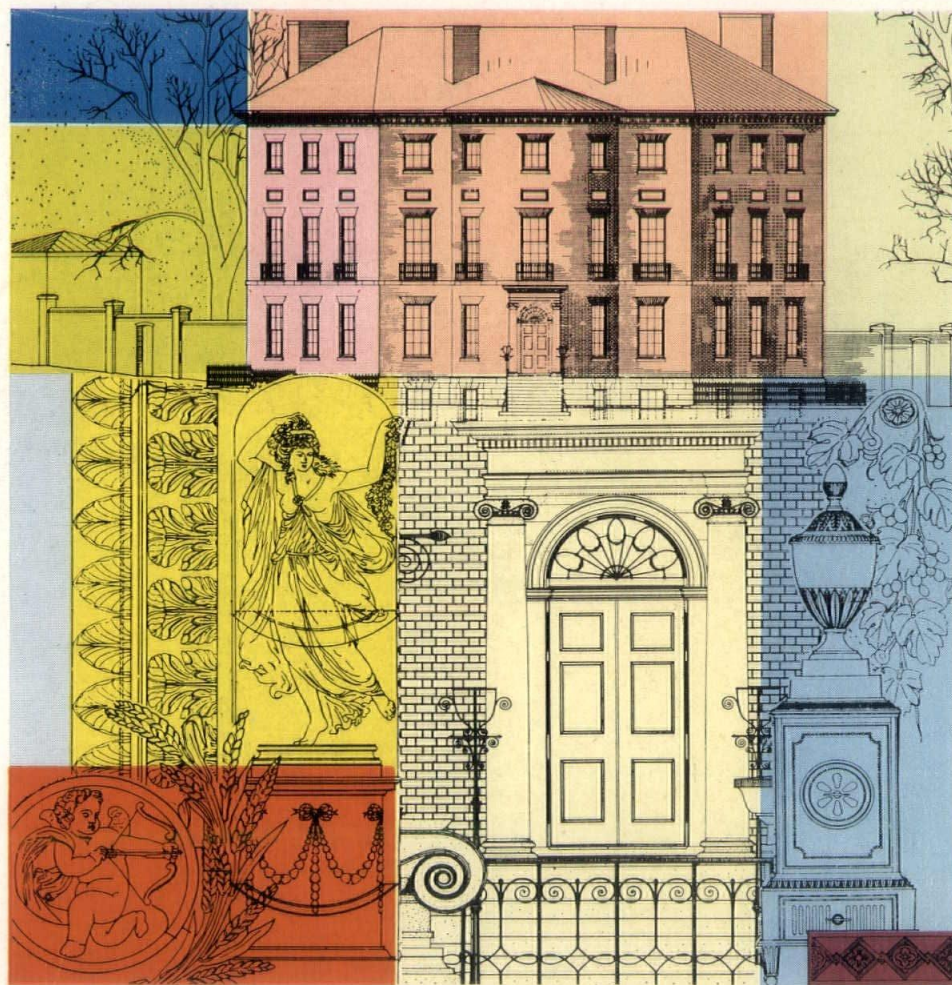


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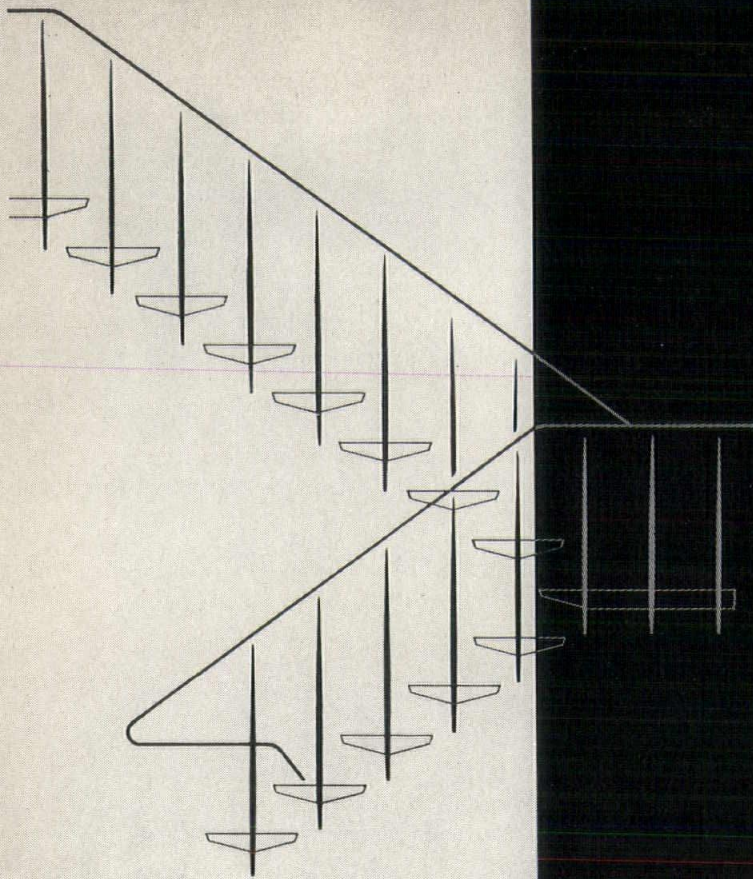
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