

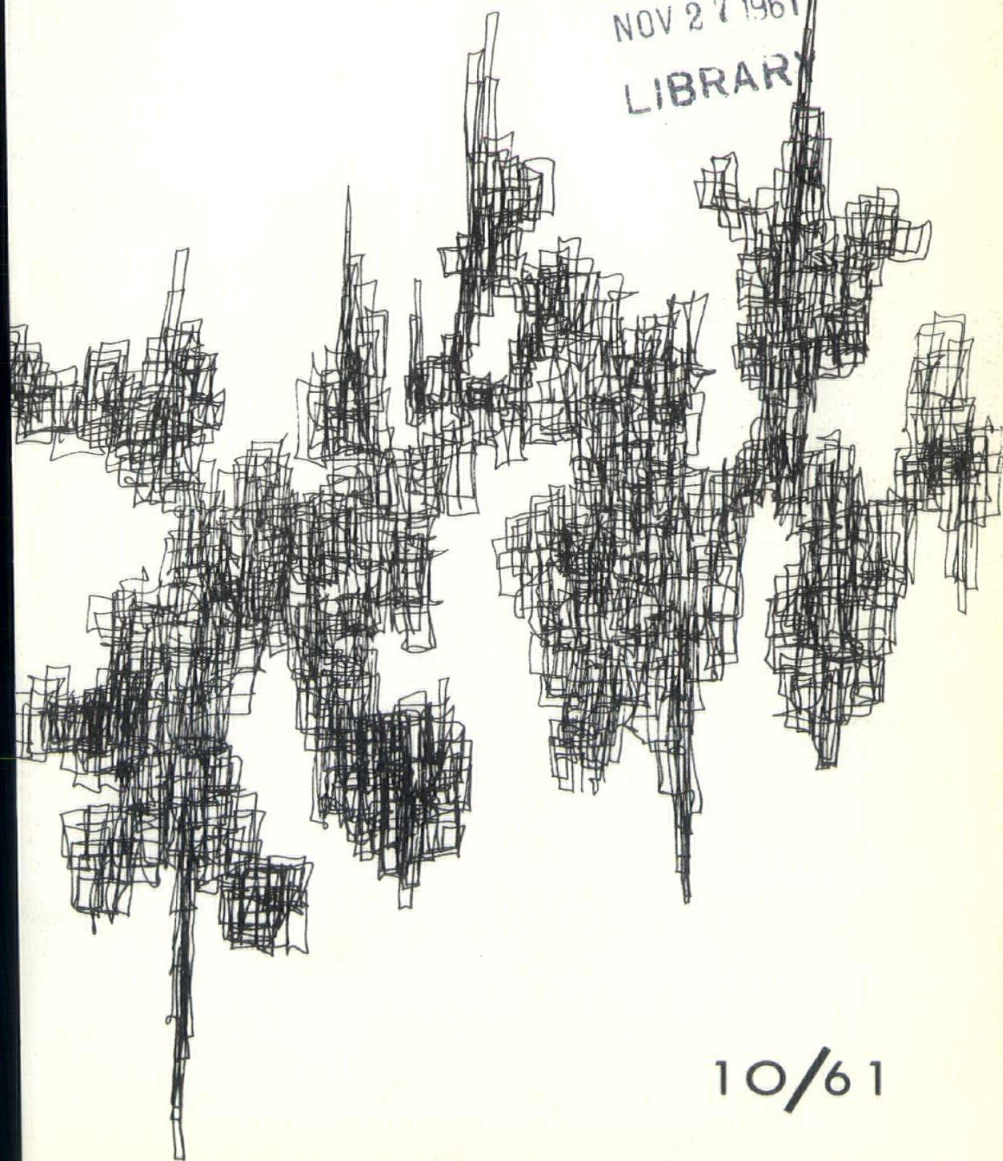
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# SKY LINES

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306 DAVIDSON BUILDING

KANSAS CITY 8, MO.

Vol. 11

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OCTOBER, 1961

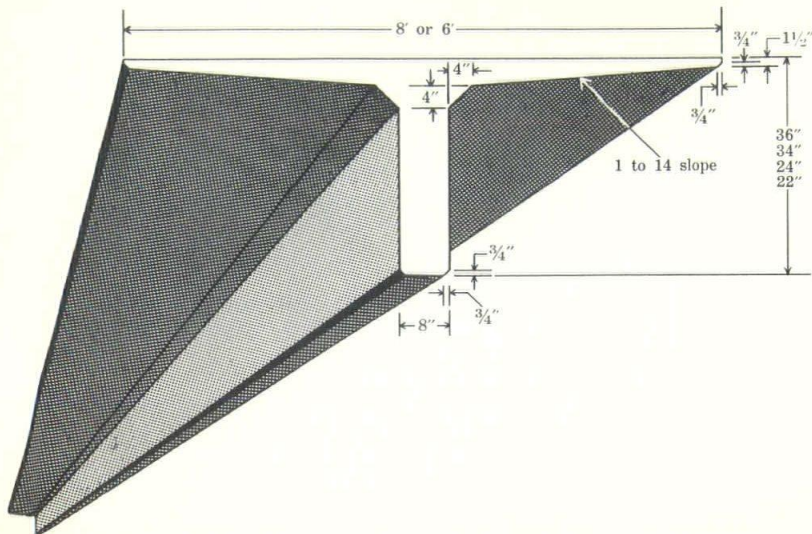
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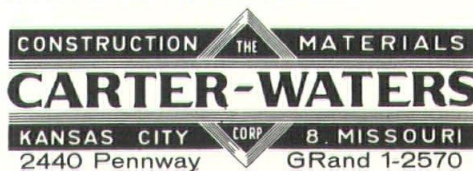
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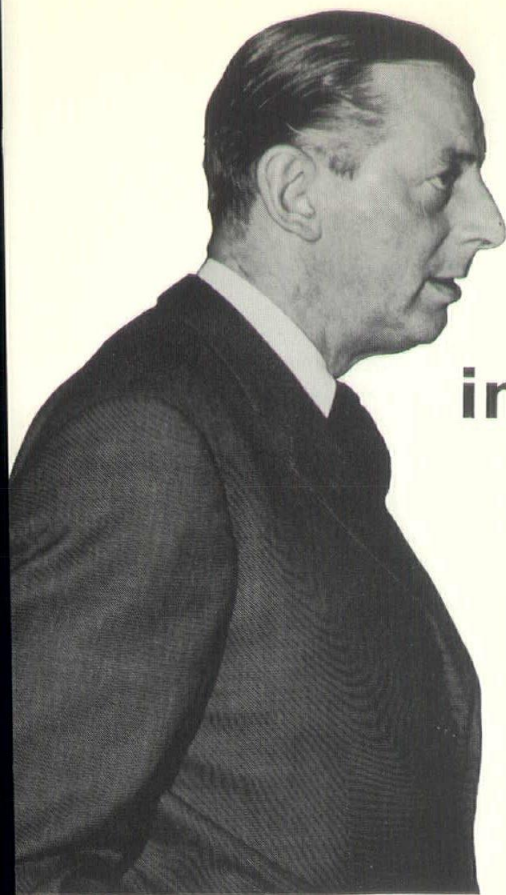


# The Eagle

## in the Square

The Annual Discourse, 1961

By Alistair Cooke



Given at the RIBA on 17 May.

The President, Sir William Holford, in the Chair

After reading the following article in the July, 1961 Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, we immediately wrote to Noel Musgrave, Editor of the Journal, for permission to reprint it in SKYLINEs. Mr. Musgrave graciously extended reprint permission and furnished us with the above previously unpublished photograph of Alistair Cooke in action. This picture was taken during Mr. Cooke's address to the R.I.B.A. Excerpts from "The Eagle in the Square" are already beginning to appear in various U.S. architectural publications, but we believe we can safely guarantee SKYLINEs readers an exclusive presentation of the entire discourse.

Mr President, Members of the Institute, Distinguished Guests: Good Evening. Your committee, which had the temerity to invite me after a run of expert Discourses from Alvar Aalto, Buckminster Fuller, Charles Eames and, I believe, Sir Christopher Wren, generously suggested that I might talk about anything I had in mind. In the United States I sometimes give a lecture which, for want of a more precise subject, enjoys the title of 'After Marilyn Monroe, What?' This allows me a polar latitude and encourages a full house.

When I had your invitation, I knew what I wanted to talk about but I couldn't quite isolate the theme. It evaded me all winter, like a hair in the mouth; but it was there all right, and I thought if I brooded awhile it would soon appear, as fine and sharp as a filament. It turns out to be something a good deal more ropery, and I couldn't put a name to it. I thought of 'The Family on the Freeway' and 'The Supermarket in the Meadow' and other tricky phrases, which – I gather – were not only obscure in England but probably meaningless.

'The Eagle in the Square', on the other hand, while it would baffle an American as completely as a clue in an *Observer* acrostic, jabs you – I hope – with a sharp and meaningful point. I do not have in mind the actual appearance of the Embassy building, which began as an impertinence and, to my mind, ended as an obscenity. I am thinking of that part of the English future that is the American present. I hope that doesn't sound boorish. I simply mean to second the wise remark – I wish I knew who said – that 'It is necessary for us to know what is happening in America because in so many things we may there read our own future'.

