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January 1996
January

All meetings will be held in the PDC Blue Board Room, unless otherwise noted. * Contact the Office at 310.785.1807 to verify meetings and locations.

Thursday, Jan. 4
6:30 p.m. - Urban Design

Monday, Jan. 8
12:00 p.m. - LA Architect
ExCom, Chapter Office
5:30 p.m. - Interior Design
Auction *

Tuesday, Jan. 9
6:30 p.m. - Associates

Wednesday, Jan. 10
6:00 p.m. - AFLA

Thursday, Jan. 11
5:15 p.m. - Coles, Chapter Office

Saturday, Jan. 13
6:00 p.m. - AIA/LA Installation
(See "1996 Installation", page 1, for details)

Monday, Jan. 15
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
Office closed

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The Art in the Workplace Committee of the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce (LAJCC) presents an exhibition of drawings and models by Frederick Fisher & Partners, Architects. Fisher, who also served as visiting professor at the Harvard's Graduate School of Design, is twice named in Architectural Digest magazine's "The AD 100 Architects." Fisher will speak on the subject of art in the workplace as well as sign copies of his new monograph, Frederick Fisher at an open reception on Tuesday, January 16 at 5:30 at the lobby of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce building, 350 S. Rixel in Los Angeles. The exhibit runs from January 9 - February 2 in the LAJCC office adjacent to the lobby. For additional information, contact Bruce Schaf at (818) 551-7282.

Art in the Workplace: Frederick Fisher Exhibit

SAVE THE DATE
Masters of Architecture

AIA/LA and Los Angeles County Museum of Art present the Masters of Architecture Lecture series the Spring at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Featured speakers include Pasos Kiurlinnen, RIBA, AIA, Pierre Konig, FAIA, Peter Eisenman, FAIA, and John M. Johansen, FAIA. Tours Mayne kicks off the series with the first lecture set for February, 1996, 6:30 p.m. at the Museum's Bing Theatre, 5905 Wilshire Boulevard. Tickets are available for the individual lectures or for the complete series. For more information, call LACMA Ticket sales, (213) 857-6010.

Architecture and Culture on Central Ave.
The Society of Architectural Historians, Southern California Chapter (SAH/SCC), the National Organization for Minority Architects, Los Angeles (NOMA LA), and the Los Angeles Conservancy are joining forces to present "Avenues, Arts and Architecture of South Central Los Angeles." Originally organized by Ron Lewis and the Los Angeles Conservancy, this bus tour gives a detailed history of the architectural and cultural significance of this community starting from the Biddy Mason Wall and Park downtown and winds south to include projects such as the Dunbar Hotel by Paul R. Williams and recent mixed-use projects by Michelle Pride-Wells, AIA of re: Architecture. The Central Avenue Symposium, held in conjunction with the bus tour will highlight the development of Central Ave. from its heyday to the present.

The Central Avenue Symposium is scheduled for Sunday, February 4, 1996 at 2:00 p.m. at the Dunbar Hotel. ($10.00, $5.00 members.) The Avenues, Arts and Architecture bus tour will take place Sunday, February 11, 1995 departing at 10:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m. ($40.00, $30.00 members.) For information call SAH/SCC at (800) 9-SAH-SCC.

Classifieds

The City of Montebello
Park is seeking candidates for three vacancies on the Design Review Board. Candidates must be either architects, urban planners, civil engineers, landscape architects or residents of the city, or a person operating a business in the city. For applications, call the City Clerk's office at (818) 307-1359.

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Feb. 28 Lighting and Controls for Daylight Harvesting
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President: Marc Schiller, Professor, University of Southern California
Time: 1 - 4 P.M.
few cities in Southern California can boast of their redevelopment and urban planning programs like Culver City. Culver City takes seriously the commitment to community involvement and has made it work. According to Miriam Mack, Redevelopment Administrator of the Culver City Redevelopment Agency, Culver City has a population of approximately 40,000 residents who are culturally diverse, well educated, politically aware and proud of their community. These community members aren’t timid about participating in the process of government, including redevelopment. Deborah L. Rich, Deputy Community Development Director, admits that at times, the participation is stifling, but neither Rich nor the City harbor any desire to restrict the community’s access to the process. As Mack stated, “In a city this size, everyone is accessible.”

