

POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

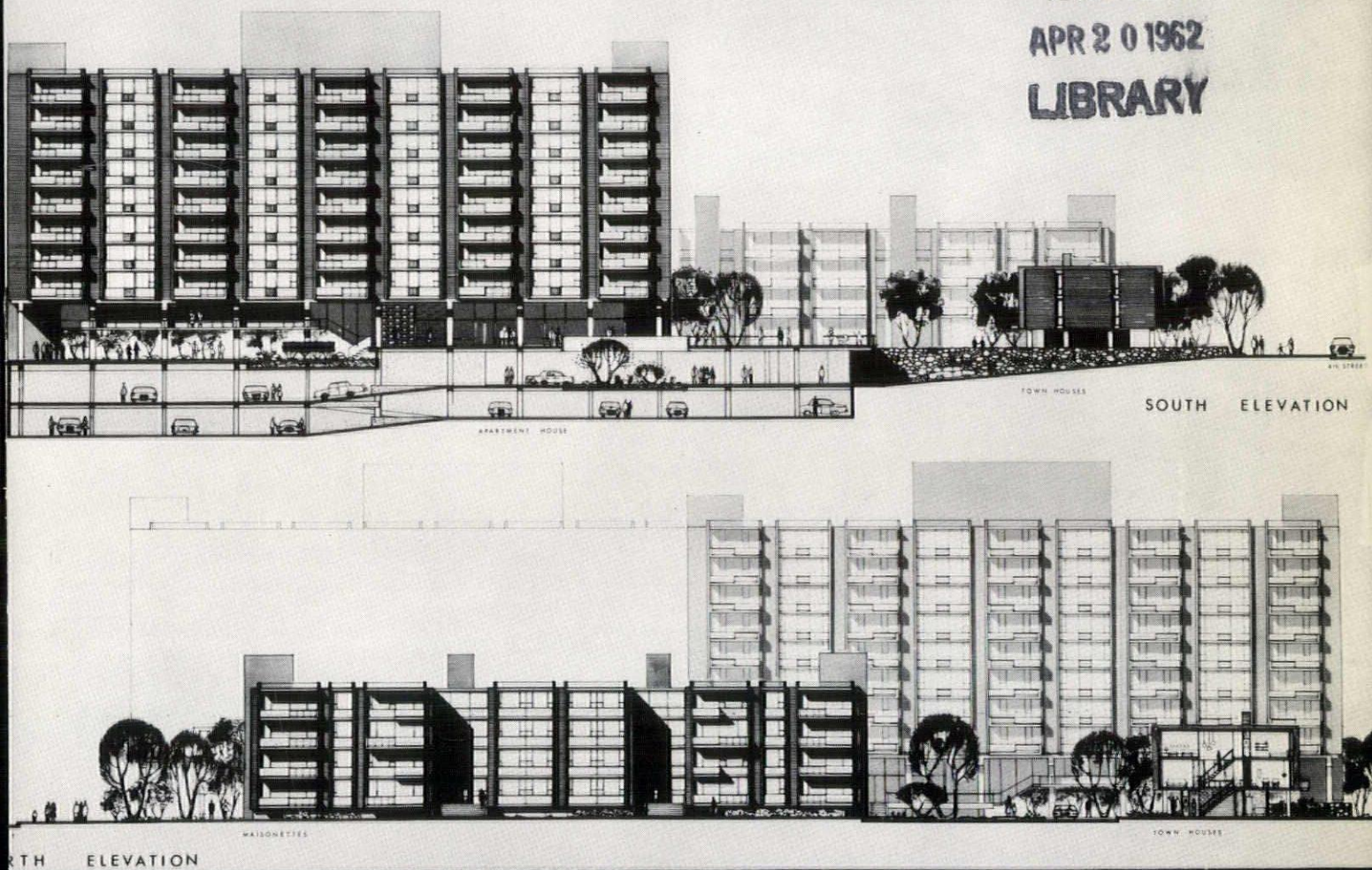


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of Maryland

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- **THIRD REDEVELOPMENT COMPETITION**
SOUTHWEST URBAN RENEWAL **WASHINGTON, D. C.**

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER OF MARYLAND

American Institute of Architects

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NEXT REGULAR MEETING

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Too Many Competitions?

The Potomac Valley Chapter has conducted over the past six years three Biennial Competitions recognizing merit in Architecture. A tradition has been established of securing juries composed of Architects, recognized for achievement in design, to select for award those works of architecture which meet a national standard of excellence.

The Competition for 1962, for which entries are due June 1st, shall attempt as in the past, to provide the significant recognition of merit in architecture in this geographical area. It is regretted that the value of general architectural competitions has been weakened by awards programs sponsored by special interest groups. We note, specifically, that the Masonry Institute is sponsoring a competition directed toward the use of masonry in architecture, scheduled within a month of Potomac Valley Chapter competition. That this competition claims the support of the Washington-Metropolitan Chapter, AIA, is a lamentable instance of poor liaison between the Chapters.

For those interested in a competition sponsored by architects and judged by architects on the basis of Architectural Merit, we recommend the 4th Biennial Competition of the Potomac Valley Chapter, AIA.

ON THE CONTROL OF ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

by Louis Justement, F.A.I.A.

