CHAPTER PROPOSES A MIDTOWN PEDESTRIAN MALL
by Jane Patton

When the main Public Library was being built over half a century ago, members of the New York Chapter of the AIA proposed a new avenue running between Fifth and Sixth Avenues to extend from the Library north all the way to Central Park. The opportunity was never realized. Madison Avenue, however, was created, and there has been vigorous economic growth as a result of the shorter blocks to the east and west of it. Later, Rockefeller Center proved both the delight of open space and the economic value of recognizing the pedestrian. But most of the long 1,000-foot blocks running between Fifth Avenue and the Avenue of the Americas, above and below Rockefeller Center, remain largely underdeveloped, unrelieved, and uninviting.

Now, 60 years after the building of the Library, the Chapter is once more proposing that a new street—this time a real pedestrian street—be cut between Fifth Avenue and the Avenue of the Americas.

A press meeting held last month by the Chapter and its public relations counsel disclosed plans—developed by the firm of Pomerance and Breines and endorsed by the Civic Design Committee—for a pedestrian mall to run north and south from Rockefeller Center (see sketch). The mall would vary from 100 to 200 ft. in width, and would follow a weaving course, going around (or even over) obstacles. It would connect at its midpoint with Rockefeller Plaza between 48th and 51st Streets. The Esso Building to the north could be pierced by an arcade. The Harvard Club, to the south, between 44th and 45th Streets, probably would be detoured, and Stern's department store would benefit by a new arcade.

The mall would be lined with trees, benches, fountains, sidewalk cafes. It was pointed out that it could be started in stages at any point or at several points, and would not have to be fully realized throughout its length to be immediately usable; it could begin to function in several sections, which would eventually be connected on the basis of an overall plan. Avenues and cross streets would be unaffected by the mall, though some safety provisions would be required for pedestrians crossing in mid-block.

Mr. Pomerance emphasized that the proposed promenade would add considerably to the city's central walking and shopping space, relieving pedestrian congestion on the avenues and at crossings. Retail business would be benefited, not only on side streets but along the avenues, since the mall would draw more people to the area as a whole.

How could the mall be accomplished? Title I was mentioned as a possibility. In addition, Mr. Pomerance pointed out that the McNeil Mitchell law of 1956 grants communities broad powers to create special planning districts to carry out projects for the public welfare. By its use, the city could acquire land for the mall and adjacent building sites. The adjacent land, sold for improvement to private builders, should more than compensate the city for total cost of land acquisition. The improvements would then add considerably to the income of the city through higher real estate taxes.

So far, the mall plan has been endorsed by the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, the Citizens Union, the City Club, and the Municipal Art Society. James Felt, City Planning Commission chairman, welcomed it as "imaginative, and deserving of serious consideration and thorough study."

Representatives of these organizations as well as Chapter members were on hand to give support and answer questions at the press conference. William Lescaze introduced the program, and President Frederick Woodbridge added greatly to its success. Most of the New York papers and the wire services were represented, and subsequently carried articles on the mall; the Herald Tribune congratulated the Chapter editorially and urged the city not to let the idea wither. Clippings are coming in from papers throughout the country.

The support of business and civic organizations and the general public is now sought to make the plan a reality. Perhaps this time the opportunity will not be lost.
May I extend to all members of the Chapter hearty wishes for a joyful and happy Christmas season. The ancient message of Peace on Earth to men of good will was never more welcome than now. It is with gratitude and appreciation that one can say that our members have shown themselves to be truly men of good will. The minutes of committee meetings are sent to the President (and he reads them) and he has, as opportunity has offered, attended meetings of various committees. The time, effort, interest, and unselfish devotion to the manifold problems of the profession exhibited by all these workers is impressive indeed. Very tangible results are being attained in the fields of legislation, fees and contracts, professional practice, hospital and health, schools, house consulting, civic design, and elsewhere.

