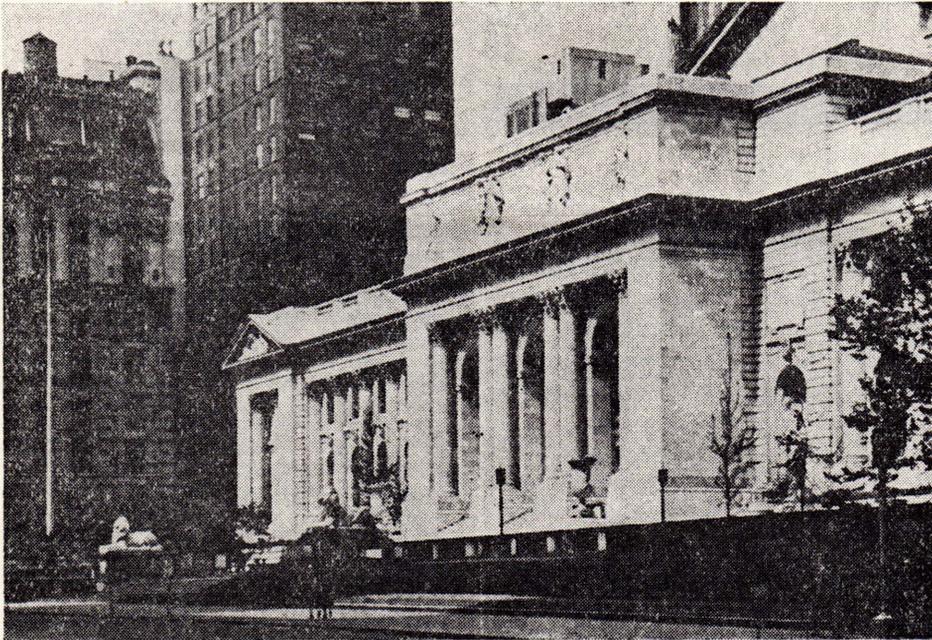


# OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



APRIL 1961



## ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECE TURNS FIFTY by OGDEN TANNER

May 23rd marks the fiftieth anniversary, to the day, that President William Howard Taft dedicated **Carrère and Hastings'** magnificent New York Public Library building at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street. To celebrate the occasion, the library staff plans a three-day series of functions starting with outdoor ceremonies at noon and continuing with various testimonials and social events.

To New York's architectural fraternity, the main library should be a source of particular civic pride. Beside housing one of the world's finest Art and Architecture collections, it is among the foremost examples of early 20th Century "modern Renaissance" architecture in America. In an ever-crowding city its open spaces, promenades and park-like rest areas are increasingly becoming more cherished.

The Library was built on the site of the old Croton Reservoir, and some of the original stonework is contained in its foundation. Its design and construction spanned some fourteen years, and as *Harper's Magazine* observed at the time of its completion: "Few

buildings in any time have been planned with greater patience and foresight, or have been executed with more technical care and refinement."

Every fragment of the building, after thorough study, was drawn first in quarter scale, then three-quarter scale and finally in full scale. Carrère and Hastings produced nearly 10,000 sketches and some 6,000 finished drawings. The remarkable precision of its construction is such that (it has been said), a two-block long knife edge passed horizontally through any seam of mortar would cut clearly through the entire building dividing corresponding seams in the exterior columns, piers and interior walls.

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## AIA SUPPORTS SENATE BILL

Phillip Will, jr., President of the AIA gave full support of the AIA to the Williams Mass Transportation Bill—S-345 now being considered by the Senate. In a statement issued on March 30, 1961. He said:

"The American Institute of Architects, many of whose 14,000 members are engaged in large-scale design activity in communities throughout the nation, support Federal assistance to State and local governments for improvement of mass transit services.

The restoration and effective development of our urban centers are vital to our national economy. Such restoration and redevelopment can only be accomplished by comprehensive planning and design. An integral part of such activity is the provision of effective transportation facilities.

Our cities are strangling in vehicular traffic. Heavy reliance on movement by automobile through obsolete street patterns in congested areas has glutted our roadways, hastened the decline of our downtown districts, and added steadily to the cost of services in our suburban areas. This strangulation by traffic can only be eased by effective development of mass transportation. If we are to depend upon automobiles alone for urban transportation, we face the ultimate prospect of a paved urban landscape in which the needs of the community are subordinated to that of a single means of conveyance.

