## CHARLES GWATHMEY AT PDC ON JUNE 13



New York architect Charles Gwathmey. AIA, will discuss his recent work at this month's Chapter meeting on June 13 at the Pacific Design Center's Sequoia Room. His slide-illustrated talk will begin at 8 p.m.; the program is free of charge and open to the public

Gwathmey is no stranger to Los Angeles, having taught at UCLA several years ago for two successive years. Since 1964, in fact, he has been actively involved in teaching, holding faculty positions at major Eastern universities in addition to his local stint. Gwathmey feels that through teaching an architect can constantly reevaluate and improve his own work

His own work and that of his associate Robert Siegel, comprises an oeuvre that is as distinguished as it is plentiful. It has been characterized as good, direct, no-nonsense modern architecture, combining the influences of LeCorbusier and Kahn

The Gwathmey Siegel firm has received numerous design awards including, in 1976, two National AIA Honor Awards for the renovation of Whig Hall at Princeton University and for the Dormitory, Dining and Student Union Facility at the State University at Purchase, New York.

Major projects now underway at his office include Northgate Housing on Roosevelt Island, New York, and student housing at Columbia University

### WATTS TOWERS: RESTORATION EXPERTISE SOUGHT

The City of Los Angeles has finally decided to do something about the repair of the Watts Towers. The Towers, which have not been repaired or maintained since the City took over ownership in 1975, have suffered badly during this year's rainy season, it seems that the same people who wanted them torn down are letting them fall down.

Now some official has come up with three-quarters of a million dollars to do a \$10,000 job. Interestingly enough a major portion of the money, according to the Los Angeles Times, is going to pay for parking lots and landscaping, not the Tower repairs. If they had waited a little longer they would have had a great parking lot and no Towers at

The Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers, which has the responsibility to approve restoration work under their 1975 gift to the City contract, is seeking concrete preservation experts in the architectural and engineering community. Contact Arloa Paquin at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 937-4250 ext. 241, if you are interested in helping the Towers. No parking lot planners need apply

Bernard Judge, AIA

## SOCRATIC **IGNORANCE FROM** THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

Philadelphia architect and educator Richard Saul Wurman, FAIA, ad dressed the Chapter on April 11 about his chief concerns - communication and invention; making information, architecture and the city observable, understandable, and better

Wurman apparently thinks that, like what name-brand newspaper editors do, most of what we as architects do "simply doesn't work.

Some of this failure has to do with communicating poorly. "You only understand something relative to something you understand...public information should be made public and usable.... That whole field of determining what is appropriate and usable information continues to evade discipline and hasn't been talked about in architecture schools."

#### "What is the Question?"

Moreover, we tend to solve the wrong problems: "In the first 5000 years of recorded history our problems were solved by saying 'more' (more building, more cops...) A radical change was the use of the word 'no' (no more freeways...).

Today we architects are unable to ask how we want buildings to perform "Products have only coincidental relationship to comfort." Schools, for example, "have no relationship to learning. Sometimes learning goes on in school; sometimes it doesn't.

Nothing Succeeds like Failure

But, mercifully, Wurman sees virtue in 'dumbness" and failure, and, Socrateslike, advances with the inadequate professional, pari passu. "A child learning to walk is actually falling all the time; that's a paradigm for my life," he admits. "I find the most seductive thing is being asked to do something high-

Inventors express similar feelings, according to Wurman, who paraphrased Edwin Land's recent comments regarding his invention of Polavision. "'I was trying to use an impossible chemistry and a non-existent technology to make an unmanufacturable product for which there was no discernible demand. And even when it was explained to people, they couldn't see why I would want to make it or they, in turn, to use it. These conditions, I felt, made for the optimal working situation....' I identify with that," said Wurman

#### **Dumb Architecture**

Nor should architects be afraid to be dumb: "We have such a fear of doing something obvious - fear that it's too lightweight, that someone's going to laugh at us," according to Wurman.

