

ALABAMA ARCHITECT

JULY-AUGUST 1966

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA COUNCIL
OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



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— WHAT THEY CAN BE!**



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The President Speaks:

All indications point to the continued rapid expansion of the Gulf Coast area that has been characteristic of it for some years. The abundance of natural resources and labor, and the presence of unmatched recreational, educational, and cultural activities provide strong incentives for new industry. In spite of the existing large and diverse industrial development the tremendous potential has hardly been touched. In prospect is an entire new industrial park south of Mobile located along the western shore of the bay with deep water facilities already in being. Also in prospect is the tremendous traffic increase that will occur when the Tennessee-Tombigbee Canal is opened and Mobile becomes the Gulf Terminus of a waterway from the Middlewest some 800 miles shorter than the Mississippi River route.

Mobile and South Alabama will expand tremendously, of that there is no doubt. The role of the Architect in this process will be to influence the force generated by this growth into logical, comprehensible patterns that fully recognize the human as well as the economic implications of their work. In the coming years, the members of the Mobile Chapter will bear ever increasing responsibility for the attainment of this goal.

Edward B. Baumhauer
President
Alabama Council AIA

a showcase for architecture

With this issue of ALABAMA ARCHITECT, we are now a year and a half down the pike. During that time, a great many events of interest have whirled their way through this state.

The Alabama members of The American Institute of Architects formed into four Chapters and affiliated together under a state-wide organization on January 1, 1965. The power of the Chapter-Council relationship becomes more evident each month.

Greater activity has been noted on the Chapter level than under the old Branch or Section status. Architects in Birmingham, in Montgomery, in Mobile, and in North Alabama have initiated an enormous amount of activity in their communities.

It has been one of the major purposes of ALABAMA ARCHITECT to bring to the attention of interested persons all over the state what this activity on the part of architects represents in a changing Alabama.

By assigning editorial material for each issue to one Chapter of A.I.A., we have been privileged to present a panorama of architectural happenings. The Chapters have responded in magnificent fashion, and their efforts provide a graphic record of the way in

which the entire design profession is making its impact on our society.

We are pleased, of course, that this recognition is broadening. Each week, we are receiving requests from persons who wish to be added to our mailing list. Various graphic associations, such as the Montgomery Industrial Editors Association, have cited the magazine for its excellence.

And may we call your attention to the continuing and increasing support of our advertisers in ALABAMA ARCHITECT. These good friends and the firms they represent have made your magazine the important public relations medium it has become. Because of the virtue of the advertising dollars spent by these friends, we have been able to publish the magazine, to develop it into the status it has attained, and to look forward to an even greater future.

New advertisers are welcomed if they meet our specifications. New readers are also welcomed, and you are invited to send us names to be added to our mailing list.

All of us, working together with a common bond of interest in architecture and its effect on our environment, can continue to make ALABAMA ARCHITECT an increasingly effective "showcase for architecture!"

—Jay Leavell

CONTENTS

The President Speaks	3
A Showcase for Architecture	3
Mobile and South Alabama	4
From Bad to Worse	10
A Challenge to AIA Members	11
Letters to the Editor	12
New Members—Change of Status	12
Birmingham Competition	12
The Guilt or Guild System	14

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Mobile and South Alabama: What they can be!

There can be a Mobile with architecture for today and tomorrow. In place of store front, movie set facades, Mobile can have shopping centers built of 360 degree total design and skyscrapers with never ending interest and character, or at least something more than the bland, boring coldness of curtain wall, be it glass or concrete. The materials are not at fault; the blandness lies in the thoughts that shape them.

The answer is AWARENESS. Man seems to have a lust for ugliness; and why? We are not aware of what is around us, or don't care. We are not bothered by ugliness. The new generation IS bothered, and they will care. They must demand non-ugliness before they will get it. It doesn't just happen.

The new generation will understand the fraud committed on them by the "merchant builders who buy land by the tract and sow it with houses." To the builders, "architecture is usually

something to do without; architecture is wasted on development customers who don't care much what a house looks like so long as there are plenty of appliances in the kitchen."

The new generation knows the incongruity of bricks versus liquid hydrogen propelled spaceships visiting the possible planets of Alpha-Centura. There is coming a new attitude on the part of the public, who realize that the good old days, to which some wish to return, are now. Architecture has in the past lagged culturally. We are living in the same spaces that housed the Model T which grandfather cranked, and we are cooking by electronic ovens in the same spaces where grandmother fired her wood stove. The gimmicks progress but the space stays the same. Will it go on and on this way? I think not! Through tomorrow's force field replacing today's door lies a city encased in a plastic bubble with completely controlled atmosphere. We may have houses with no roofs at all.

Our living space will become the entire plot of ground on which we site modern man's cave with its dark cubes called rooms. Perhaps the power companies will need no wires at all to string from ugly pole to ugly pole.

"Tomorrow we will give free rein to the imagination; buildings will have strong presences. They will be music, mirages, pyramids, pillars of smiles, play-grounds of the mind. Our great buildings will have the intensity, the courage of those strange constructions (all too few) of amateurs possessed by a magnificent idea."

The Mobile riverfront can be a park for human habitation instead of a crumbling, decaying hideout for rats.

