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Material in Design

The past ten years of increasing political and economic confusion, though devastating to the quantity of building as a whole, appear to have had some salutary effect upon the quality. Industrial and commercial building, reduced in great part to that amount required by immediate needs, is more disposed to a simple pattern of enclosure — while reduction of private residential building induces consideration of low-cost apartments and single family dwellings in which eclecticism in style and taste must give way to frugal and more efficient shelter.

Cost limitation alone may not be taken as assurance of an architecture pertinent to modern life. In fact, too often in the past, projects both large and small which posed severe economic restrictions as initial factors in design have been regarded as unworthy of the architect and have been abandoned to whatever fate callous minds would subject them.

There are more recent instances, however, where the sobering effect of curtailed budget has been an incentive rather than a deterrent and has produced thoughtful and careful arrangement of space with directness of purpose and economy of line and surface.

Then too, there is little doubt that the principles of organic architecture originally proposed by Louis Sullivan have gained increasing significance and acceptance, for it is easier, within a limited budget, to justify a building as an expression and embodiment of the life and structure within, than it is to attempt to justify it as an authentic reproduction of a past style.

Perhaps no single factor is responsible for the renewed energy which has been imparted to architecture in this country. The fact remains that plan, as a part of the whole, is less cluttered and inhibited by eclectic imposition than heretofore.

It is through material that plan is effected and through the correlation of both that building gains validity as architecture. No real vitality can accrue to plan as a part nor building as a whole until material is used with the same clarity and assurance of purpose exhibited by its counterpart, plan.

However, examination of examples of this new and promising architecture in terms of material alone continues to reveal, in the majority of instances, either a total disregard of material, so long as it accomplishes support or division of one kind or another, or an uninformed enthusiasm for the material itself that disregards both its purpose and that of the structure which it was intended to serve. The result in either case is bizarre.

Even materials having a direct structural purpose, that is, supporting members such as steel and concrete columns, beams and slabs, are seldom integrated with the design as a whole. It continues to be general practice to arrange space with only a casual regard as to the manner in which that space can be enclosed. Actual analysis of the supporting framework is deferred until the design, if so it may be called, is completed. Meanwhile, material is imbued with infinite size, shape and elasticity. The result is invariably awkward. The skeleton must be clothed and all manner of false work is resorted to.

It might be that false ceilings, walls and pilasters can be and are converted to other uses than that of hiding the imperfections of ill-conceived and poorly thought-out structural systems. Even assuming that waste space so contrived is partially excused by the presence of conduit, ducts, pipes and other paraphernalia, the next question is why these materials, too, are not thought of as part of the design. If because of imperfect material, or technique, then it is time that both material and technique pertaining to this work were perfected. This should not be too stringent a requirement where improved technique has become a byword of production. At any rate, it is not reassuring to observe the clean flowing lines of a new architecture knowing it to be held together by a maze of rusty wires and hooks.

Materials comprising the shell of a building appear to suffer not only from lack of sympathetic handling by this same casual acquaintance with their properties, but often add to it that particularly invidious artifice of pretending to perform work of which they are incapable.

Glass brick, chromium plated metals, photographic panels of marble and wood, antiqued asbestos and neon lights are measured out by the yard. Veneer, justification of its use still denied, continues in vain attempts to simulate construction based upon the solid mass of the material. Glass, tile, brick and stone bond together as beams or columns to span unbelievable chasms, or to carry impossible loads. Monolithic slabs of wood twist and turn to all shapes and sizes.

To contribute to the general confusion is added another popular misuse of material—that of applied ornamentation. This is contrived by the rather simple expedient of juxtaposing, one with the other, all known and available materials at random over all available surfaces.

It is not the fault of the materials industries if they are misled at times to believe that this new artificiality is what architecture needs and wants.

The manufacturers of finished hardware and electric light fixtures constitute outstanding examples of this misdirection. A variety of horizontal and vertical striations and set backs available in brilliant colors and trimmed in chromium is the standard vocabulary.

And it is only by the authority of good advertising that the kitchen and the bath are considered the best rooms in the modern house.

Here are materials of equipment that are in urgent need of the architect's attention. First, however, he must know them—better, even, than the mixture of the concrete forming the foundation of his building.

Knowledge alone of the properties of materials might not be sufficient to prompt honest treatment, but knowledge of the inherent character of material—its mass and structure as well as color, texture and adaptability to building—should be sufficient to produce a sympathy with that material and a desire to integrate it with the building as a whole, such as to prohibit all artifice, however ingenius.

The school is the place in which the fundamentals of such knowledge should be acquired and it is to be hoped that courses in the fundamentals will soon become a mandatory part of architectural curriculum.

It is difficult to believe that any one individual may have the capacity or life span to accomplish a full and sympathetic understanding of all the materials now available, nor should it be necessary. Stone, wood and brick, aided by lead, copper and tile, were sufficient to express with considerable eloquence the variety of the architecture of the Chinese and Japanese, the Egyptians, Persians and Mayans, as well as the life of these peoples embodied in their architecture.

Further, it is questionable as to whether more than a select few materials actually belong to building at all—certainly those materials which have no other justification for existence than a facility for representing something which they are not, should be rejected without hesitation or further consideration.

It is apparent from what has been said that no attempt is made to suggest a formula or method in the use of material in modern design—least of all to recommend any one or group of materials—rather only to point out the present irresponsible and unsympathetic use of material and the need for careful and considerate application to the subject, in the hope of developing a true sensitivity and feeling for this medium of structure.

It is better as a whole to be satisfied with a closer acquaintance with a few basic materials, and to concentrate on these with the same sincerity and honesty given to present-day plan, that an integration of plan, material and ultimate building may become a truly representative architecture.

—Paul Schweikher, Architect, Chicago.

