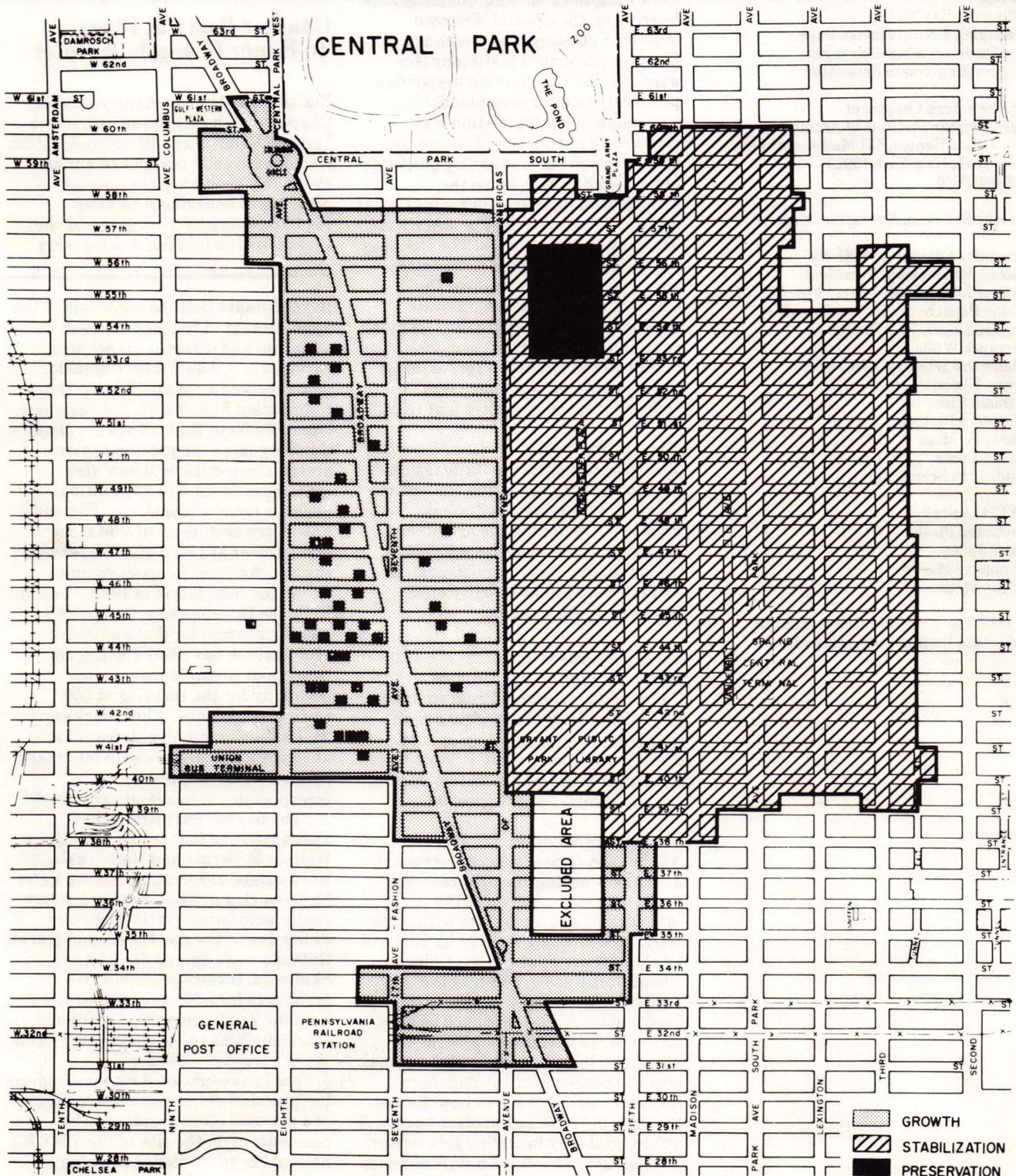


OCULUS

on current new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 43, Number 6, March 1982



The proposed Special Midtown District

OCULUS

Midtown Update: Chapter Recommendations Adopted

Names and News

Volume 43, Number 6, March 1982

Oculus

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by George Lewis

Following the Planning Commission's hearing on the Special Midtown District February 3, at which the Chapter presented testimony (see page 10), the Commission responded positively to our recommendations. Language in the legislation was changed to permit modification by special permit of mandatory elements of Section 81-40, and also the allocation of floor area in zoning lots at least 60,000 square feet or when a lot occupies an entire block. The CPC has also relaxed mandated pedestrian space requirements to meet the Chapter's objections to sidewalk widening that would break street wall continuity. Further, in residential buildings the minimum recreational space required for a bonus was reduced from 5000 square feet to 500.

More on Midtown

The Report on *Metropolis* magazine's extraordinarily revealing conference "Midtown: Testing the Zoning Proposal," including the architects' sketches of buildings tested against the daylight evaluation diagram, is available for \$10 at Urban Center Books or at *Metropolis*.

Energy Awards Winner

In the Chapter's recent Energy Conservation Awards Program the jury — Sital Daryanani, Paul Segal, Richard G. Stein, and Robert A.M. Stern — gave one award. It went to Kelbaugh & Lee of Princeton, N.J. for a multi-family, low-rise project.

Large City Chapters

At the AIA Grassroots conference in January considerable progress was made toward establishing the influence of large chapters within the AIA. At a meeting chaired by Richard Cook, past president of the Chicago Chapter, it was agreed that the Institute seems to be far too little aware of what chapters such as ours do — how we deal directly with members, including most of the firms; how the concerns of our members focus on local issues, and how distant the AIA in Washington often seems. A group, probably including this writer, is expected to meet with AIA officials in Washington next summer.

Chapter Party at Plaza To Honor Giurgola & Hotel

For the first time in many years the Chapter will hold a dress ball, in the Terrace Room of the Plaza on April 22: we hope this will become an annual event. We shall have the special pleasure of honoring AIA Gold Medalist Romaldo Giurgola and the Plaza itself on its 75th Anniversary.

