



# OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, 115 EAST 40 STREET, NEW YORK 16, NEW YORK  
WALTER H. KILHAM, JR., PRESIDENT; BEN JOHN SMALL, VICE-PRESIDENT; WILLIAM POTTER, TREASURER;  
M. MILTON GLASS, SECRETARY; DOROTHEA WATERS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY; EDWARD EVERETT POST, EDITOR.

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## THE 3 R's in ARCHITECTURE and a THANK YOU

The 81st Anniversary Dinner on February 21, preceded an evening of stimulating discussion of architectural education. George Howe, Chairman of the Department of Architecture of Yale University, and an eminent architect, author and educator outlined the aims of the schools in the preparation and training of young men and women for the profession. He asserted that the schools must so organize and present the basic elements of architecture that the average student is stimulated to seize every opportunity to acquire fuller understanding, knowledge and manual dexterity. If the student is excited he may then turn out to be a competent technician and a competent artist insofar as his native gifts allow.

Mr. Howe discussed the complaint of incompetence directed against recent architectural graduates. He stated in no uncertain terms that incompetence was by no means characteristic of the young architect. Those who do not come up to the required level of efficiency, are not made incompetent by going to schools, or even by inadequate school methods or attitudes. The schools, however, must do more than place opportunities at the disposal of unusual students. It is the average youth who requires the greatest amount of attention as far as education is concerned.

Enormous progress has been made in the education of the architect in Mr. Howe's opinion. He emphasized that most schools have attempted to bring theoretical instruction into focus with reality by having practising architects and designers on the faculty and by calling on visiting architects to serve as critics for advanced problems.

In all the discussion of the preparations of students for immediate usefulness, Mr. Howe stressed that we must not lose sight of the fact that the primary purpose of architectural schools is to create architects, not to train draftsmen for office work. "The comparative success (of the educational methods) is visible to the eye in our contemporary buildings. It seems to me, by and large, there are more good young architects being turned out of the mill in the United States than ever before, and than anywhere else in the world today... With this process, over emphasis on technical preparation must not be allowed to interfere."

Mr. Paul Windels, President of the Regional Plan Association was a guest at the dinner. In accepting the Honorary Associate Membership he said, "I appreciate deeply the unusual honor which the New York Chapter has conferred on me... I hope that the cordial relations which exist between our two organizations will continue throughout the coming years and that we may be of help in advancing your ideals in this important field of public service."

The Chapter's highest award — the Medal of Honor — was presented to Ralph Walker, President of the A.I.A.,

with appropriate ceremony. The citation which accompanied the Medal appeared in last month's OCULUS. In accepting the award, which he did "with intense pleasure and emotion", Mr. Walker said:

"I was brought up in New England, learning some feeling for God and self-reliance — a respect for the honesty and ability of my teachers.

"I have walked along the banks of the Seine and savored the beauties of a continuing civilization and the richness of cultural invention.

"I have stood silently before a small wood temple at Ise gazing at a tiny mirror's reflection — understanding the endurance of an ideal.

"I have studied through Rome, a city of wonder, realizing that man's creative powers, a continuing force, develop harmony when each generation respects the small residue of greatness conserved by its predecessors.

"I have walked along the shadowed ways of great tree alleys which baroque architects designed to please a king's mistress — thankful that beauty is never wasted, that yesterday's works, purposes forgotten, may still give simple pleasure.

"I have walked through a small medieval town, where there surged around me the fierce determination to preserve a small liberty — hard won and hardly kept when the bells called.

"I have stood also in the places I have helped to build, and always there is within my heart this desire that some other architect may — as so often I have in other places, and for a brief moment — feel both the calmness and fierceness of creation, and go away saying 'here, too, someone has served beauty'."

## CITY PLANNING

Stating, in a letter to Mayor William O'Dwyer, that the citizens of New York supported the 1938 City Charter creating a centralized planning agency with resources to solve the problems of City growth, the New York Chapter, A. I. A., supported Jerry Finkelstein, Chairman of the City Planning Commission in his request for more funds.

The Executive Committee of the Chapter further said that the Commission's work has been limited to routine matters because of lack of adequate funds. Now that the 1949 Housing Act promises federal assistance on slum clearance, it is desirable that the resulting development follow a general plan. No such plan exists for New York City.

The Chapter feels that proper expenditure of funds, in preparing a scheme for orderly City development, is not only desirable but necessary.

## PERFECTION — 1950

Has anyone seen the current issue of "Esquire"? If not, get a copy and see what our Chapter members can do!!!

*SYMPOSIUM ON COLOR*

The annual meeting of the Inter-Society Color Council was held at the Hotel Statler, New York, March 8, the afternoon session being devoted to four talks on Color as used in Architecture, Design, and Decoration.

