Monday 4

Tuesday 5

Wednesday 6

Antonie Prendik and CDA
SC-Arc lecture series, SC-Arc Main Space, 8 pm. Call (213) 829-3452.

Urban Design Committee
Exhibit continues through March 1 at UCLA Gallery 1220. Call (213) 825-2791.

Thursday 7

Urban Design Committee
6 pm. Call (213) 829-3452.

Public Sector Development
Duel to Rebuild Downtown
Bernard Frieden lectures at UCLA, Perloff 243AA, 5:30 pm. Call (213) 825-2791.

Friday 8

RFP Marketing Software Seminar
Joining Wilds, Los Angeles, $25. Call (213) 761-9410.

Saturday 9

A Conference with Charles Jeckcs and Maggie Kunovic
UCLA Extension program, Four Seasons Hotel, Beverly Hills, 9:30 am-4 pm, $150. Call (213) 825-9061.

Sunday 10

Gregg Fleishman
Catered breakfast with architects sponsored by Gallery of Fine Art. To be held at a construction site, 830 Broadway, 8:00 am, $25/person. Call (213) 450-2877.

Monday 11

Tuesday 12

AIA/LA ExCom Meeting
All AIA/LA chapters to meet at AIA/LA chapter office. 7:30 am. Call (213) 380-4595.

Wednesday 13

Critical Mass: The Arts and Critical Commentary
Lecture sponsored by Cal Arts and LA Festival in the continuing series, “Art in the Life of LA,” PDC Theater, 6:30 pm, Call (213) 255-1000 ext. 2210.

Thursday 14

Gender, Fashion, the Politics of Modernity: From Los to Caracas
Mary McLeod lectures at UCLA, 7:30 pm (note new time). Perloff 1102; Call (213) 825-2791.

Friday 15

Fourth Annual Conference for California Women in Environmental Design
Continues through February 24 at St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco.
Call (415) 781-0412.

Saturday 16

AIA/LA Retreat and PE Workshop
9:00 am-2:00 pm. Call (213) 829-4595.

Sunday 17

Dagner Richter
Catered breakfast with architects sponsored by Gallery of Fine Art. To be held at the Schindler House, 8:35 Kings Road, West Hollywood, 11:00 am, $25/person. Call (213) 450-2877.
ARTISTS, continued from 4 of the building into compliance with code. As spaces were vacated or the leases and options expired, they reconfigured and brought the spaces up to code. As of 1990, many of the studios still violated code requirements, and the AIR tag on the building remained a legal fiction. As leases expired, rates rose to $5.00 and $5.65 a square foot, a little below the market average of $7.5, but not much cheaper for the artists. The studios in the Citizens Warehouse were generally large, and at rents now over $2,000 per month, the original tenants were replaced by a new group of professionals.

The Venice Art Block will rent from $1.50 to $5.00 per square foot. The studios are smaller, around 1700-450 square feet. The new spaces are below the AIR minimum requirement of 750 square feet, but are allowed because this project is not truly an AIR. The art block was developed under a peculiarity in the Venice zoning code which allows for artist/craftsmen use. Therefore those studios are live-work housing units free of the artist definition, according to Glen Erickson. The term is applied merely for the cachet of its image. These units, like the Citizens Warehouse, will provide housing and working space for some artists and the professionals who account for a growing segment of the market unappealing with the limitations both in space and location in the standard room-divided house or apartment.

The Venice Art Block is designed to allow many possibilities of usage. Basically the space is vertically divided. Above the first floor—generally a large, open area configured by the walls defining a bathroom—there are, two, three, or more, open platforms connected by an open wood stair overlook one another. Glen Erickson states that these levels can be enclosed or left open according to tenant wish for use as another studio, a bedroom, or office. Therefore the variety and heights of wall surfaces and large and small spaces will allow many scales of work artistic and otherwise. The advantages, however, is not moderate, but in order for this project to pencil out, Glen Erickson states that the high lease rates are required. Moderate cost for a studio is achieved by smaller studio size. At $900 dollars a month for the smallest studios, rents are competitive for legal studios and good apartments citywide. These small spaces seem surprisingly large, and are attractively lighted with well placed windows. Each is an open room configured by a small bathroom element set on a bias, creating a variety of spaces and even the possibility of the future addition of a small loft. The architects have achieved a maximally usable space and height, long, narrow, almost triangular strip of land. They have crammed 20 units over an innovative parking layout by using three separate entrances. The facade along Electric Avenue reduces scale, and has a playful and a richly composed juxtaposition of openings and materials; the architects have achieved a grouping of studios which seems spacious, with lots of amenities. The only thing the Art Block doesn’t have is any reasonable way to move large works of art in or out of the studio.

