



Vol. X, No. 8

O C U L U S

May, 1949

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
115 EAST 40th STREET, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

HAROLD R. SLEEPER, *President*
DANIEL SCHWARTZMAN, *Vice President*

WILLIAM POTTER, *Treasurer*
FRANCIS W. ROUEBUSH, *Secretary*

DOROTHEA WATERS, *Executive Secretary*

MORTIMER E. FREEHOF, *Editor*

PUBLIC RELATIONS

In spite of persistent efforts of the Editorial Committee to get newspapers to establish a policy of mentioning architects' names in connection with their published work, there are still many lapses. Our constant reproaches have brought some gratifying results, but a little iron might be a potent ingredient in the campaign. To discover our legal rights, if any, the Committee called on Nathan Walker, the Chapter's legal counsel, for an opinion, which we quote:

"The problem as I see it, is to compel newspapers, etc. to give a credit line to the architect in any publicity or other release. The Standard Form expressly provides that drawings and specifications as instruments of service are the property of the architect and may not be reproduced without his consent. This clause is binding between owner and architect, but is not enforceable against third parties. In the absence of a copyright, any newspaper could reproduce a sketch or photograph of a building. This right of reproduction is based on the legal theory that once the drawings or sketches are published there is a dedication to the public and they become public property. It is for this reason that the Standard Form contains the restrictive provision aforementioned. Some architects do copyright drawings, sketches, photographs, etc. The expense for a single transaction is not great; nevertheless when the transactions are multiplied, the cost may be substantial. In addition, of course, there is the necessity of complying with technical requirements of the law which may make the procedure too onerous.

"I suggest that each architect stamp on his drawing, sketch, photographs,

etc., that the same is his sole property and may not be reproduced in any form without his written consent. Although such a notation appearing on the face of the instrument would not be legally binding upon the newspaper, yet, in many instances, it might cause the newspaper to hesitate and seek the architect's written consent. The architect could then give such consent provided the newspaper would agree to give him a proper credit line."

This suggestion might well be put into general practice. By the adoption of a uniform Chapter stamp design, a degree of weight would be added and, incidentally, a measure of publicity achieved for the organization.

LE BRUN AWARD

The winning of the 1949 Le Brun Traveling Scholarship by Miss S. Agatha Turner of Lubbock, Texas, has been announced by Harvey Stevenson, Chairman of the Scholarship Committee. Miss Turner, the first woman ever to win this coveted prize, presented an outstanding solution of the competition for the design of a suburban department store building. The elements of land use, traffic control, spatial organization, structure and materials were skillfully handled to produce a design noteworthy not only for its suitability for display and merchandising but also for its good proportions, simplicity and charm.

Gordon F. Anderson of Watertown, Massachusetts, and Kemper E. Kirkpatrick of New York City won Honorable Mention. Mr. Kirkpatrick is currently employed by Chapter members O'Connor & Kilham.

All entries in the competition were exhibited for one week on the walls of the Architectural League.

INCOME TAX SAVINGS

A method by which your income tax may be reduced is before the House of Representatives in the form of a bill entitled "Earned Income Tax Adjustment Act of 1949, H.R. 3224." The purpose of the bill is to equalize the yearly tax burden of professional men, who earn considerably more in some years than in others, by permitting them to buy special government bonds which become taxable only in the year they are cashed.

Louis Justement's article published in the *Journal* of January, 1949, and the recent A.I.A. Legislative Newsletter #1, discuss in detail the principles embodied in this bill.

As Jonathan Butler reminded us at a recent meeting, it is important that we write individually to our Congressmen to emphasize the justice of the bill. The sooner this is done, the sooner the bill will become law. We can't expect one man to do the job alone. Your own interests are involved so do your bit by writing your Congressman today!

FOAM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

The uses of foam glass in construction were described to us at the May 3rd lunch of the Chapter by R. A. Biggs, Development Engineer of the Pittsburgh-Corning Glass Company. Mr. Biggs punctuated his remarks by the skillful use of slides here and there throughout his talk. Foam glass (not to be confused with fibre glass) is of cellular consistency, very light in weight, impervious to moisture, and free from moisture migration.

The slides showed how this material may be used as roof insulation, wall insulation and pipe covering, as well as with radiant heat installations. Since plaster will not adhere to it permanently, a special base coat, known as Type

B, is applied first as a binder; this alone, without the plaster, serves as a satisfactory finish for industrial work.

The company has been working to perfect a curtain wall construction, lighter in weight and less thick than ordinary masonry. Their research has met with some success although further experimentation is necessary to make this type of wall practical and acceptable for building codes. This construction consists of a sandwich, in which foam glass is the core, with reinforced concrete on both sides. Prefabrication and ready handling of slabs make its use advantageous. To date, it has been used more in Canada than in the U. S., and accordingly, comparative cost data are not readily available. Indications are that the cost would be greater than the usual masonry walls, but this increase might be partly offset by reduced loads and thickness.