The Annex of the Library of Congress

A pamphlet of 24 pages, titled as above, printed by the U. S. Government Printing Office and distributed by the Library of Congress, has as its frontispiece a bird's eye view of Washington with the Capitol in the center, the Library and its Annex in the foreground, and the Potomac in the distance. There follow pages showing photographs of the Annex exterior, 7 floor plans (2 basement and 5 stories above grade), interior views and architectural details, each occupying one full page.

The seal of the Library of Congress carries the date 1800. The text discloses that the main building (Smithmeyer & Peltz and Edward Pearce Casey, architects) was opened to the public on November 1, 1897. In 1910 one of the courtyards was converted into a room for bookstacks. In 1927 the other courtyard was similarly transformed. From 1929-33 a Rare Book Room, a Union Catalog Room, and additional study rooms were added.

By 1935 Congress had appropriated for an Annex building $8,226,500.00, plus the cost of the ground $917,801.00. Pierson & Wilson of Washington, D. C. were selected architects for the Annex with Alexander G. Trowbridge as consulting architect. The Annex is connected by tunnel with the main building. The new Supreme Court Building and Folger Shakespeare Library are its neighbors.

The Annex's fifth story sets back 35 feet on all four sides. The main building measures 470 by 340 feet, covering 3½ acres of ground. The Annex measures 407 by 228 feet, covering somewhat over 2 acres of ground. The main building has 15 acres of floor space, while the Annex has 20 acres. Main building capacity five million volumes; Annex ten million volumes. In the Annex there are twelve tiers of bookstacks, extending from the cellar to the fourth floor inclusive, providing 13 acres of floor space.

The pamphlet goes into detail regarding equipment for the transportation of books, the location of offices, engineering quarters, housekeeping and custodial staff, photostating and photographing rooms.

Exterior wall facing of the Annex is of white Georgia marble.

Committee on State Organization

Charles D. Maginnis, President of the American Institute of Architects, has appointed the following to the Committee on State Organization:

John R. Fugard, Chairman; Executive Committee: Tirrell J. Ferrenz, Vice-Chairman-at-Large; Richmond H. Shreve, Vice-Chairman-at-Large; Louis B. Bersback, Middle Western Vice-Chairman; Arthur B. Holmes, Eastern Vice-Chairman and Chairman Plan Committee; Robert H. Orr, Western Vice-Chairman; Leigh Hunt, State Association Representative on the Board of the American Institute of Architects; Thomas Pym Cope, Secretary.

State Representatives: Marshall E. Van Arman, Alabama; Robert Law Weed, Florida; Arthur F. Woltersdorf, Illinois; Lee Burns, Indiana; Ossian P. Ward, Kentucky; Lucien E. D. Gaudreau, Maryland; Andrew R. Morison, Michigan; Louis B. Bersback, Minnesota; E. L. Malvaney, Mississippi; Arthur B. Holmes, New Jersey; Matthew W. Del Gaudio, New York; Howard R. Weeks, North Carolina; William G. Merchant, Northern California; Charles F. Cellarius, Ohio; George Winkler, Oklahoma; Thomas Pym Cope, Pennsylvania; Robert H. Orr, Southern California; Ralph H. Cameron, Texas; James M. Taylor, Washington; A. L. Seidenschwartz, Wisconsin.

Table tops made of a single piece of citrus wood were a fad in ancient Rome.

In a Pittsburgh skyscraper hospital, a pneumatic tube system carries messages, medicines and charts quickly to any part of the hospital.

Transitional Architecture

The machine age marches on. It began a century and a quarter ago in England with the use of coal and steam power. And now, with electricity added, the Western world is revolutionized industrially and culturally. Today the traveler rides in luxurious coaches on the railroad from Chicago to New York in sixteen hours; from Chicago to San Francisco in thirty-nine hours. The automobile races along the highways at fifty, sixty and even eighty miles an hour, killing more people than are killed in an ordinary war. Hughes circumnavigates the globe in the air in less than a week. A plane with a crew of five and passenger space for twenty-six makes a non-stop air trip from Berlin to New York in thirty-three hours and returns non-stop to Berlin in eighteen. Tractors have displaced horses and mules in agricultural fields. There is radio, pictures by wire, and television. All very wonderful—marvelous, to be sure.

It has affected civilization culturally and artistically in a way that in some respects is tragic. Repose seems a thing of the past. Historian Ferdinand Schevill says: "The physical diffusion of occidental civilization has, toward the end of the fourth decade of the new century, become so general that it has definitely displaced all rival civilizations and now reigns around the globe. It is no more than the bare truth to say that occidental civilization has entered a new, a Universal Phase." And again: ". . . so much store has throughout the past of mankind been set by the two fields of art and science that the practice has prevailed to evalue a civilization by their achievement alone."

President Maginnis of the A. I. A. says: "If we are content to render our own civilization in an architecture dependent upon steel, a reasonably remote posterity can have no visual knowledge of us, which might be a pity. The historic principle of structure is not quite discredited and walls will still be built against which our posterity may bark its shins. For it is worthy of remark that it is the walls and not the space which have so intelligently survived. Perhaps it may not be too hazardous a prediction that the great and significant buildings of the generations will be built in the future, as they have been always built, in terms of articulated and enduring masonry."

The question for architects to revolve in their minds is: Is present-day architecture creating anything that posterity will look back to as a permanent contribution to the artistic expression of our machine age? The architect, of course, is in this respect not all powerful. According to Mr. Maginnis, the architect is hardly more than a carver of cherry stones in the magnitude of the national scene.

The late Daniel H. Burnham said early in this century that the life of big office buildings, whose cost ran into a million or more dollars, should be figured at thirty years; not that the building would fall down after thirty years, but that it would be obsolete and should make way for a more modern structure suited to the newer day.

Perhaps all our efforts will be measured from records in books rather than existing monuments. It must be admitted that there is little harmony and repose in the architecture of today; natural, perhaps, for our jitterbug civilization.

