Skylines



December

52

KANSAS CITY CHAPTER

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

KANSAS CITY CHAPTER

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

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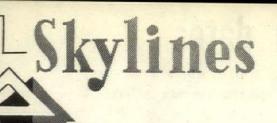


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KANSAS CITY CHAPTER AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 6 - - DECEMBER 1952

ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday December 16 The Wishbone 4455 Main Street

5:30 P. M.

*** Annual Committee Reports

* * * Election of Officers

*** Film: "Tried & True vs. the Spectacular" by Rail Steel Bar Association concerning conversion of rails into hi-stress reinforcing steel. Color by Kodachrome. Narration by Lowell Thomas.

NOMINATIONS:

President

I. L. Roark, Jr., & Wm. R. Bovard

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Frank R. Slezak & Robert S. Everitt

Secretary

Ralph E. Myers & Earl W. Allen

Treasurer

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Director

To fill the important post being vacated by Luther Orville Willis, for a three-year term: Lewis P. Andrews Herbert C. Anset Louis H. Geis Arthur Kriehn Henry D. Krug, Jr. Richard N. Wakefield

Nominations for all offices may be made from the floor the night of the meeting.

Nominating Committee * Edward Buehler Delk * Dwight Brown

* Robert O. Boller

Usual Order of Events

* Business session * Cocktails * Dinner * Program

PHONE RESERVATION VICTOR 8110

december dates

DECEMBER

SUN MON TUES WED THUR FRI SAT

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	(16)	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	29					

Tuesday December 16 - Chapter Meeting (See preceding page)

Monday December 22 - Annual Christmas Party (See facing page)

november notes

The last chapter meeting, dedicated to the associate and junior associate members, proved interesting to a good turnout of about sixty. The meeting was set up as a panel discussion of some of the facets of the architectural profession that a young architect may encounter when starting his practice, but may never encounter while working for another architect. Four corporate members of the chapter were asked to discuss certain portions.

Chapter President Roark led off with a very informative talk about membership in the A.I.A. He outlined the pre-requisites for each class of membership and the standards set by this chapter.

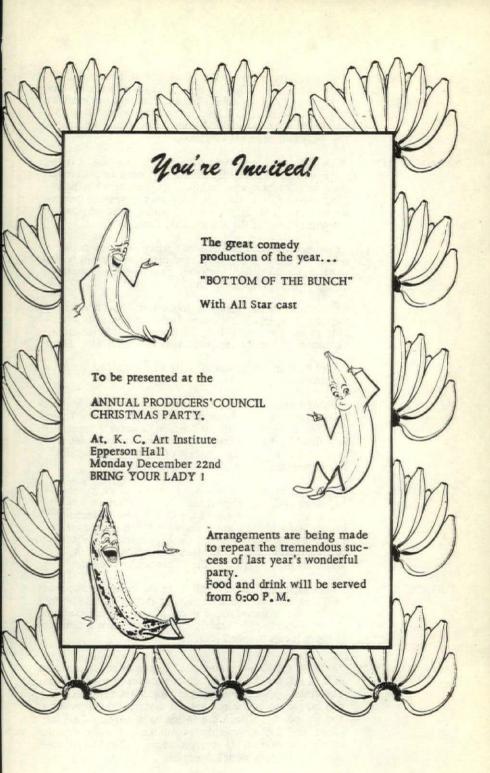
Leslie B. Simpson spoke on ethics in architecture. He presented the code of ethics as accepted by the A.I.A. His remarks about some of his experiences regarding fees proved very interesting.

Homer F. Neville presented his views of obtaining commissions and pointed out the important factors in an architect selling himself and his work to the client.

Clarence Kivett discussed facts regarding costs of production in architectural work.

A panel discussion followed the talks, with John C. Monroe, Jr. acting as moderator. Written and verbal questions were presented and a very lively discussion ensued. One observing member asked the panel if it were necessary to grow a mustache in order to become a successful architect.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE action at the November meeting was highlighted by nomination of Edward Buehler Delk to a fellowship in the A. I. A. The brief on Mr. Delk was prepared by L. O. Willis and officers and board members unanimously approved the action.



