

NEW YORK CHAPTER



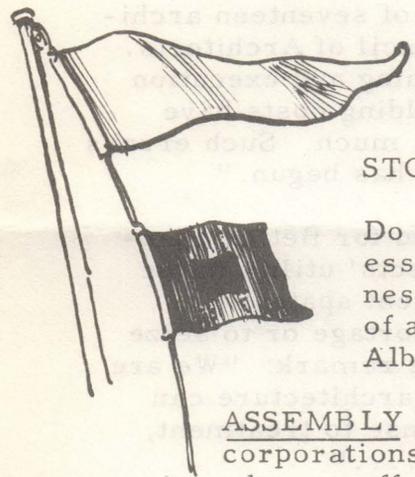
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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OCULUS

VOL. XV, No. 5 February 1954



STORM WARNINGS IN ALBANY

Do you believe that professional services and responsibilities are essentially personal in their nature? Do you believe in the soundness of the present laws which limit registration for the practice of any profession to the individual? A bill has been introduced in Albany which strikes hard at these basic concepts.

ASSEMBLY INT. 105, PRINT 105, would amend the education law to permit corporations to practice engineering. This would have an immediate and adverse effect on the profession of architecture.

WIRE OR WRITE TO HON. WILLIAM E. BRADY, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION, ROOM 437-B, ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS, ALBANY, N. Y. PROTESTING THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL.

It is equally in the public interest and in our own that New York City be allowed freely to avail itself of the professional services of independent practitioners. ASSEMBLY INT. 31, PRINT 31, would effectively prohibit New York City from retaining architects in private practice on public projects. An identical bill is before the Senate as SENATE INT. 452, PRINT 461.

WIRE OR WRITE TO HON. JOHN ROBERT BROOK, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON CITY OF NEW YORK, ROOM 444, ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS, ALBANY, N. Y., ALSO TO HON. MAC NEIL MITCHELL, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON AFFAIRS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, ROOM 506, SENATE CHAMBERS, ALBANY, N. Y., PROTESTING THE PASSAGE OF THESE BILLS.

Our action, to be effective, should represent a large proportion of the Chapter membership, and should be taken at once. Even a day will make a difference.

Hugh Ferriss, President.

ARCHITECT-CLIENT RELATIONS

The Public Relations Committee wishes to call attention to two articles which have appeared lately in House & Home and in Architectural Forum. These are reports of discussions on the problem of how the architect is to make his prospective client understand the value of the service which he offers and how to counteract the general misconception of the architect as a perhaps not completely essential adjunct to the building operation.

The House & Home Story is a Round Table Report of a group of seventeen architects, engineers and clients assembled by the California Council of Architects. It shows how necessary the Architect has become in the planning and execution of large scale individual housing projects. A quotation: "Building costs have more than doubled, so every error in planning costs twice as much. Such errors can be stopped only on the drafting board before construction has begun."

The Forum's report on the Architect-Client Forum "The Need for Better Planning and How to Get It" stresses how great will be the architects' utility in the more permanent type of building to be expected once the present spate of "necessitous construction, rushed up to meet some crying shortage or to seize some quick opportunity" has run its course. One provocative remark: "We are just beginning to understand how subtly good and appropriate architecture can influence the child's willingness to learn, the patient's response to treatment, the worker's pride and regard for his job and company"

Douglas Haskell has arranged that reprints of these articles will be available for mailing. On the request of any member, the Public Relations Committee will forward copies, without mentioning the architect's name, to any list of clients submitted. Members who prefer to send out the reprints themselves may have them for the asking. Call the chapter office.

NEW DEAN

Congratulations to Olindo Grossi, who will advance from the status of Chairman to that of Dean as the Department of Architecture at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, assumes independent status. It has hitherto functioned as a division of the School of Fine Arts. The new department will institute a graduate course leading to the Degree of Master of Architecture.

Mr. Grossi was once under close scrutiny in the New York schools as a gifted child. He has more than justified this absorbed attention on the part of his teachers. Alumnus of Columbia University, Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, sometime student at the University of Paris, Mr. Grossi joined the staff of Pratt Institute in 1945 and was named chairman of the Department the following year. In addition to his very successful work as an educator he maintains a private practice and a vigorous participation in the affairs of many local and national professional societies. Congratulations to Pratt, too.