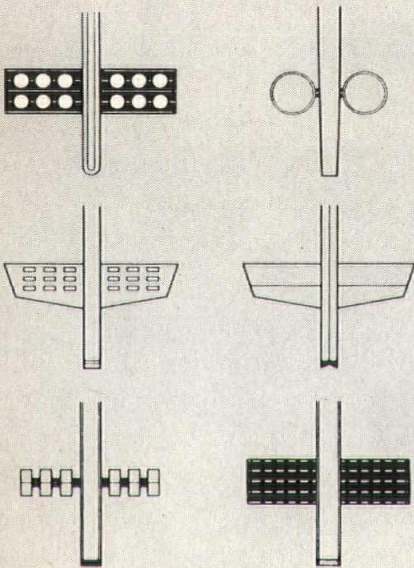


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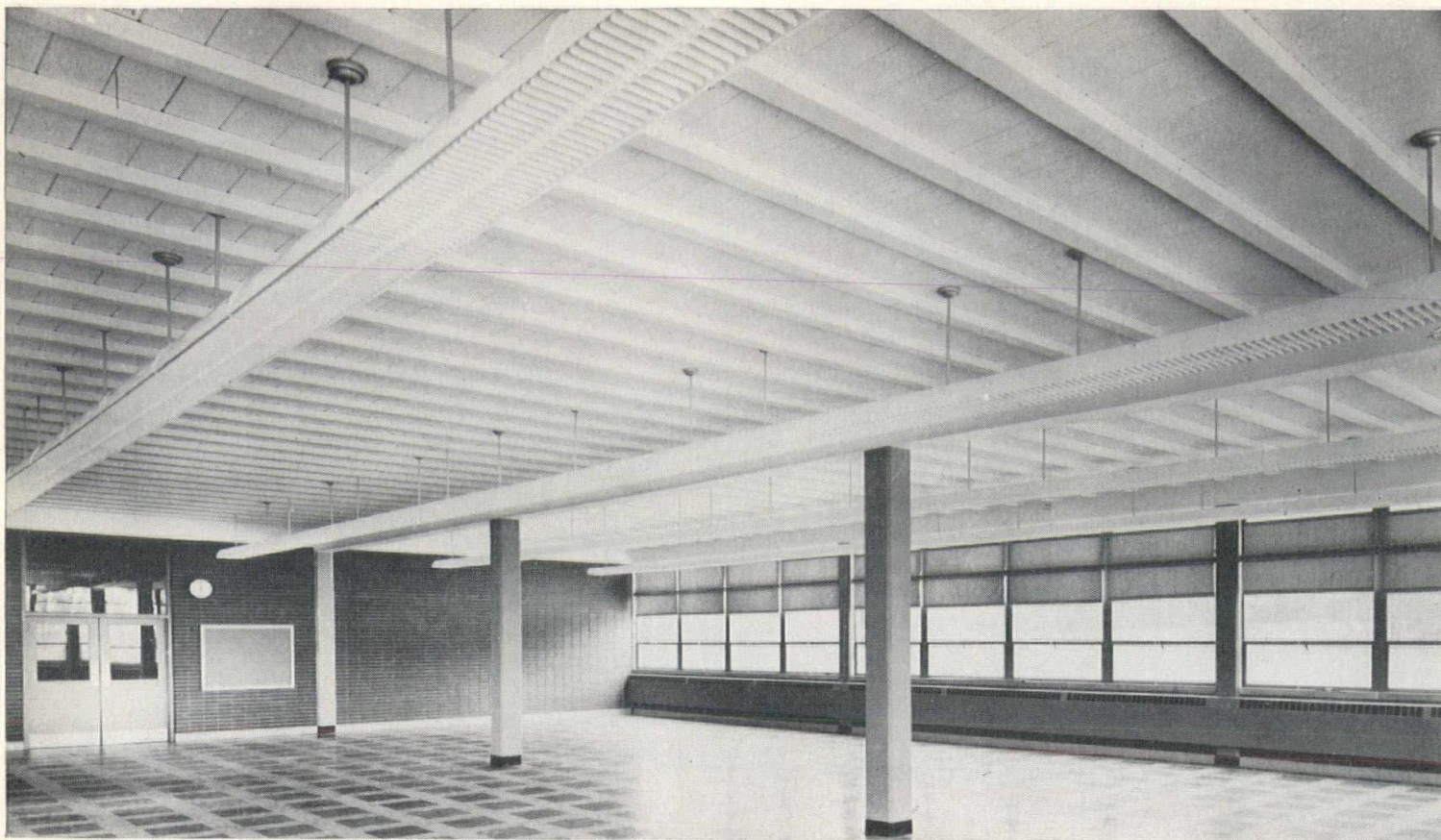
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### Cover Design

