

# OCULUS

on current new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 42, Number 6, March 1981



*Breaking Ground: Open Space Temporary and Accidental. Foundations for A.T.&T. Building and I.B.M. Building. Photograph by Marvin E. Newman. Courtesy of the Municipal Art Society.*

## OCULUS

## Letters

Volume 42, Number 6, March 1981

**Oculus**

Editor: Andrew P. MacNair  
 Managing Editor: Alexandra S. Morphett  
 Staff: William Eitner

**The New York Chapter of the American  
 Institute of Architects**  
 The Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue,  
 New York, New York 10022

George S. Lewis, *Executive Director*

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**Re: St. Bartholomew's Church**

Dear Editor:

I read with interest Mr. Oliver's analysis and comments regarding the past history of St. Bartholomew's Church's design and his interpretation of the concept of its preservation.

Unfortunately, however, Mr. Oliver, a person of very high standing and knowledge, considers in his letter only the preservation of the architectural details and the pictorial value of the landmark structure.

In my opinion, the real importance of St. Bart's is in the value of such a monument within the space and open air it provides to Park Avenue and in the contrast of its design and mass with those of the hotel and office towers around it.

Far be it from me not to trust the possibility of a clever, young colleague coming up with a new John Hancock mirror wall next to these pseudo-Byzantine forms. Unfortunately, however, there is no Copley Square nearby. This is the only open space of character in the entire area, with the possible exception of the Seagram's plaza. Anything else is hardly a widened sidewalk. Moreover, St. Bart's shubbery and trees represent the only example of natural greenery for a half mile going north, and farther than that going south.

Sincerely,  
 Giorgio Cavaglieri

**Study Tours**

**Architecture and Design in Finland**  
 Pratt School of Continuing Education has organized a ten-day intensive travel workshop from May 14th to May 25th. They will be covering the major aspects of Alvar Aalto's design work, and graduate, under-graduate credits or CEUs are available. The travel arrangements are all-inclusive via Finnair.

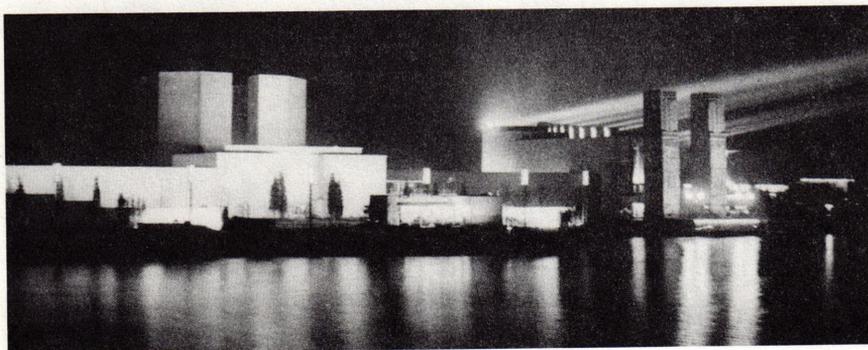
For more information contact Pratt's School of Continuing Education, Brooklyn, New York 11205, (212) 636-3453.

**Study Architecture and Design in Italy**  
 Pratt has organized a ten day study tour of Italy from June 3rd to 14th, with architectural historian Arthur Edwards; to explore Palladio's architectural and artistic masterpieces in Venice, Vicenza, Verona and Mantua. Graduate, undergraduate credits, or CEUs are also available. For information on tour costs and itinerary, contact Pratt's School of Continuing Education, Brooklyn, New York, 11205, (212) 636-3453.

**Solar Energy Seminar on a 7 Day  
 Cruise to Bermuda**

The Solar Energy Theory and Applications Seminar on the SS Doric will sail from New York on August 15, 1981 for the seven day cruise to Bermuda. This course is designed for consulting engineers, architects, contractors, and others who are concerned with the practical application of solar energy in the design and construction of new and existing structures.

The emphasis will be on solar energy basic theory, equipment, system design, computer aided design, economics and marketing potential. The fees are \$350 for the seminar and \$968 for cruise accommodations (based on double occupancy). Reserve before April 10, and contact Charles Cohen, 8 Eton Court, Wayne, N.J. 07470. (201) 696-4611.



# Chapter Notes

George Lewis

## City Construction

Early February saw a report: "Our Costs Runneth Over: Cost Overruns On New York City's Lump-Sum Capital Contracts," issued by Council President Bellamy and Comptroller Goldin. The Chapter, as an initial response, wrote Bellamy and Goldin as follows:

"A first reading of the study offers great encouragement in that you and the Council President have laid out for discussion a whole range of City construction procedures and the constraints thereon. We, who represent architects in public and private sector alike, offer our assistance in whatever actions are to be taken from here on.

"The study contains numerous reflections on the quality of the performance of some consultant designers, and we note that apparently the material for the study was provided entirely by City agencies. We regret that our Chapter and other professional organizations were not asked for the consultants' point of view. We all share the same goal: the design excellence of our public buildings.

"What you have done is a positive step."

## Proposed Exhibit of Work Abroad

The Overseas Practice Committee, Robert Gatje, chairman, is organizing an Overseas Project Exhibit for June, and Chapter firms have been invited to submit recent (five past years) international projects. Submitting firms were asked to designate coordinators, who should submit by March 9 photos and information, 8 1/2 x 11 format or slides preferred, to Lynda Davey, c/o Swanke, Hayden, Connell & Partners, 400 Park Avenue, NYC 10022. An exhibit subcommittee will review and select projects to fill the available display space. Ms. Davey will answer questions at 826-1880.

## Grassroots

Each January component officers and executives meet in Washington to review AIA programs and to express the views of members at the grassroots. This year a highly successful

Government Affairs Day was added: Rep. Jack Brooks spoke on A/E Selection, Sen. Robert T. Stafford on Design in Federal Architecture, Sen. Richard G. Lugar on Urban Development and Housing, Sen. Charles Mathias on Professional Liability, and Rep. Richard L. Ottinger on Energy and the Built Environment. John Belle and George Lewis attended, and they also met with Rep. S. William Green and Rep. Frederick W. Richmond's legislative assistant. Robert Peck, Sen. Moynihan's legislative assistant, spoke at a NYSAA lunch on the Public Works Act of '81 and its proposed requirement that architects be selected for a large percentage of projects through competitions.

## New Graphic Standards

The Seventh Edition (the first was in 1932), prepared by the AIA and published by John Wiley & Sons, has just come out. Robert T. Packard, its Editor and a Chapter member, has presented a copy to our library. It is now available at the document desk, \$67.50 to Chapter members, \$75 to others. Packard, continuing on the Institute staff, is now Administrator of Practice. His phone is 202/626-7454.

## Computer-Based Financial Management System Seminar

Firms have been advised that on Wednesday, March 18 from 1-5 p.m. G. Neil Harper of Harper & Shuman, Inc., will give a presentation of the AIA-sponsored CFMS, which is a comprehensive, computer-based service for project control and financial management tailored to architectural practice. The fee is \$25, or \$15 for additional representatives from a firm. Call the Chapter office for further information.

## EFL Architectural Fellowships

The Educational Facilities Laboratories will award eight Fellowships, \$10,000 each, to cover a six month work period in the areas of architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, urban design and historic preservation. Projects which expand upon the state of the art or broaden traditional definitions will be considered. The Program is designed to

assist individuals of proven accomplishment and future promise by freeing a measure of their time for independent project work. Professionals eligible include NYS residents not matriculated in a degree program. Requests for guidelines and application forms should be submitted to Nancy Morison Ambler, EFL/AED, 680 Fifth Ave., N.Y. 10019; a #10 self-addressed, pre-stamped envelope should be included. Completed applications due June 1.

## Nominating Committee

The Committee, elected by letter ballot from names nominated at the January 22 Chapter meeting plus one name added by the Executive Committee, consists of William J Conklin, Frances Halsband, Jan H. Pokorny, Carl Stein and David F.M. Todd. It will nominate officers and members of the Executive Committee and other elective committees, and it will welcome recommendations from members.