Scott Wilson, Chairman of delegates from the American Designers' Institute, spoke on Color Problems in Industrial Design. 100 years ago, he said, the death of the Prince Consort of Great Britain and the beginning of the industrial revolution together initiated the second dark age. The forty-year mourning of Queen Victoria set a universal fashion for dark clothing and the wholesale manufacture of household furnishings resulted in decorative schemes confined to a limited range of dull, dark tones. Only within the last twenty years has a color renaissance, starting with livelier designs in sport clothing, been definitely perceptible.

The present trend toward the use of more and more color in clothing, building, decoration, and household equipment places great responsibility on the industrial designers, whose \$8,000,000,000 annual business is devoted to interpreting the desires and needs of the public. Unfortunately, progress is hampered by the fact that printers of drapery and wallpaper continue to adhere to obsolete methods which do not give the clearest or most consistent color results. Many technical problems were described, as well as a number of findings in connection with the types, combinations, and intensities of colors giving the best results in different levels of industrial and business activity.

This was the first time that the A.I.A. had sent a delegation to the Inter-Society Color Council, and our profession was represented by Waldron Faulkner of Washington, who discussed Color Problems of the Architect. He recalled the extensive use of applied color throughout ancient architecture and its continued appearance up to the time of the late Renaissance. From then on, for the most part, the range of color employed by architects was limited to those naturally inherent in the various types of wood and stone. One reason for this change was perhaps the fact that after the Renaissance the all-around artist typical of that era ceased to exist, and the specialist became established. Michelangelo was a painter as well as an architect, and these two phases of his genius were inseparably combined in his monuments, but later architects have tended to confine themselves to that field, and the easel painting has largely superseded the mural.

Mr. Faulkner recalled that much time was devoted to the subject of color in architecture at the annual A.I.A. convention at Houston last year and pointed out that modern architecture, thanks to scientific advances in the development of building materials, was becoming more and more concerned with that question. The contemporary architect must become acquainted with the theory, science, and application of colors. There exist trained specialists who can help us, but it is our duty to learn the basic principles of this great subject in the same way that we must be familiar with the fundamentals of engineering.

The greatest present difficulty lies in the fact that no color standards common to all branches of the building industry have been established, and the speaker appealed to the Inter-Society Color Council to continue its good

work in promoting better understanding with the manufacturers of building materials, with a view to setting up some universal system for the selection and happy combination of colors.

The third speaker was Karl Bock, Chairman of delegates from the American Institute of Decorators. He discussed abstract theories of color and color combination and mentioned the excellent coordination work accomplished by the British Color Council abroad. There are, he said, no actual color problems, except such as exist in the minds of people who have acquired certain poorly-formulated ideas, and such as result from competition between manufacturers. He urges a simplification of color names in industry, and a return to nature as a guide in the determination of color schemes.

Egmont Arens, representing the Society of Industrial Designers, described the Dynamic Use of Color. He presented many instances wherein color has been used to influence human thought and action, notably in automobile traffic control and in wartime activities, when the gunsight of anti-aircraft artillery were outlined in red to facilitate the fastest response to unexpected attack. It is also well known that color has been extensively and successfully employed in the treatment of mental and physical disease.

In industry it has been found that the best selling results are obtained by presenting merchandize in packages colored not in the manner most pleasing to the eye, but in such fashion as to attract the most immediate attention. The merchandize itself must of course satisfy the public color sense, and herein lies the greatest problem of the industrial designer, who must anticipate and interpret constantly-changing tastes.

In the evening, Ralph M. Evans, Chairman of delegates from the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, lectured on Seeing Light and Color. This talk, based on the physics of the subject, brought out the fact that mental reactions to color are often very different from actual fact. An object, for instance, of a certain hue may be entirely altered in color by reflection of light from a neighboring source, but the mind nonetheless accepts the original object as possessing its known, rather than its borrowed, tints. The color slides illustrating this lecture included many landscape and still-life photographs of unusual beauty.

*OF EXTRA CURRICULAR INTEREST*

Architects should not miss the Titan, the very eloquent film on Michelangelo, now showing at the Little Carnegie, West 57 Street.

And another must is The Art Treasures from the Vienna Collections (the Hapsburg collections) current at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, through May 21.

Those with an interest in archaeology, Mayan civilization and superb drawings will want to see the Frederick Catherwood Memorial Exhibition at the Avery Architectural Library, Columbia, through March. Just off the press is an illustrated biography of Catherwood, Architect and Explorer (1799-185?), by Victor Wolfgang von Hagen.

At the Museum of Modern Art there is a model of Chicago apartment houses by Mies vander Rohe, through May 7.

*BALLADE IN PORTUGAL*

Eleven hours from New York, and we were in a land of castles and windmills, formal gardens and good food, sunshine and sudden showers, donkeys and oxcarts, street cries, bicycles and umbrellas.