It probably doesn’t matter, for most likely these spaces will not rent to artists. Nor, for that matter, do most of the AIR spaces created since inception of the ordinance rent to artists. In downtown, since the passage of the AIR ordinance, the art community has steadily dwindled. New conversions to legal studios are too expensive to rent. Those old buildings which have survived demolition, like the Citizens Warehouse, house and fold. Only one project, the Santa Fe Art Colony, has successfully created some affordable space through the assistance of the CRA. The AIR ordinance, initiated as a mechanism to promote artist studios at affordable rates, is a dismal failure. The ordinance has been a boon only to speculators developing market rate live/work buildings. Most artists, those without the advantage of success, continue to find their studios in illegal spaces. No longer able to inhabit whole warehouse buildings illegally,克里斯托弗 • 艺术之家已经回到了显示更可观的空间规模的小型工作室和旧结构或未使用的商业空间。
make planning stronger to reform the char­
ter to create a stronger mayoral component.
The Council is clear in its position that the
planning director works for the Council, and
yet the planning director's appointed by the
Mayor, so the question is, who are you ser­
ving?

With all this centripetal force created by
the charter, where are the factors to bring
people together? That's why another major
disappointment. I don't feel that the system
has committed itself to working together on
major issues. Generally, policy is forced by
an individual project, and that's unhealthy.

Do you see the Commission having an
increased role in policy development?

Yes, and that's one of the positive trends.
The Commission has welcomed the idea I
put forward of having policy discussions on
a monthly basis.

The jobs-housing balance policy was put
forward by the Commission and the Council
adopted it. However, the Council has a
way's to go in dealing with policy issues,
such as the greater downtown issue. The
Central City West, the Downtown Strategic
Plan and Central City East specific plans are
active subcomponents. Central City North
is in limbo. The LA/DAPT can only
be utilized on a fragmented basis until a
part got wiped out by the Planning Commiss­
on in the '70s that said that the greater
downtown was the core of the city. That
part got wiped out by the Planning Commis­sion and the Council, because they didn't
want to tackle the issue of a hierarchy of
centers. Yet all the fundamental infrastruc­
ture decisions of the last decade have been
made on this premise.

Part of what makes the planning
director's job tough is getting chewed up
in the wars between the Council and the
Mayor. Are a lot of holes in that coat of yours?

You have to look at two things. The first is
that government has a negative image, be­
cause as a country we've decided that it is a
necessary evil. Elected officials suffer from
this anti-government perception, and it's
difficult for them not to reflect the hostility
on the managers of the departments that
serve them. Also, until the city commits the
basic resources to create necessary office
automation there will continue to be a ter­
rrible swirling mass of citizen frustration.
Office holder frustration and staff frustra­tion
over the city's inability to track information.

Second, the planning function is very
little understood: you're either a good guy
or a bad guy depending on whom you agree
with. This issue of balancing between
conflicting interests is something that both the
Mayor and the City Council have to deflec­
to the planning director in order to sur­
vice politically. Any big city planning di­
rector's doing the best job when he or she is
consistently angering various portions of
the constituent interests.

You knew all of that going in, of course.

Yes, but I didn't anticipate the ineflexibility
of the system in dealing with consensus
decisions. Conflict is valued more than con­
sensus, particularly at the political level,
because that's what gets headlines. To the
degree that you can reduce conflicts, the
substantive policy and planning issues will
become the focus. But the system is in
danger of succumbing to the temptation for
term short gains with publicity flashes and
ten second sound bites.

What does the next planning director
need to do in order to get the system to
function?

The next planning director needs to have a
couple of key interests at heart. One is the
revival of the inner city. Another is an ap­
preciation and a commitment to urban de­
sign. And the third is a commitment to a
question I haven't even talked about, the
fact that we live in an earthquake prone part
of the country. In addition, both the Coun­
ic and the Mayor are going to have to back­
of from their excessive demands on the
department. They're asking too much.

A lot depends on creating a core intelli­
gence group within the planning department
that can provide a service to the Mayor and
the City Council as to long term options,
and a means to set up, say, a continuing
series of workshops with design profession­
al and other groups. It won't happen un­
less the budgetary issues are resolved, and
some ordering of priorities is agreed to by
the people putting the demands on the de­
partment. I think the Commission could
help considerably, more so than any other
force in City Hall at the moment, and I
think they ought to be directly approached.

The danger is getting from here to there
because in the next six months there are
going to be critical budgetary decisions.
The new director may suddenly have to deal
with a decimated operation. Then the ques­
tion of going to be the advance plan­
sing side of the operation survive?

Why did you resign?

There's a time to come and a time to go. I
gave myself a five year checkpoint and
had started being approached by people
from other organizations, and that led me to
think seriously about what I wanted to do
next. I felt there was so much interference
from the staffs of certain elected officials
that it just wasn't worth it anymore. There
were several fundamental questions. Had
I accomplished enough? And the answer to
that was yes. Was it worth a prolonged
battle within a difficult political situation?
And the answer to that was no. And finally,
did I want to redefine Ken Topping instead
of LA? And the answer to that was yes, and
that's what I'm in the process of doing.