The Congress, through passage of a number of laws over several decades, has recognized its responsibility for preservation of natural resources, the provision of adequate housing, protection from

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS  
NEW YORK CHAPTER

MARGOT A. HENKEL, *Executive Secretary*  
115 East 40th Street  
New York 16, N. Y.  
MUrray Hill 9-7969

FREDERICK J. WOODBRIDGE \_\_\_\_\_ *President*  
DAVID L. EGGERS \_\_\_\_\_ *Vice President*  
PETER S. VAN BLOEM \_\_\_\_\_ *Secretary*  
MICHAEL M. HARRIS \_\_\_\_\_ *Treasurer*

PAUL JOHN GRAYSON, *Editor*

## A TIME FOR DOING

The citizens of the United States are slowly becoming the champions of "gobbledygook." Perhaps we've already made it. Some even say that Russia is going to beat us in this race too. However, it's high time that we stop for a moment to ask ourselves "why so much talk, so many promises, so many words?"

Right now, in our troubled world, we must resolve what are those basic values, principles and rights that are necessary to maintain our freedoms and human dignity. Not only for our national purpose but for our architectural profession, our community and even for our family.

Somehow these programs we determine rarely get started when it comes to assembling the "team." This happens because we as individuals dislike adjusting certain privileges and vested rights acquired over time, only because of basic insecurity concerning the unknowns of the future. We prefer to hold on to what we are accustomed to; we are familiar with it; it's safe!

And so in order to play it safe, we use words, we complain, we question, we reserve our decisions, we abstain. Now if ever there was a time for doing. It is *now!* It is time for each and everyone of us to become fully alert, fully responsible as citizens, as architects to decide what we want, what we need, and to proceed to work toward these basic goals.

Many may ask where we can look for direction. The directions are here—as long as one keeps his eyes open—to his responsibilities. There have been just recently the Columbia series, the League Symposiums and other lectures, articles and programs.

From these activities and reports should come a plan of action. Once these are determined we must rally to support them fully by active and dedicated participation.

P.J.G.

## LETTERS

### To the Editor:

I read with interest Sibyl Moholy-Nagy's letter in the last issue of *Oculus* (Vol. 32—No. 6) and while I do not deem it's proper for me to enter the critical arguments concerning our design, I would like to have the record set straight on two matters of fact as follows:

The area of the monument is not unsuited for heavy loads. Rock is present at an average of 60 feet below the surface suitable for the support of almost any loads. We and Ammann & Whitney, our structural engineers, view the support of the monument as a very simple, uncomplicated and straight forward job.

To my knowledge we have not made any statement concerning the illegibility of the lettering we propose to use. I believe that all the lettering will be completely and easily legible to the degree that it is on the other Washington monuments. Our letters at 8 inches and 11 inches in height are readable at considerable distances. A look at the Fifth Avenue facade of the Public Library, the older buildings at Columbia University, etc., etc., will convince the most doubting.

Wm. F. Pedersen

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

King Mohammed V of Morocco, who died recently, was credited with the following opinion: "Americans confuse education with wisdom. They confuse money with intelligence. They confuse sex with love. And they confuse plumbing with civilization.

## IMPROVING NEW YORK

On behalf of the Executive Committee and the Chapter membership, **President Woodbridge** sent to City Planning Commission Chairman, **James Felt**, the following letter of commendation for the Commission's action on the recent midtown Manhattan garage proposal:

Dear Mr. Felt:

The City Planning Commission's rejection of the proposal to build parking garages in midtown Manhattan reversed a trend which would have led to a traffic-choked central city, an eventual no-man's land debilitated by the automobile.

As architects who have studied and are deeply concerned with the development of our cities, we have seen first hand the consequences of haphazard, day-to-day planning which fails to take into consideration future needs and problems of an area.

From our experiences we can say with certainty that the single most threatening danger to the workings of our metropolitan hubs is the automobile. Unless it is controlled, it can choke and destroy these vital areas. We are particularly aware of this menace because we have been among the specialists called in to help revive central city districts strangled by traffic congestion; congestion that could have been predicted and prevented.

Here in New York City we must be especially alert to the danger of traffic bottle-necks which can hamstring Manhattan's central business district. Our midtown area is the heart of the City. If it is to function in the best interests of those who live, work, do business, and play here, it must permit the free and unhampered circulation of people and goods.

The construction of more garages in the center of the city will add to, not relieve, our traffic problems. It will encourage the use of more private cars in midtown Manhattan and cause intolerable congestion.

We have found that for a city center to be vital and dynamic it must encourage pedestrian, not automobile traffic. It is the movement of people that gives life to a city. Metropolitan areas designed to contribute to this mobility experience healthy growth and contribute to the development of their surrounding areas.

In refusing the applications for the proposed midtown garages, you and your fellow Committee members have made a priceless contribution to the well-being of our city.