The Chapter urged, and I am sure was influential in, the appointment of a qualified professional to the new Board of Education and of an architect to the vacancy on the Board of Standards and Appeals. In this we had the wholehearted cooperation of the Building Congress. John Hennessey was appointed to the Board of Education and our own member Joseph B. Klein to the Board of Standards & Appeals. This has already resulted in indications of sympathetic understanding of recommendations made by the Chapter, and hope of cooperation such as we have enjoyed with the City Planning Commission. And finally Harmon H. Goldstone has been appointed to the City Planning Commission. At long last the New York City Planning Commission has an architect member and a truly distinguished one.

Our Public Affairs efforts are increasing in effectiveness. It is a long road, but the signs are encouraging. There can never be any let-up in the education both of the public and of ourselves.

From time to time we have received complaints that an individual has not had a chance to work on a committee, or that some committee does not seem to be able to get members to attend meetings. Both of these are exceptions. For the former, it is usually a matter of not letting one’s interests be known. With respect to the latter, if the work of any committee does not command interest it may be that its purpose had better be re-examined. There is so much to be done that it is wasteful to spend time and effort on non-essentials.

With the help and support of the Chapter as a whole, individual efforts will be crowned with success, and we will have gone a long way toward fulfilling the obligations of our profession to society.

A happy and prosperous New Year to all.

Frederick J. Woodbridge

BOOKS

Frank Lloyd Wright — A Biography by Finis Farr — Charles Scribner’s Sons, 293 pp. Illus. $5.95.

Beginning last January the Saturday Evening Post published a series of articles on Frank Lloyd Wright. These have now been expanded into book form by Finis Farr, magazine writer.

This can hardly be called a profound or definite study. Nevertheless, the very fact that a national magazine brought to millions who might never have known of him a concept of a great architect and, further, that a book has been published therefrom, is all to the benefit of the profession.

Widespread interest had been created by the series, certainly in the more colorful aspects of Mr. Wright’s life, but it is regrettable that Mr. Farr’s judgment of his work could not have had broader scope and conclusions.

The author recounts with the skill of a practiced journalist the events of a lifetime, but does not analyze the profound drama of Mr. Wright’s position in relation to the architectural world of his time and of the future. The Taliesin Fellowship, twenty years ago, was Mr. Wright’s expression of what is only now concerning us: the need for individuality in buildings, in neighborhoods, in cities. This was deeply Frank Lloyd Wright’s credo and he fought a battle single-handed against conformity.

The photographs of the buildings, in nearly chronological order, are well enough chosen and illustrative to the text. A serious lack is the omission of drawings. A biography of Frank Lloyd Wright requires, above all, the inclusion of his characteristic delineation. He never tired of changing and revising a project and this probably was due to his passionate love of drawing itself. Unless one knew Mr. Wright at the drafting table, one could not know the man. He was one person in the lecture hall, one in society, another on the site, but the whole man only when the pencil was in his hand.

Perhaps it is asking too much too soon for greater import and profundity than exists in this current reportorial effort. It is unfortunate that we could not have been left a second and final autobiography. It must be that Mr. Wright planned to do so, for he wrote increasingly in the last twenty years. Frank Lloyd Wright wanted to write everything to be published about himself just as he yearned to design everything. He once said, in the ‘30’s, that he had better get to designing his own gravestone for, should George Grant Elmslie outlive him, Elmslie would design it for him in the Sullivan style.

Edgar Tafel

A JOB WELL DONE

Louis Hecht recently completed the arduous job of compiling a list of registered architects in the New York area who are not members of the New York Chapter. The list not only provides basic information for the Membership Committee, but may also be used to augment the mailing list for the OCULUS.
Sirs:
Permit me to congratulate you on the article on Central Park. Mr. Cady's comments and citations from Frederick Law Olmsted's work were very much to the point. One stricture: the great landscape man's name is spelled Olmsted, not Olmstead.

Henry Hope Reed, Jr.
Museum of the City of New York

Sirs:
Mr. Djerejian's article on liability insurance was interesting and timely. However, it would perhaps have been of greater value had it included a reference to Appendix G of the Annual Report of the Office Practice Committee, entitled "Architects Primer of Insurance," which discusses the subject in greater detail. A copy of this report was sent to all members of the Chapter in September.