**MARCH 1981****OCULUS**

*Oculus welcomes information for the calendar pertaining to public events about architecture. It is due by the 7th of the month for the following month's issue. Because of the time lag between information received and printed, the final details of the events are likely to change. It is recommended, therefore, that events be checked with the sponsoring institution before attending.*

**CONTINUING EVENTS****BREAKING GROUND: OPEN SPACE TEMPORARY AND ACCIDENTAL**

40 photographs by Marvin E. Newman, with an accompanying text by Brendan Gill. Catalogue available. The Municipal Art Society, The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave., 935-3960. Through Mar. 3

**IDEA AND IMAGE IN ARCHITECTURE**

A drawing show by Voorsanger & Mills, Associates. Mr. Voorsanger is also on the Executive Committee of the NYC/AIA. Presented by the Arts Committee. The New York University Graduate School of Business Administration, 90 Trinity Place. Through Mar. 12

**MONUMENTS AND STANDING STONES**

An exhibition of paintings and pastel drawings by Margo Herr, based on works developed from drawings and photographs of neolithic sites in England and Wales. 55 Mercer Gallery, 55 Mercer St., 226-8513. Through Mar. 14

**CITY SEGMENTS**

Original contemporary architectural drawings by 30 European, Canadian, Japanese and American architects. Neuberger Museum, SUNY College at Purchase, 914-253-5577. Through Mar. 15

**AMERICAN 20th CENTURY DESIGN**

The furniture, ceramics and glass date from the turn-of-the-century Arts and Crafts movement to the 1960's. Including designers such as Stickley, Noguchi, Saarinen, Eames and others. The Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, 638-5000. Through Mar. 22

**DRAWINGS OF PIER LUIGI NERVI**

Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Exhibition Gallery, 100 Level, 280-3510. Through Mar. 23

**NEW YORK IN AERIAL VIEWS**

68 views from the air by William Fried, founder of a firm specializing in aerial photographs used to pinpoint areas for new construction and development. Views from the mid 40's through the 70's dramatically illustrate New York's changes. The New York Historical Society, 170 C.P.W. at 77th St., 873-3400. Through June 1

**ARCOSANTI, A CITY OF THE FUTURE**

A slide presentation of "Arcosanti", an experiment in designing and constructing an alternative landscape by architect Paolo Soleri. Zona Gallery, 484 Broome St., call for times: 925-6750. Through Apr. 30

**MONDAY 2****THE BLUE MEDRESE OF SAHI-BATA AT SIVAS**

Mathews Lectures, from the series "Medieval Turkish Architecture in Asia Minor" by Professor Aptullah Kuran. Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Wood Auditorium, 280-3510. 6:00pm. Mar. 2

**MONDAY 9****MONDAY 16****AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE: FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE PRESENT**

Five Monday classes by Arthur Edwards. Adjunct Professor of Architecture at Pratt. The Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st St., 860-6868. Members \$30.00, non-members \$35.00. 8:00pm. Beginning Mar. 16

**CONCLUSION: AN ANALYSIS OF ANATOLIAN SELJUK ARCHITECTURE**

Mathews Lectures, from the series "Medieval Turkish Architecture in Asia Minor" by Professor Aptullah Kuran. Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Wood Auditorium, 280-3510. 6:00pm. Mar. 16

**MONDAY 23****SYMPOSIUM: THE WORK OF PIER LUIGI NERVI**

A symposium of the work of Nervi by; Eduardo Catalano, Mario Portoghesi and Mario Salvadori. Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Exhibition Gallery, 100 Level, 280-3510. Mar. 23.

**MONDAY 30****TUESDAY 3****TOWERING CORPORATE IMAGES**

The Harvard Club presents three architects who are preparing to supply midtown with their critically discussed skyscrapers. Including Edward Larrabee Barnes and the IBM building, John Burgee and AT&T, and Der Scutt with the Trump Tower. There will be a debate and discussion, moderated by Paul Goldberger. Slide show and cocktails; 5:30pm, presentation and discussion, 6:00-7:30pm. The Harvard Club, 27 West 44th St., for more information 840-6600. Mar. 3

**TUESDAY 10****INNOVATIVE FURNITURE**

A travelling exhibition illustrating the use of technical innovations and featuring designs made possible through mechanical invention. Including pieces by Thonet, Belter, Eames, and others. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st St., 860-6868. Opens Mar. 10, through May 10.

**JOHN HENRY BELTER AND THE ROCOCO REVIVAL**

A major presentation of furniture produced by Belter in New York (1844-1863) and by other makers of the ornately laminated pieces. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st St., 860-6868. Opens Mar. 10, through May 24

**TUESDAY 17****TUESDAY 24****BUCKMINSTER FULLER: RETROSPECTIVE**

An exhibition of sculpture and prints by Buckminster Fuller, including a new edition of his "Patent Prints." Getler/Pall, 50 West 57th St., 581-2724. Opens Mar. 24, through May 2

**TUESDAY 31**

**WEDNESDAY 4****NEW YORK COLLECTS**

An exhibition of recent acquisitions documenting almost 200 years of New York City. Including formal prints recording the work of McKim, Mead and White. The Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave, at 103rd St., 534-1672. Opens Mar. 4

**AMERICAN 19TH CENTURY FURNITURE: AN OVERVIEW**

Elizabeth Stillinger from the N.Y. School of Interior Design examines the furniture of this period. Five Wednesday classes. The Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st St., 860-6868. 8:00pm. Members \$30.00, non-members \$35.00. Beginning Mar. 4

**WEDNESDAY 11****ITALIAN DRAWINGS: 1780-1890**

102 drawings including portraits and figure studies, landscape and genre scenes; tracing the movements Neo-Classicism, Purism, nationalistic Romanticism, and realism. Catalogue available. Grey Art Gallery, NYU, 33 Washington Pl., 598-7603. Opens Mar. 10, through May 30

**INTERIOR DESIGN: THE INSIDE STORY #3**

Part of the Van Day Treux Lectures—a series of informal interviews moderated by Barbaralee Diamonstein. Joseph Paul D'Urso speaks today. Parsons School of Design, 66 West 12th St., 741-5610. 5:45-7:15pm, \$7.00. Mar. 11

**WEDNESDAY 18****COMPUTER BASED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SEMINAR G. NEIL HARPER OF HARPER & SHUMAN, INC. WILL MAKE THE PRESENTATION ON THE AIA-SPONSORED COMPUTER-BASED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.**

NYC/AIA, 457 MADISON AVE., 838-9670. 1:00-5:00PM. MAR. 18

**AMBASZ ON EMILIO**

A lecture by Emilio Ambasz, architect. Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Wood Auditorium, 280-3510. 6:00pm. Mar. 18

**WEDNESDAY 25****INTERIOR DESIGN: THE INSIDE STORY #4**

An interview with interior designer, Sarah Tommerlin Lee, moderated by Barbaralee Diamonstein, 5:00-6:15pm. Warren Platner is interviewed from 6:30-7:45pm. Parsons School of Design, 66 West 12th St., 741-5610. \$7.00. Mar. 25

**TOWN PLANNING IN ITALY**

A lecture by Leonard Benevolo, architect. Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Wood Auditorium, 280-3510. 6:00pm. Mar. 25

**WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL****THE PAST, THE PRESENT, OR THE FUTURE**

A lecture by Thomas Beeby, Director of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois. Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Wood Auditorium, 280-3510. 6:00pm. Apr. 1

**INTERIOR DESIGN: THE INSIDE STORY #5**

An interview with John Saladino, interior designer. Barbaralee Diamonstein is the moderator. Parsons School of Design, 66 West 12th St., 741-5610. \$7.00. Apr. 1

**THURSDAY 5****COLLABORATION**

To celebrate its anniversary, the Architectural League commissioned 22 American artists and architects to select a project that addresses the most significant architectural problem of the decade ahead and to resolve them in a collaborative way. The New York Historical Society, 170 C.P.W. at 77th St., 873-3400. Opens Mar. 5

**INTEGRATION OF DESIGN AND ENERGY**

"A Case Study of the Shenandoah Solar Center." A lecture by Richard Taylor, arch-Pratt School of Architecture, Higgins Hall, St. James & Lafayette Ave's, Brooklyn, 636-6300. 5:30pm. Mar. 5

**THURSDAY 12****STEPS TOWARDS AN ARCHITECTURE OF CONVICTION**

"Complicity and Conviction," a lecture by William Hubbard, architect. Pratt School of Architecture, Higgins Hall, St. James & Lafayette Ave's, Brooklyn, 636-3600. 5:30pm. Mar. 12

**THURSDAY 19****EVOLUTIONARY ARCHITECTURE**

A lecture by Wolf Hilbertz, Professor at the University of Texas. Pratt School of Architecture, Higgins Hall, St. James & Lafayette Ave's, Brooklyn, 636-3600. 5:30pm. Mar. 19

**PLURALISM**

A symposium on the concept of pluralism in art and criticism, with panelists; Arthur Danto, Kenneth Frampton, Linda Nochlin, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. David Shapiro is the Moderator. School of Visual Arts Amphitheatre, 209 East 23rd St., 679-7350. 8:00pm. Mar. 19

**THURSDAY 26**

**PAUL R. BAKER LECTURES THE NYC/AIA AND CLASSICAL AMERICA CO-SPONSOR A LECTURE BY PAUL BAKER ON HIS NEWLY PUBLISHED BOOK "RICHARD MORRIS HUNT". NYC/AIA, URBAN CENTER, 457 MADISON AVE., 838-9670. 6:00PM. MAR. 26**

**FIRE IN THE CITY**

A fire protection seminar will be held at the Holiday Inn, speakers include J. Armand Burgun, AIA. For more information call Richard Levine: 386-9400. The Holiday Inn, 440 West 57th St. 9:00-4:30pm. Mar. 26

**THURSDAY 2****LECTURE ON ARCHITECTURE**

A lecture by Mr. Richard Kahan, President of the New York State Urban Development Corporation. Pratt School of Architecture, Higgins Hall, St. James & Lafayette Ave's, Brooklyn, 636-3600. 5:30pm. Apr. 2

