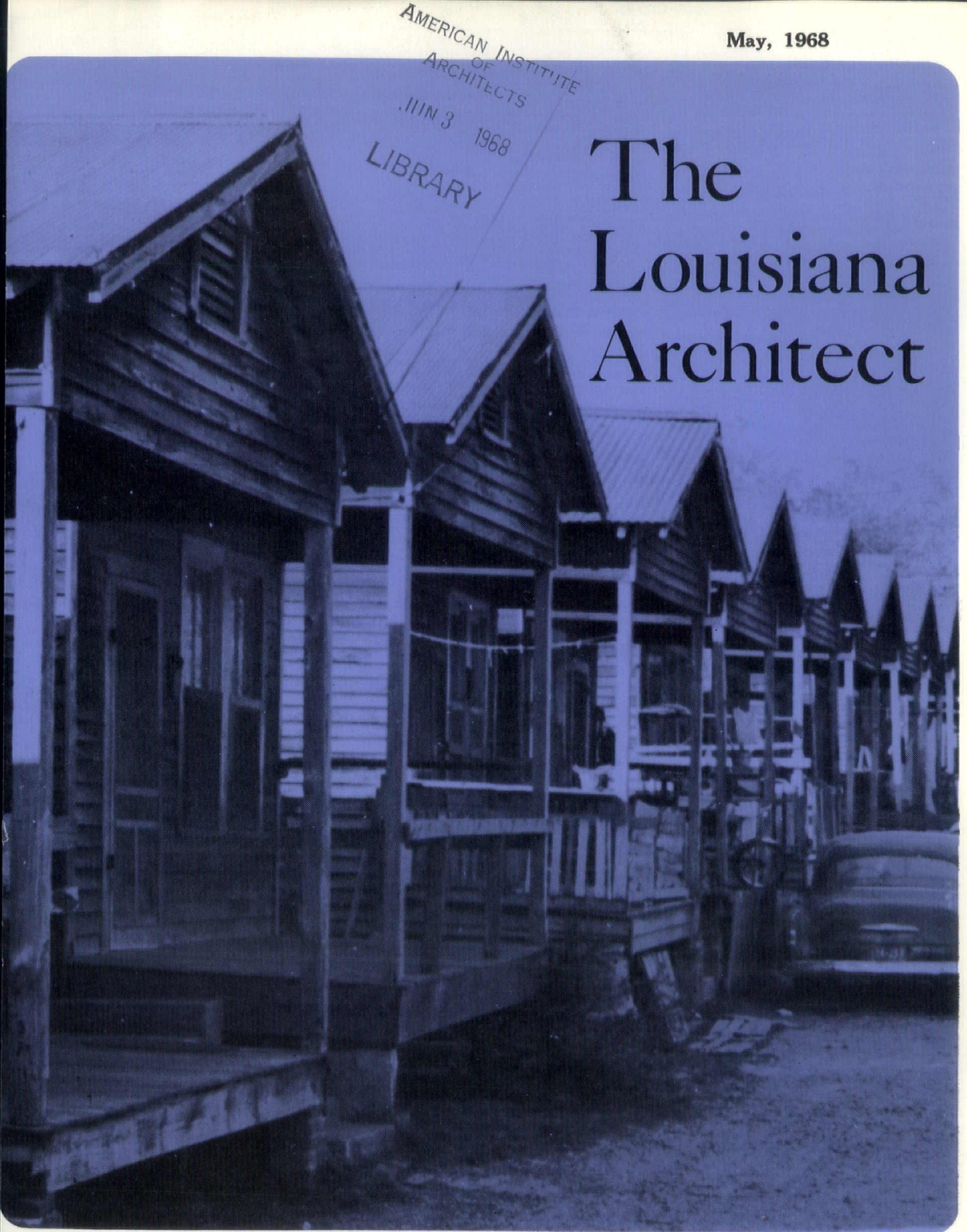


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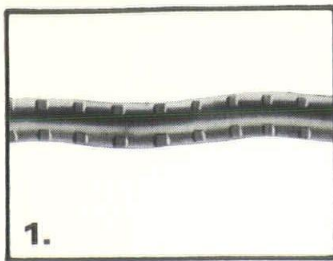
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# The Louisiana Architect