Pictured in the montage on this month's cover are various highlights of The Octagon, including a drawing of The Octagon itself, details of the entranceway, and details from the fireplaces, moldings and garden. This was designed by Wolf Von Eckardt for the October, 1959, issue of the AIA JOURNAL. The drawings were prepared under the direction of the late Glenn Brown, FAIA.

THE INDIANA ARCHITECT is deeply grateful to The Institute and the JOURNAL for permission to reprint this montage, and for assistance in the article on page 18, based upon the pamphlet "The Octagon," published by The Institute and written by Henry H. Saylor, FAIA, former Editor of the JOURNAL and Historian for The Institute.





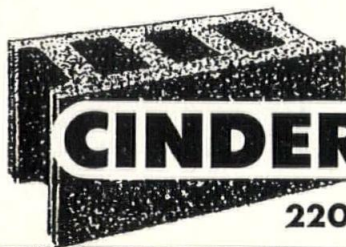
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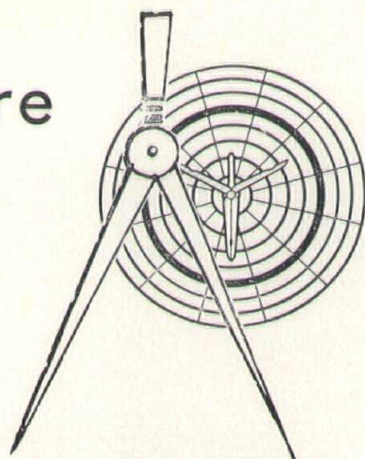
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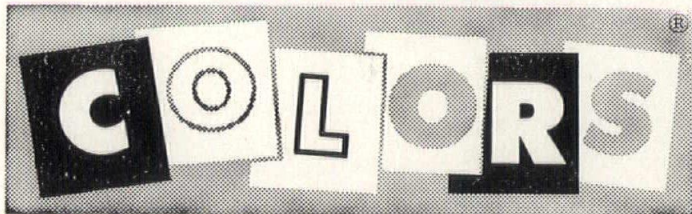
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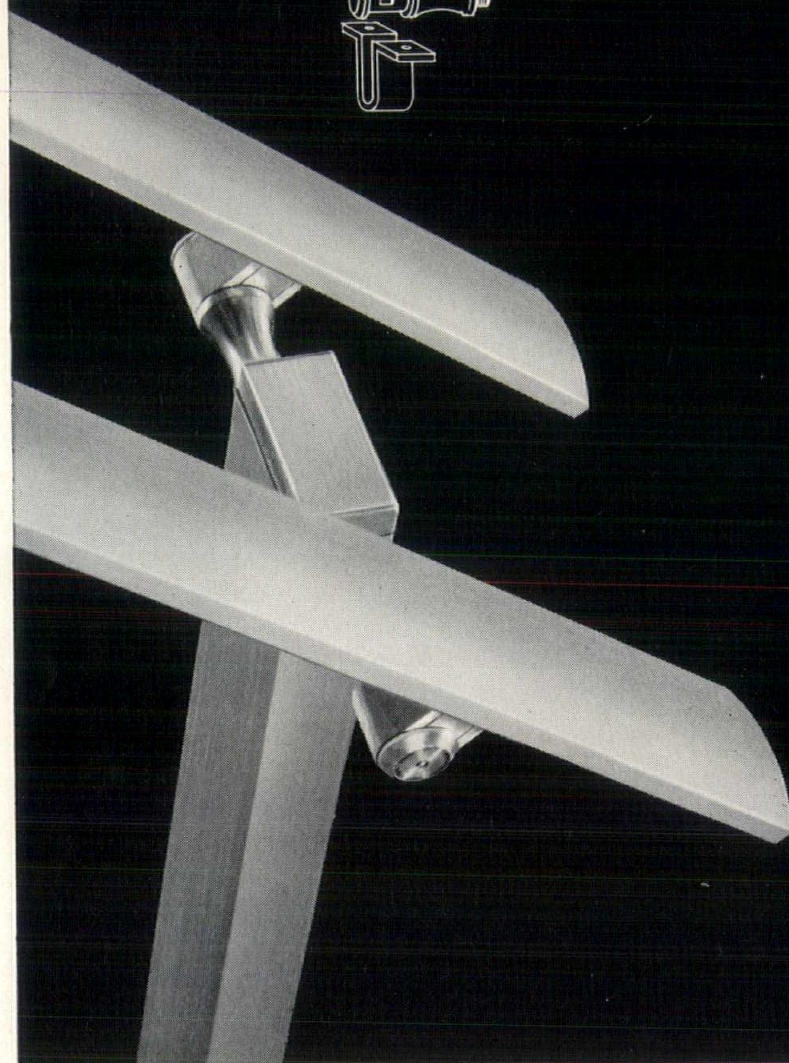
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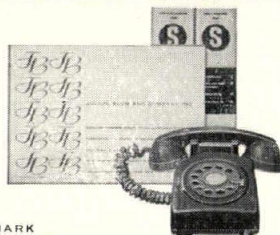