Culver City’s planning and redevelopment projects aren’t timid either. They recently completed a new shopping center which is home to Circuit City and Office Depot as well as a Buick dealership on the formerly underutilized “Kite Site” at Sepulveda Blvd. and Slauson Ave. Across from this site, a large residential community has been built. Further up Sepulveda Blvd. at Jefferson Blvd., portions of the old Studio Drive-in movie theater have been

claimed by the City to redirect and improve the traffic flow through this busy retail development. Further still on Jefferson Blvd., is the much touted Hayden Track, home of the marriage of Eric Owen Moss, architect and Samitaur Constructors, developers, whose partnership is responsible for projects that have come to be synonymous with Culver City Redevelopment.

Of the many planning projects throughout the city, Downtown is by far the most ambitious undertaking for the sheer concentration of events, including new construction, historic renovation, public art, streetscapes, and community partnership that are transforming a ho-hum cluster of disparate and aging buildings into a vibrant pedestrian community.

In 1991, members of the Redevelopment Agency Board, RDA, City Staff, and more than 100 residents participated in a charrette to determine a vision for the downtown area that included economic development, land use and design. The charrette confirmed that the downtown area was suffering from visual blight, and lack of a focal point, built or implied. Rich explained that prior to the charrette, sites outside of the downtown area were being considered for the location of the new City Hall, a move that would certainly have undermined any attempt to unify the area. Lack of adequate parking for shop patrons stifled business growth.

Washington and Culver Boulevards, which intersected to create an "X" reminiscent of the grandeur of Manhattan’s Times Square, were much wider than necessary to handle traffic flow and were not only confusing, but were sacrificing pedestrian sidewalks as well.

The findings of the charrette expressed a desire to promote pedestrian traffic, not to the extent of a Universal CityWalk or Third Street Promenade, but comparable to the carefree city centers of the past. This modern "Mayberry" would have outdoor plazas with public art, outdoor dining, green spaces and could support open-air markets and specialty shops. Coincidentally, in 1990 Sony Pictures bought the Culver Studios, MGM Studios and Filmland properties with an interest in similarly redeveloping the aging city and began its own beautification and construction program in concert with the city’s.

Culver City was once home to cinematic giants such as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Cecil B. DeMille and Desilu Productions, which produced such films as Ben Hur, Gone With the Wind, and the Wizard of Oz. After World War II, Culver City was often commissioned public art pieces is a fitting testament that Culver City’s commitment to planning and community involvement has accomplished its goals. RDM

BOOK REVIEWS

Frederick Fisher
(Alam International, 1996)
Reviewed by Michael Webb

Clarity, modesty, and sincerity are among the distinguishing characteristics of Fisher's work over the past 15 years, and they are wellmatched by this monograph. His galleries (notably for the Eli Broad Foundation in Santa Monica, and the LA Louver in Los Angeles) are noted for their contemporary, minimalist architecture and their ability to focus attention on the art. Fisher's mastery of light and space is demonstrated in his sensitive handling of natural and artificial light. His interiors are often complex, with multiple levels and an emphasis on creating spaces that are open and inviting. Fisher's work is characterized by a strong sense of composition and a thoughtful approach to materials and craftsmanship. The monograph provides an excellent introduction to Fisher's work and is a valuable resource for architects and art lovers alike.

Toyo Ito
Reviewed by Michael Webb

Ito is one of Japan's most influential architects, known for his unique approach to architecture that blends traditional Japanese aesthetics with modern design. His work is characterized by a strong sense of spatial organization, a focus on natural light, and a preference for traditional materials such as wood and concrete. Ito's designs are often characterized by a strong sense of rhythm and movement, with a focus on creating spaces that are both functional and visually appealing. The monograph provides a comprehensive overview of Ito's work, including his most significant projects and a detailed analysis of his design philosophy. It is a valuable resource for architects and design students alike.

Letter from the Editor

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the MACC workshop with Brad Burton, Real Estate Editor for the Los Angeles Business Journal and Aaron Curtis, Staff Writer for the Los Angeles Times. I noted that the three presentations represented three potentially distinct audiences. The Times, whose articles on architecture and design may appear in any section of the newspaper, gives its columnists and reviewers a lot of freedom to write whatever they wish. The architects, on the other hand, are typically interested in lengthy, architectural theories. Brad Burton commented that his readers are generally business people and that it is difficult for them to relate to the business community, particularly the development end. Both papers do a good job of presenting architectural topics to diverse groups.

On behalf of the LA Architect Editorial Board, I would like to express our gratitude to the architects, builders, and designers who have contributed to this issue. We are committed to showcasing the best in Southern California architecture as well as examining stimulating topics that affect and reflect the field. We are proud to have been able to feature some of the most significant projects in the region, and we hope that this issue will continue to inspire and inform our readers.

Sincerely,

ROCHELLE OYKHT MILES
(310) 785-1833, MGMT.

