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# Selection of Architects

Editorial Comments

4-A MORNING ADVOCATE, Baton Rouge, Oct. 19, 1966

## • SELECTION OF ARCHITECTS

Gov. McKeithen has adopted a sound new policy in following recommendations of the Louisiana Architects Association for a more orderly and more careful selection of architects to work on state projects. In essence the new executive order issued by the governor on this matter says that each agency involved in construction shall make a careful review of the experience and qualifications of architects it recommends, offering a panel of names, to do the special jobs required. Architects will be required to submit data on their qualifications and record.

We don't look for this new order to bring about elimination of a policy favored by all administrations, namely, the selection of architects who are friendly to the administration in power where at all possible. We do think the new policy will do much to make certain that whoever is chosen as architect for a project is fully qualified. Since there will be more opportunity for architects to make known their availability and experience and to have this placed on the record, any deviation from the selection of a qualified architect will be readily apparent and easily subject to public criticism.

The move taken by the governor is a good one. It should prove sound and perhaps a basis for establishment in law.

*Copies of Executive Order No. 50 are available upon request from the LAA Office, Suite 200, Jack Tar Capitol House Hotel, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.*

The determination and hard work of the LAA has paid off for its members in the creation of a more equitable method of selecting architects for state work. Governor John J. McKeithen's Executive Order No. 50 gives the agency using the project the power to interview architects and present a list of three from which the state may make its final selection. This new order hopefully will eliminate political favor as the primary qualification for the selection of architects.

In the Executive Order, architects for the first time are clearly given the authority to select their own consulting engineers. Also for the first time, where qualifications are substantially equal, preference will be given to architectural firms whose principal office is in Louisiana.

Admittedly this new method of selecting architects is not perfect, but it is a positive step forward and the basis for future improvements which will serve the best interests of the people of Louisiana.

Governor McKeithen's expression of confidence in the counsel of the LAA gives new status to this organization's role as the voice of the architectural profession.



# Selection

Selecting an architect can sometimes be the most difficult — and yet the most important — part of the building process.

It is difficult because there can be no standard, cut-and-dried method of selection like the system of competitive bidding for contractors. The architect is a professional man whose work represents a small portion of the total contract cost; however, his work makes competitive bidding possible on the major portion of the project. The selection process is important

## of

because it takes a good architect to produce good architecture.

The closest thing to an established system of selection is the formal architectural competition, but it is best suited to

# the right Architect

large scale projects and public clients. The competition is conducted under ground rules established by the American Institute of Architects; the client hires a professional advisor, sets up a professional jury, and invites architects to submit designs based on a common program, compensating all concerned for their time and effort.

For the average client, who cannot and should not go to the trouble of competition, the search for an architect begins with a list of names. Some of the names may have come from friends and associates, some from magazines, some from the local AIA chapter, and some from awards given or exhibitions conducted by the chapter.

### Make a List

If these sources are unproductive, the client's best bet is to visit some new build-

ings of similar function, and to find out who designed those he likes.

Even the first step, the making of the list, involves some difficult decisions. Should the client consider only local firms? Should he if it is a big project, consider only big firms? Should he consider only architects with previous experience in the kind of building he plans? There are arguments on both sides of each question. Previous experience in the same kind of building will be helpful, for example. But architects tend to be generalists and good solutions can come from fresh thinking about a new problem. Similarly, the big firm offers a wide range of services and specialists but the small one might give more executive time to the project.

Once such decisions are made, the client contacts each of the architects on his list, explains the project, and invites them to submit information about themselves and their work. This information becomes the basis for a first culling, and those who remain on the list are invited for an interview.

This first face-to-face contact between the client and the prospective architects can be either in their offices or the client's. In the normal course of the conversation, the client further explains the project, and asks the architect about his office and his experience. The architect attempts to relate his capabilities to the client's needs.

### Find Compatibility

An important function of the interview is to determine whether the client and a given architect find themselves compatible. They must work closely together on the project, and a great deal of its success depends on how well they get along. In fact, if an owner already knows an architect, likes him, and respects his work, he may be well advised to dispense with formal procedures and retain him without further ado.

