

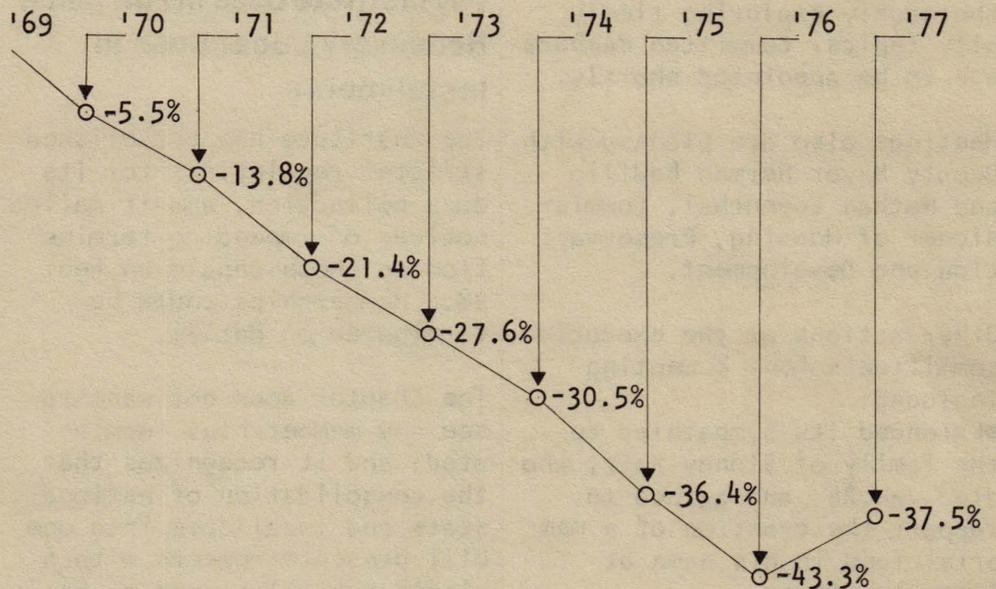
# Oculus

## Landmarks Commission Ruling On Grand Central Station Goes Before U.S. Supreme Court

The United States Supreme Court is considering an appeal by the Penn Central of a New York State Court of Appeals decision which upheld the Landmarks Preservation Commission's denial of permission to build over the terminal. A key paragraph in Chief Judge Breitel's opinion was, "A fair return is to be accorded the owner, but society is to receive its due for its share in the making of a once great railroad. The historical, cultural and architectural resource that remains was neither created solely by the private owner nor solely by the society in which it was permitted to evolve."

The Chapter has joined with other organizations supporting the Committee to Save Grand Central, organized by the Municipal Art Society, in submitting a brief *amici curiae* to the Supreme Court. An adverse decision could undermine the Landmarks Law to which the Chapter is very strongly committed. □

## Chapter Survey Finds First Upturn in Professional Employment Since Decline Started in '69



The Chapter's latest survey indicates that '77 broke the long decline in the size of the New York architectural office population since the high of '69. Firms were asked to report anonymously the total number of people - principals, all employees of all types - at ends of each year since '74, and the above graph consolidates this information with results from previous years.

Asked to estimate the number on Dec. 31 '78, the response was less encouraging: '78 is expected to continue on the same level as '77.

'69 was a peak year, a sharp peak culminating a rise which was fed by an extraordinary

level of public construction, State and City, as well as a high level of commercial and residential construction. New York, State and City, experienced this sharp rise, while construction nation-wide held relatively steady into the early '70's, when the recession became general.

The Chapter will again circulate these results widely to the press, to individuals in government, and to the construction industry. We were first in the country to provide reliable figures on architectural activity. □

George Lewis

## Executive Committee Backs Plan for Regular Meetings with Robert F. Wagner Jr. and Other City Officials

The Chapter's executive committee has voted to set up a special committee to meet regularly with City Planning Commission chairman Robert F. Wagner, Jr. This was in response to a suggestion Mr. Wagner made in his talk to the Chapter in late Jan. '78.