The New York Chapter of The American Institute of Architects commends the Commission for its far-sighted and courageous action. It is only through intelligent and long range planning that we can encourage the continued vitality and development of midtown Manhattan.

Sincerely,

FREDERICK J. WOODBRIDGE  
President, N. Y. Chapter AIA

Mr. Felt's reply follows:

Dear Mr. Woodbridge:

May I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the New York Chapter for their kind and

**Senate Bill** *Continued from Page 1*

water pollution, and assistance to blighted downtown areas.

A significant gap in this assumption of responsibility — and one which tends to negate the value of such programs—has existed until now in governmental neglect of our growing urban problems.

The interest of the nation's architects in S-345 lies primarily in its promise to fill this serious gap in the government's program for restoration and effective development of our urban areas. Specifically, we see in this legislation an important means of relating transportation to the comprehensive plan for community redevelopment. Traffic cannot be considered as a separate and isolated problem. It does not generate itself, but derives from the uses of land for the design and construction of buildings. To provide any community with the vitality, economic health, and beauty which are the goals of large-scale urban architecture, efficient land use, access, storage, and movement of people and goods must be planned as elements in a single problem.

Especially praiseworthy in this legislation is its concept of planning grants "for areas embracing several municipalities or other political subdivisions." The problems of effective transportation are not confined to single political entities within a metropolitan area. The social and economic health of an entire area depend upon the rational and orderly development of the whole.

AIA therefore favors the intent of S-345 to "authorize the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency to assist State and local governments and their public instrumentalities in planning and providing for necessary community facilities to preserve and improve essential mass transportation services in urban and metropolitan areas," and commends its emphasis on the relationship of mass transit development to "housing, urban renewal, and other land use developments in urban and metropolitan areas" and its proposal that such development be "an integral part of comprehensive plans for the land use development of the area as a whole."

**Masterpiece** *Continued from Page 1*

The building contains some two hundred rooms and halls, and is noted for spacious reading rooms and attendant artwork. Perhaps the most famous are the lions flanking the main steps, created by Edward C. Potter.

Over some four million books, nine million manuscripts, fifty thousand phonograph records, a quarter million maps are contained in one of the largest research collections in the world. The original cost of the building was \$9,000,000.

**COMING EVENTS**

MAY 1, 1961, Monday, 7:00 p.m., Rotunda of Low

Memorial Library, Columbia University  
"Homage to Great Makers"

Chairman: Professor Fitch, Columbia University  
Dinner for Dr. Gropius, Dr. Mies van der Rohe, Dr. LeCorbusier under the joint sponsorship of The American Institute of Architects—New York Chapter, Architectural League of New York, and Columbia Architectural Association—Cost of Ticket \$16.00

MAY 8, 1961, Monday, 5:15 p.m., Gallery A

Lecture by Victor O. Schinnerer  
Insurance Consultant  
AIA Committee on Professional Insurance  
Topic: Professional Liability Insurance

MAY 11, 1961, Thursday, 12:30 p.m., Gallery A

School Committee Luncheon  
Speaker: Dean Charles R. Colbert  
Columbia University School of Architecture

MAY 11, 1961, Thursday, 6:00 p.m., Brass Rail,

521 Fifth Avenue, New York City  
Hospital and Health Dinner Meeting  
Topic: "A Synopsis of the Planning of the New Bellevue Hospital Center  
Speaker: Mr. Albert B. Bauer, R.A.  
Director of Division of Buildings  
City of New York  
Department of Public Works

MAY 17, 1961, Wednesday, 5:15 p.m., Gallery A

Hospital and Health Discussion Group  
Film: "Positive Patient Safety through Simplified O. R. Nursing Techniques by American Cyanamid Co. and discussion with Miss M. V. Schwendeman, R.N., Nurse Consultant, American Cyanamid

MAY 23, 1961, Tuesday, 5:15 p.m., Gallery A

Technical Committee Lecture  
Speaker: Mr. Paul Weidlinger, Structural Engineer  
Topic: Aluminum and its Architectural Structural Application (The Emphasis is on Particularly Large Spans)

JUNE 7, 1961, Wednesday, 12:30 p.m., Gallery A

Annual Luncheon for the Election of Officers and Elective Committees

by SHELDON LICHT

### House Consulting Committee

#### Where are those Brownstones?

Mortimer Freehof, acting chairman of the House Consulting Committee would like members who are interested in submitting their solutions for the competition of Brownstone renovations to get in touch with the committee. A tentative date of May 22 was set for judging entries, and **Olindo Grossi** has been asked to serve as chairman of the jury.