Beyer Blinder Belle has announced the appointment of Richard Visconti as associate and director of technical services . . . Ada Louise Huxtable, who received a coveted MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, has resigned from *The New York Times* . . . Paul Goldberger, as the paper's senior architecture critic will now also contribute to the Sunday edition, perhaps twice a month . . . Fox and Fowle are architects of a 30-story office tower at 175 Water Street near the South Street Seaport complex slated for completion in 1983 . . . The Reliance Development Company's award program for distinguished architecture has cited The Eggers Group and Rudin Management Company for the building at 560 Lexington Avenue, which backs up to St. Bart's Community House, "for keen response to the urban landscape, pedestrian needs, and its incorporation into a landmark block." . . . The Gruzen Partnership has announced the following promotions: Wallace B. Berger and Barbara Geddis were named associate partners; Peter M. Gumpel, and Scott Keller, are new senior associates; David Augustine, Philip Jones, Fredric Rosen, and Martin Rotondo were named associates . . . Skidmore, Owings & Merrill are architects for a 55-story mixed-use building combining office space and condominiums to be constructed at 33 W. 52 Street . . . Emery Roth & Sons in association with the Halpern Partnership of London are architects of a planned office building to be constructed on the site of the YWCA's national headquarters at Lexington
cont'd. p. 12, col. 3

SPECIAL MIDTOWN DISTRICT

The Planning Commission's proposed Special Midtown District is one of the most sweeping changes in New York zoning in many years. The concept of stabilization of East Midtown and encouragement of growth to the west and south, as well as the introduction of bulk controls through diagrams evaluating daylight at street level, are particularly notable. For the District to be put into effect requires approval by the Board of Estimate; its hearing has been tentatively scheduled for April 1. G. L.

The Proposed Midtown Zoning: Growth, Preservation, Stabilization

The Association of the Bar of the City of New York, on January 18, 1982, presented a panel discussion organized by the Committee on Lectures and Continuing Education, chaired by Eugene J. Morris with Norman Marcus as Program Liaison. Oculus is indebted to the Bar Association for providing a tape of that discussion and expresses its appreciation to the speakers for their permission to excerpt their comments as follows:

by Norman Marcus

I am really pleased to moderate tonight's panel discussion of the Proposed Midtown Zoning Regulations by three knowledgeable speakers: Ed Barnes, a distinguished architect familiar with the present as well as proposed zoning regulations; Donald Elliott, former Chairman of the City Planning Commission from 1966 to 1972, a crucial period in which the 1961 as-of-right zoning formulas gave way to a series of creative public interest innovations; and Paul Goldberger, an articulate and perceptive critic of New York City planning and design.

The City is well into the final implementation phase of its three-year review of Midtown Development problems. Affected community boards have completed the ULURP recommendations; this week the City Planning Commission will schedule its first public hearing on the proposed zoning changes for February 3 at City Hall. When the Board of Estimate acts in late April or early May, we will have a substantially new comprehensive zoning ordinance in Midtown for the first time since 1961.

The process to date, begun in June 1979 by former Commission Chairman, now Deputy Mayor Bob Wagner, Jr., and carried forward under present CPC Chairman Herb Sturz's direction,

has involved every major star in the city planning firmament: public interest groups, developers, architects, economists, labor, environmentalists, community representatives, and so on. Discussion had brought us through a draft report in 1980 to a final report on Midtown Development in 1981. Before us now are 112 pages of zoning legislation that implement the recommendations of that 1981 report.

I have spent the better part of my professional life as Counsel to the Planning Commission and have witnessed and helped shape the evolution of Midtown zoning. From a largely as-of-right body of regulations, which produced predictable wedding-cake setback buildings under the 1916 ordinance, we moved in 1961 to towers in large plazas as the favored architectural form. This vision in turn gave way to a system that encouraged waiver of these regulations in order to achieve more "relevant" public-interest amenities. Ironically, these bulky 60s and 70s "waiver" buildings raised a public outcry similar to that inspired by the old Equitable Building at 120 Broadway, which led to zoning in the first place.

It was better golden eggs from the Midtown Development goose that justified this assumption of discretionary zoning powers by the Planning Commission in the late 60s and 70s. In actuality, as built, many of these amenities literally laid an egg; and the bigger bulkier buildings, which were their price, broke the scale and character of their neighboring areas. However, *some* of these interventions did work: new legitimate theaters, which incentive zoning spawned, replenished one of the city's most valuable industries and resources; priceless architectural treasures such as Grand Central and the Villard Houses were preserved through the combined intervention of zoning and landmark laws; the Citicorp covered pedestrian space with its combination of community events, retail vitality, and subway access made it the most exciting place for people to be created in Midtown

since Rockefeller Center.

I won't catalogue the mistakes, but there were many. And the City's difficulties in enforcing these increasingly sophisticated covered amenities proved expensive in a time of shrinking municipal budgets. Interior public spaces had a way of functioning for the most part as private lobbies. Worst of all, the new "brutal" scale of development in the East Midtown "gold coast," where most private investment was channeled, tended to overwhelm the public gestures at the pedestrian level. The daylight expectations of the 1961 zoning were increasingly traded away in favor of public spaces, which when not actually located within buildings, tended to bask in shadows reminiscent of the Wall Street canyons.

And so, inevitably, the current Midtown proposal is a revisionist document. If we do not learn from our mistakes, we simply go on repeating them. And zoning mistakes tend after all to be big, highly visible, and wasteful of the City's limited physical opportunities.

The pending legislative proposal therefore has a number of salient thrusts:

1. An explicit Development Strategy: Growth, Preservation, Stabilization

a) Growth is encouraged in West and South Midtown by allowing higher as-of-right floor area allowances in these areas than the zoning presently confers.

b) Stabilization of the presently saturated East Midtown core is achieved by reducing as-of-right floor area allowances in this area.

c) Preservation areas are designated on existing legitimate theater sites and in the 50s between Fifth and Sixth Avenues near the Museum of Modern Art, where downzoning is recommended.

d) Wide avenues are distinguished from narrow midblocks for floor allowance purposes with less

encouragement given for midblock as opposed to avenue development.

2. Amenities

We've tried to separate the wheat from the chaff. Many of those amenities which have proven their worth are mandated in the new proposals; on the other hand, bonus provision has been rescinded from the failures and reduced where results have been mixed. The opportunities for negotiation — calling on the Planning Commission to exercise discretion in trading off bulk for amenities whose value can't be uniformly predictable — are narrowly circumscribed and limited. Only landmark preservation, major subway access improvements, and theater renewal will qualify.