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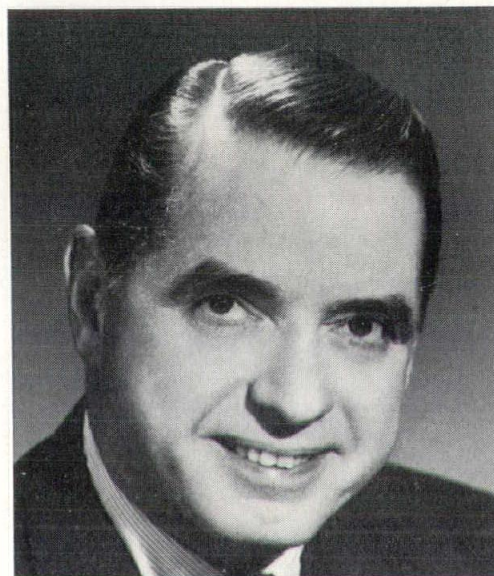
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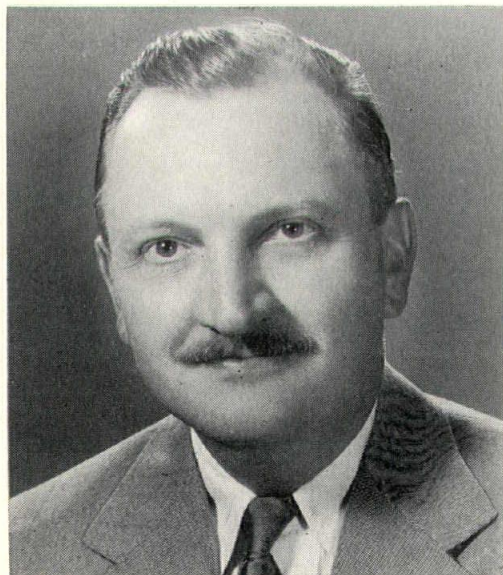
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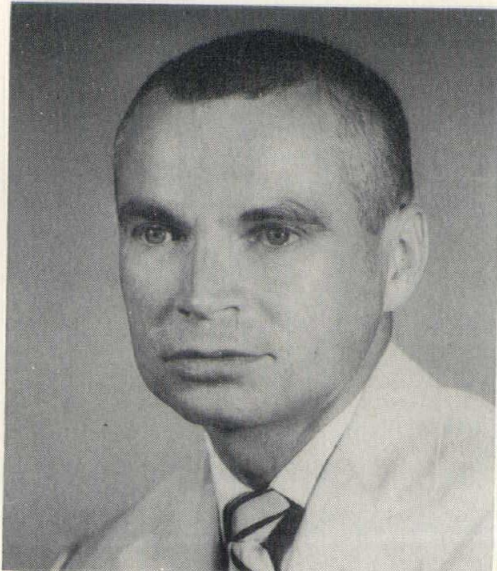
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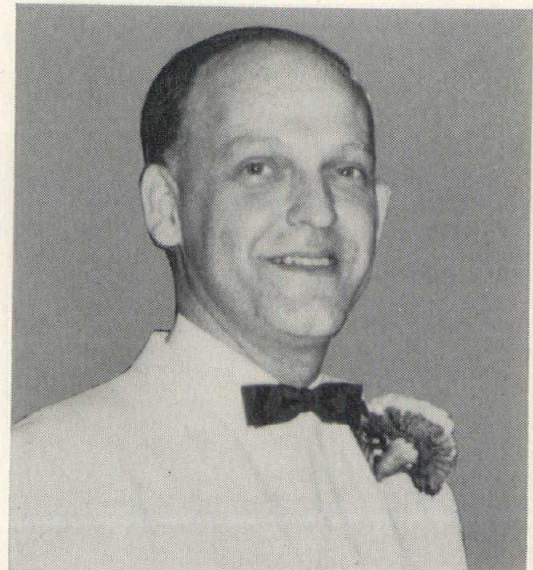
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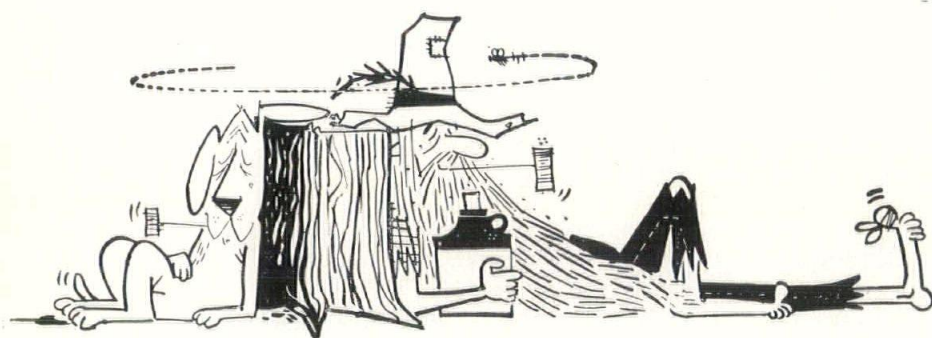
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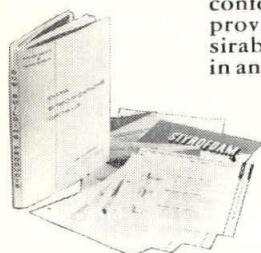
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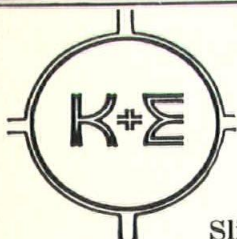
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Every attempt has been made to assure the correctness of this Roster, but the Indiana Society can assume no responsibility in the event errors do exist.