The client should not expect the architect to submit sketches of what the building might look like, because such sketches are without value, based as they must be on limited study. Such sketches almost invariably have unworkable elements and lead to inaccurate cost esti-

mates. They are also in violation of the AIA's code of ethics.

An invitation to an even more serious ethical violation is to ask the architect to compete for work on the basis of how much he charges as a fee. This brings up the question of membership in AIA. The national professional society is the first to say that there are competent architects who don't belong to AIA. But, the principals of about 90 per cent of the nation's independent architectural firms are AIA members, and AIA does have stringent rules against unethical practice.

The client now makes a final culling of the list, down as far as two or three candidates. His next and last chore is to personally investigate the work of each, for the proof of an architect is in his buildings.

### Visit Buildings

The client should let the architect suggest which of his buildings to look into. He should then steel himself not to look for the shadow of his own building in them. Shaped to the client's own needs, it might turn out to be something quite unlike anything the architect had previously designed.

If possible, it is also a good idea to talk to the owners and even the contractors to see how well they thought the project went.

Only then should the final choice be made. It is a time-consuming process, but it is worth it. Buildings don't come in packages, and hiring a fast-talking "packager" whose interest in design is subordinate to his markup on construction is an invitation to an investment loss. The more effort the client puts into the selection of a competent architect, the less likely he is to get a building that costs a lot and neither looks nor works well. And that is a terribly prominent permanent kind of mistake to make.

. . . is Key Step in Building / An A. I. A. Special News Feature



# Architecture and the Law

*In MILLER VS. DEWITT, on November 30, 1965, the Illinois Supreme Court held that an architect might be liable for failure to stop a contractor from using hazardous methods in shoring up work in progress, even though the specifications provided that the contractor "shall provide all bracing, shoring, and sheeting as required for safety and for the proper execution of the work."*

by Alvin B. Rubin

The plaintiffs in this suit were workmen who were injured by the collapse of the roof of a school gymnasium on which they were working as employees of a contractor. The architects and an architects association who filed a brief as *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) urged that a supervising architect has neither the right nor the duty to control the methods used by the contractor but only the duty to see that the construction when completed meets the plans and specifications contracted for by the owner. The plaintiffs argued that, under the facts of the case, the architects had a duty to prevent the contractor from carrying out the work in an unsafe manner.

The work involved was remodeling and enlarging a gymnasium. It required the removal of the west wall of the gymnasium, the removal of a proscenium truss from that point to the new west wall of the new gymnasium, removal of two steel columns in the old west wall, which together with the proscenium truss originally supported the west ends of the four east-west roof trusses, and the substitution of a new north-south main-bearing truss into which the west ends of the old roof trusses and the east ends of the trusses in the new structure would be fastened. The contractor shored up the east-west trusses during the transition by means of columns of tubular steel scaffolding. After the shoring was installed, and the east-west trusses were removed, the roof collapsed, injuring the workmen.

The architects had not prepared specifications for the temporary shoring of the roof, nor did they compute on the plans

the load that would be placed on the shores, or provide the contractor with a safety factor to be used in the shoring. They did not oversee or inspect the shoring as used. The architects urged that none of this was their responsibility because the contract between the owner and the contractor provided in part that:

"The Contractor shall provide all bracing, shoring and sheeting as required for safety and for the proper execution of the work.

The court said:

"Despite the argument of the architects that the shoring here was a method or technique of construction over which they had no control, we feel that under the terms of the contracts the architects had the right to interfere if the contractor began to shore in an obviously unsafe and hazardous manner. We agree with the architects that they had no duty to specify the method the contractor would use in shoring, but we believe that under the terms of these contracts the architect had the right to insist upon a safe and adequate use of that method."

The court then concluded that if the architects knew "or in the exercise of reasonable care should have known that the shoring was inadequate and unsafe, they had the right and corresponding duty to stop the work until the unsafe condition had been remedied." If they failed to do this, they would be liable to the workmen who could foreseeably be injured if the shoring were inadequate. "... [T]he shoring operation was of such importance that the jury could find from the evidence

that the architects were guilty of negligence in failing to inspect and watch over the shoring operation."

However, the court did find that it was not negligence on the part of the architects to fail to plan the shoring or provide specifications for it. It was not the usual or customary practice for architects to do this. "... [E]xcept for the duty to stop work in the event of an obviously hazardous dereliction on the part of the contractor, the architects were under no duty with regard to the methods, means or techniques used by the contractor to shore the roof.

