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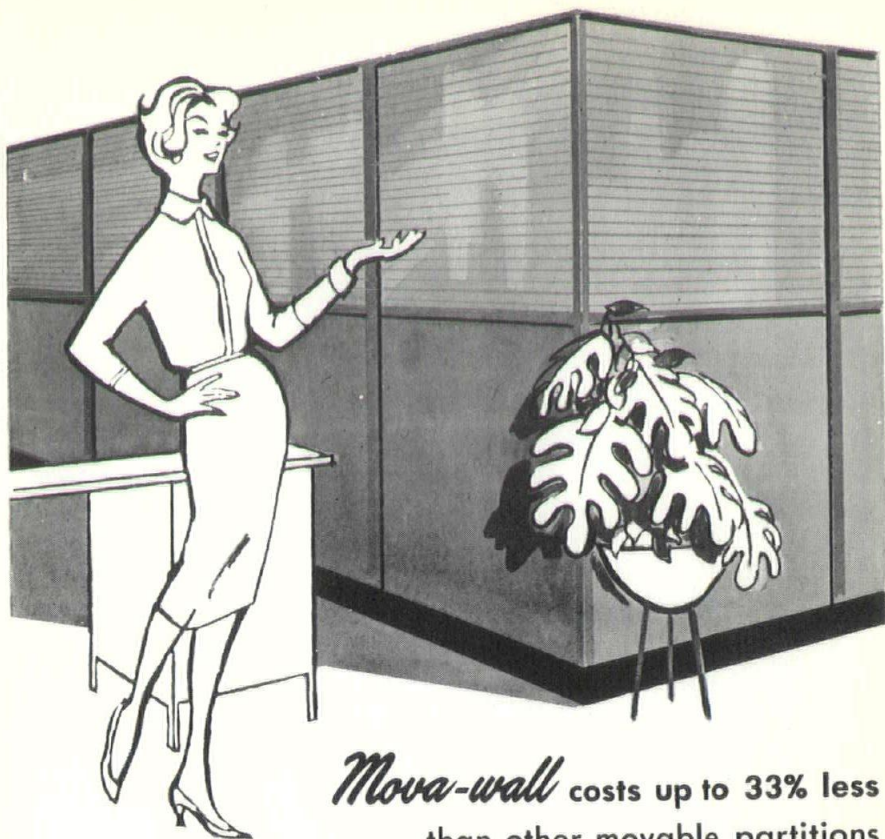
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THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE DESIGN PROFESSION



ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE
1959 MEDAL AWARDS
BANQUET OF THE KANSAS
CITY CHAPTER, ON APRIL 21
AT THE UNIVERSITY CLUB.

by **JAMES H. HUNTER, FAIA, Boulder, Colorado**

EDITOR'S NOTE

Because of the subject and content of Mr. Hunter's address, we are printing the entire talk in this issue of Skylines. Readers who were fortunate enough to hear Mr. Hunter at the Awards banquet will, we believe, welcome an opportunity to review his remarks at leisure. Those who were unable to attend the banquet would find much of interest here—and no little architectural food for thought.

When Frank Slezak first asked me to speak to you tonight and that was some six weeks ago, I was flattered. When I learned of the importance of the occasion, I was still more flattered. When he described the philosophical nature of the subject matter I was to cover, I was in ecstasy. For five weeks, I have basked in your appraisal of my after dinner speaking abilities.

Last week, Mrs. Bates, my secretary who is self-appointed chairman of the "Nag the Boss" Committee, bluntly informed me that I must either get something on the squawk box, so she could type it up, or plan to speak extemporaneously. I spent last week in a "tizzy"—squawking and thinking.

I don't know when or where you are able to find time for philosophy and meditation in this deadly and stultifying, heel and toe schedule of committee meetings, appointments, board meetings, conferences, round tables and all the other manifestations of our effort to "group think", but I find great difficulty.

I have been forced, and I am sure you have been too, to make the time and discover the place. Neither has been adequate nor appropriate but their value becomes increasingly important by virtue of their singularity.

I am a "card carrying" member of the cult of wanting to be "alone with one's thoughts".

Well, I have been shaving with an idea, now, for about five years. I didn't think of it. Frank Lloyd Wright did. He expressed it quite extemporaneously at the Princeton Symposium on "Man's Environment", in 1953.

Mr. Wright made the remark and accredited it to a French colleague whom he said he knew so well that he had forgotten his name. I am suspicious that this was simply a rhetorical device on the part of Wright to launch the idea himself.

I am, also, suspicious that Louis Sullivan had something to do with it.

He said in essence this, "Our society has produced the only civilization the world has ever seen which sprang from barbarism and progressed to decadence without ever having contributed a culture in its wake."