**FRIDAY 6****LEONARDO DA VINCI: NATURE STUDIES FROM THE ROYAL LIBRARY AT WINDSOR CASTLE**

An exhibition of 50 of the finest of Leonardo's drawings from the library which has the greatest collection of Leonardo's drawings in the world. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St., 879-5500. Opens Mar. 7, through June 7

**FRIDAY 13****VENICE: MYTH AND ART**

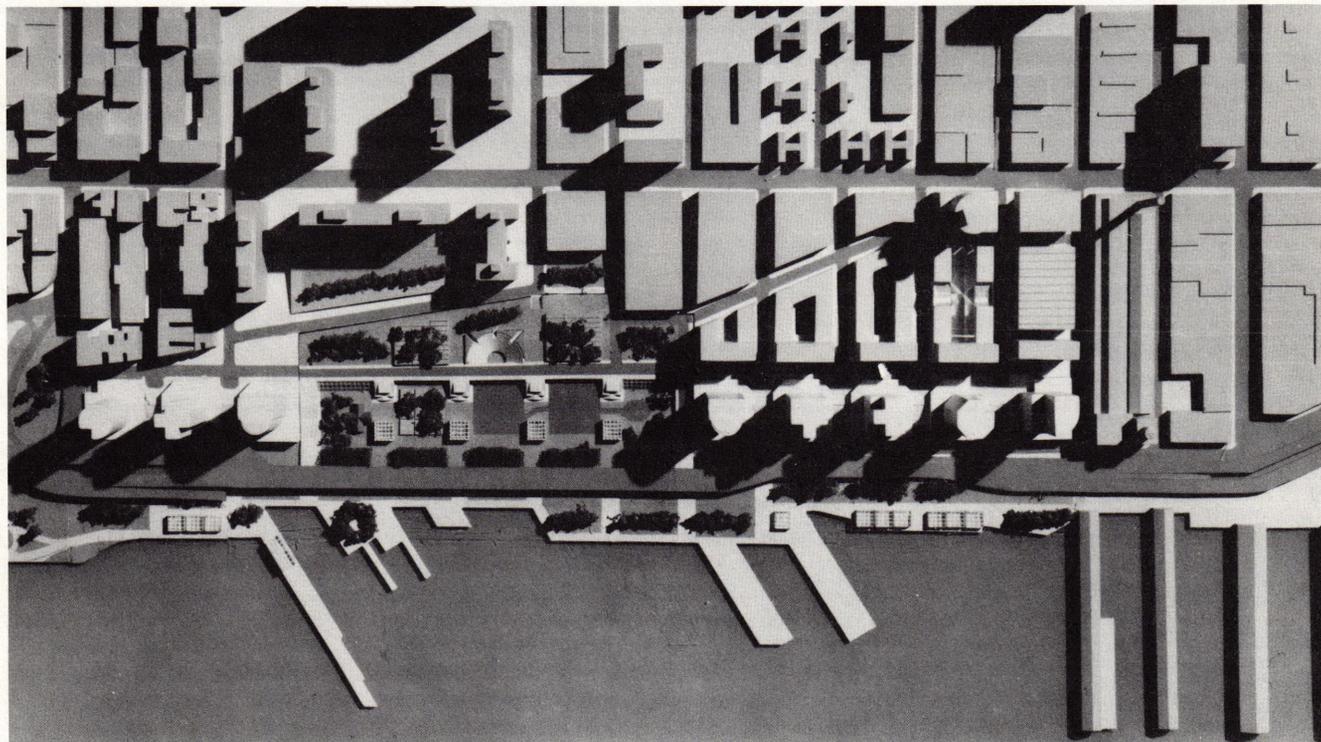
A lecture by Inge Jackson Reist titled "Venice Seen Through Foreign Eyes: Turner to Whistler." The Frick Collection, 1 East 70th St., 3:00pm. Mar. 12 and 4:00pm. Mar. 14

**FRIDAY 20****FRIDAY 27****FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF ST. ANN AND THE HOLY TRINITY**

The New York Landmarks Conservancy announces plans for a Gala Benefit to help restore the Church, one of the Nation's outstanding Gothic Revival buildings. Mrs. Vincent Astor and Brendan Gill are Honorary Co-Chairmen of the event. Subscriptions for two tickets are \$75, \$100, \$250. St. Ann and the Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn. Contact Laurie Beckelman, 425-4085. 3:00pm. Mar. 29

**FRIDAY 3**

# PENN CENTRAL YARDS



*Lincoln West, Overview of massing model. Photograph by Wolfgang Hoyt. © 1981.*

Gruzen and Partners, in a joint venture with Rafael Vinoly are the master planners for the proposed \$1 billion residential, commercial and recreational development on the site of the 60th Street Penn Central Yards on Manhattan's West Side.

The plan was recently unveiled at a meeting between the developer, Lincoln West Associates, and Community Board #7. Lincoln West Associates is a partnership between Observation Realty Corp., which has a 65% interest, and the Abraham Hirschfeld family, which holds a 35% interest. The entire development is to be privately financed.

Dr. Carlos Varsavsky, President of Lincoln West Associates said that the presentation to the community board was part of a working process to developing a final plan. With at least six months before a final proposal has been reached, they now envision a maximum of 4,850 apartments, retail and commercial space, as well as an office tower and 500-room hotel.

Within the proposal is a \$63.4 million package to extend Riverside Park from 72nd Street to 59th Street along the Hudson River. Community Board #7 will eventually make a recommendation on the proposal to the city officials. "We want to hear the community's ideas and where possible, incorporate them into the plan," said Mr. Varsavsky.

Under the proposal, Lincoln West would be built in several phases. The first phase would be the construction of approximately 1,050 residential co-op units near 72nd Street — the northern end of the site. After the co-ops are completed, the northern part of the extension to Riverside Park would then be finished.

The 3,800 residential units and more intensive commercial and retail development at the southern end of the site, would be completed at a later date. The housing would be phased-in on an average of 600 units per year, with the entire development being completed about 1990.

The proposal also calls for 42 acres to be devoted to public space and amenities, including a \$27.9 million waterfront promenade, \$17 million in improvements to deteriorated and unused piers and the Hudson River bulkhead, as well as \$2 million for providing an additional entrance to the 72nd Street subway station.

**Project Design Team:**  
Jordan L. Gruzen; Chairman, Gruzen & Partners  
Paul Willen; Partner-in-Charge  
Rafael Vinoly; Project Director  
Peter Samton; Design Director  
Frank Repas; Principal Designer  
Norman Levin; Project Coordinator  
Jorge Silveti; Project Designer

# PRAGMATISM

## Building Big Buildings

Andrew MacNair

Sold Out! Standing Room Only! The most popular architecture event of the year has to be the symposium, "New York: Building Again" held at the Museum of Modern Art. All tickets were taken weeks in advance. The auditorium was packed with the curious watching seven architects, presenting their giant buildings flashing on a fifty foot screen showing comparative snapshot views of what their new towers will be like when they are completed in mid-Manhattan.

Der Scutt of Swanke, Hayden, Connell & Partners began the evening with a pragmatic and enthused explanation of why the Trump Tower takes its zig-zag shape—yielding as many corner offices as possible. Its bronze reflecting glass is being used to help this gargantuan shaft "slip into its berth" next to Tiffany's. On an equally pragmatic note, Cesar Pelli next spoke about the MoMA Tower and Expansion emphasizing the kaleidoscopic weaving of multi-colored glass pieces into a subdued yet lively facade. Pelli's reason for making a tower this way is that the colors articulate the inside uses of the apartment spaces—small slit windows mark the bathrooms, the large double windows indicate the living rooms. A simple strategy for making a complex facade.

I.M. Pei followed Mr. Pelli on the stage showing the only horizontal building in a parade of vertical towers—The New York Convention Center. By its very nature, as a public exposition hall, it was presented by Mr. Pei as a huge public foyer serving visitors to the city with expansive walks, restaurants and exhibitions. While the exposition hall itself is a "dead" five-block service space for machines, boats and cars, the front section is a "live" public monument of great and generous proportions. It will give one of the grandest soaring spaces of the twentieth century to New York. Next in the quick succession of ten minute reviews, Philip Johnson quietly showed the bottom of the A.T.&T. Building with its massive entrance portico and the generous galleries along the back side. After a few comments about the base as an impor-

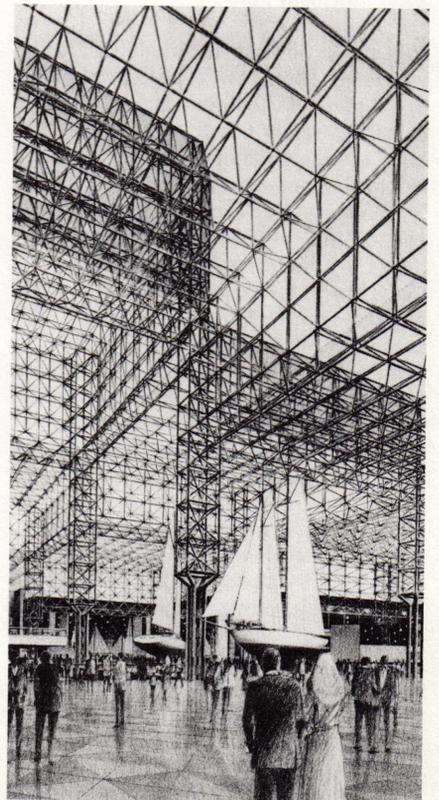
tant public space for New York, Mr. Johnson discussed the new project for 33 Maiden Lane—A brick neo-gothic office tower with round turret-like columns and a crenelated cornice. He explained that Johnson-Burgee Architects were using brick rather than glass because it was cheaper, using the rounded turrets because it was a good way to turn the corner, and, then, because it already began to look like a castle, they decided to use the crenellation along the top.