Samuel M. Kurtz
Chairman emeritus
Office Practice Committee

1961 STRAUSS AWARD TO FOLEY
Chapter member Max H. Foley, Chairman of the city's Board of Standards and Appeals, has been designated the recipient of the 1961 Sidney L. Strauss Memorial Award, in recognition of his past outstanding service for the benefit of the architectural profession.

Presentation of the Award is scheduled to take place at the annual dinner of the New York Society of Architects, to be held the evening of Tuesday, December 19, at The Summit Hotel.

CODE CHANGE FOR FALLOUT SHELTERS
The State Building Code Council has held public hearings for the purpose of considering a modification of the State Building Construction Code to exclude from its application the construction of fallout shelters built in compliance with Civil Defense regulations.

The State Civil Defense Commission, for its part, intends to develop specifications and standards for the structural sufficiency of shelters.

GOLDSTONE APPOINTED TO PLAN COMMISSION
The Chapter takes considerable pride in the appointment of one of its most distinguished members, Harmon H. Goldstone, to the recently created vacancy on the New York City Planning Commission. Having a representative of the profession on this important body has been a long-sought goal of the Chapter, and in fact, this is the first time in New York's history that a registered architect has been named to the Commission.

Mr. Goldstone, a partner in the firm of Goldstone & Dearborn, is president of the Municipal Art Society and a member of several other civic organizations.

The current term on the Commission expires December 31, but Mayor Robert F. Wagner, who announced the appointment earlier this month, is expected to name Mr. Goldstone to a full eight-year term.

New Yorkers may congratulate themselves on finally having on their planning commission a man actually trained in planning, design, and esthetics, with a demonstrated interest in preserving the best of the city's heritage and wisely guiding its future growth.

The best wishes and support of his colleagues go with Harmon Goldstone as he takes on a hard, and vital, job.

WEST POINT BUILDINGS
The new United States Military Academy Catalog of 1961-62 contains a comprehensive listing of buildings and monuments at West Point, N. Y., describing each, noting dates, historical significance, special features, style of architecture, and name of architects. A copy of the catalog may be seen at the Chapter Office.

OFFICE PRACTICE REPORT
A copy of the 1960-61 Annual Report of the Office Practice Committee was recently sent to each member of the Chapter. The report reviewed many topics worthy of notice to the membership. Of particular value are the appendices which contain a wealth of useful information. The Office Practice Committee is to be congratulated!

BRUNNER SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER
Deadline for submitting an application for the $5,000 Arnold W. Brunner Scholarship is January 15, 1962. The scholarship, sponsored annually by the Chapter, is open to American architects with advanced professional background who wish to pursue some special field of architectural investigation which will contribute effectively to the practice, teaching, or knowledge of the profession. Forms available at the Chapter office.

BRITISH CONFERENCE SCHEDULED
AIA members traveling abroad next summer are cordially welcomed as delegates to the 1962 British Architects' Conference to be held in Coventry, July 10-13. The theme of "Building and Planning in the Motor Age" will be carried out in discussion groups covering residential areas, city centers, small towns, and road and highway design and problems. The conference will follow closely the consecration of the new Coventry Cathedral, and a visit to the Cathedral will be included. Copies of the program are available through Mr. G. R. Ricketts, Secretary, Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place, London W.1.

RE: ALL LUNCHEON MEETINGS
The Chapter Office has been notified by the Architectural League that it is no longer possible to provide group luncheons for the usual $2.00 charge per person. Production costs have risen to $2.70 per plate.

To cover all service charges and gratuities the Executive Committee regrets that it is necessary to establish a $3.00 per person charge for future luncheon meetings.

