

OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



NOVEMBER, 1962

PANEL ON COMPETITION DRAWS RECORD AUDIENCE

A standing-room-only crowd heard a very vocal panel on the subject of design competitions following the Chapter's fall dinner meeting Oct. 24. Participating were Percival Goodman FAIA, moderator; Thomas H. Creighton FAIA, editor of *Progressive Architecture*; Sidney L. Katz FAIA, chairman of the board of trustees of the National Institute for Architectural Education; Edwin B. Morris, Jr., past assistant executive director of AIA responsible for architectural competitions; FDR Memorial competition winners William F. Pedersen and Bradford S. Tilney; and Boston City Hall competition winners Edward F. Knowles, Gerhard M. Kallman, and Noel McKinnell.

Creighton got the evening off to a controversial start by suggesting a moratorium on national architectural competitions, during which the fundamental bases, programs, and rules for competitions would be restudied and revised to insure more realistic programs in the future. He said that under the rules followed today, the investment in time and money for most competitors is appalling.

Goodman and Knowles stated that, while there may be material waste in entering a competition, the prime idea should be the creation of a building on paper. Knowles said competitions have the advantages of educating the public, creating a better picture of the architect in the lay eye, and acting as channels for new ideas. Kallman and McKinnell both observed that competitions should be broadened from symbolic and monumental projects to include solutions for problems which beset us today — housing and city development, for

example. Pedersen said that he is still in favor of competitions, but also thinks that aims and programs must be reshaped. He noted several things that competitions **cannot** do: (1) establish a working relationship with the client, (2) see that stunning draftsmanship eventually produces a great building, and (3) assure, in the long run, an economically sound basis for practice. He noted — following his harassment at bureaucratic and congressional hands on the FDR project — that “overlays” should be abolished. These are the outside pressures that enter after a competition has been won and proceed to muddy the waters. Tilney urged following up the competition with a strong program of public relations to insure that the public views the project in the best possible light.

Morris demanded the improvement of AIA's competition documents, giving examples of his experiences in working with government bodies while with AIA. He said that instructions to professional advisers should be more explicit, and that the professional adviser should always point out the pitfalls as well as the advantages of the competition. Money for the erection of the winning design, he felt, should ideally be available at once so as not to have to wait a long period for appropriations to be made.

Katz gave the assembly a stinging pep talk on the subject of competitions and the architect's responsibility for making them work. He strongly defended the NIAE system of student competitions, based on Beaux Arts procedures. Proposing that the national AIA

sponsor competitions for government buildings nationally and locally, he read a decree which he suggests the Chapter send to the Octagon. Ending with an impassioned plea for more architectural involvement, Katz cried: “Are we going to be architects or are we going to be dormats? It's up to us to decide!”

Preceding the panel meeting, L. Abbett Post of the American Institute of Steel Construction bestowed that organization's Award of Merit on Harrison & Abramovitz for its design of the Gateway Number Four Building in Pittsburgh, and L. Bancel LaFarge FAIA announced that Stuart Davis (who could not make the banquet) is the Institute's Fine Arts Medal winner for this year.

James T. Burns Jr.

AGBANY TAKES PENN STATION ISSUE TO P.S.C.

A formal letter demanding “an immediate hearing” has been forwarded to the New York State Public Service Commission by AGBANY. (Action Group For Better Architecture in New York), whose chairman is Chapter member Norval White. The letter notes that “the propriety of destroying the station and . . . using the surface of the property for a non-railroad use may be for the railroad to propose, but it is for the Public Service Commission . . . entrusted with the protection of the public's interest, to determine.”

Since the protest demonstration in front of the Seventh Avenue colonnade on Aug. 2nd, AGBANY

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OCULUS

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
NEW YORK CHAPTER

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IMPROVING NEW YORK

(From a recent letter to the New York
HERALD TRIBUNE)

It is often said that the New York City Planning Commission does not plan but spends its time disposing of matters proposed by others.