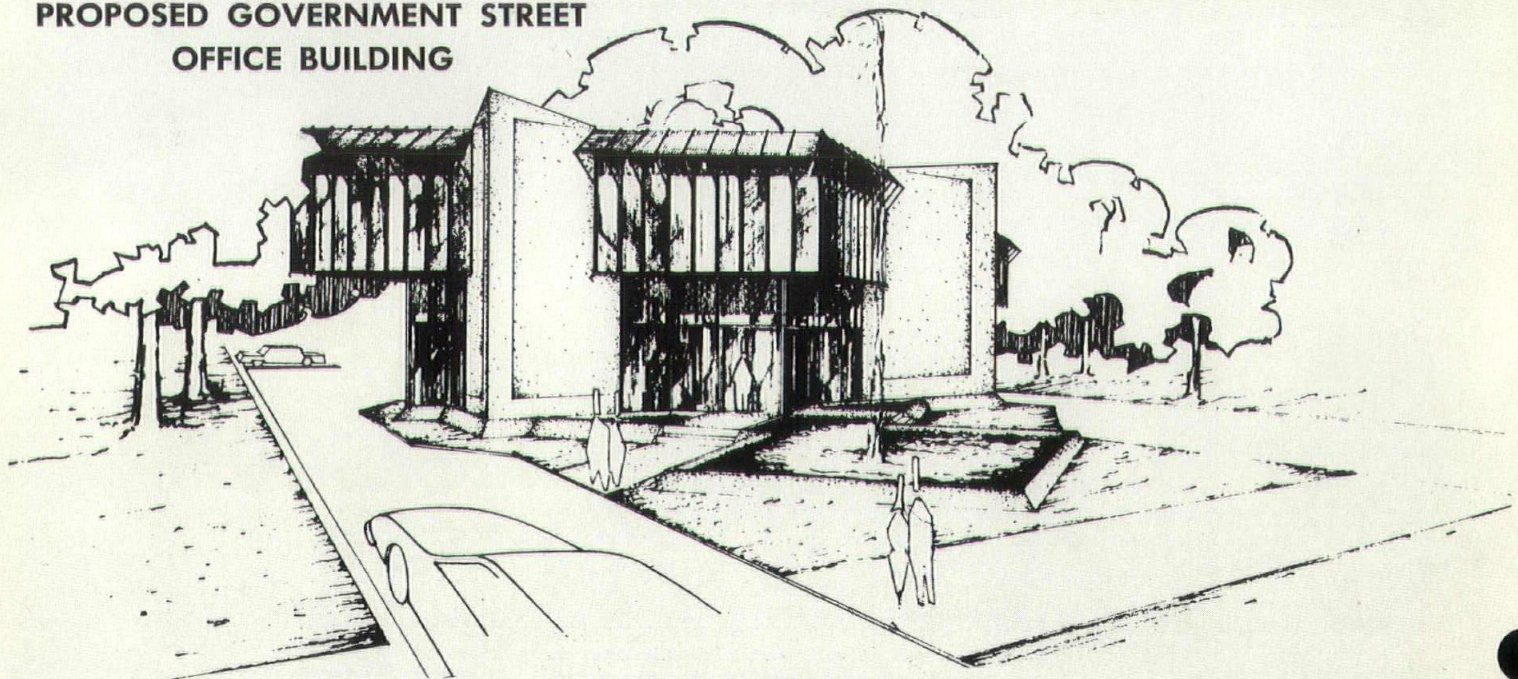
We will have more high speed highways, and we will build them without destroying the avenues of oaks.

We will use unheard-of materials to build not only cubes, but one or two of the other one hundred million shapes.

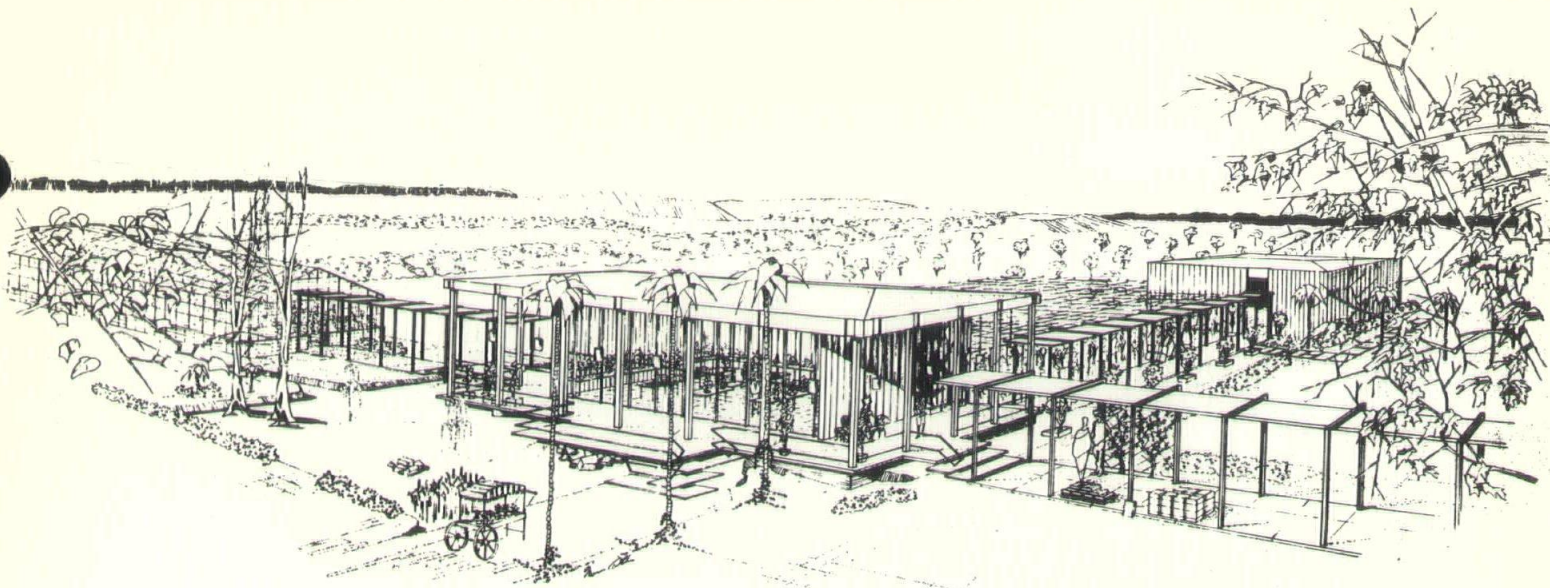
These ideas are not fanciful. They will materialize, and we as Architects should be ready to give the new generation what it demands.