However, any Chapter member and/or guest wishing to attend a particular event may do so without partaking of the meal. For those who previously signify their intent, arrangements will be made to seat them after the meal for the program, which will start promptly at 1:15 P.M. (Variations in time will be noted in the individual bulletins.)
LEAGUE EXHIBIT DEADLINE

JAN. 2

The Architectural League of New York announces the 62nd National Gold Medal Exhibition of the Building Arts, to be held from April 6, 1962 through April 27, 1962 at 115 East 40th Street, New York. The theme will be the progress made during the last three years in the interrelated arts of architecture and interior design, engineering, murals, sculpture, landscape architecture, and craftsmanship and industrial design.

Work submitted must have been completed between January 1, 1961 and December 31, 1961. Submissions in the allied arts must have a relationship to architecture. The exhibition will consist of both invited exhibits and open submissions. Deadline for open submissions is Tuesday, January 2, 1962. The juries will award Gold and Silver Medals and Honorable Mentions in each of the six related arts.

All material shown in the exhibition will be circulated to schools, universities, museums and other institutions throughout the country by The American Federation of Arts from September 1962 through September 1964.

The League’s National Gold Medal Committee includes Chapter members Giorgio Cavaglieri (chairman), Morris Ketchum, Jr., Douglas Haskell, and Robert W. Cutler.

NEW AIA PRODUCTS REGISTER

The 1962 Edition of the AIA Building Products Register will be published January 1 with a 30-day trial subscription offer for all design professionals, contractors, investors, and others interested in a unique single-source reference for direct comparison of building products. The new edition will have some 40 per cent more content than the first one published in 1960, and easier references.

In addition to the listings of manufacturers’ products and comparisons of their performance, the 1962 Register will contain more than 1,100 professional abstracts of ASA, ASTM, Federal Specifications, Department of Commerce, Underwriters’ Laboratories, and other standards.

Copies of the Register, which is priced at $25, may be purchased directly or ordered for 30-day trial subscription by writing to the Building Products Registry Service, The American Institute of Architects, 1735 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

SCHOLARSHIP DONORS SOUGHT

Having gratefully administered for three years the $1,000 scholarship of the Plastering Institute of Greater New York, the Scholarship Subcommittee has considered the possibility of securing additional funds for award by the Chapter.

The Executive Committee has reviewed this proposal favorably and reports that the Plastering Institute would be properly proud to have begun a program successfully enlarged by others.

The immediate problem is to find donors. Corporations, trade organizations, and other groups or individuals might be approached with the aim of securing additional $1,000 scholarships to be awarded to New York City high school graduates beginning professional training in architecture. Funds are being sought for award in 1963. Suggestions are most welcome, and should be directed to Robert F. Gatje, Chairman, Education and Scholarship Committee, in care of the Chapter office.

INSTITUTE POSITIONS OPEN

The OCULUS has learned of two job openings in the Division of Public Service of the A.I.A. Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The first is that of Head, Department of Public Information; the second, Editor of the A.I.A. MEMO. Both offer opportunities for advancement in salary as well as in responsibilities. It has been a policy of the Institute to recruit the type of executive and professional personnel who might be in line for promotion to Division Director.

Those interested may obtain full particulars by writing to Matthew L. Rockwell, Director, Division of Public Services, The Octagon, 1735 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

WOMEN’S ARCHITECTURAL AUXILIARY

The third Doric Debutante Cotillion was held at the Metropolitan Club on Saturday evening, November 25th. Eight lovely young women were presented at this annual fete.

The Ball, sponsored by the Women’s Architectural Auxiliary was preceded by the President’s reception in the Morgan Room honoring the eight debutantes. Many private dinner parties followed in the Main Dining Room.

Members of the Auxiliary’s board of directors served as committee heads. Mrs. Robert Ward Cutler, president, was chairman of the ball. Other officers included Mrs. Alonzo W. Clark III, Mrs. Morris Ketchum, Jr., Mrs. Irwin Leslie Scott, Mrs. Harold Reeve Sleeper and Mrs. Maximillian Otto Urbahn.

In an 11 o’clock ceremony, Chapter President Frederick Woodbridge announced the name of each debutante as she descended the stairs into the Great Hall and was escorted by her father or by a member of the Chapter acting as senior escort.

