An interview with Morris Verger

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

By Jonathan Kirsh
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. SCC/AIA. As part of the reorganization, the position of Executive Director is vacant. A new ad hoc committee has been established in favor of exploring all alternative methods of conducting business by architects themselves. In Verger’s words, “There will be a call on com­mittee chairpersons, committee members, and eligible individual members to represent the Chapter both officially and informally. The Chapter ad hoc used to be, as Morris Verger said, “We expect to continue using consultants to help us fulfill our work, but our business is our office — and we must tell it.”

The importance of the 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 office and talked about his ideas about the increased professional responsibilities of the archi­tects and the goals that we have to serve by the Chapter reorganiza­tion.

“During the time I’ve been in practice, the architectural profession has changed drastically,” commented SCC/AIA President Morris D. Verger, FAIA, at the outset of a wide-ranging interview. “In the early years of my practice part of my work was on a small scale for individual owners. These clients would directly affect the between the architect and the owner. They would have no influence on the decisions that the architect made.”

“Today,” continued Verger, “most of the architectural decisions are made in top management by the consultant’s of the owner, by the architects themselves and by the architects. The client hires architects that the architect hires. These representatives and consultants have the qualifications to produce complex contract documents. They often the coordination of the project. They also influence the architect’s decisions with the inter­play between the architect’s talent and the owner’s needs. The architect has lost in the many layers of personnel that now exist.”

In Verger’s perspective, these changes highlight the acute need for architects’ skills and needs and circumstances today aren’t what they were 20 years ago,” he said, “but the talents of the architect are needed even more. However, the talents are needed in a different way. In the past it was in the face-to-face relationship with the individual owner, today it must be with those who hire the architect for the group or community.”

Verger explained: “The pressing need details of the Clientele’s work appears to be a balance between increasing production and consump­tion, mobility of people and goods, and values, skills, and means of mass com­munication. The architect’s essential informa­tion and of public values. The architect has the talents to analyze, to synthesize ways of satisfying the physical require­ments toward to essentially express the community’s standards and values.”

“The architect must understand the community and the show the community that if they express their values, the architect can design an expression which the community will live according to their standards and built by the architect.”

The theme of Verger’s remarks — and at least one goal of the recent Chapter reorganization — is the administrative 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 as a subjective need, and an essential element of the architect’s skills.

“The planner and designer can’t decide what’s appropriate for the community, and 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 work with the public in the reality of the environment. It has to be some sort of public and kinetic function.”

“This is an essential element of the architect’s skills, and the architect hires the architect.”

“Today, it must be our story, but it must be our story,” he said. “Architecture must become a true profession.”

As part of the reorganization, the position of Executive Director is vacant. Verger said, “That information can only be given over the process that anticipates an indefinitely long lifetime. Economists will assign a figure to the worth of something, but architects are uniquely unable to design not only things that will last, but things that have a quality that is denotative.”

“The architect must look beyond the immediate challenge of listening to the public’s current needs. He believes that the architect is uniquely unable to design not only beyond that, but also that the architect must work on a broad time scale. Architecture and planning have the capacity to change the course of what will happen 20 years from now. That takes both techniques and connotative understanding. We have to change what we do in the next 20 years, but we must be able to do that and understand what will happen 20 years from now.”

This leads Verger to the belief that the architect must work on a broad time scale. “Architecture and planning have the capacity to change the course of what will happen 20 years from now,” he said. “Architecture and planning must be sensitive to the direction of that change.”

Verger explained that the architect must understand the public’s needs and values, according to Verger. “Architecture cannot solve a problem; it must be supportive of and add to what the community will do.”

“We have to expand our function beyond the public’s current needs. We have to do so very fast. We architects have to be sensitive to the richness of 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 perimeter or under­ground. Contractors would be involved in the process, and an occasional highrise apartment building, and light commercial and industrial plants — crafts, shops, and restaurants that have a role in electronic assembly. This would be a new kind of listening to the public’s current needs.”

“He likes the ideal master plan to a fine meshed scale.”

“Today, it must be our story, but it must be our story.”

W.A.L. Home Tour

Calif. AIA Home Tour on October 5th. See story inside for details. (Photograph by Julius Shulman.)

To meet the challenges that we have today, we must spend a year or two in the community, not just a year or two. We must spend a year or two in the community, not just a year or two. We must recognize that they have been discovered through the interaction with the community and the community.”