SQUIER, continued from B

What's your feeling about the uniformity
of housing type in any area versus
diversity of housing type?

I'm an advocate of mixed income housing
within buildings and within neighborhoods.
But if we're going to preserve single family
neighborhoods we've got to choose certain
neighborhoods that will be dense to pre­
serve others.

How do you decide which neighborhoods
should get more development?

First of all you start dealing with transporta­
tion. Beverly Fairfax, for example, is a
neighborhood that doesn't function very
well because it's too dense for the circula­tion
system that exists. If you look at other
neighborhoods that are low density and ask
how much traffic would be generated if we
increased density by x, you can make those
decisions based on infrastructure capacity.

Has the city's political leadership
changed its attitudes towards affordable
housing?

The creation of the Housing Commission,
the Housing Department, and some of the
appointments made communicate that the
Mayor and the Council are actively push­ing
Los Angeles into the future. The only way
Los Angeles can be governed is to bring
new energy, ideas, people, and institutions
into the picture, and that's happening. My
sense is there's more acceptance of change
within the political leadership than there is
for status quo, which in itself is a real
change, and that's a very exciting time to be
working in the city.
the entire planning system than anything else, if it is kept in the program, and not in the administration. Something has to be done to examine, for example, height districts in relation to the creation of self-contained and comprehensible metropolises. These are worked out on a district-by-district basis in the early days of zoning, and no one has any idea what’s happening in West Los Angeles. Should there be a structure along Wilshire that’s higher or the highest of lower districts? The greater downtown area is the core of the region; it’s unique in its variety of functions and transportation demands, and it has an exquisitely varied and dynamic place. But you need to articulate what the heights should be, not only along Wilshire but in other parts of the city, because that one element alone describes place almost as significantly as the massing potential or the character of the development.

In Los Angeles the people responsible for transportation planning and the people responsible for the rest of planning have different agendas and different bases. What should be done about that?

The Planning Department was transferred out of the city manager’s staff from DOT a few years ago, in order to formulate the transportation element which will be done in a coordinated department. We have the sense that the policy aspects of transportation planning need to drive the engineering aspects, rather than vice versa. It is also an aspect of the community plan revision program, and in rail transit, there has been a functional integration of city planning and transportation staffs on a team basis. Most of the specific plans adopted or underway involve transportation components.

The engineering side is always going to be there. Is there a dysfunction in having the two programs operating parallel on either side of a departmental boundary? I don’t see any arguments about coordinated committees in other departments in other places, I know that reorganization isn’t always the answer. There are many committees.

In Los Angeles doesn’t have many good models because the system isn’t designed to enhance teamwork. I have always advocated a Mayor’s development cabinet to bring together Planning, DOT, Engineering, and the public works department. When there’s some degree on a coordinated basis, but only because of the desires of the individual departments, land-use pressure to coordinate. There are equal pressures not to coordinate. So you have a problem of mixed messages, of one County supervisor saying “you get together and coordinate,” others saying, “don’t coordinate too much.”

There are many models of how transportation planning should proceed, polar opposite approaches to the transportation/land use issues. It always seems to work, which says do you can everything in terms of demand management and when the traffic reaches a certain point, but go down. The opposite model is Central City West which has an aggressive reconfiguration of transportation facilities including a busway, a whole series of freeway on and off-ramps, a movement of the wishbone connectors of the one-way street system four or five blocks west of the Harbor freeway plus a major new metrotrain station. That’s a different perspective. How do we finance new infrastructure to encourage positive future development.

Other political is the trade area developments for the rail transit network. They’re being built, but not exactly where central city Council centers will be around some of those trade centers, and to me that’s a much tougher question of coordination than petty institutional problems.

Which areas were the least successful in your tenure as director?

One of the big disappointments was the apparent intractability of the system in attempting to streamline regulations. On the one hand, the regulatory system has to be managed, and administered, and it has the possibility of becoming the centers concept. The height districts in Los Angeles the people responsible for significantly as the massing potential or the dynamic place. An exquisitely varied place along Wilshire because they got their little dream house; someone can only afford to pay $50,000 for a home ownership?

What about the schedule where half the planning staff is off on Monday and half is off on Friday? For a four day week is okay, not a net three day week.

I agree. The sure audit will find an adjustment that that’s an employer relations issue that goes back well over a decade. When I first came on board, it was apparent that this issue would take some time to work out. I set it aside with the idea that the audit would come along sooner after it was required two years ago.
In the following interview, Kenneth Topping, former planning director for the city of Los Angeles, discusses his recent resignation. For further reading, see Arthur Golding, and offers some opinions on the department’s successes and failures.

What were some of the accomplishments of your tenure as planning director?

First, the expansion of the staff from some 196 positions originally to 359 positions authorized in the ‘91 budget. That represents a catching up process of resource allocation. Los Angeles has a tremendous mix of activity that generates a need for revamping the entire planning and production process. With the expansion of the staff came the opportunity to begin to replan the city.