The chairman of the Post-Debutante Committee was Miss Bonnie Duval Burrows. Mary Isabelle Wilker served as Junior Chairman, Carl Meyer as Junior Benefit Chairman, and Robert Ward Cutler, Jr. as Floor Committee Chairman.

Decorations carried out a color scheme of gold and white, with gold candles giving the only light in the West Lounge, where a midnight champagne supper was served to 250 guests. The debutantes wore white ballgowns, long white gloves, and all white accessories. The bouquets carried by the debutantes were pink camellias and English ivy sprays. Music was by Phil Bennett and his orchestra.

The purpose of the ball was to raise scholarship funds for young architects. Grants have been given to Columbia University and Pratt Institute.

Hildegarde Sleeper
(Mrs. Harold R.)
CITY OF NIKKO EXHIBITION
A one-tenth scale model of the entire picturesque city of Nikko, Japan, is now on display at Roosevelt Field, Garden City, Long Island. The model, a work of art in itself, is said to have taken 22 years to complete under the auspices of the Imperial Household Department, and is being shown in this country for the first time.

The exhibit will continue through the holiday season, seven days a week beginning at 11 a.m. Admission is $5.50 for adults, $2.50 for children, and is being shown in this country for the first time.

COOLING SEMINAR
On January 16, the New York Chapter of the Producers' Council is sponsoring an all day Seminar on Air Conditioning at the Barbizon Plaza Theatre, 59th St. and Avenue of the Americas.

At the request of the A.I.A., this Seminar was developed by the National Office of the Producers' Council. The presentation is tailored to the interest of the practicing architect and will cover fundamentals of design, equipment, and comfort. Chapter members Michael Harris and Max Urbahn will be among those appearing on the panel.

Producers' Council members will exhibit equipment relating to the theme of air conditioning.

STUDENT CHAPTER NEWS
Cooper Union
Professor Esmond Shaw, Chairman of the AIA educational Advisory Sub-Committee, reports work is progressing on a project which will eventually systematize the material of all 11 N.A.A.B. registered and accredited architectural schools in the U. S. into a one-page condensation giving tuition, living costs, degrees offered, courses of study, and other pertinent details for each institution. The quick reference guide thus evolved will be distributed to all colleges with return information sheets to keep the system up to date.

Professor Shaw also reported that the Student Chapter at Cooper Union has experienced an encouraging increase in student applications for membership.

ROBERTS BUJAC

COMING EVENTS

I. CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 10, 1962
Wednesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Hospital & Health Discussion Group

JANUARY 16, 1962
Tuesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Technical Committee Lecture

JANUARY 25, 1962
Thursday, 12:30, Gallery A.
Nominating Committee Luncheon

JANUARY 30, 1962
Tuesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Meetings Committee (Fallout Shelters)

FEBRUARY 7, 1962
Wednesday, 6:00, Gallery A.
Hospital & Health Dinner Meeting

FEBRUARY 13, 1962
Tuesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Technical Committee Lecture

FEBRUARY 21, 1962
Wednesday, 7:00.
95th Anniversary Dinner Dance
Plaza Hotel

FEBRUARY 21, 1962
Wednesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Hospital & Health Discussion Group

MARCH 13, 1962
Tuesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Technical Committee Lecture

MARCH 14, 1962
Wednesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Hospital & Health Discussion Group

APRIL 10, 1962
Tuesday, 12:30, Gallery A.
Pre-Convention Luncheon

APRIL 17, 1962
Tuesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Technical Committee Lecture

APRIL 18, 1962
Wednesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Hospital & Health Discussion Group

MAY 7-11, 1962
A.I.A. Convention—Dallas, Texas

MAY 16, 1962
Wednesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Hospital & Health Discussion Group

MAY 22, 1962
Tuesday, 5:15, Gallery A.
Technical Committee Lecture

JUNE 6, 1962
Wednesday, 12:30, Dining Room
Annual Luncheon

II. OTHER ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 16, 1962
All day Seminar for practicing architects on Air-Conditioning sponsored by the New York Chapter of the Producers' Council
Barbizon Plaza Theatre, 59th Street and Avenue of the Americas

FEBRUARY 8, 1962
Thursday, 8:30 p.m.
The Building Boom: Architecture in Decline
Topic: The Laws of the Asphalt Jungle
Museum of Modern Art Auditorium

Note: Chapter Events will take place at 115 East 40th Street except as otherwise noted.

