Beauty and the budget get together in this all-concrete school

The Avocado Elementary School in Homestead, Florida, demonstrates again the advantages of concrete in even a small size plant.
The structure is striking, yet tastefully modern...with 22 classrooms, cafetorium, library and administrative spaces. For 35,210 square feet, the bid price was $398,390, or $11.32 per square foot.
The precast concrete folded plate roof, supported on prestressed columns of concrete, provided not only an outstanding design feature, but brought important economy. Walls are concrete masonry, stuccoed on the exterior, plastered inside for decorative effect. And included in the modest cost is the elegance of terrazzo floors in the cafetorium.
For school boards seeking, at realistic cost, esthetically pleasing facilities that are also durable, firesafe and easy to maintain, concrete offers the ideal solution. Portland Cement Association

An organization to improve and extend the uses of concrete, made possible by the financial support of most competing cement manufacturers in the United States and Canada.
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EDITORIAL
THANKS

Dick Thevenot

Special thanks from Louisiana Architects go to Representative Joe Keogh
of East Baton Rouge Parish who did a magnificent job as author of our bill
H 856 - Selection of Architects and Engineers. Mr. Keogh is of the opinion
that the present method of awarding state work is not in the best interests of
the people of Louisiana and he has shown his determination to do something
about correcting the problem.

The LAA is grateful also to our bill’s co-authors Representative Algie D.
Brown and Representative Taylor O’Hearn of Caddo Parish and Representative
Burton Angelle of St. Martin Parish.

For his outstanding support of H 856 in the Senate the LAA will long be
grateful to Senator Donny Ray Moore.

The increasing effectiveness of the LAA lobby and the benefits won for
architects are directly related to the friendship and respect our architects
have in the legislature.

There is no better way to maintain these friendships and to win new friends
than to show the legislators that we appreciate their help when they vote for
our bills. Never let it be said that the only time you hear from the architects
is when they need something.

With this in mind each Senator and Representative who voted for H 856
was mailed a personal letter of appreciation from the LAA, and each of the
AIA Chapters have been asked to thank the legislators in their area.

Hopefully individual architects of the LAA will also take time to give a word
of thanks to members of their legislative delegation who voted with us during
the recent session. H 856 was supported by all the senators and by those
members of the House listed below.

Mr. Keogh
moved the final passage of the Bill.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called with the following result:

YEAS

Messrs.—

Adams
Angelle
Barranger
Bel
Bernhard
Boesch
Bordes
Branton
Brown, A. D.
Brown, W. K.
(Caddo)
(Caddo)

Dwyer
Early
Fortier
Pulco
Garrett
Hessler
Hope
Hoffman
Holshead
Hudson
Jewell
Keller
Keogh
Lacy

Dawson
Dupleis

LeBlanc
LeBleau
LeBreton
Lowe
McCormack
McGehee
McMillian
Monson

Nunez
O’Hearn
Patten
Polk
Richardson
Sapir
Schile
Schoenberger
Schwegmann
Sheridan
Simon
Singleton
Smith
Smith
Stinnett
Stinson
Strother
Sullivan
Talbot
Tarver
Ted
Triche
Walker
Williams
Womack
Wood
For one week this year the LAA had a highly successful legislative year. On Thursday, July 7th, the final day of the session the Senate passed by vote of 37 - 0 our major bill H 856 - “Selection of Architects and Engineers.” On Thursday, July 14th, Governor John J. McKeithen vetoed our bill.

LAA President John Webb has arranged to meet with the Governor for the purpose of discussing the intent of the bill and the unsolved problem of equitable and prudent selection of architects for state work.

Hopefully this meeting will produce some proposed solutions which may be considered by the LAA Board of Governors at their August 28 meeting in Shreveport. LAA members are encouraged to express their opinion on this subject to members of the board.

THREE BILLS AFFECTING ARCHITECTS PASSED AND WERE SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR.