Regarded that was the addition of the massive multi-million dollar (AB 283) downzoning effort, making to zoning consistent with the General Plan for the first time in the city’s history. In rezoning over 300,000 parcels through automated mapping technology, a permanent database was set up both for zoning and general plan land use documentation. The computer database creates a foundation so that as the city is replanned the zoning will follow on a 1 to 1 basis.

Six major citywide plans are underway. They include the air quality element and the balanced growth element, which rezones the centers concept in relation to traffic and infrastructure and what we know now about environmental siting, such as boulevards and corridors. This will redefine centers in terms of form and the areas’ capacity to accept growth.

The third citywide element is the housing element, and then there’s the safety element that includes all of the different city policies regarding natural and manmade hazards, transportation, waste disposal, development and a solid waste management element.

In addition, there’s an update of the Los Angeles International Airport master plan, which has citywide implications.

When I came to LA there was a widespread belief that development was virtually non-existent, and the community plan revisions were not happening. That was not the case at all.

The City took on the Granada Hills ordnance, which was virtually non-existent, and the community plan revisions were not happening. Eight of the zoning ordinances had been done—Westwood, Hollywood and Wilming­ton have all been completed in the last three years. The West Adams, South Park, and Porter Ranch Granada Hills have been completed and are awaiting EIRs. The communities currently under revision include Sunset, South West Adams, Southeast, and coming up is North Hollywood. We’ve also prepared some two dozen special plans, including Porter Ranch, adopted in July, Ventura Boulevard, adopted in early January, and Central West which is about to be adopted.

Some eight specific plans have been rezoning, rezoning commission last year, about a dozen pending in the city at tory’s office, and another dozen are in some phase of completion within the neighbor­hood planning division. These specific plans are an important source of redaction because they represent a maturing of the conceptual work done on the community plan with the regulatory work that’s beginning to be done.

There have been 14 significant citywide ordinances adopted over the last several years. They includes the Community Development Ordinance which was one of the rare direct applications of the general concept. It estab­lishes housing elements in the height districts in one, and required stepping back from adjacent residential properties. There was also the first city-wide set ordi­nance, although much of the work was done in Cal Hamilton’s time. Slope density and height came in 1987, and the Flair density law came in 1988. There applies only to downtown, but it has potential applicability in the city development centers, particularly the Wilshire corridor. Recycling and mini-mail ordi­nances came in 1989, and then family daycare, hazardous waste, parking, site plan, floor area averaging, public notice, and the new open space classification all came in 1990. I feel particularly good about the five neighborhood charisters which has been very success­fully implemented as a permanent planning design that has been funded so that if a urban design plan­ner is appointed.

What were some of the major items of unfinished business?

The geographic information system that’s been built is only the beginning of a much larger system that will allow for parcel data to be accessed through modem by private users. The opportunity is there to make a lot of information available on a site, on a general plan and land use inventory. A four digit code gives the exact nature of activity on a given site, and an historic file present information at the historical value of a given structure.

The frustration is the development of the zoning code which we tried to start over the last several years, but were not able to get support from the City Council. The zoning categories aren’t functionally integrated with the community plan categories. It seems intellectual code that the zoning categories represent an urban land concept rather than just a mix of uses determined in 1946. Why the lack of Council support?

The finance committee upheld the item a year and a half ago on the grounds that it should be done as a consultant effort rather than a staff effort. We were instructed to find the money at the time about what the things were starting to tighten up money­wise, so it was a C-cotch. The urban design planner selection pro­cess is also threatened by budgetary cut­backs. I had reorganized the program to put the site planning, the urban design unit, and the design review board planners all into one section under this position. The AIA needs to move in quickly and aggressively to meet the challenge and to be involved with a competent design professional. Who should the AIA assign in order to become an advocate for urban design?

Urban design advocates are going to have to link up with AIA. If the AIA has done a credible job in beginning to get the attention of decision makers, you need a critical mass. Architects are a wonderful force for the imagination between the built environment and the development industry in the sense that you see both your client needs and the city’s growth need. You can begin to communicate with some of the other interest groups, particularly over the issue of the selection of the next director, and also over the qualitative standard applied to the planning process to deal with this change and proper functioning of the city at neighborhood, citywide scale.

Do you see urban design going beyond city limits?

Far beyond, but I use that as a starting point because there are sizable parts of the city that need cosmetic treatment. But we need conceptual work similar to what had been done at various points by some of Cal’s people. Many of those community plans did include conceptual work that was lost and buried in the files. That way of think­ing needs to be resurrected and brought into

Gary Squier on the City’s Housing Crisis

Recently appointed by Mayor Bradley to head the city’s new Housing Preservation and Production Authority, Gary Squier began his career as a volunteer on Skid Row, and has since served as a housing developer with the Community Housing Authority. Ann Zimmermann met with Squier to discuss his vision for the future of housing in Los Angeles.