From time to time proposals are made to improve the appearance of our city by means of some form of control of architectural design. In 1910 the Congress created the National Fine Arts Commission with, as its chief function, the control of the architectural design of the federal buildings to be erected in the national capital. In 1931 the Congress, by means of the Shipstead-Luce Act, extended the control to the privately owned buildings that face on certain park areas or that face existing or proposed federal buildings. Why not, in 1962, extend this control to urban renewal areas or to the city in its entirety? My own opinion is that, far from extending the scope of architectural design control, we should give serious consideration to the reduction or abandonment of the existing forms of control.

I submit that the only valid reasons for architectural design control are based on the following premises:

1. That it is possible to secure the appointment to the control board of individuals competent to distinguish between good architectural design and inferior architectural design.
2. That the control board can indicate to the sponsor and/or architect of the individual project that is disapproved the reasons for which such project is not sufficiently creditable to merit approval.
3. That relatively good architecture will be produced if the control board can eliminate bad architecture by withholding its approval of the badly designed projects that are submitted.

I believe that every one of these premises is fallacious. Let us take them up one by one:

- (1) The competence of the control board.

I am not questioning the competence of the individual architects who might be appointed to an architectural control board. I am even willing to grant that they would, in all likelihood, be men of integrity and leaders in their profession. Certainly the membership of the Fine Arts Commission has over a period of many years consisted of outstanding architects, sculptors and painters; men who have been devoted to their task even though they served without compensation.

When the Fine Arts Commission was created in 1910, however, there was fairly general agreement, among architects, concerning "good" architectural design as distinguished from "bad"

architectural design. But the architectural world of today has lost what seem, in retrospect, to have been the pleasant certainties of 1910. We no longer feel quite sure, as individuals, that we will like tomorrow what we like today or that we are really capable of deciding what "good" architecture consists of, even if the ideas of "yesterday" and "tomorrow" are eliminated from our judgement. And there is good reason for this uncertainty. Many of us are beginning to realize that there is probably no such thing as an intrinsically beautiful building. That which we call the beauty of a building exists in the emotional response of the human observer. It is proper that we should trust our emotions as a basis for enjoying all forms of beauty, including architecture. It is less obvious that we should trust these same emotions when the problem is that of controlling the artistic production of others.

- (2) Reasons for rejecting designs.

The only valid and honest answer is that the individual Board members don't like the design, that it stirs in them no favorable emotional response either individually or collectively. We are such reasonable creatures, however, that we seek reasons even where there are none. Besides, most of us do not want to hurt the feelings of the architect and so each Board member tries to suggest ways in which "obnoxious" features can be subordinated and "good" features emphasized. This may help the architect to satisfy the Board and it may help the Board members to satisfy their conscience; it may even help to excuse the architect from a feeling of failure, but it does not help to create good architecture. And this brings us to the third premise:

- (3) That good architecture will be produced by the elimination of bad design. Perhaps there is no such thing as "good" architecture in the sense of intrinsic structural beauty regardless of time, space or the individual observer. What is it, then that stirs our emotions differently when we observe the Parthenon or St. Peters or the Capitol or the Empire State Building — or the apartment house on the next corner?

If we could really analyze these emotions we would probably find that they were based on a complex blend involving many types of emotion such as: response to the creative spirit of a great architect or a great period in history, craftsmanship, technical competence, skilled use of materials, etc.

Can we say that the jury for the Roose-

velt Memorial Competition was right or wrong in its selection of the winning design? Can we say that the Fine Arts Commission was right or wrong in its rejection of this same design?

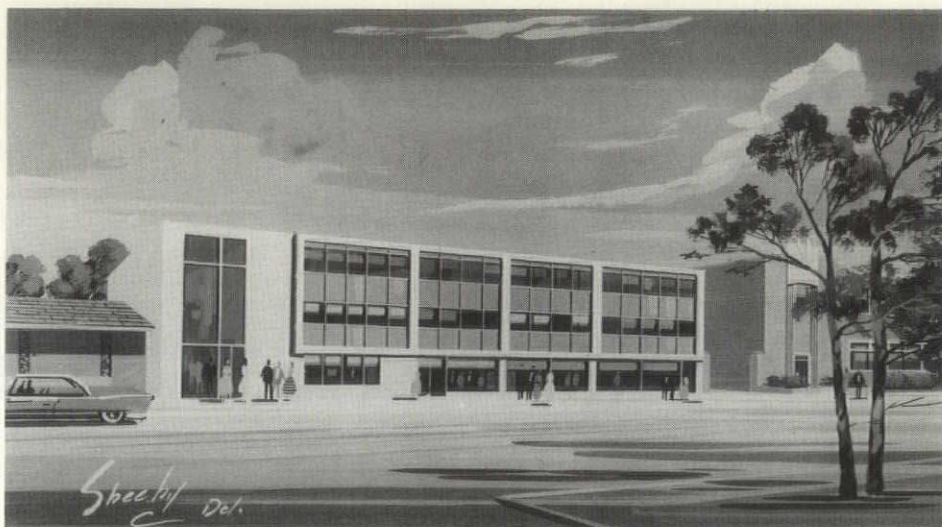
I believe that all that we can say, with any degree of objectivity, is that we happen to be living in a period when the emotional responses of architects to modern buildings are so diverse that they have lost almost all social significance. Before we, as architects, attempt to lead public opinion in the matter of architectural design we should have a better idea of where we want to go.

What is good architecture?

