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Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



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February, 1950

Guest Editorial by Elizabeth Gordon

Outlook for the Building Industry

Is the Architect Worth His Salt?

The Architect as a Modern—I

Report on School Buildings

A Seminar and How It Was Run

Kansas Gets a Registration Law

35c

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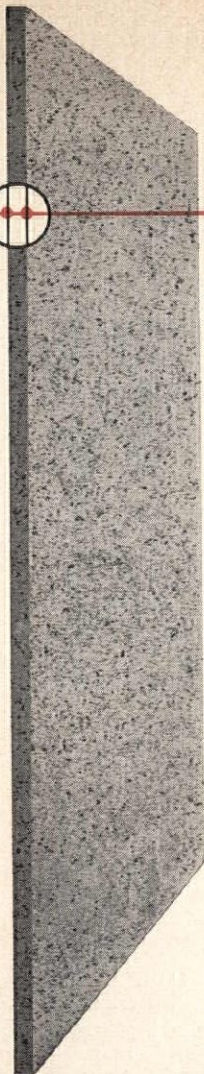
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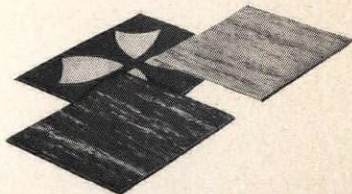
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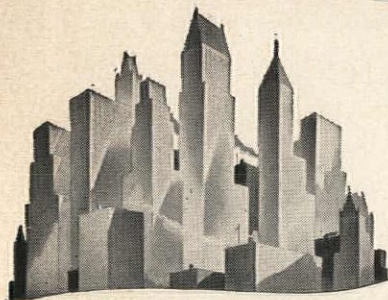
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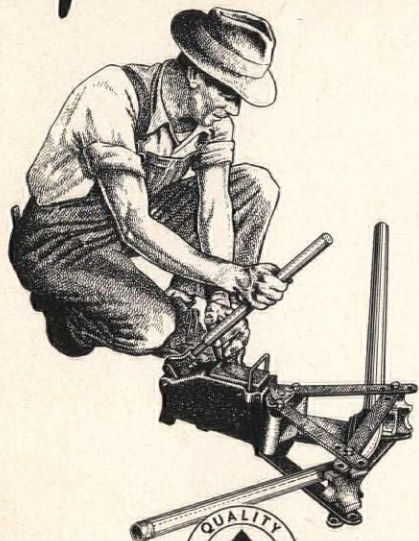


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Elizabeth Gordon, Editor of House Beautiful, is not the average client. She has about eight houses designed for her magazine each year. Of these, say six are developed through the design and specification stage, to be illustrated by drawings. One or two are actually built, fully landscaped and furnished. Miss Gordon thus is a many-time client with plenty of opportunity of observing architects at work. What does she think of them? Well, get fully braced for a Guest Editorial in which full freedom to say what she thinks was asked for and granted.

Elizabeth Gordon

TO RECITE THE GOOD THINGS about architects is the fashionable thing to do. Everybody does it—including *House Beautiful*. And it is not hard to do, either. For we get to see, with our own eyes, not just in photographs, the cream of America's architectural output. And the best is very good indeed. The flaw is: There is so very little of it.

To recite what is wrong with architects is less fashionable. In fact it is simply not being done—in print. Negative remarks are saved—to be used verbally, in private.

But as a client, who spends several hundred hours a year in conference with architects trying to produce houses we can publish as worthy standards to guide our

readers' thinking, I think I have earned the right to air some of the negative opinions that choke me up with frustration and despair about the future.

Like all generalizations, this list of my pet peeves will be too varied to apply to every architect who reads this. Rather they might be called: "Tendencies to Beware Of," or "Watch Out That These Don't Apply to Me," or maybe "These Symptoms Are Catching."

So if any of these shoes fit, wear it:

1. Architects tend to ignore the definition of the project as laid down by the client. They assume the attitude, "I know what's good for you, and that's what I am going to give you. So you'd better like it."

2. Too many architects regard designing as pure design—not as a tool to aid and abet performance. As a result, much of their designing is non-functional. They design as though the house were to exist in a vacuum—instead of in a social world and in an environment of weather, children, dogs, and people.

3. Too many architects design without any regard to cost. With all the figures that exist today—about average cost per square foot or per cubic foot—architects can have some practical check on themselves as they go along. But almost no one uses it. They blithely turn out houses which turn out to be one-third to one-half too expensive. Then the drawings have to be revised, wasting everybody's time and their own overhead, and gaining bad reputations for being impractical.

4. They go off on tangents of infatuation—getting so preoccupied with some design stunt that intrigues them that they force the whole concept on the plan to yield them the chance to use the stunt.

5. They swallow whole the manufacturer's claims without bothering to check them against field experience or common sense.

They tend to do this because they like a product's looks.

6. They don't understand the basic laws of physics that govern the performance of materials, and disclose their ignorance about such well-publicized phenomena as condensation on windows and walls—with talk reminiscent of old wives' tales.

7. They are too often unaware of the amenities that compose good living, blithely putting toilets (and their flushing noises) next to living-rooms and beside terraces.

8. They don't grasp that architecture can only exist inside the social framework, and that a house has to also be "a machine to impress the neighbors." Too many architects design to impress other architects. This puts everything on such an esoteric basis that presently there may be no clients.

9. Too many architects copy the idioms of modern design without understanding their functional reason for existing in the first place. There are too many solar windows that don't face the sun, too many clerestory windows that don't open, too many cove lights that don't light, etc. It is my stricken observation that the bulk of the modernists are just as doctrinaire

as the traditionalists ever dreamed of being.

10. Too many architects are quite inept at site solutions. (There's that tendency to design in a vacuum again). They don't know how to create an affinity between the structure and its surroundings (e. g. working hard to create a long, low roof, but failing to study the grades and contours so the house sits up 2 feet off the ground and so destroys the objective striven for in the roof). When they do take up the site problem they do so at the end of the designing instead of at the beginning where it belongs. They also ignore, alarmingly, the site problems of wind, sun, traffic arteries, neighbors' nuisances, privacy outside for living terraces, privacy inside for big glassed openings, privacy for services (garbage, clothes drying, etc.). With our current concepts of a good house

for good living, it seems that house designing must start at the lot line. But most architects design the house first and then work out to the lot line. By that time it's too late.

11. Too many architects (the younger ones particularly) act as though beauty were their *only* aim. They'll sacrifice convenience and performance and common sense in the name of Beauty. Yet it seems to be commonly agreed that the most beautiful architecture occurs when performance calls the tune and beauty emerges through the brilliance of the solution. Too many architects try primarily to make their houses an esthetic experience only, instead of wholly wonderful places to live.

These are common faults. And the whole average level of our domestic architecture would be raised if architects would pay more attention to correcting them.

Architects are getting the seminar habit. These conferences do not occur spontaneously—they have to be built

A Seminar and How It Was Run

By Kenneth Reid

THE first New England A.I.A. Regional Seminar, devoted to the advancement of Hospital De- sign and held in Boston on December 2 and 3, is now history, and the committee members who

arranged it have by this time perhaps gratefully resumed their normal ways of life. Their labors, extending over seven months, were at times exacting and intensive. As their chairman, I want to pay tribute to their intelligent devotion to the job they were chosen to do, more or less accidentally, at Houston last March. In particular, my associates of the Executive Committee — Messrs. Sherman Morss, Hugh Jones, Charles D. Maginnis, Jr., and Hugh Stubbins — performed their tasks so faithfully and efficiently that I doubt if any committee chairman ever had a more capable crew. As a result, the affair was a success: it was pronounced so by experts and veterans of other seminars, and we have had enough expressions of satisfaction from representatives of all the participating groups to make us feel that all the effort was distinctly worth while.

I speak thus warmly at the outset of this report because the experience of this seminar has impressed me with the importance of having a good committee, containing in its membership the variety of talents such an occasion demands. Perhaps all architects are versatile enough: I do not know. Perhaps any group of them, chosen

at random, can tackle any given assignment and carry it through to perfection. But it can do no harm to stack the cards a little at the beginning and pick men who are most likely to succeed.

Our experience indicates that any Regional Seminar Committee will need:

1. A chairman who is if possible located at the center of operations; i. e., in the city where the seminar is likely to be held. In our case, my remoteness from Boston was a handicap.

2. Two members for the program subcommittee who are thoroughly acquainted with the building type under examination, so that they will know exactly what problems need clarification and where to turn for the experts best qualified to examine and clarify them.

3. One member with a flair for figures and financial management, to act as treasurer and handle all business transactions with hotel management, printers, stationers, and suppliers of whatever goods and services need to be purchased. He, too, should be centrally located.

4. One or more members familiar with the avenues and techniques of publicity, to get out news-

paper releases and direct mail announcements at appropriate stages during the preparations for the seminar and see that they are placed and distributed to reach the largest possible number of people who might be expected to attend.

5. At least one, and preferably two, members from each sponsoring chapter who can assume the responsibility of beating the drum among their constituents.

The program committee is undoubtedly the key element of the whole group. A well worked out program will be a powerful inducement for gaining the acceptance by first-class men of invitations to speak, and the combination of such a program and an outstanding list of speakers can almost by itself insure a sufficiently large attendance. Conversely, a poor program can bring about disappointing failure.

In view of the importance of the program, we felt justified in spending about three months on its preparation and polishing. That left about two months to line up speakers and about a month to take care of last-minute preparations. Our deliberateness, we feel, paid off in the end, though it caused us some worried moments by delaying the time when we

could send out complete printed programs, which were not available for mailing until two weeks before the opening of the seminar. A month would have been safer to allow, but in our case the program was so obviously good that it attracted an immediate response and we received almost 300 cards of acceptance within the week after its distribution. The actual attendance fell somewhat short of this, but there were well over 200 persons in the audience at all sessions.

Developing a program and staging a seminar have some points of resemblance to the process of writing and producing a play. There should be a central theme (in our case the consideration of the problems of the smaller general hospital), and this theme can be developed in a series of related topics, arranged in logical sequence, moving perhaps from the general to the particular and winding up with some sort of a climax. When it is finally done, there is the equally important task of casting the performers and engaging them to appear. Fortunately, they take care of furnishing their own lines and there need be no group rehearsals. As with the theater, however, there is the necessity of

providing an adequate hall, with good lighting and acoustics and all the appropriate equipment such as slide projectors, lecterns, adjustable and portable microphones, blackboards, etc.

