

F O C U S

Chicago Chapter American Institute of Architects

June 1981 Newsletter

CHAPTER TAKES POSITION ON CODE AMENDMENTS

The following is a statement of opinion regarding amendments to the municipal code of Chicago titled, "Chapter 78-B Rehabilitation Code", as proposed by the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Building Code Amendments which was presented to the Board of Directors on April 28, 1981 by Steve Weiss, AIA, Chairman of the Housing Committee.

The Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects supports the proposed "Chapter 78-B Rehabilitation Code" Amendments to the Municipal Code of the City of Chicago. The Chapter acknowledges the need for a concise document governing the rehabilitation of existing buildings in the city. Particular significance is placed on the spirit of these amendments, in that the public good is best served by the diverse character of the Architecture of Chicago, and that this character can best be enhanced by an active relationship between new and rehabilitated existing buildings. By recognizing the differences in economic, administrative and technical requirements between rehabilitation and new construction, these Amendments will foster a greater degree of public health, life safety and welfare in the City through increased and Code correct rehabilitation of the existing building stock.

Although the proposed Amendments are thorough and well researched, the Chapter recognizes, through the active input of its members, that certain items within the Amendments are contrary to the stated goal of fostering rehabilitation. In addition, the Chapter feels strongly the need for additional provisions which

will encourage Housing rehabilitation on a wide spread scale. The Chapter takes specific exception to the following paragraphs of the proposed chapter 78-B:

1. Paragraph 2a should be expanded to include the following: "Existing garages accessory to an established residential use may be altered, repaired or enlarged with new construction matching the existing construction up to the limits of the existing zoning and/or building construction requirements on that zoning lot." The Chapter feels that residential upgrading should include the ability to upgrade existing garages without requirements of conformance to new construction.

2. Paragraph 2d(1) should be revised to allow private garages to be located not less than one foot from interior lot lines, rather than two feet, six inches. On the typical city lot of twenty-five feet width, a two-and-one-half car garage twenty-one feet wide would be desirable, in lieu of the nineteen and one-half feet afforded by the proposed Amendments.

3. Paragraph 2d(2) should be revised as follows: "2) Any frame building, except accessory buildings, having exterior wall construction providing fire resistance of not less than one hour, may be located no less than three feet from an interior lot line.."

This revision would allow frame garages to be built closer than three feet to an interior lot line, without requiring the additional requirement of a one hour fire rating on the side walls.

4. Paragraph 2d(3) should be revised by deleting the word "interior". This would allow any existing frame porch to be repaired or upgraded, regardless of its

location on the lot.

5. Paragraph 4c(6) should be revised to require an approved standard automatic sprinkler system provided with a two source water supply in buildings of Type III-A construction which are changed to residential use and are between fifty-five feet and eighty feet in height. In addition, in buildings of Type III-A construction which are changed to residential use and are over eighty feet in height, the building shall comply with the sprinkler alternate of Paragraph 62. 1-10 of the Municipal Code.

6. Paragraph 6d(3) should be expanded to include the following clarifications: "Dormers built on a building of ordinary construction - Type III-B or III-C may be built of wood frame construction, provided that the entire building meets the requirements of Type IV-A construction."

In addition, the Chapter recognizes the following additional items, which are not included in the proposed Amendments, and which are required to complete the goal of fostering rehabilitation of the existing building stock. We urge the Mayor's Advisory Committee to address these items and offer them as Amendments to the Municipal Code, as deemed appropriate:

1. The Mayor should issue a directive to the Zoning Administrator and coordinating Architect that they exercise their final review authority to make interpretations of the Zoning Ordinance and Building Code to make allowances for the special problems peculiar to rehabilitation of existing buildings. This interpreta-

tion process should take place prior to any recourse to Zoning or Building Boards of Appeal, which should be utilized only as a forum of last resort.

2. The Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 194-A of the Municipal Code, must be reviewed and amended to serve in tandem with the proposed "Chapter 78-B Rehabilitation Code." In some cases the provisions granted in Chapter 78-B are contrary to the requirements of Chapter 194-A.

A. The Zoning Ordinance should be amended to allow residential use below the second floor in commercial and business zoning districts.

B. In zoning lots composed of more than one lot-of-record, side yard requirements should be determined by the width of the lot-of-record adjacent to the neighboring zoning lots on each interior lot line.

