Franzen to address February meeting on 'Architects and Urban Environment'

Ulrich Franzen, FAIA, will address the February meeting of the Southern California Chapter/AlA on "Aspiring Spaces: Architecture and the Urban Environment" on Tuesday evening, February 11, at the Elks Club Grand Ballroom. The distinguished New York-based architect will illustrate his remarks with a twin-projector slide presentation of work by contemporary architects in urban settings.

Reservations for the meeting should be made by February 7th in the enclosed white envelope. The cost per person, including dinner, is $5.00 if paid in advance or $7.50 at the door. Spouses, of course, are always welcome. (Reservations, whether paid in advance or at the door, must be made by February 7th, and unpaid reservations may be billed to satisfy the unmet guarantee. A portion of this cost goes to defray general expenses for the meeting.)

A reception will begin at 6:30 p.m., followed by a three-entree buffet dinner at 7:30 and the featured speaker at 8:15. The Elks Club is located at 607 Park View Street, on the first block west of Wilshire Boulevard and 6th Street. Parking is available behind the Elks Club building and off Carondelet, one block west of Park View.

Franzen, whose Agronomy Building is illustrated here, is the widely recognized recipient of three successive AlA Honor Awards, the coveted Brunner Memorial Prize in Architecture of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the 1970 Thomas Jefferson Award for Architecture, and the Gold Medal of the New York Chap- ter of the American Institute of Architects. The aluminum and stainless steel structure was designed to satisfy the advanced needs of a university training program in agronomy. The exhibits and laboratories are arranged in two levels and are accessible by two large elevators. The main floor includes the Agronomy Auditorium and the Agronomy Library, with an elevator to the Research Laboratories in the large upper floor. The plan is simple, with only a few points of importance. The design is based on a careful analysis of the working habits of agronomic faculty members and students. The building is designed to accommodate the changing needs of the discipline. The building is located on the campus of the University of California, Davis, and is a prominent example of modern architecture.

The two-day nightmare

By Lester Wertheimer, AlA

(Mr. Wertheimer has been, for the past seven years, a director of Architectural License Seminars, an organization providing study materials for the new Professional Licensing Exam to test the architectural knowledge of students in the field of architecture. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard, Yale, and other institutions, and he is a former president of the Architectural League of New York. Franzen also served as chairman of the Institute's Committee on Design.

Recent projects by his New York firm include a master plan and new facilities for the national historic enclave at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; major buildings at Cornell University, Hunter College, and University of New Hampshire Dormitory by Ulrich Franzen.

Agronomy Building by Ulrich Franzen. (George Crema Photographs.)

The principal purpose of this new exam is to test the candidate’s understanding of the whole building process, especially as it relates to a real project. In its broadest sense, the new exam is intended to reflect the total body of knowledge, judgment, and skill that the practicing architect must be concerned. What about the two-day nightmare? What’s it really like? ‘Tough,’ agreed most candidates, ‘tough but fair.’ ‘Others complained of “tricky” questions, and several mentioned the great number of multiple choice questions for which there were at least two correct answers. One candidate recalled the uselessness of the help files for the understanding of the questions, a request for the right answer, but not finding that answer listed as a possible choice. ‘It’s like traveling through Wonderland,’” he claimed. The words ‘tricky’ and ‘understanding’ mean whatever they want to mean.

Does serious study help in this new exam? Most said the exam will test results are directly related to prior preparation. However, one candidate said, ‘Forget it... it’s useless. You can’t learn good judgment or common sense, and that’s what’s being tested.’ Another claimed that since the exam relies heavily on experience, there is no preparation possible except ‘perhaps ten years as a construction manager on various large projects.’ Furthermore, one candidate, ‘having good judgment or even a lot of experience doesn’t guarantee good architects. Just look out the window. Most of those buildings were designed by amateurs.’

How good a test of potential architects is the exam? The major- ity thought it was a fair way to appraise professionals. Others were not so sure. ‘Any structural engineer or even a clever English major could become an architect with a month of specialized study,’ said one candidate. Another felt the questions were far too general: ‘No doubt about it... a sociologist who worked sum- mers as a construction laborer could pass it.’

For established professionals there is a common tendency to feel that the new crop of architects just doesn’t have it... certainly not the way they did in 1940’s. ‘Why hell,’ as one timy-old put it, ‘they don’t even know how to draw.’ But if the new Professional Exam is any indication, newly licensed archi- tects will truly be well-rounded professionals — generalists in the broadest meaning of the word, and ready to accept accountability for the quality of today’s man-made environment. As one candidate remarked, ‘If I ever get past that awful exam, I’ll be ready to tackle any phase of any project. And there’s very good chance he will.

FEBRUARY 1975

Postponement

The installation of 1975 Chapter officers and directors, originally scheduled to take place at the January meeting, has been post- poned until March due to the un- fortunate illness of incoming Chapter President Morris Varig, FAIA.

Details of the rescheduled installa- tion banquet, including the name of the honorary master, will be announced in the March issue of L.A. ARCHITECT.