This is a debatable idea, certainly as it applies to national taste, to the tone and technique of government, and to many other things besides. But I am convinced that in the main drift of housing and accommodating human beings in society (and I am sorry to say that too often it is more of a drift than a drive) the United States is creating the 20th century mould, if only because it is the most prosperous of the free nations, therefore its example in material habits is contagious because it is the leading protagonist in the Cold War and therefore is able to assert and export its style of life to anxious people on our side; but much more, because the problems of an exploding population, a lagging supply of housing, the emergence of the automobile as a right of the worker as well as the drone, an economy whose vitality depends on the widest possible choice of things for most people, not an *élite*, to buy: all this has gone much further in the United States than anywhere else and makes it the exemplar of what society *is* in the century of a huge middle class that narrows and overwhelms the two extremes. Without getting into a

(Continued on page 7)

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political and philosophical argument, I think we may agree that if the so-called free world cannot maintain the primacy of a prosperous, expanding and *dominant* middle class, it is doomed. More than in anything else, the United States is the archetype of the teeming, egalitarian society. It is obvious from any cursory tour of Europe, and surprisingly demonstrated by many of the new nations of Africa, that – rightly or wrongly, madly or sanely – this is what they are aiming at. Their efforts tend to produce the same pride and confusion of personal aims, the same problems of social mobility, physical comfort, of production, public health, automation and all the rest of it, as the United States wrestles with on a continental scale.

I don't mean this to be a boast but an acknowledgement, in some ways a sad admission, of the facts we have to work with. My theme, then, is the new physical order of society that has come about in the United States since the Second War and how, for better or worse, it will move in on the United Kingdom. As a convenient symbol of the scale and brashness of this invasion, I couldn't think of anything more appropriate than the 33-foot bald eagle, certainly the most brutal of American intrusions on Sir Richard Grosvenor's square in all the 176 years since John Adams arrived at number 9 to give you notice that the United States was there, and now here, to stay.

Only once before have I dared to appear, so to speak, as a lay preacher before the College of Cardinals. I hope you will stay with me through this rather long reminiscence, because it bears on our delicate relation today, which – as I see it – is that of a mere citizen presenting a petition of grievances to his superiors. The telling of this story may suggest that there are not, as Sir C. P. Snow deplures, two alien cultures, the unsympathetic communities of the artist and the scientist, but three: the artist, the scientist, and the man in between, who pays their rent, cheats a little on his taxes, marvels at some of the wonders you invent for him and curses some of the others, and whose main concern in life, when day is done, is a loaf of bread, a jug of wine and thou. To you this forgotten creature, whose kind makes up the majority of the human race, may often seem to be the one lumpish obstacle to the achievement of the good life, the graceful house, the perfect city. And I can appreciate that to architects especially he is a positive nuisance almost to the extent that he is a demanding client. And yet, from his maddening position as householder, commuter, worker it is possible that he sees a few simple things which you do not see. In this hope, I dare to speak for the third man, on behalf of whose physical or spiritual welfare the whole gamut of professions – from space pilots to politicians – pretends to be in such a dither of selfless labour.

A little over two years ago I was invited to Boston to speak at the annual dinner of the Massachusetts Heart Fund. When I arrived, I found, to my embarrassed astonishment, that all my dinner companions were eminent heart specialists, including Dr Paul Dudley White, who preserved General Eisenhower. My qualifications for addressing a distinguished body of heart surgeons and probers were hardly less pathetic than they are for facing today this eminent body of architects. My two closest friends at Yale were medical students who are now a surgeon and a psychiatrist of alarming distinction whom I would still not trust to wipe a tear or lance a boil. In the course of a correspondent's life, I had happened to pick up, among other odd things, a morbid interest in the workings of the transverse colon and the tympanic membranes. I began to try and justify my being there by noting that a foreign correspondent is a man whose very employment requires him to keep up the bluff that he takes all knowledge for his province and is equally at home in a textile mill, a political convention, a showing of abstract art, a proxy fight or a launching pad at Cape Canaveral. So I shuffled in front of the doctors samples of their own jargon. I don't suppose I fooled any of the formidable men present. But even the most disinterested specialist in any country takes on the prejudices of his own land: and my own peculiar history – that of an Englishman born and bred, and an American tamed and naturalised – had forced me by accident into a peculiar speciality of my own, which is the continuous observation of what is British about Britain and American about America.

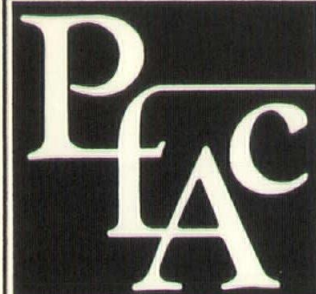
I have never forgotten my first walk along Fifth Avenue 29 years ago. I noticed something then that never fails to please me and give me hope, that by simply not taking anything you see for granted, it may be possible to say something intelligent about it. (After all, nobody before Aristotle noticed that a play tends to have a beginning, a middle and an end.) It was a building, not in itself striking or odd: except for one detail. It had a name. The name was chiselled on its façade. It was not called the Elysee Palace or Transport House. It was named after a successful merchant whose surname was, literally – French. It was not even called the French Building. There, facing on Fifth Avenue, it proclaimed – and still proclaims – its title: The Fred F. French Building. The F. was what struck me as delightful and – as I was later to realise – wholly American.

So facing these tolerant though solemn medical men, I took the risk of recalling that the United States is at all times a country with a passion for fashion. By which I don't mean it has a fetish for women's clothes (which country does not?) I mean its ears are alertly tuned for the last cry in every kind of process: the latest trick in book-binding, or tree-

(Continued on page 10)



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planting or bridge-building, or teaching piano, in bathroom gadgets, in theories of education, sex, architecture – in ideas. All I could offer the doctors was the reminder that this trait extends also to the learned practice of medicine. For I had noticed that when I first arrived in the United States, every bellyache and twitch of a striated muscle on the right side was put down to an infected appendix, and healthy families were retiring to the hospitals to have appendectomies *en masse* as a form of preventive medicine. I myself, after a bout with bathtub gin (it was then the twilight – thank God – of the Noble Experiment) was seized by the university butchers and to this day I bear the scar of *that* particular fashion. A little later, every rash or sneeze was attributed to an allergy, and a roaring business was done by manufacturers of flockless pillows and proprietors of Canadian resorts above the ragweed line. And so it went – down to that memorable evening before the heart specialists, which I dwell on because it explains why I am here and some of its lessons may apply to us.

At that time, the word 'cholesterol' gibbered through the land, as the word 'unclean' used to herald the approach of a leper. There was a tremendous to-do about the lethal snags created in the blood stream by carbohydrates and animal fats, either separately or in combination. Two years ago, it was established, at least to the satisfaction of a panicky populace and the makers of anti-coagulant pills, that cholesterol was as fatal as silt along a river bed and was responsible for most of the seizures and strokes of successful men who no sooner decide to take a trip around the world than they keel over at their desks. I hasten to report that this precious discovery is now not only in doubt but is looked on by some specialists as a naïve superstition, a hangover from the Dark Ages of medicine, namely the 1950s. The rush to consume only soyabean and vegetable fats was declared to be premature. But carbohydrates are now more suspicious than ever. So there is a national retreat from pastries and a grateful stampede back to beef.

All I could say to this medical gathering was that if the cholesterol theory was true, and if animal fats and carbohydrates were certain prescriptions for heart attacks, then they would have to explain the miracle whereby 55 million Britons were still alive. For of all known civilised communities, the British are the connoisseurs of animal fat and the compulsive addicts of carbohydrates – with their morning toast and eggs bubbling in bacon fat, their biscuits at eleven o'clock, their lunch of more meat and (worse) suet, then tea and more biscuits and cake, and dinner and meat again, and potatoes and pudding and perhaps an emergency snack of cheese and biscuits to guarantee coming safely through the night. How to explain the endurance, the ignorant but cheerful survival, of the British?



I saw that the doctors were now tense and puzzled, which is always a sign that you have a specialist by the tail. I was bold enough to offer an answer. Britain, I had noticed, maintains rights of way across fields and meadows and builds footpaths alongside highways, and uses the phrase 'Let's go for a walk' almost as an idiom. In America you cannot walk across fields and there are no footpaths once the town ends. The British walk, and cycle and walk, even in the rain. Let us face it, gentlemen, I said – they function. Could it be, I wondered – like Harvey groping towards the theory of the circulation of the blood – could it be that lumps of cholesterol could be shaken loose from the walls of the arteries by a lively blood stream, as rocks and weeds are carried away by a river in flood? Perhaps the secret of avoiding blood clots lay in the humble admonition of the London bobby: 'Keep Moving!'

After this barefaced performance I sat down in some embarrassment until Dr White told me that I had spoken words of the profoundest wisdom, and that he wished the slogan 'Keep Moving' might be taken over and plastered on billboards throughout the United States. I told him it was not copyright but the trick would be to get the American population to learn, as a novelty, the very old process of walking – upstairs or to work.

The vainglory of this occasion came back to me when you flattered me with the invitation to be here today. I don't expect, and you shouldn't, any similar moments of clairvoyance. But sometimes the patient who doesn't know what ails him can help the doctor find out by merely reciting his gripes and grievances.

So I speak as a patient, sometimes a victim and always a sympathetic observer of the Western man's daily round: which begins with the orange-juice concentrate and the instant coffee, and the morning mist which swoons over the traffic jam and, by loving contact with carbon monoxide and factory wastes, turns into smog; through which we are safely delivered to the city to pass the day behind the steel-and-glass curtain that abolishes privacy and under the fluorescent light that induces fatigue; the grind ends at twilight in a forest of billboards, and the haven of the faceless suburb, the quick visit to the supermarket for the bottle of bourbon that adds the calories and the bottle of metrolcal that takes them away, Then the cocktails, the jiffy steak, the pre-cooked television dinner, the secondal pill and the oblivion of sleep. And once a week the return to natural pleasures, such as rescuing blameless trout and bluefish from rivers and bays polluted by industrial sewage.

Well, of course, life is not as bad as that. I have concentrated the agony for a purpose, but there are millions who now live even the travesty of the good life I have summarised.

If you doubt it, let me - as the politicians say - cite a few figures.

Item: in the last 16 years, the acreage of citrus-bearing trees in Los Angeles County has shrunk by 30 per cent, but since California learned how to convert fruit-growing into an industry the production of citrus has almost doubled. It is difficult to get fresh orange juice in the hotels or motels of California, but the canned, or concentrated forms are universal. The point is that orange groves are pretty but they are not as profitable as real estate.