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Garden Center for Malbis Plantation Nursery

This proposed glass and steel pavillion provides an outdoor indoor space for the display of plants homogeneous to the plantation gardens. The Garden Center is to be another Tourist and Commercial Attraction of the Malbis Community.

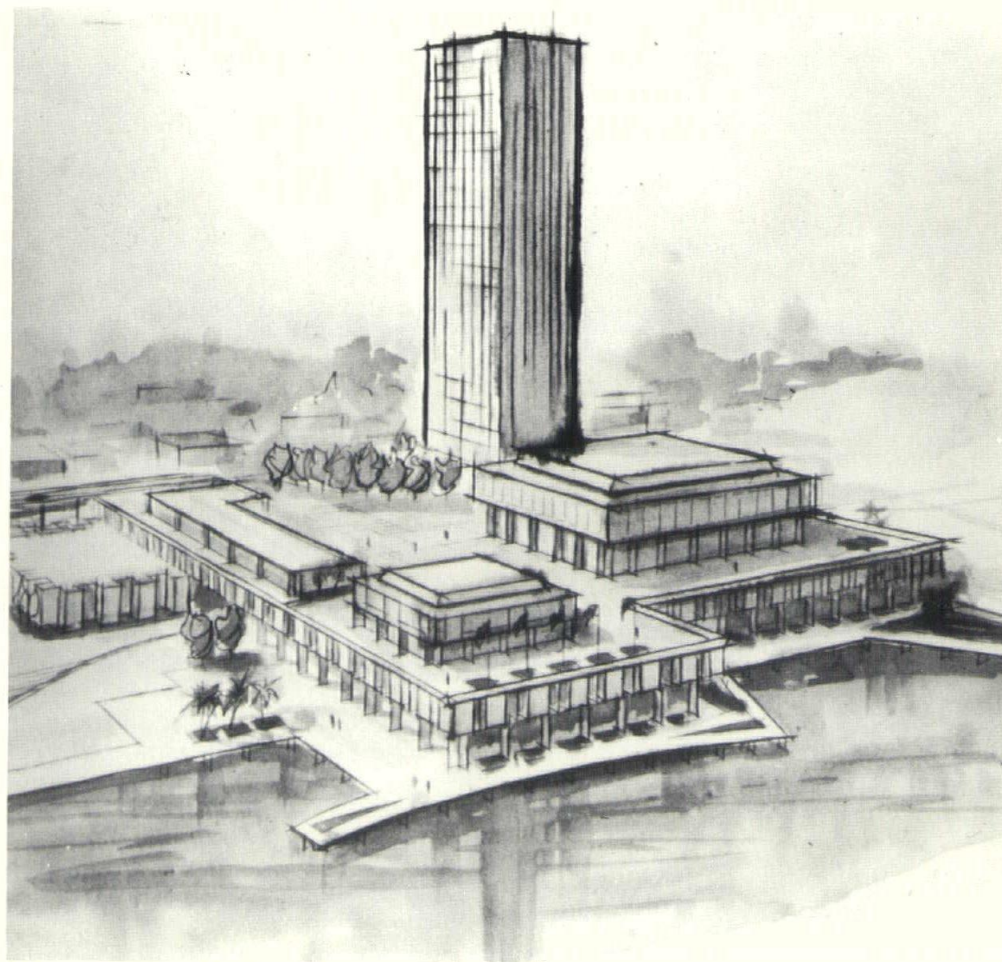
WINDOW ON THE WATERFRONT

ARCH WINTER, F.A.I.A.
Architect-City Planner

When the plans for the Water Street Area were drawn, it was thought that the project might bring to reality a dream long held by many a Mobilian: a down-town riverfront park. So the design suggested a block-long plaza, raised above railroad tracks and parking and accommodating in its expanse an exhibition hall, an office tower for maritime agencies and others, and a bank of shops with a restaurant overlooking the river. Visiting Navy ships could dock here, and at Mardi Gras King Felix III could arrive here, instead of at the foot of Government Street, to inaugurate his annual reign of mirth and misrule.

