

# OCULUS

an eye on new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 50, Number 4, December 1987



*The new towers at Union Square designed by Davis, Brody & Associates join the night-time skyline.*

*Photo: Stan Ries*

# OCULUS

## The Validity of Architecture Competitions

Volume 50, Number 4, December 1987

### Oculus

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### From an Interview with A. Eugene Kohn

*The wave of competitions mounted in the past ten years has so nearly engulfed the architecture profession that some critics might wonder how architects can afford to accept so many attractive invitations. The editors have therefore asked a number of competition-winning architects to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of competitions for architects these days. The first to respond to this inquiry is A. Eugene Kohn, who is a partner in the frequent competition-winning firm Kohn Pedersen Fox. The views represented are his own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the AIA or NYC/AIA.*

We must first distinguish between the two basic types of architecture competitions. There is the open competition, which normally any architect in the world can enter. The open competition is one that is frequently used for awarding civic projects such as city halls, state capital buildings, and some institutional buildings. In Europe the open competition has been a very popular way of selecting architects, usually for government work and occasionally for private work. In the United States, the open competition has been less popular except for certain civic projects. Open competitions usually offer no payment except to the ultimate winner. They are often conducted using the *AIA Handbook of Architectural Design Competitions* and have a jury of peers.

The other basic type of architecture competition is one that is limited to invited architects, who are offered fees (normally minimal) for their design efforts.

In recent times the private sector, in many cases the developer, has chosen a competition as a way to select an architect. Fortunately, however, not that many projects are based on competitions for selection of an architect, and I regard that as a plus.

Open competitions afford young architects an opportunity to be discovered. Usually, only known,

experienced architects are invited to limited competitions.

Some competitions are well publicized and the public relations fallout is especially terrific for the winners and, though less so, even somewhat positive for the losers. Obviously there are advantages to developers, who can gain a lot of publicity for their projects by holding a competition among celebrated architects. Such architects lend a note of credibility to a competition. Also developers and the private sector feel that they get a lot of ideas from having several architects provide designs, which they can later take advantage of.

But the disadvantages have become increasingly clear.

First, many if not the majority of competition projects do not get built. Whether you win or lose you find projects that don't go ahead for various reasons. It is also rare that the winning scheme of a competition is built without major modifications. In some cases the scheme that ultimately is built may have been more influenced by one of the losers than by the winning solution. Therefore, it is a costly and time-consuming process to all concerned, without corresponding benefits.

Second, most of the competitions held in the private sector, and particularly those by developers, are not judged by professional juries. They are usually judged solely by the owners themselves.

Third, frankly some competitions are unfair, in that often one of the competitors is really favored going in, for any number of reasons. The competition may serve as a device to select the favorite architect while looking equitable to all contestants—even if the winning submission is not the best. In these cases the favorite architect should just be selected without going through the sham of a costly competition.

If you are prequalified and asked to enter a limited competition, you

should have the comfort of knowing that you have an equal chance of winning against every other competitor and that all the entrants will abide by the requirements. There have been cases where the winning entrant has not followed all the competition guidelines.

Often I hear from a client that "We allowed this architect to enter as a courtesy, because he has done work for us before." That means there is no chance for him to win. The developer thinks he has done that architect a favor by letting him participate, but in fact has probably done him an injustice.

Architects spend tremendous amounts of money on competition entries. To go to the effort and expense with little chance of winning cannot be regarded as a favor to the architect, except for publicity or to have the creativity and quality of the firm's work rediscovered by the owner. It seems only appropriate that the prequalified firm that submits the best entry, which also complies with all the requirements of the competition, should win. The competition should be judged by people competent to judge a competition—both owners and architects.

Even though most limited competitions are paid ones, the architects spend far more money—meaning double, triple, or quadruple the amount that is paid to them—in order to win the competition. As you get nearer and nearer to finishing a competition entry, you begin to think that if you add another drawing, another model—you will win. So you pour it on, both in time and energy; a panic almost sets in.

I feel very strongly that if there is going to be a competition, it should be paid for and that the amount of money should be equitable, that is, not a token in terms of the work that must be done, but an amount of money that represents the effort that those staging the competition are asking of the architect.

Architecture is not a very profitable profession. There are a lot of risks and not every project makes money or is even a break-even situation. Competitions cost an architecture firm considerable amounts of money. To ask architects to participate in many competitions—wherein they lose significant amounts of money but rarely win—really hurts the professionals.

The majority of projects planned by developers or even by corporations are not, in my opinion, appropriate for competitions. The best results—the best buildings—come as a result of working closely together with your client—understanding the needs, the spirit, the goals of the company. A competition does not afford the architect the opportunity to get the client involved.

An example of a competition that should not have happened is the following: One corporation was going to build a 225,000 sq. ft. headquarters and determined to hold a competition in two phases. Phase I was to be non-paid. They invited approximately 20 architects to submit designs after four weeks of work. (They even asked the entrants to pay a \$250 deposit for the competition materials.) Then the corporation planned to choose four architects for the next phase. The estimated expenditure for four weeks of work in time and models would be \$50,000 to \$75,000. If you were one of the four chosen for the next phase you would get \$25,000—except for the winner, who would get the award. If you were unlucky enough to be chosen for the next phase you would get \$25,000 to do larger models and spend \$75,000 to \$125,000 in order to win. (Remember, the building was only to be 225,000 sq. ft.) If you won, you didn't get paid the \$25,000 fee and were in the hole for approximately \$125,000 to \$150,000 at the start. The chances of making a profit on 225,000 sq. ft. are slim. Without the competition you might at best make a profit of \$75,000 to \$125,000. After the cost of the competition is deducted you would be lucky to break even and would probably lose money—maybe



*President A. Eugene Kohn*

as much as \$100,000 to \$225,000 with the cost of the competition included. I believe a corporate office project of this size does not warrant the competition process and is really taking advantage of architects.

The most reasonable way to select an architect is to research the appropriate architects for the project—to get to know them through the interview process (more than one), see their work, check their references, and feel comfortable with one before choosing an architect. Competitions attack the weakness of architects. The desire to do the building is so paramount that we tend to overlook practical considerations—the considerations required to support our firms and our people and to give to our work and talent value.

I am concerned that our profession is hurting itself by excessive competition. Our major contribution is our creative effort, our solving the design issues. If we give away our best talent, sometimes for very little money, sometimes for a loss, then we are giving away that very talent that is the cornerstone of our profession. Design—the creative effort that makes us special—is what justifies our profession, our usefulness to society.

