

OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



DECEMBER 1965



NEIL BERZAK

TOWARD ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE, ONE SMALL STEP:

Mayor Wagner signs executive order on fine arts with prime movers Commissioner George Gregory, Jr. (seated left), Councilman Robert A. Low (seated right) and members of the N. Y. Chapter AIA. Left to Right: Charles Thomsen, Nathan Ginsburg, Simon Breines, Edgar Tafel, Frederick Woodbridge, Albert Bauer, Ronald Allwork, and Giorgio Cavaglieri.

MAYOR WAGNER ORDERS ART QUOTA FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS

"New York City believes in the arts and in culture. It believes in promoting them. It believes in subsidizing them where the subsidies result in the greater enjoyment of artistic creations by greater numbers."

Robert F. Wagner, Mayor

Consistent with those words uttered eight months ago at the April Cultural Affairs Conference, one of Mayor Wagner's last official acts was the signing of an Executive Order (page 3) directing that a maximum of one percent and a minimum of one-half percent of the construction cost for the city's new public building be allocated to the fine arts. As defined in the order, these would include sculptures, bas-reliefs, mosaics, frescoes, murals, prints, tapestries, stained glass, paintings special fountains and other artworks which are not utilitarian.

For a Municipal Policy

The issuance of the executive order in an afternoon ceremony at City Hall on December 13th climaxed a seven month collaborative effort by representatives and officials of at least five city agencies and 12 civic groups and professional organizations, including the New York Chapter AIA, which functioned under the aegis of Robert Dowling's Office of Cultural Affairs as the *Committee for the Beautification of New York*.

Actively supporting the Mayor's program were members of the New York Chapter, who, often in a dual capacity, figured prominently in the development of the executive order. Under the apt and skillful guidance of pro-tem Chairman George Gregory, Jr., a member of the city's Civil Service Commission and head of Harlem's Planning Board 10, the Committee worked

closely with the Office of the Mayor in developing the program which would make New York the first municipality in this country with an official policy for the general improvement and greater use of works of art in its public buildings. Requirements similar to those ordered by the Mayor are in force in Boston and Philadelphia, not as a municipal directive, but rather as independent and enlightened policies of their redevelopment agencies (OCULUS, November and December 1964 issues).

Legislative Program

Councilmen Robert A. Low and Richard S. Aldrich have played a leading role in the Committee, heading its committee on legislation, assisted by Norman Marcus of the City Planning Commission and Chapter members Arthur G. Palotta, Charles Thomsen, Albert Bauer, William D. Wilson and Simon Breines. It is anticipated that, early in January, a resolution will be introduced in the City Council calling on the NYC Housing Authority and the HRB to carry forward the Mayor's program and press for legislation for the inclusion of fine arts in their urban renewal programs. Mayor Wagner's executive order is not binding on Federal and State programs but applies to schools, court buildings, health centers, hospitals, libraries and others. Affected by this order are the controversial Family Court building and the new Police Headquarters among some 40 buildings now planned or under construction. Under the new order, for example, the \$50,000 budget for artwork allocated for the \$50 million Harlem Hospital could be substantially increased.

The Goal: Design Excellence

The Mayor's order also stressed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DROP BUREAU OF DESIGN

The Board of Education's announcement of November 22nd was startling if not in content, at least in its timing and particularly in the eventual plan to abolish its own Bureau of Design which currently produces approximately 1/3 of the Board's new school projects. This plan to phase out the Bureau was one of the main recommendations contained in a report by the Chapter's School Committee to President Max O. Urbahn and the Executive Committee.

That the design of school projects by the Bureau of Design cost the Board 63 percent more than if the projects had been handled by private architects and their consultants was hardly news to architectural and engineering circles. The Chapter's School Committee under Chairman Gordon Schenck had just concluded its own exhaustive study of the Board's problems and policies in its school construction program. Working with the Board's Architects and Engineers Advisory Committee, the Selection Committee of Architects and the Association of Professional Engineers, the Chapter's School Committee had steadfastly pursued the objective that the Board of Education should rely on private architects for the construction of new schools.