Therefore I offer a suggestion for the Commission to ponder. It should recommend to the Mayor that measures be taken to merge the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority with the New York City Transit Authority.

Such an unexpected statement coming from the Commission without the customary doubletalk should assist the next move: creation of a Regional Transport Authority, an agency which would embrace all forms of transportation and financially balance road and rail travel as far as the public purse is concerned.

It has been for a long time evident that the population growth which confronts us is making it imperative to build new and improve old rail facilities. It seems sheer folly to let railroads deteriorate while spending billions on new expressways. These ever-widening strips of concrete rift our urban communities and country areas asunder only to create traffic jams, air pollution and street congestion.

Were more motor tolls used to rehabilitate rail travel the chances of future exorbitant taxes for this

purpose would be greatly lessened and the chances of having decent rail travel greatly improved.

The Planning Commission should coordinate its efforts with the newly created Tri-State Transportation Committee toward setting up such a Regional Transport Authority. It should not approve in the Capital Budget any new major subway lines until a master plan for all transportation has been prepared.

The Planning Commission will serve its own and the public interest to a far greater extent when it moves into the van and ceases to be part of the rearguard. For this agency was created to be hunting in the field beyond and not just to concentrate on daily chores.

Goodhue Livingston

Former Member, New York City
Planning Commission

PUBLICITY OPPORTUNITIES

A leading publication in the retail shoe field is interested in interviewing architects who have designed or remodeled shoe stores. The publication will use the interviews as the basis for an article on shoe store architecture, and credit the participants. Contact Tod Potash at Jack Bernstein Associates, 37 West 57th Street, PLaza 1-6670.

BOOKS

"*Makers of Contemporary Architecture*" — R. Buckminster Fuller, by John McHale; Philip Johnson, by John M. Jacobus, Jr.; Louis I. Kahn, by Vincent Scully, Jr.; Eero Saarinen, by Allan Temko; Kenzo Tange, by Robin Boyd. Published by George Braziller, Inc. \$4.95 each.

The five books in this series deal with the lives and work of five major creative architects of our time. Each book consists of a biography and discussion of the architect's work by the author, some 100 illustrations, plans, drawings, and photographs, selections from writings of the architect, a selected bibliography, and a biographical chronology.

In reading these books, it seems evident that architecture in the United States is developing toward a more "romantic" expression and away from the purely technical,

functional approach of the 1930's to 1950's. Machine technique is being mastered and freely used in the search for new forms. There is a marked direction toward the sculptured form — a warmer, more personal architecture than that of the early Bauhaus and present Mies. We are thinking more of the entire concept of the building, of its beauty, without the artificial division between interior and exterior as an approach to design. This is the beginning of the end of the old saw that a building is designed from the inside to the outside: first the plan, then any elevation that fits. This reviewer, for one, is in full accord with these developments and finds it gratifying that in the midst of construction, the bulk of which is shoddy, it is possible to find a growing number of dedicated architects deserving what amounts to monographs of their work.

It is also of interest that we are developing a number of writers on architecture who know their subjects, write critically, and are able to communicate intelligently. If you have read the work of some of our most famous architects, I know you will agree that this is a blessing.

The photographs are on the whole good but not large enough. The fact that historical examples of buildings and schemes are included gives the books a greater dimension and meaning. We are finally starting to recognize the importance of our heritage.

It is also gratifying that architects are now being treated as working people, not mad geniuses à la Ayn Rand.

Hopefully, there will be more of this kind of presentation of the work of living architect-artists to further dispel the myths of our profession and to aid the struggle against ugliness in our land.

Richard W. Snibbe

The American Architects' Directory can be obtained from the Bowker Publishing Company, 62 West 45th Street, New York City, Tel. No. MU 2-0150. The new edition contains listings of 15,000 architects, including 11,200 biographies, on 976 pages. Price to members is \$17.50 — to non-members \$25.



