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September, 1935

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Modern Design and F. H. A. Insurance

THE Technical Division of the Federal Housing Administration, Miles L. Colean, Director, has issued a report with the title "Modern Design" which deals with the subject of "Modern" design as applied to dwellings on which F. H. A. insurance is sought.

In most communities, this type of design constitutes a departure of a more or less marked degree from the character of housing which has customarily obtained. Its proposed use immediately raises the question as to the effect of "Modern" design upon risk rating, particularly on the scores of "Property" and of "Relation of Property to Neighborhood."

The new document has chapters devoted to the following subjects: General Considerations, Characteristics of Modern Design, Exterior Design, Materials and Methods of Construction, Eligibility and Rating, Property Standards, Rating of Property, Relation of Property to Neighborhood, and a Summary, which reads as follows:

"This discussion is in no sense regulatory. Its purpose will be served if it succeeds in focusing attention upon the problems arising out of a new stylistic trend, and in indicating the manner in which such problems may be approached.

"The various insuring offices must reach their own conclusions in respect to the matters discussed. Depending upon the varying conditions under which the problems present themselves, conclusions may be widely divergent and may require subsequent readjustment.

"Emphasis must be placed upon the fact that Modern design is something more than a new method of exterior treatment—it is fundamentally related to developments in plan and structure of which the exterior treatment is but the final expression.

"There can be little question but that the movement toward Modern design is one of great present vitality. The sound elements in the movement are those arising from the desire to produce dwellings better fitted to present day methods of living than those to which we have been accustomed. How long its vitality will persist, and how successful the movement eventually will be, must depend upon how closely this relationship to underlying economic and social currents is maintained."

"Modern Design" is not available for general circulation. Architects actively engaged in planning small houses which are financed with F. H. A. insurance who have encountered difficulties based upon the desire of owners for a house in the "Modern" style, may obtain copies by addressing an explanatory letter to the Technical Division of the Federal Housing Administration, Washington, D. C.

National Committee on Useful Employment

THIS Committee, appointed by the Construction League of the United States—of which the Institute is a constituent member—has the following objectives:

1. To secure modifications in the rules and regulations governing the expenditure of the funds appropriated by the Relief Appropriations Act of 1935. These rules and regulations should be modified to assure the realization of the purposes expressed by Congress in the Act and by the President in asking for its passage.

2. To stimulate a growing demand for Federal grants and loans to provide funds for useful local public projects, thus decreasing the necessary volume of work relief of the CWA type and increasing normal employment through the use of the facilities of private enterprise.

The Chairman of the Committee is Sullivan W. Jones, Architect, and its membership is broadly representative of the entire construction industry. The Committee on Useful Employment desires as promptly as possible information on the following questions:

(a) Information has been received from several of the League's affiliated organizations that the cost of Federal and non-Federal public works has been rising and that the number of bidders has been diminishing. To what extent have these charges been evidenced in your state or locality; and what are the reasons?

(b) Are competent persons being selected to supervise the execution of WPA projects? What is the process by which such persons are selected?

(c) What are the rates of pay for persons responsible for planning and designing WPA projects? This question is confined to top men of ability who direct the work of others; who have working under them draftsmen and technicians; the men who initiate and put together the projects under the program.

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(d) How is the requirement that 90% of those employed on WPA projects be drawn from the relief rolls, working out in your locality? Does this rule produce sufficient skilled mechanics? Are there more skilled mechanics available than can be given employment in their accustomed trades?

(e) What is the number of skilled mechanics, by trade classifications, who are members of unions and who are

on relief rolls or are now employed on WPA projects?

Chapters and individual architects interested in WPA projects in their communities are requested to send pertinent facts to the Chairman of the Committee on Useful Employment, care of the Construction League of the United States, National Press Building, Washington, D. C.

P. W. A. Rejections

THE many rejections of P.W.A. applications, submitted after thorough study and costly preparation, prompted the Secretary of the Institute to address the following telegram to President Roosevelt:

Believing in the basic principles of PWA procedure The American Institute of Architects deplores the widespread rejection of sound and useful projects prepared in accordance with recommended and approved methods. Time and money advanced in the preparation of plans for worthy projects are thereby lost and technical and skilled and clerical workers in the construction field are deprived of opportunity for normal employment. You are strongly urged to correct the injustice of withdrawing the helping hand once extended to this class of workers.

A reply, through the National Emergency Council, was received, as follows:

The President has instructed this office to acknowledge your telegram of September 20, urging that those projects over which the Public Works Administration has jurisdiction be approved for inclusion in the Works Relief Program.