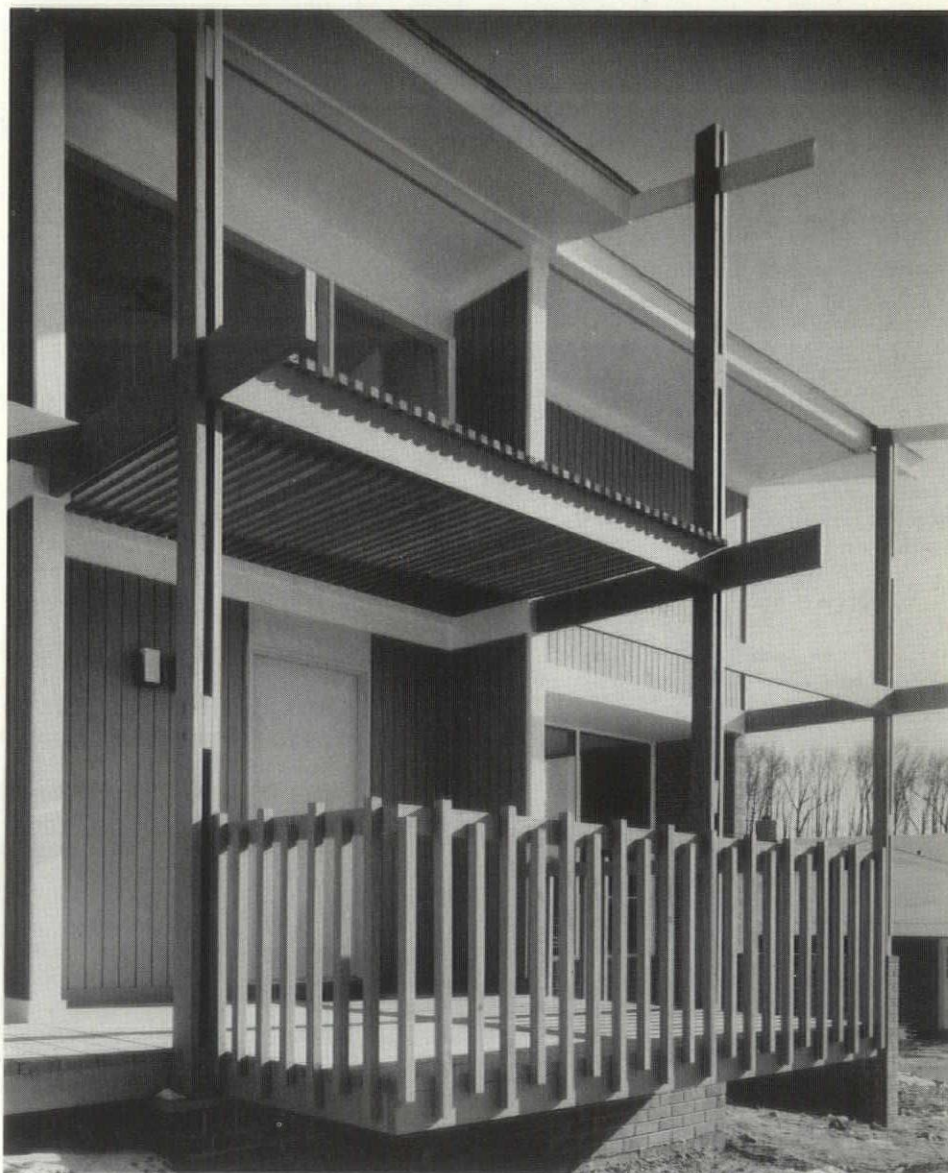
Although we may question the very existence of "good" design" as an intrinsic quality of buildings, we do know that most of us respond emotionally to some buildings more than to others. When this emotional response is favorable and when we find that it is shared by our friends and colleagues we think of a building as being beautiful or well-designed. That is perhaps not a very satisfactory definition of "good" architecture but it may be all that we can do to define such an elusive concept.

Little as it is it may be enough, if we know how to use it. For we should not belittle the value of shared emotional experience, especially if the architects who experience real emotion with respect to buildings seek to share their experience with their colleagues. The past generation has witnessed a revolution in architectural design. The discipline of the "styles" of architecture is gone and has given way to a sort of individualistic chaos. Perhaps we shall, some day, create a new discipline which will give us the comfort of rules. If so, we shall learn to recognize the excellence of the good craftsman or even the genius working within the rules of the new "style".

The period between the two world wars was a period dominated by the efforts to overthrow so-called traditionalism and enthrone modern or contemporary architecture. This job is done but there remains a far more difficult task: that of developing, among the architects, a sense of direction. I believe that we can best stimulate our own creative ability as well as that of our colleagues by caring enough about our environment — all our environment — to study it carefully. We must become aware of the environment and seek to discover those things which please us and which please our colleagues and friends, — perhaps even to understand why we are pleased. Architectural criticism should be completely free to praise or condemn but let us beware of the power to control architectural design.



Professional Arts Building, Inc., East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Md.
Clifton B. White, Architect



Houses at Crest Park, Montgomery County, Md. A housing development designed by Walter Bucher and Associates, Architects.

Warren Ballard Photo



ENTRY NO. 86

Morris Lapidus, Harle and Liebman, Architects
New York, N. Y.