Those words "civilization" and "culture" as linguistic handles to ideas are a little confusing. They have been used as synonyms for so long that they can stand a little "meditation", because Mr. Webster's big, fat dictionary is of no real help here, if you accept Mr. Wright's particular use of the words, "civilization" and "culture",

as I accept them. And I do simply because Louie Sullivan used them in the same sense.

Then "civilization" means the leverage, the advantage that man, the animal, has attained over nature and natural phenomena.

And "culture" means the amenity of a civilization—essence—that quality which makes it all meaningful and worthwhile.

If you can accept these definitions as valid, then Wright's statement becomes quite an indictment of what we have produced here since the days of the first colonization on these barbaric shores.

In this context, perhaps, we have produced a tremendous civilization with little or no culture. If we, then, have done this, it must be quite possible for another, a different society to have done it conversely.

If we have produced a strong civilization and a weak culture, then some other society, somewhere in history may have developed a weak civilization accompanied by a strong culture.

I submit China as a case in point.

The Old China (not the Red affectation)—invented gunpowder, bird nest soup and a language impossible to adapt to the typewriter and, perhaps, some other things, but certainly she did not develop the mass-produced automobile, the atom bomb, or the inter-continental ballistic missile.

Somehow, the importance of the simple things that the Chinese did develop and their appreciation of them as evidenced by the literature they have written about them—bespeaks strong culture, a full, complete and indigenous culture and we look on it with jealous admiration.

Perhaps, you are not convinced that as a society we have produced a strong civilization but a weak culture. Perhaps you need a clincher?

All right!

Look at your television set.

Look at the back of it.

Witness the complicated mechanism, the involved technical devices which are the hallmark of our civilization. The greatest technical advance that any society has ever made.

Now look at the front of it.

This was the side it was intended to be viewed from. Enjoy the "Bang, Bang, Robin Hood Legend" adnauseam. Listen and be wooed by the singing huckster. Experience the soul stirring drama of the "Soap Opera".

Rejoice in our culture.

But this, you say, is evidence only of the "performing arts" as opposed to our technical abilities.

You want evidence of our "environmental arts"?

All right!

Approach one of our cities and pass through the surrounding turbulent sea of ugliness. Become engulfed in the towering billboards, the animated signs, these evidences of our willful and unrestrained hucksterism which blot out the natural beauty of the landscape; be shocked by the blinking, blinding neon signs; be appalled by the flimsy shacks with the whimsical phony fronts designed to sell hot dogs, pizza pies and hoola hoops. Be disgusted by the disorderly array of industrial buildings, the junk yards, the "tortilla flats", the shanty towns of our civilization.

I called it a sea—actually it's a quagmire because we are bogged down in it.

At best, these approaches are a sordid, makeshift and depraved Disneyland. At worst, they are worn out, dilapidated and an unspeakable slum.

Look well also into the "asphalt jungle" which is the core of our cities and be shocked by the shouting "neon barker" of commercialism; the competitive signs, the arrogant and willful disregard for order, the awful pretending sham of our urbanism.

"We have urbanized until it is a disease. The city is a vampire living on the fresh blood of others, sterilizing humanity . . . the push-button civilization over which we are gloating has suddenly become a terror", if you like Wright's description of it.

I am generalizing now—there are some exceptions and Kansas City is notably one of them. I mean this as more than an amenity.

Fortune Magazine's study of cities culminating in their effort to evaluate their effectiveness listed Kansas City very high, well near the top of the eight best in the United States for its use of planning, and the effectiveness of its planning on its growth pattern.

This Chapter can well be proud of the excellent work

it accomplished in that little booklet, "K.C.—80", which has well nigh become a model in city planning circles for the effectiveness of its impact.

Not only was Kansas City rated very high in these areas but, also, for its recreational facilities and park system, and the quality of these two factors really accounts in great measure for the fact that Kansas City has, also, a very high rating in traffic law enforcement and in its traffic accident death rate control.

The fact that Kansas City is doing a good and effective job in these four areas then reflects a fifth quality—that of its "good housekeeping." Proof, at least to me, that, as a city, you are proud of your planning and proud of your parks and recreational facilities, and, consequently, you take good care of them.

There are a few more attractive cities that show some glimmerings of order, planning amenities, and the beginnings of city planning.

I may be generalizing when I condemn this sea of turbulent ugliness. But, I am not exaggerating. At least the millions of people who flee our cities each year don't think so. They are rushing out and away from this monster to escape. But, in so doing, they unthinkingly transform our lovely American countryside into an unplanned, jerry-built, helter-skelter mess we call the "suburb" and as the sea of ugliness spreads, the awfulness has only been transplanted.