At its meeting of November 9th, the committee with Gordon Schenck and sub-committee chairman Joseph Fuller had drafted its final report to the Chapter's Executive Committee. Included in the report was the recommendation that the Board "phase out the design of their new school projects by not hiring additional staff for that purpose, and further reducing their staff as they leave and retire." The report urged that the New York Chapter pursue "with renewed effort and vigor" this position based on the Committee's findings "that the cost of architectural services, as performed by the Board of Education, is greater than the cost of obtaining the services from private architects and their consulting engineers."

The announcement of the proposed change made by Dr. Bernard

E. Donovan was received by members of the Chapter with quiet jubilation. It was after all a significant victory without as much as one skirmish. "Dr. Donovan 'stole our thunder' and we are glad he did," said Mr. Schenck at a special meeting of the committee following the announcement. According to Vice Chairman Michael Radoslovich and Herbert Riemer, the proposed change will require time to implement: "We must plan now for a follow-through. . . . What we can do now is to see that this change be carried to its logical realization." The phasing out of the Bureau of Design will require the sanction of the State Legislature since state law requires that large school boards have their own department of design.

Another member of the Committee, currently serving as Treasurer of the Institute in Washington, Daniel Schwartzman FAIA, had this to say: "We must assure the Board of Education that the architectural profession is ready and willing to cooperate with the Board in its efforts to develop an inspired school building program which is more economical and efficient in its operation. The burden will be on the architects to justify the trust placed on them by the Board in providing a higher caliber of design for its schools."

This sober appraisal and the quiet optimism is reflected in the Chapter's response addressed to Donovan by Chapter President Max O. Urbahn:

"The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects wishes to acknowledge and express its thanks to the Board of Education for the recent disclosure that there can be significant savings to the taxpayer by having private architects design schools.

"Your findings confirm most emphatically the research by our Chapter's School Committee.

"Our 1500-member organization, which includes many of the country's most distinguished architects, stands ready to help the Board's Office of School Buildings in every possible way."

Charles Thomsen

CHAPTER MEETING VOTES \$5000 FOR BUILDING CODE

At a special meeting of the New York Chapter AIA held at the League on December 5, the corporate membership voted its approval of an Executive Committee recommendation that the Chapter appropriate \$5000 from its Contingency Reserve Fund towards the implementation of the new building code project now nearing completion. This will raise the financial participation of the Chapter in a new code for the city to \$12,500. Under special grants from the Chapter's Brunner Fund administered by the Brunner Scholarship Committee, the Building Code Committee under the chairmanship of G. Harmon Gurney has been reviewing since 1963 the proposed drafts of the code articles prepared by the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and its consultants (OCULUS, March 1964).

The \$5000 appropriation approved by the Chapter at its special meeting will go to the \$125,000 fund pledged by the professional and other organizations of this city's construction industry and members of the New York Building Congress.

The purpose of this fund was outlined by J. Hennessey of the Building Congress.

Stressing the positive features of the new code, he said that one of the most important phases of the project was the program designed to familiarize architects, engineers and members of the city's construction industry with the provisions of the new code as well as to review some of the new requirements and features. This "public education" program would significantly contribute in the implementation of the code as one of the most important tools to open new design vistas for the architectural and engineering professions.

The chapter meeting presided over by David F. M. Todd, vice president of the New York Chapter, voted its support "in principle" of the need for a new city building code. But, in voting the appropriation from the contingency reserve fund, as recommended by the Executive Committee, the chapter members

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NEW YORK CHAPTER

CHARLES E. THOMSEN, Executive Director
MARGOT A. HENKEL, Executive Secretary

115 East 40th Street
New York, N. Y. 10016
Murray Hill 9-7969

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BUILDING CODE

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE

present carefully emphasized that this contribution should not be regarded as a blanket endorsement of the new code as presently drafted. As it was pointed out by Emil Szendy, vice-chairman of the Building Code Committee, much of the second draft (approximately 10 of the 17 articles) had not yet been reviewed by the Chapter.

Frederick G. Frost Jr., a member of the New York Chapter and consultant to Brooklyn Polytechnic on the architectural portions of the code, announced, in answer to a criticism addressed from the floor that building codes often need to be "translated into good English," that the City had appropriated an undisclosed 6-figure sum for the services of "top-notch" editorial consultants for the final drafts of the articles.

It was also announced by Vice President Todd that the Chapter's Building Code Committee under G. Harmon Gurney would hold during the next months, a series of workshops for the chapter membership and other architectural organizations of the city as its part in the education program to implementing a new building code for New York City. A preview of these workshops was given by Mr. Szendy who briefly reviewed, in wide brush strokes, many of the provisions of the new code which differ in various degrees with existing ones.

CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

December 13, 1965 g

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 180

TO: HEADS OF ALL CITY DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES HAVING JURISDICTION OVER

CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC BUILDING CAPITAL PROJECTS.

FROM: ROBERT F. WAGNER, MAYOR

SUBJECT: ALLOCATION OF A PRESCRIBED PORTION OF THE CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF PUBLIC BUILDING CAPITAL PROJECTS TO FINE ARTS ORNAMENTATION

In order to expand this Administration's policy of commitment to enriching the cultural climate of New York, you are directed to give maximum emphasis to the esthetic aspects of architectural design in all public building capital projects erected under your jurisdiction. In addition to providing such excellence of design, you are directed to apply a sum of not less than 1/2 percent and no more than 1 percent of the total construction cost of such buildings, where appropriate and as conceived by the architect, to creations or items representing the use of fine arts. The artistic features so provided for such projects shall include but shall not be limited to ornamental arrangements and effects created through the use of sculpture, bas-reliefs, mosaics, frescoes, murals, prints, tapestries, stained glass, paintings or fountains (which are sculptural and/or decorative), provided that each of such items shall be designed to enhance the setting of the project and to achieve effects which are esthetic and not structural or utilitarian.

It is anticipated that you will appoint an official in your department to effectuate this order with the architect assigned. You shall consult with the architect in selecting the artists for such works of art. The artist is to participate in the planning, as appropriate.

In carrying out this order your objective should be not to seek the lowest cost only but to acquire the greatest value for the money available, including quality and beauty.

/s/ ROBERT F. WAGNER
Mayor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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that the overriding objective should be architectural excellence and imaginative design and that the order assuring the inclusion of art in the city's structures supplements this goal and in no way substitutes for it.

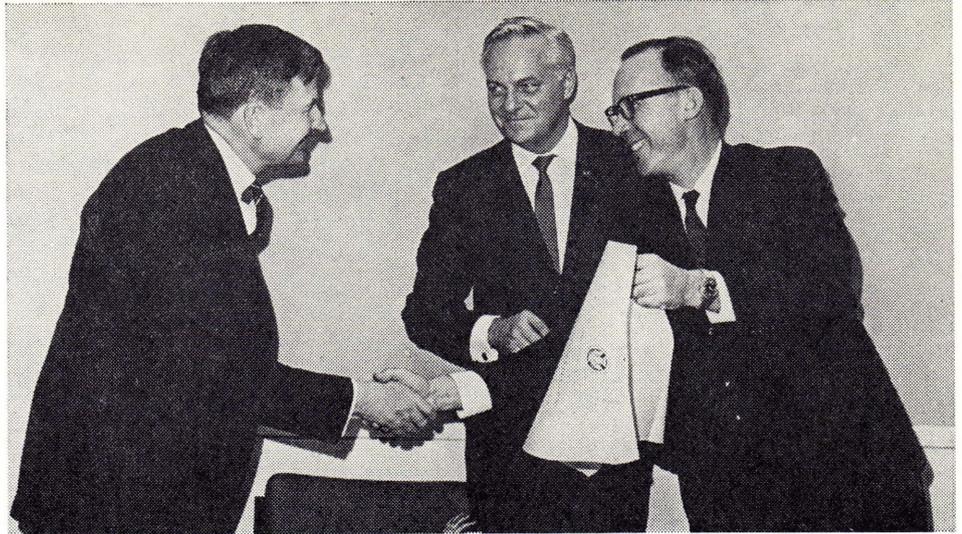
The Committee's efforts for the inclusion of artwork in the construction budget had suffered a small setback this last summer when the *New York Times* published an editorial calling it "a well-meant but misguided gesture." New York, according to the editorial, needs better buildings, "imaginative design, creative care." One percent, it added, could "go toward fees to make public buildings something less than a losing deal for architects."

The Chapter's strong support for the arts quota and its endorsement by the cultural community of the city was expressed in a joint statement by Chapter President Max O. Urbahn and Architectural League President Ronald Allwork, AIA:

"By earmarking these funds for art, the city will acknowledge that it is sympathetic to the desire and need for better design. As a first small step, it will show its concern for architecture and will encourage both architects and city officials to strive for better buildings.

