

BALTIMORE CHAPTER A. I. A.

ARCHITECTS'
REPORT

DETROIT SHOWS HOW TO REBUILD A CITY

By BOB LISTON

The following article appeared recently in the "Baltimore News-Post" and we recommend it to your thoughtful reading. It is a fantastic program, particularly when you realize that it is actually being executed. It takes big ideas to conceive and execute such a schedule. It will take big ideas to get Baltimore's \$900,000,000 Urban Renewal Program started. Here's hoping we can join Detroit, Dallas, and other cities in answering Lord Winster. It is too bad this is not the reply to Lord Winster's remarks printed in the last issue.

Mr. Blessing, who is interviewed, will be one of the many distinguished panelists at the Middle Atlantic State Regional Conference next month.

Detroit, in its efforts to make a "dream city", has invested \$700,000,000 in civic improvements since 1950 and has seen private investors pour in an almost equal amount. The resultant fever of construction with slums giving way to office buildings, housing projects and arenas seating 55,000 is the handwork of Charles A. Blessing, the Motor City's director of planning.

In an exclusive interview, Blessing told what Detroit plans to do and how it is doing it. The most important ingredient in rebuilding a city, he said, is the master plan. "When there is a master plan for a city, it builds confidence." Knowing what is to be done, where and when generates confidence and understanding as to timing and location of all future developments. It encourages investors to come in. "Equally important, I think, is the philosophy of a city which accepts the principal of orderly growth under a plan adopted, adhered to and accepted as a guide."

Detroit adopted its master plan in 1950, after a decade of development. It is under constant revision, Blessing said, but never has the mayor or city council departed from it on a wild scheme. The master plan maps are hung on the wall in the budget director's office. They are the guide which the city uses in its growth. I think the best indication of the success of the plan is the fact that \$700,000,000 worth of public improvements have been made under it. Included are highways, parks, libraries, health centers, hospital additions, police and fire stations, public

lighting, major thoroughfare improvements and, most of all the \$10,000,000, 75 acre Detroit civic center".

This civic center, located on the Detroit River, includes a \$30,000,000 city-county office building, a Ford Auditorium costing \$5,000,000; a \$3,000,000 veterans building; and now under construction a \$50,000,000 convention-exhibit hall. It will be the largest in the world.

Detroit spent \$14,000,000 alone for land for the center in the heart of the city. The Ford Auditorium was a gift of the Ford family, to which sizable public funds were added to build a "Carnegie Hall of Detroit". The huge convention hall, capable of seating 55,000 people when completed, includes \$11,000,000 of private capital raised during Detroit's 250th anniversary celebration in 1952. In addition, land is reserved for a Federal building and a State office structure. They will become part of the civic center complex.

The pump priming by the city has seen private investors join in. Blessing commented, "Mayor Cobo, who died earlier this year, said he hoped to see private investments total \$500,000,000 before he died. He may have made it." The list of private investments built or planned is imposing: A National Bank Building, 15 stories high and costing \$16,000,000; a Detroit Bank & Trust Company Building, 10 stories high erected at a cost of \$12,000,000; a \$30,000,000 Hilton Hotel; a \$5,000,000 Greyhound Bus Terminal; a \$40,000,000 addition to the Federal Post Office building; a 100-acre, \$30,000,000 private housing project. Other projects leading to Detroit's "dream city" are a 3,800 unit Federal low-cost public housing development and a 73-acre "model" light industry and wholesaling district to be built with \$25,000,000 of private money. There is a medical center district of 120 acres. Four hospitals have raised \$13,000,000 already. A plan for the rest is now before the Federal government.

Much of this private investment is under an urban renewal set-up. Baltimore got started on its urban renewal projects in 1956. Detroit started planning in 1947 and was ready when the first urban renewal

act was passed in 1949. It already has Federal money for three downtown projects and is committed to submitting within 15 months final plans for three more. Five "neighborhood conservation projects" were approved just recently. Detroit plans for five a year for ten years until encroaching blight in an area surrounding the central city is stopped.

Detroit's accomplishments are possible, Blessing explained, because it has a single planning agency coordinating all planning both public and urban renewal.

The Sea of Ugliness

A companion piece to Lord Winster's article printed last month. The theme is the same but the voice comes this time from the heart of America.

