

An interview with Morris Verger

Chapter reorganization is the first step in "a quantum leap" for architectural profession

By Jonathan Kirsch
Editor, L.A. ARCHITECT

Editor's note: Last month, Chapter members were informed of a structural reorganization of the Chapter office in a letter from President Morris D. Verger, FAIA. As a part of the reorganization, the position of Executive Vice President has been discontinued in favor of more active participation by architects themselves. In Verger's words, "The Chapter will rely on committee chairpersons, committee members, and individual Chapter members to represent the Chapter both officially and informally." Verger added: "We expect to continue using consultants to help us tell our story, but it must be our story — and we must tell it."

The details of the Chapter reorganization — including the appointment of an Office Manager and other changes at the Chapter office — will be announced in upcoming issues of L.A. ARCHITECT. In the meantime, we spent an afternoon with Morris Verger at his Westwood office to discuss his ideas about the increased professional responsibilities of the architect and the goals that will be served by the Chapter reorganization.

"During the time I've been in practice, the work of architects has changed drastically," commented SCC/AIA President Morris D. Verger, FAIA, at the outset of a wide-ranging interview. "In the early 50s, a large part of the work was on a small scale for individual owners. There was direct contact between the architect and the owner, and the decisions were jointly made."

"Today," Verger continued, "most of the architectural decisions are made by representatives and consultants of the owner, by the architect's staff, and by specialists that the architect hires. These representatives and consultants have the sophisticated capabilities to produce complex contract documents quickly; unfortunately, they also sometimes insulate the architect from the owner. The interplay between the architect's talent and the owner's judgment is often lost in the many layers of personnel that separate them."

In Verger's perspective, these changes highlight the acute need for the architect's skills. "The needs and circumstances today aren't the same as they were 25 years ago," he said, "but the talents of the architect are needed even more. However, the talents are needed in a different place. While in the past it was in the face-to-face relationship with the individual owner, today it must be with those who can legitimately speak for the group or community."

Verger explained: "The pressing need in the foreseeable future appears to be a balance between energy production and consumption, mobility of people and goods, teaching/learning of productive skills, and means of mass communication of essential information and of public values. The architects have the talents to analyze, to synthesize ways of satisfying the physical requirements, and to esthetically express the community's standards and values."

"The architect must personally speak with the community — and show the community that if they express their values, the architect can design an environment which will help the community live according to their standards and values," Verger concluded. "It's a teaching/learning process on both sides."

The theme of Verger's remarks — and at least one goal of the recent Chapter reorganization — is the architectural profession's responsibility to introduce itself to the people who will use or live in the built environment that the architect designs. Verger sees the community's subjective needs as an essential element of the architect's design criteria.

"The planner and designer can't decide what's appropriate for the community if the community doesn't know it as well," Verger said. "That information can only be

discovered through the interaction between the architect and the public. The architect has to meet with the public directly, and he has to deal with them not in the abstract but in the reality of the environment. It has to be some sort of visual and kinesthetic presentation — the architect has to be able to draw in front of them, to make quick sketches, to show pictures, to talk with them, so that the public can express themselves and recognize that they have been heard and understood."

Verger insists that the contact between the public and the profession must be a face-to-face encounter. "I mean that literally," he said. "These meetings would require the architect to learn how to deal with groups. It's a new kind of dealing with the public. It recognizes the idea that the public has value systems that they would express if given the opportunity. Our job is to listen to the public, to understand their values, to translate the values into reality, and to bring the public along with us."

Crisis architecture?

But Verger insists that the architect must look beyond the immediate challenge of listening to the public and must design beyond the public's current needs. He believes that the architect is uniquely able to design not only "denotatively" — that is, for immediate and specific functions — but also "connotatively."

Verger explained: "The architect has the skill to understand what we have to do immediately — and to recognize the serial consequences of what will happen 20 years from now. That takes both denotative and connotative understanding. We have to denote what will happen in the next few days, but we must be alert to the far-reaching connotations of what we do today."

This leads Verger to the belief that the architect must work on a broad time scale. "Architecture and planning are not crisis-oriented," he said. "Architecture cannot solve a crisis. By its very nature, it is a process that anticipates an indefinite life. Economists will assign a certain profitability to a building on the basis of a finite lifetime of use. But if the building is what we call good architecture, it can go through mutations and accommodate itself to different uses and lifestyle demands. Good buildings are something like people who can adapt themselves readily to a variety of circumstances. It's the same distinction as between education and training. An educated person gains an understanding and can function under a range of circumstances, whereas a trained person can only respond to a limited and specific set of circumstances."

Crisis, according to Verger, is often the result of poor planning and architecture by earlier generations. "Certainly the crisis in the city — as far as security,

transportation, and ready access to goods and services are concerned — requires the attention of the architect and planner. But the reason we have the crisis today is that the planning didn't happen when it was supposed to happen. If a crisis exists, you cannot look for a quick answer in architecture. The social worker deals in crisis. Our social responsibility is the long-range planning and design that avoid crisis."

The salad bowl theory

Verger is frankly disappointed in the current state of long-term planning in Southern California. "We do not have a master plan for the Los Angeles area," he said bluntly. "What we have is a conglomerate of zoning plans which plan for limited and specific uses. A specific use plan, by its very nature, does not envision the richness or the human values that come about and are expressed through mixed usage."

Verger illustrated his criticism with an urban hypothetical: "Suppose we had an area of broad walkways. Suppose there were shops, restaurants, art exhibits, parks and malls, schools, with parking on the periphery or underground. In addition, suppose there were offices interspersed among the shops, and an occasional highrise apartment building, and perhaps some light commercial or industrial plants — craft shops, jewelers, computer software, electronic assembly. This would be a total mixture of uses — and none of our current zoning plans can handle it!"

He likens the ideal master plan to a fine mixed salad. "When you have a well-made salad, it will have a number of ingredients. And each ingredient tastes of its unique essence. The master plan — especially for Los Angeles, which has an unparalleled opportunity because it is the only city of this size and scale built since the advent of the automobile — could allow us to experience the same variety and intensity. We would prefer that the directions of the master plan — rather than being on a specific use basis — recognize what now exists. Whatever is built under the master plan should be supportive of and add to what already exists, so that the city would become a richer place. When you build a new part, the existing parts should be even richer and more valuable." And Verger insisted: "New buildings are destructive if they make the existing buildings prematurely obsolete."

Only architects have the background to create and implement a master plan with these standards and values, according to Verger. "The state of the art is such that architects — with the kind of training and education many architects have had — can bring human values to long-range planning. The planning team, acting in concert, should include the urban planner, the environ-

mentalist, the biologist, the anthropologist, the behavioral scientist, each playing his solo at the appropriate time. But the architect is still the conductor of the orchestra."

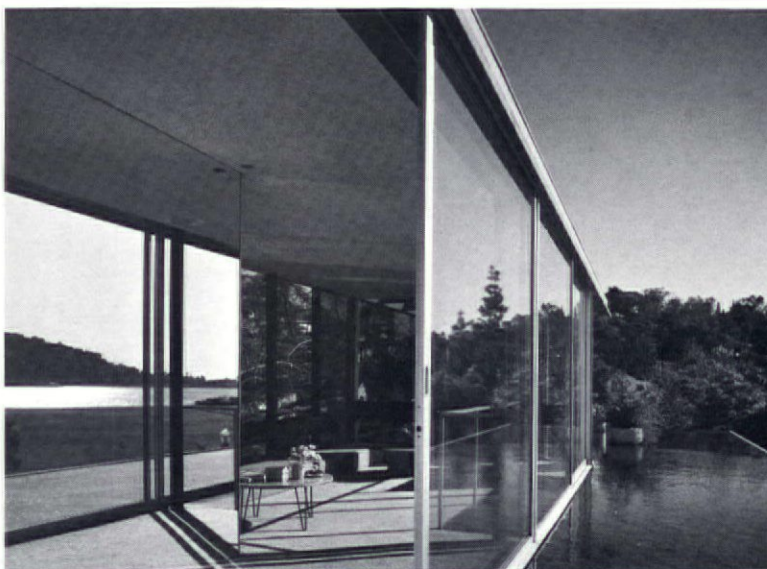
A quantum leap

To meet the challenges that Verger has outlined here, he calls on members of the SCC/AIA to focus their skills and attention on both community contact and long-range planning. The reorganization of the Chapter office — with the new emphasis on personal contact by architects with the public — is simply the first step in what Verger calls "a quantum leap."

"We're not contributing nearly as much to the public as we might when we are confined to the design of individual buildings, or when we allow ourselves to be insulated from the public by layers of outmoded practices," Verger said. "We have to expand our function and do so very fast. We architects need education on how communication actually takes place between people. We have to distinguish between functional activities and subjective values. We have to think of how to invite and structure public meetings so that the communication can take place. We must learn how to listen, to take all the information and display it back to the group. And in order to achieve these goals, the architectural profession has to make a quantum leap."

The Southern California Chapter/AIA — among the largest and most active organizations of the architectural profession — appears to Verger as an untapped reservoir of talent and energy. "We should address ourselves to the problems of communication and planning as a chapter," Verger said. "We have enough interested members, we have enough members who would be delighted to work on specific problems. There is more than enough talent and willingness to change the city and to greatly expand the market for architectural services."

And Verger insists that the realization of these new goals will enable the individual architect to enhance the quality of his or her own work. "When you're doing an individual building for a client," Verger concluded, "and you have a sense of the richness and human values that the building can contribute to the community, you're in a position to do a much better job."



W.A.L. Home Tour

Richard Neutra's VDL Research House at Silverlake is one of six homes to be featured as a part of the Women's Architectural League 15th Annual Home Tour on October 5th. See story inside for details. (Photograph by Julius Shulman.)

SEPTEMBER 1975

Inside:

Design: A preview of the Pacific Design Center.
"The Architect As Implementor" by Jerry L. Pollak, AIA
Chapter Meetings: July and September meeting announcements
WAL: 15th Annual Home Tour
Chapter News and Notes: Names, news and notable events

Calendar:

September 9: SCC/AIA Chapter meeting. See story for details.
September 16: "Glass in Architecture" by Anthony Lumsden, AIA, at Professional Development Program. See enclosed announcement.
September 27: L. A. Community Design Center's Second Annual Allied Arts Festival at Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood. Call 626-1453 for information.
October 5: WAL's 15th Annual Home Tour. Call Chapter office or see story for details.

NEWS AND NOTES

Bill Porush starts his class in "Structural Design for Architects" on Saturday, September 6, at 10:00 a.m. The class will meet at 306 West Third Street in Los Angeles. For additional information, call 628-7080.