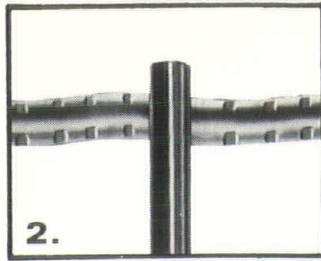


*The Shotgun House*

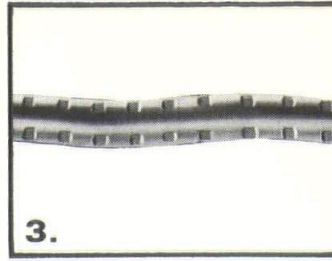




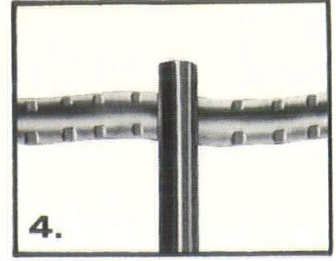
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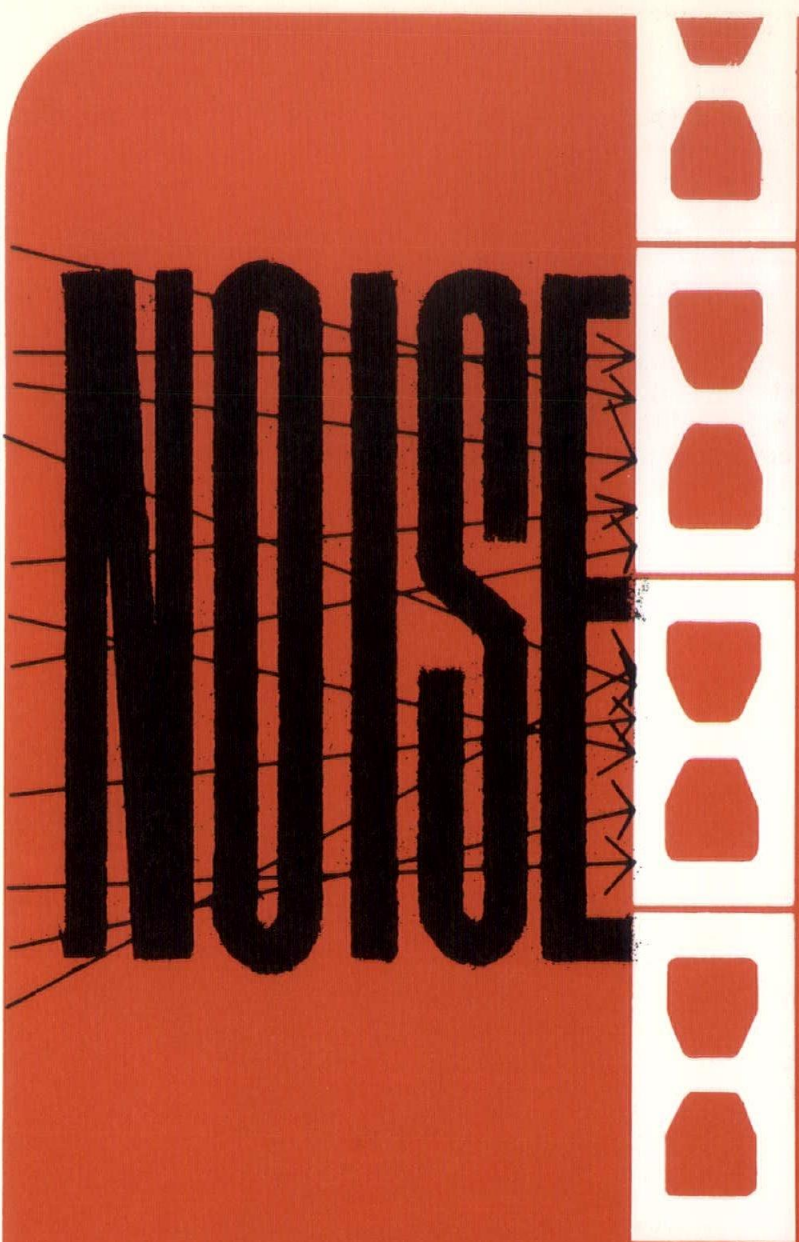
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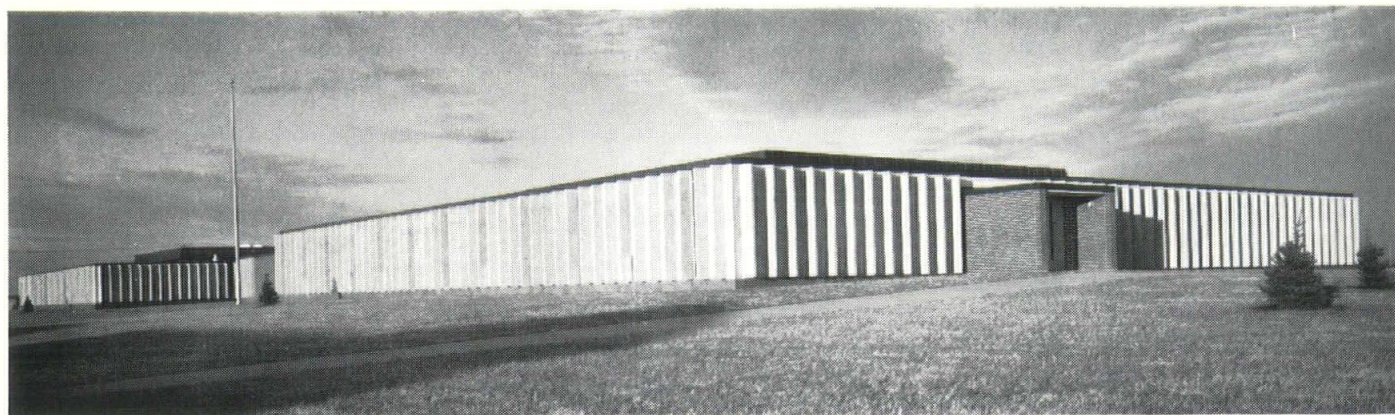
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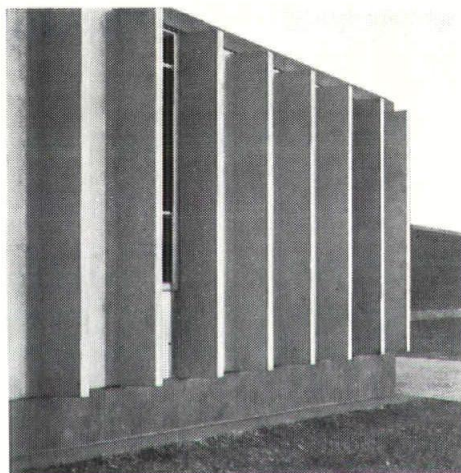


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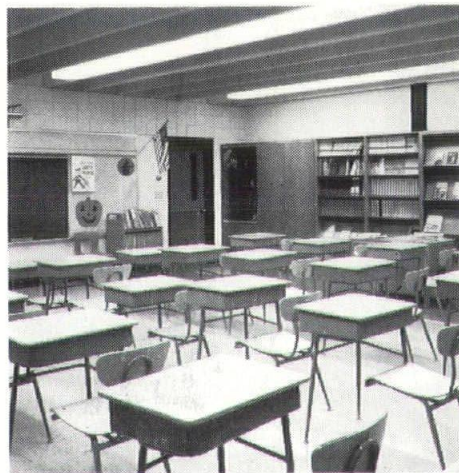
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Architect-Engineer: Foss, Engelstad & Foss, Moorhead. General Contractor: T. F. Powers Construction Co., Fargo, N.D. Precast, Prestressed Concrete Fabricator: Wells Concrete Products Co., Wells, Minn.



Close up of precast wall panels



Classroom with ceiling of exposed double-tees and concrete masonry walls

The Probstfield Elementary School in Moorhead, Minnesota, represents a simplified system of construction rapidly gaining favor for its speed and economy. Both roof and walls are double-tee units of precast, prestressed concrete.

The double-tee roof integrates decking and beams to create its own ceiling. The three-sided recesses formed by the "tees" simplify lighting and air duct installation.

Double-tee curtain walls, using load-bearing concrete masonry as backup, provide a striking and height-accenting

exterior. Easily repositioned, they facilitate future expansion.