The ad hoc committee will prepare for each meeting by thoroughly exploring timely city topics. Committee members are to be appointed shortly.

Meetings also are planned with Deputy Mayor Herman Badillo and Nathan Leventhal, Commissioner of Housing, Preservation and Development.

Other actions at the executive committee's Feb. 2 meeting included:

- Extended its sympathies to the family of Sidney Katz, who died Jan. 26, and agreed to support the creation of a memorial fund in his name at Pratt Institute.

- Approved the Chapter's latest position paper on the landmark preservation policies of the City. This paper has been sent to all chapter members and city officials.

- Noted that the Chapter's committee on historic buildings was planning to use letters and verbal testimony to obtain landmark status for the interiors of Radio City Music Hall and for the Emigrant Savings Bank building at 51 Chambers Street.

- Agreed to prepare resolutions on the following subjects for passage at the '78 AIA convention in Dallas: 1) urban policy 2) environmental education 3) membership categories

and dues 4) communications between AIA headquarters and the membership.

Full text of the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting may be seen at the Chapter office. □

*Stephen A. Kliment*

## Pay Institute Dues in Full and if Necessary Local Dues in Installments

The Institute has established stricter regulations for its dues collection, and it mailed notices of impending termination to those unpaid on Feb. 28. Memberships could be terminated on Mar. 31.

The Chapter does not want to see any memberships terminated, and it recognizes that the consolidation of national, state and local dues into one bill presents members with a single sum which used to be more spread out when separate bills were sent. If you are in a pinch, pay the Institute its share (\$50 for first year, \$75 second, and \$100 thereafter) to avoid termination, and pay the rest in monthly installments. □

## Members of Nominating Committee Elected

The following members were elected as the '77-78 Nominating Committee, following the tallying of ballots: Jordan Gruzen, Anna M. Halpin, J. Karl Justin, Barbara Neski, and Richard G. Stein. The Committee would appreciate hearing from members with any suggestions for nominations. □

## Candidates for Membership

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

*AIA Member*

Jeffrey H. Simon

*AIA Associate*

Barbara Demory-Thomas

**New York Chapter  
The American Institute of Architects**  
20 West 40th Street  
New York, New York 10018  
212/730-1221  
George S. Lewis, Executive Director

**Executive Committee 1977/78**  
Peter Samton, President  
Charles E. Hughes, 1st Vice President  
George A. Dudley, Vice President  
Joseph Wasserman, Vice President  
Stephen A. Kliment, Secretary  
Anna M. Halpin, Treasurer  
Jonathan Barnett, Director  
Michael McCarthy, Director  
Rosaria Piomelli, Director  
John Belle, Director  
Roy Friedberg, Director  
Robert A. M. Stern, Director

**Oculus Committee**  
Denis Glen Kuhn, Editor/Chairman  
Albert Barash  
Stephen N. Carter  
Mary Jane Clark  
Bonnell Irvine  
Lawrence Levine  
Kenneth Ricci  
William C. Shopsin

Stephen A. Kliment  
Secretary, NYC/AIA  
Cathanne Piesla  
Chapter Staff Member

*Not a headline. Would be more suitable as lead paragraph!*  
**Goldberger Article Spurs Office Practice Committee to Initiate a Survey of Chapter Firms to Obtain More Data Regarding Professional Liability Insurance and Reiterate Some Suggestions**

In '47, the premium for professional liability insurance was \$25.00 covering \$25,000 liability. It was a prudent investment even though legal suits in those years seemed a remote possibility. Today for coverage 10 times larger, the premium is about 30 times greater and with a sizeable deductible!

A single legal suit, no matter how trivial it may at first seem, can be devastating.

The diversion of attention, the time needed for research to establish a defense and then more time for conferences with lawyers can be extensive. Higher legal expenses and the possibility of even higher insurance premiums have created a sense of unease within the profession.