SOUTH-WEST URBAN RENEWAL AREA, PARCEL 110 C

The Redevelopment Land Agency has announced that it will schedule a public hearing in the near future on the subject of a proposal to lease or sell approximately five acres of land in the Southwest Urban Renewal Area to the D. C. Realty and Development Corporation, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the D. C. Transit System, Inc. The 4.86 acres is bounded by Fourth Street, Maine Avenue, park land just north of Ft. McNair and new O Street, S. W.

Offers for the land were solicited on the

basis that the land is to be sold for \$3.40 per square foot or approximately \$720,335 or rented for an equivalent amount to a financially and otherwise qualified offerer whose site plan in the judgement of an architectural jury was the best of those submitted to the Agency by persons or organizations offering to purchase or lease the land.

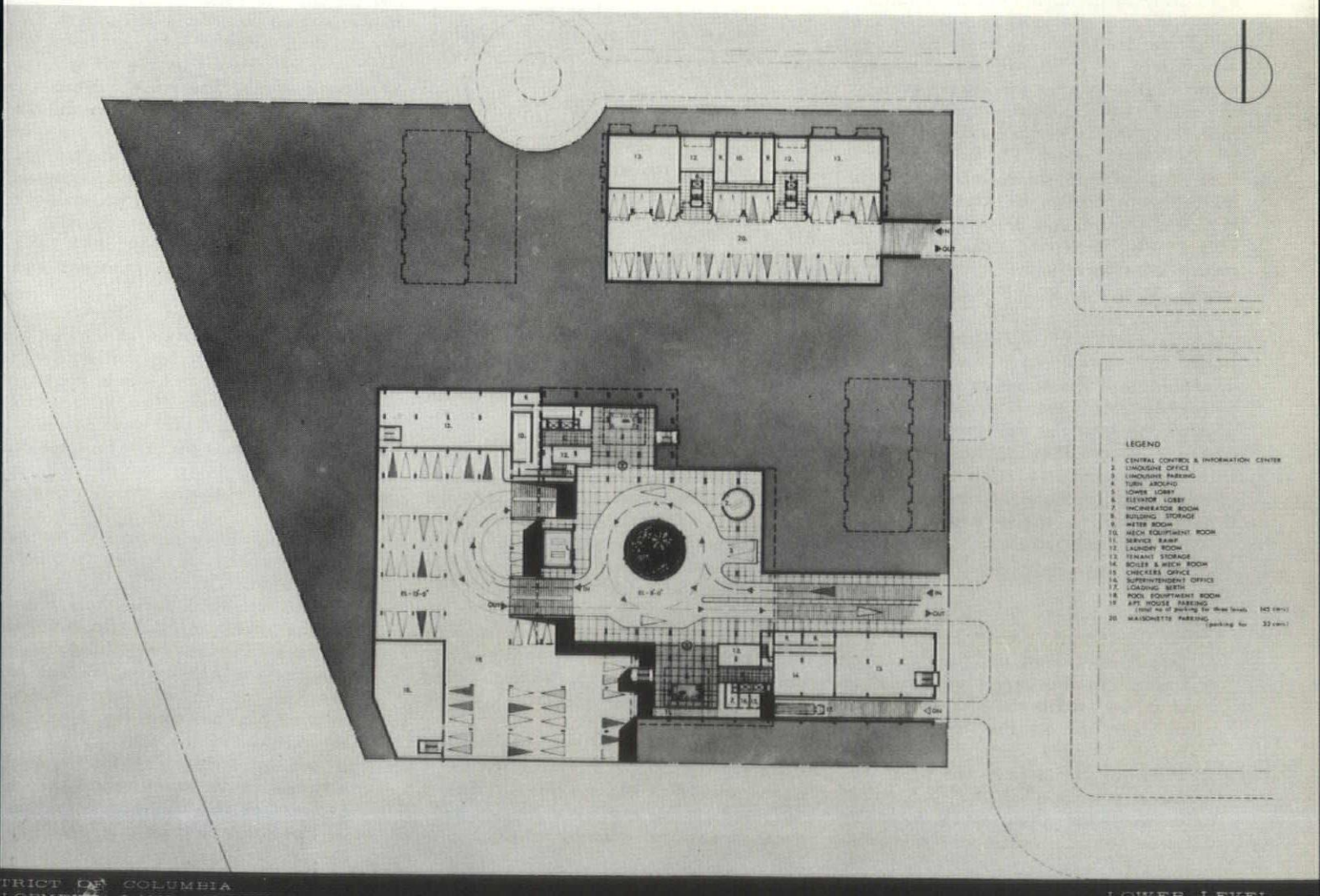
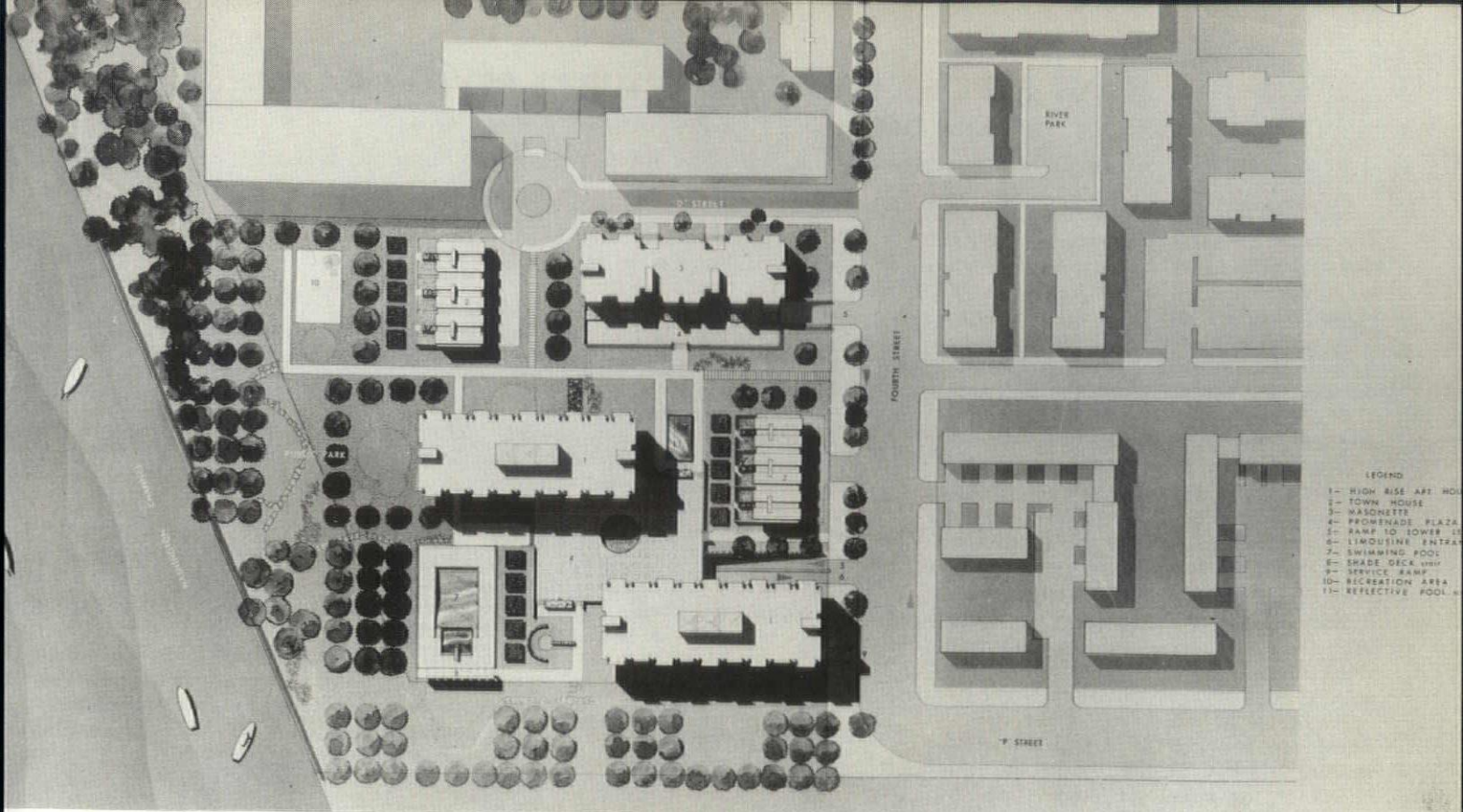
As required in the Urban Renewal Plan, the proposal of the D. C. Realty and Development Corporation specifies that 290 units will be constructed, of which