Our program occupied two morning sessions and one afternoon session of about three hours each, with two luncheons and a dinner filling the intervals. Both meals on Friday were graced with able individual speakers and the Saturday luncheon was the occasion of a climactic round-table on "The Hospitals of the Future." The remainder of the second afternoon was reserved for group meetings divided by states, so that the architects and administrators could meet with the state officials in charge of the Hospital Survey and Construction Program and talk over forthcoming projects. A cocktail party thoughtfully donated by the Massachusetts Chapter and State Association, preceded the dinner.

Each session contained three talks, each followed by thirty minutes of open discussion led by some individual other than the speaker. The talks were brief by arrangement, and the audience participated actively in the discussions, which made for liveliness. A

few minutes of recess were interspersed here and there during the proceedings, not only to permit setting up projectors and screens but to give relief from the hard chairs. (One speaker contributed the epigram, "The mind can absorb only what the seat can endure.")

In spite of the length of the sessions and the concentrated tightness of the schedule, however, the audience followed everything with remarkably close attention. This is a tribute to the quality of both speakers and audience. One woman participant reported afterward, "I particularly like to remember that I sat with a group of five men who were without cigarettes for three and one half hours, which I can understand was a real hardship, but not one of them would take time out to go to the first floor for a new supply."

It is not possible in such a brief space to describe the program in complete detail. We had a court stenographer on hand to take down as much as possible of the floor discussion and most of the speakers had prepared written copies of what they proposed to say. We hope to publish the bulk of the proceedings in mimeographed form as soon as they can be edited and

put in shape, and provided also that there is sufficient demand for them.



As in the case of any such seminar, its degree of success depended largely on securing the friendly cooperation of the groups of professionals and laymen concerned with the subject under consideration. The doctors, hospital administrators and personnel, consultants, engineers, trustees, and public officials who took part both as speakers and auditors, contributed most generously of their time and thought, and the focusing of their different points of view along with that of the architects

upon the common objective—Better Hospitals—was what made the meetings so helpful to all concerned. Meetings of architects alone would not have gained the same broad perspective. Similar cooperative spirit will undoubtedly be found among groups of people connected with other types of buildings as The Institute's program of regional and state seminars expands. For the sake of future seminar committees we hope that each field brought up for examination contains the equivalent of Mr. Marshall Shaffer of the U. S. Public Health Service, whose enthusiasm and sage advice have been invaluable in the case of hospitals.

The Architect as a Modern

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

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

An address before the meeting of the West Virginia Chapter and its guests at White Sulphur Springs, Nov. 5, 1949

I UNDERSTAND that there is, on this occasion, a tacit understanding between Cy Silling and Walter Taylor that this affair is not to be too serious, and so it has been recommended to me that I talk on some such subject as "Architecture, the Mistress Art;" or, equally soporific, "Architecture and the Fine Arts." Thinking that even

Ruskin would have placed these subjects on a higher level of "lavender and old lace," I looked about for something much more immediate and thrilling. My subject therefore this evening is that of "Knitting: A Peaceful and Soothing Occupation to be Enjoyed in Relaxation after Dynamiting Buildings *Which Have Not Come*

Out Too Well"; or, as a subtitle, "Why Are White Cathedrals Better than Black Cathedrals?"

I am not interested in anything but ideas. If I mention a building I have seen it.

It is generally acknowledged we are living in a mess; but it is claimed that while ancient Athens was in a mess it produced the Parthenon; that while Renaissance Rome was in a mess the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel got painted. So perhaps after all, Picasso is greater than I think, and Lipschitz is the greatest sculptor in all history—this especially, if messiness is acknowledged to be the generator of greatness. Now I have a trio of purls and a circle of dropped stitches for this occasion.

My message—and I believe that what I am supposed to leave with you is a message—is: "Man asks for a symbol of faith but the modern world gives him another toggle switch."

In our age, increasingly devoted to the mass man, i. e., to mass production, to so-called dictatorships of the proletariat, to an appeal to mass emotions; the architect, long self-considered as an individual, finds himself in the all-too-embracing arms of confusion. He must work for the betterment of man-

kind—building houses for these masses, building them as cells, as deadly and as nearly alike as possible—and, as cheaply as the unintelligent mass itself will permit; because these masses now seek and often get more return for less work. The architect, however, is trained by tradition, a strangely strong tradition, to maintain his individual integrity as an artist: one whose purity of output might even be faced with the test of dynamiting the mangled abuse of this same purity—for the architect, like God, (especially if we are young) is thought virtually far above the poor client for whom our worlds are designed.

Early this summer I walked all about—outside and in—revisiting four of the great cathedrals of France: Chartres, Amiens, Rheims and Notre Dame de Paris, and I came away feeling very strongly that in these buildings man has achieved a mastery of sculptured form; a true definition of space—in modern words, plasticity; one, moreover, that no modern architect has yet achieved, no matter how much he lives, philosophically, in the time-darkened shadows of their original whiteness.

For as I see it, the architect's concept of space is, in its modern

sense, one without individuality. Its underlying idea—supposedly that of freedom—is too often amorphous; in other words, without a beginning and without an end; a concept of space which, in my opinion, refuses to admit that human emotions are conditioned by human, physical reactions to its material extent. Space which is amorphous or too flexible in use designation leads inevitably into frustration of form.

The Japanese house, however, develops controlled space which may expand for wide family use or be retracted for individual privacy. Its relation to the outside world is not carelessly accepted but knowingly planned as to picture. The opening of the *shoji* toward "Fuji," for example, would always be a composition-selected portion of the whole panorama. Here you have a wide selection of definite forms.

But, moreover, as one sees the soaring of the Gothic structures, especially their interior majesty—the great arches woven so tightly together far overhead—one appreciates that architects, at least once in their history, knew space as an indication of godliness, because, as one sees the infinite care in detail—in proportion and execution

—the sudden surprises which continually greet the eye, the kings, and the angels, and even the common folk, all in queer juxtaposition, together with all the known and mythical animals browsing in the great herbals in stone; the rich emotional stories in glass, vivid and living in surrounding light, all rising in their thousands; the whole structure rising as a hymn to "le seigneur"—the Lord—He everywhere in evidence so that the little and the great alike may see Him; seeing all this, I wondered if the artist, he who humbly worked in these stones, on this glass, or carved this wood, felt that he, too, might have had to dynamite in order to preserve his precious individuality. Or was each artist somehow imbued with the modesty of that medieval tumbler of "Our Lady" so that he quietly entertained and worshipped her with his few tricks, because that was all he had to offer?

Or, should we pity the poor modern architect of the most modern political state—pity Comrade K. Alabyan, who came to the United States shortly after the war was over for what few crumbs we capitalists could give; but who was removed recently as vice president of the Soviet Academy because he

did not safeguard the "party line" in the development of the study of architecture (evidently the crumbs became a cake); and also because as you can clearly see, it is impossible to believe that any cultural art such as architecture can ever be removed from the political control of a socialist society in which it is being developed.

We must all agree, however, that *the artist is an individual*, and often when the destructive wars are over, a few books, a few pieces of sculpture, a few wrecks of buildings remain to attest that once a fine society existed. The Venus de Milo, for example, regardless of the names of possible rulers or makers—its beauty unadorned and continually recognized—sustains the fact that man worked to achieve ends beyond his *immediate physical needs*; that there was a creative joy in life more lasting than that of the cook pot and the couch. We know, throughout all history, that a society dies but that its artifacts may remain.

Does this mean that the artist is faced with a constant dilemma like that of Whistler, and therefore he is impelled to paint out the face of a "Lady Eden"? Or, again, like the fictional Howard Roark,

dynamite the scrambled result of his work? Or must he be, always, a creature of political compromise—one which submits to the party dicta because "Russian architecture does not exist for Alabyan alone,"—or does this idea *seem entirely unreasonable?*

So I return to Chartres and to the great communal prayer that a small group of men, over a generation, raised in mighty accord to their ideals, and I still wonder if the individuality of the artist was so lost that he bemoaned the fact or that he was called to heel by the then higher authority, i. e., the Church. *No, it was much later when books were burned, and their makers too.*

Yet of what advantage is life to us, unless we think of it as individuals; and if so, if we submit to communal direction, must we not do it voluntarily—for always there is this question: What is significant, the present political structure or man himself; some statistical stability or another adventure into creation? We must admit life is too varied in its possibilities to be fitted into any one mold, and that the trouble with modern architectural design may be that it tries to make all life conform to one pattern—a pattern, unfortunately,

calling for and completing the average.

When our office first met Henry Jeffers, then president of the Walker-Gordon Milk Company, and helped to develop the "rotolactor," we were impressed with the necessity for treating with the average. All the contented cows passing from the "cow lounge" to the mechanical milker, trod a known path three times a day and gave within a slight fraction the identical quantity of milk. Any cow whose "give down" of milk kicked off the cover on the can overhead, was on the way out the second time it happened—on the way out to the butcher or to a purgatory which "Elsie" was not permitted to know. I am not too sure but this is the life of the average toward which the world now so gaily progresses.

I believe the architect should be an individual because I believe he should be a leader; and one who does not wait for fashion to direct his work, or society to stop in order that he may catch up. But the architect recently, unfortunately, has admitted he has no other position—except that of following the engineer; that not only has the humanist approach been

lacking in achievement but that there is nothing that the *art* of living can offer beyond the science of material attainment. We have accepted the idea of the engineer esthetic as proposed by "El Corbu." The engineer esthetic is a standardized product of calculated efficiency, i. e., the mass-produced modular cell, because it is supposedly economically cheaper; because it is the creature of the machine.

Recent architectural negations now resemble the work of the factory engineer, initiated shortly before the first world war, because it too was the creature of the machine, by such outstanding American engineering firms as Lockwood Greene and Ballinger and Perrot. One wonders therefore if architecture no longer has a separate meaning; whether or not the world, no longer trained to give consistent attention to absorbing detail, is going to be finally satisfied with what the engineer and his slide-rule thinking offers it. *I wonder—but* the engineer himself, strangely enough, is seeking a warmer, more humanistic life. He realizes that the end of a series of continuing negations means the death of progress.

