



Vol. V, No. 4

THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

115 EAST 40th STREET

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1943

NEWS OF MEETINGS

On Wednesday, December 9, about 80 members and guests attended a cocktail party in the Pine Room of the League to pre-view an exhibition of interesting photographs loaned by the American-Swedish News Exchange. These were in charge of Mr. Holger Lundberg and were titled "Sweden Prepares for Defense." In an adjoining room was another group of photographs, also of Sweden, taken by one of our members, G. E. Kidder Smith, while traveling on a scholarship, granted by the American Scandinavian Foundation.

Among the honored guests were the Swedish Consul General in New York, Mr. Kastengren; First Secretary of the Swedish Legation, Mr. Dahlman, and his wife; Vice Consul and Mrs. Carbonnier, and the President of the American-Swedish News Exchange.

The Annual Christmas Luncheon was held on Christmas Eve under the joint sponsorship of the Chapter, the League and the American Society of Landscape Architects. After the usual preliminary ceremonies, at which it may be interesting to record that 5 gallons of cocktails were consumed, the company numbering about 175 sat down to roast turkey and all that traditionally goes with it. At the proper time, all lights were lowered, leaving only the red candles flickering, while Christmas Carols were sung lustily to the accompaniment of Mr. Edmond W. Rickett of the Blue Hill Troup. By unanimous vote, Mr. Rickett was elected an Honorary Member of the Annual Christmas Luncheons. No speeches were scheduled, but all present were glad to hear from the League's President, Lieut. Woodbridge, U.S.N.R., who reported that since serving with the Navy he has found that the much-talked-of prejudice against architects vanishes once the architect is in the service and has had an opportunity to demonstrate his ability to think and plan.

At the Chapter Lunch on January 14, nearly 100 members and guests came to hear Mr. MacCornack speak on Post War Planning. Special guests at the lunch were the New York State Board of Examiners, members of the A.I.A. Committee on Post War Reconstruction and 8 representatives of the New York Producers' Council.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, February 25th 8:15 p.m.
Have you made your reservation?

HONORARY ASSOCIATE

Your Executive Committee has nominated for election to Honorary Associate Membership in the Chapter William Church Osborn, lawyer of New York City. Mr. Osborn is President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, member of the Art Commission of New York, former member of the Directors' Committee on Physical Planning for the New York World's Fair, and a member of many Committees, both public and charitable, in this city.

Under the By-Law provision regarding notice in writing to all members, you are hereby notified that the election of Mr. Osborn will take place at the February 25th meeting.

HANDBOOK OF ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE

We quote below a letter just received from President Shreve:

"There has just come to me from The Octagon a copy of the Handbook of Architectural Practice, which has been revised and re-issued by The Institute. The book is a fine example of cooperative work and is the product of the organized effort of our Corporate Members. While the final direction of what has been accomplished was in the hands of Mr. Parker, to whom our thanks are especially due, we should not fail to recognize the initial contribution of the Committee of the New York Chapter.

The Board of Directors of The Institute has requested that the President write to you to recognize and thank you for the Chapter's part in this valuable work."

NEW STATE OFFICERS

The New York State Association held its Annual Meeting in December at the Architectural League, and elected the following officers for 1943: President, Charles R. Ellis of Syracuse, Vice Presidents, Wm. G. Kaelber of Rochester, Louis Booth of Poughkeepsie, George B. Hall of Bronxville, and Lorimer Rich of New York; Treasurer, Maxwell A. Cantor of Brooklyn; Secretary John T. Briggs of New York.

FUTURE PLANNING

Walter MacCornack, Vice President of the A.I.A. and Chairman of its Committee on Post War Reconstruction, spoke at the January Chapter meeting on the Architect's place in Post War Reconstruction.

Mr. MacCornack's Committee is developing a program aimed to cover the large task of urban reconstruction and at the same time capable of variation for Chapter needs. However, in order to deal capably with this complex problem, Mr. MacCornack said architects should be well grounded in the 16 "elements" of which the problem consists.

The first of these is employment. No program for future reconstruction can be successful unless it includes a plan for full employment based on sound economic principles. An artificially stimulated economy will not suffice.

Secondly the problem of finance must be carefully studied, and all efforts to free the flow of credit should receive our full support.

Nextly architects should encourage a thorough re-examination of our national tax structure. Improved methods of assessing for tax purposes are needed.

Immediate attention should be given to deflating our concept of urban land values as reflected in economic use.

A comprehensive legislative program is needed which will (a) permit the use of eminent domain by qualified private corporations, (b) drastically revise our antiquated building codes, (c) improve our ordinances governing zoning and land use, (d) invoke the state's police power for razing obsolete buildings and (e) provide for the gradual removal of non-conforming uses.

It is also important to plan for decentralization both of industry and residences, and to do this on a regional basis rather than within the usual limitations of political subdivisions.

The neighborhood unit should be recognized as an essential element of replanning.