In those cases where competitions are appropriate they should be well planned and managed by the owners, fair to all invited participants, and pay a fee corresponding to the time, effort, and submission requirements.

# AN OCULUS CELEBRATION

## Continued

Last month's second installment of our semi-centennial History of *Oculus* ended with David Paul Helpern's recall of his years of editorship—from 1973 to 1975. He concluded with his own retelling during that time of the beginnings of this publication in 1938, showing, again, the cyclic nature of publishing as of memory.

This month's continuation of the story recounts how the present editorial situation came about, wherein *Oculus* is edited by a professional team of outside editorial consultants who specialize in the subject matter of architecture and the other design fields.

The reasons and advantages for organizational newsletters being produced by outside consultants are several: (1) an editorial consultant team relieves the in-house staff of the ongoing workload of producing a publication; (2) a consultant can serve as policeman to the adopted schedule (not without at times seeming to be an ogre), whereas an in-house staff tends to respond to other pressures, such as, "Fund raising has to take first priority right now"—and so publishing schedules are let to slide; and (3) though editing, like writing, may look as if anyone could do it if they had the time, editing is a craft built up over the years that is best exercised by specialists.

In this installment, after the observations of the current editorial team on their six-year tenure, the story comes full cycle again. Received late, and published here, are the recollections of Edward Everett Post, who preceded Harmon Goldstone as editor of *Oculus* from October 1949 to January 1951. In our ending is our beginning.

Still, for future issues, the editors invite your remembrances as contributions to this history of *Oculus* in its 50th year of publication.

CRS

Denis Glen Kuhn  
1976-1979

My tenure began in the fall of 1976 and lasted until the fall of 1979. My principal goal was to publish an issue every month and to establish in the membership's mind, as well as in the office in-box, the existence of *Oculus* as a regular, dependable means of Chapter communication.

As part of this communication, we were able to start a primitive form of the regular monthly calendar that is now a vital part of each current issue.

We utilized the *Oculus* format designed by Arnold Saks, developed during J. Arvid Klein's and David Halpern's editorships. The frustration we encountered was in the time required to typeset each issue, which caused us to miss deadlines frequently. In order to keep to an every-month schedule, we resorted to hand typing instead of typesetting each column. This was the age of the IBM interchangeable ball, so we could even italicize.

George Lewis, Richard Ferrara, William Shopsin, and I would write most of the articles and Cathanne Piesla would type them. Then I would rush home to my drafting table and do the final paste-up, including cropping photographs, "letra-setting" each title, and returning the material the next day to Cathanne to forward to the printer. George Lewis would proofread the final paste-up and the blue-line galley, faithfully picking up typographical errors. We made an effective team, producing some 28 editions. We allowed ourselves the luxury of skipping one summer month each year.

Looking back at this sometimes hectic three-year period, I remember the patience of my boss, Georgio Cavaglieri, as I chased down an errant article on the office phone or attended one last quick meeting at the Chapter.

Al Lorenz produced over a hundred brilliantly drawn cartoons; we published over 20. We tried to include drawings whenever possible. The yearly Chapter awards program was always published with ample



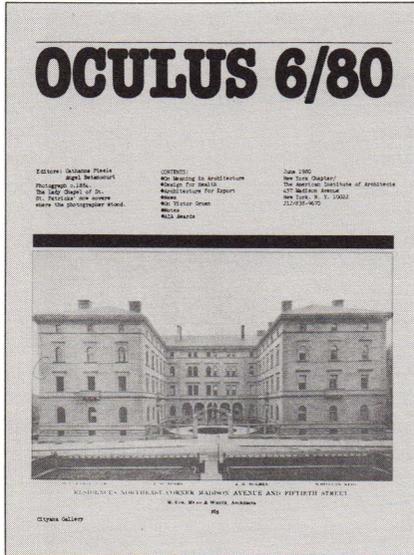
*Oculus*, September 1979.

photographs and a good series was run on each of the schools of architecture in the New York City area.

This was also the period in the Seventies when many of our colleagues were out of work due to a very severe drop in workload throughout all the offices in the metropolitan area. We ran a poem by Ken Ricci about the depressing state of the profession and a photo of one of our colleagues on the unemployment line. I remember both of us being chased out of the unemployment office by other people on line who thought I was deliberately taking their pictures to be used against them later for some diabolical purpose.

In June of 1978 I received the Chapter's Harry B. Rutkins Award "For the liveliness he has brought to *Oculus*, a newsfilled yet often irreverent commentary on Chapter events." I still get a sense of satisfaction for publishing an issue each month, for the variety of subjects and topics covered, for learning how to do paste-up and to proofread copy, and most importantly, for clearly demonstrating the value of *Oculus* and the need for a professional editor to reach the present level of high quality.

Design by Massimo Vignelli  
1979



Oculus, June 1980

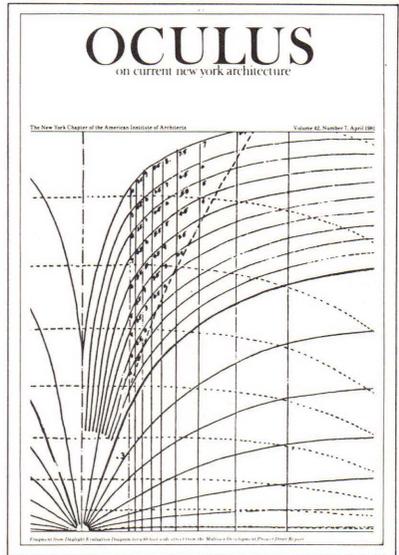
In 1979 Jaquelin Robertson wrote in *Oculus*, "With this issue, *Oculus* takes on a 'new look,' a new editorial format and, hopefully, a more vital and interesting direction in keeping with both the Chapter's location and its seminal and historic role within the larger AIA family . . . For this reason we've called on Massimo Vignelli to give us an attractive and economical new format—a fresh visual style—and upon a number of the City's top professional editors to help shape content to ever-changing architectural concerns. *Oculus* will have either a guest Editor or a Guest Editorial each issue—Andrew MacNair, Suzanne Stephens, C. Ray Smith have already agreed to serve the cause—so as to better focus on the wide range of views in our city and to further stimulate enlightened discussion amongst ourselves . . . there will be a search for controversy as well as for self-approving consensus; for disagreement and debate; an effort to reflect the world as it is as well as what we would like it to be . . ."



