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SKYLINES



OCTOBER
1955

KANSAS CITY CHAPTER AIA

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SKYLINES

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Skylines

Volume Five, Number Eight

October 1955

OCTOBER . . .

Usually this space is reserved for notes on events to occur during the coming month. However, it is fairly obvious that October is nearly over. October is a very short month this year, and even though it has its usual allotment of thirty-one days, the Kansas City Chapter really needs more. Events quickly chose their days, and there was just not enough time to go around, so some events lost out in the competition.

The October Chapter meeting was cancelled because of the crowded schedule, and this issue of SKYLINES is appearing about October 31 for the same reason.

You should be reading here that the Tenth Central States Conference is going to be held October 13, 14 and 15 in St. Louis and that the Producer's Council Caravan will be October 17 and 18 . . . but, instead, we must say that we hope you attended both of these events.

Important future dates to keep in mind are:

November 9—Carthage Marble Corporation,
Cold Spring Granite Company
and Texas Granite Corporation
dinner at Eddy's Restaurant.

November 15—November Chapter Meeting.

IN RETROSPECT

Four long years ago, which seem now to have been rather short, the Kansas City Chapter undertook a new project. That project was SKYLINES. There were those who were certain the project would fail as quickly as it started. But after four years, it should be safe to say that it has not failed.

Many people have helped keep SKYLINES thriving, among them are our advertisers, contributors of editorial material and, of course, our readers; however the real success of this publication can be traced straight to one person, Frank Grimaldi.

In 1951 Frank was appointed to captain this new venture, and he has been directly responsible for every issue published. He has spent many hours of planning, writing and just hard work to make SKYLINES the recognized success it is today. Now, because of other demands on Frank's time, he must give up "his project", the one he has guided so well.

Every member of our Chapter is indebted to Frank for a job, not just well done, but brilliantly done.

AIA PROPOSES COMPETITION FOR D.C. AUDITORIUM

Washington, D. C. — A national competition for the design of the District of Columbia's auditorium and civic center is proposed by The American Institute of Architects. George Bain Cummings of Binghamton, N.Y., president of the national architectural professional society, has written members of the District Auditorium Commission to offer the Institute's cooperation in setting up such a competition.

Cummings pointed out that in authorizing appointment of a commission to study and make recommendations for the proposed auditorium, Congress has recognized the unusual importance of a national cultural center in the capital city—not only to Washington residents but to all citizens of the United States.

Therefore, the Institute suggests, it would be particularly appropriate to utilize the democratic method of open competition in selecting the architects and artists who will collaborate on the designs and artistic decoration for the building.

The AIA president noted that his organization frequently is called upon by Federal agencies and others to advise on the selection of an architect and is prepared at all times to comply with such requests. He said that as a public service, the Institute would be willing to set up a special architectural advisory committee to assist the District Auditorium Commission in attaining its objective of providing the finest cultural center in the country for the nation's capital.

With a membership of nearly 11,000 which represents the great majority of practicing architects throughout the United States, The American Institute of Architects is the recognized spokesman for the profession. Its national headquarters are in the historic Octagon House in Washington.

A REPORT

POST-CONVENTION SESSION OF AIA OFFICERS AT MINNEAPOLIS

By W. H. Simon, President, Kansas City Chapter

By this late date most of the activities of the 87th Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects held in June at Minneapolis have been reported upon in the Bulletin, Journal or Memo. President Cummings called together the Board of Directors, the Staff of the Institute, the Chairmen of the National Committees, and the Chapter Presidents the evening after the convention had adjourned. This meeting has never been reported upon or its importance analyzed.

The purpose of this meeting was thought by some to be a social gathering to afford an opportunity to meet the newly elected officers, directors and others we contact in working with the Institute. The meeting was far from a social affair. President Cummings conducted the meeting in a business-like manner, continually keeping it moving in a well planned purposeful course.

President Cummings told of the Institute Organization, the Institute Program and the Officer's Areas of Responsibility. The following outline of the meeting which was given those attending is probably the shortest method of reporting on this part of the meeting. (See facing page.)

THE INSTITUTE ORGANIZATION

The American Institute of Architects
 10,500 Corporate Members
 assigned among 118 Chapters
 and 11 State Organizations
 grouped into 12 regions
 covering the entire USA,
 its territories and possessions
 operating in every state through its
 State Organization or Chapter
 and in every region through a
 Regional Council
 meeting annually in Convention
 which is sovereign

The Committees
 National
 some of which
 are "vertical" with
 correlated Regional
 and Chapter Coms.

