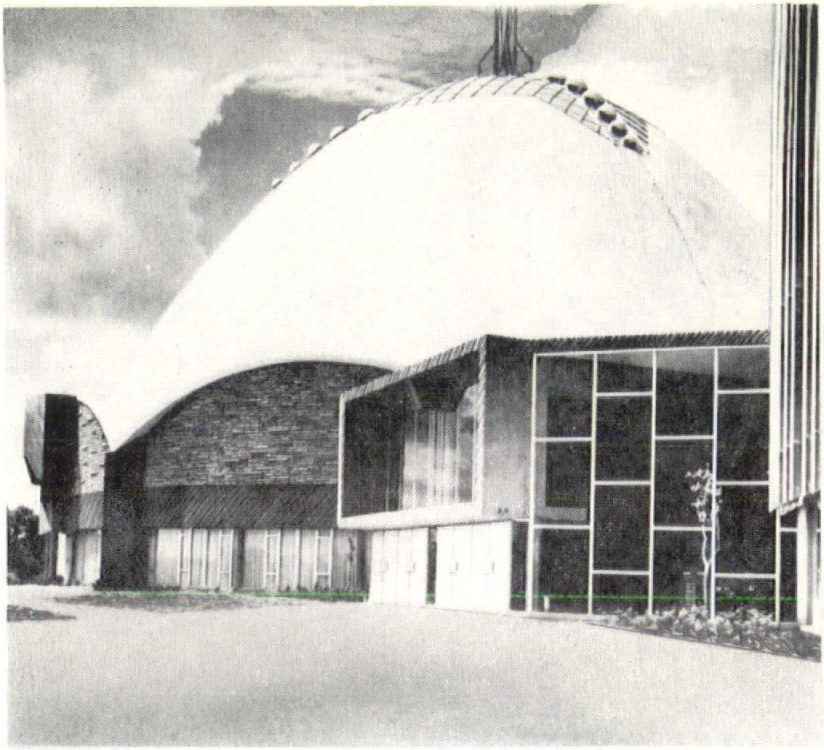
ARCHITECTURE UTAH AIA

MAY JUNE 18 JULY, '59



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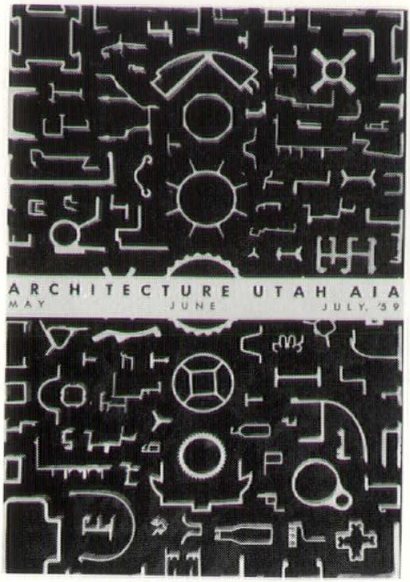