Guidance is available from two experienced sources, namely the Institute in its constant improvements to documents and V.O.Schinnerer and Company in its flow of Guidelines for Improving Practice. To put this information to work by the staff from principals to draftsmen requires continuing effort - a duty not to be relished but most certainly productive.

The Institute has a convenient way for keeping us up-to-date with all of its documents through Documents Subscriber Service at the nominal fee of \$8.00 per year. Improved and new documents and forms are mailed with explanatory and advisory material when published. Such data could be timely for incorporation into a new agreement or an all-but-complete set of contract documents.

V.O.Schinnerer's Guidelines, mailed at no charge, contain useful advice and recommendations which they consider to be important in reducing liability and, ultimately, premium rates.

One of the current new projects being developed by the Institute seems promising. It is a complete step-by-step guide for the project manager, so arranged that it can serve as a broadscope checklist for the more experienced project manager.

The Paul Goldberger article on professional liability in the Feb.12'78 issue of the New York Times has spurred the Chapter's Office Practice Committee, Alan Schwartzman, chairman, to start drafting a survey to be sent to Chapter firms. The survey is to serve as one step in the search for relief from this liability burden. The survey is intended to determine the recent and present cost of professional liability insurance in terms of its proportion of gross receipts, the number and type of claims made and of claims settled and the nature of efforts to reduce the chances of claims. The cooperation of each firm will be needed.□

*Charles K. Hirzel*

**Architectural Record Plans Building Energy Conservation Seminars for May 1 and 2**

A two-day seminar entitled, "Proven Design Technologies for Energy-Efficient Building Envelopes, Lighting, HVAC" is being sponsored by Architectural Record magazine to help architects, engineers and commercial building owners apply proven, cost-effective energy-efficient concepts to the design and operation of new or renovated buildings. The program will emphasize the minimum standards of the new ASHRAE 90-75 guidelines as a departure point for improving building energy performance.

The seminar is scheduled for New York on May 1-2, '78 (Marriott's Essex House).

The seminar is distinguished by an expert faculty who will be together for the first time in a single program: Jack Beech, PE, of Joseph R. Loring & Associates, Inc., N.Y.; John L. Kmetzo, PE, of EE Linden Associates, Inc., New Canaan, Ct.; and John E. Flynn AIA, of The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

This is the first in a series of continuing education programs sponsored by Architectural Record for architects and engineers. Attendees successfully completing the seminar will be awarded 1.4 Continuing Education Units (CEU's) which have been established according to guidelines of The National Task Force on the Continuing Education Unit. One CEU represents 10 contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education program.□

*Charles E. Hamlin*

**The New York Landmarks Conservancy gets Feds to Move Back Into Custom House, Selects Developer for the Federal Archive Building and Aids in Getting New Roof and Skylight for the Tweed Courthouse**

*Again bad headline. This is a run-on sentence!*

In an evolving search to establish a revolving fund to save landmark buildings, the New York Landmarks Conservancy has been spun in many directions. Originally an offshoot of the Municipal Art Society, the Conservancy has been on its own since '73. It is a private, not-for-profit, tax exempt organization chartered in the State of New York to further the protection, preservation and continuing use of architecturally, historically, and culturally significant buildings throughout the State. It is not a governmental agency.

According to Susan Henshaw Jones, the Executive Director, a number of projects are currently "on the boards" at the Conservancy and are comprised of "reuse proposals, landmarks preservation and urban conservation studies and other preservation concerns." A team of four full time staff members conduct all the business related to the completion of projects and their efforts are guided by the 29 members of the "Board" of the Conservancy. Chapter members who serve on the Board of the Conservancy are: Jonathan Barnett, Simon Breines, Lewis Davis, Geoffrey Platt, and Richard Weinstein. The staff and the Board are assisted by consultants whose services are engaged as required by the needs of the various projects.

