

President's Statement

Our profession is once again in a state of crisis. The prosperity of four years ago has suffered a severe breakdown. The real value of work on our boards is less than half of what it was four years ago. But every breakdown is also a chance for a breakthrough. The New York Chapter absolutely must respond to this opportunity by leading our profession to a higher level of responsibility in the determination of our physical environment.

We architects are constantly censured for the chaotic condition of our urban world. Our community knows that we are the major profession which has been trained to bring beauty, order and economy into our environment. We have been uniquely licensed to maintain the physical quality of life. It is absolutely futile for us to complain that our portion of responsibility has been usurped by the developers, the builders, the politicians and the bankers. Each of these groups has a valid point of view and important practical experience; they also enjoy one marvelous privilege: we architects are held responsible for the leviathan disorder created by their decisions. But as long as we bear the blame, let us also seek to enjoy the responsibility.

We have a responsibility to our City. We must seek a constructive resolution to such an issue as the proposed new West Side Highway. We have been presented here with an excellent highway study with a chance to bring more than one billion dollars of Federal money into our ailing local construction industry. A new highway must be, however, one part of a general urban plan which includes mass transit. We must take the lead to insure that there is such planning so this Federal munificence will build a total community as well as a highway.

We are working as part of a new committee which has a grand name: The Special Committee for the Construction Industry, which includes the building trades and the contractors associations. We and our colleagues on the Committee are lobbying for new housing legislation and striving in other ways to help the recovery of our industry.

We have taken the lead in opposing a builder who has chosen to ignore the developing planning process in our City in his quest for an excessive F.A.R.

We are working with TATAC and ARCH to provide services to those parts of our community which have never been able to purchase such services.

We have a responsibility to government in City Hall, in Albany, and in Washington. We have met with the Mayor and his deputies. We have met with the Comptroller. We have been working with the President of the City Council on several programs. We expect to establish the same strong relations with the new emerging state and federal leaders. We expect to establish committees with City departments, including HDA, the Board of Education and DPW.

It is our conviction that the best professional services will be achieved through the power of the government combined with the sensitivity of the private professional. We seek to extend private professional participation in government work for the good of ourselves and our community.

We have a responsibility to represent all the members of our profession. Last year, through an exhibit, we dramatized the work of women in the profession, and we hope this will result in more women becoming architects. The AIA should represent the professional employee as well as the employer. It should represent the architect in government service as well as the architect in private practice.

We also will seek to develop programs in cooperation with such traditionally sympathetic groups as the Architectural League. We hope to use meetings, exhibits, and other activities to raise and explore a concern for better design in architecture.

(continued next page)

Executive Committee Actions

June 12, 1974

- Heard Kurt Karmin, Chapter representative on the NYSAA Board, report its action on June 8 approving recommendations for changes in that organization. Nominated the following for NYSAA offices: Bruce Hartwigsen (Westchester) for President-Elect; Al Efron (Staten Island), Richard Jacques (Eastern N.Y.), and Kurt Karmin for Vice Presidents; Michael Doran (Rochester) for Secretary.
- Discussed the advisability of forming a city-wide building code committee in cooperation with the other City architectural organizations.
- Resolved to develop formal liaison with HDA concerning fee schedules and other matters.
- Heard Norbert Turkel of the Urban Planning Committee report on the Urban Design Council's Housing Quality zoning proposal.
- Heard Henry Whitney of the Urban Planning Committee explain the complex issues involved in the West Side Highway Project's proposals, due to be aired at public hearings in June and September.

June 26, 1974

- Appointed the following directors to be commission chairmen: Architectural Education, N. Jerry Maltz; Building/Site Design, A. Corwin Frost; Environmental Planning, J. Arvid Klein; Internal Affairs, Anna M. Halpin; Professional Affairs, Louis P. Giacalone; Public Affairs, Michael Maas.
- Appointed James B. Baker to be Chairman of the Ethics Committee.
- Heard Herbert Oppenheimer report on the July 25 hearing of the Board of Standards and Appeals at which he expressed strong Chapter opposition to the request by the Milsteins for a variance to permit erection of a 43-story building on Lincoln Square. (Article this issue).

- Heard Henry Whitney report on further developments concerning the West Side Highway Project.

- Recommended that James B. Baker be nominated to succeed Frederick G. Frost, Jr., as one of the three directors on the Institute Board from the New York Region.

- Discussed the suggestion of Edward Logue, President of UDC, that a competition be held for a 1,000-unit housing project at Northtown on Roosevelt Island.

- Approved the recommendations of Denis Kuhn, Chairman of the Historic Buildings Committee, that demolition of the Tweed Court House, north of City Hall, be opposed by the Chapter (Article this issue). Heard his report on the adverse Court of Appeals decision in the case of the landmark status of the Morgan House on lower Madison Avenue.