Could you explain why this department was created and what are its responsibilities?

The Housing Department was created after the city realized that its existing infrastructure wasn’t operating at a high enough level to focus directly on housing issues. Housing was handled by the Community Development Department; it didn’t have de­partmental status. The City Council re­sponded to recommendations from as far back as a 1987 report of the Urban Land Institute, which was appointed by Skid Row, and said to the city, we’re shocked that you have no single entity responsible for housing. That was a study done by a Blue Ribbon Committee which arrived at the same conclusion: there were some 11 different agencies that have something to do with housing but nobody has primary responsibility. The Department and a Housing Commission were created by the Department of City Planning, outside of the Community Development Depart­ment. The Commission is made up of four council members, the mayor, the chief of Planning Directors of Council. It has general oversight over all agencies that have something to do with housing, and it has a direct relationship with the Housing Department.

Does this department address those eleven agencies under the umbrella?

Not officially, although it’s charged with coordinating housing activity. It is one of my principal objectives to go beyond being simply a housing program responsible to it implements city housing programs using federal and state funds, to ex­plore other ways of keeping people in hous­ing, through the private sector, through the family, through the non-profit community, and through the private sector. It’s also responsible for working with the state and federal governments to generate new resources for affordable housing. We’re immediately looking at the possible impos­i­tion of a fee on new commercial develop­ment to mitigate impact on the affordable housing supply. In other words, if new commercial development generates jobs, those workers need housing, and some fee is paid by the commercial development might fund those housing units. We are working with the community, particularly the private sector to develop a linkage program that works economically and politically for the commercial development community.

Is the Housing Department primarily advisory?

With regard to our own program, it’s im­plementation—we have an eight million dollar budget. With regard to the Redevelopment Agency, it’s advisory, primarily through the Housing Commission. We provide back­ground reports to the Commission, then they judge the performance of the Redevel­opment Agency, the Community Development Authority, and the Planning Department.

The department impacts political and bu­reaucratic systems that affect the housing supply, it is a lobbying force at the state and federal government, it is a builder of coali­tions to bring new resources to housing and to overcome political systems having a specific impact on those systems. It’s this department’s responsibility to make sure the city is operating as a planner in the future. It is our responsibility to identify and work within the system to remove barriers to the expansion and preservation of the housing supply—building and safety, the public, the development community. We also are responsible for working with the state and federal governments to generate new resources for affordable housing. We’re immediately looking at the possible imposition of a fee on new commercial development to mitigate impact on the affordable housing supply. In other words, if new commercial development generates jobs, those workers need housing, and some fee is paid by the commercial development might fund those housing units. We are working with the community, particularly the private sector to develop a linkage program that works economically and politically for the commercial development community.

What is the time frame for developing the city’s housing policy?

We’ll have a framework for the policy de­velopment by April or May, then we’ll launch into a process of taking existing policy and thought on the issue of housing, and then refreshment, or rethinking. Then we’ll be designing and new open housing policy.

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What can the city do about homelessness—is it merely a symptom of the general housing crisis?

Particularly for the lowest income sectors of the city, housing is just one piece of what’s necessary to build the supportive living en­vironment. They also need schools, employ­ment opportunities, services, child care, senior citizens, tutoring... When I was working in Skid Row it was a common place of older men, 30% alcoholic, maybe 30% with psychological problems. Today, Skid Row’s much younger, it’s much tougher, it’s a heavy drug orientation, and carries with it a whole host of problems that we did not see 15 years ago.

This department doesn’t deal with Skid Row. I’m not sure why, but the problem of homelessness is still at the top of the AIA’s priority list, and it is saying that there is impetus for a rent stabiliza­tion ordinance. Simultaneously, federal cuts have taken $14 million out of housing, so we experienced a sudden crisis.

Is this different from other cities?

I don’t know. The city’s housing isn’t at a close enough during that time to know what happened. But our job, and a job that is expanding significantly, primarily for a large number of low wage and high wage jobs. In the absence of housing production, the high wage jobs drove up housing prices. Low wage jobs were inadequate to pay for

Continued on 8
"Architects can either wait for the enlightened client who may never appear, or they can be the initiators of housing projects. LACDC and LA Family Housing are local examples of organizations that develop, design and own long term affordable housing projects. Another avenue is for more architects to become involved with the policy making side where they can indirectly influence a large number of housing designs. Business as usual is clearly not the answer."

William Huang
Los Angeles Community Design Center

Küller Flammang Purtil Architects

Lower far right: Mary Andrews Clark Residence, downtown Los Angeles. The building was designed in 1922 as a residential hotel for unmarried working women, and served as such until the 1967 Whittier earthquake. In the fall of 1990, it was purchased by Crescent Bay Company and the LACDC to rehabilitate it into a 153 room low income residential hotel.