The fact is, most obvious things haven't yet been done.... Most of my career has been based on obvious things, and I have a million more to do."

Anne Luise Buerger

### CONTINUING **EDUCATION** SEMINARS SET

The SCC/AIA Continuing Education Committee has announced its program for 1978 which consists of five seminars of wide-ranging interest to the architectural community. The program, which has been developed in cooperation with USC and the Producers' Council, Inc., is designed to address relevant contemporary issues and material often not included in formal architectural education

The seminars are as follows: June 24, Environmental Impact Statements; August 12, Energy Legislation September 16, Financing and Liability Cost; October 21, Building Moderniza tion, Rehabilitation and Restoration. All the seminars will be held at USC, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The date of the fifth seminar, on Proposed Handicap ped Legislation and Architecture, will be announced as soon as confirmed.

It is suggested you forward your reservations, using the enclosed form, to the Chapter office as soon as possible to facilitate arrangements for the seminars. The charge is \$15 per seminar, and attendees will receive certificates of participation.

Paul J. McCarty chairs the Continuing Education Committee, whose members are Vito Cetta, Steven J. Demeter, Lawrence Dubal, Susan Peterson, Robert H. Taylor, and Joseph Vaccaro, with John A. Derfner representing USC and H.L. Hinman representing the Producers' Council.

#### 

...architectural tragedy..."

It was alarming to read in the March 1978 issue of L.A. ARCHITECT the article by Thomas S. Hines on the possible demolition of the Pan Pacific Auditorium; that would be an architec tural tragedy - the kind so often timed just before a recent building style returns to favor with the public. I hope very much the people responsible for the fate of this unparalleled Art Deco masterpiece will be farsighted enough to save it.

Robert Venturi

..stronger stands..." The May 1978 issue of L.A. ARCHITECT includes this paragraph referring to a March 14 seminar in which participated: "No matter who the critiis, though, newspaper or journal editorial policy can create a situation that renders the critic 'gutless,' according to Drevfuss (who made a verbal commitment to overcome this ob-

I do not face that "obstacle" in my work. Therefore I did not make that

commitment. I did say that in the future I expect to take stronger stands on architectural

issues than I have in the past John Dreyfuss

## SCHINDLER HOUSE **FRIENDS LAUNCH** FUND-RAISING

A major fund-raising drive to purchase. restore, and preserve the world-famous Schindler House will begin with a garden party at the house, 833 N. Kings Road, Hollywood, on June 25 from 5 to 7 p.m., sponsored by Friends of the Schindler House. Admission is \$25 per person and \$35 per couple. Guests may expect wine, hors d'oeuvres, music and architecture talk as they tour the house and grounds and discuss future plans for the building with the officers of the group and members of the Schindler family.

The house, completed in 1921, was the first major building Schindler

designed after leaving the office of his mentor, Frank Lloyd Wright. Through the years, Schindler and his wife Pauline shared the double house cooperatively with other families, including that of Richard Neutra. Schindler also had his studio there.

Total costs for purchase, repairs, restoration and initial maintenance are expected to reach approximately \$350,000. Contributions are being sought via special fund-raising events, such as the June garden party, and through annual Friends of the Schindler House memberships. Membership categories are: Student \$10; Individual \$25; Family, \$35; Corporate, \$100; Sponsor, \$500 and over. All contributions are tax-deductible. In addition to the primary satisfaction of helping to save one of the landmarks of modern architecture, members will also be entitled to participate in special programs and Schindler architecture tours to be arranged by the Friends.



Julius Shulman)

## **BOOK REVIEW**

Case Study Houses, 1945 - 1962 by Esther McCoy, Second Edition published by Hennessey and Ingalls, 1977, Softbound, \$14.95. Hardbound, \$28.50.

The small private house has always been the most elusive and deceptive of the architects' productions. Rarely, if ever, mentioned in the great treatises on architecture, the designing of houses, nevertheless, has become in the public mind what is most closely associated with the architect's activities probably because living in a house is an experience which we all share and hence is most easily understood.

