

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
ONE FIFTEEN EAST FORTIETH STREET, NEW YORK 16, NEW YORK



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OCULUS

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COMING EVENTS

TUESDAY, MAY 13th, Professional Forum Dinner at 6:00 PM. The dinner originally scheduled for May 1st has been re-scheduled for May 13th. Unfortunately the Architectural League is not available and so arrangements have been made to hold the dinner in the Norse Grill of the Waldorf following which the meeting will be conducted in the Perroquet Room. The subject of the meeting will be a report on the final version of the Institute's findings based on the 1950 survey of the profession. We are fortunate in having Dr. Edwin S. Burdell, Chairman of the commission that developed the report, as guest speaker. Also, Ralph Walker and Walter A. Taylor, the National Institute's Director of Education and Research. Tom Creighton, Editor of Progressive Architecture, will emcee. Also with us will be honored guests from abroad -- A. Graham Henderson, President of the RIBA and C. D. Spragg, Secretary of the RIBA.

We suggest that you reread your Progress Report so that you can take an active part in the discussion. It is hoped the evening will produce recommendations for presentation at the Convention. We hope to adjourn the meeting not later than 9 o'clock. Reservations \$5.00.

DON'T LOOK PLEASANT

Several Chapter members have been urged to sit for portrait photographs by a studio claiming official sanction of the AIA. The Executive Committee, while justly proud of the appearance of the Membership, has no program for immortalizing it in the files, and has authorized no photographer to solicit business under the AIA aegis.

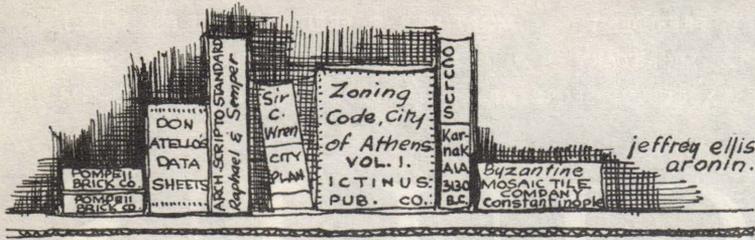
DUES LONG PAST DUE

At the last meeting of the Executive Committee it was reported that 105 out of 684 Corporate members and 25 Associate members have not paid their current dues which were payable in January and which amount to approximately \$3000.

Your officers and committees cannot function in your interest without the financial means to carry on the many Chapter activities. If your delinquency is due to oversight, this notice and the most recent bill should serve as reminders. If there is temporary financial embarrassment, a call or visit to the Chapter Office will receive friendly consideration.

It is hoped that you will not, by continued silence, make it necessary to post your name as being in default in accordance with the By-Laws.

THE ARCHITECT'S BOOKSHELF



Two outstanding works by Chapter members have come in this month. The first, by Tom Creighton and Kathering Morrow Ford, is the new Reinhold publication: The American House Today. This is a book to be praised without reserve. The authors have searched deeply

for and found a new collection of residences built in all parts of the United States. Many have not been published heretofore; many, in fact, have been designed by architects with unfamiliar names. Almost all have been built in the last five years and are illustrations of various points the authors raise:

- the architect's program; what are the requirements? -- appropriate use of site -- space organization problems -- environmental factors
- construction methods -- appearance.

What is especially appealing is the fact that the book is well presented: there are fine exterior and interior photographs and clean-cut plans for each building. The American House Today is suitable for architectural reference and for teaching. It is also the sort of volume that architects could lend to clients with the view of reforming them from period-type house obsessions.

The second work, also issued by Reinhold, is the Perspector by Theodore A. de Postels, emeritus member of the AIA and member of our Chapter since 1926. de Postels, who will be remembered for several other works, has now designed an instrument to assist architects and others in drawing perspectives. The Perspector is actually two separate devices on one plate: there is a special protractor to establish the visual distance for a perspective view in accordance with an angle of vision, and there are perspectographic means for developing a perspective from plan and elevation drawings. This gadget, at a low price, will more than pay for itself in any architect's office.

HONORS

Chapter members who have recently won awards are: John H. MacFadyen, a Rome Prize Fellowship in Architecture for 1952-53; Harry M. Prince, The Fifth Avenue Association Award for 1950-51 for his building for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations at 838 Fifth Avenue; and Moore and Hutchins, a Baltimore Association of Commerce Biennial Contest Award for their Froelicher Hall and an Honorable Mention for their Van Meter Hall, both at Goucher College.

UP FROM UNION SQUARE

In October 1867, the first AIA convention gathered at Union Square in a building now occupied by Ohrbach's Department Store. E. J. Gambaro informs us that above the modern store front, the sheet-metal and stone facing of this building remain undisturbed. Originally it was classified as an office building, but it was remodelled into a store in 1874 by Joseph Sands and James Renwick, Jr. (Renwick was 3rd president of the New York AIA and also architect for Grace Church and St. Patrick's Cathedral.) While the national convention met here, New York members had their headquarters at 45 East 17th Street in the Everitt House. Sentimental delegates to the 1952 convention at the Waldorf might like to look once again at these early meeting places.