Winning entries in the **First Annual Design Awards Program** of the SCC/AIA will be on display at the **Museum of Science and Industry** starting **August 28** for six weeks. Panels and slides documenting the 20 Award-winning designs will be on exhibit.

Toshikazu Terasawa, A.I.A., Japanese community leader and partner in the 25-year-old architectural firm of O'Leary, Terasawa & Takahashi has been reappointed to the Los Angeles City Building and Safety Commission. The Commission, authorized by the City Charter serves as an advisory body to the Building and Safety

Department and as an appeal agency.

Harry B. Wilson, Jr., AIA, has been named president of the **Architectural Guild** for 1975-76. Wilson, who is president of Charles Luckman Associates and a director of the SCC/AIA, will serve with **John R. Campbell** (William Simpson Construction Co.) as vice-president and **Jack Crevier** (Crevier Consulting Electrical Engineers, Inc.) as secretary-treasurer. The 350-person Guild is an active support organization for USC's Department of Architecture.

A graduate architect from Yugoslavia is seeking a temporary position with a local firm to observe architectural practice in America. His travel and living expenses will be paid by his sponsor, and thus there will be no cost to the employer. Contact **Aleksander Bizjak**, Muzejski Trg. 4, 66,000 Koper, Yugoslavia.

The planning committee for the **Los Angeles Community Design Center's Second Annual Allied Arts Festival (SAAAF)** is soliciting original works of art, prints, furniture, plants, fabrics, jewelry and other items as tax-deductible donations to the Festival. Bring donations to the LA-CDC, 541 South Spring Street, Suite 800, or call 626-1543 for pick-up. Donated items will be on sale at the Festival on **September 27** at the **Pacific Design Center**, 8687 Melrose Avenue, in West Hollywood. Festivities will include dancing to a live band, entertainers, fellowship, bar, food, live and silent auction of donated items, and an audio-visual presentation about Community Design Centers. For information, call 626-1453.

Robert C. Lesser, AIA, has been named a judge for the **1975 Gold Nugget Awards** sponsored by the **National Association of Home Builders** and the **Pacific Coast Builders Conference**. The awards program honors outstanding examples of commercial, industrial, institutional, housing and new community design throughout the western states.

SCC/AIA Chapter Meetings

SEPTEMBER

A lively and provocative exchange of ideas and information among Chapter members and AIA leaders will highlight the September SCC/AIA Chapter Meeting at Barnsdall Park in Hollywood on Tuesday evening, September 9, 1975. A picnic on the grass in the garden setting of Barnsdall will precede the evening's program.

Cocktails and a picnic buffet will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Barnsdall Park. Following the buffet dinner, members will gather in the Barnsdall Park Auditorium for an open forum with SCC/AIA officers and directors, regional directors and CCAIA officers. CCAIA President Ward Deems, FAIA, and Rex Lotery, FAIA, Regional AIA Director, have been invited to take part on the program.

Members will be encouraged to ask these local, state and national AIA leaders any and all questions about the organization and its programs. Questions are expected to include: What does the AIA do for me? Why are Chapter dues so high? What is the purpose of the CCAIA, and why are its dues so high? What's in the AIA for the young practitioner? Is the SCC/AIA a clique of "in" people who enjoy cocktail parties and avoid hard

issues? If the AIA is so good, why is the environment so bad?

Chapter members are invited to add to the list of questions by attending the September 9th Chapter Participation Meeting with questions of their own in mind. The cost of the evening is \$4.50 per person; bring a blanket along for the picnic buffet on the grass. For reservations and information, use the enclosed white envelope or contact the Chapter office at 624-6561.

JULY

An insider's tour of the 52-story Security Pacific World Headquarters in downtown Los Angeles attracted Chapter members and guests to the July Chapter Meeting. Tours were conducted by the firm of Albert C. Martin Associates, and then the members and guests gathered for dinner and an informational program in the building's waterfall-decorated cafeteria.

The project team for the Security Pacific building shared an intimate view of the design and building process. David C. Martin, AIA, spoke about the downtown area's new pedestrian circulation system and how the Security Pacific building was designed to harmonize with the system. Jack Spak, project architect, described the concept of the building and the function of the design process. Chuck Griggs, project manager, spoke about the health and safety systems of the Security Pacific building, with special attention on the fire and seismic safety aspects. Ron Pagliassotti, project director and project architect for interiors, concluded the evening with a description of the task of space-planning and decorating one million square feet within the building.

"It was a tremendous amount of information," commented our observer. "The tour included the building's magnificent art collection, and the evening program enlightened us on the problem-solving techniques and design process that the Martin office used in the Security Pacific building."

W.A.L. Home Tour

"A Walk Through Living History" is the theme of the 15th Annual Home Tour sponsored by the SCC/AIA and the Southern California Chapter of the Women's Architectural League on October 5, 1975, from noon until 5 p.m. The nostalgic theme of this year's tour is in keeping with our country's Bicentennial Celebration. Funds received from ticket sales are used to provide scholarship funds for architectural students.

Six homes dating from the 1880s through the 1960s are featured on this year's tour in the Silverlake, Echo Park and Highland Park areas. The earliest homes represent the Queen Ann-Eastlake style of the 1880s. The Hale House — built in approximately 1885 and now in the process of restoration — boasts highly ornate brick chimneys and much exterior wood carving.

Also in the process of being completely restored is Historical-Cultural Monument No. 51, built in about 1887 by Aaron Phillips. Spindle work and turned posts grace the entry, and the house makes wonderful use of stained glass windows. The present owners are Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Morales, who now live in the house.

Architect R. M. Schindler designed one of the first double cantilever buildings for the Wilson House in 1937, a residence now occupied by Bernard Zimmerman, AIA. It is four stories high and moves in three directions as it goes up.

In 1947, Douglas Honnold, FAIA, and John Lautner, FAIA, brought a full range of outdoor living to a small city property (60 by 80 feet) for their clients, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wright. Today, it is hard to

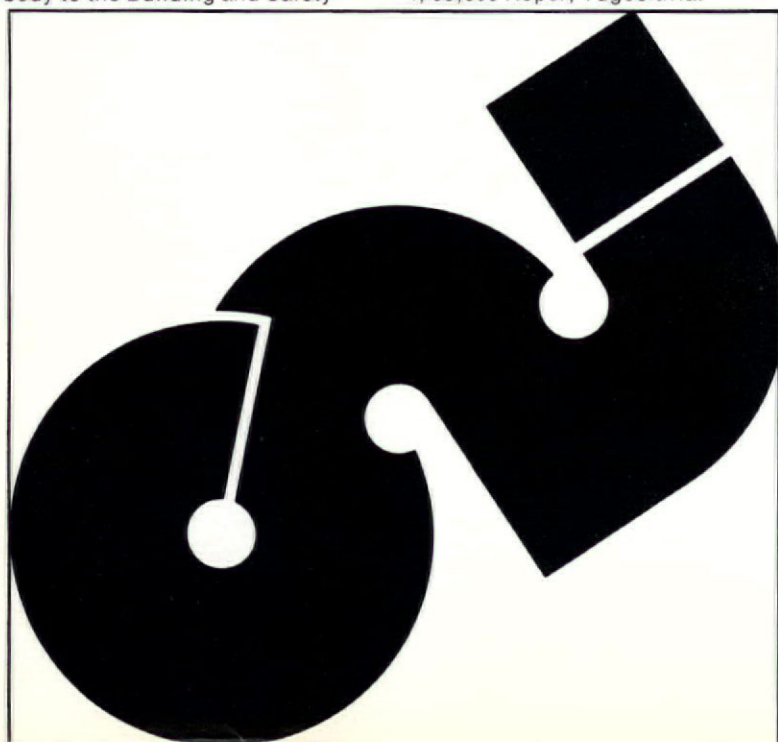
tell where the gardens begin and the house ends.

John Lautner, FAIA, began Silvertop in 1957, and the house is still in the process of "becoming." Also on the W.A.L. Home Tour is the VDL Research House II, originally built by Richard Neutra, FAIA, in 1932 and then rebuilt after destruction by fire. The 1965 reconstruction from its charred skeleton was completed by Neutra and his son, Dion Neutra, AIA, as research and project architect.

Mrs. Victor Newlove, Chairperson of the Home Tour, is being assisted by Mrs. Richard Stoddard, Hostess Chairperson; Mrs. Robert Tyler and Mrs. Claus G. Dalmak, Ticket Chairperson and Co-Chairperson; Mrs. Cyril R. Shnier, Press Chairperson; and Mrs. Miller Fong, President of the Southern California Chapter of the Women's Architectural League.

Tickets and information about adults and \$2.50 for students 15 years or older. Visitors will not be allowed to smoke, wear sharp heels or take pictures. Children under 15 years will not be admitted.

Tickets are and information about the Home Tour are available at the SCC/AIA Office, 304 S. Broadway, Suite 510, Los Angeles, 624-6561; Armet, Davis, Newlove & Associates AIA, 5767 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, 931-6231; M. Flax, Artists Materials, 10852 Lindbrook Drive, West Los Angeles, 474-3561; R. Duell & Associates AIA, 606 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, 451-5873; Richard Stoddard AIA, 13701 Riverside Drive, Sherman Oaks, 788-6084; and Mrs. Robert Tyler, 19344 Rosita Street, Tarzana, 345-1571.



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CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

CCAIA President Ward Deems, FAIA, has called for a reaffirmed commitment to the **Man Hour Data Bank**. When the trend away from the use of the percentage-of-construction-cost method of determining architectural costs began several years ago, a group of concerned West Coast architects began to study the possibility of establishing a data bank which could help architectural firms in estimating their costs. As a result, **Man Hour Data Bank, Inc. (MHDB)** was organized last summer. MHDB represents a source of man-hour data which is an essential element in the implementation of the Institute's new Compensation Management System. For further information, contact MHDB Headquarters, 1736 Stockton Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94133, (415) 981-0366.

A new name in L.A. ARCHITECT's masthead is **Bonnie Wright**, who will serve as the publication's **Director of Advertising**. Ms. Wright can be contacted through the Chapter office in the Bradbury Building for information about advertising rates and schedules.

Members of the SCC/AIA mourn the passing of **Ralph Mitchell Crosby, AIA**, at Laguna Hills, California.

The **Southern California Chapter of the Architectural Secretaries Association** will join 14 other allied professional groups in attendance at the **Second Allied Arts Annual Festival (SAAAF)** at the Pacific Design Center on **Saturday, September 27, at 7:30 p.m.** The Festival — which will benefit the **Los Angeles Community Design Center** and its community programs — will be the regular monthly meeting of the ASA.