The travel diary of two young people around the world is interesting in this connection. Erika and Klaus Mann, daughter and son of the famous Thomas Mann, wrote down their impressions, some of which are here given rendered in English.

They find "Wellington, Kansas typical of all midwestern towns of its approximate size—desolate idyl, mechanically planted streets breathing death. Cozy little homes, yes, but a sentimental pit with running water, radio, and electric light. Per contra, the sorriest, most inaccessible European village has inner life and rhythm organically developed around a church. Wellington's main street harbors a post office with columnar portico, a court house, many stores, and an Antlers Hotel."

They cross the Pacific and come to Tokyo in Japan. "The Imperial Hotel in Tokyo is a curious and amusing place to stop. Conceived in the extravagant brain of an American, it has something suggesting opera decorations. Jokesmiths maintain it is strongly influenced by 'Aida'. The bathrooms resemble Egyptian tomb chambers, with electric light sparingly, though effectively, disposed."

They come to the principal city Soeul in Korea. They say: "Our civilization overruns unmercifully and inevitably every other style—every one. A breech is passing through the world, from the South Sea Islands through Africa, that is very painful."

Posterity will judge our efforts to express the civilization of our day in architecture as an effort to tell the story of a changing, unstable time—a period abounding in brilliant minds at a time when nothing is static, everything dynamic, erratic, hysteric. That would be a true picture.

Historians should have a most interesting story to tell and dependence will have to be on conclusions formed through studies of books and pictures rather than existing monuments. The Empire State Building, Radio City, the Chicago Field office building—one wonders whether any of them will be standing fifty or seventy-five years hence.

The great pyramid of Cheops has been called history's first unemployment relief project. It kept workers busy and fed them during Nile flood season, when they could not do agricultural work.

Illinois Society September Meeting

The evening of September 27 brought to the Architects Club of Chicago seventy-five members and guests to partake of dinner and later to listen to an absorbing paper written and read by Paul D. Angell, Vice-President, Chicago Real Estate Board, wherein he proposed a new type of corporation to further home building on a large scale, which he calls "The Public Service Building Corporation." Some twenty more men came in after the dinner to listen to Mr. Angell.

The occasion was the first meeting of the new year of the Illinois Society of Architects' monthly meetings. The dinner was very good, the spirit among the men breathed camaraderie and active conversation until the serious business of the evening began.

President Jensen dispensed with the Secretary's minutes as well as other Society business and plunged immediately into his introduction of the evening's forthcoming paper. He said that in the matter of improvements and the cure of evils, democracies move slowly and so the blighted and slum areas in our cities and towns had grown constantly and with all the remedial measures that had been tried, the solution was not at hand. When recently he had heard of Mr. Angell's thoughts and studies, he—in connection with the Program Committee—had determined that Mr. Angell had something that should interest all progressive architects. So this meeting had been arranged to have Mr. Angell present before the architects his suggestions for reviving and rebuilding American cities.

President Jensen called upon Arthur Kruggel, President of the Chicago Real Estate Board, to introduce the speaker of the evening. Mr. Kruggel did this in a graceful, concise manner, pronouncing Mr. Angell a genius whose ideas often created openmouthed surprise.

Among the guests at the speaker's table were Harry S. Cutmore and Hugh E. Young, respectively chairman and engineer of the Land Use Survey for Chicago; J. Soule Warterfield, Past-President, Chicago Real Estate Board; Elmer C. Roberts, President, Chicago Chapter, A. I. A.

Mr. Angell's paper was long and though he read rapidly he read well and articulated clearly. Before the Revolutionary War in this country, a French farmer migrated and settled in the neighborhood of Philadelphia and in 1780 this farmer wrote his reflections on what he found here and prognosticated the future of the U. S. A. Mr. Angell read this prognostication and in comparing it with what happened in more than a century following it, found the farmer's prophecy remarkably true.

With plenty of statistics to back up his statements, Angell traced the progress of this country from Colonial times through decades and generations, marking the succeeding depressions, which in every case were followed by an upbound very much bigger than their immediate predecessors, until he came to 1929. He dwelt upon the depressions of 1857, 1870 (he did not mention the crime of '73, so popular with political orators), and the depression of 1893. The Hoover administration, he said, tried relief by government aid and subsidy, and the efforts of the Roosevelt administration were nothing more than the Hoover plans multiplied manyfold. Relief administration in many fields had almost invariably failed and home building, he believed, was the only field that could be depended upon to produce a cure.

Before the debacle of 1929 there had been excessive building, but selfish interests—and he did not exclude himself—had gone so far as to warrant the crash. Private initiative, nevertheless, must not be denied, but it should be regulated and supervised by government.

Life insurance corporations had started out primarily to insure lives, but today they are bankers' super-banks and had very largely lost the original purpose of their organization.

To encourage home building on a large scale, a scale sufficiently comprehensive to counteract blight in a whole section, Mr. Angell thought was the solution. The first essential would be a master zoning plan for every city; then a building program under "The Public Service Building Corporation," for which special legislation would be necessary. He outlined what he thought would be a proper law. The question of constitutionality of such a law would have to be settled by the courts, but court decisions were growing more liberal and there was hope that the question of eminent domain could be answered in a way that would not discourage, but rather encourage, the creation of such service building corporations. He would have no legal restrictions as to the earnings, though competition in building many units at once would tend to low rentals based on profits through mass production.

On to Urbana, Architects!

Once more the clarion sounds to call together the members of the Illinois Society of Architects for their Third Annual Statewide Meeting on Saturday, October 15, at Urbana, Illinois.