3. Light and Air

By codifying practical, but demonstrably measurable, standards of daylight penetration to public streets, the need for discretionary waiver of rigid regulations is removed. For example, the emerging Midtown Madison Avenue canyon in the upper 50s — a product of negotiated trade-offs between light-and-air values and pedestrian amenities — cannot happen again under the proposed Midtown zoning.

It is important to recognize that the City's Midtown plan is not limited to zoning alone. Key to the success of the plan are public projects including West 42nd Street redevelopment, the Portman Hotel, and major infrastructural renewal. Tax reform is another necessary ingredient and we will not touch on that tonight. The subject tonight is zoning, return to as-of-right, predictable controls that enable the private sector to carry out a public vision of a future that responds to the City's needs and aspirations.

by Donald H. Elliott

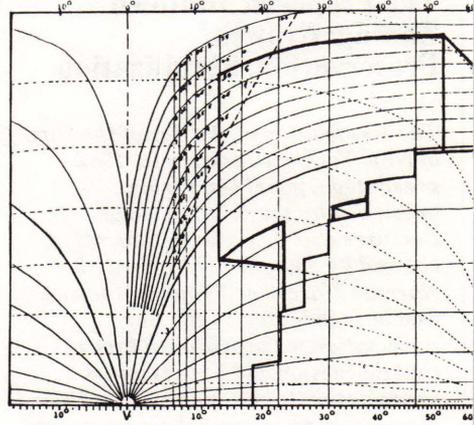
The title of tonight's topic should probably be "Big Bulky Brutal Buildings" or "The Emerging Madison Avenue Canyon." I am starting with my conclusions so there won't be any doubt about where I stand, and I will explain why.

- 1) The City Planning Commission is giving up the role of innovator and government leader in matters of Midtown development, and I think that is a great mistake.
- 2) The proposed general rules that are being offered are legitimate for what the shape of buildings should be, but they ought not to be made absolute. They will not prove responsive to the peculiarities of different areas of the city. They will stop desirable buildings, and they are making a judgment about one value almost absolute — light and air on the street. It is an important urban design goal but not the only one.
- 3) The proposed zoning will not appreciably effect the amount of building that occurs on the East or West Sides. In my judgment it was a mistake for the Commission to stop at Eighth Avenue rather than to continue west.

The solution which has been proposed is to change the organization of the rules, which provides for how a building should sit on a lot and what its relationship to the street should be and then to permit no change from that rule and to forbid the Planning Department the right to exercise any discretion.

A peculiarity of the zoning law is that the same degree of energy and formality is necessary to issue a special permit as is necessary to change the underlying law. So what we found happening in the late 70s and early 80s for the special districts was not only that special permits were given under them, but the law itself was changed with respect to particular buildings. The underlying

The Waldrum Diagram is a daylight evaluation diagram upon which a building or buildings are drawn for evaluating daylight compliance. The building or buildings are drawn on the diagram using a fixed vantage point and recording all horizontal and vertical angles subtended by all edges of the building from the vantage point. The building or buildings are translated to the corresponding angle lines on the diagram.

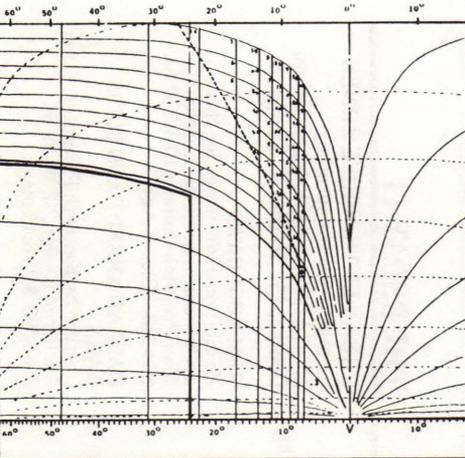


statute was being amended and the amendment applied to a particular building. Therefore the fact that the Planning Commission is now saying "thou shalt not amend this law" is important only if they don't amend it. During this period they could have refused to grant waivers and this circumstance might not have happened. This leaves the Board of Standards and Appeals as the major varier of the zoning ordinance — a role in the 60s many of us felt was being exercised too strenuously by the board, one that we believed was more properly left to the Planning Commission.

And that is the main thrust of my concern about this approach. I really don't have any particular concern whether we use the Waldrum system or another system as a general rule for the placement of buildings. I feel when the Planning Commission says we will not consider anything else, that it is a mistake.

Let me talk about some of the criticism of some of these big bulky brutal buildings. First, there is the question of the size of the building, the number of square feet . . . The June 1980 report urges that buildings be related to the size of the foot print, the problem being that it would tend to encourage tearing down the small building. If you can't leave the small building next door, the tendency would be to tear it down. The June 1981 report supported restricting

The Daylight Evaluation Diagram for a 60-foot wide street is shown applied to Citicorp Center. Center line of diagram is looking north, 250 feet from the intersection of Lexington Avenue and 53rd Street. Darkest line is outline of Citicorp's south elevation. Vertical lines represent increments of 25 feet along the street. The spaces enclosed by intersections of all horizontal and vertical lines constitute "squares" which are used for counting daylight. Each square above 70° is 25 feet by 2° no matter how distorted it may look in the diagram. Similarly, all squares below 70° are 25 feet by 10°. All squares on the diagram represent equal daylight.



transfer across zoning lines. So if there was a zoning line you couldn't move the bulk from one side of it to the other, even though you owned the building. The problem here is that it would tend to encourage a small building next to a big building on the avenue but not to have one or the other behind or in front. The current statute doesn't deal with the problem except by drawing new zoning lines. If you happen to own a lot that spans zoning lines you can deal as you would in the old days. But if you don't you will have trouble transferring it back and forth. There will be many instances when that arbitrary rule is going to work improperly and when pressure to give the Commission power to make an amendment is going to be overwhelming.