Before the mid-19th century, architects were not involved in the design of ordinary private houses. Since that time either they have enjoyed the steady patronage of wealthy clients in their residential work or they have eased their guilty consciences by using rich men's houses as testing grounds for ideas about workers' housing.

There has been only a handful of incidents in the history of modern architecture of concerted, purposeful and progressive experimentation with improving design in ordinary domestic architecture. The list would include the Quartiers Fruges at Pessac in 1923, the Weissenhofsiedlung in 1927, the Wienerwerkstatte of 1930, and Wright's Usonian experiments of the '30s and '40s. As Esther McCoy reminds us in her introduction to the second edition of Case Study Houses, the last serious experiments in residential design occurred in Southern California between 1945 and 1962 under the auspices of John Entenza and Arts and Architecture magazine.

It is both timely and ironic that this book which records a vanished, beautiful, and idealistic moment in our history should reappear just now when the private architect-designed house has removed itself completely beyond the reach of the average person and what remains has become the breeding ground of architects' private fantasies.

The book is really a study of lost innocence, of California after the Second World War. "There was something electric in the air, a particular excite ment that comes from the sound of hammers and saws after they have been silent too long," Miss McCoy writes.

It was logical enough that this should occur in California: for several decades a climate of architectural experimenta tion, particularly in residential architecture, had existed there, extending from Greene and Greene to Wurster and to Schindler. California has always tended to nurture the private aspects of life over the public, the domestic over the monumental. In Los Angeles, Esther McCoy tells us, the work of Lloyd Wright, R.M. Schindler, Richard Neutra, Harwell Harris, J.R. Davidson, Gregory Ain, and Raphael Soriano had laid the ground for the Case Studies

In fact the architects for the first Case Study Houses commissioned were largely drawn from this reservoir of fine domestic architects, mostly born before the First World War. The early Case Study Houses fall squarely within that existing tradition of good, modern housing: essentially modest, economical, made of wood, relying heavily on planting and siting for visual privacy.

The first phase ends with two extraordinary houses, one by Charles Eames, the other by Eames and Eero Saarinen. They are the first Case Studies to experiment broadly with plan and structure Neither house subscribes to the CSH program of accommodation to the typical family with children.

The Eames house was for two practicing artist/designers and included a studio (see L.A. ARCHITECT, October 1977). The Entenza house, with its regular pinwheel steel structure, was designed for 'elastic' space "which could graciously expand or contract for an occasional party of forty or a friend in for morning coffee, for twenty architectural students from Helsinki or for conversation in the evening with half a dozen friends.

The second phase of the Case Study Houses begins in 1950 and extends over the next ten years. Entitled, "Steel Takes Over" this chapter is summed up in Soriano's statement: "If you are look ng for a solution for housing from the 20th century, which I am, the general and the individual must be identical.. Modular planning is particularly important in steel, where logic and economy are usually identical. Tricks are costly and hazardous."

From the older Soriano's highly disciplined 10' x 20' steel-bay pavilion the book moves on to what is surely the high point of the CSH program: the work of the young Craig Ellwood and Pierre Koenig. Never were more spare, disciplined, and economical houses conceived and executed. Like the taut bodies of professional dancers in top physical form these houses shine from the pages of the book and put to shame the self-indulgence of today's houses.

It is these same photographs of Case Study Houses #17, #18, #21, and #22 which so many of my generation marvelled at in the pages of Arts and Architecture when we were in school and which ultimately drew some of us to California. This was modern architecture in its purest form. These houses summed up all the aspirations of youthful idealism in the '50s and are at such variance with all the macrame-filled red wood, shed-roofed boxes of the California '60s. "Steel is not something you can take up and put down," Koenig is quoted as saying, "It is a way of life.