Urbana should prove a happy choice as it is synonymous with the University which was founded in 1867 as the Industrial University of Illinois. It is interesting to turn back and read of its auspicious start, being deeded 480,000 acres of public lands in Champaign County, contingent on its being established at Urbana. The Illinois Central Railroad agreed to remit $50,000 in freight charges and the Dunlap Nursery contributed a $2000 gift in trees and ornamental shrubs, which acquisition made a notable start in transplanting the bleak prairie landscape into the lovely campus of today. On his own responsibility Dr. Thomas J. Burrill planted the elms along the avenue which perpetuates his name.

Thought was given from the beginning to an organized campus plan development. The first one made by Harald Hansen, then an instructor in architecture on the faculty, can still be seen in the office of the University architect. Since then plans have been made and submitted by Daniel Burnham, Holabird & Roche, Clarence Blackall, W. C. Zimmerman, Professors Ricker and White, and lastly, Charles Platt, which is the one now being followed.

Mention of Harald Hansen gives the first inkling of the existence of an architectural school. We find that one was established in 1870 upon the proposal of a regent, Dr. Gregory, with five students in attendance and the name of James Bellanger as the head. Mr. Hansen taught drawing and rendering. Nathan Clifford Ricker was its first graduate in 1873 and later he became Dean of the School of Architecture and Engineering.

The first new University buildings were the Mechanical, in 1872, and University Hall, in 1874, both designed by John M. Van Osdel. In 1897 Professors Ricker and White designed the University Library, now the Law, in the then prevalent Richardsonian tradition, at a cost of $380,000. This building is excellent in the elements of good design and construction and will remain a credit to the University for decades to come. The Auditorium was designed by another alumnus, Clarence Blackall. However, the most recent and finest buildings on the campus, designed in a Georgian style, are the work of Charles Platt.

There will be a visit and demonstration in the new Materials Testing Laboratory after the last train's arrival and before the reception and dinner in the evening.

The dinner will be informal and held at the Champaign Country Club, which is situated about a mile from the depot or central business district of Urbana and is accessible by bus to within a few blocks. President Arthur Cutts Willard has been invited to be a guest and to say a few words of welcome. Professor Rexford Newcomb, Dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, will give the main address. Dr. Carl Schneider, an expert color photographer, has consented to give an illustrated talk on "Nature's Architecture." Other details of the program are still in the making at this writing.

For Sunday morning a conducted tour of the University grounds and buildings has been planned. A walk along the elm-shaded broadwalk will reveal newer additions to the Women's Building which hide the 1905 McKim, Mead & White creation, so much admired by graduates of two decades ago. This 1905 building forms the rear end of the 1924 additions facing the newer campus.

The Inman Hotel at Champaign has been chosen as headquarters on account of its convenient location to the depot, country club and University. Their rates are:

Single room with bath.....$2.50 and $3.00
Single room without bath.....$1.50 and $1.75
Double room, twin beds.....$4.00, $5.00 and $6.00
Double room, one bed.....$3.50 and $4.50

The Illinois Central Railroad has a train leaving Chicago at 9 A. M., on which the round trip fare to Urbana is $5.10. On the Panama Limited, leaving Chicago at 1 P. M. and reaching Champaign at 3:30 P. M., the round trip fare is $6.50, returning by regular train on Sunday. It is suggested that those going by car who have room or desire others to share expenses with them, and also those wishing to avail themselves of such an arrangement, contact Herman Palmer. However, no guarantee can be given that all can be accommodated in this manner.

A special Program Committee headed by Ernest L. Stouffer of Urbana has been appointed with the following members: Joseph W. Royer, Urbana; William H. Schulzke, Moline; Louis H. Gerding, Ottawa; Frank N. Emerson, Peoria; Charles A. Behrensmeyer, Quincy; Frank A. Carpenter, Rockford; Benjamin A. Horn, Rock Island; Ralph Harris, Springfield; Leo J. Weissenborn, Chicago—ex-officio.

It is hoped that the echo of the clarion will bring full attendance, not only of Society members, but also unaffiliated licensed architects, members of the Central Illinois Chapter of the A. I. A., and faculty and senior students of the Department of Architecture of the University.

—Leo J. Weissenborn.

Chicago Chapter September Meeting

An assembly of 144 members and guests of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. met for the first meeting of the new Chapter year on September 13 at the "Sky Top Roof" in the Medical Arts Building, Chicago. The dinner was called for 6 o'clock and the meeting broke up reluctantly at 10:30 P. M.

President Roberts' welcome was cordial, dwelling particularly upon the special guests, Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig Hilbersheimer, Walter Peterhans and John B. Rodgers of Princeton—all new professors in the architectural school of Armour Institute, the first three being German scholars recently come to this country. They were not asked to speak, for the October meeting of the Chapter is to be devoted to them.

The President, changing the usual order of procedure, immediately plunged into the program of the evening by introducing Philip Maher, Chapter member, who functions on the National Advisory Committee on Architectural Design for the Procurement Division, Treasury Department, Washington, and is a member of the jury of recent government post office competitions. Mr. Maher began by saying that under Presidents Washington, Jefferson and Jackson, the chief executive controlled government architecture. After them, the Treasury Department organized the Supervising Architect's Office of the Treasury, which functioned through the years into the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Under him the Procurement Division was organized in 1933 with Admiral Peebles at its head, and the Division's first large program disposed of $68,000,000 —85% of which was for buildings, principally post offices, costing less than $60,000 each. The work of designing these buildings was concentrated in Washington and a drafting force of from 800 to 1000 draftsmen and designers was put to work. Soon it was felt that the architectural talent should be drawn from different parts of the country, and 21 architects from everywhere were assembled. The results to Government architecture have been reasonably satisfactory for an effect of freshness in design, based on classic foundation, has been achieved. Whether this architecture will continue to be developed in the Bureau or Division, or whether in time it will be distributed to architects in private practice, time only can tell.