SUB-PART A-1. PUBLIC BUILDINGS

§ 1595. Construction and design of state owned buildings; handicapped persons

The standards and specifications set forth in this Section shall apply to all state owned buildings, educational institutions and office buildings which are constructed, renovated or remodeled in whole or in part by the use of state funds, or the funds of any board, commission, agency or department of the state; provided, however, that the provisions of this Sub-Part shall not apply to buildings constructed by parish or city school boards. All such buildings and facilities constructed, renovated or remodeled in this state after the effective date of this Section shall conform to the purpose of making such buildings and facilities accessible to and usable by the physically handicapped, or standards and specifications reasonably similar thereto.

§ 1596. Specifications for grounds, buildings and facilities

A. All public walks shall be at least forty-eight inches wide and shall have a gradient not greater than five percent. These walks shall be of a continuing common surface, not interrupted by steps or abrupt changes in level. Wherever walks cross other walks, driveways or parking lots they shall blend to a common level. A walk shall have a level platform at the top which is at least five feet by five feet, if a door swings out onto the platform or toward the walk. This platform shall extend at least one foot beyond each side of the doorway. A walk shall have a level platform at least three feet deep and five feet wide, if the door does not swing onto the platform or toward the walk. This platform shall extend at least one foot beyond each side of the doorway.

B. At least one parking area shall be made accessible to the building by either placing it at the grade level of the building or providing ramps at curbs or steps between the parking area and the building.

C. Where ramps with gradients are necessary or desired, they shall conform to the following specifications:

(1) The ramp shall not have a slope greater than one foot rise in twelve feet, or 3.33 per cent, or 4 degrees 10 minutes.

(2) The ramp shall have handrails on at least one side, and preferably two sides. The top of handrails shall be thirty-two inches above the surface of the ramp and shall extend one foot beyond the top and bottom of the ramp.

(3) The ramp shall be at least thirty-two inches wide (inside clear measurements) and have a surface that is nonslip.

(4) If a door swings out onto the platform or toward the ramp, the platform of the ramp shall be at least five feet by five feet. This platform shall be clear of door frame.

(5) If the door does not swing onto the platform or toward the ramp, this platform shall be at least three feet deep and five feet wide. This platform shall be clear of door frame.

(6) The bottom of the ramp shall have at least a six foot level run.

(7) Where the ramp exceeds thirty feet in length, level platforms shall be provided at thirty foot intervals. Level platform shall also be provided at turns in the ramp. Platforms shall be at least thirty-two inches wide by five feet long.

D. Each building shall have at least one entrance which is accessible to individuals in wheelchairs. If the building is to be equipped with elevators, this entrance shall provide access to elevators either on a level plane or by ramp.

Doors shall have a clear opening of no less than thirty-two inches when open and shall be operable by a single effort. The floor on the inside and outside of each doorway shall be level for a distance of five feet from the door in the direction the door swings and shall extend one foot beyond each side of the door. Sharp inclines and abrupt changes in level shall be avoided at doorsills. As much as practicable, thresholds shall be flush with the door.

H 100 (Act 204) effective June 28, 1966.

To eliminate architectural barriers to the handicapped in state buildings. Ammends Part III of Title 40 of Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950 to add the following:

Technical information on new laws should be retained by architects for future reference.
E. Steps in stairs shall be designed wherever practicable so as not to have abrupt (square) nosing. Stairs shall have handrails thirty-two inches high and measured from the tread at the face of the riser. Stairs shall have at least one handrail that extends at least eighteen inches beyond the top step and beyond the bottom step. Steps should, wherever possible, and in conformation with existing step formulas, have risers that do not exceed seven inches.

F. Floors shall wherever practicable have a surface that is nonslip. Floors on the same story shall be of a common level throughout or be connected by a ramp in accord with subsection C of this section.

G. (1) An appropriate number of toilet rooms shall be accessible to, and usable by, the physically handicapped and shall have space to allow traffic of individuals in wheelchairs.