"Art is not and should not be a superficial embellishment. Throughout history, and particularly during periods of great creativity, painting and sculpture have been an integral part of the total design of buildings. The proposal to earmark funds for art is not in conflict with the objective to improve the quality of architecture in public buildings. Rather, it is indicative that the city has finally decided it is willing to do something concrete."

Applauding the Mayor's "latest action in the cause of good architecture and to enrich the cultural life of New York," Edgar Tafel, Chairman of the Chapter's Aesthetics Committee also congratulated Commission George Gregory, Jr. at the City Hall ceremony for his role in having "the first step taken to insure artwork in the city's public buildings."



TO PRAISE A PRIVATE QUEST FOR BEAUTY

"For insistence upon the highest standards of architecture": David Rockefeller (left) receives Award from William D. Wilson (right) and Max O. Urbahn (center)



David Rockefeller (left) with Chapter's elder statesman Julian Clarence Levi (right) and Frederick Woodbridge (center). In background, Margot A. Henkel Executive Secretary of the Chapter



... With B. Sumner Gruzen and Walter Kilham (right)

The event was pleasant, the atmosphere cordial and the ceremony brief as officers and directors, past and present, of the N. Y. Chapter AIA gathered on a late afternoon in December to honor one of New York's distinguished citizens. To David Rockefeller, private citizen with a personal search for excellence and a better environment, went the highest recognition the Chapter could give: its Award of Merit. To former Chapter President William D. Wilson who made the presentation, Mr. Rockefeller replied that perhaps his only merit was to have had a family with a great love for beauty, for architecture and the arts. Any further success, he added, should be credited to his ability to choose the right talent for the right project.



... with a familiar face: Philip Johnson, FAIA
photos by NEIL BERZAK

URBAN BEAUTY, GOALS AND TOOLS

A PARTIAL COVERAGE OF THE REGIONAL PLAN CONFERENCE

The 20th Annual Regional Plan Conference held last November at the Statler Hilton was extraordinarily well attended. The transcripts of the 11 panel sessions and Mr. Rouse's address, "Shaping Growth for Urban Needs," have not come to hand. In the meantime, an unofficial account of the panel on "Urban Beauty, Goals and Tools" is recorded below for the benefit of those architects unable to attend.

URBAN DESIGN AND THE 6-FOOT MAN

James Marston Fitch of Columbia University offered the principal paper of this panel. Stating that "beauty" is not an exact term, he pointed out that the beauty of an urban environment or of a building is not so simply understood as that of a painting or sculpture. One is a participant in the urban scene, not merely an onlooker. Use of a sidewalk or of an interior space is accomplished with the whole body as well as with memory, hope and other psychological factors. Proportion, balance, rhythm, color, etc., are important but not as decisive as other human responses. And so, one finds a stately plaza deserted, except for pigeons, and a small street crowded with strollers enjoying window displays and becoming part of unscheduled human happenings.

It is dangerous to design urban areas without basing technical decisions at the level of the six-foot human who will use the areas. It is also dangerous to base cultural decisions on standards supposed to appeal to the middle class. Small-scale models are deceptive since they do not show the impact the scheme will have on time-space elements and on persons using the area. There should be an overall plan. But it should be laid aside temporarily in favor of sub-plans at the pedestrian scale. The policies and aims of the Regional Plan Association are excellent; embracing all transportation types. But, urban design is more than free movement. Once the traveller is at his goal, the surroundings should serve

and delight him. The prejudices of experts should not control urban design. A greater sensitivity to raw human material will resolve present contradictions between man and his environment.

MACRO VS. MICRO

Discussion of the paper started with Mr. Rai Y. Okamoto, architect and planner currently lecturing at the New Jutland School of Architecture in Aarhus, Denmark. He remarked that it is necessary to emphasize the macro-scale (regional) planning as opposed to Prof. Fitch's micro-scale in order to have reasonably effective access to work and play and to provide enjoyment of the three dimensional experience of urban design. For example, a freeway in San Francisco is well designed as a freeway, but it is incompatible with the city it disrupts. Also, telecommunications and other factors are fast making the region itself an entity. Its planning is essential for micro-scale design. Agreeing with Prof. Fitch's characterization of the present middle class state of the art, he asked how aesthetic values can be improved in a democracy.