- Heard Herbert Oppenheimer report on a July 17 breakfast meeting of the Joint Committee on the State of the Construction Industry, hosted by Paul O'Dwyer, at which the principal agenda was the urgency of Federal legislation to enable urban housing construction.

- Heard Messrs. Oppenheimer, Kousmanoff and Lewis report on an informal meeting with representatives of the Battery Park City Authority at which the current status of the plans were reviewed.

- Appointed Arthur Seckler, Chairman of the Building Code Committee, to be Chapter representative on the Building & Construction Advisory Council to the Buildings Department, to succeed Frederick G. Frost, Jr.

President's Statement

(continued)

All this and more can happen this coming year because the New York Chapter is blessed with a large number of active members among our grand total of 1700 members. There are more than 30 committees, and it is their continued activity that makes our Chapter the often frantic and usually constructive professional center that we require.

The New York Chapter can be of critical importance in bringing our profession to the responsible position of which we are capable in this City. If we achieve that responsibility, that alone will not set right all the ills of our urban world. But we should be able to solve more problems than we presently do, and we will be able to face our failures with more grace and with the potential that we may next time succeed.

Herbert B. Oppenheimer

New York Chapter
The American Institute of Architects
20 West 40th Street
New York, New York 10018
212/565-1866
George S. Lewis, Executive Director

Executive Committee
Herbert B. Oppenheimer, President
Robert F. Gatje, 1st Vice President
Alexander Kouzmanoff, Vice President
James B. Baker, Vice President
Manfred Riedel, Secretary
Richard Roth, Jr., Treasurer
A. Corwin Frost, Director
Louis P. Giacalone, Director
Anna M. Halpin, Director
J. Arvid Klein, Director
Michael Maas, Director
Nathan Jerry Maltz, Director

Oculus Committee
David Paul Helpert, Editor and Chairman
Ralph P. Albanese
Bonnell Irvine
Norman F. Jacklin
Carl Meinhardt
Martin Pitt
Daniel V. Rodriguez
Ralph Steinglass
Linda Yang

Welcome to New Members

The NYC/AIA welcomes the following members:

Corporate

Sam Anson Haffey
Saverio Quaranta
William N. Bonham
Roger E. Breton
Donald L. Currie
A. Arnold Krigel
Nancey A. T. Miao
Gert D. Thorn
Thomas J. Belanyi
Robert A. Kenyon
Martin Holub
Charles Platt
Peter D. Sayer
Richard Bienenfeld
Alexander Cooper
Panayotis DeVaries
C. William Eilers
Frank LaRosa
Ronald McDonald
Edward Spooner
John Whedbee
Terrance Williams

Associate

Andreas Vernadakis
Ludwig Glaeser
Walter Mystkowski

Candidates for Membership

Information received by the Secretary of NYC/AIA regarding the qualifications of candidates for membership will be considered confidential:

Corporate

Manuel I. Fernandez
Eric F. Goshow
Stanley G. Kennedy
Thomas W. Loosbrock
Timothy Daniel Wood

Associate

Sheikh Pervaiz Waheed

NYSAA Convention Returns to the Big Apple; No Registration Fee

The New York State Association of Architects/AIA 1974 Convention will be held in New York City for the first time in 27 years. Place and dates are the Hotel Commodore, Park Avenue at 42nd Street, from Thursday to Saturday, October 17-19, 1974.

This is the first NYSAA/AIA convention to have *NO REGISTRATION FEE*. Admission to seminars, exhibits, special events and the Annual Awards Program is open to all who register, at no charge. (There will be a charge for luncheons.)

Free registration will allow greater participation and representation by offices in and near the City. NYSAA/AIA is strongly encouraging principals of firms to grant a one-day "busman's holiday" to all personnel to allow them to take advantage of this opportunity to attend the seminars, exhibits and special events.

The Convention Program is a compact 2½-day series of seminars and lectures, a luncheon business meeting on Friday, the Awards Program Reception Friday evening, and a Banquet Luncheon on Saturday for Installation of Officers.

Speakers will include Charles Eames, perhaps the dean of America's designers; Henry Diamond, Executive Director of the "Commission on Critical Choices"; and Archibald Rogers, AIA President. Featured topics will be business development for architects and technology and the architect. The Chapter's exhibit on women in architecture, expanded to include work by women architects around the State, will be on display.

The complete convention program will be sent shortly to NYSAA/AIA members and registered architects. For further information, contact:

Linda Jansson,
Acting Executive Director
NYSAA/AIA
441 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10017
212/697-8866

Mayor's Panel of Architects

Architects, in order to be considered for City commissions, must be listed on the Mayor's Panel of Architects.