Partial Editorial Calendar for 1996

February:
Changes in Health Care

March:
WestVista/Interiors

April:
Readers' Opinions on
Affirmative Action
Is it or isn't it?

May:
Entertainment
Architecture

June:
The New Museums

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Community Planning in Asia

The Pacific Rim is certain to remain the global center of economic growth for the next decade. Private enterprise is optimistic about the future, and governments within the region are generally pro-growth and pro business. The region's growing political stability, entrepreneurial leadership, plentiful labor force of intelligent, industrious and inexpensive workers, influx of foreign investment and an emerging middle class population base are all helping to drive the economic boom.

Despite the varied colonial pasts of many Asian countries, their developmental patterns, in many respects, closely mirror those of the United States. While new development initially occurred within major metropolitan areas, attention has now shifted to new suburban and satellite communities. These planned new developments are seen both as the solution to overly congested cities and as an alternative, affordable housing option for a growing middle class market. The governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have recently focused on planned satellite communities in an effort to help check the uncontrolled growth that threatens the quality of life in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. Malaysia is so committed to the effort that officials are planning to relocate the national government to the new satellite community Putrajaya—located between Kuala Lumpur and the proposed international airport.

Although satellite communities have become a part of government policy throughout Asia, in most instances their implementation is left to the private sector. As with any business venture, economic success is central to the private enterprise partnerships that are behind developments ranging from major land reclamation projects in Japan and the Philippines to multi-use integrated developments in China. And, while environmental concerns may be voiced, sustainable development in most areas equates to a balance between economics and the environment. Developers place the greatest emphasis on a compelling development concept that also has a workable budget and reasonable operational costs. In contrast to the American approach which typically follows a logical sequential process, Asian developers tend to look at the "big picture" first-visualizing the design product up front, prior to developing a plan for implementation. They also typically request realistic finished renderings in early design phases as well as the 3D CADD fly throughs made possible by today's computer technology.

Although Asian nations have a different sense of urban scale and density, many developers welcome the introduction of Western planning concepts and ideas tailored to local conditions. Part of this appeal is due to the American lifestyle as romanticized in television and film, and part to the fact that a foreign architect brings a level of expertise that lends stature to a project. This presents American firms with the opportunity to play an integral part in the development of complex urban design projects and planned communities that will serve rapidly urbanizing populations for decades to come.

Within the Asian region, there remains a strong desire for freshness and designs that offer something new. With economic maturity, we are also seeing a rise in nationalism that translates in a design sense to regionalism. The sources of this regionalism may come from an appropriate design response to climate, available building materials and technology, and social-cultural factors that deal with lifestyle—and even superstitions exemplified by feng shui.

With 3.4 billion people, accounting for 60% of the world's population, Asia is a dynamic market with a desire to improve both quality of life and modern stature. The strong link that many U.S. architectural/planning firms have forged with clients within the region offers the opportunity to expand our own cultural horizon and experiences—to recognize and work with cultural differences, and to gain knowledge in a positive, interactive way. Urban sprawl, traffic congestion, environmental issues and lack of affordable housing are universal concerns. Regionalism offers appropriate solutions to specific situations and may open our minds to better solutions elsewhere.

Robert D. Smith, AIA, APA is Vice President & Director of Planning and Urban Design at RTKL Associates, Inc.
Essay

Michael Hricak, AIA

Monitors, Headphones and The Village Pump: Overheard Information and Tribal Wisdom in the Making of an Architect

As office planning in the 70's and 80's moved towards greater efficiency in terms of the use of space and the individual's movement through these thoughtfully planned work places, a red flag was raised as to the danger of eliminating what I will call "the chance encounter". A few enlightened clients and designers saw the benefit and the need for persons working in a shared environment, but often on different projects and/or tasks, to "bump into" each other. Through these unplanned meetings, at a distance from the immediate task at hand, we somehow better able to explore possibilities, gather new data and, perhaps because of the unstructured nature of the exchange, often arrive at solutions easier than in a formal working session.

One model for this spontaneous exchange of information and opinion is that of the "village pump". Briefly, its counterculture in simple times you could stay connected with the life events and activities of your community through the ordinary daily chore of visiting the village water well.

Here you come in contact with a combination of rumors, gossip, hard facts, opinions and exaggerations. It's a messy, spontaneous, unplanned, perhaps inefficient way to gather information. In short, you receive answers to questions you didn't know to ask or care.