The architect has to meet with the public directly, and he has to work with the public in the reality of the environment. It has to be some sort of public and kinetic function — the architect has to be able to draw in front of the public, to make quick sketches, to show pictures, to talk with them, so that the public can express themselves directly, without the fear of being heard and misunderstood.”

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Richard Neutra’s VDL Research House at Silverlake is one of six homes to be featured as part of the W.A.L. Home Tour on October 5th. See story inside for details. (Photograph by Julius Shulman.)

A quantum leap

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A quantum leap
 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.

The Smartest Move We Ever Made.

We’re Coordinated Resources, Inc., and we’re moving to Pacific Design Center. But before we could start we needed help. We needed someone to handle the logistics—and the paperwork. Making sure the paperwork was concise and efficient. In no time, we were set up there in the Pacific Design Center.

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Pacific Design Center
868 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90069

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And by golly, we got it. Because we hired the best office furniture dealership we knew to handle it. Us.

So if you’re a designer or architect and you have clients who need a quality link between the design/architectural process and the completed project, come see us. It could be the smartest move you ever made. Ours was.

Coordinated Resources, Inc.
Pacific Design Center
868 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90069

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 Loyter, FAIA, Regional AIA Director, have been invited to take part on the program.

Members will be encouraged to ask those 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 dues so high? What is the AIA for the young architect? 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 our environment so bad?

Chapter members are invited to attend the SCC/AIA Chapter Meeting on September 9th to help us in our part on the program. Reservations and information use the enclosed white envelope or contact the Chapter AIA office at 626-7080.

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 waiting area.

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 design of the building’s new pedestrian circulation system and how the Security Pacific building was designed to harmonize with the system. He also described the concept of the building as a pluralistic expression of the design function of the project. Chuck Griggs, managing partner, spoke about the health and safety systems of the Security Pacific building, with special emphasis on the fire and seismic safety aspects. Ron Pagliassotti, project architect and project architect for interiors, explained the design and functionality with a description of the task of space-planning and designing 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, enlightened us on the problem of space-planning and designing one million square feet within the building.”

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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 Bradford Building for information about advertising rates and schedules.

Members of the SCC/AIA mourn the loss of Robert Crosby, AIA, at Laguna Hills, California.

The Southern California Chapter of the Architectural Educators Association will join 14 other allied professional organizations in attendance at the Second Allied Arts Festival (SAAF) 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 stations 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 Marie Romanak, AIA, 117 South 17th Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103. (215) 568-3166. 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 Lunadei, AIA, at the September 16th Professional Development Program, called the Chapter office for further details.

Donald L. Wolterton, AIA, was named 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, Wolterton is a partner in the architectural firm of Niemeyer, Moffatt & Wolterton. Also installed were Vice Presidents Leonard Kirsch and Kurt Rheinfurth, Secretary Greg Mosaw, and Treasurer George Henderson.

Should membership in the CCAIA be on a chapter or 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 Donald L. Wolterton. AIA. Lyman is undertaking a year-long sabbatical to work on research, writing and as one of the creators of L. A. ARCHITECT — with Robert Wight, 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 Corporation. The program includes a comprehensive group of home study courses, the all-new Professional Examination Guide/TIP, and a one-day intensive seminar to be held in Los Angeles on November 15. The AIA 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 AIA office at (213) 477-0112.

Editor Jonathan Kirsch will hold L. A. ARCHITECT office hours at the Chapter offices in the Bradford Building. His office hours will be 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 27, 1975. Kirsch is available for consultation and conversation by phone or in person at the Chapter office on the first Tuesday of each month, or through 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 for the Fall quarter. "Century Styles of Architecture," a survey from William Morris to Frank Lloyd Wright's "Fallingwater," will begin September 23, 1975, and run for the Fall quarter, 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. As part of the class, which will meet from September 23 to November 15, the ALS organization will conduct a tour of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright in "Frank Lloyd Wright: When Democracy Becomes Architecture." It is hoped that his residential and public buildings, urban planning, and Wright's philosophy of organic architecture based on the agrarian idea of the "bungalow," will be of interest to architects. 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. 3535 of the Graduate School of Management at UCLA. For further information, call 825-1238.

