

IOWA ARCHITECT

editorial



Barbara Lett Simmons

CHARRETTE — THE "WHEEL" CONCEPT

Des Moines, Iowa launched a significant and gruelling agenda when it engaged in the exciting and rewarding Charrette process for planning the new educational facilities.

The Charrette process requires development of a **working partnership** between the center of political authority, the multi-agency bureaucracy, the planner/designer and the community to be affected. This working partnership of commitment and shared financial support augments creative community development.

In Des Moines, practical and viable plans were made possible because of this kind of direct participation and commitment by key public officials and planners working in concert with local citizens.

Planning such as this stands in clear contrast to the traditional proliferation of uncoordinated Federal, State and local government studies that end up on shelves unimplemented and frequently unimplement-

able. This kind of effective economy is further maximized when resources already available are marshalled for full use.

There is also another kind of economy more difficult to measure but clearly of great value. Through the shared participation of an educational facilities charrette, the community is provided an opportunity for airing its hopes and ideas and at the same time is able to measure these against the realities of political, economic and technical constraints.

Still another benefit, though not negotiable in the market place, is evidenced by a quote I share from a Des Moines Charretter who stated the following in referring to her charrette participation:

"I feel it helped cement community relationships. I know in my case it did. There was a Negro lady from another school I'll be working with that I felt was ill at ease with and leery of me, but we both left the Charrette as good friends communicating meaningfully. She met my husband and learned about our family and we in turn found out a lot about her family and opinions and we both became aware of each other as just two women with a lot in common and what did our difference in race have to do with anything really. I felt so good when I got home and I hope she did also."

This immeasurable kind of economy is perhaps the highest level of what "charretting" is all about. As a brochure put out by the U. S. Office of Education states, "Things are never the same after charrette; the experience unites the participants and the outcome changes the entire community." This effective technique of harnessing community opinion toward positive goals is being demonstrated in Des Moines.

To enunciate a few of the basic goals of the educational program which came out of the Des Moines 1971 Charrette is to further acknowledge the economic benefits when we consider long range values:

1. To provide an education leading toward the liberation of the individual person and of the community so that they can function cooperatively and creatively toward resolving problems confronting the community.
2. To develop the ability of each child to relate wholesomely to himself and others.

continued on pg. 2

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IOWA ARCHITECT

Volume 18 Number 3
July/August/September 1971

The IOWA ARCHITECT is the official publication of the Iowa Chapter, The American Institute of Architects, and is published quarterly.

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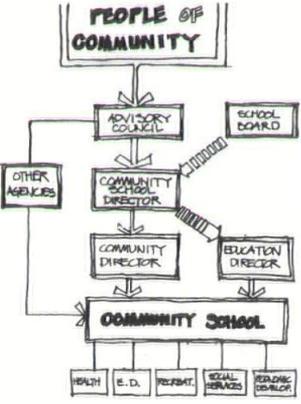
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Ronchamp:

The chapel at Ronchamp by LeCorbusier was constructed in 1950-53. It is the most notable example of the plastic inventiveness which Corbusier brought to architecture.

Critical commentary by Christopher W. Kellogg on this celebrated structure provides a fresh and individual perspective.

12 21



Charrette:

The basic goals of an educational program should be to develop the individual to function creatively and provide for individual needs in the development towards total intellectual, social, emotional and physical maturity. "Charrette" as a process is an attempt to determine the real requirements that an educational facility must meet to best fulfill the goals set by those who will be served by that facility.

As always the NEWS provides you with notes on upcoming conventions, A.I.A. policy, changes in office staff and items of concern for everyone.

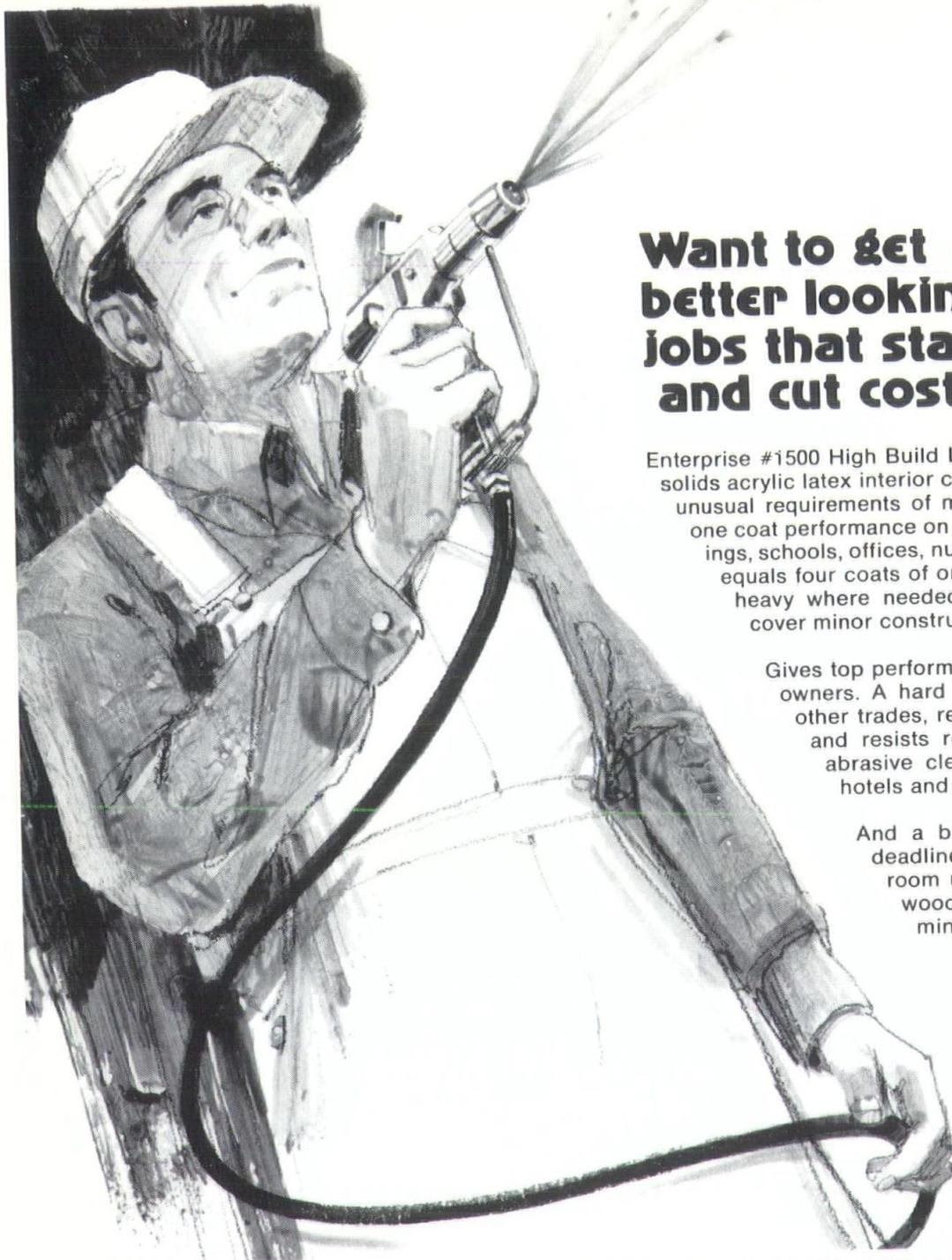
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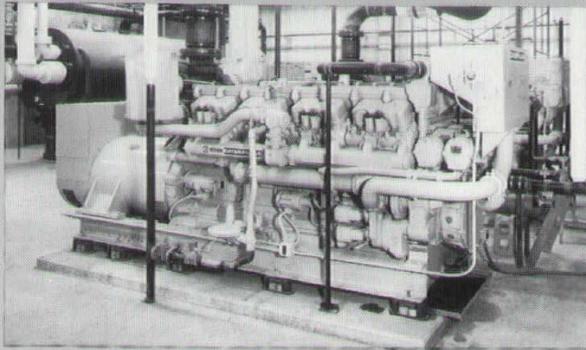
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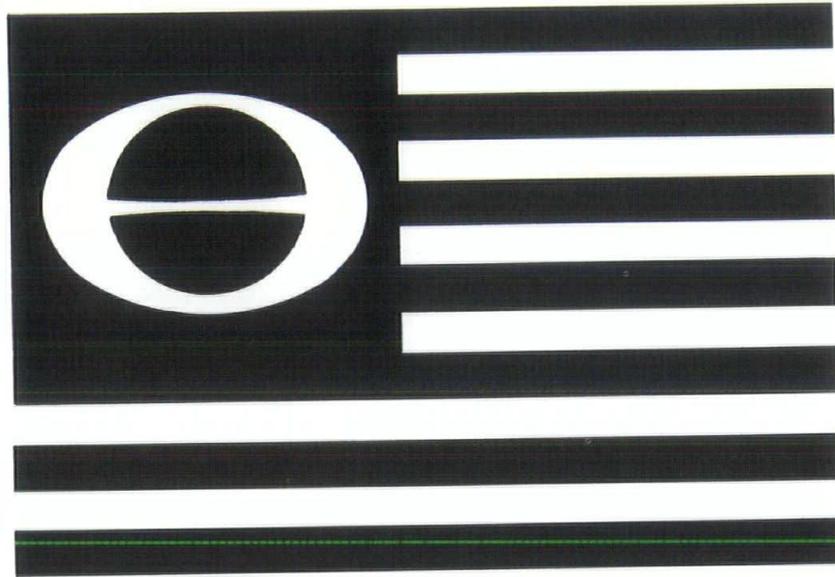
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Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp

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A Critique by Christopher W. Kellogg

Religion is a strange phenomenon and it produces strange structures. Unlike an office tower or apartment complex, a religious structure has demands which are up to the discretion of the client and can be circumvented by the architect if a rationalization of aesthetic needs take priority. It is for this reason that my basis for the critical analysis of Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp is necessarily closely defined. I have decided upon three basic areas of criticism: the first, how well the structure functions for those who use it; the second, the structural honesty of the building from an architect's point of view; the third, the aesthetic qualities that have been applied to the structure, as well as those inherent in such an edifice.