Members are requested to report any errors to the Society headquarters at their earliest convenience.

16

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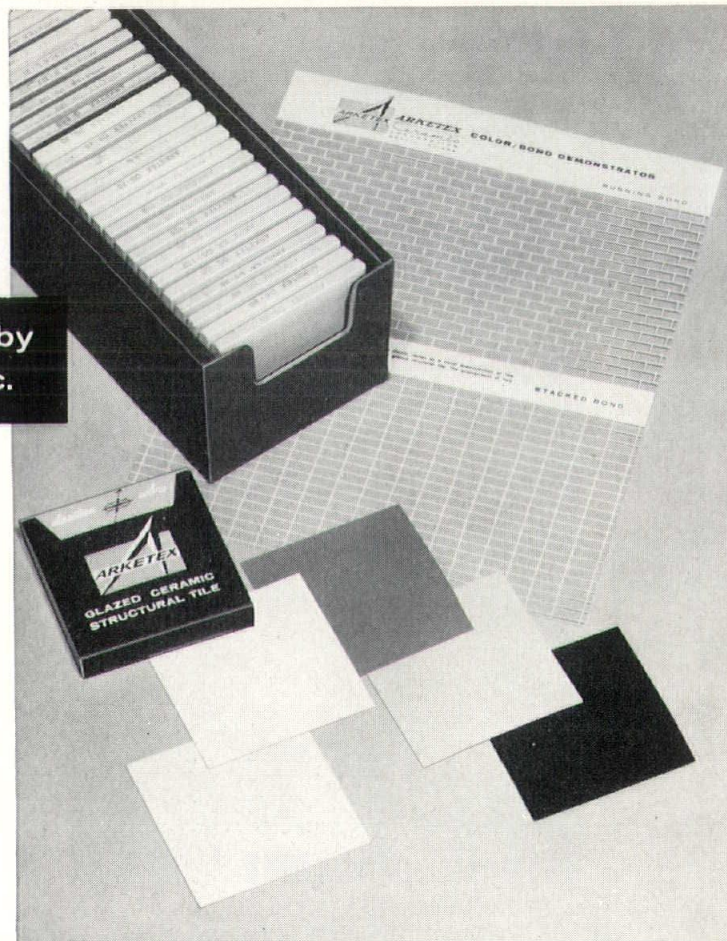