Item: the measurable density of industrial smog on what was lately the sylvan Pacific Coast has increased 20 times since Mr Henry Kaiser, in the first flush of wartime patriotism, had the audacity to find his ores in Utah and build the first steel plant in California. Several bio-chemical studies of smog in the main industrial areas of the United States suggest, when they don't assert, that smog may vie with tobacco tars and the arsenical compounds of cigarette paper in producing, or at least aggravating, cancer in human beings.

Item: a few years ago a New York eye specialist reassured a congress of opticians that their business would flourish exceedingly so long as the trend continued to replace incandescent with fluorescent lamps.

Item: the Administration's super-highway bill, adding 40,000 more miles of divided highways (or, as you slangily prefer it, dual carriageways) provides such pitiful rewards to the contributing states for prohibiting billboards that the advertising lobby will win. And the spineless provision that billboards must be (I think it is) not closer than 200 feet is already being superbly flouted by building billboards twice as big as the normal and lettering them in a paint mixed with diatomaceous earth that glows in the night like Milton's plunging Lucifer. In a more majestic project still, the advertising men are soon to fill the gap that has boggled them for years: namely, how to exploit by night those vast and tantalising spaces between stars - I mean the sky. Last summer they had extraordinary success in projecting on the night sky an image of coloured slides 200 feet wide, and we may soon have the boredom of God's 'inky arch' relieved by appeals to banish acne or body odour powerfully reinforced by satin-smooth, peach-bloom maidens whose vital measurements, I have figured, will be not 36-24-36 but 1188 inches, 792, 1188.

As for my assumption that most people at the end of day drive 30 miles or more to their homes in what was only 20 years, or five years, ago virgin pasture or prairie, let us consider the most characteristic 20th century innovation in city planning, or rather the unavoidable necessity, since the population explosion in most civilised lands is rapidly



obliterating with a flow of human lava the ancient distinction between town and country: I mean the suburb. There ought to be another word; for it is not at all the metropolitan petticoat we have all known, since the successive inventions of the railroad, macadam, the chain store and the Surbiton golf club.

The American suburb, as we now use the word, has been planted whole in open country. The typical procedure was merely dramatised two years ago by a Chicago gambler who, by a natural progression, moved on to politics and buying up vacant lots on the frowzy edge of town. (His cousin in Los Angeles, by the way, was a cab driver who in a poker game won a single lot of scrubby land west of the city towards the sea. He parlayed it into ten lots. It is now the jet runway for the Los Angeles International Airport, and our cab driver no longer drives himself, not even in the private Convoir that flies him between his house in Beverly Hills and his desert retreat in Palm Springs.) Well, back in Chicago, our gambler was just beginning to enjoy that most tempting of all speculative sports: dipping his toe in the tide of real estate that taken at the flood leads on to fortune. One day he drove 20 miles outside Chicago and saw what Carl Sandburg described 30 years ago, and what the pioneers waded across a century before that: an ocean of grass, 'like seas where the billows have rolled, the sun shining at evening on the weeds of the river'. He scanned it and figured where the latest interstate motorway would pass, and close by he chose and bought a meadow and several hundred surrounding acres. Among friends who were also contractors or politicians or both he wangled the plumbing, water, electricity, paving and construction contracts. Within a month the bulldozers had ripped up several groves of offending trees and cleared the essential, the central tract: the parking lot for 500 cars in front of the site of the supermarket. After that you choose among the rush of bids for the stores that flank the supermarket, and the school, and the churches, if any. Then you pave the parking lot, drop beside it a supermarket the length of a bomber factory, scatter around the countryside the prefabricated split-level or ranch-type houses with one picture window, one TV antenna and a garage as big as the house. Then come the lucrative deals with the practitioners of outdoor advertising. All you need now is a friend in the movie business who will corner another field and put up the white screen and the spaced poles with the extension microphones. And lo - you have the unit, the nucleus of 20th century civilisation.

This is the formula and the procedure across 3,000 miles of the American landscape. In California, it proceeds at a breathtaking rate, peopling all the coastal valleys, transfiguring the old Spanish land-grant country, crowding the

orchards, transforming in ten years the once charming country between the Los Angeles city limits and San Juan Capistrano into a continuous 50-mile stockade of plastic suburbs jammed up against an elevated, twelve-lane freeway. This plastic growth, or parasite, stops short only where the mountains are high enough to make pumping water an expensive proposition: as along the incomparable stretch of the American *corniche*, the 120 miles between Morro Bay and the Big Sur country, where only the late Mr William Randolph Hearst sinking pumps 3,000 feet and linking them with an aqueduct 100 miles away could afford to make his own cachelments for water and only Henry Miller prefers to do without it. However, this recalcitrant bit of paradise will soon be brought to heel. At Morro Bay they are beginning to purify water from the sea, and once the Pacific becomes California's reservoir, the present Governor is proud to ruminate, 'there'll be no stopping us'. The 1,200 new residents who settle in the state *every day* will triple and quadruple. The day is not long off when Presidential aspirants will be wise to be born in California or rent a winter cottage there to claim dual citizenship.

There have been some casual, brave attempts by town-planning groups and garden clubs to give prizes after the event, for handsome supermarkets or shopping centres already there. But most of these suburbs simply are as faceless as so many billboards. They crowd within easy view of the superhighway, the tollway, the freeway, the expressway, which is their lifeline to the old city. (Central Los Angeles today has had to give up two-thirds of its entire area to the parking, garaging and servicing of automobiles.) They are linked by gaudy stretches of what we call frontage highways, with a neon stream of billboards and lunch-counters and drive-ins and liquor stores and funeral parlours and gas stations that make it now impossible, even for a knowing traveller - unless he is a tree expert with keen peripheral vision - to guess whether he is approaching Chicago, or Seattle, Philadelphia or Savannah, Minneapolis or New Orleans. Everything, in fact, gets to look more and more like greater Los Angeles and Greater Miami. And, I think, for good reasons. The originals are both sun-drenched littorals a continent apart, and to most Americans bred in mean cities they are El Dorado. Therefore, they attract the overflow of the population that is able to move, of the people who are restless, or vigorous, rootless, or thrifty, or old and pensioned off. So, naturally, they are also the happy hunting grounds of the fly-by-night realtor and the big-scale construction man, who are the true city planners and architectural dictators of our time. They are so, I dare to say, not because most people crave garish things or prefer ugliness to grace (though there is lots of evidence of that) but because the realtor and construc-

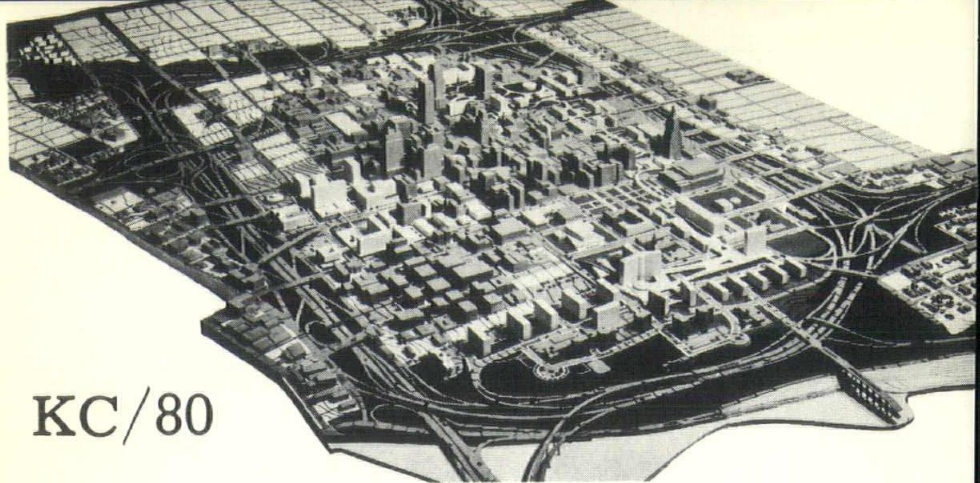


tion men who have collared the land and built the suburban swarm of Los Angeles and Miami had invaluable experience in how to establish the political connections, how to get their hands on the source of synthetic materials that are both cheap and durable (in Miami the building code requires that every structure must be able to withstand a hurricane). Like the builders, the kiln-owners and landlords who put up the hideous industrial cities of the Midlands and the North of England, they learnt early and profitably, therefore, how to meet the needs, or prescribe the wants, of a growing population more speedily and exactly than the city planners, the onlooking architects, the building commissions. By now these men have set a pattern for mass production that would be as hard and ruinous to break as the standard model of the American 21-inch television set: and it is with these men that the federal government itself has to deal, when it launches its own vast projects. So, we adopt the style of house, shop, petrol station, motel, supermarket, drive-in lunch counter that first appeared in California and was repeated in Florida.

The style or stylelessness of these buildings is a mere incident of the massive expansion of Florida and California. More to the point is the phenomenon of the suburb itself and the retreat of our society, and its economy, towards it. The first parkways, superhighways built in the 1930s, were designed to speed traffic across the still virgin countryside and to separate and ease its flow in and out of the cities. The city fathers and the city businesses approved of them because more people could come from farther away and duck into the city for a suit, a piece of garden furniture, a bedstead, a visit to the theatre. Now, the freeways, the superhighways, are built to by-pass the cities or to plunge over them. And the suburban supermarket, with its range of commodities from evening gowns to asparagus, lawn mowers to beer, tennis rackets to household paint, has become the staff of life to people who can have all their worldly goods supplied without ever moving out of what we used to call 'the country'. One effect has been to send a deputation of Broadway producers begging the Mayor to rescind a fourpenny tax on theatre tickets or accept in a year or two the closing down of New York's theatres.

The effect over the whole country has been to make the big and elegant city department stores start branches ten or twenty miles out of town, and in some places to move out of the city altogether. This is like putting up another Selfridge's in the New Forest, or moving Harrod's to Little Piddletrenthide. (A month ago, my wife was fetched by a dramatic advertisement in the *New Yorker*, of a summer beach costume available at a sleek Fifth Avenue store.