Edward Larrabee Barnes then spoke on the I.B.M. Building as a sophisticated exercise in the geometry of a tower which has been cut away into an elegant proportion from the usual clumsy rectangular shafts. Mr. Barnes was particularly concerned with the physicality of the tower and displayed a great sense of involvement with building the steelwork. His slides and description gave the audience a moment of some greater illumination on the structural forces that shape these new towers. He aptly demonstrated that it is the architect's task to deal not only with such forces as shape, economics and image but also with the physical action of building buildings—foundations, steel and concrete.

Raoul d'Armas of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill presented a detailed review of the Fisher Brothers building on Park Avenue and the Urban Trust Operations Center. Eli Attia, the youngest architect in the symposium, outlined his concerns with the architecture of 101 Park Avenue as contributing to a more "interesting" skyline as well as acting as a Park Avenue gate to the Grand Central/Forty-second Street intersection. Mr. Attia then presented the tower for the First National Republic Bank at 40th Street and Fifth Avenue.

The seven presentations were followed by a discussion with Arthur Drexler and Franz Schulte, art critic of *The Chicago Sun Times*. The night was late and the discussion brief. However, the lessons were clear. Architecture is booming in New York. The

towers are monuments to the city's vitality. The rationale behind the realities of building big buildings is essentially the same as it has always been—program, site, money, time, materials, geometry, and image. These New York architects are still seeking accomplishments within the world of the new, the world of progress, and modernity. All are concerned with style, learn from the past, and care about building better buildings. Der Scutt in his opening remark announced that Post-Modernism is dead. Cesar Pelli demonstrated his search for a language of complexity within stringent building budgets. Philip Johnson illustrated his urge for historical variety. I.M. Pei indicated that money limits the architect to the point that to make one or two marks, "moves," or gestures in architecture is all that is allowed—and all that is needed to make exciting buildings.



## Breaking Ground

For well over three hundred years, the ambitious builders of New York City have been breaking ground; they have been delving deeper and deeper into the rocky bowels of Manhattan and hurling towers higher and higher against the sky. Our city is an organism that must constantly evolve into new and often unexpected shapes, or it will die; the Municipal Art Society eagerly salutes the architecture of each succeeding generation, even as it cherishes the most distinguished architecture of generations past.

The purpose of this exhibition is to call attention to two separate but related features of the urban landscape: open spaces that come into existence temporarily, in the course of the demolition of old structures and the preparation of their sites for the construction of new structures, and open spaces that, having come into existence by chance, remain as permanent and almost always welcome oddities in the formal plan of a city.

These two features may be studied in cities all over the world; they are especially easy to study here, because the comparatively small size of Manhattan island and the consequent intensive use of its available land area have led to a continuous process of building up and knocking down. No other city that I know of has produced so many temporary open spaces over so long a period; no other city has accidental open spaces that, once having been accommodated to, have proved more fruitful to the city's economic and emotional life.

It is an old but apt jest made by rural wisecracks that New York City will be a great place if they ever finish it, but this is precisely what we New Yorkers have no intention of doing; with a relish that sometimes approaches folly, real-estate developers in this city grant a life-expectancy of forty or fifty years to a building that in any other place might be expected to enjoy a life-expectancy of a hundred years or more. On Fifth Avenue for example, the Bonwit Teller building was doomed to extinction by reason of its supposed great age, which was less than fifty; the Bergdorf Goodman building a block further North may face a similar fate at a roughly similar age. Nor is this passion for construction-destruction-construction anything new in New York life. It was happening — and was being deplored by so-called old fogies, ancestors of today's architectural historians and preservationists — as early as the turn of the nineteenth century and again, still more vehemently, at the turn of the twentieth century. Stanford White's masterpiece, the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

was completed in 1906 and was build in so sturdy a fashion that it might well have lasted a millennium; to general dismay, it was thrown down after thirteen years, to make room for an addition to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

The current building boom in New York City is surely no less importunate than that which destroyed White's many-colored Presbyterian basilica; one hears rumors that the Olivetti and Lever House buildings are in jeopardy, as producing far less revenue than their valuable sites are capable of. Be that as it may, the boom is yielding at least one indirect benefit to the citizens of New York — the opening up of many unexpected vistas, which give delight to the eye and add immeasurably to the charm of our street life even as they inconvenience us. It is hard not to imagine these vistas as the sites of future parks and squares, though in fact we know exactly what they are: deep holes in the ground, blasted out of bedrock and soon to become the multi-story basements of high-rise office buildings. It was as a result of observing the excavation of just such a site near the building in which he has his offices that the financier and philanthropist, Arthur Ross, was inspired to propose and fund this exhibition. It occurred to him that a photographic documentation of a representative number of temporary open spaces would be of the greatest possible interest, first to the living and then to generations of New Yorkers as yet unborn.

For it is plain that these temporary open spaces have much to teach us before they disappear. Whether we are conscious of it or not, the amenity of a suddenly increased volume of light and air has a salutary effect on our dispositions. We are drawn to visit a construction site not merely to watch the hard-hats at work with dynamite, back-hoes, and trucks (fascinating as their skills are to the Walter Mittys among us) but also to catch a welcome glimpse of the city's past at the very moment when the city's future threatens to obliterate it. We perceive that the city's past, in terms of urban design, could have been far better than it was; we perceive as well, and more poignantly, that the city's future could be far better than it is going to be. The damnable gridiron of streets and avenues with which we have been struggling on this narrow island for upwards of a hundred and seventy-five years remains unyielding; it is an iron virgin that seeks always to squeeze us to death, and it appears that there is no way of outwitting this instrument of torture except at an impermissibly high cost. Such open spaces as we have

are small in scale and lack emotional nourishment; as the buildings that surround them grow ever bigger, the amount of nourishment the spaces provide will grow ever more meager.

That brings me, in all modesty, to what I would be happy to have history accept as Gill's Law: the proposition that when open spaces in cities come into existence by chance they nearly always prove more satisfactory than open spaces that are the result of foresight and careful planning. This dictum, gloomy news for urbanologists, seems to hold true for all kinds of accidental spaces, whatever their cause and wherever they may be found. In New York City, my ideal example of this phenomenon is Broadway. What a mercy that it existed before the gridiron was thought of and that its va-grant sidelong progress up the island from the Battery to Spuyten Duyvel could only be accommodated to and not expunged! A series of makeshifts fitted the old highway — the main route between the bustling small city of New York and the upstate village of Albany — into the plat of the great city to come, and clumsy as the makeshifts may have been thought to be at the time, in every instance they have proved to be charged with unusual life. Over the years, where has the celebrated energy of New York best manifested itself, if not at Union Square, Madison Square, Herald Square, Times Square and Columbus Circle? At these freakishly shaped open places, people have always felt a natural tendency to mingle and make merry and spend money; here have sprung up our grand hotels, our theatres, our restaurants, our cabarets.

Every city has its accidental open spaces, and without exception they strike me as showing off each city at its most likeable. Given that this is the case, what conclusion can we draw from it? Alas, we cannot simply will accidents into existence, for then they would no longer be accidents. The most we can hope to do is to remain alert to the possibilities that accidents provide and to draw up plans that are humanely capable of change. Alastair Reid says of his calling as a poet that to succeed at it one must put oneself in the posture to be struck by lightning; and then wait. What we need in New York is to be happily struck by lightning, and not once but a hundred or a thousand times. The temporary and permanent open spaces that Marvin E. Newman has so ably pictured for us in this exhibition have in common the ability to increase our hopes and quicken our imaginations. We are a city of wonders, but there could be — must be — more wonders still.

