

OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



FEBRUARY 1963



RUBEROID COMPETITION SET IN N.Y.C. BLIGHT AREA

In a commendable effort to improve the quality of urban renewal, and to add a fresh dimension to its fifth annual design competition, the Ruberoid Co. this year has arranged with the City of New York to focus on an actual blighted site: a 16-acre tract of mixed residential and commercial uses between 105th and 111th Streets on the Harlem river (shown above in white outline).

Problem: to design an attractive, practical, middle-income (Mitchell-Lama) housing project, making use of the waterfront but not building over the Drive. The winner will receive \$10,000 and an inside track for the eventual project commission. Other top prizes: \$5,000, \$2,500, and six merit awards of \$500 each. Prizes for students only: \$2,000, \$1,000, \$500, and four merit awards of \$250 each.

Chapter member B. Sumner Gruzen is Professional Advisor to the Competition. Official registration forms must be filed by May 15 with the Ruberoid Co., 733 Third Ave., New York 17 (YU 6-2500).

PENN STATION'S FATE

The seal on the fate of Pennsylvania Station has hardened in recent weeks, and the grand old building seems ready for the imprimatur of the wrecker's ball.

Two city groups paved the way in January for the destruction of the station and the erection above of the giant Madison Square Garden-arena-office building complex.

On January 3, in an all-day meeting, the City Planning Commission heard 23 speakers in favor of preserving the station and 19 speakers favoring the MSG project. Among the 23 were Mrs. Aline Saarinen, John Johansen, Robert Weinberg, AGBANY Chairman Norval White, P/A Editor Jan Rowan, Museum of Modern Art architectural director Arthur Drexler, and many other architects and spokesmen for civic groups and neighborhood planning associations. Speaking for MSG were representatives of the railroad and the Garden, the project's architect, Charles Luckman, an employe of his traffic consultant, Wilbur Smith Associates, and construction union leaders, business organization spokesmen, and representatives of individual business in the area—plus a surprisingly bitter denunciator of pro-preservationists.

After only a few days—these decisions usually take about a month—the City Planning Commission granted the variance to permit construction of the Garden. Within a few more days, on January 24, the measure was before the Board of Estimate, which granted it.

The next moves of organizations like AGBANY are being discussed. Preservation of the building had the combined support of such organizations as New York Chapter

AIA, the New York Society of Architects, the Municipal Arts Society, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Action Group for Better Architecture in New York—and such people as August Hecksher, Aline Saarinen, Philip Johnson, Lewis Mumford, Alfred A. Knopf, Fannie Hurst, Rep. John Lindsay, Jo Mielziner, Bruno Zevi, Ernesto Rogers, and countless others, both professional and non-professional. The fact that a chance for preservation was denied without proper city study of the entire area involved is considered total folly by many architects.

James T. Burns, Jr.

IMPROVING NEW YORK

New Yorkers will long remember the "big snow" of 1960. For a week afterward, to facilitate its removal, private automobiles were banned from Manhattan. The results were remarkable: the streets were soon cleared, and buses and taxis moved with comparative ease.

At Pratt Institute's fall series on "Man and the Motor Car" an English architect observed that in some European cities traffic engineers were busy studying and forecasting future traffic demands when, in point of fact, the increased number of automobiles simply could not be accommodated.

The obvious question here is not "When will New York reach the saturation point?", but "When did mid Manhattan surpass it?" Public and private garages in the area have neither relieved curb parking nor speeded traffic flow. Why not go to the core of the problem

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
NEW YORK CHAPTER

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and eliminate private automobiles from the congested center of New York? Public transportation and taxis would move everyone faster, Mr. Kinney's parking lots could be turned into Mr. Zion's "parklets," and we would all be better off.

S. Hart Moore

KIDDER SMITH, LEVI HONORED

Chapter member G. E. Kidder Smith, FAIA, has been awarded the Institute's Architectural Photography Medal for 1963. Author of a handful of books on modern architecture around the world, "GEKS" is credited, among other accomplishments, with the "sequence" approach to photographing buildings and spaces.

Julian Clarence Levi, F.A.I.A., is one of the recipients of the 1962 Columbia Architectural Alumni Association Medal for "standard and constructiveness of tasks performed, with special consideration of their relationship to the good of the university . . . and the length and continuity of these services."

CONFERENCE ON N.Y. STATE PLAN

On Thursday, February 28, Pratt Institute will hold a conference on the New York State Regional Development Plan being prepared by the State Office for Regional Development. Chairman will be Professor George M. Raymond, Chairman of the Planning Department of Pratt Institute. Speakers will

be: Harold F. Wise, Consultant to the Office for Regional Development: "Towards a New York State Plan—A Progress Report"; Henry Cohen, Deputy City Administrator of the City of New York: "Demographic Aspects of the Proposed State Plan"; Mrs. Shirley A. Siegel, Assistant Attorney General of The State of New York: "Regional Development and New York Law"; Wallace S. Sayre, Professor of Public Administration, Columbia University: "Governmental Aspects of the Proposed State Plan"; Mrs. Catherine Bauer Wurster, Professor of City Planning, University of California: "State Planning for Guidance of the Development Pattern—Key Issues".