Oculus, June 1980

The Guest Editor idea did not work, it appears, for subsequently then-Executive Director George Lewis wrote in his Notes on the Year, "*Oculus* appeared in a new format designed by Massimo Vignelli and did not manage to get itself published on a regular basis." Rumor had it that the invited Guest Editors could not afford to donate their professional services to such a degree.

Andrew MacNair  
1980-1981



Oculus, Volume 42, No. 7, April 1981

In the summer of 1980, George Lewis and John Belle, then president of NYC/AIA, asked me to work with them on *Oculus*. I re-designed the newsletter from a very plain tissue number that Massimo Vignelli designed the year before, as part of the Chapter's interest in improving its newsletter from its original printed colored one-sheet report.

With a small budget we produced a modest, yet improved, monthly newsletter with a relatively traditional design. The number of pages and images was a function of available money.

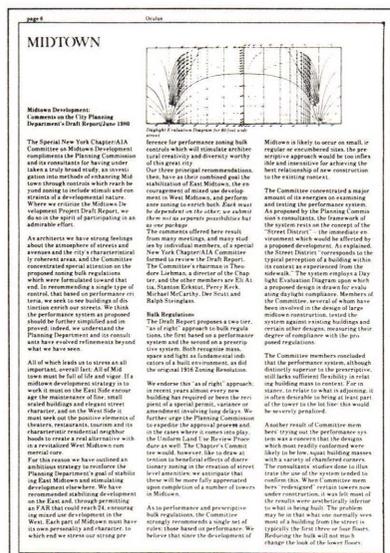
*Andrew MacNair's brief statement should be supplemented by his editorial in Oculus of January 1980:*

"*Oculus* has always held up a two-way lens; one focusing upon the activities of the New York architect, and the other, opening its eye toward the larger and broader architecture world as a whole—Manhattan, New York, and the United States.

"*Oculus* will continue this tradition. While refining the scope, established in its first issues of 1938, *Oculus* will actively report to you the current developments of programs, projects, and plans within the New York

# AN OCULUS CELEBRATION

## Continued



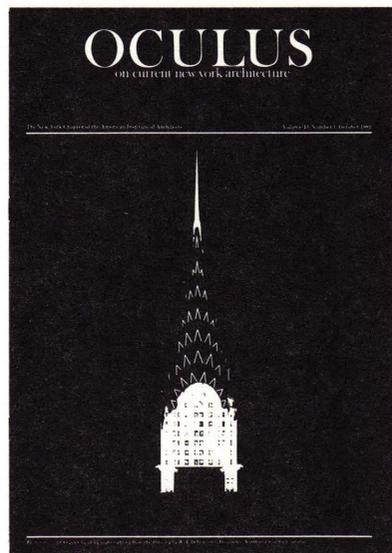
Oculus, Volume 42, No. 7, April 1981

chapter as it unpacks its crates from West 40th Street to inaugurate its new ideas within the Urban Center.

*"Oculus is a channel for your ideas, projects, and accomplishments. It will be both a record of developments of your work as architects and provide a critical lens for reviewing these developments . . . We must open up the lens, to let in other light and express . . . ideas about architecture in a changing society."*

*And Andrew MacNair, in his too brief tenure as editor did just that—publishing excerpts of speeches, lectures, and articles by architects and theoreticians not only from here but also those abroad; publishing news on architecture projects from all over the world (something that had not been done before in Oculus); adding the calendar; and most significant of all, combining the newsletter format with that of a visual design magazine. Without that last seemingly subtle yet truly innovative step, today's Oculus could not be what it is.*

### C. Ray Smith 1981-Present

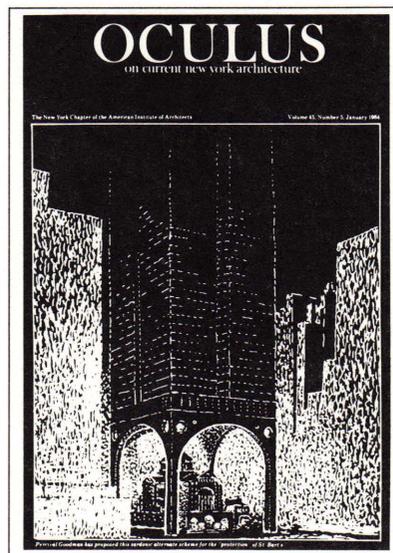


Oculus, Volume 43, No. 1, October 1981

The present editorial team has continued that approach and has refined it: turning the calendar sideways so that it can be pulled out of the issue easily and hung on a wall; refining the trim size for economy; and so on.

As editor, I aim to present debates on crucial professional issues in the pages of *Oculus*. To avoid conflicts of interest or disagreement with the Chapter's official position on any subject, we put opposing opinions on facing pages or in adjacent columns. This format makes a debate of the running text, provides a podium both for the major professional statement and for opposition. The simultaneity of the two statements makes the debate well rounded, or at least not one sided, and avoids the appearance of seeming to endorse a single isolated opinion.

On notable occasions this device has led to additional controversy, however. When the Chapter voted not to take an official position on the addition to the Guggenheim Museum, the editor came under some censure from several members for presenting opposing opinions in a way that was considered, at the least, too forceful. Several cartoons by distinguished Chapter members were considered major offenders.



Oculus, Volume 45, No. 5, January 1984

The traditional prerogative of the editor and art director for the choice of cover illustration has also been a matter of occasional concern. Not only were two of the "infamous" Guggenheim cartoons the cause of major turbulence, but the appearance of a building designed by an out-of-town architect caused some consternation.

Perhaps such consternation springs up because the cover of a publication is felt by some to imply approval—though the evening newspapers clearly teach otherwise. We aim for *Oculus* covers to provide news, leaving readers to form their own opinions—as with the textual debates. To rule out the possibility of having on the cover works by other than Chapter members would have left past issues in considerable question, for example: Arata Isozaki (Palladium, Jun 85), Frank Lloyd Wright (Guggenheim Museum, Feb 86), or God and Nature (Waterfront, Apr 85).

This editorial team has also been questioned for the tautology caused by changing the subtitle of the publication from "On Current New York Architecture" to "An Eye on New York Architecture." The reasoning is that "eye" is a direct translation of the Latin "oculus." And



# OCULUS NYC/AIA DEC 87

## CONTINUING EVENTS

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

*Oculus welcomes information for the  
calendar pertaining to public events  
about architecture and the other design  
professions. It is due in writing by the 1st  
of the month for the following issue.*

*Because of the time lag between  
information received and printed, final  
details of events are likely to change. It is  
recommended that events be checked  
with sponsoring institutions before  
attending.*

### ART/N.Y.

Paintings, prints, drawings, and  
sculpture in ongoing series of  
exhibitions of original art by  
emerging artists at the offices of Fox  
& Fowle Architects, 22 W. 19 St.  
627-3557. Closes Feb. 19.