(Continued on page 17)



## KC/80

A Blue Ribbon committee has recently been appointed by the Chamber of Commerce of Kansas City to coordinate efforts and begin implementation of Phase II of the KC/80 project.

Designed and constructed through the combined efforts of the Kansas City Chapter, A.I.A., the Downtown Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, the City Plan Commission of Kansas City and local members of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the KC/80 model outlines a master development plan for Kansas City's Central Business District over the next two decades.

Members of the Chamber's KC/80 committee are John Latshaw, E. F. Hutton & Co.; Charles Price, Price Candy Co.; R. Crosby Kemper, Jr., City National Bank & Trust Co.; Jerry Frieling, C. of C. Downtown Committee; Ronald Ferguson, The Jones Store; Chet Hovel, Ford Motor Co.; W. D. Grant, Business Men's Assurance Co.; S. W. Harris, Lucky Tiger Manufacturing Co. and John M. Hewitt, president of the Kansas City Chapter, A.I.A. Latshaw was named as chairman.

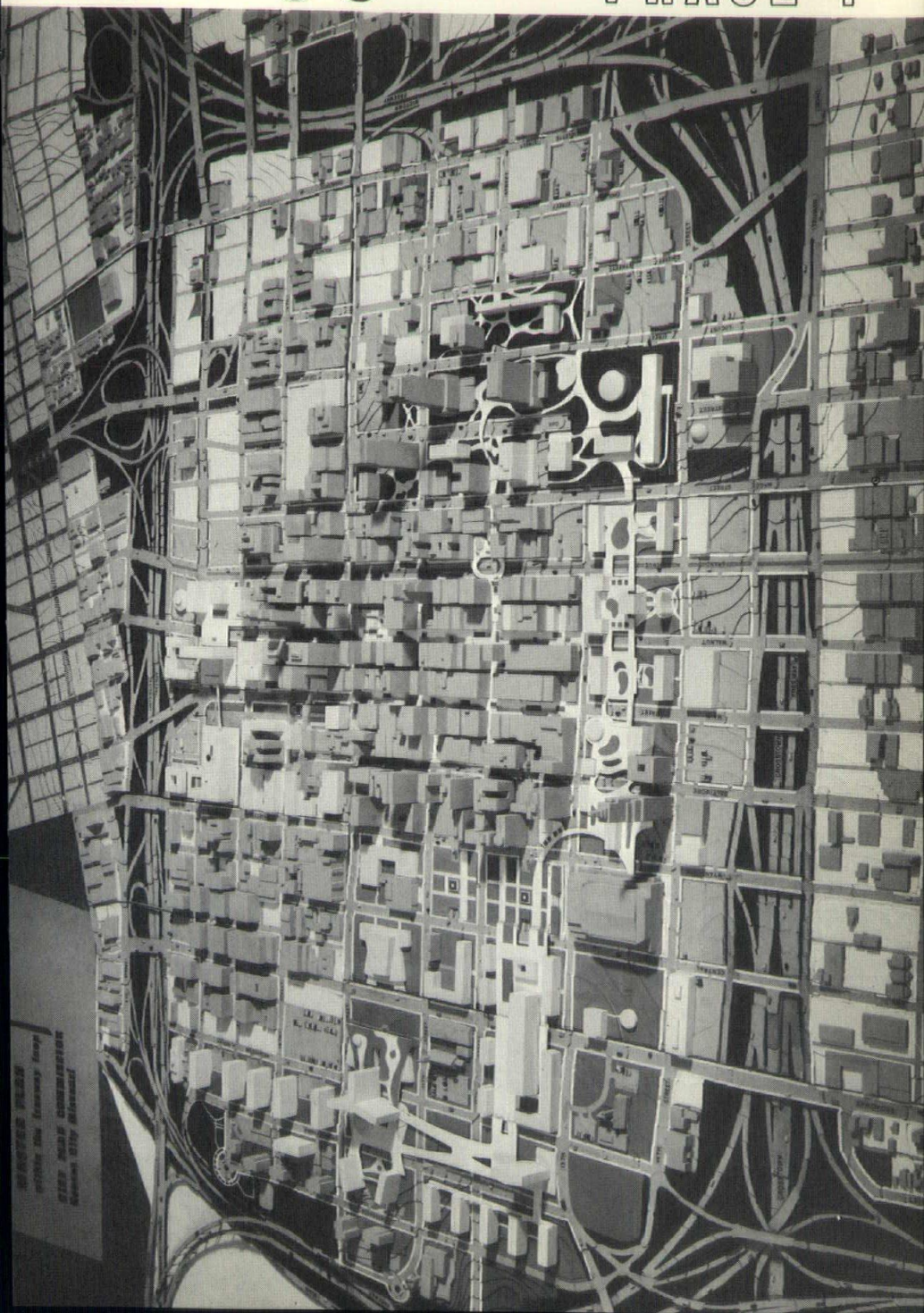
To get the program underway, members of the committee outlined the scope of KC/80 to more than a thousand persons attending a special movie showing at the Empire Theater on August 30. Models and delineations were displayed in the theater lobby, attracting considerable public attention. The booklet on KC/80, bound in as the next eight pages of this issue of SKYLINES, was distributed at the movie and will be used at other public events scheduled for the next several months.

At this point, the active Chamber committee gives every evidence of being able to regenerate enthusiasm for and interest in this award-winning concept of orderly downtown planning and land use.



# KC / 80

## PHASE 1



INTERESTED PERSONS  
within the Exemption Period  
may make comments  
to the City Engineer.



# KANSAS CITY-1980

The view into the future represented in this booklet gives some indication of what the Kansas City of 1980 could be like.

KC/80 is a master plan for the Central Business District in downtown Kansas City, Mo., and is the result of a concentrated effort by members of the Kansas City Chapter of The American Institute of Architects. Primary emphasis was placed on the Civic Center and the Central Retail Core (retail, financial, commercial and hotel area) and their relation to each other as well as their function within the Central Business District.

KC/80 could not have been developed without the active interest of many other organizations; business, civic and governmental. The Downtown Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of Kansas City, the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Kansas City Plan Commission were outstanding in their support and participation.

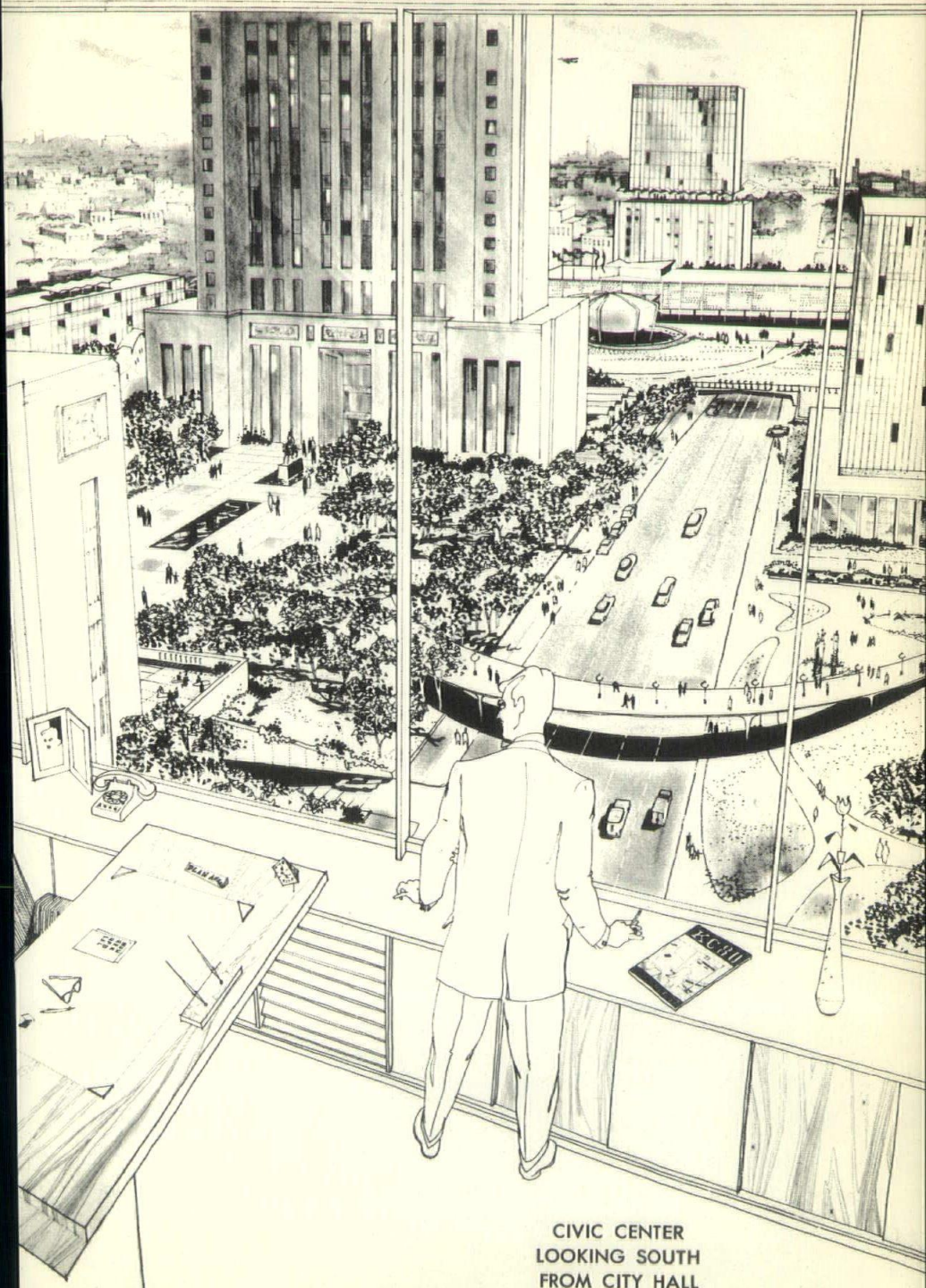
Approximately 425 acres of land are enclosed by the projected loop road system around the Central Business District. This is 25 acres more than is contained in the Chicago Loop. The photograph on the cover shows a model of the Loop and the downtown area.