(2) An appropriate number of toilet rooms shall have at least one toilet stall that: (a) is four feet and four inches wide, (b) is at least four feet eight inches, preferably five feet deep, (c) has a door, where doors are used, that is thirty-two inches wide and swings out, (d) has handrails on each side, thirty-three inches high and parallel to the floor, one and one-half inches in outside diameter, with one and one-half inches clearance between rail and wall, and fastened securely at ends and center, and (e) has a water closet with the seat twenty inches from the floor.

(3) An appropriate number of toilet rooms shall have narrow aprons, which when mounted at standard height are usable by individuals in wheelchairs; or shall have lavatories mounted two inches or more from the wall and thirty-one inches from bottom rim to floor for knee space and accessibility to individuals in wheel chairs.

(4) Mirrors and shelves shall be provided above lavatories at a height as low as practicable and no higher than forty inches above the floor, measured from the top of the shelf and the bottom of the mirror.

(5) An appropriate number of toilet rooms for men shall have an appropriate number of wall-mounted urinals with the opening of the basin nineteen inches from the floor, or shall have floor-mounted urinals that are on level with the main floor of the toilet room.

(6) An appropriate number of toilet rooms shall have an appropriate number of towel racks, towel dispensers, and other dispensers and disposal units mounted no higher than forty inches from the floor.

H. An appropriate number of water fountains or other water-dispensing means shall be mounted thirty inches above the floor and in a way which will make them usable by the physically handicapped. Water fountains or coolers shall be hand-operated or hand-and-foot operated.

I. Where elevators are to be provided they shall be accessible to, and usable by the physically disabled at all levels of the building, normally used by the general public. Elevators shall be designed to allow for traffic by wheelchairs.

J. Switches and controls for light, heat, ventilation, windows, draperies, elevators, fire alarms, and all similar controls of frequent or essential use, shall be placed within the reach of individuals in wheelchairs.

K. Every effort shall be exercised to obviate all hazards to individuals with physical disabilities.

L. In addition to the requirements contained in Subsection A through K of this Section, each building to which this Sub-Part applies shall comply with the American Standard Specifications for Making Buildings and Facilities Accessible to and Usable by the Physically Handicapped, as approved on October 31, 1961 by the American Standards Association.

§ 1597. Enforcement of Sub-Part

A. The state fire marshal shall be responsible for enforcement of Sections 1595 and 1596. When conducting inspections authorized by R.S. 40:1595 and 1596 the authorized agents of the state fire marshal shall determine whether each building covered by Section 1595 has met the specifications set forth in Section 1596. If the state fire marshal or his agents find that the specifications set forth in Section 1596 are not met, the state fire marshal shall order the state fire marshal. No construction, remodeling or renovation of the building to make the necessary alterations within a reasonable time specified by the state fire marshal. No construction, remodeling or renovation shall be finally accepted by the authority ordering it unless the state fire marshal has furnished the authority with a certificate attesting that the construction, remodeling or renovation has met the standards set forth in this Sub-Part.

B. On projects where compliance with any regulation of this Sub-Part is judged by the project architect or engineer to be unreasonable, the architect or engineer may so notify the contracting authority in writing, in which event the contracting authority may authorize in writing a deviation from the compliance with such regulation. (Paragraph B. is an LAA sponsored amendment.)
(1) In the event that the work or construction, is new, then "Work or labor is begun or material is furnished" is defined as having begun when either excavation has been started so that it can be observed on inspection, or material has been furnished and delivered to the job site which is visible upon inspection and which material when delivered had a value in excess of One Hundred and No/100 ($100.00) Dollars.

(2) When the work or construction consists of the improvement, repair or reconstruction, then the phrase, "work or labor is begun or any material is furnished" is defined as work or labor or material furnished exceeding the value of One Hundred and No/100 ($100.00) Dollars, and which has been performed or delivered at a time not more than thirty (30) days immediately preceding the recording of a bona fide mortgage or a bona fide vendor's lien.