The Board of Directors
 5 Officers
 12 Regional Directors
 The Staff
 The Executive Director
 Department heads
 and aides

The Executive Committee
 of the Board - 5 members

The Chapters
 State Organizations
 Regional Councils

Officers
 Directors
 Committees

THE INSTITUTE PROGRAM

The Never-ending Program

The achievement of
 The objects of The Institute
 The goals of the Profession

Derivation of the Immediate Program

1. By-Law Provisions
2. Convention action on Board's Report
3. Convention Resolutions and other actions

THE OFFICERS' AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The President

Stimulation and Integration of Institute Activities
 Duties set forth in the By-Laws

1st Vice President
 To the President, especially
 a of External Relationships
 and Functions

2nd Vice President
 Aide to the President, especially
 in area of Internal Relationships
 and Functions

The Secretary

Duties set forth in the By-Laws

The Treasurer

Duties set forth in the By-Laws

The Regional Directors' Responsibility

To implement The Institute Program in their respective regions and
 To visit and assist the Chapters and State Organizations

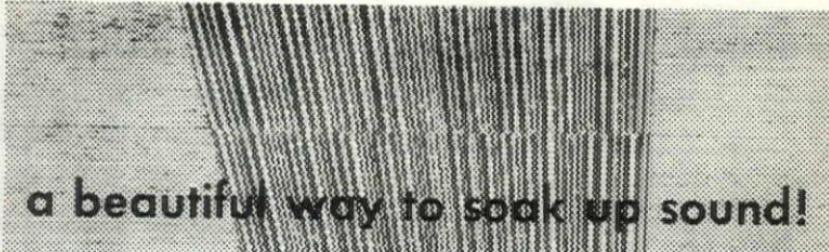
Also passed out at this meeting was a printed document listing National Committee Personnel for 1955-1956 with the duties of each committee spelled out. This document should be valuable to our chapter in order that we may more closely align our chapter committees with those of the Institute. Of the committee personnel listed we have fifteen serving from our Central States Region of which five are members of the Kansas City Chapter. This is a great improvement over our representation in past years and our regional director, Frank McNett, should be given credit for his efforts in our behalf.

In an analysis of this meeting, which was one of Institute organization, the importance of the region in the governmental functioning of the Institute becomes more and more apparent. One of the most significant of these trends is the change in By-Laws relating to unprofessional conduct whereby a Regional Judiciary Committee is established.

Let us consider the political implications of this new concept of regional importance in the government of our organization. At the present time the Regional Council is made up of the president and secretary of each chapter in the region acting in an advisory capacity to the Regional Director. With the creation of a Regional Judiciary Committee which is elected by the Regional Council the council is vested with more than an advisory status. Therefore you, as a chapter member, should in selecting chapter officers consider that they now represent you and your views at the Regional level. It does not, and should not, necessarily follow but it seems logical that our Regional Director should be someone who has either served on the Regional Council or is well versed in its proceedings. In the past the pattern has been established that officers of the Institute are nominated from the past board members. Thus, to summarize, when we as chapter members elect a chapter president we should consider the broader aspects of the office as he now represents us in a limited measure at the Regional level with the possibility of serving as a Board member and ultimately as a national officer.

Altho, as stated above, the Regional Council is made up of the president and secretary of each chapter with the Regional Director presiding it should be emphasized that the meetings are open to all members and they are invited to attend.

W. H. Simon



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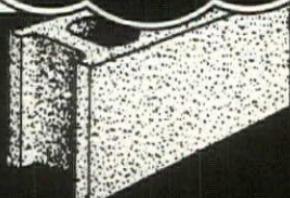
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Willard, Kansas, Bridge Deck . . .

The advantage of reduced dead loads was clearly indicated in the substantial savings realized on the Kansas River crossing at Willard, Kansas.

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NATIONAL HOUSING CENTER OPENS PHOTO EXHIBITION OF BEST HOUSES

When the National Association of Home Builders opened its imposing new National Housing Center in Washington recently it also placed on view a special photographic exhibit of the best 56 builder houses for 1956 as chosen for it by *HOUSE & HOME*, leading magazine of the homebuilding industry.

Outstanding new design and quality construction ideas incorporated in the houses in this exhibition "should be an eye opener, not only for the home buying public, but for the homebuilding industry, too," declares the current *HOUSE & HOME* in its own feature presentation of these houses. The magazine selected only houses that it found to be among those "making the greatest contribution to housing progress." This exhibition in the National Housing Center, it said, marks "the beginning of a housing Hall of Fame."

All of the exhibit houses were built by NAHB members. According to the magazine they demonstrate the new standard of homes achieved through America's post-war "revolution in home building." This exhibition, it points out, "will show buyers how much better are the new homes they can insist on buying. It will show builders how much better are the homes they can now offer."

LOCAL HOUSES CITED FOR EXCELLENCE

Given national recognition in this outstanding show in the nation's Capitol are plans and photos of the houses of Kansas City Builder, Jed Giles, designed by Architects Linscott, Kiene & Haylett.