Dr. Norman Williams Jr., Visiting Professor of Law at Rutgers, agreed with Prof. Fitch's definition of urban design elements. Objecting to the imposition of middle-class values, he said that elements of urban design must be further analyzed to arrive at a philosophy. Legal regulations alone will not do the trick. Dr. Williams' recent experience in drawing up statutes to protect Vermont's natural beauty led to the discovery that scenic values must be defined before legal controls can be set up.

Mrs. Mary Perot Nichols, Assistant Editor of the *Village Voice*, said that in accepting Prof. Fitch's low-keyed attack on urban design, a cosmetic approach must be avoided. She asked for the creation of a Civic Design Commission to take the place of the Municipal Art Society which she believed has become an "institutionalized expression of

the conservative elite." There is a new opportunity for urban improvement, she remarked, now that President Johnson has given beauty a "square brand."

CITIZENRY PARTICIPATION

Discussing the need for decisions by citizens, Prof. Fitch remarked that people become "real" when they are *in* a place. They are not "real" when, as commuters, they go *through* a place. He commented in addition that the destruction of pedestrian enjoyment is poor design. This was elaborated by Mr. Okamoto's description of a principal street in Copenhagen now open only to pedestrians.

Dr. Williams noted that citizens are beginning to accept purely aesthetic values. Legal attention to those values follows. Unfortunately, legal subdivision controls tend to become arbitrary. One difficulty is that most land is in private hands rather than in the public domain. Prof. Fitch remarked that foreign countries have more aesthetic controls than the United States, but little economic backup to implement them. As to the effectiveness of citizens participation, he cited Greenwich Village groups actions in the Washington Square replanning controversy and against urban renewal proposals in the Village.

Elisabeth Coit

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Max Abramovitz and David L. Eggers are among the 17 members appointed to the General Service Administration Design Panel. The principal functions of the panel will be: 1. To develop and recommend criteria for the selection of architects and for the contractual relationships with architects; 2. To review GSA design standards and procedures. 3. To advise the administration in the selection of architects for significant projects; and to advise on the acceptability of designs when so requested by GSA.

Paul Damaz is the subject of the *Architectural and Engineering News* series of biographical sketches known as "Names" in the October 1965 issue.

The N.Y. Medical College announces that seven Chapter members will serve on the faculty of a special program, "The General Hospital: Its Functions, Activities, People and Equipment." They are Messrs. J. Armand Burgun, Alonzo Clark III, Howard H. Juster, Allen C. Parrette, Zachary Rosenfield, William J. Taylor and Louis V. Viola.

The course starts January 26 and applications for the 17 two-hour sessions must be received by December. Contact Dr. Sigmund L. Friedman, Director, Graduate School of Medical Administration, New York Medical College, Fifth Avenue at 106th St., N. Y. 10029. The fee is \$130.

A report on Family Living in High Elevator-Serviced Apartments, written by Elisabeth Coit, FAIA, has been published by the Government Printing Office. Commissioned by the Public Housing Administration, it describes design and management practices that improve living conditions in high buildings. Cost is 30¢.

Aly S. Dadras has been appointed chairman of the department of architectural technology, New York Institute of Technology.

BRUNNER COMPETITION

January 15, 1966 is the deadline for registration in the annual Arnold W. Brunner Scholarship competition. The \$6000 grant, offered by the New York Chapter AIA, is one of the nation's major architectural awards. The 25 year old competition is open to architects and those in related fields. Applicants are required to state their choice of subjects with an outline of the proposed study, research and necessary travel to be completed within one year.

"Proposals are invited for advanced study which will contribute to the practice, teaching or knowledge of the art and science of architecture. The winner will receive the award to finance the completion of his study," according to Dean McClure, chairman of the Chapter's Brunner Scholarship Committee.

The 1965 grant was awarded to Charles A. Blessing, director of Detroit's City Planning Commission, to use in the development of a book on urban design. Previous scholarships have financed a traveling architectural exhibit for high school students. Brunner grants were made to test motion pictures as a means of analyzing environmental factors, and for examination of the use of legislative action as it affects architectural and urban design in Europe.

Application forms and further information can be obtained from the N. Y. Chapter AIA at 115 East 40th Street. Announcement of the award will be made on June 1, 1966.

