

Journal of The American Institute of  
**ARCHITECTS**



March 1950

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Guest Editorial by Katharine Gilbert

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The Renovation of The White House—I

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External Physical Environment

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The St. Louis Conference

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The NAHO Boston Meeting

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The Architect as a Modern—II

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Our First Architectural School?

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# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

WITH THE AIM OF AMPLIFYING  
AS THROUGH A MICROPHONE  
THE VOICE OF THE PROFESSION

MARCH, 1950

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## CONTENTS

Guest Editorial . . . . . 99 <i>By Katharine Gilbert</i>	Louis Kahn . . . . . 130 <i>By George S. Koyl, F.A.I.A.</i>
A.C.S.A. Meeting . . . . . 102	Calendar . . . . . 133
External Physical Environment Is Not Symmetrical . . . . . 103 <i>By James M. Fitch</i>	Honors . . . . . 134
The Octagon and Its Memorial Garden—An Apology to Gilmore Clarke . . . . . 109	News from the Educational Field 134
A New Arts Center . . . . . 110	Architects Read and Write:
The Renovation of The White House, Part I . . . . . 111 <i>By Douglas William Orr, F.A.I.A.</i>	A Call for Interpretation . . 136 <i>By Louis A. Simon, F.A.I.A.</i>
The Architect as a Modern, Part II . . . . . 119 <i>By Ralph Walker, F.A.I.A.</i>	"Should Professional Maga- zines Publish Designers' Work?" . . . . . 136 <i>By John Lloyd Wright</i>
The St. Louis Conference . . . . 124 <i>By Walter A. Taylor</i>	An Answer to "Are We Pre- paring Future Architects for the Profession?" . . . . . 137 <i>By one who shuns publicity</i>
The NAHO Boston Meeting . . . . 128 <i>By Frederick Gutheim</i>	Garnier and His Paris Opera House . . . . . 139 <i>By Goldwin Goldsmith, F.A.I.A.</i>
A Resolution of the Central New York Chapter . . . . . 130 A tribute to the late Arthur Norman Gibb	Our First Architectural School? 139 They Say: <i>John Taylor Egan,</i> <i>Prof. W. R. Lethaby, Lewis</i> <i>Mumford</i> . . . . . 140
	The Editor's Asides . . . . . 141

## ILLUSTRATIONS

The White House: Details of the Renovation . . . . . 115, 116
At the St. Louis Conference on Public Housing . . . . . 125
Research Tower, Johnson Wax Factory, Racine, Wis. . . . 126 <i>Frank Lloyd Wright, architect</i>

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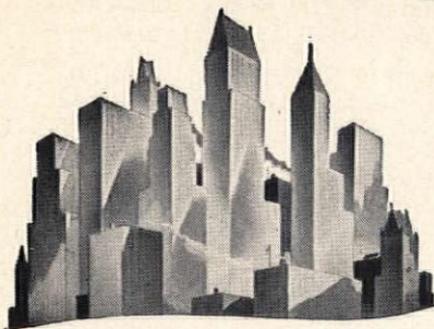
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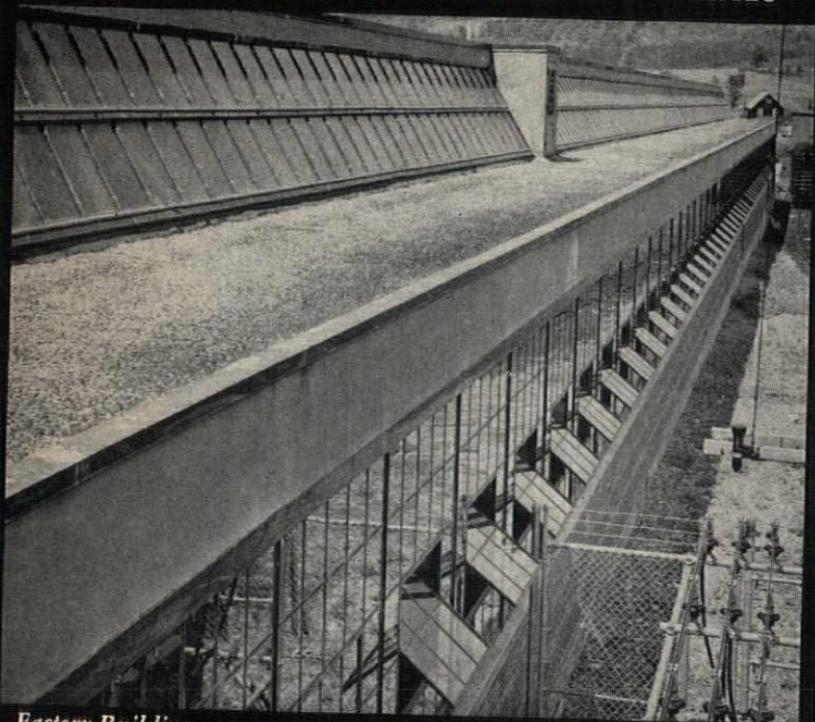
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*Our series of Guest Editorials has brought a wide variety of opinion, as well as several incipient crusades. In a somewhat different vein, the following essay was prompted by what has come to be termed "open planning." This month's Guest Editor won her Ph. D. at Cornell, was for several years Kenan Research Fellow in philosophy at the University of North Carolina, served as Professor of Philosophy at Duke University from 1930 until '41, and has been Head of the Department of Aesthetics, Art and Music at Duke since 1942. Under her suggested title, "Architecture and the Poet," we are privileged to hear—*

*Katharine Gilbert*

"I THINK of housing projects as inward-looking groups." When I encountered this sentence in Dean Joseph Hudnut's "Architecture and the Spirit of Man" my mind strained forward toward a statement I had been looking for in books and articles on modern architecture and had on the whole missed. What required saying is here, I thought. The author is reckoning with our need to withdraw from time to time and live and think by ourselves, and he handles it under the idea of the inward orientation in right building. He is reflecting on this human need with the intention of drawing its shape and devising its shell. He is saying that on the perimeter of

housing units there are the filtering skins, the porches and terraces, the group meeting-places, the gardens organized with enclosures, the wide windows; and in the interior there are the flexible sections for eating and sleeping and talking; and then as the subtle final control for a family's values and varied functions there is some "blessed uninvaded work-room" or some lovely peaceful atavistic *cave*.

But I was of course wrong. By being "focused towards the center and away from the boundaries" Mr. Hudnut meant that housing projects "should have at their center some interests which are shared in common by all and which are expressed in structures or open spaces

shared by all." The more I reflected the more I realized that my dashed expectation had been a lapse on my part rather than a right. For the author had made it perfectly clear pages earlier that he liked stir and was city-set and collective-minded. He had spread it on the pages of Chapter XIII that it was by the city and not by the poetical solitude of country-places that his mind was fed and fortified; that while poets give the city to the devil he gives it to God; and that the haven of his dreams is a little flat at the corner of Broadway and 42nd Street. The shaping and placing of a poet's place would hardly occur to him as a primary requirement of his profession.

And yet in a way my expectation was natural. For while in general our functional architects do not study the virtues of contemplation and creation in seclusion or shape bedrooms and quiet work-rooms, Mr. Hudnut himself has widened the concept of housing's uses almost to the spirit's farthest horizon. He has given it memory and a symbolic spire, for instance. As I read, I feel with joy and relief the sweep of his sympathies and tolerances.

But the poet is hardly in his

picture. Now a poet may be thought of in the singular, or at any rate, in the well-defined class of which Walt Whitman and Shelley are examples. But this is not the poet whose claim to architectural consideration I am presenting. One knows little of the poetic habit who knows only a list of the makers of epics, dramatic poems, and lyrics. Poetic invention is an entire precious way of life, and it includes all kinds of creativeness. In it are those who like Petrarch crave to meditate in solitude, or like Descartes hatch their new geometries while lying late in bed, or like Pico della Mirandola acknowledge the melancholy temperament but claim also its genius for the investigation "of the highest and most secret things," or like Yeats nurse their dreams in guarded reverie and record that the poet's favorite symbol for his fit shell is the tower, or like Virginia Woolf attribute the sterility of woman in literature to the lack of *A Room of Her Own*, or like Hō-Jō-Ki make their little ten-foot-square huts for worship and music and reading.

This value of contemplation and creative imagination is the one which architects still do not seriously and altogether shape a space

for. The gentle humanity which gives its due to history and to sentiment bridle at *ποίησις* (poiesis). Why? Apparently because the poet seems not to know his place within a group. He carries momentum and in the wrong direction. He is setting toward an enclosed interior in the heart of the house or toward some secluded tower-chamber, and dragging along congenial functions and beings with him. Isn't he tainted with introversion? Won't he stick his head in a hole?

For the basic postulate of the latest school of functional architects is the primacy of the social factor in human need. The words 'private' and 'peace' occur, but far less often than 'sharing', 'collective', 'group', 'communal' and 'organic'. Frank Lloyd Wright was a friend of country-places and matters. But today architects are preoccupied with the truth that men have got to learn to live together or die. They are not so acutely aware of the equivalent truth that with the contemporary underlining of social planning and the ideal of psychological adjustment, man is fast losing the power to live with himself. If man is always in a group, he not only cannot cherish

unique vision and capacities but he gets afraid of himself for a companion. Pejorative terms such as escapist and poet-conspirator betray this bias. It goes without saying that the city-planners hate congestion and disorder in the life together. And Mr. Mumford even speaks of the "brutal lack of intimacy in most cities." But when he praises the vision of harmony, order and joy that is a Fresh Meadows I look in vain for any mention of a poet's corner, a prophet's chamber or a philosopher's armchair. Have we 'seen through' all such functions then, and cast them in the discard?

Contemporary architects not only focus on shared functions and space, but on these in our present era. Designing must be for the concerns of our age of speed, vast cities and dimensions, machines and techniques, political, economic and social planning, the channeling of work to be done, and the organization of organizations. These comprise in truth the spirit of modernity. But architects have always, as we know, built in some sense in the spirit of their own modernity. One wonders how far they might now try to *maladjust* to their age in order to guide the indweller toward individual crea-

tiveness and thoughtfulness. Let us recall such a maladjustment upon which we can get the perspective of history.