(To be concluded in March)

The Outlook for the Building Industry

By *Earl B. Schwulst*

PRESIDENT OF THE BOWERY SAVINGS BANK, NEW YORK

An address before the Annual Convention of the American Institute of Steel Construction, White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., November 1, 1949

THE BUILDING INDUSTRY, it seems to me, is in a singularly fortunate position. Formerly, in appraising the future of the industry, the outlook was always dependent upon the future of business conditions. If the business forecast was good, building would flourish; if the business forecast was bad, building would suffer. Although this sympathetic movement of the industry with the business cycle will still be a factor, the sting of deflationary business conditions upon the building industry has been removed by acceptance of the compensatory budget doctrine of government. If and when government does find it necessary to pump purchasing power into the economy, the vehicle, according to present planning, will be the construction industry.

Congress has already laid the groundwork by voting \$100 million of Federal money to plan a \$3 billion backlog of public works as a hedge against future depression. This money would be advanced to

state and local governments to plan building projects as a means of avoiding "leaf-raking" undertakings if business declines became serious. State governments are also making plans along the same lines. In New York State, Governor Dewey recently appointed a Committee on Housing and Construction. Among other duties, the Committee is to prepare a survey for the Governor as to the time and place of State-sponsored construction, so that such building by the State can be advanced in areas and at times when private construction is lagging. This objective is designed to prevent competition between the State and private builders for manpower and material, to assure labor of steadier year-round employment and to further encourage labor to perfect its apprentice-training program. Other states will probably follow suit. Thus, a pattern of stability, not hitherto enjoyed, has been set for the building industry.

Suppose government does not

find it necessary to embark on anti-deflationary public works projects, what then? Of the three components of the building industry—industrial, commercial and residential—my interest, being a savings banker, centers in the latter. However, savings banks are also interested in industrial and commercial construction insofar as it results in a supply of securities or mortgages that meet the investment requirements of the bank. It appears to me that business construction cannot continue much longer at present levels. The dollar volume of privately financed business construction is down from its 1948 peak and prospects are that the decline will continue.

Thus far, substantial declines in commercial and industrial building have been prevented by public-utility and transportation-company construction. Public-utility construction has been at a rate almost treble the pre-war rate. Construction by telephone companies has declined slightly in recent months from the high level of last year, and is likely to continue declining as expansion of telephone facilities nears completion. Most of the transportation companies' capital expenditures have been for rolling-stock and equipment.

According to SEC estimates, capital expenditures for all business during the last quarter of 1949 will be \$4.25 billion, which is 25 percent below outlays for the same period in 1948. There is good reason to believe that these estimates are sound. In the first place, net income after taxes of manufacturing corporations dropped \$393 million in the second quarter of 1949 to a total of \$2,018 million. This was \$845 million below the total for the comparable period in 1948. Notwithstanding the decrease in earnings, dividend payments increased approximately 5 percent. Since retained corporate earnings are the first source of funds for capital expenditures, it is likely that business construction will decline. In the second place, many companies have increased their debt ratio in the past three years to the point where they are loath to borrow more money for expansion. The American Telephone and Telegraph System, for example, has increased its long-term debt from 32 percent to 54 percent of total capitalization since 1946.

From all indications, savings institutions will not find a major outlet for their funds in corporate bond issues. Prices of high-grade corporate bonds are being driven

up to the point where they yield only about one-quarter of one percent more than U. S. Treasury obligations. Therefore, if the future of the building industry is to be dark, it will not be due to lack of mortgage money. Although savings have declined sharply since the war years, it now appears that the rate of savings by individuals has become fairly well stabilized. Reserves of private insurance companies are increasing at about the rate of \$3.5 billion a year, and shares in savings-and-loan associations about \$1.6 billion annually. Time deposits in commercial banks and savings-bank deposits combined are increasing also at the rate of \$1.6 billion annually. Thus, from new money alone these four major types of savings institutions will have about \$7 billion to put to work during 1950.

Growth of savings is not the only source of funds that these institutions have available for investment. Since practically all mortgages are now on an amortized basis, payments on account of principal amount to sizable sums which must be reinvested annually. For example, mortgage amortization payments and pay-offs in the mutual savings banks' combined portfolio in 1948 totaled \$600 mil-

lion compared with total loans made of \$1,325 million. This meant that the banks had to make \$1.82 of new loans to gain a single dollar in loans held. In addition to this new money flowing into the savings institutions annually for investment, insurance companies and savings banks have huge holdings of Government securities accumulated during the war years, a portion of which they would be very glad to see replaced by higher-yielding assets. Government bonds now account for 55 percent of total assets of all savings banks as against a pre-war distribution of 25 percent. Mortgage investments, on the other hand, have declined from 41 percent to 27 percent of assets during the period.

Now, a new potential source of investment funds is likely to create a huge demand for an already limited supply of investment opportunities. The precedent set by Ford with respect to company pensions appears likely to become widely accepted in principle. It is, of course, impossible to estimate the amount of accumulations that would be involved. One of the large investment services (Standard and Poor's) has pointed out that, as a rough indication, the $8\frac{3}{4}$ cents an hour granted by Ford, if ex-

tended to the fifteen million workers employed in manufacture, would exceed \$2.4 billion annually. How this money will be employed will depend to a great extent upon whether it will be administered by government or private agencies.

If administered by government, the funds would probably be handled in the same manner as social-security accumulations, that is, invested in Government bonds. The money would then be available for government spending or, optimistically perhaps, for retirement of public debt. If administered by private institutions, an intensified demand for high-grade corporate securities, mortgages and equity housing investments would result. In any event, if the pension plan system does become a reality for a large segment of industrial workers, the funds accumulated will be an important factor in the supply of capital for building and other industry.

In pointing out these favorable factors in the outlook for building, I do not mean to imply that the industry should be lulled into a false sense of security. We had evidence last fall and this winter of what can happen if prices are pushed up to the point where con-

sumer resistance asserts itself. Construction costs in general rose to a peak in the autumn of 1948 and the number of new housing units started declined to a low winter level of about 50,000 a month. The manner in which the building industry reacted is to be admired. Productivity of labor increased, prices of building materials in general were moderately lowered (substantially, in the case of lumber) and builders reduced their profit margins. These steps led to improvement in the quality of the product and somewhat lower prices for new houses. Results were quick. Building spurted, and in June 100,000 units were started, the same number as in the peak months of April and May, 1948.

Apparently, increasing emphasis will and should be placed upon the use of new materials and techniques in construction to drive down costs. This is also one of the objectives of Governor Dewey's Committee on Housing and Construction to which I referred before. If private industry is to meet a substantial part of the potential demand for housing, it seems to me that ways must be found to broaden the consumer market by reducing the cost of the product. Although not in the construction business, I have

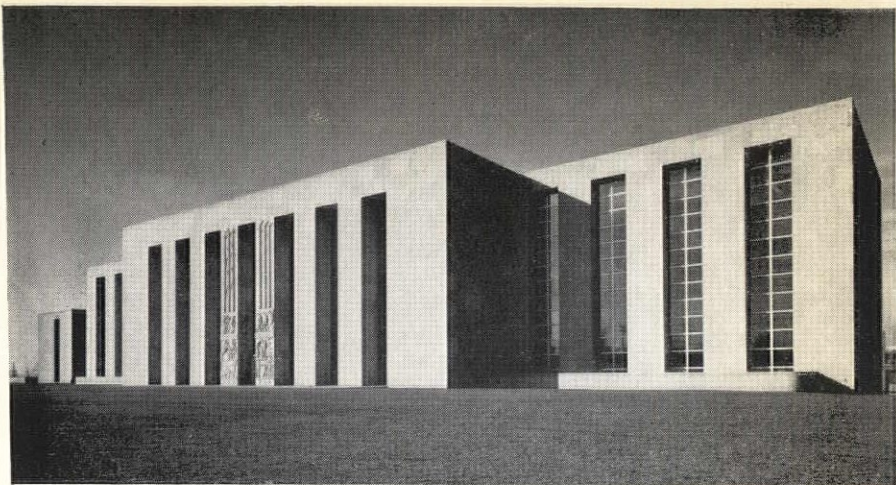
heard progressive thinking men in the industry state that much can be done along these lines. As a case in point, a large eastern contractor told me of an experience he had in building 600 homes in a city in Ohio. The local plastering subcontractor submitted a bid far above the general contractor's estimate. The reason for this was that the bid by the local man was figured on the unit basis he had been in the habit of using in bidding on one or two houses. After discussion of the difference in the estimates, the contractor prevailed upon the plastering contractor to accept the bid set up by the former. As part of the deal the general contractor agreed to deposit \$20,000 in a local bank as a guarantee that the plastering contractor would make a profit of not less than that amount on the basis of the bid as accepted. As it turned out, through large-scale purchase of material and more effective use of labor, the local contractor made his \$20,000 profit and did not have to touch a dollar of the escrow deposit.

How far we have progressed in meeting the housing demand is very difficult to measure. Certainly, a large part of the demand is at a price that cannot be supplied by

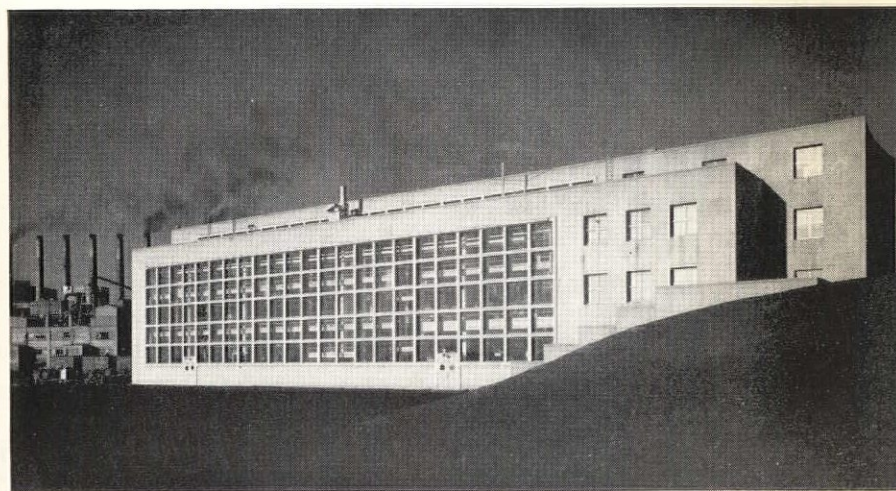
private industry, and if it is to be met, will be done so by government subsidy in one form or another.

