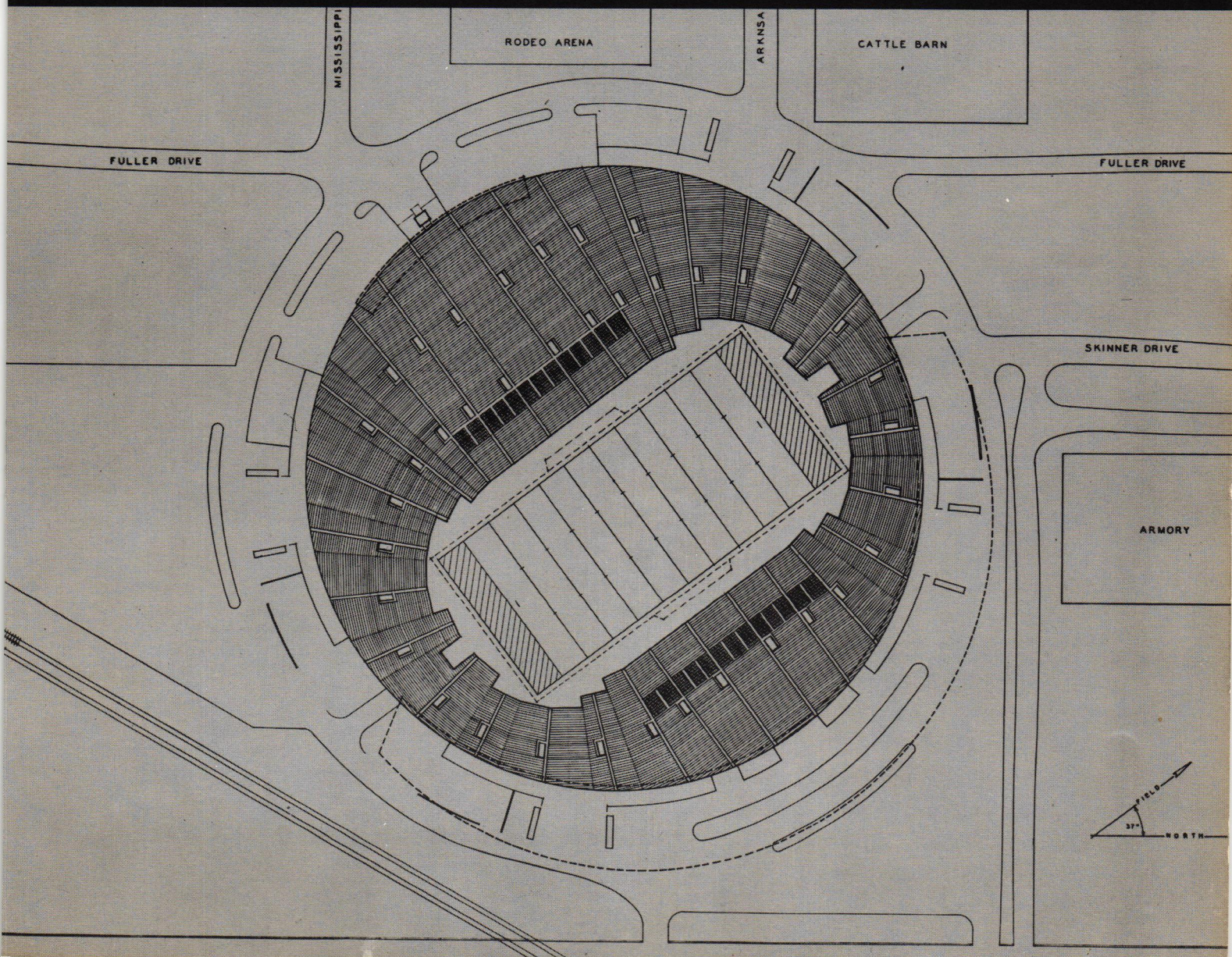
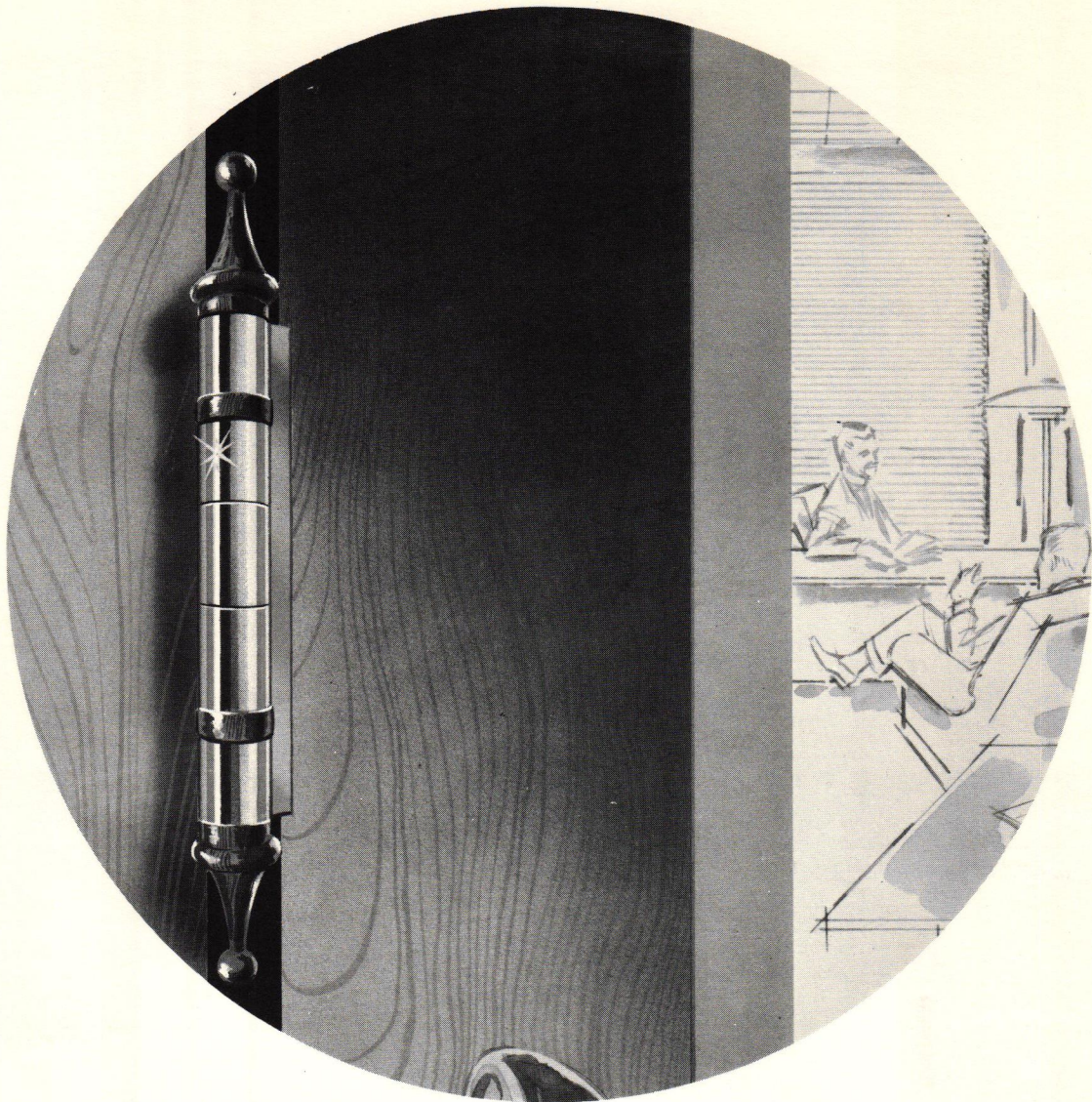