Two competitions among practitioners were instituted, the first for designs for the $60,000 class. There were 550 entrants in the competition, 10 winners and 10 honorable mentions. In the competition for larger buildings, 206 submitted drawings. Mr. Maher thought there was less wealth of material in this competition than in that for the smaller post offices. The designs were too ornate and not expressive of the contemporary movement. Looking over the contestants, it was found that Institute men did not predominate among the winners.

John Wellborn Root, Fellow of the Institute and jury member in the Wheaton Competition, spoke next. In introducing him the President stated that the firm of Holabird and Root had received a silver medal award from the Paris Exposition of 1937 for excellence in domestic architecture.

Mr. Root in his talk favored competitions for public buildings. Turning to the Wheaton College Competition, he spoke of the make up of the jury and of the first and second prize designs particularly. Miss Seaver of the Wheaton College faculty was influential in the selection of the designs. In the jury's discussion, the Walter Gropius design finally placed second, long was considered for first place. But the final judgment was that Gropius' frame-like design with excessive glass would be imposing itself on the New England landscape. So that design was placed second.

Mr. Root then turned to the forthcoming architects' ball to be held December 2 at the Drake Hotel in Chicago. Its proceeds will go to a scholarship fund for draftsmen. The plans for the ball contemplate the presentation of one or more movies where the design of sets and direction will be in the hands of architects. One subject seriously considered for a movie is "Gone with the Wind."

President Roberts' next injected regular Chapter business by calling upon the Secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting, whereupon Earl Reed promptly moved dispensing with this reading, which was carried, and Secretary Heimbrodt had opportunity only to announce an R. I. B. A. conference in Dublin.

Alfred Shaw of the Chapter functioned as juryman in architectural competitions for the American Gas Association and Pittsburgh Glass Institute and he was to talk on competitions sponsored by commercial agencies. He first read a poem of his own authorship "Pont du Gard."

Mr. Shaw favors commercial competitions. The jury in the Gas Association competition found the average of excellence low. A community plan was called for and here the results were much more interesting than in the case of the houses. The speaker held that a program giving too much freedom is a mistake.

George Fred Keck, architect, who teaches design at the New Bauhaus, had the subject "Structural and Spatial Patterns in Architectural Design." He felt that the times reflected something new, fluid and uncrystallized; technical science in the matter of steel and many other building materials had advanced far; that new materials were constantly being produced; and that the old thought of functional design needed less stress today when transparent and reflective materials and materials of other novel effects were at hand. He looked upon the architect as an inventor. Aesthetics should prevail in architectural design and this was the day of the designer's "new freedom." He read quotations from a number of books he had read, including "Cambridge in the Fifties" by Horatio Greenough, the sculptor. He quoted Emerson and others.

Paul Schweikher, Yale '29, Meacham Fellowship winner and a young practitioner of architecture in Chicago, read a paper on "Material in Design." Mr. Schweikher's thoughts, clearly and well expressed in his paper, presented by means of a fine voice and perfect articulation, impressed the company mightily. He ended with a fine analysis of building fads supported by advertising. Mr. Schweikher's paper is presented on another page in this issue.

William Jones Smith, Chairman of the Program Committee, spoke of future meetings that are being arranged for the Chapter, dwelling upon the October meeting when Professor Mies van der Rohe will be featured.

The President now called for a discussion of the subjects taken up during the evening. Messrs. Keck, Schweikher and Holabird participated.

Asked to write a brief essay on the life of Benjamin Franklin, a little girl wrote this: "He was born in Boston, traveled in Philadelphia, met a lady on the street, she laughed at him, he married her, and discovered electricity."

Ancient Egypt shipped roses to Rome, says Richardson Wright, garden authority; but, he adds, "no one has yet discovered the secret of how they were kept fresh during that long journey."

The green and white marble called Verde Antique, which Augustus used in making Rome beautiful, was obtained from Greek quarries.

A Request from the Burnham Library

Missing in the files of the Burnham Library of Architecture, The Art Institute of Chicago, are the following issues of the A. I. A. Annuary: 1918; 1923-1924; 1924-1925; 1925-1926; 1927-1928; 1930-1931.

The Library requests donations of these issues and thanks in advance any architects who may be willing to surrender them so that the Library may be able to serve its clients with the greatest efficiency.

More on That Small House Problem

The Editor: "Otherwise let's forget the whole mess." So ends Carl E. Heimbrodt's article in the August-September Bulletin on "That Small House Problem." Most architects will probably agree with that conclusion.

It is safe to say that few individuals who intend to build a residence coming under the category of a "small house"—meaning somewhere between $5000 and $10,000—will pay to an architect a commission big enough to net the latter a reasonable profit. It is also safe to say that most architects are in business with a hope of making some profit.

The solution is difficult, if not impossible, assuming ethical practice according to A. I. A. standards. It may not be "practicing architecture," or "strictly ethical," though one way is to get a job designing small houses for a building material or construction concern, and another for architects to design and build houses with their own or borrowed capital for sale at a profit. So do the builders. Why can't the architect—if he is smart enough—beat the builder at his own game?

—Victor A. Matteson.

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The Editor: I have read with great interest Mr. Heimbrodt's article on "That Small House Problem" in the August-September issue of the Bulletin.

My experience dates back to the time when it was well within the architect's prerogative to control planning, design, and supervision in the small house field. With the advent of skyscraper and fireproof construction, many architects of "other days" unfortunately led responsible contractors into the new field of construction, abandoning housing—the backbone of construction—to the tender mercies of speculation and commercialism in all their ruthless phases. How well the older architect functioned in his capacity as planner, designer, and supervisor of the small house, the apartment, and other buildings of ordinary construction, is made evident by a look at such buildings fifty to sixty years old. The observer will be impressed by the integrity of good construction, built under the watchful eyes of competent architects.

The Scriptures say, "Everything that hath been, will be, and everything that will be, hath already been." Let us hope that we may again see all housing, especially the life-time investment of the so-called poor man, designed and supervised under the ethical and watchful care of the architect.