In Greece there once lived a man named Socrates. His ways have made a difference to two thousand years of human experience. He was a lover of the city like Mr. Hudnut and made jokes about his awkwardness and naiveté when caught outside the walls. He 'functioned' as an intellectual gadfly in the community center, in the 'heart' of Athens. He used the downtown district for his ironical talk and pursuit of patterns of things. But the Socrates who philosophized and invented in the market-place, public baths and banquet-rooms had previously ripened in himself by himself. He had odd rooms to do it in, I venture. But he could 'participate' and 'prick' because he had pre-

viously ingathered. One recalls his sudden withdrawals from company to live out a trance or hammer out an idea or entertain a vision. Then, and not till then, was he ready to cooperate. The intimacy of his mind was very far in indeed—farther in than the lovely village greens of ideal housing projects. The proper housing of Socrateses seems a worthy problem.

Being of the contemplative and poetical persuasion, I had thought of capping this essay: "I want a bedroom." But it seems better to bind it together in a graver and more general way, thus: Who has the imagination to design a proper place—study, bedroom or penthouse—for the encouragement and protection of the imagination? If imagination is what "gives to airy nothings their local habitation," who will give a local habitation to imagination itself?

## A.C.S.A. Meeting

THE 36th Annual Meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture will be held in Washington, D. C. at the Mayflower Hotel on May 8th and 9th—the two days immediately preceding The American Institute

of Architects' 82nd Convention. An invitation is extended to faculty members of all schools, to members of The Institute, and to others interested in architectural education to attend the Association meetings.

MARCH, 1950

# External Physical Environment Is Not Symmetrical

By James M. Fitch

Excerpts from an illustrated talk before the BRAB Conference in Washington, January 11-12, 1950—"Weather and the Building Industry"

DU<sup>E</sup> TO the rapid development of a wide variety of materials and equipment for controlling all aspects of the natural environment, the impression seems to be widespread that climate is no longer an important factor in architecture. This concept, I feel, is fallacious on at least two grounds. On the one hand, it leads us into gross miscalculations of the actual performance of buildings under the impact of climatic variations. On the other hand, it causes many buildings to be over-engineered—that is, mechanical means are used to correct conditions which reasonable attention to site, orientation, path of sun and wind, even proper use of vegetation, might well prevent. In other words, this mechanistic concept tends to produce buildings which are always fighting their environment instead of trying to work with it. It makes it more difficult for them to combat the negative aspects of a given climate and almost impossible to exploit the positive. It is my

feeling that all buildings, no matter how simple or how complex, will perform better when precisely tailored to a precisely measured climate.

Today most buildings are designed to yield internally symmetrical conditions of comfort. The design criterion for a classroom, for example, is not only that levels of illumination, temperature, ventilation and acoustics be generally correct, but also that such levels be actually operative for every child in the room. Unless the classroom meets such conditions, it can no longer be considered a successful design.

Obviously, this is no easy assignment for either the architects or the engineers. And is not made any easier by their tendency to regard the external physical environment in which the building will stand as being either a meteorological vacuum or a meteorological constant, or, at best, meteorologically symmetrical. If you doubt that these are very common as-

sumptions, you have only to examine almost any building, including this one. Does the north wall differ in the slightest degree in design or construction from the south? The east from the west? Can you tell by the distribution of glass, insulation, weatherstripping, storm sash and so forth, which way the wall faces? Does the construction, pitch or color of the roof reflect the fact that a south slope may easily receive two to three times as much heat as the northern slope?

Or, again, compare a house in Hackensack, New Jersey, with a similar one in Amarillo, Texas. Does the one differ in any important respect from the other? My guess is that the only real difference you will find, if any, will be in the B.t.u. rating of the heating plant. The sad fact is that, generally speaking, we ignore the climatic variations between a north and a south exposure in Hackensack just as we tend to underestimate the climatic difference between Hackensack and Amarillo. We design as though climate were symmetrical in time and space, which of course it never is.

The painstaking analysis of the Columbus, Ohio, climate (Sept. 1949 BULLETIN, pages 22-23) demonstrates the variation—

from month to month, hour to hour, season to season—in the thermal regime of that area. Obviously, we cannot assume that, in Columbus, we design for conditions that are even remotely symmetrical—unless we merely study the annual tabulation at the extreme right edge of the table, which of course is just a statistical summary.

If you doubt that climates are asymmetrical in *space*, as well as time, look at this chart (Sept. 1949 BULLETIN, page 17). Here you have the thermal regimes of Columbus, New York, New Orleans, St. Louis, Oakland, Phoenix, St. Paul, Portland, and Charleston. You see that, going across the country—in other words, moving in space—you find the same immense variations, even though of course there are certain common denominators.

The building designer should not assume that he works in symmetrical conditions. Yet, too often, he does just that. This architectural inattention to a meteorological fact is possible today only because of the materials made available to the building field by science and technology. It was never possible before. If we look at all the periods prior to the last one hundred years,

we find a close attention paid to climate in all building. In fact, this seems to be the distinctive quality of all national and regional architectural styles. Whether men built a palm-thatched cottage or a house of stone or wood is of secondary importance. What really deserves our admiration is the way in which they used the materials at hand to ameliorate a given complex of climatic conditions.

Today this is no longer necessary. We can erect identically the same building in Portland, Maine, and Brownsville, Texas. Indeed, we do it all the time. We can even maintain exactly the same internal conditions inside the two buildings, thanks to the level of our engineering sciences. But does the fact that this is technically possible mean that it is economically or even philosophically correct?

I do not pretend to have measured the working conditions inside the multiple-story glass skyscrapers which have sprung up across the country since the war. But I venture to say that, without accessories in the form of blinds, curtains, shades, lamps and photoelectric cells, luminous conditions inside these buildings will fluctuate widely both as between one exposure and another, or as between

one time of day and another for the same exposure.

The same asymmetry will apply to the thermal environment. There is, for example, a new 40-story skyscraper now nearing completion in New York City, whose main east and west walls are sheathed in double insulating glass, literally all forty floors. Bearing in mind the solar load on the west-facing glass wall on a July afternoon, it is obvious that conditions at that wall will be as different from the identical east wall as though the two were hundreds of miles apart. If thermal conditions within the buildings are to be kept symmetrical, it is apparent that the air-conditioning system has to be over-engineered to correct this distortion. Obviously, it can do so only by having a cooling capacity many times the average load.

In both cases, in other words, internal balance can only be maintained by the use of a wide range of auxiliary equipments and the consumption of immense amounts of energy.

In the case of the New York City skyscraper, at least, the problem of solar heat loads was exhaustively studied. As a matter of fact, early schemes for the building involved the use of exterior sun-

breaks outside of the wall, free of the wall. These had to be abandoned, I understand, because they raised apparently insuperable problems of icing and corrosion. It may well be that for a 40-story tower in downtown New York, this is the only practical solution. And I do not question the ability of its designers to make such buildings perform correctly. But it seems to me to be obvious that such concepts of design have a limited validity. They do not apply, for example, to a skyscraper in San Antonio where no problems of corrosion or icing exist, and where the problem of solar heat is much more acute.



Nor, I think, do such concepts apply to smaller, lower, detached buildings; least of all to the residence. For the simplest way to handle excess solar heat, is never to let it enter the fabric of the building in the first place. And I trust you will not think me romantic when I say that trees and vines are among the best solar-shading devices know to man. They present no problems of corrosion and icing, and Nature puts them up and takes them down at exactly the right intervals.

Now naturally, I do not mean to disparage this vast body of new materials and equipments that we have at our disposal. On the contrary, they are indispensable to contemporary building; but we often fail to realize that, the more complex the heating, cooling, ventilating or lighting system becomes, the more important it is that we pay close attention to the climatic and microclimatic factors. Precisely because of the delicacy and precision of much of this equipment, it is more than ever important that we tailor the whole building to fit exactly the climate for which it is designed. You cannot expect double insulating glass or summer air-conditioning to operate at maximum efficiency and economy if you place it in a building whose four walls are designed for some "average" climate. Nature does not produce averages; statisticians do that.

If you want constant, symmetrical comfort conditions inside the building, it seems to me your first premise must be that the external climatic load on the building will never be symmetrical. Thus, it makes a great deal of difference, to both the equipment and to the occupants of a given building, which direction the windows face,

what the walls are built for, which way the roof slopes, and what its color is. It makes a great deal of difference inside a building whether or not the windows overlook paved or sodded surfaces; shaded or exposed areas, etc.

In architecture, as in war, the best strategy is a defense in depth. If you meet meteorological phenomena at the lot line, you will have a much easier time at the wall. Your building can better absorb the attack of a January wind if its first impact has been broken by a tree belt at the property line. It will be much easier on roof surface, insulation, fan and occupants, if the impact of the summer sun has first been absorbed by a parasol of trees.

Having selected the site on which we are going to meet the enemy, we can develop many architectural means of exploiting the microclimate, of manipulating it in our favor. Many of these means need not be complex or involve mechanical power. Generally speaking, our efforts should always be toward minimizing extremes, of leveling fluctuations of temperature, humidity, windiness or calm, sunshine or shade.

Take a case based on actual measured conditions. We have a

difference in radiant temperatures between a lawn—which registered an average of 80° right at the surface of the lawn—and a blacktop or asphalt terrace, where the temperature registered 120°. There you have a 40° differential inside of fifteen or twenty feet. What is worse, you have a heating system radiating heat directly into the house. Everybody knows this but I think if we took a Gallup poll of the terraces in this country, we would find very little attention paid to such considerations.

Obviously, the same situation operates with respect to visible light. The light reflected into the windows is going to be a great deal higher from, say, concrete than that reflected from a surface of sod.

Sod is an actual cooling element. Here is a demonstration, again based on observations. You have an air temperature of 85° at the street, and, 75 feet back, moving across a lawn and under shade, the temperature is down to 79°. This is a condition which operates all the time, everywhere, and it is pretty consistently ignored. In other words, we use lawns more for what the neighbors will think than for what comfort they might yield us.

There is, obviously, a whole

range of solar-shading devices whereby we can break the sun before it ever gets to the structure. Obviously, high trees and shrubbery, placed to the south and west of the house, will serve as very effective barrier to the west sun.