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BAD BUILDING . . . PRODUCT OF THE MONEY MEN?

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A well known author recently stated that the world's great cities no longer have the desire to erect great public buildings, and that if they did, they could probably not find the talent to do the job. But, most of our great cities—and lesser ones as well—are cursed with monumental buildings dedicated to Mammon, and there seems to be no end to the talent available to deliver these monstrosities at cut-rate prices. Of course, there has been a great flood of commentary on the offensiveness of these structures in esthetic terms, but no one in the building industry itself has really yelled loudly about the fact that they are technically inadequate and often jerry-built. The fact that the money lenders might bear some of the responsibility for this is also discussed, if at all, in muted tones.

But, the fat went into the fire last June when Toronto's **Daily Commercial News** published a lengthy letter on the subject of mortgage companies' responsibility for incompetent construction. Consulting Structural Engineer A. A. Goldes pulled no punches when he said:

"I am amazed that hard-headed investors of mortgage funds can sanction the expenditure of vast sums on building projects for which the amount spent on design and its implementation is so trifling compared to the over-all cost."

He was seconded a few months later by the president of the North Carolina Chapter of A.I.A., Arthur C. Jenkins, Jr., who said: "Insurance companies, banks, savings and loan companies and building inspectors . . . can do much to remedy a bad situation that is getting progressively worse, by refusing to lend money for or approving plans for constructing sub-standard buildings."

Of course, these same criticisms can be leveled at clients themselves but, since their contact with the building construction industry is sporadic at best, they can hardly be expected to display the expertise of the money men who specialize in building loans. Thus, we are inclined to agree with Mr. Goldes and Mr. Jenkins.

Simply stating the fact that money men must assume a good deal of responsibility for bad building is, however, not enough. It takes a little leverage to discourage profitable lending operations, even when they are not in the public interest. The answer, then, is to publicize bad building in the popular press.

Currently, the popular press is getting a good deal of attention from the A.I.A. This is all to the good, but we fear that there is a little too much emphasis on esthetics. There are no hard and fast rules governing artistic taste, but a fire trap is always a fire trap; a non-functioning air conditioning system is no air conditioning at all; and window glare is an abiding aid to the optometrist. This is what the popular press needs to look for and comment on, for this affects the public health, welfare, and safety—and the future role of the architect, the consulting engineer, and the contractor in the building construction industry.