The school consists of 21 classrooms, a multi-purpose room, gymnasium, shower and locker rooms, kitchen and office area. The cost—\$14.90 per sq. ft.—included all electrical and mechanical work, as well as kitchen, cafeteria, science and gymnasium equipment. Complete sitework—parking lot, sodding and extensive landscaping—was also included.

Moorhead school officials found concrete met their many requirements, including fire safety and long-term economy.

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# The Louisiana Architect

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An Honest View on . . .

## Increased Interest Ceiling On State Bonds

A barrier that stands in the way of dormatory construction at our State Colleges and bars the way of many other building projects is the 5% limit on interest imposed on the sale of State Capital improvement bonds.

Regardless of how much we hate to pay higher interest, the fact remains that in the current money market investors can earn higher than 5% on their money, and this market is not going to change to suit us.

Certainly the State should always work to create the right climate and provide the best security in order to earn the best possible interest, but a realistic view demands that Louisiana adjust its allowable interest rate to permit needed construction projects to be carried out.

The Louisiana Architects Association is consistent with what it feels is its professional obligation to the public and has opposed building plans which it feels is not in the best interest of the people of this State. It may be said that such a policy may not always be advantageous to the architects. This may be true, but it is also true that we have no standards if we stick by them only when we stand to benefit.

Our support now of a higher interest ceiling seems less self-serving because we have honored our obligations to the public interest.

EDITOR'S NOTE—Credits to Gleason Photography were unfortunately left off of the article on Licensing Exams in the April Issue.

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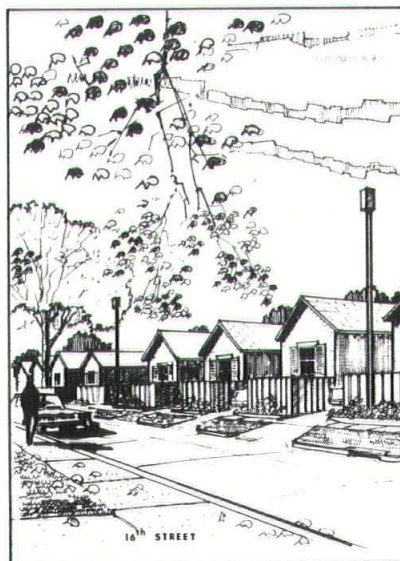
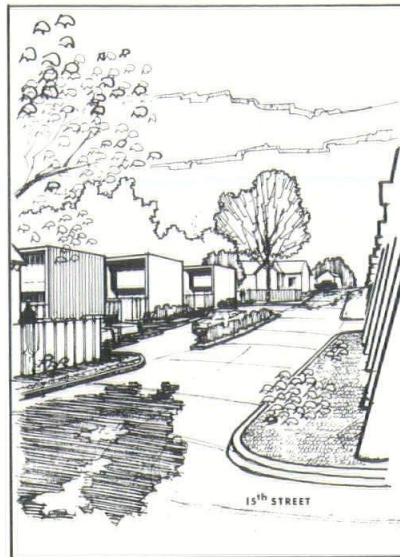
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# The SHOTGUN



The "shotgun house," bane of low income and minority groups since the mid 1800's, can be remodeled into a desirable home in updating blighted neighborhoods rather than having the houses razed and starting all over again, a completed study shows.

LSU architectural student Robert Wayne Drummond has completed a neighborhood rehabilitation study which could become a part of the efforts to upgrade such areas in Baton Rouge.

The detailed report, including architectural sketches, has been taken to the regional office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Fort Worth, Tex., where a demonstration cities grant will be sought to finance application of some of the findings.

Drummond, a student in the LSU Department of architecture, devoted more than 30 pages to the report, plus art work.

Sociological studies have shown that the simple, three-celled houses are direct contributors to many of the problems of blighted neighborhoods.

## No Privacy

The porch is the living room and there is no space inside utilized for family privacy, the report said.

In the shotgun house, the doors are aligned, either in the center, or to one side. This feature gave rise to the nick name for such homes. With all doors open, a shotgun could be fired through the house without striking anything.

"Contrary to popular belief," Drummond's report notes, "the shotgun house is not the product of urban environment."

It is as expansion of the one-celled, trapper-fisher camps found in the Southeastern Louisiana bayou region. Use of such homes spread to the northern part of the state where they became quarter houses in lumber camps and tenant houses on farms.

## Widely Used Here

The shotgun house has widespread use in Baton Rouge, where the Negro, who makes up 33 per cent of the community, is concentrated into less than 10 per cent of the land devoted to residential use.

"Substandard housing is identified with the Negro community in Baton Rouge," he said. "While the overall substandard housing rating for the city is 17



per cent, there is . . . an unbalanced condition in terms of race. Of all the substandard units, the white community occupies only two per cent — while 47.6 per cent of the Negro community lives in substandard housing."

In some areas up to 92 per cent of the houses do not meet minimum code requirements, according to the city-parish Department of Public Works.

The shotgun dwelling houses an estimated 50 to 60 per cent of the low-income community, which is predominantly Negro, in Baton Rouge.

"Adult conduct is learned as a child, and such an environment unquestionably, has a crushing influence on children," the thesis said.

### Detrimental Effect

The concept of the shotgun house has had a detrimental effect upon the low-income community of this area. "To fully understand its impact, a knowledge of how critically weak the family unit has been made by external forces is necessary," the thesis says.

History has witnessed the abolition of slavery, the creation of citizens from the former members of its bonds, and finally, legislation to insure this citizenship with civil and equal rights, it adds. But legislative action has not been sufficient, and "An apparent void has been created between legal status and reality."

Slavery severely damaged the stability of the Negro family unit, the thesis says: "The husband's role as provider and protector was destroyed. Since that time, the Negro family unit has been in a constant state of strain and disintegration. The urban slums have kept this strain on the historically weak unit by continuing to undermine the father's role. The family unit today is highly unstable and faces a complete breakdown."

One of every four homes is broken by divorce, compared to one of every 10 in the white society. One of every four children is illegitimate, compared to only three per cent in the white community, the report said.

The shotgun house has not helped improve these statistics.

"The weakness of the family unit, combined with adverse physical conditions, such as sleeping three and four in the same bed, create a loss of identification," the thesis said.

"Christian names are often dropped by the parents and other children. Such phrases as 'hey boy—you better get in this house girl—you gonna get a whipping boy' are common and increases the child's need for self identification.

