



# OCULUS

Vol. I

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THE NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS  
115 EAST 40th STREET • DECEMBER, 1938 • WARD W. FENNER, EDITOR

## WAGES AND HOURS

The profession generally is interested in the possible effect on it of the Fair Labor Standards Act, especially the Wages and Hours division.

The Institute, through its attorneys, Tanner, Sillcocks and Friend, have asked the administrator, Mr. Andrews, a number of questions concerning the applicability of the act, but as we go to press no answer has been received.

The best informed opinion seems to be that the act will affect some but not all architectural offices. Architects whose work does not cross state lines will not be touched. Architects who do work outside the state may be cloaked by the immunity of professional, executive and administrative workers, but there has not as yet been a definite ruling on this point.

## ROSETTES AND FRETTS

Our choice of a name has inspired considerable comment. It has been suggested that the oculus is also the opening through which hot air can escape.

*Excerpts from letters follow:*

"After the existence of *The Oculus* the title is the next best thing. I offer my compliments on both, and feel we are to be congratulated on this newest of architectural publications."

ELISABETH COIT

"I wish to compliment the Chapter for issuing the leaflets, very aptly titled *Oculus*." ROSARIO CANDELA

"This is simply a word of enthusiastic approval and congratulation on the choice of *Oculus* as a name for the New York Chapter's leaflet. It is a most happy choice.

"I feel that in the little paragraph entitled 'Christening' some recognition should have been given to the brilliant mind that thought up this title."

LEOPOLD ARNAUD

We agree with Dean Arnaud but it was impossible. See the account of the November Chapter meeting.

In our November issue appeared a paragraph headed "Education" in which the Education Committee's report was summarized without mention of the important fact that the fund alluded to was that inherited from the Arnold W. Brunner estate.



## NEXT MEETING— DECEMBER 20

### TOPIC—COMPETITIONS

Architectural League at 6:30 P.M.



## DECEMBER MEETING

The agenda for the December chapter meeting will be as follows:

1. Vote on amendment to chapter by-laws.
2. General topic—Public Work of the Federal Government.
  - a. Method of letting by selection.

Speaker: Charles Butler

- b. Method of letting by competitions.

Speakers: Edgar I. Williams  
Eric Gugler

On each topic there will be general discussion with each speaker from the floor limited to five minutes. From these discussions it is hoped we may receive constructive suggestions helpful to Mr. Butler's Committee, and perhaps arrive at a definite chapter position.

If you have any ideas to present, write them out and leave them with the Secretary after presenting them.

## ADVERTISING

During the past few months various groups of promoters have again approached chapter members with the ancient proposal of publishing monographs of architects' work—costs to be paid by manufacturers.

In the June, 1936, issue of the *Octagon* (page 19) the Institute declared itself as looking with disapproval on the publication of the work of its members in any publication supported in any way by advertisements, except in regular magazines, and the Committee on Practice must henceforth consider such practice as unprofessional conduct and so report to the Judiciary Committee the cases brought to the attention of the Committee.

## NOVEMBER MEETING

The first meeting of the Chapter for the winter was held on November 22 at the League. A number of topics came up, and discussion was very full on the subject of competitions. There was a strong feeling among some groups of members that certain recent competitions for mythical college buildings or groups are not the type of competition that the Institute should sponsor since there were no contracts for architectural services involved.

Apropos of competitions for public works, Mr. Charles Butler asked the Chapter to give him concrete suggestions as to what the relation should be between private architects and governmental bureaus.

He remarked that what the politician wants is some reasonable method of selecting architects which can be completely non-political.

The discussion then turned to whether the Chapter should accept and endorse the proposal that architects should render only partial services to governmental bodies which are set up to do much of the work themselves, or whether it should take the attitude that the architect is trained and equipped to handle the job from start to finish and should be retained for complete services.

Many points of view were brought out on both questions, but they were considered important enough to deserve more time and study, and it was resolved that they must be discussed again before the Chapter takes formal action.