The court also held that the architects could seek indemnity from the contractor if the injury was directly caused by his improper construction methods and techniques used, and if the architects were liable only by reason of their failure to stop work on the job.

This case represents a significant extension of the architect's exposure to liability for hazards resulting from the methods of work used by the contractor. If this decision is generally applied, the architect is faced with a dilemma: if he undertakes to investigate the safety of the contractor's work methods, he may encounter objections from the contractor. In addition he may expose himself to further possible liability to workmen and third persons if he does not adequately perform the job he has undertaken. And of course he will be required to do more work for no additional fee. On the other hand, if he leaves all of these matters to the contractor, the architect may be held responsible for failure to see that the work is being performed with proper safety precautions.



# First Honor Award

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## JURY COMMENTS:

This sympathetic solution to a problem involving additions to a simple, almost austere, board and batten Victoria Church, deserves high praise. Each element of the plan is well studied. This enhances strongly the original concept. The overall result will be distinguished, if executed as proposed.

There is a sensitive recognition of specific existing values, including the lawn, the trees, the exterior materials, the window and door details. The disciplined selection of such elements compliment the original buildings. One bold move—the relocation and reuse of the old steeple—is essential to complete this handsome group.

## JURY:

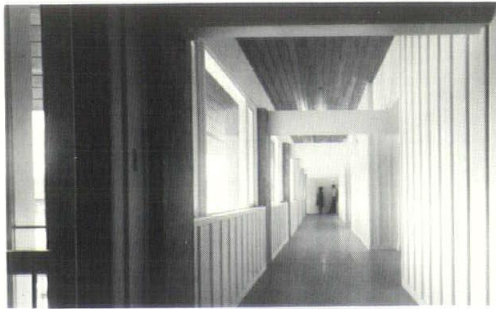
Morris Ketchum, Jr., F.A.I.A.  
Chloethiel W. Smith, F.A.I.A.  
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ADDITIONS TO GRACE MEMORIAL CHURCH (EPISCOPAL) • HAMMOND, LOUISIANA