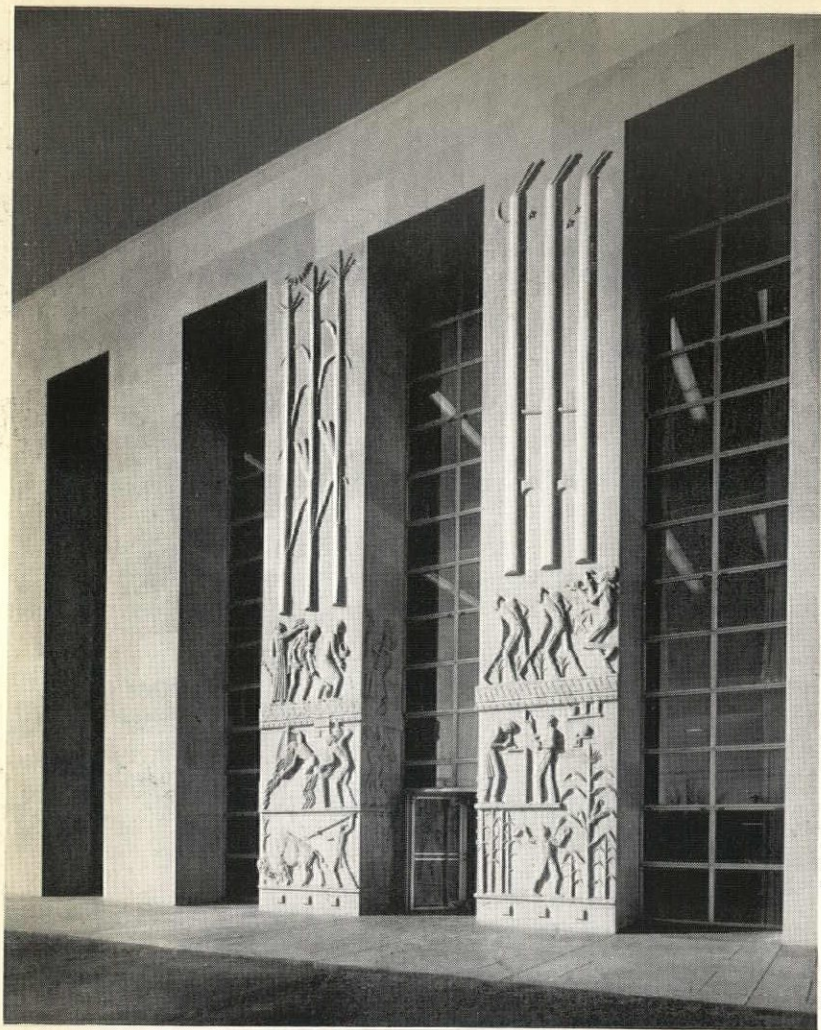
At the Bowery we have recently completed a survey of post-war residential construction activity in New York City. On the first 3½ years after the war there was a net increase of about 45,000 dwelling units in the five boroughs of New York City, or roughly 13,000 per year. The City Planning Commission estimates that New York City should add about 20,000 units per year until 1970 to take care of growth requirements; and that if substandard units are to be replaced another 28,000 units would have to be added each year. If these goals are to be attained, public agencies will no doubt have to provide a considerable amount of the housing, and plans have been made in this direction. At the end of 1948 there were about 26,000 occupied dwelling units in public (subsidized) housing projects in New York City. This amounts to about 1¼ percent of the total number of occupied dwelling units.

The current objective of the New York City Housing Authority calls for more than 130,000 subsidized units by the end of 1953. If this objective is reached public



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DETAIL OF MAIN ENTRANCE

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LEE LAWRIE, SCULPTOR

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Journal
The AIA

housing may amount to 5 percent of the City's housing supply at that time. In Manhattan the proportion could become as much as 10 percent, due to the decline in the number of non-subsidized families in the Borough that has been under way and is likely to continue, while the number of public projects to be built in Manhattan is increasing.

To summarize my impressions about the outlook for the building industry:

1. The industry is fortunate in that it is insulated to a great extent against future deflationary business conditions by planned government spending on public works,

2. Savings institutions will have plenty of money available for investment in mortgages and housing. The pressure of funds seeking investment will be accentuated by the growth of company pension plans for industrial workers.

3. The building industry should make every effort to decrease costs and improve quality through new techniques. Otherwise, a large part of the potential demand for new housing will be priced out of the market.

4. Even though progress is made in reducing costs and improving quality, government-subsidized housing will become of increasing importance, particularly in urban areas.

Kansas Gets a Registration Law

By Charles L. Marshall

STATE ARCHITECT

THE 1949 session of the Kansas legislature enacted a law requiring the registration of all persons using the title of "Architect." The passage of this legislation consummated a thirty-year effort to acquire a law either covering the use of the title "Architect" or licensing the practice of architecture.

The new statute requires, in the interest of public health, safety,

and welfare, that any person performing the function of planning and design be registered as an architect in the manner of statutes now in operation in other states. The statute does not apply to farm buildings, to buildings that cost under \$15,000, nor to those which do not house more than eight persons or provide a meeting place for more than fifty-five people. But

conversely the law applies to any structure whose requirements are over those minimums.

Unlike most registration or licensing laws, this statute does not specify that the teaching of architecture is considered professional practice—the Board of Architectural Examiners must be composed of men who have had five years experience as practising architects prior to appointment. This provides for a stable Board that knows the limitations of the profession, both from the educational as well as the practical point of view in considering applicants.

While it might be a desirable condition, the legislation does not recognize the requirement of a three- or four-year training period prior to application for a certificate as a registered architect. Only two conditions are provided in the law—graduation from a college under the supervision of the State Board of Regents or from a school accredited by the National Accrediting Board; or the applicant must have had seven years of practical experience of a nature acceptable to the Board of Architectural Examiners. There is no examination provided other than meeting these two conditions.

For the first year that the statute

is in effect, a grandfather's clause provides that anyone practising architecture for one year previous to the enactment of the statute can become registered if that practice is of a character satisfactory to the Board.

Persons from other states, who are not living within the state at the time of application, must make application under the section on reciprocity. In regard to reciprocity, the statute is so worded that no reciprocity can be granted unless the other state offers reciprocity to Kansas on an equal basis. The law was worded in this manner since so many of the states will not recognize reciprocities from another state as being on an equal basis. The Kansas Board will have to have an agreement with each of the other states before any reciprocity can be granted. In a number of cases, this is being worked out on the basis of equal reciprocity, where the Kansas architect has been accepted by the State Board and has the minimum experience required by the other state.

Since the passage of this statute—and its effective date was July 1, 1949—137 certificates have been issued by the Board. Each annual

receipt will be marked as to the section of the statute under which application was made, in this manner: if under Section 14-A-B, the applicant has had both college training and over seven years experience in architecture; while under 14-B he has the seven years experience. If the card is marked Section 14-A only, the applicant has only the college training that permits registration under the statute. Cards marked under Section 21 are given under the grandfather's clause of the statute. It

is assumed that anyone having a card marked Section 14-A-B meets the requirements of the statutes of practically all other states.

For the Kansas architect, the passage of the statute has given him a legal entity that he has never before possessed. It is interesting that the law provides only for the registering of those with a degree in architecture, or equivalent experience. Architectural engineering graduates are expected to follow their choice by registration as professional engineers.

How do we look from outside on an economy basis? Here's one view

Is the Architect Worth His Salt?

By Myron L. Matthews

VICE PRESIDENT, THE DOW SERVICE, INC.

Reprinted by permission from *Construction News Market* for Aug. 11, 1949 wherein the article appeared under the title, "Architecture Building Dollar Value Received Greatest of All"

THE COST of architectural and engineering services in the design of buildings and their supervision while under construction, together with the management of the erection process by a reputable building contractor, is today the best insurance to the owner of getting a quality building money can buy. Too often, to the owner's later sorrow, one or the other, or both the services of these profes-

sional and practical construction experts are dispensed with in the name of economy. Immediate economy of a small part of the full cost of buildings (which are long-term investments for somebody)—even in the case of speculative units—usually turns out to have been a false, temporary economy interfering with rentability, resale and re-financing at a future date. Often have owners been heard to remark

in such a situation, "If I had it to do over again the architect or engineer with the contractor, would have complete charge."

The money the architect can get from his customary designing commission is hard-earned. It amounts to about what the lender of mortgage money used to get for the use of his money. The owner who paid this without thought of evasion, skips the architect, thereby jeopardizing the soundness of the entire venture. The lender is placing a growing emphasis upon this point, and many banks today will not lend a nickel unless a competent architect or engineer is employed along with a good contractor. For this reason, owners omitting architectural services today may tomorrow find serious re-financing troubles as a result.

Now what does the architect have to do to earn his designing and supervision fee and what does he do with the money thus earned? He must provide an adequate office, maintain a sufficient staff, originate and produce sound plans and attractive designs, maintain contact with clients on work under construction, perform a complicated buying function and an equally complex superintendence function,

keep informed of new trends in design, construction, materials and treatments, squeeze out time somewhere to influence new assignments into his office, and continuously keep such an eagle eye on his costs that he can accomplish all the foregoing within the fixed and narrow margin of a small percentage, 6 to 10 percent, of the total cost of the work entrusted to him—the sum total obviously constituting a big-league problem in business management. It is true, of course, that in some large metropolitan architectural offices, various functions are divided and allotted to specific individuals. In such offices the material or equipment salesman may never reach or see a member of the firm. Instead he will see the firm's specialist on his particular subject. Of the approximately 6,000 to 8,000 active architectural offices in the United States only a few rank in this classification. The great bulk, in point of numbers, is made up of those in which the principals are active in all phases of the work, or in which one partner is responsible for the artistic performance of the office, another for engineering and technical superintendence and a third for organization, management and new business. Sometimes this is done by

two partners and sometimes by one.

Take the progress of a small project through a one-man office. The job we will say, is an office building or a factory, to cost \$40,000. The architect's gross income is \$2,400 or \$4,000, depending on his customary percentage. Here is what he does to earn it. First, it costs him something in personal time to get the business, and perhaps something more in the way of club dues, civic or social activity, entertainment, or other form of "selling overhead." Thereafter he must familiarize himself with all the requirements of his assignment. He must draw up initial plans and elevations and get them approved by the owner, maybe in the face of a building committee representing as many conflicting opinions as it has members. Then he must prepare complete specifications and detail drawings, call in contractors, supply them with copies of the blueprints and specifications, and, after a few days, receive their bids. All through the construction period he must supervise and scrutinize the various contractors' performances. He must keep a running checkup of costs in order to be able to approve the contractors' "estimates" for his

client to pay. In addition, he may need to hold two or three conferences a week with his client.