### No Recreation Space

"Having no recreation spaces where their special skills or abilities might be demonstrated, they frequently turn to petty theft, fighting, or some other form of increased violence. Disciplinary or economic factors force two out of every five youngsters out of the educational system at an early age. The cycle is complete and ready to project itself into the next generation.

"Such conditions create a feeling of despair, apathy, and often hostility. High crime rates, school dropouts, illegitimacy, drunkenness, filth, hunger, and disease give little reason for a man to take pride in himself, his family, or the community."

Drummond offers architectural designs for renovation of the shotgun houses to give both parents and children more privacy, some recreation space, and better sanitary conditions.

The renovation would be tied in with a project to help eliminate cluttered yards, alleys, open drainage ditches, dirt streets, and flooding.

The average number of rooms in the houses surveyed in the report was three, and, usually five to six persons lived in each unit.

### Cites Expense

Surveys show it costs \$14,500 per unit to build new public or moderate income housing in Baton Rouge. Investing a maximum of \$2,500 to rehabilitate a shotgun house often is difficult to justify.

And often, just bringing the house up to building code standards does not solve the basic problem—lack of privacy, storage and living space.

Drummond proposes efforts to rehabilitate not only the houses in a blighted neighborhood, but to attack the cause of physical deterioration—lack of economic and social stability.

Occupants of the houses would take an active part in determining the needs and design of the community. They would also take part in the rebuilding of it.

"This approach is the reverse of providing new structures and community facilities and hoping for stability, pride and community spirit," he said.

Upgrading of the community would include providing offstreet parking, eliminating health hazards and setting up recreation areas for children.

Side and rear yards would be redesigned to provide more choice of areas for family use.

### Seeking Federal Funds

The Department of Public Works has before HUD an application for federal funds for a minimum code enforcement program in Eden Park.

More than \$3 million would be invested in a 62-block area for home repairs, plumbing, wiring, painting, street improvements, lighting and drainage.

The program would provide grants and loans to persons wishing to update their homes.

Drummond's thesis on what can be done with the basic type of home in the area could conceivably be tailored into the program.

Drummond feels that the federal funds would be a direct help by providing means for upgrading of the homes.

But the impetus for improvement must come from the community affected and much of the work must be done by its residents.

Recently, he presented his report to a committee of Community Action, Inc., in South Baton Rouge and says the basic ideas in the report were generally accepted. The acceptance did not come without sharp questioning, however.

The area he went into is mostly a landlord rather than home-owner section. "Why should we work to help the landlord?" Drummond said some asked. "Why not burn them (the houses) down?" was another question.

"Where would you live?" was a reply. Rebuilding the houses, even for the landlord who refuses to do so, may sound crazy at face value, but in the long run there would be benefit to the community, Drummond feels.

The parents would not see direct benefits perhaps, except in improved living conditions. But the family structure would be improved and in the long run this is where the gains would be made. The children would have better condi-

(Continued on Page 19)



# POLITICS of URBAN DESIGN

By Gordon C. Wittenberg, FAIA

*For many people, politics is regarded as the contrivings of the unscrupulous in government, an activity which is suspect and conducted largely out of public view. For the author, the concept as it operates in urban redevelopment must be politics in the best sense: the art of statecraft involving all affected persons. He explains his views by recalling the successful experiences of Little Rock from which he has extracted a number of practical precepts, all applicable to any city concerned with urban improvement programs.*

Everyone involved in architecture and its related fields shares the desire and recognizes the necessity for good urban design. I want to discuss, therefore, some of the methods and techniques which can be utilized to make this happen, and where all of us fit into this picture. I further want to discuss how to arouse our politicians, planners, businessmen, and citizens to demand the implementation of these techniques. This is "politics" of urban design.

Our world is literally exploding into new dimensions. Its mushrooming population places immense pressures on the very means of existence. The millions of people in our urban communities are no longer satisfied merely to exist. They desperately want, demand and will attain a better way of life. Obviously, the cities that remain only the products of the past 50 years will suffer simply because the urban planning — and the lack of it — in the first half of the 20th century isn't adequate for the remainder of the second. Those cities that have the vision to plan boldly and the determination to build soundly can look forward to winning in this great competition. In fact I'm not at all sure that we

have much choice. Not to act has only one alternative: defeat by default.

Fundamentally, our problem begins with arousing the interest and concern of the citizenry to the condition of our urban areas, to the courses of action available and to the danger signals occasioned by rapid, sprawling growth.

I would like to submit the example of Little Rock, Arkansas, as an interesting case study of a city's efforts to insure a sound urban design to provide for modern man's needs in a new urban environment. I would not be so presumptuous as to pretend that this story is a flawless one, or so naive as to proclaim that the plan for a renewed and revitalized Little Rock represents the patented panacea for the urban ills of your city or any other. No two communities are exactly alike. Therefore, no plan for solving the problems unique to individual cities can be exactly alike. But there are experiences worth sharing.

Some time ago it became obvious to us in Little Rock and the surrounding area that people were unwilling to accept the outdated, second-hand way of life found there. Our area was then beginning to realize its enormous potential as a thriving center for business and industry. We were in the process of converting from an agricultural to an industrial economy. New industries started to bring in new plants and unprecedented payrolls. They were also creating a demand for new housing, new schools, new shops and added community facilities which are all a part of the total picture.

The presence of a new industrial plant throws the outworn and obsolete parts of a town into sharp contrast with the new. We can take a page from the book already

written by American industry. US manufacturers are noted the world over for their readiness to scrap obsolete machinery to replace it with more efficient apparatus. It is an equally good investment to scrap obsolete elements of a community plant and to replace them with more efficient, attractive and functional urban components. No city can grow to its maximum potential if the entire community is not kept up to high standards.

In Little Rock we recognized our obligation to renew and revitalize our urban environment; to cut out the diseased tissue of slums, repair the worn fabric of poor environment and begin to set our physical house in order to meet the challenge of the times. This didn't just happen.

City officials, planners, architects and businessmen took a long hard look at the problems of the community and set out to determine the most equitable and effective means available to solve them. It was obvious that a piecemeal, sporadic attack on isolated situations would never provide a lasting solution to those problems which had been abuilding for a hundred years or more. Nor would it solve the problems of urban sprawl rampant around the periphery of the city. What Little Rock needed was a plan. More important still, there was a need to devise a plan which could be carried out within the framework of financial and legal capabilities.

