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L.A. Architect September 1992

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4 Classic Modernist Furniture. Classicon America/Classic Contemporary Designs is a German company which is licensed to reproduce the furniture designs of Eileen Gray, Walter Gropius, Bruno Paul, Otto Blumei, Otto Kruger and Eckart Muthesius. (Laila de la Cuesta. (800) 423-1027.

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Some events for the Fall

Freeman House On Show
As part of the campaign for the restoration of Frank Lloyd Wright's remarkable Freeman House, the USC School of Architecture is making the house available for tours and other events. One of the most original and spectacular of Wright's small block houses, the Freeman house was conceived for and became a hub of L.A.'s avant-garde in the 1920s.

The campaign will not only support restoration efforts, but will also fund an Architect in Residence program to allow internationally renowned Architects to study and teach at USC. Hour-long tours take place every Saturday, usually at 4:00pm. Call for reservations and information at 213-611-9671.

South Pasadena Tour
In spite of nationwide protest from the preservation community, Caltrans is pushing ahead with plans to extend the 710 Long Beach Freeway through the historic neighborhoods in El Sereno, South Pasadena, and southwest Pasadena. The federal government is requiring Caltrans to hold mitigation meetings with representatives from the affected cities before final approval of the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) will be considered. These meetings will begin in September.

If this freeway were ever to be built, the result could be among the biggest losses of historic resources in the state's history. It is too late to sue Governor Pete Wilson. Hurry now to stop Governor Pete Wilson before he does to our historic neighborhoods.

On Sunday, October 6th, the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation will sponsor a tour of homes threatened by the freeway. Participants will stroll through tree-lined, turn-of-the-century settings in Culver City. The campaign for the restoration of the Freeman House will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are $12 for members of historic preservation groups and $15 for non-members and will be on sale at the South Pasadena Historical Museum, 953 Meridian Avenue, beginning at 9:45. For further information, call 818-799-9089 or 818-799-7161.

Designs For Living
Watch out for Designs For Living, a large-scale 12 month wall calendar documenting the Southern California homes of Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, John Lautner, Rudolph Schindler, Charles and Ray Eames, Irving Gill, and others. All photography is by LA-based architectural photographer Julius Shulman, Hon AIA. Featuring an introduction by L.A. educator, writer and historian Dr. Robert Winternitz. For further information, contact John Dorman at 213-344-1600 (Fax 213-236-9999).

Designs For Living is published by Photoventures Publishing.

Festival Of Trees
The Festival of Trees, an internationally recognized holiday celebration, will make its L.A. debut November 24-29, as a benefit for Five Acres, the therapeutic children in Altadena that serves all of Southern California. Fifty designer-decorated Christmas trees will be displayed at the Festival of Trees Center. Sponsors and designers for the event.

The Design House will also contain functional artwork - creative furniture and objects for the home - donated by artists such as Laddie John Dill, Susan Landau, Pamela Kern Quinton and Joel Stearns. This artwork will be sold at the Festival of Trees Center. Sponsors and designers.

Sweet Charity for Venice Family Clinic
Top Los Angeles designers, architects, and artists are coming together to transform the historic Bel Air mission into the 1992 Sweet Charity Design House, which will be open to the public for one month beginning Oct 2. Proceeds will benefit the Venice Family Clinic, which provides free comprehensive medical care to low income and homeless individuals from all over Los Angeles.

Among the more than 40 designers participating in the project are award-winning architect Steven Ehrlich, Van Martin Rowe (who will create a Celestial Observatory for the home-owners), Luis Ortega (who is transforming the bar area into a Moroccan Water Bar), and singers/designers Dionne Warwick.

The Design House will also contain functional artwork - creative furniture and objects for the home - donated by artists such as Laddie John Dill, Susan Landau, Pamela Kern Quinton and Joel Stearns. This artwork will be sold at the Festival of Trees Center. Sponsors and designers.

For further information on tickets and event shuttle service call 310-392-8630, x208.

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Ten California Architects Abroad

21 Portman Square is the rather stately location of theriba's Heinz Gallery - the Architectural Library and Drawings Collection funded by the British Institute. For July, the Heinz is hosting an exhibit entitled "Ten California Architects: One is tempted to state that this exhibition exhibits nothing so much as the powers of one's inipotence.

First, some local color. Post-election practice continues in recession with the total debts of Cassie Dock developers Olympia & York estimated at over $2 billion. Facing sudden death and never realizing a major intervention in the capital. The IRA's recent bomb has purportedly cost the Los Angeles Automobile Association $34 million. The value of the automobile in Ireland currently has been stated to be "irreducible." The curatorial decision, then, to whom foreign editors tend to disrepute a reportage inevitably focuses on the sudden death and never realizes a sudden death and never realizes a sudden death and never realizes a major intervention in the capital.

Thus the LA Riots. Thus the IRA's recent bomb has purportedly cost the Los Angeles Automobile Association $34 million. The value of the automobile in Ireland currently has been stated to be "irreducible." The curatorial decision, then, to whom foreign editors tend to disrepute a reportage inevitably focuses on the sudden death and never realizes a sudden death and never realizes a sudden death and never realizes a major intervention in the capital.

"Ten California Architects" has ostensibly the merit of introducing the non-glassier to London. UK design reportage inevitably focuses on the glamour boys of the avant-garde like Frank and Thom and Eric. "Brevity!" for course these indigenous experimentors but touch on the others whom foreign editors tend to disregard. The curatorial decision, then, to host a catholic selection had promise. The Ten are a somewhat motley crew**: There is an appropriate geographic spread from across the state; with three architects from San Francisco (including Sea Ranch), one from Fresno, four from Los Angeles and two from San Diego. The styles and methodologies of these practitioners also vary. There are some real whatlers. What is one to make of a professional institution which, however indelibly, accredits a Charles Moore dwelling to John Lautner and classifies an Eichler interior as the Kappe Residence? It's not, of course, that the work is bad. Real bad. But like Ray Kappe and AA-hero John Lautner will always rise above such situations. The questions, surely, are why this non-event was promulgated in the first place and, then, why so incompletely. One would be better off buying a good book. Unfortunately, Ten Californian Architects by Scott and Ann Wyman, Zimmerman, which was to have accompanied the show, will not now be available until the fall. Ray Lautner, the chosen media are sketch, formal drawings for the Penn Station/Madison Square Garden, but there are some real whatlers. What is one to make of a professional institution which, however indelibly, accredits a Charles Moore dwelling to John Lautner and classifies an Eichler interior as the Kappe Residence? It's not, of course, that the work is bad. Real bad. But like Ray Kappe and AA-hero John Lautner will always rise above such situations. The questions, surely, are why this non-event was promulgated in the first place and, then, why so incompletely. One would be better off buying a good book. Unfortunately, Ten Californian Architects by Scott and Ann Wyman, Zimmerman, which was to have accompanied the show, will not now be available until the fall.