At conferences recently held, it was determined that applications now on file with the Public Works Administration will be re-examined by that agency. They will be reviewed in the light of certain requirements designed to achieve the objectives of the Works Relief Program. Those projects meeting necessary requirements will be approved.

It is hoped that the projects in which you are interested will meet with these requirements.

The interest which prompted you to telegraph the President concerning this matter is appreciated.

This response is gratifying. It would indicate a reconsideration, and final approval of many useful projects to which much study has been given by architects.

Deceased Members

As reported to the Institute from May 16, 1934 to September 24, 1935. Please report any omissions to the Secretary.

FELLOWS

Cairns, Bayard S. Cooper, Francis W. Eckel, Edmond J. Keller, George Kellogg, Thomas M. Kimball, Thomas R. ewis, Ion Magonigle, H. Van Buren

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With the Chapters and State Associations

(Excerpts from Minutes, Bulletins, and Reports)

Buffalo.

A meeting of the sub-committee on practice of the Chapter was held at the Rectagon on June 21, the purpose of which was to discuss the question of submission of sketches for the Westminster Church Memorial Chapel.

At a meeting of the directors of the Chapter on June 25 a lively discussion ensued in which several interpretations of the Competition Code were advanced by as many members. While all members were substantially in accord with the principles of the Code, there was considerable debate as to how close the Code should be adhered to in this particular instance, in which mitigating circumstances were evident.

The Church having no funds with which to institute a competition in the accepted manner, some members were in favor of taking the philanthropic attitude and furnishing sketches without regulation or assurance of remuneration. Fear was expressed that if such procedure were adopted in this instance, a precedent might be set which would destroy control over future competitions.

It was moved that the Building Committee be advised as follows:

1. That for their own benefit they appoint a practicing architect as professional adviser to draw up as simple a program as possible and to work with the Building Committee;

2. That they appoint a licensed architect as a voting member of the jury.

It was further agreed that the Chapter would furnish the professional adviser and the jury member free of cost to the Church.

Central Illinois

The third regular Chapter meeting of the year was held in Bloomington, on September 7. The members assembled for lunch at one p.m. This was followed by the regular business meeting.

was followed by the regular business meeting. The meeting was called to order by F. N. Emerson, in the absence of President Macardell, who was unable to be present. It had been proposed to make a change in a clause in the Chapter by-laws, reducing the annual Chapter dues from ten to five dollars, for the year 1936 and succeeding years. To bring the matter before the Chapter for action it was moved that the annual dues be reduced as stated. An interesting discussion followed, in which it was pointed out that in view of the fact that the national body had again resumed annual convention meetings, dues of only five dollars per year would not be sufficient to meet the Chapter's obligations in 1936. The motion was then voted upon but failed to pass. Accordingly, Chapter dues for 1936 will be ten dollars.

The Secretary-Treasurer was asked to give a tentative report on the status of Chapter finances. This report showed that a large portion of back dues has been paid, and only a few members are now in arrears.

The Chairman of the Membership Committee reported a number of prospects. Members knowing of prospects were urged to write to the chairman or to any officer of the Chapter.

Mr. Lundeen, District Officer of the Historic American Buildings Survey work of the Chapter, expects the work to be continued and wishes to locate more projects for consideration. Members knowing of old structures of any type in the territory of the Chapter which have historical value or are of architectural merit, should write to him, giving the name and location. This survey has given employment to needy architects and draftsmen over a period of time and it is hoped that it will be continued.

The main topic discussed was that of the Government program for reviving the building industry, and what place the architect may have in such a program. The whole scheme seems to be somewhat uncertain. However, some members reported work which was being undertaken in their communities. Some private work was also reported. One of the special things observed at this meeting was that many members were busy with work, and there seemed to be a more hopeful outlook than in recent years.

Concerning the position of the architect with respect to the Government program, it was reported that there was very little that the individual architect or that a Chapter group could do to change conditions. The best that can be done is to stand back of the officers of the Institute in Washington in whatever action they may take.

The regular annual meeting of the Chapter will be held in Peoria, on Saturday, December 7.

Columbus.

The entire Columbus Chapter contributed in no small measure to the success of Ohio's Better

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Housing Week, sponsored by the Federal Housing Administration. Mr. R. C. Kempton, Secretary, addressed letters to the architects of central Ohio, urging their active participation in the full week's program, which resulted in splendid response.