UNITED FUNDS

in Kansas City this year raised more than three million dollars and for the first time the architects were solicited as a group. Although fund headquarters got out cards on only about half of the firms, chapter members Ralph Myers, Frank Slezak and Bill Simon brought in over \$1400. The goal had been set at \$1000.

PRESIDENT GLENN STANTON was a most welcome visitor to Kansas City November 6. About fifty architects heard an informal, informative report at a luncheon at the Hotel Phillips. That evening, the board of directors and several prominent members of the KC Chapter entertained Mr. Stanton with dinner at the Kansas City Club.

At the noon session the national prexy dwelt on public relations, ethics, the 1953 convention which will be held in his great Northwest bailiwick, and the Pan-American Congress held in Mexico City.

KC Chapter member Eugene John Stern, now residing in Mexico City, made his office facilities and staff available to the Institute during the Congress. Mr. Stanton had warm praise for the hospitality of Mr. & Mrs. Stern.

David B. Runnells of Kansas City also attended the Pan-Am sessions.

- ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIALS among our chapter members now includes president Lloyd Roark, who successful in his bid for a Township Board post in northeast Johnson County, Kansas. His activities in the welfare of his community includes a vice-presidency of the Council of Home Owners and board member of the Recreation Commission.
- TWO MONTHS IN EUROPE has placed Edward W. Tanner high on the list of luncheon and dinner speakers. Since his return a few weeks ago he has addressed the Oak Meyer Gardens Homes Association annual dinner gathering, and on December 3 he appeared at the weekly Chamber of Commerce luncheon at the Hotel Muehlebach. All A. I. A. members were invited to the Chamber luncheon.
- THE RECOMMENDED MINIMUM FEE SCHEDULE -- in the convenient pocket card size -- is included in each of the SKYLINES being mailed out this month. It is the aim of the fee committee to keep the membership and our lay readers informed of these recommended fees.
- REFER TO SKYLINES ADVERTISING when you write a spec or make a phone call in reference to a particular product in your designs. The firms who buy these pages month after month make this magazine possible. Besides that, all their products are top-notch. Check the inside back cover. Call the Producers' Council members by name. They're the men with the answer to all your problems. They'll give them that important personal attention.

in the news .

THE F. H. A. IN KANSAS CITY, according to Mr. J. Vivian Truman, director, reports need for an additional architect in their office due to a substantial increase in the building activity in this area. They will be glad to receive applications from qualified architects. IIOO Federal Office Building, 9th and Walnut streets.

THE CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE of last October continues to enjoy a good press. Local publications in allied fields carried an extensive article written by SKYLINES editor Frank Grimaldi. They were "The Modern Builder" published by the Kansas City Builders Association, and "The Midwest Contractor", a construction newsmagazine which covers the same territory as our region organization. A full page of pictures snapped at various conference proceedings were carried by the latter.

The national architectural magazines are giving us good follow-up coverage. Architectural Record in its "Record Reports" section of November, and the "News" section of Architectural Forum gave us good mention.

SKYLINES this month presents condensations of three talks delivered at the keynote seminar: "Esthetic Qualities in Architecture." Future issues will be devoted to the discourses of Charles Eames, the seminars on painting, sculpture and stained glass.

CHRISTMAS SEASON and the annual party of Producers' Council culminates another year of fine relations with that group. This is an appropriate time to express our thanks to the Producers' for their splendid cooperation thru the years. Especially for their part in the Central States Conference, the publication of SKYLINES, and the Christmas party, we say, "Thanks very much, fellows!"



Esthetic Qualities

a seminar held at the central states conference a.i.a. kansas city missouri october 9 1952

Ralph E. Myers

J. Woolson Brooks

Bruce Goff

n Architecture

It has been said that architecture is a many-sided profession - - it is partly a business, partly a technical achievement, and partly an art. It is architecture as an art that we are considering today.

First, it seems logical that as long as we are going to talk about Esthetic Qualities, a definition of these words would be worth knowing. The dictionary defines Esthetics as - - the science or theory of the beautiful in taste and art - - to create an emotional effect - - the effect on the emotions of the people who see it or use it. These definitions I believe are significant, but are they the key to the measurement of Esthetic Quality? Can we measure our emotional experiences? Can we measure beauty?