Ray Lautner

**Rebecca Rodgers, Arthur Dyson, Steven Ethelrich, Joseph Escherick, Ray Kappe, Kendrick Bangs Lauer, John Lautner, Donald William MacDonald, Charles Moore, and Rob Wellington Quigley.

More L.A. Architects At Large

California, and Los Angeles in particular, has been represented several times recently in the international architectural conference community. In mid-June, Dr. Andreas Papadakis, editor of Architectural Design, hosted "Theory and Experimentation," an "intellectual extravaganza" which gathered (with the notable exception of architectural advocate Prince Charles of Wales) over sixty prominent architects and critics from Europe, the Americas and the Far East. From Los Angeles were architects Eric Owen Moss, FAIA; Thom Mayne AIA; Morphosis; UCLA professor Dagnan Racher; and Wolf Prix of Coop Himmelblau, L.A. and Vienna. Moss, Mayne and Prix immediately traveled to Vienna for a more intimate conference sponsored by the Osterreichisches Museum fur Angewandte Kunst (M-A-K); the Austrian Museum for Applied Arts. Entitled "The End Of Architecture?", the conference was simultaneously praised and criticized in the Vienna press for the close, and closed, nature of the event. Just this last month, a somewhat different kind of conference took place in Mexico City. Jointly sponsored by the Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, USC School of Architecture, Revista Arquitectura and Instituto National de Bellas Artes, the "Premier Encuentro Binacional de Arquitectura" brought together architects from Mexico City, Los Angeles, and New York. Representing the different factions of LA Architecture were John Lautner, AIA; Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss, FAIA; and Panos Koulermos. The program, organized by Trade-Tech. Professor Marcella Oliva-Aguilar was, according to Moss, "more regional, more focused on place" than the two earlier events. "It was, in a sense, more innocent, and perhaps more clumsy, but more genuine." Catalogues/publications will result from each conference, and will be made available for sale to the public later this year.

The work of another prominent Los Angeles architect, the inimitable John Lautner, FAIA, has been recently tracing the globe. Recent stops include Vienna, at the Hochschule fur Angewandte Kunst, Harvard, at the CSID, Vancouver, at the League For Studies in Architecture, Chicago, at the Graham Foundation (where it was the most successful exhibit in the history of the organization), and New York, at the National Institute for Architectural Education. Talks with slides and film were given in many more places...Hope this distinguished Angeleno will repatriate his exhibit to this city and remind us all why he is one of the founding fathers of california design.

Mary Eaves Mitchell

Coming Exhibitions

Angels and Franciscans: Innovative Architecture from Los Angeles and San Francisco opens at 65 Thompson Street, the Castella/Gagosian Gallery in New York City's SoHo. The show explores the generation of architects born of the pioneering vision of Frank Gehry. Curated by Susan Vernon, Mike Davis, and Bill Lacy, and designed by Frank Gehry, FAIA, the uniquely Californian exhibition features works by Los Angeles architects Frank D. Heinz, Edward Durrell Stone, Robert Stern, John Lautner, Morphosis, and Eric Owen Moss, FAIA. Franciscans are Craig Hodgetts & Hsin Ming Fang, Holm Hinkle Faxon Jones: Mark Mack, Stanley Saitowitz, and Studio Works. Gehry will be represented by his designs for the Penn Station/Madison Square Garden redevelopment. The catalog, published by Gagosian/Rizzoli International will be available by late September.

Pre and After-View continues next page...
Pyramids, Cathedrals, and Gardens

Architecture: the Natural and the Manmade Vincent Scully. (New York: St. Martin's Press, $40 hard cover.)

Scully is a living national treasure and this masterly set of essays distills the insights he has gained in a lifetime of research and teaching. Professionals can recapture, in these pages, the sense of wonder that first kindled their love of architecture; students will have their eyes opened and their imaginations stretched. For Scally ranges over the entire history of building, from Mesopotamia to modernism, as it relates to the natural world. The scope of the inquiry is daunting, but so are the leaps across centuries, from Sumerian ziggurats to the meaning diagrams of Hugh Ferris, from the facade of Notre Dame de Paris to the plan of the garden at Chatsilly, from Greek temples to late Corbus. Early chapters on the sacred mountains and temples of antiquity are densely erudite. Then, with Hadrian's Villa and the Pantheon, the text seems to soar, borne up on gusts of passion. Then's a brilliant analysis of the con­

tradictions in French gothic cathedrals and in classical gardens. Scully makes you think that you are reading about a living, ferociously guarded dead. But in Maya Lin's memorial the cool face of death with our hand. . . , The innocence and architectural cer­

ties of 1932 have been replaced in the 57 varieties of modernism. Frampton analyzes its evolution from Neutra designed for specific hous­

ings!) He concedes its failures, but blames the practitioners more than the underlying principles. "Progressive and extraordinary diverse at its begin­

ning . . . much more than its critics will acknowledge - Modernism continues to live on in the most interesting of today's architecture," he declares. "Post-Modernism, obsessed with money and fashion, has never produced rigorous design or a better environ­

. . . . The buildings he illustrates - including the Pompidou Center, Lloyd's, and a fish market trans­

formed into a banking center - offer more convincing support for his argu­

ments than his schematic sketches for transforming London.

Michael Webb

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Coalition Goes To Work

The people's protest coalition is scheduled to begin its campaign to "freeze out" the city's downtown area with increased construction in the late summer or early fall. The group, which has been meeting weekly at the City Hall, plans to hold a demonstration outside City Hall on the day the city council votes on the proposed expansion of the McCormick-Hyde Park area.

Hillside Ordinance Approved

The latest in a series of Hillside Ordinance reviews was held by the city council on Monday night. The ordinance, which was approved by the council, aims to regulate the construction of hillside homes.

Coliseum Expansion Killed

The proposed expansion of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum was killed by the city council on Monday night. The council voted 13-0 to reject the expansion, which would have included a new stadium and accompanying facilities.

Critics Turn Turned

Actor

Dennis Hopper, who has recently turned to acting in films, will be the star of a new movie due to begin shooting next month. The movie is being produced by the independent film company, "The Hollywood Dream Factory," and will be directed by Richard F. D. Zanuck.

Design Decisions

Logo, titles and captions in "Ticker tape," a sans serif typeface, are used for high-speed information processing. Clear, bold, homage to auto-cultural Los Angeles.

