

OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



MARCH 1964



NYCHA "VEST-POCKET" PROJECT AT
74 WEST 92ND ST. WILLIAM LESCAZE, ARCHITECT

WEST SIDE URBAN RENEWAL—A PROGRESS REPORT

The New York City Housing Authority has announced that construction has started on four low-income, "vestpocket" housing developments.

Known as "vest-pocket" projects because of their moderate size and relatively small sites (as opposed to the superblock developments) three of the new units are part of the City's West Side Urban Renewal Area development of a 20 block area of Manhattan, bounded by 87th and 97th Streets, Central Park West and Amsterdam Avenue. One of these projects is by William Lescaze; another by Harry M. Prince; the third by DeYoung, Moscowitz. A fourth project, by Chapman, Evans and Delehanty is located outside the 20-block area, on Amsterdam Avenue. All four projects are to be completed in 1965.

The West Side Urban Renewal

program has been in the planning stage since 1955. It was not until June 1962 that permission was granted and \$180 million allocated to halt the further deterioration of this critical area. Combined with the conservation of buildings in good condition and the rehabilitation of marginal ones, new low- and middle-income developments will be provided along with luxury housing units.

According to Authority Chairman William Reid, the vest-pocket concept for low-income housing is proving to be a practical approach to urban renewal. The deteriorated portion of a city block is replaced but the block's still valuable private housing and commercial structures are retained.

Thus large scale relocation is avoided and the positive features

CHAPTER OPPOSES REMOVAL OF POLICE HEADQUARTERS FROM CIVIC CENTER

The new Civic Center is in danger of being nibbled to death; and relocating the police headquarters building outside the master plan represents the first nibble, according to Geoffrey N. Lawford, president of the New York Chapter A.I.A. Mr. Lawford, speaking for the 1,400-member Chapter before a hearing of the Site Selection Board, said that to take the police headquarters from the site provided in the adopted Civic Center plan would be returning "to piecemeal planning." Mr. Lawford continued: "It reverts to the short-sighted policy of putting the next needed building on whatever land is open at the time, which is the principal cause of the lack of any sort of order and dignity in the civic buildings of the greatest and richest city in the world. The police department, as an important arm of the city's government, should have its headquarters as an integral part of the Center and its location there has been approved by the City Planning Commission. Why then move it out of the Civic Center area? Because the land is more readily available? This reasoning contradicts the whole concept of master planning as embodied in the Civic Center program.

"In a project of such wide interest as the Civic Center, differences of opinion among professional people as to its most perfect solution are to be expected. The airing of views is healthy, and responsible suggestions and comments must be given full consideration," Chapter President Lawford stated, "but the finest Civic Center will not be achieved through those who oppose the plan on the basis of vague gen-

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
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eralities or through those who offer nothing but obstructionism in their comments. This can serve no purpose but to cause irreparable confusion, delay, and interference with the ultimate objective."

Mr. Lawford also pointed out that the New York Chapter has given full support to the new Civic Center plan, and has urged adoption of the plan "at all levels in the city government from the beginning—notwithstanding what, at times, appear to be voices to the contrary. We strongly urge that the Site Selection Board leave the police headquarters building in the area now provided for it in the master plan of the Civic Center, and by so doing contribute constructively to the realization of that plan before it can be nibbled to death."

ARCHITECTS WIN HOT ARGUMENT

In an epoch making decision, a three man arbitration panel unanimously rejected the claim for \$1,700,000 asserted by the Great Neck Board of Education against the architectural firm of LaPierre, Litchfield, & Partners. The case attracted nationwide interest.

In 1954, the architects designed South Senior and South Junior High Schools which were built in Great Neck, Long Island, at a cost of over \$9,000,000. The seventeen building complex contained the most modern and complete educational facilities. Soon after the schools opened in September 1958, complaints were made that the temperatures in the classrooms were extremely high. In 1961, an en-

gineering firm recommended to the Board a \$1,700,000 air-conditioning plant to improve the thermal environment, and the Board demanded that the architects pay for such a system. The arbitrators began hearings in January 1963.