This section is filled with fascinating accounts: of Soriano's quest for the perfect connection in steel ("One is always the best - it performs in all ways. After I have found [it] I don't vary it"); of Ellwood's apprenticeship in cost estimating, job supervision, and drafting for builders who constructed the work of Neutra, Soriano, Saarinen, Eames, Wurster, and Harris; and of Koenig's early important lesson in steel construction when the bids on his own steel hillside home came in so high that he called on the manufacturers, contractors and engineers to learn the reasons (at that time, he worked at night in plant engineering at an aircraft company)

In CSH #22 by Koenig the program seems to have reached its ultimate statement. Greyhound-lean, the house poises on its hillside terrace and unashamedly extends by means of its naked linearity the grid of the city streets far below

The last chapter deals with houses by Killingsworth, Brady and Smith and Jones and Emmons, intended to be built in multiples to emphasize environ-mental planning aspects. The Killingsworth, Brady and Smith houses are extremely elegant, if not a trifle fussy. The other project was never built.

In a new introduction to the second edition, which alone is worth the price of the book, Miss McCoy explains, "Nearly all advances in the design of the small house have come out of small architectural offices...the large office was a product of the late '50s and '60s, and before that middle-sized offices could afford to (and liked to) design houses.... Even the middle-sized office today can hardly afford to design a small house, and the large offices have no designers who have ever worked at a small scale or know the technology of

"By 1962," she concludes, "it had become clear that the battle for housing had been won by the developers. Housing was a gigantic industry...[and] the custom-built family small house was being priced out of existence. The Case Study House was a social program; it essentially ended when the house became a luxury.

It is a pleasure for the architect to read this book. It is written by someone who understands well the building process and the architect's motives and who does not confuse them with popular sociology, newspaper supplement sentimentality, or historical and literary allusions. For the architect who reads this book, a greater understanding of the art of architecture is achieved, as well as a clearer vision of how we arrived where we are in architecture in California.

Tim Vreeland, AIA

#### **JUNE 1978**

Volume 4, Number 6

Inside:

Quality Housing: Possibilities and Problems, by Kenneth Dillon and Michael Franklin Ross.

June 5: USC Scholarship Presentations, Watt Hall, 8 p.m. June 13: Charles Gwathmey, Sequoia Room, Pacific Design Center, 8 p.m. June 20: Anthony Lumsden, AIA L.A. 12 Lecture Series, Knoll Showroom, Pacific Design Center, 8 p.m.









# QUALITY HOUSING

### OVERVIEW

#### The Housing Marketplace

Today's housing is controlled almost completely by the rules of the marketplace. All housing is built for profit, except a small portion of public housing which has the backing of the non-profit sponsor. The principle of "build cheap and sell dear" becomes the controlling factor in most projects.

Because the owner/developer and the contractor are frequently the same person, corner-cutting becomes the name of the game. It thus becomes difficult or impossible for the designer to control the actual building. The designer is often regarded as an adversary - a necessary evil in the building process - who must be manipulated and controlled lest he produce too costly a design. And, as the developer often has no identification with the building product, he is rarely impelled to produce an outstanding building.

Further controls are established by an enormous accumulation of government regulations at the federal, state and local levels. Many of these regulations are out-of-date, remnants of land-use concepts and construction rules of past generations. Consequently, there has developed over the years a Byzantine set of rules subject to capricious and arbitrary interpretations.

#### Government Programs

Special government agencies have been created to provide housing, often for specific groups, such as family, elderly, and more recently the handicapped. Need is based on a housing plan, which surveys existing housing stock, delineates deficiencies, and establishes quantities of needed units. Projects may involve new construction or substantial rehabilitation. Except for the handicapped, this is all housing for low- and moderate-income persons.

The best known agency is HUD, or the Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD has a wide variety of programs, ranging from block grants, which may be administered by locallevel agencies, through mortgage and interest assistance, to rent supplement.

The current Section 8 program is an example of the latter; it provides direct rental assistance, based on a percentage of tenant's income (i.e., ability to pay) in relation to the fair-market rent for the unit. Construction is usually in response to requests for proposals, a sort of package bid system comprising design, development, and a management plan. Design considerations are prescriptive as explicated in the multivolume "Minimum Property Standards.