Margin carries captions, notes, etc. Criss-crosses with "Ticker tape" to frame body text. Asymmetrical, layering, abstraction and modular system homage to freedom of modern planning.
For enormous help recently with L.A. Architect, the Editor would like to thank:

**Morris Newman, Sherry Snell, Robin Cottle, Anthony George, Dehan Glanz, Lisa Pound, Michael Webb, Ellen Cohn, Mitzi March Mogul**

Over the last year L.A. Architect has expanded editorial coverage, and advertising, and we are presently tackling distribution and mailing (yes, there have been problems with delivery and we apologize to all affected). Long overdue, however, is a redesign.

L.A. Architect is a test case for the feasibility of Desk Top Publishing. It is produced by one person (with volunteer assistance), who undertakes copy input, editing, typesetting, photographic reproduction and layout, on one Macintosh computer system. This involves a combination of sophisticated word-processing and graphic software packages, which can be difficult and time-consuming, but also permit cost-savings, flexibility and creative freedom.

Wishing to fully realize the potential of the system, I have, with generous assistance from talented graphic designer Robin Cottle, endeavored to create a fresh new face for L.A. Architect. Our intention was to achieve clarity, legibility, and structural rigor, as well as flexibility and a strong identity for a paper dealing with the unique design environment of Los Angeles.

While certain fundamentals have been laid down (see [Design Decisions Explained](#)), this is not seen as the definitive design, but rather a project in progress, for which comments and ideas are welcome. The design also serves the purpose of defining sections of the paper; this month we introduce two new regular features, complete with own logos: *Habitat*, celebrating an holistic approach to architecture, edited by Walter Scott Perry; and *Horrors*, a design critique, by Aaron Betsky. More will follow.

L.A. Architect cannot (for budgetary reasons, amongst others), and is not intended to be, a glossy design review perpetuating the star-system, but rather a low-cost, inclusive, news and reviews paper reflecting social/economic realities, as well as celebrating design, and catering to a broad architectural community. Ideas, contributions, news and assistance are always welcomed. So keep in touch with the editor at 213 380-5177.

FRANCES ANDERTON

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There is an underlying philosophical problem: over the years, bureaucrats and elected officials have shown an increasing tendency to make development approvals very discretionary. My own preference is to make development more an as-of-right process with strong, appropriate safeguards.

As people in neighborhoods saw undesirable, disruptive development patterns they asked, "How can we stop it?" and the answer was by making development more and more discretionary. I believe there is a better way. If we analyze development standards and ordinances we can define acceptable and desirable patterns of by-right development. We can simplify the process and reduce staff workload.

—Con Howe
Bill Christopher, AIA, gives his opinion on the troubled state of Planning in Los Angeles.

Farewell to Bill Luddy

Bill Luddy, Executive Director of the Carpenters/ Contractors Cooperation Committee, leaves the City Planning Commission this month to take a position on the board of the Metropolitan Water District. Bill's leadership guided the Commission through the fields of planning sworn on land mines and littered with the remains of past failures. His tenure produced breakthroughs such as the Multihand Specific Plan, the Ventura Boulevard Specific Plan and the Central City West Specific Plan, as well as the Hillside Ordinance.

I had the distinctive pleasure of serving with Bill on the Commission for several years and I am aware of just how much he will be missed.

An Architect draws all these plans
And thinks he'll build a better land
A better future for Mankind
But then he soon finds out in time
That no one really gives a damn
About his plans, or fellow Man.
-Carl Hall
Writer, Los Angeles

Rebuilding / Short Term

Post-Riot Los Angeles still faces a variety of serious planning and design challenges. To the outside world, the short term efforts to Rebuild seem to focus on the immediate issue of replacing one mini-mall for another without stepping back to determine why the past approach went up in flames. Hopes that a fresh look would derive new visions for the inner city appear to be dimming. The fervor over rebuilding the liquor stores is a classic case. On the one hand, the merchants are demanding reparations and the right to reconstruct, while the community is rebelling and fighting the apparent over-concentration. The City in the middle seems powerless, or chooses not to exercise its powers, by failing to address the grievances of either side.

Rebuilding / Long Term

The longer term Rebuild LA efforts to bring the likes of General Motors and Vons back to the inner city are laudable. Jobs are crucial to the survival of the inner city. But jobs alone will not save the riot-torn areas. As demonstrated by the 1965 riots, the early attempts to recruit employers will be undermined over time by the lack of complimentary community resources. Most Rebuild LA efforts seem to be geared to happen with minimal community outreach.

Typical of this viewpoint, Assemblyman Curtis Tucker, working with the support of officials of Rebuild LA, introduced legislation (AB194 & AB3325) in Sacramento which, in effect, would have declared fully half of the City blighted, including desirable areas untouched by violence. These bills would have subjected those areas of the City to the immediate imposition of CRA Project Areas with no questions asked and would have suspended the requirements of CEQA. Along the way, the provisions of redevelopment law requiring a local Project Area to monitor the actions of the CRA would also be sidestepped. All of this was to be done without the benefit of public debate: hardly the stuff of enlightened public policy.

Lack of Funds

A lack of sufficient funding for long term planning in this city sets up this dynamic. Without modern plans in place, the City is scrambling to meet the demands of the next century, while trying to cope with current problems. Given the recession, public sector budgets are exercises in deficit reduction at all levels of government. In this atmosphere, the fiscal debate between more street cops and more planners almost certainly produces more cops at the expense of the City’s ability to plan for anticipated conditions in the coming years, necessitating even more cops in future budget discussions.

Zucker Audit = $525,000,000

The Management Audit of the Planning Department done last year underlined the need to inject the department with a strong sense of design and re-orientation toward actual planning, as opposed to ritual case processing. Unfortunately, the audit placed a $15,000,000 price tag on that change of heart. Since that time, no one has come up with a convincing method of securing the funding to make this happen. Yet the riots underlined the fact that we must assess the City’s destiny as a visceral level. We must reinvent the city, rather than rebuild it.

Bernson Bond Issue

In response, Councilman Hal Bernson, Chair of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee of the City Council (PLUM), has proposed a revenue bond that would provide funds for the department to make the managerial changes advocated in the audit and fast-track a plan revision program. We need, however, more than that. Among other immediate problems, the City is facing a series of Warner-Ridge-type lawsuits which threaten to undermine a significant portion of the City’s zoning.

Long Range Planning Trust Fund

Hence, a Long Range Planning Trust Fund must be established to provide an on-going source of funds for the planning process. The people of the City must be convinced that a donation of $1.00 per parcel or acre of land per year to such a fund will help to insure the long-term value of their property. Such a fund would provide the resources to update the General Plan and the Community Plans of the City, making them recognizable blueprints for the future build-out of sustainable communities. AB1246 (Katzi) is the legislative mechanism being developed to make this program a reality.