"The Towering Inferno notwithstanding, occupants of a tall building should not respond to a disaster situation are not likely to panic," reported E. L. Kantor 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. Kantor concluded: "Research conducted over the past 25 years clearly indicates that human behavior under general emergency control and rational and adaptive. "Deadly behavior does occur, but it is the exception, not the rule.""
**Pacific Design Center: "...Its esthetic is partly...**

Tim Vreeland interviewed Gruen Associates, the architect of the Pacific Design Center, this month's coverstory. 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 had 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 550,000 square feet, will provide 750,000 square feet of leasable space to tenants in the interior levels of the building and that the five lessors: and that the circulation cores of buildings 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 surrounding buildings, and make the building disappear. We dismissed 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, and represent five categories of lessors; and that the circulation cores of buildings are placed diagonally 400 feet across from each other to encourage visitors in the Center to look at all the floors.

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 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 surrounding buildings, and make the building disappear. We dismissed 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.

Leasing Vreeland: What are the restaurants and what is the function? Pelli: This is an important issue. The building sits among them. It is a classical photographer's subject: the contrast position of a transatlantic liner with small houses. 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 surrounding buildings, and make the building disappear. We dismissed 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.

Architectural Space Vreeland: 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 550,000 square feet, will provide 750,000 square feet of leasable space to tenants in the interior levels of the building and that the five lessors: and that the circulation cores of buildings are placed diagonally 400 feet across from each other to encourage visitors in the Center to look at all the floors.

The Silhouette Vreeland: I would like to ask you a question about the silhouette of your building which is large. 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...
Vreeland: But then in what tradition do you see the building operating? In a way it relates back to os van der Rhee, the early Mies. For example, the buildings he signed for Berlin (the Finsberghouse office buildings) if you turn on their side. Other architects who have worked with glass in this manner are some of the Dutch architects like Bijvoet and Duiker.

Pelli: Yes, I am thinking of the Dutch architects and that period 1940-60. Mart Stam. Johannes van Dukenburg are some of the Dutch architects who are interested in the problem. There were not even metal and glass office buildings. The office buildings were conceived as an envelope. They were not built as corporate entities, which was the usual way office buildings were built.

Pelli: It is a glass skin, but treated quite freely. There are not even metal and glass office buildings, if you turn on their side. Other architects who have worked with glass in this manner are some of the Dutch architects like Bijvoet and Duiker.

Pelli: I am thinking of the Dutch architects and that period 1940-60. Mart Stam. Johannes van Dukenburg are some of the Dutch architects who are interested in the problem. There were not even metal and glass office buildings. The office buildings were conceived as an envelope. They were not built as corporate entities, which was the usual way office buildings were built.

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 shown on the back of it. It is an insulated building with the storefront on the inner side. The back of the store 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 installed in, which makes a very tight curtain wall. Because of seismic conditions lightweight walls must be best sense in California. The glass wall remains crisp. And if something happens to it and it is broken, if it has to be replaced, it never remains chipped or peeling or chipped. It always looks new.
The architect as implementor: new roles, new rewards

By Jerry L. Polash, 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-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 implementor can create new development opportunities. And the architect's knowledge can be reflected in increased financial compensation and a position as the 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 project. 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, percent-ages 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 local governmental 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, and the package, such as identification of the equity and partners, must be prepared before 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 best architects possess a number of 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 project as a whole, and the ability to "sell," including the obtaining of financial partners and other team members.

The architect as implementor must have a knowledge of financing techniques and sources, especially in the areas of retail and office space and where money is scarce. He must be tough but fair when dealing with others, and he must be flexible on answers and approaches to problems. The architect should have political savvy in obtaining the necessary approvals for zoning and environmental regulations, ranging from zoning changes and environmental approvals to state and national agency approvals. Finally, he should have available resources to invest, in the form of land, in cash or services.

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

The architect must recognize that he is taking on additional risks and responsibilities, perhaps far beyond his own economic capabilities and professional expertise. If he 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, all at the time of this writing, there appears to be an oversupply of condominiums in Los Angeles, and there is a glut in the market of downtown office buildings. The architect should insist on a fair evaluation of the potential profitability of the project.

The potential profitability of the project. Underwriting of the project must be very careful. The architect should have available resources to purchase to delivered approvals. He must have the ability to obtain maximum financial leverage. He should organize the development team on different partner arrangements for different types of projects. Nothing in the concept of professionalism bars an architect or a construction manager from being in a project development team. His partners can offer a turn-key project or professional construction management with new responsibilities for cost-control, scheduling and administration.

The architect as implementor must know his partners and understand his relationship to the decision-making process in all phases of design, financing, construction 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. He should be charged to the project on a predetermined fee arrangement. The 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 advancing terms before the project financing can be completed. He must be in a position to purchase to delivered approvals, and he must have the cash investment to obtain maximum financial leverage. He should organize the development team on different partner arrangements for different types of projects. Nothing in the concept of professionalism bars an architect from being in a project development team. His partners can offer a turn-key project or professional construction management with new responsibilities for cost-control, scheduling and administration.
Art Center and simplicity

for service, maintenance and physical communication.