But there are hundreds of devices that can be used to minimize the negative aspects of the climate. Nowadays most architects pay attention to the problem of shading south and west windows. We get into terrible tangles as to whether the shades should be canvas or asbestos sheet; whether they should move or not move; and who will put them up and take them down. We forget that a good deciduous vine will often do the job quite well, with no fuss or maintenance.

A microclimatic phenomenon which farmers know but architects have pretty well forgotten, is that, after the sun sets, the air that cools first and cools quickest is a film right at the surface of the earth. This cooled air can be very easily dammed by a wall, by a hedge, by any obstruction, and will cause what the farmers call a frost pocket. On the other hand, in certain areas, for example, in Washington, the summers are so uncomfortable that this might very well be a condition

to look for. It might very well keep you submerged in a pool of cool air during the hot summer months.

Thanks to the modern climatological knowledge, we begin to realize the immense fluctuations which exist within any one climate. How much more important then, that we recognize the difference between one climate and another. All of us know, of course, that the climate in central Ohio is quite different from the area in the Southwest around Phoenix. But how many of us realize the exact ways in which it differs or the precise amounts? I do not think many of us do, for if we did, there would be much more fundamental difference between the buildings in the two areas.

As a matter of fact, this need for regional differentiation in roof design, applies to every element of the building, and for most of the equipment in it. This is often more clearly the responsibility of the designer than of the manufacturer. For example, all the necessary components for a good roof anywhere are commercially available. Using this sort of design procedure, you may end up with two roofs—one in Columbus, one in Phoenix—which use the same products.

But if they are really designed for their respective climates, they will use these products in quite different combinations and quantities. They will have to, if they are really going to meet the dissimilar climate load imposed by those two regions.

These illustrations, scanty as they are, suggest a new approach to building design—one which steers a median line between naturalistic and mechanistic extremes. It implies avoiding blind

dependence upon either ventilating fans *or* prevailing breezes, upon maple leaves *or* insulation, upon sunlight *or* fluorescent bulbs. Rather, it implies the intelligent use of *both*, to the end that our buildings offer optimum comfort for minimum capital outlay and operating costs. This way, and this way only, we will get buildings whose performance, in terms of comfort, is symmetrical in both time and space.

## The Octagon and Its Memorial Garden— An Apology to Gilmore Clarke

FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO it was suggested that a fitting memorial might be developed at The Octagon in honor of those members who had given their lives in defense of our country's ideals. Rebuilding the Garden to serve as such a memorial seemed to offer a worthy subject. It was thought that the Garden and its fine old boxwood might well serve as a harmonizing link between the 1800 Mansion, the 1940 Administration Building, the old stable, (perhaps one day to house The Institute's Library).

Mr. Gilmore Clark was asked to design the Garden, and Mr. Lee Lawrie, the sculptor, consented to

act as sculptor on the memorial. Both gentlemen are Honorary Members of The Institute.

Under the jurisdiction of three Boards of Directors the design progressed. Recently the staff was moved out of The Octagon Mansion and how to make the best use of that building entered into the discussions. It was thought best that the first floor of The Octagon should be renovated and properly furnished, not with antiques, but so that it could be used as The Institute's front door, adapted to the reception of those who visit our national headquarters.

Obviously, this use of the Man-

sion's first floor fitted closely into the practical function of the Garden. In other words, the whole idea of a formal reception area called for as much open space adjoining The Octagon as could be developed.

At about this time—early last spring—The Board felt it advisable to integrate a number of committees which were concerned with one phase or another of our headquarters into a new Committee on Buildings and Grounds, with Mr. James Edmunds as Chairman, to take under its wing the various efforts relating to the Garden, the furnishing of The Octagon, and the furnishing of the Administration Building or Annex.

Mr. Edmunds wrote Mr. Clarke asking him to make certain changes in accordance with the above ideas in the Garden plans which had already been completed. These suggestions evidently did not meet entirely with Mr. Clarke's approval. It was then suggested by the Committee, with the approval of The Board, that Mr.

Clarke be asked to relinquish the job, and another landscape architect be appointed.

It was at this point that we acted in an extremely discourteous manner to Mr. Clarke. The discourtesy was most assuredly unintentional, but it resulted in a misunderstanding as to Mr. Clarke's continuation as landscape architect.

While we believe that The Board had the right to insist upon certain features of the design with which Mr. Clarke was seemingly unsympathetic, we deeply deplore the manner in which Mr. Clarke's services were terminated without proper notice and thanks for the aid he had given, charging only his out-of-pocket expenses. The humble apologies of both of us are offered and it is hoped that they will be accepted by Mr. Clarke in full understanding of the circumstances.

RALPH WALKER,  
*President.*

JAMES R. EDMUNDS, JR.,  
*Chairman, Buildings and  
Grounds Committee.*

## A New Arts Center

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY is to have "a gathering place for the promotion of mutual interests of the drama, music, painting, sculpture, architecture and associated arts." President Eisen-

MARCH, 1950

hower has invited Richard Rodgers, composer and producer, to head a committee to develop the project. Other members of the committee are Ely Jacques Kahn, F.A.I.A., architect; Henry Allen Moe, director of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation; Alfred de Liagre, Jr., producer; and Lawrence Tibbett, music.

For the Columbia faculty, the following will work with the com-

mittee: Leopold Arnaud, Dean of the School of Architecture; Professor Peppino Mangravite, directing painting and sculpture courses; Professor Oscar Campbell, head of the Department of English, and Professor Douglas Moore, of the Department of Music.

As planned tentatively, the arts center would be erected on the east side of Amsterdam Avenue, between 116th and 117th Streets.

## The Renovation of the White House

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

By *Douglas William Orr*, F.A.I.A.

An address delivered before the Washington Building Congress,  
January 5, 1950

I HAVE BEEN ASKED to tell you something of the renovation of the Executive Mansion, and while I feel somewhat that I am carrying coals to Newcastle, speaking in Washington where more has been published about The White House than anywhere else, I am happy to bring to you some facts about the background of this operation and the work being undertaken.

History records that The White House was the first public building to be erected in Washington, its cornerstone having been laid

with much Masonic ceremony on October 13, 1792. It has been the home of all of our Presidents save George Washington, but he had much to do with its site selection and erection.

There probably is no building so important to the people of the United States—the most famous home in the country, one which carries affection for millions and which has become a symbol of the endurance of our democratic way of life.

It is interesting to note that,

contrary to the general belief, The White House has been undergoing changes, additions and repairs almost since its erection. While I will not dwell too long on its history, it is necessary for a more complete understanding of the problem to recount certain events which have had a bearing on the problem before us today.

The White House was designed by James Hoban, winner of a competition for its design, and its construction was supervised by him. The building was first occupied by President and Mrs. John Adams in November 1800, some eight years after the cornerstone was laid. At the time of its occupancy, some of the interior, notably the East Room, was not completed. One must recall that in this rather primitive era, water was carried by hand into the house from a spring in Franklin Park. There were no bathrooms, and Mrs. Adams, the first lady to occupy the building, wrote: "We had not the least fence, yard or other convenience without, and the great unfinished audience room, I made a drying room of—nor were there enough "Lusters" or lamps, so candles were stuck here and there for light—that neither the chief staircase nor the outer steps were completed, so the family had

to enter the house by temporary wooden stairs and platform."

Seven years later (1807) Jefferson and Latrobe developed plans for the additions of the North and South Porticoes and the addition of the East and West Terraces. The terraces made provision for service quarters on each side of the house, and it is recorded that Jefferson himself made these drawings, which showed the arrangement of stables, saddle rooms, ice house and even a hen house disguised behind the classical colonnades.

One might also recall that at this time the population of the country was a mere seven million people, and the Washington bureaucracy consisted of 128 persons. I wish to stress the contrast of Government size with that of today, because it has much to do with the functional strain to which this selfsame White House, with relatively minor additions, is called on to withstand.

The President's House was conceived as a residence for our chief of state, and in contrast with the palaces of European rulers the structure was a very modest one, but befitting our young democracy—and expressing a national ideal.

On August 24, 1814, the building was burned by the British forces which had captured Washington, the fire destroying the interior and part of the walls.

Work of restoration was commenced in 1815 and President Monroe moved in during December 1817.

The South Portico was not completed until 1824 and the North Portico until 1829.

At that time, candles and lamps were still in use in the house. It was in 1833 that the first pipes to bring water from the Franklin Park spring were installed, and not until President Fillmore had one put in in 1850 was a regular bathtub in the building. The earliest record of gas installation appeared in 1848. It was not until 1853 that heating, other than open fireplaces, was installed.

It was 1859 before Potomac water was piped into the house, and even today, due to inadequate street mains, the water pressure for the fixtures of the third floor baths is not sufficient to make them work properly.

In 1869 the East Terrace was entirely removed and later greenhouses were added at the West Terrace.

Changes in the interior were

rather constant with succeeding administrations. The supervisory care of the building was changed numerous times from one Government agency to another by executive order. At no time, so far as can be learned, had it occurred to the agency charged with the duty of making alterations or additions, to look into or be concerned with the structure itself.

The interiors, so far as the original design conception of the building was concerned, deteriorated rapidly with various remodelings, and, as one historian has noted, prior to the alteration of 1902 the East Room more nearly resembled the saloon of a Sound Steamer than anything else, and the State Dining-room had the decor of a fashionable bar of the time.

Contrary to general belief, the original structure was well built and well reconstructed after the fire. If any fault can be attributed to the original structure, it was founding it on compressible soil. For its purpose, the manner of structural framing, with the floor loads carried to the proper walls, the structure was adequate—as time has shown. Settlement may have occurred, but in general it has been very uniform and caused no important dislocation.

The building was satisfactory physically and functionally for the first part of its life, but it must be remembered that it served as executive offices as well as residence up until 1902.

Cabinet and other meetings held on the second floor, close by the President's Study, had grown by the time of the war between the States, to such scale as to entirely invade the family living space. The area was used freely by secretaries, mission and office seekers, and the family never really regained privacy of that area, as the quarters were put to even more concentrated office use as our nation grew in size.