Advanced Community Planning Program

The process which has been envisioned to implement this effort is an Advanced Community Planning Program that would allow the City to contract with consultant designers and planners to develop the individual community processes, tailored to local concerns. The overall coordination would be provided by a task force within the Department made up of contract employees outside the bounds of civil service. This mechanism would allow the director to mix outside experts with staff planners, in hopes of developing a cadre of planners dedicated to bringing the City to life through the implementation of design-oriented planning initiatives.
Sometimes It Seems as If Nobody Cares

While architects dream of the street for clients that only want what they see on TV and the city ignores whatever brilliant ideas designers might have for the reshaping of our complex landscape along more beautiful and socially responsible lines, the rest of the world goes along its merry way, building monstrosities and covering the Southland in sordid parcels of homes and till-up boxes garlanded only with graphics. Sometimes somebody does decide they want, uh, actually something, well, different; you know, original and provocative, and so they hire one of the big guns from the East Coast.

It's the same old story: a fight for love and beauty that doesn't even make it on to late late television, let alone network news. Why is it that architecture gets no respect in this (or most other) town? Let me just ask you:

1. The Climate/Traditions of Los Angeles, a.k.a. NIMBY Survival Space means walls, shade and water, not enclosure, structure and representation. From the mission to what Mike Davis calls the "make my day" architecture in which we all engage, this city is about private reality carved out of what is perceived as of an environment made inhospitable by the extinctions of our geographic or the social and physical refuse of our industrial engine. The niceties of good form often become irrelevant in this social context.

2. The Modernism Syndrome, a.k.a. The Tour De Swindle. It is perhaps a gross misapprehension of our natural resources to create conditions that last when we are powerless for that change, or if not powerless, at least impotent. We all move to the correct continental middle of life, building just stand in the way, especially if they are designed to look like house some- thing specific.

3. The Culture Industry, a.k.a. Get Me Rewrote. What we try to do functionally with buildings can be done much more easily with graphics, single projection, or, heaven preserve us, the kind of prepping we call interior design and space planning. Architecture then is just another medium of artistic expression to the age of Jesse Helms and "Upper Ginn." It can't even look naked. Even if it represents family values, almost nobody can afford them because our ways of making architecture take up so much money.

4. The Professional Dilemma, a.k.a. Nobody Loves Me. Let's face it: we just haven't managed to control the market on legally binding price gouging we want to use and lawyers have done. Do we want to? The AIA thinks so, but then we want to be the butt of countless low-rent types. Perhaps it's bet- ter to be the dapper, idealistic and starving artist who sells his wife to build his vision in the latest Adman film, currently leasing against a backdrop of models bought off the backs of those starved SCI-Arc students.

5. The Howard Rauck Syndrome, a.k.a. Father Knows Best. Our reaction to much of the above has been to preempt architecture as the realization of the good, the true, and the beautiful. Fancies that most people find ridiculous, ugly, and useless. Perhaps architecture is a valid form of investigation, but then as soon as it is built it becomes something that could have worked better if it had just served the client. However, what we think is good might just possibly be influenced by the fact that we are mostly male and mostly white, as well as mostly middle class (at least by aspira- tion.)

6. The Ethical Dilemma, a.k.a. You Can't Fix the People All The Time. So if we are a service profession and just need to learn how to provide the best, most honest service to our clients, who are our clients? The guy signing the check, the community in which we live, the ethical principles of the A.I.A. or the community defined by zoning and building codes? All of these clients make conflicting and morally exclusive demands on our work.

7. The Philosophical Dilemma, a.k.a. The Death of Architecture. In a world in which we have doubts about both the object and the subject, in which simulation, projection, and the pervasiveness of knowledge define our reality, what the hell are we trying to make buildings for? Architecture had a certain place in a society based on capitalist structures. What is to become of architecture in Postmodern society?

There are answers possible to each of these questions and there are actually some hopeful attempts in built form that have risen up out of the remains of Los Angeles in recent years.

Rather than just sit around and moan, the AIA/LA Design Committee proposes to show how architecture can re-imagine a better Los Angeles. Starting with a specific site that is the subject of a major planning study, the Pico-Union Neighborhood, the Committee proposes to create a design that shows how the infrastructure and forms of the area could be re-invented. Intended as a critical study of both the physical landscape and the social, economic and legal forces that define our building practices, this design will not accept all given conditions and rules, but we must figure out how our city could be transformed - even if it means rewriting the rules and our rules. The result will be a provocative design that will be presented at the 1994 National Convention, put down the street from the project, the design process will be open to all members of the Committee, which is, of course, open to all members of AIA/LA. Come to the next meeting.

Aaron Betsky, Co-Chair, LAIA Design Committee

I would argue that it is exactly the difficulties of making architecture that, if recognized, can allow us to make good buildings. The problem is that it is much easier to ignore these ques- tions and to make do by indulging in the kind of mediocrity built compromises that only make us look more useless and perhaps even evil. All of these issues have become a matter of intense dis- cussion in the recent meetings of the AIA/LA Design Committee.

I will be writing a monthly column, in which I will examine the built environment, whether created by architects or by the nameless others who are always to blame. You'll find the excuses listed here, one through seven. Write only if you come up with another one.-A.B.
Eco-Home: Living an Ideal

"I didn't start out thinking I was going to solve the world's problems," says Julia Russell, mother and patriot. She has launched an environmental movement short on cash and political clout, but long on clarity and commitment. Conceived during the drought of 1977, Russell's Eco-Home movement eventually became a reality in 1988, after a decade of trickle-down, me-first politics and attitudes that led to oil spills, medical waste washing up on beaches and Nimbyism regarding the treatment of urban garbage.

The idea of Eco-Home originated with a middle-class mother in Silver Lake, who no longer wanted to be part of the problem, but instead to attempt a solution, and to share the fruits of her work and discoveries with anyone who cares to listen and learn.

Russell started out by selling her car, replacing it with a large tricycle. With a rootstiller, she ploughed of her thirsty front lawn, planted drought-tolerant vegetation and installed a simple grey-water irrigation system. With a green thumb and hard work, Russell turned her small lot into a living laboratory of energy conservation and sustainability, complete with solar-powered heated and electrical systems. Almost single-handedly and without fanfare, she has created a working-class, low-budget biosphere, by using the basic principles of her Yankee upbringing: common sense, strength of character, and basic decency.

Russell's long-range goal is to develop the Eco-Home network. She wants to propagate the concept of Eco-Home and build a demonstration in every community in America, if possible. Russell has a growing library and cross-reference information network, and has started to reach out nationally with her own writing, quarterly newsletter which acts as a claxon call to all those who want to participate in the movement's network. In this upside-down election year, the notion of self-reliance as a political reality seems to be an idea whose time has come. This idea takes on greater meaning when one observes the growing line of curious people standing outside a wooden bungalow on Russell Avenue to hear a tall, gray-haired woman deliver a simple message: 'Don't ever think that one person doesn't make a difference.'