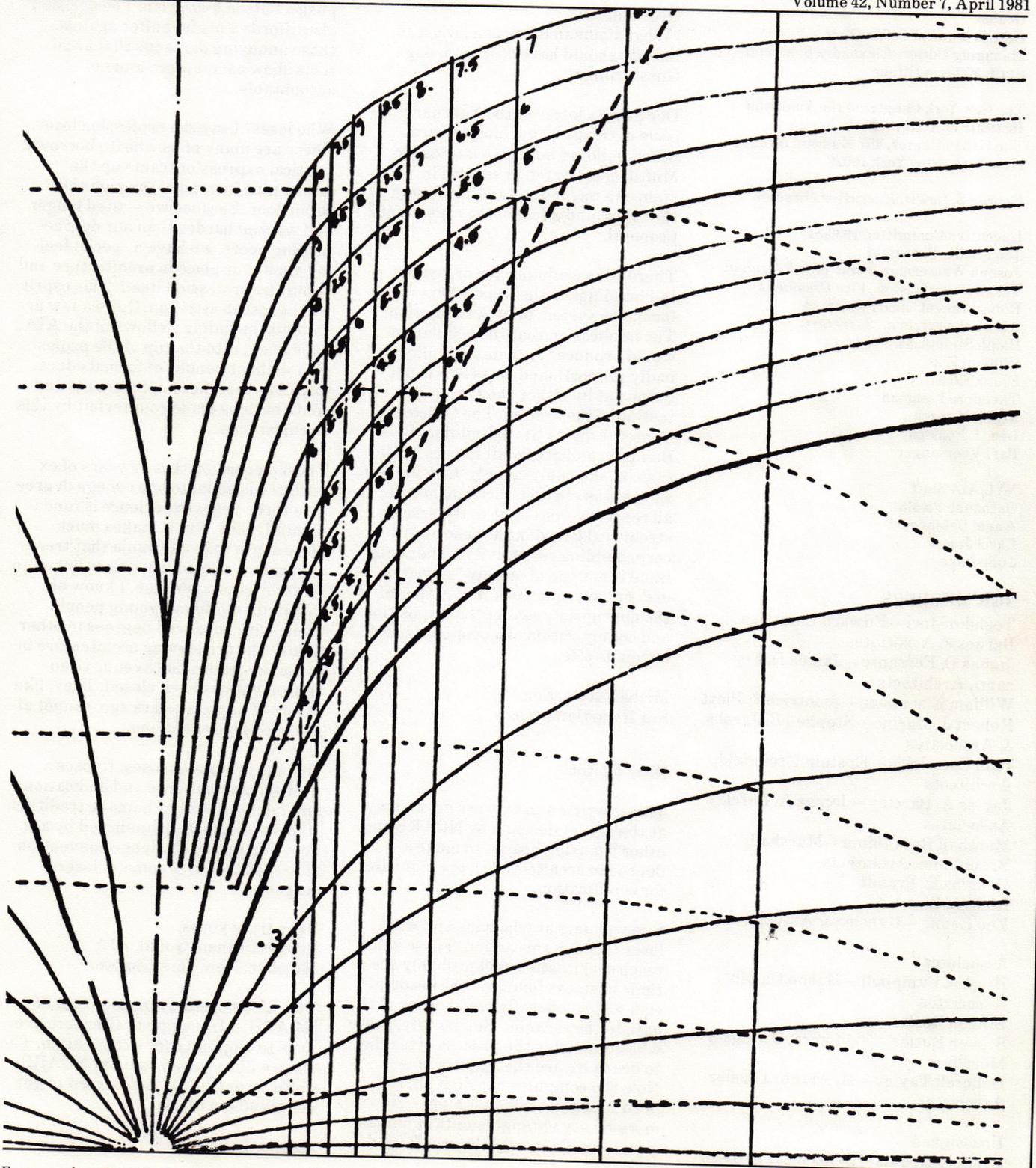
Brendan Gill

# OCULUS

on current new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 42, Number 7, April 1981



Fragment from Daylight Evaluation Diagram for a 60 foot wide street from the Midtown Development Project Draft Report

## OCULUS

## Letters

Volume 42, Number 7, April 1981

**Oculus**

Editor: Andrew P. MacNair  
 Managing Editor: Alexandra S. Morphett  
 Staff: William Eitner

The New York Chapter of the American  
 Institute of Architects  
 The Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue,  
 New York, New York 10022

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 Deborah Taylor — M. Arthur Ginsler Associates

**Unassigned**

Barbara Geddis — Gruzen & Partners

Dear Editor:

"What a human being can adjust to, nobody should have to live through."  
 Gussie Singer

Der Scutt's letter in the February issue of *Oculus* regarding the proposed building bulk regulations for Midtown indicated in several instances a misunderstanding of both the intent and effect of the consultants' proposal.

There is no prejudice for or against tall buildings in the consultants Performance system of bulk regulation. The implication that the regulation would produce "... a dumb, bulky, badly proportioned mass ..." is not borne out by either the text or the testing of the system. The Citicorp Center, Empire State Building, RCA Building, and other tall towers in Midtown handsomely comply with the consultants as-of-right performance tier in all respects — daylight to the streets, street scale, (and in the case of Citicorp, building reflectivity). The zoning issue is not one of merely "skyscrapers" or "skysquatters" but rather of the appropriateness of the disposition and configuration of a proposed building on its site.

Michael Kwartler  
 For Kwartler/Jones

Dear Editor:

This is written to express my dismay at the recent decision by NCARB and other licensing boards to make a degree in architecture a prerequisite for certification.

One wonders at who wins and who loses through this action. Those who teach architecture will probably see their business flourish. The academician will be unchallenged keeper of the gate to the seraglio. But, clearly, those who administer the process of leading to licensure are the major winners. Now the computer can do it all. No need for subjective judgments. No more messy entanglements in human situations. Just tally the credits and

push a button Yes or No. The decision also affords a useful buffer against those annoying demands that architects show competence and be accountable.

Who loses? I say the profession loses. There are many of us who (to borrow a nautical expression) came up the hawse pipe instead of through the cabin door. Because we waited longer and worked harder than our degree-holding peers, we have a special feeling about our place in architecture and about the profession itself. This esprit will be lost to attrition. Quite a few architects, including Fellows of the AIA, have made it to the top of the profession without benefit of formal education. Are their accomplishments and contributions made counterfeit by this circumstance?

The old equation that 12 years of experience is equal to one college degree plus three years experience is fundamentally silly. But it makes much more sense than a formula that treats experience as a nullity unless linked to an architectural degree. I know of talented, intelligent young people (some with advanced degrees in other fields) who are leaving architecture because the traditional avenue to advancement has been closed. They, like others of us some years ago, cannot afford a college education.

Yes, the profession loses. It loses a well of common sense and dedication and talent. It loses a humane tradition. It loses people unencumbered by academic dogma to challenge conventional wisdom. And, to some, it loses respect.

Very truly yours,  
 Bryant Putnam Gould, AIA  
 Member, New York Chapter

The AIA's position opposes that of NCARB. AIA suggests alternate avenues to eligibility for examination. The issue will be raised again at NCARB, and a strong effort is expected to get the stand modified.

George Lewis

# Notes

## Evening with Public Architects

Over 200 people working as architects in public and quasi-public agencies were identified and invited to a reception on February 26. More than 100 architects came to hear John Zuccotti speak on the importance of government work to the profession. Many ideas were exchanged. It is becoming increasingly impressive the percentage of architects employed in both government and private industry.

## Midtown Planning

The Chapter's paper commenting on the Planning Department's Midtown development project Draft Report, prepared by a special committee, Theodore Liebman, chairman, was delivered to Chairman Sturz March 11. (See text in this issue.)

## City Sale of Air Rights

The following letter has been sent to City Planning chairman Herbert Sturz:

"It seems that what use is made of the City's own air rights is a matter close to home, and one would think the Planning Commission would want to pass on a developer's specific plans before any sale is approved. There must be a lot of City air rights standing around waiting to be sold, some of them pretty sizeable, and their offspring might be pretty terrible, especially if the affected communities have to watch what the developer decided to do, out of reach of any effective review process. Once the developer buys, he is not going to be very sympathetic to any City or community suggestion."

## Requests for Proposals (RFP's)

David Todd has agreed to form a committee to review and comment on the various kinds of RFP's which architects are encountering.

## New Fellows

The following Chapter members have been elected by the Institute's Jury of Fellows:

Judith Edelman  
Harold Edelman  
Peter Eisenman  
M. Milton Glass  
Charles Gwathmey

William Hamby  
Malcolm Holzman  
Norman Pfeiffer  
Taina Waisman  
Read Weber

They will be inducted at the AIA Convention in Minneapolis.

## Foreign Visitors

The Chapter constantly receives requests from individuals and groups from abroad asking that meetings, tours, and visits to architects' offices be arranged. We would like to hear from members or firms who might like to meet foreign visitors.

## Fort Wadsworth

Doris Nathan, the Chapter's representative on the Gateway Citizens Committee, calls attention to the Navy's having won approval to move its Resale Systems Office to Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island, which would undermine plans to include the Fort in the Gateway National Recreation Area. Anyone who could suggest an alternative site should call Hooper Brooks, Director of the Committee, 682-7750.

George Lewis

## About Architects:

Without fanfare, Paul Heyer unexpectedly has been appointed Acting Dean of the School of Architecture at Pratt Institute. He is already in place, working on the fine tuning schools require before the accreditation board begins its review this summer.