In studying transportation, we must differentiate between express and local streets and recognize new problems of air transport and off-street parking. Provision for recreation is another important element.

The problem of housing should be attacked broadly and types of dwellings studied in relation to their location.

The line of demarcation between private and government subsidized buildings must be determined.

Familiarity with new methods of construction, new materials and simplified standards is essential. Every effort should be made to eliminate the many unfair and restrictive practices which still honeycomb the building industry.

Lastly we must be constantly on the alert for any and every means of abolishing the speculative evils of the past.

A.C.H.

FROM OUR LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:

Through the Legislative Service of the N. Y. State Association of Architects, a digest of all bills introduced in the State Legislature affecting the profession, and buildings in general, is filed with the Chapter Office for information of the members. Copies of bills in original form may be requested of the Clerk of the Assembly or the Clerk of the Senate, depending upon where the bills are pending.

Bills affecting the profession will be acted upon by the Legislative Committee and the desired measures taken in support or opposition. In such cases, when called upon, the support of each and every member is essential.

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

The Civic Design Committee is now discussing 20 proposals submitted by Chapter and League members, originally solicited by the Brunner Scholarship Committee. Other members wishing to participate in the work of the Committee should file their names in the Chapter Office.

SUGGESTIONS INVITED

The Committee on the Apartment House Medal is prepared to give Awards this year for apartments or housing groups completed between October 1, 1940, and October 1, 1941. Buildings within the five boroughs completed within that period will be considered, irrespective of cost, income group to be housed, or method of financing.

If you know of any outstanding buildings or groups which you believe worthy of an award, you will greatly aid the Committee by sending in your comments to the Chapter Office.

MEMBERSHIP

CANDIDATES:

The following names have been submitted for Institute membership:

1. Ronald R. Allwork
Sponsors:
Richard F. Voell
Howard Park Vermilya
2. Simon Breines
Sponsors:
Emery Roth
Ben C. Bloch
3. Hermann Haviland Field
Sponsors:
Antonin Raymond
William Lescaze
4. Elsa Gidoni
Sponsors:
Adolph Witschard
Steward Wagner
5. M. Milton Glass
Sponsors:
Sidney L. Strauss
Henry S. Churchill
6. Othmar Kraus
Sponsors:
Henry S. Churchill
Leon R. Levy
7. Charles L. Macchi
Sponsors:
Antonin Raymond
Alfred E. Poor
8. Charles F. Mink
Sponsors:
Daniel Paul Higgins
Henry Hofmeister
9. John Edward Muddell
Sponsors:
Lester H. King
Alfred E. Poor
10. Maurice Reinholt Salo
Sponsors:
Francis Keally
Steward Wagner
11. Nunzio Joseph Sapienza
Sponsors:
John T. Briggs
Sidney L. Strauss
12. Richard George Stein
Sponsors:
Walter Gropius
Antonin Raymond
13. Earl Henry Strunk
Sponsors:
Antonin Raymond
Walter F. Anderson
14. Bradford Sargent Tilney
Sponsors:
Walter H. Kilham, Jr.
Philip L. Goodwin

TALE OF A COAT

It was a single breasted coat, dark blue and woolly, size 36, and came from Rogers Peet. One day it went to the Architectural League for lunch and was hung up on hook No. 86 alongside a hundred and twenty-five other coats. The lunch was a special and important lunch of the New York Chapter A.I.A. and a lot of special and important people were there.

After the lunch the owner of the coat had an appointment with a City Official about a big job. Upon entering the check room to get his coat he was astonished to see hook No. 86 staring blankly and vacantly at him. What to do! With despair he surveyed the roomful of coats, all seemingly dark and woolly, and then faced the oncoming horde from the lunch tables, each man claiming a dark and woolly coat. The day was bitter cold—impossible even to consider going without a coat, and that City Official was waiting. What could our poor architect do but stand aside and watch 124 coats fitted on to their rightful owners and wear the odd remaining one to his official appointment.

Late in the afternoon the League's telephone rang. One of the lunchers had discovered he was wearing a strange coat. Could he return it and get his own? Our architect was immediately notified to come for the exchange of coats. But what was his amazement to find the returned one was a *double* breasted one, size 39. Quickly the news was broadcast, by letter, telephone, and word of mouth.

Four days later the League's telephone rang again. Another luncher had discovered he was wearing a strange overcoat. Could he return it?

Our architect was overjoyed. Four days of wearing a substitute coat which flapped at his heels and covered his knuckles and had to be shed quickly and tucked in a corner of the anteroom of every office he had entered, had been a trying ordeal, now at last to come to an end.

The second returned coat was a black cheviot with a velvet collar!

From then on the League's telephone rang at frequent intervals. Coats of varying sizes and colors were returned, tried on and rejected.

But patience is always rewarded. One day the dark blue wool model from Rogers Peet was found, like the little lost sheep, and came back to its rightful owner. And great was the rejoicing thereat.

And so ends the tale of a coat. We wonder if he got the job?