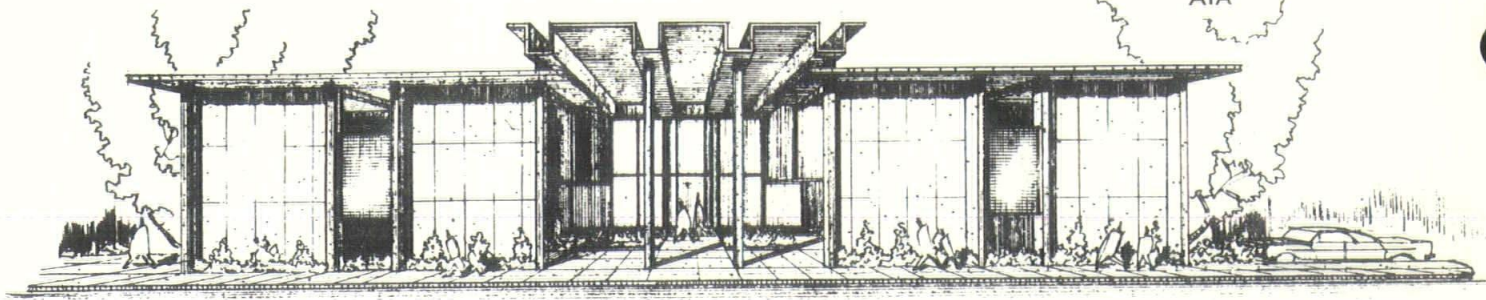
But the State Docks management felt obligated to use the two city blocks for ocean terminals, placing its trade mart farther up Water Street next to its warehouses.

The opening of downtown Mobile onto its waterfront and the creation of a worthy link between Bienville Center and the port that is its reason-for-being will therefore have to be an exercise in generous patience on the part of Mobilians.



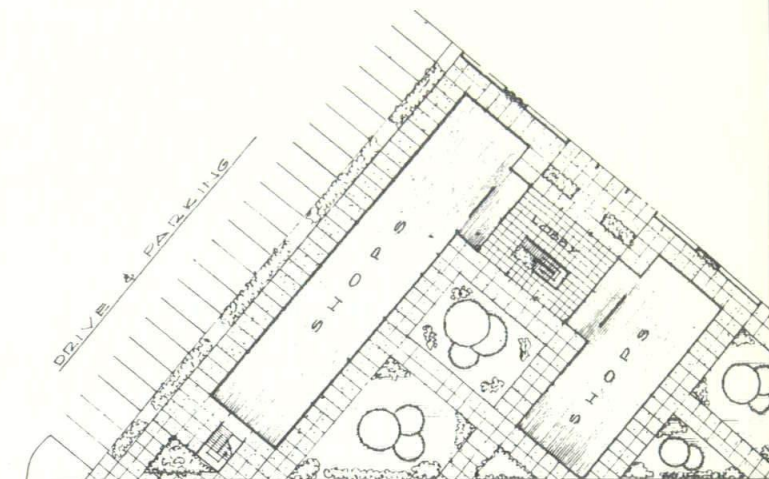
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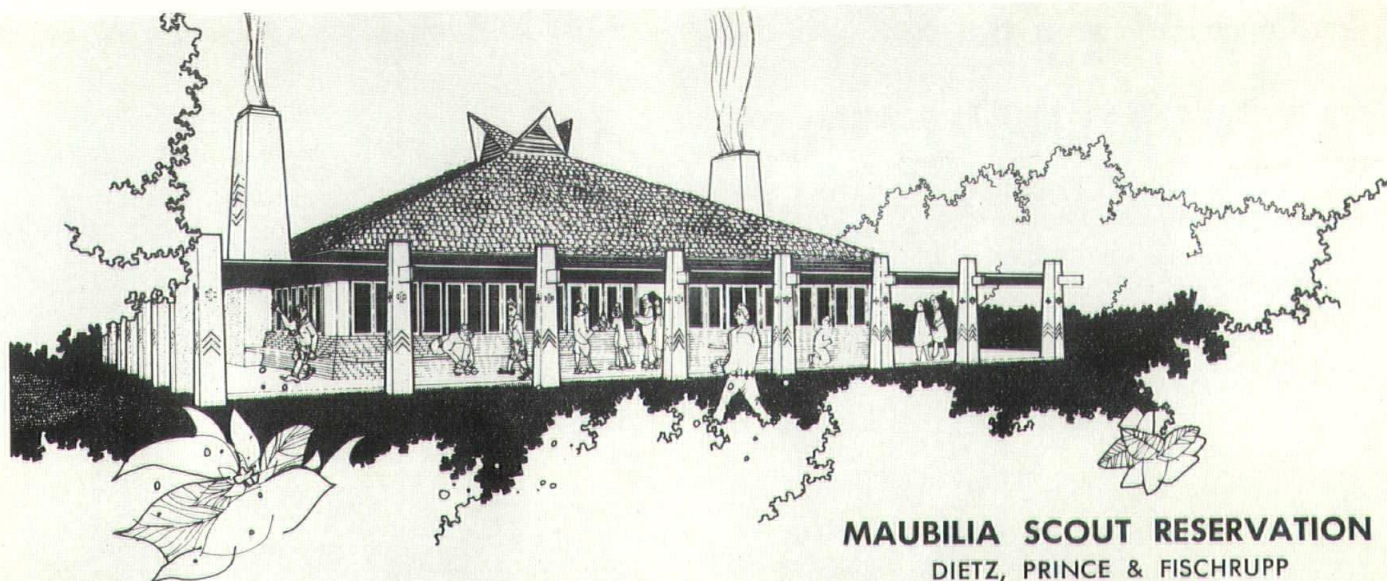


This proposed Office Building will be located in what is now a Residential Area, which in the future is allocated for Professional Offices, Apartment, and Light Commercial Business. This area, although not in the immediate Downtown, will lend easy and quick access to the Downtown Area. This building is composed of 8400 Sq. Ft. on the ground floor and 12,000 Sq. Ft. on the second and future floors. The second floor and future floors are cantilevered over the ground floor providing covered, but open walks to the first floor shops.