Unofficially, the office of Venturi, Rauch & Scott-Brown opened their New York office last month. Anticipating the final approvals on Westway, they are spending two days each week in New York laying the ground-work with Clarke & Rapuano on the planning of the super-park for the super-highway.

Cavaglieri/Edelbaum and SITE Inc. have won the competition for the renovation of the former Police Headquarters on Centre and Grand Streets into a hotel with cultural center. The project will be developed in conjunction with Mario Salvadori of Weid-

linger & Associates, and Trans-National, a Toronto-based international development corporation.

As 499 Park Avenue gradually opens, it is possible to see a showcase of interior spaces designed by a variety of New York architects. The lobby, designed by the buildings' architects, I.M. Pei and Partners, is what Mr. Pei calls "an indoor short-cut to Bloomies." The Italian Trade Center is just being finished with a collage of hyper-active wavy curves in a gray and white sculpted space by Sartoga and Schwarting. Voorsanger & Mills are working on opening their designs for the San Paolo Bank.

Rumor tells us that Richard Meier has been seen inspecting a floor of 499 Park, possibly with the prospects of a future interior within this new collection.

Bill Lacy, president of the Cooper-Union, is putting the finishing touches on this summer's program for Aspen, called "The Italian Idea." The summer convocation of designers promises to be the highlight in a series of recent design conferences importing foreign designers into the U.S.A. Lacy has invited hundreds of heroes from the Italian landscape including Bertolucci, Sottsaas, Antonioni, Eco, Fallaci, and Mendini.

New York architects should see Richard Serra's latest work installed in the Castelli Gallery on Greene Street. Serra has constructed a 123 foot long curve of Corten steel, 10 feet high, 1 1/2 inches thick. The curve, called "Slice," divides the gallery into two halves—one with the concave space of a rusty red wall, the other with a convex space of grey steel. "Slice" is constructed of three curves joined with invisible tongue-and-groove joints. It weighs 75,000 pounds and is on view at 142 Greene Street until April 4. The price—\$150,000.

Andrew MacNair

APRIL 1981

# OCULUS

Oculus welcomes information for the calendar pertaining to public events about architecture. It is due by the 7th of the month for the following month's issue. Because of the time lag between information received and printed, the final details of the events are likely to change. It is recommended, therefore, that events be checked with the sponsoring institution before attending.

## CONTINUING EVENTS

### ARATA ISOZAKI AND OTHERS

"Concepts of The Individual House."  
Spaced Gallery of Architecture, 165 West  
72nd St., 787-6350. Closes April. 25

### INNOVATIVE FURNITURE

A travelling exhibition illustrating the use of technical innovations and featuring designs made possible through mechanical invention. Including pieces by Thonet, Belter, Eames, and others.  
Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st St.,  
860-6868. Closes May 10

### JOHN HENRY BELTER AND THE ROCCO REVIVAL

A major presentation of furniture produced by Belter in New York (1844-1863), and by other makers of the ornately laminated pieces.  
Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st St.,  
860-6868. Closes May 24

### NEW YORK IN AERIAL VIEWS

68 views from the air by William Fried, founder of a firm specializing in aerial photographs used to pinpoint areas for new construction and development. Views from the mid 40's through the 70's dramatically illustrate New York's changes.  
The New York Historical Society, 170  
C.P.W. at 77th St., 873-3400. Closes Jun. 1

### COLLABORATION

To celebrate its anniversary, the Architectural League commissioned 22 American artists and architects to select a project that addresses the most significant architectural problems of the decade ahead and to resolve them in a collaborative way.  
The New York Historical Society, 170  
C.P.W. at 77th St., 873-3400. Closes Jun. 7

## MONDAY 6

## MONDAY 13

### INTERIOR DESIGNER SPRING LECTURE SERIES #1

Betty Sherrill will speak on,  
"Antiques and Decorating."  
Museum of the City of New York, Museum  
Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St.,  
534-1672. 11:00 am. Series of four: \$35.00.  
Apr. 13

## MONDAY 20

### MODERN ARCHITECTURE AND THE THIRD WORLD

A seminar by Mimi Lobell.  
Pratt School of Architecture, Higgins Hall,  
St. James & Lafayette Ave's, Brooklyn,  
636-3600. 6:00 pm. Apr. 20

### INTERIOR DESIGNER SPRING LECTURE SERIES #2

Part of the "Four Monday Mornings" lectures. Albert Hadley speaks on "Style vs. Fashion and Decoration."  
Museum of the City of New York, Museum  
Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St.,  
534-1672. 11:00 am. Apr. 20

## MONDAY 27

### INTERIOR DESIGNER SPRING LECTURE SERIES #3

As part of the "Four Monday Mornings" lectures, John Saladino will speak on "Interior Design as Fine Art."  
Museum of the City of New York, Museum  
Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St.,  
534-1672. 11:00 am. Apr. 27

## TUESDAY 7

## TUESDAY 14

## TUESDAY 21

## TUESDAY 28

### TRACKING THE MARVELOUS

An exhibition, guest curated by John Bernard Myers, focusing of the New York art scene from the 1940's through the 70's.  
Grey Art Gallery, NYU, 33 Washington  
Place, 598-7603. Opens Apr. 28

**WEDNESDAY 1****THE PAST, THE PRESENT, OR THE FUTURE**

A lecture of Thomas Beeby, Director of the School of Architecture and the University of Illinois.

Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Wood Auditorium, 280-3510. 6:00 pm. Apr. 1

**INTERIOR DESIGN: THE INSIDE STORY #5**

An interview with John Saladino, interior designer. Barbaralee Diamonstein is the moderator.

Parsons School of Design, 66 West 12th St., 741-5610. 5:45-7:15 pm. \$7.00. Apr. 1

**WEDNESDAY 8****PLANNING COMMUNITY SERVICES**

"Designing Environments for Individual Growth," a panel discussion with Richard Krauss and James Batchelor.

United Engineering Center, 47th St. at U.N. Plaza. 11:30 am.-1:00 pm. For further information call Nina Liebman: 982-4600

**'ISMS' OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE**

A lecture of Kenneth Frampton, Professor of Architecture at Columbia University. Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Avery Hall, Wood Auditorium, 280-3510. 6:00 pm. Apr. 8

**WEDNESDAY 15****INTERIOR DESIGN: THE INSIDE STORY #6**

An interview with Mark Hampton, 5:00-6:15 pm., and with Bob Bray and Mike Schiabe, 6:30-7:45 pm. Barbaralee Diamonstein is the moderator.

Parsons School of Design, 66 West 12th St., 741-5610. \$7.00. Apr. 15

**WEDNESDAY 22****THE LAST DAYS OF INDUSTRIAL MONUMENTALITY**

"What the Traffic Would Bear." A lecture by Reyner Banham, Professor at the University of Southern California. Pratt School of Architecture, Higgins Hall, St. James & Lafayette Ave's, Brooklyn, 636-3600. 5:30 pm. Apr. 22

**MR. PAUL FRIEDBERG: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

First in a series of lectures coordinated by Mr. Friedberg. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st St., 860-6868. 6:15 pm. Apr. 22

**WEDNESDAY 29****CONRAD HAMMERMAN: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

Second lecture in the series coordinated by M. Paul Friedberg. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st St., 860-6868. 6:15 pm. Apr. 29

**THURSDAY 2****LECTURE ON ARCHITECTURE**

A lecture by Mr. Richard Kahan, President of the New York State Urban Development Corporation

Pratt School of Architecture, Higgins Hall, St. James & Lafayette Ave's, Brooklyn, 636-3600. 5:30 pm. Apr. 2

**RICHARD WEINSTEIN LECTURES**

Yale University, School of Architecture, Hastings Hall, A & A Building, 180 York St., 203-436-0550. 8:00 pm. Apr. 2

**THURSDAY 9****ROMALDO GIURGOLA: PROJECT**

Max Protetch Gallery, 37 West 57th St., 838-7436. Opens Apr. 9

**SCOTT BURTON: NEW WORKS**

Max Protetch Gallery, 37 West 57th St., 838-7436. Opens Apr. 9

**COMMUNITY THROUGH DESIGN**

A lecture by Oscar Newman. The City College, School of Architecture and Environmental Studies, Townsend Harris Hall Auditorium, Amsterdam Ave. & 139th St., 690-4118. 6:30 pm. Apr. 9

**THURSDAY 16****THURSDAY 23****THE STREETS OF NEW YORK**

"A Conference on City Spaces." The panels and participants will include architects, urban planners, psychologists, geographers, realtors, government officials, students, and citizens interested in the livability of cities. For information call, 564-2906. For registration call 741-5677.