I've chosen Le Corbusier's Ronchamp for several reasons. The structure has a specific purpose and can therefore be analysed accordingly. The chapel has drawn world-wide commentary, some of which I've incorporated in this analysis. There has also been time for public opinion to evolve on the church, and the architect himself has expressed his ideas of the structure itself and architecture in general. But more important than any of these is that I have visited the chapel myself, and because of this fact, I feel I am familiar enough with it to express a valid analysis of my own impressions.

The critical analysis I am going to give may be a bit unorthodox, but having seen the structure and not feeling completely adequate to criticize it as a peer to Corbusier, I want to express my impressions

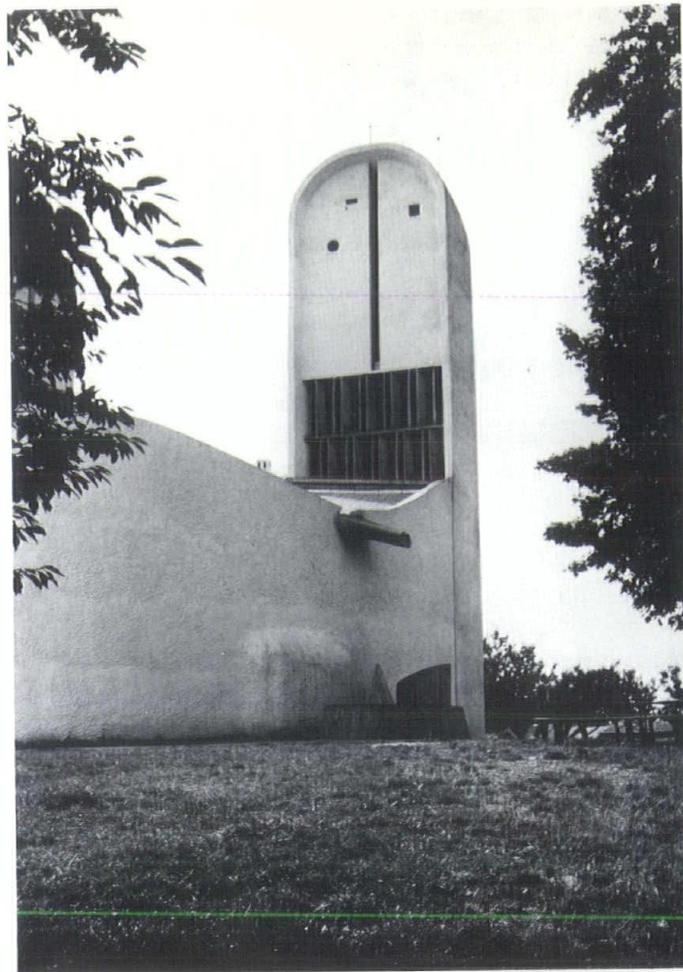
in a fairly non-technical, straight-forward manner. I will do so in the unabashed first person, for what that may be worth. I am also going to adopt a travelogue-type approach, letting you see verbally as I saw visually. I will express my feelings as I felt them, and as I still feel them. Therefore, the credence of this analysis is left up to you.

We get off the bus at the car park and, paying our contributions of seven francs, we ascended the foot ramp toward the curious structure. It appears from this distance as huge white monolithic mass floating at the top of the grassy hill. As we get closer, we see the deep reveals of the south wall facing us; the tall tower of one of the smaller chapels rising to the left. The wall slants back at a seventy-five or eighty degree angle to the ground and presents itself as a huge buttress against the intense sunlight. It seems just natural to walk around the structure clockwise, and so we do, proceeding toward the west wall. Here is a strange combination of shapes: a stark white wall with a pregnant bulge at center bottom (indicating the confessionals within); directly above it, a double-barreled gargoyle juts out about four feet to deliver rainwater from the roof to an elliptical pool beneath containing a concrete cylinder and two concrete pyramidal-shaped tetrahedrons. As we progress toward the north wall, we see two oppositely facing light-grabbers standing at attention. Between them a secondary entrance is squeezed. Another deeply revealed wall completes the north side, with an applied concrete stairway to the priests' quarters showing the only signs of intended human habitation. The east wall is like a stage backdrop; impressive in immensity and scale, functional as an echo screen for outdoor services. At the right a plastered cowling protects and surrounds a concrete pillar that supports the dominating shell roof structure. A small pulpit rests up against this cowling; behind, canti-levered from the wall, is a choir loft of sorts. A plain white marble altar stands off to the left; above it, the hollowed-out back of the Virgin Mary standing in a window designed to pivot but failing to do so. Another entrance door is hidden at the junction of the east and south walls, hardly noticeable. Jutting out here at the corner is the tall knife-edged end of the south wall, delineating the corner and serving as an almost obelisk-like visual accent.

As with any piece of sculpture by a recognized master, we are somehow compelled to recircumvent the structure; it actually is almost awesome to look at. This time we notice some of the details of the exterior: the sixteen square meter enameled door painted by Corbu himself; above it, the concrete box containing a feature lamp that abruptly sticks out of the side of the tower. For the first time we take a good look at the exterior wall surface—it appears to be hand-thrown plaster with an impasto of about two inches; in fact, it has an almost papier mache quality about it. As we circle, our gaze is interrupted by the straight, black expansion joint set between the tower and the west wall, and we are reminded that, it is, in fact, an actual building. The west wall draws us directly onto the north; the two opposite towers here intrigue us. Two more expansion joints delineate the junction of the walls and towers, and above, in the tower fronts, we see the four inch static, concrete fins set at arbitrary angles, suggesting moveability. We momentarily wonder why they don't move. The fins are repeated above the small doorway, quite arbitrarily. The pock-marked north wall expresses well the rear of the structure; loosely organized, an access stairway clinging to the papier-mache as if this side is not meant to be seen. So we keep moving. The east wall, with its enormous cantilevered roof, is impressive. There are tiny bullet-hole sized lights all over this side; maybe Corbusier doesn't like eastern sun. The Statue of the Virgin looks strange with the hollowed-out back staring at us through the window. The door fit in between this wall and the sweeping south wall is small, and above it all those same louvers. These should move being on the east, but they don't. But it's okay, he's a master.

Excitement builds as the enormous enameled door is pivoted about its axis, and we all ease into the interior. It's dark. It's damp. It's hollow. We all just pirouette in our respective positions taking in the supposedly magnificent interior. The pulpit looks funny sticking up on the side like that. Those windows, they're so large but let in so little light. That wall must be twelve feet thick! The confessionals look as if they were built for pygmies, imbedded in the walls like that. Oh, there's the altar—puny, simple, and anti-climactic. A little more walking around inside, and we go back out.

This is what happened to me when I saw Corbusier's monument. When one is in the presence of such a structure, emotions take over, but now that I am finished with the tour, I think logical analysis is in order. Did the church function as it was intended? Was it a machine to serve man in accordance with Corbusier's theories? Retrospect may answer these questions. If we agree that the function of any chapel, even a pilgrimage chapel, is to help in an individual's communication with the Almighty, and

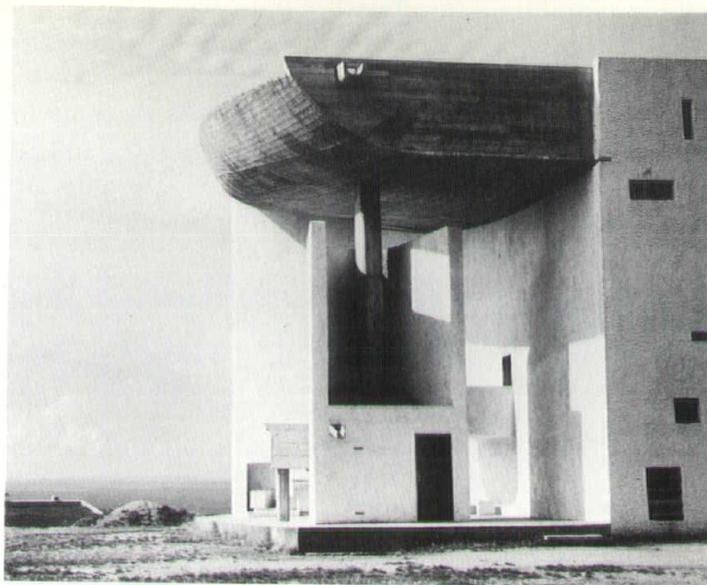


the ultimate glorification of the latter, then the relative success of Ronchamp can be evaluated. In the chapel itself, the actual icons relating to religion are scarce; a small cross, a totally uninspired altar poorly placed, a minimal stature of the Virgin in a glaring window. The eyes of a visitor are riveted to Corbusier's hand-painted windows, then slowly drift to the horizontal band of glass at the junction of the walls and roof, then to the other visitors, then back to those damn windows. Hardly conducive to prayer. While we were there, I noticed that no one even appeared tempted to kneel, though this might be because we were not the most religiously minded group of tourists. But other sources I've researched have strengthened this observation: even though a few pews are provided, they are very rarely used, except at times when Mass is being offered. Usually, visitors stand and simply gawk. It makes us wonder; was this chapel built for the glory of God or the glory of one man?