**Glen Fowler** of the *New York Times* attended a luncheon meeting of the House Consulting Committee, which was reported to be a lively "give and take" affair. The committee suggested to Fowler that the Real Estate section of the *Times* has been showing the poorer side of Architecture. The meeting concluded with a promise from him that he will cooperate with the profession and attempt to publish the better side of architecture in the future.

### Legislative Committee

**Harry Rutkins**, chairman of the Legislative Committee reported that the "Corporate Practice" bills were killed in the New York State Assembly and barring any last minute action on the part of the Senate, the bills are believed dead. As in previous years, the letters written to the legislators expressing strong opposition to the measures were instrumental in stopping the passage of these bills.

A bill permitting the waiving of certain qualifications for the architects' licensing requirements for persons who have practiced for more than 15 years, with the State Association's recommendations, was defeated.

Another bill, permitting the open-type unenclosed parking structure or carport is being revised to include the New York State Association of Architects' recommendations and is expected to be acted upon shortly.

Chairman Rutkins informed the Committee that the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn has been retained by the New York Building Congress and other builder-contractor groups to study the necessity for revision of the New York

Building Code. The study is expected to include recommendations on the desirability of rewriting the code, the desirable type of code (performance vs. specification), code format, method of accomplishment of any recommended rewriting, estimated cost of rewriting and estimated time necessary for rewriting.

Among the bills reviewed by the Committee was legislation on the corporate practice of engineers. This is definitely opposed by the New York State Society of Professional Engineers. In addition to this bill, there was legislation permitting any professional person to practice through partnership or corporation. This bill is also definitely opposed since it would permit incorporation of all professions.

### Office Practice Briefs

#### Professional Liability Insurance:

No longer being written by Fidelity Casualty. Lloyds of London continues to write coverage *above that normally covered*. Continental Casualty (A.I.A. recommended) continues to write this coverage.

#### Plan Review by Insurance Rating Bureau:

Submission of plans during working drawing phase to owner's insurance representative may result in lower insurance rates if suggestions made by them can be incorporated.

#### Coordination of Architectural, Structural, Mechanical and Electrical Drawings:

Some architectural offices require submission of design schematics from consulting engineers in early stages of preliminary design, and have found this to be very beneficial.

### Civic Design Committee

**Simon Breines**, Civic Design Committee Chairman reviewed the progress of the sub-committees' work and announced that sufficient headway had been made to warrant Chapter meetings this spring on the city's new *Zoning Amendment*, the *Master Plan* and on the *Urban Renewal Program*.

### Cooper Union

The Cooper Union Chapter has not been too active in the recent past. We are attempting however, a renaissance with the introduction of an annual Student-Faculty Conference. This year's conference was held at the Green Engineering Camp the weekend of April 15th. The topic was "What are we preparing for?"

In the student vernacular, Cooper Union is known as a "commuter school." In this respect our extra curricular activities lack vitality due to extremely small responses. Weekly meetings compete with lunch breaks, and so we have not been able to accomplish as much as desired.

Our major asset however is our diversity, and we are confident that we can take advantage of this, through the annual conferences. We can bring to the discussions not only the prevailing moods of the school, but those of the varying environmental communities within our city. The conferences moreover, will enable a large segment of the student body to meet and air their views with other students and the faculty.

RICHARD CREAUGH HEYDECKER,  
President

### MEMBERSHIP

#### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The New York Chapter extends its warmest welcome to the following new members:

##### Corporate

Thomas V. Di Carlo  
Eugene Meyers  
Marietta M. Meyers

Melvin H. Smith  
Calvin McCormick  
Earl H. Strunk

##### Associate

Dennis Jurow  
Jorge A. Foussats  
David H. P. Clarke  
Fred Jaros

Judith Y. Newman  
Otto J. Schumm  
Charles E. Thomsen

#### CANDIDATES

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

##### Corporate

Henry Stanley Dobiecki  
Maurice Warner Kley  
James S. Brown  
Daniel Chait

William James Dearden  
G. Peter Jennewein  
Stephen Alexander Kliment  
James Stewart Polshak

##### Associate

William Edward Caldwell  
Paul P. Sanzari  
Lucile Fonfara Young

##### Sponsors:

J. Armand Burgun  
Robert M. Bradbury  
Olindo Grossi  
Martin Schwartz  
Morris Ketchum, Jr.  
Robert T. Handren

#### ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE

#### APPOINTMENTS

Education Student Chapter Committee.....John Arms  
Publications Committee.....Sheldon Licht  
Jan V. White

#### Younger Architects Committee

Harold Edelman  
Joseph Fuller  
Bruce C. Graham

Norman Klein  
Julian Neski  
Rolland Thompson