Present at the lunch was a distinguished guest from Madrid, Sr. Casto Fernandez-Shaw, Architect and Editor of *Cortijos y Rascacielos*, whose short but gracious greeting, given at the invitation of Lessing Williams, Chairman of the meeting, especially pleased the Spanish speaking members present.

CANDIDATES

According to the By-Laws of the Chapter, names of candidates for membership shall be submitted to all members before consideration by the Committees on Admissions. Information received regarding the qualifications of the following candidates will be considered confidential:

Corporate Membership:

1. Richard Mark Brayton
Sponsors: Jedd S. Reisner
Max O. Urbahn
2. Stanhope Blunt Ficke
Sponsors: Harold C. Bernhard
William F. Lamb
3. John Nelson Linn
Sponsors: John T. Briggs
Harvey Stevenson
4. Edmund Howe Poggi
Sponsors: George Fenner Blount
Ed. W. Helms (N.J.)
5. Charles Herbert Simmons, Jr.
Sponsors: Jonathan F. Butler
Harvey Stevenson

Associate Membership:

1. Frank Dan George
Sponsors: Arthur S. Douglass, Jr.
Edward W. Slater
2. George Gillies Sharp
Sponsors: Harvey Wiley Corbett
Bernhardt E. Muller

CONTRACTS

With the coming of Spring a hardy perennial blossomed in the form of a discussion of architects' contracts at the lunch of April 26th, when an opportunity was offered us by Clarence Litchfield, Chairman of the Contracts Committee, to air our "gripes, peeves, and laudatory comments". Several guests were present, including James M. Ashley, President of the National Producers Council, Theodore I. Coe, Technical Secretary of the A.I.A. and a visiting delegation from Washington, D.C.

Another guest, Mr. Malaney of the New York State Education Department, described some of the violations of the code of practice which have come to his attention. We were heartened to hear that the Department is making an investigation of Red Book listings in the hope of eliminating from the Architect's section all those not legally licensed to practice. Mr. Malaney reminded us that corporations practicing architecture could only do so legally if their license to practice as a corporate body had been granted before 1928. He deplored the practice of farming out licenses and said an Architect should not allow his seal to be affixed to a drawing unless the work had been done under his personal supervision. Mr. Malaney urged members to advise the State Board of any known instances of violations.

Clarence Litchfield then introduced the subject of contracts by telling us very briefly what his Committee has been working on during the past season. The Committee advocates abolishing the negotiated lump sum contract. It is preparing a standard architect-engineer contract and revising Document 177, the A.I.A. Schedule of Proper Charges. Also, provision is being made to clarify the arbitration clause, to include fees for engineering services and to cover reimbursement of payments for municipal filing tax.

Comments were invited, and it was soon apparent that two attorneys present, Nathan Walker, the Chapter's counsel, and Bernard Thomson, both of whom have addressed the Chapter on the subject of contracts, were at wide variance as to the advantages of a short form contract which would include specific detailed agreements by reference. Mr. Litchfield invited both attorneys to meet with his Committee in an effort to work out an equitable form of agreement.

The Committee recommended a 10% retainer fee, 15% additional for preliminary sketches, and a total of 80% upon completion of drawings and specifications, including details. This started a lively discussion as to whether the present minimum fees recommended are realistic and as to whether 20% is adequate to protect the owner for services required during supervision. Messrs. Beck, Briggs, Freehof, Lippmann, Platt and Post, among others, expressed opinions and told of personal experiences. A request was made for a show of hands by those present who base their residence alteration work on the 18% recommended in the minimum schedule. No hands were raised. Accordingly, the Committee was urged to give further consideration to the currently recommended increase of 50% for alteration work. It was also suggested that 80% of the fee might be set as the earned value in cases where a project is abandoned just prior to construction, but would become due only upon such determination. A larger percentage might be permitted to extend through the construction period.

It was evident from the discussion that the experiences of many members indicate the need for further study and revision of current schedules. The Committee on Fees and Contracts has before it a considerable task to evolve a set of conditions which will satisfy the majority of the members.

STEEL PROTECTION

Inasmuch as steel is an important element in structural design, its protection is vital. Various methods of accomplishing this were discussed at the technical luncheon on April 12. The program of the meeting had been well thought out by John H. Callender, who had secured for the occasion experts on three aspects of steel protection.

The speakers — J. G. Hotchkiss, District Engineer, A.I.S.C., J. George Wills of the National Lead Company, and L. H. Trott of the N. J. Zinc Company — each expertly supplementing the other's points, described the physical and chemical methods of cleaning and coating steel. The objective is to make the closest possible connection between the metal and the protective vehicle, thus isolating the metal from its environment. To achieve this end, prime considerations are clean surfaces and a coating which will insure protection from moisture and other contaminants.