Architectural ugliness will continue to engulf the few examples of good contemporary building unless architects accept the challenge of total environment. This is the theme of Ralph E. Rapson, head of the School of Architecture at the University of Minnesota, in an article written for "Perspective," magazine of the Students' Architectural Society of the University of Manitoba:

An architect's work must be charged with something beyond maximum function and use, or the result will fail. He will not have realized total environment.

Often the utilitarian, structural, and economic aspects of a design have been successfully and brilliantly met and often the spiritual satisfaction rings true; however, all too often beauty is missing, the visual delight one receives from sensitive and loving handling of positive and negative space, the contrast of sun and shade, the enrichment of form and detail, and the play of color and texture. This failure to achieve architectural delight stems from numerous sources. In many instances it is due to the architect's own lack of imagination and his own deficient sensitivity. Lack of effort, complacency and defeatism, economic pressures and deadlines, while not to be condoned, play their part in our meager efforts.

If ever there was a need for careful and thoughtful design, it is now. Our times have produced far-reaching advantages in science and technology as well as highly significant social and political change. This is an age of mass production standardization, and rapid economic growth. It is a period of highly increased personal and group prosperity, yet all the while something is lacking.

In the headlong rush to conquer the unknown and to perfect scientific and industrial know-how, a world of unprecedented ugliness has grown up around us. All about us we see the sickening consequences of our great industrial and economic civilization. An angry environment full of discord and chaos confronts us at every turn.

Glaring lights, blaring noise, dust and dirt, distasteful advertising, speed and power, discordant

lack of order and design, all assault our sensitivities and pollute the city and countryside alike—an environment seemingly dedicated to the mobile jukeboxes, miles of asphalt and concrete, and acre after acre of ranchburger delight. Much of this is the product or by-product of the machine, and there can be no denial of the great advantages and potentialities supplied by technology, but certainly the fault does not lie with the machine. Our environment and the products about us are of our own doing; it is for us to decide whether the machine is leader or servant. It is for us to build for pleasure and a full life rather than strangulation and slow death.

The know-how and the means have resulted in contemporary architecture, often fine, and occasionally exciting architecture. Today's building often reaches unprecedented heights in its solution of problems of shelter. The physical limitations and restrictions imposed by bygone period design have been all but rejected. Public and private buildings alike, large and small, have in many instances reached levels of accomplishment that honestly rate the designation, contemporary architecture.

Yet it is difficult to reconcile the top-flight individual architectural accomplishment with the unbelievably low level of over-all environmental performance. For every bit of excellence there are countless examples of ugliness. The angry sea of un-design has all too often practically engulfed these examples because the architect cares not or dares not look beyond his immediate isolated effort.

The Architect and Tomorrow's City

The planning of the Regional Conference of the A.I.A. has been so successful that it has blossomed into an event of National importance. The panelists, listed below, whether from California, Chicago, our immediate region, or Baltimore proper, are of national stature in their respective fields:—

Victor Gruen, California Architect and designer of the nationally known Fort Worth City Plan

Carl Feiss, Washington, D. C., City Planner and Urban Renewal Consultant

Edmund N. Bacon, Executive Director, Philadelphia Planning Commission

James W. Rouse, Jr., Mortgage Banker & Developer, Baltimore

Harry Weese, Architect, Active in Urban Redevelopment in Chicago

David A. Wallace, Architect, Director of Planning Council, Greater Baltimore Committee

Charles Blessing, Architect, Executive Director, Detroit City Planning Commission

Jefferson B. Fordham, Dean—Law School, University of Pennsylvania

David M. Walker, Regional Administrator, Housing and Home Finance Agency

John P. Robin, Executive Vice-President, Old Philadelphia Development Corporation

Herbert S. Greenwald, Developer, Chicago

Topping this impressive list of speakers is **Senator John Sparkman** of Alabama, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Urban Renewal, will deliver the principal address at the banquet on Friday night.

The formal program starts at 11:30 a.m. Friday, April 18 with the opening of the Raw Bar at the Belvedere Hotel and goes through luncheon at 12:30 on Saturday. This is a major event that will change

the direction of Architecture in Baltimore. Don't miss it!

* * *

Judging from the applications for space, the manufacturers are recognizing this conference as an important place to show their products. An interesting and diversified exhibition of building materials seems assured.

The Architects of the Chapter are reminded that, among other things, this conference will take the place of the Annual Architectural Exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art. All architects who wish to exhibit are urged to get in touch with Robert Fryer at the office of Smith & Veale. The subject must have some relation to Urban Renewal and City Planning.