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Each day was dedicated to an important aspect of the housing problem. Monday, September 9 was entitled "Social Implications of Housing"; Tuesday, September 10, "Architects' Day"; Wednesday, September 11, "Finance Day"; Thursday, September 12, "Modern Devices"; Friday, September 13, "Landscape Gardening"; and on Saturday, "Interior Decoration" was considered.

The Chapter, while taking a large part in the whole week of activities, were especially interested in the success of Architects' Day.

"The Architect and His Job" was the subject of an address by Howard Dwight Smith, O. S. U. "Materials" was discussed by Mr. J. Byers Hays, Architect of Cleveland. Sound pictures were presented through the courtesy of Westinghouse on the "Home of Tomorrow" with Lowell Thomas as narrator.

In the afternoon, Mr. Dwight James Baum spoke on "Domestic Architecture of the Small House." In the evening, Mr. Baum was the guest of the architects at an informal dinner at the University Club, after which he spoke on "Better Homes in America."

Many other architects of note, not members of the Chapter, were guests of the Chapter throughout the week, and members were busy arranging talks and meetings, bringing together out-of-town architects and Chapter members for discussion of various topics.

The Columbus Chapter is to be commended on their vigorous participation in this program, thus manifesting to the public at large that the profession is vitally interested in the problems of small houses and better housing.

California, State Association of Architects.

The bulletin of the Association announces that there will be a State Convention at Santa Barbara, October 3, 4 and 5. Professional and technical problems will be considered, new policies discussed, amendments to the constitution considered, and new officers elected.

Northern Section Meeting.

A pre-convention meeting of the Northern Section was held on September 20. Recommendations for convention action were proposed, and the Association's adoption of the Building Officials' Code discussed.

The Treasurer's report was read and members urged to support the Association.

Georgia.

At the regular monthly meeting of the Chapter, held in Atlanta, in August, the President reported as follows:

In connection with the future bond money to be voted on for carrying out the sewer program and other City improvements, it was rumored that certain additions to Atlanta Schools were being designed by City Draftsmen in the employ of the City School Board. A general discussion brought out the fact that only one school is known to have been so designed.

Moved by F. P. Smith, and seconded by Robinson, that the same committee that investigated the matter last year again make contact with the School Board to get what information they can concerning this subject.

Moved that Committee on State Laws contact the Allied Engineering Society and others with purpose of getting better interpretation of Professional Tax Rulings.

Mr. F. P. Smith delivered a talk on the Nashville Courthouse Competition.

New Hampshire Society of Architects.

The Institute is pleased to learn of the formation of the New Hampshire Society of Architects, as of March 8, 1935. The Society comprises four classes of memberships: Active, junior, affiliates, and honorary members. The active membership is limited to those architects practicing as principals and those employed by principals in an executive or supervisory capacity.

A copy of the By-laws of the Society has been received at The Octagon and follows closely the form established by the A. I. A.

The following officers have been elected: Professor Eric T. Huddleston, A. I. A., President; Howard A. Goodspeed, Vice-President; Carl E. Peterson, Secretary-Treasurer. Executive Committee: Albert H. Dow, Alfred T. Granger, Harold Holmes Owen, Wilfred E. Provost.

The Institute congratulates the officers and members of the Society and extends its best wishes for success in this undertaking.

Washington, D. C.

E. Philip Schreier, Secretary of the Chapter, recently delivered a most interesting radio address on the Better Housing Program for Washington, D. C.

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(With the Chapters-Continued)

Mr. Schreier's address clearly explained the functions of the architect and how his services might be utilized in connection with small home construction. The manuscript is too lengthy to quote in these pages, but copy is on file at The Octagon and is available to any member who may have occasion to make an address in connection with his chapter's public information program.

Wisconsin.

The annual meeting of the Chapter was held at the Colony Inn, in June.

officers and committees, the meeting resolved itself into a love feast. In fitting words the President

After receiving the various annual reports of the

As of Interest

A Warning.

A man impersonating Royal Barry Wills, Architect of Boston, in possession of a bronze medal which was awarded to Mr. Wills in the 1934 Better Homes in America Competition, has been presenting himself to architects for the purpose of cashing worthless checks.

Mr. Wills has furnished the information that the man in question called at his office seeking a position and removed the medal from his office at that time. Mr. Wills describes him as thirty years old, slim, sandy mustache, and wearing a black double-breasted suit.

W. H. I. Fleming, Architect of Washington, whose generosity was recently imposed upon by this man's hard luck story, describes him as follows:

Age thirty, six feet tall, weight one hundred forty pounds, dark complexion, and no mustache.

Regardless of varying descriptions this imposter should be easy to identify. Architects approached by him should reach for the telephone instead of the check book.