A cross section of community leadership met to analyze our problems. It was quickly determined that the situation we faced was not just a "city thing," an isolated problem of the central city alone. Like most metropolitan areas, Greater Little Rock was made up of a number of separate municipalities and many more independent governmental entities. Nevertheless, all shared mutual concern over the welcome but problematical growth we were experiencing. It was agreed that the establishment of the proper pattern for growth and development could best be achieved through a coordinated planning effort for the entire area.

As a result of the concerted action of local citizens, a Metropolitan Area Planning Commission was established. This agency was set up to treat the planning problems of the entire county rather than those within the city limits alone; a paper line which urban problems readily traverse. This agency now works with the city,



county and state planning commissions for a coordinated, orderly program of growth and development.

"Metroplan," as we call the Commission, is financed primarily by contributions from each of the participating cities, their school districts, the county and other financially able bodies. It is directed by a board of commissioners composed of leading citizens concerned with the development of the area. An architect is the past chairman. Metroplan is properly staffed with professional planners whose experience and academic backgrounds provide a wide range of talent necessary for this most comprehensive endeavor.

That good planning is good business became evident sooner than anyone had anticipated. Through Metroplan's studies of growth patterns, the school districts were shown where schools would be needed a decade hence. This enabled them to purchase land in advance of need for 10 to 20 percent of its later market value. The investment put forth by the school districts for metropolitan planning has proven a fantastic bargain.

Many other direct, tangible dollar-and-cents savings could also be illustrated with regard to such items as the location of industrial sites, sanitation facilities, public utilities, expressways and interstate highway projects.

This is good, sound, sensible planning. It's been good business and great politics. I can't think of a single elected official who opposed this operation. I can remember a number of them who used it as an example of *their* progressive thinking. This is as it should be. It's remarkable how progress can

be accelerated if we aren't particularly concerned about who gets the credit.

As studies of the urban area progressed, it became apparent that we had an urban body with a sick heart. Our new growth areas would never realize their fullest potential until something was done to improve the heart itself, the control center. Our central city was still the hub of the entire urban area. It had to be revitalized and modernized to service adequately the pressing demands of its sprawling environs.

After extensive study, it was concluded that the best means available to attack the problems of blight and decay within the city was a comprehensive program of urban renewal in its fullest sense: a massive, citywide attack on the deficiencies inherited from the past. Fortunately, we had a good city-manager form of government, many members of which had been involved from the beginning. We also had an active housing authority which had earned the respect of the community. Therefore, we had in existence the necessary vehicle to get *going*. Since that time, Little Rock has established a national reputation as an outstanding example of a community which has used well this tool for rebuilding the city from within. By the end of this year, Little Rock will have completed five urban renewal projects, which is a very good record. Three more projects are presently in execution and four more are in the planning stages. Project areas involve some 3500 acres of the city and constitute an ultimate expenditure in Federal and local funds of some \$82 million.

As of the first of 1966, \$31 million in new construction has

been completed or announced on land which has been cleared and made available for redevelopment through the renewal program. In addition, over \$13 million has been spent by property owners on the rehabilitation of property within the project area. In many instances the evidence of progress in neighborhoods adjacent to the project areas has been just as dramatic, thanks to improved health of the renewed neighbors. We are finding that for every dollar of public funds expended, private enterprise is spending five dollars in the rebuilding cycle. That's quite a business generator in a city of 130,000 population.

Little Rock has reaped a wealth of benefits from our urban renewal program. We have created a better living environment for thousands of our citizens. New jobs, payrolls and profit have been realized in the process. I must add, however, that the job doubtless would not have been done without the financial assistance made available under the urban renewal program. Few, if any, urban centers in the United States are in a financial position to meet effectively all of the burgeoning demands occasioned by the explosive transition from a rural to an urban society. The city is strained to the very breaking point in order to meet the cost of operating the community plant. With an ever-increasing population, the city finds itself faced with the need for enormous capital improvement programs necessary to service new growth areas. At the same time, it is trying to give attention and positive action to the older, declining areas.

(Continued on Page 15)


Photo by Don Dupuis











## Louisiana Provincial Types

Through Louisiana, one comes across distinctive provincial building types. New Orleans has its ubiquitous shot gun house, French Settlement its unique type, North Louisiana its dog-trot cottage, and South Louisiana its basic Acadian cottage with attic. Note these are all direct common-sense buildings with a sure spare sense of form.

The type pictured here is prevalent in the Madisonville area north of Lake Ponchatrain. It is often embellished with carpenter gothic detailing and appears Victorian. In this case the simple turn wood columns lend a spare elegance more akin to earlier Greek Revival building. Usually the off-set porch is on the south side only serving as outdoor sitting space, circulation space and south sun control. These vanishing provincial types, when restored, are usually more satisfying than the mean camps or houses which replace them.

By JOHN DESMOND, F.A.I.A.



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# Role of **RESEARCH** for Architecture

*Condensed from a paper given at the Architect Researchers Conference, Washington University, St. Louis*

*By*

ROBERT H. DIETZ, FAIA, Dean College of Architecture and Urban Design — University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

In the last few years we in the profession of architecture have heard a good deal of discussion about research in architecture. It is difficult to ascertain whether this has been an outgrowth of a recognized need, or whether it is a result of our lack of involvement in contrast to what is occurring in industry and other professional areas, or just plain embarrassment because of this relative position: regardless, the question constantly arises as to what is the role of research in architecture. Many of us believe the role is a recognizable one.

Architects have always prided themselves on being universal men, programmers, planners, and innovators. This they have been, in a rather generic sense, and as Hudnut once said, primarily as inventors; however, in relation to demands and responsibilities, and with the advent of new knowledge and devices circumscribing their activities, one wonders if they have relegated much of their professional expertise to art which is any man's domain. Evaluation techniques in art are difficult to describe nor have they progressed in their general context. Expression and interpretation may be personal or of groups; however, guidelines are virtually impossible to establish on which progressive development can be predicted. Examples may be used for explanation, but qualification escapes even the most astute critic and it may very well should be. New visual stimuli flood the market, but in contrast to breakthroughs in practically all other sciences and quasi-sciences, little advancement, whether in analysis, teaching methods, techniques or testing has been forthcoming.