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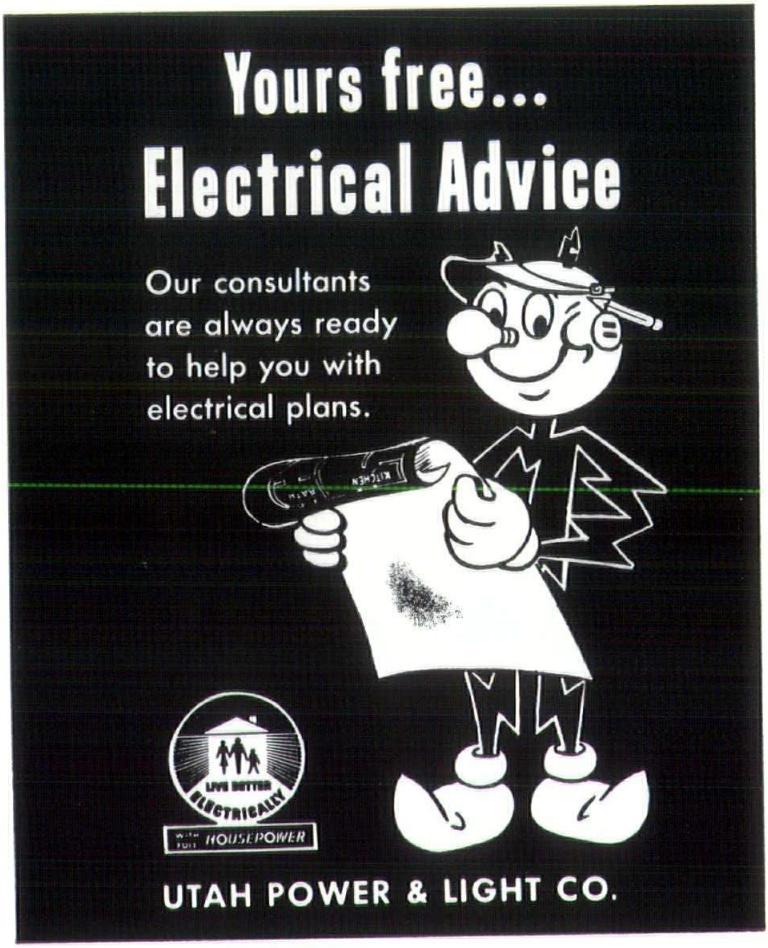
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EDITORIAL

One facet of the constant search for lower construction costs which is often thought of but seldom acted upon is that of the contractors' retainage requirements. This is an area in which the architect can be of immeasurable help to the owner in getting the greatest value for his construction dollar by affording the general contractor reduced financing costs. In short, he can render a service to both parties and still retain his impartial status.

In Chicago, the officials, out to save money for the city, have taken a step in this direction by reducing the retainage requirements on construction contracts awarded by city departments.

In giving contractors more of the money they have earned, the city benefits since under competitive bidding any economic gains handed the contractors will reflect in increased competition and lower bid prices.

While in the past, the Chicago City Council has required a retainage of 15% of all monies due, as of July they have reduced their requirements to 10% of each monthly estimate until 50% of the project is completed. No additional money will be withheld during the last half of the job.

On completion of the work — and before computation of the final quantities — the retainage will be reduced to 2% of the total contract. After computation of the final quantities, the 2% still held by the city will be paid.

Exactly how much of the construction dollar can be saved by this measure is open to conjecture, as is the danger of contractors not finishing their jobs. However, it is certainly an avenue which is worthy of exploration.

SINGLE INDUSTRY CONCEPT NEEDED BY CONSTRUCTION

(Reprinted From April 17, 1958, Issue of the "Engineering News Record")

Only in emergencies, it would seem, do construction people consciously think of themselves as part of a single, great industry. They did so during the war. And now in these uncertain days, when the "construction industry" is being headlined in the press and heralded from the halls of Congress to village street corners as the bellwether of business recovery, everyone, who in one way or another makes his living from construction, reacts with a glow of pride. Such a feeling should be made permanent.

It is right and proper, of course, for an architect to think of himself as an architect, for a structural engineer to classify himself as a structural engineer or even for a contractor to regard himself as being a part of the highway industry or a bridge builder, an earthmover or driver of tunnels. But it is equally right and proper, and not at all inconsistent, for anyone of these persons to think—and perhaps to think first — that he is also a member of an all-encompassing construction industry.

Were such a single industry concept to prevail universally — and continuously — in the field of construction, much good could result. Coordination of the many diverse elements on a construction job might well come easier. Construction industry dealings with the public would benefit from the resulting united front that could be presented. Technical education would be given a broader base and a sharper focus. And there are many more possible advantages.

One of the obstacles to broad acceptance of the single industry concept of construction is said to be a doubt that construction can really rate as an industry. Because its activities are widespread and often seemingly unrelated as compared with, say, manufacturing, which is accepted as an industry, construction is looked upon as another breed of cat. The truth of the matter is that manufacturing and construction are very much alike.