Also functionally, the structure has been constantly subjected to burdens of traffic, inconsistent with the original intent. During the times The White House is open to tourists, as many as 8,000 persons a day pass through the corridors and State Rooms as sightseers.

Large State receptions, with as many as 2,000 persons in attendance, and even greater crowds at inaugural and New Year receptions, overburden the building, putting a heavy strain on structure and equipment.

Even the moving of furniture, chairs and other equipment, and its

storage from one event to another, is a major problem and for which no adequate provision was ever made.

Coupled with the great American passion for improvement, it was quite natural that as the mechanical age came and grew, The White House should be provided with modern conveniences. But each time improvements were added, something was subtracted from the structure. Doors, openings and chases were cut through and into walls, floor joists were bored, cut and altered with complete abandon, always apparently with the idea that there would be enough structure left to support the loads.



It is really quite amazing that, so far as can be ascertained, no investigations were *ever* made as to the general organization of the structure, its ability to withstand such operations without at least a blood transfusion, nor apparently were studies made as to the effect of changing the loadings on walls and piers.

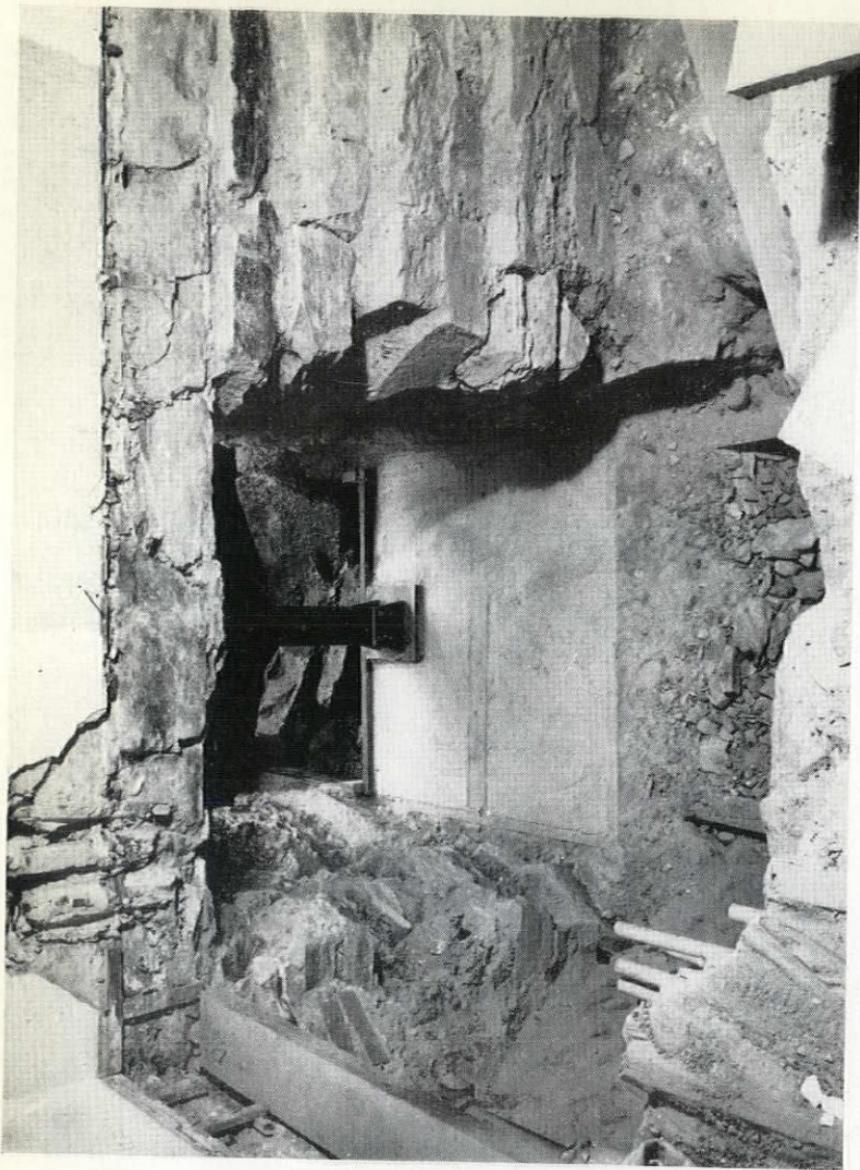
The failure to conduct proper investigations (at a time when engineering knowledge was certainly sufficient and available) has con-



The main walls of stone were thus spread at the footings—five feet below grade on compressible soil.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
*Photograph by Abble Rowe*

*Journal*  
*The AIA*



THE WHITE HOUSE  
*Photograph by Abbie Rowe*

One of the underpinning concrete piers, carried down to bed rock. On top of it is a heavy jack.

tributed significantly to this extensive and expensive operation of today.

The first alteration of *major* significance after the reconstruction of 1815, occurred in 1902 when, during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt, the main floor was reconstructed and restored to something like its original architectural self. One very significant move in this project however, was the removal of office function from the President's residence to temporary quarters in a new wing, west of the West Terrace, where it remains today. The executive office wing was never considered as anything but temporary. This separation of residence and executive offices at least removed the jumble of domestic and official functions, liberating the second floor solely for use as the President's residence and reestablished the residential character of the building.

Fortunately, a scheme of adding enormous wings on each side for office purposes, sponsored under McKinley's administration, fell by the wayside.

During the 1902 alterations, the State Rooms were restored, the East Terrace was rebuilt, the State Dining-room was enlarged by

the removal of the main staircase from the west end of the cross hall, but unfortunately, although recommended by the architects for reconstruction, the second floor was left generally in its original state, although some new steel framing was introduced and the President's living quarters improved and modernized.



The second significant change occurred in 1927, when the roof was replaced by the steel trusses and a fire-resistive third floor installed, the weight of this floor being suspended from the roof trusses. The manner of carrying out this alteration is one of the principal causes of the very radical rebuilding required today. The old roof construction consisted of ten large main trusses, spanning from wall to wall, with jack and hip trusses. The third floor was actually an attic supported on the lower chords of the trusses.

On completion of this alteration, we had a White House with fire-resistive construction of the first and third stories and roof and, except for an inconsequential amount of non-fireproofed structural steel introduced in 1902, a wood-constructed second story dating back to

the reconstruction after the fire of 1814.

So much for a brief historical background, which I hope will aid you in visualizing the rather continuous, if slow, attrition on the building and the scope of the problem now presented.

In February 1948, now nearly two years ago, President Truman asked a committee composed of Mr. R. E. Dougherty, President A. S. C. E.; Mr. Reynolds, Commissioner of Public Buildings; Mr. Winslow, White House Architect; Mr. Crimm, Chief White House Usher; and myself as President of the A.I.A., to direct an investigation of the structural condition of The White House. The President had become concerned with evidences of structural deterioration, more particularly as related to the second floor but not confined to it.

Even at its first meeting and from its first observations, the Committee was greatly concerned with conditions of the structure and with the serious fire hazards.

It immediately recommended re-

strictions of loading of the second floor, extreme diligence against fire, replacement of the combustible second floor at the earliest practicable date, and that further interim repairs be made and that the investigation be continued and pursued as rapidly as could be done with a minimum of inconvenience to the President and his family. I will not dwell in detail upon all of the phases of the investigations except to say that, for once, basic structure was looked into.

Even the reconstruction of the second floor only, was a major operation, as all of the fine ceilings of the State Rooms of the ground floor were suspended from this combustible floor construction.

By September, it had become very obvious that the difficulties were not confined to the second-floor construction, but that even more serious faults requiring major operations had been unearthed in the investigations. The conditions were of so serious a nature that it was considered necessary to evacuate the building and undertake even more heroic remedies.

*(To be concluded in April)*



MARCH, 1950

# The Architect as a Modern

IN TWO PARTS—PART II

By *Ralph Walker*, F.A.I.A.

An address before the meeting of the West Virginia Chapter and its guests at White Sulphur Springs, Nov. 5, 1949

*In Part I—February Journal—Mr. Walker had been speaking of his recent travels, particularly through the cathedral country of France, and how architects of the past have occasionally achieved a mastery of sculptured form. He had been stressing the necessity of the architect's being an individual and a leader as contrasted with the slide-rule thinking of "recent architectural negations."*

NOW I WOULD SUGGEST the opposite, i. e., true individualism—which is rarely dogmatic—for individualism, by its very nature, seeks and judges the alternatives that life may offer. No true individual is blindly imitative. He is naturally a skeptic and lives by his own enthusiasms. This does not mean he is anti-social. On the contrary, he understands and is not afraid of the people who surround him. He seeks his ideal—as did Leonardo when he sought the face of Christ and the face of Judas in humanity. Your individualist translates within his own soul the poetry of the world about him.

No! The individualist is not an imitator, nor is he afraid. It cannot be said of him that he can afford to wait, in negative purism, for twenty years in order that his personality may become warmer and more human in architectural creation; he supposedly defining purism as a complete absence of anything the human soul normally thinks essential—as an emotional expression.

The architect as an artist will continually seek serenity. This does not mean barrenness nor the endless repeat copied from the products of the inhuman assembly line. No! The Cathedral at Chartres is serene, whereas the Education Building in Rio, in my opinion, is nervous. The former is the outpouring of the soul of man seeking his needed glorification; the other, merely a drafting-board mental fence, a supreme example of the modern tendency toward an architecture of vacant faces, the negation of plastic form.

I believe that we, as architects

and as individuals, should be skeptics and should question an architecture which develops any barrenness of character—and today there is an all-too-apparent and growing monotony of design. My own life, for example, has touched in so many ways the possible richness inherent in the twentieth century, and I am continually filled with wonder at the plentitude in the mental and physical resources which surround us.

We should be skeptical, of course, of an architecture, one cheap and ignoble and which now floods our land; this endless production of poor designs in which there is evident neither individual choice nor selection, and which offers a standard of excellence unacceptable but by way of expedience; and which in our time seems to demand a lower form of esthetic appreciation; because, and especially, at no other time in the history of mankind has there been possible such an infinite variety of skills—skills which now, unfortunately, so desperately need direction into refinement—which now, also, is so possible of attainment *if the architect seeks an aristocracy of value rather than an average.* We must, indeed, be careful that later and wiser historians do not

place us as architects of a poverty architecture.