PROBLEMS IN PRACTICE

Every architect is vitally interested in prospects for work, also in how to obtain better results through improved services and increased office efficiency. To stimulate ideas and suggestions along these lines the Professional Forum Committee arranged a meeting on April 19th called "Program for Developing Practice". As a corollary the Chairman of the Committee, Maxfield Vogel, expressed the hope that the discussion would bring out constructive ideas which might help to establish future policies of the Chapter. The discussion was divided into three phases: quantity of work, quality of work, and standards of practice.

Thomas Creighton gave statistics on expected volume of construction during the coming year, based upon a program of research recently conducted by *Progressive Architecture*. His several sources of information show an estimated expenditure of 18 to 19 billion dollars in construction in 1949, with less private and more public work than during 1948. Housing and commercial work are due to drop, except that shops and stores will continue active. Private institutional work will increase, also public educational facilities and public utilities. Communities meeting certain requirements may receive subsidies for hospitals under a decentralized program. The large demand for rental housing will continue. The problem of the economic house remains to be solved, and herein lies a challenge to the Architects.

William Lescaze discussed random topics bearing on the general subject "Quality of Work". He stressed the importance of an adequate public relations program with the premise that the individual architect will fare well only if the entire profession flourishes. He proposed that the Chapter conduct a series of critiques, by members and for members, for the purpose of improving quality of work. Another suggestion was the award of Oscars, after the fashion of the movies, which might serve as an impetus to greater effort. He also felt the Chapter should give its members the benefit of information resulting from wider research on materials, codes, and standards. He hoped that a realistic system could be established for making preliminary estimates without great expense to architect or client.

We might remark editorially that some of these suggestions are already under consideration by the Chapter.

The last speaker, Jedd Reiser, posed a series of questions on his topic, "Standards of Practice": Can the Chapter set up a system for making preliminary estimates demanded by clients? What complications arise when the architect acts as General Contractor, or when the Contractor includes architectural services? Does the experience of architects indicate that this is the present trend? (Editor's note:—the courts have already established that a builder may not collect for both architectural and construction services unless he is also a licensed architect).

At what point can the architect consider his services terminated and how much service should be rendered in connection with maintenance?

What opinions have been expressed as to the success of verbal contracts? standard documents? or short form contracts?

Do architects favor unions among their employees?

To what extent are we permitted, ethically, to use publicity in obtaining work, and might we benefit from a summary of public relations methods used by other professionals?

Do we prefer to work with interior decorators, or to handle furnishings ourselves?

In the discussion period, John J. Klaber called attention to the practice in small communities where laymen are permitted to file plans for work of considerable cost, but alleged to be within \$10,000. He suggested Chapter action to correct this condition.

ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

The following paragraphs are condensed from Notes kindly contributed by our fellow-member, OLINDO GROSSI, the Chairman of the Department of Architecture at Pratt Institute.

In the lifetime pursuit of architectural study, the proper perspective of the future architect toward the profession should be established in the student stage. It is of the greatest importance that in his formative period he be taught to approach the problems of architecture with an open mind, for they are infinite and constantly changing. Development in the student of habits of creative and analytical thinking, and of a desire to learn, to experiment, and to contribute, is the goal of teaching in all

professions. In architecture, all subjects should be integrated with a view to simulation of conditions in office practice.

Courses noted separately in the curriculum can best be related to one another if presented with emphasis on their connection with the subject of Design, which might then more properly be entitled Architecture. Technical and theoretical studies should all be coordinated and could be handled differently each year. Such a program, by reason of its necessary flexibility, would result in the advantage both to students and to teachers of varied new mental experience. In addition, the content of all courses may be enriched by contact with "clients," the practicing profession, and visiting lecturers and jurors, and by field trips and summer jobs on construction projects or in architects' offices.

It is also the special duty of a school to offer a philosophy of architecture, which is difficult to acquire at a later time when the demands of office practice generally leave little time for abstract thought. A school, with its freedom from the restrictions met in practice, should be even more a place for experiment and research than an office, where economic conditions often lead to repetitive rather than creative design. Students, therefore, should be encouraged at some time in their course to make semi-theoretical studies as exercises in the relation of imagination to reality.

Complete working drawings should be required at various stages of a student's development in order thoroughly to instill in his mind the fact that architecture has to do with actual building. Fortunately for those schools which are located in large cities, architectural education need not be too remote from practice. The breakdown of the ivory tower can be achieved with the kindly participation of the profession, many of whose members have given generously of their time as critics, jurors, and advisors, and, in addition, as friends of the schools, faculties, and students.

