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ARCHITECTS

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COVER PHOTO

This month's cover photo is by William Roughen, faculty member of University of Kentucky's School of Architecture.

### THE KENTUCKY ARCHITECT

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Paul Sullivan (below), President, Farmers Bank of Frankfort, found the design most appropriate and appealing to his bank's needs through a design contest. By this method, he and his Board of Directors made their decision on the best design with the bank's objectives as primary criteria.

# a design contest...



hen the Farmers Bank in Frankfort decided to build a new bank building, they discovered the hiring of an architect complicated by the fact three of their depositors were principals of local architectural firms.

The idea of design competition seemed appealing as the best method of picking the most qualified architect and thus avoid hurt feelings.

Before the idea was completely accepted, the bank's young President, Paul Sullivan, and the Board of Directors, decided to ask two additional architectural firms into the competition. Firms entering into the design competition were paid for all design work.

Those entering the design compe-

tition were Oberwarth and Associates, Gray and Coblin, and Lee Potter Smith, Pritchett, Hugg and Carter, all of Frankfort; Chrisman, Miller and Wallace, Lexington, and William Welch and Associates, Louisville. All firms are KSA-AIA affiliated.

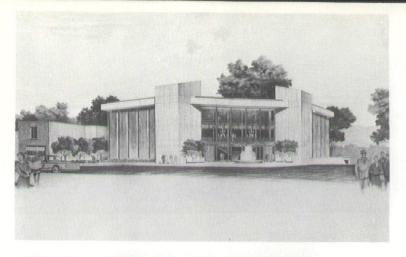
The winner of the competition, Gray and Coblin of Frankfort, (see page 5) submitted a building more in character with the interior spaces of the present downtown Farmers bank. In the present building, as President Sullivan describes it, he can see all the working components of the bank. He feels that the winning design observes the vital aspect of security in providing a visual openness. President Sullivan also points out that the security so important to a customer's confidence

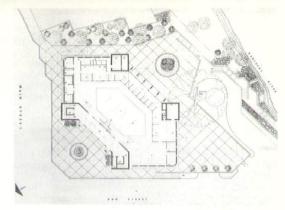
in a bank is also observed in the other designs. The design for security in the Gray and Coblin design, however, more closely meets the criteria of the Board of Directors and those of his own, according to President Sullivan.

Competition on this scale is relatively unique. An opportunity was presented in which competing firms could experiment with an approach completely their own. Such a project could well represent a model for large public works which have unusual significance in their influence on existing and future works.

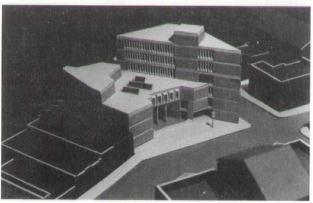
Each of the designers have visually projected what their buildings would look like in comparison to neighboring buildings. Some have been more

(Continued on page 9)

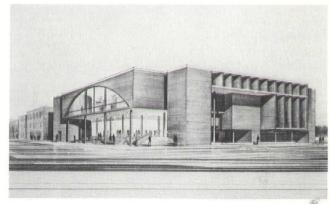




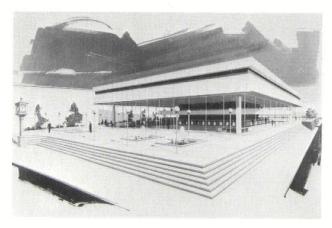
The selected design by Gray and Coblin, AIA, Frankfort