We have been busy coining words about "styles" and "isms" and developing architectural cure-alls that lead us away from understanding. We have ex-

I know you as loyal friends, fair and eager opponents, and as potential benefactors of humanity. But what does this Humanity, this mass of possible clients, think of you? They have us typed usually in an unflattering category. They say we are a bunch of Dreamers, a group interested only in the making of pretty pictures. They use the most derisive term which they can find: they speak of Architects as Artists.

I am uncomfortably conscious of the cause for this distorted appraisal. The sins are mainly those of our architectural forebears—a relatively small number of guys who mistakenly thought they were architects, and unfortunately got away with the deception. These bogus aesthetes brow-beat their clients into accepting ridiculous solutions on the ground that they were inspired. By the time the charm of the architect's sophisticated personality had been forgotten, and the client had grown accustomed to detouring around useless columns located by the architect for principles of good taste, he began to think of that creative gentleman as a sleep-walker.

You've heard a lot of talk here about esthetics, and it always makes me wince a little bit when anyone uses that word, because I confuse it with anesthetics. Are we trying to get a so-called esthetic veneer over what we have come to practice as functionalism, or are we trying to go a little deeper? Are we trying to pretty up our buildings to give them a facial? Are we trying to vary the monotony by trickery of various kinds? Someone has said art is a deception, and certainly it's slight of hand many times.

We have all sorts of formulas, whether we admit it or not, we can accept a grid and we can trick it up by varying the shapes in various ways, and of course, we can do all sorts of interesting things with colors and textures and materials. We can change the appearance of these boxes in many ways, but I think if it's going to be architecture, it will have to be a little more than that. Where is it going to come from? It has to come from all of us who are working with this idea of architecture as more than just building, and we're going to need to not only know what's happened and what is happening, we are going to have to grow ourselves, and keep growing and keep being

ploded many small parts into big theories and run rampant with them until the next one comes along. We have failed to relate the parts to a congruent whole, but on the other hand have tried to show that these various theories are free-standing and are unrelated.

There has been an age old search for a mathematical guide to the forms of art such as the Greeks tried to do and of late Le Corbusier with his "Modular scale". The Greeks did well by their proportion formulas but they were limited and not all-inclusive. Because Le Corbusier devised his "modular scale" does not mean we should write-off the value of the Greek formulas. On the other hand Wright has said "proportion in itself is nothing." To imply that the esthetic value of a building can be reduced to a matter of proportion alone is absurd. Because of Wright's statement I am sure Le Corbusier's theory of modular scale has not become obsolete. He points out the

I am convinced that most of the faults of our architecture are due to overemphasis on rationalism and materialism; a dearth of consciousness of the Spiritual. Because we are so damnably comfortable in our materiality, we shun everything spiritual with the excuse that it is only connected with religion, an opiate for the weak. But what I am talking about has nothing to do with sectarian religion. The spiritual qualities which I mention, and which underly all architecture of this or of any age, can be described by the simple word, sensitivity. They consist in perception of relationships between objects and objects, objects and people, people and people; that do not yield to scientific analysis, but are sensed through intuition. You cannot prove them. You do not know you are right until 100 years after you are dead. The only technique for advancing architecture is to follow this intangible hunch method, guided by your mind, but controlled by your heart or soul, or whatever unreliable part of your anatomy is responsible for this quality that we call sensitivity.

Fortunately it is not difficult to prepare seed beds in people's minds for new

curious about things and noticing such common things as the sunset. We must be alive and aware to all forms of beauty, and I think that we must not be worried if the forms are different. We very seldom question beauty in nature, of any kind, no matter how strange the forms of seashells or crystals or any other natural forms, clouds, colors, colors that just don't go together look pretty good in nature, and still, when it comes to man's work, we become highly critical because it doesn't do what we had in mind. Any new concept usually brings ridicule and derision and fancy cuss words along with it; and I think we could profit by Debussy's remark that any beautiful idea has in it an embryo of something absurd for fools. We are inclined to laugh at anything that is unfamiliar to us. The Japanese say, "When imitation comes, beauty goes." I think we have to learn to distinguish between influence and imitation and inspiration. Almost anything that will inspire us will, naturally, influence us in some way; and it's natural, particularly in our growing pain stages, which I hope we are still in, that we will show this influence. I have heard Mies' fans regret that he ever went beyond the Barcelona Pavilion. We have to see those things differently, and we have to go -along with them, and I think the fact that these artists do change and that

in Architecture

limitations of the theory, not its uselessness. The limitations of the Greek formulas did not stop the Romans from being esthetically great builders. Nor did these formulas, or the limitations of stone, stop Gothic architecture from being a great architectural achievement. As Worringer has so beautifully put it - - "Everything that Greek architecture did was by means of the stone; everything that Gothic architecture did was in spite of the stone".