LOUIS SKIDMORE— A TRIBUTE BY ROBERT MOSES

Following are excerpts from the remarks of Robert Moses at the Memorial Services for Louis Skidmore, FAIA, on Oct. 24.

Louis Skidmore stood at the portal or gateway of the age of building high, with new machines, materials, inventions, devices and methods . . . Skid viewed architecture as a progression, and did not fancy himself as an entirely new man owing nothing to any school or teacher. Nor did he set out, as so many other contemporaries have, to build monuments to himself without reference to purpose or content. Nor did he ignore the wishes of his clients.

He was an apt pupil and successor to the great Chicago innovators . . . a bright, alert, forthright, shrewd, at times impatient, at times philosophical, ambitious, practical dreamer with the same remarkable Hoosier antecedents which produced Booth Tarkington and James Whitcomb Riley, and nurtured Abraham Lincoln.

Skid found himself at ease with bozos and businessmen as well as Beaux Artists. Trojan and Tyrian, he took them in his stride. He could hold his own in the dog-eat-dog business of architecture for, like most professions, it is a good deal of a business today. Man cannot live by bread alone, nor for that matter by architectural keystones or occasional new cities in the wilderness. Below as well as above, the Father's house has many mansions. The S.O.M. stamp Skid put on his buildings may not always have had the imprimatur of the critics, but it had their respect and it carried distinction.

It was a brave new world. Skid enjoyed it to the full, and added much to its permanent treasures.

CHANGING TIMES AT COLUMBIA

By Sheldon Licht

In a profile that appeared in one of the architectural magazines shortly after Charles Colbert became Dean of Columbia's School of Architecture, students and local professionals were warned: "Columbia will really start buzzing . . ." Dean Colbert has lived up to this prediction.

In a brief period he has instituted a program which has changed the education of architects at Morningside Heights. The greatest impact of Dean Colbert's "new frontier" is being felt on the graduate level, where he has introduced four avenues to the Masters degree: Planning and Design for Education, Planning and Design for Hospitals, Central Business District Design, and Architectural Design. In each of these areas, members of the faculties related to the particular disciplines are giving courses to the students to fill in the voids in their background and to reinforce their pre-existing knowledge. The students are given an opportunity to choose their field of concentration.

Dean Colbert points out that this is not "specialization." He feels that in order for an architect to make a decision and a program at the pre-design level, he must have full knowledge of his subject. In the design itself, the architect must interpret needs and requirements and translate them into the real terms of society. It is the duty of architects, Colbert feels, not to reflect society, but to affect it.

In the architect's search for a solution, he must justify a change



from tradition, and at the same time he must constantly seek new ways and forms. Colbert feels that education and professional training must go on simultaneously, which is reflected in his policy of seeking work-experienced Masters candidates. Some 50% of the Master degree students at Columbia already hold a license in architecture.

The Dean himself has a many faceted education, and he impresses on the student the need for extending his interests: inbreeding tends to retard the searching mind, with its ability to depart from tradition; all aspects of the human condition should be approached and studied. The student with a searching mind, says Colbert, has a greater asset than one with mere knowledge. On the other side of the coin, the educator is "a person who attempts to make his knowledge obsolete."

In viewing some of the results of this program, early as it may be, some critics believe Dean Colbert has "fragmented" architecture. Others find this program a welcome change. Proponents of both sides, however, must agree that Columbia's new Dean has instilled the old school with a new vitality.

PRATT INSTITUTE EXTENDS RESEARCH SERVICES

The School of Architecture of Pratt Institute announces the expansion of its research activities to permit it to carry out further programs in theoretical and applied aspects of building research, and provide increased service in all areas of the building industry. The Research Department is now prepared to undertake:

Development of programs, including space requirements and flow diagrams, model and analytical studies of proposed buildings or their elements, for structure, fur-

niture and equipment layouts, light distribution, shadow patterns, acoustics, color, sun control, shading, heating and ventilation, wind effects.