Propaganda, truthful or otherwise, seems the order of the day, though little practiced by architects and contractors. In this second largest of all industries, these men offer little in the way of public pronouncement of their own value and importance.

Like a voice crying in the wilderness, we are pleased to offer monthly one page of "Plastering Craft" magazine to architects to help bring before the public the value of competent architectural service in building construction, especially in "That Small House Problem."

—Oscar A. Reum, President
Contracting Plasterers' International Association.

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Unquestionably, the logical minister to wed the public's groping desires to the realities of low-cost functional building is the architect. He is the only technician trained to coordinate all of the elements involved, the only man equipped to realize all of the possibilities of large scale planning and construction. That's no small-fry matter for small-fry minds.

Before the architect admits defeat in the small house field, let him ponder the diminishing number of large houses built each year. Let him ponder the rewards, both financial and social, of planned neighborhoods in which the low-cost house is the key unit. Let him also ponder the possibility of future curtailment of the vast Government-assisted building volume in institutional fields. Better yet, let him keep step with public demand—study, experiment with and produce good low-cost houses.

—Building Reporter.

A New Housing Scheme for Fort Wayne, Indiana

A new thought in the low-cost housing field is about to be set in motion as a concrete plan in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The Housing Authority of that city has concluded that their local problem will not be solved by the erection of a large apartment building with electric stoves and all of the other deluxe equipment which has thus far characterized the majority of public housing efforts. Furthermore, the rents on such apartments, even with the aid of a rich federal subsidy, look more like average rents in Fort Wayne than like rents for the submerged tenth.

Directing their attention to their lowest income group who today cost local taxpayers the most by reason of their inferior housing, the Fort Wayne Housing Authority has evolved a plan for building three-room free-standing houses, warm, dry, with plenty of light and air, running water and sanitary facilities, but with no luxury gadgets, which can be rented for two dollars and fifty cents per week per house.

The plan calls for local tax exemption as in the case of all Housing Authority projects, and for WPA labor. But no cash or interest rate subsidy is involved. Funds are to be advanced by local lenders under an FHA-insured mortgage paying a full 4½% interest with amortization limited to twenty years. Since the mortgage and the interest on it are also tax-exempt under the Indiana State Housing Law, the demonstration is doubly interesting in revealing what can be done in the very low rental field without utilizing artificially low capital rates.

A novel plan of land acquisition and slum demolition is to be used. It is the observation of the local Housing Authority that most slum property is on land being held for future income. Little or no income remains, yet owners will not sell on a present income capitalization basis.

The Fort Wayne Housing Authority is offering to buy such properties for one dollar each. It will demolish the fire and social hazard structures now on the land and substitute for them the new model house to be built under the program. The former owner of the property will get an option to repurchase his land at any time by paying the small cost of moving the new house, which is demountable, to another lot. In this way an owner may hold on to his chance for future speculative profit and escape taxes in the meantime; the Housing Authority gets the use of the land practically free for real low-cost housing purposes; and the City of Fort Wayne, which loses a small amount in real estate taxes, gains more than such loss in reduced health and relief costs.

Pictures of Ancient China

Knowledge of ancient China, previously confined almost entirely to what has been learned from literature, has been greatly expanded by tile pictures in the tombs of China in early days, Prof. William Charles White, formerly Bishop of Honan, and now of the University of Toronto, has revealed.

Dating back twenty-two centuries, the tile pictures, well protected through the ages against vandalism, present a new and fresh picture of the costumes, weapons, and pursuits of the time. A large collection of the tiles, which are from five to six feet long, two feet or less in width and six inches thick, is now housed in the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology.

Making Oil Burners Fit

The conversion of old furnaces to oil heat brings convenience and freedom from dirt but the oil flame often gives inefficient performance because of lack of design coordination. Since the combustion chambers of furnaces cannot easily be altered in shape, the only thing left to do is to make the flame shape adjustable to fit the furnace. A new "tailor-made" flame, whose shape can be changed to fit any fire box, is announced by the General Electric Company.

Thirty-six different varnishes containing 100 per cent soybean for their oil content have been developed and are now undergoing exposure tests to determine their aging properties, according to Dr. Henry G. Knight of the U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, reporting in *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry.*

Deneux and Restored Reims

The solemn inauguration of the cathedral at Reims on July 10 after nineteen years of infinitely patient and difficult work calls attention to its architect, M. Deneux, a hitherto not well known man, little known because he always had chosen to labor in his beloved church ever since the age of 16 and even is referred to as the "hermit of Reims."

The cathedral is completely repaired, except for its facade. That has been left deliberately as a reminder of the world war experience it went through. In the repair work cement was blown into torn pillars and shattered stone figures under several pounds' pressure. There has been some criticism of this "American method" of mending a venerable weather worn stone edifice. But the modern way has its defenders, too; particularly the replacement of the oak rafters and chestnut roof with concrete.

Some of the statues which were smashed to bits have been resculptured in pitch pine and covered with hammered lead. These figures decorate the spire.

Deneux's long association with the cathedral in its architectural office made him the ideal man for the work. The immensity of it may be guessed from the fact that there are alone 2,300 statues. The great difficulty in reconstructing it was that there was no complete description of it as it had been. There is an entire library of books dealing with the structure, going back to the 13th century, but no adequate comprehensive work containing all the details.

The dilemma was solved by the appointment of Deneux as chief architect. He began to work in the architect's office of the cathedral at the age of 16 as an office and errand boy. Beginning with the most humble tasks, he worked himself up to his present position. During his early employment he helped with the work of restoring the basilica. Time, the revolution, and bad taste had destroyed some of the art of the middle ages.

Not content with his job in the office, he spent all his spare time studying the details of his beloved church and drawing them. He sketched the gargoyles and the rows of stone flowers. He painted those statues way up aloft which are too far away to be seen except in profile, but many of which are of as high quality and interest as anything down below.