We contended that the school buildings and the mechanical installations were designed in accordance with the regulations of the State Education Department, and comparable to those found in many other schools in the state of New York. The ventilating and exhaust systems consisted of a combination of unit ventilators and louvers in the classroom doors. The excess air which found its way into the corridors through the louvers, was driven out of the buildings through mechanically operated fans mounted on the roofs. The engineers stressed that the mechanical system was not only similar to systems they had used in other schools in the same district, but in fact was an improvement over such systems. We further contended that the financial and physical restrictions imposed by the Board precluded any result beyond that ultimately achieved, and that the temperatures in the classrooms were coincident with outdoor temperatures.

The ruling in this case, I believe, will generally benefit the architectural and engineering professions, hard-pressed as they have been in recent years by a flood of litigations. A tenacious resistance against legal attacks may deter others, but there is a need for coordinated effort. This could be achieved by a rotating panel of experts appointed by the Chapter and the New York Association of Consulting Engineers to assist without charge in the defense of important cases which may affect the vital interests of the architectural and engineering professions.

Nathan Walker
Walker & Walker

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: *Retained as legal counsel for the N. Y. Chapter since 1961, the firm of Walker & Walker has been connected with the chapter since 1948. Nathan Walker has lectured extensively and is the author of numerous articles on the legal aspects of architecture and engineering.*

EXHIBITS: CHURCHES AND TEMPLES

A chapter-sponsored exhibit entitled "Churches and Temples: Postwar Architecture" was on view at the Pepsi-Cola Building, Park Avenue at 59th Street from January 14 through February 5. It will now be circulated to institutions throughout the country under the auspices of the American Federation of Arts.

The exhibition, consisting of photographs and drawings of 21 churches and temples, was prepared by the chapter's Exhibit Committee. The buildings were selected from 160 entries from the U.S. and abroad by Marcel Breuer, Lathrop Douglass, Percival Goodman, and Jan C. Rowan, along with Maurice Lavanoux, Editor of *Liturgical Arts*. The exhibition panels were designed by John M. Dixon and Norval White with text for panels and brochures by James T. Burns. Architectural models and religious works of art were included.

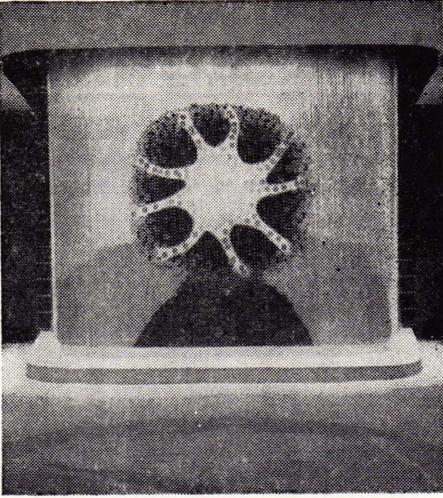
The exhibit received considerable coverage in the New York press and on television. The *New York Times* published a favorable review by Ada Louise Huxtable and a front page feature, with several illustrations in the Sunday Real Estate Section, followed by a reminder on the following Sunday. *Cue* magazine and *Progressive Architecture* ran articles on the exhibit. NBC-TV's "Today" and ABC-TV's "Directions '64" gave half-hour presentations. ABC-TV filmed the actual exhibition and included an interview with Jan C. Rowan, who spoke for the Board of Selection.

John M. Dixon

"OUR TOWN—1970"

The Municipal Art Society of New York will preview some of the major developments proposed for the various parts of the city in an exhibit opening April 6 in the lobby of the Union Carbide Building, Park Avenue and 48th Street.

The exhibit will show New York as it may appear in 1970 by means of models, drawings and photographs of such projects as the New York Stock Exchange, the World Trade Center, the Civic Center, Litho City, the new Madison Square Sports Arena and others.



ART COMMISSION APPROVES FREUND'S "MOVING" MURAL

The New York City Art Commission has approved a "moving" mural by architect-artist Tibor Freund, a member of the New York Chapter, A.I.A. The mural, commissioned by the Board of Education, has been installed in the lobby of Public School 111, the Bronx. The school's architect, A. Gordon Lorimer, F.A.I.A., incorporated the mural into his early design.