The idea that form follows function in the strictest sense is just as foolish as trying to find a mathematical formula for beauty. Certainly the re-discovery of functionalism in our time is the first step towards a genuine esthetic effort. If it seems to some of us that functionalism is just the opposite of esthetic beauty, it is because many contemporary architects consider a pleasing visual form of their buildings to be an automatic by-product, a well deserved reward for their honest thinking on a structural, planning, or utilitarian problem.

We are confused between the values we attach to technical and mechanical

ideas. Hearing a new piece of music just a few times, or seeing a new form only a few times is enough for the observer to identify it as part of his own experience. The trick is to get him to listen, or to look, these few times—even to take one good look. If he should really open his eyes, he would find that today's great abstract painting does not differ fundamentally from the great naturalistic painting of the day before yesterday because what makes them both great is simply design. There is truly more similarity between Rembrandt and Picasso than between Rembrandt and any landscape painting which you may find on an advertising calendar, because design is common to the former and lacking from the latter. Design is such a vital force that it cannot be defined. You might say that Design is the relationship of sensuous elements in space or time in such a manner as to be aesthetically satisfying. This sounds good, but what does "aesthetically satisfying" mean? We might substitute the expression "Aesthetic emotion", but would come no closer to grips with meaning.

You will find it rewarding to convince yourself of the reality of space. Per-

they continue to grow is an exciting and stimulating thing which should interest us and which should make us realize that we as individuals need to do that, too, in our own ways and not to just follow a herd. It seems to me that as creative artists we should realize, first of all that the qualities which really count in any work is not the fact that it has a certain kind of structural system or it's made of certain materials; it's the feeling, the real genuine feeling that's in it. The feeling of the artist, the feeling of the times and your feeling in response. That's the common denominator. It's been said that it's a pity that we have to go through so much, build up so much, to tear it down to find the real naked feeling that's within this work. Work has to have genuine impulse and feeling to be worth anything esthetic, and if it has that, if it is honest and sincere, no matter what it looks like, what kind of spacial relationships or colors or textures it has, it will reach us whether it's done by the natives of Samoa or Corbusier or an Eskimo. The composer of music can write the kind of music he feels like when he feels like it, providing he is able to earn his living in someway. A painter has that same opportunity, a sculptor and practically any artist, except an architect. Very few of us have the money to go out and build what we would like to build. Maybe we

achievements, of which we are justly proud, and those values we attach to emotional experience, which we are afraid of. Exposed rivets might be technically good, but I doubt if they are emotionally exciting. Buildings which become a force diagram can not be expected to function in visual terms as successful as they do structurally through the balancing of the physical forces involved. This one-sided approach to esthetic acievement is just as absurd as designing Greek facades for twentieth century banks.

The need of the eye, that is, of the human spirit, is not necessarily congruent with the needs of mechanical efficiency or of physiological comfort.

To solve utilitarian and structural problems it is possible to make progress step by step, adding one result to another. The eye, on the other hand, always seeks for completeness makes it an image. Architecture, stripped to its very bones, in the nakedness of its structure, reveals visual virtues of

haps an excurison into atomic structure may help here. The simplest atom is that of Hydrogen, it consists of a nucleus, and one electron; that is all, Supposing the nucleus, which accounts for the entire weight of the atom, were the size of a pea, the electron would be a balloon thirty feet in diameter. The balloon would cruise around the perimeter of the atom, describing a sphere three hundred miles in radius, or large enough to enclose at the plane of its center all the habitable land of the entire Central States District! Here we have hundreds of thousands of cubic miles filled with nothing but space, except for one balloon and one pea! Of course, hydrogen is a gas; and lighter than air, but the atoms of lead or uranium, which is the heaviest substance, differ only in having a few more moving parts. These heavy atoms contain a mere cupful of peas, and less than one hundred balloons in that immense dome of space.