Mr. Woodbridge spoke on the desirability of building up the Chapter's associate membership, not only to strengthen the Chapter but to foster a feeling of community of interest between the young draftsman and the practicing architect. He announced that the Executive Committee had agreed to invite an associate member to attend their meetings, and that each other committee chairman might do the same, so that the younger men might get a true picture of the ways that their employers and associates were thinking and acting.

Mr. Woodbridge urged that all members do everything in their power to

help the Membership Committee enlist new associate members, and suggested specifically that each man post a notice in his office and speak personally to his employees suggesting that they join the chapter as associates.

Messrs. Bessell and Williams gave a summary of the recent New York State architects' convention, and made a special point of the fact that the Chapter's representation was humiliatingly low.

*Oculus* was given a guarantee of at least one year's life by the appropriation of \$275 for its expenses from the Chapter's reserve fund.

Mr. Bessell presented an invisible prize in an inaudible speech to the anonymous winner of *Oculus'* competition for a name.

Messrs. Erskine, Petroff and Strupman, newly elected associate members, were introduced to the Chapter.

President Harmon reported that in regard to the "Mayor's List" the following provisions had been agreed upon for this year:

That a Committee of 9, consisting of one representative of each architectural society in the Metropolitan Area, and one each from the Municipal Art Society and the Fine Arts Federation, elect a jury, the members whereof would not be members of the Committee of 9; this Jury to select not more than 75 firms for the 1939 panel; and further that this Committee of 9 study a plan for next year's method of selection; all other provisions as agreed upon at the last meeting of the Chapter to remain the same.

### LIBRARY

The Chapter library needs whatever books you can spare, but especially the following:

- A good standard dictionary
- A dictionary of architectural terms
- A complete file of the *Octagon*

### POSTAGE DUE

The Chapter office continually pays postage on return post cards that arrive too late to be of any use. Miss Waters requests that when members notify her of their intended presence or absence at a meeting, they mail the cards before the meeting takes place.

### HOUSING COSTS

Alfred Fellheimer of Fellheimer and Wagner has recently been appointed chairman of a Building Congress committee to study minimum construction standards for rental housing projects eligible for mortgage insurance. It is expected that the results of the committee's work will be helpful as a guide in setting up low-cost private rental projects in the city.

### JOINT COMMITTEE

Few architects seem to have a clear idea of the function of the Joint Committee of Architectural Societies of the Metropolitan Area. The Committee has as its member bodies:

New York Chapter, A.I.A.  
 Brooklyn Chapter, A.I.A.  
 New Jersey Society of Architects  
 Westchester Society of Architects  
 New York Society of Architects  
 Brooklyn Society of Architects  
 Bronx Society of Architects  
 Staten Island Society of Architects

As only architectural societies are members of the Joint Committee it can take action only upon questions that are brought before it by one of its constituent societies, and it can never act in behalf of any single individual.

We present below a description of its genesis and activities written by Mr. DeGaudio, the present Chairman:

"For about twenty years the Architects of the City of New York had been at the mercy of city officials in the questions of interpretations of the various laws and ordinances. It was very difficult for an Architect to serve his client properly because of the arbitrary attitude of many of the city officials and city employees, and it was a known fact that the administration of the various offices having to do with buildings were not only incompetently managed, but run as private enterprises to a great degree.

"Accordingly many of those Architects practicing in the kind of work that required local supervision on the part of city employees decided to form an organization. This was done, and from the time of such formation the relations between the Architects and the city officials have greatly improved.

"In 1928, when the Multiple Dwelling Law was first suggested, each of these various groups and each of the Chapters of the American Institute of Architects studied the problem and arrived at certain conclusions. By accident or by a happy thought one of the local organizations invited the representatives of the various other organizations to meet to discuss this very important matter, and after a number of meetings all the architectural groups joined in the opposition to the then proposed law and in suggestions as to the manner in which the law might be formed.

"In 1929 and 1930 the representatives of the various associations and chapters again cooperated fully and efficiently. So successful were the efforts of these representatives that in 1931 it was suggested that these representatives form themselves into a permanent group to represent their organizations and to

discuss problems and exchange ideas. From this conference resulted the Joint Committee of Architectural Societies of the Metropolitan Area.