Also: Full-size mock-ups of building assemblies (walls, windows, partitions, rooms) to determine weathertightness, heat flow, sound reduction, light, sun effects and control, feasibility of erection and moving. Analysis of existing buildings, covering planning, performance of building assemblies, psychological effects.

SPROSS AND CAVALIERI ARE NEW OFFICERS OF N.Y.S.A.A.

At the annual convention of the New York State Association of Architects, held October 10 to 13 at Lake Placid, N. Y., Chapter Member Roger E. Spross was elected the new Secretary of that organization and Chapter Member George J. Cavalieri was reelected Treasurer. The other new officers elected were: President - Elmer Chambers, Syracuse; 1st Vice President - Simeon Heller, Queens Chapter; 2nd Vice President - Allen Macomber, Rochester; and, in the only contested office, Millard F. Whiteside of the Westchester Chapter was named 3rd Vice President. Our own hard-working Samuel M. Kurtz will continue as editor of the *New York State Architect*.

The convention was well attended, well run, and enjoyable in spite of less than perfect weather. This year there were 34 architectural exhibits and 50 commercial displays arranged on two floors of Whiteface Inn. At the Saturday awards luncheon four of the five architectural citations went to members of the New York Chapter. Emery Roth & Sons won two for their "Tower East" apartments and Massachusetts State Office Building. Isadore & Zachary Rosenfeld were cited for their nursing home in Puerto Rico, and Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton, with Ives,

Turano & Gardner, for their Pan American Terminal at Idlewild.

The full details of all business meetings, resolutions, and by-laws changes will be published in the Nov.-Dec. issue of the *New York State Architect*.

One of the highlights of the convention was Morris Ketchum's discussion of the structure of the Institute and what AIA is doing at the national level to improve its service to the chapters and to individual architects. Mr. Ketchum is both Director of the New York Region and National Chairman of the AIA Committee on improving the structure of the Institute.

Honored convention guest and main speaker at the Thursday night banquet was Arthur Gould Odell, Jr. FAIA, 2nd Vice President of the Institute, who spoke on "The Expanded Services of the Institute."

Besides the seminars, the wet golf tournament and equally wet cocktail parties, mention should be made of the mad Romans who showed up at the Costume Ball entitled "It Happened on the Way to the Forum." For details, button-hole a delegate who was there — such as President Fritz Woodbridge.

F. Marshall Smith

REMINDER: BRUNNER AWARD

Active architects and those in related fields are eligible to apply for the \$5,000 Arnold W. Brunner scholarship, one of the nation's top architectural awards.

Offered annually by the New York Chapter, the scholarship calls for study in some special field which will effectively contribute to the practice, teaching, or knowledge of the profession. Each candidate is free to choose his subject of study, according to E. N. Turano, chairman of the Brunner Scholarship Committee.

Past scholarships have been awarded for a wide variety of projects including a study of urban living, the development of a traveling architectural exhibit for high school students, and the compila-

tion of a guide to contemporary architecture in Europe. The most recent grants were made for a study of visual perception as it is related to design, and for the development of a more efficient means of visual communication which will implement and facilitate architectural design.

The candidate is required to submit his choice of subject with an outline of his proposed studies, research and necessary travel. The scholarship must be completed within one year from the date of the grant.

Application blanks and further information can be obtained from the Chapter, 115 East 40th Street, New York 16, New York. Deadline for applications is January 15.

THE USE OF "AIA" INITIALS

From time to time laymen, and architects too, write the Institute asking about the proper use of the initials A.I.A., or complain about their improper use. The By-Laws of the Institute are explicit: A **student associate** member may not use the initials or the name The American Institute of Architects at any time after his name. A **junior associate** member, after his name, is legally entitled to write "Junior Associate of the (blank) Chapter of the American Institute of Architects." Note that the initials A.I.A. cannot be used and the name of the Institute must be spelled out in full.