Manufacturing, for example, encompasses

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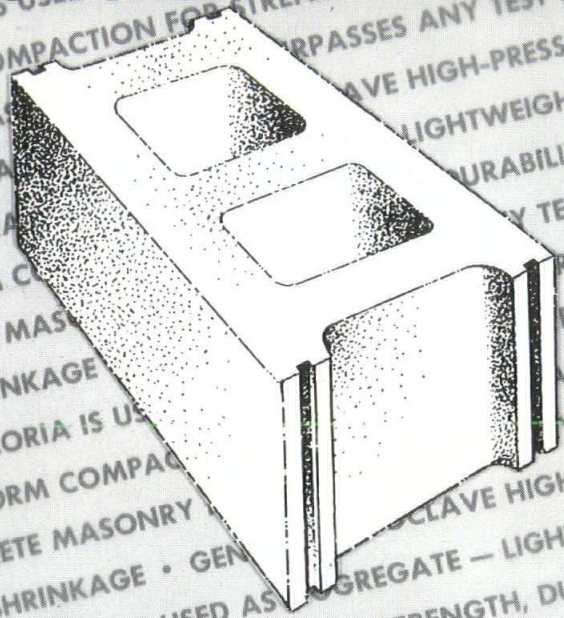

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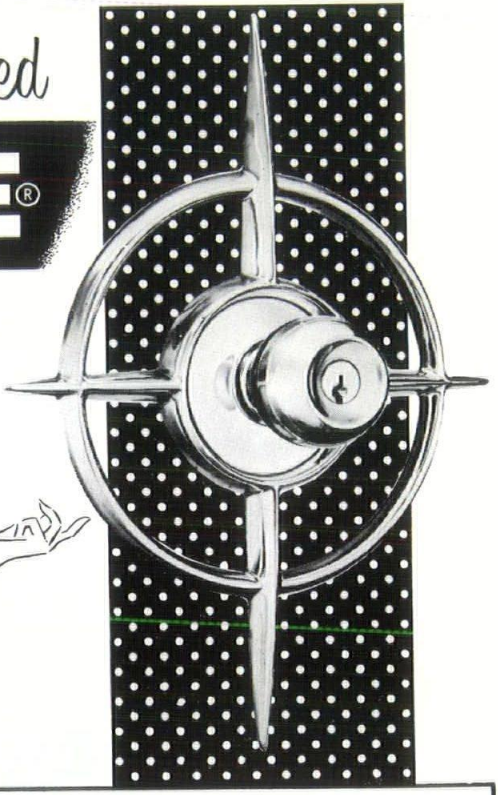

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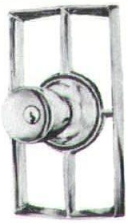

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SINGLE INDUSTRY CONCEPT

(Continued from Page 3)

research, development, production and marketing as its prime functions — with many a technical and business service, professional or otherwise, performed in the process of getting its products to the consumer. In construction the familiar research and development of manufacturing are lumped as design — meaning everything from studies to preparation of plans. The actual field operations of converting plans to realities are certainly production. And, while marketing takes many forms, none would deny that construction's products must be "sold" at some stage in the process.

Manufacturing encompasses many technical and business services before its products are ready for the consumer, but so also does construction. Owners must first express a need or demand for the facility to be constructed; bankers must study it and assure its financial support; then engineers and architects must analyze, design and specify; lawyers, insurance men and realtors have their parts to play; and finally there are the contractors, materials and equipment suppliers, inspectors and, in cases, the operators of the projects — all performing their essential roles as members of the construction industry.

Construction is indeed an industry, and one with unusual unity of purpose and procedures. It is also a big industry (one-seventh of all business activity), and it is basic (providing shelter, power, sanitation, water, transportation, communication and all the other fixed physical facilities that make our modern standards of living possible). Only by thinking of construction as a single industry can such significant and satisfying facts as these have full meaning — and lead to a proper appreciation of construction's breadth, depth, importance and wealth of opportunities.