"When the new Building Code of the City of New York was suggested, representatives of the various architectural groups in the city again cooperated, suggested amendments, made appearances and generally succeeded in obtaining concessions which they felt the architects should receive. These representatives were finally joined with the Joint Committee, which latter Committee eventually took over the matter of the Building Code revision.

"Since 1935 this Joint Committee has acted as a coordinating committee, receiving ideas from each of the organizations and requesting the other representatives to impart to their constituent organizations such information.

"Because of the imminence of a new charter, a discussion in respect to the Building Code and the amendments to laws generally affecting the profession, the architectural groups themselves decided to maintain the Joint Committee as the spokesmen for the entire profession in the Metropolitan Area.

"Since the new city administration has been in office all complaints made by the various architectural organizations have been forwarded to the Joint Committee which, in turn, has discussed the matter with the city officials, and in all cases complaints have been adjusted and the city administration has complied with the requests of the Joint Committee. In fact, at the present time the city administration regards the Joint Committee as the spokesman for the entire profession in the City of New York and will receive suggestions only from this Committee. The functions of the Joint Committee therefore have now resolved themselves to the following:

"Complete cooperation between the various architectural groups in the Metropolitan Area (including Westchester County and Northern New Jersey) without in any way interfering with the organizations themselves, nor with their local management.

"Appearance before city and state officials on behalf of the architectural profession, after the representatives of such organizations have unanimously approved of such proposition.

"The discussion by the Committee of all problems such as unionization of draftsmen, amendments to laws, registrations of architects and other legislation that affects the profession as a whole."

## COMMITTEES, 1938-1939

## EXECUTIVE

*President* — Arthur Loomis Harmon      *Vice-President* — Frederick G. Frost  
*Secretary* — Robert B. O'Connor      *Treasurer* — Cornelius J. White      *Recorder* — Alfred E. Poor  
1939 — James C. MacKenzie      1940 — Gerald A. Holmes      1941 — Eric Gugler  
James Kellum Smith      Philip L. Goodwin      Francis Keally

## FELLOWS

Wm. A. Delano, *Chairman*      Arthur L. Harmon      Ralph Walker  
Thomas H. Ellett      John W. Cross      D. Everett Waid

## NOMINATIONS

Hobart B. Upjohn, *Chairman*      Lewis Greenleaf Adams      J. Andre Fouilhoux

## JURY FOR MEDAL OF HONOR

Arthur L. Harmon, *Chairman*      Louis Ayres      William L. Bottomley      William Gehron      William F. Lamb

## PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Archibald M. Brown, *Chairman*      William J. Creighton      Philip L. Goodwin

## ADMISSIONS

Julius Gregory, *Chairman*      Frederick G. Frost      Hardie Phillip  
Charles Butler      James B. Newman      Lessing Whitford Williams

## CIVIC DESIGN

Gerald A. Holmes, *Chairman*      Cameron Clark      Wallace K. Harrison      Chas. Downing Lay      Wm. Edgar Shepherd  
Leopold Arnaud      Harvey Wiley Corbett      Daniel P. Higgins      William E. Lescaze      Hobart B. Upjohn  
Harry B. Brainerd      Eric Gugler      Arthur C. Holden      Harris H. Murdock

## AUDIT AND BUDGET

Robert B. O'Connor, *Chairman*      Daniel P. Higgins      Richard H. Kimball

## SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE INSTITUTE COMMITTEE ON COMPETITIONS

Arthur L. Harmon, *Chairman*      James K. Smith      Egerton Swartwout

## EDUCATION

John C. B. Moore, *Chairman*      Charles Butler      Henry S. Churchill      Robert Hutchins      Edgar I. Williams

## FINE ARTS FEDERATION

*Representatives*      *Alternates*  
Otto Eggers, to 1939      Harvey Stevenson, to 1939  
Hobart B. Upjohn, to 1940      Ward W. Fenner, to 1940  
Frederick G. Frost, to 1941      Julian Clarence Levi, to 1941