WALTER SCOTT PERRY

Cities should bloom, not just survive. The word "sustainability" is finding its way into common usage almost as quickly as "recycled" and "biodegradable" have but, perhaps even more than those other terms, it is often not fully understood. Sustainable Cities, Concepts and Strategies for Eco-City Development. (Edited by Bob Walter, Lois Arkin, and Richard Crevoshay) is a recently-published, wide-ranging book that clarifies the complex matrix of "sustainability" for lay persons and professional alike. Reviewed in next issue.

Unpave L.A.!

Environmentalists Join to Restore L.A.'s Watershed

It's no secret that the built environment has caused a lot of problems to living creatures in Los Angeles. The Westside Urban Forum invited representatives of "Unpave L.A.", a coalition of environmental groups and public officials, to discuss the issues regarding storm drainage, water reuse, and toxic reduction in a panel moderated by Dorothy Green.

A $400 million plan to add more concrete to the Los Angeles River, continuing the old approach to storm drain management which has given us toxic beaches and a concrete environment, was the main target of the panel. Lewis MacAdams, founder and director of Friends of the L.A. River, opposes the Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA) project which is proposed by the U.S. Army of Engineers and endorsed by the L.A. County Public Works. He noted that L.A. County is planning to budget $200 million to fund LACDA, with $200 million coming from the federal government.

Unpave L.A. proposes an integrated approach to flood control, including the capturing of storm water for re-use rather than sending this precious resource back to the ocean through miles of concrete, dragging toxic elements along its path. Andy Liptik of Treepeople commented that "We've got water, and we're throwing it away!" He suggested that we collect water as much as possible, using plants for natural filtration and irrigation instead of concrete which costs hundreds of millions of dollars.

Adi Lieberman of Heal the Bay said that California is the nation's leader in coastal pollution. Heal the Bay has been working with the City of Santa Monica on a Model Land-Use Ordinance which will provide architects and home builders with guidelines to reduce both the volume and toxicity of urban runoff.

Chuck Ellis, representing the City of Los Angeles as the Public Information Director of the city's Storm Water Division of Public Works, appeared to be in agreement with the problems and solutions of the environmental activists. He addressed city regulations regarding water run-off from industrial properties, and the variation of soils in different areas of the city. He also mentioned a controversial plan to build a freshwater harbor in Belmount Heights.

Robert Harris, FAIA agreed with the panellists and stressed the benefits of green space and the amenities of regional parks to all communities along the L.A. River. He emphasized that regional parks as part of the flood system could be an antidote to the Army Corps of Engineers raising the concrete river walls.

Call 310/370-4511 for information about Unpave L.A., or call Heal the Bay at 310/394-4552 for information regarding the model land-use ordinance.

ELLIE CORN
Mitzi March Mogul responds...

would not have been fast enough nor efficient enough to handle the current volume of people. We should have studied a decade ago and the reasons why we didn't are another story entirely, but now we have not to make decisions which will affect the future of the city.

Let's study the Expo Light Rail. I do emphasize that while I support the concept of mass transit, each situation is different and must be explored thoroughly. Mass transit at all costs will not be advantageous for this city.

First of all, I did not take "sides" on this issue. I do believe that light rail is one answer to a mass transportation scheme, and I do believe that Expo is one route which should be used. You suggest Santa Monica or Wilshire Blvd. as alternate routes; rather they should be additional routes. The original rails along Expo Blvd. were laid for freight cars (lots of noise) before there were houses there. In fact, the railroad developed in part because the railroad was there.

Historically, communities develop in proximity to transportation access: waterways, railroad, even major highways. (When traffic was routed to the new interstate highways, the communities of Rancho Park, Cheviot Hills, etc. while pleasant and suburban feeling, can hardly be considered historic, so this is not an issue of preservation. In the May issue of LA Architect I also discussed the proposed six and a half mile freeway extension through South Pasadena, to which I am firmly opposed. In South Pasadena, considerable amounts of housing, historic and otherwise, would be lost. To my knowledge, the Expo Light Rail would not destroy housing stock.

You suggested that travel time from Expo Park to Santa Monica currently is 40 minutes. At what time of day would that be? 2:00 A.M. maybe, but not peak hours.

There are several ways of interpreting the facts, and both sides manipulate numbers to prove their points. Friends of the Expo Point of View also to pull their statistics out of thin air. The real point is, right now, no decisions have been made. It is still in the preliminary phase. Even Culver City has not yet made a decision to support it or not. They have asked LACRT to look into the issue of ridership demand, and they have asked the agency to study locations for their stations within Culver City. The issue of ridership demand is also subject. LACRT actually has estimated 50,000 daily riders. They count each time someone boards — it may be the same person on a return trip. The methods and procedures used is the same for the freeway. You quoted the projected rider demand, but not the Santa Monica statistics. The average daily trips on the Santa Monica Freeway between Lincoln and 270,000 trips is between 200,000 and 200,000. That figure is much higher.

At the junction, where cars are crossing back and forth between freeways, these are the latest available 1991 statistics, so where you get a number like 450,000, it is a mystery.

Your assertion that electric buses have been proven appropriate also is a non sequitur. Since Los Angeles does not have electric buses, there is no way to accurately prove or disprove their desirability. They may have been proven elsewhere, but do have subways (which do not support in Los Angeles), monorails, trolleys and rail. Electric trolleys are slower, with less ridership capacity, are more maneuverable. A planned spur from the Blue Line, from Washington down to Exposition Park, would connect directly to a light rail line on Exposition Boulevard. To have trolleys at that point would require a transfer, involving more time and inconvenience. It is believed that those things would dissuade people from using the system.

Your narrow-mindedness is revealed in an early sentence, "...that citizens from another neighborhood can get to the beach area...". I haven't forbid that citizens from another community should want to take the shortest possible route through "your" neighborhood (you only ever bought the house, not the entire surrounding area); 2. Did it ever occur to you that folks may want to travel to or from east or west points mid-city and the beach? I stand by my statement regarding racism. I have attended several of the public meetings and witnessed the behaviors and remarks which I reported in the May issue. As a resident of Central Los Angeles, I resent the suggestion that either I or my neighbors would want to burgle homes on the Westside, or would be so stupid as to use public transportation to do it.

Although I am a proponent of historic preservation, I do not view this past through rose-colored glasses. Nostalgia is great, but is only a lament. It is also an argument for preserving architecture without sentimentalism. I believe that preservation and development are not mutually exclusive, rather when they co-exist, the best of both is achieved. I have no desire to live in the past. I want to see my city grow and be strong and beautiful.