It threatens to drown us.

It is our environment.

Do you want it decimal pointed?

You would like to have it chapter and verse?

All right! Look at the component parts of this mess—the buildings that we do and their complete disregard for each other. The long line of efforts toeing the property line and clamoring for attention. The new and fresh efforts to create a "brave, new world" under the aegis of a stark and sterile "functionalism."

Cold, with complete lack of adornment, with complete disregard for the human being and human aspirations, competitive examples of "Poster Art", each asserting some shallow technical or structural conviction.

Look at the Bahaus influence of "internationalism" as it has affected our efforts and then chortle up your sleeve, because the very prophets of the "Bahaus" and

the whole cult of "technology", in our architecture, would now abandon it.

Look at Le Corbusier's Ronchamp Chapel. Look at Mies' Seagram Building. Look at Gropius' efforts in New England. The very people who promoted this architecture of technology with its disregard for the human beings have abandoned their child and have suddenly recognized human values. They have become, almost, "romanticists"—at leasts they, our heroes, have become "humanists." This, in my view, is good, a little late but very good.

But let us assume the best—that we are "humanists", that we really want to design for human beings, that we really want to create an environment that has aesthetic value, that is meaningful to society, that expresses our aspirations, our hopes and spiritual values. Do you feel as thwarted as I, do you despair in the climate which confronts our efforts, do you long for a private client with taste, a corporate client who will let you "try", a school board that wants something other than an \$8.00 per square foot school?

How can we excuse this failure on the part of our society to want a culture?

Can we say that it is because we are a young society?

An adolescent society and typically we spend so much time admiring the great bulging muscles of our technology that have had no time to develop the charm, the graciousness, the poise of a culture.

Is it really because we are a young society? Hence, immature and, hence, excusable?

Fiddlesticks!

I don't think that this is a very valid excuse. When we inaugurated our first president and this became officially a nation in 1789, it was exactly 170 years ago. 170 years of a society operating under a single political philosophy and under one continuing government. No other society in the world today has had the same philosophy or the same form of continuing government for that long a period of time.

Further, we have had no foreign wars on our soil and our one and only revolutionary upheaval was nearly a hundred years ago. Our last economic breakdown nearly 30 years ago.

Is this a very valid excuse—our youth?

Are we a juvenile delinquent as a society or are we an

immature and insensitive adult as a society?

Perhaps, we should face facts.

Perhaps, we should face facts, because—and it was Winston Churchill of all people who said it—"We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."

And I would do Mr. Churchill one better and say, "We shape our environment and afterwards our environment shapes us."

In my view, we are caught between the horns of a dilemma.

On the one hand, we have the apathy of society itself, the ignoring, the disinterest, the turning away from anything that bespeaks of beauty or of culture. On the other hand, we have the design professions, the very artists who should be creating this cultural environment, ignoring each other, unable to communicate to one another let alone be able to communicate to the society to which we are responsible.

Let me wrestle the two horns of this dilemma one at a time.

(A) The Apathy of Our Society: The lack of concern of our society for its environment.

What are the factors involved here?

First of all, I see the "cult of the common man." The common man seems to be our ideal, as a society; and the uncommon man is extremely unpopular. As H. I. Phillips said, "He is now unconstitutional."

What are the reasons for this "common man" concept—what causes it?

Are we educated to it? Indoctrinated into it?

Are we assuming a "faddish" attitude? A pose?

Are we aborting Tom Jefferson's "Democracy" into the "Mobocracy"?

The objectives of our educational system are bent, apparently, to that of adjusting the child to this "common man" society the making of him "a common man", and the disciplined "seeking of truth" seems to be almost divorced from our teaching methods.

Culture becomes an academic subject to be pursued in terms of other societies but not of our own.

Mr. Wright put it: "Education—not being on speaking terms with culture at the present time."

With such educational objectives, could ours or any society possibly produce an Aristotle, a Copernicus, a Shakespeare much less a Phidias, a da Vinci, or a Christopher Wren?

Somehow, it would seem, that the "uncommon man" should again be allowed a place in the sun and permitted to break through this film of mediocrity which appears to me to be the avowed objective of our society. He must become popular again—even if we have to "build him up" like a Hollywood movie star.

But, better still, it would appear, that this "uncommon man", this "egghead", should somehow be entitled to some measure of respect from society.

Whitney Griswold, the President of Yale, at a Baccalaureate Service vented his spleen thus: "Could Hamlet have been written by a committee, or the Mona Lisa painted by a club? Could the New Testament have been composed as a conference report? Creative ideas do not spring from groups. They spring from individuals. The divine spark leaps from the finger of God to the finger of Adam . . .