Science, it would appear, means one thing to the scientist and another to the architect. Science to the scientist

is a systematic accumulation of knowledge which may or may not contribute to useful purposes. We find scientists reluctant to pass judgments or make predictions without first trying to exhaust all known knowledge pertinent to a given subject before rendering a decision. Although intuition plays a big part in their *modus operandi*, it is predicated on a repertoire of experience and information much unlike that which an architect may resort to in his decision-making process. Does this mean that architects have not made good judgments? No, through the course of history and of late many examples are in evidence which would qualify the architect's prowess, but there are probably many which possess deficiencies ranging from minor errors to gross negligence. Evidence is that these examples permeate every facet of building construction, involving siting, economics, programming, structures, mechanical equipment and the behavioral factors affecting the environmental milieu.

Magazines portray the excellence of new designs and innovations. Architects are held in high esteem and probably have in their ranks more publicized and well-known practitioners than any other profession. The architect is in demand and, of late, consulted with respect to national and local planning, and environmental problems. Yet confusion, want of direction, specific purpose, and capabilities plague the profession and its educators. Could it be the architect is riding an old horse and unwilling to give up the trust-worthy steed because he likes to revel in memories of its past accomplishments? Is the profession languishing in its glories, the good life and ways of yesterday, while those about the architect are forging ahead, exploring new

horizons not always with purpose, but for want of the thrill of investigation and satisfaction associated with new breakthroughs.

What has contributed to this reluctance to recognize the adventure of exploration associated with rigorous investigation and the results it might contribute; the excitement of really knowing and understanding man and his environment, dimensions beyond one's own immediate experience and involvement? Why haven't we established criteria on which judgments can be predicated with some degree of reliability? Why does the state of the art continue to endorse construction methods and techniques two thousand years old, while other industries enjoy and employ new devices as an accepted practice and seek new ones at an ever accelerated rate? Why do we employ evaluating techniques which neither take into account performance characteristics or the critical analysis of a design? Why do we become so personally involved in the design process that we often end up designing a building for our own edification and satisfaction instead of meeting the client's needs? Why do we subject the occupant, the casual visitor, and peripatetic viewer with our own internal frustration and egocentric expressions when he neither wants it nor understands our motives. What is it that has generated these ideological inclinations and attitudes, and can we continue to perpetrate such and offer a service concomitant with our obligations?

When embarking upon planning, it seems not only necessary but obligatory that objectives be established in order to know what course of action is to be taken; secondly, the responsibility or scope such objective might imply; thirdly, the methods to be employed;



and lastly, what it is hoped will be accomplished. This does not imply change cannot take place during the process, in fact, it should if progress is to be recognized and encouraged. Such may be some of the charges with which we are confronted. Critical research is implied.

Why don't we have strong graduate programs in the schools comparable to those in other professions? Why are we beginning only now to think about doctoral or Ph.D. programs, and not being able to qualify them? Does this not indicate a lack of sophistication, a lack of advancement, a lack of demand for research and investigation? In our universities, why is so little time devoted to research in architecture in contrast to that which is being done in other areas? Should this not concern us and indicate something might be wrong—that the art and science of architecture might be at a standstill? Could it be the attitudes generated in our schools eventually affect practice since this is where the professional gets his training? How can a profession be anything other than the parts which structure its composition? One might deduct from this vilifying analysis of the educational process that little or no progress is being made; this is not true. In fact, considering the complexity of the profession, the many facets of the industry with which the architect must deal, notable progress is in evidence, but it appears to be far from universal, consistent, or understood.

Many years ago other professions recognized that for all general purposes the individual office is not organized nor financially capable of performing research of any magnitude. In the field of medicine, this responsibility has been centered in hospitals, medical schools, and associated industry. Some

research and development has occurred in some of the larger architectural offices; however, it is on a very limited scale and there is little evidence of published material or general distribution of such information. A dire need for criteria is wanting with regard to institutional facilities. Hospitals, universities, housing, and many others are all in need of programming processes, evaluation procedures, directives, operational procedures, technical innovations, etc. They are of such magnitude that within the contractual agreements of most offices, very few can go beyond providing the basic design decisions predicated on already tried or obsolete methods. Research for many building types, if done at all, is under the guidance of those outside the field of architecture. This kind of involvement is necessary and will continue, but frequently the architect neither understands the rationale beyond the results and incorporates them into designs not realizing their value or ultimate consequences.

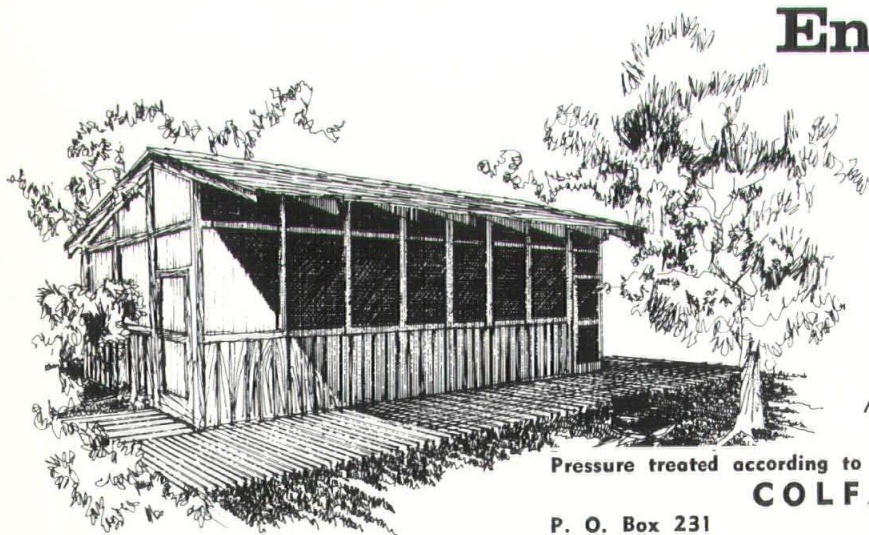
Our charge in society is a formidable one. We have in essence been telling others by our methods and techniques that we come by decisions through some sort of inherent capability of which only the architect is knowledgeable. The only fallacy in the rationale, if it be one, is it seems to be failing us. Our efforts, unfortunately, linger on, many permanent, through which and in which our clients and potential clients thread their ways being reminded constantly of poor results. Society might not wait. Because of the economic climate, the chaos about us, the demands for a better product, and the embarrassment due to associated responsibility; administrators, politicians, the public, and dissatisfied private clients are wanting and demanding

better results. Better results will come only through more precise capabilities; better capability will come only through rigorous evaluation, research, and qualified decisions.