LEBRUN DESIGN COMPETITION

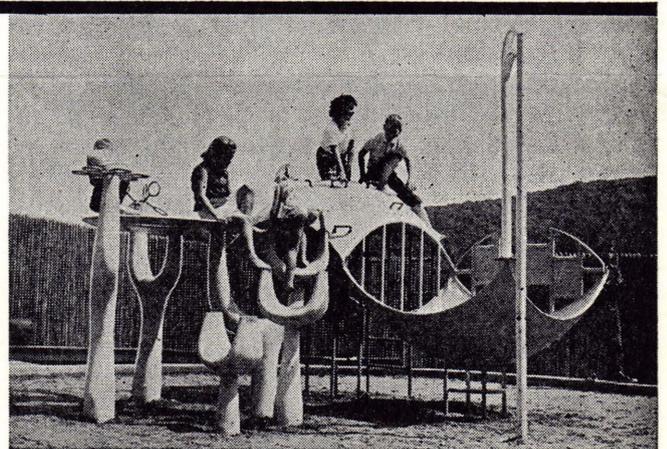
Applications are being accepted for the \$3000 LeBrun Traveling Fellowship design competition offered every two years by the N. Y. Chapter AIA. The subject of the 1966 program is: "A Small City Library and Museum."

The program will be available January 15 and entries will be due on March 11. Requests for nomination forms should be addressed to Harvey P. Clarkson, Chairman, LeBrun Committee, N. Y. Chapter AIA, 115 East 40th St., New York 10016.

To be eligible for the award, applicants must be between the ages of 23 and 30 and have at least 1½ years of architectural office experience. They must be American citizens and residents of the U.S. or its territories, and never have been the recipients of other traveling scholarships.

The winner of the design competition must use the award to travel outside the U.S. for the study of architecture according to Chairman Clarkson. The Fellowship was established in 1912 by the will of Napoleon Eugene LeBrun.

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CHAPTER PUBLISHES 1965 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Margot A. Henkel, Executive Secretary of the New York Chapter has announced that the 1965 membership directory of the New York Chapter has been printed and mailed to chapter members. Commenting on the handsome 4 in. x 9 in. 80-page volume designed by the Chapter's graphic design consultant, Ivan Chermayeff, she said that much of the credit goes to the Publication Committee which handled the mechanics of the production; and to Elisabeth Coit for having done the proof-reading.

She urged the membership to send in their address and telephone number changes as they occur so that such records may be continuously kept up to date and prevent incorrect listings in future directories. Mrs. Henkel also stated that while it is impossible to avoid changes of address which occur after the printing forms are locked, it is unfortunate when some members fail to report their new addresses when it is still possible to do so. For example, she said, "the present directory just off the press is no longer up to date. From the time the listings were closed to now, approximately 200 listings have become obsolete."

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Corporate

Warren W. Weaver	Manuel Canelas Martinez
Herbert L. Mandel	Robert H. Welz
Paul S. Cooper	Oliver Lundquist
Frank d'Autilla	Daniel D. Sullivan
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Professional Associate

Albert J. Carey Jr.

Associate

S. Terry Vine	Allen E. Roberts
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CANDIDATES

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

Corporate

Joseph A. O'Hare	Efrer Morales-Serrano
John Q. Hejduk	Oleg Borisov-Morosov
Bronson Binger	Frank A. Jacobi
Antonio Miro-Montilla	

Professional Associate

James Arthur Kingsland

COMING EVENTS

JAN. 12	Membership Cocktail Party Dining Room, Wednesday, 5:00-8:00 P.M.
JAN. 25	Nominating Committee Luncheon Dining Room, Tuesday, 12:30 P.M.
JAN. 25	Technical Committee Lecture Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:30 P.M.
FEB. 15	Hospitals and Health Seminar Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:15 P.M.
FEB. 24	Anniversary Dinner Dance Steamship M/S Europa, Thursday
MARCH 1	Technical Committee Lecture Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:30 P.M.
MARCH 22	Technical Committee Lecture Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:30 P.M.
APRIL 19	Hospitals and Health Seminar Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:15 P.M.
APRIL 26	Technical Committee Lecture Dining Room, Tuesday, 5:30 P.M.
MAY 11	A.I.A. Pre-Convention Luncheon Dining Room, Wednesday, 12:30 P.M.
MAY 24	Technical Committee Lecture Dining Room, Tuesday, 12:30 P.M.
MAY 25	Membership Cocktail Party Dining Room, Wednesday, 5:00-8:00 P.M.
JUNE 1	Annual Luncheon Dining Room, Wednesday, 12:30 P.M.
JUNE 26 - JULY 1	A.I.A. Convention Denver-Hilton Hotel