Members interested in applying for the Panel for 1974 may obtain applications daily from October 1 through October 21, 1974 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. at the Department of Public Works, Room 1400, Municipal Building, Centre and Chambers Streets, New York City. Applications will be received by DPW until October 21. Inquiries should be directed to Mr. William Rome, 566-4683.

The Milstein Mix: or "How I Stopped Worrying and Avoided the Zoning Law"

Paul and Seymour Milstein, the West Side development team and already builders of one of the more monstrous Manhattan apartment complexes at One Lincoln Plaza (circa 1972) have done themselves one better. They have requested the Board of Standards and Appeals to waive special Lincoln Square District zoning restrictions and allow them to construct a 43-story, one block south of their first bulging but not too beautiful baby.

The building would have the highest density of any residential building in New York City, contain 824,040 square feet or 50% above the legal maximum for the site, and have a floor area ratio of 21.6. For interested readers the legal maximum F.A.R. for the Lincoln Square District (where the building is located) is 14.4, and the standard maximum F.A.R. is 12 for usual high-rise apartment houses.

The situation has aroused almost "shock interest" because the Milstein brothers challenge the city's entire innovative, operational and meticulously established incentive zoning principles.

Lincoln Square was one of the first "Special Districts". In exchange for providing certain urban amenities, builders have been offered a chance to build more floor space than the zoning law would normally allow.

The Milsteins, however, claim that the urban amenities asked for will add so much to their cost that the building can only be profitable at the much larger density they suggest. The Milsteins' second line of attack is directed at the destruction of what traditionally constitutes "hardship", a legal requirement for the granting of a zoning variance which has generally been held to mean such specific hardships as unusual soil or rock conditions or extremely irregular sites. The duo claims a broad general hardship based on nothing more than the typical Broadway irregular site shape, the high cost of mortgage money and construction, and even the existence of the special Lincoln Square District itself!

The Board of Standards and Appeals has scheduled a special public hearing for September 19 to consider the Milstein's application. Who knows? Maybe profit is the highest motive, and the public is damned.

NFJ

Postal Service's Building Program Provides Opportunity

The Post Office has embarked on a multi-billion-dollar building program, to be executed over the next few years.

At a well-attended meeting at Chapter Headquarters on Aug. 14th, Fred F. Montoya, Northeast Regional Manager of the U. S. Postal Services Facilities Management Support Services Contractor, explained the procedure by which architects will be selected for postal facilities commissions.

Projects will range from small alterations to improve working conditions to the design of new, fully mechanized postal facilities.

Max O. Urbahn Associates, one of a number of firms retained by the Postal Service for construction management and consulting services, is in charge of the northeast region, which includes New England, New York, northern New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Urbahn Associates will review proposed projects to see if they are economically and physically justified, pre-screen architects, and manage jobs in the northeast region. Selection of architects, however, will be by the Postal Service itself.

To be eligible for consideration for Postal Service work, architects must file Standard Form 251, Architect-Engineer Questionnaire, with both the New York Area Office and the Headquarters Office in Washington, D. C. Regional offices have the responsibility for projects under 50,000 square feet and \$2,000,000, and the Headquarters Office has responsibility for all larger projects.

Architectural firms that qualify are not automatically considered. All projects where fees are in excess of \$25,000 will be advertised in the *Business Commerce Daily*, *Brown's Letters*, and *Dodge Reports*. These ads must each be answered, and the Postal Service must be notified that a firm's Form 251 is on file.

The Postal Service has further stipulated that local firms are to be given preference. Manhattan-based firms were originally limited to Manhattan and the Bronx, but thanks to Chapter efforts, all NYC firms are eligible for work in all boroughs. The Chapter is now trying to extend the eligibility of New York City firms into adjoining regions.

Firms interested in being considered for Postal Service projects may obtain Form 251 and Postal Service addresses at Chapter Headquarters.
DPH

Demolish the Tweed Courthouse?

That neglected pile close by City Hall, described by Henry Hope Reed as "the finest public building in the Anglo-Italian Classical style in the country", meticulously constructed under the direction of William Marcy Tweed, will disappear, to be replaced by a new City Hall annex — if Mayor Beame's advisors in City government have their way. Not a single private architect or preservationist was on the task force, as Past NYC/AIA President Tim Prentice pointed out in a letter to the *Times* June 24th.

At this writing Herbert Oppenheimer, Denis Kuhn and George Lewis, to be joined by representatives of the Architectural League and the Municipal Art Society, have an appointment on September 3 to meet Deputy Mayor James Cavanaugh, who apparently finds prolongation of the building's life difficult to contemplate. It is the Chapter's opinion, as expressed by Kuhn, who is chairman of the Historic Buildings Committee, that the Tweed is worthy of landmark status, that it has magnificent features such as the central rotunda which could never be incorporated into a contemporary "economical" design, and that its renovation into a viable functioning City Hall annex is both economically and practically feasible.