CIVIC DESIGN

The Civic Design Committee under M. Milton Glass has been giving attention to many controversial topics in our dynamic city, including Welfare Island, the Manhattan Civic Center, the Midtown Pedestrian Mall (see this issue), and several renewal proposals.

The Committee is now preparing a statement on the need for master planning and orderly development of central city districts in which so much public and private construction and reconstruction is now taking place.

The Committee was active in getting out a press release last July announcing the Chapter's opposition to the Welfare Island project. This action was enthusiastically supported at a meeting attended by representatives of the Citizen's Housing and Planning Council, the Municipal Art So-
Office Practice

The committee, under the chairmanship of H. Bourke Weigel, has decided on several subjects to be studied during the year, among them modular design, the quantity survey form of bidding, and the reduction or elimination of shop- drawing checking. Following the adoption by the State Convention of a resolution submitted by this Chapter, Samuel Kurtz, Chairman Emeritus of the committee, is establishing an Office Practice Committee at the state level. The new committee will coordinate the efforts of the constituent chapters and maintain liaison with the National Architectural Practice Committee of A.I.A., of which chapter member Daniel Schwartzman is chairman.

Technical

In the coming year the Technical Committee, James J. Souder, chairman, will be presenting topics of considerable interest to the membership, grouped under the general headings of “Advances in Conventional Structural System” and “Building Components of Precast Masonry.” Steel, aluminum and concrete will be discussed by speakers of considerable authority. Another topic under consideration is “Light in Buildings” an area of considerable importance to modern design.

World’s Fair

The New York World’s Fair Committee under Chairman Samuel M. Kurtz has begun to formulate its purpose and plans. The Committee believes that it is not intended to serve as a means of obtaining individual architectural commissions, but rather to determine to what extent the Chapter, and the Institute as a whole, can relate its activities to the Fair. Information from the Institute in Washington indicates that there is as yet no formal A.I.A. policy regarding participation.

The Committee, meanwhile, has discussed sponsoring possible exhibits at the Fair, covering outstanding work of U. S. architects, the growth of New York City, or outstanding architecture of New York State.

Chapter members interested in the work of this committee may contact Mr. Kurtz at MU 3-5700.

House Consulting

The House Consulting Committee under Chairman Harold Edelman has decided to try to extend the range of its remodeling competitions to all areas of detached and attached houses.

The committee is also preparing a list of all city and state agencies involved in housing problems. Though none of these agencies commission architects directly, they often recommend architects to potential sponsors.

Committee member Herbert Lippmann has presented a proposal for changing the new zoning on Manhattan side streets from R8 to R7, which was felt to be highly desirable.

Sheldon Licht, John Dixon

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The New York Chapter extends its warmest welcome to the following new members:

Corporate

Roy S. Johnson (Transferred from the Westchester Chapter, A.I.A., to the New York Chapter, A.I.A.)
Richard E. Baringer (Transferred from the Chicago Chapter, A.I.A., to the New York Chapter, A.I.A.)

Associate

Lester C. Sosen
Marion J. Gabrysiak
David Basch
William B. Gleckman

CANDIDATES

Information regarding the qualifications of the following candidates for membership will be considered confidential by the Admissions Committee.

Corporate

Barry E. Eliks Oberlander
Allen Laidle

Associate

Louis A. Erodino
Michael R. Santoro
John Choi
Mario Di Valmarrana
Robert Gilkey Dyek
Jack Freimor
Heino Tammerk

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

OCULUS DIRECTORY

OCULUS is grateful to the following contributors who helped sustain the costs of this issue.

Stephen M. Olko
Consulting Engineers

Reports • Designs • Specifications
Foundations • Structures • Site Work
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MEMBERSHIP