The **41st International Eucharistic Congress** and the **Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA** are co-sponsoring an architectural competition for design of altar stages for the

city's two major sports stadiums. Architects not practicing within the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Chapter must be registered architects in the United States and must associate with a Philadelphia firm to enter the competition. The deadline for the competition is October 1, 1975. For further information, contact **Mario Romanach, AIA**, 117 South 17th Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103, (215) 569-3186. The winning design will receive an award of \$5000, with \$2000 for second place and \$1000 for third place winners.

"**Glass in Architecture**" will be the theme of a presentation by **Anthony Lumsden, AIA**, at the September 16th **Professional Development Program**. Call the Chapter office for further details.

Donald L. Wolverton, AIA, was installed as President of the **Los Angeles Chapter, Construction Specifications Institute**, in ceremonies held at the Chalon Mart last June. A graduate of USC's College of Architecture, Wolverton is a partner in the architectural firm of Nielsen, Moffatt & Wolverton. Also installed were Vice Presidents **Leonard Hirsch** and **Kurt Rheinfurth**, Secretary **Greg Mowat**, and Treasurer **George Hernandez**.

Should membership in the **CCAIA** be on a chapter or an individual basis? A proposed change in CCAIA's membership structure — which is now based on local AIA chapters — is the subject of a vigorous debate around California. An upcoming issue of **L. A. ARCHITECT** will explore the controversies and contentions which surround the issue of CCAIA membership.

At the end of September, **Frederic P. Lyman, AIA**, will turn over the chairmanship of the **L.A. ARCHITECT** Editorial Board to **Thomas R. Vreeland, Jr., AIA**. Lyman is undertaking a year-long sabbatical that will include world travel, research and writing. As one of the

creators of **L. A. ARCHITECT** — and, over the past nine months, as Chairman of the Editorial Board — Lyman's energy, imagination and enthusiasm have shaped the Chapter's new publication. Lyman's familiar byline will remain in these pages as he contributes to **L.A. ARCHITECT** during his sabbatical year.

Candidates for the **Professional License Examination** to be held this December will be interested in the preparation program currently offered by **Architectural License Seminars**. The program includes a comprehensive group of home study courses, the all-new **Professional Examination Guide/TIP:1**, and a one-day intensive seminar to be held in Los Angeles on November 15. The ALS organization is completing its eighth year of educational service to the profession and is currently providing study aids to thousands of individual candidates throughout the country. Further information may be obtained by calling the ALS office at (213) 477-0112.

Editor Jonathan Kirsch will hold **L. A. ARCHITECT** office hours at the Chapter office in the Bradbury Building from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 2, 1975. Kirsch will be available for consultation and conversation by phone or in person at the Chapter office on the first Tuesday of each month, or throughout the month at 836-5729. Chapter members are invited to submit information and ideas for **L.A. ARCHITECT** in the form of notes, outlines, completed articles or visual materials.

Two courses in architecture will be presented by **UCLA Extension** in the Fall quarter. "**Twentieth Century Styles of Architecture**," a survey from William Morris to Charles Moore (including Corb, Mies, Gropius, Wright, Art Deco, Corporate International Style and Pop), will begin September 23, 1975. To celebrate the American Bicentennial, a comprehensive

survey of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright will be offered in "**Frank Lloyd Wright: When Democracy Builds**." The course will emphasize his residential and public buildings, urban planning, and Wright's philosophy of organic architecture based on the agrarian ideal of Jeffersonian democracy. Kathryn Smith, MA, will conduct the class, which will meet from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, starting September 25, in Rm. 3357c of the Graduate School of Management at UCLA. For further information, call 825-1328.

"*The Towering Inferno* notwithstanding, occupants of a tall building who are responding to a disaster situation are not likely to panic," reported **E. L. Quarantelli** of Ohio University's Disaster Research Center during a symposium on "**Human Response to Tall Buildings**," held under the auspices of the AIA and the Joint Committee on Tall Buildings in Chicago last summer. Quarantelli continued: "Research conducted over the past 25 years clearly indicates that human behavior under stress is generally controlled, rational and adaptive. Panic behavior does occur, but it is the exception, not the rule."

P.C.

A new Energy Committee is being established by the Southern California Chapter of **The Producers' Council, Inc.** Highlights will include seminars and programs of interest to the construction industry. Guests at the recent PC meeting included **Morris Verger, FAIA**, and **David Martin, AIA**. At their request, contact will be made with the AIA Energy Committee for possible activity coordination. Recently elected PC President **Charlie Morgan** of W. R. Grace & Co. serves as the PC liaison for the Southern California AIA. Other newly-elected officers are: **John Marshall** (The Mills Co.) 1st VP; **Richard Berklite** (Modernfold Industries) 2nd VP; **Freda Harper** (Libbey-Owens-Ford Co.) Treasurer; **Hank Hinman** (Johns-Manville) Secretary.

A detailed four-page evaluation of the **Preliminary Coastal Zone Plan** of the **California Coastal Commission** was submitted to Commission members and staff by SCC/AIA Chapter President **Morris D. Verger, FAIA**, **Jerry L. Pollak**, Chairman of the Environmental Planning Committee of the SCC/AIA, and **Harlan R. Hogue**, Subcommittee Chairman on Coastline Planning. The evaluation enumerates several general concerns about the Plan and fifteen specific proposals, ranging from comments about length ("*The Plan should be re-written . . . to reduce its contents to the essence of a constitutional framework*") and language ("*Language of the Plan should be clear, simple and comprehensible*") to organizational structure ("*We are opposed to a single . . . Commission to enforce the Plan . . . Existing state ordinances-agencies already provide the necessary structure for enforcement*") and philosophy of regulation ("*There should be less regulation of design and more encouragement of innovative planning*").

A tour of **Lockheed Plant 42** in Palmdale will be held on September 13 by the **SCC/AIA Associates**. A complete tour of the facilities by Lockheed staff personnel with the assistance of staff architects promises to be both educational and fun — bring the family, too. Buses will leave the DWP parking lot at 111 N. Hope Street, downtown Los Angeles, at 9:00 a.m. Fee is \$2.50 (payable to SCC/AIA), and reservations should be made as early as possible. Contact **Bob Reyes**, Director of Communications at 655-7220, for further information.

How far does L.A. sprawl? Well, **L.A. ARCHITECT** has readers as far away as Tennessee, where the publication "CSI Memphis" picked up **Lester Wertheimer's** article on the Professional Licensing Exam ("The Two-Day Nightmare") with a reprint credit to **L.A. ARCHITECT** and the SCC/AIA.

Philip Kimmelman, AIA, has been named to the **Elevator Code Advisory Committee** of the L.A. Department of Building and Safety as a representative of the AIA.

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Pacific Design Center: "... Its esthetic is partly

Tim Vreeland interviewed Gruen Associates, the architect of the Pacific Design Center, this month's centerfold. The principals interviewed were: Edgardo Contini, Partner-in-Charge; Cesar Pelli, Partner-in-Charge of Design; and Allen Rubenstein, Project Coordinator and later Partner-in-Charge. What follows are extracts from a much longer interview during which L.A. Architect learned that Gruen has been working on the project since 1970; that the developer is Sequoia Pacific, the land development arm of Southern Pacific Company; that the Executive Director of Pacific Design Center is Murray Feldman; that the building, whose gross area is 750,000 square feet, will provide 550,000 square feet of leasable space to tenants in the interior design business; that the five levels of the building vary in area and represent five categories of lessors; and that the circulation cores of escalators are placed diagonally 400 feet across from each other to encourage visitors in the Center to look at all the floors.

Siting

Vreeland: I am curious about the site. You must have given a lot of thought about the neighboring buildings, and just how your building would sit among them.

Pelli: This is an important issue. The building is much larger than anything which surrounds it. We were aware of this and we had two choices. One was to try to blend to a degree with the surroundings. We discussed this briefly. The building could have been terraced and built in brick. It would have been possible to use earthy colors — beiges, grey — that would have picked up colors of surrounding buildings. My concern with that attitude is that, if you do that, the new large element changes the scale of everything around because it becomes part of its surroundings. Everything changes with it. Look at other large buildings in the area. I believe they do more to destroy the scale of everything around it than P.D.C. The approach we have taken is just the opposite. We placed the building as an object which is separate from everything which is around it.

It is like some port city where, down a street, you see some huge boat which is enormous in scale, but doesn't change the scale of the little buildings. It is a classical photographer's subject: the contrast position of a transatlantic liner with small houses.

The Design Center was carefully placed on its site as a separate identifiable object. It is very light in weight, a large volume but with little mass — as if it had just landed there. It coexists in harmony with the small houses without becoming part of them. Two different fabrics and scales which are juxtaposed and not mixed. To me it is like having steak and then dessert. One after the other they go perfectly well. But if you mix the steak with the dessert there is disaster. If you try to make the steak sweet so it will blend with the dessert or the dessert salty so it will go with the steak they both will lose.

Rubenstein: There is one other consideration about the scale of the building in relation to its function. Besides the bulk or the volume of the building as it relates

architecturally to its surroundings, we were concerned about what effects the function of the building would have in the very area it is placed. Melrose and Robertson Boulevards. For example, to exaggerate, if all those businesses in those one-story stores were to shift into our building and desert the streets, we would gain something on the one hand but lose something very valuable on the other. But this is not happening. Some businesses are staying on Melrose and Robertson Boulevards and others are moving into the Center. I think what we are doing is reinforcing existing services at the center of the city.

The building does more than just provide new space for the existing functions. When the building opens it will be with a function new to the area. It will accommodate contract interiors representation on a much larger regional basis than Robertson Boulevard could ever do. Should somebody want to furnish a large hotel, he would come right here and be exposed to combined facilities that would not have been available otherwise. The

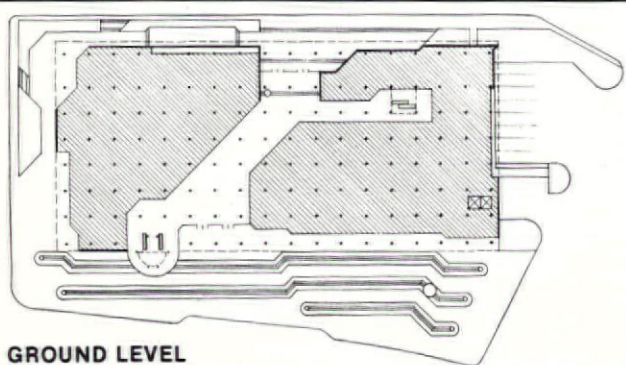
same person that would have gone to Rome or to New York or to the Ice House in San Francisco will now come to Los Angeles.