The Open Mall Area was developed to enhance the functions of the building.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



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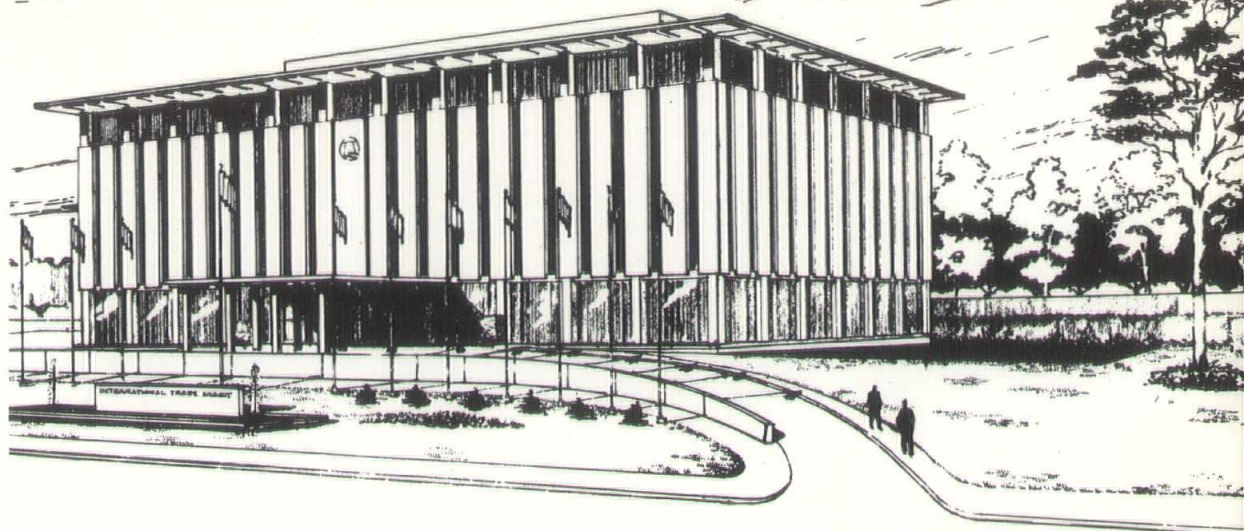
A group of buildings and facilities located in Clarke County, Alabama, and built for the Mobile Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Initial construction was begun in February, 1964, and to date includes a Central Dining Lodge, a Cook's Lodge, Office and Staff Meeting Building, Ranger's House, Trading Post, 14 Troop site washstands and latrines, Metal Storage Building, Swimming Pool, and Central Show and Bathhouse. Total cost to date of buildings exclusive of water system, roads, and equipment is \$270,000. Future construction planned will include camp director's house, health lodge, 4 staff family

cabins, chapel, troop shelters, shop building, and dam and lake.

The largest building, the Central Dining Lodge, will serve 240 campers per week, has stainless steel kitchen and preparation equipment, stone fireplaces, and surrounding covered area on all 4 sides for protection from weather.

All buildings feature window sill height brick veneer, rough sawn board siding, and full width front porch to give continuity throughout the reservation.

ALABAMA ARCHITECT



INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER

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The new International Trade Center, now under construction, is being built by the Alabama State Docks Department to promote foreign trade in the Port of Mobile.

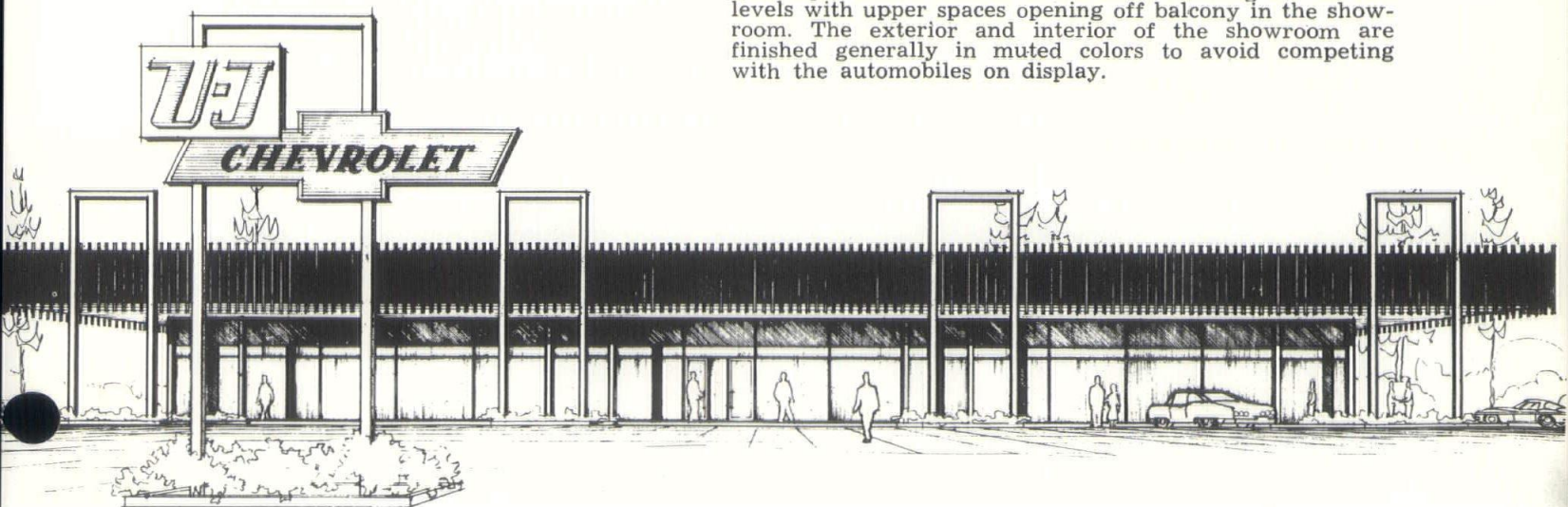
Containing 56,000 square feet, the four story building will have on the first floor, international trade promotion offices, the Mobile Consular Corps headquarters, a foreign trade library, a combination auditorium and dining hall to seat 150 persons, and space for international exhibits.