246 will be in elevator apartments, 32 in walk-up apartments and 12 in row houses. The apartment units will be distributed by the number of bedrooms per unit as follows:

- 6 efficiency units (0 bedrooms)
- 208 one bedroom
- 32 two bedroom

Each of the 12 row houses will contain three bedrooms. The 32 walk-up apartments will be divided equally between one and two bedroom units.





JOINT REPORT OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PANEL

Parcel 110C, Project C Southwest Urban Renewal Area

Carl Feiss — Chairman, FAIA, AIP; Dan Kiley, AIA; Hugh Stubbins, FAIA;

Oskar Stonorov, FAIA, AIP; Philip Will, FAIA, President of the AIA.

The panel is happy to commend the Redevelopment Land Agency for the obvious success of the two previous reviews of submittals; which encouraged developers and their architects to participate competitively, in a substantial number, for the development of Parcel 110c. There were eighteen submittals and all were examined. The panel was impressed with the quality of many submittals and the intensive work done by their architects. There was an impressive amount of work performed by many contestants which the review panel took into proper consideration.

It should be made clear from the outset that the panel was seeking fresh solutions to residential design for the project, recognizing at the same time the importance of providing a harmonious development with the rest of the architectural design of the southwest area. However, the panel was handicapped by not knowing two significant facts. First, it had but little knowledge of the design of Harbour Square to be built immediately to its north. We were familiar only with the site plan and the bulk of buildings proposed. Second, there was also a lack of a final plan for development of the properties immediately to the east of 4th Street. We understood that this area is to be developed solely for buildings under 40' in height and took this into consideration. Fortunately, the construction of River Park project was far enough along for us to be able to visit it and to include its design in our considerations.

We wish to commend the Redevelopment Land Agency for maintaining complete anonymity in regards to both architects and developers. Also, we were informed that the sponsors for all eighteen proposals were financially capable of entering into the development of the projects which they submitted. Therefore the panel was relieved of other considerations, than the criteria which it established, for review and judgement of individual submittals.

The panel adopted the following six criteria:

1. Relationship to Surroundings.

A significant number of the proposals contained small scale models indicating the conjectured relationship, by architects, of their individual designs to the total environment. Since a general overall site plan for the area south of M had been provided by the RLA to the contestants, these small scale environmental models are consistent

and it was possible for the panel to review relationship with adjacent areas. The panel recommends to RLA that in the future, to the degree that it may be possible, more information on adjoining designs be made available to review panels.