The Urban Redevelopment program in Kansas City has already cleared many acres in the downtown area and is offering an unprecedented opportunity to start anew the development of a model community.

Nowhere in our great city are facilities for commerce, shopping, entertainment and culture so grouped as in the downtown area. As a body is only as healthy as its heart, so is a city only as vigorous as its Central Business District.

In making the space more available, more usable and more pleasant, the economic vitality of the entire Kansas City area is enriched.

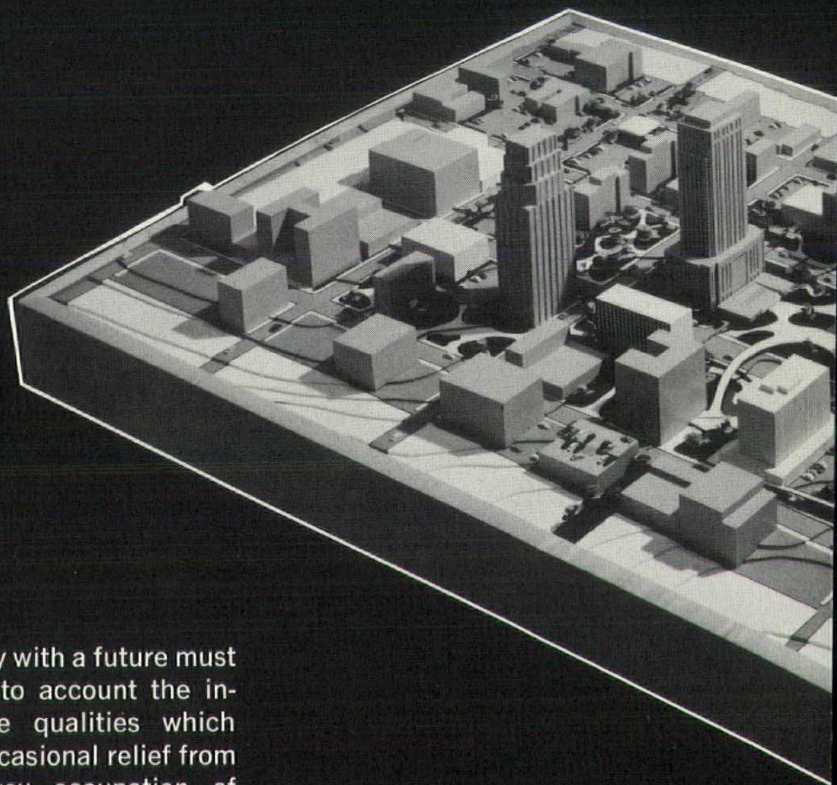




CIVIC CENTER  
LOOKING SOUTH  
FROM CITY HALL



# THE CIVIC CENTER



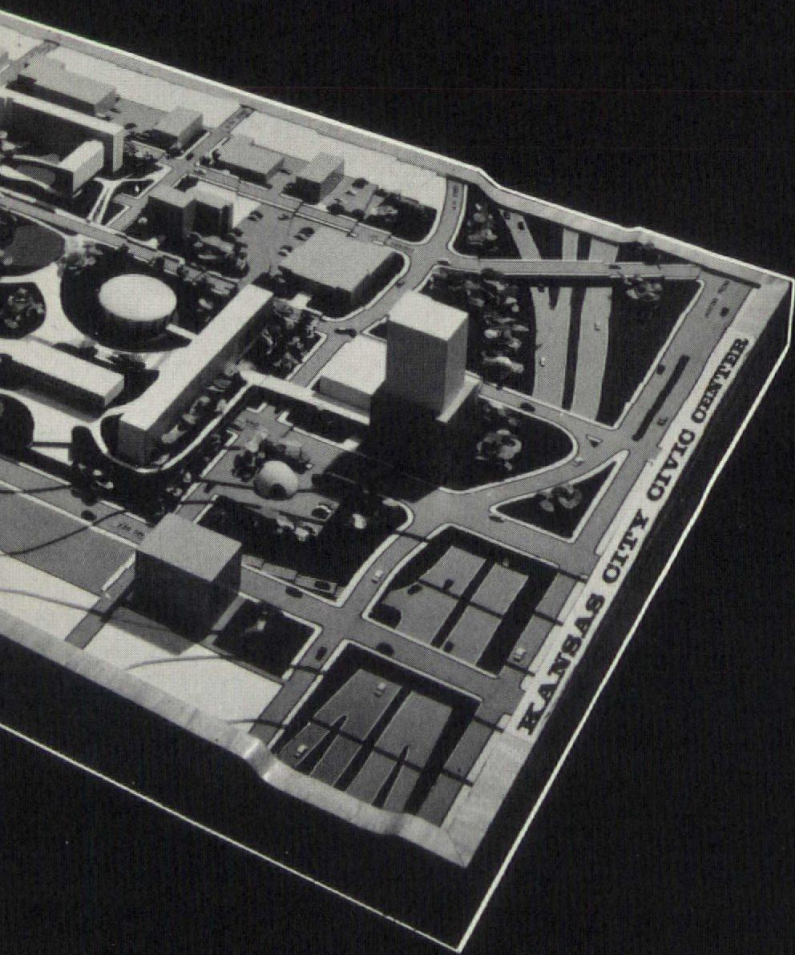
The city with a future must take into account the intangible qualities which give occasional relief from the busy occupation of carrying on business. The cultural life of a city must contain activities appealing to, and at the same time, inspirational to all citizens.

In developing a design for the Civic Center it seemed logical to locate in the area bounded by Cherry, Eleventh, McGee and Fourteenth Streets.

● Already located here are the City Hall, Court House, Police Building, Parental Home, the Public Library and soon the Federal Office Building and the State Office Building—the governmental and research center of the city.



- With the high concentration of people in the downtown area, greater use of Civic Center facilities could be made at a downtown location during daytime hours.
- This plan would emphasize the great potential of downtown residential facilities—a permanent population at the core of the city which would make the Central Business District a healthy financial community 16 hours a day and seven days a week, instead of a deserted village after dark and during week-ends. Many people have no desire for houses with yards to keep, yet wish to be near where “things are going on.”





- Ample parking spaces in the downtown area could be used to advantage in evenings and weekends in attracting people to the Civic Center from all parts of the city. Convention and transient guests would have ready access to Civic Center facilities from downtown hotels and motels.

The following building types were selected for location in the Civic Center:

Museum. The success of the Kansas City Museum has proven the great need for such an institution. Consider how much more use it would receive in a Civic Center location.

Planetarium-Aquarium. Always of great appeal, this building could be operated in conjunction with the Museum, as is the present planetarium.

Children's Museum. Located south of the Public Library and connected by ramp, this facility could easily be used in conjunction with the Children's Library Department. Providing space to exhibit the work of the city's children and traveling exhibits tailored for the young, the Children's Museum could become an invaluable educational center.

Hall of Fame. Every great city needs a center to keep alive the memory of its leaders for the appreciation of future generations.

Information and Hospitality Center. Facilities of this nature have been extremely successful in other cities. Usually run by either the Chamber of Commerce or the Junior Chamber of Commerce, these centers provide a real opportunity to inform the visiting public of the resources and activities of our city.

Federal Office Building. Plans are approved to locate this structure on a two-block site east of the Court House.

State Office Building. The State offices will eventually be consolidated into one building.

Legal Office Center. A space near the courts and the vast research facilities of the Public Library would be highly desirable.

The Civic Center is thus made an integral and useful part of the entire Central Business District—and of the entire city.



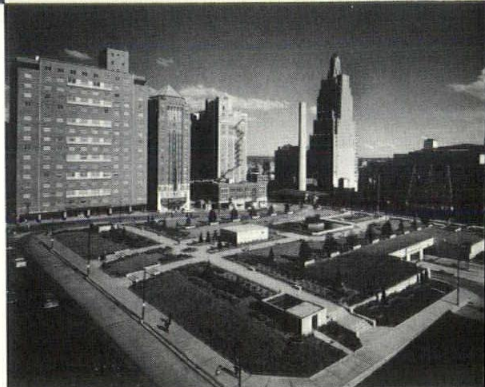
TO-DRAWING OF  
O CIVIC CENTER  
OKING NORTH





VOLKER MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

AUDITORIUM PLAZA



The range of activities encompassed in the plan represent a dramatic, yet workable and economically feasible approach to keeping pace with a growing, vital community. It establishes the basic framework for traffic and land use, recognizing that additional detailed planning will be required on such items as mass transit, open space design and service. In the final analysis, many of the recommendations will be adapted or modified to meet changing conditions.

Today, the KC/80 Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of Kansas City is concentrating its efforts on a practical day-by-day implementation of various parts of the overall plan.

This Committee needs the support and participation of **all** Kansas City business, civic and financial interests—**your support**—to be successful. We know the plan is workable; it has served as a model for other cities and planning officials all over the country. In 1959 The American Institute of Architects' coveted Citation of Honor was awarded the Kansas City Chapter, AIA, for developing KC/80. All of these goals can be achieved through public and private efforts. KC/80 is a beginning.

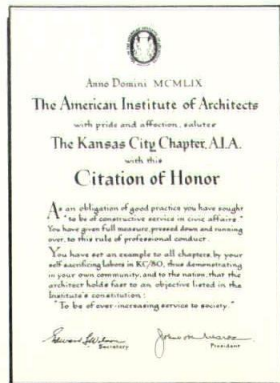


PHOTO CREDITS—Wayne Wright  
L. D. Jones — Randazzo & Morrison

When we went down there, they looked at us with a new kind of pity. They had never seen the costume. It was, they explained, a bit of 'prestige advertising'. They got it for us from their store in Manhasset, New York. It could also be had in a town outside Philadelphia, and in the Green Spring Valley of Maryland.)