(3) In any event, if an affidavit, duly signed by an architect or a licensed engineer, before a Notary Public, has been filed in the Office of the Clerk and Recorder of the Parish in which the property is located or in the case of Orleans Parish, in the Mortgage Office thereof, which affidavit certifies that he has inspected the job site on a certain date and at a certain time and that no work has begun or material furnished to the building site, either on new construction or on the improvement, repair or reconstruction of existing construction; and such affidavit is filed immediately prior to the filing of a bona fide mortgage or bona fide vendor's lien, or within two business days thereafter, then any lender, including banks, savings and loan associations, life insurance companies, credit unions or other institutional lenders, and other interested parties may rely on the facts recited in said affidavit and shall maintain any and all privileges to and priority over other liens and claims as conferred by Title 9, of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, and particularly, 9:4801, 9:4812 and 9:4813. The filing of such an affidavit will in no wise prejudice the rights of the furnishers of labor or material to file and perfect liens to which they may be entitled, but if materials have been furnished after the affidavit of the engineer or architect has been filed, then a materialmen's lien is subordinated to the bona fide mortgage or vendor's lien.

(B) Work performed by an architect, engineer, or any other professional person to whom a privilege is granted shall not be termed "work" within the meaning of this section, but this provision shall not deprive said profession or professions of their lien and privileges as contained in this chapter.

(C) Any engineer or architect who shall negligently or willfully file a false affidavit under this Act or who fails to record an affidavit when required to do so, shall be liable to any materialmen or laborers who may have otherwise been entitled to a lien or privilege hereunder.
BILLS OPPOSED BY THE LAA

HOUSE BILL 533

Liability of Contractors (Reported without action by House Judiciary A Committee and later withdrawn) This bill would have nullified any agreements whereby contractors could assume liability for damages or personal injury caused by others.

This bill if permitted to pass would thus have done away with "hold harmless" and indemnification clauses in owner-contractor agreements which protect architects from being liable for construction accidents not connected with faulty design or specifications.

The LAA arguments against this bill were as follows:

1. There isn't any reason why a contractor should be prohibited from assuming any risk the owner requests and agrees to pay for in the bid. Adopting this law would be like saying that the owner can not require any additional protection, even when he is willing to pay the cost.

2. This law would prohibit a contractor from making a legal contract that he is willing and anxious to enter into. There is no requirement that any contractor enter into any contract that he does not want to undertake. If, however, a contractor is willing to undertake a contract giving him specific responsibilities, he should not be prohibited by law from doing so.

3. This statute would make it unlawful for the State of Louisiana to protect the State from the negligent acts of State employees who are working on a construction project together with the contractor's employees where their joint negligence contributes to an accident.

4. Since the contractor has control over the construction site, there is no reason why he should not be held responsible for acts of negligence on the construction site if he is willing to assume this responsibility. If he is not willing to assume this responsibility, he is not obligated by law to do so.

Defeat of this bill results in Louisiana architects being spared a sizable liability insurance expense or liability risk.

HOUSE BILL 865

Establishing a licensing board for residential designers (Reported unfavorably by House Judiciary C Committee) This bill would have given residential designers professional status without requiring that they have professional training or meet professional standards.

The LAA arguments against this bill were as follows:

1. There is no more reason to license so-called residential designers than to license purchasing agents, non-certified accountants and radio announcers.

2. In passing a law providing for a registration board for these people, the grandfather's clause would permit anyone who has ever designed the simplest type of "residence" to become a "residential architect." Thousands of carpenters, contractors, and general handymen would qualify, and thus dilute the sub-professional status residential designers aspire to, and the professional status of the practice of architecture. The public would not fully understand the difference between an "architect" and a "designer," or between the qualifications and standards of each group.

3. Many architectural students who earn their way through college and gain much of their early experience by designing houses would be prohibited from practicing under the licensing requirements of this bill.