It appears to me the role for research in architecture is one of improving our capabilities. This, it would appear, will come about when we recognize that to be effectual, we must, through more intensive research and investigation:

- explore new horizons and evaluate what they portend,
- develop and establish criteria on which better decisions can be rendered,
- develop techniques and systems by which the problem solving process can be more readily accomplished,
- seek qualified information to better understand man and his environment,
- understand the designs which contribute to his welfare and happiness,
- create an attitude within the profession commensurate with the demands being placed upon it,
- provide an outlet for the inquisitive energy pent up in youth who are seeking answers to questions, but which is presently denied many of them,
- recognize problem implications, their magnitude, and develop methods by which they should and can be solved.

Let us hope that the profession will recognize that research and the results produced are not in conflict with its modus operandi, and will contribute to its advancement and well being. The role of research in architecture seems apparent; why aren't we more involved?—(Florida Architect)



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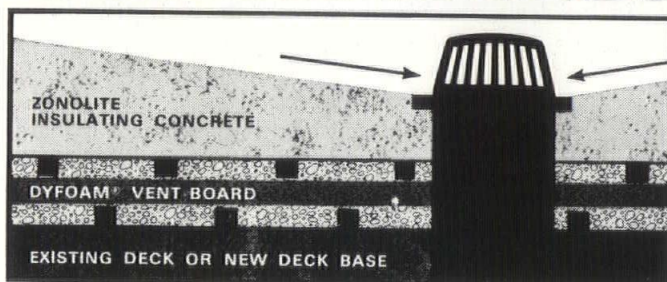
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## POLITICS

(Continued from Page 9)

I find it difficult to understand those who contend that a common purpose does not exist in the area of urban design in which government — both local and Federal — can unite with private enterprise to form an effective alliance. I am not willing to concede that the Federal government is my enemy. It is my government and it should work with me. Urban renewal is based on a partnership of government and private enterprise. The lion's share of the money spent in this program in the long run is, and will be, furnished by private sources.

I don't propose urban renewal as a cure-all or advocate its use in all cases. It is only a tool. Much depends on how you use, misuse or fail to use it. Cases can be sighted in some cities where urban renewal has worked badly or not at all. Most failures can be attributed to poor or inadequate planning and to a lack of the most vital elements of all: community understanding and support.

This brings us back to politics, convincing the right people and keeping their confidence. When I say "politics" and the "right people," I don't mean that you stop with Capitol Hill in Washington or the Statehouse, City Hall, County Courthouse or planning Commission. The right people also means the news media, the construction industry, the real estate board, the financial industry, the Chamber of Commerce, civic clubs, PTAs, church groups, every public or private agency, business, profession and individual citizen who is affected by urban design — in short; everyone. Naturally, you cannot convince everyone, but general public understanding and acceptance is as fundamental to the success of any program of this nature as good spaghetti is to an authentic Italian restaurant.

Little Rock incorporated a most effective vehicle to insure good politics in its efforts. Understanding the significance of this program to the city's future, business leaders realized that they needed the continual and solid backing of the entire community. The result was the organization of the Urban Progress Association. The incorporators of its charter included the presidents of every bank, every



## POLITICS

utility, every major department store, property owners and the proprietors of most of our leading businesses. Urban Progress has repeatedly proven its worth to the community in its active support of sound local government, comprehensive metropolitan planning, orderly growth for residential and industrial development and, where needed, renewal and redevelopment.

Urban Progress was largely responsible for the early approval of our request for planning funds. It organized and scheduled meetings for local groups of officials having a part in planning to assure that there were no overlapping efforts and to keep all official agencies informed of plans as they developed. Laymen who had specialized knowledge and experience in certain fields were organized into technical advisory committees. No public funds are used by Urban Progress. Every penny necessary for its operation — running about \$35,000 a year — is furnished by private membership investment.

This association keeps the community constantly informed through newsletters, speeches, slide talks, motion pictures, newspaper and magazine articles, television and radio.

As an official civic group in the community, Urban Progress does not actually participate in the preparation of plans and has no official voice in their ultimate approval. However, its members so closely ally themselves with the program that they are an actual part of it every step of the way. Urban Progress has provided the public information needs and the organizational backing of the community: the politics of urban design.

This association has been especially instrumental in the initiation and current execution of Little Rock's most dramatic program involving the creation of a new design for the very heart and core of the city — the Central Little Rock Urban Renewal Project. This is a massive 508-acre program involving the realization of the entire central business district and its environs. In execution now for four years, it is projected for another six. By the end of this year, work will begin on \$14 million worth of new construction on land made available for redevelopment

through the project. Some of the finest talent available has been incorporated into the planning of this project and the architectural treatment of the redevelopment proposals.

This project actually had its birth as early as 1957 at the National Citizens Planning Conference held in Little Rock. To translate the theme—"Main Street 1969"—into visual terms, the Arkansas Chapter AIA created a concept of what Downtown Little Rock could look like in that year—based on broad assumptions and the best estimates the architects could make, working as they were with limited basic data and an exceptionally short time schedule for the preparation of drawings. This visualization was, however, all that was necessary to fire the imagination of the business and civic leaders who saw in the concept a rallying point as well as a place to begin molding a new central business district. Since the inception of the Downtown Little Rock 1969 plan and, eventually, the adoption of the Central Little Rock Urban Renewal Project, the results have been almost awesome.

The renewal faith in the downtown area — inspired initially by the efforts of our local architects — has resulted in a strictly private investment of over \$64 million for new construction and remodeling in downtown Little Rock. This amount is greater than was spent in this same area in the preceding 40 years.

As part of the downtown renewal project, a general rehabilitation program has recently been initiated. A 30-man committee was organized within the membership of Urban Progress to assist the renewal agency in encouraging businessmen and property owners to examine the esthetic posture of the landscape and streetscape and to coordinate remodeling and rehabilitation. This committee is making marvelous headway in eliminating the typical unlovely, uninviting, worn-out look of the downtown asphalt jungle which repels resident and visitor alike. All in all, Little Rock is getting a gigantic face lifting — not without mistakes — but a bright new face it is!