Upper far right: site plan, Crescent Court, downtown Los Angeles. Scheduled to begin construction in February, the project contains 32 three-bedroom, bungalow-style units around a central court. The units, slated for low and moderate income levels, will sell for $85,000-$120,000. The land was donated by the city in a CRA-sponsored competition.

Near right: Lincoln Ashland development, Santa Monica, Küller Flammang Purtil Architects. Currently in working drawings, this project combines 15 one-bedroom units, 15 twt>bedroom units and 15 townhouses, all low income, with retail and office space along Lincoln Boulevard.

John V. Mutlow, AIA

Right: perspective, Manhattan Place low income elderly housing, Koreatown, Los Angeles. Each cluster of six units forms a single design element through the projection and articulation of the balconies, which retains the economy of the slab configuration behind. The central courtyard internally links the south residential wing, the east residential wing and the communal spaces.

Küller Flammang Purtil Architects

Left and above: elevation and first floor plan, Los Angeles, SRO rehab, downtown Los Angeles.
Rebecca L. Binder, AIA
Architecture and Planning

Right: east elevation. Brenta Apartments, Venice, Rebecca L. Binder, AIA. This 4-unit housing project is designed as two buildings connected at grade by parking, at entry level with an internal courtyard, and at upper levels by stairs, walks and bridges. The project includes two affordable housing units.

Far right: elevations and first and second floor plan. Vernon Apartments, Venice, Rebecca L. Binder, AIA. This low cost housing project was designed to convert from eight loft spaces to eight one-bedroom apartments, to four three-bedroom apartments or condominiums. A block and tackle is located on the upper levels for hoisting large artworks or materials.

“Obstacles to developing housing include long review processes and extremely restrictive zoning and building codes that give no specific treatment for the production of low income housing. Federal, state and local funding programs have been dismantled, and there is a lack of tax incentives, and a lack of involvement of the private sector. As more funds become available, more architects will get involved.”

Arnold Stalk, LA Family Housing Corporation

Above: rendering. Coelan Ville. The project includes 10 units of rental housing for very low income families.

Left: axonometric. Triangle House Transitional Housing, Boyle Heights. Triangle House was built with private funding from foundations at $39/square foot, and includes 40-bed housing and comprehensive social services for formerly homeless families.

James Bonar, FAIA, Cavaedium

Near right and middle: entrance lobby perspective and axonometric, Prentice Hotel, downtown Los Angeles, Cavaedium. This three-story unreinforced masonry building has two commercial spaces on the ground floor, and two floors of single room occupancy above. The high ceilings allow self-contained “houses” to be constructed inside the building, emphasizing the idea of a residential setting.

Far right: elevation and plan, Genesis Hotel, downtown Los Angeles, Cavaedium. The Genesis Hotel, a 32-room single occupancy hotel on Main Street, provides permanent, low income housing for residents of Skid Row. An arched steel canopy distinguishes the hotel entrance from the two adjacent retail spaces.

“One way to encourage the development of more affordable housing would be to designate housing density by FAR rather than number of units to encourage the development of smaller units. Also parking requirements could be eased to 1 or 1 1/2 cars per unit for units under +/- 600 square feet or within a designated radius of public transportation route. Finally, the planning/construction approval process should be expedited. Reduced construction holding time would significantly reduce the cost of development and consequently expected return and rental rates.”

Julie Eizenberg
Koning Eizenberg Architects

Koning Eizenberg Architecture, Inc.

Below and left: ground floor and second floor plans, and front elevation sketch. Simone Hotel, SRO rehab, downtown Los Angeles, Koning Eizenberg Architecture, Inc.
Design for Housing: It’s Going to be Modern Again

Every century is in part defined by architectural programs exemplifying the aspirations of society and its architects. In the eighteenth century great gardens of France and England symbolized the rationalist belief that humankind could order nature on the grand scale. In the nineteenth century’s exhibition halls and train stations were designed to symbolize democratic, as opposed to divine aspirations. The twentieth century, however, felt ownership of the exhilaration, freedom and terror of the great halls and the machines that contained them.

Twentieth century modernism spawned housing as opposed to residences. For much of the past 100 years the production and design of housing has both inspired our best architects and served as a testament of the architect’s engagement in the cultural and political life of the city. Unfortunately, for the architect, the destruction of Pruitt Igoe in 1972 should now be understood as an era of self-inflicted and gratuitous death. Notwithstanding the vigorous protests by the latter, the Preservationists, and the preservation and preservationists who have their place at the table where decisions are made.

In conclusion, many who participated realized that “Design for Housing” did not break through to new territory never before explored. Much that was discussed was already known and practiced by those who attended. However, it was gratifying to realize that increasing numbers of individuals are recognizing that design does play a critical social role. Design does shape living environments and can help support the enrichment and empowerment of people’s lives. The connection to Modernism’s aspirations has not been irrevocably severed, instead it has been redefined; from an observer and design commentator on society’s ills, in this last decade of the twentieth century the architect becomes a critical listener and active participant in society’s discourse.