To sum up the history of this young and flourishing institution: First came the Second War and the planting of boom cities in open country, where there was room for the bomber factory or the gun-cotton plant and the people who were to work it. (Charlestown, Indiana, had 1,100 people, one steak house, two drug stores and a pool room, when I was there in 1940. Two years later, when I went to do a story about the biggest smokeless powder plant in the world, it had 27,000 people.) These improvised, ratty, emergency towns gave such men as William Levitt an idea. Why not design the whole town and plant it complete? By 1950, the suburbs were draining the people and the revenue from three-fifths of metropolitan America. By 1955 alarmed or far-sighted industries were following them, and putting a one-storey factory, and also big flashy apartment houses alongside, by the one-storey supermarket. By 1960, 4,500 shopping centres had been built in the country beyond metropolitan areas. (If it is any consolation to those of you who live in cities and wrangle with school boards, or design fire stations, may I add that in the countryside of suburban New York, stretching up the Hudson River and out to the new Levittowns of Long Island, there were – as early as 1954 – 1,071 separate legal jurisdictions over such public services as transport, street paving, water, police and fire protection.)

In short, every metropolis in the United States has been losing population since 1940; the movement of growth has been steadily and rapidly away from the cities; today the suburban share of all metropolitan retail trade in the United States is 57 per cent. And it is growing.

Any of you who have travelled across the United States, and enjoyed – in the olden time, 1940 or before – the long light on the Blue Appalachians, the lonely 300 mile drive up the Edwards Plateau and the turn around an arroyo and the first view of the West great plain and seven stacked mountain ranges ahead, as majestic and straightforward as a major chord of Bach; who have gone through the lake country of Minnesota, or the scarlet canyons of Utah; or nuzzled in the grace of the Kentucky Blue Grass or been stunned by the silence of the desert and the purple nights over Phoenix, Arizona, and the stars as big as fists; or cruised through the incomparable 900 miles of California, and gone from Andalusia to Devon to Yorkshire to Morocco and back to

(Continued on page 19)





**This is a Stallpack installation clean, rustproof, and permanent. Shown here are two standard Stallpack marble enclosures and two matching urinal screens. Each stallpack includes gleaming Ozark Grey Veined marble stiles and partition, metal door with baked-on enamel finish (birch door optional), plus a complete set of quality chrome-plated hardware that will not rust or corrode. The hard, Group A Stallpack marble stays shining clean with little effort, will last for the life of your building without trouble or repair!**

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**CARTHAGE MARBLE**



Spain again – I hope that all such connoisseurs of what is still (but rapidly contracting) the lovely landscape of the United States – I hope you will sense by now, shall I say, my alarm? And the rest I hope will gather, in Sinclair Lewis's phrase, it could happen here.

However, in a country like England which so doggedly preserves the ancient pattern of old city, or industrial city; dreary, interminable, solid, brick-choked fringe-suburb; open country and charming village – some of you may still be asking yourselves why I have talked, with such paranoid insistence, about the suburb. What of the city?

Well, all civilised countries, old and new, share much the same problems inside the cities: the soaring ground rents; the crumbling or deliberate destruction of whatever part of town had style; the increasing complexity and cost of the plumbing, wiring, pipes and grids in the so-called underground city' of the city's bowels; the traffic congestion; the victory of concrete brick, lavatory tile, pressed enamel, low grade aluminium, sodium vapour lights over older, more beautiful, more expensive materials, so that it is academic to ask who are the new Louis Sullivans, the Richardsons, the Raymond Hoods, since they are obliterated by the Zeckendorfs and the Hiltons. All this is as true of Paris (outside its preserved centre) and Madrid and Brussels as it is of London and New York; and truer still of Rome, whose population, by the way, has increased in 22 years exactly like Los Angeles – from 750,000 to two and a quarter million. Everywhere in the Western world, we watch the triumph of the steel and glass monolith and failing efforts of the city fathers to clear the old slums before the new slums have mellowed

The last phrase may provide an unconscious clue to my preoccupation. Slum clearance is fast becoming, in the United States as elsewhere, a bold and timid thumb in the exploding dyke of population. Our Western rate of growth between 1900 and 1950 assumed a doubling of the population in 100 years. The more accurate guess is now 50 years. In 1932 the population of the United States was 130 millions. In 1962, it will be 185 millions, and in 1980 something between 250 and 260 millions. This is a turtle's crawl beside the pace of India, which has increased by 82 millions in ten years. Latin America is more prolific still. The United Nation's best estimate is that whereas we now have a world population of 2.8 billions – it took us 30,000 years to achieve it – 50 years from now it will be between 5 and 6 billions. Happily for our comfort this evening, we are not concerned with the plight of the under-developed countries, whose people multiply, as the marvels of medicine prolong the miserable life of their middle-aged, and who enjoy no noticeable improvement in their economies. So that Brown, Bonner and Weir give us the sombre warning that India, and other nations



of Asia, may have passed a peak of well-being and may now be entering an era when the standard of life will go down among many more millions who are just managing to stay above the level of starvation. Even in these vast continents, whose wretchedness seems as boundless as their horizons, the direction of growth is unquestioned: more and more industrialisation.

Today we are talking about the highly industrialised countries of the West. Most of them have no huge arid or semi-arid areas which might be able to absorb the spill-over of the coming population flood, and sustain it, when our sources of power are manufactured (in laboratories) from the air, the rocks and the sun.

We are talking about here and now, in the United States and the United Kingdom. If the continental United States is having to spawn suburbs by the thousand in its valleys and its prairies and, how, with air-conditioning, in its deserts, it cannot be long before the cities of England groan in labour and discharge their dense millions into the meadows and the vales. That day may be here, you know better than I. But it most certainly will be here in the moment that the working man begins to take for granted, as he did 40 years ago in the United States, his right to a motor-car as an extra set of legs. Like the boys from the slums of East St Louis and Pittsburgh who during the Second War practised amphibious landings on the beaches of the Pacific Coast, and saw the lupins drenching the mountains above them, these mobile workers will have had a vision of the better life. They will burst out of the North and the Midlands and discover that the perpetual golf-course which is the South of England also belongs to them.

If this appears fanciful or freakish to you, think for a moment of the other laughable Americanisms that tickled a fancy, or supplied a need, of a population whose aim is middle-class comfort. The traffic light, invented as long ago as 1913 by a doctor in New Haven, Connecticut, who was for a time thought to be slightly mad. The petrol pump. The neon sign. The divided highway. The quick-lunch counter. The co-operative apartment. The parking lot. The pre-fabricated house. The self-service market. The motel. Now, the parking meter. And, thank goodness, the Esso map. Every other one is a concession to the nuisance value of the *other* man's automobile.

I have recited to you a grim documentary record of the American experience in the hope that you will anticipate it and control it. Control is the word. But how, in a society where every moron over 21 has the vote and can throw out the party that denies him a cleaner factory or a new playground? Who is to do the controlling?

(Continued on page 23)

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In the great ages of architecture, the tastes of the third man were not consulted. The design of the cities that we now tour with such wistful reverence, the dictation of vast parks and plazas and crescents, were at the whim of emperors and patrons who had the political power to realise their private reveries in Florence or Versailles or Bath or the old, the gone for ever, Regent Street. The remaining emperors do not even vote, and there is no plutocrat alive, not even in Greece or Texas, rich enough to commission a city park. The Rockefeller brothers are valiantly trying to drum up 68 more millions to redeem an acre and a half of New York slum property and convert it into a city centre of the performing arts. The welfare state equivalent, I suppose, is the National Trust, and like the Rockefellers preserving Williamsburg, it performs a very honourable, if defensive, service in shoring up a heritage against a whirlwind.

There was a time when the architect would have been the obvious answer. Even in America, Frederick Law Olmstead was able to fight the city bosses and decree that New York's Central Park should be, three miles out of town, laid down according to an eccentric plan which, by the way, correctly foresaw the development of the city and arranged a triple plan of cross-town bus routes, winding footpaths, and continuous carriage drives which had merely to be paved over to be, a hundred years later, an excellent and workable plan for today. But need I turn the knife in the wound of your impotence by asking what architect today has the political influence, the command of millions, the control of the building materials and the contracts, to impose a style, as he used to, on a city, a county, or - the Minister of Housing? Possibly I am misinformed, and you order these things more cunningly in England.

I pass on and consider, but briefly, the politicians. When I have been privileged to be in their company, and mentioned these things, I have got the impression that the Conservative sighs over the undoubted fact that the masses do not share his taste, but he thinks they had better be allowed their pleasures, nauseating though they be. The Labourite believes absolutely he knows what is best for the masses, and it serves them right. The Liberal is no longer consulted, which is a happy accident, since his intentions are praiseworthy in all things, but his taste is usually seedy.

And yet it can only be done by a new, bold and effective alliance between the architects and the politicians. I do not know the strategy by which the Town and Country Planning Act came to be, but I can only say that if such a civilised law were conceivable in America, the banning of the billboards and the burying of the telegraph poles alone would have stayed the Coney Island rot that rages across the continent and would have dramatically restored the landscape to the



unbroken loveliness, the strangeness and the majesty it had when I first journeyed around it in the bad old days of the Depression.