Parsons School of Design, The New School, 66 Fifth Ave., 741-7758. Apr. 24 & 25

**THURSDAY 30****PANEL DISCUSSION**

Sponsored by the Alliance of Women in Architecture, "Does the Present Zoning Resolution meet current New York City Needs?" The panel includes Diane Serber, Jeanette Bamford, Robert Cook, Dr. Beverly Moss Spatt, Sally Goodgold, Roberta B. Gratz. NYC/AIA, 457 Madison Ave, 3rd Fl., 838-9670. Non-members of AWUA \$3.00, members free. 7:00 pm. Apr. 30

**MONUMENT TO ARCHITECTURAL ACHIEVEMENT**

"The M.I.T. Campus." O. Robert Simha. NYC/AIA, 457 Madison Ave, 3rd Fl., 838-9670. 6:00 pm. \$3.00. Apr. 30

**FRIDAY 3****FRIDAY 10****SUNDAY WALKING TOURS**

The Museum of the City of New York will begin its 22nd season of Sunday Walking Tours, that explore the neighborhoods of New York with knowledgeable guides that point out details of history and architecture. For a brochure listing all the 1981 tours, call or write the museum.

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St., 534-1672. Beginning Apr. 12

**FRIDAY 17****FRIDAY 24****INNOVATIVE FURNITURE SYMPOSIUM**

The symposium is to coincide with the exhibition "Innovative Furniture in America," at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Those interested in participating should call Robert W. Gutman, 760-7714.

Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 West 27th St. Apr. 25

**FRIDAY 1 MAY**

# MIDTOWN

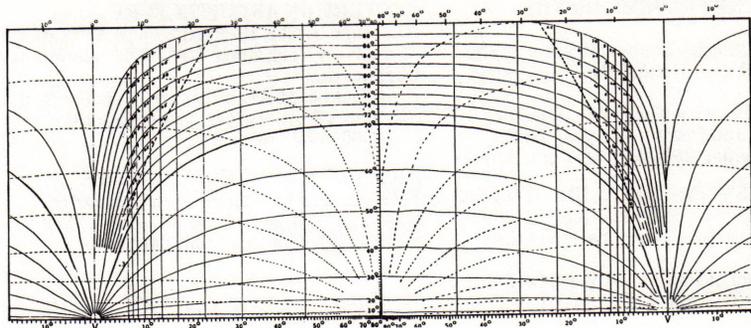
## Midtown Development: Comments on the City Planning Department's Draft Report/June 1980

The Special New York Chapter/AIA Committee on Midtown Development compliments the Planning Commission and its consultants for having undertaken a truly broad study, an investigation into methods of enhancing Midtown through controls which reach beyond zoning to include stimuli and constraints of a developmental nature. Where we criticize the Midtown Development Project Draft Report, we do so in the spirit of participating in an admirable effort.

As architects we have strong feelings about the atmosphere of streets and avenues and the city's characteristically coherent areas, and the Committee concentrated special attention on the proposed zoning bulk regulations which were formulated toward that end. In recommending a single type of control, that based on performance criteria, we seek to see buildings of distinction enrich our streets. We think the performance system as proposed should be further simplified and improved; indeed, we understand the Planning Department and its consultants have evolved refinements beyond what we have seen.

All of which leads us to stress an all-important, overall fact: All of Midtown must be full of life and vigor. If a midtown development strategy is to work it must on the East Side encourage the maintenance of fine, small-scaled buildings and elegant street character, and on the West Side it must seek out the positive elements of theaters, restaurants, tourism and its characteristic residential neighborhoods to create a real alternative within a revitalized West Midtown commercial core.

For this reason we have outlined an ambitious strategy to reinforce the Planning Department's goal of stabilizing East Midtown and stimulating development elsewhere. We have recommended stabilizing development on the East and, through permitting an FAR that could reach 24, encouraging mixed use development in the West. Each part of Midtown must have its own personality and character, to which end we stress our strong pre-



Daylight Evaluation Diagram for 60 foot wide street.

ference for performance zoning bulk controls which will stimulate architectural creativity and diversity worthy of this great city.

Our three principal recommendations, then, have as their combined goal the stabilization of East Midtown, the encouragement of mixed-use development in West Midtown, and performance zoning to enrich both. *Each must be dependent on the other; we submit them not as separate possibilities but as one package.*

The comments offered here result from many meetings, and many studies by individual members, of a special New York Chapter/AIA Committee formed to review the Draft Report. The Committee's chairman is Theodore Liebman, a director of the Chapter, and the other members are Eli Attia, Stanton Eckstut, Percy Keck, Michael McCarthy, Der Scutt and Ralph Steinglass.

### Bulk Regulations

The Draft Report proposes a two tier, "as of right" approach to bulk regulations, the first based on a performance system and the second on a prescriptive system. Both recognize mass, space and light as fundamental indicators of a built environment, as did the original 1916 Zoning Resolution.

We endorse this "as of right" approach; in recent years almost every new building has required or been the recipient of a special permit, variance or amendment involving long delays. We further urge the Planning Commission to expedite the approval process and, in the cases where it comes into play, the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure as well. The Chapter's Committee would, however, like to draw attention to beneficial effects of discretionary zoning in the creation of street level amenities; we anticipate that these will be more fully appreciated upon completion of a number of towers in Midtown.

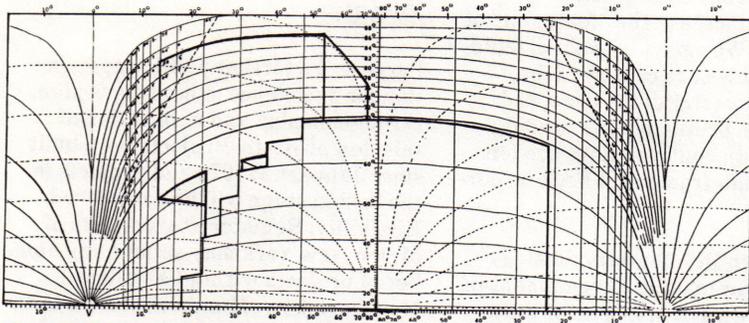
As to performance and prescriptive bulk regulations, the Committee strongly recommends a single set of rules: those based on performance. We believe that since the development of

Midtown is likely to occur on small, irregular or encumbered sites, the prescriptive approach would be too inflexible and insensitive for achieving the best relationship of new construction to the existing context.

The Committee concentrated a major amount of its energies on examining and testing the performance system. As proposed by the Planning Commission's consultants, the framework of the system rests on the concept of the "Street District" — the immediate environment which would be affected by a proposed development. As explained, the Street District "corresponds to the typical perception of a building within its context as experienced from the sidewalk." The system employs a Daylight Evaluation Diagram upon which a proposed design is drawn for evaluating daylight compliance. Members of the Committee, several of whom have been involved in the design of large midtown construction, tested the system against existing buildings and certain other designs, measuring their degree of compliance with the proposed regulations.

The Committee members concluded that the performance system, although distinctly superior to the prescriptive, still lacks sufficient flexibility in relating building mass to context. For instance, to relate to what is adjoining, it is often desirable to bring at least part of the tower to the lot line: this would be severely penalized.

Another result of Committee members' trying out the performance system was a concern that the designs which most readily conformed were likely to be low, squat building masses with a variety of chamfered corners. The consultants' studies done to illustrate the use of the system tended to confirm this. When Committee members "redesigned" certain towers now under construction, it was felt most of the results were aesthetically inferior to what is being built. The problem may be in that what one normally sees most of a building from the street is typically the first three or four floors. Reducing the bulk will not much change the look of the lower floors.



*Daylight Evaluation Diagram for 60 foot wide street applied to Citicorp Center with vantage*

The consultants criticized the 1961 Zoning Resolution as being written around "an idealized building . . . sitting abstractly on its own site . . ." an a-contextual concept which did not continue the planning ideas of the teens, twenties and thirties. In regard to the present proposal, the Committee urges the Planning Commission to find a suitable and creative balance between the demands of the continuous urban fabric and the single building of a fine design, recognizing that often it is the interaction of the two which produces the visual excitement of a great city.

The Committee's tests also indicate that the proposed zoning may have gone too far in attempting to achieve as-of-right development on small sites. The elimination of maximum tower coverage allows a larger floor size on a smaller site than is presently possible. This might encourage even more intensive development than we see now.

In sum, the Committee applauds the intent of the proposed performance-based regulations. The consultants' work reflects a great deal of imagination and detailed analysis, including such innovative features as the proposal to reward the use of light colored exterior materials. In recommending further refinement of the bulk controls, we say better to get the new, relatively untried system right than to promulgate in haste.

#### Zoning the East Side

The Draft Report accepts the existing FAR limitations and proposes that they be continued. We believe the permissible FAR in the East Side core should be reduced from a maximum attainable of 18 to a maximum of 15, which is to say that the base should be 12.5, with an additional 2.5 attainable through the provision of amenities. We agree with the Report's recommendation to reestablish a maximum of 18 FAR in the Fifth Avenue Special District instead of the present 21.6.

Some Committee members who supported these proposals for the East

point for the middle of 53rd Street between Third and Lexington Avenues.

Side did so with reluctance because of a concern that they would accelerate development costs, affecting the entire rental structure and the economic vitality of Midtown. To avoid any possibility of so sober a scenario, the Committee recommends a thorough economic analysis of the possible consequences.