CHFA, the California Housing Finance Agency, provides financing for housing through bond issues, which are repaid through arbitrage and mortgage interest payments. A self-supporting agency, it acts much as a conventional lender by lending directly, but it generally follows HUD rules. Applications for funds are made directly to the Agency, which has offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Sacramento, and after site and schematics approval, a loan commitment is made. Projects usually have HUD (Section 8) financial support

In addition, the Department of Agriculture has programs for rural housing under the Farmers Home Administration. There are also local housing authorities at city and county levels, as well as specific agencies, such as community redevelopment agencies, which include housing in their programs. Backup for these are usually HUD block grants or Section 8 rent assistance financing.

Kenneth Dillon, AIA

### FOUR PROJECTS

#### Introduction

To achieve a quality living environment for people in multi-family housing has long been a dream of the architect. Within the uncertain palpitations of the marketplace, the ever-changing govern-ment programs and policies, and the constraints of tight schedules and limited budgets, it is a wonder we get anything built that remotely resembles the ideal environment described by Chermayeff and Alexander in their classic book, Community And Privacy.

What follows is a review of four projects in Los Angeles that are attempting to achieve a level of quality through pragmatic, innovative design and a respect for their surrounding environment.

The two completed projects represent responses to the demands of the private sector. These include Carolwood Condominiums by Ron Goldman, AIA, and Brent Robbins & Bown, and the Orlando/Waring Condominiums by Kenneth Dillon, AIA. The two unbuilt projects soon to be constructed in the Bunker Hill area of downtown include The Promenade Condominiums by Kamnitzer Cotton Vreeland, and the Senior Citizen Housing by Daniel Dworsky and Associates.

#### The Private Sector

In the intensely competitive marketplace of the private developer, there are no philanthropists. The profit motive determines who stays in business and who does not. In both the Carolwood and Orlando/Waring Condominiums there is an intelligent response to the demands of the marketplace as witnessed by the tight, efficient planning and the unit designs. In addition there is a successful hierarchy of semi-public to private space, as well as a variety of unit plans including a spacious penthouse at the Carolwood and a high-ceilinged two-bedroom at the Orlando/Waring.

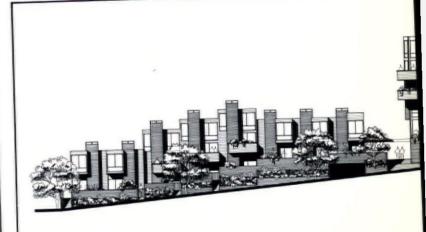
The Orlando/Waring Condominum, consisting of twenty-four units, is conceived as two tower blocks connected by a glass lobby. Community areas open from the lobby onto a garden court and pool area. It was built in 1974 at the very low cost of \$17 per square

The Carolwood is composed of thirtysix units on a sloping site. Completed in 1975, the building cost \$28.50 per square foot net. The interplay of the vertical chimney elements and the interlocking balconies forms a straightforward geometric system that is visually pleasing and reflects the basic simplicity of the plan. The two-story townhouses step up the hill to the fourstory penthouse building, taking maximum advantage of the panoramic views and the changing topography.

#### CRA Rebuilds Bunker Hill

The completion of the Bonaventure Hotel and the elegant remodeling of the Biltmore have helped attract many visitors to downtown Los Angeles, but for many years the City has needed better-quality housing for the permanent downtown residential population. This need will be filled in part by two new housing projects currently in development - a condominium project and a senior citizens' rental project, both of which excel in the great attention they pay to public and semi-public open

The Promenade by Kamnitzer Cotton Vreeland, under the design direction of Peter Kamnitzer, will ultimately cover five parcels of the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Area with a total of 800 units to be built in four phases. The total site plan calls for an interlocking series of stepped low-rise units which define public plazas and outdoor recreation areas. Kamnitzer refers to these as "textural infill." Although the site plan



# PROBLEMS & POSSIBILITIES

reads somewhat like an oversimplified diagram, the development of Phase One, with its stepping profile and variegated facade, should prove to be a very positive addition to downtown. Preliminary estimates by the developers, Shapell Government Housing and Goldrich Kest & Associates, indicate the condominiums will start at \$70,000 per unit. According to Elliot Maltzman, President of Shapell Government Housing, public response thus far has been "sensational."