CASH AND COMFORT

Jeffrey Aronin, who has made a study of climatology and recently published the book "Climate and Architecture", addressed a luncheon meeting sponsored by the Technical Committee on January 21st. Mr. Aronin's thesis "More Comfort for Less Cash", was that architects should know and work with nature in her many well documented meteorological manifestations to provide this greater comfort.

The use of vegetation, terrain, sun and wind are among the natural phenomena to be considered, brise-soleils and masonry textures among the man made. The absence of illustrations is something of a disadvantage in a talk of this nature but as Mr. Aronin not infrequently pointed out the topics are well covered and illustrated in his comprehensive book on the subject.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

At the January meeting of the Historical Buildings Committee the Municipal Art Society's listing of historic New York Structures was cited as an effective undertaking which should have the support of the New York Chapter. The Committee hopes to develop and recommend an effective program for documenting and photographing all historically significant New York buildings, as not all can be saved from the steel ball and the bulldozer. One such building imminently threatened is The Mark Twain house, 21 Fifth Avenue, designed by James Renwick in 1840. The Committee offers its good wishes to The Greenwich Village Chamber of Commerce in its effort to preserve the house.

With the warm approval of its membership and Chairman Talbot Hamlin, President Ferriss has appointed Cameron Clark to the Historic Building Committee. Few of our panels are so fortunate as to list a foreign correspondent, but Mr. Clark's responsibilities will include the whole Caribbean area, in which he is now practicing architecture.

THE LEBRUN SCHOLARSHIP

Robert Carson, Chairman of the LeBrun Committee announces completion of the program and the arrangements for the 1954 competition. The subject will be An Elementary School and the winner will be awarded \$2,800 for at least six months' travel in Europe. Each member will soon receive a card announcing the details of eligibility and application procedure which he is urged to post in his drafting room. As the competition is for men and women aged 23 through 27, with at least 1-1/2 years of experience, it may well be from the staff of one of our members that the next LeBrun Scholar will come.

BRITISH CONFERENCE

The Royal Institute of British Architects announces the British Architects' Conference. Torquay 1954.

This will be held at Torquay from May 26th to May 29th at the invitation of the Devon and Cornwall Society of Architects. You are invited, and the complete program will be available at the end of March from Mr. C. D. Spragg, Secretary, 66 Portland Place, London W 1, England.

MEMBERS WORK FILE

A year and a half ago, a members' work file was set up in the Chapter office and each member was sent a simple form to fill out. Since then only 174, or 20% of the membership, has taken advantage of this opportunity to bring their work to public attention. Every day inquiries come to the office which could easily be answered from the file if it were complete and up to date. The Chapter obviously never can and never will recommend a particular architect, but persons seriously interested in selecting an architect can look through the file and perhaps pick up some good ideas. Why miss this chance? Won't the missing 80% send in their folders and thereafter keep them up to date?

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate Membership

Frank Willis Binckley	Sponsors: Antonin Raymond and Ladislav L. Rado
Roy O. Allen, Jr.	Sponsors: Robert W. Cutler and Charles S. Haines
Harold J. Olson	Sponsors: Robert W. Cutler and Herbert D. Phillips

Associate Membership

Arthur Pomponio	Sponsors: Van F. Pruitt and Leon S. Barton, Jr.
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FEB. 19th

MEMBERSHIP MISCELLANY

When he was in charge of the drafting room for H. Van Buren Magonigle, Abram Bastow laid out the lettering around the Institute's seal which his patron had designed and delineated, and was given the original drawings as his reward. Some time ago Mr. Bastow generously donated these drawings to the Institute as a permanent record, receiving the thanks of the Board of Directors. Can't quite visualize it? Turn back to the mast head.

Walter H. Kilham, Jr. appeared very effectively on a television program last month sponsored by Columbia University's Bicentennial Committee. The topic was Soviet architecture which he had the opportunity to observe and photograph as a Wheelwright Scholarship holder.