The structural honesty of the building is another aspect to be questioned. The thing was designed to be built by forming it with a screen of steel, then spraying this screen with concrete. This method was determined to be unfeasible, and the stone from the old church was to be used instead. Therefore, concrete slabs were poured to function as pillars for

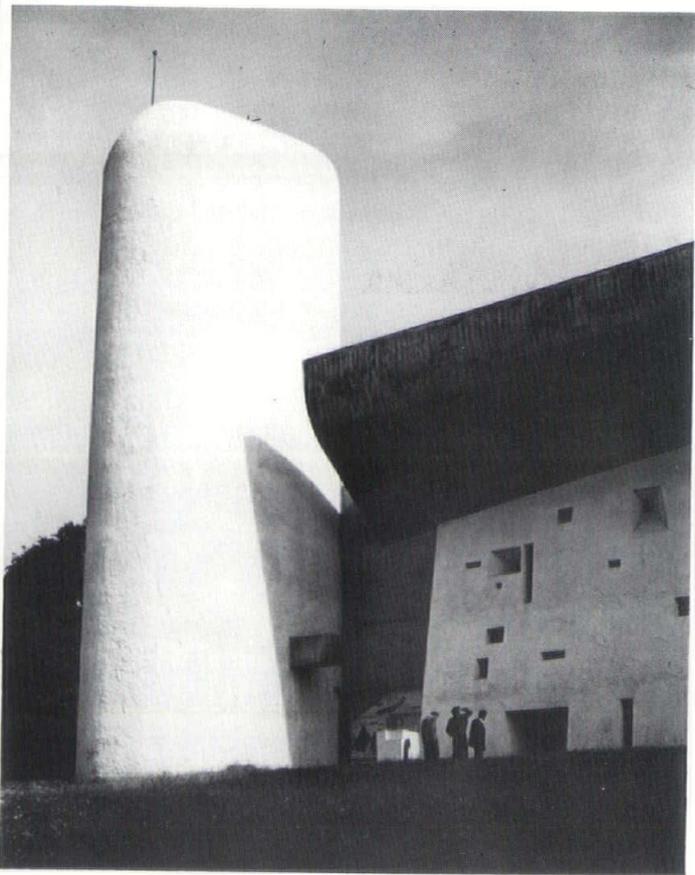
support of the enormous roof, and most of the rest of the wall was filled with stone. After the entire structure was complete, it was plastered with blown concrete so that it looks like solid cement with textured finish. The honesty of this solution is questionable, at the very best. The concrete pillars supporting the roof can be seen passing through a horizontal window band at the top of the walls, but since this band is only about six inches deep and the wall is, at points, twenty-five to thirty feet tall, other than careful inspection shows the roof floating above the floor, an uncomfortable situation for the common tourist, even if being aesthetically awesome. Only the working drawings betray the hollowness of the massive six feet thick roof, as there is no physical quality of it to indicate its construction. Wall thicknesses vary throughout in a somewhat random manner—from approximately twelve feet at the base of the windowed south wall to about two feet at its top. The other walls you just guess at, an average being possibly three feet. The **thinnest** wall was the east, while this is the very wall that must carry the greatest cantilevered overhang of the roof. Perhaps casual visitors do not notice these details, and perhaps Corbusier was therefore not concerned with them, but this is not adequate architectural excuse for helter-skelter detailing.

The lack of precision in fenestration, the papier mache concrete, and the spontaneous imperfections obvious throughout all question the honesty of one who is supposed to be a master architect.



It has been said, and at times proven, that a building that functions well and is structurally well-expressed automatically assumes its own aesthetic superiority. This, of course, may be in the eyes of the beholder, as a proponent of Gothic architecture will often totally dislike an International Style building. Therefore, a criticism of the aesthetics of Ronchamp will, of necessity, be fairly personal, so if you disagree, I apologize. But the chapel did, and still does, impress me as a massive piece of sculpture, though undeniably a personal work of great intensity. It is only secondarily a building, and only incidentally a chapel. The structure has an ethereal quality; its solid external character contrasts with its interior void to produce a high emotional impact. The curving walls and unbelievable roof weren't enough for Corbu; he had to add a gargoyle for a rainspout, a secondary concrete sculpture to receive the water, light-grabbers, cantilevered choir lofts, and so on and so on, until the visitor's eyes are literally boggled with awe-producing details. Inside, a bold purple wall contrasts with white; huge funnels try to deliver light in a menagerie of directions; and the handwriting of a master utters profound words on doors and windows. Aesthetically, it may be vastly superior, if superior is taken to mean an over-abundance of applied architectural culture.

It has been said of Corbusier that he does a thing he knows he has to do and then looks to justify it. Whether Ronchamp has been justified to Corbu is immaterial; if it has been justified in the eyes of the people it was built for may never be determined. A Swiss man living nearby was quoted as saying "the old one was better," though he may be dismissed as a simple old man who doesn't understand progress. Even so, to me, a visitor like so many others, the sensational impact of the chapel was sustained for a brief period, and when emotions had subsided, there was little to appeal to the intellect, and nothing to analyse or stimulate curiosity.



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A Charrette has been described as "a process of community planning," "a vehicle for citizen participation," and "a technique for studying and resolving educational facility problems." It is this as well as unique personal experience for people who participate.

The literal meaning of the term Charrette is two-wheeled cart. Another meaning has developed over the years which has considerably more significance to persons involved in community planning. The second meaning evolved when the faculty at the Paris' Ecole des Beaux-Arts (School of Architecture) reportedly sent a two-wheeled cart, **la charrette**, to collect drawings and designs of architectural students prior to the end of the school term. Occasionally, students did not have their assigned work completed. When this happened it was not uncommon to see someone atop the cart hastily making last minute alterations or improvements to designs while **en route to les professeurs**. The word CHARRETTE as adopted by architects is associated with building design and has become synonymous with creativity, compressed time, deadlines, and feverish planning.

The Charrette concept has been used in a variety of different planning situations across the United States to develop community facilities, i.e., high schools, elementary schools, and community health facilities. Des Moines conducted an Educational Facilities Charrette in which emphasis was placed on planning two new inner-city elementary schools to replace four obsolete facilities that date back to 1885. An Educational Facilities Charrette, as employed in Des Moines, and elsewhere in the country, is essentially a planning process whereby members of a community have the opportunity to establish a structure and organization in cooperation with the school system to develop plans for an educational program and school facility. The technique requires that: (1) a majority of planning participants be representatives from the area to be served by the school; (2) matters relative to the solution of problems are considered in open public meetings; (3) much of the responsibility and authority for planning is placed on the community; and (4) the community seeks and considers the advice of educators, planners, local public officials, architects, business representatives, and students.

The main purpose of conducting an Educational

Facility Charrette is to provide the community with an opportunity to develop plans that are consistent with needs of the community, within the capabilities of the community to implement, and directed toward solving problems of the community as identified by residents living in the target area. Solutions to problems are developed by planning intensively in a compressed period of time while working against deadlines to resolve differences. Basically, the Charrette provides a framework for:

1. Increased community involvement in solving problems.
2. Greater acceptance of solutions to problems.
3. More effective planning.
4. Developing trust between community and school.
5. Identification of new roles and responsibilities.

The Charrette process differs considerably from conventional methods of planning. First, it provides a structure which allows residents and agencies to collectively identify problems, needs, and interests that prevail in a community; seek solutions to community problems; confront elected officials in open public forum about community needs; and assist in the implementation of programs. Secondly, many feel the Charrette is more effective than traditional methods since proposals are more likely to be accepted and supported by residents due to their participation and involvement in the planning process.

The Des Moines Public School System in cooperation with the State Department of Public Instruction sponsored a program on community participation and involvement in planning inner-city school facilities during the Fall of 1969. Letters were sent to Iowa superintendents, school board members, professors of education and interested citizens inviting them to attend an evening meeting to hear about "Charrette" a relatively new method of planning schools.

For the Des Moines Public Schools the Educational Facilities Charrette was the culmination of a program of citizen involvement in a city wide program of facilities construction. In 1968, the school system embarked on this building program with the aid of a Citizens' Advisory Committee which studied the building needs of the school system and made its recommendations to the Board of Education. Citizens in the attendance areas of each of the building projects approved by the voters were involved with school personnel in the planning of these new facili-

charrette

Educational Facilities Planning Workshop

ties. None, however, were involved as much as Charrette participants representing areas to be served by the Bird-Grant and Nash-Kirkwood replacement schools.

The new schools were of special significance to both the inner city communities and the school system. Achievement levels far below the norm for Des Moines elementary schools were a common source of frustration. For community, the low achievement levels represented a serious handicap to its goals and aspirations. It meant that many children would be at a disadvantage when they moved to junior and senior high school and would have to "compete" against children who came from schools where achievement levels were higher. It also meant that education would not be reaching its potential as an ally in the struggle against unemployment and underemployment, poor housing, discrimination, and other social conditions so common in inner city communities throughout our nation.

For the school system, the low achievement levels were an indication that the many special and compensatory programs which had been programmed into these inner city schools were not creating the degree change needed and desired in these communities. The limited changes wrought by these programs did, however, serve to underscore and sharpen an awareness of the complexity and tenacity of the problems involved with providing effective education for children from racial minorities or low socioeconomic backgrounds. This awareness and the increasing refusal by communities to accept the responsibility for poor school performance but rather to hold the school accountable for what happened to their children, suggested a need for the school and community to combine forces for the improvement of education.