Second, shape and placement of buildings on the lot: When the emerging canyon of Madison Avenue is completed—IBM, AT&T, and Trump along with the closing of 56 Street between Madison and Fifth—it will be recognized as a major triumph of urban design done not by government agencies but individual developers. First-rate architects working with the Planning Commission have achieved what I believe will be a sensational result. What I am saying is that it's important to have some degree of flexibility so, as we understand the particularities of different areas of the city, we can mold the rules to fit those

cont'd. p. 10, col. 1

by Edward Larrabee Barnes

The proposed zoning changes, have had the scrutiny of architects and real estate developers. Architects have generally supported the proposals but felt that the FAR differentials still were not great enough to slow down development on the East Side and encourage development on the West Side. They also felt that the zone should be extended beyond Eighth Avenue. And there was a minority report that thought the issue of residential construction should have been addressed—that there should have been an incentive for residential construction.

The motives for zoning change at different times are always worthwhile—albeit frequently a reaction to the results of the previous zoning change. At the time of the Seagram Building, there was a general appreciation of the serene massing of Mies van der Rohe—the open plaza and the setback tower. I remember the intensity that architects felt about that. It took time to see what such massing was like, as tower after tower, each with a front plaza, was developed along Sixth Avenue. There was a reaction in the Lindsay/Don Elliott period when the tendency was to try to make this a pedestrian city, a more humane city, with lively street life. The plaza was seen to sort of cauterize the street. And so there was a move to bring the retail line right up to the sidewalk—doing as much as one could for the pedestrian. Through-block arcades, and mini parks were encouraged; there was even an attempt to close Madison Avenue.

Since that time, there has been an increasing awareness of preservation and landmarks and the value of architectural heritage in place. "Contextual architecture" that is to say, a building designed with a sensitivity to the building next to it, is now much appreciated. When I was in architecture school there were no such objectives. You were given a blank site with nothing on it. Whatever you

cont'd. p. 8, col. 1

by Paul Goldberger

There are a number of issues that the new zoning raises, and it is important to keep them separate. There is the question of as-of-right zoning versus what might be called negotiated zoning; there is the question of bulk; there is the question of density. The impulse behind the new zoning emerges out of a sense that the existing zoning is not serving us adequately on all three of these separate areas. But the nature of the problem and the nature of the solution chosen in each area is different. Similarly, the inadequacy of the zoning so far as developers and architects are concerned is not the same as the inadequacy of the zoning so far as planners are concerned; different still from both of these constituents is the public's perception of the whole matter.

There are moments when I think that the crucial issue facing us right now is one of density, one of crowding, and that the best zoning law we could ask for at this moment in Midtown Manhattan's history is a very simple one, consisting of three words: no more buildings. Illegal, of course, and altogether ridiculous. But the notion that we could reach a time in which architecture could cease to matter is now becoming very real.

I wonder if the entire city should not be drastically downzoned—not from 15 to 12 in midblocks, as we are now proposing, but to something more like 3 or 4, with a certain kind of bank or fund of extra development rights available for purchase within any area of, say, 8 or 10 square blocks.

As it is now, our zoning code really does not address the problem of too much building, and I am not sure that the proposed revisions address this problem all that effectively, either. Reducing midblock FAR from 15 to 12 does not make all that much difference in the final analysis—if a street of old brownstones or 5 or 6-story commercial buildings in the East 50s is

cont'd. p. 8, col. 3

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CONTINUING EVENTS

Oculus welcomes information for the calendar pertaining to public events about architecture and the other design professions. It is due by the 7th of the month for the following month's issue. Because of the time lag between information received and printed, final details of events are likely to change. It is recommended, therefore, that events be checked with the institutions before attending.

Send Oculus Calendar information to:
New York Chapter/AIA, 457 Madison Avenue, N.Y. 10022.

MANHATTAN ADDITIONS: PART II

An expanded presentation of two apartment buildings by Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas. The Lobby, 369 Lexington Ave. Closes Mar. 10

LANDMARKS THAT AREN'T

Photographic exhibition of some of the city's unprotected landmarks. Sponsored by The Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. Closes Mar. 11.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF TIME

A study of four cities by Lebbeus Woods, Express Network, 59 Greene St. 431-6560. Wednesdays to Sundays, 12-6 pm. Closes Apr. 4.

PLANNING AROUND

Exhibition. SPACED Gallery of Architecture, 165 W. 72 St. 787-6350. Closes Mar. 27.

HISTORIC CAST IRON IN CENTRAL PARK

Exhibition. The Dairy in Central Park (65th St. between the Zoo and the Carousel). 360-8141 or 360-8236. Closes Mar. 31.

ROBERT ADAM AND HIS STYLE

Exhibition. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6868. Closes Apr. 11

MTA PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE FIFTH AVENUE COACH COMPANY Exhibition. The New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West. 873-3400. Closes May 1.

ARCHITECTURAL FANTASY AND REALITY

Exhibition of 17th and 18th century drawings—entries in competitions at National Academy of St. Luke in Rome. Cooper-Hewitt, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6868. Closes May 2.

MONDAY 1

THE HAND OF ADAM

A film by Murray Grigor in five-Monday series in conjunction with "Robert Adam and his Style." 6:15 pm. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6868.

ARCHITECTURE AS A PUBLIC LANGUAGE

First session of design studio given by James Wines/SITE. Mondays 6-9 pm (Mar 1-Apr 19). Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. Registration \$10, studio \$200. 685-3754.

MONDAY 8

ARTISTS AS DESIGNERS IN THE 20th CENTURY

First in five-Monday series by Dr. Ronny Cohen, critic and art historian. 6:15 pm. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6868.

PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES

Conference on "New Investment Opportunities Under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981." Registration and information: Education Services, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 202-673-4092.

TUESDAY 2

PRESERVATION ISSUES

First session of design studio given by Stephen B. Jacobs. Tuesdays 6-8 pm (Mar 2-May 11). Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. Registration \$10, studio \$200. 685-3754.

FILM SERIES: ARCHITECTS, BUILDERS AND BUILDINGS

Full of Life (1957) and *The Finishing Touch* (1927). Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 6:15 pm. 860-6868.

TUESDAY 9

GOTHIC REVIVAL IN FRANCE

First in series of Matthews lectures by Neil Levine. 6 pm. Avery Hall, Columbia Graduate School of Architecture & Planning. 280-3414.

