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THIS ISSUE:
OUR THUNDEROUS SILENCE

COVER:
Photograph by Paul Burch
Quotation from "A Guide to Kansas City for New Residents" used out of context with permission of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City.

CREDITS:
This issue is a result of generous assistance from:
Judy Walker, James Gohlston, Kansas City Crisis Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City

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metropolitan Kansas City has the forward look. An expanding, diversified economy spanning six counties, it offers an inspiring in which to live and work," accurately describes the environ-ment pictured above as was intended in the September, 1969 JAN-\CITIAN, but the statement becomes incongruous when ed to the young man's environment pictured on the cover. The sas City we proudly describe as The City of Fountains, beautiful s, unique shopping centers and residential areas second to none of real for a significant number of Kansas Citians. METRO- N has estimated there are 64,000 substandard dwelling s in urban Kansas City. This substandard housing is "home" approximately 250,000 people.

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce has generously nited us to use statements from the September, 1969 KAN-\CITIAN out of context, in collage with photographs taken this in our City, to focus on the inconsistency between the "good about which we talk, and life as it is for many Kansas Citians. possible that we who are uniquely qualified to deal with en-\mental issues have become so obsessed with architecture as isness that we have become insensitive to the real needs of City and our clients? Is it possible that we have contributed to deterioration of our environment, directly, by designing for the the community, or indirectly, by maintaining "prudent silence" on issues of community environment?

We are challenged on many fronts to be sensitive and relevant: by WHITNEY YOUNG, JR., Executive Director, National Urban League (Portland, Oregon, 1968 AIA Convention): "The AIA has dis-tinguished itself by its thunderous silence and complete irrelevance to the social revolution."

by THE ARCHITECT'S RESISTANCE (Chicago, Illinois, 1969 AIA Convention): "As expressed in the AIA's Standards of Professional Practice, architectural services should be directed toward 'the ultimate goal of creating an environment of orderliness and beauty.' In a society torn by racism and dominated by institutional violence, in an environment which is demoralizing and inhuman, ultimate goals of Orderliness and Beauty are meaningless. Architecture is not an abstract art existing in a moral void, but part of an economic, political and social process. This process dictates the form and practice of architecture, and in order for architecture to fulfill human needs, the process must be governed by human values, not material ones."

The article by Charles Kahn (University of Kansas) offers an insight to the pressing environmental problems facing our City, explores options open to the university and the profession in dealing with the problem and challenges us as citizens and as architects to re-evaluate our convictions and priorities.
"Kansas City, traditionally mindful of its residents' leisure activities, maintains 108 parks which embrace 7,030 acres. The base of this system was that planned by the founding fathers—one of the outstanding park layouts in the nation."
"Although building continues heavy in multi-family units, a broad spectrum of single family dwellings with price-range variety are available in both new and old construction. Good places to live are sprinkled throughout the counties."
“Perhaps one of Kansas City’s greatest charms is the near unlimited variety of its residential and shopping areas. From quiet tree-shaded older neighborhoods to the fast-developing suburban complexes of luxury apartments and townhouses, the resident can choose pleasant accommodations to suit his income and his tastes.”
"Metropolitan Kansas City abounds in excellent shopping centers strategically located in the six-county area. There are more than 100 of them of various kinds—neighborhood, community and regional."
One of the major problems in the contemporary world is that the pace of our life is so hectic that we rarely have the time or inclination to re-evaluate our standards or reorder our priorities. This is especially true for professionals, and, seemingly, doubly so for architects. For those of us in private practice the press of our daily responsibilities convinces us that we have little time for activities other than those involved with meeting the requirements and deadlines imposed on us by the clients for whom we work. Even for those of us in the universities, the combined pressures of teaching and, hopefully, practice tie us to traditional procedures and priorities which may have little relevance to the real problems of society. Urban life may deteriorate for those of us for whom it has traditionally been exciting and rewarding without that deterioration becoming discomfiting, much less overwhelmingly unbearable. The affluence of our society allows a trade-off which we have as an anomaly of our age is that those whose professional expertise is in many different, albeit important, areas that must become our major preoccupation today.
HE FIRST MEETING OF MO-KAN CONTRACTORS, AN ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY CONTRACTORS SPONSORED BY THE BLACK ECONOMIC UNION. DEAN KAHN, A MEMBER OF THE ACT TEAM (NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION TASK FORCE) ORGANIZED AND STAFFED A SIXTEEN WEEK COURSE IN CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS AND ESTIMATING FOR MO-KAN MEMBERS.