Vreeland: Your buildings look expensive. Are they, in fact?
Ellwood: Our buildings are not only inexpensive, but also are invariable 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 other 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 faith and patience of Larry Freeberg of Swinerton & Waiberg Co., general contractors. Development Pacific Corporation, construction managers, also contributed in making the project a reality.

Ellwood: The Pont du Gard turns me on. The Italian hilltown, Tellaro. The magnificent structures of the Anasazi. A Maillot bridge, a Maillet sculpture, the Eiffel Tower, the Langenheim villa. A van Gogh, an Albers painting, the Farnsworth House, the Stradivarius violins, the Bran- denburg 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 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 critical, to stick together against the slings and arrows of the world at large. As chairman of the AIA’s Architect as Client Committee, I consider us 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 better than a B.

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 com­pleting projects. It has been interesting to watch that 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 unbusiness­like 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 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, it is 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 relate reliable estimates of con­struction costs, and when budget construction costs are not controlled during planning. Quite often an architect’s de­signs are unlikely to be built and his projects are unlikely to be completed.

Little attention is paid to pre­established project time sched­ules. Another absurd lack of com­petence.

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 ideas that the design and construction teams look like menu boards.

We once had an architect who said the word “architect” said it all. It is necessary to define such words as Planning, Systems, Economics, Feasibility Studies, Environmental Impact Reports, Construction Records 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, can suffer, too.

That C- I mentioned earlier is a genuine grade on business prac­tices for most architects I’ve worked with. The poor, unprofessional and unbusiness­like behavior of many architects who’ve run their shops is obvious to everyone. I feel it’s my duty as a fellow architect, what must the public think of the profession?

I find it astonishing that many architects feel that businesses live by contracts and expect them to abide by the contract. Many of my associates, who’ve signed agreement to perform, will refuse to carry out their assignment in their own areas of competence. Another matter that we badly needed to clarify, Businessmen are not willing to wait to things in writing. When they are inadequate or missing records on a project, the client quickly loses patience. Do you blame them?

Finally, a business firm knows well what it has agreed to in the way of services and fees. Sup­plicants 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 handled by out­side architects. Jobs are lost every­day for all architects because of the habits and actions of a few.

Our company, for example, is now writing the program, financing and approval for projects, providing all project administra­tion, including construction, supervising construction and handing all necessary approvals and permits from government. We are doing this because we’ve been let down so often in the past by our architects and competitors. Our 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 possible pro­jection of the "Fixed Guideway Transportation System" recommended for the San Fernando Valley to Long Beach via the "Southwest Freeway." 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 ultimate istammatum of William Coleman, United States Secretary of Transportation, stating that in the southern California region was to be the region responsible for the availability of federal funds. The desire for rapid transit affects agencies should reach a consensus on a Starter Line Project, pledge the required local share of funding, and coordinate these facts within a two- to three-month period. We are currently in response to the California Air Resources Board’s request, various public agencies — including SCRTD, United States Department of Transportation, mass transportation should be written to overcome some of the existing deficits in the mass transportation to the Long Beach area. Within this corridor the other public entities have evaluated approximately 11 alternative and the total ridership is approximately 130,000 trips. The cost would be approximately the same as the above alternative and the total ridership is approximately 130,000 trips. The various technical aspects of the mass transportation will be evaluated in the future in light of the City of Los Angeles Planning Department and the Regional Goals — Patronage Contract — Community Support. A detailed description of the system will be published in the System will be published in the near future.

The East Los Angeles Rapid Transit System, as proposed, is a mass transit system that would be evaluated in the future in light of the City of Los Angeles Planning Department and the Regional Goals — Patronage Contract. It would provide service to the residents of the San Fernando Valley to the Long Beach area. Within this corridor the other public entities have evaluated approximately 11 alternative specific courses. They will also have developed varying opinions regarding the type of system, their local and overall technical difficulties including the extent of grade separation.
Challenges to the profession: New standards, new goals, new markets — and a new level of recognition for architects

By Morris D. Verger, FAIA
President, SCAIA

The past year has been a very productive one for the Southern California Chapter of AIA. As my term of office comes to a close, I feel 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 officials, directors, committee chairpersons and Chapter members — and has taken a look forward to a still higher level of involvement by the profession.