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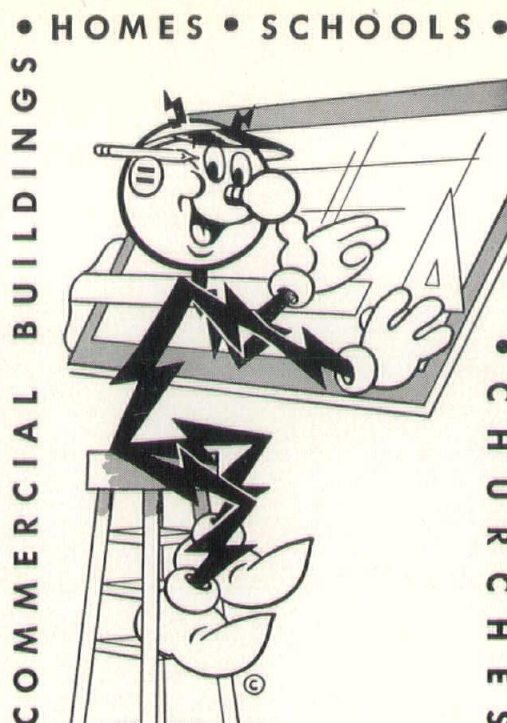
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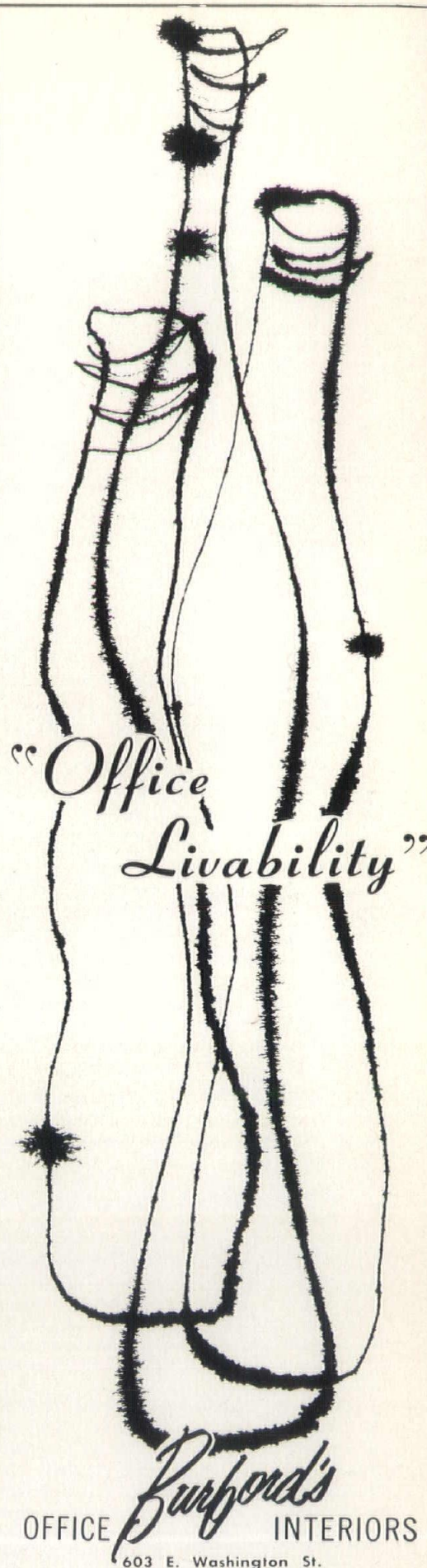
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# THE OCTAGON