se constraints, an extreme sense of frustration was soon felt by those of us who were involved with the program. We were committed to the premise that forcing either services or programs on a community would not work and yet realizing that community initiative would not generate contact until the community had confidence in the university. Concurrent with this came the realization that architecture alone had neither the resources nor the expertise necessary to consider the complex, inter-related problems of urban life. Still, several embryo connections were established and programs were commenced with the Ballard Center Lawrence, the Model Cities and Black Economic Union in Kansas City, Missouri and the City administration in Kansas City, Kansas. At that time, Kansas City, Kansas, had not as yet received its Model Cities designation. It was soon clear that volunteer personnel could not handle the job that needed to be done and an architect was hired by the School as assistant professor with the specific responsibility of establishing a community design center and communications with existing community organizations. Simultaneously, a group of people representing almost all of the various schools in the University coalesced around a small nucleus of people, one of whom represented the School of Architecture, which, in effect, angled the whole thrust of University involvement. From a rather restricted viewpoint involving only architecture, the University Council for Urban Action initiated a commitment of the multi-disciplinary resources of the University to the problems of the minorities and the poor. Composed of the Deans of all of the schools, with representation from other administrative areas and students, the Council had both immediate access to personnel and the administrative power to make commitments of resources thin the various disciplines. The function of the Council was to initiate University response to problems from the community, keeping with the change in character of the effort, the Community Design Center became the Community Consultation Center of the University of Kansas. With the semi-formal involvement of the University came the real necessity of ordering the priorities and coordinating the activities of the sudden proliferation of schools and departments which, as if waiting for some catalytic action, suddenly became involved in sometimes conflicting and duplicatory programs. The response of the University to these problems was the establishment of the new position of Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Urban Programs.

With the arrival of the Urban Coordinator on the campus came the opportunity to evaluate the few successes and real failures of the first year of the action program. The failures were many, discouraging but not, in retrospect, unexpected. We never were able to establish any working organization with the Model Cities program in Kansas City, Missouri. The reasons for this, I would imagine, are a combination of lack of confidence in the University's commitment to produce, an inefficient and ineffective communications procedure between community and University, and a lack of understanding by the community in grasping the significance and potential of the University resource. In addition, the few new programs which were generated with University support ran afoul of the shrinking funding available from federal sources. At the present time, none of the grant requests prepared during the first year have received funding. It is obvious from a study of the activities of the first year that we were spread far too thin. In shot-gunning the numerous problems which existed in an attempt to quickly initiate a program which was very late in getting started we fell victim to the same lack of establishment of priorities about which we were so aware and critical when it applied to others. We in architecture also failed to encourage strongly enough major participation in the Urban Center by the professionals in the city.
But among the failures were some very real successes. The establish­ment of the University Council for Urban Action and the Com­munity Consultation Center itself are indicative of the movement of the University into the area of direct social-action programs. The importance of this cannot be overestimated. With the Special Assistant to the Chancellor assisting in ordering our goals and setting our priorities, the base which we have built over the past year is, alone, sufficient justification of the work of the past year. We have, in addition, managed to establish some measure of credibility in the communities and our communications with the communities is on a much firmer basis than was ever the case during our first year. Perhaps the most significant move has been in the direction of programs elsewhere but merely reflects our experience with the diversity of the past year. In addition, it appears logical that we would be much better advised to deal with a few programs done very well than with a larger number done less well. We have learned by experience not to be afraid to admit that we are committed to the limit of our ability to produce. We in architecture feel that our first emphasis should be in the area of education, through Title I for example, and through professional activities secondarily. Finally, we are convinced that for the delivery of professional services, the professionals in Kansas City are essential to a valid program.

Our evaluation of the past year has led to several very definite decisions. The first is that, for maximum effectiveness, we should concentrate our efforts in one area. The area we have chosen, for a number of reasons, is Kansas City. This does not minimize the importance of programs elsewhere but merely reflects our experience with the diversity of the past year. In addition, it appears logical that we would be much better advised to deal with a few programs done very well than with a larger number done less well. We have learned by experience not to be afraid to admit that we are committed to the limit of our ability to produce. We in architecture feel that our first emphasis should be in the area of education, through Title I for example, and through professional activities secondarily. Finally, we are convinced that for the delivery of professional services, the professionals in Kansas City are essential to a valid program.

There are many people, especially the young black professionals, who claim that advocacy is dead. I do not believe that, for this particular area, it is. Our relative insularity may, for once, have given us that modest amount of leeway to make the concept function well here where it has failed elsewhere. We are at least in a position to benefit from the errors of other areas where advocacy may no longer be a viable intervention procedure. It cannot be denied, however, that advocacy will face a growing militant resistance on the part of the poor to outside involvement, regardless of the altruism behind that involvement. Imagined evils are as real to the perceiver as if they were real. In this area we do still have, I believe, that small "window" of possible action which will make a cooperative effort possible. What we can no longer afford is any foot dragging or wasted opportunity. We now have no leeway for error or further vacillation. We must hold paramount the recognition of community primacy in the generation and direction of programs aimed at inner-city problems, and we must be able to deliver an acceptable quantity and level of expertise the services require. This involves the absolute necessity of professional input on a major scale in those areas and directions articulated by the community. We must accept the principle of community control as we accept client control in our other activities. We also must, as a profession, make every effort to support on a growing scale and continuing basis the scholarship program for minority students. In the long run, the only acceptable process of change will be that generated by professionals whose roots and identification are with the community. All of this will require that architecture, both school and profession, make a total commitment to environmental improvement with all that is intimated by that statement. It is no longer possible for any of us to accept the dichotomy between the promise of the country and the actuality of our every-day lives, especially for those who by reason of color, place of origin, or religion are denied equi­parity of opportunity. I do not delude myself that many of the problems which we must face are exclusively those of the poor. Many of these problems are common to all of us and becoming more so. We must, however, attack the major, critical problems now or the solution to the others will become irrelevant.
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