Your "primary objections" are unrealistic. This is a city, and rapidly growing. Increasing noise and traffic congestion come with the territory, and no one is exempt. Peace and quiet are a luxury to be had. But there are better arguments for preserving architecture than sentimentalism. I believe that preservation and development are not mutually exclusive, rather when they co-exist, the best of both is achieved. I have no desire to live in the past.

I want to see my city grow and be strong and beautiful.

DAVID BOUCHARD
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PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS
Galaxy defended. NIMBY's V Public Transport

From Mitchell E. Sawasy:
In order to establish credibility, I believe that one must work from the basis of fact. This letter should help to clarify the credits of "Love It Or Loathe It: Ghostly Galaxy" (July/August 1992). Although I do not totally disagree with Mr. Betsky's observations, I do feel that the developers have, in fact, exhibited a great deal of courage in developing the project. Despite the head lock of CRA, the flight of other "national" developers of other "Hollywood Projects," and the economy, they have followed through with their commitment. The developers have risked much -- and could gain much -- on the Hollywood Galaxy project. We see very little evidence of other sources coming to the plate to help renew "Hollywood." Had our firm been responsible for the design of Hollywood Galaxy, I'm sure the project would not have been realized as we see it today. But we were not the Design Architect. In fact, Rothenberg Sawasy Architects (RSA) did not become involved in the project until after the permit was issued. After extensive review and input from the CRA, the Design Architects -- Maxwell Stannum Christenson & Vidal -- received approvals to build the project. My firm's responsibility consisted of clarifying the construction documents for bidding purposes and participating in the construction process as Coordinating Architect. I hope next time that Mr. Betsky hands out the accolades to those who deserve them most.

Mitchell E. Sawasy AIA, Principal, Rothenberg Sawasy Architects, Inc.

To Mitzi March Mogul from Steve Kunin:
Your section "NIMBY'S v Public Transport" in your column "Preservation Round-up" in the May 1992 edition of the L.A. Architect is so entirely biased, misinformed, and misleading that a public retraction and explanation of your misrepresentation should be issued immediately. I am still trying to understand how a preservationist such as yourself could take sides with a public agency (the Los Angeles Transportation Commission) which is prevented from running a railroad through a number of single-family neighborhoods and by doing so, will destroy those neighborhoods. Contrary to your opinion, it is homeowner's groups such as ours which are trying to preserve the quality of life which is slowly slipping away in this city. Destroying a neighborhood so that citizens from another neighborhood can get to the "beach area" is the most ridiculous and ill-informed concept of city planning and preservation of which I have ever heard. Contrary to your unfounded accusations, racism and fear are not facts in our opposition to the proposed route through our neighborhoods. Reasonable and sensible transportation engineering and planning issues are facts in our opposition. Our primary objections are inappropriate noise levels, additional traffic congestion with considerable north-south automobile traffic, and inadequate ridership support within walking distance of proposed stations to justify cost. The homeowners in the Rancho Park and Cheviot Hills areas have had reason to become informed. We know that this proposal would destroy the quality of life along the right-of-way due to excessive noise levels; it has happened to residential neighborhoods in Sacramento and Long Beach. Consider: The Exposition Boulevard rail line is estimated to cost over 500 million dollars without any grade separations. It will cost one billion dollars if it is put underground to avoid congestion with automobile traffic from Washington Boulevard to I-405. Total cost for a trolley bus route is 200 million dollars (Exposition ROW Preliminary Planning Study.)

The travel time from Exposition Park to 17th street in Santa Monica by rail transit is estimated at 30 minutes. This time does not include travel time to the Exposition Park Station or time from the 17th Street to the beach. Current travel time by automobile from Exposition Park to the beach on I-10 is 40 minutes (Exposition ROW Prelim. Study.)

In order to boost ridership on the existing Long Beach line, parallel passenger-preferred bus routes have been curtailed. The Rapid Transit District has stated publicly that rail routes and bus routes serve different needs and preferences in the transportation system. That is to say that one system does not and cannot supplant the other (R. Gebhart, Feb. 18, 1992.) In order to provide rider safety on the blue line, the Los Angeles Sheriff Deputies patrol the right-of-way and ride on selected trains. The Culver City Council is not supporting the use of the ROW for rail transit and in fact has requested that the LACTC study alternate routes where the Exposition Boulevard ROW traverses the city boundary. Although patronage demand studies have not been made by LACTC, they estimate a projected demand of 25,000 one-way daily trips by the year 2010. The Santa Monica Freeway, which approximately parallels the Exposition Boulevard ROW currently handles over 450,000 daily trips. At 1.2 riders per car, that is 540,000 people who use the freeway every day. Electric busses have proven to be the most economical and environmentally-appropriate means of public transportation for multi-core cities such as Los Angeles (Mel Weber, UC Berkeley, and Martin Wachs, UCLA.) Over half a million people currently traverse our neighborhood on the existing streets and freeways every day. We are familiar with public transportation and are not afraid of it. However, we believe that public transportation funds should be spent wisely and sensibly along corridors and routes which serve the greatest good. The Exposition Corridor right-of-way traverses a great number of single-family neighborhoods of very low density. There are many other corridors such as Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards which are obviously far better suited to support the ridership demands, capital and operating costs of rail transportation. Instead of your knee-jerk "rail transportation is good" attitude, I suggest that you and David Saffer, whom you quote, become familiar with the facts before espousing opinions in architectural journals.

Steve Kunin, President, Westwood Gardens Civic Association

Author's response
Those of us who are native to Los Angeles (admittedly in the minority) remember the trolleys and busses. It was an excellent system. Those of us who are native to Los Angeles (admittedly in the minority) remember the trolleys and busses. It was an excellent system. Those of us who are native to Los Angeles (admittedly in the minority) remember the trolleys and busses. It was an excellent system.

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University’s KEMI television station in Los Angeles, California. Andongoul AI\ has been designated by the clients and the community for its dedication to providing quality services and for its commitment to maintaining high ethical standards in all aspects of its work.

The Inland Valley Development Agency, a joint powers agency of local governments in San Bernardino County, has selected Johnson Fain & Pereira Associates to create a master plan for a 400-acre portion of the Norton Air Force Base. The 50-year-old military base is scheduled for closing in 1996, and is expected to be converted to commercial uses.

In the West, the Mandalay Group has selected Johnson Fain & Pereira Associates to create a master plan for a 400-acre portion of the Norton Air Force Base. The 50-year-old military base is scheduled for closing in 1996, and is expected to be converted to commercial uses.

In the South Pacific Basin, the Kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands has selected Johnson Fain & Pereira Associates to create a master plan for a 400-acre portion of the Norton Air Force Base. The 50-year-old military base is scheduled for closing in 1996, and is expected to be converted to commercial uses.