## MEMBERSHIP

Stuart Edson      Frederick G. Frost, Jr.      Frederick J. Woodbridge, *Chairman*  
Maurice Gauthier      Richard Kimball      Willis N. Mills      Alfred E. Poor  
Eastman Studds

## LEBRUN SCHOLARSHIP

Francis Keally, *Chairman*  
William F. Ballard  
Don E. Hatch  
Alfred E. Poor  
Harold R. Sleeper  
James K. Smith  
Harvey Stevenson  
J. Davidson Stephen  
Otto Teegen  
Hobart B. Upjohn

## MEETINGS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Wesley S. Bessell, *Chairman*  
Ward W. Fenner  
Gerald A. Holmes  
Gerald Kaufman  
Hobart B. Upjohn  
Edgar I. Williams  
Frederick J. Woodbridge

## SURVEYS OF UNSAFE BUILDINGS

Charles C. Platt, *Chairman*  
S. Brian Baylinson  
William H. Gompert  
Arno Kolbe  
Van F. Pruitt  
James M. Scheiner  
Harold R. Sleeper  
John A. Thompson  
Frank E. Vitolo  
Frederick J. Woodbridge

## LEGISLATION

Charles C. Platt, *Chairman*      Charles Butler      William H. Gompert      John Sloan      Andrew J. Thomas  
Wesley S. Bessell      Harvey Wiley Corbett      Wilfred S. Lewis      James K. Smith      William Wilson

## SPECIAL COMMITTEES, 1938-1939

*Appointive Committees*

## REVISION OF BY-LAWS

Frederick Mathesius, *Chairman*  
Ralph Walker  
Julian Clarence Levi

## CONTRACTS

John V. VanPelt, *Chairman*  
Gerald A. Holmes  
William O. Ludlow

## FINANCE

Daniel P. Higgins  
R. H. Shreve  
Cornelius J. White *and Custodian*

## COMPETITIONS

Edgar I. Williams, *Chairman*    William A. Delano    William Gehron    Talbot Hamlin    Frederick J. Woodbridge

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Alfred Fellheimer, *Chairman*  
Matthew DelGaudio  
Frederick G. Frost  
Gerald Kaufman  
Harris H. Murdock  
Alfred E. Poor  
Andrew L. Reinhard

## FIFTH AVENUE ASSOCIATION

*Representatives*  
Leopold Arnaud  
Arthur C. Holden  
Edgar I. Williams  
*Alternates*  
Thomas H. Ellett  
Julian Clarence Levi  
Edward S. Hewitt

## SMALL HOUSES

Harvey Stevenson, *Chairman*  
Henry Otis Chapman  
Randolph Evans  
Edwin L. Howard  
Gerald Kaufman  
Kenneth Stowell  
Eastman Studds

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Wesley S. Bessell, *Chairman*  
William F. Dominick  
William H. Gompert  
Lorimer Rich

## LARGE SCALE HOUSING

Alfred E. Poor, *Chairman*  
William Lescaze  
R. H. Shreve  
Clarence Stein

## CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES

## CITIZENS BUDGET COMMISSION

Harris H. Murdock

## JOINT COMMITTEE OF ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETIES IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

Arthur L. Harmon    Frederick G. Frost

## REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT SOCIETIES' MEDAL OF HONOR ON CITY PLANNING

Hobart B. Upjohn    Ralph Walker

## REPRESENTATIVE ON BOARD OF TRUSTEES NATIONAL ACADEMY ASSOCIATION

To 1940 — Thomas H. Ellett

## REPRESENTATIVE ON COMMITTEE OF EIGHT

Arthur L. Harmon

## CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES ON INSTITUTE COMMITTEES

## HOUSING

Clarence Stein

## STRUCTURAL SERVICE

John T. Boyd, Jr.

## CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY RELATIONS

Harris H. Murdock

## PUBLIC WORKS

Eric Kebbon

## PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Wakefield Worcester