"What shall we say about the endless, sterile, stultifying conferences held in substitution, or in the desperate hope of substitution, for individual inventiveness; the public-opinion polls whose vogue threatens even our moral and aesthetic values with the pernicious doctrine that the customer is always right; the unctuous public-relations counsels that rob us of both our courage and our convictions? This continuous, daily deferral of opinion and judgment to someone else becomes a habit . . . It conjures a nightmare picture of a whole nation of yes men, of hitchhikers, eaves-droppers, and Peeping Toms, tiptoeing backward off-stage with their fingers to their lips—this, the nation whose prophets once cried "Trust Thyself! . . ."

Secondly, I am disturbed by the quality of leadership of the people we elect to public office.

I have always been struck by the fact that the truly fine person, the successful merchant or lawyer or doctor once elected, for example, to a school board suddenly puts on a cloak of omniscience and becomes the defender of the "common man" and the "tax dollar."

He is now expert in all areas.

He, as though the democratic process of his election had granted him new talents, is more concerned with getting a school building that costs \$8.00 per square foot than

he is with the educational environment of the next generation.

He is willing, even eager, to supplant the judgments and skills of the architect, by literally dictating the building in his own image and making of this architect, this artist, (this man who should produce the cultural environment we need) a mere errand boy, who technically executes the mediocrity demanded by our school board member in his new and assumed role. The school must not only be cheap, it must look cheap. It must not only be mediocre, it must look mediocre.

Thirdly, I am struck by the lack of private leadership in stirring up enthusiasms, convictions, and righteous indications amongst these "common men" to do anything about their environment.

Such simple things such as curbing up the degradation of our highways with signs, billboards, and neon gimmicks.

Such simple things as insisting that public utility lines be buried and put out of sight in our cities.

Such simple things as insisting that our public buildings be designed by the best architects and be adorned by the best artists this society can produce so that our environment can be an investment in the culture of the next generation.

Such simple things as insisting on spaces and bits of greenery and even a tree in the midst of our asphalt.

Such simple things as protecting the common heritage of our countryside from the exploitation of the speculative builder.

They are all such simple things but the "common man" just doesn't seem to give a "damn."

Let me explore for a moment the other horn of this dilemma.

(B) The Inability of Our Artist to Communicate:

What are the factors here?

First, I am appalled by the number of architects who shun the word "artist" and prefer not to be considered an artist. Why try to be everything but an artist. I am appalled by their attitude toward society and their fellows in the design professions.

Let's face it. We have always been as architects, the "impresarios of the arts", "the master builders." We are the ones who should coordinate, meld, bring together,

and direct the creation of this physical environment which is essential to our culture.

Our collaborators, the engineers, are providing us with tremendous technical advances in terms of pre-stressed concrete, in terms of thin shell structures, in terms of new and exciting structural shapes and forms based on sound engineering and realistic economic factors but, somehow, it is the architects who fumble them.

Oh, we are willing and eager to use these new forms—we become enamored of, say, the “hyperbolic paraboloid”, but we use it willfully and without understanding. We relate it to the site like a “flying saucer” and so denuded of any scale elements or human interest that it becomes a curiosity, a “two-headed calf!” As bad, really, as the “Brown Derby” Restaurant with its “brown derby” form.

True, our “aesthetic” should stem, in part, from structure and from technology in this era of the machine and this type of society.

The structural engineer must play a very important role but it is our job to “humanize” and adorn that hyperbolic paraboloid, that geodesic dome, that thin shell vault, and bring it into scale and make it a meaningful, sincere, and real shelter form appropriate to and admired by this society—and we fail to do it. We have lost this skill and we have no one to blame. The structural engineer has not failed us, he has done a superb job.

Nor have the electrical and mechanical engineers failed us. They have given us every technical advance of this civilization and it is we who are too stupid to use their contributions intelligently.

We either create a glass cage and ask our colleagues to solve the climate problem within this impossible structure or we create a cave above ground and offer an equally difficult problem for him at the other extreme.

We simply have not learned how to work with him and to use the joint effort toward a humanized architecture.

Secondly, what of the “hand maidens” of architecture—what of the sculptor.

It has been so long since he has been asked to adorn a building that he is now content in his ivory towers with his sculptural whirligigs which he calls “mobiles” made of bent wire and the welding torch out of the gimmicks and gadgets of our civilization, and he speaks a kind of “mumbo jumbo” to his fellow sculptor.

He cannot communicate with society; he cannot adorn a building; he knows nothing of the problem of humanizing this environment in a way communicable to society itself.

He should be working with the architect creating surface and texture and pattern and meaningful adornment. He should be excited and challenged by our new materials and our new technology.