### EXHIBITION

Joseph Urban: Vienna/New York.  
Cooper-Hewitt Museum. 860-6868.  
Closes March 6.

## MONDAY 7

### WORKSHOP

"Being More Profitable and  
Competitive with PC CADD," an  
AIA-sponsored modular workshop  
focusing on the effective use of  
CADD in the architecture/design  
firm. Roosevelt Hotel, NYC. Contact:  
Graphic Systems, Inc., Lou Savarino  
617-492-1148.

### EXHIBITION

Modelmaker as Master Artisan.  
Artisanspace Gallery. F.I.T., Seventh  
Avenue at 27 St. 760-7624. Closes  
Dec. 10.

### BUCKMINSTER FULLER

Exhibition. Max Protetch Gallery,  
560 Broadway at Prince St. 838-7436.  
Closes Dec. 12.

## TUESDAY 1

### GEORGE HARGREAVES

Exhibition of Hargreaves Associates'  
landscape work in the western U.S.  
Harvard Graduate School of Design,  
Gund Hall Gallery, 48 Quincy St.,  
Cambridge, MA. 617-495-9340. Closes  
Dec. 18.

### DEADLINE

For submissions in the Municipal Art  
Society's competition "Wanted: A  
Waterfront for New York."  
Waterfront Competition, MAS, 457  
Madison Ave., NYC 10022. 935-3960.

## TUESDAY 8

### NYC/AIA ROUNDTABLE

"Profile: Collaboration between the  
Landscape Architect and the Artist"  
presented by the Chapter's Art and  
Architecture Committee with M. Paul  
Friedberg, Jackie Ferrara, Walter  
Dusenbery, and Jean Feinberg as  
moderator. 6:30 pm. \$5 admission.  
Call for location and reservations  
838-9670.

### EXHIBITION

Architecture for Dinosaurs. Photos  
and drawings of the building of the  
American Museum of Natural  
History. Central Park West at 79 St.  
769-5000. Closes Dec. 13.

### EXHIBITION

"The Golden Age of Ottoman  
Architecture: Sinan, Sultan  
Suleyman's Court Architect,"  
presented by the Architectural  
League. The Urban Center, 457  
Madison. 753.1722. Closes Dec. 16.

## WEDNESDAY 2

### EAMES FILM FESTIVAL

Eight short films produced by  
Charles and Ray Eames between  
1955 and 1978. 6:30 pm. Cooper-  
Hewitt Museum. 860-6868.

## WEDNESDAY 9

### LECTURE

"Joseph Urban - From Vienna to  
New York, 1872-1933" by Timothy  
Rub, guest curator of the Joseph  
Urban exhibition. 6:30 pm. Cooper-  
Hewitt Museum. 860-6868.

### COLIN ROWE

Walter Gropius Lecture. 6 pm.  
Harvard Graduate School of Design,  
Piper Auditorium, Gund Hall, 48  
Quincy St., Cambridge, MA  
617-495-9340.

### NYC/AIA EXHIBITION

Drawings 1914-1925 by Alexander  
Rodchenko. Closes Dec. 18.

### TOWNSCAPES OF EUROPE

Exhibition of photographs of public  
places in Europe. AIA Headquarters,  
Washington, DC 202-626-7467. Closes  
Dec. 30.

### OTTO WAGNER: DRAWINGS

Exhibition of the turn-of-the-century  
Viennese architect's drawings. The  
Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St.  
219-2166.

## THURSDAY 3

### LECTURE

James Stuckey, PDC president, on  
"Government - Urban Design -  
Metro Tech, Brooklyn: Case Studies,"  
in Pratt series. 6:30 pm. Higgins Hall,  
St. James Place & Lafayette Ave.,  
Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

### LECTURE ON ROBERT ADAM

By Gervase Jackson-Stops,  
architectural adviser for the British  
National Trust. Corcoran Gallery of  
Art's Frances & Armand Hammer  
Audit., Washington, DC 202-638-3221.

## THURSDAY 10

### THE CITY TRANSFORMED

Art Deco: The European Roots  
1910-1925 by Barry S. Lewis in 92nd  
Street Y lecture series. 6-7:30 pm. at  
the Central Synagogue Community  
House, 128 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

### EXHIBITION

The Age of Sultan Suleyman the  
Magnificent. Metropolitan Museum  
of Art. 879-5500. Closes Jan. 17.

### GALVESTON ARCHES

Seven fantasy arches designed by  
architects Charles Moore, Cesar  
Pelli, Stanley Tigerman, Michael  
Graves, Helmut Jahn, Boone Powell,  
Eugene Aubry. Cooper-Hewitt  
Museum. 860-6868. Closes Jan. 31.

## FRIDAY 4

### CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

Annual Christmas Tree and Baroque  
Creche Display. Metropolitan  
Museum of Art. 879-5500. Through  
Jan. 3.

## FRIDAY 11

### SEMINAR ON SAT. DEC. 12

"The 'First Ladies' of Decorating"  
moderated by C. Ray Smith will  
consider the work of the pioneer lady  
decorators of the 30s and 40s.  
Participants: Sarah Cecil, vice  
president of Rose Cumming and  
author of a forthcoming book on Rose  
Cumming; Dupuy Warrick Reed,  
design historian; Carleton Varney,  
president, Dorothy Draper & Co.  
10 am-4 pm. Cooper-Hewitt Museum.  
To register: 860-6868.

**MONDAY 11**

**TWELFTH NIGHT AT KEDLESTON**

Evening of refreshments and entertainment typical of an early 19th-century Christmas season at Kedleston Hall. The Octagon, Washington, DC. 202-638-3221

**TUESDAY 12**

**NYC/AIA BRUNNER DIALOGUES**

Thomas L. Schumacher, 1986 recipient of the Chapter's Arnold W. Brunner Grant, first in series of presentations by former recipients. 6 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 838-9670.

**WEDNESDAY 13**

**LECTURE**

By George Hargreaves, San Francisco landscape architect. 6 pm. Harvard Graduate School of Design, Piper Auditorium, Gund Hall, 48 Quincy St., Cambridge, MA 617-495-9340.

**CONFERENCE**

1987 Microcomputer Graphics Conference. Jacob Javits Convention Center. 609-987-9400.

**THURSDAY 14**

**MIES VAN DER ROHE**

Exhibition at Max Protetch Gallery, 560 Broadway at Prince Street. 838-7436. Closes Jan. 16.