A much wider range of customers will come to the Pacific Design Center and while they're here, they will visit all the other stores in the surrounding area.

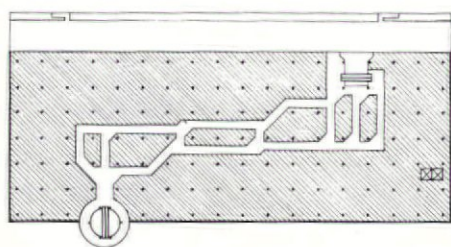
The Silhouette

Vreeland: I would like to ask you a question about the silhouette of your building which is so strong: The esthetic of large glass and metal buildings within the tradition of the last twenty years has not been toward such distinctive silhouettes. In fact, it has been the opposite. The whole sort of S.O.M.-ing of buildings has tended, through the influence of Mies earlier, to simplify silhouettes as much as possible.

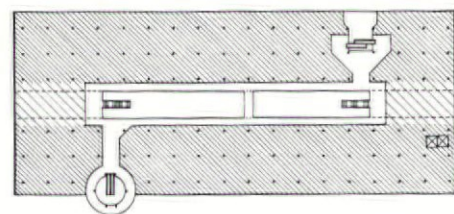
Pelli: Well firstly, as far as the silhouette is concerned, it was really a very simple decision. We wanted to build it just as a cut-out of an extrusion. Its esthetic is partly intellectual and partly graphics. As to the second part of your question, it is not a metal and glass building. The metal does



GROUND LEVEL



THIRD LEVEL



SIXTH LEVEL

Intellectual, partly graphic...

It exists. It's just a glass skin. Actually, there are not even metal mullions, just neoprene gaskets. It's a skin, but treated quite freely. **Vreeland:** But then in what tradition do you see the building existing?

Pelli: In a way it relates back to Mies van der Rohe, the early Mies. For example, the buildings he designed for Berlin (the Friedrichstrasse office buildings) if you turn them on their side. Other architects who have worked with glass in this manner are some of the Dutch architects like Bijvoet and Duiker and Mart Stam.

Sign and Color

Vreeland: What were the elements which you were prepared to put in the Pacific Design Center? How early were they established? **Pelli:** The exterior which was established very early, and the utility of a few principal spaces. As you know, as a designer I put most of my eggs in a few baskets, two or three major elements, for those I will fight. For the rest I remain flexible. I do not believe there is one best design but a whole range of options, from

good to bad.

Contini: What we didn't expect from the client, considering their corporate entity, was that when the design was submitted (except for some concerns about the color, which took longer, subsequent convincing), they were absolutely enamored of the concept and they were very supportive. But even when supportive, the owner took active and constructive participation in the critique. This is a rare thing.

Pelli: The client participated in the design process and approved all the decisions. The issue of the color of the building was a very good case in point.

Vreeland: You must have earlier established that it would be a color?

Pelli: We had established early it would be a color and we had chosen blue. In fact, that's one point about which the client had some doubts and they wondered if there weren't alternatives to blue. So we presented about ten alternatives from white to very dark colors, unsaturated and saturated. We had to study them very carefully because the color is so

essential in the design of this building. We made a very systematic study. We presented our conclusions in a model that we covered with different colors of glossy paper. We ended up recommending only two colors. One was blue and the other one was desaturated red, going towards brown so that it had the same intensity of color as the blue but was in the red range. The yellows looked terrible; the greens were awful. And in the pastel shades the building completely lost its form. Of the two colors that we considered for first choice, we made jackets that we could take off, covered in zip-a-tone with the mullion grid drawn over. The model could be dressed and undressed like a paper doll.

Rubenstein: I am not sure that I would say that we "sold" the blue again. I think that when the issue was reopened we were ready to restudy it and change it if that were the decision. We came back again with an open mind and it turned out that the decision to use blue was reaffirmed.

Pelli: As an attitude we never

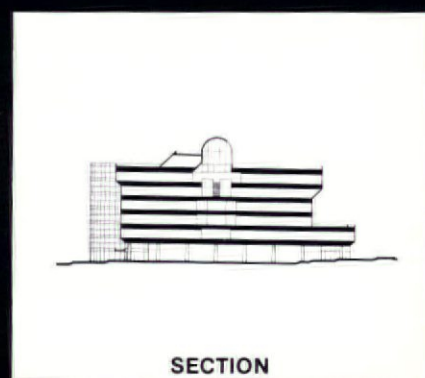
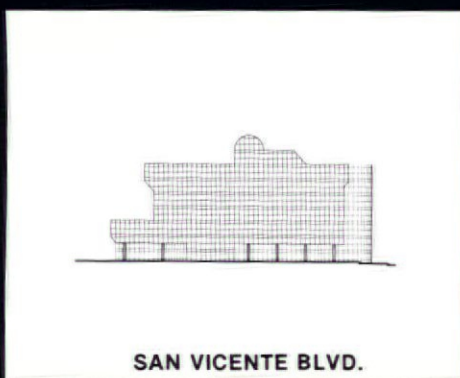
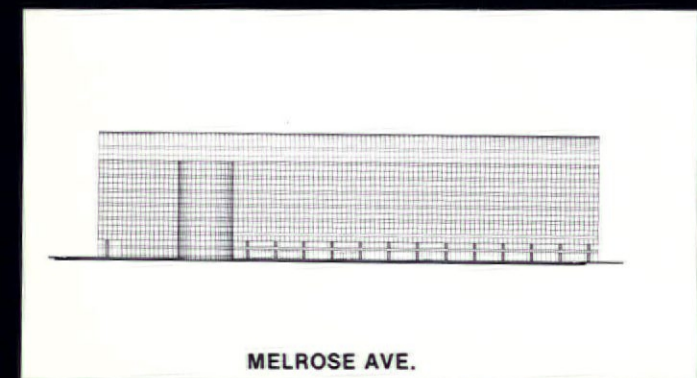
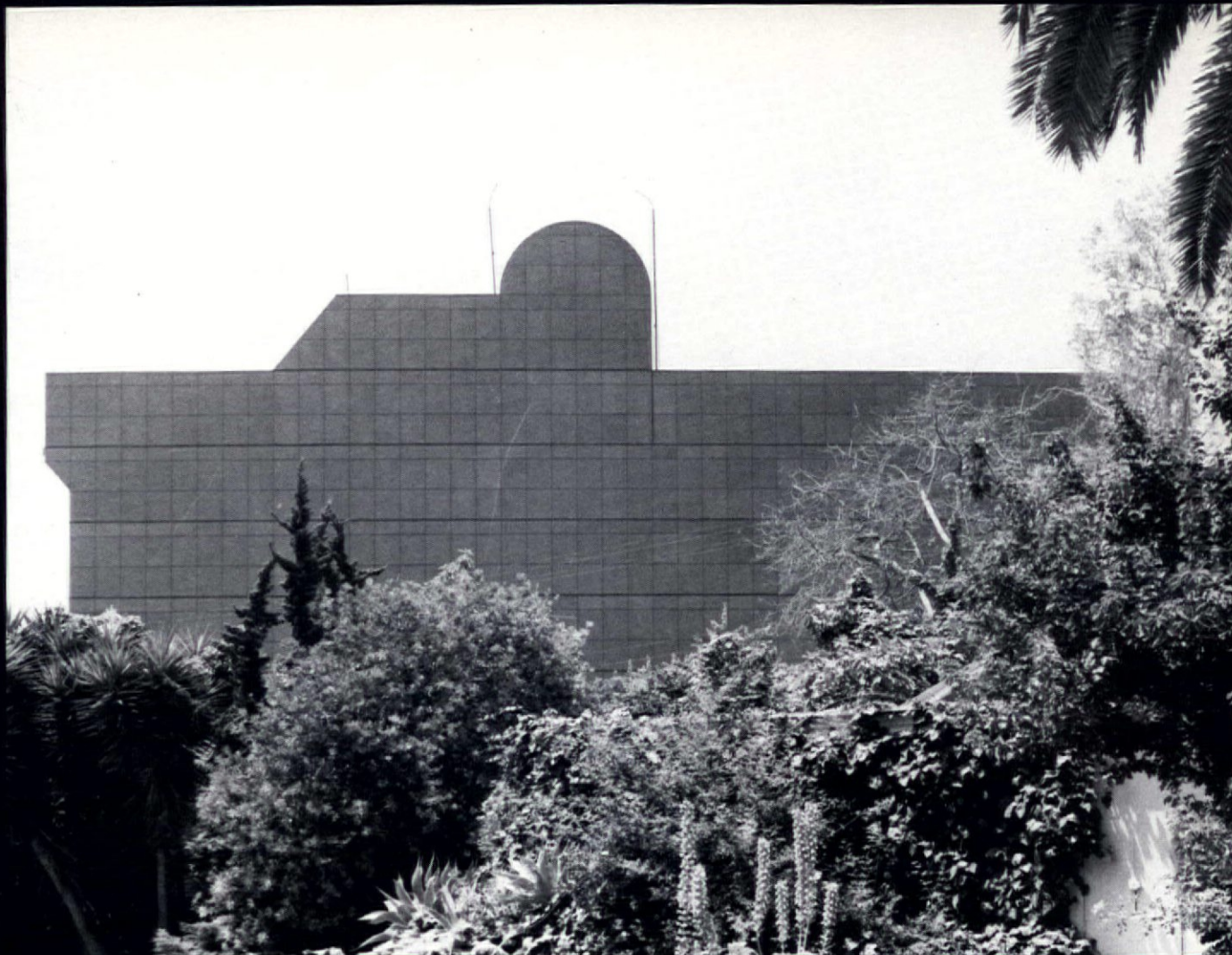
push a design on an owner. We always recommend — and we may make a very strong recommendation — but we feel that the ultimate decision should be in their hands. We typically present alternatives with qualifications. The qualifications are about esthetical considerations, but we also address them to issues of cost, schedule, construction problems and so forth. We always present the alternative, making very clear that some may cost more or be less beautiful than others. We presented the recommended colors knowing that, when the decision was made, we would go with their choice, so they had to be all good.

When the blue was chosen, we prepared about twenty large plexiglass panels with different shades of blue, more or less saturated, light and dark, from grey to red blue. And the decision for the present blue was made because with all the lighter shades you have very little reflection as there is less contrast. So this is a much livelier building, although darker. The actual shade of blue we ended up with was not exactly of our

choice, but, due to the technical limitations of the spandrel glass color process, this was the blue with the least red in it that Libbey-Owens-Ford could produce.