GOOD NEWS FOR ARCHITECTS

Looking for a common characteristic among the dwellings it selected for this "finest big collection of production houses ever assembled," *HOUSE & HOME* points out that 45 of the 56 were designed by architects. "This should be encouraging news to architects, some of whom believe that most builders are well beyond the point of any return," it adds. "Yet every year an increasing number of builders invites architects to join their planning teams. The results are clearly evident."

Other common features among many of these leading national houses:

- 34 have two bathrooms each, and another 7 more than two bathrooms.
- 43 have special outdoor living areas; 6 have porches.
- 20 have rear living rooms; 22 have living rooms running clear through the house.
- 34 have fireplaces; all 56 have larger-than-conventional window areas.
- 52 have pitched roofs; 4 have flat roofs.
- 26 were priced under \$20,000 — of these, 11 were priced under \$15,000; 30 were priced above \$20,000.

INDUSTRY SPOKESMEN SHARE IN HONORS

Commenting on the "challenging assignment" its editors faced in selecting the best 56 houses from among 400 exceptional candidates submitted by NAHB members from all areas, HOUSE & HOME observed that it was "strikingly significant" that houses built by so many of NAHB's top members were among the finalists. "For the influence of these men spreads far beyond their own suburbs," says the magazine. "When such leaders as Red Lockwood and Bob Gerholz (former national presidents) bring out the best designed houses of their long careers, the repercussions are felt by hundreds of Midwest builders. When such leaders as Nate Manilow, Eddie Carr, George Goodyear, Dave Bohannon, Alex Simms, Floyd Kimbrough, to name just a few of the influential builders represented among the winners, move to a new design, their action carries great weight."

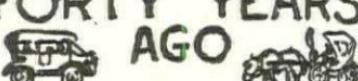
• • in the news

Quite a few members of the Kansas City Chapter were in St. Louis for the regional conference, which was very interesting this year. Next month SKYLINES will have a report on the conference and, also, will print some of the talks that were heard there.

THE KANSAS CITY TIMES.

OCTOBER 17, 1955.

FORTY YEARS AGO



From the files of October 17, 1915.

Lester, president, and William W.
La Force, secretary, both of Kan-
sas City.

The annual exhibit of the Kan-
sas City chapter of the American
Institute of Architects opened for
the week today at the Fine Arts
Institute, 1020 McGee.

The new Central market, pri-
vately operated, has been opened

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TO ALL MEMBERSHIP

At the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Board sanctioned active participation of the Chapter by both monetary donations and any service which they may care to render for the moving and restoring of the Fry McGee residence.

As you probably know, this is one of the few remaining examples of the architecture of early Kansas City. The house was built in 1848. It is now located at the southeast corner of Fourth and Locust, which site is planned for a bridge approach. It is contemplated that the house be moved and restored to, as near as possible, its original condition upon another site and used for a museum of early Kansas City history by the Native Sons of Kansas City, Missouri.

The Board considers this a worthy project of historic building preservations and, therefore, asks your co-operation and contribution for this project. It has been suggested that contributions be made in the name of the Chapter; therefore, we advise that you send your contributions to John Monroe, our treasurer, who in turn will present the moneys in the name of the Chapter. We hope you will all participate in this venture.

W. H. Simon, President

Ernest O. Brostrom, Chairman

Historic Buildings Preservation Committee

1729 H Street, Northwest, Washington 6, D. C.

WHY NOT BUILD THE HOUSE YOU REALLY WANT?

PLANNING the house itself can be an intriguing game. In fact, some people get so fascinated by planning that they never get around to building.

You, of course, will not fall into the error of infinite planning. You mean to get a house built, and no shilly-shallying. Thus you may fall into the other planning error, building without planning enough.

This is a serious mistake. A house that goes into construction too soon will be a disappointment. All your second thoughts will come too late. You will live to regret the house you might have built if you had not been so all-fired anxious for action.

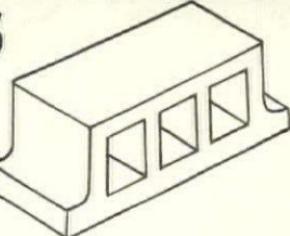
So expect to spend months evolving ideas and testing them. You will reject many that seem attractive at first glance. A few will survive repeated scrutiny. Gradually, over the weeks, your vision of the "right" house will become increasingly explicit.

Is an architect necessary?

YOUR house, like many another, could be built without an architect's ministrations. You could buy a stock plan from a plan service or a magazine or a lumber dealer. The resulting house might be perfectly sound and adequate.