When in 1919 the question arose of restoring the cathedral, there was Deneux with his tremendous personal information about it. A national subscription was started and presently Deneux was at work with the reconstruction. At first it was a matter of digging in the ruins and finding a piece here, a fragment there, and knowing where they belonged. For the past nineteen years Deneux has been living exclusively among the ruins of the cathedral. His work required as much study, concentration, research as the deciphering of hieroglyphics.

Deneux had made one important discovery that stood him in good stead. Many of the stones that went into medieval cathedrals have on the back side curious marks. Chiseled into the stone are figures, such as a flower, a letter, a chalice, a hammer, a scythe, or something like that. Viollet le Duc concluded that these mysterious marks merely indicated the vanity of the workman who thus placed his stamp on the block.

Deneux discarded this idea. He concluded that the marks were indications as to where the stone belonged, where it was to fit in. This discovery helped him greatly in reconstruction from the mass of debris that the war left behind, around, and within the walls of the old church.

He found that a wheel referred to a rose window, a chalice to an altar, a key to the church treasury room, a bishop's crook to the part of the cathedral nearest the archbishop's residence, a cross to a mullion, and so forth.

He found that, while the damage had been great, the worst harm, the irreparable disfiguring or complete shattering of irreplaceable stone Christs, virgins, saints, and popes, was comparatively small. Of the 2,300 statues only 65 were completely lost.

Worshiper of medieval architecture, Deneux nevertheless was happy to have at hand modern building advantages, particularly the process of blowing liquid cement into fissure or a gash. His biggest job of this kind was in repairing a huge pillar which had been hit by a .305 shell, badly nicked and knocked out of line, but which still supported a large part of the apsis. Placing a corset around the damaged parts of the pillar, he blew in nineteen tons of cement.

Another feature of his work was the recovery of the lead that had melted when the woodwork of the roof burned. This lead had dripped all around the church. He recovered not only all of that but some old lead from the 1481 fire that had been overlooked. He salvaged a total of 8,800,000 pounds of lead and used it in covering the roof of the reconstructed church.

—From Edmond Taylor's Report in "The Chicago Tribune."

College Professor Views Small House Problem

The Editor: On returning from my summer vacation I find the August-September issue of the Bulletin, interesting to me, as always, especially the little notes from ancient times, and in this issue the account of J. H. Mansart.

It is Mr. Heimbrodt's excellent article on the problem of architect-participation in the small house field that stimulates this inquiry, however.

It occurred to me this summer that one strong reason why most people do not hire architects for small and even medium-sized houses is that the impression is abroad that an architect-designed house is an expensive house. It is probably true, as Mr. Heimbrodt brings out. Why? Well, partly tradition, and partly because there has been no strong incentive to architects themselves to economize. I persist in believing, however, that once dedicated to the problem of economy, a good architect can produce a better house for less money—that is, a really decent house—than can anyone else. The only trouble is that it is more work for less money than any other kind of building.

In my completely amateur way, I wondered whether anything could be done—or has been done—on a sliding-scale commission basis. For example, assume that a 6% commission on a $10,000 house should be increased by 1% for every $1,000 saving in the cost of the house; so that a $6,000 house, for example, would pay a commission of 10%. The figures are doubtless all wrong but they may illustrate what I mean. The architect would get a $600 commission in either case and presumably could afford to spend as much time and effort on the one as on the other, except that on the smaller house a greater proportion of his time would be devoted to the problem of economy. At any rate, he would not be penalizing himself by taking a smaller job, and I believe that he might make the higher commission worth the client's while—in effect, the client would be paying a bonus of $240 to the architect for a $4,000 saving. As I say, I am a complete amateur on this problem and this scheme probably has as many fallacies as the Townsend plan. Even if it were sound, it would doubtless have to receive the approval of the A. I. A. and other bodies. All the same, I turn to older and more experienced heads. Has it ever been tried? What would architects think of it?

I tell you that as a layman building a house, I would feel a lot easier in my mind if I knew that my architect wouldn't profit by selling me the idea of a more expensive house than I ought to have, and that even if I were building a small and inexpensive house, I could feel that my architect was just as much interested in it as he would be in a larger and costlier one. I would feel that I was getting $10,000 worth of service for $6,000, which would always make me feel smart.

This scheme has many imaginable difficulties, but what the basic fallacy is I don't see. There must be something wrong with it. I await illumination.

—Prof. Hugh S. Morrison,
Department of Art and Archaeology, Dartmouth College.

Muralist Thomas Benton says: "There's no use working your head off adapting yourself to spaces that have no value as frames for an expression in life. My conception is that so far as has been seen to date, the architect only wants what amounts to a piece of wallpaper on the wall, something so devoid of striking content, so devoid of genuinely stimulating esthetic properties that it will not disturb his predetermined concept of the proper formal relations in his building. The architect has got to realize that the artist also is a living, creative being."

Among the Architects in History

In Ancient Greece. In the Periclean age, we naturally expect to find adequate records of those architects who did so much to beautify Athens. In the lavish records of the wealth and learning of the time of the Athenian Acropolis, little is revealed about Ictinus, Callicrates, and the rest. Pericles and after him Pheidias, the sculptor, steal the show. Pericles was, of course, a canny politician, patron and connoisseur of the arts, and he is put down as an amateur architect. Greek towns often ascribed the design of architectural monuments to the gods, according to Pausanias. At Ephesus there was a law under which if an architect's extras exceeded the contract amount by more than 25%, he was held liable for them personally. Town planning was one of the functions of the Greek architect.