Vreeland: Why didn't you go straight to reflective glass?

Pelli: Mirror glass was also considered. But this is not vision glass; this is cladding. It has insulation blown on the back of it. It is an introverted building with the storefront on the inner mall. The back of the stores is typically storage and they don't need windows. On a couple of floors where we thought offices would exist we did put in bands of windows. The spandrel glass is a cladding and because it is cladding we thought it should have color and not pretend to be windows. It is a high technology assembly, all zippered in, which makes a very light curtain wall. Because of seismic conditions lightweight walls make best sense in California. The glass wall remains crisp. And if something happens to it and it is broken, it has to be replaced. It never remains dented or peeling or chipped. It always looks new.



The architect as implementor: new roles, new rewards

By Jerry L. Pollak, AIA

The development of a building project involves teamwork, utilizing the services of the architect, investor, general contractor, engineer, economist, attorney, mortgage banker, realtor, user and other specialists. The interdisciplinary team demands expert management, and the architect — by virtue of his knowledge of the development process — qualifies for a key role in the management of the team.

The architect as implementor is not necessarily the co-owner, but he is challenged to expand his services and increase his management responsibilities. He is involved in the decision-making process, and he is called upon to participate in planning, financing, construction and ownership. These kinds of participation offer the architect an opportunity to become an entrepreneur with an equity position in the building project.

How can the architect personally benefit from direct participation in development?

The architect as implementor enhances his value to the builder-owner-user by providing quality control and better design control. Because of his expertise in construction methods and materials, the architect as developer can bring cost-saving and time-saving methods to the project. The architect as innovator can create new development opportunities. And these contributions may be reflected in increased financial compensation to the architect in his expanded role as developer.

What is the basic development process?

The development process is determined by the nature, scope and complexity of the specific building program. Generally, the development program may be broken down into four distinct phases:

1. *Preliminary concepts and testing.* This stage is initiated in

response to an idea, a site, a program or a proposal. The potential for development is measured through preliminary investigation of the site, familiarization with current market conditions in a specific area for a specific program, and evaluation of the potential profitability of the completed project.

2. *Packaging.* This stage includes the following steps needed for obtaining financing and local public approvals.

- Assembly of the development team, including specification of the type of organization, percentages of ownership, and determination of responsibilities.
- Preparation of feasibility studies, determination of absorption rates, and the preparation of financial pro-forma indicating go/no-go decisions.
- Steps toward acquisition of land including land options, ground leases, joint venture participation with land owner, deferred acquisition, syndication and land contract.
- Programming and budgeting, including determination of size of budget, phasing and preliminary cost estimates, time sequence projections of construction cost.
- Schematic plans, indicating alternatives for development based on site requirements, program, potential of financing, zoning and other environmental restrictions as well as marketing considerations.
- Preparation of a financing package for submission to prospective lenders, including description of the development, resumes of the participants in the development team, schematic drawings, marketing information and appraisals, preliminary approvals of the plans and sites by local public agencies.

3. *Financing commitments and permanent loans.* The financing commitment for construction will normally have certain pre-conditions before actual funding, such as identification of the equity and cash or services, the preparation of design and working drawings,

obtaining of building permits, and other approvals.

4. *Detailed design and implementation.* This stage includes preparation of working drawings and construction documents, selection of the general contractor, completion of all other requirements outlined in the Letter of Credit commitment for interim and permanent financing, and involvement of construction and property management. Depending on the nature of the project, the implementation may include lease, sale or liquidation of investment.

Why is the architect particularly suited to the role of implementor?

Through the normal training and practice of architecture, the architect acquires a development expertise that is normally associated with the profession. This includes an exposure to various projects, community needs, and identification of potential development programs; broad knowledge of land use, zoning, site plan and environmental requirements; innovation and creativity, including an awareness of technological advances and new building requirements; and design consciousness aimed at design control, quality, functional requirements, cost-benefit relationships and an awareness of urban design.

What personal attributes must an architect possess to be a successful developer?

The architect as implementor functions in a role not ordinarily associated with the profession. This role requires an ability to manage the team, to make decisions, to recognize the requirements of the projects as well as the inherent limitations, and the ability to "sell," including the obtaining of financing, investors and other team members.

The architect as implementor must have a knowledge of financing techniques and sources, especially when interest rates are high and money is scarce. He must be tough

but fair when dealing with others, and he must be flexible on answers and approaches to problem-solving. He should have political savvy in obtaining the necessary approvals amid growing bureaucratic complexities, ranging from zoning changes and environmental approvals to state and national agency approvals. Finally, he should have available resources to invest, either in terms of cash or services.

What are the major pitfalls that face the architect as implementor?

The architect must recognize that — as the implementor — he is taking on additional risks and responsibilities, perhaps far beyond his own economic capabilities and professional expertise. If an architect is not a good businessman in managing his own practice, then he should certainly not delve into the field of development and real estate. Some novice developers should be aware of the following pitfalls.

The shortage of good deals. In a tight-money market, the architect must be very selective as to the type of project and its market potential. For example, at the time of this writing, there appears to be an oversupply of condominiums and a shortage of single family houses in Southern California.

Front money. All projects need front money for preliminary drawings, market feasibility studies, appraisals and land options, etc. The front money requirements may vary from \$10,000 to \$50,000, depending on the size or scope of the project. The architect may need an investor-partner to assist him in providing front money.

Availability of capital. Capital in the form of loans and equity is the most important key to the financing of a project. Insufficient personal capital — or excessive investment in relation to personal wealth — is a real hazard.

Control. The architect as implementor must know his partners and understand his relationship to the decision-making process in all phases of design, financing, con-

struction and management. The partnership arrangement must be such that he cannot lose control of the quality of design. If an architect does architectural work on speculation without control of the project — generally in exchange for a small equity position — he is being taken advantage of. To maintain proper control, the architect's services should be identified as an item to be charged to the project on a predetermined fee arrangement. The principal architect can use a portion of this fee as equity with the understanding that his participation as an equity partner is a separate transaction. Other important aspects of project control are staffing, division of responsibilities, and the efficient use of time in carrying out the project.

How can the architect minimize his risks or exposure?

The architect as implementor should insist on a fair evaluation of his services in relation to the contributions of other team members. He should take an equity position only on an individual basis or through a separate organization created for development enterprise. He should bring in other equity investors only when he recognizes that their contributions are necessary for implementation of the project.

He should acquire land under advantageous terms before the project financing can be committed. He should tie the land purchase to delivered approvals, minimizing the cash investment to obtain maximum financial leverage.

He should organize the development team on differing partner arrangements for different types of projects. Nothing in the concept of professionalism bars an architect from participating in a project development team. His partners can offer an inter-disciplinary approach to the total development process, and can offer the client a turn-key project or professional construction management with new responsibilities for cost-control, scheduling and administration.

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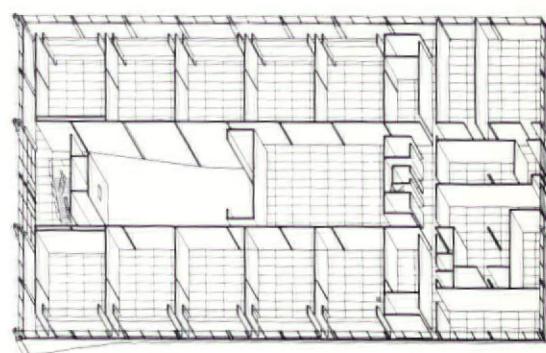
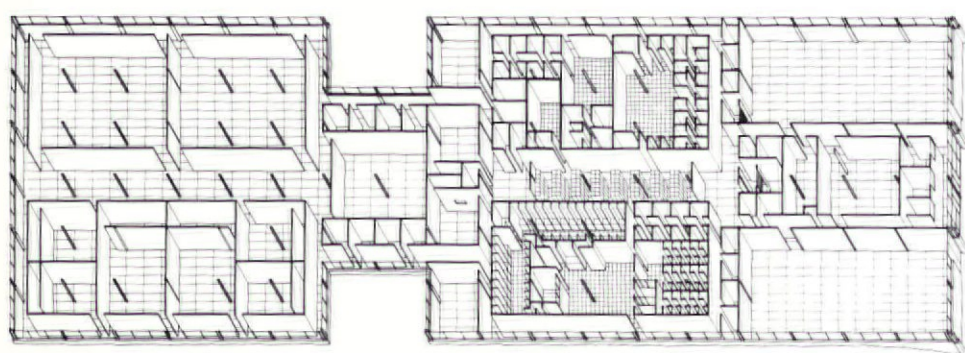
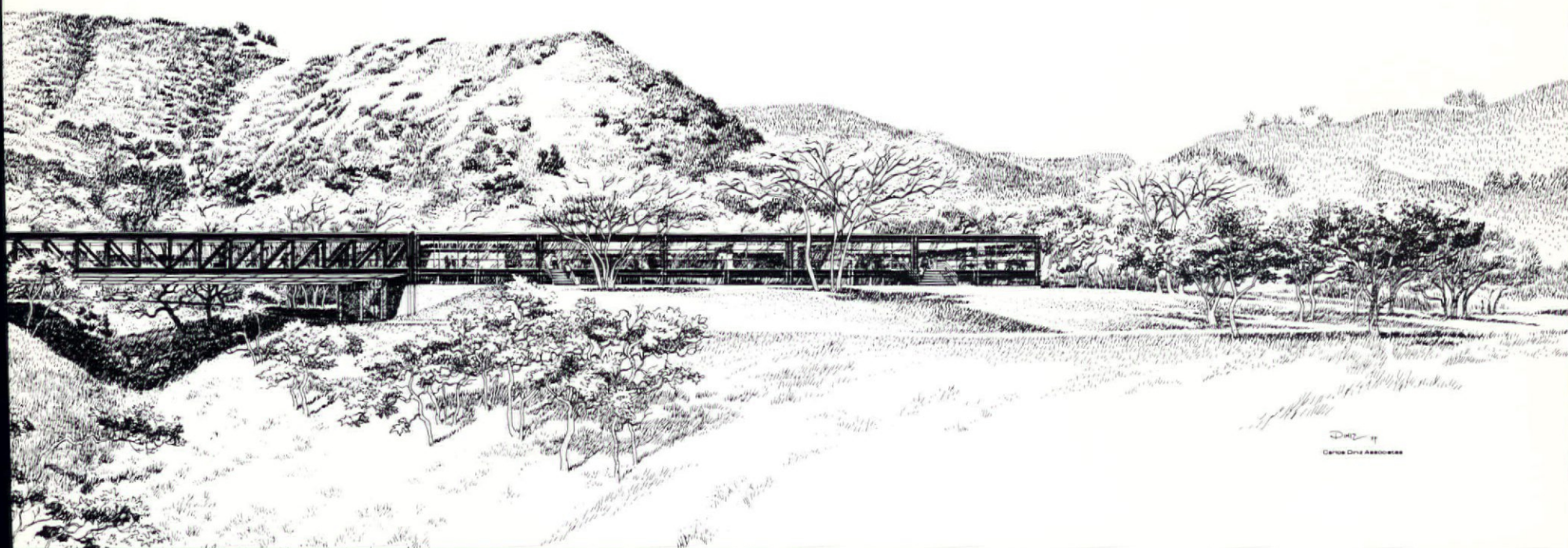
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Art Center y and simplicity..."

