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# THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

115 EAST 40th STREET

SEPTEMBER, 1941

ALBERT G. CLAY, EDITOR

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Time: 12:45 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 30  
Place: Architectural League  
Subject: Our Public Relations Program

Since the Chapter shows such a lively interest in the vital question of our public relations, the new Activities Committee has planned to devote the larger part of the first September meeting to a further discussion of this subject.

On hand to introduce the topic will be William Lescaze, Chairman of the Public Relations Committee. This committee has absorbed last year's Special Committee on Public Relations which was responsible for the study and report made by Baldwin, Munson and Mann. This report was first brought before the Chapter at a special meeting on June 24, 1941.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

September: Tuesday, Sept. 30—Lunch  
October: Tuesday, Oct. 28—Dinner  
November: Tuesday, Nov. 25—Lunch  
December: Tuesday, Dec. 23—Lunch

The preceding schedule of meetings for the remaining months of 1941 is tentative, as announced by your newly constituted Activities Committee. This committee, of which Willis N. Mills is Chairman, recently held its first meeting and assumed the following duties: To organize and implement the Chapter's meetings and occasional entertainments, to suggest various vital subjects for discussion, and to act as a reception committee to new members. A special effort will be made this year on behalf of the younger and newer Members to interest them in Chapter affairs.

In general, meetings are to occur on the fourth Tuesday in each month. The lunches will be short and will hold strictly to a prepared agenda. President Stevenson will continue the custom of calling for adjournment not later than 2:15 p.m.

Your committee wishes to emphasize the fact that lunch meetings are called for 12:45 p.m., which means that before this time members will be expected to have taken their places at table.

As announced last year, the committee requests that the members grant the young Associates in their offices a little

more than the customary hour for lunch on Chapter lunch meeting days. With this incentive the Associates should be urged to attend the meetings.

## WILLIAM MITCHELL KENDALL

William Mitchell Kendall, Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and Member of this Chapter since 1902, died at his summer home on August 8, 1941. Mr. Kendall was consultant to the firm of McKim, Mead & White, having been with them for almost 60 years. He recently retired when senior partner.

Speaking of Mr. Kendall's connection with that office, the *New York Tribune* said editorially: "He was ideally representative of his firm's genius. That genius is occasionally underestimated in some quarters. Under the pressure of so-called modern ideas it is disparaged as 'eclectic,' reproachful criticism overlooking the inextinguishable fact that it renovated American architecture, giving the art of building among us a new life and a new beauty. Kendall bore an important part in this creative development of classical and renaissance motives."

Among the buildings designed by Mr. Kendall are such outstanding monuments as the main post office buildings of New York City, the Manhattan Municipal Building, buildings at Columbia University, the Business School at Harvard University, and the Arlington Bridge at Washington.

## AMERICAN STANDARDS

The Chapter has received a copy of the brochure entitled "ASA Project A62." This is prepared by the American Standards Association under sponsorship of the A.I.A. and the Producers Council in an attempt to coordinate dimensions of building materials and equipment. The objective is to secure harmony in the relation of sizes for the interfitting parts of structures and thus to eliminate excessive cutting and fitting in the field, without compromising latitude in planning.

This brochure, which carries the slogan "A Cooperative Effort of the Building Industry," is on file at the Chapter office. Members of the A.I.A. may obtain a copy without cost by addressing M. W. Adams, Secretary, 110 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass.

## STATE CONVENTION

The Convention of the New York State Association of Architects on October 16, 17 and 18 will be held in Syracuse. Last year 24 Chapter members attended the convention held in Rochester. We hope to send an even larger delegation this year.

Convention arrangements are in charge of Lemuel C. Dillenback of Syracuse. Mr. Dillenback will be our guest at the luncheon meeting to be held on September 30 and will say a few words about the Convention Program.

You are reminded that this Convention of the State Association has an added significance in the fact that it is the first to be held since the affiliation of the State Association with the A.I.A. With this in mind we urge as many of our members as possible to make the journey to Syracuse.

The tentative Convention schedule just received includes:

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

Official welcome from the Mayor of Syracuse, the Chancellor of Syracuse University and the Syracuse Society of Architects. Response by President Kideney of the State Association.

Civilian Protection: Frederick G. Frost, Harvey Stevenson, Harry M. Prince.

The Slum: George A. Boehm.

Radio Publicity: William Lescaze.

Why No Architect?: T. Merrill Prentice.

Housing Trends: William F. R. Ballard.

A Forum in Two Parts: I. Services of Architects—Frederick J. Woodbridge. II. Fees for Architects—Charles H. Higgins.

Preview of Contemporary Ceramic Exhibition, Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts.

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17

Effect of Federal, State and Municipal Bureaus, introduced by Matthew W. DelGaudio, Chairman, Adolph Mertin presenting subject for discussion.

The Architect and the State Labor Law: Daniel E. Bellows, N. Y. State Dept. of Labor Director.

The Architect and the F.H.A.: Thomas G. Grace, State Director F.H.A.



Illustrated luncheon talk: Architectural Concrete—A. J. Boase.

Sound Movie: "Know Your Money"—U. S. Secret Service.

Future Scope of the Empire State Architect: Julian L. Kahle.