Achievements of Chapter Committees

At least one measure of our productivity is the meeting 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 Chap­

ter members to visit the office to see the scope and detail of the 1975 committees activities. Particularly impressive on a visual level is the research done by the Subcommittee for the Hollywood Urban Design Study of the Environmental Planning Commit­

ee — a neighborhood plan for Los Angeles.

Restructuring the Chapter Office

The newly appointed Chapter office manager, Phyllis Arnold, is working with the Ex-Con to develop procedures for making all Chapter activities readily accessi­

ble and visible to the members. She is ably assisted by Rosalie Williams.

We are starting a library of com­

mittee activities and procedures. For each committee there will be current activities, past accomplish­

ments and a plan of the study area.

We are in the process of designing

post-cards and other kinds of notices to facilitate communica­

tion between committee chair­

persons 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 to schedule meetings between Chapter members and the "doers" of the community — both official 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 report referral systems — one for people looking for work in architecture 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 intro­

spective architects was that we are increasingly looked upon as build­

ing 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 environment that our buildings provide for people.

During the recent CAIA confer­

ence in Coronado, this pheno­

menon 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 archi­

tecture; the other was the appearance of a "standard" HUD project. Each project was built at the same time and on the same amount of land, each with a similar number of ancillary facilities and the same square footage. Statisti­

cally, the only major difference was the land, the number, the size, the cost of the individual units of the units were the same. Each con­

forming to the same federal standards and detailed requirements. The result is that one was clearly successful as far as HUD is con­

cerned, while the other failed to meet the requirements of space, cost, and more importantly, function.

But consider some other judg­

ments of these two projects: the people who use the project, and the taxpayer. The architects — Howard Lane, Russ Levikow — were pleased at being asked to do the work and it was pleasant to walk through and look at. We administered the survey by 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 which the architect excelled his re­

sourecfulness to design the project so it could be enjoyed by everyone who lived there. And, in fact, the project is enjoyed by the children and adults alike.

Particularly, it can be said that any good work of architecture is a positive construction of meaning and all levels of sophistication. Con­

versely, if the building narrows, the success of its archi­

tecture is diminished.

We could not avoid comparing Steve's project with the one next to it. Our project was open, liv­ing, alive and cheerful; the other project was a生命的ordinary, a monotonous warehouse for people. Oppenheim's project was a lively place — children were playing, the grounds were immaculate, and the outdoor activity around it; the only people visible were those entering or leaving the units.

We asked Steve if the other project was really as recent, since the con­

trast in the number of visible people was so great. He said that the rea­

son for the liveliness of his project was that the architect had taken the adjacent project liked his play areas more and the adults found the units more pleasant. We asked Steve why his project was so much more pleasant than the other one, since it clearly had more use by more people. The architect seemed to enjoy the buildings and grounds of his project — since it was so pleasant — and therefore did not consider his facility as successful. The archi­

tect and the residents judged Steve Oppenheim's project an unqualified success.

Next, consider how the project is judged by the public or the tax­

payer. Actually, the public doesn't know it's same as far as the public is concerned, the project is under the jurisdiction of a federal government and the money was contributed by the Federal Government. The public is not aware that the well-designed project contrib­

utes to a stable and responsible community, and the poorly designed project does not. In one case, the public tends to say: "Thanks to government efforts, I have a satisfactory place to live; in the other project, which have not satisfied their housing don't respect the institutions that are responsible for their dissatisfac­

tion. The result is the state of repair of the two side­

by-side projects is different.

Of course, none of this is apparent to the architectural profession, which has not been seen that good architecture contributes to the community. This is true of every project — unless they happen to live there — for the builders have to pay and the financial reports may have to be made to the government sources.

The architect, unfortunately, has not received recognition for what he contributed to the community. The architect is only recognized as a technical problem-solver and technician of the building — not as a professional whose concern was the impact that the building has on the lives of people.

The recognition of the architec­

tural profession and its contribu­

tion to the built environment is 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, and as fulfilling the 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 a statewide data, determines the alternatives, decides which alternatives to use, and implements the decision.

We should compare the manage­

ment 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 complete or 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 original projects that are capable of achievements not other­

wise possible in the current structure. Management keeps the architects in business and builds them. Architects are a professional people who use them. We could not avoid comparing Steve's project with the one next to it. Our project was open, living, alive and cheerful; the other project was a monotonous warehouse for people. Oppenheim's project was a lively place — children were playing, the grounds were immaculate, and the outdoor activity around it; the only people visible were those entering or leaving the units.