The school system had to plan two new inner-city replacement schools as part of its current four-year \$18 million building program. This interest continued to grow until the summer of 1970, at which time a Coordinator of Planning and a Director for a newly created Drake-Des Moines Institute were appointed and charged with the responsibility of assisting one of the two remaining elementary communities in planning their school. The Charrette technique was one of several options available to plan the facilities. The Charrette was assured when the school system

committed \$15,000 on November 25, 1970, to the project, Model Cities notified the school of a \$20,000 appropriation on December 16, 1970, and the Polk County Superintendent's office allocated \$5,000 December 17, 1971.

The cost of getting together was high. The cost of not getting together is higher to all of us.

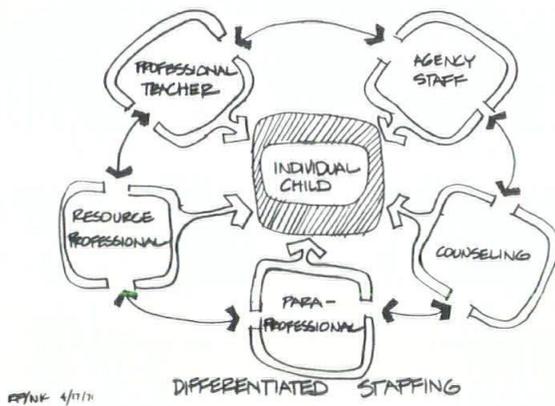
ORGANIZING THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The formation of an effective Charrette Steering Committee is probably the single most important step toward the creation of a successful Charrette. Certain conditions must be met when establishing a steering committee if it is to function in behalf of the community, be viewed as community oriented rather than institutionally controlled, and be trusted by residents in the community. The Des Moines Charrette Steering Committee was organized as follows:

1. The community had the voting majority to guarantee that their interests, desires, needs, and problems were considered.
2. Residents of the area representing the community were elected at open public meetings.
3. Committee officers were residents of the communities and were elected rather than appointed.
4. Agencies, organizations, and institutions that were needed to provide information, financial or in-kind support, an administrative structure to assist in the implementation of plans after the Charrette, and support in the larger community were identified by resident members elected to the Steering Committee.
5. Representatives from agencies, organizations and institutions were persons in decision-making positions or reported directly to persons in decision-making positions.
6. The Steering Committee had an abiding interest in helping the community members solve its problems and were available to participate in all Charrette activities.

The Des Moines Steering Committee consisted of twenty-seven persons who officially met for the first time January 18, 1971. The Committee was designed initially to be small so the community would have the opportunity to increase its size later if it so desired. Composition of the original steering committee was as follows:

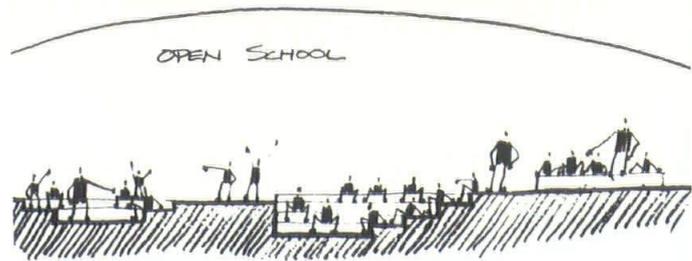
*Representatives	Number
Residents from the immediate area	
Bird Elementary Attendance Area	4
Grant Elementary Attendance Area	4
Kirkwood Elementary Attendance Area	4
Nash Elementary Attendance Area	4
Residents from community at large	3
Representatives from agencies, organizations, and /or institutions	
Model Cities	1
State Department of Instruction	1
School District	1
Polk County Superintendent's Office	1
Drake University	1
City Government	1
Greater Opportunities	1
Chamber of Commerce	1
TOTAL	27



The design of a Charrette is based on three essential elements: (1) the variety of people involved, (2) the amount of time scheduled for activities, and (3) the activities planned for the people and time available. Because Charrette is a dynamic process, its design must be flexible enough to allow for day-to-day decisions which reflect what has transpired in the preceding activities. This means that much of the design of daily activities must wait until the actual Charrette is in progress and it is possible to assess what is happening in the various discussion groups. It is important, however, to emphasize that all decisions are guided by the overall goals of the Charrette.

The Des Moines Educational Charrette was scheduled for ten days and evenings—April 13 through April 23 with Sunday, April 18th as a day off. Day-time sessions were scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with flite-type lunches being served to Charrette participants at the meeting site. Evening meetings were scheduled from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Consultants, discussion leaders, recorders, and graphic interpreters were brought together a day before Charrette began so that they would have some time to become familiar with one another and with the roles they were to assume during the Charrette.

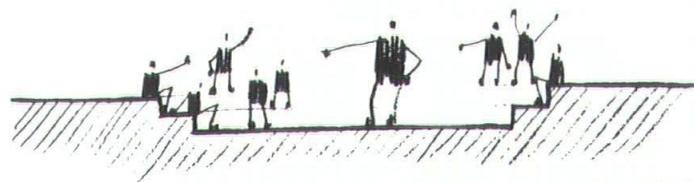


FACILITIES (B-G)
4-13-71

Participation in the Des Moines Charrette reflected a wide range of interests, talents, and viewpoints which are necessary to promote creative interaction between the clients and those who serve them. The participants fell into the following categories:

1. Community residents:
 - a. Eighty full time participants from the four target area communities.
 - b. Twelve full-time participants from the community-at-large.
 - c. Residents who attended evening meetings but were not involved in the daytime meetings.
2. Representatives of agencies, governmental units, and organizations which are involved in decisions affecting these neighborhoods and/or in providing services.
3. Supportive staff
 - a. Seven consultants—including the contracted architects for the two projects.
 - b. Seven discussion leaders selected from community residents.
 - c. Seven recorders.
 - d. Seven graphic interpreters — people with architectural background who prepared graphic materials to use in representing ideas formulated by Charrette.
 - e. Two Charrette coordinators.

TEACHING WELLS



FACILITIES (B-G)
4-13-71

Prior to the beginning of the Charrette, two eight-man developmental teams consisting of teachers, principals, and supervisors from the Des Moines Public Schools, consultants from the Polk County Board of Education and staff members from Drake University had been identified. Their task following the Charrette was to develop educational specifications

based on directions given by the Charrette participants. Most of these team members were full-time participants during Charrette.

For the first cycle of activities, daytime meetings were organized around four major topic areas:

- Educational Program
- Educational Facilities
- School-Community Programs
- Community Development

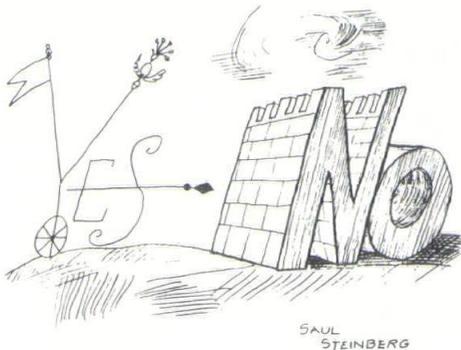
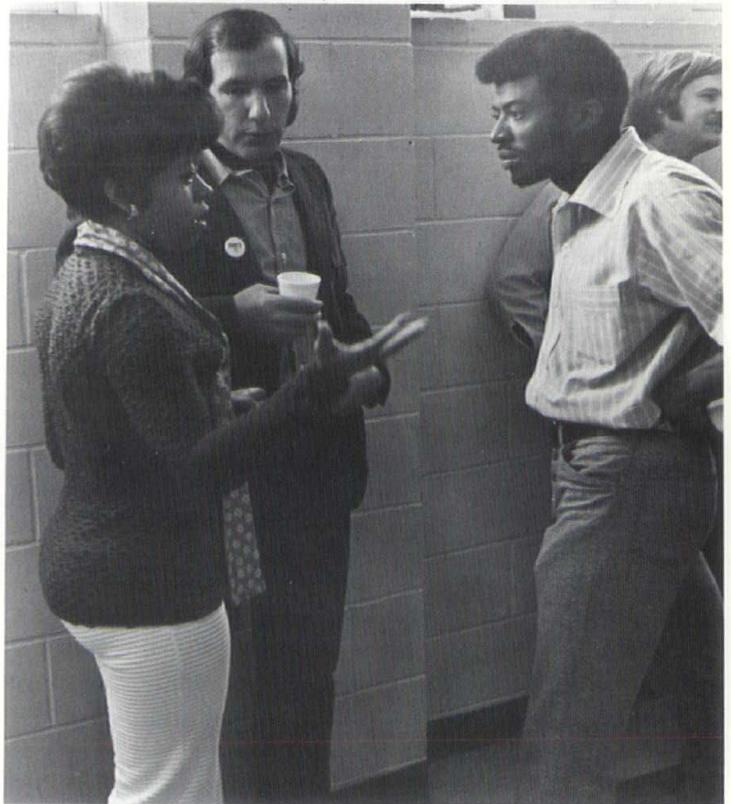
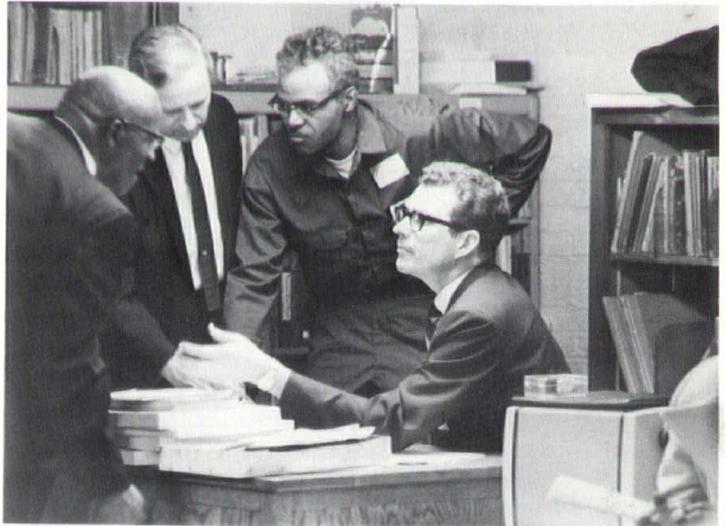
All Charrette participants were assigned to a discussion group which was scheduled to spend a day and a half in each of the four topic areas. Each discussion group was assisted by a team consisting of a:

- Discussion leader — who was a community resident to assist the group in communicating with each other and the consultants.
- Consultant — to provide professional, technical assistance to the discussion group.
- Recorder — to summarize and record the progress of discussion groups.
- Graphic Interpreter — to produce graphic materials to summarize ideas and plans and to be used for communicating with evening participants.