The conference will be held from 1:15 to 5:00 P.M. in the auditorium of the World Affairs Center, Carnegie Building, 345 East 46th St.

TV SERIES ON ARCHITECTURE

Dates and topics have been set for the remainder of the television series on architecture sponsored by station WNBC-TV and the Columbia School of Architecture under Dean Charles Colbert. All programs may be viewed on Saturday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. on Channel 4:

"The Basis of Design"

Feb. 23—"The Man-Made Environment"—Henry Wright

"City and Region"

Mar. 2—"Changing New York"—Sam Joroff, Richard Miller

Mar. 9—"Spread Cities"

Mar. 16—"New York Heritage"—Russell Lynes, Ada Huxtable, Wayne Andrews, James G. Vander Pool, Edgar Kaufmann, moderator.

"Building in the City"

Mar. 23—"Cultural and Civic Centers"—John M. Johansen

Mar. 30—"Schools and Communities"—Edward Romieniek, Alex Kouzmanoff, Stanley Sharp

Apr. 6—"Building the Church"—Victor Christ-Janer

Apr. 13—"Our Hospitals Change"—Ray Trussell, Richard Miller

Apr. 20—"Cities, Planners, and Architects"—Dean Colbert

PRATT PLANS CENTER FOR RENEWAL EDUCATION

Professor George Raymond, Chairman of the Department of Planning at Pratt Institute's architectural school in Brooklyn, has announced the receipt of a \$94,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to be used over a two-year period for the establishment of an experimental Adult Planning and Urban Renewal Education Center.

The proposed center, to open in September, will make available factual information on urban renewal and housing theory and practice to grassroots citizens' organizations. The program will offer extension courses dealing with urban renewal and planning to community groups concerned with such problems and prospects.

The development of such an educational effort is considered essential in view of the difficulty of achieving meaningful citizen participation in city planning, despite the increasing commitment of city governments to undertake planning and renewal projects with such participation.

ZONING DEADLINE EXTENDED

The date of December 15, 1962 for the completion of minor enlargements, alterations and conversions under the old zoning law has been extended to September 15, 1963, provided that the building permit is obtained before June 15, 1963. The Board of Estimate restored the power of the Board of Standards and Appeals to grant a three months' extension beyond September 15, 1963, provided that substantial work has been performed.

The Planning Commission has not yet decided on amending the Zoning Resolution as to completion date for new building construction for which plans were filed before December 15, 1961. Such new building construction must be completed on or before December 15, 1963 but, if for good reason an extension of time for completion is required, an appeal may be made to the Board of Standards and Appeals for a one year extension, provided that foundations are completed and substantial work has been done on the superstructure.

NEW CONCRETE CODE

The Concrete Industry Board has worked for several years in preparing a new concrete code, which has finally been accepted by the City and has become law. It incorporates into one new section all the references in the Code to concrete and further updates the technical requirements in keeping with present-day technology.

Edwin M. Forbes, the Chapter's representative to the Board, reports that it is preparing to publish this code immediately for use in the profession at \$3.50 a copy. Anyone wishing to purchase a copy may apply at the Concrete Industry Board, 220 East 42nd Street.

AIA members are also invited to a C.I.B. luncheon on Feb. 28 at 711 Third Ave., at which a four-member panel will discuss "What the newly revised code means to you."

LETTERS

Sirs: Your lead article, "Chapter Backs Magnificent Civic Center Plan" (Jan. *Oculus*) rings with pride as though it were a Chapter accomplishment.

True, the plan was developed by Chapter members, but you omitted the part that Nat Ginsburg, also a Chapter member, played in his single-handed effort for over three years, prodding City and Federal officials to recognize the need for such a study.

Consider the fact that the Federal building was already designed for its site, that he had to buck the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission and Board of Estimate, the General Services Administration, and just about everybody who said it couldn't be done. He persisted for three years, writing letters, appearing at hearings, traveling to Washington, and finally culminating his efforts by securing President Kennedy's support.

There, now, is a man's effort worthy of an A.I.A. award.

Fred L. Liebmann

Oculus had no intention of minimizing Mr. Ginsburg's considerable role in this brief account of the Chapter's endorsement of the final plan, and may have occasion to tell his story more fully at a later date—ED.



WOMEN'S ARCHITECTURAL AUXILIARY

The WAA Board of Managers is happy to report a nice profit on the Doric Cotillion, which is indeed encouraging. As a result, another architectural scholarship will be awarded soon.