Defeat of this bill protects the professional status of architects and prevents the public from being misled into believing that residential designers are a type of architect who can render the services of a trained professional.
DEMAND GOOD HOUSE DESIGN

A SPECIAL NEWS FEATURE FROM THE A. I. A. ON DESIGN TRENDS IN AMERICAN HOUSING.

It's high time that Americans closed the "design gap" in their housing, says The American Institute of Architects. A spokesman for the national professional society of architects puts it this way: "We have more money to spend and we spend more of it on our housing than anyone else in the world. We probably know more about building materials and construction than anybody else. We also know more about using design as a tool to create human comfort and efficiency. It's about time we put all of this know-how together and gave Americans housing worthy of Americans."

A number of our leading homebuilders, working with architects, are trying to do this now and the results are beginning to be felt, says AIA. Another significant factor is that leading lenders' organizations, such as the United States Savings and Loan League, are asking staff and consulting architects to help them set up design standards for granting loans. Several educational booklets on design have already been sent to lenders by the association.

Design Principles

But the vital factor, according to the architects' society, is public demand for good design. It is growing steadily as more and more people in today's buyer market learn to distinguish the good from the bad—and refuse to buy the latter. The AIA believes that any intelligent person with a grasp of basic principles can quickly learn to distinguish between good and bad design. And it's in his interest to do so, AIA points out, for several very good reasons: (1) Good design makes more efficient use of space—you get more for your money; (2) As public and lenders grow more knowledgeable, the badly designed house becomes a poor investment; (3) The well-designed house, by appealing to the sensory apparatus which every human possesses, is simply a lot more fun to live in.

The main factors which should influence the siting of the house on its lot, AIA says, are the view, sun control, terrain, and the need for privacy. If the lot looks a mountain, ocean or bay, the house may have to be oriented to the west to give the family the enjoyment of a breathtaking view. In such cases, the owner will decide to put up with the heat and glare of west sunlight. In the great majority of cases, however, the lot has not an all superior view and the owner has to "make" a view. Then sensible sitting rules should be followed. Major glass areas should be oriented southward. In the summer, when the sun rides high, a roof overhang will block out glare and heat.

Terrain and Privacy

Terrain and privacy often go hand in hand. The good designer works with the terrain, not against it. Changes in grade and elevation may allow design of an interesting multi-level house. By contrast, split-level houses on level lots make little sense. Hills and natural growth may act as sun shields and give the family a private life both in and out of doors. Privacy from the outside world generally depends on five factors: window placement and size, planting, distance from neighbors or the street, terrain, and obstacles. Among the latter are fences, screens, shrubs, and the placement of such structural elements as garage, carport, and opaque walls. In one admittedly extreme case, an architect faced a problem in which the only available area for a private patio faced the street and the local building code forbade a fence. Yet the family wanted a private area outdoors. Solution: He sank the patio three feet below grade and planted dense, three-foot hedges around it, thus creating a six-foot barrier.

The good designer should make maximum use of the lot for family enjoyment. The worst thing that can happen is to have all the rooms arranged in a uniform pattern, facing the street regardless of lot size or/and shape.

Quality of House

The quality of the house itself depends fundamentally upon the effective arrangement of space—inside and out. Shrubbery should not be pruned so as to cover up a bad foundation and create a pedestal on which the house appears to stand. It should stand as sculpture in space or create natural walls, which define outdoor spaces.

The doorway should offer a dignified, even formal, introduction to the family. As one experienced architect has said, "it should make the act of entering and departing a special act, denoting a transition from one experience to the other."

A common fault in bad design is the use of too many wall materials. One type of wood contrasted with one type of masonry may provide an effective contract. But one type of wood and two kinds of masonry on the same house may create a jumble of textures. The exterior should be a visual reflection of the interior floor plan. Neglect of this principle results in illogical changes in exterior elevation and odd protruberances. The roof line should be simple, logical, and strong. When you walk around the house, you shouldn't get the impression that you had walked behind a Hollywood set. A house, like a piece of sculpture, should be handsome when seen from any vantage point. It shouldn't change materials and plan just because it turns the corner. It shouldn't feature scroll-work and carpenter bric-a-brac. The "cute" effect is usually a bad one. Windows should be similar in proportion and detailing.