2. Site Plan & Compatibility of Elements.

Site Plan considerations include the disposition and compatibility of buildings on the land, spacing of structures, elements of privacy, daylight relationship between structures, orientation, view, general landscape treatment, relationship between pedestrian and vehicular circulation and the use of open space for recreation or other purposes.

3. Project Appearance.

This included consideration of the overall architectural design quality in each proposal, and the unity to be expected between buildings of all types.

4. Pedestrian & Vehicular Access.

This criteria involves pleasant and convenient access to all dwelling units for occupants, visitors and deliveries.

5. General Plans of Building Types.

This includes the general disposition of dwelling units within each building type, the arrangement of public open spaces and the quality of the building plan.

6. Unit Plans.

This consideration involved the number and distribution of units by types within the program established by the RLA.

Primary considerations are size, convenience, attractiveness, room arrangement, and privacy of dwelling units.

RULES OF THE COMPETITION

The Congress in the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, has ruled against the speculative use of lands acquired for redevelopment and renewal purposes. It is the conviction of this panel that the use of the competitive system with emphasis on planning and design as opposed to competitive bidding for land only, prevents speculation and provides the best opportunity to obtain higher quality and greater stability in these developments.

The Agency provided the panel with a summary of non-conforming elements for all submittals and the degree of their seriousness. On the basis of this summary, the panel found that four pro-

jects (numbers 85, 89, 92 and 95) were in such grave violation of the published conditions of the competition that the panel felt that in fairness to the other competitors who adhered to the conditions these four must be eliminated from consideration for the award. The panel felt that it must call to the attention of some of the designers participating in this competition that they were frustrating the efforts of the panel to premiate high quality design by this disregard of mandatory requirements. It is regrettable that responsible architects should so jeopardize the success of their plans and the commitments of their clients. This panel notes with concern that two prior panels referred to similar violations and recognized similar steps which they had to take to eliminate proposals. It should be remembered that it is not within the province of a review panel to redesign a submittal.

THE RECOMMENDED AWARD

The panel, with Mr. Kiley dissenting, chose project no. 86 as its choice.

The decision to recommend project no. 86 was not easily arrived at but was finally reached after a total appraisal of relative merits based on the six criteria mentioned above. The panel's choice of project no. 86 was based on the following considerations:

1. The attractive solution of elements of urban convenience, i.e., accessibility to the apartment houses both underground and above ground.
2. Highly desirable apartments and very acceptable town houses and maisonettes.
3. The distribution of units whereby project no. 86 arrives at a majority of one-bedroom apartments with only six efficiencies. As a contrast for instance, project no. 90 has 152 efficiencies and 80 one-bedrooms. The panel feels that the reliance on a high percentage of efficiencies lowers the economic stability of the project.
4. Project no. 86 is superior in the six categories to all other projects considered.
5. Project no. 86 is particularly noteworthy because the first living floors of the buildings have been elevated to a height sufficient to provide for an interesting space relationship between the high-rise structures and the site.
6. It will be noted that the general distribution of open space in the project design is excellent, that half of the apartments in the high-

rise have views down river and all avoid western exposure. It will also be noted that surface parking is kept to a minimum although the panel feels that it may be possible to eliminate some excess vehicular curb cuts on 4th Street. The panel feels that project no. 86 will be well related to the general character of other projects in the Southwest area.

It appears from "Drawing no. 2, Lower Level," that it would be desirable but not essential to combine underground parking of the high-rise apartments. This will make feasible a distinct improvement in site plan.

The panel, with Mr. Kiley dissenting, feels that the demonstrated capability of the designers as shown in the submission warrants our recommendation to the RLA of no. 86 as the winning solution.

The panel urges the RLA to foster the closest cooperation between the architects of the various Southwest parcels so as to bring about a desirable harmony of materials, scale and overall texture of design thereby enhancing the unity and beauty of the area with special emphasis on the river front.

COMMENTS ON OTHER SUBMISSIONS

Scheme No. 90

This submission was the first choice of Mr. Kiley. The panel recognizes the excellent site design and in addition wishes to commend specifically the ingenious design of the town houses with their supplementary apartments. The town houses of No. 90 have an unusually well thought out handling of buildings to exterior spaces resulting in a most pleasing space relationship within themselves and to the large plaza.

Scheme No. 92

Although the plan is non-conforming and non-conformable without major redesign, the panel particularly appreciated No. 92 as a terminus to the Southwest Redevelopment Area. The form of the multi-story apartment buildings is not only interesting but a relief from the usual slab building. The disposition of the two building types was, in the panel's opinion, excellently handled in this project. It has an ingenious apartment plan and an elegant vehicular entrance court.

Scheme No. 98

The character and consistency of No. 98 of both high and low buildings is to be commended. The town houses and the courts have a domestic charm which does not normally appear in this type of scheme.