We had dined Thursday evening, my husband and I, in our New York apartment, and on Friday evening we were in the Victoria Hotel in Lisbon enjoying as delicious a dinner as one could wish for. Six courses are served at dinner — only five at lunch — and each dish cooked to a turn and served with proper deference. And such excellent little native wines — your bottle is marked with your name, and if unfinished appears again at the next meal.

It is early spring in Portugal; the almond trees are in blossom, pink heather grows along the roads and the acacia trees make great splashes of yellow on the mountain sides. How could I resist the smiling country woman who offered me from her basket a bouquet of a dozen or more pink and white camellias for 14¢?

Portugal is a land of sheer mountains and fertile valleys, the lower hills covered with olive groves extending for miles, every tree carefully pruned so the sun can reach each branch; the valleys are given over to grape culture, again each vine meticulously pruned. Here and there dominating a mountain peak is the outline of a Moorish Castle, and everywhere windmills, sturdy little round towers with four sails circling idly in the breeze. Native transportation is by donkey, the man aboard sitting under his umbrella, the women following on foot with an oversized bundle on her head. It is in fact a country of umbrellas, large black serviceable ones with sturdy crook handles. Bicyclists hook them over their shoulders, farmer boys tend their sheep with a staff in one hand and an umbrella in the other.

The Sindicato Nacional dos Arquitos de Portugal has its headquarters in comfortable offices in a wing of the Palacio das Belas Artes, a handsome building of stone and pink stucco, in the centre of Lisbon, not far from the Embassies and the various Ministries. I heard of the Sindicato from one of its distinguished members, Sr. Raoul Lino, an altogether delightful gentleman who received us most graciously in his home atop one of the many hills of Lisbon. Sr. Lino, who has "already made seventy", is architect for some of the ministry buildings now under construction. On his library table was a copy of "Brazil Builds" by Philip Goodwin & G.E.K. Smith, translated into Portuguese. Sr. Lino's only objection to the modern is its monotony and the fact that it tends to destroy the spirit of nationality, an opinion not altogether surprising in a country of such strong national spirit.

My courtesy call at the headquarters of the Sindicato was promptly returned by the Acting President, Sr. Arquitecto Ignacio Peres-Fernandes, who subscribes to our American architectural magazines and follows our work here closely. For two hours we compared conditions here with those in Portugal. Of special interest to me was the fact that architects in Portugal are as concerned with the problem of specialization as many are here. Our guest analyzed for us his theories of modern planning and "urbanisme", illustrating his points with small sketches in true architectural fashion. He was obviously

proud of the new residential section in Lisbon, which fortunately we had already seen. Broad avenues, well laid out squares surrounded by 5 story apartment houses painted in cheerful colors, tiered with balconies, and smart shops below, the new section of Lisbon, some of it still under construction, seemingly extends for miles over the rolling hills of the city. A handsome formal park, of the size of several city blocks, was a focal point.

The gardens of Portugal alone are worth the trip; the clipped boxwood in geometrical design with poplars, flowering fruit trees and reflecting pools, somewhat reminiscent of Italy, are kept in perfect condition (labor is cheap and cheerful). Handsome loggias of blue tile form the backdrop and in one private garden on a hill overlooking the city, the ancient lustre tiles gleaming bronze in the sun, were an unforgettable sight.

The impression gained from our short visit was of a clean country, an industrious, cheerful and well mannered people, proud of their illustrious past and confident of their future.

D. W.

*LETTER TO THE EDITOR:*

The article on Specialization in the December OCULUS attracted my attention. How we can stand true to that warning . . . and still publish our Register of Architects is beyond my humble understanding . . .

I wish to add this second objection on "unfairness" to the first on "specialization". When a new member with a new and small practice joins the Chapter he gets in the Register a very small allotment of space—using the advertising term advisedly—compared with possibly a whole page for an older firm with a correspondingly large assortment of types of work. Does this savor of Chapter equality? And all because the Chapter Office is loath to tell an inquiring prospect that it does not recommend one architect above another, that architects do not specialize, and that any architect in the Roster (that does not mean the Register) will do a good job if he cares to undertake the commission. How much more dignified for the profession, how much fairer to the membership, if we make that the policy of the Chapter.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) CHARLES C. PLATT

Ed. note: It is hoped that the procedure being followed in the Small House Consulting Service, as outlined in the last issue of the OCULUS, will answer some of the above objections.

*EDUCATIONAL NOTE*

The current exhibit of the firm of O'Connor & Kilham in the Pine Room of the Architectural League is a story of the progress of work in an architectural office, rather than a showing of photographs and models of completed jobs.