Chrisman, Miller and Wallace, AIA, Lexington

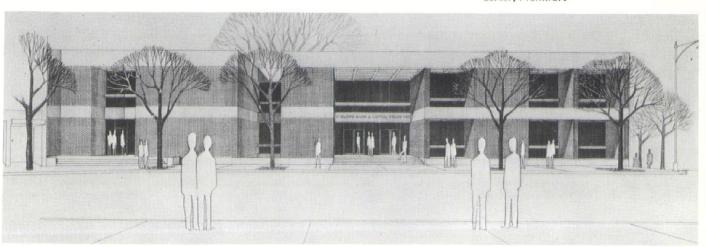


Oberwarth Associates, AIA, Frankfort

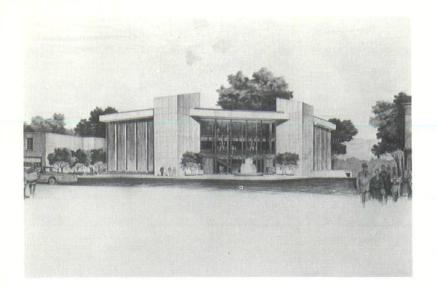


William M. Welch, AIA, Louisville









# Notes about the Selected Entry...

his is a new building for an old established bank that will be built on East Main Street in downtown Frankfort. The site is irregular, slopes at the rear to the Kentucky River and is about a half block East of the Bank's present site. The property, also, faces North to the building of the Bank's principal competitor.

Our response to the site conditions was to propose a three story building of approximately 43,000 square feet with an underground parking garage placed across the property, facing the corner, toward downtown Frankfort, the present location of Farmers Bank and away from its competitor. The orientation allowed for a wider banking floor with all the Teller's windows visible from the Entrance.

The basement provides parking for forty-four (44) cars, shipping and receiving rooms, and two (2) television operated banking windows in an essentially open structure affording good ventilation, natural light and a view of river.

Customers walking from downtown

Frankfort will enter the Banking floor through a two-story entry with an elevator and stairs to the upper floors. This floor provides space for General Tellers, a Note Department, Vaults, Office Area, Statement, Savings, Bond and Bank Check Windows. The floor space is approximately 10,000 square feet and relates to the Mezzanine above by an open stair and a central two story open Lobby. Windows at the rear of the General Teller's windows and opposite the Main Entrance overlook a paved Plaza, the Kentucky River and the State Capitol.

A Mezzanine Floor of 5,000 square feet contains the trust department, storage vaults, auditing department, director's room, offices and toilets. Two Story spaces provide a visible relationship between this floor and Banking Floor below.

General bookkeeping, a computer and related spaces, proof department, kitchen, staff dining and storage spaces are located on the third floor. The dining room seats sixty (60) for dinners and luncheons and ninety (90) to one hundred (100) for community meet-

ings. It is at the rear of the building overlooking the river.

Four towers, each extending above the roof, house stairs, elevators, vaults, and mechanical spaces and provide the principal structural support for the floors, eliminating columns from the main floor. They are an expression of a vertical linkage between the floors.

The property on which the new bank will be located is now occupied by old, somewhat dilappidated, two and three story masonry buildings which will be demolished. Our concept attempts to relate the new building to the neglected beauty of the river at the rear and to the central core of the business district which it faces. We believe that this is an important step toward developing greater appreciation of the river by public use of the plaza around the building. Farmer's Bank, at its present location, provides public meeting space in front of its building and this tradition will be continued at and around the new building. Further, this development, hopefully, will stimulate further development of business district toward the East.

Francesco Memoli, a gentle and wise man who loves painting, sculpturing, photography and writing as much as his chosen profession of architecture, has many credit lines in national publications reflecting upon the nature of architecture and architects. Better known as "Frank" Memoli, AIA, of Watkins and Burrows, AIA, Lexington, this Kentucky Society of Architects member is probably its finest literary talent. His book, Vanity and Value, represents a strong work for his Kentucky colleagues. For those who love honor, truth and beauty, we believe they will find a staunch advocate of those traits in Frank Memoli.

# Modern Architecture

by Francesco Memoli, AIA

o understand current events and to foresee the future course of events, one must know history. By the same token, a history of architecture should teach us to know and to shape a modern architecture. But modern architecture do not study their history. They are out to do something new and original. They do not wish to be influenced by the past.