Solicitation

An open solicitation for articles, letters and editorial suggestions is being made by the Editorial Board of L.A. ARCHITECT to the mem- bers of the Southern California Chapter/AlA.

Regular features such as Feed- back, Perspective and Design are intended as forums for reader criti- cism, personal opinion and the visual display of architectural pro- jects and plans, Letters, articles and visual presentations for L.A. ARCHITECT should be submitted to the solicitation in care of the Chapter Office. (Architectural pre- sentations shown in the Design department are selected by the Editorial Board.)

An upcoming series of articles in L.A. ARCHITECT will discuss the impact of the economy on the architectural profession, and how individual architects are dealing with the situation. If you have any specific boat to the architect, talk to the topic of “Architects and the Economy,” please submit to the solicitation directly to Kenneth Dillon, AlA, 11702 San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90049.

Back Page:

Chapter News and Notes:

Women in Architecture

FEbruary 1975

Inside

SCC/AlA's First Annual Design Awards Program for 1975

Design: One Plus One

Perspective: Women in Architecture

Feedback: "A study of light and color"

W.A.L.: Student-architect rap sessions
Southern California Chapter/AIA announces 1975 Design Awards Program

By Thomas R. Vreeland, Jr., AIA

Beginning in 1975 and continuing henceforth, Chapter Design Awards will be held annually rather than triennially, starting in the year one year prior to the last year of the triennial period. The awards announcement and issuance—by the joint 1974-75 Board of Directors of the Southern California Chapter/AIA—will be held annually within the last five years for judgment and premiation to the distinguished jury consisting of Ronald W. Dungan, Gens and Associates; Richard Meier and Esther McCoy. The project of administering Design Awards Program is being assigned to AIA's Southern California Chapter. Los Angeles area produces enough buildings of quality to viewing them on an annual basis, and with the expectation that an architectural project will sustain itself as a stimulus to better design, a chapter is an administrative working unit of Chapter members. The following guidelines will apply to eligibility, requirements for submission, and the competitive process, as well as the Concealed Identification, closing date, and to the project:

Requirements for submitting entries: A submitting entry is to be unique to those for the national AIA Honors Awards program and entries prepared for the national program may be duplicated for submission in the preliminary submission for judgment, and hence can only be known to the jury even though the submitting architect may not be the sole author involved. The submitting architect, in addition to being the sole author, may qualify as a team head. The basis for determining authorship shall be the architect's contribution to the concept submitted. Where the architect is not the sole author, all other participants in shaping the concept shall be credited as part of the submission, regardless of proportionate contribution.

An entry may be one building or a related group of buildings comprising a single project. "Building" is meant any completed improvement designed by the submitting architect including preservation of existing buildings.

Photographs and Slides: For every project submitted, the architect shall submit no less than four size sufficient photographs (either black and white or color) and plans to properly illustrate the architectural design. All photographs and project identification must be removed from all such submitted elements. Final architectural plans and elements are set forth below; failure to meet any one of these criteria will result in disqualification of the entry. The photos and slides, as well as other design materials, shall be submitted in the following manner:

Exterior
- One 8"x10" print showing each exposed side of the building or improvement.
- One additional 8"x10" print showing the immediate environs of the building or improvement as these abut the selected side being shown (may be omitted if environs are included in above).

Interior
- One 8"x10" print (and for reconfiguring of portions of a building, an additional 8"x10" print) of the pre-design condition unless evidence is submitted as to its unavailability.
- Slides: A minimum of five 2"x2" 35mm color slides must be included for each entry, either exterior shots and two interior shots. They shall be of comparable content and emphasis and should be on adequate effective slides to allow the merit of the project and each facade of the building (slides of renderings are not acceptable). The opinions stated are those of the authors only, and do not reflect the official position of the AIA or the Southern California Chapter, except where indicated.

Published monthly by the Southern California Chapter, American Institute of Architects, Santa Monica Post Office, 204 South Broadway, Los Angeles, California 90013, at the rate of $1.25 per year. All rights reserved. Copyright 1975, American Institute of Architects. 

One year mail subscriptions: AIA members outside the Southern California Chapter, $8.00, non-AIA members, $10.00 Address inquiries to the Chapter office.

Second floor plans Simon left, de Bretteville right.

Second floor plans Simon left, de Bretteville right.
intimate spaces to the sides of the more generalized two story living space. The parents occupy one side, the children the other on both levels. The de Bretteville house reverses this by placing the specific and intimate spaces in a central zone leaving the generalized two story living room on one side and the studio on the other. The contrast in the interior of both is between mini­imized functionally specified spaces and functionally varied open loft like spaces. At a larger scale a similar contrast exists between the continuously generalized exterior and the more specifically tuned interior arrangements. The four by four window grid reflects the four foot planning cube used throughout and accommodates doors, awning windows and fixed items. A variety of structural materials are articulated and differentiated. The massive concrete at the base­ ment supports the slender steel frame which in turn supports steel pipe and wood trusses and an ex­ posed underbelly of 24x5y and plywood of the roof. The steel gratings and pipe handrails, the clear anod­ ized aluminum windows, the corrugated asbestos and fibreglass on the outside of the four foot by eight foot panelized plywood walls, all standard "catalogue" items, are clearly articulated. The changes in and choices of mater­ ials are largely in response to spe­ cific performance requirements.