This team was "stationary" which meant that each team worked with four different discussion groups and each discussion group worked with a different team in each of the four major topic areas.

The rotation of all discussion groups through the four topic areas, each with four different discussion groups and each discussion group worked with a different team in each of the four major topic areas.

As an attempt is made to describe the sequence and design of Charrette activities, there may be a failure to also communicate the movement of events within this overall design. As the need arose or was felt, discussion groups were combined, subgroups were established, caucuses regarding citizens or staff concerns i.e., citizen members on the developmental teams — were held, and participants changed work groups, temporarily most of the time, to become involved in discussions of prime concern to them. The most notable example was a discussion group of Nash and Kirkwood residents who worked with a consultant to bring into the open and discuss racial issues confronting these two communities which were forced into a relationship with one another by the school building program.



BUDGET

Funds to conduct a Charrette typically come from a variety of local, state, and federal sources and "are usually committed by organizations other than the sponsoring agency." This fact holds true for the Des Moines Charrette as well when *in-kind contributions are not included in determining sources of financial assistance. The total Charrette budget proposed for the Des Moines Educational Facilities Charrette was \$54,700. Of this amount \$37,700 was provided by agencies, organizations, and institutions other than the public schools who sponsored the Charrette.

Each school will be constructed at a cost of \$1,105,000 from funds appropriated through a school bond election held in November of 1969. Basically, both building plans call for the following components:

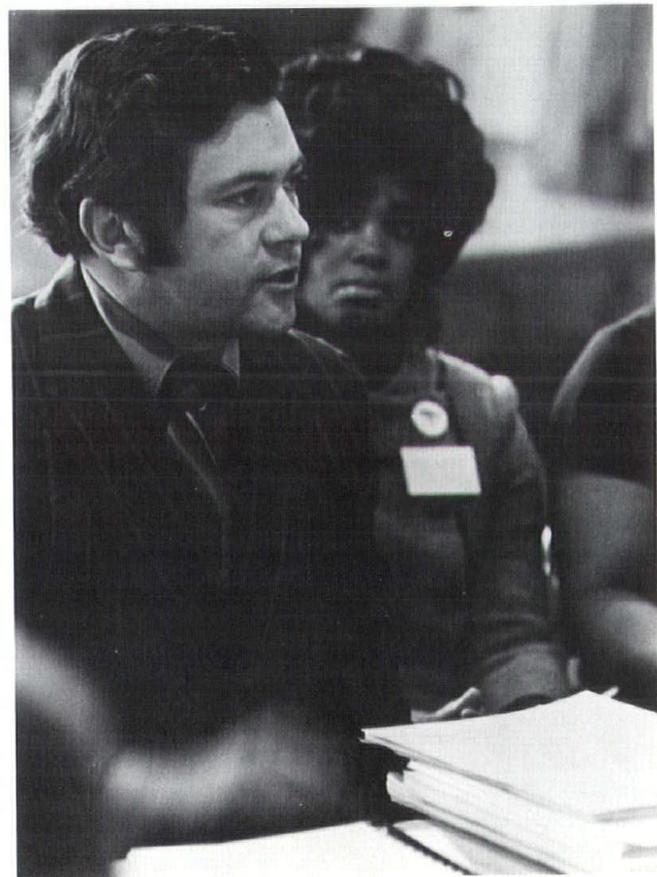
1. Space to house a pre-school
2. Three learning pods or areas
3. Resource center
4. Gym
5. Separate cafeteria
6. Kitchen
7. Administrative offices
8. Pupil services area
9. Community room
10. Space for agency use
11. Well developed playground

A listing of the **Sources of Financial Assistance** does not reflect the many in-kind contributions which are "equally important to the success of the Charrette process." A financial accounting, however, would not be complete without reference to those agencies, organizations, business, industry, and institutions that made major non-financial contributions to the Charrette. Substantial in-kind contributions were made by the Des Moines Public Schools, Drake University, and Polk County Superintendent's Office. Other organizations making major in-kind contributions were as follows:

Chamber of Commerce
Child Guidance Clinic
Des Moines Taxpayers Association
Greater United Way
Iowa Children and Family Service
Iowa Power and Light Company
Northwestern Bell Telephone
Polk County Social Services
Sears Roebuck and Company
Settlement House Association
Teacher Corps
Junior Chamber of Commerce

*A contribution is "in-kind" if it consists of the use of services or property without charge.

How in fact has the Charrette process influenced the early studies of the preliminary design for these two schools? It is programatically different from most local schools: Pupil services such as home-school, nurse and "haven" room; community services such as agency



offices, a community school director; multi-use areas such as gymnasium facilities to be used by the neighborhood (thus making the complex eligible for funds under the Neighborhood facility act), community room with participation and display areas. Obviously, inclusion of such community functions complicates the planning problem, but one thing is certain . . . people are becoming more deeply involved in the approach to and execution of an educational system.

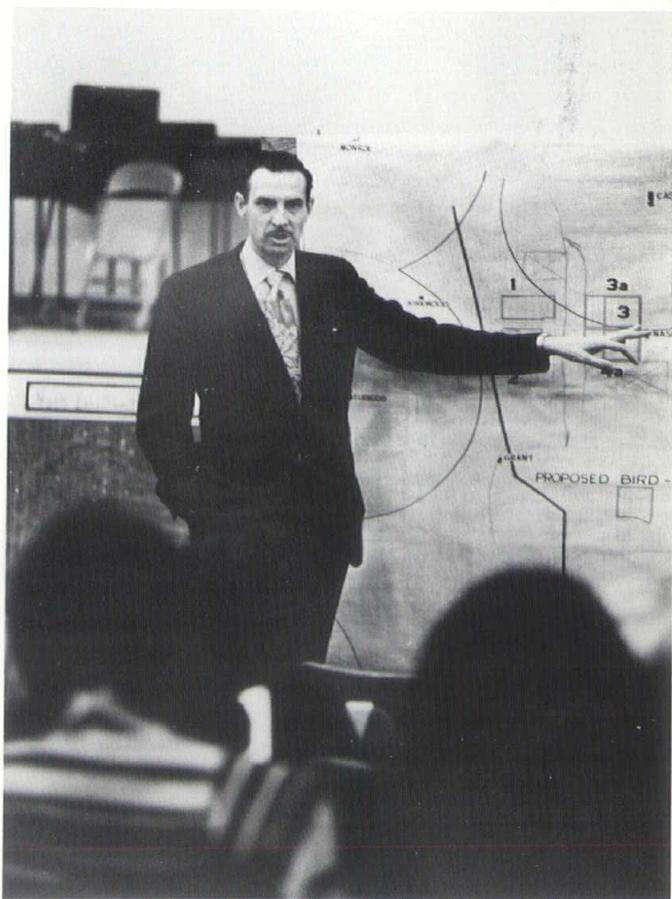
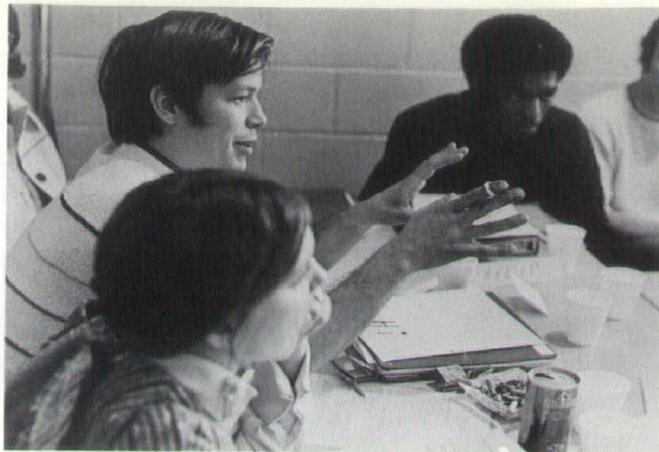
One of the Charrette Steering Committee members, after laboring many months to help set up the Charrette, commented as the Charrette actually got underway, "What Charrette touches it changes." This was a beautiful sentiment, one furnishes evidence that Charrette, a process and vehicle for planning, had indeed begun to make its impact felt.