Director of Planning

Philip Darling has been appointed to succeed the late Arthur D. McVoy as Director of the Department of Planning of the City of Baltimore, according to an announcement from the Mayor's office.

Mr. Darling moves over to this very important position from the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency where he has been serving as Assistant Director to Oliver C. Winston for the last ten years in charge of planning and development. He prepared for a career in City Planning by obtaining his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Yale and a Master's degree in City Planning from M.I.T. He has held planning positions with the United States Housing Authority, National Housing Agency, and the Federal Public Housing Authority.

A native of Pleasantville, New York, he moved to Baltimore and has been responsible for a great deal of the fine work that has been accomplished by the local housing authority and its successor, the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency.

Our congratulations go to Mr. Darling and we join Mayor D'Alesandro in pledging "fullest cooperation" to him.

* * *

At the same time the Mayor accepted the resignation of Lucius R. White, Jr., FAIA, and Mr. W. Watters Pagon and praised them for long and faithful service. In their places he appointed Mrs. Duane L. Peterson, former President of the Women's Civic League, and Alexander S. Cochran, AIA. Alec seems to have long ago devised a sure-fire formula for success by collecting degrees from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton!

Chapter News

At the March meeting of the Chapter we had the privilege of hearing our fellow member and architect, David Wallace, Director of the Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, give a very provocative exposition of his views of the Architect's position in the last half of the 20th Century. In fact, it was a pointed plea for us to examine ourselves

BALTIMORE CHAPTER AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



PAUL L. GAUDREAU.....President
ARCHIBALD C. ROGERS.....Vice-President
KELSEY Y. SAINT.....Secretary
JOHN RIGGS ORRICK.....Treasurer
JAMES H. STEPHENSON
L. McLANE FISHER

ARCHITECTS' REPORT

GRINNELL W. LOCKE.....Editor
2517 St. Paul Street (18) • TUxedo 9-2727
JOHN RIGGS ORRICK.....Adv. Mgr.

OFFICE

MRS. AGNES M. PRESTON, Executive Secretary
1025 St. Paul Street (2) • MULberry 5-0933
Hours: Eleven to Five.

closely. In his opinion we have the choice of becoming a trade that concerns itself with the petty problems of the individual building, their details and materials, or of taking our position in society as Architects, in the biggest sense—knowledgeable of building design and also well informed on the economic, traffic and social problems of the city and ready to be leaders in the building and rebuilding of cities as were the architects of the Renaissance.

Mr. Wallace pleased his older listeners and startled the younger ones when he held up the much maligned "Ecole des Beaux Arts" and its planning in the grand manner as one of few schools training men to think in the large terms required for the practice of Architecture today. It was challenging indeed to hear such a stimulating talk from one who is so successful at practising what he preaches, and Baltimore is most fortunate in having Dave Wallace to guide its planning.

Our Public Relations Chairman, Mr. Silcox, has announced that the Baltimore Chapter, AIA, has reserved a space at the **ABC Construction Fair** on May 24 and 25 at the Baltimore Raceway.

The American Institute of Electrical Engineers will hold a panel discussion on **Electrical Systems in Modern Schools** in the auditorium of the new Edmondson High School at 8:00 p.m. on March 26th. The panelists will be Mr. William E. Lehr, Assistant Superintendent, School Facilities, Baltimore City and Messrs. Robert McNeill, Don Banke, and Albert Gipe, electrical engineers. Architects interested in school work should find this evening beneficial.

The Senate is at present considering the proposed alterations to the facade of the **United States Capitol Building** and we understand that there is a good chance that they can be blocked. You are urged to write to your Senators and encourage them to do everything they can to prevent tampering with the design of this great and symbolic building.

G. Kidder Smith, distinguished Architectural critic and photographer, will give an illustrated lecture on the New Churches of Europe at the Peale Museum at 8:30 P. M., April 10th. You won't find more exciting photographs.

ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

"We appreciate the confidence of our advertisers in the 'Report' as a medium to serve their needs. We trust that our professional readers will reciprocate by calling on these specialists in their respective fields."

Producers' Council, Inc.