Speculative Building and Its Ultimate Influence on the Profession: G. Storrs Barrows.

Specifications and Forum: Harold R. Sleeper.

Convention Dinner.

#### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

Priorities in the Building Industry: Thomas S. Holden.

Professional Practice: James O. Hoyle.

Cooperation Between Architectural and Engineering Professions: Frederick H. Zurmuhlen, N. Y. State Society of Professional Engineers President.

Report of Resolutions Committee.

#### EXHIBITION

There is to be an exhibition during the Convention of the outstanding works of the members of the Association. Such an exhibition was held last year and was widely attended by the public. The exhibit will be in the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts with a private preview on October 16.

Photographs and sketches of recent work are solicited by the Committee. Materials are to be sent to the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts, marked c/o Architects, so that they will be received in Syracuse by Saturday, October 11. Exhibitors are requested to enclose two or three office letterheads.

#### ARCHITECTURE ON THE AIR

During the summer months Chapter members may have become conscious of a familiar voice on the air speaking on Monday mornings at 10 a.m. immediately following the Masterwork Hour of WNYC. The voice is none other than Elisabeth Coit whose talks over WNYC, a non-commercial station, have been designed for the would-be house owner.

The listener is told how to get the FHA loans, how to procure good plans, and how to consult the A.I.A. The programs endeavor to encourage the "small" man to build for himself with the aid of an architect rather than to buy in a Jerry-built development.

Miss Coit has also appeared as guest speaker on two interviews during the summer, one over WABC (The Woman's Page), when she spoke on Defense Housing, and the other on WJZ (The Woman of Tomorrow Program). Her topic was "What to Expect of Your Architect."

In commenting on this work by

Miss Coit, one of our prominent members has said, "It seems to me that she is doing exactly the publicity work the Chapter wishes, and without any expense to the members."

#### TRIVIA

*Apropos the recent competition open only to those on the Mayor's list of architects, one of our members contributed the following personal experience of the days when an architect was an unknown at the City Hall.—Ed.*

Fellow Architects, including Competitors and Mayor's-listers, let me take you back to the days at the beginning of the century; those golden days of the dignified architect, who visited his jobs in progress of construction clothed in a Prince Albert or cutaway coat, silk hat and a cane. In this attire and with natural dignity and personality he made his presence felt from the bottom of the foundations to the top of the uppermost cornice (this was the old days).

It was in that period that I was endeavoring to gain knowledge and experience, and seeking culture and education in every available nook and corner. Having heard that Vignola and Vitruvius had made measured drawings, I hit on the idea of doing the same thing of the New York City Hall with my classmate, the late Frank Hutton.

Equipped with drawing pads, tapes, rules and calipers, we approached the building from the southerly side and decided that the best place to begin taking up measurements and archeological data would be at the side of the entrance portico.

We had completed the base, including the rustications and quoins, and had begun to apply the calipers to the O.G. base mouldings when we were approached by a man about 6' 6" tall with a decided brogue, his sleeves rolled up and ready for any and all business. In an authoritative manner he inquired what we were about.

I, acting as spokesman for the team, told him that we were making a measured drawing. He informed us that he had been the custodian for years but never heard of such a thing and could not allow us to continue unless we secured a permit. I asked where we could apply for the necessary permit and he said he knew of no one who had the authority to issue one except his honor the Mayor. I consulted Frank Hutton and we decided we would not permit this interference to swerve us from our architectural endeavors.

Undaunted, we ascended the steps

of the City Hall and went to the Mayor's office. The guard on duty asked the nature of our business and we informed him that we wished to get a permit from the Mayor to make a measured drawing. The guard looked bewildered and disappeared, but returned in a short while and ushered us into the office of the then Mayor of New York City, the Honorable Robert S. VanWyck.

The Mayor inquired the purpose of our call and I informed him that we were architectural students (which immediately commanded respect) and that we had been interfered with in making a measured drawing of the City Hall, and desired a permit so that we could continue with our aesthetic efforts.

I saw immediately that he was baffled. He consulted a large dictionary on his desk and finally inquired, "What is a measured drawing?" I explained the nature of the drawing and he then consulted another volume which I detected to be the charter of the City of New York.

Finally he said, "I regret I can find no authority in the charter for issuing such a permit. However, I shall exercise my prerogative as Mayor and say you had better proceed and make the measured drawing and if there is any further interference on the part of the custodian or anyone else, refer him to me."

Frank and I felt we had overcome a hurdle in the path of architecture.

—Wm. H. Gompert

#### CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

##### CANDIDATES

The following candidates have been presented for Institute membership:

1. Addison Erdman

Sponsors—

Charles Butler, Robert D. Kohn

2. Alexander Douglas Knox

Sponsors—

Bancel LaFarge, John C. B. Moore

##### NEW MEMBERS

The following have been elected:

##### Institute Members

1. Meade Bolton

2. John T. Briggs

3. John Hamilton Coulter

4. Howard B. Dearstyne

5. Philip Ives

6. Hunter McDonnell

7. Albert C. Schweizer

8. Sidney L. Strauss

9. Louis Weeks—readmitted

10. Robert C. Weinberg

11. Albert Wilson (former Associate)

##### Associate Member

1. Vincent Scott Fox