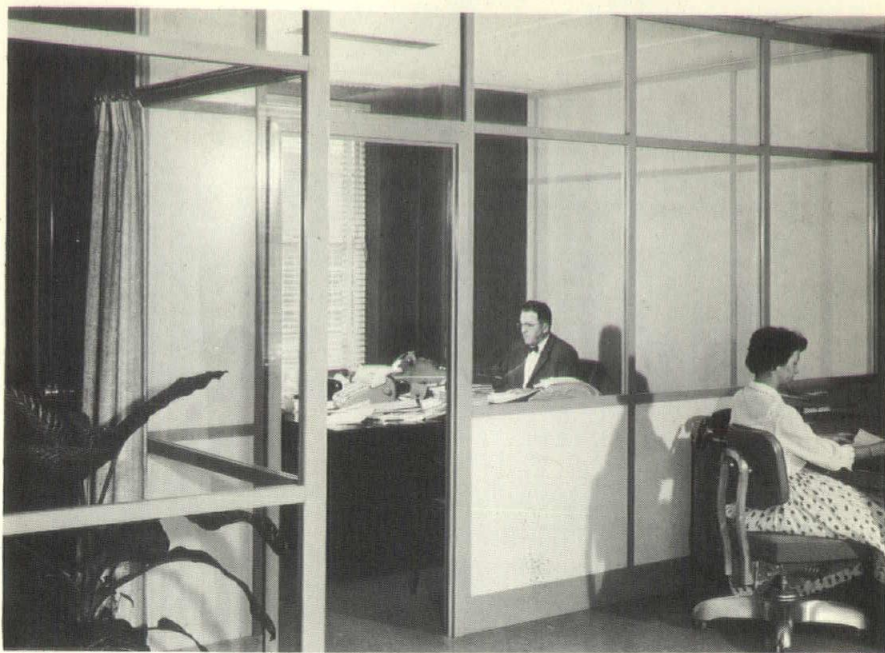
I suggest that this essential alliance, between the architects and the politicians, could begin to explore some sort of intermediate authority that could anticipate and draft the Suburban Planning Act. The analogy I have in mind is one with the original conception of the BBC.

After the First War, it began to dawn on some economists who had left the groves of Academe for the rough and tumble of the Reparations conferences that there were some functions of the national and metropolitan life that were too precious to be left to the vagaries of the stock market, and too permanent to be at the mercy of government departments and votes of confidence. Casting around for some independent authority that would be at once responsible and disinterested, John Maynard Keynes suggested that there should be more and more autonomous public corporations. He it was, I believe, who conceived the idea of a broadcasting authority which, like the Port of London Authority, should be neither a private enterprise nor one run by the state. Out of this conception was born the BBC, which was given the odd name of the British Broadcasting *Corporation*, to distinguish it from a limited liability *company*. (Keynes thereby gave a handle to one twist of permanent Anglo-American misunderstanding, for in America the word corporation *means* limited liability company. So the BBC is always called the British Broadcasting Company and damned, in the same breath, as a government-controlled system and a first leap towards galloping socialism.)

You may already have such an authority, ready at the first trickle of pale men from the Potteries to channel the flood. If so, I apologise for my condescension. If it is not there, it will have to be, unless you are to concentrate and compound the disorder of the erupting American suburbs in an area the size of New York State and a section of Pennsylvania.

At the end of 650 pages of the most erudite survey of the city, from its beginnings as a sanctuary and a stronghold to its present dissipation as a suburb on the motorway, Mr Lewis Mumford, for whom (I hope) we all have the most awesome admiration, sees the alternative as either Utopia or Necropolis: the perfect city or the graveyard. I don't believe this is the alternative, or ever has been. For between the drawing-board and the lease fall the facts of life: the needs of people that are irrelevant to architecture; the indifference of most people, I sincerely believe, to aesthetic surroundings, and yet their honest craving for Alberti's prescription, given over 400 years ago, for 'a pleasant spot of ground . . . a little way out of town . . . upon an airy road'; the universal preference for the human swarm; the percentage our local politicians

(Continued on page 27)



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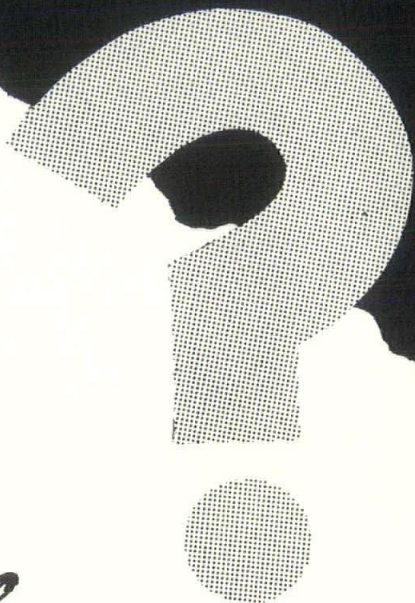
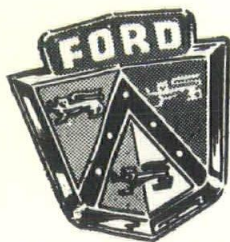
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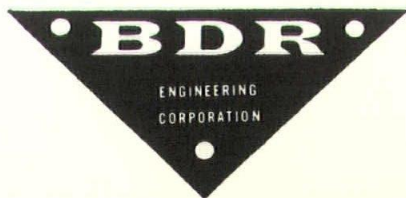
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# "OR EQUAL"



It is your decision,  
Mr. Architect.....  
will it reflect your  
client's best interest?



must make on the side; and the superior shrewdness of the real estate agents and the construction men who batten on these frailties.

These twins, it must now be clear, I honestly believe to be your enemies, as your best ally is the true politician, who is a man with a temperamental tolerance of what ought to be and a sporting scepticism about what has to be. A man whose concern follows his instinct, which is to strike the best bargain between ought and might.

However it is to be done, if I may risk a final presumption, it seems to me that it is your duty, and might become your pride, to give sense and direction to a tidal wave. It is your job now, before the jobbers seize the initiative, to respond to what is healthy in the revolt of the masses, to contain it in new forms and so give to all your visitors from other, more disordered, lands visible proof that the best of the English genius in these things, which has been in coma since the Regency – is alive again. The gift of making small things noble – of domesticating a wild landscape – the genius, in a word, for dignifying and not demeaning the human scale.

## **VOTE OF THANKS**

### **The President**

You will have seen that Mr Alistair Cooke has made a serious point and has made it with humour and wit and irony and not a little satire. It has been a delight to hear and it will be a delight to read. I am very pleased that the Institute has given Mr Cooke one of his few opportunities to hear the audience reaction when he speaks, as, I am glad to say, he often does into the microphone. He cannot often have realised the direct effect he has upon a large audience.

You will have noticed that I avoided the usual banal introduction of him at the beginning – that he came from so-and-so, etc. Now that he has spoken I ought to tell you one or two secrets which in fact are not secrets. He was born in Manchester and went to Blackpool Grammar School, and then he took a very good degree at Cambridge and went to Harvard and Yale.

He is now the chief American correspondent of *The Guardian*. I hope that some of you pursue Mr Cooke's satire in its pages. May I refer you to the issue of 12 May in which he announced the discovery of a rare group of 23 normal men outside Chicago. The reason I make this point is that I think that the whole of the English-speaking world owes Mr Cooke a great debt of gratitude for what he has done about words. He has coined several which I shall never forget. Let me quote one. He discussed the normal man 'who walks upright and is omnivorous and probably omnibibulent'. I do not think that I shall ever go to a cocktail party again not thinking of that word omnibibulent.



# BID DATE REGISTRATION

In recent months several members have commented on the fact that their bid lettings have run head-on into three or four other sizable lettings.

To help avoid such conflicts two local organizations have volunteered their services. While it admittedly might be preferable to have only one clearing house on bid dates, various things pointed towards establishing two of them.

From Linn Wetwiska of the F.W. Dodge Corporation we have the following:

"The F.W. Dodge Corporation 'Dodge Reports' offers to the Architects a unique service, known as the 'Bid Counseling Service'. Here is how it works; whenever you get ready to set a date for receiving bids on any of your projects, just pick up the phone and call BALtimore 1-6755 in Kansas City (or the 'Dodge Reports' office nearest you) and ask for 'Bids Counseling Service'. This service will help you to pick a date when the least number of projects are being bid for on that particular date. Also, this will help to insure MORE and BETTER bids from the general and sub-contractors, which eliminates to a lesser degree the possibilities of 'rejecting all bids' because of bids being too high; owner does not feel that enough bids are received, etc., because your project and a dozen others were bid

the same day. Let 'Dodge Reports' help you set a date to receive bids.

And George Crider of the Mid-West Contractor offers a similar service to architects and engineers in their Pick-A-Date Department:

"Mid-West Contractor offers to the Architects and Engineers of the Mid-west area a new service which is designed to secure more and better bids for your projects. Here is how it will work: Before you set a date for the receiving of bids on any of your projects call Mid-West Contractor (Vlct 2-2902) and ask for 'PICK-A-DATE DEPARTMENT'. We will assist you in picking a date for your project which will not conflict in any way with any other projects which may be out for bids at that time. By offering this service we believe that it will eliminate congestion and the problem of many projects being bid on the same date. In this way, we believe we can assist the Architect, the Engineer, and the Owner to obtain more prospective bidders and more competitive bids and eliminate the possibility of bids being rejected because of too few bidders and too high prices.

Let Mid-West Contractor help you picking a date for your project which will be of equal benefit to you and all concerned."

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## **addenda**

- Speaking of bid lettings, as we were in the previous article, a Kansas City contractor ran into a novel approach on plan deposits the other day. Central City, Nebraska was advertising for bids for a \$12,650 tennis court and ice skating rink. When the contractor wrote to the Central City City Hall for plans and specs. he got this answer from City Clerk Morris W. Johnson: "The specs for this project are being sold at \$10.00 each, so if you would like the specs you will have to send \$10.00 for the same." Maybe they hope to take care of the engineer's fee this way.

- Several 1962 A.I.A. post-convention tours are shaping up – most of them headed south from Dallas, as you might expect. The United States Travel Agency announces a 16-day "technical study tour" through six Central American countries. Approximate cost is stated as \$750.00.

We plan to carry an article on Mexico and its potentials for a post-convention visit in a later issue of SKYLINES.

- The A.I.A. has sent out announcements on its 1962 Honor Awards Program. Other than the fact that all entries are due at the Octagon by January 19, 1962, we don't plan to go into any more details. If you'd like more information call the Chapter office.