Baltimore Chapter, VA 3-7674
Nat'l Org. of Bldg. Materials
and Equipment

General Contractors

BALTIMORE CONTRACTORS, INC.
711 S. Central Ave. (2) BR 6-2800
General Contractors

COGSWELL CONSTRUCTION CO.
513 Park Ave. (1) MU 5-7231
Builders - Appraisers

CUMMINS-HART CONSTRUCTION CO.
318 Wyndhurst Ave. (10) HO 7-1100
Industrial Construction
Appraisers - Builders

CONSOLIDATED ENGINEERING CO., INC.
20 E. Franklin St. (2) MU 5-7500
General Contractors

THOMAS HICKS & SONS, INC.
106 W. Madison St. (1) MU 5-3430
Builders for three generations

LACCHI CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
2023 Maryland Ave. (18) BE 5-1795
General Contractors since 1918

JOHN McSHAIN, INC.
3501 Sinclair Lane (13) EA 7-2421
Builders

MORROW BROTHERS, INC.
2315 N. Charles St. (18) BE 5-8390
Contractors and Engineers since 1890

PIRACCI CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.
2552 Woodbrook Ave. (17) MA 3-2727
General Contractors

WILLIAM H. SANDS, INC.
704 York Rd., Towson (4) VA 3-1441
Builders and General Contractors

Paving

DRUMMOND & CO., INC.
Pikesville (8) HU 6-7900
Roads and Green Plastic Tennis Courts

Concrete and Masonry

ARUNDEL-BROOKS CONCRETE CORP.
921 S. Wolfe St. (31) EA 7-8200
Pre-Mixed Concrete

BALTIMORE BRICK COMPANY
3200 E. Madison St. (5) OR 5-0260
Brick - Glazed Tile - Glass Blocks

BURNS & RUSSELL COMPANY
Bayard & Severn Sts. (30) GI 5-0720
Spectra-Glaze Products

HARRY T. CAMPBELL SONS' CORP.
Towson (4) VA 3-7000
Quarrymen - Contractors

MARIETTA CONCRETE CORPORATION
Pulaski Hwy. & Race Rd. (21)
MU 7-5200
Wall Panels - Block - Precast Concrete

V. PATURZO BRO. & SON, INC.
800 N. Haven St. (5) BR 6-2731
"Pat" Concrete Products

Doors and Windows

FENESTRA, INCORPORATED
1919 St. Paul St. (18) HO 7-8868
Steel Windows - Doors - Bldg. Panels

MODERN DOORS, INC.
2110 N. Charles St. (18) HO 7-9405
Modernfold Doors

PELLA SALES COMPANY
5005 Harford Rd. (14) CL 4-2190
Pella Doors - Windows - Rolscreeens

THE J. D. SLAUGHTER CO.
2301 N. Charles St. (18) BE 5-4161
Windows - Curtain Walls - Panels -
Steel Deck

SOUTHERN SASH & DOOR CO.
2523 Penna. Ave. (17) MA 3-8555
Distributors: Slideview - Ware - Marmot

Glass

ART PLATE GLASS & MIRROR CORP.
1331 S. Monroe St. (30) GI 5-1700
Distributors - Glass & Metal
Contractors - Fabricators

PITTSBURGH PLATE GLASS CO.
400 N. Holliday St. (3) LE 9-3000
Manufacturers of Glass & Paints

Hardware

ALBERT GUNTHER, INC.
36 W. Biddle St. (1) VE 7-7437
Contract Hardware Service

MacCARTHY COMPANY, INC.
111 E. 25th St. (18) HO 7-9300
Builders Hardware - Metal Doors

Painting

G. T. BECKSTROM, INC.
516 Chestnut Hill Ave. (18) TU 9-5488
Commercial and Industrial Painting and
Sandblasting

KUEHNLE-WILSON OF MD., INC.
622 N. Calvert St. (2) MU 5-3610
Painting - Building Cleaning - Pointing -
Sandblasting - Waterproofing

General Building Materials

THE ARUNDEL CORPORATION
Pier 2, Pratt Street (2) PL 2-7120
Sand - Gravel - Stone - Blast Furnace
Slag

JOHN H. HAMPSHIRE, INC.
330 W. 24th St. (11) HO 7-3970
Plastering - Flooring - Acoustical
Ceilings - Roof Decks - Partitions

Building Specialties

AMERICAN SHADE COMPANY
864 N. Howard St. (1) VE 7-5891
Window Shades - Venetian Blinds -
Columbia Aluminum Screens

BELINGER SIGN WORKS, INC.
1300-10 Bayard St. (30) GI 5-5666
Neon - Electrical - Porcelain - Stainless
Signs or Letters