First Stage

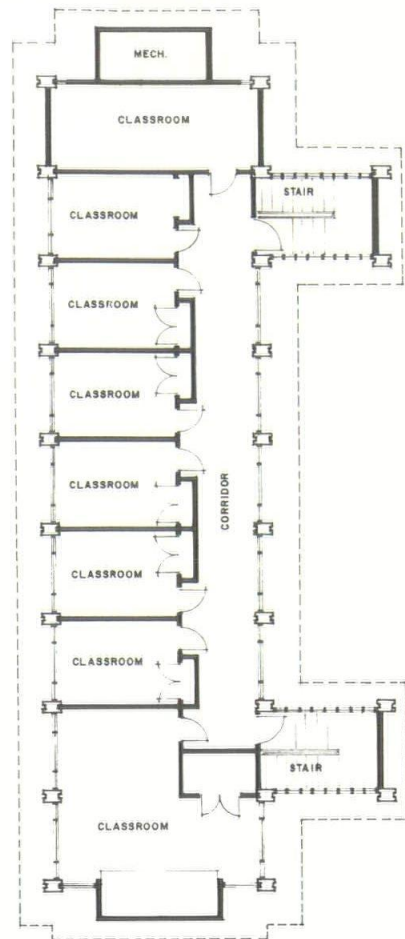




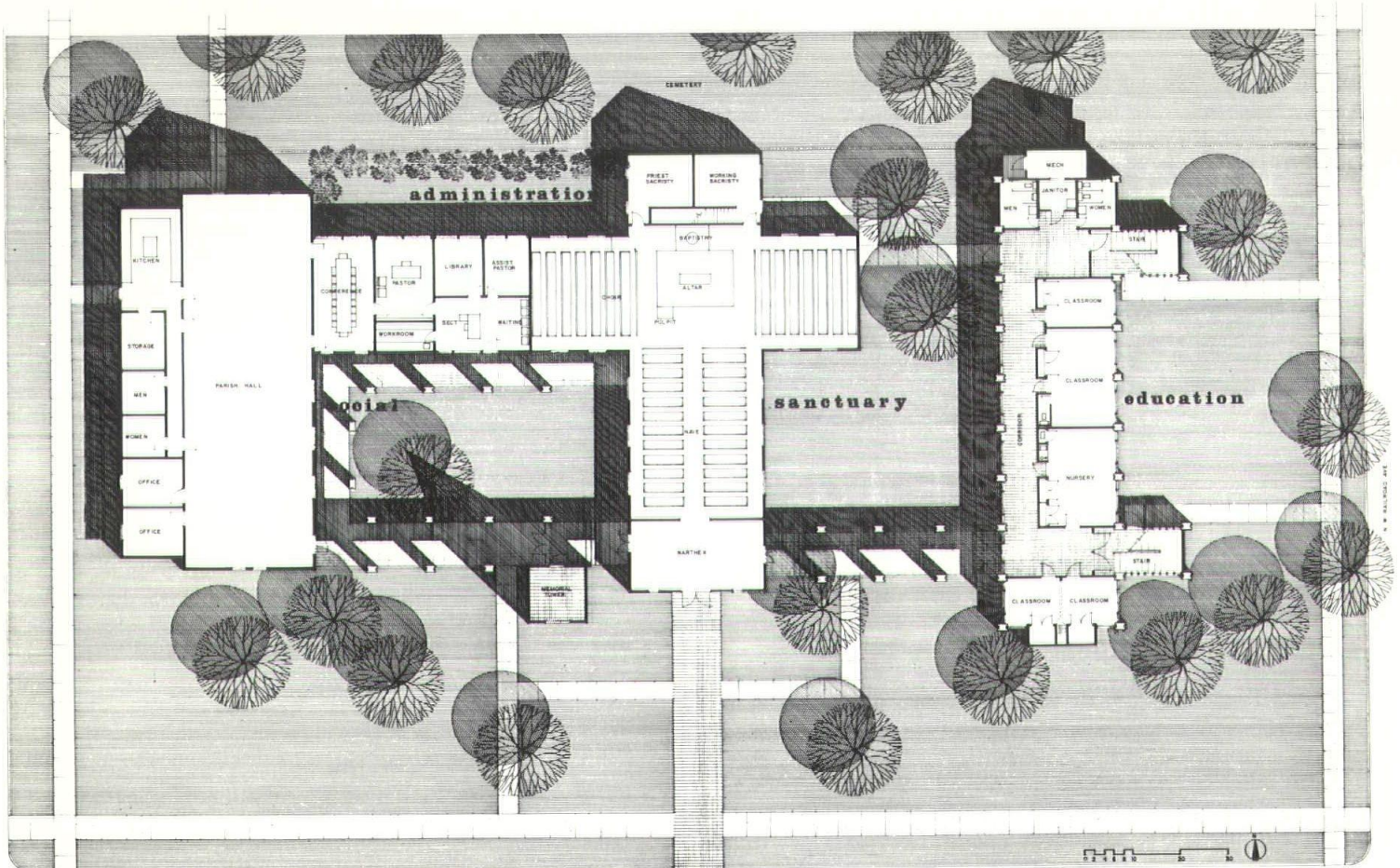
Corridor



Educational Building



Second Floor



Final Proposal



Photographs by Dave Gleason

## ADDITIONS TO GRACE MEMORIAL CHURCH (EPISCOPAL) • HAMMOND, LOUISIANA

In this addition of an educational building to a historic gothic revival board and batten church the tri-partite problems of preservation, continuity, and growth were faced.

The educational building, shown in photographs, re-uses the board and batten exterior and interior. Structural concrete columns and laminated beams are exposed throughout, defining the classroom spaces. The vertical and lineal quality and the gabled massing of the older buildings are continued.

The program for the church, which will be the second phase of construction, calls for a doubling of the seating capacity and plan changes in accordance with the new attitudes toward liturgy without disturbing the small scale intimacy of the present interior. These would be accomplished by moving the altar forward and adding crossing naves for additional seating. The tower will be made free standing and preserved as a memorial to allow a narthex.