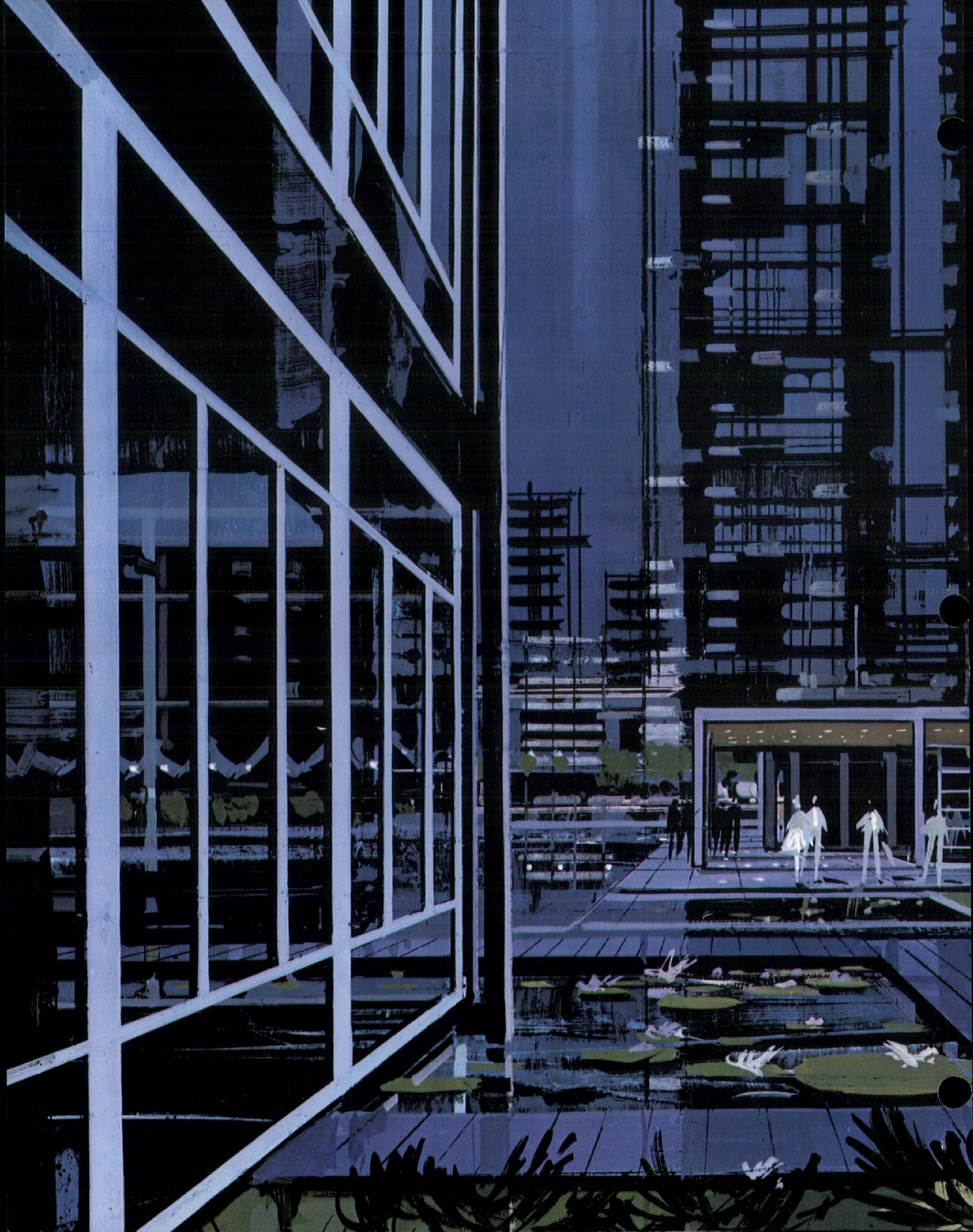
The second and third floors will contain office space for consular representatives, export and import firms, foreign freight forwarders, steamship agencies, and other world trade, maritime and shipping industries. The International Trade Club and Restaurant will occupy the fourth floor with an observation and dining terrace overlooking the Port of Mobile.

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EDWARD B. BAUMHAUER - AIA - ARCHITECT

The main building of this automobile agency contains 38,000 square feet for the accommodation of the sales, administrative, shops and parts activities. The body shop and paint booths are housed in a separate building of 8,000 square feet. Offices in the main building are on two levels with upper spaces opening off balcony in the showroom. The exterior and interior of the showroom are finished generally in muted colors to avoid competing with the automobiles on display.







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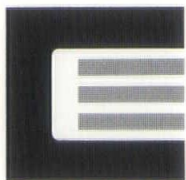
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Mobile and South Alabama

What they can be!