Such appreciation is vital to construction's future. For example, because no one has thought to impress them with the construction industry idea, engineering students seldom think in industry terms, but only in those of one of its specialties. As a consequence, because the opportunities thus appear to be limited, there is a danger that an insufficient amount of technical brainpower will be attracted to the industry to man its leadership jobs for the future. The single industry concept, with the vision it conjures up of wide job opportunities, would reduce this danger without in any way changing the appeal of the various specialties.

Further with respect to construction's future, the complexities of projects today require that the services of civil engineers be supplemented by the talents of many other kinds of engineers and specialists. A single construction industry concept would be a powerful aid in attracting such people to construction service — and keeping civil engineers from wandering to other pastures.

And finally there are the relations with the public and the press, with legislative bodies and with other segments of the economy, which would be clarified and simplified if a single industry concept prevailed throughout every nook and cranny of construction.

In a future in which the nation's welfare will be increasingly dependent on the manifold services of construction, a single industry concept of these services will be more than ever necessary. It is needed today. And since no diminution in the individuality or importance of the various specialties that make up construction is involved, all that is required is mental acceptance of the fact that the whole is greater — and more powerful, influential and appealing — than its parts.

JOINT EFFORTS IN DESIGN

By ROBERT M. ERIKSSON, A.S.L.A.
of Baldwin, Eriksson and Peters

The increased tempo of building activity, the more intense development of building sites and the greater public desire for beautification in their homes, factories and public places is creating an ever growing need for creative collaboration between the design professions.

Many architects, engineers and landscape architects have readily felt the need for help from the other design professions and have solved the problem in various ways. A few large architectural firms have added landscape architects to their staff. Small partnerships incorporating architects, engineers, planners and landscape architects have been formed. However, the most common method of collaborative designing normally takes place when the architect calls in a landscape architect to consult on a single design project. Usually this is a person he has worked with before or one recommended by the client. It is important that each profession appreciate and use the others for the full contribution each can offer. Too often the architect who has been retained to design a residence or an industrial plant, or the civil engineer who has been commissioned to prepare a subdivision plan, will call in a landscape architect late in the planning stage or after the construction is approaching completion merely to act as an exterior decorator, filling in the gaps and voids with planting. Most landscape architects would welcome more challenging responsibilities.

The joint committee of the design professions describes the landscape architect's responsibilities as follows:

(a) Determines the specific use and arrangement of land based upon the general plan adapted by the collaborators and subject to review, develops the final master or site plan for the project.

(b) Designs, prepares drawings and specifications for, and supervises the construction of lawns, interior walls and terraces, service areas, parking areas, fences, irrigation and drainage, planting, pools, such othersite surface improvements and such private drives as are included by mutual agreement among the collaborators.

(c) Prepares grading plans and specifications for the project and supervises construction on all areas under landscape development.

(d) Designs, prepares drawings and specifications for outdoor recreation facilities.

Ideally, the landscape architect should be brought into the project at the very inception. In this way he is able to gain a broad knowledge of the architect's and client's problems and assist in taking full advantage of unusual site conditions. At this time the question of landscape budget should be discussed. Many times a client's ideas and pocketbook are not compatible with the property.

More comprehensive exchanges of ideas and polling of design talents will result in an ever increasing number of outstanding projects and thus more effectively serve clients.