The making of any professional is a combination of learning in an academic setting, a training period under the watchful eye of an experienced and skilled practitioner, and the constant maintenance of expertise through continued study and inquiry. Although our office is as digital as any, I have a real concern for the future exchange of anecdotal and experiential information. I am quite aware that I can "log on" and currently share with thousands of individuals, and potentially come into contact with cross cultural points of view that I would not have even considered. But the simple point is that I must be "on line". Which brings me to the issue of The Virtual Office.

What does it mean to work under the supervision of a licensed architect? Does a link via modem count? Is teleconferencing as effective in developing skills as sharing the same physical space? Much of what I know from my apprenticeship is based on overheard information. A boss talking to a difficulty client on the phone, a project architect handling a crisis with a site superintendent, a job captain motivating a team a bit behind on the schedule. This is not hard information. It's tone of voice, a balance of speaking and listening, a combination of knowledge and experience. I can't get that from text or images on a monitor. It's the stuff that no one will actually sit you down and teach you. It's the answers to questions that I did not know to ask.

Committee News

The LA Architect Editorial Board invites the AIA/LA Board of Directors and interested Chapter members to join us in a Round Table Discussion Tuesday, February 6, 1996 at 11:30 a.m. at the Chapter Office to discuss the format and content of the publication. RSVP 310.785.1813

People and Projects

Kudos to ZGF

Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership (ZGF) has been selected as a recipient of a Merit Award from the AIA Cabrillo Chapter 1995 Biennial Design Awards Jury for the renovation and addition to the Peninsula Library in Palos Verdes. Originally designed by architect Quincy Jones in the 1960's, the addition, which doubled the size of the building was commenced for its qualities of light, color, space and sequence. Good Taste to RAW Architecture

Merrill Shnoller, noted restaurant critic, ventured into new territory recently in a review of the new restaurant, fusion at pico, for Los Angeles Reader. The food critic became architecture critic as he lauded Raw Architecture for a design he considers a "kick in the head." He goes on further, "The design by (partners Steve Lott and Roland Wiley, AIA NOMA) inspires all sorts of descriptive cliches—post-minimalist, mondo blendo, and all that." (Los Angeles Reader, December 8, 1995) Who says architecture isn't reaching the mainstream?

Barton Myers

Keynote Speaker

Barton Myers, FAIA, FRAC, presented the keynote address at a two-day conference on Theatre Architecture: Future Directions, an exploration of architecture for the performing arts held in New York City this past December 8 and 9, 1995. Myers is architect of the Performing Arts Center and theCerritos Center for Performing Arts. The conference was attended by architects, theatre consultants and acousticians and examined how architecture defines performance halls and theaters as well as its impacts on urban planning.

Jerde Lights Up Las Vegas

Commissioned to bring sophistication back to the aging downtown district of Las Vegas, Las Angeles based architect Jon Jerde, FAIA and his Nevada Office, JPI/Nevada, designed a linear pedestrian theatre along Fremont Street replete with 2.1 million lights and a 540,000-watt sound system. A space frame 125 feet wide and 90 feet high covers the street enveloping pedestrians in an outdoor theatre complete with the world's largest computer generated animation and extrawide sound quality. The new urban arch is not only successful in bringing back the glitter, but also thousand of spectators, to the almost forgotten downtown Vegas.

Jerde, architect of Universal CityWalk, Horton Plaza in San Diego, and Minnesota's Mall of America, the nations largest mall, is known for his spectacular pedestrian villages", but even Jerde himself is overwhelmed by the magnitude of it all. As stated in a recent article by Times Staff Writer Tom Gorman (Saturday, December 2, 1995 Los Angeles Times), "he is quizzed as saying, "This is the damnedest project I ever did."
The 1996 Board Installation

The 1996 LA/AIA Board Installation Dinner and Reception will be held Saturday, January 13, 1996 at the elegant Gas Company Tower, 555 West 5th Street, downtown Los Angeles. This black-tie event begins with a 6:00 p.m. cocktail hour and, during the sit-down dinner at 7:00 p.m., will feature the Installation of new Chapter officers, as well as the recipients of the William Z. Landworth Memorial Scholarship. Tickets are $75.00 per person. RSVP to the Chapter office by January 10 at (310) 785-1809.

(Gas Company Tower by SOM, Los Angeles - See inset, page 4. December 1995 LA Architect)

Landworth Memorial Scholarship

The AIA/LA Associates have announced the winners of the William Z. Landworth Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship, which recognises students from Woodbury, SCI-Arc, USC, UCLA, and Cal Poly Pomona is funded each year by the annual AIA/LA Associates Sandscale Competition and a generous donation from the Landworth family.

The $15,000 award is given to

The winners will receive their awards at the 1996 Board Installation Dinner.