THE LAWRENCE FALLON COMPANY
105 E. Saratoga St. (2) SA 7-2282
Signs - Tablets - Letters - Gold Leaf -
Bronze - Aluminum - Stainless

NATIONAL REFRIGERATION CO., INC.
2903 Grindon Ave. (14) HA 6-5223
Commercial Kitchen & Cafeteria
Refrigeration - Bar Equipment

SELBY, BATTERSBY & CO.
2405-7 W. Balto. St. (23) ED 6-4410
Vitro-Glaze & Vinyl Walls, Traffic
Bearing Roof Decks, Troweled &
Conductive Floors

THE STEINER-FULTON CO.
1813-17 Pierce St. (23) ED 6-1310
Partitions - Ornamental Aluminum -
Shower Doors

Steel Products

THE MARYLAND STEEL PRODUCTS CO.
P. O. Box 1997 (3) MU 5-4110
Structural Steel and Ornamental Work

RINK BUILDING SYSTEMS, INC.
3513 Wash. Blvd. (27) CI 2-6740-41
Butler Steel Bldgs. - Corrugulux - Fiberglass
Insulation - Infra-red Heaters

Carpentry and Millwork

CONRAD PROTZMAN, INC.
8 W. West St. (30) LE 9-1063
Third Generation of
Fine Cabinet Makers

RODDIS PLYWOOD - MacLEA LUMBER
506 S. Central Ave. (3) SA 7-2761
Roddiscraft Architectural Doors -
Plywood - Partitions

U. S. PLYWOOD CORP.
6519 Quad Ave. (5) Dickens 2-8800
Plywood - Doors - Partitions -
Allied Products

C. O. WURZBERGER & SONS
2601 Annapolis Ave. (30) GI 5-1111
Millwork Acceptable to All Architects
This is our 50th Year.

Insurance

VICTOR O. SCHINNERER & CO., INC.
Investment Bldg., D. C. (3) RE 7-1929
Professional Liability Insurance for
Architects & Engineers

Plumbing, Heating, Electrical

AMERICAN-STANDARD
5005 Holabird Ave. (24) DI 2-0400
Mfg. Plumbing, Heating, Cooling

HENRY O. BERMAN CO., INC.
10-12 E. Lombard St. (2) LE 9-7002
Sounds Systems - Dial X Telephones
"There Is Nothing Finer Than A
Stromberg-Carlson."

LLOYD E. MITCHELL, INC.
4650 Reistersdown Rd. (15) LI 2-1241
Plumbing - Heating - Air Conditioning -
Acoustical - Sheet Metal - Plastering

THE MORRIS ENGINEERING COMPANY
813 N. Calvert St. (2) SA 7-5388
Industrial and Commercial Oil Burning
Systems

POWER & COMBUSTION, INC.
219 E. 25th St. (18) HO 7-4329
Industrial Boiler Room Equipment

RIGGS DISTLER & COMPANY, INC.
216 N. Calvert St. (2) SA 7-6543
Air Conditioning - Plumbing -
Heating - Electrical

TAZE & HEWITT
33 E. 21st St. (18) BE 5-5895-6
Commercial - Industrial - Heating -
Ventilating Equipment

Engineering-Testing

THE JOHN E. ETLAR COMPANY
230 Register Ave. (12) DR 7-8282
Steam Power Plants - Acceptance Tests
Conducted - Combustion Engrs.

RAYMOND CONCRETE PILE COMPANY
1111 Merc. Tr. Bldg. (2) PL 2-7074
Geo Soil Test Borings & Pile
Foundations

Special Services

BALTIMORE DUPLICATING SERVICE
7 St. Paul St. (2) LE 9-0674
Complete Duplicating Services -
Specifications

GARDENS BLUE PRT. & PHOTO PRT CO., INC.
419 St. Paul Place (2) LE 9-2763
2118 Maryland Ave. (18) HO 7-9385

SECRETARIAL SERVICE
2317 Maryland Ave. (18) HO 7-5713
Specifications - Typed - Mimeographed -
Bound

SOUTHERN GALVANIZING COMPANY
1620 Bush St. (30) GI 5-7711
Hot-Dip Galvanizing & Metallizing

MARIE VEDITZ
2 E. Lexington St. (2) SA 7-1380
Typing - Duplicating Specifications -
Binding