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HAWAII ARCHITECT

April, 1983

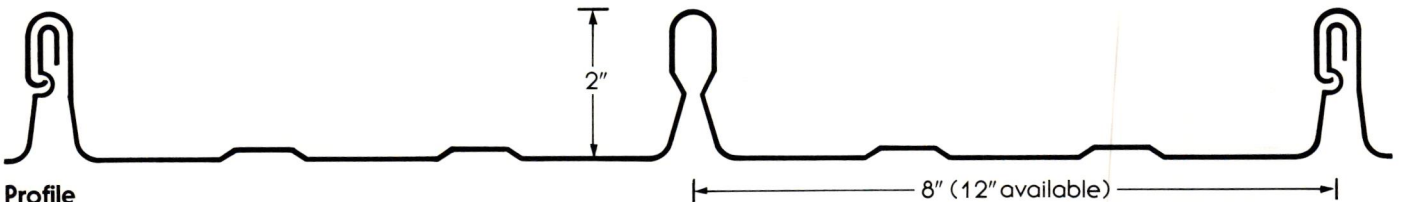
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233 Merchant Street, Suite 200
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-2977
(808) 538-7276

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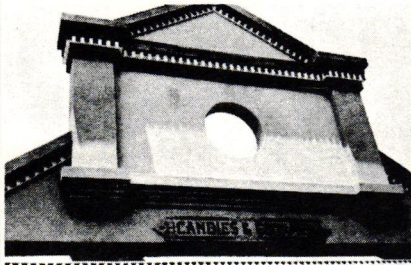
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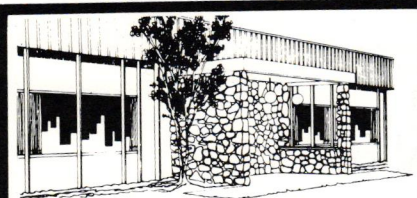


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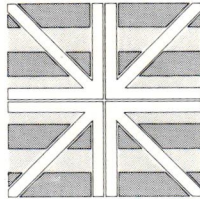
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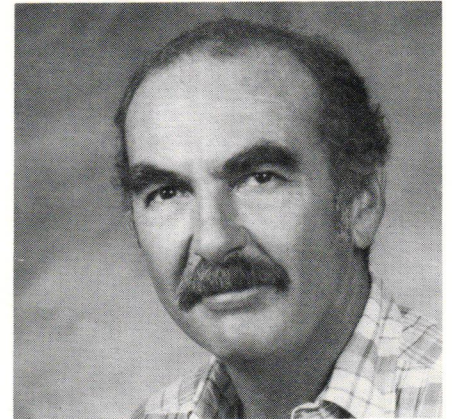
Megatrends

by Lewis Ingleson
 President, Hawaii Society/AIA

Recently, I have been reading *Megatrends*, a new book by John Naisbitt. The book describes the ten major trends that will transform our lives between now and the year 2000. Naisbitt is the public member of the board of directors of the National AIA and is also scheduled as one of the keynote speakers at our 1983 National Convention in New Orleans. The book is easy reading and puts into perspective many of the seemingly bewildering happenings reported daily by the media. Although we may be dismayed and confused by many of the events happening around us, seeing these events in the context of larger trends provides us with insight and understanding.

One major nationwide trend, according to Naisbitt, is the move from a strong centralized government to stronger local governments. Indicative of this is the relative stability in the number of federal employees as opposed to the enormous growth recently in the size of state and local governments. Certainly, a national government is necessary, particularly with respect to defense and foreign affairs. However, as we all know, it is nearly impossible for a gigantic centralized government to respond adequately to the needs of its citizens at the local level. The same is true to a lesser extent at the state level. Even our city/county system does not always respond appropriately or sensitively to the needs of its people.

The establishment of the neighborhood board system in Hawaii is one indication of this trend on the local scene. At times, neighborhood boards seem to be just another layer of government to be contended with as our projects go through the multi-level permit process so prevalent in Hawaii. However, if Naisbitt is correct in his predictions, we will probably see



the neighborhood boards replacing some of the functions currently performed at the city level, thus reducing the layers of bureaucracy. Perhaps the neighborhood boards are the vanguard of a system of government akin to the old town meeting concept which I find very hopeful and heartening after so many years of the "big is better" syndrome. A smaller organization can respond more appropriately to the needs of its "customers."

However, as in most human affairs, there may be a troublesome side to this trend. Naisbitt points out that there is also a trend from representative to participatory democracy. The apparent popularity of initiative and referendum, as well as neighborhood boards is indicative of this trend. With time, more and more of the decisions currently being made by the legislative and executive branches will be made by the people directly. Thus, it may be difficult to know with certainty that the permit issued yesterday will be valid tomorrow (shades of Nukoli'i!).

All in all, these are exciting and yeasty times. I highly recommend *Megatrends* to you. You may not agree or like the trends John Naisbitt writes about, but I think you will find it fascinating reading. It will certainly shed a great deal of light on the events of our times. HA

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