We should be skeptical of any architecture which is mechanical, so cell-like that nature is forgotten except as some abstract functionalism; for no man knows life who has no great tree spreading its branches over his roof. We should question, of course, that narrow engineering concept which seeks standardization and unanimity of acceptance, especially at the expense of the blessings bestowed by the tree shadow. For, given a choice we should prefer to house our body in a hut and our soul in a cathedral, but not both body and soul in a standardized cell—no matter how push-button its comforts.

We should be skeptical of the idea that shelter is enough, or of a form of community life which negates the possibility of the right to be wrong or the right to vote "No." The boys at M.I.T. recently wrote upon a blackboard, "If my name began with a 'W' I would rather be Wright than President;" and I agree with them for he, too, would question, and fervently has, the modern idea so prevalent, i. e., vast urban geometry with its unlimited privilege in rentals for decreasing minima. For we know that today's world

has developed the possibilities of comfort and leisure in dispersed buildings of individual human scale. Human scale, as we can test it, can be determined by the position of the individual in his community whether or not it is one of civic responsibility, personal growth and the leisure to build a new cathedral.

We should question an architecture, an art, a community which presupposes totalitarianism in any form which seems to offer a "phony" equality; any philosophy which does not offer the opportunity of a true equality, i. e., the emergence of an aristocracy in the very earliest sense; of being a society governed by its best. And we must question any society which is afraid to admit excellence or even superiority; and strongly object to the "party line" in any of its manifestations.

It is obvious that if we accept the impersonal services of the machine as a desirable goal—careless of what it may make—we will find ourselves accepting also an impersonal architecture; and finally becoming a faceless people housed in a faceless architecture. Mass men tending mass machines; living in mass housing; obeying in the mass. We must question the architect who accepts uncritically—as

unfortunately too often he does—the trends toward this type of world. No longer is he then a prophet for better and richer living, but, in frustration as an artist, is accepting negation rather than creating fulfillment.

We must question an architectural philosophy which does not make the family the center of its interest; which does not make the house a home—a temple of loyalties and responsibilities—in which all members feel as one. "The daily life of such a home, in which the endeavor of each is to make existence as pleasant as possible for all—in which the bond of union is really love and gratitude—represents religion in the best and purest sense; and the place is holy," as Lafcadio Hearn has said.

We must question, of course, a social or an architectural philosophy which takes from man his long-fought-for birthright—the opportunity of "doing for himself"—and which places him in danger of losing security if he be adventurous.

We must question an architecture of words, one which dogmatically calls itself universal—which uses such semantics as "anti-gravitational"—because everywhere it is failing to meet the local

traditions of a good life. Once again, the local architect must understand his geography, his mores, his place in life. We as architects know that the mere transference of a foundation load from a wall footing to a point, regardless whether it be under a column or the point of a hinged truss, does not diminish the supported load nor negate gravitational forces.

We must question an architecture of imitation rather than one of creation: The hurried and unthinking acceptance of a new dogma with its insistence on immediate compliance or the damnation, which, from a new inquisition, too often greets the individual artist when outside the recognized and sanctified movements; especially now when the world of the mind has been freed, within our society at least, to seek both the infinite littleness and the vast greatness of nature and of the human need for happiness. The American Institute of Architects has but now just honored a maverick, and the profession as a whole should look to and welcome the novel and the unique.

We should question an architecture of negation—of the drafting-board esthete—whose final withdrawals make all building re-

semble the basis of mass production, i. e., the factory, and in which there is nothing left of beauty, pleasure, grace or tenderness—values which in the past have made man; and to remain man he once more must seek.

We should question the current hatred in art of the human being and the admiration of the abstract—all of which belong to a faltering world believed in by limited intellects who can never understand the infinite hopes of the human heart. Our poetry, too, is of the kind that speaks often of the gutter rather than of the skies—for in impotence we are cheered to find for a moment a world where—

“The river bears no empty  
bottles, sandwich papers,  
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard  
boxes, cigarette ends,  
Or other testimony of summer  
nights . . .” (T. S. Eliot)

We should question an architecture which leans on an art whose motivation is either senility or an assumed childishness or, even further, a faked primitiveness. For we can still assume that in a world which definitely needs adult direction and inspiration, it is still possible to find amazement in the far-reaching qualities of human sensitiveness, and that further ful-

fillment is still possible within the desire of an understanding of the human soul. The universe is ours either negatively as termites or positively, as gods.

We should question therefore, architecture based upon an assumption that painting or sculpture are the masters of architectural form rather than its pliant servants, *for functionalism is the form that human convenience makes, and architecture is the elegance which clothes the cultural aspirations of a society, and only after the use is thoroughly acknowledged.* The baroque church is not a painting: It is an expression of a new dramatic form of liturgy.

The fact that the little chapel at "Pamphula" resembles the sculpture of ARP, unfortunately, does not make it a satisfactory building for the Roman Catholic faith: as that body feels it to be both unusable and anti-Christian in symbolism, for here the convenience of the church was totally disregarded. The building, moreover, when I saw it, was falling apart.

If I may be forgiven, "painting toward architecture" makes me think of a "bull in some one else's china shop."

We must question, finally, the

architectural teacher who places limitations on human contact or *who fails to resent* that his pupils follow predetermined programs or grooves, or who does not appreciate that architecture is a life-long discipline involving constant change. It is obvious that adaptability to change is the continuing cause of human existence and its main differential to other forms of life. We must constantly seek the good teacher who would wish his pupil to be a greater man than himself.

All of this in a summing up might come to mean that architecture, to us, should be much more than the mere copying of the latest fad; and for this moment I speak for myself. I believe that it must achieve, essentially, a quality which leads to cultural expression, and I cannot believe that our present world possibilities are adequately represented by what I see. I am sufficiently skeptical to think that our architectural development will not always be entered by a "Herculite" door or escaped through a four-leaf clover.

D. H. Lawrence in the early 'thirties, said: "The world is waiting for a new great movement of generosity or for a great wave of death." What we must be concerned with is not the mere cliché

word "progressive," for we are not merely acting against the deadness of an old world: we are concerned with life itself, not with fashionable newness but with a life which might constantly remold the best of our constantly recurring past into a still better future. Perhaps we should remember that the positive progressive of today is the equally positive conservative of tomorrow; that the enrichment of life, surely our aim, may be attained by architects only when we

maintain a creative balance between them.

If we will, we can replace the materialistic concept of the engineers' esthetic with a new architecture of humanism, in which *order* is voluntarily achieved: nor do I think that in its achievement we, as a profession, are necessarily impotent. Therefore, we should keep on discussing architecture—its purposes and its meanings—but more especially its relation to a better order.

## The St. Louis Conference

*By Walter A. Taylor*

THE CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC HOUSING under the auspices of the Committee on Urban Planning and Housing and the Department of Education and Research, represents a new pattern of national committee activity. While the Conference was of a limited size it was national in representation. Participants came from 34 chapters of The Institute in 24 states and the District of Columbia, and included President Walker and Vice Presidents Stanton and Wischmeyer. Government agencies and other professional groups were represented among the speakers

and participants; American Institute of Planners, American Society of Landscape Architects, ASCE, ASME, NAHO, and The National Housing Conference.

The purpose of the Conference was to make clear to our profession the extent of its responsibility in the success of the public housing program authorized by the last Congress. The Conference emphasized the fact that success will be achieved only if communities as a whole benefit from the constructions undertaken, and that the immediacy of fresh public housing construction in large volume is op-



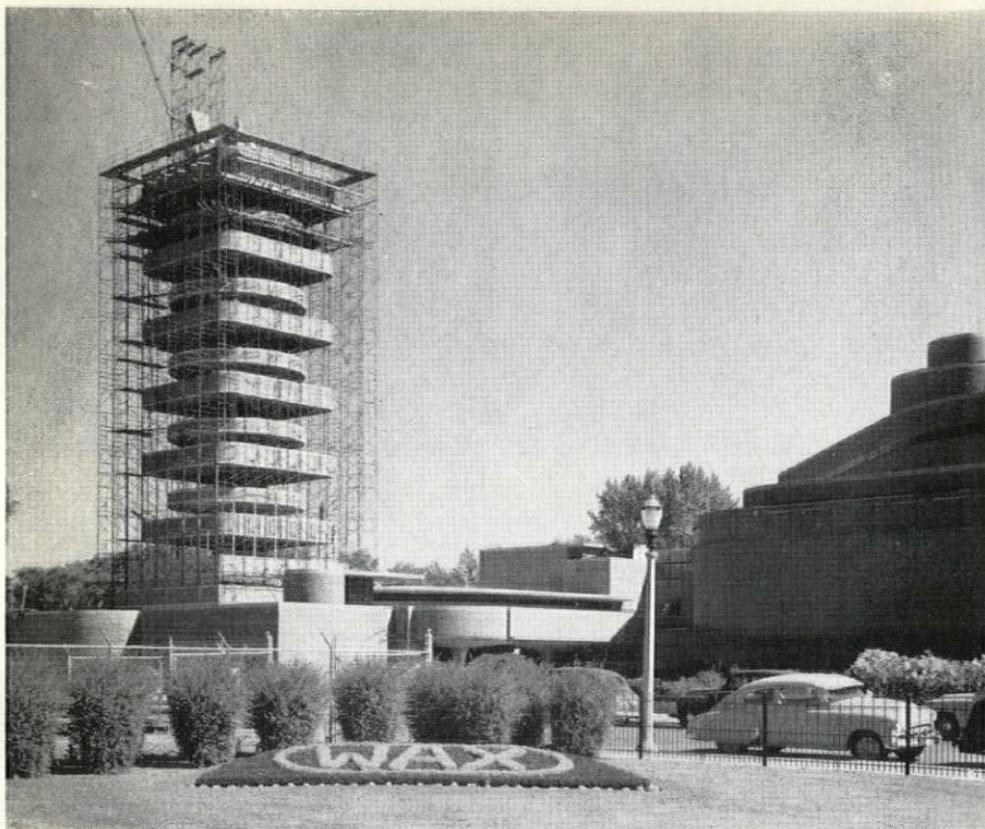
G. C. Wright, Indianapolis; A. W. Murphy, Butler, Pa.; P. R. Hunter, Los Angeles; Ferd Kramer, Chicago; Howard Eichenbaum, Little Rock; A. E. Koelle, St. Louis; H. L. Holtzendorf, Los Angeles.