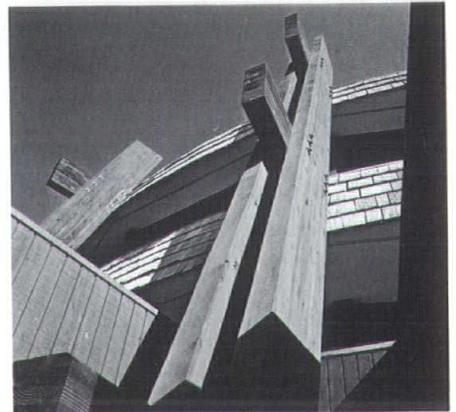
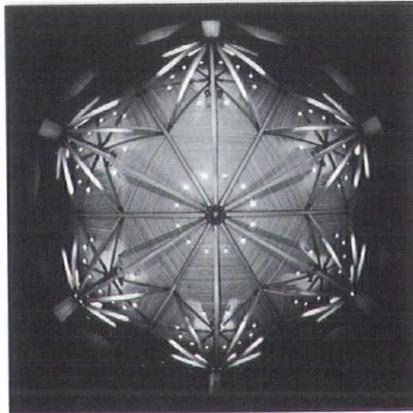
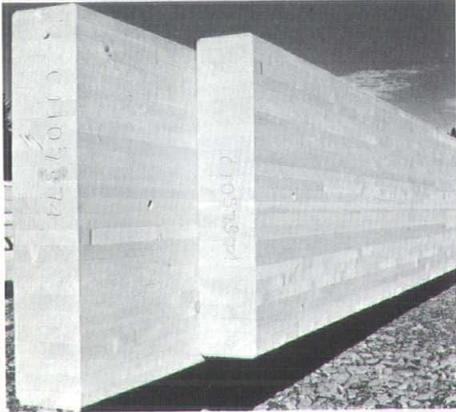
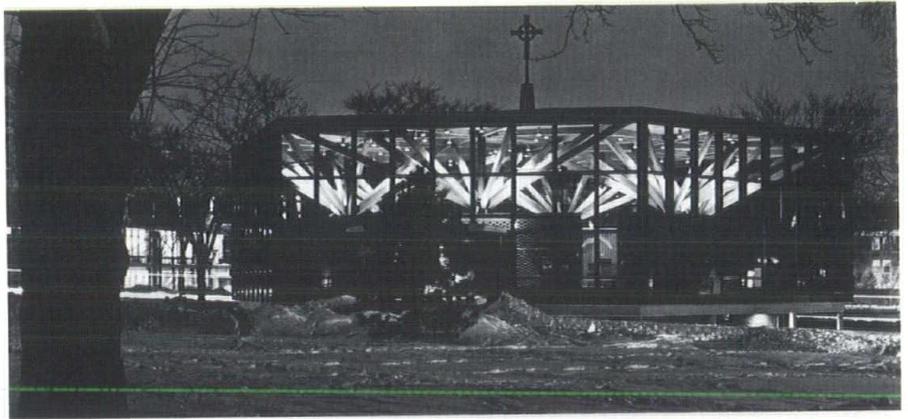
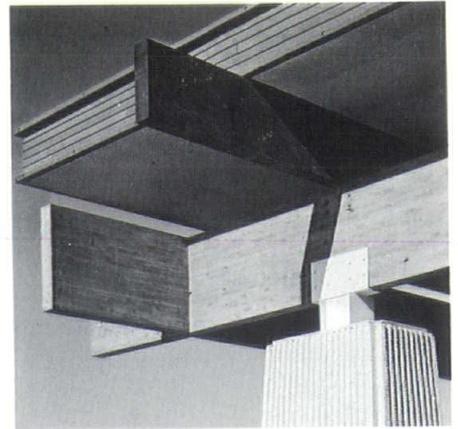
It would be an unfortunate mistake to view the Charrette as a culminating event. Rather, there are compulsive reasons to view it as a beginning. The pathology of problems standing in the way to improved education and life conditions in these communities quickly dispenses any notion that any single event, no matter how intensive and comprehensive, can effect these problems in a lasting way. The Charrette was a beginning in the development of potential partnerships within the communities and between the communities and the institutions which serve them.

It behooves the Des Moines community to view the Charrette as an initial investment which must be nurtured, for in numerous ways the larger community shares in the pathology of those problems being faced in the inner city communities. The Charrette process focused on problems created by our past failures. City-wide support of this effort by the inner-city community to help itself must be forthcoming if we value for others what we value for ourselves—good education, safe neighborhoods, places to play, a chance to work, and freedom of choice.

A member of the Board of Education, after attending and participating in a number of Charrette meetings observed, "This is the most intense and thorough discussion of education that I have experienced in Des Moines." There is no doubt that the willingness and desire to engage in serious, long term discussion about education for the Bird, Grant, Nash, and Kirkwood areas was impressive. There is also no doubt that there was a very constructive emphasis which produced a minimum of blaming and scapegoating. The focus was on building a program and a school which would alleviate or at least begin to deal more effectively with the problems presently faced in these communities.

Note: This report was taken from "Charrette '71 — a Final Report on the Des Moines Educational Facilities Charrette", compiled, written, and edited by Dr. Charles Link, Director, Drake Des Moines Educational Institute and Charrette Coordinator, Mr. Donald Brubaker, Principal, Hubbell Elementary School and Charrette Coordinator; and Mr. Deane N. Haerer, Director, School-Community Relations, Des Moines Public Schools. The complete report and supportive data is available upon request by writing to the Office of School-Community Relations, Des Moines Public Schools, 1800 Grand, Des Moines, Iowa 50307.





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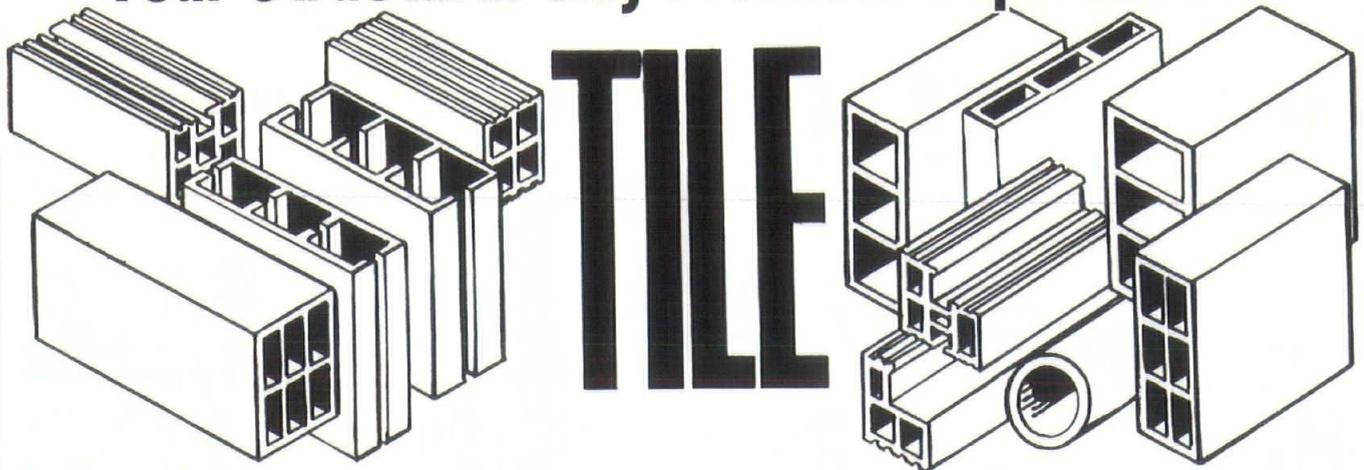
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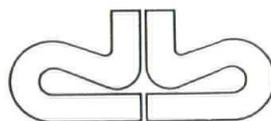


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OFFICE NOTES

The firm of Tinsley Higgins Lighter & Lyon announces the retirement of Clyde W. Lighter and the reorganization of the firm from a partnership to a professional corporation.

Officers of the new corporation are R. Wayne Lyon, President, Tom G. Higgins, Vice President, Keith E. Shirk, Treasurer and Kirk Colvig, Secretary.

Mr. Lighter attended the University of Iowa and the University of Minnesota, where he received a B. S. in Architecture in 1926.

He became a partner in the firm of Tinsley, Higgins & Lighter in 1945 and has been a partner in the firm of Tinsley Higgins Lighter & Lyon since 1953.

His community service includes eight years on the City Plan & Zoning Commission and ten years on the City Urban Renewal Board.

Mr. Lighter served the AIA as Iowa Chapter Secretary in 1947-48 and as Vice President in 1949-50.

Tinsley Higgins Lighter & Lyon also announces the retirement of Charles L. Ritts who joined the firm as specification writer in 1948.

Mr. Ritts received his B. S. in Architecture from the University of Illinois in 1916 and is one of the founders of Alpha Rho Chi, Architectural Fraternity.

He served the Iowa Chapter AIA as Treasurer from 1951 to 1953.

Architects • Hansen Lind Meyer, Inc. announced the election of senior associate John Douglas Benz to the position of principal of the firm. Mr. Benz has been with Hansen Lind Meyer since January of 1967 and has been a senior associate since December of 1968. Benz attended the University of Denver and Iowa State University, where he received his Bachelor of Architecture in 1962. John and his wife Diana and children Phillip Andrew and Mary Elizabeth reside at 730 Keokuk Court in Iowa City.

AMES AWARD

Michael James Fatka is the recipient of the Burdette Higgins Memorial Award for the 1970-71 academic year. The \$100.00 award is presented annually to a graduating senior in Architecture for his outstanding ability in architectural delineation.