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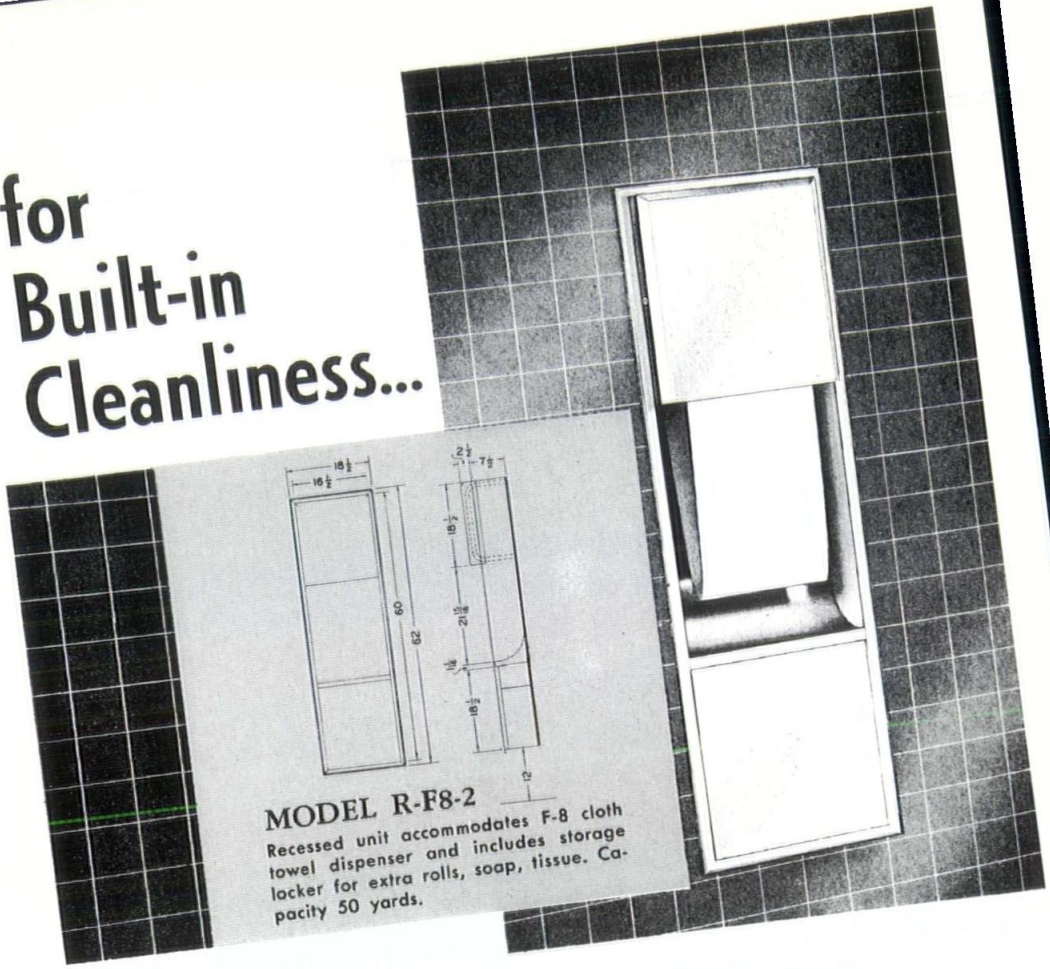

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PLANNING AND YOU

What Is Planning?

PLANNING is "intelligent forethought applied to the development of the community."

How Is It Done?

1. BASIC INFORMATION is collected about the community and its future growth.
2. A COMPREHENSIVE LONG-RANGE PLAN is prepared, setting down desirable future land use. The plan includes location and size of streets, public utilities, community facilities, residential, commercial and industrial areas.
3. PLANNING TOOLS are used to carry out this plan.

   ZONING brings about the desirable land use pattern as set out in the comprehensive plan.

   SUBDIVISION CONTROL brings about orderly development of new residential areas.

   CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING provides for proper development of community facilities.

   BUILDING CODES set basic requirements for all types of construction.

   HOUSING CODES designate minimum requirements for healthful living.

Who Does It?

CITY AND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS are appointed by the appropriate government officials. They make recommendations to city and county officials on all planning matters.

A STAFF OF PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS, hired by the planning commissions, gathers basic data, prepares the comprehensive plan, studies zoning and subdivision applications. These findings are submitted to the planning commissions.

CITY AND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS have the only authority to make these recommendations into law.

Planning and You

Planning pays you dividends, such as maintenance of property values, adequate schools and parks in the right places, elimination of costly mistakes and duplication.

But without citizen interest, effective planning programs cannot be developed. You can help by finding out more about planning and letting your city and county officials know that you think planning is a vital function of government.

Prepared by the Salt Lake City
League of Women Voters

DURRANT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Carbon County School District

PRICE, UTAH

Ralph A. Edwards, Architect

George N. Daniels, Associate