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Vreeland: Your buildings look expensive. Are they, in fact?

Ellwood: Our buildings are not only inexpensive, but also are invariably below average prevailing costs. Perhaps they "look expensive" because we strive for clarity and simplicity and these express a certain dignity and honest elegance. Creative detailing also contributes to this elegance. Art Center's cost is slightly over \$30/foot — considerably less than state university or college structures of comparable function on level sites. The design process covered a 5-year span from 1970 to 1975, a period of severe inflation. We guarantee our clients' budgets, and Art Center is under construction today within the budget set in 1970. Of course, we had the cooperation of Don Kubly, President of Art Center College, and the good help and patience of Larry Freeberg of Swinerton & Walberg Co., general contractors. Development Pacific Corporation, construction managers, also contributed in making the project a reality.

Vreeland: As magnificent as the Art Center building is, when one first sees it, the building strongly appears to have a quality of inevitability and even of déjà vu. Has this bridge-like form straddling the landscape been foreshadowed in your earlier work? Do you relate this building to any of your earlier work? Do you see it as sitting within, or stemming from, a tradition of architecture other than your own?

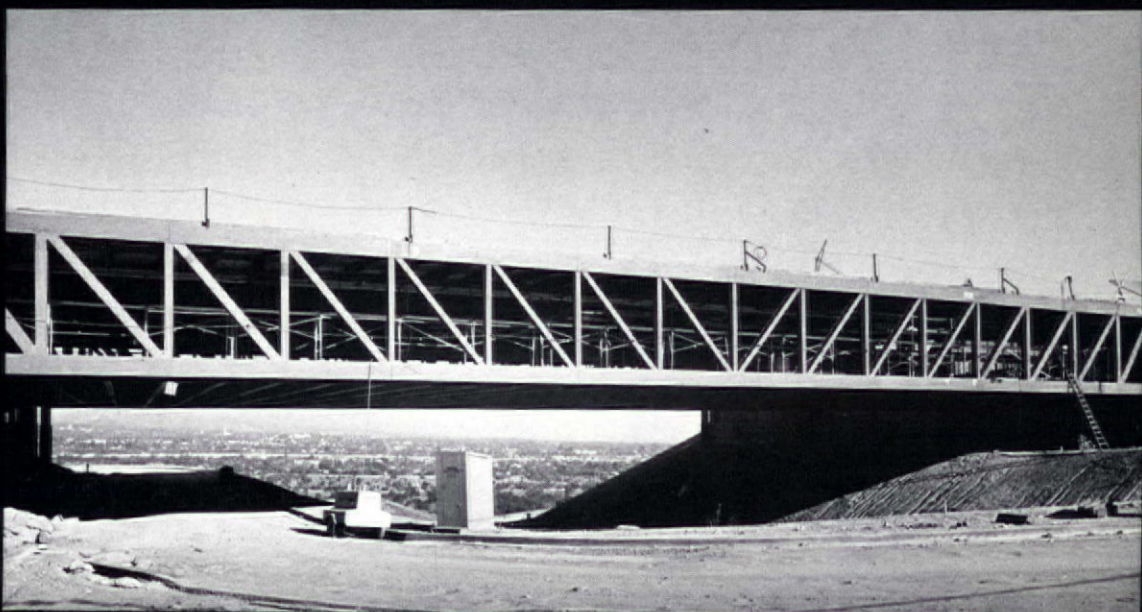
Ellwood: We first exposed a structural steel truss in our Courtyard Apartments in 1952. The truss appeared again in our 1955 South Bay Bank. In 1960 we designed an all-aluminum structure with exposed trusses, and in 1962 we

used a pair of exposed trusses to span 78 feet between masonry courtyard walls in our Chamarro House. In 1964 we designed the Weekend House, a simple roofed steel truss bridge over a steep canyon. Since then exposed trusses have appeared in several of our buildings. So, in this respect, there is certainly a relationship to our earlier work. However, our buildings reflect a consciousness of truth, and this consciousness is not static, but ever progressively unfolding. Had we never used the truss before, it is very probable it would have happened here. As Jim Tyler states: the trusses were not the goal, but rather the result. Given the span and the height of the bridge portion of the building, trusses were the logical solution. It was simply the best way to do it.

One invariably conjures up images with the word "tradition." Art Center expresses a search for truth. It therefore stems from a tradition as old as architecture.

Vreeland: What are your references in architecture? What turns you on? Greek temples? Works of engineering? Modern art?

Ellwood: The Pont du Gard turns me on. The Italian hilltown, Tellerio. The magnificent structures of the Anasazi. A Maillart bridge, a Maillol sculpture, the Eiffel Tower, the Langweiss viaduct. A race car, an Albers painting, the Farnsworth House. The Villa Savoye, the Brandenburg concertos, Mont-Saint-Michel. Hagia Sophia and the stone farmhouses of Tuscany and Corsica. All are architecture of truth. But my turn-ons are irrelevant. Any reply to this question makes it seem as if our work is the result of singular efforts. I am also turned on by the men who work with me, the sensitive men who are truly responsible for the success of our buildings: Jim Tyler in design and Steve Woolley in administration.



The architect as client: "As an architect who is proud of his profession, it makes me angry!"

by Thomas L. Sutton, Jr., AIA

Members of any profession have a tendency to be clannish, to stick together against the slings and arrows of the world at large. As chairman of the AIA's Architect as Client committee — and as a corporate architect employed by a multi-faceted company — I've given a lot of attention to candidly evaluating and measuring the caliber of work executed by architects whom we have employed for our various projects.

Since the shoe has been on the other foot, I can speak first-hand of the frustration and problems that a client faces when working with one of our own profession. First and foremost, I state without hesitation that the majority of architects who've worked for our firm would get a C+ on their professional abilities. Sad but true. I've talked to other architects who hold positions such as mine. Some would grade their colleagues' work even lower; none would mark them higher.

As an in-house architect, I am liaison between my company and outside designers on a wide range of projects, including new construction, on-going refurbishing and complex expansion. It has been interesting to watch what happens.

Generally, it is within four specific areas that I feel our outside architects fall short:

- Lack of competence in performing professional services.
- Assuming responsibilities beyond their professional training and experience.
- Unprofessional and unbusiness-like work habits.
- Poor communications.

To fail in any of these areas is indeed a poor reflection upon our profession. Let me be more specific:

- Time and again I have watched job costs rise and construction time extend — problems that we all understand and should anticipate. Would you believe that it is an exception when an architect that we have engaged goes back to his drawings and specifications to make the necessary changes? Believe it or not. It's true.
- There is a tremendous lack of coordination in the preparation of drawings and specifications for architectural, civil, structural, mechanical and other aspects of a job. Again, a highly unprofessional situation.
- Quite often I find that the architects we engage do not thoroughly examine alternate concepts and/or solutions to an overall design. Optimum solutions are seldom realized. Mediocrity is.
- Budgets and estimates are, generally, disasters. Projects and future commissions are lost when an architect fails to provide reliable estimates of construction costs, and when budget construction costs are

not controlled during planning. Quite simply, the architect's designs are unlikely to be built and future projects are unlikely to be got!

- Little attention is paid to pre-established project time schedules. Another absurd lack of professionalism!

As expressed earlier, I've found that too many architects assume responsibilities beyond their professional training and experience. They offer such a grab bag of services that their business cards look like menu boards.

We were once confident that the word "architect" said it all. Is it necessary to include such words as Planning, Systems, Economics, Feasibility Studies, Environmental Impact Reports, Construction Management and the like to describe our work? When an architect contracts for services beyond his training and experience, it seems to me that it's not only his personal reputation that suffers. The profession, by association, comes off as guilty, too.

That C+ I mentioned earlier is surely a generous grade on business practices for most architects I've worked with. The poor, unbusinesslike manner in which many designers run their shops is deplorable. If that is the opinion of a fellow architect, what must the public think?

I find it astonishing that many architects forget that businesses live by contracts and expect them to be honored. In my experience, many architects have signed agreements to perform their services to certain specifications, only to carry out their assignment in their own

way, apparently forgetting or ignoring the specific terms of the contract.

In the area of basic communication, I've found many architects sadly lacking in basic communication skills. One man repeatedly failed to respond, in writing, to inquiries about an important matter that we badly needed to clarify. Businessmen are not wrong to want things in writing. When there are inadequate or missing records on a project, the client quickly becomes upset. Can you blame him?

Finally, a business firm knows well what it has agreed to in the way of services and fees. Businessmen are not particularly pleased when an architect submits charges for additional services that have never been discussed, let alone approved.

The result of all of this is simple: the resident architect finds his superiors insisting that he perform more and more of the services that

would normally be awarded to outside architects. Jobs are lost every day for all architects because of the habits and shortcomings of a few.

Our company, for example, is now writing the program, hiring and controlling all consultants, providing all project administration, reviewing shop drawings, supervising construction and handling all necessary approvals and permits from government. We're doing this because we've been let down so often in the past by architects who didn't fulfill their agreements.

Of the thirty-odd items listed in the CCAIA document on comprehensive services, we have out of necessity made ourselves responsible for twenty-four items — far more than half of the total list!

In short, architects themselves — by bad planning, bad business and bad communications — have almost killed a once-lucrative field.

As an architect who is proud of his profession, it makes me angry!

Transportation studies

The Environmental Planning Committee Sub-Committee on Transportation has been reviewing the latest public transportation proposals on the "Fixed Guideway Starter Line." We have had meetings with representatives of Los Angeles County, SCRTD, Los Angeles City Planning Department, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles Redevelopment Agency, Mayor Bradley's Office and consultants.

The most recent events regarding the rapid transit appear to be stimulated by the recent ultimatum of William Coleman, United States Secretary of Transportation, stating that if the Southern California region wished to assure itself of the availability of federal funding for rapid transit, affected agencies should reach a consensus on a Starter Line Project, pledge the required local share of funding, and communicate these facts within a two-to-three month period.