**FRIDAY 15**

1888: Public works official Robert Moses born.



*SOM's new building across from the Public Library*



*Photos: Stan Ries*

## Names and News

Oculus regrets the death of interior designer William Pahlmann at 87. He died in Guadalajara, Mexico on November 8th and a memorial service was held in San Antonio on November 13. . . . Stuart Pertz has been appointed a City Planning Commissioner. . . .

John H. Beyer addressed the New York University Real Estate Institute in October. The lessons of South Street Seaport's public/private development partnership was the focus of his presentation . . . .

Groundbreaking ceremonies in *Bryant Park* were held on October 26 to mark the beginning of a \$21.6 million project to restore the park and extend the New York Public Library's book stacks beneath the Park's central lawn . . . . Kevin Hom has joined Fox & Fowle Architects as vice president . . . .

The presidents of the American Institute of Architects and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada have signed an "Accord on Professionalism" setting the stage to improve reciprocity for U.S. and Canadian architects practicing on both sides of the border . . . . The Eggers Group has expanded and renovated a 1914 gymnasium at Union College in Schenectady "in the spirit in which it was originally designed." . . . . The Office for Metropolitan History, the 13-year-old consulting firm headed by Christopher Gray, has moved to an artists' studio building at 80th Street and Broadway. Being dedicated to urban history, Mr. Gray notes, "Constructed in 1905 as the Broadway Studio Building, the five-story building was the home of Parsons School of Design from 1906 to the late 1930s and it was reportedly there that Jean-Michel Frank's 'Parsons Table' was popularized" . . . . Kenneth Frampton moderated a symposium in November on Wagner drawings in conjunction with the exhibition "Otto Wagner: Drawings" currently on view at the Drawing Center (see Calendar) . . . . Michael A. Nieminen has been made an associate in the firm of R.M. Kliment & Frances Halsband Architects . . . . Architects/Social Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility/NY are sponsoring the third international exhibition (Feb. 23-March 5) and benefit auction (Feb.



25, 6-9 pm) of architects' drawings at the Max Protetch Gallery Annex, 214 Lafayette Street. James Stewart Polshek and Kenneth Frampton, as co-chairmen of the Auction Committee, invited curators abroad and in the U.S. to submit a short list of architects and designers who have either already established major reputations or who (as younger architects) are on their way to doing so. Countries to be represented are Britain, Finland, France, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Rumania, the U.S., the USSR, and West Germany. For more information: Laurence Shopmaker at 966-5454 or Magda Salvesen at 334-8104 . . . . The Landmarks Preservation Commission has granted landmark status to two 19th-century Staten Island houses: the Dorothy Valentine Smith house (1893-95), and the John King Vanderbilt house (1836) Executive Committee Director . . . . Douglas F. Korves made a very respectable showing in the New York Marathon with a finish time of 4 hrs. 47 mins.

### Christmas Ideas

For Christmas presents with a New York City slant, the Department of General Services City Publishing Center offers Citybooks Catalog with gifts ranging from Sanitation Department caps and T-shirts, and Subway Token neckties to cast iron NYC seals from the West Side Highway as well as such publications as *When Brooklyn Was the World 1920-1957* by Elliot Willensky, *Sailors' Snug Harbor 1801-1976* by Barnett Shepherd, *Manhattan Trivia The Ultimate Challenges* by Val Ginter, *A Guide to New York City Landmarks*, *New York City 1988 Alternative Side of the Street Parking Calendar*, and a great deal more both serious and frivolous. For free catalog: Citybooks 669-8245.

*One Keycorp Plaza by Brennan Beer Gorman/Architects*

### Architectural Study Tour

A four-day tour, *Miami: Tropical Skyline* (March 17-20) sponsored by the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, will look at a wide cross-section of the various architecture styles that have flourished and are still evolving in modern Miami. Richard Hoberman, president of the Miami Design Preservation League, will guide visits to the "exotic" planned communities of the 1920s in Coral Gables and Coconut Grove, Fairchild Tropical Gardens, the Art Deco hotels of the 1930s on Miami Beach, and to important modernist and post-modernist structures including Arquitectonica's Spear house. Accommodations will be at the newly refurbished beachfront Eden Roc Hotel, designed and built by Morris Lapidus in the 1950s. To register and for more information: Cooper-Hewitt Museum 860-6868.

### Competitions

December 15, 1987 is the deadline for entries in the 1988 Lumen Award Program, which was "conceived and developed to encourage and to publicly recognize excellence, professionalism, ingenuity and originality of lighting design." Any project completed in 1986 or 1987 in the NY Metro area and/or any project designed by a New York designer or consultant is eligible. For more information: Michael Cahana, Wheel Gersztzoff Freedman Associates, 807-7727 . . . . The Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA) has called for entries in its 1988 Industrial Design Excellence Awards program. Designers may submit designs in the following categories: environments, equipment, exhibits, furniture & fixtures, toys & games, instruments, machinery, 3D packaging, products, signage, systems, transportation, design explorations, and student design projects. May 6, 1988 is the entry deadline. Any product placed on the market after May 1, 1986 and before May 1, 1988 is eligible. IDSA members may order entry kits for \$65 each, nonmembers for \$105 each. Those who wish to participate should contact IDSA, 1142-E Walker Road, Great Falls, VA 22066; 703-759-0100.

Letters

The correspondence reproduced was actually authored, it is suspected, by Chapter member John A. James, now practicing for other endorsements in Sheffield, Massachusetts.

THUMBLESS CORPORATION

Innovators in Boot Recycling  
2350 Crepe Avenue  
Oxford, Iowa 19146

October 10, 1987

Mr. T. Merrill Prentice  
130 Lake Road  
West Cornwall, Connecticut 06796

RE: Product Endorsement

Dear Mr. Prentice:

After seeing the enclosed advertisement - which we thought was brilliant - we decided to launch a similar campaign for our products with you as principal spokesman and image-giver. A photograph of our latest and most inventive product is enclosed for your review.

If you are interested in participating in this wonderful, international advertising campaign, please let us know as soon as possible. We are prepared to sign a contract with you immediately and provide you with a substantial retainer. An added benefit to you would be a lifetime supply of any of our products for you and your family.

We implore you, as one of the most visible proponents of Post-Mortemist architecture, to accept our offer and become a member of our exciting new venture.