The 26 by 10 ft. mural, entitled "Universal Dissemination of Knowledge", shows in changing images and colors the expansion of knowledge from the time when knowledge was the property of the few to the future when, hopefully, it will belong to all. The changes in the abstract forms and iridescent colors occur as the viewer moves past the mural. The aluminum backing is built-up in three-dimensional planes and the enamel paint applied so that light reflections vibrate between the various planes.

W.A.A. HOUSE TOUR

As announced five residences of chapter members will be opened to the public from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on April 14th. The tour will include the A. Bartos penthouse, 155 E. 72nd St.; apartments of the W. Frizzells, 137 E. 19th St., and of Julian Levi at 205 W. 57th St.; brownstones of B. Lafarge, 356 E. 69th St., and of E. Tafel at 14 E. 11th St. Tickets for the House Tour are \$6.00 (\$5.00 for WAA members). For further information, call RH 4-3345. Mrs. M. O. Urbahn is chairman of the tour.

Hildegard Sleeper

This is the first of a planned series of reports from the Executive Committee on current activities, immediate objectives and long-range policies of the Chapter. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS will seek to establish a close, precise and positive communication between the committee and the membership in those areas of chapter endeavors and involvements. One such area is the proposed new building code for New York City. OCULUS gratefully acknowledges the kind assistance of Code Director W. H. Correale and of Mr. N. Dan Larsen in the writing of this report.

NEW BUILDING CODES FOR NEW YORK CITY

Early next year, work on a proposed building code for New York City will be completed; bringing to an end the three year, \$800,000 undertaking which received Mayor Wagner's blessing in September 1961 and the Board of Estimate's authorization in February 1962. The building code project, awarded to the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute in April 1962, is being written by three New York City architectural and engineering firms assisted by various specialists, under the direction of the Polytechnic Institute's Code Committee headed by Administrative Vice-President Charles E. Schaffner. The proposed building code is tentatively subdivided into 21 articles of which 7 are being handled by Frederick G. Frost, Jr. and Associates, architectural consultants to the Polytechnic. At this writing, preliminary drafts for nineteen of these articles have been submitted by the consultants. Technical Director William H. Correale estimates that the over-all state of completion of the code work has reached the 50 per cent mark.

It is unlikely that the proposed code will encounter the resistance met by the Zoning Resolution of 1961. Indeed it is seldom that the city may undertake such a complex task with as unanimous and genuine an acceptance as that accorded the code project by the building construction community.

Even more rarely is this response translated into positive collaboration and support. Twenty private organizations, including the New York Chapter, A.I.A., and at least fifteen city agencies are actively participating in this collective effort. Coordinated panels of their experts consult with, assist and advise the Polytechnic Institute and its consultants in creating the new code. The New York Building Congress has pledged \$100,000 toward the project. Largely responsible for the strong endorsement by the construction industry and the city departments is their dissatisfaction with the building regulations now in effect.

Policies and Scope

Written in the late 1890's and severely limited by the rigidity innate with "specification-type" codes, the present Building Code has not kept abreast with technological advances in engineering and with new construction methods. Nor has it evolved sufficiently to assimilate the vast changes in building materials. The proposed "performance-type" code will endeavor to avoid these shortcomings. Its various sections, stated in terms of the desired results will omit, to a certain extent, the methods of achieving them; and thus allow not only greater flexibility in the choice of materials, methods of assembly, etc., but also the early adoption of new applications resulting from technological advances in the construction industry.

Although a designer is free to specify any materials and methods of construction which can meet the performance criteria, the new regulations will nevertheless make liberal reference to accepted national standards developed by the research groups of professional and industrial organizations. The standards which will be included in the new code are carefully studied so as not to adopt errors or archaic practices; and in many cases new standards are devised where acceptable ones are lacking. This procedure, based on a recommendation by the Polytechnic Institute

CONTINUED PAGE 4

in its 1961 report, follows the national pattern for new performance-type codes adopted by many cities and states throughout the country. Despite the inherent advantages of this method of approach, certain limitations will have to be overcome. Two among them have been brought to the attention of Code Committee Chairman Schaffner by the Architects' Council and by the New York Chapter, AIA, in their capacity as members of the Industry Advisory Committee.