The Senior Citizen Housing Project by Daniel Dworsky and Associates will total 1,100 units to be built in two phases. Phase One will contain 760 units in three sixteen-story blocks set around a multipurpose social service center. The housing units are all identical one-bedroom plans based on the Forest City-Dillon System of prefabricated concrete units. The repetitive nature of the housing blocks is offset by the stepping social service center which attempts to recreate the cascading hill-side of the old Bunker Hill. Built under the auspices of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency and the Retirement Housing Foundation, the non-profit sponsor, the project will serve the residents as well as the adjacent community. HUD will provide Section 8 rent subsidies to residents.

#### Conclusion

Within the constraints of the marketplace, certain public agencies and private developers are striving to improve our stock of quality housing. Jim Hosenfeld, of the Los Angeles County Housing Authority, perceives the need for a family housing program that would provide low- and moderate-income families with quality housing in a series of small cluster developments integrated into the existing residential areas, rather than through the traditional concept of the single large housing project with the negative connotations it has acquired.

For example, Shapell Government Housing has joined with Goldrich Kest & Associates to develop housing projects in the downtown areas of Los Angeles and San Diego which were once considered taboo by the private developer.

These trends represent a shift in consumer attitudes which promises to bring professionals back downtown and foster the revitalization of our central cities through the rebirth of a social fabric which includes all age groups and all levels of our society.

Downtown Los Angeles already

boantown Los Angeles already boasts some of the finest culture and entertainment in the country. The new hotels, office buildings, and other commercial enterprises combined with a large resident population, at varied income levels, should produce one of the most vibrant downtowns in the United States.

Quality multi-family residential architecture, whether it's a 40-unit condominium or a 1,000-unit urban complex, is possible if the client is well-informed and the architect is creative enough to meet the demands of budget, schedule, and good design.

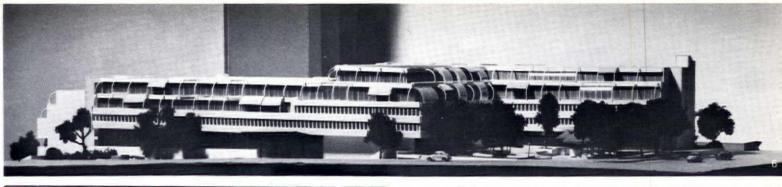
Michael Franklin Ross, AIA

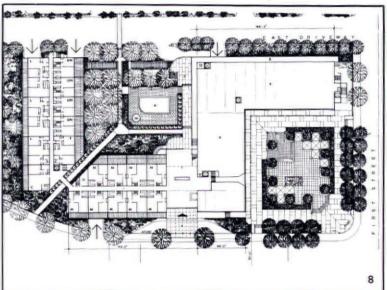
Bunker Hill Senior Citizen Housing, Los Angeles (In progress), Daniel Dworsky and Associates. Associate Architects: Ogren, Juarez and Givas, and William H. Howell. Project Architect: David Margolf. Project Designer: Jon Thogmartin. Client: Retirement Housing Foundation. (Drawing: Thomas Tomonaga).
 2. - 5. Orlando/Waring Condominiums, West Hollywood, 1974, Kenneth Dillon, AIA, Architect. Project Designer: Reg Wong. Client: Shapiro Co. (Photos: Tim Street-Porter).