Thirdly, the painter. He too has been up in his ivory tower working at his easel since he was last called on to adorn a wall.

He has been hybridizing his easel art in the vain hope that somehow he will produce a "sport." Hopeful that some museum, somewhere, will buy it and make it "precious, precious" to the generations of the future. What he does means little or nothing to this society.

We architects shun him because we are fearful that if we turn him loose on a wall he will simply do an enlarged easel painting, we fear that, certainly he cannot do a mural. We are afraid he will do a gimmick to be attached to the wall, not be "of" the wall.

All of us, it seems to me, in the "design professions" have been so busily intent by ourselves and on pleasing ourselves in creating our bit of the total art which is our culture that it is either "precious, precious" or "sterile, cold, and inhuman."

We have become divorced from society to the point where society takes its aesthetic satisfaction from transient, temporal, and moving things rather than from environment itself. Its motor cars, the pageantry of its spectator sports, and its commune with nature in participant sports.

Society and the artist have become worlds apart and, it would appear to me, that it will take real leadership to bring this society in focus with itself so as to again create a culture.

If you willy-nilly look back on all of the societies the world has ever produced and say to yourself, "What did they do to develop a culture and how did they go about it?" you will undoubtedly be impressed at once, as I was, with Florence, the City of the Trade Guild, the Merchant Prince, and the Artist, under the dictatorship of the Medici.

For its time and place in history, its civilization is comparable to ours, it seems to me. The standard of living of the Florentine was the highest of the entire world. Its government was relatively stable for almost as long a period as ours and, while it was dictatorship, you can

be sure that "Lorenzo the Magnificent" made no move without consulting the "Wool Merchants Guild."

They produced a tremendous national product and they spent its surplus on their environment in adorning their community and in developing their culture, the like of which the world has never seen an equal.

No other society, to my knowledge, in the history of the world has spent the surplus of its economy more lavishly than did Florence. Florence spent it on Art.

Except for us, of course. We have done it.

We have done it under the name of Science.

And for the atom.

We have spent the cream of our economy lavishly—as lavishly as did Florence.

Of course, the atom hasn't really raised the standard of our civilization in proportion to the billions of tax dollars which have been poured into it. Perhaps, it will, but so far we have seen little evidence of it. Certainly it has contributed nothing to our culture.

It is not within the perview of this paper to discuss our defense needs and our military problems. I simply point out that we are capable of "paying the price" if we want to do something bad enough. Actually a fraction of the "Atom Budget" would do the job.

The machinery and some limited funds have already been made available for "Urban Renewal." But there is a marked disinterest.

But, you say, it is unfair to compare us with Florence. The world of the Florentine was a different world from the one we confront.

Show us some modern nation that can do this thing?

Name one of our sister nations in today's world?

A year ago I was privileged to spend a month with nine other architects and city planners as guests of the West German Government. Our mission, at their request, was to review their post-war construction and to consult with their architects and planners for purposes of mutual assistance and advice.

We were privileged to see what West Germany is doing and from the most advantageous point of view—"back stage." We saw most of her bombed out cities. We asked questions. We investigated. We got their point of view. We learned about their problems.

I was completely astonished.

It was I who learned, not I who gave advice.

The great cities of Hamburg, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Munich, Berlin, and a dozen more have been rebuilt.

All have been rebuilt without any utility lines above ground—they are all buried.

All have been rebuilt without the clutter of neon, signs, and the sea of turbulent ugliness surrounding them—this is "verboten."

All have been rebuilt with order and social consciousness and with a regard for beauty and aesthetic value—there is no willful disorder.

All have been rebuilt with the densely populated slums of the past now opened up into plazas with greenery and trees and pedestrian ways—places for people.

All have been rebuilt with their "suburbs" designed for the future, orderly, and related to the social pattern instead of in terms of block after block "of two-bedroom houses" (no down payment for G. I.'s).

Their housing developments deserve discussion. Residential building types are scrambled. That is, in the same areas are to be found "single family two-bedroom houses", "single family one-bedroom walk up apartments", "single family efficiency apartments" disposed with elevators and ramps and with service offices and shops on the first floor. Imaginative playgrounds and organized recreational areas, provide space and vista. Grass and trees and gardens calm it and give it repose. Traffic is peripheral—not through it.

What does this mean socially?

The cycle of human life has been considered. The young married couples occupy the walk-up efficiency apartments, families with babies the one-bedroom apartments; families with children occupy the single family two-bedroom houses; elderly couples whose children are grown occupy the multi-storied, elevator and ramped apartments, and society is snug and at peace.

Society is better for a thousand reasons.