We asked Steve if the other project was really as recent, 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 architect had taken the adjacent project liked his play areas more and the adults found the units more pleasant. We asked Steve why his project was so much more pleasant than the other one, since it clearly had more use by more people. The architect seemed to enjoy the buildings and grounds of his project — since it was so pleasant — and therefore did not consider his facility as successful. The architects and the residents judged Steve Oppenheim's project an unqualified success.

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wise possible in the current structure. Management keeps the architects in business and builds them. Architects are a professional people who use them.
An enthusiastic audience of more than 400 attended the November SCC/AIA Chapter meeting at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, said Jack M. Johnson, FAIA, who spoke on the subject of "Teen Abuses." Guests and Chapter members commented favorably about the casual, low-cost wine-and-cheese reception that took place the place of a formal dinner, Johnson told a which was excitedly illustrated with slides of both architecture and technology — focused on the need to break through "the traditional compositional form," "the wall," and "the environment." Johnson said it encloses us, which is the meaning of "enviro." Johnson 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. McCoy, president of the ICCAIA's Energy Advisory Committee — she can return soon to her important work — is one of the most respected architectural critics and historians. Esther McCoy, AIA, has been a member of the ICCAIA's Energy Advisory Committee for non-resident architects. Dr. David E. 32 experts on various fields, the environment, and the future of the state-wide programs affecting the AIA, are instrumental in the formulation of CCAIA's Energy Task Force and O'Sullivan — chairman of the State Energy Commission — the bill to the State Energy Commission.

Most prominent among the discriminating, creative architects was Francis Parsons, AIA, Wilson, AIA; Ralph H. Flew, FAIA, C. E.; and Marion O'Sullivan — chairman of the President of the L.A. Architectural Secretaries Association. Election results and bylaw amendments will be available by the end of 1974. Chapter members — she is able to return from her recent illness doing graduate work in art history at the University of California (Los Angeles). Ms. Hamanaka was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, grew up in California, and studied architecture and engineering at the University of English and at Berkeley University in California. She is a newly-licensed architect in the State of California.

The annual business meeting of the Southern California Chapter/Architectural Secretaries Association was held through December at the American Institute of Architects Office for Rent. The meeting will convene on December 10th. Chapter members are invited to contribute articles, information, and design features for publication in L.A. ARCHITECT, a newsletter of the Los Angeles Chapter. All architects interested in the ASA will be listed in 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.

L.A. ARCHITECT December 1975

WINNING ENTRIES IN THE FIRST ANNUAL DESIGN AWARDS PROGRAM OF THE SCC/AIA ARE 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 OFFICE VISITORS ARE INVITED TO STOP BY TO AVOID A LESSURY STROLL THROUGH THE SPECTACULAR SPACE OF THE PDC.

Annie Luise Buenger is a newly-elected Secretary-Treasurer of the SCC/AIA. She is also the participating secretary-treasurer of the AIA American Institute of Architects, Chicago, IL. She is a new graduate of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle and a new member of the Chicago chapter of the AIA.

The Cabrillo Chapter/Alia has published a Governmental Agencies Directory, containing the membership list of the California Architectural Billings Commission and an individual listing for all 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/Alia, 121 Linden Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90802 (310-567-1212).

The 2,121st meeting of the SCC/AIA Board of Directors: Office of the President and Executive Director, Nada M. Vardanian, FAIA, Planning Director Calvin Hamilton on the selective recording of valuable older buildings; Henry Silverstein reported a moderating influence in the "Barrier Free Architecture" Section and the October 11th "Advances" at Pepperdine University; an SCC/AIA resolution regarding GCAIA from chapter to chapter membership organization; David Parke was elected to serve on the Board of Directors of GCAIA; and several Corporate members were welcomed to the balance of Gerald Weinbach's term as President. The Membership Induction Committee report was accepted, and seven new Corporate members were welcomed to the Board.

The exclusive Southern California showing of the Bicentennial Print Portfolio "The American Century" — featuring the works of 13 artists including Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, and Goldsworthy — will be held through December at the California Library at the University of Southern California, Lafayette Park. 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 Hollywood House of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Association of Women in Architecture. The conference was sponsored by the Women's Year by stimulating and facilitating among women in the architectural profession and related arts. Panelists included Sheila de Bretteville, Claire Forrest, Karen Hill Scott, and Lynn Paxton. The conference was co-sponsored by AIA president Nada Bonsa.

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L.A. ARCHITECT December 1975

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