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The Pacific Design Center on Thursday evening, October 29, 1992 from 5:30 until 7:00 p.m. Cost is $10.00 for Chapter members, $15.00 for non-members. Call Bernie Althin at 310 204-3790 or the Chapter office at 213 380-4595 for reservations (by September 25).}

Effective Negotiating Seminar
In association with IFMA (International Facility Management Association), the PDC and IEEE, the Professional Practice Committee of AIA/LA is planning a one-day seminar on effective negotiating skills on Saturday, November 7, 1992 at the PDC. Call Shideh Kaeiir of IFMA at 310 162-4805 for reservations and further information.

Southern California Edison Programs for Energy Efficiency
At the September meeting of the Professional Practice Committee, Walter Jones of Southern California Edison will speak on the utility company’s currently available programs for new construction and retrofit of commercial, industrial and residential buildings. Learn how to help clients evaluate how to take advantage of lower utility rate schedules by specifying or converting from standard to energy-efficient equipment. The meeting will take place on Thursday, September 24 at the Chapter office, from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. Call Bernie Althin at 310 204/2190, Don Morales at 310 498-5616, or the Chapter office for information.

New Members

Professional Affiliates
As members of the Professional Affiliates committee within your organization, we are creating a sounding board designed to bring the latest techniques and technologies to you and expose the many issues that affect your performance in the marketplace. In the next few months we will be very active in the AIA as we sponsor lectures, seminars, and speakers on subjects that matter to chapter members. Our goal is to provide information and become a reliable resource to the AIA BE ON THE LOOKOUT for future events. Contact Nicki Solomon at 213 380-4595.

Membership News
On Monday, July 27, the L.A. Chapter hosted a party commemorating our 90th birthday, and welcoming new members to the chapter. The chapter office was transformed into a festive setting, complete with a jazz band and guests turned up in force. Tables were set up buffet-style in the conference room, with fresh fruits and vegetables meticulously laid out on trays by the UPSTAGE CAFE. In addition, QUIZNO'S generously provided an array of cold cuts and cheeses placed among exquisite floral arrangements from ARC FLOWERS AND GIFTS.

Competition and Awards
Competition
Accessible Housing Design Competition
Architects, builders, and consumers have until October 2 to register for a nationwide competition for accessible housing design. Sponsored by Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, the competition focuses on low-cost modifications to living areas such as kitchens and baths for the physically handicapped. For more information and registration, call Jean Barrett Robertson at 401 751-5567, ext. 27.

Award
Applications are now being invited for the Rudy Brunner Award, a non-tradional award that identifies and celebrates the difficult process of creating excellence in the urban environment. The award is given every two years by the Rudy Brunner Foundation to developments which demonstrate the successful reconciliation of competing financial, visual, and social factors in the design process. Applicants are not expected to conform to a preconceived criteria of excellence, but rather to describe the product, process, and values, that most concretely demonstrated the success of their project, diverse definitions of a quality built-environment are sought. The projects to be assessed are not constrained by scale or time of completion. However, projects should have been in construction long enough to demonstrate success. Projects of any size will be considered as long as they make a contribution to the urban environment. The Selection Committee (which includes, among others, an ex-mayor and architect Harvey B. Gantt and Angeloene Denise Fairchild of Local Initiative Support Corp.) is especially interested in innovation in design, modification of standard processes, and innovation of new participants in the effort to revitalize our cities.

People and Projects

Selected:
Robisch Robisch & Balbiana Inc., the architect of the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Cancer Center and Betty Weiland Ambulatory Surgery Center at Northridge Hospital Medical Center. The complex broke ground in August. The 18,500-square-foot complex is to contain five surgery operating rooms, patient stations for treatment, a day-hospital treatment facility, radiation therapy service, a new 25-minute electron-volt linear accelerator, a data center, a laser room, four operating rooms and waiting and examination area.

ADM Architects has been selected for

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Which Way AIA?

At the 1991 Convention in Washington, AIA broke with tradition and elected its first educator as President and first woman as President-Elect. At the same time, it resolved to recast itself embracing architects in government, corporate practice, military, education, manufacturing, along with those in traditional practice. The Board of Directors meeting and the Convention '92 that followed in Boston this year have proven to be mechanisms for accelerated change. The Board has acted decisively to support Continuing Education as a requirement for membership in the Institute. A pilot program will begin in January, 1993 and full compliance will be required by January, 1996 and thereafter. This is so that members of the Institute can maintain higher standards than that of their colleagues.

The Board acted unanimously to support a motion which supports social, cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity within the profession and the Institute.

The Board strongly supported the concept of the Institute taking a leadership role in establishing an Urban Agenda for America. Acknowledging that architects and staff can and must become involved in improving the urban condition not only by designing buildings but by crafting legislation, public policy, and consensus among residents that their cities can fulfill the promise that has somehow eluded us.

The Convention produced resolutions and positive responses to all these issues from the floor, as well as one addressing AIA's policy for a sustainable environment. Beyond this, the Board had taken action to support the recommendations of the Service Delivery Task Force which, with the issues mentioned above, will measurably affect interaction between the Institute and the membership, such that AIA shall evolve into an organization which is substantially more accessible, accountable, essential, and profoundly conscientious.

RUDAT implementation, and fundraising to assist us in whatever way they can in this initial program and on the long term. At present, our intention is to facilitate four workshops in separate but defined cultural zones so as to assist communities in expressing their own issues and goals, and translating those into visions for the future of their communities.

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Committees

Cadd

The CADD Committee will present a program on INTERGRAPH, one of the most complete turn-key CAD solutions for architectural design, visualization, and drafting. Presented by Alex Masum and Scott Kramer, from Intelligent CAD Integration, it will take place at Gruen Associates, 6330 San Vicente Blvd, LA 90048. Call the Chapter Office at 213 380 4595 or Matt at 310 798 2700.

Professional Practice

Alternate Dispute Resolution

The Professional Practice Committee, in conjunction with the Mediation Institute, will host a panel discussion on mediation on October 29, 1992. Participants will represent design and legal professionals who have had first-hand experience in mediated settlements of disputes common to the architectural field. The meeting will take place at the Blue Auditorium of the Convention Center in Chicago.

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Max Factor Threatened

The Max Factor building, which houses the Max Factor Makeup Museum, is on the verge of closure. The owner, Proctor & Gamble, has agreed to keep the museum open till September 1st and has determined to eventually donate the museum artifacts to a proposed Hollywood Entertainment Museum. An RFP has been issued to keep the museum open until that time (est. Fall, 1995) and may include other uses within the space. The retail make-up outlet has already been closed and will not re-open.