In response to the Secretary's request, various public agencies — including SCRTD, Los Angeles County, Los Angeles City, Long Beach, Burbank and Others — have recommended that a Starter Line for a Regional Fixed Guideway Mass Transit System should be within a corridor connecting the San Fernando Valley to the Long Beach area. Within this corridor the above public entities have evaluated approximately 11 alternative specific routes. They have also developed varying opinions regarding the type of system, the local contribution and other technical difficulties including the extent of grade separation.

The City of Los Angeles Planning Department favors a route from the San Fernando Valley to Long Beach via the Hollywood area, portions of Wilshire corridor, touching on the central business district and the south central corridor. Phase 1 of this route is approximately 23.8 miles in length and would cost approximately 1.22 billion dollars, with a total estimated ridership of approximately 185,000 trips.

Another route would extend from North Hollywood through Burbank, the central business district, along Willowbrook Ave., to the Norwalk Freeway, a distance of approximately 26 miles. The cost would be approximately the same as the above alternative and the total estimated ridership is approximately 130,000 trips. The various technical aspects of the mass transportation will be evaluated in the future in light of:

- Community and Regional Goals
- Potent Patronage
- Cost
- Community Support
- Usable Segment
- Speed of Implementation

The type of Mass Transportation System will largely depend upon local and federal commitments of financing. The arbitrary figure of \$900,000,000 limitation has been indicated as a financing goal. The above amounts will be matched by a federal contribution.

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Challenges to the profession: New standards, new goals, new markets -- and a new level of recognition for architects

by Morris D. Verger, FAIA
President, SCC/AIA

The past year has been a very productive one for the Southern California Chapter/AIA. As my term of office comes to a close, I feel it appropriate to offer an assessment of the work we have done over the last twelve months. The Chapter has acquired a new and dynamic style — thanks to the efforts of officers, directors, committee chairpersons and Chapter members — and we can look forward to a still higher level of involvement by the profession.

Achievements of Chapter Committees

At least one measure of our productivity is mounted on the west wall of the Chapter conference room in the Bradbury Building — a visual display of the 1975 activities of Chapter committees. Rather than attempt to summarize the achievements, I would urge Chapter members to visit the office to see the scope and detail of the 1975 committee activities. Particularly impressive on a visual level is the work done by the Subcommittee for the Hollywood Urban Design Study of the Environmental Planning Committee — a neighborhood plan of the study area.

Restructuring the Chapter Office

The newly appointed Chapter office manager, Phyllis Arnold, is in charge of the office and is working with the Ex-Com to develop procedures for making all Chapter activities readily accessible and visible to the members. She is ably assisted by Rosalie Wallace in these tasks.

We are starting a library of committee activities and procedures. For each committee there will be current activities, past accomplishments and future plans.

We are in the process of designing

post-cards and other kinds of notices to facilitate communication between committee chairpersons and committee members, so that the communication process will become quicker and more effective.

In addition to making committee activities more visible and accessible, the Chapter office will help schedule meetings between Chapter members and the "do-ers" of the community — both officials and citizen groups — to provide more personal contact between architects and the community. Our Chapter office will be available for these meetings.

Soon to be completed are two job referral systems — one for people looking for work in architects' offices, the other for people who call the Chapter for names and recommendations of architects.

Recognition of the Profession

As Chapter president, I attended many meetings, I listened to and spoke with many AIA members throughout the state, I came into contact with many members of the community. A recurring thought that I heard from the more introspective architects was that we are increasingly looked upon as building industry technicians with the same status as other technicians. We are looked upon as technicians who are concerned with structures rather than professionals who are concerned with the environments that our buildings provide for people who use them.

During the recent CCAIA conference in Coronado, this phenomenon was dramatically displayed. Howard Lane, Russ Levikow (Northern California Chapter/AIA) and I were given a tour by Stephen Oppenheim of two 400-unit housing projects next door to each other near San Diego. The one designed by Oppenheim was a work of architecture; the other one was a repeat of a "standard" HUD project.

Each project was built at the same

time and on the same amount of land; each project had the same number of ancillary facilities and the same square footage. Statistically, the two projects were equal — the land, the number, the size, the cost and the income from each of the units were the same. Each conformed to the same HUD standards and detailed requirements. The projects are judged to be equally successful as far as HUD is concerned — they met the same requirements of space, cost and income.

But consider some other judgments — those of the architect, the people who use the project, and the taxpayer. The architects — Howard Lane, Russ Levikow and I — enjoyed seeing the project done by Steve Oppenheim. It was pleasant to walk through and look at. We admired Steve's inventiveness in concentrating some of the units into a multi-story structure and others into lower structures with shaped open spaces, so that the project composed an interesting whole. Steve exercised his resourcefulness to design the project so it could be enjoyed by everyone who lived or visited there. And, in fact, the project is enjoyed by the residents of all ages, children and adults alike.

Parenthetically, it can be said that any good work of architecture is enjoyed by people of all ages and all levels of sophistication. Conversely, as the appeal of a building narrows, the success of its architecture diminishes.

We could not avoid comparing Steve's project with the one next to it. Oppenheim's project was inviting, alive and cheerful; the other project repelled us. It felt like a monotonous warehouse for people. Oppenheim's project was a lively place — children were playing, people were strolling around, the grounds were immaculate, and the buildings were in excellent repair. The project next door, on the other hand, looked shabby; there was no activity around it; the only people visible were those entering or leaving the units.

We asked Steve if the other project were mostly vacant, since the contrast in the number of visible people was so great. He said that the reason for the liveliness of his project was that the children from the adjacent project liked his play areas more and the adults found the units more pleasant. We asked Steve why his project showed less signs of wear than the other one, since it clearly had more use by more people. He said that everyone seemed to respect the buildings and grounds of his project — since it was so pleasant — and therefore did not abuse the facility. The architects and the residents judged Steve Oppenheim's project an unqualified success.

Next, consider how the project is judged by the public or the taxpayer. Actually, the public doesn't know anything about it; as far as the public is concerned, the projects were funded by the federal government and the money was something that came from Washington. The public is not aware that the well-designed project contributes to a stable and responsible community, while a poorly designed project does not. In one case, the residents of the project say: "Thanks to government efforts, I have a satisfying place to live; I respect and support the institutions that respect me." On the other hand, the people who are not satisfied with their housing don't respect the institutions that are responsible for their dissatisfaction. And the visible evidence is the state of repair of the two side-by-side projects near San Diego.

Of course, none of this is apparent to the public. The public has not been shown that good architecture contributes to the community. Their only view of the project — unless they happen to live there — is the tax burden that they have to pay and the financial reports that may come from government sources.

The architect, unfortunately, has not received recognition for what he contributed to the community. The architect is only recognized as a technician who deals with the technology of the building — not as a professional whose concern was the impact of the environment

on the lives of people.

The recognition of the architectural profession and its contribution to the built environment is the key to whether or not we become an increasingly important part of society.

We have to address ourselves to the question of what constitutes professional recognition. A profession is a discipline with recognized standards of public responsibility; the members of the profession are recognized as having skills and knowledge gained through a prescribed sequence of effort and learning and testing. There must be a repository of the profession's knowledge in universities and libraries; there must be statewide and national programs for continuing education and for raising the level of the profession. Decision-making within the profession must be made by members of the profession. Finally, there must be a recognized source of authority that speaks for the profession.

The future plans and directions of the architectural profession should be assertive rather than responsive, and they must come from within the profession from architects who are innovative and sensitive to public aspiration — and not from outsiders. We have to set our own standards; we have to determine our own methods of implementing these standards. And the profession must communicate these standards to the public. We must decrease the distance between architects and the community.

As for the markets for our work, the profession itself must invent new markets. No one else can do it for us. Experts in marketing can teach us as individuals how to be more competitive and more successful than our fellow architects in getting a bigger piece of the decreasing pie. But only we as architects can invent markets that do not yet exist. Architects are more like inventors than problem-solvers in the managerial sense; we use our understanding of feelings and the social-economic-political process to invent the physical environments for the community's aspirations.

Architecture communicates at the feeling level. Architects strive for

an impersonal perfection that has a universal cognizance. What we do is visual and moving; we can communicate more effectively in a face-to-face relationship with the help of visual material such as sketches, slides and photographs. We can explain the movement and the change that takes place during use — the visual changes and the kinesthetic awarenesses.

As I talked to more architects and community leaders, I became aware of the differences between problem-solving as used by good management and innovations produced by good architects. The accepted problem-solving technique employed by management defines the problem, gathers the relevant data, determines the alternatives, decides which alternatives to use, and implements the decision.

We should compare the management problem-solving techniques to the way an architect arrives at conclusions. Management is an administrative, ongoing process; it is geared to very gradual changes. Architects are project-oriented, and projects create completely new environments. Management sees projects for purposes of improving their existing mechanisms for more efficiency or lower cost. Architects see projects as new organisms capable of achievements not otherwise possible within the existing structure. Management keeps the store running profitably, while architects are inventors. They reach out, explore and discover new satisfactions that people can enjoy. The test of successful architecture is not whether it takes less effort to manage profitably, but whether the people recognize in a new project that they've always wanted it even though they've never seen it before.

I'm convinced that — if the profession is to grow — it must act like a profession, set its own goals and its own standards. We must display our skills to provide environments that will improve the social, economic and political processes. Architecture has moved from a private art of the wealthy and powerful to a public art of the community. There is an enormous market for architectural services; our need is to perceive it.



Interior court (above) and play area (below) of San Diego project by Stephen G. Oppenheim and Associates. (Photograph above by Wayne Thom; all others by Nancy Oppenheim.)



Entry road (above) and recreational building (below) at the housing project next to Oppenheim's San Diego project.



CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

An enthusiastic audience of more than 400 attended the **November SCC/AIA Chapter meeting** at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where **John M. Johansen, FAIA**, spoke on the subject of "Technology and Esthetics." Guests and Chapter members commented favorably about the casual, low-cost wine-and-cheese reception that took the place of a formal dinner. Johansen's talk — which was excitingly illustrated with slides of both architecture and technology — focused on the need to break with the "Renaissance compositional form" as a principle of design. "Architecture is the enviroing art," Johansen said. "It encloses us, which is the meaning of 'environ.'" Johansen explained that he breaks down the design process into three stages: "Place it, support it, and connect it." Program Chairman **Bernard Zimmerman, AIA**, expressed thanks to **Bill Jones** of L.A.C.M.A. who helped create the exciting program in the elegant Bing Theatre.