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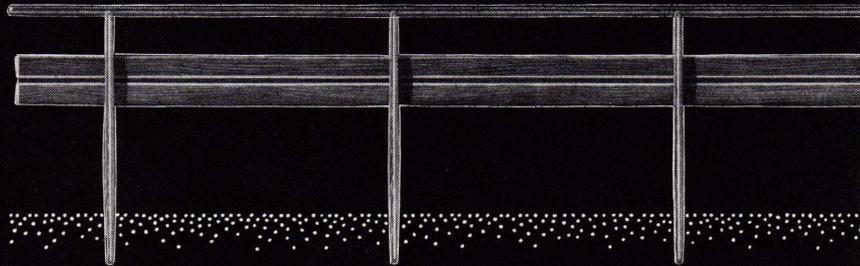
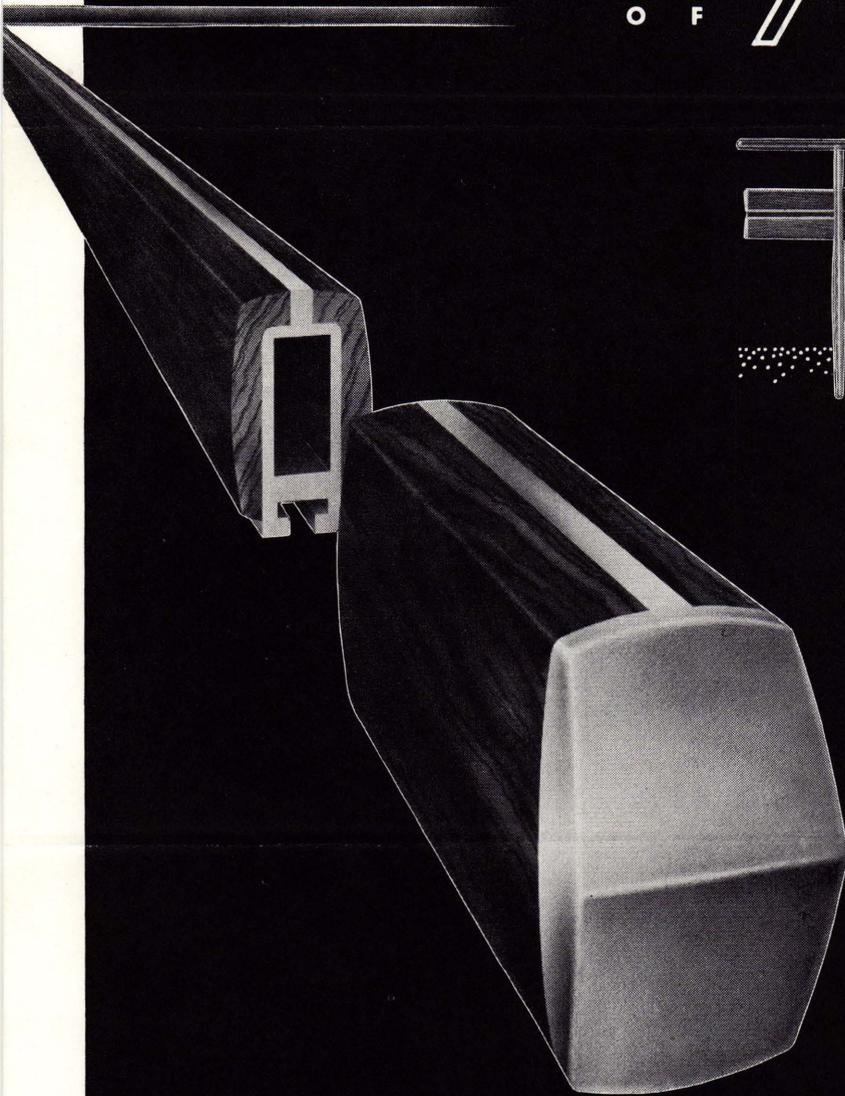
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