Together with these recommendations for the East Side we are proposing elsewhere in this paper that permissible FAR to the west be increased. A majority of the Chapter's Committee felt that reducing FAR in the East Side core in conjunction with raising the FAR to the west and south would reinforce important objectives of the Report, namely stabilization of the East Side and provisions of incentives for development away from it. The goal of a stabilized East Side cannot be achieved unless pressures are eased and sites for economically realistic projects become available elsewhere: our proposal for the East Side must be taken together with our recommendations for the West Side.

Two members of the Committee, Eli Attia and Der Scutt, dissented regarding the proposal to reduce permissible FAR from 15/18 to 12.5/15 as follows: We, as do most members of the Committee, agree that there is too little difference between 12.5/15 FAR and 15/18 to cause concern in terms of the visual perception of a building, especially one which is designed to meet daylight evaluation standards. We also do not feel that such reduction in bulk on the East Side will result in significant reduction of on-grade congestion.

But we believe that a reduction in bulk could disturb the economic balance achieved through the years between the various interests in the marketplace, interests which we feel we are not equipped to evaluate properly or thoroughly.

A 15 FAR building has the same initial heavy equipment costs as an 18 FAR building. In order for a developer to make a reduced FAR project viable higher rents would be required, and

we are concerned that the design quality would be immeasurably reduced.

Increased rents in these new projects could detrimentally affect the entire Midtown rental structure, which could cause a mass exodus of small businesses and service organizations; this loss of mixed use occupancy in Midtown would be tragic. It must also be understood that a developer would frequently need the additional 3 FAR to realize the income necessary to offset the extremely high costs of public amenities such as subway connections, through block arcades, covered pedestrian activity spaces and urban parks.

In short, we believe that a FAR reduction of 3 would diminish the quality and substance of East Midtown architecture. A loss of viable projects could adversely affect the city's economy and its position of leadership.

#### Bonusable Amenities

The Draft Report proposes an order of priorities for which FAR bonuses would be granted. For instance, a sidewalk widening (about which we comment below) would have to be provided before a through block connection could be considered. We do not agree. While we favor the proposed mandated subway connection improvements, we think that a priority system for other amenities would be a mistake: it would stifle the flexibility which an architect requires in order to relate a project's form to its particular location and surroundings, and that this could limit important design opportunities in which a given amenity could count for more than it might on another site.

#### Subway Connection Improvements.

The Chapter Committee generally concurs with their being mandated, but it thinks the bonuses proposed are not adequate to compensate for the planning difficulties and high construction costs that experience shows are involved. Further, a developer on a small site could face disproportionate hardship unless the bonus were to be increased on some kind of sliding scale. The economics in all cases must be realistic.

*Arcades.* While these have proven desirable in some cities, they have never been popular in New York. For one thing, under present zoning the available bonuses apparently are not sufficiently attractive as compared with the economic return when the glass line at the ground floor is at the building line. Actually, unless a development occupies an entire block, an arcade becomes discontinuous, functionally and visually. We do not attach great importance to arcades as a

bonusable amenity.

**Covered Activity Spaces.** The Committee endorses continuation of the existing criteria of covered pedestrian spaces. While there have been failures, we anticipate that some excellent examples of activity spaces are now under construction, and that such public amenities can contribute to the richness of architectural experience and delight for the pedestrian. Their economic viability, however, must be carefully analyzed along with their public accessibility. The Report's proposal to limit pedestrian spaces to sites of 35,000 or more square feet is too restrictive: they should be possible at smaller sites where they might enhance the ground level experience.

**Urban Parks.** We support the concept of an Urban Park as a bonusable amenity, and we agree that Paley and Greenacre Parks set admirable standards. But we are concerned that too detailed zoning language regarding for instance, water, trees, seating and walls could inhibit design appropriate to a given site.

**Sidewalk Widening and Street Wall Concept.** The Committee finds a conflict in the Draft Report between its determination to maintain street walls — with which we concur — and its proposed encouragement of sidewalk widenings. We feel that the spirit and character of most New York streets depend on the continuity of building frontage on the street line and the maintenance of retail continuity. In most cases sidewalk widenings should be prohibited. Sidewalk congestion can and must be dealt with through removal of obstructions, including peddlers, and in some cases the reduction of traffic lanes.

#### **Transfer of Air Rights to Non-Contiguous Sites**

We do not endorse transfer of air rights to non-contiguous sites except as a means of preserving landmarks. We agree that "the landmarks transfer has a respected and perceivable public purpose" (p. 50), and we propose that the air rights of a landmark be transferable within a wider area than is presently possible. We further propose that it be permitted to transfer air rights from sites adjacent to landmarks within the same wider area. It is essential that any new regulations affecting Midtown include provisions to protect the great landmarks — St. Bartholomew's, The University Club and the other irreplaceable treasures which set New York apart as a great cosmopolitan city.

#### **Zoning Lot Mergers**

The Report recommends a form of regulation of zoning lot mergers which would attach a sliding scale of permissible FAR transfer based on distance from a proposed development, but it expresses concern that a sliding scale

might encourage demolition of older buildings to increase the "footprint" of the project. We agree. The small buildings in Midtown are crucial to the scale and character of the area, and they must be protected. We propose that when adjacent buildings are left standing, a full transfer of FAR be permitted.

#### **West Midtown Development Strategy**

A strategy for making development in West Midtown attractive must draw from its present special character and its potential for an enhanced life style of living-working-entertainment proximity. It should not be viewed solely in terms of its commercial possibilities. We recommend encouraging a mixture of uses, and we propose considerably increased FAR toward that end. It should be stressed again that our proposal for West Midtown must be considered together with our proposal for East Midtown: each is dependent on the other; our recommendation consists of one package. We also point out that while current plans being initiated for West 42nd Street are very important, those plans do not in themselves offer a sufficient basis for a development of West Midtown of the overall character which we suggest here.

West Midtown contains a range of theaters, performing arts, entertainment, restaurants and 24-hour life to a degree found nowhere else. It is served by subways on three avenues. The Clinton area to the west is a stable and varied residential community. If West Midtown is to compete successfully for desirable new development, we must encourage a West Side with a unique mix of offices, residences and entertainment, interspersed with community facilities and neighborhood services. It must not be viewed as a second-rate office location, and we feel that appropriate zoning and other developmental incentives should be offered.

Toward achieving this end we recommend a free bonus for provisions of dwelling units and community facilities in addition to presently permitted commercial space provided that the Report's proposed performance zoning criteria as measured in daylight diagrams is satisfied. We believe that development on the West Side should begin with as-of-right FAR 18 with bonuses to 21.6, and that an additional residential bonus should be added to such commercial construction to bring the total floor area to a maximum FAR of 24.

We believe that with encouragement of this kind an urban neighborhood with an energy and dynamism of its own will be created, an asset to the city and a desirable location for commercial development.

## **NYC/AIA 1981 RESIDENTIAL DESIGN AWARDS**

**Purpose:** To further public appreciation for excellence in housing design, through display and publication of selected projects. Projects both built since January 1, 1976 and projects in the design stage will be considered.

**Eligibility:** Registered architects of Metro New York may submit any number of projects within 100 miles of New York City. Members of NYC/AIA may submit entries/projects regardless of location. Projects in the design stage will be judged separately from those already built.

**Presentation:** a) Six or more 8" x 10" photographs and/or drawings fully describing the project. b) 35mm slides must be individually mounted in a transparent plastic sleeve. c) A brief explanation of the program and solution on one typewritten page. d) All material must be presented in a black Ful-Vu economy 8½" x 11" binder with transparent plastic window sleeves. Material is to be submitted at participant's risk. Reasonable care will be exercised in its safekeeping.

**Ownership:** The New York Chapter/AIA shall have the right to publicize, exhibit or authorize reproduction of all submissions and shall credit the architects. Winning entries remain the property of the NYC/AIA. After the awards, entries should be picked up at the Chapter office within 2 weeks, or participants may send with the shipping receipt a check or money order, payable to the New York Chapter/AIA, in the amount of the shipping charges plus \$5.00 to cover packaging and handling.

**Jurors:** Bernard Rothzeit, Partner, Rothzeit, Kaiserman & Thomson P.C.; Lewis Davis, Partner, Davis Brody & Associates; Joseph Wasserman, Gruzen & Partners; June Vollman, Sr. Editor, Housing Magazine.

**Anonymity:** Submissions shall contain no identifying marks. A plain white card bearing the name and address of the architect, name and address of project, name and address of owner etc. shall be placed in an opaque envelope and inserted in the last plastic sleeve. Submissions must be received at the office of the New York Chapter, AIA, 457 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022, no later than noon, Friday April 24, 1981.

**Awards:** Both designers and clients of the premiated entries will receive New York Chapter/AIA Certificates. The announcement of the awards will be made at a special reception; the date and time to be announced. The Jury reserves the right, with its discretion, to issue awards and citations as it sees fit or to issue no awards or citations at all.