But the real question is not whether you can

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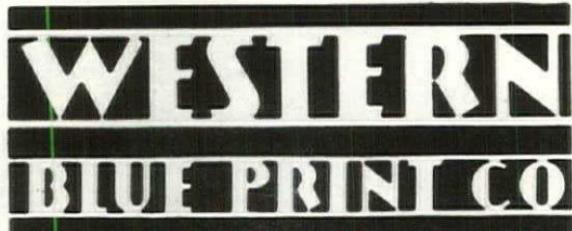
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manage without an architect. It is, Do you want to?

To answer that, go back to your original purpose in deciding to build instead of just buying or renting.

Are you building only because no suitable houses are for sale or rent where you want to live? Then your main concern is location. You might well be money ahead building from a stock plan and forgetting architects. But note well what you are doing: You are settling for *a* house, not building *your* house.

On the other hand, are you building because you want a house that meets your individual tastes and needs as no ready-planned house could? Then the house matters as much as location to you, perhaps more. And you are cooking an entirely different kettle of fish.

The only way to get a real tailor-made house is to have an architect design one for you, the way you want it. No half measure, such as tinkering with a stock plan or attempting to concoct a house yourself with the help of an obliging carpenter, is going to give you a satisfactory result.

So supposing you do need an architect, how do you pick one?

Not by opening the yellow pages of the telephone book to "architects" and ringing up one at random. You wouldn't select a family physician that way. The architect who designs your home performs a service almost as personal as your trusty M.D.'s. You will tell him your dreams, ideas, financial limitations, family problems. Your architect, like your physician, should be sympathetic, congenial, understanding.

Since not all architects design homes, you must locate those who do. If you have friends in real estate or the building business, they can suggest names. Or you can spot the most appealing architect-designed homes in your community and ask who planned them. A chat with the owners—who will be flattered by inquiries from admiring strangers—will reveal quickly how these people feel about their architects.

You will hear gossip, too, about architects who can “build cheaper” than others. Don’t believe it. Some do a better job than others at arranging space in efficient, economical ways. But none can cut your building costs without cutting something out of the house. It is the builder, not the architect, who can build cheaper.

When you have identified a man who designs the kind of house you like, make an appointment to see him. Tell him, briefly, about the sort of house you want to build and approximately how much you expect to spend. Then ask whether he is interested and, if so, how soon he could begin work.

These inquiries may be made by telephone. It is better, though, to visit the architect’s office. That gives you an opportunity to see whether he runs a businesslike establishment and is a person you can get along with. And you will have a chance to see examples of his recent work, in photos or models.

Don’t leave without asking about fees, either. As with other professional services, there are no standard rates for architectural work. Usually the charge is a percentage of the expected construction cost. It may run anywhere from 8% to 15%, depending upon the type of construction, the locality and other factors.

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Living happily with an architect

THE perfect way to get what you want from an architect would be to adopt him. Then he could live in your home and watch your family at work, at play and at each other's throat. If your wife, who is right-handed at the table, turns out to be left-handed in the kitchen, he could note this important fact. He could observe your hobbies, your style of entertaining, your foibles and your way with the kids, and plan accordingly.

In the end he could design a house that would earn that fantastically presumptuous compliment every architect longs to hear, "I couldn't have done it better myself."

This procedure is utopian, of course, and possibly too strenuous for both architect and client. Nevertheless, you should strive to help your architect see your way of living as clearly as any outsider can. You do it by explaining exactly what you want in a house, fully and candidly, and detailing your reasons.

This, incidentally, is where your file of purloined ideas goes to work. When you are struggling to describe a whatta-ya-call-it that the architect would recognize immediately as a clerestory window, you can dip into the file for a picture and say, "See? Up high like this, kind of, only longer."

Your architect will try manfully to give you what you want. This may surprise you if you have heard tales of strong-willed architects' imposing their personal preferences on clients. That does happen occasionally, but only to clients who make impossible demands, refuse to listen to reason or fail to explain what they are driving at.

The architect will try to accommodate all your wishes in his preliminary drawings, made expressly for you to criticize. And he will rework them with saintly patience until you are satisfied. No working drawings will be made or specifications written until you give the word that you are content.

But woe betide you if you are struck with bright new ideas after you have given the go-ahead. No architect-client relationship, however idyllic, can stand that strain. When new ideas come too late, be prepared to pay extra to work them into the plans, or forget them. Remember, you are bound to pay for completed drawings and specifications, whether your house is built or not.

Use your architect as adviser on materials and equipment, too. Would double glazing save enough heat to justify the added cost over single glass? He will know. How much more, if any, will cork tile cost than hardwood flooring? Ask the architect. Will your budget stand a double lavatory in the master bath? He can tell. On all such questions—and there will be hundreds—he can give unbiased, canny, cost-wise advice you could get nowhere else.

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