The immediate necessity is to convince City Hall that the building's fate should be decided only after professional opinion other than that to be found within City agencies has been heard.

GL

Landmark Preservation Law Is Punctured

We have a brownstone gem at Madison and 37th — the J. P. Morgan House. In the Anglo-Italianate style, it is one of the few freestanding brownstones left in the city. The mansion received Landmark designation in 1965.

However, our New York State Court of Appeals invalidated this landmark status last July, a decision which permits the Lutheran Church of America to demolish the structure. The 5-to-2 majority held that — in the case of a charitable organization — required retention was a severe hardship. The minority noted that the intended office building would require a zoning variance.

Beverly Moss Spatt, Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, was "shocked and disappointed". NYC/AIA Past President, Giorgio Cavaglieri stated that "Judge Gabrielli's decision seems to announce the failure of years of effort . . . to build an awareness of our historical heritage".

At a meeting of the Historic Buildings Committee, Denis Glen Kuhn, Chairman, the following aspects were reviewed:

- The hope of confining the impact of the decision to this specific case.
- The possibility of bringing the case to the United States Supreme Court. (The Supreme Court might not consider the case if there are adequate grounds for decision within the State.)
- The variance required by the change of use from residential to commercial.
- The substantial number of landmarks owned by non-profit organizations.

The Chapter has written Beverly Moss Spatt requesting a meeting to discuss legal and general aspects of this matter.

BI



The endangered J.P. Morgan House

Chapter to Issue Position on West Side Highway

The Report on the West Side Highway Project is in fact a traffic study. It is thorough and professional study of five alignment and construction options for the ailing stretch of road running from the Battery to 72nd Street on the west side of Manhattan.

But the effects of this highway on the overall traffic patterns, economy, and general well-being of the area it runs through, are not mentioned in the study, even though, according to initial agreements made in 1971 between the Governor and the Mayor, the City was supposed to study the overall planning effects of the highway and develop a land use plan concurrent with the Highway project. Now the final round of public hearings to determine the public's attitude toward the highway are to take place September 5 and 12.

The AIA, in representing the profession whose principal concern is the total built environment, will issue a position statement at the September 12 public hearing. Unfortunately, having to choose one highway alignment out of the five options solely on the basis of the transportation study is like trying to decide a legal case after hearing only one person's testimony.

Much thought will be behind the statement. During the summer the Executive Committee and particularly the West Side Highway sub-committee of the Urban Design Committee, under the sub-chairmanship of Henry Whitney, have been holding and attending many meetings, a number of which were particularly noteworthy.

John Zuccotti, chairman of the City Planning Commission, addressed the Executive and Urban Design Committees informally on the subject at the Chapter's invitation. Asked why the City hasn't developed the promised land use plan, he indicated that perhaps the land use plan should follow the study of the transportation options, and should be developed concurrently with the direction chosen. Asked how much Federal money the City would obtain if the city chose one of the three options which did not include an interstate road, Chairman Zuccotti answered anywhere from 300 to 350 million dollars; with an interstate highway, the project could obtain as much as three times that amount.

Another meeting took place at the Rockefeller Foundation on August 26 and was attended by representatives from the AIA and virtually all other concerned parties, including the Regional Plan Association, Community Planning Boards, COMBO, City Planning Commission, Citizens Housing Association, Citizens for Clean Air, American Automobile Association, Institute for Public Transportation, and City Club. The meeting was an attempt to further define the issues and perhaps identify areas where a consensus of agreement exists.

At the most recent meeting, John Belle of Beyer Blinder and Belle, consultants to certain of the affected Community Planning Boards, reviewed the latest position of his clients and also presented some of his own ideas on modifications to the basic options. If the highway is required, it should reduce the amount of traffic it currently handles, not create a barrier to the waterfront, and be realized with a minimum of construction disruption over the shortest possible time.

There still is also the more general question of whether the highway is needed at all, and if so, at what scale and in what larger context? A land use plan would presumably go a long way toward answering this question. The completed Project Report, with its five options, began with the assumption that the highway was needed. There have been precedents in other cities where such land use studies were Federally funded. If not possible in this case, other means will have to be found; waiting for the City to embark on such a review may be futile.

Clearly, choosing between the five Project Report options is not a simple matter. Most positions are still being discussed, including the Chapter's. The final Chapter statement will include some or all of the following points:

1. No definitive position or comment will be made until a comprehensive land use study is concluded. All following points are therefore tentative.
2. Preliminary review and understanding indicate that an interstate road would be in the City's best interests.
3. No proposal should attempt to increase the amount of traffic since the existing tunnels and bridge are at maximum usage already.
4. The proposal should include provisions for mass transit such as bus lanes and/or a rail right-of-way. This point is still being considered; transportation statistics of Lower West Side need and current use will not support such a provision.

CM