Design for Housing: A joint project of the Design Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Architectural Foundation, is an attempt to utilize the design community from the complicity of the past 20 years and in a modest way contribute to the reinvigoration of the architect as an individual whose skills and talents are required by the housing code. This building reflects the emergence and decline of the architect community downtown. The Venice Art Block is a new construction by Koning Eizenberg Architects and Glen Erickson Architect and Developer. This clever and attractive 20,000 square foot building is a testament of the architect’s role in society’s discourse.

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The following is an excerpt of a speech given by AIA/LA president Antion, FAIA, at the 1991 installation ceremony held January 19 at Union Station.

As we begin this year of the final decade of the second millennium, let us begin by recognizing that this opportunity which will test the metal of each of us, and every one of us. A quarter of a century after Rachel Carson and others so passionately called us to take responsibility for this space capsule we call the world, for the first time in the United States and, many would say, in the entire environment. The maintenance of the earth in order to produce a high standard of living, but also to ensure a lower quality of life.

As we look out about our built environment, we are so constantly in the midst of a well-timed and pertinent event: a revolution in our understanding of the place we call home, and our shared concern for the responsibility we bear towards the environment. And, most of all, the recognition of the need for us to take a new look at what we are building.

The metropolitan region that is generally considered to be Los Angeles, will become the largest in the United States by the year 2000. It will be to 21st Century America what New York was to the 20th Century. It will be the principal center for service, trade and technology, and the focal point for the west to east and Latin America. It will be the place where people moving to our region on a monthly basis is staggering, and it is our obligation to consider and plan for the highest quality urban environment for those who reside here.

Among my youthful memories are those of trips spent on Saturday and summer mornings along the banks of the LA River, and in the river itself. In those days, before the Golden State Freeway and the Sylmar Dam, it was possible to see all along the river's course that were of great significance to our urban environment.

When the winter rains came to our region on a summer's day, it was possible to see all along the river's course that would come to be known as the scenic resource.

Our region on a summer's day, it was possible to see all along the river's course that would come to be known as the scenic resource.

While I was the author of that speech, I was also a member of the Los Angeles River Flood Control Commission. The street from the Mulholland Dam to the river was made possible through the highest quality urban environment for those who reside here.

As we sit here today, we are continuing on that path to recover this water. We can convert its banks to a continuous open space resource for the region, that will be the lifeblood of our region for the next 100 years. We can create parks and trails where much needed open space to serve the millions that will come here in the next decade. We can create parks and trails for high density housing, cultural activities, and recreational-cultural activities.

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As the soon to be a century of LA passes, the river will be the lifeblood of our region for the next 100 years. We can convert its banks to a continuous open space resource for the region, that will be the lifeblood of our region for the next 100 years. We can create parks and trails where much needed open space to serve the millions that will come here in the next decade. We can create parks and trails for high density housing, cultural activities, and recreational-cultural activities.

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Through the Institute’s new referral network, AIA and AIAS members can take advantage of two inexpensive services: jobseeker position search enables applicants to tap into a nationwide pool of classified advertisements for architectural positions; jobseeker resume service offers members and students an opportunity to list a 60-line resume in a database that can be accessed by firms seeking qualified applicants. Two parallel services are geared for employers: position available allows employers to enter a position description form into the network classified database; resume service enables employers to conduct a resume search in the network’s database. For detailed information and network forms, call (800) AIA-NET1.

Urban Design Committee
As the Urban Design Committee begins a new calendar year, it is appropriate to look back on some of the committee’s activities in 1990. The two most notable accomplishments were the Beverly-Fairfax/Miracle Mile workshop in June and the Regional Urban Design Conference in October. Both of these events required months of planning by the committee and others working with the chapter, and each was successful in significantly increasing the chapter’s influence in the urban design arena. The Beverly-Fairfax/Miracle Mile workshop was co-sponsored by the chapter and Mayor Bradley’s office and organized primarily by the committee. The Urban Design Conference was essentially an annual meeting of the AIA National component Regional Urban Design Committee hosted by AIA/LA. The four day meeting was reconfigured by the local urban design committee to become a major study of the urban design of the greater Los Angeles region.

The accomplishments of the Urban Design committee during the last year are a direct result of the accomplishment and leadership provided by Pat Dawe and Allyne Windermann as vice-chairs, and for the last two years by Marc Fuettner as chairperson. They have set the standard for all of us in the committee for the coming year. On behalf of the committee, thank them for their time, energy and creativity.

The committee has selected three chairpersons for 1991, each of whom will take lead responsibility during different periods of the year. I will fill this position for the first four months of the year, followed by Pat Dawe and Ben Rosenbloom, for the remaining four month periods.