AT THE ST. LOUIS CONFERENCE ON THE ARCHITECT AND PUBLIC HOUSING,  
FEBRUARY 2, 3, 1950

*Photographs by Zarembka Studio*

Jerrold Loebel, Chicago; A. R. Morison, Detroit; H. L. McMath, Austin; A. D. Taylor, Cleveland; H. A. Schwab, Pittsburgh; C. L. Martin, Cincinnati.





RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TOWER  
FOR S. C. JOHNSON & SON, INC., RACINE, WISC.  
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, ARCHITECT

Showing the unusual problem of scaffolding.  
The tower is to be 156' in height, sup-  
ported by a central stem.

portune as a means to stimulate professional and public interest and action in community redevelopment.

The program of the first day emphasized public housing and the community. President Walker introduced Commissioner Egan of the Public Housing Administration who spoke very directly to the architects in terms of what the people, represented by Congress, expect in public housing, the architect's responsibilities, and the policies of the Administration in relation to architectural services.

Another division of the Housing and Home Finance Agency was represented by Charles L. Farris of the Division of Slum Clearance and Urban Redevelopment, speaking on the relationship of slum clearance and redevelopment to public housing. Louis Justement, F.A.I.A., of Washington, analyzed the intent and scope of the 1949 Public Housing Legislation. Frederick Gutheim of the New York *Herald Tribune*, speaking at the luncheon session, gave fresh insight into public attitudes toward public housing.

In the afternoon, Elizabeth Coit, A.I.A., of New York, discussed standards from the viewpoint of tenants of existing housing projects.

Richard W. E. Perrin, A.I.A., Director Milwaukee Housing Authority, discussed site selection. Community facilities and services were analyzed by Howard L. Holtzendorff, Director of the Housing Authority of the city of Los Angeles.

The second day of the Conference was devoted to planning techniques. George Bain Cummings, F.A.I.A., Binghamton, N. Y., Fred L. Markham, A.I.A., of Provo, Utah, and A. Whitney Murphy, Butler, Pa., 1949 Langley Scholar, gave firsthand accounts of architect's collaboration in planning in their own communities.

At the luncheon session, Harland Bartholomew, of St. Louis, explained, with maps and charts, the comprehensive and long-range planning activities of the St. Louis Plan Commission.

The second afternoon was devoted to a general discussion of the many problems raised, with special emphasis upon public participation in urban planning and the position of the architect in urban planning. The discussions were led by Committee Chairman Perry Coke Smith, F.A.I.A., Director Arthur Holden, F.A.I.A., P. R. Hunter of Los Angeles, Drayton Bryant, Na-

tional Housing Conference, Jerrold Loebel, F.A.I.A. of Chicago, Hugo Leipziger, University of Texas and Vice President Stanton.

The entire Proceedings were recorded and will be available from The Octagon in summarized printed form.

## The NAHO Boston Meeting

THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING of The National Association of Housing Officials was held in Boston, Nov. 13-16, 1949.

Of greatest interest to the architects, probably was the general session of the 14th when the subject under discussion was: Why so much drabness, monotony, sterility in public housing design? Can it be avoided in the future?

Frederick Gutheim had the task of summarizing this discussion, and to his pen we are indebted for the following.

The participants didn't really answer the questions, which vary from city to city. They emphasized that the large-scale housing project was a new architectural form, without precedent, for a still-unknown client. Perhaps, they suggested, we have formulated our ideas of a large-scale housing project prematurely. Maybe we ought to rethink what has been done and take a different approach that will yield less monotonous 'institutional-looking' developments.

They agreed on the desirability of better designed outdoor space, and in variety in design. These would make for better living as well as better appearance.

Ernest A. Grunsfeld, Jr. (Chicago architect) reported on a five-months trip through Europe and said Copenhagen had the most interesting housing design. In this Danish city of a million population, half the population lives in large-scale housing built during the last fifteen years. He didn't find much in Europe that was new; rather he saw the continuation of an old tradition. Grunsfeld explained that the high quality of housing design in Europe was due to the fact that people accepted the large-scale housing project as the way they live, and insisted upon a high quality of design, accordingly. "High-quality housing design is a positive demand of the people," he said. This attitude he thought is the difference between Europe and ourselves. He agreed with other speakers that the origin of true variety in housing design is in the varied requirements of people and their varied use of the housing.

Julian Whittlesey (New York architect) said that the origin of

variety in housing was in "the program"—in the architectural statement of the problem. He warned that false variety only lay in "a scattering of ornaments and architectural excrescences." Economy does not excuse bad design, Whittlesey said, nor does it forbid good design. He agreed with Kennedy that variety came from the varied life of families living in housing—but said it also came from such factors as the varied topography of an interesting site in the hand of talented designers. He urged housing architects to "work to the top of your budget" and warned against "the cut-rate appearance." Whittlesey told the story of Willow Run's proposed permanent housing that was never built "because Henry Ford won his fight for temporary housing at Willow Run." On this project the architects had to work directly with a committee representing the prospective tenants. Whittlesey said the experience of working with these "flesh-and-blood tenants" rather than what he called "statistical people in the form of pictographs" convinced the architects they couldn't average human requirements but must provide for their infinite variety. Not "either/or" but "some of both" was his recommendation.

Robert Kennedy (Boston architect) asserted that the only sound basis for variety in architecture is the infinite variety among families. The architect must reflect this in his work. His work is formative,

a force for good. He said good project design is a positive help to good management and would pay off in contented tenants, in good will and in prestige. He gave facts and procedures from a so-called "group dynamics" study of an M. I. T. veterans' housing project and an unidentified public housing development that showed the importance of good design in influencing social life in housing developments. The study is being published by Harper in a few months, and was sponsored jointly by the Bemis Foundation at M. I. T. and the Navy. The main conclusions reported by Kennedy were that "proximity leads to propinquity"; or people living close to each other—within 180 feet, he said—were more likely to become good friends than those living at a distance. Kennedy said the study showed that small details of design often had a major effect on social life, and told of the families living around a court in a housing development who were all good friends—except for two families whose houses faced out on the street instead of in towards the court. They had no friends at all in the group!

Dean William W. Wurster (M. I. T.) demanded "private green space" for families living in housing projects, whether in the form of "space for leisure and recreation, private and usable, at their door" or in the form of apartment-house balconies. Simple means may be sufficient to produce this result, he said, often just

fences and hedges the families could build themselves—if not prevented by management. He said he would like to see some houses designed with one door for “family, guests, and the garbage, and another leading only to a private garden.” He said people would prefer to keep their garden space for recreation, even if it meant they had to forego

using it for a garage; they’d walk to grouped garage compounds, he added. The fire-escapes in New York slums, Wurster said, were more appreciated by those living in the slums and offered a more reasonable basis for modern low-rent apartment house design than what he called “the slums of Park Avenue.”

## A Resolution of the Central New York Chapter

AT A MEETING of the Central New York Chapter, A.I.A., January 21, 1950, the following resolution was adopted and ordered spread on the minutes of the organization:

“In the death of ARTHUR NORMAN GIBB, our profession and his

community have lost a distinguished practitioner and a conscientious public servant.

“His wide interest and his enthusiasm have been an inspiration over the years.

“His life has brought credit to our calling and to our Chapter.”

### Louis Kahn

*By George S. Koyl, F.A.I.A.*

THE NAME OF ALBERT KAHN implied more than the charming, dynamic personality of the man who bore it. His genius for achieving a prodigious number of building projects of many types cannot be dimmed by the fact that he was the inspirational head of an organization—an organization which could grasp an idea and

forthwith, like a superhuman, produce a mammoth structure complete with all accessories down to the smallest detail, ready for occupancy and use within a miraculously short span of time. Such achievements required the individual thought and well-directed labor of hundreds of associates in the office and in the field, under guid-

ance of the organization's chief. That chief was Louis Kahn.

The name of his firm, Albert Kahn Associated Architects and Engineers, Inc., was Albert's own recognition of the principles of cooperation and coordination. The tribute paid him by The American Institute of Architects in Detroit in 1942, when he was awarded a Special Medal as an "Exponent of Organized Efficiency, of Disciplined Energy, of Broad Vision Planning," was a tribute to him personally. The tribute to his brother, Louis, who was second in command of the organization during Albert's life, and after his death, President, is still unpaid. It remains for one who has been greatly interested in the development of industrial building as a Fine Art to call the attention of our profession to his achievements. Louis Kahn passed away on September 1, 1945, just two years and nine months after the death of Albert Kahn.

It was important to Albert that he should be relieved of responsibilities which would save time and energy for the broad visions of a mammoth practice. Louis, leaving the University of Michigan in 1908, when the firm of Albert Kahn, after five years of pioneer-

ing, was fairly well launched in the field of industrial architecture, stepped into the breach between the swiftly moving head of the firm and his less maneuverable but rapidly growing organization, and with intelligence and effectiveness wrought the miracle of unification. Numerous commissions inspired by the Packard achievement, a one-story production layout of concrete and steel—the first example of this type—resulted in the imperative need for an organization which could cope with a galaxy of problems forthrightly and with certainty of successful resolutions. Of the division of responsibilities, Albert not long before his death had to say: "Matters of policy, of supervision, the selection and handling of contractors, preparation of contracts, the receiving of reports of men in the field, the business management, collections and disbursements are entirely in the hands of my very able brother, Louis, who, in addition, directs many commissions from their inception to the completion of the work. We both visit and keep in touch with our respective projects."