AIA CONVENTION -- TECHNICAL SESSIONS

At the technical sessions of the 1952 convention at the Waldorf, Arthur Holden Chairman of the Convention Committee, has announced that the six major speakers will develop various aspects of the theme "Structural Resources for Architectural Design." The first three of these will cover new uses of architectural concrete in a program developed by Walter A. Taylor, AIA Director of Education and Research.

Here are the topics:

- Precast Structural Systems. This subject will be covered by Roger Corbetta, a New York builder with extensive experience in precast concrete construction.
- The Lift-Slab System will be described by architect O'Neil Ford of San Antonio, Texas, who first employed it in Trinity College, San Antonio.
- Pre-Stressed Concrete, of so much interest and so little familiarity to architects, will be presented by Professor M. J. Holley of M.I.T.
- Shell Structures, and their relation to materials conservation. C. S. Whitney, of Amman & Whitney, a distinguished consultant in thin shell concrete design, will tell us about them.
- Conservation in School Buildings (and this means lower costs) will be presented by Los Angeles architect Henry L. Wright.
- Governmental Specifications Problems and Codes rounds out this significant series, with the help of William H. Scheik, of the National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C.

THE SAME THE WORLD OVER

Our correspondent in Japan has written recently about some of the local problems of an architect. Sound familiar?

"Architect's Enemy in Japan

No. 1. Fortune Teller. In Japan there's a very funny occupation. He is a fortune teller by house-planning. So he tells where kitchen should be, bathroom should be, and so on. This custom was imported from China. In China north-west direction is a desert and cold windy in winter. So they call it Devil Gate. Now Jap teller tells north-west is dangerous to locate bathroom...and so on. Superstitious people believe it and want architect to obey him.

No. 2. Wife. Jap wife changes her mind very frequently. (I don't know how is in the States.) So after a planning was finished she changes her mind...and so on. She says 'Yes I know planning was fixed, but I happen to called on one of my friends and her living room was...'

No. 3. Teacher of Tea Ceremony. He has a traditional idea about house design. He sticks to it and don't let other one says his idea. Of course we know his art is a kind of arts but most of them are a kind of superstition.

No. 4. Most of Jap people don't know What Is an Architect. So they think it's waste of money for architect to design building. (Contractor doesn't want money to design for itself.) There's a big joke I heard. But this is not a joke but it really happened. A man asked an architect to design his house. When the design was finished, the architect handed the man 10 blue prints. The man asked how much is a blue print. The architect told him one blue print costs 3 cents. The man payed the architect 30 cents. The architect told me this story."

SMALL HOUSE CONSULTING SERVICE

The roster of the Small House Consulting Service contains professional data on panel members. It is consulted by people desirous of professional advice when building, buying or altering. The panel architect's usual charge for this consulting service is \$10 per hour. At present the panel consists of 27 Chapter members. Since the roster is about to be reprinted, present members, who wish to continue being listed, should submit current addresses and phone numbers; others, who would like to be added to the panel, should call the Chapter Office immediately for instructions.

HOUSING CONGESTION STUDY

The Lavanburg Foundation grant announced in our last issue will be used by the Chapter Committee on Housing to initiate a study of the Pattern of Congestion and its effect on dwellings in New York City from 1870 to 1950, with a view to evolving a scheme for intelligent future planning. An analysis will be undertaken covering:

1. The number and kind of rooms in relation to family size; the size of principal rooms and total usable area per unit; equipment; building types in predominant use; density of coverage, height, and use of exterior space; rents.
2. Background: the size of the city; transportation methods; population movement in relation to city growth; public amusement and recreation facilities; building techniques.
3. A historical review by approximate decades: 1870-90, a period of peace and expansion; 1890-1901, up to the first Tenement House Law and the first subway; 1901-16, when the Zoning Law was adopted; 1916-29, from World War I to the adoption of the Multiple Dwelling Law; 1929-40, the era of PWA Housing, Public Housing, and the FHA; 1940-50, with the rise of urban development.

The Committee, each member of which is assuming responsibility for a specific part or aspect of the investigation, consists of A. Burnham, J. H. Callender, G. H. Gurney, F. G. Lopez, J. Rannells, and W. C. Vladeck, with H. S. Churchill as chairman. A trained research worker will be needed, and drafting, typing, and the possible necessity of purchasing certain documents or paying for their use or reproduction will be among the expenses of the program. A fully detailed prospectus is on file at the Chapter Office.

It is the intention of the Committee to produce not a mere chronological-statistical record, but a reasoned analysis which it is hoped will lead to a series of conclusions shedding some light on factors needed by architects, investors, and city administration groups in determining what elements the public considers essential to good city living.

CANDIDATES

Information regarding the qualifications of the following candidates for membership will be considered confidential by the Admissions Committee:

Corporate Membership

Daniel C. C. Gilbert
William J. Freed

Sponsors: Lloyd Morgan and Clarence Litchfield
Sponsors: Ely J. Kahn and Robert A. Jacobs

Associate Membership

Joseph J. Oshiver
Manon Peyrot

Sponsors: Geoffrey Lawford and Hugh Romney
Sponsors: Mary T. Worthen and John Thompson