Consider space in a picture as substance just as important as the objects contained in it. Imagine space as the mould in which the objects were cast, and the next time you view a picture or contemplate a group of buildings, fancy the space flowing around objects and buildings as substantial as the stone, glass, flesh etc.

feel like doing a drive-in the day someone comes in and aks us to do a church. We do not have control over the demand that's going to be placed upon us by the problem that we have to solve, so we have to have a store, sort of a bank account, you might say, of experience and feeling, of emotion that we can draw upon when we need to for certain things; and in that sense, I think the architect has the toughest problem of all, because if his work is going to have genuine feeling, he still is faced with this very real problem of producing it when he has to. We have to believe in our clients, or believe in our problem and we have to have enthusiasm for work. Someone said, "Nothing worthwhile is ever accomplished without enthusiasm." We need to not be afraid to explore and to, most of all, not be afraid of our own feeling

in Architecture

symbolic significance. The honest use of materials and techniques is an expression of honesty and genuiness in human relationships. The flexibility of the planning and the consequent mobility of visual appearance, the free play of light, texture and materials are suggestive of the quality of organic growth. The human scale, the adjustment of space to human range is a symbol of the significance of the individual. We do not see the essential values of our life in our wild race for speed, success, mechanical efficiency, profit; neither do we recognize the role of visual forms as one of the means by which we can reach toward these essential values.

We must dig deep into ourselves and re-value ourselves, our philosophies, and our conceptions as to what is of value. To restore architecture to its place in the art of space, we must reclaim the visual sensibilities we have lost. We must recognize that visual form is an integral factor in architecture which should be respected and studied in its own terms.

The word "tension" may be only a trick term of this disturbed generation, but to me it adds meaning. It was invented to describe whatever relationship existed between two or more masses in a painting. It may be unity or it may be contrast, but to call it tension makes it more real. The General Assembly Building may be said to set up a tension with the Secretariat at the United Nations complex. Tension might be described as what holds the Kansas City War Memorial group together; the two little temples and the smoke stack. Try this device for a while in appraising painting or architecture.

"Movement" expresses the restless or dynamic quality admired today during the decline of static classic feeling. It may consist of a directional arrangement of lines, of planes, or of colors; or a rhythm set up by repeating separated elements in some progressive order or weight. The twentieth century painters and their immediate predecessors developed ingenious mannerisms for producing minor movement throughout their canvases—sometimes called the roll within the canvas. This consists often of twisting flat planes by manipulating the shading or color. You can easily recall many similar devices used to add movement to architecture.

and emotion. Now it seems that any work of art has the quality of surprise. This surprise may be mild, it may be pleasant, it may be shocking and unpleasant, but in various degrees, we have the quality of surprise. Our attention can be caught by some trick or device, but that isn't enough. There has to be this quality of mystery to hold our attention, and this mystery is something that you can't buy down at the dime store. Imagination can't be taught, but it can be developed. So, it seems to me what we need most now is the ability to attack each problem freshly, not to worry about how So-and-So did it; to keep ourselves alive by absorbing things that will help us to grow; to not be afraid of things if they do not seem to be like someone elses; and to not be ashamed of our feeling and emotion.

STAR

CITES A BUILDING NEED

HALF OF U. S. STRUCTURES ARE SUBSTANDARD, SPEAKER SAYS.

Addressing Producers' Council, Elliott C. Spratt Describes Challenge to Construction Industry.

Fully half of all buildings in use today either should be razed or substantially modernized, Elliott C. Spratt, St. Joseph, Mo., told members of the Kansas City chapter of the Producers' council this afternoon at the

The Producers' council is a na-Hotel President. tional organization of building products manufacturers.

Spratt, national president of the council and grandson of James Cowgill, former Kansas City mayor, added that the urgent need for replacing or modernizing the millions of aging or obsolete buildings presents both a "major challenge and a golden opportunity" to the nation's building industry.

Short of Standard. "Countless outdated hotels, public school buildings, office structures, stores, warehouses, apartment buildings and private homes remain in use today."

Spratt said. "They fall far short of modern standards of safety. health, comfort, convenience and

economy.