Louis relieved Albert of all those responsibilities which would save time and energy for the broader visions of practice. He

compiled an Operating Manual comprising one hundred and forty-one solidly written pages for the exclusive use of members of the firm. His firm had been expanded several years before Albert's death to embrace in partnership some twenty-five key members of the organization, both to assure perpetuity of the firm beyond the lives of the Kahns as well as in recognition of the fact that the scope of industrial architecture had grown beyond the capacity of any one man to administer all its ramified phases. The need for such a manual filled with detailed directions and advice is most obvious in the commercial and industrial fields in which the architect stands professionally between the owner and the contractor. Every possible contingency must be foreseen and every difficulty forestalled for the speedy progress of the work, and, incidentally, for the conservation of the time and profits of the architect. The possibility of error is readily apparent on one wartime project which had more than 250,000 separate drawings; made even more possible by changes and revisions along the line, both before and during construction, with the attendant obligation upon the architects to discard the old and

substitute the new and be prepared to prove, if necessary, that everyone concerned, from owner to operator to contractor to suppliers, was made conversant with the current and valid plans.

To set up the routine which would handle such problems almost automatically was one phase of the work of Louis Kahn. He drew upon his experience in dealing at length, in the intra-office manual, on twenty-nine different operations in the Kahn headquarters and in the field offices through which major projects passed. When experience failed and where no comparable organization existed from which patterns could be adopted, Louis Kahn devised and invented. Dealing with broad and basic considerations, he answered such questions as: How far up the river must marine borers customarily travel at tidewater, if the project involved wharves and docks? or procedures of determining liability if one contractor damaged the work of another; or, will a given client accept an affidavit where notary's commission is undated and the date can be supplied by wire? It deals with such subjects as methods of payment, of determining contractor and subcontractor competence and compensation, of expediting

materials so that specifically fabricated materials such as window sash will arrive on the project exactly when the walls are ready to receive them. The manual is a living record of the best methods and procedures for avoiding trouble and disagreements, which the author had to discover for himself by the hard process of trial and error. He was the inside man prepared to skillfully handle the business of the firm which Albert Kahn was expanding outside.

Albert the eldest, and Louis the youngest, in a family of six brothers, were destined to make architectural history in a period of unparalleled opportunity in our in-

dustrial development. To Louis as Secretary-Treasurer, then as General Manager, and, after Albert's death, as President of the partnership of twenty-five key members, may be attributed an important share of its success.

Fully trained in matters of the esthetic as well as of the builder, he subordinated these in large measure to business administration and, in so doing, contributed with distinction to the public esteem of the profession of architecture as to its efficiency as well as to its tradition of planning buildings which add their beauty to the amenities of our working hours as well as to those of everyday living.

## Calendar

*March 6-10:* Second of two similar Garden Symposia under the sponsorship of *House and Garden* and Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Va.

*March 8:* Nineteenth annual meeting of the Inter-Society Color Council, Hotel Statler, New York, N. Y. Subject for the afternoon session: Color as Used in Architecture, Design and Decoration. Scott Wilson, Waldron Faulkner, Karl Bock and Egmont Arens will speak.

*March 9, 10:* 36th Annual Convention of Michigan Society of

Architects, Hotel Statler, Detroit, Mich.

*March 28-31:* National Plastics Exposition, Navy Pier, Chicago.

*April 10-16:* VII Pan-American Congress of Architects, Havana, Cuba.

*April 22-29:* Historic Garden Week in Virginia, under the auspices of The Garden Club of Virginia.

*May 8-9:* Annual Meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D. C.

May 10-13: Eighty-second Convention of The American Institute of Architects, Washington, D. C.

June 7-10: Annual Conference of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Bristol, England.



## Honors

RALPH WALKER, F.A.I.A., has been elected a Corresponding Member of the Philippine Institute of Architects.

PAUL WINDELS, President of the Regional Plan Association of New York, has been elected an Honorary Associate of the New York Chapter of the A.I.A.

C. HOWARD CRANE, originally of Detroit, who has for the past fourteen years maintained an architectural and engineering office in London, has recently been elected President of the American Club in London.

WILLIAM F. LAMB, F.A.I.A., of Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, New York, has been made a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Membership is for life and results from a selection among distinguished contemporary Americans.

JAMES W. KIDENEY, F.A.I.A., has been elected to membership on the Airport Advisory Board, Buffalo, N. Y.

ROBERT F. FRANTZ has been elected by the trustees President of the Saginaw Museum, Saginaw, Mich.

## News from the Educational Field

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, Washington, D. C., offers three specialized courses for summer study, beginning June 12. One of these is on Archives, another on Genealogy, and the third on Historic Buildings. Tuition for the last-named subject will be \$30.

Further details and application blanks may be had from the Office of the Director, School of Social Sciences and Public Affairs, 1901 F Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C. These applications are due not later than May 10, 1950. The courses are offered in cooperation

MARCH, 1950

with Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., the Library of Congress, the Maryland Hall of Records, the National Archives, and the National Park Service.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, California, announces the appointment of Ernest Kump as Visiting Lecturer in Architecture in the University's Art Department during this winter quarter.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY announces that Dr. Sigfried Giedion has been appointed Visiting Professor in the Department of English and History for the term starting in February. While at M.I.T., Dr. Giedion will conduct a seminar, "Civic Centers and Social Life," and give a series of five public lectures on "The Role of Art in Contemporary Life."

THE NEW YORK CHAPTER, A.I.A., announces the annual Le Brun Traveling Scholarship for 1950. Subject this year will be "A Suburban Railroad Station," programs of which are available together with applications for nomination forms from the Chapter at 115 E. 40th St., New York 16, N. Y.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS announces the 19th annual consideration of candidates for the Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship. The Fellowship yields a sum of

\$1,000 towards defraying the expenses of advanced study of the Fine Arts in America or abroad. Applications are due not later than May 15, 1950. Request for application blanks, further details, and instructions should be addressed to Dean Rexford Newcomb, College of Fine and Applied Arts, Room 110, Architecture Building, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.

The Managing Committee of the JOHN STEWARDSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP IN ARCHITECTURE announces the customary competition, the winner of which is to pursue the study of architecture in this or a foreign country under the direction of the Committee. Final date for receipt of application blanks is March 15, 1950. Further details may be had from the secretary, Henry D. Mirick, Room 809, 12 S. 12th St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY also offers through its Department of Meteorology a program of eight courses in climatology—four each in the two summer terms—June 12-July 21 and July 24-September 1. Tuition for individual courses will vary from \$45 to \$75, or a total of \$320 for the entire series. Application forms and other information may be obtained from Professor Walter H. Gale, Room 3-107, M.I.T., Cambridge 29, Mass.



# Architects Read and Write

*Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative.*



## "SHOULD PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINES PUBLISH DESIGNERS' WORK?"

By JOHN LLOYD WRIGHT, Del Mar, Calif.

IT IS revealing to see in cold type (I have seen worse than that out here under-cover) such thoughts among architects as expressed by Frederick N. Clark of Los Angeles on page 89 of your February JOURNAL.

Such as "Every architect, at one time or another, when reading the *Record* or *Progressive Architecture*, has resented finding a feature article or photograph of work done by non-architects such as The Austin Company, Raymond Loewy, or some other designer. The writer believes that a truly professional magazine should not present

the work of these competitors, regardless of the excellence of the job, and regardless of the type of work: industrial, commercial, or residential . . ." and his requirement for publication is—" . . . an affirmative answer to the simple question, Are you a licensed architect in the State in which this work is built?"

It is a good thing that State Licensing Boards do not control publications.

Seems to me an architect could well give weight to "the excellence of the job." That is what really makes the architect, isn't it?

## A CALL FOR INTERPRETATION

By LOUIS A. SIMON, F.A.I.A., Washington, D. C.

IN THE JOURNAL of February 1950, there is a Guest Editorial which needs interpretation in order to be properly evaluated.

It recites eleven sins found in the practice of architecture.

It graciously admits that the recital is a generalization "too varied to apply to all architects," but forthwith proceeds to imply by its wording that the faults as charged

represent at least the general attitude of architects and call forth "negative opinions that choke me up with frustration and despair about the future." Perish the thought!

Now what interpretation is to be put on the following quoted excerpts referring to architects?:

"They assume the attitude 'I know what's good for you and

MARCH, 1950

that's what I am going to give you. So you'd better like it."

As to making a check of costs by available figures, "but almost no one uses it."

"They swallow whole the manufacturer's claims without bothering to check them against field experience."

"Too many architects design to impress other architects."

"They are too often unaware of the amenities that compose good living."

"They don't know how to create an affinity between the structure and its surroundings."

"Most architects design the house first and then work out to the lot line."

Now there may be those architects who, obviously having first-hand knowledge of architectural practice as it generally functions and mayhap being serious-minded

withal, would be inclined to lift an eyebrow at a Guest Editorial making exaggerated assertions expressed as pontifical pronouncements from the seat of superior wisdom on the heights of Olympus.

Perhaps then a call for interpretation is not out of place. If so, it is a call for quickened imagination to recognize our Guest Editorial for what it really is, namely not a portrait but a fine example of the art of caricature—an art that has its own technique, an art to be judged accordingly, but an art to be used only where good taste permits.

Thus by all the known laws of journalistic extravaganzas, this descriptive caricature of architectural practice falls on our ears not as the shattering blast of a sixteen-inch gun, but merely as the feeble click of a toy pistol.

AN ANSWER TO  
"ARE WE PREPARING FUTURE ARCHITECTS  
FOR THE PROFESSION?"

BY ONE WHO SHUNS PUBLICITY

THIS CAPTION of the article of Assistant Professor Roessner of the University of Texas, in the January JOURNAL, in itself justified my interest, which grew as I proceeded with the reading and found myself in agreement with some of the conclusions but also in sharp criticism of other expressions of thoughts and opinions.

I glean that Professor Roessner is probably a young man, a very blessed state indeed, but apt to be disregarding of the accomplishments of the past. That is natural and to be expected of the average man, even of the more enlightened, but a professional educator, an instructor of our youth should be more careful and not mislead his charges.

Now I am not young, but far advanced in years, yet I believe I keep my mind young through the contemplation and enjoyment of the expression of fresh ideas and accomplishments of the later arrivals on the scene and also by occasional participation in their execution and fulfillment.

So I am pleased to agree with the Professor in his conclusions that design and esthetics of the profession should be correlated, each supporting the other. But I must chastise him, as a teacher, for exhibiting either his disregard or ignorance of past accomplishments, and like many of the younger group, attributing every sound and desirable preparation for architectural practice to today's efforts only, disparaging or denying similar efforts of the past. My criticism, if of any value, is only because it is directed towards an instructor of our young student architects; who are encouraged to be either indifferent or disrespectful of the past and who are directly misinformed of earlier efforts.