Mike has been an excellent design student completing his Bachelor of Architecture degree in May 1971. Born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he and his family are residing in Ames.

AREA NOTES



1913. Algona, Iowa erected what Huger Morrison referred to as one of Louis Sullivan's best designed small structures.

Built initially as offices for Druggist's Mutual, the building remains, as of today, basically unaltered on the exterior although the interior has been totally changed.

The building was recently sold and plans now are to renovate to accommodate a clothing store which could jeopardize the intrinsic value of the structure.

Architect William Wagner, because of his interest in the structure, has provided a solution which will maintain the integrity of the design, but as of now its future remains in question.

We hope the present owner will realize a solution which encompasses both the present needs and the historical ones.

Central States Regional

Kansas City will have the Central States Regional Conference October 13 thru 15. The theme of the Conference will be "**A Piece of the Action**" and will focus on what some have termed the newest frontier in the business of architecture . . . land development. Speakers for the Conference include Vincent Kling; Robert Hastings, AIA President, Herbert Lembcke from Atlanta, and John Law presenting the small firms approach to development work. Mr. Paul Farrell, lawyer, mortgage banker, and architect will discuss financing.

AREA NOTES

1972 Iowa Convention

Announced dates for the 1972 Iowa Chapter of the AIA Annual Convention are January 27, 28 and 29. It will be held at Johnny and Kay's Hyatt House in Des Moines.

Fall Retreat

The Iowa Chapter AIA Fall Retreat has been set for October 1 and 2. The Retreat will be held again at Bortell's Bar Rocking B Ranch which is West and South of St. Charles, Iowa.

The Human Environment Committee is putting together a program with emphasis on the governments role in the design of public facilities and the design professional's role in government.

GARDNER SEES GOVERNMENT UNRESPONSIVE TO HUMAN NEEDS

Our political and governmental institutions are not effective, are not accessible by the people, are not responsive to human needs, and cannot be held accountable, John Gardner, chairman of Common Cause citizens lobby, told the American Institute of Architects convention Wednesday.

"Many Americans have wanted their government to become weaker," he said, adding that, "they have imagined that if they paid little attention to government it might remain unobtrusive.

"But in the face of their neglect it has not withered away. It has become huge and all-pervasive. But it is not accountable. It is not responsive."

Gardner participated in a panel discussion focused on the second question of the AIA convention theme's Hard Choices: How do we best use our resources to meet basic human needs now?

Also speaking on the issue were Harold Sims, acting executive director of the National Urban League, Peter Drucker, management consultant and author, and an architectural student, Greg White of Rice University, Houston.

The session was moderated by Dr. Vivian Henderson, president of Clark University, Atlanta. To those that scoff at the idea of citizens action or believe it is ineffective Gardner reminded them that relatively small groups of crusading citizens won the vote for women, abolished child labor, forced us to care about retarded children, and launched the civil rights movement . . . "

Gardner said that he has found disillusioned people throughout the country and profound skepticism about our political and governmental processes.

"Such feelings constitute a kind of explosive charge that could splinter our two major parties. It could lead us to follow the shallowest of demagogues. It could result in massive refusals to vote."

HUMAN RESOURCES PROGRAM

Architectural firms and individual architects have pledged a half-million dollars over a four-year period to the Human Resources Council of The American Institute of Architects to expand its program of professional responsibility to society.

This commitment to the profession's socially directed concerns was announced by San Francisco architect Nathaniel Owings, FAIA, co-chairman of the Human Resources Council, at a convocation of 100 architects in Omaha February 27.

They were assembled for the first nationwide meeting of the council, a body created in December to raise money and stimulate the personal involvement of architects in attacking the problems of the poor, the minorities, and their environment. The architects came from every part of the country, traveling at their own expense, to share experience in their own community efforts and learn how the national movement might support their local activities.

The diverse group included representatives of some of the nation's largest architectural firms, black leaders of Community Development Centers (which offer professional services to help poor citizens improve their physical surroundings), individual architects who have been devoting time to these services, and chapter officers charged with involving their members in the broad human resources effort.

Decisions on applying the funds to specific projects will be made by the Human Resources Council's executive committee, headed jointly by Owings and Robert J. Nash of Washington, D. C., the first black architect to be elected a national vice president of the AIA.

They defined the council's main thrusts in three program areas: Community Development Centers (CDCs), education for black architects, and elimination of the constraints to building housing for the poor.

16TH ANNUAL HOMES FOR BETTER LIVING PROGRAM AWARD

Twenty-one architect-designed homes and apartments have been selected for awards in the 16th annual Homes for Better Living program. The program is sponsored by The American Institute of Architects in cooperation with HOUSE & HOME, a McGraw-Hill trade publication for the home building industry, and AMERICAN HOME, Downe Publishing's consumer magazine.

The certificates of award—six First Honors, 12 Awards of Merit, and three Honorable Mentions—will be presented to the architects in recognition of their outstanding contributions to better living.

The Homes for Better Living program, the largest and oldest residential design awards competition in the country, was instituted to encourage greater

news cont'd.

collaboration between architects and builders, and therefore better housing for the citizens of the United States. In the 16 years of the program, there have been 498 award-winning projects.

Entries are divided into three categories: 1) custom houses designed for a specific client, 2) merchant-built houses designed to be sold, and 3) multifamily housing. This year there are 11 custom winners, two merchant-built winners, and eight multifamily winners. In 16 years, awards have gone to 213 custom houses, 148 merchant-built houses, and 137 multifamily projects (although the apartment category was not added until 1961).

Selected for an award of Honorable Mention in the custom house category was Thomas P. Reilly, Crites and McConnell Architects Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

editorial cont'd.

3. To provide for each child's individual needs toward his total intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.
4. To provide help to children in developing a system of values which is in harmony with the best interests of the home, community and the total society.
5. To provide training and retaining experience in the culture and history of all ethnic groups with emphasis on those represented in the community for all school staff and others involved cooperatively with the school in the development of children.

The reality test of the Charrette proposals demands affirmative answers to only two questions. Are these proposals conceptually valid and are they operationally feasible? It is this writer's observation that the answers to these questions were positively affirmed by the highest ranking officials and community leaders of Des Moines at the final, open forum presentation when they established a target date for implementation of school year 1972-73.

What the charrette instrument does is provide a tool to people for communicating who have never been a part of the design process that shaped their surroundings. Administrators are now aware that non-expert residents have something to tell them that can help in the planning process. Architects and planners have a new, potentially creative and dynamic input into their design programs. The pitfall to be avoided, however, is that community residents experience only the illusion of affecting their own lives—not the reality. Realizing this, architects and planners can do much to make "charrette" a vital new instrument for participatory democracy.

The Charrette process idea was evolved initially by an officer in the Office of Education and the first one took place in February 1969 in Maryland at the Dunbar High School in East Baltimore. The first Charrettes were provided with seed money and technical assistance from HEW. There have been about 40 Charrettes and they have run the gamut from urban cities to small towns, rural areas, inner city and suburban schools, plus model cities.

The major purpose of the Charrette process is planning—comprehensive community planning which embraces community supportive services to interrelate housing, health, employment, highways, etc. Ideally an educational facility, as the tangible outcome, serves as the catalytic agent to get at **total** comprehensive community planning.

While the Charrette is not a highly structured process, it has three very definite components:

1. Comprehensive planning related to other community services.
2. Involvement of both decision makers and the citizenry affected.
3. Compressed time—deadline orientation of two weeks permits greater creativity, continuity of people and obviates waning of interest.

This process has been utilized for the settling of a variety of specific community disputes such as housing authorities, transportation, ecology, desegregation of schools, etc.

The Des Moines Charrette for establishing two new educational facilities has moved in a positive and wholesome manner. The high level of interest and cooperation from the citizenry; official decision-makers in the city, state and county governments; and the education systems and institutions of higher education are ingredients which build in the success factors.

The Charrette Community Advisory Committee has established 5 sub-committees to aid the implementation of the Charrette goals. These committees will translate the ideas and goals produced by the April work into reality.

The term "charrette" implies the speed of wheels and the wheel concept signifies community involvement. The principal purpose of "jointly" arriving at implementing plans and solutions to school and community problems is being demonstrated by the Nash/Kirkwood-Bird/Grant communities. People of good faith across the entire country recognize the need for human relations charged with the responsibility of producing in-depth sessions capable of giving some new direction to school and community dilemmas.

"Human problems need human solutions. Human solutions need the involvement of ordinary people as well as experts and professionals." This very right and very prophetic statement of Lisa Richette is the heart of the matter.