In Medieval England. For years William of Wykeham was given sole credit for the reconstruction of Winchester Cathedral, metamorphosing it from a Romanesque to a Gothic structure. Unquestionably Wykeham was a great churchman, a fine executive, appreciative of ecclesiastical art and architecture. But he was not the architect of that job. The English critic, Papworth, discovered sixty years ago that Master William Wynford whose portrait, together with portraits of the master carpenter and paymaster, appear in stained glass in Winchester College Chapel, was the real architect. Wykeham, a splendid mind and organizer of building operations, did serve architecture magnificently, but his position as architect of Winchester is no longer tenable.

The fallacy often repeated by writers that the medieval mason was content to work for the glory of God alone, may be ascribed to exaggerations in monkish chronicles. A recent explorer says: "It is astonishing how few medieval documents testify directly to the artist's love of his work." Medieval building was marred by many of our present-day difficulties. The craftsman's hours were long but his horizon was correspondingly restricted. He worked to contract, was summoned to work by the church bell, fined for being late, for quarrelling, idling, losing tools and obstructing other workmen.

Wyclif says: "They conspire together that no man shall take less for a day than they fix, though they should by good conscience take much less, that none of them shall do good steady work which might interfere with other men of the craft, and that none of them shall do anything but cut stone, though he might profit his master twenty pounds by one day's work in laying a wall, without harm to himself." How like today!

In Renaissance Italy. Like today, the architect's difficulties and worries sometimes drove him to despair. The early ones generally depended entirely on their earnings for their livelihood, a circumstance changed in Baroque times. Bramante was so over-zealous regarding the foundations of the Belvedere at the Vatican and "so courteous and obliging, that for the convenience of certain among his friends he commanded the masons not to build the walls in a firm uninterrupted range, but to leave certain spaces among the old chambers on the lower floors, to the end that they might store casks, pipes, firewood, etc., therein."

Michelangelo's closing days were troubled through quarrels, Sansovino was once thrown into prison, fined and degraded by detractors. Brunelleschi's ruse to have Duomo authorities sanction his dome plan is too well known to be repeated here.

In Baroque Italy. In Baroque Italy the architect's status was clearly defined and though he sometimes dabbled in painting and sculpture, he generally confined himself to building design. Fortifications, theatrical properties and scenery, gardens and bridges, were considered to be within his province. Exceptions occur where he went beyond these, as in the case of Guidotti of Lucca who practiced architecture, painting, sculpture, and body-snatching. He broke his thigh in a flying accident after covering a quarter of a mile on wings of his own design at a public display.

Characteristics of the Baroque period in Italy were splendor, freedom, ostentation, planning on a grand scale with the admitted aim of producing a monumental effect. Bernini—he of the Piazza di S. Pietro, the Spanish Steps, and the Scala Regia at the Vatican—is a shining example. The ideal client was invariably the Pope and his cardinals, though nobles erected palaces of increasing magnificence. Big-shot architects had enormous general practices. Some specialized. For instance, the Bibiena family did theaters and their designs were carried out in many countries of Southern Europe. The successful architect enjoyed riches, honors, and social position. These characteristics reached a climax in Bernini. Urban VIII in addressing him said, "It is fortunate for you that the cardinal Maffeo Barberini is become Pope; but we are still more so, that the Cavaliere Bernini should live during our pontificate."

Louis XIV of France wrote the Pope asking Bernini's release to come to Paris to design a wing of the Louvre. His trip was a triumphal march. Bernini did design an extension of the Louvre but machinations of French architects prevented it ever being carried out.

A British bird fancier who advises against giving cake and other sweets to cage birds points out: "You don't give your children birdseed for a treat."

Romans made cement by mixing volcanic ash with lime.

A cork substitute is being made from potato peelings in Germany.

One problem of air conditioning in the tropics is that buildings are often constructed without glass in windows and with numerous openings.

Arthur Sisson Coffin, Chicago architect resident in Winnetka, Illinois, died at his home on July 27 after an extended illness. Mr. Coffin was born in New Bedford, Mass. in 1857. Without benefit of formal education, he rose in his profession to a conspicuous place.

He joined Henry Raeder in 1889 and practiced with him and Mr. Crocker for eighteen years under the firm name of Raeder, Coffin and Crocker. Mr. Coffin's talent was in planning manufacturing and hydraulic plants, which were built in many states. Besides these, he was the architect of the Congregational Church in Winnetka, the original Winnetka Community House, Skokie Country Club, Century Building, St. Louis, Mo., as well as a number of Winnetka residences.

Mr. Coffin was an emeritus member of the A. I. A.

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Sidney Lovell, an architect in Chicago for fifty years, died on August 6 at the age of 71, in Birchwood Sanitarium after a long illness. He became a member of the Illinois Society of Architects in 1913. He had also been a member of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A.

Mr. Lovell was born in Racine, Wisconsin. At the age of 14 he was apprenticed to Col. Wood, a theater architect, and with Wood traveled to many cities of the country where Wood had theaters to erect or remodel. In time the firm became Wood and Lovell, this partnership ending in 1894. Then Mr. Lovell practiced alone, with an occasional association with the late Ernest Walker on residential work. In 1927 his son, McDonald, was taken in partnership under the firm name of Lovell and Lovell. In 1935 Sidney Lovell withdrew from active practice.

Mr. Lovell specialized in mausoleums and has to his credit a number of community mausoleums erected in cemeteries in various parts of the country. He also contributed to residential and apartment house architecture.

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Frederick C. Foltz, Chicago architect, died on September 6, age 49 years. Mr. Foltz was the son of Fritz Foltz of Treat and Foltz, architects, famous in Chicago in the 1880's and '90's.

Mr. Foltz' architectural education was obtained in his father's office and through private tutors. He became superintendent of caissons for Holabird and Roche on the LaSalle Hotel. He practiced independently under the firm name of Foltz and Brand from 1920 to 1925; Foltz and Company from 1925 to 1929. After that Mr. Foltz became supervising architect and industrial manager for Clearing Industrial District, Inc., the position he held at the time of his death.

He was a member of the Illinois Society of Architects since 1913.