And yet, to fully understand the state of the arts today, especially that of architecture, we must go back at least a few years and gather together the threads of causes and defects leading to the present conditions and results, and imposing limitations and directions to the future. I feel strongly that some reference to the past is essential if we are to make any sense out of modern architecture, and if we are to derive any value from its theory and practice.

If it will not poison the inspiration of the modern architect too much, I should like to begin our study at the turn of the century. This was still the time of Banister – Fletcher.

The history of architecture was still taught by the comparative method. This consisted mainly of the recall and imitation of the historical styles, and incidentally, of the ecological study of their influences. But we will not dwell too long in this period.

The expositions of Buffalo (1901), St. Louis (1904), San Francisco (1915), and San Diego (1915), were still encouraging the traditional styles and helping America "to form a higher standard of public taste," as Banister – Fletcher put it. Mc Kim, Mead and White, Cram and Ferguson, Goodhue, John Russell Pope and others of their ilk reigned supreme with commissions galore. At the same time, men like Frank Loyd Wright, Gropius and Le Corbusier began to emerge. They had new principles and new ideas. But even then they were not quite new.

As far back as 1826, Karl Friedrich Schinkel said "Every great age had its style of building, why shouldn't we have ours." He began to emphasize material and construction for their architectural effect, omitting all "useless parts."

Much later, at the Chicago Exposition of 1893, Louis Sullivan expressed the Schinkel principles in his Transportation Hall. In the same exposition the Classical styles were rampant. Except for the occasional commission usually springing from economic or engineering considerations, modern architecture as an art form was still fighting to be born.

It was not until the depression of the thirties, as evidenced by the Chicago Fair of 1933 and the New York Fair of 1939, that modern architecture gained acceptance by both the public and the architects.

It has been in forefront of building design ever since.

Thus, after the seeds of modern architecture had been planted for over a century, we began to get its fruits. One might ask, in an age of speed where knowledge and skill are vastly accelerated, what took it so long? Were its principles that difficult to understand? Were the prejudices against it that insurmountable? Or, did its realization require a combination of fortunate, or unfortunate circumstances, such as a depression, for a catalyst?

Perhaps we should not cast aspersions on this belated achievement. Most architects today are sold on modern architecture. The buyers of the buildings are sold. Why make waves? Well, some of us are not quite sold. Now and then we happen to cast a backward glance and see what architecture has achieved in the past and what it has contributed to the social well-being of other cultures. Perhaps we know too much history. Perhaps we are asking more of architecture than mere building technology.

Let us review briefly the principles and purposes of modern architecture, as stated by its pioneers and champions:

- 1. It is a freedom from the past and a search for a new style based on the requirements of the present.
- It seeks forms which follow functional requirements.
- 3. It calls for an appreciation and honest use of materials.
- 4. It calls for architectural integritya frank show of structure and design.
- 5. Its design must be based on modern needs and modern practices.
- 6. It must emphasize the varieties of experience, instead of being hide-bound by the rigidities of order.
- It must emphasize an economy of means and a simplicity of form as against the weight, expense and uselessness of the historic styles.

"Finally," said the modernists, "modern architecture should adhere to the basic principles of function, stability and beauty." This had the same ring as the classic "commodity firmness and delight." At least, the first two words of each phrase seemed to talk about the same things. The last, however, "beauty" and "delight" did not seem quite comparable. The modernist's view of "beauty" seems to spring from the materialization of "function and stability." The classicists "delight," on the other hand, seems to suggest a subjective quality in architecture which is entirely apart from the other two. In other words, the classicist defines beauty as an added, applied element in architecture, while the modernist defines it as merely the outgrowth of practical requirements.

This is the bone of contention between modernists and traditionalists to this day. Sometimes one has had the ascendancy over the other, depending on the importance or definition of beauty. I expect to say more about beauty later. For the moment, we are concerned with the principles that give rise to modern architecture.

These principles were a necessary

corrective for the architectural excesses of the 19th Century. They had a salutary effect against the more blatent copyists. They brought design around to a concern for contemporary conditions. They pointed out the fallacy and vanity of resurrecting unsuitable styles and using them indiscriminately, of using cheap ornament and dismissing functional and structural requirements. They disapproved of facadism and the academic emphasis on paperwork architecture. In the 19th Century, there were many things to be done for, or against, the architecture of the times, and the modernists were doing it.