Since 1900, the national headquarters of The American Institute of Architects has been located in one of the oldest and most interesting buildings in Washington, D.C. Built between 1798 and 1800 as a residence for Colonel John Tayloe, The Octagon was designed by Dr. William Thornton, architect and man of many talents.

In many ways, The White House and The Octagon are related. Both date from the beginnings of government in the national capital; The White House was started first but The Octagon was first completed. Both have served as the official residence of the President. And both have become so deeply ensconced in the affections of Washington that the seasoned citizen of our nation's capitol feels an almost personal pride of ownership and also of responsibility for their safekeeping.

Colonel Tayloe, the original owner, was persuaded by his friend General George Washington to build his new town house in the planned national capital, rather than in Philadelphia, the Colonel's original choice. And the natural architect for the Colonel to select was Doctor Thornton, recent winner of the competition for the Capitol and an authority on architecture, medicine, astronomy, philosophy, government, art, and language. A graduate of Edinburgh, with an M. D., Dr. Thornton also became famous as architect, inventor, writer and painter.

The unusual plan of the house was due to the angle formed at the junction of the two streets bounding the plot, New York Avenue and Eighteenth Street. Although the site was apparently out in a lonely countryside, the city streets had been definitely plotted, and the house was designed to fit the site.

On August 24, 1814, during the War of 1812, the British left The White House a fire-gutted ruin. Very possibly Mrs. Tayloe's foresight in establishing the French Minister—with his country's flag—as a house guest saved The Octagon from a similar fate. In any event, Colonel Tayloe offered President Madison the use of the mansion as an official residence, and the Madisons moved in on September 8, 1814.

For more than a year Dolly Madison reigned as hostess of The Octagon. In the tower room just over the entrance, President Madison established his study, and here ratified the Treaty of Ghent on February 17, 1915, establishing a peace with Great Britain. The table on which the treaty was ratified is a pivoted circular one, with wedge-shaped drawers. In the wide scattering of Tayloe heirs it got as far away as San Francisco, was rolled in bedding and trundled

out of danger from the fire and earthquake of 1906, was purchased by the San Francisco Chapter, and returned to the Madison Study in The Octagon.

After 1855, The Octagon no longer served as the Tayloe family town house. In 1865 it was used as a school for girls. From 1866 to 1879 the Government rented it for use of the Hydrographic Office.

The AIA rented the structure in 1899, for a yearly rental of \$360. At that time, The Octagon had become a tenement building, occupied by ten families. The fine old drawing-room was found to be piled four feet deep with rubbish; the whole interior was covered with grime, the fireplaces closed up, windows broken. But the century-old structure still stood staunch and sound, a tribute to its original designer.

Three years later the Institute purchased the property for \$30,000, and by 1914 owned the property mortgage-free.

In 1911, two building lots to the north were purchased and their ramshackle dwellings torn down. In 1940, the original stable (condemned as unfit for storage) was completely rebuilt and restored and the Annex was built along the eastern line of the plot. This building engaged but left undisturbed the stable.

During the war years, this Annex was leased to the Government, and the AIA was unable to occupy the space until 1949.

In recent years, The Octagon has been carefully restored both inside and out. In 1953 the stable became the Library Building, the garden committed as a memorial to Institute members who have given their lives in defense of freedom and their country.

It is no accident that The Institute has made its national headquarters in this historic building. For from its very beginnings, The Institute has diligently concerned itself with safeguarding and preserving worthy buildings and historic monuments.

And after a century and a half, The Octagon is fitted to serve not only as an outstanding monument of the nation's earliest years, but as an efficient and active stimulus to architecture and The Institute.

