



APRIL MEETING

Time: 6 p. m., Tuesday, April 23.

Place: Architectural League.

Subject: "WHITHER?"

To carry on the discussion of architecture in a somewhat more practical vein than at the last meeting, we propose at the next meeting to try to find out what is going to become of architects.

A number of the more experienced and notable members have been asked to give their opinions on this subject, which is a particularly pertinent one now in view of the difficulties under which architects are struggling, and also in view of the apparently continuous encroachments of government and other competing agencies. There will be opportunity for discussion and any members wishing to contribute their ideas on present trends will be given ample opportunity to air their views.

It is hoped that this discussion will be perfectly frank and from the heart and not merely an attempt to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps and go whistling for a wind.

DELEGATES

The annual convention of the A.I.A. will be held in Louisville, Ky., May 19-25. For detailed program we refer you to various articles which have appeared recently in the *Octagon*.

The New York Chapter is entitled to send 19 delegates, all of whom must be assigned members of the Chapter in good standing. Under our By-Laws the Executive Committee must nominate three times that number to be voted on by the Chapter. If you are willing and able to go to the convention as a delegate, send in your name to the Executive Committee. This will help them in making up the necessary list of 57 names for the ballot.

BROADCAST

One of our members, Reginald E. Marsh, of Tooker and Marsh, will broadcast over WHN on Tuesday, April 30, at 9:15 p. m., on the program "Careers for Youth." Mr. Marsh's talk is one of a series of programs sponsored by the Rotary Club.

CURRAN VS. GEHRON

The October 1939 issue of the *Oculus* contained a brief announcement of a suit brought in the Supreme Court of the State of New York against various city officials connected with public works, and also against Chapter Member William Gehron.

This action, brought on behalf of civil service employees, was an attempt to restrain the City from awarding contracts to private architects, under the amendment to the Charter known as the Buckley Bill.

The Chapter, in the interests of all architects in the Metropolitan area, joined in the defense of the suit and engaged counsel and filed affidavits, with the result that the petition was denied, with a very encouraging opinion of the Court.

The petitioner appealed from the Supreme Court's decision and further hearings were held, but on March 21 the Appellate Division unanimously upheld the decision of the Supreme Court—a second victory for the architects. A third step is possible but highly improbable. The appellant may, up to April 26, ask the Court's permission for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals. We are informed that in 99 cases out of 100 such permission is withheld.

In connection with legislation the *Oculus* wishes to remind Chapter members of the bills now pending in the City Council (local law C-14) and at Albany (the Wicks Bill) which, if enacted, will prohibit private architects from receiving any commissions from the City of New York. Not only our Chapter but many architectural and engineering societies of the City and State have expressed opposition to these bills. It is not too late to write personal letters against this legislation. For suggested form of letter, addresses, etc., call the Chapter office.

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Enclosed with this *Oculus* is one of the new final printed forms of our employer-employee agreement. Additional copies may be had at the Chapter office at a cost of three cents each.

RE-VERSUS

The Chapter meeting held after a dinner on March 26, 1940, was devoted to an extraordinarily vocal reflection upon the Architectural League's recent and widely publicized exhibition "Versus." Eighteen of the 60 members present engaged in the verbal fanfare which President Frost conducted by calling upon individuals for remarks, and then for questions from the house. Fire was drawn more than once judging by several spirited rebuttals offered during the evening.

President Frost designated as key-noter Edgar I. Williams, recalling that Mr. Williams had made, at an early meeting this year, the novel and interesting suggestion that the "Chapter devote an evening to the discussion of architecture." Mr. Williams set the stage by calling for a show of hands as to preference for the 1st Floor show, the work of firms who have become known as followers of the classic school of thought, and then preference for the 2nd Floor show, the work of integrated builders of the moment.

"Evenly divided," declared Mr. Williams, perhaps remembering his position as President of the League, "with an additional 50% on the fence."

Honors for the evening early went to Hugh Ferriss who conceived the idea of Versus. Asked to explain why each of its two sections dealt with so limited a field, he said that this was necessary to create a controversial point which could be presented pictorially to the public. He stated that these shows demanded a third show to present the more liberal thought, and expressed a promise that such a show would be arranged.

Then Mr. Ferriss let fall an epigram which concisely and pointedly treated with a thought which rapidly became the sense of the meeting: "If on the 1st Floor there is a beauty which is no longer true, on the 2nd Floor there is truth which is not yet beauty."

Space in the *Oculus* is too limited to report all the thoughts expressed during the evening. Highlights were: Harrie T. Lindeberg, touched off by a reference in the keynote speech to the

work of one of the "modern" house architects, voiced a blasting denunciation of the glass-walled house which he considered both unsuited to withstand either the cold of winter or the heat of summer, and totally lacking in privacy: "Why my little dog," said Mr. Lindeberg in speaking of an inspection trip he had made in one of these creations of international thought, "usually so well-behaved, didn't know whether he was indoors or out. And as for the decorative use of lally columns, I have no quarrel with them. I have used them successfully in the cellars of my houses for years."