A sampling of some of the current reuse projects are:

- The U.S. Custom House on Bowling Green
- The Federal Archive Building on Washington Street in Greenwich Village
- The Fraunces Tavern Block

Some of the landmarks preser-



*The U.S. Custom House on Bowling Green designed by Cass Gilbert in 1907 is to be reoccupied in part by U.S. Government offices with lower floors to remain available for cultural purposes. Photo by Jerry Spearman.*

vation and urban conservation studies are:

- The facade easements program
- An evaluation of the impact of landmark designation on communities
- The public buildings inventory

Some preservation concerns are are:

- The Tweed Courthouse
- Pier A
- The Villard Houses

The space limitations of Oculus prohibit a full update on all of these items. However, the news on a few is:

- The GSA has rescheduled the return of Federal offices to the U.S. Customs House and will renovate the upper floors and leave the main public areas for cultural purposes.
- The selected developers, Rockrose Development Corp., and the architects Beyer, Blinder, Belle are working with the Conservancy and the local Community Planning Board

to develop an acceptable reuse plan for the Federal Archive Building.

●A contract for construction has been let by the City, utilizing drawings and specifications prepared by the architect Giorgio Cavaglieri, to install a new roof and skylight and secure the Tweed Courthouse against penetration by the elements. Hopefully, this is the beginning of a plan to restore and reuse this long neglected remnant of the City's rich architectural and political history.

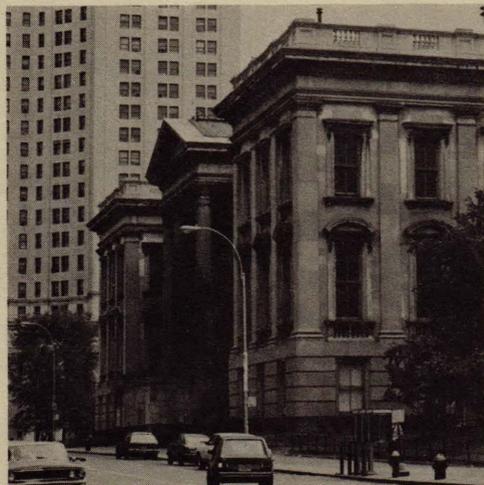
●The Vincent Astor Foundation has come forth with a major contribution to be used to purchase the historic buildings on the Fraunces Tavern Block rescuing them, practically at the eleventh hour, from demolition. □

*Denis Glen Kuhn*

## New Perspectives on Neighborhood Planning Emerge as First Impressions Wear Off



*The U.S. Federal Building, "The Archives" designed by Willoughby J. Edbrooke and completed in 1899 will be used primarily for residential purposes. Photo by Steven Zane*



*The Tweed Courthouse designed by John Kellum in 1858 and completed by Leopold Eidlitz almost 20 years later will be secured against the weather as hopefully the first step in a rehabilitation program. Photo by Joseph Ruocco*

The neighborhood as the central operational element in urban planning has achieved widespread currency in the last few years. While the new focus on neighborhoods may not look like news - after all New York City has always seen itself as a network of neighborhoods - it does represent a definite departure from the large scale urban planning initiatives so common for the past 30 years, the worst of which were "bulldozer renewal" projects that wiped out entire viable, but aging, neighborhoods.

While the new trend toward neighborhood based planning holds much potential, there are a variety of practical problems that confront the architect/planner that is interested in working in this field. The purpose of this two-part article is first to examine briefly a few of the particular issues associated with neighborhood planning and next month to present the perspectives of several professionals active in this field.

### •Scale

The most obvious issue. Macro-planning of regions and cities lost validity as it became clear that this mammoth species was too costly; that it probably was undemocratic to have plans imposed from above and lastly, that these plans did not reflect the natural growth and diversity of the city or region. In contrast, planning at the micro-level is easier to manage, usually easier to finance, can more accurately be made to reflect diversity and natural growth cycles and in the final analysis is more respectful of human scale, local values and

political reality.

### •Continuity

Grandiose macro-planning could never cope with Time. It wasn't incremental; it was just supposed to happen all at once. That may be one of the reasons most of it never happened. Neighborhood-based planning by definition is incremental: it can happen piecemeal and that's good. It is not meant to alter the locale overnight, but rather to change and improve with the passage of time. Lewis Mumford refers to the city as an organ of Man's memory: micro-planning is intended to respect the continuity of this memory function.