The foregoing is for a commercial building. If, however, the \$40,000 job represents a residence, assuming someone wants to spend that much for a home, the proposition looks even less alluring because it quite probably entails working for a client who cannot read blueprints, knows sufficiently little about architecture to desire impossible accomplishments, and fusses and frets about the progress of construction from day to day. We writes his architect, telephones him, visits him personally—and expects his architect to sit idly by while he talks away valuable time. He wants the architect to change the design of the breakfast room so that it will accommodate a certain manufacturer's fixtures as contrasted to another manufacturer's, equally good and perhaps better, included in the specifications. He is unable to understand why it would all necessitate a structural change in the house, and cares less. Finally he does—but at the expense of his architect's time which the latter cannot tack onto his bill like the attorney or doctor, for instance. And then in a day or two it starts all over again.

Architectural design and supervision in no way should be regarded as a policing power hampering the builder in turning out a good building inexpensively, or any reflection upon his honesty and integrity. Most good builders prefer working with architects and engineers and actually are anxious to share the responsibility for final results with a supervising technician.

Some owners and builders have felt that architects and engineers sometimes cramp the style of a contractor to an extent affecting the pocketbook of the owner adversely and unnecessarily. This view is wrong and is rapidly giving way to intelligent enlightenment. More and more, greater reliance is being placed upon the architect by both owner and contractor. Contractors show increased confidence that the architect must in his central position guard the owner's interest as well as the contractor's, not to mention his own. Then, too, to a growing degree, banks are taking direct interest in buildings under con-

struction in which they are financially interested.

All of this may bring up a natural question in the owner's mind. With bank supervision, or FHA supervision, or supervision of a reputable builder, "Why do I need architectural supervision?" The answer lies in the fact that the supervision of a bank or FHA is primarily in their own interest and not in the owner's interest except in so far as their interests are the same. From a practical point of view this isn't "very far." Furthermore, the so-called supervision of banks and FHA, while an admirable advance in the right direction, can hardly be classified as more than superficial. Contractors prefer to work with an architect because their two separate functions are not competitive. One does not encroach upon the other. They go together like twins. The architect is the owner's expert designer, supervisor and general arbitrator and coordinator. The percentage he gets may well be the most value per dollar an owner receives.

Calendar

February 17, 18: Regional Convention of the North Central States District, Nicollet Hotel, Minneapolis, Minn.

FEBRUARY, 1950

February 19-23: 6th Annual Convention and Exposition of the National Association of Home Builders, Hotels Stevens and Congress, Chicago, Ill.

February 27-March 3: First of two similar Garden Symposia under the sponsorship of *House and Garden* and Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Va.

March 6-10: Second of two similar Garden Symposia under the sponsorship of *House and Garden* and Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Va.

March 8: Nineteenth annual meeting of the Inter-Society Color Council, Hotel Statler, New York, N. Y. Subject for the afternoon session: Color as Used in Architecture, Design and Decoration. Scott Wilson, Waldron Faulkner,

Karl Bock and Egmont Arens will speak.

March 8-10: 36th Annual Convention of Michigan Society of Architects, Hotel Statler, Detroit, Mich.

March 28-31: National Plastics Exposition, Navy Pier, Chicago.

April 10-16: VII Pan-American Congress of Architects, Havana, Cuba.

April 22-29: Historic Garden Week in Virginia, under the auspices of The Garden Club of Virginia.

May 10-13: Eighty-second Convention of The Institute, Washington, D. C.

June 7-10: Annual Conference of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Bristol, England.

Report of the A. I. A. Committee on School Buildings

ON THE ARCHITECT AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR SCHOOLS AS SUBMITTED TO, AND APPROVED BY, THE BOARD AT ITS SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING IN NOVEMBER, 1949

AS A RESULT of the amount of comment that has been aroused concerning The Institute's statement of policy with respect to the architect's position in long-range school planning, this Committee submits the following as a further clarification of its thinking in the matter:

It is the stated intent of The Institute, as recommended by the Committee on School Buildings, to assist the profession of architecture in its effort to produce better schools.

In this respect the Committee believes, among other things:

1. That better schools can be

realized through comprehensive long-range planning and programming.

2. That a means of comprehensive planning should be available in some manner to all school districts regardless of size or financial condition.

3. That these objectives can be accomplished in a democratic manner through the leadership of private architects.

4. That The Institute by furnishing architects with the proper support and information can materially accelerate the realization of these objectives.

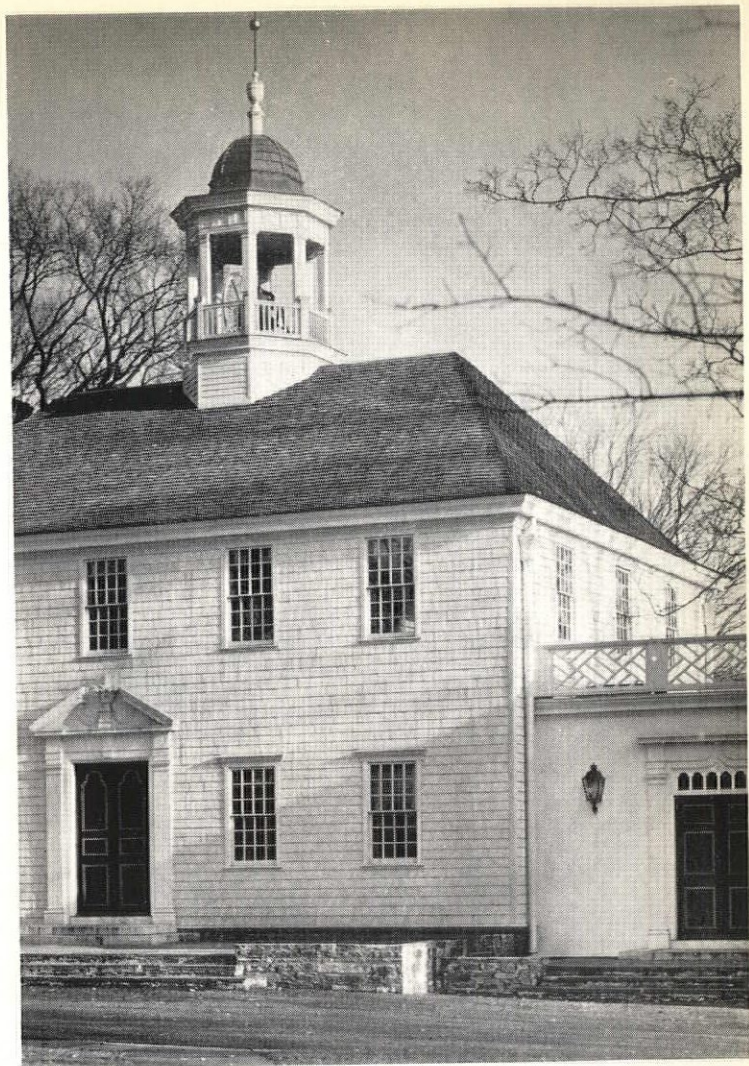
The general application of comprehensive and sound planning in the fields of education, public health, housing, etc. has long been overdue. In only relatively recent years has planning begun to assert itself in these fields under the leadership of architects and others.

With the exception of some large urban areas, few school districts today are able to avail themselves of the benefits of sound planning with the means which are at their disposal. Also, the number of districts that benefit to a degree from educational planning by the use of educational consultants is relatively minor in relation to the entire pic-

ture. In view of this, the concept of school planning should not be separated from that of comprehensive planning; be treated as a mystery; nor reserved for the all-knowing judgment of a select and titled few. In our opinion, this only tends to stifle its general application.

In order to broaden the availability of planning to school districts, we believe planning should be generally encouraged at the community level under the best available leadership regardless of title. It should be encouraged in this manner even if the situation demands that the superintendent, the faculty and the school board determine educational policies and requirements without the aid of a paid professional educational consultant.

Therefore, the Committee believes what is needed is a better understanding and more vital leadership in the field of comprehensive school planning rather than merely a concentration of attention on a particular phase of the problem, i. e. the educational requirements. In consideration of this, it is readily understandable that experts in particular phases of school planning will, due to a misunderstanding of the broad aim



FAIRFIELD TOWN HALL, FAIRFIELD, CONN.

CAMERON CLARK, ARCHITECT

Photograph by Gottscho-Schleisner

In the series of
architects' favorite details

*Journal
of
The AIA*



SOUVENIR OF THE PALM SPRINGS CONVENTION, CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTS,
Nov. 8, 9, 1949

Left to right: Adrian Wilson, Glenn Stanton, Ralph Walker, Thomas Holden,
Don Lyons, James Mitchell, Don Kirby, Harry Whiteley

Photograph by *Julius Schultman*

of The Institute, question it as indicative of an encroachment on what they feel to be their sole prerogative.

With this broad concept in mind, it appears then that the question most often raised, as to whether the architect is or is not qualified to specify educational requirements, is minor and beside the point. Obviously, he is not, and does not imply that he is qualified in this field. There is no mention made in the policy of The Institute, nor is there any inference intended, that architects should be encouraged to make educational surveys or determine educational requirements for school building programs. This unquestionably should be reserved for qualified educators.

We cannot agree, however, with the contention that the services of an educational consultant will take the place of over-all, long-range planning nor with the contention that he is more qualified to do over-all long-range planning than others. It must be admitted, nevertheless, that under the present situation there is a tendency towards the general belief that if an educational consultant is retained, regardless of the type of planning or person responsible for the design, superior results will

be more or less assured in the planning of a school building program. With this we also cannot agree, since experience does not seem to bear this out in its entirety. As matters stand, the entire question does seem to indicate the failure of educational consultants to grasp the comprehensive nature of planning and the fact that educational specifications are merely part of the whole process.

The existence of a critical need for comprehensive long-range planning for schools is possibly best manifested in the completed educational surveys of record. These surveys in practically every instance include material, advice and recommendations on subjects clearly beyond the scope of educational requirements and specifications and the background and training of the parties who prepared them. On the other hand, we know of no documented evidence on record in which architects have determined or recommended educational policies or requirements, although we do not deny that this could be a possibility. In this respect, we believe that an impartial evaluation of the situation concerning school planning will reveal, not the encroachment of the architect into the field of educational planning

and consultation, but the definite encroachment of the educational consultant into the field of architectural and over-all planning. In view of this, the Committee believes that the profession should not attempt to explain the architect's position in the matter of school planning, but should assert his position as one necessary and vital for accomplishing the desired objective of making available comprehensive planning to the largest possible number of school districts in an attempt to provide better schools.