EMERGING VOICES

First in new program series of emerging architects hosted by the Architectural League, 457 Madison 6:30 pm. 753-1722. Nonmembers \$5.

FILM SERIES: ARCHITECTS BUILDERS AND BUILDINGS

Playtime (1969) and *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1931). Cooper-Hewitt, 2 E. 91 St. 6:15 pm. 860-6868.

WEDNESDAY 3

FORUMS ON FORM

Lecture by Ronald Lee Fleming and Renata von Tscharnar on their book, *Place Makers, Public Art That Tells You Where You Are* (Hastings House). Introduction by Margot Wellington. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 12:30 pm. 935-3595.

LIGHTING DESIGN AWARDS

Deadline for entries in 1982 IES Lighting Design Awards: Lighting Design Awards Committee, c/o IES Headquarters, 345 E. 47 St. 644-7924.

WEDNESDAY 10

NEW DRAWING IN AMERICA

Part II of exhibition celebrating Drawing Center's 5th anniversary includes architectural drawings. The Drawing Center, 137 Greene St. 982-5266.

FORUMS ON FORM

Lecture by Lester Walker on his book, *American Shelter: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Home* (Overlook Press). Introduction by Tim Prentice. 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3595.

THURSDAY 4

ARCHITECTURE: THE FACE OF NEW YORK

Lecture by James I. Freed in series at Ethical Culture School for Continuing Education, 2 W. 64 St. 874-5210. 7:45-9:15 pm. Single admission \$15 if available.

COALBROOKDALE FOUNDRY

Slide lecture presented by Friends of Cast Iron Architecture and The Victorian Society. 6 pm. Donnell Library, 20 W. 53 St.

THURSDAY 11

URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONES

Seminar co-sponsored by NYC/AIA and APA. 6 pm. Urban Center, 457 Madison. 838-9670.

REM KOOLHAAS

Exhibition of drawings for three architectural projects in Holland. Max Protetch Gallery, 37 W. 57 St. 838-7436. Closes Apr. 3.

HANNAH ARENDT AND LOUIS KAHN

Lecture by Kenneth Frampton. Open Atelier of Design, 12 W. 29 St. 686-8698. \$10. 6:45 pm

FRIDAY 5

FRIDAY 12

LONG ISLAND DESIGN AWARDS PROGRAM

Deadline for entering the Long Island Chapter/AIA's 1982 Architectural Design Awards Program "for excellence in Long Island architecture." Information and entry form: Philip C. Pandolfi, 610 Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, N.Y. 11788. 516-543-1300.

MONDAY 19**SHELTER: MODELS OF NATIVE
INGENUITY**

Exhibition of models, drawings, and photographs focusing on house forms of indigenous builders, early American settlers, energy-conscious architects. The Katonah Gallery, 28 Bedford Rd., Katonah. 914-232-4988. Closes May 23.

BATTERY PARK ESPLANADE

Exhibition. Avery Hall, Columbia Graduate School of Architecture and Planning. 280-3414. Closes Apr. 2

MONDAY 22**MONDAY 29****NEW YORK'S TRANSIT SYSTEM IN
TROUBLE**

First of six sessions led by Alfred Shapiro, principal planner, NYC Planning Department, Transportation Division. 7:45-9:30 pm. Center for New York City Affairs/The New School, 66 W. 12 St. 741-5690. \$80 for course.

TUESDAY 16**FILM SERIES: ARCHITECTS,
BUILDERS AND BUILDINGS**

Metropolis (1926), and *Manhatta* (1921). Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 6:15 pm. 860-6868.

**EMERGING VOICES IN
ARCHITECTURE**

George Ranalli and Tod Williams — in new program series presented by the Architectural League, 457 Madison Ave. 6:30 pm. 753-1722. Nonmembers \$5.

TUESDAY 23**GOTHIC REVIVAL IN FRANCE**

Second in series of Matthews lectures by Neil Levine. 6 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia Graduate School of Architecture & Planning. 280-3414.

EMERGING VOICES

Steven Holl and Laurotta Vinciarelli — in series presented by the Architectural League, 457 Madison Ave. 6:30 pm. 753-1722. Nonmembers \$5.

TUESDAY 30**GOTHIC REVIVAL IN FRANCE**

Third in series of Matthews lectures by Neil Levine. 6 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia Graduate School of Architecture & Planning. 280-3414.

**EMERGING VOICES IN
ARCHITECTURE**

Frank Israel (Los Angeles) and Susana Torre (New York) — in series presented by the Architectural League, 457 Madison Ave. 6:30 pm. 753-1722. Nonmembers \$5.

WEDNESDAY 17**FORUMS ON FORM**

Lecture by David Naylor on his book, *American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy* (Van Nostrand Reinhold). Introduction by Dorothy Twining Globus. 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3595.

WEDNESDAY 24**IMPACT OF RADIOLOGIC
IMAGING MODALITIES ON**

Lecture by Dr. Patrick Cahill, Physicist, New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. Sponsored by NYC/AIA Health Facilities Committee. 5 pm, NYC/AIA Headquarters, 457 Madison Ave. 838-9679.

FORUMS ON FORM

Lecture by Kenneth Frampton on his book, *Modern Architecture: 1845-1919* (Global Architecture). Introduction by Robert Hughes. 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3595.

WEDNESDAY 31**FORUMS ON FORM**

Lecture by Gerald Allen and Richard Oliver on *Architectural Drawing: The Art and the Process* (Whitney Library of Design). 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3595.

GIORGIO DE CHIRICO

Exhibition of paintings and drawings. New West Wing, MOMA, 18 W. 54 St. 956-7284.

THURSDAY 18**ARCHITECTURE: THE FACE OF
NEW YORK**

Lecture by Bob Mayers on the changing face of the theater district, in series at Ethical Culture School of Continuing Education, 2 W. 64 St. 874-5210. Single admission if available \$15. 7:45-9:15 pm.

RECIPROCITY AND CONFLICT

Lecture by Bernard Tschumi. Open Atelier of Design, 12 W. 29 St. 686-8698. \$10. 6:45 pm.

THURSDAY 25**PUBLIC SPACE IN MEDIEVAL
ITALY**

Lecture by Guiseppe Zamboni. Open Atelier of Design, 12 W. 29 St. 686-8698. \$10. 6:45 pm.