C. Newly constructed fire escapes shall be permitted within any yard when required as an additional means of egress. Fire escapes shall be included as a permitted obstruction in required yards in Paragraph 5.7-5(1), of the Zoning Ordinance.

D. Dormer setbacks should be allowed to follow the main building required yard setbacks, with no additional setbacks required from the main building walls.

E. The Zoning Ordinance should be amended to allow structural alterations and additions to existing non-conforming residential uses.

F. Existing porches and stairs should be allowed to be enclosed, regardless of location on the zoning lot.

G. Off-street parking should be required for added units in existing residential buildings where existing parking is non-conforming to the Zoning Ordinance.

3. Applications for building permits for residential rehabilitation and code violation projects of six or less dwelling units

should be routed through designated plan examiners who specialize in residential rehabilitation construction.

4. Table 48-12.5 of the Municipal Code should be amended to be in tandem with the proposed Chapter 78-B.

5. Zoning and Building Code provisions for energy conscious design and solar energy applications should be developed and added to the Municipal Code.

6. Both the Plumbing and Electrical Chapters of the Municipal Code should be amended to include rehabilitation of existing systems based on performance criteria, in lieu of new construction criteria. In addition, the Electrical Chapters should be amended to include the National Electric Code as the basis of electrical system design in Chicago. Only prudent and specific additions to the National Electric Code should be included in the Chicago Municipal Code.

7. The provisions of the plumbing, electrical, ventilation and warm air heating chapters should be reviewed with regard to allowing "state-of-the-art" materials and techniques to be used in rehabilitation. These would include the use of polyvinyl chloride plastic piping for drain, waste, vent and water supply piping; fiber glass duct work for warm air heating and ventilation systems, flexible conduit for concealed electrical work, and fiber glass plumbing fixtures including whirlpool bathtubs.

8. The procedure for applying for and obtaining a building permit should be documented along with a clear description of the functions and responsibilities of each department or bureau. In addition, all directives and interpretations of each department, bureau, administrator or plan examiner should be regularly published and disseminated.

The Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

recognizes the critical role played by the Department of Inspectional Services in the continuing welfare of the City. These comments are made in a spirit of consultation and assistance to the Mayor, the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Building Code Amendments and the personnel of the Department of Inspectional Services, in their roles as protectors of the public good and welfare. We stand available to continue this advisory role as appropriate.

SUMMER SOIREEES

On the evening of June 9, 123 cruise-bound persons will meet and board a Mercury vessel at 5:30 PM. The Architectural Tours Committee has planned a great summer night on the Chicago River. Your ship will be stocked with wine, fruit and cheese; and Bill Westfall, associate professor of History of Art and Architecture at Circle Campus will be on board to give commentary on the architecture along the way. Reservations will be held for AIA, WAL and APA members at \$15 by phoning 663-4111 and remitting your check by June 4.

Architects "Search for Alexander" - On Tuesday, July 14, Chicago Chapter members will have the opportunity to attend a lecture and view this major exhibition of Greek antiquities dating back to the 4th century B. C., without the hassle of those anticipated long lines. The group plan provides guaranteed space for 50 people at \$6.00 per person. This special event is provided by the Chapter for AIA members, with each member entitled to one guest. The lecture will commence at 5:45 PM in the Columbus Drive Auditorium, with viewing of the exhibit scheduled for 6:45 PM. Again, this is a special viewing for groups; the public will not be admitted. Reservations may be made by calling 663-4111; your check to confirm that reservation must be received at the Chapter by July 9.