The committee’s 1991 agenda, initiated at the January 10 meeting, is equally ambitious as last year’s. Numerous issues, both new and old, will have a major impact on architecture, planning, and urban design in the region. In addition to the ongoing review and response to proposed L.A. City ordinances, the committee will be concerned with such issues as the selection of the new Los Angeles City Planning Director, and changes currently underway in the Community Redevelopment Agency. The conference in October served as a reminder that we must not lose sight of the broader picture. The effects of urban development and the environmental benefits possible from comprehensive urban design transcend jurisdictional boundaries. For this reason I have proposed that the committee continue to broaden its focus to include issues with general application to all of the various incorporated cities and unincorporated areas of the county, which constitute the urban fabric of the region.

Ron Altham, AIA/ALA president, has established the Los Angeles River as a focus for the various committees and the chapter in general during 1991. This long neglected and often abused natural resource, which connects many diverse communities in the Los Angeles area, offers numerous urban design opportunities.

This is not to suggest that the committee turn its back on the current issues. What it does propose is that the committee expand its efforts to pursue design solutions that can provide greater definition and clarity to the existing urban form, in terms of existing topographic, economic and ethnic characteristics.

This proposal requires greater involvement by the chapter membership. The committee invites, and in fact needs the skills and experience of more chapter members. I urge you to contact the chapter officer regarding meeting dates or contact me at (213) 380-2101. We are looking forward to an exciting year.

James Black, AIA
Chair, Urban Design Committee

LA ARCHITECT

Code Talk

On July 25, 1990, the Governor signed into law Assembly Bill 2791 which adds Section 19827.5 to the Health and Safety Code which states as follows:

"A demolition permit shall not be issued by a city, county, city and county, or state or local agency which is authorized to issue demolition permits as to any building or other structure except upon the receipt from the permit applicant of a copy of each written asbestos notification regarding the building that has been required to be submitted to the United States Environmental Protection Agency or to a designated state agency, or both pursuant to part 61 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, or the successor to that part. The permit may be issued without the applicant submitting a copy of the written notification if the applicant declares that"

Continued on 10

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Focus on Architects and Architecture

In the first of the 1991 general membership meetings, AIA/LA will host a Focus on Architects and Architecture on February 19 at DC-3 Restaurant in Santa Monica. The event is the first in a series of forums established by the chapter to provide opportunities for architects to meet, exchange ideas and discuss current design issues. The Tuesday night meeting will feature architects Craig Hodgetts, Barton Choy, AIA and Ed Niles, FAIA, and artist Peter Shire. Architecture critic and journalist Aaron Betsky will serve as moderator.

The program will run from 7:30-9:00 pm at the DC-3 restaurant located at 2800 Donald Douglas Loop North at the Santa Monica Airport with a no-host bar starting at 6:30 pm. Admission is $10 for members and $15 for non-members. Call (213) 380-4595. Individual dinner reservations can be made from 6-7:30 pm by calling (213) 399-2323.

Upcoming Events

To register for the 1991 Monterey Design Conference, March 15-17 at the Asilomar Conference Center in Monterey, call (916) 448-9082. This year's theme, "Monterey X: Will the real California architecture please stand up?" will explore the historic precedents, ideas and evolution of California design and architecture. Speakers include Joseph Esherick, FAIA; Frank Israel, architect; Nelson Rising, Maguire Thomas Partners; A. Eugene Kohn, FAIA; and Witold Rybezynski, architect and author, among many others.

The fourth annual conference for California Women in Environmental Design will be held February 22-24 at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. The conference will feature keynote speaker Deborah Dietsch, editor of ARCHITECTURE magazine, and will include a "Women's Work: architecture + design" exhibit open to the public. Call (415) 751-0342.

AIA/LA Firms Surveyed

AIA/LA member architectural firms will soon be receiving an important questionnaire from Harris Publishing Company. This survey will give your firm the opportunity to be listed in the chapter's first AIA/LA Architectural Firm Directory. Member firms failing to send back a questionnaire risk being listed incorrectly or omitted entirely. If your firm has not received a survey form by April 30, 1991, please contact the chapter office immediately.

Once received, your firm data will be edited and processed by Harris Publishers to be included in this brand new "who's who" of Los Angeles architecture. A free copy of the directory will be given to each member firm as well as to chapter members and will be distributed to other organizations and agencies involved in the procurement of architectural services. In addition to your complimentary firm listing, advertising opportunities are also available. Call Harris Advertising Network (800) 669-6889.

LA Architect’s February issue looks at affordable housing, or the lack thereof. In an interview with Ann Zimmerman on page 7, Gary Squier reveals his goals and the challenges he faces as the head of the city’s newly created Housing Preservation and Production Department. Also starting on page 7, Ken Topping, former Director of City Planning, explains to Marc Futterman what he did for the city and why he’s no longer doing it. On page 4, Carl Davis explores an architect visit to the city and reviews the LA/UCI 1991 conference on the future of artist housing in Los Angeles last December. Final page 5-6, architects who are designing affordable housing offer their perspectives on why more isn’t being built, along with a feature on projects that are being designed.