A **non associate member** is entitled to write "Associate Member of the (blank) Chapter of The American Institute of Architects." Once again the initials may not be used and the name of the Institute must be spelled out in full.

An **honorary associate** is entitled to write "Honorary Associate of the (blank) Chapter of The American Institute of Architects" The use of initials is not permitted.

A **corporate member** of the Institute is the only membership category in which the use of the initials A.I.A. is permitted.

An **honorary member** is entitled to write "Honorary Member of The American Institute of Architects." No initials may be used.

Fellows of the Institute, of course, are entitled to use the initials F.A.I.A., but **Honorary Fellows** must write "Honorary Fellow of The American Institute of Architects." The use of initials is not permitted.

CONSULTING HOURS AT DEPT. OF BUILDINGS

The city's Department of Buildings has established a new uniform practice for consultations with architects and engineers.

Consultations with plan examining personnel will be conducted between 9:00 A.M., 12:30 P.M. No consultations shall be held during the afternoons, except on matters requiring extensive discussion, and then only by appointment.

The Chief Plan Examiner and

Chief Engineer will be available for review and consideration of objections with applicants during the same hours. The Borough Superintendent normally will be available during the morning for consultation on appeals from the determinations of the Chief Engineer and Chief Inspector.

BRI ANNOUNCES FALL CONFERENCES

School building research, masonry practices, preassembled panel construction, pump and spray application of building materials, and Chicago's new Marina City will be explored at the 1962 Fall Conferences of the Building Research Institute, to be held at the Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D. C., November 27-29.

Held twice each year, BRI conferences bring together architects, engineers, building materials manufacturers, owners and operators of buildings, educators, government building experts, and persons from other fields associated with building.

Three days will be devoted to school building research; some 20 papers and panel discussions will deal with case studies in campus planning; research in design, equipment, and services; and operation and management of school facilities.

A day-long program on masonry will cover current recommended practices, recent research developments and test data regarding stone masonry, ceramic tile, the use of masonry for sound control, joint reinforcement and ties, wall design, and waterproofing.

Other one day programs will take up new approaches to systems of preassembled panel construction, and pump and spray application of materials.

A special half-day session will be devoted to Chicago's much publicized Marina City Project. Four papers will deal with the project's general design concept, special construction problems, demands posed by the concrete work, including the use of glass-fiber reinforced polyester forms.

Program and registration material may be obtained from Building Research Institute, 2101 Constitution Ave., Washington 25, D. C.

NO GIFTS, PLEASE

A reminder to the membership during the holiday season: Section 901 of the New York City Charter provides that no officer or employee of the City shall accept any gratuities from any person whose interest may be affected by his official action. Any city employee who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, if convicted, shall forfeit his office or employment.

The Code of Ethics further provides that employees of the City are prohibited from accepting any gifts or gratuities from any person, firm, or corporation doing business with the City.

CITY COLLEGE STUDENT CHAPTER, AIA, 1962-3

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has met with the Mayor, Port of New York Authority Executive Director Austin Tobin, Pennsylvania Railroad Vice President J. B. Jones, and Madison Square Garden President Irving Mitchell Felt. Mayor Wagner, although promising at the September 10th meeting that he would request his Landmarks Preservation Commission to report to him on the importance of Penn Station as part of our urban heritage, has not done so. AGBANY has written again demanding that he fulfill this promise, and his promise to seriously investigate with his Corporation Counsel Leo Larkin the legal possibilities for the city's involvement in the preservation of this building. Mayor Wagner was reminded once again that there exists on the State Assembly's books The Bard Bill, empowering the Board of Estimate to condemn and preserve this great monument on behalf of the people of New York.

Civic organizations supporting AGBANY's position on Penn Station include: The New York Chapter, AIA, the New York Society of Architects, the Municipal Art Society, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the American Institute of Interior Designers, and the Fine Arts Federation of New York.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Young Architects

Two architectural exhibitions are scheduled for next Fall. One, an exhibition of Ecclesiastical Architecture, will be displayed in the Pepsi-Cola Building Lobby in September, 1963. Work to be included need not be limited to the New York area and the submission of models is urged. Negotiations are in progress to increase interest by making a traveling exhibition of the selected submissions. Selections will be by appointed jury.