- The Building Research Institute will hold its fall conference at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D. C., November 28-30. Two of the discussion subjects already announced are "Design for the Nuclear Age" and "Identification of Colors for Building".

- Kivett & Myers & McCallum announce that Angus McCallum, former partner in the firm, has returned to independent practice at 1221 Baltimore. Clarence Kivett and Ralph Myers will continue their practice as Kivett & Myers at 1016 Baltimore.

McCallum is the immediate past-president of the K.C. Chapter, A.I.A., and is a member of the Mo. Assn. of Registered Architects, the American Concrete Institute, the Building Research Institute of the National Academy of Science and the Midwest Concrete Industries Board. He is the A.I.A. representative on the accrediting committee of the National Architectural Accreditation Board, and a member of the A.I.A.'s national committee on facilities for the aging.

● Kay Alexander, George Lund, John Huffman and Joe Shaughnessy, Jr., ably represented the K. C. Chapter in their presentation of a special study of the Eastside Urban Renewal project. The four spent a total of more than 500 man-hours in the study for the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority of Kansas City, Mo. A complete report on this most recent civic contribution of the Chapter will appear in the November SKYLINES.

● Don't forget the Honor Awards Banquet, Wednesday, Nov. 1 at the Muehlebach Hotel. Harold Spitznagel, F.A.I.A. will be the featured speaker.

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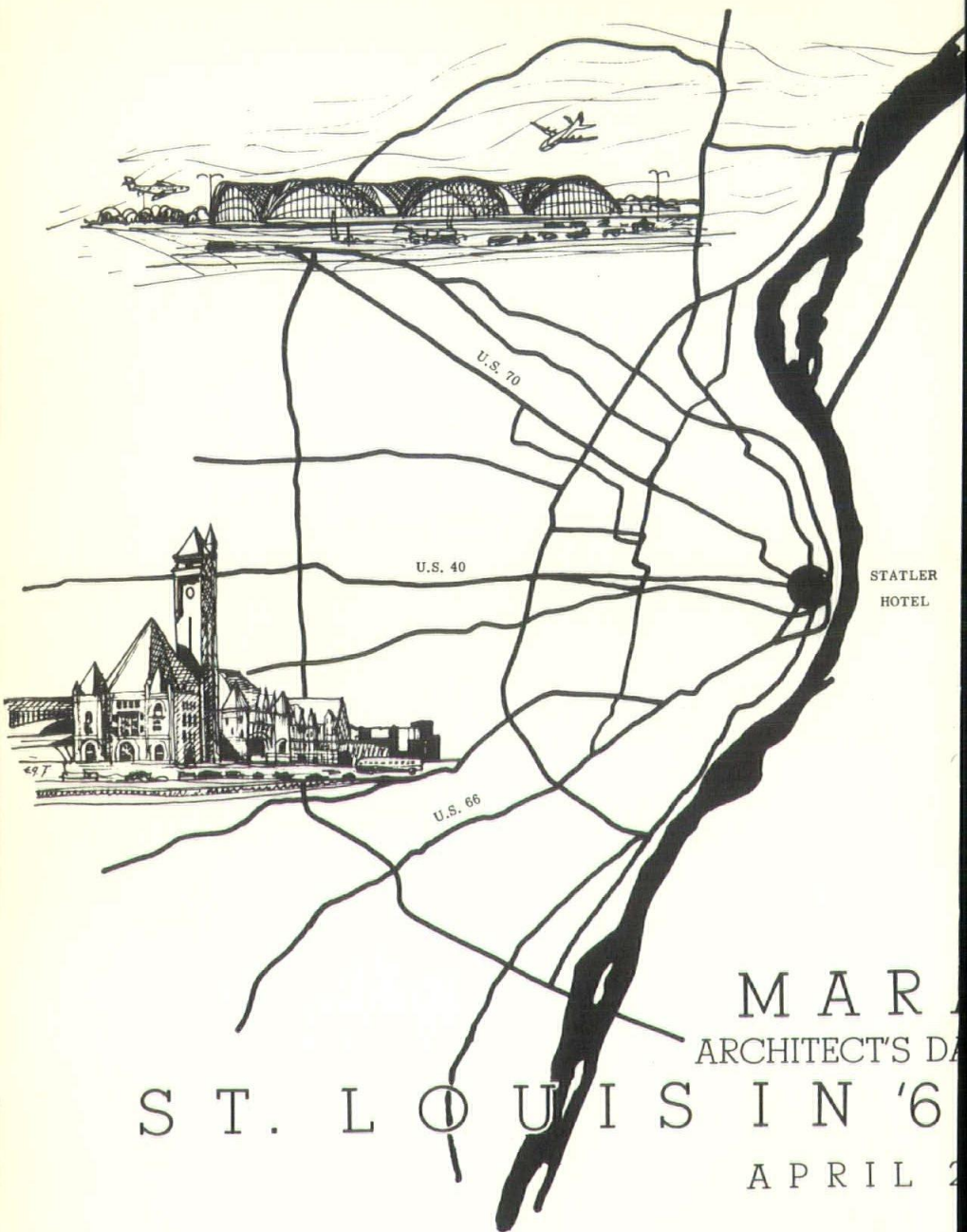


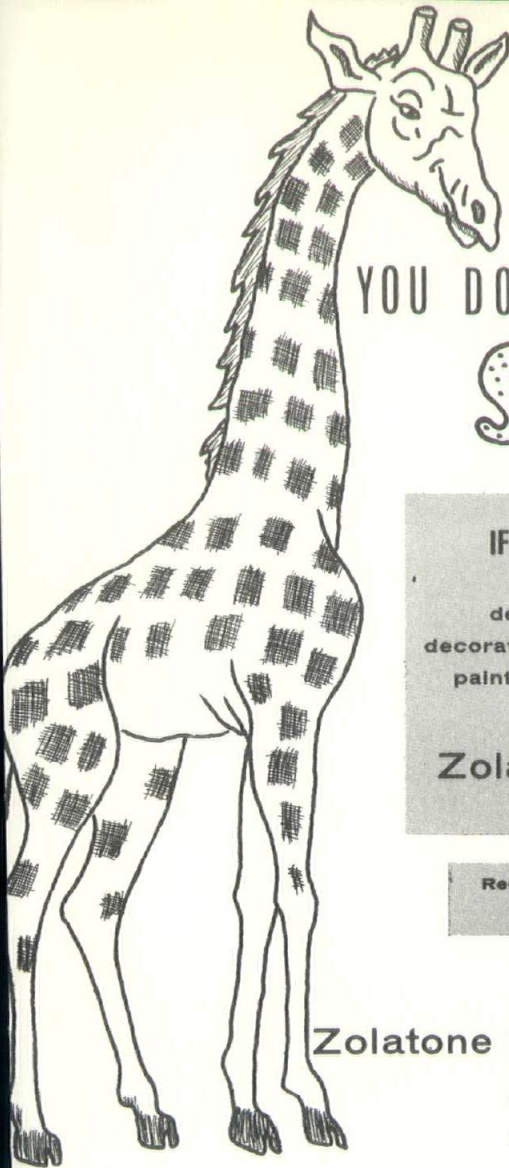
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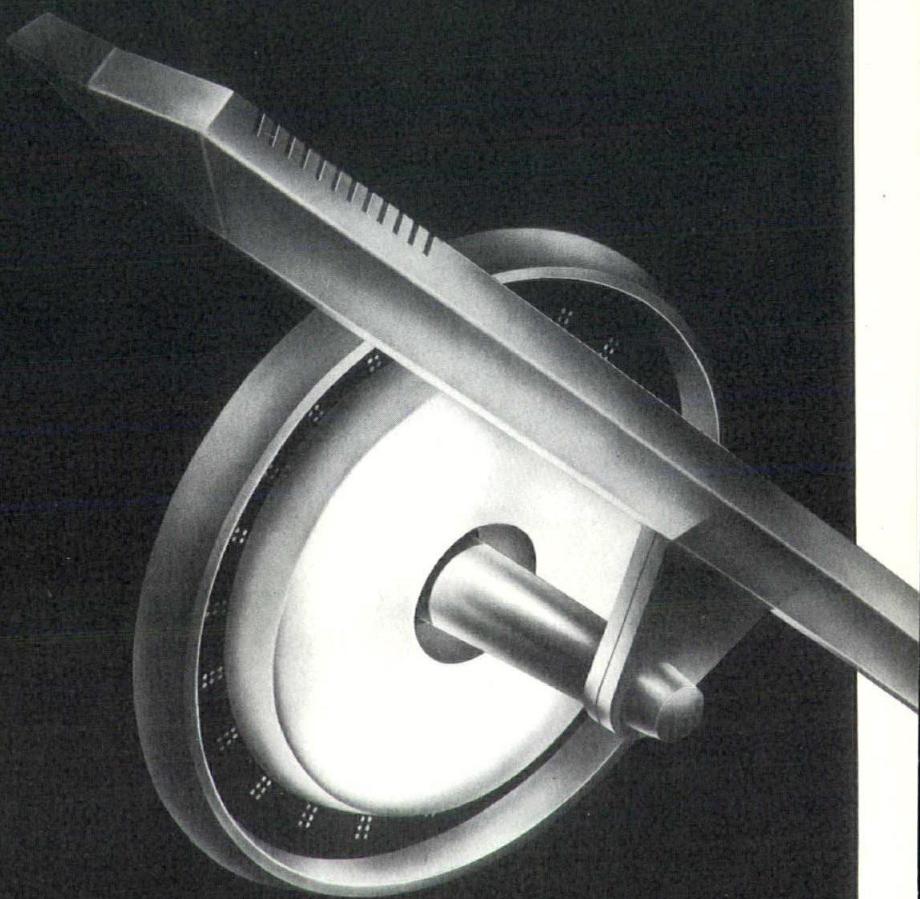
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