Our Committee on Education, believing that such an exhibit would be of instructive value to the students of the drafting schools whose work was shown here last spring, invited those schools to bring their students to the Exhibit. Practically all the schools have responded by sending groups of students to the Exhibit accompanied by an instructor, and the Education Committee has supplied a member in each case to explain the Exhibit and talk in general on work in an architectural drafting room.

*COST ESTIMATES*

A record number of members attended the Technical Committee's lunch on March 7 to hear J.P.H. Perry, Vice President of the Turner Construction Company, and Harry R. Dowswell, partner of Shreve, Lamb, & Harmon Associates, caution architects against attempting to make their own preliminary cost estimates.

Introduced by W. Stuart Thompson, the speakers both emphasized the fallacy of applying a predetermined square foot or cubic foot cost to buildings of apparently similar design and urged that we ask reputable contractors to make our preliminary estimates on the basis of full information furnished them as to materials and methods. (We wonder, however, how many members have found it necessary to add a contingency to such preliminary estimates to cover the many small items that are usually omitted from the information furnished the contractor at this stage.)

Mr. Perry illustrated his remarks with charts showing the great range of cubic and square foot costs and pointed out that the range of bids varies directly with the completeness and accuracy of drawings and specifications. A more detailed description of this luncheon will appear in a forthcoming Technical Committee report.

*NEW OWNER-ARCHITECT AGREEMENT*

A recent issue of the A.I.A. Bulletin contained the proposed new Owner-Architect Agreement for use when a multiple of the technical salaries forms the basis of payment and asked for comments on the proposed forms.

Among other things, the Agreement provides that the Architect be paid for his services on the basis of a multiple of the technical personnel costs plus the time actually spent by the Architect on the work at a fixed hourly rate. It is not clear, however, whether the hourly rate would apply when the Architect is himself performing technical services — in fact the Agreement does not specifically cover this possibility as does the Chapter's own document on services of the Architect. As many architects do perform some of the technical services themselves, this point might well be clarified.

It is also suggested that the word "necessary" be inserted before the word "additional" in the first line of Article 1, III (a), as some offices now include 3 inch details on the working drawings and do not furnish any further details.

It would be interesting and helpful to know as well what a proper multiple of the technical salaries and a proper hourly rate would be, or how one arrives at such figures. Perhaps some Chapter members will give us the benefit of their experience.

*DANGEROUS LEGISLATION*

Attention is called to the list of bills pending in the New York State Legislature attached to last month's issue of the OCULUS. The Chapter Committee on Legislation therein presents an excellent summarization of certain proposed laws and amendments which are believed to be inimical to the best interests of our profession. All members are again urged to protest at once in writing to their local State Senators and Assemblymen, as well as to the chairmen of the committees to which the undesirable bills have been referred. The names and addresses of the latter may be found following each item on the list.

*QUESTIONNAIRE*

As a result of the many inconclusive discussions during A.I.A. Owner-Architect agreements, the Professional Forum Committee has issued to the membership an easily answered questionnaire on this subject. A whole-hearted response from the members based on their own bona fide experiences should prove of immense help in determining what, if any, revisions are essential to make these documents properly protect our peace of mind and pocketbooks.

Following a complete tabulation and analysis by the Committee of the answers, a Chapter meeting will be arranged to discuss results, arrive at conclusions and authorize instructions for our delegates to this year's Convention. Armed with factual data and united backing, the delegates can then effectively present the case.

Each member certainly owes it to the profession and to himself to fill out and return the questionnaire promptly. And, incidentally, being forced to review the documents critically won't hurt anyone.

*SMALL HOUSE CONSULTING SERVICE*

A number of Chapter members have already signified their intention of participating in the Small House Consulting Service reported in the last issue of the OCULUS. This service, which was recommended by the Small House Committee and approved by the Executive Committee, is intended to make architectural services in the small house field available to that part of the public which cannot afford or does not need full services.

Chapter members interested in participating in the service should notify the Small House Committee at once so that application blanks can be forwarded to them. These blanks will be sent only to members who have signified their intention to participate.

Members of the Committee are completing the details of the book which will contain background data and examples of the work of each participating member and of the leaflet describing the service. The service will then be inaugurated.

The Committee has now embarked upon the second phase of its program — the speculative house. To date it has been studying the services of the Architect in this field as well as means of encouraging better speculative housing.

*CANDIDATES*

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

*Corporate Membership:*

Franklin Nelson Breed

Sponsors: Cameron Clark & Chester B. Price

Marvin Henley Clapp

Sponsors: Ronald Allwork & Howard P. Vermilya

Harold Edelman

Sponsors: Robert A. Jacobs & Joseph Neufeld

Herbert Leary Smith, Jr.

Sponsors: Harold D. Hauf & Frank G. Lopez

*Associate Membership:*

Lawrence Theodore Berger

Sponsors: Joachim Accurso & Benjamin Goodrich