A combination of three structures, the first of which was erected about 1915, the building was unified in 1935 by S. Charles Lee, with an Art Deco/Regency Revival facade. Max Factor was a pioneer in make-up that looked natural on film, designed to work well under the hot lights with star's individual skin tones. The building represents elegance and theatricality, a symbol of all that Hollywood stood for.

Should the museum close, the future of Hollywood revitalization, no one has made Historic Preservation a focal point. Revitalization has a lot to do with marketing and public relations, and time is often spent on these projects creating an image. Hollywood comes complete with its own handle, but few are capitalizing on it. Instead, millions are spent on mega projects such as the Hollywood Galaxy, while the real Hollywood icons are left to Fate. Proctor & Gamble, whose name is so inextricably linked to another noteworthy structure, Pasadena's Gamble House, are losing the boat, too. Making a commitment to the Max Factor Building could go a long way toward an image of elegance, refinement, and a respect for the best in American ingenuity and heritage, presumably all things for which their products stand.

Mitz1 March Mogul

is one of the best buildings in Hollywood, National Register eligible and, though nominated in 1980 for Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument status, the nomination was stall ed at the request of the former council member for the district. Proctor & Gamble has reserved the right to reject "any and all offers at its sole discretion." Although they state that factors other than economics will be taken into consideration, there is no guarantee that they will select any of the submitted proposals, thus leaving the building in limbo.

It seems strange that in all the talk about Hollywood revitalization, no one has made the County's reference source for architects" or consider the alternatives that "the County departments should take over this function, or a new policy utilizing the AEB with departments should be established."

This board of committed professionals should be used to the best of its ability, especially since the costs to the taxpayers is minimized by board members' volunteer service. Equitable distribution of business must be promoted for design firms now struggling for work in our county.

Architects and other interested professionals should support the equal distribution of archi netical contracts throughout firms in the County by encouraging the Board of Supervisors to maintain the Architectural Evaluation Board with a new policy mandating that the County adhere to its recommendations.

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Coalition Goes To Work

The Design Professionals Coalition agreed on August 7 to assist four Los Angeles neighborhoods create their own development plans. The agreement signals an increasingly direct role in community affairs by the Coalition, a group of over 15 design organizations including the Chapter, NOMA and AIAE. Formed shortly after the Los Angeles riots, the Coalition is intended to connect design professionals with efforts to rebuild the city. Neighborhoods requesting assistance include Crenshaw, Vernon-Slauson, Vernon Central and Hoover-Adams. "The Coalition will be a resource for information and a connection to further resources for these areas," said Michael Pride Wells, Coalition co-chair. The organization plans to assist neighborhood-based planning efforts, by training local residents to gather information and conduct community meetings.

According to Wells, the Coalition is also planning a monthly series of public design charrettes. Tentatively scheduled for October is a charrette for the design of "scatter-site" housing in South Central Los Angeles. The organization has approached the Chapter and the city’s Housing Preservation and Production Dept. to co-sponsor the event. The Coalition is also considering the provision of design professionals to rebuild the city. Neighborhoods requesting assistance include Crenshaw, Vernon-Slauson, Vernon Central and Hoover-Adams. "The Coalition will be a resource for information and a connection to further resources for these areas," said Michael Pride Wells, Coalition co-chair. The organization plans to assist neighborhood-based planning efforts, by training local residents to gather information and conduct community meetings.

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Hillside Ordinance Approved

The Los Angeles City Council approved the long-debated Hillside Ordinance in July, effectively reducing the size of most new construction and remodeling in the city’s hilly areas. The Chapter had opposed the version of the ordinance which finally won approval. Prior to the vote, Chapter President Richard Appel wrote Councilman Marvin Braude that the ordinance would be "an environmental, architectural and administrative nightmare. We are convinced, after extensive testing of the requirements, that this version will encourage architecture that will be a blight on the hillsides." Appel added that the ordinance "will require that almost every permit application seek variances or hardship exemption in order that even reasonable houses can be constructed."

Under the approved version of the ordinance, owners of a lot with a 50-foot frontage on a 50-degree slope, would allow a house no larger than 2,400 square feet. Owners of a 50-foot frontage on a 67-degree slope can build only 2,000 square feet. "The resulting building would be a box with a flat roof," said Bruce Sternberg, chairman of the Hillside Ordinance Task Force.

The ordinance sets a 36-foot height limit on most sites and 45-foot limit on houses built on slopes of greater than 67 degrees. Houses on standard lots can cover no more than 40 percent of the buildable area. Additional parking spaces are required for each 1,000 square feet above 2,400 square feet of new or remodeled residential construction.

According to Sternberg, the building formula is a purely political ordinance that absolutely disregarded what the design community, the building community, and even the Hillside Federation had wanted. The federation, a powerful homeowner’s lobby, had backed the AIA version of the ordinance.

Coliseum Expansion Killed

The planned expansion of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum has been killed, as a result of a failure by the Coliseum’s private manager to sell luxury seats. The announcement came shortly after developer Wayne Ratkovich completed work on a proposal to enlarge and renovate the historic stadium.

The developer had recommended a scaled-down expansion plan for the historic structure, which has been the subject of expansion plans for nearly 20 years. In December, Spectacor, a private company which operates the publicly owned stadium, announced a $240 million expansion plan, including the addition of 15,000 club seats and 282 luxury suites. Spectacor was unable to find lenders for the project.

In April, Spectacor hired Ratkovich, best known for historic renovation projects in Los Angeles, to reformulate the expansion plans. Ratkovich’s $116 million plan called for only 4,000 club seats and 150 luxury suites. The developer also devised an ingenious construction schedule, with work occurring on the football season. Ratkovich envisioned work starting next year. In August, however, Spectacor management announced that renovation work had been put on hold indefinitely.

Critic Turns Actor

Sam Hall Kaplan has found a way to supplement his income during the recession—by becoming a television actor. Kaplan, the former architectural critic of the Los Angeles Times and currently a vice president of Janss Corp., started his new career in the classic Hollywood way: he was spotted by a talent agency. "I was hired to supervise the building of sand castles for a sequence of ‘Beverly Hills 90210,’ and they asked me to play a judge for sand-castle contest."

His debut aired on August 20. Shortly after filming, agents approached the bearded Kaplan, whose barbs have lodged deeply into the egos of many architects, to do screen tests for both "L.A. Law" and "Civil Wars." Kaplan has already found himself typecast, however. In both screen tests, he is playing a courtroom judge. "I’ve gone from critic to judge. Not a very great distance," says Kaplan.

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Top left: 489 South Robertson Boulevard: remodel of a 2-storey office building for Megadrive, by Michael Carapetian, (with assistance from Danny Song Koo, Mark Lee). Photo: Peter Carapetian

Below: Sam Hall Kaplan

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