The parents and in-laws of this young married couple only a stone's throw away and they can visit.

The children's playground is at the base of and near elderly couple's living units. Gramps and Grandma can baby sit.

The number of elderly people, whom I saw at or near children's playground, wiping noses, changing diapers, refereeing petty quarrels, and teaching the amenities of life was astounding—oldsters and youngsters were happy.

Those who are learning how to walk and those who are forgetting how to walk have a great deal in common—I discover.

Is it not better to put them together than to do what we try to do and segregate our old people into the discard piles of nursing homes, and into isolated "Senior Citizens" developments and out of our hair, where they have nothing to do but "live in the past" and boast to each other of their offspring's accomplishments.

I believe I saw in Germany real social order, real planning, a real intelligent and humanized environment—gracious and good.

There are no signs or neon on the public highways, and the new public highways had, as a part of their construction contracts, and landscaping of the highway shoulders themselves. Imagine a new highway with ten miles of trees planted on each side of it. Not "fingerlings" but trees with trunks the size of my wrist which in a very few short years will become a tree lined avenue ten miles out from the busy city.

Two per cent of every building budget in Germany must be used for "art." This is simply the law. The result is bits of sculpture, mosaics, murals, amenities of every sort created by artists—sprinkled amongst, through, and on these buildings.

The children's playgrounds are a delight. Imaginative and spritely, as compared to our playgrounds with their "super-sturdy", mechanical, unimaginative heavy pipe, swings, and heavy pipe jungle gyms—all cold and prison like. Actually, and it's a sad commentary—a great deal of our playground equipment is manufactured by the same companies who make prison equipment.

I saw the kind of environment we could have—actually constructed and being constructed.

The tremendous problems that Germany has had with her reconstruction, her social adjustment because of the "refugee", and with her economy are being solved and she is doing a marvelous job.

While I was there, President Heuss made a major radio address to the people. It was an appeal in defense of the "two per cent budget for art" and he pointed out the

need for these cultural factors in the society they hoped to build from the ashes—I covet such an appeal from our President.

In one month, I attended six operas. May I confess that this is almost as many operas as I had attended, in my entire life, up to that time. Each opera company was subsidized with tax money. Each opera company played a forty week season. Each opera company had its own conductor who was a fine musician and honored by his community. Each opera company had a symphony orchestra and each had its own opera house.

But Germany has no military, no defense problem, you say. Perhaps her defense budget is not as great as ours—but consider also her “refugee budget”, and a few others in her reconstruction program which we do not have. Enemy bombing is a rather costly way to “Urban Renewal.”

Can it be done in this modern world? Of course, it can be done.

If we have the leadership to do it.

And if we cared.

Is there any way out of our dilemma? Any way that we can bring into focus for our society the realization of what we can do to better our physical environment?

I envision this to be not only a problem for the elected leadership of our communities—but for us the artists whose responsibility it is to create the cultural environment of a society.

Have not the artists, all through history, had to fight for, and lead their societies toward creating such a cultural environment?

Read Leonardo's notebooks. While many of his letters had to do with his war machines, many had to do with his artistic projects, too. And with these letters remaining to us—how many more did he write—and how many times did he speak out, defend these projects, and lead the people of Florence toward the environment he and his fellow artists were creating?

I envision a joining of hands of all the Design Professions for this leadership—the Planners, the Architects, Engineers, and Artists.

A great and united front providing the leadership toward the “Cultural Environment” our society must have to justify its “civilization.”

I envision a kind of federation of all of our professional organizations for purposes of creating such leadership.

In this way could be provided the "cross fertilization" we, all of us, need within our own ranks and the opportunity to present to the public the impressive "united front"—long the tool of labor.

I envision us jointly, "The Design Professions", conducting a great educational campaign via the press, the radio, and television to awake society to the need and to show how and what can be done with our environment.

Think of the impact of a T.V. show as good as "Omnibus" with an Alastair Cooke as the champion of such a cause.

Would we each lose his identity by such a Federation of Professional Organizations—by no means. The Planner, the Engineer, the Artist, the Architect—each is a specialist in this total problem of environment—we are not competitors, we are collaborators. We are the "planning professions" and our total job is bigger than any one of us.

Is this a new idea—the City of Athens had such an organization. The sculptors, the painters, the guilders, the architects, the mathematicians, all belonged.

Mr. Socrates was an honorary member. ●

JUST A REMINDER...

1959 A. I. A. CONVENTION

JUNE 22-26

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

HOTEL ROOSEVELT, CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS

A.I.A. CHAPTER WILL HOLD AWARDS MEET

Special Dinner Session Has Been Scheduled Here Tuesday Night.