(continued)

FROM BAD TO WORSE

by

W. Frank Laraway

To most architects the day to day grind of managing an office leaves little time or incentive for reflection as to the more philosophical aspects of architecture. Indeed, there seems to be grounds to question whether or not what most of us are involved in is even architecture, as opposed to mere building or running a business. **If architecture** is to be art, it must be more than mere problem solving such as detailing a roof so that it doesn't leak, more than designing with materials and methods that bring the bids in on the money, more than pro-

viding enough exits to conform to the codes, more than making the building relatively maintenance free and more than satisfying a client's taste. Most of all, it must be aesthetically satisfying. And what is more, to be art it should not require an architect's education to emote this experience. Beauty should be a spontaneous thing, non-dependent on a knowledge of structure, technology, history and all the many things with which we tend to rationalize our work. It must even "do something" to the layman. It should be an "Ah, this is it", or an "Ah, this is almost it—" experience without all the intellectual jargon that seems to prevail in our architectural magazines today. Unfortunately architects seem to make the worst critics. One only has to follow the magazines of our trade to deduce this. Unfortunately the public through its natural ignorance of the lingo and knowledge that we ourselves have acquired in some academic institution, has long ago been aware of this situation, and as a result, has revolted and permitted its taste to stay with the past, the old and the revived. The public cannot understand what we are trying to say in our buildings—that a building is stripped to the bone because "less is more" or wide flange shapes are exposed because this is an "expression of structure." Beauty needs to be pure and simple to Mr. Public if it is not to be "revivalist", "traditional" or any of the other styles in which he constantly seeks shelter.

An example of the "rationalistic approach" to design is in the recent May issue of "Progressive Architecture" under what is called the ecological approach to architecture. The piece of work outlined is a series of shed-roofed housing units on the California seacoast. It is pointed out that the design shape was derived from, among other things, wind tunnel studies. Whereas the wind may make a different sound whistling through the shingles with a shed roof whose pitch is determined by wind tunnel tests, it does not necessarily make it more liveable or aesthetically appealing. Still other exam-

ples though different in approach are the National AIA Awards for 1966. This is not to say that a great deal of technical as well as graphic ability is not displayed in the work that is receiving so much publication. The point is that we must question the modernist trend by both intellectual and aesthetic feelings. Whereas the people in the architectural profession tend to reject the past, we also must give equal treatment to the new.

Architecture in South Alabama is having to cope with a demand "old Mobile" style architecture. Whereas if a client demands this sort of style, there is little we can do about it but give him his old brick, wood shutters, and iron lace. However, when an architect is occasionally lucky enough to get the type of client that does want something that is more in step with the nature of materials, economy and all and all, more fit for the purpose for which it was intended, he would do well to ponder the path which the new architecture is taking around the country before getting on the band wagon. What the correct approach is, is not to be suggested here; only that "what can be" is many things. "Rotten old Mobile style" architecture (as some of the more cynical Mobile architects chose to call it) though it is a type of historical plagiarism, has many naturally appealing qualities which much of the modernist style lacks. South Alabama architectural trends need constant reexamination. The old must be criticized with as equal vigor as the new in the attempt to evolve a way of building that creates an environment for working and living that is more suited for the functions and for the humans who are to exist within it. Needless to say, there will always be clients to satisfy, budgets to meet, codes to conform to and details to make workable, but in order that architecture be more than mere sophisticated nest building, there must be at least the pursuit of the nebulous thing we call beauty. Art needs no restatement, therefore we must reject the old. But on the other hand, all that is new and different is not gold.

A Challenge to AIA Members

Never has there been a time when people within associations needed so urgently to work together to bring their best efforts and abilities to bear on common problems.

The challenges which associations have faced in the past are likely to be dwarfed by the challenges of the future. Technological change, manpower issues, the challenge of competitive industries and expanding government—all these are beating upon us with such insistence that there is hardly time to attend to one emergency before another crisis is upon us.

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LETTERS to the Editor

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Sincerely yours,
Larkin W. Yates
Administrative Assistant
City of Decatur
Decatur, Alabama

Sirs:

I have seen a copy of ALABAMA ARCHITECT for May-June 1966, and would like to have my name placed on the mailing list to receive this publication.

Sincerely yours,
J. Revis Hall
Superintendent
Anniston Public Schools
Anniston, Alabama

Gentlemen: We were pleased to receive your letters and to know that you are interested in ALABAMA ARCHITECT. Your names have been added to our mailing list.

—Editor



NEW MEMBERS AND CHANGE OF STATUS

CORPORATE — James Elliott Ford, AIA, 1130 South 22nd Street, Birmingham, assigned July 20, 1966, to the Birmingham Chapter. Firm: Rust Engineering Company.

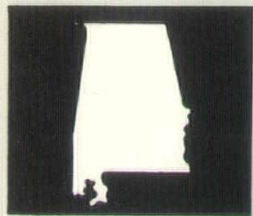
ASSOCIATE — Larry L. Bricker, 715 Franklin Street, Huntsville, member of the North Alabama Chapter. Firm: Northington, Smith, Kranert & Associates.

ASSOCIATE — Charles M. Yarborough, 3800 Jamestown Drive, Huntsville, member of the North Alabama Chapter. Firm: Rust Engineering Company.

BIRMINGHAM COMPETITION

The Birmingham Chapter of the A.I.A. will hold an Awards Dinner on the night of August 26 to make presentations to winners of the 1966 Architectural Competition Committee, said August 5th was the deadline for receiving manila envelopes. Dean Bill Lacy of the School of Architecture of the University of Tennessee is Awards July Chairman, other members being from the School of Architecture faculty of the University of Tennessee. Winners will be reported in an early issue of ALABAMA ARCHITECT.