Sincerely yours,

X  
JERRY THUMBLESS,  
President

JT:jaj

encl



The Significance Of Classic Structures.

by Michael Graves



Michael Graves is one of the century's most celebrated architects. His work has won hundreds of awards, including the Prix de Rome, and includes everything from art museums to airports. Currently, he is a professor of architecture at Princeton University.

"During a presentation to a client the other day, I was asked a rather provocative question. He said, 'Tell me, why is it that your buildings look so traditional and so new at the same time?'"

I was rather surprised at first, but then I realized that his comment tells us something important about where we are in architecture and design today. I guess I have not forgotten the lessons that 5,000 years of architectural history have taught us.

And what a history it's been.

The Parthenon. The Coliseum. The great cathedrals of Europe. At the same time, though, I am trying to re-interpret those traditions in a modern form.

For me, the things that endure are those that blend the traditions we all know with the spirit of new invention. The familiarity of the past as one with the freshness of the present.

When the people at Dexter showed me their shoes, I said "Perfect, this is just what I mean about combining the classic and the contemporary."

A classic dress shoe is only as good as some of the contemporary thinking that goes into it. Like a firm dedication to using only the richest, softest, most supple leathers. Not only in the uppers, but in the soles and insole coverings as well.

As for support, comfort and shape retention, the same dedication holds true. And all our shoes are put together with a level of craftsmanship and attention to detail that is unheard of in the shoe business.

"Which just goes to prove what I've been saying for years. There is nothing more important than starting with a good foundation."



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THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE / OCTOBER 4, 1987 47

Dear Editor:  
I wouldn't have believed it possible, but Spiro Kostof's TV series "America by Design" has managed to make Robert A.M. Stern's recent "Pride of Place" look good. Despite the expensive pretensions, what mainly remains for me of these efforts is the battle of theatrical props: Spiro's costume changing vs. Robert's slick roadster. The architectural education of the American public has been set back a decade. Weep for the profession; with friends like these two, who needs enemies?

Simon Breines  
Pomerance & Breines

Dear Editor:  
I am an expediter working in New York and an architect client of mine recently passed along *Oculus* (Jun-87, p. 12) all-too-cheerful notice of the

change in New York's appointment procedure for the Department of Buildings. Instead of calmly announcing this change, the AIA should be fighting tooth and nail with the City to force them to provide the services needed by the architectural and construction communities.

The Department of Buildings is currently in a shambles. The telephone appointment system is, quite simply, a lottery. It is sometimes possible to get appointments over the phone. It is more often possible to get nothing but busy signals for 45 minutes at a time, day after day. The telephone system was created to eliminate early morning lines for appointments. Neither system addresses the basic problem. The Department of Buildings is drastically understaffed and cannot keep qualified examiners for more than a short time.

Commissioner Smith never goes to the Manhattan office, even though it is now right downstairs from his own office. He simply attends meetings and acts shocked when a building falls down or blows up. His indifference to the actual workings of the department appears monumental.

The filing fee basis was recently raised from \$5 to \$10 per thousand dollars of construction cost. An increase of that magnitude at a time when services get worse every day is an outrage.

Individual architects can do nothing to influence the city, or even get the city's attention. The AIA as their representative is letting them down.  
Judith A. Faulkner

## AROUND THE CHAPTER

### Chapter Reports

Having just signed off on the 1986-87 fiscal year, and approaching the end of the 1987 calendar year, we see a great deal of change here at the Chapter. Not all is visible, but much of it is apparent in the way that your membership, announcements, and participation in the Chapter are developed and processed.

Finances this year were sufficient to permit us finally to fund a long-needed upgrade of the Chapter's computers. We unceremoniously abandoned our two antique Osborne computers, and with the advice and help of Charette are now the proud users of new Macintosh computers and a Laserwriter printer. Over one-half of the membership data-base is "inputted," making checking records easier and somewhat more foolproof than before. Contract Distributors, Inc., one of the original donors to the Headquarters renovation, contributed a technician to hide the myriad of cables necessary to make the computer installation possible. More of our "in-house" announcements are coming directly out of the computer, thanks to its graphic capabilities. Recent mailings that you may have noted for their new look are: "Turning Designs Into Building," the Heritage Ball flyer, the Vertical Architecture and Rodchenko exhibit announcements, the special double Rodchenko catalog, and our new Public Membership application. Watch for more changes to come.

The Chapter has leased off-premises warehouse space, and we are now able to clear out some of the standing supplies that have clogged the staff office for years. Archival materials and out-of-date records have been dispatched to the Bronx, and files and other day-to-day needed items are now stored in the basement. Plans are in the works, thanks to a donation of design time from Kohn Pedersen Fox, for additional shelving and storage for the staff office. We hope to proceed with this new construction in phases, as funds become available.

Through the good offices of Furniture Consultants, Inc., we have purchased much needed additional furniture, which should be in place in January. New files, a computer table for our bookkeeper, and a desk and chair for the staff office will make it easier to maintain an uncluttered look. It means that for the first time each staff member will actually have her own desk, and this can only result in increased productivity.

Our special thanks to all who are working with us on this transformation!

I would remind you that the Chapter is your "headquarters" too. Please stop by and visit the Members Gallery — the Rodchenko exhibit is particularly beautiful — and check out the fact that you can actually see the carpet in the staff office.

LML

### NYC/AIA Annual Financial Report

	1985/86	1986/87
<b>Receipts</b>		
Dues	\$324,095	\$380,985
Administration	11,452	13,455
Oculus	11,005	17,407
Publication Sales	74,594	70,224
Committees/Events	52,763	94,787
Miscellaneous	4,683	8,949
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$478,592</b>	<b>\$585,807</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>		
Administration	\$288,580	\$326,445
Bylaw Required	5,900	5,600
Oculus	75,412	95,317
Committees/Events	108,031	120,067
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$477,923</b>	<b>\$547,429</b>
Fund Balance	\$ 670	\$ 38,378

The above represents the Chapter's financial position as of September 30, 1987. The audit has begun and will be available for review when completed later this year. Our 1986-87 year was successful in both outside fundraising (some 19 percent comes from direct fund-raising efforts) and increased member base (a 15 percent increase over 1985-86).

We would like to thank those of you who have responded promptly to the sustaining member dues invoice for the 1987-88 fiscal year, which was mailed in mid-September. The Chapter's cash flow situation, always tight, has been eased considerably by these prompt payments.

### NYCAIA88!

The Chapter is planning a very special kick off event for the '88 Convention: the Thomas Jefferson Ball. This black-tie gala will be held Saturday night, May 14, 1988, just prior to the American Institute of Architects' 120th Convention start. It will be a celebration of "Art in Architecture" in honor of the first architect President of the United States of America.