While construction and technology have developed considerably in the last decade, these advances have not been uniform, but rather have been concentrated in certain specific areas. Other areas have remained comparatively stagnant due to the lack of physical research. The proposed code, representing the state of the art as it exists and further restricted by time and money limitations, will reflect this discrepancy in the factual data available. Concern over this serious short-coming is shared by Code Chairman Schaffner. "For that reason," he said in a reply addressed jointly to the Council and to the Chapter, "we will recommend to the Department of Buildings those areas in which we think physical research is most badly needed. We would expect that Building Department officials would then follow all research work being conducted in these fields, attempt to inspire work where none is being done and perhaps . . . support some of their own." Arising from this very flexibility of the new code is the danger of unwarranted changes and additions which could make the code as unwieldy as its predecessor. To prevent this, Chairman Schaffner reported a suggested system of code revision "through the use of an appointive Building Code Board or Commission. This would seem," he said, "to effectively eliminate the possibility of arbitrary administrative changes." The Industry Advisory Committee has already given its approval for this precautionary measure.

Charles Thomsen

The next issue will review the functions of the advisory committees and the part played by this chapter.

BUILDING CODE PROJECT ORGANIZATION

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Dept. of Health	N.Y.C. Housing Authority
Dept. of Highways	N.Y.C. Planning Commission
Dept. of Hospitals	

BRI SPRING CONFERENCES AND RESTORATION FORUM

Four research correlation conferences, several workshops, and a panel discussion will highlight the Building Research Institute's 1964 Spring Conferences, to be held at the Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D. C., April 21-23. Nine individual programs have been scheduled, covering:

Periodic Maintenance Inspection of Existing Buildings; Roof Coverings, including unusual roof coverings in use at the New York World's Fair; Integration of Mechanical, Electrical, and Structural Systems; Mechanical Fasteners in Building; Performance Standards for Plastics in Building; Paints and Coatings in Building; Critical Path Method in Planning and Construction; Adhesives and Sealants in Building; Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Arch.

In addition to its annual Spring Conferences, a forum on the principles and techniques involved in the restoration and preservation of historic buildings will be conducted by the Building Research Institute on June 11 and 12. The meetings, to be held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D. C., will be chaired by Charles E. Peterson, FAIA, architectural historian and planner. Historic, archaeological and architectural photogrammetry; structural protection against insects and decay; climatic control; treatment of the restoration site; drawings, specifications and cost estimates; inspection and supervision; and preservation of restored structures are among the topics to be presented. An extensive exhibit showing important restoration work will be presented during the forum. A panel discussion covering masonry, woodwork, hardware, painting, finishing, plastering, and lighting is planned. Also scheduled is a session devoted to the role of the architect in European restorations.

Information about registration and further details about the Conferences and about the forum may be obtained from Milton C. Coon, Jr., Executive Vice President, Building Research Institute, 1725 De Sales St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

NEW BRI TECHNICAL JOURNAL

A new, bi-monthly publication entitled *Building Research: The Journal of the Building Research Institute*, has been inaugurated by BRI. The first issue of the 64-page journal, featuring technical papers on impact noise and on high-density, low-rise housing, was published in February. In announcing the new publication, Milton C. Coon, Jr., Executive Vice President of the Institute, said, "Our aim in publishing *Building Research* is to aid in the intelligent and rapid improvement of our building environment through a wider dissemination of building science information."

In addition to including material presented at BRI's nationally-known research conferences, the journal will report on suggested reading in building science literature, publish contributions by BRI members and non-members.

Subscription rates may be obtained from BRI at 1725 De Sales St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

WELTON BECKET AT A.S.C.E's WORLD'S FAIR FORUM

A forum on three N. Y. World's Fair structures will be conducted by the Metropolitan Section of the A.S.C.E at 7:15 p.m., on April 15. The meeting to be held at the United Engineering Center, 345 East 47th Street, will hear California architect Welton Becket define his design approach for the General Electric pavilion, and discuss the nature and content of the proposed exhibits.

The steel configuration, design and erection problems of A.T.&T. building will be described by its engineers N. Hueser and M. P. Goldsmith. R. R. Bradshaw will discuss G.E.'s curvilinear pipe dome; and Dr. L. Zetlin will speak on the free form concrete shell of the Eastman Kodak pavilion with reference to its design features and control procedures.

The members of the N. Y. chapter have been invited by A.S.C.E's program chairman S. Olko to attend this forum.