THURSDAY 1 APRIL**THE LESSONS OF ROME**

Lecture by Jon Michael Schwarting. Open Atelier of Design, 12 W. 29 St. 686-8698. \$10. 6:45 pm.

FRIDAY 19**FRIDAY 26****LONG ISLAND DESIGN AWARDS
PROGRAM**

Deadline for receipt of entries in the Long Island Chapter/AIA's 1982 Architectural Design Awards Program "for excellence in Long Island architecture." Philip C. Pandolfi, 610 Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, N.Y. 11788. 516-543-1300.

FRIDAY 2 APRIL**PRESERVATION IN PROGRESS:
THE SEAPORT DISTRICT**

Exhibition and program highlighting the Seaport as a working preservation site organized by the South Street Seaport Museum, 203 Front St. 766-9020. Closes Dec. 26.

Barnes

cont'd. from p. 5

were designing was on empty land, or you could demolish a building to make empty land. That is absolutely not the rule today. In my visits to architecture schools I have found that practically every problem involves building in context with other buildings. Architects are being trained to be aware of street lines, cornice heights, and general continuity within the city.

So the new height and setback regulations recognize the context of the street wall. And there are new regulations favoring preservation of landmarks and even whole neighborhoods.

The question is can you zone a city and produce overall good architecture? For example, if New York had never changed the old setback zoning what would the city look like today? If there had never been any 40% towers and everything had just been wedding cakes, what kind of city would that be?

I recall Bernard Rudofsky's book *Architecture Without Architects* in which village architecture is studied. There we see whole towns that face the wind, or face south, or towns effected by contour The question is whether the zoning lawmakers could have the same effect of wind and sun [*general laughter*] and produce a common piece of architecture without architects? I think the answer is no.

New York has already been through many successive changes. The feeling I have is that we should update our zoning and in a few years change it again. One cannot have an absolute, sure zoning law. Perceptions will change, and there will always be yet another change.

This new zoning law tends to look at things on a lot-to-lot basis. The architect looks only at his lot and designs according to the new laws. For example: Retail at the sidewalk line and an 80" height is mandated to encourage continuity whether these

features actually exist on each side of a lot or not.

We are not intended to look up or down the block but to design within our lot. Without the kind of planning agency that Don Elliott is suggesting, which is an agency with the power to analyze sensitively — particularly on large lots to see what would be best for the neighborhood, without such planning support, architects and developers will be designing with blinders.

I have worked with Seymour Durst to look at his property west of Sixth and north of 42 Street. Offhand you would say that the general formula for N.Y.C., to build on the avenues and not on the side streets is a good one. But when we made a model and we could look at the whole neighborhood, we found that off-setting towers was an extremely interesting proposal. When you have such strong holdings as that, an overall plan can be developed that is far more enlightened than the individual development of as-of-right buildings on each single block. And this entails a planning commission with more powers than are implied under the new zoning.

To me one of the most beautiful streets in New York is Wall Street — which is a canyon and darker than anything we're doing on the upper 50s and Madison. And why is it beautiful? Because at the end of that canyon is a green park and Trinity Church. The fact that you are looking through containment to openness moderates the necessity for setbacks. The alteration of light and dark, the recognition of context in real life is something that architects are trained to do.

But I don't see in the new zoning the possibility of discretion when the rules just don't add up or make sense. Urban renewal and clearance will probably come back, when you have partnership between the Planning Commission and the individual developer — again, when you are looking at something larger than individual sites.

Residential encouragement is a partnership thing. I think David Rockefeller has put forward the possibility of a partnership for middle income housing on a non-profit basis but an idea as innovative as that must have encouragement and innovation from the Planning Commission. So I give total endorsement to what Don Elliott is saying, that is, the Commission is drawing back from imaginative partnerships with architects and developers. The proposal zoning is basically a lot-by-lot analysis and I think that a larger view is the essence of city planning.

Goldberger

cont'd. from p. 5

replaced with a tower built to 12 FAR or a tower built to 15, it just doesn't make too much difference.

Similarly, the increased FAR offered on the West Side will surely act as somewhat of an incentive to move — but it does nothing to prepare for the eventuality that we may have a similar problem of too dense, too tight, a kind of overbuilding on the West Side. And of course the economics of building on the West Side are not so dramatically different as they are on the East Side; land costs are of course cheaper, but not that much cheaper, and the differential is narrowing.

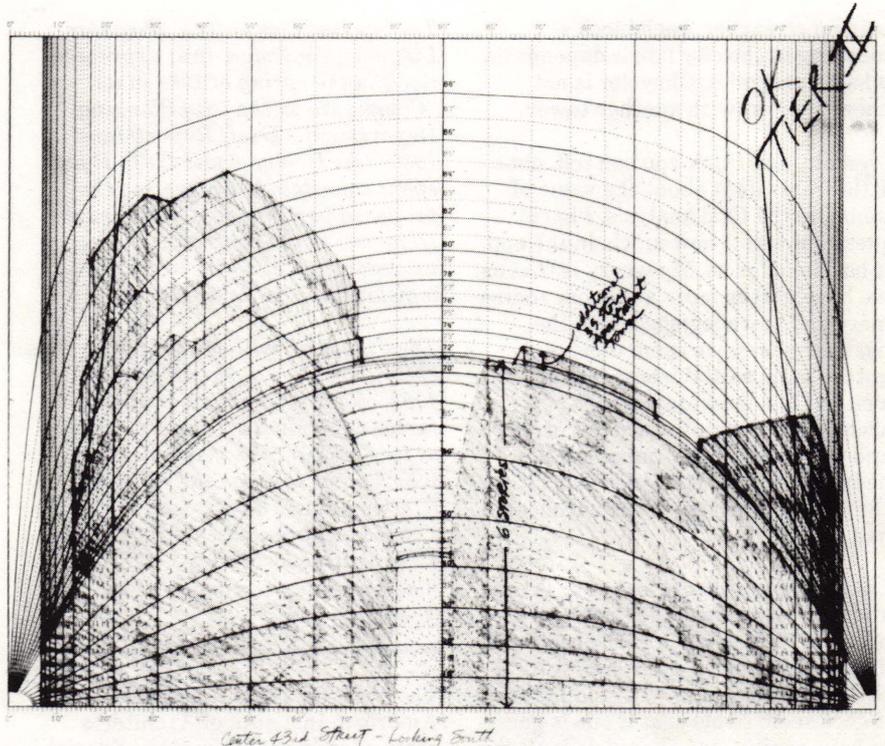
Things are changing, which brings me to a second point. Our zoning legislation has frequently been one step out of phase with the economy, and today seems no exception. We are entering a much harder time; the great boom of the last few years is, for all practical purposes, over. Just as we were out of phase — correctly concerned about overbuilding on the East Side, but waiting so long to do anything that we are, in effect, locking the barn door after the cows have already gotten out. And as I said before, we haven't done all that much anyway — the new zoning is more a case of leaving the door ajar, not locking it. But in any case it is all too late — the building has taken place. There will be a couple of projects on a couple of sites, but the combination of