When our President, Mrs. Max

O. Urbahn, returns from a round-the-world trip, a meeting will be called to consider a Pre-Convention Luncheon and Fashion Show. Meanwhile, inquiries may be addressed to Mrs. Harold Sleeper, 50 Sutton Place South, PL 5-5419.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Brunner Scholarship Committee: James A. Evans became chairman of the committee on January 1. The committee reviewed and approved the interim report of scholarship recipient Denis Charles Schmiedeke, who is putting his drafting proposals to work on an actual project. Mr. Anthony, another winner, reports his book almost ready for publication. It was also pointed out that there is still a \$1,500 debit listed on the books for payment of the full award sum to Mr. Carlos, who has reported no progress as yet.

Legislative Committee: It was proposed that all members report any difficulties experienced with the new zoning law. These would be discussed in cooperation with the Architects Council and the City Planning Commission to see what action should be taken.

School Committee: Discussed at length plans for a two-day Spring Seminar on Schools to be held the first week in April. Cooperation on this project between the Chapter, AASA, and the Board of Education was emphasized. The work sessions will be limited to 150 invited architects and educators involved in large urban school programs.

World's Fair Committee: Progress on plans for an architectural booth at the fair were reviewed and progress reported. Approval of a resolution to this effect at the October Lake Placid Convention was reported, as well as encouragement from AIA Regional Director Morris Ketchum. Investigations as to space, money needed, and theme will continue.

Office Practice Committee: Liaison with other professional organizations continued as a topic. Coop-

eration has been offered by the N.Y. Society of Professional Engineers. Other continuing projects are: legal aspects of architectural practice, modular design, and revision of the AIA Handbook.

Historic Buildings Committee: The chairman was directed to see that a letter is sent to Park Commissioner Newbold Morris relative to a master plan for Central Park roadways, walks, and other areas.

Hospital and Health Committee: On the recommendation of the H&H Committee the Executive Committee authorized an expenditure of \$350 for publication of Robert Hyde Jacob's research in durable form.

House Consulting Committee: The committee proposed text to the Executive Committee to run in the Yellow Pages and the *New York Times* Real Estate Section advertising the committee's availability as a group to consult on house problems.

The Committee will find material for an exhibit by conducting the annual competition in a greatly simplified manner in the following categories: 1) New houses, 2) Alterations, 3) Projects (this being opened to both practicing architects and students). Mr. Dadras agreed to make a draft of the program to be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Edelman informed members that the Irving Trust had tentatively agreed to sponsor the exhibit of this material. The Committee agreed to coordinate this project with exhibitions of work being prepared by the Younger Architects Committee.

James T. Burns, Jr.

COMING EVENTS

- JAN. 29-APR. 15 "Le Corbusier—buildings in Europe and Asia"
Exhibit open daily 11 a.m.—6 p.m. (1-7 Sundays)
Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd St.
- FEBRUARY 21 Anniversary Dinner
Terrace Room, Plaza Hotel, 5th Avenue & 59th Street
- FEBRUARY 23 Hospital and Health Field Trip
The New St. John's Riverside Hospital
Receiving Entrance, Yonkers, New York
Saturday, 10:00 A.M.
- FEBRUARY 26 Technical Committee Lecture
Gallery A, Tues., 5:30 P.M.
Topic: "Fire Safety" with new building materials
- MARCH 6 Hospital & Health Lecture
Dining Room, Wed., 5:15 P.M.
- MARCH 12 Technical Committee Lecture
Gallery A, Tues., 5:30 P.M.
Topic: "Site Techniques"
- MARCH 23 Hospital & Health Field Trip
Blickman Co., Saturday, 10 A.M.

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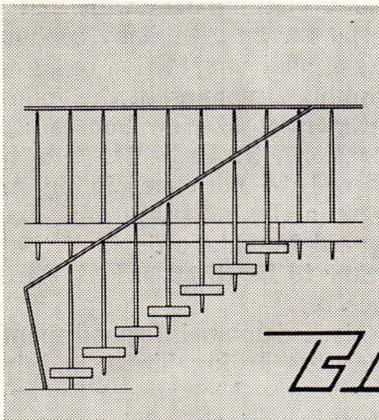
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BRI SPRING CONFERENCES

The Building Research Institute will hold its 1963 Spring Conferences at the Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D. C., April 23-25. Eight separate programs have been tentatively scheduled, covering: structural adhesives; plastic panels; preassembled panels; coating concepts for the maintenance of commercial and industrial structures; noise control in electrical and mechanical systems; construction of thin shell concrete structures; innovations of the new IBM Building in New Orleans; and finishes for and new structural applications of metals.

For registration and further details, contact Milton C. Coon, Jr., Executive Vice President, Building Research Institute, 1725 De Sales St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

NYSAA CONVENTION SET

A directors' meeting of the New York State Association of Architects has approved its committee recommendation to hold the NYSAA Convention this fall at Grossingers in the Catskills, Oct. 20-24.

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Corporate

Irving A. Mennen

Dorothy T. Hill (Transferred from Chicago Chapter)

Associate

Lester Fein

Edward Paul Montano

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate

George A. Diamond
(Readmission)
Frithof Martin Lunde
Leo H. Mahony

William Hamilton Roehl
Joseph T. Sibley, Jr.
(Readmission)

Associate

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