COMING EVENTS

MARCH 17	Technical Committee Lecture Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:30 P.M.
APRIL 6-17	Student Exhibition
APRIL 9	Student Exhibit Cocktail Party
APRIL 14	Technical Committee Lecture Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:30 P.M.
APRIL 20	Hospitals & Health Lecture Dining Room, Monday, 5:15 P.M.
APRIL 30	Pre-Convention Luncheon Dining Room, Thursday, 12:30 P.M.
MAY 6	Hospitals & Health Seminar
MAY 12	Technical Committee Lecture Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:30 P.M.
MAY 14	Membership Cocktail Party Dining Room, Thursday, 5:00-8:00 P.M.
MAY 25	Hospitals & Health Lecture Dining Room, Monday, 5:15 P.M.
MAY 26	N.Y. Chapter, A.I.A. & Producers' Council Awards Luncheon Dining Room, Tuesday, 12:30 P.M.
JUNE 3	Annual Luncheon Dining Room, Wednesday, 12:30 P.M.
JUNE 14-18	A.I.A. National Convention Chase-Park Plaza Hotel St. Louis, Missouri

of the neighborhood preserved. The planned integration of various economic groups combined with the diversity of its architectural character seem to have halted the further deterioration of the area and to have stimulated the participation of local citizens and religious and business groups in the program.

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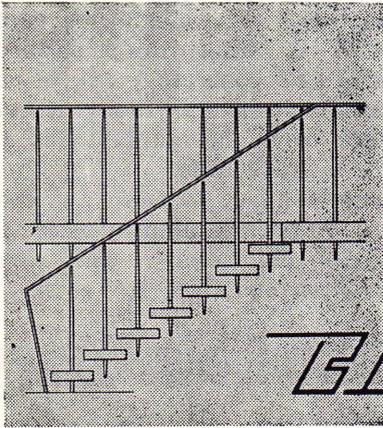
STONE AND VILLANUEVA AT PRATT INSTITUTE

The School of Architecture at Pratt Institute has announced a spring series of lectures. On Thursday, March 12 at 7:00 P.M., Architect Edward D. Stone will speak about Asia. Architect Carlos Raul Villanueva will discuss South America Monday, May 4 at 7:00 P.M.

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COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Brunner Scholarship

It may be of interest to the membership at large to know about the proposed studies which were submitted this year to the Scholarship Committee. The committee has compiled a list of some of the runners. The subjects ranged from a book directed to children on the history of western architecture to a study on architectural expression in the automobile age. Judging from this list, the Brunner Scholarship is succeeding in its aim to generate intellectual pursuits among architects.

School

At a recent meeting, the committee considered the eventuality and possibility of school construction supervision becoming a part of the architect's contract. Among various other items discussed were: "extras" in design and construction; "suggested design" versus the system of "required design", presently practiced by the Board of Education. Many of these topics are now under study with sub-committees and with the appropriate people at the Board. Study of a new Board of Education "Program of Requirements" is also under way.

Sheldon Licht

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

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Aly S. Dadras Nathan Streitman

Professional Associate

Dorothy C. Scott David J. Smotrich
Joseph F. Stuchlik Frederic Wm. Neuwirth

Associate

Anthony J. Di Marinisi, Jr. Michael G. Bobick

CANDIDATES

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

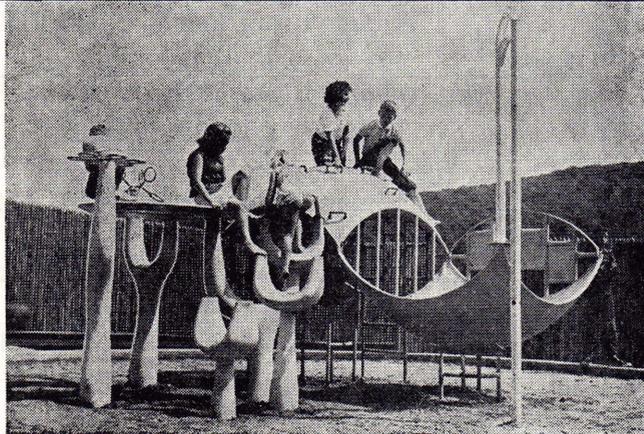
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