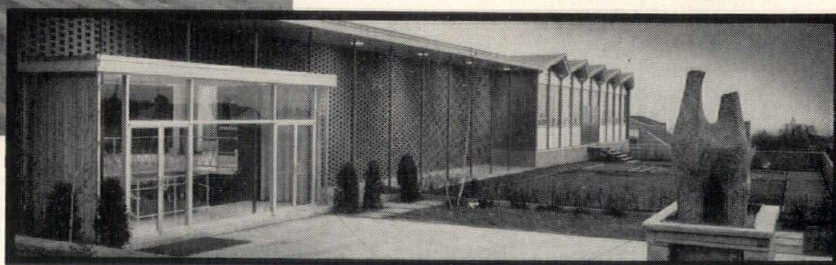
It must be noted in closing that, despite its historic name, The Octagon is a building with six, not eight, sides. Possibly the circular entranceway which protrudes at the front of The Octagon (which contains the Treaty Room on the second floor and the original wine cellar in the basement) reminded the Tayloes of an eight-sided shape, but in any event, for more than a century and a half the name has been unchanged.







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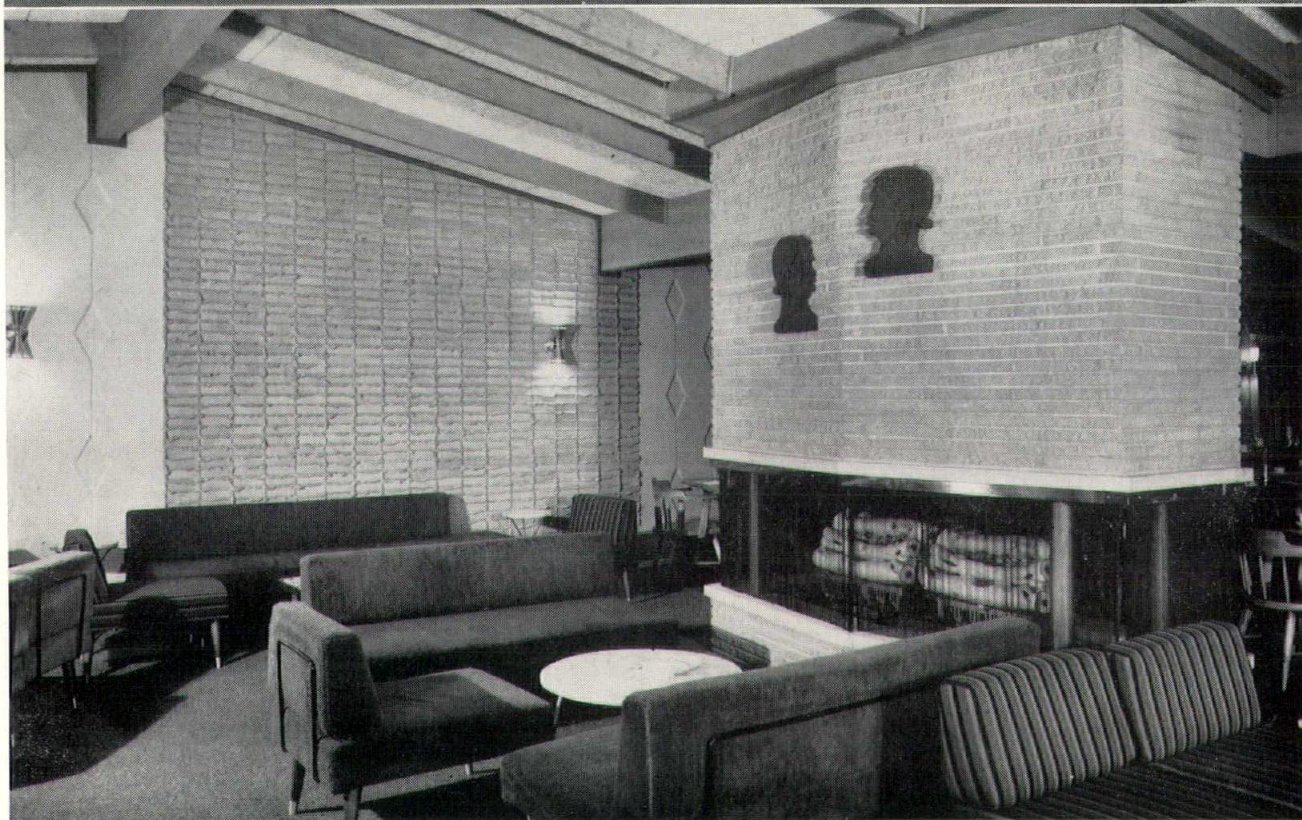
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