The educational consultant has evolved as a professional advisor to assist school superintendents and school boards in analyzing, evaluating and determining educational policies and requirements. He is in reality one with the client when the position requires a statement of a program of educational requirements for a school building program. In this position he is also qualified to assist the client in the evaluation of solutions to the problem prepared by the architect. This role of educational consultant in school planning is as unassailable as is the position of the architect, and one will not usurp the position of the other if the true relationship of the various interested

parties is clearly understood and respected.

Comprehensive school planning and programming, to be practical and useful, involves more than expert consultation on educational requirements alone. It involves expert consultation on growth and population trends; finance; taxation; public health; community activities; economics of building; zoning; traffic distribution; site studies; space organization; civil and structural engineering; fire safety; building codes; landscape design; properties of materials; maintenance methods; evaluation of physical properties; public utilities; property appraisal; public laws and legislation; color psychology; scientific techniques in visual, audio and climatic environment; graphic arts; and documentation, among other things.

In addition, of necessity sound planning requires a coordinator of all information resulting from these aspects of the problem relative to the desired aims. A coordinator that is also capable of evaluating, organizing and documenting graphically this information into a clear and concise statement of objectives, facts, conditions and means for use as a practical plan. This role unquestionably

must be assumed by someone, regardless of title, and we believe that the architect, because of his background and training, can do this most ably and judiciously.

It is only natural that, as in other fields, the consulting experts at first will manifest a reluctance to cooperate as part of a team under able leadership, due to the fact that they have been used to a very singular prominence in this field for so long.

It appears, therefore, that the architect's role needs clarification, not as an expert in a particular phase of the problem, but as a coordinator of the whole. This is unquestionably a service that he should be qualified and able to perform and be compensated for over and above his fee for building plans.

Since architects of necessity are associated with practically every school project regardless of size, and are responsible for the ulti-

mate interpretation of the problem, we believe that they are in a position to initiate and assume leadership in a general school planning program. By assisting and encouraging the architect in this role, we also believe that more and better planning will be undertaken, resulting in better schools. The fact that most architects are not equipped or experienced in this work does not detract from the premises stated above. It is, however, recognition of this fact that justifies the aims of The Institute as outlined in their stated intent.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry L. Blatner
A. Thomas Brown
Wm. Wayne Caudill
Charles R. Colbert
John W. McLeod
Lawrence B. Perkins
Howard Dwight Smith
Ernest J. Kump,
Chairman

News from the Educational Field

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, College of Architecture and Design, announces the establishment of the Harley, Ellington and Day Scholarship, which affords \$1,000 to an upper junior student in architecture, to be awarded in the spring

of 1950, and for four successive years thereafter.

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY announces the 19th competition for the Steedman Fellowship in Architecture, with its stipend of \$3,000.

Registration is due before February 18. Further details may be had from the School of Architecture, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON announces that its School of Architecture and Allied Arts, effective with the fall term of 1950, will require junior standing in college for admission to the school. The change is in line with the general trend to require a broader background in liberal arts and sciences for majors in the professional areas.

BROOKLYN CHAPTER, A.I.A., announces its 20th architectural competition, conducted annually, which is open to students who have legal residence in the territorial area of the Chapter, those who attend accredited schools of architecture anywhere in the U. S., and to draftsmen employed in or residing in the territorial area. Programs and details are available from Vito P. Battista, 2 Court St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO offers, starting in September 1950, a five-year curriculum leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Architecture. This course is in addition to the course in Architectural Engineering which was established 25 years ago.

NEW YORK CHAPTER, A.I.A., announces the opening of the 23rd annual LeBrun Traveling Scholar-

ship. All applicants must be nominated before February 10, by a member of the A.I.A. Further details are available from the LeBrun Scholarship Committee, 115 E. 40th St., New York 16, N. Y.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS announces appointments to its teaching staff: William S. Kinne, Jr., Professor of Architecture, to conduct courses in materials and methods of construction, specifications and architectural practice; Gabriel Guevrekian, Professor of Architecture, to teach advanced courses in architectural design; Henry C. Edwards, Instructor in architectural history; James A. Prestridge, Jr., Assistant Professor, to teach courses in architectural design. Visiting critics are: L. Morgan Yost and William T. Priestley, Jr., both of Chicago; Karl Kamrath, of Houston; Igor Polevitsky, of Miami; and Max O. Urbahn, of New York.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY announces the Lowell M. Palmer Fellowship in Architecture, designed to assist a student of unusual promise in the advanced study of architecture at Princeton. The Palmer Fellow, exempt from tuition fees, receives a stipend of \$700. Further details and application forms, which must be filed not later than March 1, are available by addressing the Secretary of the School of Architecture, Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY announces a short course for prospective home owners to be given in ten weekly lectures by Harold R. Sleeper, F.A.I.A. The course is given on ten successive Thursday evenings beginning February 7, with a fee for participation of \$15.

The FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS of the A.I.A. has established an annual medal award for the student in architecture at the University of Florida "who has made the most meritorious contributions in leadership and service among his fellows." The first recipient of the award, known as the Florida Association of Architects

Medal, is Edward Dean Wyke, Jr., of Miami, Fla.

RICE INSTITUTE is making available three Fellowships in Architecture, beginning in September 1950. These are available to Rice Institute graduates or those of similar institutions of equal educational standing. They lead to the degree Master in Architecture. Calling for not more than 8 hours of laboratory teaching, they carry a stipend of \$1,200, with the remission of all fees. Applications due not later than Mar. 1, 1950. Requests for information should be addressed to The Department of Architecture, Rice Institute, Houston, Tex.

They Say:

Egbert Jacobson

(Director of Design, Container Corporation of America.)

I have come to see that public relations are little more than personal relations extended to a large field. What is good between man and man is good between company and public. Everyone knows that if he reaches out and gives what he can of himself for the good of others it comes back with surprising swiftness, and multiplied many times. I distrust synthetic public relations, which are like private relations based only on self-interest

and which require a false front and constant shoring.

Henry S. Churchill

(in "Architecture and Cities," Magazine of Art, December 1949.)

Architecture, in the simplest sense, is building into which man puts something of his spirit. Cities—collections of architecture—also possess something intangible, which is in essence the spirit of the community. If this were not so, there would be no greater joy in the cathedral than in the shanty; the

boulevard and civic center would be of no greater worth than the slum.

John Gloag

(in "Men and Buildings," 1931.)

THE TRUE architecture of today is as experimental as early Gothic, but without the salutary discipline that stone imposes upon an experimenting architect.

A. Trystan Edwards

(in "Architectural Style")

PROPORTION in architecture results from compliance with the principles of Number, Punctuation and Inflection; and as far as the formal attribute of buildings is concerned, every fault in proportion can be set down to a violation of one or another of these principles.

Michael T. Waterhouse, M.C.

(From his inaugural address as President of the R.I.B.A., November 1, 1949, speaking of the U. S. A.)

EACH MAN working for a contractor knows that he has to give his best if he is to keep his job. If he can't, some other guy will get his job. But he also realizes that it is only by this means that his boss can do the job in time and make it pay. He wants his boss to succeed and, apart from any ma-

terial benefit to himself, he takes a pride not only in his own gang doing its best to make the job pay, but he also takes a personal pride in his firm's success. A remark typical of this was made to me by one operative. "Why, I wouldn't work for a bum firm. I'd sooner see them out of business." This illustrates also that keen outlook by which the test of efficiency is applied from below as well as from above.

Don Lyons

(President of the San Francisco Chapter, Producers' Council, speaking before the California Council of Architects, Palm Springs, Nov. 6, 1949)

PERHAPS the most industrious, socially organized, thoroughly integrated complex known to man is the ant kingdom. The diminutive ant, who, by waving his feelers, can direct the progress of a construction job in his little world as efficiently as we in ours. And since the dawn of time, the ant has subjugated and trained a minute louse called the aphid. These aphids supply milk to the ant kingdom. The ants rely on them as their source of liquid refreshment. Some of you by now are probably ahead of me. Today there are those in your well-integrated or-

ganizations who consider the Producers' Council to be the aphids of your kingdom, and having furnished the liquid refreshment, they have fulfilled their mission. But don't be misled—we love it!

Lewis Mumford

(in "Monumentalism, Symbolism and Style," *Magazine of Art*, Nov. '49.)

ON ONE DOGMA almost all believers in modern architecture are agreed: namely on the open plan, particularly in dwelling houses, as the very essence of modern expression: free-flowing space, rooms divided by hardly even a visual partition, have become the patent of modern building. Look at a book of modern plans and you will find that only in the bathroom is anything like complete privacy and isolation

permitted; even the bedrooms in many new houses present walls of glass that give out on an equally open garden. As a movement towards freedom, as an effort to achieve flexibility, this over-emphasis on openness, coming as it did first of all from the Middle West, that land of extroverts, must have our sympathetic assent. But there is nothing final in this achievement, for the open plan is the symbol of an entirely public and outward-turning life. There must come a time when modern architecture will recognize equally the deep human need for the cell: The room with the locked door, secure against all intrusion, giving out not on open space but on a garden or walled yard equally inviolate to unwanted visitors.



Architects Read and Write

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



FUNCTIONALISM AND THE U. N. HEADQUARTERS

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

SPEAKING OF FUNCTIONALISM, how about the United Nations Secretariat? This was a great opportunity, free from the usual commercial restrictions, with plenty of money, plenty of space, plenty of time for study, and an abundance of the best architectural talent in

the world. The building is now under construction, and its plans have been published. Let's look at them.

The long sides are all glass, the ends all marble. To accomplish this the columns on the long sides have been set back, complicating

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the structure, increasing its cost, and hampering the division into offices; the spandrels have been disguised as windows, by the addition of a glass facing; the best view of the river is enjoyed by the women's rest rooms, in the center of the east front, while the conference rooms, at the ends of the building, being windowless, have no view at all.

Is this functionalism? Or is it the very thing of which the younger

architects accuse us old fogies who studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts forty years ago?—constructed decoration; planning from the outside in; sacrificing practical considerations to a preconceived theory of monumental effect. True, they don't use classic columns (nor do we, except on the rarest occasions, despite the time we spent learning to draw them), but they manage to do the same thing very effectively with slabs.