Friends, admirers and colleagues of **Esther McCoy** send their best wishes for a speedy and comfortable recovery from her recent illness. Chapter members hope that she can return soon to her important work as one of the nation's most respected architectural critics and historians.

Michael J. O'Sullivan, AIA, has been appointed to the **State Energy Advisory Committee** for non-residential buildings. Comprised on 32 experts from various fields, the energy advisory committee — under the chairmanship of Dr. Thomas Simonson — is responsible to the State Energy Commission for advice and alternatives. O'Sullivan — chairman of the CCAIA's Energy Task Force and the SCC/AIA's Energy Conservation Committee — has been instrumental in the formulation of state-wide programs affecting energy conservation performance regulations.

Newly elected 1976 SCC/AIA officers who will serve with Chapter President **Henry Silvestri, AIA**, include Vice President/President-Elect **David C. Martin, AIA**; Secretary **Ralph H. Flewelling, AIA**; and Treasurer **Robert Tyler, AIA**. The 1976 officers were declared elected by acclamation at the November Chapter meeting. Continuing Chapter directors include **Harry Harmon, FAIA**; **Robert Kennard, AIA**; and **H.B. Wilson, AIA**; also serving on the board as Section Presidents will be **Francis Parsons, AIA** (Bakersfield) and **Gordon Forrest, AIA** (San Fernando Valley). 1976 Chapter directors include **Joseph Amestoy, AIA** and **Donald Brackenbush, AIA, AIP**.

Chapter members who are interested in **referrals** for residential and remodeling commissions are invited to register with the Chapter office in the Bradbury Building.

The **American Institute of Planners [AIP]** is sponsoring a dinner meeting in Long Beach on December 16th to discuss the **California Coastal Plan**. **Joseph T. Edmiston** (Sierra Club) will speak in favor of the plan; **Gilbert W. Ferguson** (Californians for Environment, Employment, Economy and Development) will speak in opposition. The meeting will convene aboard the Queen Mary with a no-host bar at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m. (\$8.00 per person). Reservations can be made by calling (213) 956-2140; copies of the Coastal Plan can be obtained from the South Coast Regional Planning Commission at (213) 436-4201.

Transcripts of the "Joint Design Professions Seminar" on all phases of business management are available for purchase at \$5.00 per copy from **Jerry Keller, ARA**, 524 S. Rosemead Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107. Topics covered in the 63-page document include professional liability claims, legal matters, tax innovations, financing and specifications liability. The seminar was held in September 1975 under the joint sponsorship of the **CSI, Producer's Council, AIA** and **ARA**.



The third member of the SCC/AIA Chapter office team is **Karen Hamanaka**, who works with office manager Phyllis Arnold and Rosalie Wallace in the Bradbury Building. Ms. Hamanaka was born in Hawaii, grew up in California, and studied mathematics and English at Baylor University in Texas. In addition to her responsibilities at the Chapter office — which include ordering documents for Chapter members — she is studying accounting at Cal State Northridge. Ms. Hamanaka is available between noon and 5:00 p.m. at the Chapter office for document services.

The deadline for the January 1976 issue of **L.A. ARCHITECT** is **December 10th**. Chapter members are invited to contribute articles, information, and design features for publication in **L.A. ARCHITECT**. Any problems or questions can be discussed with Editor Jonathan Kirsch during the regular **L.A. ARCHITECT** office hours at the Bradbury Building on the first Thursday of each month. He'll be at the office between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, **December 4th** — and, of course, he's available for consultation throughout the month by telephone.

Winning entries in the **First Annual Design Awards Program** of the SCC/AIA will be on display at the **Pacific Design Center** through the month of **December**. Panels and slides documenting the 20 Award-winning designs will be on exhibit, and Chapter members are invited to stop by for a leisurely stroll through the spectacular spaces of the PDC.

Anne Luise Buerger is a newly-appointed member of the **L.A. ARCHITECT Editorial Board**. Ms. Buerger, who works in drafting and graphics for Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd, is also the acting secretary-treasurer of the AIA Associates. After completing a Bachelor's degree at Cornell and a B.Arch. at Columbia, she spent a year doing graduate work in art history at the University of Paris (Sorbonne). Formerly, Ms. Buerger was assistant editor of **Architectural Record** and coordinator of information services for Max O. Urbahn Associates, Inc./Architecture and Planning.

"**Barrier Free Architecture**" was the topic of the November **Professional Program**, sponsored by the SCC/AIA, the Producer's Council and the CSI. Speakers include **Byron Blue** and **Margaret Dempsey** of the California State Department of Rehabilitation; **Dennis Cannon**, Consultant to the L.A. Rapid Transit District; **Ken Wardell**, Cal State L.A.; **Jack Actenberg**, University of San Fernando College of Law; and **Chris Johnson**, General Building Contractor. Chairmen include **James G. Pulliam, FAIA** (SCC/AIA); **Frank C. Matias, P.E.** (Producer's Council); and **Clifton Clark, AIA/CSI** (Construction Specifications Institute).

The annual business meeting of the **Southern California Chapter/Architectural Secretaries Association, Inc.**, was held in November in the offices of Adrian Wilson Associates. Election results and bylaw amendments for 1976 will be announced in the January issue of **L.A. ARCHITECT**. ASA members will attend a Christmas party at the home of an ASA member as its December meeting.



The **Women's Architectural League** sponsored a Student-Architect Rap Session at the offices of **Gin D. Wong, FAIA**, in November. Participating architects included **Gin D. Wong, FAIA**; **Emmanuel I. Aguilar**; and **Gene L. Fong**. Architectural students from USC, UCLA, Cal-Poly Pomona, Sci-Arc, L.A. Southwest College, West Los Angeles College, East Los Angeles College, and Los Angeles Trade Technical College took part. **Mrs. Anni (Edgar A.) Szanto**, WAL vice president, was in charge of the event.

"Advance? What's an **Advance?**" That's the question we heard from many curious readers who wondered why the October 11th SCC/AIA conference at Pepperdine University was called an "Advance." Well, the more traditional word for a day of introspection and planning in the cloistered solitude of a mountain campus might be "a retreat" — but since the profession is advancing, not retreating, the SCC/AIA chose to use a more dynamic word!

The **Cabrillo Chapter/AIA** has published a **Governmental Agencies Directory**, containing the membership list of the California Building Officials and an individual listing for many cities in Southern California. The Directory has been published in loose-leaf form to facilitate updating. The book is available to members for \$10.00 and to non-members for \$15.00 from the Cabrillo Chapter/AIA, 121 Linden Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90802 (432-9817).

L.A. ARCHITECT received a note from **Mickey Wapner**, Assistant to the Dean of the **UCLA School of Architecture and Urban Planning**. "I am very impressed with the quality of the publication," Wapner wrote. "To me, it excels on several counts: as a professional publication, it is a succinct articulation of architectural information, trends, and responsibilities; as an organizational newsletter, it invitingly sets forth activities and news of the SCC/AIA and other related groups; and as a public relations vehicle, it serves admirably to inform a broad audience about the concerns and community service of the local architectural community." Concluded Wapner: "With the recent ebb and flow of national professional journals, local publications of this quality help to fill a big gap."

Charles W. Moore, FAIA, will deliver ten Monday evening lectures on the topic of "**Visual Architecture**" during the Winter Quarter at **Cal Poly Pomona**. Moore, former Dean of the Yale School of Architecture and presently UCLA Professor of Architecture, will speak on "The Animated Boundary," "Path and Place," "Inhabiting — Room, House and City," "Organizing — The Plan," "Enclosing — Inside and Out," "Roofs, Porches, Windows, Door," "Holiday," "Space," "Distance," and "Composition, Choreograph and Collision." For further information regarding the lecture series, please contact **Richard Chylinski**, Chairman, Department of Architecture, Cal Poly (714-598-4182).

The **2,112th meeting of the SCC/AIA Board of Directors**: Officers, directors, and guests in attendance heard a report by **Morris Verger** on a meeting with **Ray Gravigian, FAIA**, and L.A. Planning Director **Calvin Hamilton** on the selective recycling of viable older buildings; **Henry Silvestri** reported on a meeting of the Bakersfield Section and the October 11th "Advance" at Pepperdine University; an SCC/AIA resolution regarding CCAIA billing procedures was discussed, and the Board reaffirmed its opposition to changing CCAIA from chapter to direct membership organization; **David Martin** was elected to serve out the balance of **Gerald Weisbach's** term on the Ex-Com; the Membership Induction Committee report was accepted, and seven new Corporate members were welcomed — **James Dwight Black, Doug Griswold Eddy, Douglas Bruce Meyer, Roger Dale Sherwood, Richard James Spalding, Chester A. Widom**, and **Dale Nelson Yonkin** — along with Associate member **Susan Rohrer Peterson**; the Board voted to provide funds for a Chapter display as a part of the Institute Bicentennial Committee Project; WAL Vice President **Anni Szanto** reported on the October 5th Home Tour and the 25th anniversary of the WAL; the San Fernando Valley Section is compiling a list of buildings deserving preservation.

The exclusive Southern California showing of the **Bicentennial Print Portfolio**, "America: The Third Century" — featuring the works of Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist and Edward Ruscha — is being held through December at the **Collaborative Gallery**, 678 South LaFayette Park Place. The posters and original prints will be available through the gallery until January 1976.

Over 150 women students and professionals attended a conference on **Women in Environmental Design** in October at the Hollyhock House. The seminar was sponsored by the **Association of Women in Architecture (AWA)** to commemorate Women's Week and International Women's Year by stimulating and communication among women in the architectural profession and related arts. Panelists included Sheila de Bretteville, Clarie Forrest, Karen Hill Scott, and Lynne Paxton. The conference was opened by AWA president Nada Borsa.

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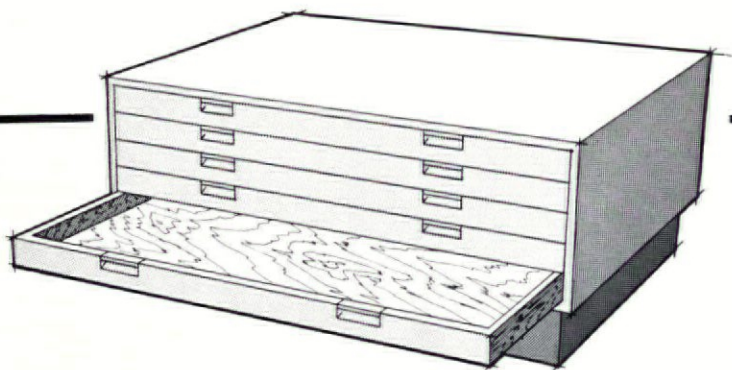
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