Logical Interior

Inside the house, guests should move naturally toward the proper entry without confusion. An area where adults and children can remove boots and winter clothing is desirable. The family should be able to enter from the kitchen or family room and be able to get to the bedrooms without going through the living room. Active living areas should be separated from quiet sleeping areas. Preferably, the living room should be a dead-end space, with all traffic coming into the space from one end. While the trend in bedrooms is toward smallness, the child's bedroom should be more than a bunkroom. It should be sizeable and pleasant enough for him to spend happy hours in it. The husband and wife should be able to move around comfortably in their bedroom and use it for reading and leisure as well as for sleeping.
The Award Jury cited the Shreveport IBM building as "a clean, straightforward and simple expression and a fine selection to the problem. It provides great flexibility of interior space and should serve the needs of the client quite well. The scale is sympathetic to the residential area."

The design concept of the building was influenced by an exceptionally interesting and demanding site. The site slopes sharply down from a service road at the rear to the major avenue. Since this slope was almost one story high in the length of the building, the two-story building, in effect, is floating on columns at the front over the main entrance drive. By excavating the balance of the lower level, the service entrance is concealed from public view at one side and leads directly into the shop and mechanical equipment areas.

With the service facilities thus removed from the parking lot side of the building, the secondary (and most used) entrance was designed to be as inviting as the main entrance. The parking lot at the "rear" is screened from view by a belt of large evergreen shrubs which also serve as a screen wall for the cooling tower.

All four sides of the two office floors are enclosed from the elements by floor to ceiling solar grey glass protected from the hot southern sun by unique concrete overhangs on all sides. These special concrete overhangs were designed as vertical elements suspended from and an integral part of the projection of the floor and roof construction. The exposed concrete is rubbed and finished to provide a smooth, handsome and maintenance-free surface.
"Flexible Modern Interior"

66 AIA GULF STATES REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Photos by Frank Lotz Miller

Service Drive
The Fifth in a Series of Profiles on Fellows of the American Institute of Architects from Louisiana

PROFILE OF A FELLOW

G. SCOTT SMITHERSON, FAIA

"The architectural profession today stands at the door of a challenging and rewarding future."

"If we individually and collectively move forward in taking our responsibility for leadership in the "War on Community Ugliness," then we will find that others in our communities will be anxious to join in the struggle. We will find that professional men, business people, politicians, and other civic leaders have been increasingly concerned, and they will recognize that the leadership naturally emanates from architects. With this recognition and as improvements in our visual environment are made we will find that the profession has grown in stature, influence and demand, are not being filled at all, and as we will see the much talked about "Second America" become a world far better for all to live in.

If we do not take our proper place in the "War" then the leadership will be found among the least qualified and architecture as a profession will gradually become one of mere surface concerns. The package dealer will find us but one member of the team of economists, sociologists, planners, engineers, etc. and relegated to designing street furniture and perhaps facades for individual buildings after all the important decisions have been made by others.

The American Institute of Architects has provided each Chapter with tools, 'weapons,' procedures and guidelines, many of which were developed in successful efforts in Chapters much like our own. The individual members must now urge their Chapters to push forward with this program for it is already late."

When you meet G. Scott Smitherman, FAIA you'll know instinctively that he is a leader. His record as an architect, a member of the AIA and a community decision maker will give depth to your first impression.

BORN: 4 January 1921, Shreveport, La.

EDUCATION: South Highlands School, St. John's High School, Byrd High School, McCallie School, Chattanooga, Tenn. (Graduated 1939), University of Pennsylvania, Phila., Pa.; 1939 - 1943; 1945 - 1946 Bach. of Arch.; Harvard University, 1946 - 1947 Master of Arch.

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