TWO CCAIA FIRMS WIN 1981 HONOR AWARDS

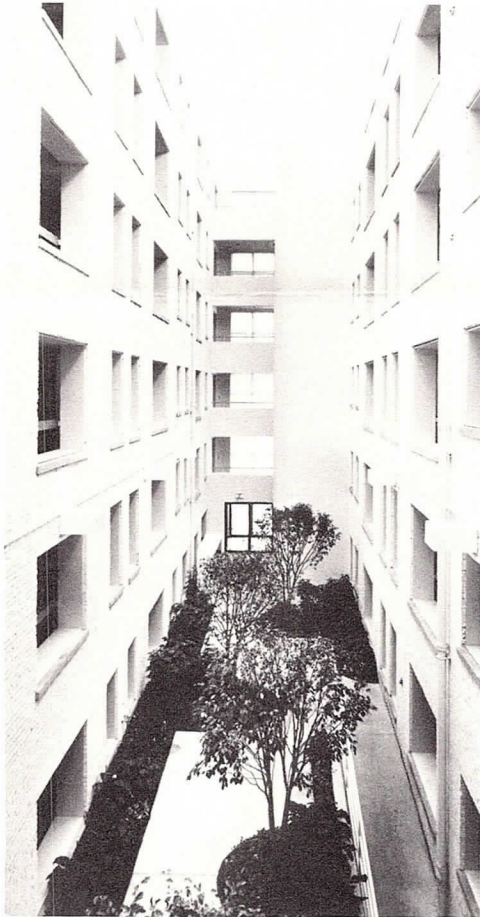
The nation's highest professional recognition of design excellence, the American Institute of Architects' Honor Awards, were conferred on eight current use and seven extended use projects at the 1981 AIA National Convention in Minneapolis and St. Paul on May 17-21. The 1981 winners were selected by two juries from 404 entries representing all categories of new and existing buildings, ranging from a small wooden house to a large new office building, and from renovation of a cancer research laboratory to restoration of the oldest museum west of the Mississippi River.

The Honor Awards Jury for Extended Use reviewed 96 entries encompassing a wide range of structures, including much more than the usual preserved landmark building. Nagle, Hartray & Associates/Ltd. received the 1981 Honor Award for "The Oaks, Housing for the Elderly", in Oak Park. The project involved rehabilitating a 1926 residence hotel with two structures into 76 apartments for the elderly and handicapped. The jury acknowledged that "a common problem in older buildings where overdense building results in an inadequate lightwell.....has been turned into a resource for a sense of community.....the use of artificial lighting to complement the skylighting provides a continuous bright center at all times."

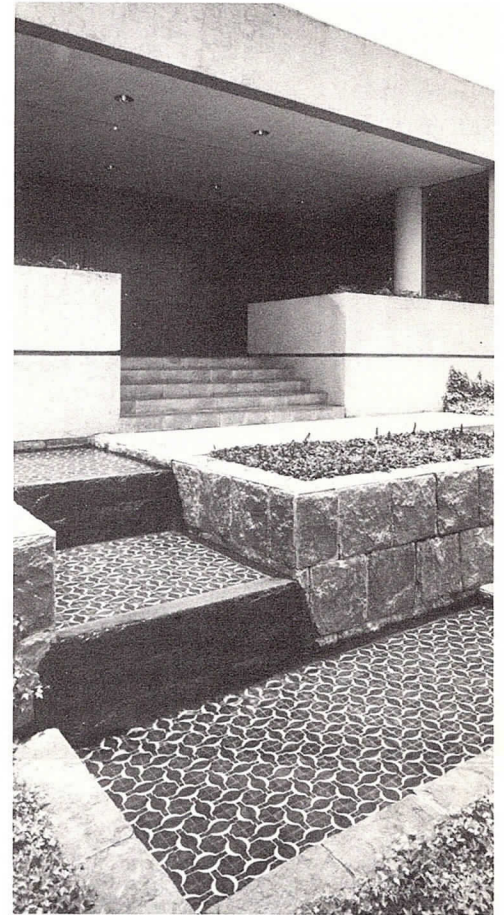
The seven-member Jury for Current Use reviewed 308 entries that illustrate a diversity of design directions representing "reasonable solutions to difficult urban situations as well as several unusual and amazing structures...." Skidmore, Owings & Merrill was presented the 1981 Award for Current Use for the Banco de Occidente in Guatemala City. The project consists of three banking facilities for Guatemala's oldest banking institution. The jury recognized "the highly successful relationship of the buildings to their

urban setting, composed principally of one- and two-century-old colonial buildings." In its comments, the jury cited the project's "openness to the street and to pedestrians", brilliant use of color, spacial order, "and a sense of repose."

Congratulations to Nagle, Hartray & Associates and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for capturing this prestigious award.



THE OAKS
1981 HONOR AWARD FOR EXTENDED USE
NAGLE, HARTRAY & ASSOCIATES/LTD.



BANCO DE OCCIDENTE
1981 HONOR AWARD FOR CURRENT USE
SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL

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