One curious aspect of the meeting was a sudden inarticulateness of the proponents of the 2nd Floor exhibition, who were present in numbers but who seemed unable to express orally what they had so eloquently written on the walls.

One of those championing this part of the show was Carl Feiss of the faculty of Columbia University, who remarked that the architects exhibiting on the 1st Floor did not seem to be indulging in creative thinking, whereas upstairs there is a definite attempt to create something new and better.

William Adams Delano, when called upon to speak, begged to be let off on the ground that he had really made his speech at the League dinner which celebrated the opening of the exhibition. (For text see the *March Octagon*, page 14.) However, he remarked that "both schools of thought had a great deal to offer and by assimilation of the two we shall achieve something. Every revolution is a step in evolution and this exhibition has undoubtedly created new thoughts and has thus been a stimulus to architects."

Gerald A. Holmes rose to the defense of some of the buildings of the 1st Floor exhibit, pointing out their functional excellence. "The New York Post Office (McKim, Mead & White) is one of the most functional buildings in America. If it were faced with a wall of glass bricks instead of a row of columns it would be the rage of the modernists!"

Francis Keally followed this with the plea for appropriateness in architecture as first consideration. He took for his illustration the contrast between the recently completed North Beach Airport and the Union Club, both recent works of one firm—a delicate compliment to the genius of Mr. Delano.

YOUR LeBRUN VOTE—

The Chapter's vote on the changes in the LeBrun Deed of Gift is still far from its goal. The Deed requires that no change can be made without a

three-quarters vote of the Chapter. This means that 320 of our members must vote. At press time we have heard from only 150.

Just to refresh your memory, this was a two-page letter sent to all members on February 20. If you have not signed and sent yours in, please do so at once.

Before long we will have another LeBrun Scholar, whose itinerary cannot be settled until the required vote of the Chapter has been recorded. Obviously our next Scholar will not be able to travel through Europe, as did the winner of last year's Scholarship, Harvey P. Clarkson. His comprehensive trip through Finland, Sweden, France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland and Germany was depicted in an exhibition of sketches and photographs held at the Architectural League from January 15 to 27.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT DATA

Brief outlines of departmental orders issued by the Department of Housing and Buildings are available to members at the Chapter office. This information is being assembled by the Joint Committee of Architectural Societies, of which Matthew DelGaudio is Chairman. Subjects treated in the first bulletins received include digests of 21 orders, most of which apply to architects. Among the subjects treated are: Reconsideration on plan objections. Anchoring of walls to columns in buildings of skeleton construction. Vents for traps of floor drains in garages. Rigid bolts for signs on glass veneer. Casement windows opening outward onto fire escape balconies. Replacement of existing wood stairs with steel stairs. Gasoline selling stations.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP CANDIDATES

The following names have been presented:

For Institute Membership

1. Richard Marsh Bennett
- Sponsors { Philip L. Goodwin
Richard Boring Snow

For Chapter Associate Membership

1. Ernst Payer
- Sponsors { Henry H. Saylor
Eleanor Pepper
2. Sidney Maxwell Shelov
- Sponsors { Wallace K. Harrison
Spencer R. Smith

NEW MEMBER

Albert Mayer, elected to Institute Membership March 15.

LOSS

Clinton Mackenzie, died March 9.

SIN

We have been made aware of a sin of omission committed in connection with the *March Oculus*. When reporting the invited guests attending the Anniversary Dinner we mentioned the names of five presidents of societies who are members of the Joint Committee, but failed to record the presence of John T. Briggs, the secretary of that committee.

Other members of the Joint Committee present were our fellow member Matthew DelGaudio, chairman of the Joint Committee and representative from the Bronx Society, and our own Chapter representatives Messrs. Frost and Stevenson.

THE EDITOR

SALESMANSHIP

Very exceptional indeed, and within the subject of our next Chapter meeting, are efforts on the part of the layman to sell the architect's services. A good example is the following statement which we find quoted in the *Michigan Society Bulletin*. It is from a "Book of Ideal Homes" published by a Detroit savings bank, and containing a portfolio of selected designs by the Architects' Small Homes Association of Michigan. This organization is sponsored by the A.I.A., Producers' Council and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

"The services of an architect in small home building has been greatly stimulated by FHA regulations which permit those lending on homes to include the architect's fees in the appraised value of the property. Thus the larger part of the architect's fees may be borrowed and paid for over a long period of time. Remember that you can rely on your architect's skill and experience to lead you around many pitfalls and obstacles because he has many times performed what you probably are undertaking for the first time.

"Experience shows, too, that architecturally planned and supervised houses are more salable and command a better price. Remember that the architect is more than a mere designer. He draws specifications, itemizes the materials to be supplied, the construction to be employed and the equipment to be used and his knowledge of all these can be a real safeguard to you in the building of your home. Oftentimes his role as a money saver is overlooked. He knows what materials will be most economical; he specifies and supervises workmanship to insure your getting a first-class job; he adapts your house to your lot and makes the best use of light and ventilation. Very often his skill in avoiding waste of space alone will more than pay his fee."