Ted Liebman and Tom Jones tested a building design on the Daylight Evaluation Diagram at the Midtown conference organized by Metropolis magazine. Use of the diagram to control building bulk has been included in the Planning Commission's Midtown Special District legislation. The diagram process was evolved by CPC consultants Davis/Brody and Kwartler/Jones.

the economic downturn and the fact that the core of Midtown east of Sixth Avenue is, for all practical purposes, filled up makes a lot of this fairly moot.

Similarly, the growth of incentive zoning, of which the plaza bonus under the 1961 ordinance was the beginning, was out of phase as well. It gave us an enormous amount of extra office space that, as Jerrold Kayden showed in his superb study, "Incentive Zoning in New York City: A Cost-Benefit Analysis," sponsored by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, contributed directly to the overbuilding that brought about the collapse of the office market in the early 1970s. The plaza bonus gave us nearly 8 million *extra* square feet of office space in the years from 1963 to 1975, the arcade bonus an extra half-million, and special districts, such as the theater district and the Lincoln Center Special District, another 1.69 million square feet of extra space. In hindsight, it is easy to see that much of this was not necessary at the time in which it was built; later, when the market grew into this space, it became a windfall. The public was not particularly well served at all by these incentives — not only were the amenities themselves often poorly executed, poorly conceived, and poorly maintained, there is real reason to question — again, with the ease of hindsight — whether we would not have been far better off without the amenities and without the extra square footage that came along with them. For the sunshine and open sky permitted by smaller buildings may be the most important amenity of all. It was heresy to say such a thing in the late 1960s, but it seems clear now. Sun and sky are an amenity, as sure as plazas and retail shops.

Let me conclude . . . We are in a time in which we seem to have lots of good architecture and very little good planning, despite all of our complex regulations and intricate legislation. IBM and AT&T, to return to our favorite whipping boys, are evidence of that — both buildings of serious architectural intent, both buildings



that, for all their so-called amenities, a planner concerned about the values that make up a livable city would have to consider an error in the very fact of their existence, despite their architectural enticements.

In any case, most of the good architecture we now have — these buildings, Mr. Barnes's superb Klein Tower at 535 Madison Avenue, Cesar Pelli's Museum of Modern Art tower, and others — is not good because of the zoning code at all. These are not buildings shaped by the code; they are exceptions to it in most cases. What zoning gives us, alas, when the game is played straight, are such lunacies as the skirted granite building with the silly slope at 520 Madison Avenue.

The new zoning does appear to recognize these problems. I admire the attempt to return to an as-of-right system, though I don't think it goes far enough — there are still too many chances for negotiation. But there is a recognition that the street wall is important, which is a direct

180-degree turn from the 1961 zoning ordinance. There is a recognition that interesting tower shapes, when a responsible part of the urban context, are valued and to be encouraged. There is a recognition that light on the street is important, and that we must get back to a time when the provision of light on the street is the major factor in determining permissible bulk.

But I still think that we have not yet gotten far enough away from the problems in the 1961 ordinance, or at least the problems in the system of amendments and special permits and waivers that came to render the 1961 ordinance nonexistent. I would prefer to see more amenities mandated, others ignored, and bonuses eliminated altogether if possible. (The off-site park is a particular mistake, I think.) I still think that there is not enough attention being paid to the sense of the city as a whole thing, as a work of urban design in itself, and not a series of individual tracts of land, unrelated except by proximity. As I

The Chapter's Position On Midtown Development

said much earlier, each block's meaning in the city fabric depends on what is around it; Chrysler is not cheek by jowl with another tower.

I remain, as I think you can tell, not a little ambivalent about the value of zoning in the final analysis. I have questions about how much, in the end, it has done for us. My worry is that as we have gotten more and more zoning, more and more legislation, in the postwar years, we seem to have gotten a worse and worse looking city, a city of few individual works of architectural significance but of less and less coherence. Zoning has not been able to knit it all together into the sort of coherent fabric we once had.

I don't believe that the answer is to abandon it all, since the problem, in my view, lies as much with architects, developers, and an irrational system of land economics as with zoning. But it does seem to me that if one is going to have zoning, one should do it all the way, without timidity. The issues of density must be addressed more strongly, the issue of urban amenity must be dealt with more forthrightly and less in the manner of the incentive system. The job of the City Planning Commission is to plan.

Elliott

cont'd. from p. 5

areas so they will be places we can be proud of.

Other conclusions: New height and setback and shape are going to result in greater coverage, but lower buildings, which will make the small lots left on the East Side more profitable to develop and, I suspect, will essentially offset the drop in FAR which is proposed. I don't think we will see much impact on the East Side. There does not seem to be a panic to complete buildings before the effective date of the zoning, like that which preceded the 1961 zoning amendment and, in that case, the requirement for a grandfather clause.

The Special Committee, Theodore Liebman, chairman, first expressed itself in the spring of 1981 in its "Comments on the City Planning Department's Draft Report/June 1980" (see Oculus April 1981). It had spent countless hours testing the proposed performance—Waldrum Diagram—bulk controls, incorporation of which in the legislation it strongly advocated.