Harold Sleeper, in addition to his travels reported in a recent issue is contributing a section of details each month to the Architectural Forum and to House and Home. What a variety of interesting and public-spirited ways Mr. Sleeper has hit upon to make a living, between editions of one of the best loved reference works of our time. He also practices architecture; just when is his own closely guarded secret.

In 1952 OCULUS expressed thanks to Eric Keбbon for arranging the plan of Public School 6, Madison Avenue and 81st Street, in such a way as to spare several fine trees on the site. Pass that way now and you will see the trees still in full and vigorous health, softening and beautifying an otherwise all too urban scene. Long life to them and their conservator.

Every one enjoyed Bruno Funaro's lively summary of what goes on on Morningside Heights after dark. In a purely curricular way, of course!

BEAUX-ARTS JUDGMENT

On January twenty-seventh the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design held open house to its members in the second floor gallery of the Architectural League to show the results of the first of the two judgments of students' work to be held this year in accordance with BAID'S new schedule.

The judgment had been on January twenty-third. The problems considered were: Emerson Prize - Entrance to an International Airport; Class A, A Newspaper Plant - Kawneer Company Prize; Class B, A Campus Union - Title Council of America Prize; and Class C, A Campers' Lodge - Hiron Alumni Prize. The programs were written by Howard L. Cheney, Evanston, Ill., George Howe, Philadelphia, Pa., John N. Richards, Toledo, Ohio, and Paul Thiry, Seattle, Washington.

Three hundred nineteen students from seventeen architectural schools submitted their entries to forty-eight judges, several of whom had come from distant cities for the judgment which lasted all day. The quality of the work of the prize winners as well as many of the runners up was extremely high both in design and in presentation. The winning design for the Title Council Prize by W. Bartoli of Carnegie Institute of Technology seemed to be notably well conceived and beautifully executed. The Kawneer Prize was won by J. P. Feagley, of Pennsylvania State College and the Hiron Prize by T. J. Butler, also from Penn State.

HISTORIANS

A fine opportunity to learn more of our architectural heritage is offered by The Society of Architectural Historians, whose chapter in New York City meets twice a year. At each meeting there are two speakers, one speaking on the subject of United States architecture, or that of some part of the Americas, the other on a foreign subject.

At the January meeting held at New York University's Department of Fine Arts in the shadow of the Metropolitan Museum, Professor Richard Krautheimer gave an interesting talk on Leone Battista Alberti, who flourished in Italy five centuries ago and about whom all our members know a great deal. Ellen Kramer gave an even more interesting presentation of the career of Detlef Lienau, a skilled and successful architect who flourished in New York City as late as five decades ago, about whom most of our members know nothing.



At this meeting of the Society, Robert C. Weinberg suggested that a "Watch-dog" committee be formed, with an eye to obtaining plans, information and photographs of buildings of architectural interest which are about to be demolished. The Society will be glad to lend its influence in saving these buildings when possible, even though it is unable to lend financial support in this endeavor.

James Grote Van Derpool, Avery Librarian, Columbian University, was one of the founders of the Society and is now serving as president of the local chapter. The S. A. H. wishes particularly to invite practising architects to attend its meetings. For announcements and for information regarding membership, address the secretary of the local chapter, Alan Burnham, at 65 Fairfield Avenue, Greenwich, Conn.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

Started by Mayor Wagner in 1951, the Community Planning Board has become in Manhattan the type of planning organization which we hope will continue to grow. Basically a neighborhood idea, it involves the subdivision of Manhattan Island into twelve planning districts in order that each district can better understand its planning needs. Each month in each district some twenty citizens from all walks of life meet to discuss the social problems of that district. Housing, health, hospitals, and many other subjects are discussed with a view towards the solution of their inherent problems. The Board then contacts the different commissioners to see what can be done with that neighborhood.

Each board member may recommend a new member. His name is then submitted to the Borough President, and if possible, he is made a member. Not restricted as to profession or to location, the Boards are made up of energetic citizens and have done a great deal in their own -- and other neighborhoods. Based on a good principle, this neighborhood plan group should do great things.