Buffalo Small House Bureau.

The Octagon has received the circular of information regarding the Buffalo Small House Bureau of the Better Housing Committee. The Committee responsible for the preparation of this circular are to be commended for their clear and concise statement of the building problems of the small home owner and the suggested remedies.

The paragraphs included in the circular are briefed as follows:

presented to the Chairman of the late Convention Committee, William E. Herbst, a beautiful token of esteem of the Chapter and of its appreciation of his efforts to make the Convention the success that it was. The chairman of the Ladies' Group, Mrs. Bauer, spoke briefly in a happy way reminiscing of the exciting week lately experienced.

Mr. Herbst was elected President of the Chapter at the meeting, and Richard Philipp, Vice-President. Alexander Guth was elected again as Secretary of the Chapter, a post which he has held for a number of years.

Leigh Hunt, chairman of the Public Information Committee of the Chapter, presented a verbal report. He called for assistance on the part of all the members for articles of the proper kind.

Building owners have not secured full value for their money; Architectural services have always been available; Standard form of architectural services outlined; An alternate plan offered for small homes; Small House Bureau service outlined; No charge for consultation; A Protection for the Home Owner; Complete Service only; Services furnished to owners desiring assistance in modernization; Free consultation; Fancy trimmings have fooled the buyer; Owner fails to appreciate real cause of High Maintenance Cost and Low Re-sale value; Lending agencies misled; Poor construction and improper materials hurt resale value; Can the Building owner be protected from rapid depreciation and obsolescence?; Government encouraging new building; Will the billions of dollars loaned for new homes be safely invested?; Can such investments be made more safe?; Architects study problems and establish Small House Bureau.

The Octagon feels that this circular would be most useful to the Chapters considering the formation of similar organizations. Copies may be obtained by addressing the Buffalo Small House Bureau of the Better Housing Committee, One Niagara Square, Buffalo, N. Y.

Medary Scholarship Award.

The Institute wishes to announce that the Medary Scholarship jury, headed by Ely Jacques Kahn and Charles Butler has selected Mr. George N. Lykos, Old Baltimore Road, Wilmington, Delaware, as the recipient of this year's award.

September, 1925

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Mr. Lykos is a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the award is to assist him in continuing his post-graduate studies there.

M. I. T. Traveling Scholarship.

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Dean William Emerson, School of Architecture at M. I. T., has advised that the winner of the Scholarship is Frank A. Faillace, of Brookline, Mass., who is also completing his work for his Master's Degree.

Course in Community Planning.

The School of Architecture of New York University announces a course in community planning designed to meet the needs of architects, engineers and others concerned with the problems of city and regional planning and the methods of developing planning schemes consistent with modern community needs. The course will cover the various theories and principles involved in the development of towns, cities and regions, and the methods which have been developed in the course of time in the creation of communities and in guiding their functions.

The course will be under the direction of Dr. Carol Aronovici who has had a long experience in practical planning in various parts of the United States and who has given courses of this kind in a number of universities throughout the country. He will be assisted by a number of experts in the practical field of planning and subjects which have a direct bearing upon the scientific phases of planning theory and practice.

To assist the students in becoming familiar with the various methods of planning an exhibit of plans prepared for various cities and regions throughout the United States and Europe and other material bearing on planning will be on display at the School of Architecture of New York University, Bryant Park Center, 1071 Sixth Avenue, when the course opens on September 24th.

Is a Mayor Higher than an Architect in Rating?

A postcard received at The Octagon from Harry T. Stephens, F. A. I. A., of Paterson, N. J. reads as follows:

"THE OCTAGON says an A. I. A. Member has been a mayor. Is a mayor higher than an architect in rating? If so, Jules Verner, A. I. A., New Jersey Chapter, often is Mayor of Linden, N. J. I don't know whether he is just now or not." "P.S. Louis F. Bird, A. I. A., of South Orange, likewise."

New Book.

Design in Art and Industry.

By Ely Jacques Kahn. New York, 1935. Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers. Price, \$3.50.

Excerpts from Review by Langdon Warner:

THIS book will of course be eagerly read by every young man and woman who is reaching out to learn how to make things—whether paintings or airplanes. The distinguished architect who wrote it was encouraged by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation given through the American Institute of Architects.

The very nature of his quest for design through the Orient and the Occident is enough to prove that he had caught something of the discontent that stirs us all today, and to make us look eagerly to his report on the successes and failures of arttraining in other lands.