Chapter President A. Eugene Kohn, in announcing the plans has said: "The intent of this celebration of the Arts in Architecture is to bring to the fore the leadership of architects and artists in the creation of the special fabric of our lives: not only the built environment, but the enhancement of literature, theater, dance, painting, and drawing, which we so frequently take for granted in the passage of each day. We will honor those artists who make the many contributions, in the name of one who contributed so much during his lifetime. Thomas Jefferson, the consummate statesman, architect, and artist, is a symbol to us all of the leadership of which we are capable, and the influence and change which we bring to the world."

Members of the New York art community will join architects from around the country and the world to celebrate on May 14, 1988, in the Museum of Modern Art. All the Museum's galleries will be open — including the Architecture and Design Collection as well as the Garden (weather permitting) — for our two thousand guests. The Ball will begin at 9:00 pm with brief opening remarks by Gene Kohn and with the introduction of honored guests. Dancing to the music of Eight to the Bar, viewing of the artworks, and mingling

throughout the Museum will follow and continue into the night.

A Host Committee of prominent artists and architects is in formation, and will be announced early in 1988. Plans for the Jefferson Ball have been under the direction of Convention Steering Committee member Kenneth H. Walker, principal of the Walker Group/CNI, who has worked closely with the Museum of Modern Art to create a memorable evening. Tickets will be limited by MOMA's capacity, so watch for the announcements of this unique event.

### Coming Chapter Events

- Tuesday, December 8, 6:30 pm. The Art and Architecture Committee is presenting "Profile: Collaboration between the Landscape Architect and the Artist" with panelists M. Paul Friedberg, Jackie Ferrara, Walter Dusenbery, and Jean Feinberg as moderator. There will be a \$5 admission charge. Call for location and reservations 838-9670.

- Tuesday, December 15, 6 pm. The Urban Center. Thomas L. Schumacher, 1986 recipient of the Chapter's Arnold W. Brunner Grant, will be the first in a series of Brunner Dialogues by former recipients of the Grant.

### Special Offerings

The Chapter is now able to offer a number of new and enhanced services to the membership and the public.

*Oculus* is available on a subscription basis through Public Membership in the New York Foundation for Architecture. If you are thinking of holiday gifts for friends, family, and clients, think of *Oculus*. Public Membership also brings with it the added benefit of Exhibit Opening announcements, invitations to the Annual Meeting and the Heritage Ball, and . . . *Special for 1988* . . . access to the Annual Convention of the AIA, to be held in May at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.

Members Gallery Exhibit Catalogs are now available on a subscription basis. If you, or your clients, miss the four shows per year, but still want to "see" what is happening, this service may be the answer. Available for \$30 per year, the catalogs will be mailed as soon as they are received from the printer, usually in advance of the exhibit opening. Overseas subscription rates are also available. Archival issues of previous exhibits are available by mail in limited quantities for \$10, including postage and handling.

AIA Bookstore Gifts are available through the Documents Department. Numerous architecture-related gift items from the AIA can be ordered through the Chapter. Note cards, childrens books, posters, architecture books, and more. If you have not saved the AIA catalog sent earlier in the year, stop at the documents window for information.

### Extra Extra Oculus

A limited number of extra May 1987 Distinguished Architecture Awards issues of *Oculus* are available at the Chapter. You can purchase single or multiple copies by sending a check for \$2.00 per copy to the Chapter. This offer will be available through December 1987 or until the supply is depleted, whichever happens first.

### The Brunner Dialogues

The Chapter will host a series of presentations by former recipients of the Chapter's Arnold W. Brunner Grant. The presentation will be sponsored by the Brunner Committee, Steven Peterson chair.

The Arnold W. Brunner Grant was founded in his memory by Emma Brunner, his widow, through a bequest to the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Its purpose is to further the development of architecture in the United States by awarding one or more grants, usually

annual, "for advance study in some field of architectural investigation which will most effectively contribute to the practice, teaching, or knowledge of the art and science of architecture."

The recipient of the annual monetary award is selected by a panel of distinguished professionals in architecture, journalism, and education.

The series will feature the work of recent recipients in the subject area for which the grant was bestowed and will include:

Miriam Gusevich, 1985, to develop a series of essays developed through the study of the phenomenon of Kitsch on the development of a Modernist sensibility. The hypothesis here presented is that the major participants of the European Modern movement rejected the use of historical precedents as a reaction to what they regarded as Kitsch, or bad taste, in 19th century works. They interpreted Kitsch as the corrupt nexus of modern technology and traditional forms, and proposed to disengage these two components as a corrective against Kitsch. Contrary to their intention, the proliferation of "Modern Kitsch" has thrown into question this interpretation of the problem of Kitsch, and the problem will not simply go away, whether in Modern or Post-Modern guise.

Thomas L. Schumacher, 1986, to research a book on Guiseppe Terragni and the Culture of Modern Italian Architecture. Mr. Schumacher's work concentrated on the convergence of the ideological imperatives of the Modern movement in architecture with the history of Italy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; the importance of nationalism and the *Rigorgimento* and its dominance above Fascism; ideological and aesthetic influences of writers like Croce, Beontempelli, Pirandello; the idea of the "Third Rome;" the ambivalent attitude in Italy toward functionalism, summarized in Marcello Piacentini's call for "two

## Erosion and Accretion

by Lenore M. Lucey

architectures, one in evening dress and one in underwear.”

Suzanne Stephens, 1987, for an analysis of the development of architecture criticism in the United States over the last 130 years, using essays that have been printed in newspapers and periodicals as examples. By documenting this history of architecture criticism, Ms. Stephens opens the discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of architectural evaluation over the years.

The evenings will take place at the Urban Center in the Doris C. Freedman Gallery on the main floor. See *Oculus* calendar for dates and times.

CAP

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### Contemporary Architecture in West Germany May 18-28, 1988

10-day tour sponsored by the NYC/AIA.

Travel to West Berlin, Frankfurt, Cologne, and Dusseldorf following the 1988 AIA National Convention in New York City, May 15-18.

See how the design competition of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) has transformed Berlin into a showcase for world architecture with structures by Mario Botta, Arata Isozaki, James Stirling, Robert A.M. Stern, and others.

Visit celebrated new museums by Richard Meier and Hans Hollein and urban center developments in Frankfurt and Dusseldorf.

Spend the day in East Berlin touring Old Berlin's surviving Baroque buildings and new Classical structures.