Educational Building







# News Notes

## New LAA Officers for '67

The highlight of the LAA's annual meeting in Baton Rouge, October 14, was the election of the new officers for 1967. Shown here from left to right are: Frank N. Brocato, AIA, of Baton Rouge, who was returned for a second term as Secretary-Treasurer; Perry Brown, AIA, of Baton Rouge, Vice President; George M. Leake, AIA, of New Orleans, President; and Howard Sherman, AIA, of Shreveport, Vice President.

## Licensing Exam Set

A four day examination for architectural licensing will be held January 25, 26, 27 and 28, in Room 41 at LSU's Hill Memorial Building (Old Library). Persons aspiring to be licensed should file their application before November 25, with Mr. H. D. Ruffin, Director of the Department of Occupational Standards, P. O. Box 44095, Capitol Station, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804.



Gerald J. McLindon

## New School Director . . .

The new Director of LSU's School of Environmental Design is Gerald J. McLindon, a native of Bathgate, Scotland.

Environmental Design combines the three academic departments of fine arts, architecture and landscape architecture.

McLindon served as Director of the recently completed Market Street Development Project in San Francisco and as the Director of the Metropolitan Planning Commission in Little Rock, Arkansas. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture and a Diploma in Civic Design from the University of Liverpool in England, a Diploma in College teaching from Harvard University and Radcliffe College and a Master of Landscape Architecture Degree from Harvard.

A member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, McLindon was the recipient of the Earl of Derby Prize for architecture at the Liverpool College of Technology, a Fulbright Scholarship to Harvard University and a Uriel H. Crocker World Wide Scholarship in landscape architecture to Harvard.

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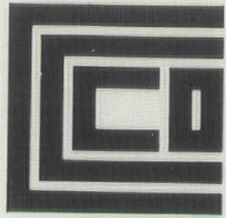
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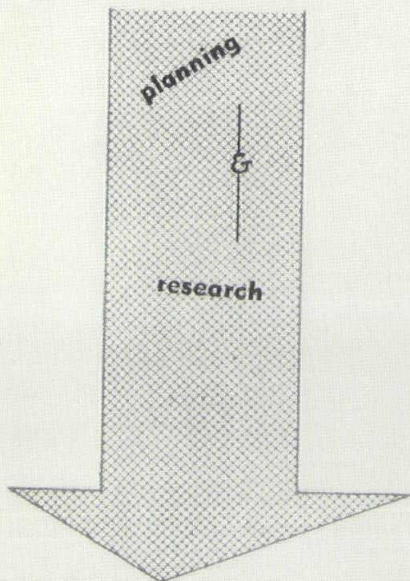
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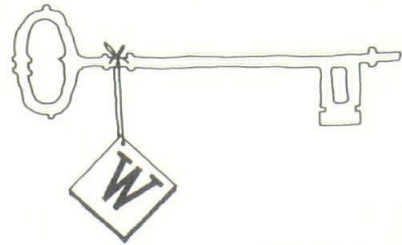
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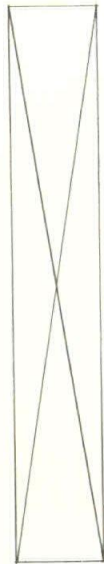


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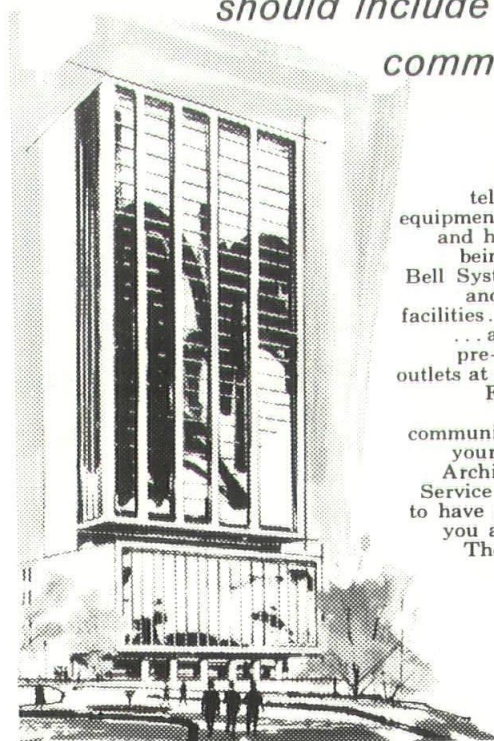
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