The articulation and exposure of materials, connections and struc­ ture creates a strongly constructed object, bolded, trusted and braced. The juxtaposition of that to the big general volume is similar to the formal and functional juxtaposition between the specific and the general uses which should accom­ modate the complexity of living in that place.

...
Chapter News and Notes

APPOINTMENTS
Donald C. Axon, AIA has been appointed head of the Department of Architecture at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. He has also been named Chairman of the College of Architecture and Planning at the University of New Mexico. In addition, Don has been named as a team leader in the forefront of efforts of the architectural design and construction program on the campus. He has been involved in the design and construction of several major construction projects on the campus.

Howard D. Martin, a resident of San Marino, has been elected Chairman of the Los Angeles Regional Planning Commission. He is a graduate of the University of Southern California and has served as Chief Executive Officer of Continental Can Company for 25 years, during which time he has been instrumental in developing and implementing strategies to improve the business operations of the company.

The Architect's Role in Solving These Sectors of the General Public

The architect's role in solving these sectors of the general public policies in these areas of concern is to educate elementary and secondary teachers, and students in architectural education. Students in architectural education need the input, complementing formal architectural education, of citizens living in the community. The participating citizen groups are organized by the AIA and include the Architect's Office. The participating citizen groups are organized by the AIA and include the Architect's Office.

AWARDS AND HONORS

The Great Westwood Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee has selected two winners in its annual awards honoring architects, landscape architects, and designers. The awards are presented to individuals who have demonstrated excellence in their work and who have made significant contributions to the beautification of the Westside community. Award winners will be presented at a luncheon banquet in April. Projects must be located in the area bounded by the city of Santa Monica and the west Beverly Hills on the north, Century City on the east, and the Los Angeles River on the south. If you are interested in any of the projects involving buildings or structures, you must submit an application. The application must include a letter of inquiry from a professional member of the Great Westwood Chapter of the AIA, Los Angeles 90024, 475-4574, before February 7th.

PUBLICATIONS

During a nine-week summer stay in Washington, D.C., as one of four 1974 AIA Architecture-8 architecture students, four-year-old architect student William H. Martin was elected to explore opportunities for students in the field of architecture and restoration. The results of his investigation, a report prepared in consultation with the National Park Service, will be submitted to the AIA. The report is available to members of the AIA for a fee of $5.00.

The Standard Management Company has donated $3,000 square feet of office space to the Los Angeles Community Design Center. The new office, located on the eighth floor of the Arcade Building at 541 South Spring Street, will house the seven full-time staff members, the Center's library and studio, and its meeting space for staff, volunteers and clients. Margaret Siegel, AIA, serves as President of the Community Design Center, a project of the Southern California Chapter, as well as on the Center's Board of Directors.

Student-Architect Rap Sessions

Student-Architect Rap Sessions are planned again by the Women's Architectural League. Rap sessions in the past have been enjoyed by both students and architects. The Women's Architectural League provides an opportunity to visit local architects and to meet with practicing architects in an informal way, giving members the opportunity to ask questions and acquire some insight into the working environment of architects.

The session is sponsored by the AIA, Los Angeles Chapter. The Women's Architectural League is a group of professional women who wish to meet and socialize with architects and design professionals.

CLASSIFIEDS

There is no material that can equal the design flexibility and performance of lath and plaster. Metal and gypsum lathing systems are available to meet every construction need. Acoustical, fireproofing, conventional plastering and the new "thick coat" applications can provide a surface to answer every functional requirement. The Plastering Information Bureau is the technical service staff for your consultation and assistance in the preparation of lathing and plastering specifications. You are invited to call.

A reminder from the Chapter office in the Brick Building. Contact phones are not answered in the office between noon and 1:15 daily.

NEW MEMBERS

Corporate:

IN THE NEWS

Sixteen revisions of the Bylaws of the Southern California Chapter AIA were approved by members whose votes were received and tallied by the Chapter's Bylaws Committee last December. A total of 274 votes — well above the required quorum of 186 — were received and counted. According to a report to the Chairman, Martin B. Turner, FAIA, the following revisions were passed:

Article II (Membership): Permits a professional associate member of the Chapter to become an associate member of the Board when the number of professional associates reaches a minimum of 100 percent of corporate members. The number of corporate members shall now be determined by the Chapter rather than the AIA, with the Board of Directors of the Chapter determining the number of corporate members.

Article III (Dues and Assessment): Establishes a minimum dues amount equal to 10 percent of the corporate members' assessments.

Article V (Officers and Directors): Limits to two the number of officers and directors who may serve the Chapter at any one time. The Chapter must have at all times a President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. (Photograph by Marvin Rand.)