TALK BY COLORADO MAN

James M. Hunter of Boulder to Present Address on Design Leadership.

Honor awards for excellence of structural design, detail work and craftsmanship will be presented by the Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Architects at a 6:30 o'clock dinner meeting Tuesday night at the University club.

James M. Hunter, prominent architect of Boulder, Colo., a fellow of the A. I. A.,



James F. Hunter.

will be the principal speaker. About 100 chapter members and their guests are expected to attend.

Hunter's talk will be on "The Need for Leadership in the Design Profession."

Don Hollis, chairman of the chapter's honor awards committee, said Hunter is widely recognized for his professional accomplishments as well as for his work in advancing standards of professional education for architects in America.

The chapter's honor awards program is an effort to recognize outstanding examples of building design, with both architects and owners given medal awards for those projects judged best.

Special awards also are given owners and architects for details of buildings. The third type of award is for outstanding craftsmanship displayed among the building trades.

Hollis said architectural department faculty members and senior class members of student A. I. A. chapters from the University of Kansas and Kansas State university are among the invited guests.



HARSH WORDS FOR AMERICAN CITIES—James H. Hunter (right), a Boulder, Colo., architect, last night described American cities as quagmires of ugliness. He was the principal speaker at a meeting of the Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Here he talks to Angus McCallum, president of the chapter. Hunter had kinder words for Kansas City. It has one of the prettiest metropolitan areas in the country, he said.

CITY NEAR TOP FOR ITS BEAUTY

A Boulder, Colo., Man Tells Architects U. S. Towns Are Ugly.

DECRIES PHONY FRONTS

Kansas City One of Few Exceptions, James Hunter Asserts.

By Fred Fitzsimmons.

Members and guests of the Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Architects, meeting last night at the University club in design achievement in this area, heard a Colorado architect decry the ugliness which today permeates and surrounds most American cities.

James H. Hunter, in criticizing American art and culture, singled out Kansas City as one of the better metropolitan areas from a standpoint of aesthetics.

Eighteen Entries.

Four medal awards, one special award and two craftsmanship awards were made at the honor awards dinner meeting. Hunter, Eugene Mackey of St. Louis and Glenn Benedict of Wichita had judged 18 entries for medal or special recognition in a session here about two weeks ago.

Judging of the craftsmanship competition, in which there were eight entries, was handled by a committee headed by Edward W. Tanner, Kansas City architect, and including W. W. Bennett, president of the Builders association, and Edwin A. Elliott, president of the Kansas City chapter of the Associated General Contractors.

The four medal awards:

• The Hallmark Cards building at Lawrence, Kas. finished and occupied in May, 1958. Designed by Kivett & Myers & McCallum.

• The Meadowbrook Junior high school, 8500 Mission road, Johnson County, occupied last year. Designed by Donald B. Hollis, architect, and J. David Miller, associate.

• Parks, Davis & Co.'s branch office, 6633 Troost avenue, completed last July. Designed by Kivett & Myers & McCallum.

• The Holy Cross Lutheran church, 2000 Highland road, Kansas City, Mo. Designed by Monro & Lefebvre.

Award for Birdhouse.

The special award was for the birdhouse at the Swope park zoo. It was designed by Elpidio Rocha, architect for the city park department.

The craftsmanship awards:

• A stone wall at the Hallmark Card plant at Lawrence, designed by Edgar Savas of the Constant Construction company.

• Steamfitting at the Meadowbrook Junior high school, executed by E. K. Waller, steamfitter foreman and employee of Edward W. Lochman, plumbing and heating contractor.

Clients honored at the awards meeting, with citations given:

Lynn Bauer, director of buildings for Hallmark Cards; Dr. Howard D. deBachan, superintendent of schools for the Shawnee-Mission district; A. L. Peters, branch manager for Parks, Davis & Co.; the Rev. E. C. Partridge, pastor of the Holy Cross Lutheran church; and George Puhler Green and Jerome Cohen, members of the park department of Kansas City.

Angus McCallum, president of the Kansas City A. I. A. chapter, presented the awards. Donald Hollis presided as chairman of the honor awards committee. About 100 persons attended the meeting.

Abhors Average City.

Hunter, a widely acclaimed Boulder architect and a fellow of the A. I. A., had harsh words for the average American city.

"Approach one of our cities," he said, "and pass through the surrounding turbulent sea of ugliness. Become engulfed in the towering billboards, the animated signs, these evidences of our willful and unrestrained hucksterism which blot out the natural beauty of the landscape."

"Be shocked by the blinking, blinding neon signs. Be appalled by the flimsy shacks with the whimsical phony fronts designed to sell hot dogs, pizza pies and hoodlums. Be disgusted by the disorderly array of industrial buildings, the junk yards, the Tortilla Flats," the shanty towns of our civilization."