### •Data

The great bugaboo of modern planners. Data collection ought to be a function of policy, not vice versa. However, since the policy shift, in New York City and elsewhere, to the neighborhood perspective is either so new or hasn't officially happened, relevant data is hard to come by. In addition, since the state of the art: finance, sociology, physical planning, zoning, and so forth is in turmoil, it is difficult to determine what information is relevant. The problem facing the practitioner is that the available data tend to set the mental framework for asking the questions, whereas just the reverse ought to happen: the neighborhood perspective should decide what questions get asked and the data ought to be culled accordingly. The timeliness of the data that is available is

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## Perspectives on Neighborhood Planning

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often a problem, especially in "transitional" areas. Moreover, the accuracy of the census data for these areas is open to serious question, according to knowledgeable community workers.

### ●Legitimacy

If neighborhood-based planning has a hallmark it is the involvement of local residents in the planning process. This hallmark raises one of the larger philosophical problems of the genre: who represents the "People?" It also raises one of the most troublesome problems for the practitioner: along with involvement has come an increasing sophistication and proliferation of community representatives. Sophistication is probably a good thing in the long run; over the short haul however it can mean an enormous amount of additional work spent in building consensus for a plan and achieving final approval. Proliferation of authoritative bodies also increases the time needed for gaining approvals.

From one perspective neighborhood planning looks like a new experiment in its early stages. Another perspective is that the history of the City is really an on-going experiment in the uses of the urban neighborhood. Recent developments simply represent another set of adjustments to accommodate a lively reality.□

*Ken Ricci*

## Miscellany

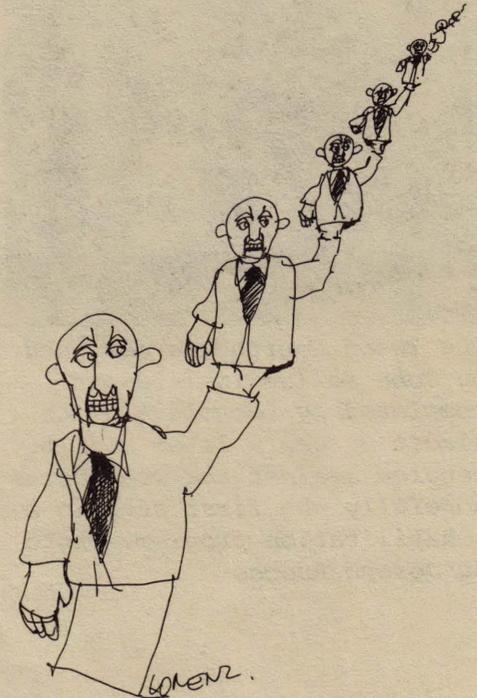
●A special committee, with Rolf Ohlhausen as chairman, has been reviewing zoning legislation for the Fisher Brothers' proposal to construct an office building incorporating a large public galleria, behind the Racquet Club on Park Avenue across from the Seagram Building.

●Herbert Mandel has been appointed chairman of the Housing and Community Development Committee. Some members met with Nathan Leventhal, new Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner, on Feb. 28. Commissioner Leventhal was quite receptive to our contact and invited an ongoing, if informal, dialogue with the Chapter. He indicated that a strong move toward interagency coordination relative to housing and planning matters is underway which our representatives felt was definitely a move in the right direction. A tentative meeting date was set up for a continuation of our discussion early in April.

●The AIA Research Corp. has published a technical paper, "Identifying Climatic Design Regions and Assessing Climatic Impact on Residential Building Design," available for \$3. Write to Rosalie Grattaroti, AIA Research Corp., 1735 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20006.□

## Residential Design Awards Delayed

The Chapter's Annual Residential Design Awards program has been delayed. The Feb. snowstorm disrupted jury members schedules. The jury will meet on Mar. 7 '78.□



*Critics*

*Drawing by Albert Lorenz*