For itinerary and price of the post-convention trip to West Germany — where contemporary architecture has come of age — contact: Regina Kelly, 838-9670.

An old adage has it that one should buy real estate because no more will be created and because it is not going to disappear, and therefore can only go up in value. In reality, however, both the removal of existing land and the creation of new land occur — erosion and accretion.

Architects face the same in their practices:

- The *erosion* of traditional architectural areas of practice to “special consultants.”
- The failure to aggressively pursue the *accretion* of new forms of practice.

The liability crisis, the fee crunch, rising costs, the fear of over specialization, as well as fear of the new and the unfamiliar all contribute to an approaching crisis: architects will be left designing only the exterior envelope of a building.

The interior design lobby has put forward an incredible argument: that architects did not become interested in interiors until it became financially necessary. This position totally ignores a long history of architects who controlled every aspect of their “product.” Until the advent of speculative office buildings, which put architects in the position of having a single client for a building, and competing for the work of a multiplicity of tenants for fitting out, it was a given that the architect designed or controlled the total look.

Architects have to take some of the blame . . . for not pursuing more aggressively those areas of practice that complement their architectural work, and for not developing new areas of practice into which they can move. We have allowed the practitioners of important segments of the total practice of architecture not only to usurp our traditional roles, but to attempt to call these parts of architecture practice new professions.

We have seen the development of “facilities management” as a discipline that rarely involves architects in a process that directly affects their design work and professional lives.

While many architects employed by corporations are facilities managers, as a growing profession it is attracting more and more people who are either untrained — corporate staff is coming from such areas as purchasing, personnel, and legal — or with outside training as “facilities managers” without the benefit of the knowledge of the planning and design process that architects can supply.

We have watched contractors become “construction managers.” Originally another method of administering the building process, construction managers now routinely seek to replace the architect as the owner representative in advising on (and sometimes seriously influencing): the choice of architect; the layout and design of the project; suggested (or sometimes dictated) detailing, materials, and methods; and controlling the on-site construction dispute resolution process.

We need to look to expanding our horizons, not limiting ourselves to ever narrowing circles of practice. We need to find ways not only to maintain in our sphere of influence those areas that people are attempting to usurp, but to increase and develop that scope within our practices. We need to demolish the concept that individual segments of architecture are somehow “removable” and capable of becoming major professions alone, without the structure of the profession and the guidance of the architect to make them whole.

We must act to stop the erosion of the practice of architecture, and to develop plans for the accretion of those compatible areas that will enable us to grow into the 21st Century.

## Design Credits An Editorial

The letters about design credits that were published in last month's *Oculus* (page 11) have inspired the following recapitulation of previous discussions on this subject, which were initiated by the editors: *Oculus* October 1986, p. 14f, and *Oculus* January 1987, p. 15.

Two main distinctions are pointed out: 1. Editors publish credits as they are provided. Therefore that information, to be correctly printed, must be easily retrievable, orderly, complete, and accurate when the editors receive it.

2. Traditional formats for presenting design credits have not been established by the profession as a whole, leaving constant discrepancies.

Some overall guidelines on the subject are excerpted from the above-mentioned previous discussions.

They are followed by some modest proposals from architecture editors.

### Previously stated guidelines

1. Architects are inconsistent about giving credit within their own firms, and editors often get the complaints—some from associates who worked on a project but have subsequently left the firm. Generosity of spirit is the moral imperative in question.

2. Editors, public relations agencies, and clients are not always provided with up-dated design credit information.

3. Changes in firm names are not always recorded or proper publishing people notified.

This editor asked in *Oculus* Oct. 86, "How can editors know this information if principals do not provide it? How can they know about an associate architect, a project designer, an interiors consultant if the leading architect on the team does not mention it, or if the public relations department does not suggest it?"

"The editor 'should' know, but is it likely that he or she will? It cannot come from good investigative research, for legal considerations that

are unknown to editors may preclude such credit. Still, the project architects complain. Editors must send them back to complain to their principals."

4. The legal issue of copyright laws that require credit to a photographer for a photograph but not to the designer of the building photographed—or to the model-maker—should be investigated. As well as dual-credit clauses in contracts between architects and photographers. (Christopher March, *Oculus* Oct. 86, p. 15, and Martin Zelnik, *Oculus*, Jan. 87, p. 15.)

5. Credits for architects on the staffs of corporations or public agencies—who sometimes initiate, program, select sites, and so on—should be investigated. (Peter El Gindi, *Oculus* Oct. 86, p. 15.)

6. Original architects of buildings recently renovated should be credited as well as the architect of the current renovation. (Christopher Gray, *Oculus* Jan. 87, p. 15.)

### A Modest Proposal from Editors

Most architecture editors would concur, I believe, in recommending that an ad hoc committee investigate this subject thoroughly and aim to establish something like rules, procedures, and formats for Design Credits—who in each firm should most generously be credited, when to check on up-dating lists of credits, and printed formats for credit listings. The goals should be less on consistency and more toward minimizing errors in crediting.

To get that committee started, perhaps we might dare to formulate some rules that might better ensure proper design credits—an *Ars Credita*, if you will:

1. Architects must write into their contracts with both clients, model-makers, and photographers their requirements for crediting to their firms, their associates, and their consultants.

2. Architects must up-date those credits with their clients and their clients' public relations agencies as changes occur.

3. Architects must write or stamp the proper credits on each document, rendering, or photograph of each project that goes out for potential publication.

4. Architects are responsible for proofreading the names in their credit listings to see that the list is complete and that the names are spelled correctly as the professional listings of their firms, colleagues, and consultants so use their names.

5. Each generation of editors and reporters must be re-educated—architects also (Charles K. Hirzel, *Oculus* Jan. 87, p. 15.)

### Some Don'ts About Design Credits

1. Don't expect any publication to have enough staff or funding to call you up to see if you spelled your firm's name correctly. (Most publications have neither staff nor money for this—least of all *Oculus*, which offers as its principal example of this requirement the annual design awards issues. Those consist primarily of lists of credits supplied by the architect entrants.)

2. Don't expect that a publication will divine the correct caption and credit for a photograph unless you put it on the back yourself. And don't forget the photographer's, renderer's, or model-makers' credit.

3. Don't, please, continue to blame your dedicated editors—especially those in understaffed and underrecompensed positions—for lack of research or knowledge that you were too lazy or forgetful of yourself. Anger with inefficiency is best properly directed.

The axioms are: (a) If you don't do it yourself, it is guaranteed that it will be done somebody else's way, and (b) Information must be retrievable and transferrable.

CRS

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