The second exhibition is tentatively titled "Visionary Schemes for New York" and is to go on display in the I.B.M. Galleries in October, 1963. Urban design studies for metropolitan New York will be shown, and selection, again, will be

by appointed jury. Volunteers for both projects were selected.

Brief reports by the Chairmen of the following four sub-committees were given:

Office Practice, Martha Crawford, Chairman

Commissions, Costas Machlouzarides, Chairman

Urban Design, Norman Klein, Chairman

Public Affairs, Sheldon Licht, Chairman.

The reports covered the activities and accomplishments of the past year, and projected plans for 1962-1963. Individual sub-committee meetings will be called next month to put new programs into effect.

Roberts Bujac



The W.A.A. held its semiannual meeting on October 3rd in the Architectural League's Pine Room. The business on hand was the Doric Debutante Cotillion, which will be held during the Christmas holidays this year. Be

sure to save December 26th.

The group attending enjoyed "A Tour of the White House with Mrs. Kennedy," a film lent by the Octagon Library. Tea and discussion followed.

PEACE CORPS NEEDS ARCHITECTS

Architects are needed by the Peace Corps, Director R. Sargent Shriver has announced. The Corps has 25 openings for architects in five countries (Brazil, Tunisia, Malaya, Camerouns, and Peru), as well as opportunities in engineering and other technical professions in eight countries.

Minimum age for volunteers is 18; there is no upper age limit. Married couples are eligible if they

both qualify and have no dependent children under 18. Length of service is two years. Volunteers receive allowances to cover food, clothing, medical care and incidentals, plus a termination payment of \$1,800 based on \$75 for each month served.

Information and applications are available at most Post Offices and college administrative offices; or write directly to the Peace Corps, Washington 25, D.C.

COMING EVENTS

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| NOVEMBER 19 | Talk: "Motors vs. Architecture" By Percival Goodman FAIA Engin. Building, Pratt Institute, 7 P.M. |
| NOVEMBER 27 | Technical Committee Lecture Gallery A, Tues., 5:30 P.M. Topic: "Models I" Speaker: Reino Aarnio |
| NOVEMBER 27 | Talk: "Traffic" By Commissioner Henry Barnes Engin. Building, Pratt Institute, 7 P.M. |
| DECEMBER 5 | Hospital & Health Lecture Dining Room, Wed., 5:15 P.M. |
| DECEMBER 11 | Technical Committee Lecture Gallery A, Tues., 5:30 P.M. Topic: "Models II" United Scale Models Co. |
| JANUARY 3 | Annual Luncheon (Election of Officers) Gallery A, Thurs., 12:30 P.M. |
| JANUARY 15 | Technical Committee Lecture Gallery A, Tues., 5:30 P.M. Topic: "Computers and Critical Path" Speaker: James J. Souder |
| JANUARY 30 | Hospital and Health Lecture Gallery A, Wed., 5:15 P.M. |
| FEBRUARY 21 | Anniversary Dinner Thurs. Terrace Room, Plaza Hotel 5th Avenue & 59th Street |

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Corporate

Donald D'Avanzo
James S. Gaspari (Former Associate Member)
Anthony Guasco (Former Associate Member)
Harry J. Harman
Joshua Huberland
David E. Leibowitz
Sheldon Licht (Former Associate Member)
Albert E. Milliken
Federico V. Montilla
Arthur Pimm
Jedd S. Reisner (Readmission)
Ben Schlanger

Associate

Albert M. Roden

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate

Charles C. Holt
Carlos F. Lavandro
Sanford Malter

Richard Roth, Jr.
Edward T. Shiffer

Associate

| | |
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