Scheme No. 91

The town houses are commended for their general design and their relation-

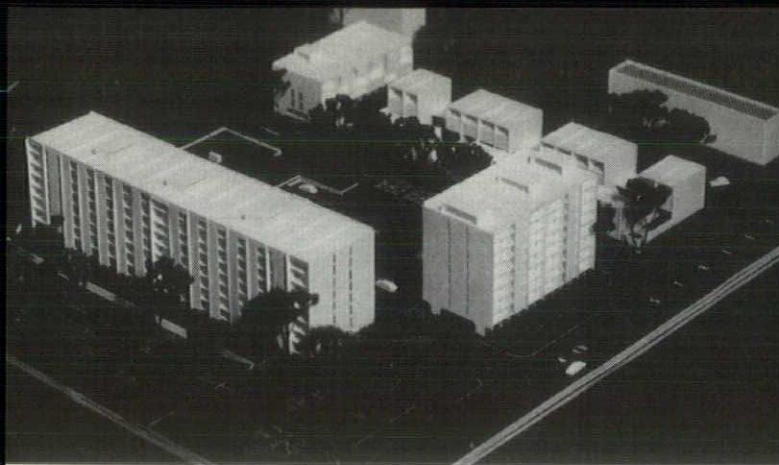
ship to the existing rows of trees and for their ingenious use of roofs as a utilitarian and decorative feature. Many of the contestants forgot that the occupants of upper story high-rise buildings look down on the roofs of low-rise buildings.

Scheme No. 85

Though No. 85 introduces an element

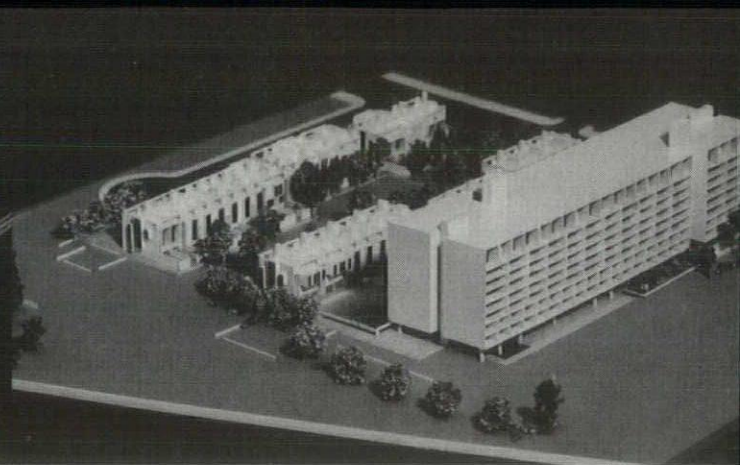
which some of the members of the panel felt was inappropriate to the location, the design shows a degree of spontaneity and originality and a desire to break through the over-simplified slabs, squares and towers of standard high-rise buildings. The originators of the design are to be commended for the freshness and the vigor of their approach.

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82	Abe Pollin 6101 16th Street, N. W. Washington 11, D. C.	Berla & Abel Washington, D. C.
83	Sampson Enterprises, Inc. 222 East Erie Street Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Harry Weese & Associates Chicago, Illinois
84	Domino Construction Corp. 1523 L Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.	Peter Caspari Toronto, Canada
85	Baltimore Contractors, Inc. 711 South Central Avenue Baltimore 2, Maryland	William Harder Benjamin Carr Arnold, Maryland
86	D. C. Realty & Development Corp. (D. C. Transit System, Inc.) Thirty-Sixth & M Sts., N. W. Washington, D. C.	Morris Lapidus, Harle and Liebman New York, New York
87	Robert Chuckrow 60 East 42 Street New York 17, New York	Milton J. Prassas and Associates Washington, D. C.
88	Robert Chuckrow 60 East 42 Street New York 17, New York	Hyman & Flower Baltimore, Maryland
89	Edgewater Development Co. 3636 16th Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.	Charles M. Goodman Associates Washington, D. C.
90	Channel Park, Inc. 1000 Woodward Building Washington 5, D. C.	Nicholas R. Arroyo Washington, D. C.
91	Joseph Venneri Associates 1225 K Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.	Weed-Johnson Associates Miami, Florida
92	Frank J. Meistrell, et al One Rockefeller Plaza New York 20, New York	Milton Schwartz & Associates Philadelphia, Pa.
93	Richard J. Fox and Robert A. Fox Box 146 Plymouth Meeting, Pa.	Collins, Kronstadt Associates Silver Spring, Md.
94	Walker & Dunlop, Inc. 905 16th Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.	Mills, Petticord & Mills Washington, D. C.
95	Julius Sankin 5410 Connecticut Ave., N. W. Washington 15, D. C.	Fred Safran New York, New York
96	Wellesly, Inc. 1110 Spring Street Silver Spring, Md.	Cohen, Haft & Associates Silver Spring, Md.
97	Channel Gate Associates 724 14th Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.	Satterlee & Smith Washington, D. C.
98	George Hyman Company 1010 Vermont Avenue, N. W. Washington 5, D. C.	Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon Washington 5, D. C.