"Yet, just because they happen to be with us, they continue

in use."

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

NOVEMBER 14, 1952

The public must be made dissatisfied with these obsolete and unprofitable structures, Spratt

declared, continuing: "The typical businessman doesn't wear his necktie until it falls apart, and doesn't use a pair of shoes until his toes stick out in the cold. But in far too many cases, he does continue to use his factory and warehouse, until they threaten to collapse." many fine

homes and many other splendid modern buildings. But all of you, including those in whom civic pride burns most fervently, will have to admit that you also have many, many buildings which have completely outlived their usefulness.

The Same Elsewhere.

And that's the same story the nation over, Spratt said.

What appeals do we use with the public?" the speaker asked. "We appeal primarily both to their pride and to their desire for economy and increased productivity. We appeal to their very basic desires for better health, increased comfort and greater convenience.

"Now, modern buildings offer all those advantages, plus a sound economic value in terms of lower maintenance and operation costs."

CLIPPINGS

BUSY ON NEW DESIGNS

BUILDING PACE REFLECTED OVER NATION, ARCHITECT SAYS.

Speaking to Group Here, National President Notes That Schools Head List of Construction Projects.

NOVEMBER 6, 1952

In general, architects over the nation are busy, reflecting an all-time peak of activity in some sections, Glenn Stanton of Port. land, Ore. president of the Architects, said here today.

Heading the list of projects now under design and scheduled to boost construction by next spring are school structures.
Schools, Stanton noted, are the most frequently mentioned developments in current, major building activity, a survey of American architects shows.

On National Tour.

Stanton this afternoon ad. dressed members of the Kansas City chapter of the A. I. A. at the Hotel Phillips. His visit here is one of many being made by the Oregonian in a tour of the nation to see and hear what the A. I. A. membership is doing. However, Stanton added, his survey of architects uncovered a mood of uncertainty among those in the field. Government building industry controls, imposed under national emergency powers, may not have retarded building, he said, but the fear they might is proving an un-

The election results may prove his fear to be groundless, the sistor said, but he added that ost architects had not exy the presidential vote went.

Some Not Sharing.

Many smaller architectural offices have not shared in the current defense building boom, and building industry controls have hurt projects in commercial, recreational and similar fields, Stanton stated.

South and on the West coast appears to be the busiest, he said, and the slowest in New England

and in the north central states. Stanton said his group now is vitally interested in a public relations program, and at a recent A. I. A. convention, allotted a budget of \$35,000 a year, over a 3-year period, to hire professional counsel to promote better contacts between architects and the public.

We can let the public know what we are doing, but we must also prove it to them," Stanton

The Oregon architect recently returned to this country from the Pan American Architectural congress held at Mexico City. Representatives North and South American nations were there. of thirteen

One highlight of the proceedings was an inspection of the new Mexico City university buildings have extremely contemporary signs, Stanton said.



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

HOWARD EICHENBAUM DISCETOR GULF STATES DISTRICT

November 12, 1952

Mr. Frank Grimaldi 402 Congress Building Kansas City 2, Missouri

Dear Frank:

Just a note to let you know how much I appreciate receiving your editorial efforts, "Skylines". I congratulate you as I think this is one of the best Chapter publications being distributed throughout The Institute. I look forward to receiving it each month.

I enjoyed very much being with all of you during the very limited time I had during your Regional Conference. It was a splendid meeting, and I congratulate the Kansas City Chapter and the Central States Region on the excellent program and wonderful attendance. Please express my best wishes to all of my friends in Kansas City.

Sincerely yours,

Howard Eichenbaum, Director Gulf States Region, A. I. A.

HE/r

WHY

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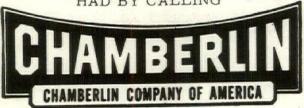
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Grievance Committee: Dwight M. Brown Samuel W. Bihr, Jr. Albert B. Fuller, Chairman, Tel: HA. 1292 Practice of Architecture

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Carl J. Jourdon Medal Awards: Homer F. Neville, Chairman, Tel: HA. 6804 Ernest O. Brostrom A. S. Keene

Hubert Swanson

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Martin Moffitt

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Edward M. Fuller, Chairman, Tel: NO. 3479 City and Regional Plan:

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