Fundamentally, therefore, we find the beginnings of the modern movement to be good. Its ideals were great; its principles had validity. Some of these principles were subject to personal disagreement due to difference in taste – or, as pointed out before, due to semantics in defining beauty. Some of them, as they developed later on, became bad when they were taken out of the context of history. Generally, however, the principles had at least the true and the good on their side from the beginning, and they were about to win over the beautiful.

But, for a long time, from about the 1900 to 1930, modern architecture had a struggle to assert itself. The traditionalists still had the upper hand, and they had the larger and better commissions.

Moreover, the traditional styles at the beginning of the 20th Century, were ridding themselves of the vain excesses of the 19th Century. They were beginning to take some of the pages out of the notebooks of the moderns. They began to be concerned about the fitness of architecture for its time, and about the proper use of materials and structure. They reexamined their ideas of beauty. The Eclectic Styles and the International Styles were developed at this time. The cold, bare and even brutal architecture, lacking ornament and crafts

manship, which today is associated with the modern idiom, was little to be seen at the time.

From 1930 to about 1950, all architecture, including the traditional, began a struggle for survival. It was a period of retrenchment for architecture, and especially for the fine arts and luxuries of life, Jewelers, furriers, custom tailors, chauffeurs, musicians, actors, and many craftsmen, personal servants and performing artists were suddenly without work. About one out of every four tradesmen and workers lost their jobs. Income was reduced throughout the economic system. Only the civil servant was unscathed, and forebode the encroachment of a government beauracracy on our lives and on our architecture.

It seemed that things would never be the same again. It was a time for economy, labor savings and conservation. Any show of wealth was ostentation. Little building was done, except that which was absolutely necessary to maintain the little production we had during the depression. When the war followed, even less building was done of any architectural merit. The few architects that were left went into industrial and military construction.

It was during this period that modern architecture gained its present foothold. Industry and the government, the only buyers of buildings, wanted the cheapest, the most efficient, the easiest and quickest to build. They were not interested in beauty or the support of the human spirit, they were interested in shelters and production machines. The principles of modern architecture, were born as an antidote to the trappings of the historical styles of the 19th Century and they had stressed function and efficiency. They were adopted without too much difficulty, or understanding, by the architects and clients of the thirties and forties. Architecture, or at least, the building industry, survived.

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### A DESIGN CONTEST...

(Continued from page 4)

graphically effective than others. All in all, five efforts were gathered in their various interpretations of what the Farmer's Bank represented to the community of Frankfort and the institutional-building image which they choose to mirror that look.

President Sullivan described the entries as all having merit."We felt we could have accepted any of the design with certain re-design. Since redesign would have been necessary, we felt that all the architectural firms should be entitled to that privilege. This, we decided, was asking too much and would entail too much time. The winning design, that of Gray and Coblin, more nearly fit our conception of what we were trying to do," President Sullivan said.

We concluded our present building is well known to older Frankfort residents, President Sullivan said. We are not satisfied that new customers



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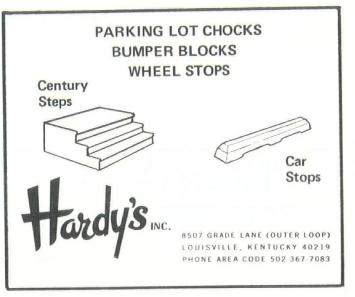
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are attracted to our old building. New customers, we feel, will be attracted as a result of the new building, Sullivan said.

Sullivan smilingly commented some attention had been given the fact that Farmer's Bank could have been the nation's first boat-in-bank. A landing and walkway from the Kentucky River would have given immediate access to customers who prefer boating transportation. "That is not possible. A bank in Portland beat us to the punch. Maybe you can say we're the first in Kentucky."



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