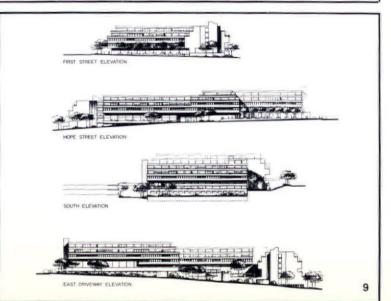
 9. The Promenade, Los Angeles (in progress), Kamnitzer Cotton Vreeland, architects. Design supervision: Peter Kamnitzer. Client: Shapell Government Housing, Inc. and Goldrich Kest & Associates. (Photo 6: Tim Street-Porter).

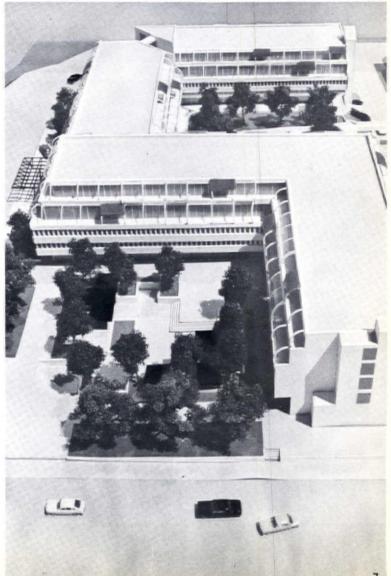
(Photo 6: Tim Street-Porter).

10. - 15. Carolwood Condominiums, West Hollywood, 1975, Ron Goldman, AIA, and Brent, Robbins & Bown. Client: Weber Development Co. and Enstreat Corp. (Photos: Morton Neikrug.)







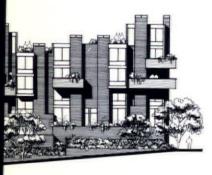




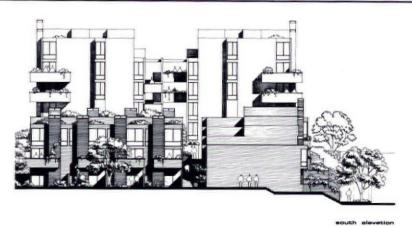
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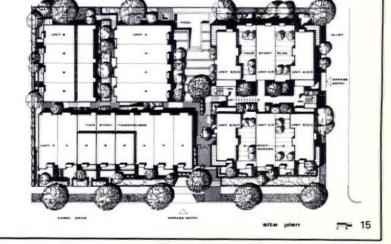












# HAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

comment is June 19. Call 485-6445 for

further information.

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The 2,144th meeting of the SCC/AIA Board of Directors: On April 4, 1978, officers, directors and quests gathered at the Chapter offices to hear: Jerry Pollak and Judy Nelson on the Griffith Park Plan, recommending Chapter endorsement of the Plan which the Board subsequently granted, the Chapter position and other comments to be outlined in a letter prepared by Pollak: a discussion of Board support for the CCAIA move to Sacramento, to be so stated in a letter to the CCAIA; approval of David Martin's letter regarding the CCAIA planning process; approval of the formation of a Professional Liability Committee, to be headed by David Sachson; Board recommendation of the appointment of Burnett Turner to the Los Angeles Bicentennial Committee; a membership report by Secretary Stanley Smith.

A two-day seminar, "Proven Design Technologies for Energy-Efficient Building Envelopes, Lighting, HVAC" is being sponsored by Architectural Record magazine. The seminar will be in Los Angeles on July 10 - 11, 1978, at the Century Plaza Hotel. For registration information contact Charles E. Hamlin, Architectural Record, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020, (212) 997-3088

The San Fernando Valley Section of the SCC/AIA will hold a dinner meeting on June 29 which will feature Robert Burman, AIA, speaking on "What is Religious Architecture?" The meeting will be held at the Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City beginning at 6:30 p.m. The charge is \$10/person. Call Clyde L. Smith, AIA, at 789-5090 for further information

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#### A public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Los ARCHITECT or Angeles Central Library Renovation and SENIOR DRAFTSMAN Expansion is scheduled for June 15, Immediate opening in San Luis Obispo for talented person to execute complete drawings 7:30 p.m., in the Los Angeles City Council Chambers. Last date for written

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