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If one had any respect for commissions and their reports this book would make us all vote for a commission of Americans to be sent on a leisurely tour of the world—particularly of the Orient—to report to us the surviving and the new-sprouting excellencies that exist. The commission should contain a philosopher, a craftsman, a sociologist (God save the mark!) a factory-manager, a bishop in gaiters, and a professional philanthropist. No doubt our author could travel in several of these different roles in his own single person, but he must not forget to take with him, as secretary, a Woman of Sense.

"Use of Brick in French Architecture-The Midi."

By William Emerson, F. A. I. A., and Georges Gromort, Professor of Architecture, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, with a Foreword by Ernest John Russell, as President of The American Institute of Architects. Published by the Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 112 West 46th Street, New York, N. Y.

Washington University, School of Architecture.

The appointment of Joseph D. Murphy, of Kansas City, Mo., as Acting Associate Professor of Design in the School of Architecture, Washington University, has been announced, recently.

Mr. Murphy studied at M. I. T. from 1927 to 1929. During the first year he won the Fontainebleau Scholarship, and three years later, the M. I. T. Fellowship for European travel, which he was obliged to relinquish on winning the Paris Prize, also. The summer prior to his departure was spent with Messrs. Bennett, Parsons & Frost on early plans for the Chicago World's Fair.

During his studies in Paris he was four times Medallist in the Concours of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He then collaborated with Professor Jacques Carlu, Director of the School at Fontainebleau, in a competition for the rehabilitation of the Avenue de la Grande Armee, Paris, spending two years in the Professor's office.

In 1932 Mr. Murphy returned to Kansas City to practice, designing the Civic Auditorium of that city, the House of Detention, interior designs of the Court House, and other projects.

Fined for Posing as an Architect.

His pose as a registered architect cost Fred L. Smeltz, 2333 Richton Avenue (Detroit) \$100. He was fined by Judge Arthur E. Gordon, in Recorder's Court, following testimony by E. N. Walker, secretary of the State Examiners in Architecture. Smeltz, according to witnesses, posed as an architect in dealing with clients who intended to build houses.—Detroit News.

Editorial Comment by the Public Press

Architects Pledge Aid

From the Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

THE president of the American Institute of Architects, Stephen F. Voorhees, voices the true American spirit when, speaking for his profession, he says that all our Government buildings should represent and embody the highest standards of design, both artistic and practical, and promises the cooperation of the Institute with the Government along every line in realizing this ideal. In giving this pledge to the Government, our architects have not so much set an example to their fellow countrymen as seized an opportunity to represent them.

The architects are in a peculiarly favorable position to lead in the aesthetic education of America, for their work is always in the public eye. It is an influence closer than seeing. We actually live with it. Indoors or out we cannot escape the presence of architecture. It is a kind of marriage, and it allows of no separation. Also it is for better or for worse, and nobody knows as well as the architects how liable it is to be for worse. Their very offer holds an implication that American architecture, and not least our governmental architecture, affords large room for improvement.

Our buildings have been our teachers from the beginning, and how praiseworthy our first buildings were! Whether we think of the Plymouth cottage or the colonial mansion or, in the far Southwest, the Spanish Mission, we realize that we set out with noble architectural examples before us. We realize equally that we had a long middle period—perhaps not wholly ended when we sadly disregarded them. Fortunately many of the buildings of our architectural Dark Age have had to be displaced, and still others await worthier successors. Also our expansion, recent and to come, has offered and will offer fresh opportunity for the highest art in building.

No one knows as well as our architects the dangers of their art—the spell of every epoch's modernism with its temptation to petrify passing moods in art, for the regret of future generations, the intoxication of sensationalism with its permanent morning headache of disillusionment, and all the other inviting bypaths that lure artists away from true art. It is to make sure that our governmental buildings shall set examples of escape from these faults and embodiment of their opposite virtues, that the American Institute of Architects offers its aid to our Government at Washington.

Get an Architect

From the Memphis Press-Scimitar

E. W. Horner, Tennessee FHA director, urges applicants for loans to engage an architect.

"We have noticed that applications go thru more quickly when the services of an architect have been used," he said.

This is advice which all should follow. No one would think of attempting to perform an operation on a member of his family, or filling his teeth. But he will attempt the highly technical job of planning and supervising the building of a house without professional advice. The result is ugly and impractical homes, which soon depreciate.

Recently a Memphis home fell into the hands of an insurance company. They found it has been so badly planned that it would not sell until it was done over. So they hired an architect to plan its remodeling. How much better had the builder hired an architect in the first place.

The services of an architect are the most valuable investment a builder can make, be the house small or large.

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