In addition to the face lifting, we in Little Rock are also looking at our governmental structures with a mind toward modernization. A citizens group with metropolitan representation has recently recom-

(Continued on Page 18)

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AIA

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# POLITICS

(Continued from Page 16)

mended consolidating many of the governmental functions which now duplicate each other in our various incorporated municipalities within the metropolitan area. If put into effect, this can save our taxpayers millions of dollars. We are all aware of the natural tendencies of governmental entities to covet the functions of their various branches. Convincing a quarter of a million people that the consolidation of a large number of municipal services is good business is not as easy a task as it would appear. But the job we have done so far wasn't easy either. So we're going to try.

Recent efforts have shown positive progress. In order to assure a continuity of effort, a full-time Community Development Department has recently been incorporated into the structure of the Little Rock municipal government. Similar efforts are underway in the neighboring city of North Little Rock and elsewhere throughout the area.

I would carry this one step further and report that the General Assembly of Arkansas in 1963 created a State Planning Agency to coordinate and concern itself with planning on a statewide basis. This wasn't anyone's pet dream either. It came about because our elected officials had seen demonstrated proof of the great need and benefit to be derived through coordinated efforts rather than the haphazard methods of the past.

Communities in Arkansas are also able to hire the services of the City Planning Department of the University of Arkansas to assist them in setting up minimum code requirements, master street plans and many of the necessary planning concepts fundamental to their development.

There are a few important lessons to be learned from our efforts — all worth consideration here.

- *The planning and rebuilding of our urban areas cannot and should not be considered a purely private endeavor.* There is a public obligation through the provision of necessary public facilities which must be met. It is becoming more and more apparent that public investment is often the catalyst necessary to generate private initiative and development. Desirable and

adequate expressways and thoroughfares must be provided throughout the city to make the vital link between outlying residential areas and the central business district. This planning must be coordinated with the state and interstate transportation systems. Cultural and recreational facilities must be provided. Government buildings must be made attractive and easily accessible to the public. Without these public investments to provide a sound base for the area, private development will lag. Thus, public initiative through the provision of public facilities is necessary for private investment.

- *Planning studies and proposals should be made with an eye to the needs of the entire community.* It is important, before undertaking any part of a development or project, to develop a detailed plan for the future growth and development of all of the community. It is vital to know in detail how each part of the urban design relates to the other parts before attempting to treat any portion of the whole. An urban area operates on too many different levels and has too many interrelationships to be examined and treated in a piecemeal fashion.

- *Private plans should be developed with official public participation and sanction.* Thus, when they are completed, they will have official recognition and can then be carried out rather than forgotten. This does not rule out private participation in the planning process, either through work or money or both. It means that there must be recognition in City Hall, in the business community and among the general public that the city has its responsibilities for the plans under preparation. Unless everyone who is directly affected by the program is involved in the planning and a solid broad participation is realized, the program is in critical danger of lacking the necessary support for adoption. Without support, the plan will merely languish, ignored in the files.

- *The leaders cannot move ahead of public understanding, approval and acceptance involving public action.* If the community and its public bodies are to be included in plans for urban design they must be made, to understand what the problems are, how the community is affected, why the plan must be carried out and what the benefits are to the community. Perhaps this sounds basic, yet many groups today involved in this type of activity

overlook the need to tell and sell their plans and program — and many stub their toes on public opinion or the opposite, public apathy.

- *Lastly, plans must be kept flexible and easily adapted to changing economic trends and conditions.* Set realistic time limits for completion and be prepared to meet with demands for unparalleled speed on the one hand and a deliberate snail's pace on the other. There is a need for infinite patience. Remember that this job cannot be accomplished overnight.

These are a few of the elements which must be considered when we speak of the practical politics of urban design. Undoubtedly, there are many other factors more or less important, depending on situations unique to each community, which must also be considered. And it is incumbent upon us to make these matters *our* business. Why us? A writer once said, "I finally understand what architects are. You are the people who can see buildings before they are — I can't." Chloethiel Woodard Smith FAIA told some of her colleagues a while ago, "As architects, we must see, even if all too frequently with less than perfect vision, what no one else can see — the building finished and used by the people it was built for, or the city completed and lived in by the people it was built for. Each year, as we finish a new town or building, we can look at the buildings 'after they are there' and see if they are as fine as those we saw before they were there." Mrs. Smith went on to say, "We are pretty well agreed that the millions of square feet of the new haven't satisfied our all too recent and all too timid dreams for fine cities that are more than new. We must find new dreams, new ideas and new ways of communicating; not just new bricks and fresh concrete. For the architect, unlike the sculptor, the painter, the musician, the poet, is bound to people and, except in rare instances, he must bring people along with him or his art will remain paper, habitable only in the mind."

I couldn't agree more — if the art of urban design of which we are capable is not to remain merely paper, then we must decide that we too must bring people along with us. This, then, is the definition of the politics of urban design. ■



## THE SHOTGUN—

(Continued from Page 7)

tions in which to develop and express their talents, thereby gaining the knowledge that would give them more earning power to get out of blighted neighborhoods.

Thus, the main benefits of the federal funds would be to provide the means whereby a person, with proper incentive, could carry out his desires at a price he could afford without the feeling that something was dumped in his lap.

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The ideas drew praise from Ray Burgess, director of the DPW, and Chester Jordan, director of the Capital Region Planning Commission.

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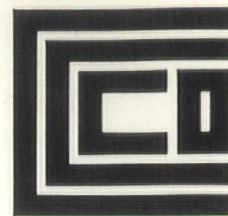
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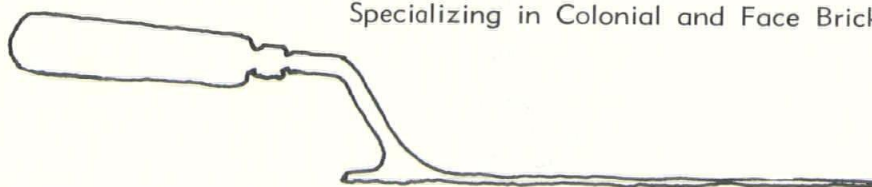
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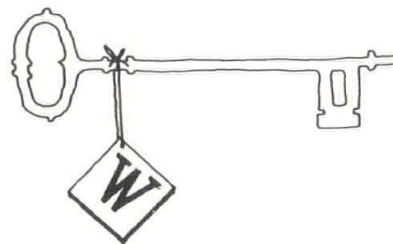
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