I can in long retrospect, without any feeling of nostalgia, refer to professional training in the years immediately before and after the turn of the century. The leading architectural schools then established in this country stressed a broad cultural education; not only design and esthetics but mathematics applied to construction problems, building material courses, history of architecture and, may I add, even essay writing, *then*

*considered* an instructive aid in the expression of correct English, so essential to any man of education, professional or otherwise.

At that time, at the Columbia University Architectural School, Professor Wm. M. Ware directed the broad cultural program; Professor A. D. F. Hamlin, a master lecturer, taught history and ornament; Professor Frank Dampster Sherman, poet and mathematician, taught mathematics and its practical application to everyday architectural problems; Professor Grenville Snelling instructed in Engineering applied to steel construction; Professor C. P. Warren explained building materials. It was a distinguished faculty. All have now passed away. There was also Henry Hornbostle, then a young practising architect and a visiting instructor, now living in retirement, and who was probably the greatest teacher of planning of his time, both at Columbia and in his atelier and later at Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh.

University of Pennsylvania, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Cornell, all on a par with Columbia, similarly stressed a broad education embracing design and construction and all the other diverse elements that were then as now essential "not to train architectural designers alone, but future architects."

I ponder: Do the schools have broader programs today? Does the University of Texas?

## GARNIER AND HIS PARIS OPERA HOUSE

By GOLDWIN GOLDSMITH, F.A.I.A., Austin, Tex.

**B**ELATEDLY READING the article on Garnier's Paris Opera House in the December JOURNAL, I am surprised that the author did not tell the story so often heard in my youth.

Talking to Garnier, a friend criticised the front and met a stub-

born defense approximately as follows:

FRIEND: The first story is too low.

GARNIER: I wanted it low.

FRIEND: But it is *too* low.

GARNIER: But I wanted it *low*.



## Our First Architectural School?

**W**E ARE INDEBTED to a paper of the Vermont Historical Association—"Dake of Castleton" by Herbert Wheaton Congdon, for the following interesting note:

"*The Windsor Gazette*, a weekly newspaper now called *The Vermont Journal*, carried the following advertisement in its issue for January 5, 1802 and the three succeeding ones:—

TO YOUNG CARPENTERS, JOINERS &  
ALL OTHERS CONCERNED IN  
THE ART OF BUILDING:—

The Subscriber intends to open a School of Architecture at his house in Windsor, the 20th of February next—at which will be taught The Five Orders of Architecture, the Proportions of Doors,

Windows and Chimneypieces, the construction of Stairs, with their ramp and twist, Rails, the method of framing timbers, length and backing of Hiprafters, the tracing of Groins to Angle Brackets, circular soffits in circular Walls; Plans, Elevations and Sections of Houses, with all their Ornaments.

The Art of drawing Plans and Elevations, or any other figure respectively will also be taught if required by

ASHER BENJAMIN.

December 28, 1801

"There is no reference to these advertisements in the news columns of the paper. It is not known whether the "school" died aborning

or succeeded to some degree in Windsor or elsewhere. Benjamin sold his house in Windsor and left that village within a year or two

after his effort to start America's first School of Architecture, the date of his departure being conjectural."

## They Say:

**John Taylor Egan**

*(Commissioner, Public Housing Administration; before the A.I.A. Conference on Urban Planning and Housing, St. Louis, Feb. 2, 1950.)*

I WOULD BE less than frank if I did not say that in the past I have felt the profession was not living up to its responsibilities to society at large. It seemed to me that architects and planners were too closely concerned with their duties to their clients and were ignoring their duties to the community. Certainly there was little evidence of concern with awakening the public to the kind of communities we might have if the planners had the means to translate their plans into action.

Now Congress has authorized undertakings in which you have a critically important part. In large measure, the success or failure of the programs will be judged by the quality of your work. That is why I am tremendously heart-

ened by this conference. I hope it marks a dedication of the profession to making the most of the opportunities before it.

**Professor W. R. Lethaby**

*(in "Town Theory and Practice," 1921.)*

CIVILIZATION has to externalize itself in disciplined arts, which become the registers and indices of the quality of life.

**Lewis Mumford**

A HUMANISTIC CANON of architecture will provide for all the dimensions of the human personality, arranged in the order of their value and significance and united into an organic, interrelated whole. Translated into practical domestic terms, this means that an architect may deliberately forego adding an extra bathroom in order to increase the dimensions of the living-room or to panel it in a more attractive species of plywood.

## The Editor's Asides

AT THE St. Louis Chapter's annual meeting Walter Taylor facetiously suggested that the architectural profession might borrow a leaf from the medical profession's book and use polysyllabic technological verbiage to impress its clients. The newly popular "microclimatology" and "macroclimatology" might serve as an entering wedge for the new technique.

Professor Lawrence Hill of Washington University dug into his pocket archives and came up with the following as the reply a historically minded architect might make to his super-technical physician:

"Well, Doc, that's a wonderful diagnosis of my case! So complete and so harrowing! It moves me to reciprocate with a diagnosis of your own condition in the lucid manner of a contemporary of Hippocrates.

"A mere glance convinces me that you have a serious prostylar entasis in your opisthodomos. Your narthex is charged with acroteria. Your guttae are relaxed and pendant. You have an antefix in your propylaem and your entire tabularium is vermiculated with trabaeal apodyteria. In short, you

have a plain case of echinated abaci!"

On second thought Professor Hill seems afraid the reply is a bit too archeological to augment a vocabulary of contemporary jargon. "In fact," he says, "were it presented as part of a registration test with the request that the candidate define each term, I am afraid that few would get their licenses."

Well, how would this do for the reply, phrased to conform to the vocabulary of the younger generation?

"A mere glance convinces me that you are threatened with convection of the spandrel. I strongly suspect that if we were to open your pavonazzo there would be found the caisson mastic that is a definite sign of either alberene or granolithic chamfer. Your globe valve sounds to me suspiciously like solenoid insulation. That in itself would not be fatal if a B.t.u. test of the piloti showed no trace of laitance. Nevertheless, the dependable Batten slump test might still reveal a belt-course of extruded torque or—more alarming still—water hammer in the eclectic burl. Of course a specialist might

ignore all these possibilities and seek at once for the dread furring of the camber. He might suspect gunite in the screed, and attempt to sherardize the lower chord of the muntin. Without wishing to alarm you unnecessarily, I would suggest that you start taking high-early-strength purlin grout—if necessary through the bascule conduit of the proscenium. Here's hoping you live."



THE SHELVING OF PERIODICALS is a major problem of almost any library. Journals of science and technology have their greatest use in the first year or two after publication. After that they will be in occasional demand for study or research. It costs a library about 20 cents a year to shelve a volume. Shelving 5,000 titles a year brings a charge that increases \$1,000 each year. Obviously the answer is microfilming. University Microfilms, of Ann Arbor, Mich., is undertaking this source for a long list of periodicals, of which the JOURNAL is one. When a year's issues are completed, these are microfilmed and sold as a unit, ready for the reading machine which is now standard library equipment. To guard the pub-

lisher, these films are sold only to regular subscribers of the periodical—a film volume cannot be bought instead of a subscription. It is a satisfaction to know that the JOURNAL in this form will be available long after its pages have become too brittle to handle.



AN APPLICANT seeking one of the Edward Langley Scholarships usually has a definite program he wishes to follow; he gets the idea first and then looks for the means to carry it through. To any potential candidate whose idea has not jelled, here is a tip: A History of The American Institute of Architects. I believe that The Institute's Committee on Awards and Scholarships might look with favor upon an application with this program. The Scholarships are open to all residents of the United States and Canada who are engaged in the profession of architecture; that is, architects, architectural draftsmen (including specification writers, supervisors and executives), and teachers and students of architecture. Proposals from candidates are made on A.I.A. Form S70. Further details and these forms are always available from The Octagon.

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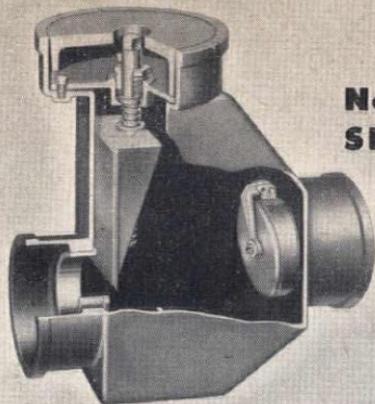
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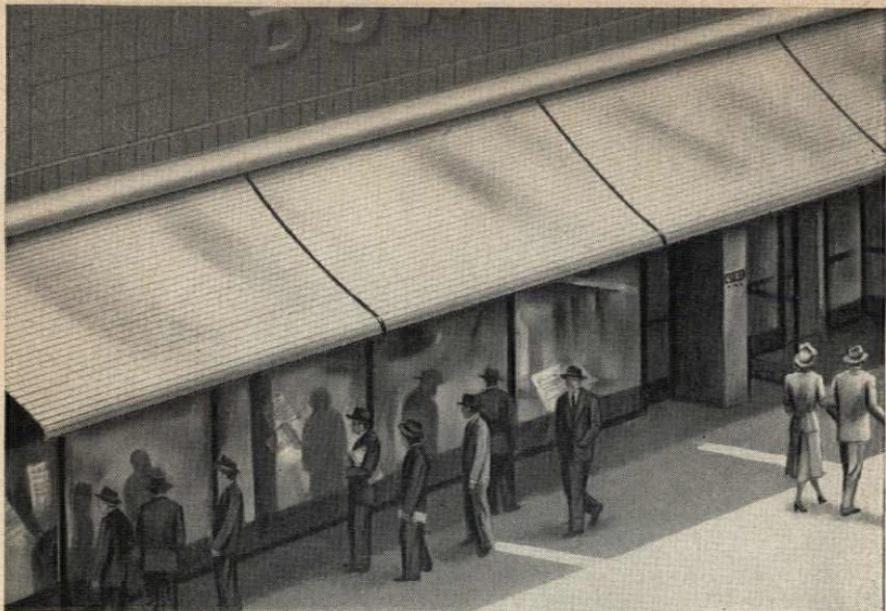
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