SIR PATRICK ABERCROMBIE'S QUALIFICATIONS
BY EUGENE D. STERNBERG, Denver, Colo.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING, UNIVERSITY OF DENVER --

CONGRATULATIONS to The American Institute of Architects on its decision to award the 1949 Gold Medal to Sir Patrick Abercrombie! I had the rare good fortune to know and work with Sir Patrick for a number of years, first as a student, then as an assistant in his university work and an architect and planner in his private practice. To me, as to all of his students, his teaching and his example are a constant inspiration, and I cannot think of another man in the profession who more richly deserves the honor of the highest award of The Institute than he.

Sir Patrick is widely known as a great, and probably the greatest, architect-planner of our time. He is also a fine and persuasive writer. Less widely known is the inspiring teacher. Sir Patrick has that rare quality of sincere appreciation for

the work of young people. Even in his practice, he encourages the talents of young architects by giving them the chance to experiment, to design, to plan. To most of his students in architecture and planning he gave not only his gifts as a teacher of great wisdom and long experience, but also his personal friendship and the chance of working for him during the first difficult stages of practice.

Perhaps your readers will be interested in a little of the background of their 1949 Gold Medalist. He first gained prominence when, with collaborators, he won an international competition for a new plan for Dublin, just before the outbreak of the first World War. From then until 1939 he worked on a series of regional planning schemes which covered a large part of England and Wales. He is

generally considered to be a pioneer in the field of regional planning. Most important of the schemes were: the Lake District, North Wales, Sheffield, Doncaster, Bristol and Bath, East Kent, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, East Suffolk, the North Riding of Yorkshire, and, in conjunction with his brother Lascelles Abercrombie, the poet, a plan for Stratford-on-Avon. He designed industrial villages in North Yorkshire, and mining villages in East Kent. Outside England, he planned a new industrial area at Haifa Bay, Palestine, and the new University of Ceylon.

During all this time, and until he retired in 1946, he was engaged in teaching, for twenty years as head of the Department of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool, and from 1935 as Professor of Town Planning at the University of London.

The German bombing of Britain's cities, and the resultant public interest in the possibilities of planning, called forth all of Sir Patrick's training and experience. For cities all over Great Britain, and

from countries as far apart as Australia and Ethiopia, came requests for his services as planning consultant. With his genius for synthesizing the contributions of many specialists, and his broad vision, he completed plans for the County of London, for Greater London, for Bath, Bournemouth, Plymouth, Hull, Clydeside, Warwick.

Concurrently with these activities, he found time to sustain a flourishing architectural practice, and to write articles, pamphlets, reviews. His small book in the Home University Press on "Town and Country Planning" is the standard work on planning in Britain for both professionals and laymen.

He has been a member of many Commissions, helped to found and presided over the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, was Chairman of the Housing Centre, and President of the International Reunion of Architects. He holds the Ebenezer Howard Memorial Medal, and the Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

"THE STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE AS ART"

BY EDWARD W. RANNELS

DEAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

I THANK YOU for calling attention to the several objections to my little paper on "The Study of Architecture as Art" that appear in the November 1949 issue of the JOURNAL.

It is reassuring to learn that the

blood of men in the profession can be brought to the boiling point so easily by the printed words of an outsider who, as a teacher of art, has an obligation to study architecture as art and therefore naturally enough gives emphasis to

space as the important element in any such consideration of it.

Of course Mr. Study is entirely correct, although he shifts the premises slightly, in saying that "all practising architects, no matter to what school of thought they may belong, fully realize that it is in terms of walls, floors, and ceilings that they must work."

But these are the means, not the ends, of architecture. What they do esthetically is give shape and form to space. Space is the essential esthetic ingredient of every three-dimensional art, whatever the medium. And unless space itself is given shape, direction, continuity, connectedness and is somehow made active, we have some-

thing less than art, however handsome the forms.

It is natural that the aspersions cast in the direction of the classical styles should stir up a lively resentment among those who emphasize the stability of forms more than the fluidity of the spaces defined. There is no denying the splendor of the classic forms when viewed historically in their own proper setting of time and place; nor is there any intention to deny a classic space. There is only the insistence that the space which the classic forms enclose is a static space. In our present world any such treatment of space is an anachronism, and if I may add a charming word borrowed from my critics, nonsense.

ARTHUR H. NICHOLSON—A STERLING CHARACTER

BY ALBERT KELSEY, F.A.I.A., Philadelphia, Pa.

A FEW WEEKS AGO, at the age of eighty-six, an experienced architect, a superb draftsman and a sterling character passed away unknown and forgotten except by a few architects who still survive (of several cities, but mostly of Philadelphia) and by the admiring fellow draftsmen in those offices with whom he had worked who are fortunate enough to be still alive.

Arthur H. Nicholson was an English Quaker. While quite young he took a job as steward on a tramp steamer that was then cruising in the Mediterranean and the Aegean. One bright day he was electrified by the sight of the

glowing domes and minarets of Constantinople. Then and there he determined to become an architect.

I do not know his full story or when he came to the United States; but I do know that he educated himself, becoming a sound architectural designer, who could also paint a good water color and play the violin. Above all, I know that he brought up a big God-fearing family, and that of his surviving children (necessarily now middle-aged) one is a missionary in Japan and another, like his brother, is devoting himself unselfishly to good works, in India.

He was my righthand man for

eight or nine years. I remember well how at the beginning of the First World War he came to me all atremble and greatly confused, saying that he wanted to go home, as he could not work.

"What's the matter?" I asked, sympathetically; whereupon he explained that he had just learned that two of his sons were in the guard-house for refusing to wear the uniform. To make a long story short, those two, and fifteen other conscientious objectors defied and beat the United States Government. They were, however, all

sent overseas, as was right and proper, and made to do the most objectionable work; but Nicholson's sons, and probably the others too, having proven that their people had been good citizens and conscientious objectors for several generations, returned home with splendid records. Through it all, Arthur H. Nicholson stood by his boys, advising them to maintain the stand they had taken.

Needless to say, I never respected and admired any man more than the late lamented Arthur H. Nicholson.

SHOULD PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINES PUBLISH DESIGNERS' WORK?

By FREDERICK N. CLARK, Los Angeles, Calif.

EVERY ARCHITECT, at one time or another, when reading the *Record* or *Progressive Architecture*, has resented finding a feature article or photography of work done by non-architects such as The Austin Company, Raymond Loewy, or some other "designer." The writer believes that a truly professional magazine should not present the work of these competitors, regardless of the excellence of the job, and regardless of the type of work: industrial, commercial, or residential.

One can easily imagine the value of such an article to a non-architect; he proudly displays it to a prospect saying, "See, the architects' own magazine thinks my work is outstanding," and another job is not available to some nearby architect. The *American Medical*

Journal does not give space to healings by chiropractors or osteopaths, and although we do not own these magazines as the doctors own their *Journal*, they are in business due to our continued support. This is why they audit their subscription list and certify to the advertiser that 16,000 of the 29,000 copies of each issue will go to architects or engineers, the men who decide what goes into the job.

If the architects were to become displeased with one of these magazines and withdrew their support, it is safe to say that the advertisers would not renew their contracts and so the magazine would be in desperate straits.

The architects are fast coming to desperate straits due to the inroads of "industrial designers,"

"plan services," "complete building services," and just plain "designers." We have been asleep so long on defensive measures (or thought them beneath our dignity) that we have allowed these competitors (a horrible word) to get more than a foothold in our field, even though we knew that each of them dropped some of the services or safeguards of full architectural service. I believe it is time to start some action against

them and our magazines offer as good a starting point as any.

I suggest The Octagon should confer with the publishers to the end that with each release required for publication the magazine would have an affirmative answer to the simple question, "Are you a licensed architect in the State in which this work is built?" This would put a stop to the implied blessing that *our* magazines are giving to our competitors' work.

WASHINGTON'S TEMPORARY BUILDINGS

BY EDWARD STEESE, New York

THE AIR-VIEW of Washington in the October JOURNAL raises a disturbing question: Do the emergency bureaus, that spoil a noble plan of government to perpetuate themselves, perpetuate the emergency buildings that house them (and spoil a noble civic plan), or is it *vice-versa*?

Speaking only as an architect, it is obvious, either way, that temporary buildings do tend to be permanent, like those to the right, built during the first World War. They, however, and those to the left, do tend to fit in with the original pattern of the Mall, but what can be said about the "temporaries," that sprawl between the Monument and the Reflecting Pool, in answer to embarrassing questions in the minds of foreign dignitaries flown in by air? Surely the French, even under the guise of Emergency, would not so disfigure the Champs Elysées.

There is one very obvious lesson: That both permanent and temporary buildings (that may last a lifetime) are now subject to esthetic as well as strategic scrutiny from the air and should be designed with this in mind. Even the top of the Lincoln Memorial does not come off too well in this regard.

It was said last spring, at a dinner in honor of the National Commission of Fine Arts, given by the Municipal Art Society of New York, that the Commission's greatest asset was its lack of dictatorial power. I wonder about this, for, though I do not like absolute power vested in any body subject (or not subject) to political whim, the fact remains that some control should be exercised even in the case of the temporary-perpetuals that deface our Capital: before and not after their erection.



Books & Bulletins

PLANNING THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY BUILDING. Edited by John E. Burchard, Charles W. David and Julian P. Boyd. 155 pp. 5½" x 9¾". Princeton: 1949: Princeton University Press. \$2.50.

A summary of the thinking on the subject, set down by three members of the Cooperative Committee on Library Planning which started its studies late in 1944, under Rockefeller Foundation money, and brought together the viewpoints of fifteen universities and a host of qualified experts.

AIRPORTS AND AIR TRAFFIC. By John Walter Wood. 159 pp. 5½" x 8¼". New York: 1949: Coward-McCann, Inc. \$3.75.

The Author of "Airports: Some Elements of Design and Future Development" (1940) is among the few men who are closely following the phenomenal growth of air transportation with the purpose of keeping the architectural profession informed.

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG. By A. Lawrence Kocher and Howard Dearstyne. 111 pp. 9" x 10¾". Williamsburg: 1949: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc. \$2.75.

Another superbly illustrated book on the restoration—a "drink at the

spring of our history." It is not a source book of details to be cribbed, but an inspiration that should enable us to build our own world more worthily.

BUILDING FOR MODERN MAN. Edited by Thomas H. Creighton. 234 pp. 5¾" x 8¾". Princeton: 1949: Princeton University Press. \$3.50.