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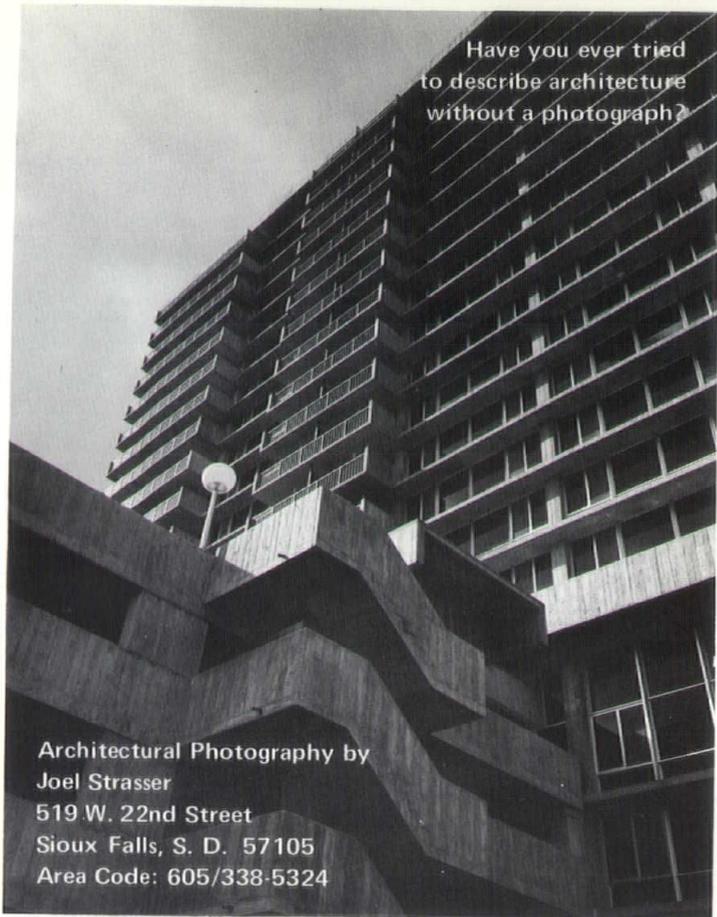
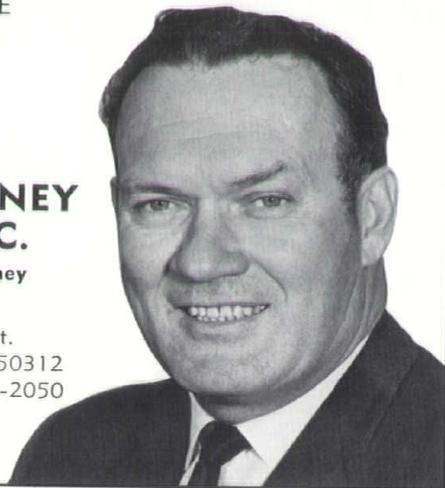
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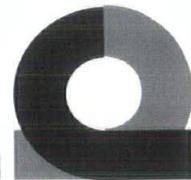
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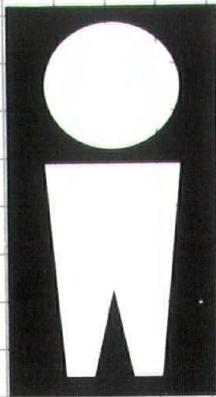
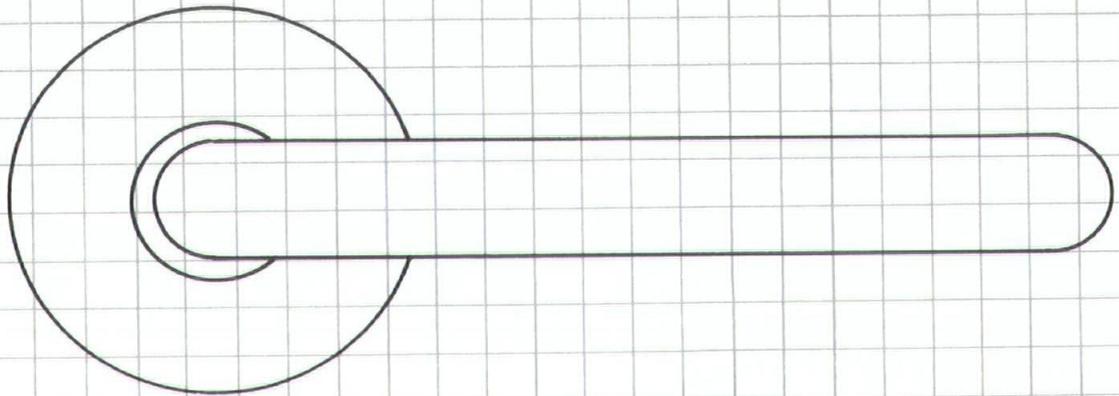
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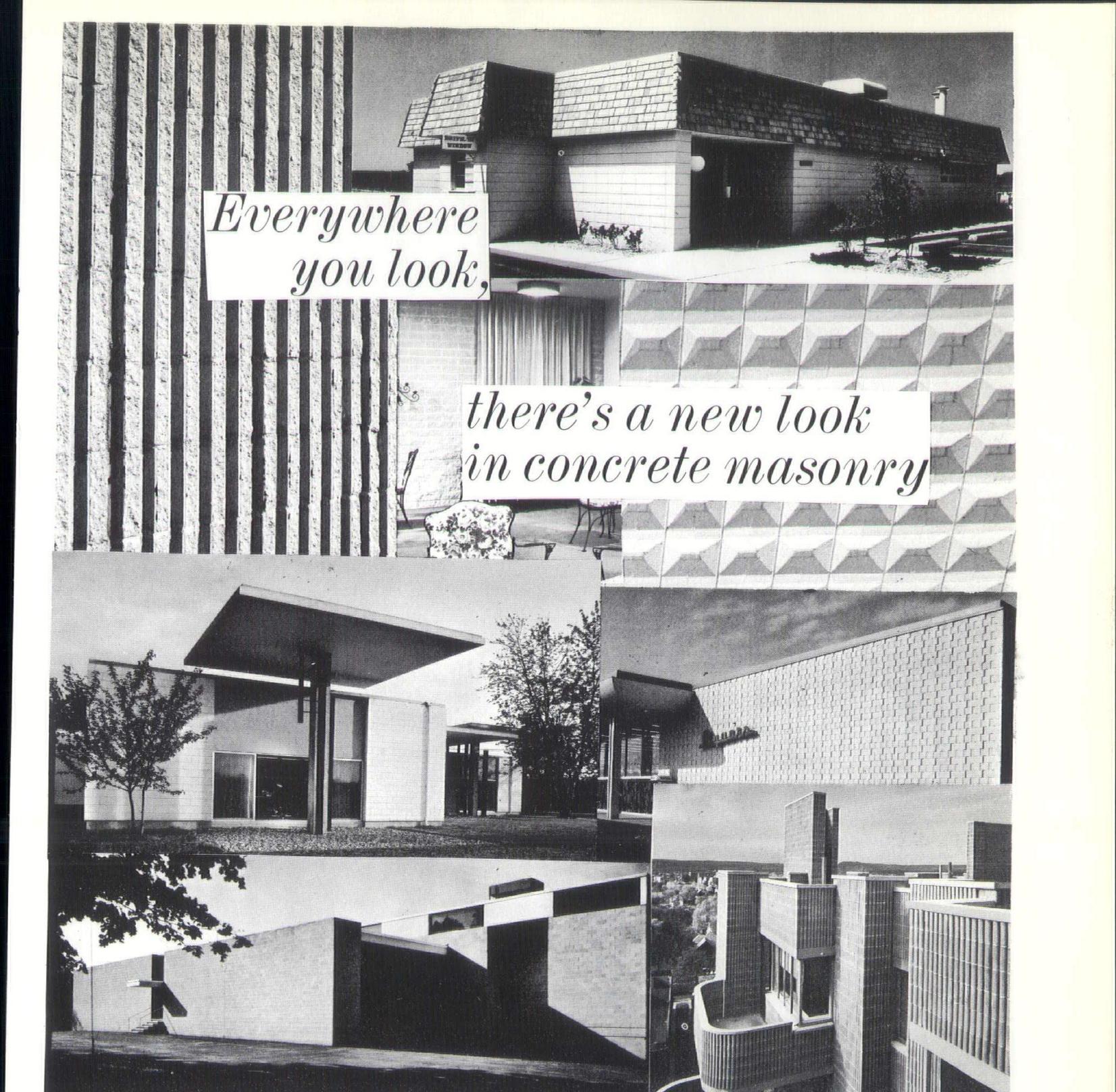
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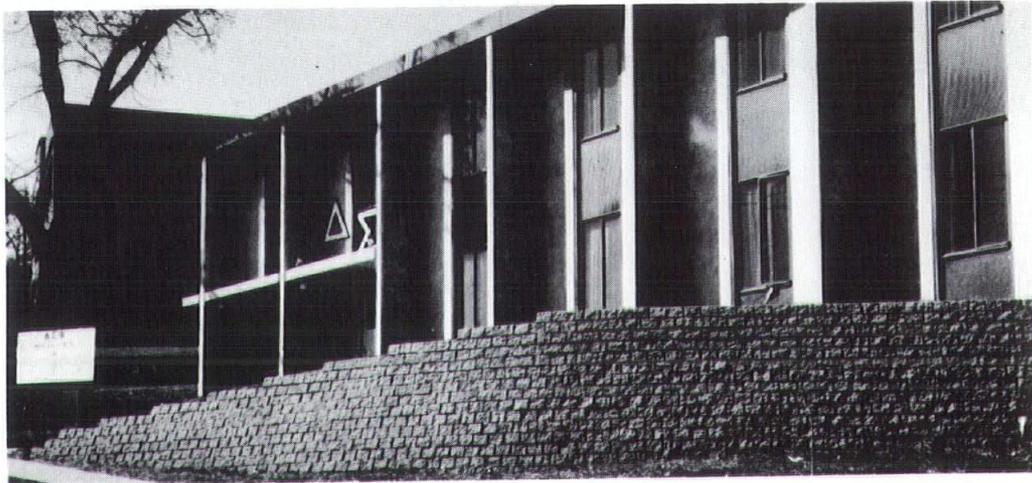
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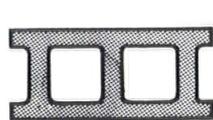
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