USUS LOQUENDI

We are glad to report that once more an opportunity has been given, and taken, of telling the public something about the Architect. Eleanor Pepper was invited by the Alpha Phi Alumni Society to address the annual meeting in April of their New York Regional Group. Her subject—"What Is An Architect"!

WHAT ABOUT THE REGISTER?

This question was posed at a recent Tuesday lunch during which we discussed the subject of improving architectural practice and developing a more effective Chapter program to that end.

The Register, you will remember, is the Chapter's little grey year book, part of which is given over to data on those members who supplied the necessary information on their educational background and architectural experience.

Answering the specific question on the distribution of the booklet, we respectfully refer the inquiring member to the February issue of the OCULUS in which a complete report on distribution was given under the title "The Register" (pg. 4).

The usefulness of the Register, however, does not stop with the distribution of the book itself. The Chapter Office is beset not only by those in search of architects versed either in Italian Renaissance or in the currently popular ranch house, but also by "live prospects" whose plans have advanced to the point that they are asking their banks to inquire into the experience and professional background of the specific firms or members under consideration.

That the Chapter Office is doing a valuable service to its members in supplying this information is obvious. It should be equally obvious that this information can be given only by reference to the records on file about the members, as supplied by the members themselves.

AROSE BY ANY NAME

From John J. Klaber comes an amusing clipping from the *New York Times* of April 20, describing the erection of the first steel upright for the United Nations Secretariat Building.

The caption reads "First Steel Girder". The account takes it from there as follows: "A crane wrenched upright the first beam . . . The operator swung the steel column . . . Guests shared enthusiasm at setting the first beam . . . When the massive column was secured . . . Two workmen scrambled up to the beam's summit . . ."

We really should educate these feature writers.

HOUSING CONFERENCE

At a conference held under the auspices of The New York City Housing Authority and The Welfare Council of New York City on May 4th, the very interesting subject of expanding the concept of housing developments into broadened neighborhood centers was discussed. The principal speakers were State Housing Commissioner Herman T. Stichman, the Chairman of New York City Housing Authority, General Thomas F. Farrell, and Mr. John S. Linen, Vice-President of the Chase National Bank.

Commissioner Stichman highlighted his talk of things to come by stating that the City will be asked to modify its master plan so as to bring all social, recreational, health and other activities within the general areas of housing developments. Saying that the City is being rebuilt, Commissioner Stichman envisioned centers for neighborhood living modeled after housing developments in Sweden.

Mr. John Linen, acknowledging a personal interest in the housing program, stated that in individual projects there is an opportunity to build a firm foundation of community spirit and responsible citizenry.

General Farrell, speaking in behalf of the New York City Housing Authority, invited all private, semi-private and public agencies to participate in the planning of housing by making known their needs. In outlining the housing program, General Farrell stated that 29 housing projects are under construction or will soon be started. Furthermore, 70 to 80 additional proposed projects are awaiting passage of the Federal Housing bill. These, when completed, will house some half million people.

COMING EVENTS

June 1, Wednesday — Lunch 12:30

Annual Meeting of the Chapter; reports for the past year; hopes for next year; elections; and inauguration of the New Officers.

Note: No Tuesday lunch on May 31.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

The Chapter's counsel, Nathan Walker, has called attention to the fact that on April 13, 1949, Governor Dewey approved a bill to provide for the payment of benefits for disabilities resulting from non-occupational injuries or sicknesses.

Briefly, the bill provides weekly benefits of one-half of an employee's average weekly wage for disabilities commencing after June 30, 1950, beginning with the 8th day of disability and continuing for a maximum of 13 weeks. An employee must contribute one-half of one percent of his wages—but not more than \$.30 per week—with the employer making up the difference between this amount and the actual cost of providing the disability benefits, which he may do either through insurance or by furnishing proof of his financial ability to pay them.

An employer of four or more persons is defined as a covered employer. An employee of a covered employer for four or more consecutive weeks ordinarily is eligible for benefits. The bill is so complicated, however, that members should ascertain for themselves whether or not they are subject to its provisions before July 1, 1949, at which time some of its requirements become effective.

STORE MODERNIZATION SHOW

As in past years this Chapter has been invited to display appropriate work of its members in the Store Modernization Show to be presented at the Grand Central Palace in New York during the week of June 19-24. The national competition for the selection of "The Best Modernized Store of the Year," which in 1948 was won by our fellow-member, Victor Bohm, will again be held.

A committee consisting of Morris Ketchum, Jr., Chairman, assisted by Thomas H. Creighton, Jose A. Fernandez, Robert Allan Jacobs, Morris Lapidus, and Daniel Schwartzman, is at work on the development of plans for the Chapter Exhibit and will shortly issue further details as to presentation of entries.