Then the CPC issued its report "Midtown Development" in June 1981, and the Committee submitted further comments. The CPC arrived at its final position in legislation which went through the ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) process, culminating in a CPC hearing February 3, 1982. The Chapter's testimony at the hearing follows:

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects recommends adoption of the Special Midtown District, and we have joined with other constituent organizations of the Presidents' Council in submitting a statement to that effect for your consideration. In it we express our opinion that the proposed Floor Area Ratio differential between East Midtown and West Midtown will not in itself go very far toward encouraging development to the west, but we are strongly behind the Planning Commission's expressed intention to recommend implementation of the economic incentives by other City agencies.

And we would like to remind you here that the Chapter has previously recommended lower FAR to the East than you have proposed, and higher, for mixed use development, to the West. We have been particularly concerned that West Midtown be characterized by a rich mix of commercial, residential, and theater uses quite distinct in character from East Midtown. Toward this end we strongly recommend that the Commission include a bonus provision by optional special permit for increased floor area in mixed use

commercial-residential buildings, always adhering to the new bulk regulations.

Our statement here is intended to reinforce and supplement that of the Presidents' Council, and the points we shall make fall within the limits of what we understand to be the kind of changes in the legislation's text which could be made before your Report is transmitted to the Board of Estimate. We have discussed all of these with the Chairman and some members of the Commission and staff, and in supporting the District we feel confident that our recommendations will be seriously considered. They are as follows:

1. Special Permits

We are very much in agreement that a return to predominantly as-of-right development should be a prime goal of this legislation, but as architects we feel that opportunities for urban planning may be present in certain cases where the proposed legislation would constrict the best urban design. Let it be quickly said that we are completely opposed to special permits to violate FAR restrictions or height and bulk regulations: the daylight diagrams must be adhered to in every case.

We do recommend that optional special permits be made possible in the following categories:

a. *Large Sites.* On sites of 50,000 square feet and over, not including lots acquired through zoning lot mergers on which buildings would remain, the presently proposed prohibition of split lot averaging of bulk should be waived should the developer opt to apply for a special permit.

b. *The secondary urban design features included in Section 81-40,* including Retail Continuity, Street Wall Continuity, Pedestrian Circulation Space, Through Block Connections, and Major Building Entrances. One example of a special urban design opportunity could be an avenue site on which the legislation as



Midtown density sometimes offers transitory—and surprising—images of layering.

Photo: C. Ray Smith

Names and News

written mandates street wall continuity: it could well be that setting the building back and providing an avenue-front plaza — an occasional plaza, not several in a row as on the Avenue of the Americas — could be superior urban design and provide needed and appropriate open space.

In neither of the above cases should bonuses over and above those defined in the present proposal be offered. And we wish to stress that the urban design capability of the City Planning Department must be maintained at a very high level in order for special permits to be administered in the best interests of the City.

2. Pedestrian Circulation Space

While we, like everyone else, favor relieving excessive pedestrian congestion, we are opposed to mandating a certain number of square feet of pedestrian space through sidewalk widening, corner circulation space, arcades, corner arcades, and through-block connections. To be specific, we are totally opposed to regulations that could require a developer to widen the sidewalk for anything less than the full block front. Widened sidewalks on most side streets, where congestion is not a problem, would be particularly undesirable. The street wall must not be broken by jogs in the building front: the continuity of the street wall is imperative, and a wall is not a street wall when it is set back ten feet next to a building at the lot line. New York is an accumulation of an enormous variety of buildings, and it is our streets that hold it all together. We are against arcades as being demonstrably ineffectual.

We have a relatively minor but important criticism regarding the Regulations for Residential Uses. We believe that the bonusable provisions for recreational space for residential occupants is unrealistic and unworkable, that the minimum 5000 square feet, as well as the minimum roof setback and minimum roof deck size are far too large for small buildings.

On a point that is not part of the present legislation, we join the Planning Commission in advocating an increased governmental capability toward assisting the assemblage of development sites. We do not advocate a new agency, but we recommend that the powers of the Public Development Corporation be broadened to increase its potential effectiveness toward this end.

There is one more observation that we, as architects, are most happy to make. The performance system to regulate bulk and ensure daylight on Midtown streets, which the Commission is proposing here, may well be the most significant zoning concept to have been introduced in New York in many years. From the very beginning of the project it fell to us as architects to work together with your admirable urban design staff and consultants to try out, to test, the daylight diagram proposals, and the result will be that daylight on the streets henceforth will be for the public the most vividly perceived outcome of this whole exercise.

These, then, are our observations, which we submit to augment those contained in the Statement of the Presidents' Council. We shall be very willing, and on short notice, to consult with you and the Department staff about possible implementation of our recommendations in the Report you will send to the Board of Estimate. We know the time is short.

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Avenue and 52nd Street. London & Leeds (USA), the real estate arm of the Ladbroke Group of Great Britain, has contracted to purchase and take title to the YWCA building by July . . . Ezra Ehrenkrantz is project director of the exhibition, *Shelter: Models of Native Ingenuity* opening at the Katonah Gallery on March 15 (see Calendar). James Marston Fitch is consulting editor for the exhibition catalog, which will have essays by Rene Dubos, Richard Stein, among others . . . The Grad Partnership are architects of the Middlesex County Adult Correctional Facility planned to replace the existing county jail in North Brunswick, New Jersey . . . The National Home Fashions League's New York Chapter honored the New York Landmarks Conservancy last month by presenting its "Big Apple Award" to Landmarks Conservancy chairman Brendan Gill . . . Haines Lundberg Waehler have been commissioned by City Investing Company to plan and design 660,000 square feet of interior space at Building A in the Battery Park City commercial complex. Cooper, Eckstut Associates prepared the design guidelines for the Battery Park commercial core . . . HLW were also commissioned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Baltimore District to design the Systems Design Center for the U.S. Army Computer Systems Command at Fort Belvoir, Virginia . . . Rizzoli honored Robert A.M. Stern last month on the publication of his *Buildings and Projects 1965-1980* . . . Also last month Margot Gayle, president of Friends of Cast Iron Architecture, presented the annual Certificate of Commendation to five officials of the Department of Parks and Recreation "for preserving and renewing the historic ironwork in Central Park." . . . NYC/AIA members have been invited to participate in the Long Island Chapter/AIA's 1982 Architectural Design Awards Program "for excellence in Long Island architecture." March 12 is the deadline for submitting entry blanks, March 26 the deadline for receipt of entries (see calendar).