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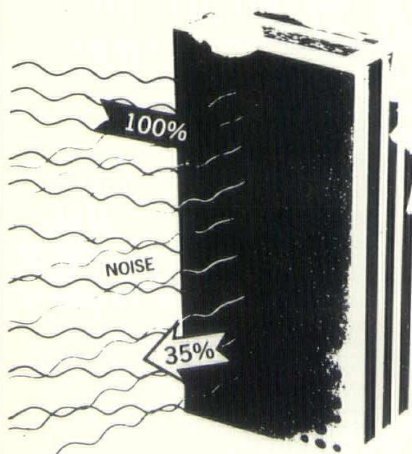
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The Guilt or Guild System

By Donald L. Horton, AIA
Vice President, Alabama Council of
The American Institute of Architects
Montgomery, Alabama

The Guild System was "invented" to answer certain problems which existed in the business community of the 13th century.

Craftsmen who were interested in upholding the quality of the goods they produced, in honest merchandising and in improving and perpetuating their skills, got together and *did* something.

Their answer was to form a group or "guild" of craftsmen who set up standards of excellence for their own craft. Not all groups had the same standard, but those voted into each group were privileged to use its "hallmark" or trademark and were expected to maintain an acceptable and consistent level of quality. Consumers grew to understand the quality to expect from each Hall and the comparative prices to expect from each. This Hallmark was equivalent to what we today call a firm's "reputation."

The principles of the Guild System could and should be revived today, with each firm acting as its own guild.

A firm's reputation in the building trade is made up of many things, the most important of which is the individual craftsman's pride in his workmanship, since he wittingly or unwittingly leaves his firm's Hallmark on all that he does.

This Hallmark which is left by a man in the flooring trade is left forever exposed to view. He cannot expect and should not want someone else to hide his work from the public eye—although at times he might wish it were possible.

The men in the building trades who have to go to the job site to ply their trades—and particularly so with the finish men, including the flooring trades—are in an enviable position. A machine in a factory might do the job more uniformly but the machine can't come to the job site. So it must be done—or at very least assembled, fitted and finished—by hand; and must necessarily show the effect of the

craftsman's handwork and judgment. If the net effect is good it is called "craftsmanship" by my definition—A Joy Forever to the contractor, architect, owner and to the man who did it!

But if the first chair to be set on a new floor appears to have one short leg, the chances are good that the someone will have to make a trip to the job site, and that some of the following questions will arise:

How bad is it? This is hard to judge and usually raises more questions than it answers.

"Who done it?"

How much other work will have to be torn out to remedy it?

How long will it take?

Will it be any better next time?

These are embarrassing questions to everyone—differently perhaps to each participant but embarrassing all the same; and most of the time could be avoided by a little more "Craftsmanship."

My observations have been that many situations of this kind are the result of rush and press of other work; the job is not quite finished.

This is not to imply that there is nothing to be gained by the individual or his firm in speeding production—during the Guild period or now—obviously the speedy Guildsman could produce more goods than the slower—but not at the expense of quality! The quality had to be then, and should still now, be maintained.

The trend toward producing something cheaper, at the sacrifice of some amount of quality, taken to its ultimate, will produce an "almost free" piece of merchandise which is absolutely worthless!

This may be the path of least resistance, the easier of the systems, but the trend in my opinion should be reversed; and if it is, it will produce ever increasing quality at no or little increase in cost.

Although nothing lasts forever and the shay will wear out some time, a piece at a time or all pieces at once,



DONALD L. HORTON, A.I.A.

nevertheless, "Planned Obsolescence" is a term invented by a salesman with a little cheaper piece of goods who had to justify his sacrifice in quality.

It should also be expected that more than one quality of each type of goods will be produced, and have a proper place of use. Not all projects can expect a budget like the Taj Mahal; but after the budget is set and the type of each material is set, it is wrong to try to materially reduce the cost of any material by reducing the quality of that material; it is better to use a good quality of a less expensive type. It is natural that an owner, or architect, or anyone making selection for the owner, will always want the most for his money and usually want a finer and more expensive type of product than the budget will allow. This is the time for the seller to offer good advice: know your products; offer realistic price estimates; and recommend a type flooring which will stay within the budget and allow enough money for the job for your craftsman to be able to leave a Hallmark of which he is proud. If he is proud of it, the firm will be, too.

It may sound a little "Pollyannaish" but I believe that this "pride" will eventually speak for itself and lead its possessor to more rewards and customers than he can gain in any other way. It is not a Get-Rich-Quick scheme, and it requires constant attention, but it will work.

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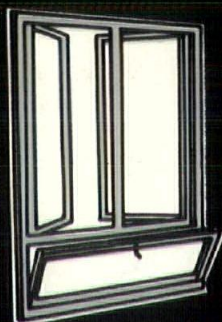
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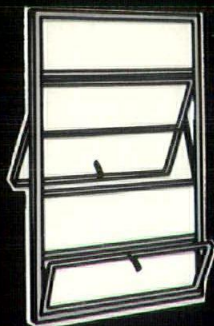
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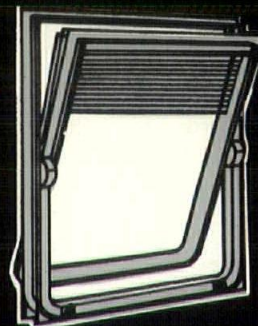
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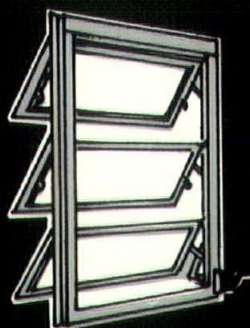
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