"I call it a sea; actually, it is a quagmire, because we are bogged down in it."

A Depraved Disneyland.

"At best, these approaches are a sordid, makeshift and depraved Disneyland. At worst, they are worn out, dilapidated, and an unspeakable slum."

Hunter admitted he was generalizing, that there are exceptions—and that Kansas City is an exception.

"I mean this more than an amenity," he said. "Fortune magazine's study of cities, culminating in their effort to evaluate their effectiveness, listed Kansas City very high, well near the top of the eight best in the United States for its use of planning and the effectiveness of its planning on its smooth pattern."

"Kansas City rated very high, also, for its recreational facilities and park system. The quality of these two factors really accounts in great measure for the fact Kansas City has, also, a very high rating in traffic law enforcement and in its traffic accident death rate control."

The initiative for improvements should come not only from the political leaders of the community, but from artists and architects, whose responsibility it is to create the cultural environment of a city, Hunter said.

"I envisage a joining of hands of all the design professions for this leadership—the planners, the architects, the engineers, the artists," he said.

Need United Front.

"A great and united front providing the leadership toward the cultural environment is what our society must have to justify its civilization."

"I see a kind of federation of all of our professional organizations for purposes of creating such leadership."

The annual Medal Awards activity of the Kansas City Chapter has long proved to be one of the Chapter's most productive continuing public relations programs. On these two pages are reproduced some of the newspaper coverage of the banquet, Mr. Hunter's talk and the Medal Award winners which appeared in the KANSAS CITY STAR. Coverage by other media is also good, but our special thanks go to Fred Fitzsimmons, the STAR'S Real Estate Editor, for an outstanding job on the 1959 Medal Awards.

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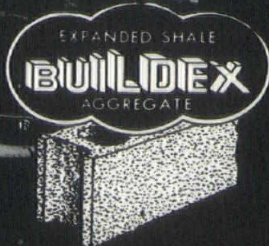
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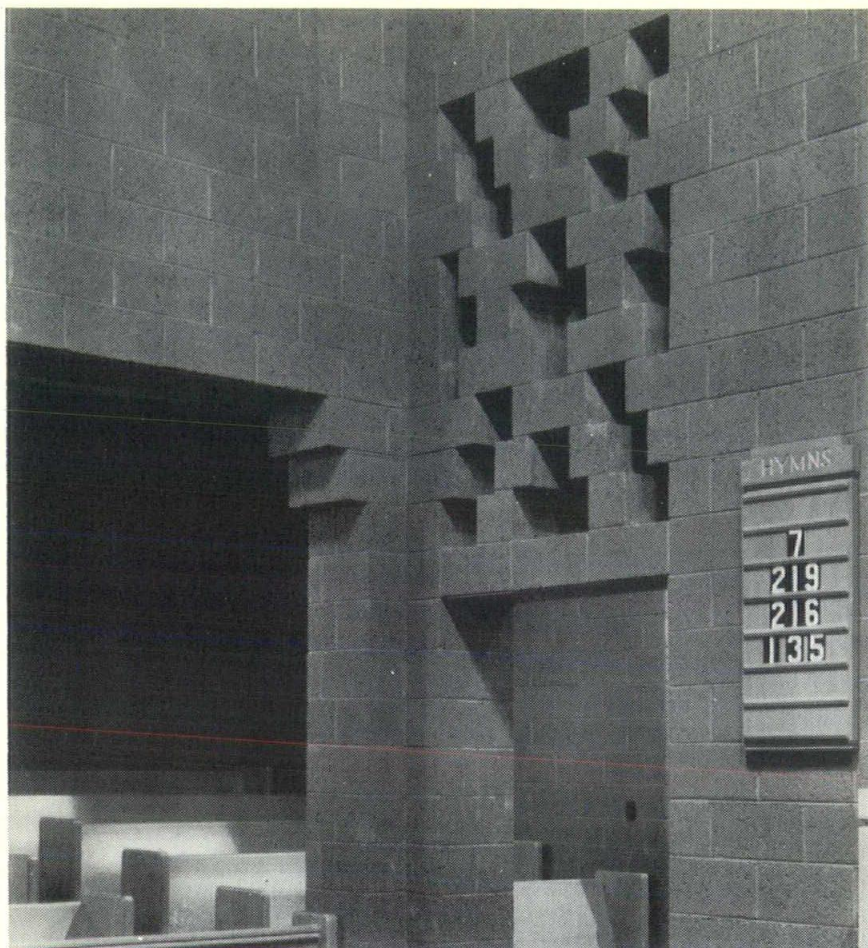
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