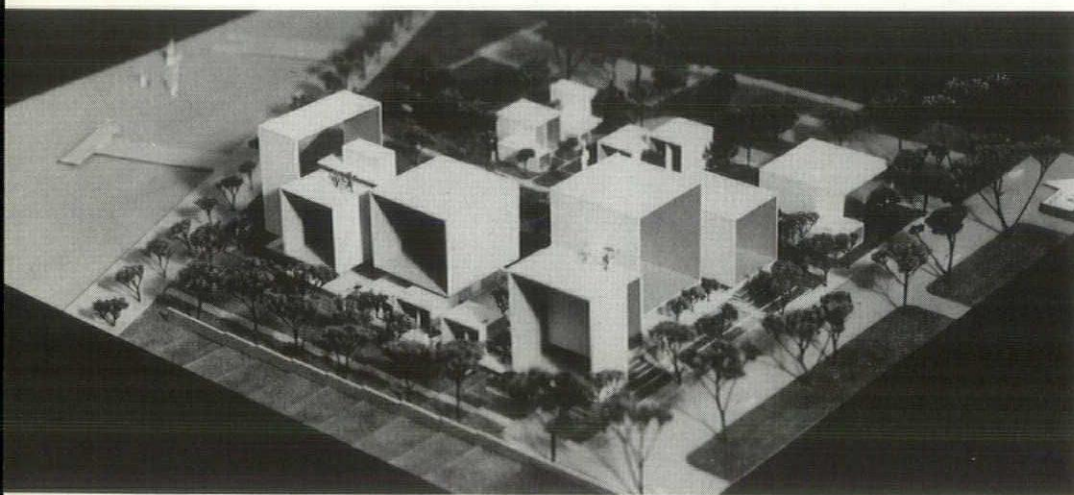
ENTRY NO. 90

Nicholas R. Arroyo, Architect
Washington, D. C.



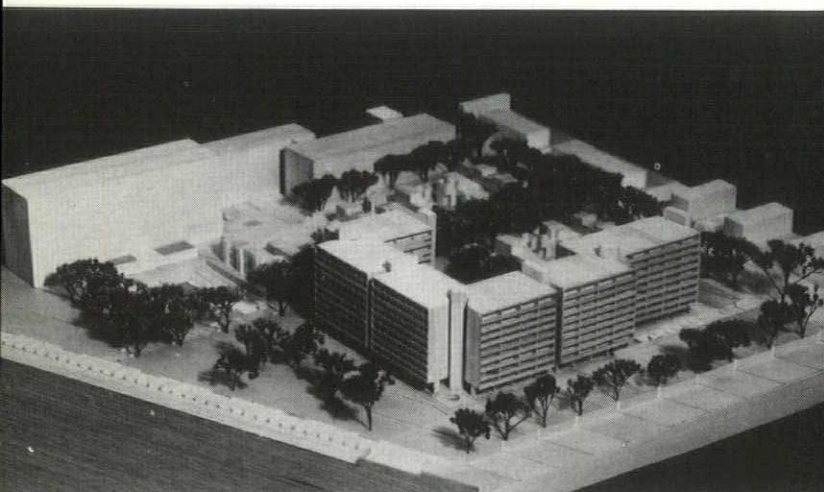
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Weed-Johnson Associates, Architects
Miami, Florida



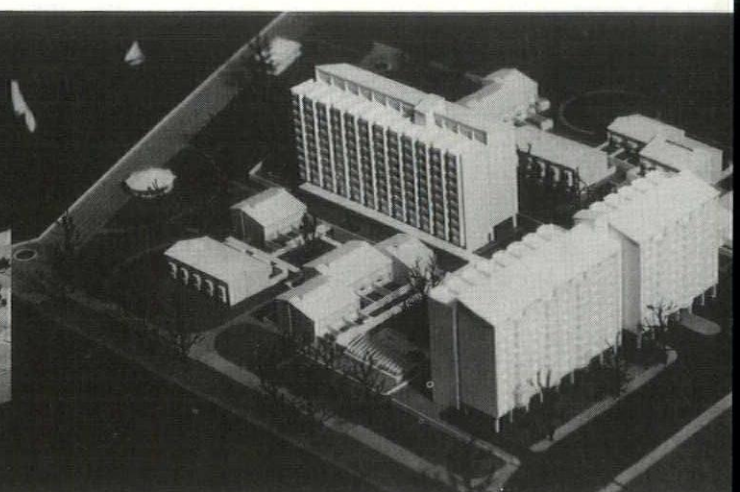
ENTRY NO. 85

William Harder &
Benjamin Carr, Architects
Arnold, Maryland



ENTRY NO. 92

Milton Schwartz & Associates
Architects
Philadelphia, Penna.



ENTRY NO. 98

Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon, Architects
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Klon O. Row, Inc.
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Briggs Construction Co., Inc.
 4909 Cordell Ave., Bethesda, Md. OL 6-4545
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 Washington 2, D. C. CO 5-2212

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Jack T. Irwin, Inc.
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 Slate Products
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 OL 4-6252

McLeod & Romborg Stone Co., Inc.
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 Stencils - Mats - Ditto - Mimeograph
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Paddock Swimming Pool Co.
 Mr. A. Stadt, Vice Pres.
 Swimming Pools & Equipment
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 JA 4-2626

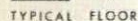
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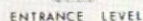
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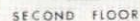
APARTMENT HOUSE

LEGEND

TYPE A	-	2	RED ROOMS
TYPE B	-	1	RED ROOMS
TYPE C	-	1	RED ROOMS
TYPE D	-	1	RED ROOMS
TYPE E	-	1	RED ROOMS



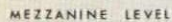
TOWN HOUSE



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD F



APARTMENT HOUSE



MAISONETTE

LEGEND

Type 8 - 2	BRIDGEMAN	DUPLEX
Type 8 - 2	BRIDGEMAN	
Type 8 - 2	BRIDGEMAN	

TYPICAL FLOOR

100% COTTON
100% COTTON
100% COTTON

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