Words from well-known contemporary figures who attended Princeton's Bicentennial Conference in the Spring of 1947. The book has been a long time in coming out (Apr. 1949) and a long time awaiting its turn for review in these pages, but the considered words of Gropius, Contreras, Neutra, Wright, Howe, Giedion, Hamlin, and others do not soon lose their vitality.

PETER HARRISON—FIRST AMERICAN ARCHITECT. By Carl Bridenbaugh. 206 pp. 7¾" x 10¼". Chapel Hill. 1949: The University of North Carolina Press. \$6.50.

Harrison's biography has too long suffered by reason of his having been a Tory in the midst of the young republic's fiery patriots. The architect of King's Chapel, Boston, and St. Michael's Church, Charleston, among other well-

known monuments still standing, deserves to be better known in his profession.

HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR-CONDITIONING FUNDAMENTALS. Second Edition. By William H. Severns and Julian R. Fellows. 673 pp. 6" x 9¼". New York: 1949: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. \$6.50.

A revision of an earlier work, to keep up with the changing techniques and equipment in this rapidly developing science.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN IDEA. By Louis H. Sullivan. 334 pp. 5½" x 8¼". New York: 1949: Peter Smith. \$3.50.

To serve a growing demand for Sullivan's classic, The Institute, as owner of the copyright, has granted permission to the publisher to make this excellent facsimile reprinting.

GEO-METRIC VERSE. By Gerald Lynton Kaufman. 64 pp. 5" x 6¼". New York: 1948: The Beechhurst Press. \$1.50.

A New York architect plays with verse as expressed in geometrical compositions of type.

AMERICAN SCHOOL BUILDINGS. Twenty-seventh yearbook. 525 pp. 6¼" x 9¼". Washington: 1949: The American Association of School Administrators. \$4.

In addition to its comprehensive coverage of modern educational techniques, this year's book contains a chapter on architectural and

engineering service which, for wise counsel to building committees and balanced information as to the professionals' roles in school building, sets a new high in excellence.

EDUCATION FOR PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, A Report of the Proceedings of the Inter-Professions Conference on Education for Professional Responsibility, held at Buck Hill Falls, Pa. in April, 1948. 217 pp. 5½" x 8½". Pittsburgh: 1948: Carnegie Press. \$3.

An interchange of experience and ideas by teachers in schools of divinity, medicine, law, engineering and business.

MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION. By Albert G. H. Dietz, 350 pp. 6¼" x 9¼". New York: 1949: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc. \$4.50.

An M.I.T. professor of building engineering and construction stresses the essential natures of the materials discussed, developing their application in both old and new roles, and particularly in composite forms.

THE STORY OF MAGNESIUM. By W. H. Gross. 271 pp. 5½" x 7¾". Cleveland: 1949: American Society for Metals. \$2.

Here's a metal about which architects, as well as the public, know comparatively little—even the fact that aluminum is 1½ times heavier. Magnesium's story here is in a compact capsule, easy to take.

The Editor's Asides

LEGAL HAZARDS seem to be multiplying. The New York Chapter's *Oculus* calls attention to a case where a N. Y. partnership was given a commission for a project in New Jersey. Only one of the two partners was registered in that state. In a suit for their fee, the case was decided against the partners, the court ruling that the client was entitled to the services of each member of the architectural firm, and that the contract, being joint, was unenforceable since one of the partners, under the New Jersey law, could not practise in that state.

IN TALKING with Lorimer Rich, chairman of The Institute's Committee on Competitions, he uncovered a need for information. No one, not even the members of the Competition Committee, has a very definite idea of what is the proper charge for a competition's professional adviser to make for his services. It is recognized that these services will vary widely among coming competitions of different size and degrees of importance. In many cases there is some research to be made before a program can be written. Such re-

search might even result in the professional adviser's reporting to his client that a competition is not advisable in the circumstances. Or, he might advise a two-stage competition instead of the open-to-all type originally contemplated. Can he base his fee on any other than a per diem rate? If not, how will he estimate the number of days the job will require?

Any data from previous experience or details of any method that has proven satisfactory will be warmly welcomed by Mr. Rich or any member of his Committee.

TO OUR CONTINUED AMAZEMENT, there are pitifully few sources where one may buy 2" x 2" projection slides of architectural subjects in full color. Most architects seem to find it necessary to photograph for themselves the desired subjects, and that is necessarily a slow process. One source fairly well stocked with Pacific Coast, Guatemala, Yucatan and Mexican subjects is Jaycee Colorslides, 3961 Sacramento Street, San Francisco 18, Calif. Dean Gallion of U.S.C. speaks well of it.

TURNING in search of relief from our professional tribulations, I opened a publication from Ceylon. Here surely, all would be sweetness and light. Not so; architectural editors, officers of architectural societies and practising architects were bombarding the *Times of Ceylon* with indignant protests against the building of a Hall of Independence as a copy of period architecture of the past. The frustrations of the architect seem to have a worldwide spread.

IF ANY ARCHITECT among what might be called the older men has any doubt that we have passed through a transition period of architectural development, there is a test for that doubt. First, note that word was *through* a transition, not merely *into* one—perhaps there are still those who think we are merely passing through a fashion period, such as *Art Nouveau* and that we shall soon be out of it and back on the main road. However that may be, here is the test I have in mind.

I suppose, through all architectural history, men have looked about them, selected one or two or half a dozen buildings of their own time, and said to themselves,

“If I had designed those, or even one of them, I’d be content to stake upon it my reputation in the generations to come.” For some among us the choice might have been McKim’s Boston Library, or Goodhue’s Nebraska State Capitol, or Sullivan’s Transportation Building of the Chicago ’93 Fair, or Rogers’ Harkness Tower at Yale, or Pope’s Masonic Temple in Washington. Think back and name the building that compelled your youthful admiration and envy. Would you now be satisfied to have your name go down in history on the sole basis of having been its designer?

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT seems not to have been the only architect to hit upon and develop the helical ramp idea for museum purposes, as in the Rosenwald Museum for New York. Back in 1931 Burnham Hoyt made sketches for what he called a Helix Museum. With a central bank of elevators, he combined a descending ramp or stair giving access to the various galleries and their storage spaces. The scheme was further developed for a particular site in Denver and two models were made, one of which I believe is in the Denver Art Museum.



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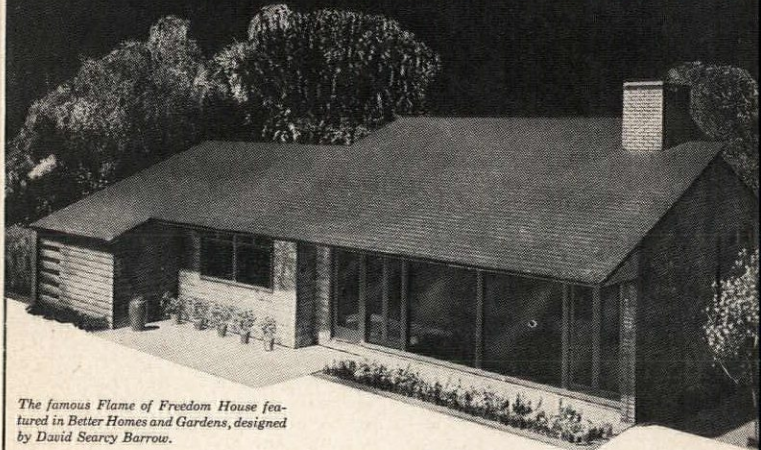
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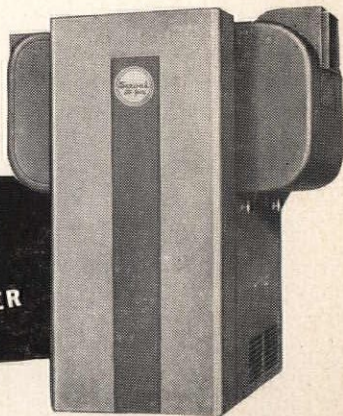
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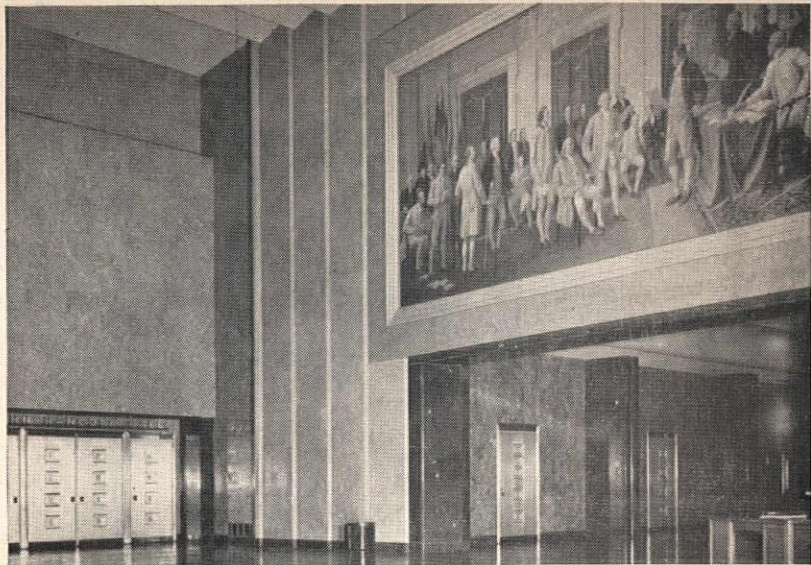
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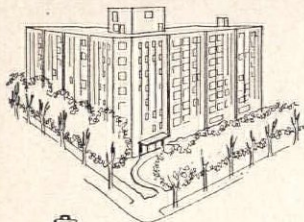
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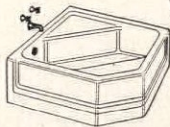
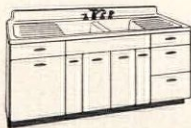
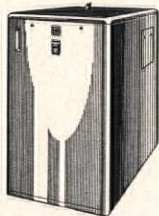
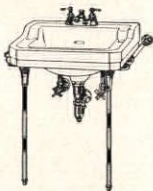
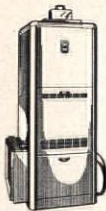
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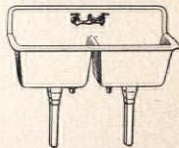
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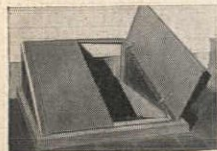
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