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THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

115 EAST 40th STREET

NOVEMBER, 1941

ALBERT G. CLAY, EDITOR

CHAPTER MEETING

Time: Tuesday, November 25, at 12:45 sharp.

Place: Architectural League.

Subject: Legislation and Civic Design.

LEGISLATION MILITANT

It is high time we as architects took an aggressive attitude towards legislation which affects our profession. We have been willing to sit back and let others introduce bills which, in many cases, hinder rather than help our practice, while we protest faintly and hope for the best.

The present attitude of your Committee on Legislation is that its existence will not be justified unless we are prepared to fight either for or against pending bills, and to initiate new legislation which will remedy some of our current problems. In this we need your help.

I am asking every member of the Chapter to review his practice and make a note of any problems he has met which he feels are not satisfactorily solved by existing law. If you will send me a memorandum of these items, together with any suggestions for remedying them, my Committee will carry on from there. The State Legislature will convene on January 1. If we are to be ready then we must start gathering our material NOW.

Send your comments at once to the Legislative Committee at the Chapter office.

Matthew W. DelGaudio, Chairman,
Committee on Legislation.

BUILDING CONGRESS

Peter A. Stone of the OPM will be the speaker at the Congress lunch on Nov. 19. You are urged to attend.

MEMBERSHIP

The following names have been submitted for Institute membership:

1. Ferdinand Eiseman

Sponsors—

Eric Gugler

Maurice Gauthier

2. Herman Herrey-Zweigenthal

Sponsors—

Walter Gropius

Frederick J. Woodbridge

3. Karl F. J. Seifert

Sponsors—

Anthony dePace

John Theodore Haneman

OCTOBER MEETING

The October meeting of the Chapter was held after dinner at the Architectural League on Tuesday, October 28. President Stevenson presided over a varied program. Attendance was 61.

Mr. Woodbridge gave a résumé of the recent convention of the State Association in Syracuse. "Our State Association," said Mr. Woodbridge, "is vital and unified and more nearly representative of the profession within its territory than any similar organization." He went on to express the hope that we would send an even larger delegation to next year's convention which will be at Buffalo.

For details of the convention see your copy of the October *Empire State Architect* or the transcript of the complete proceedings which is on file at the Chapter office.

SCARAB MEDAL AWARD

The Chairman announced that it was his pleasure to present to George Nelson an award on behalf of the Scarab Fraternity (a national architectural student organization). This gold medal award is made annually to a man or woman under 35 years of age for distinguished professional achievement.

The 1941 award was made to George Nelson in recognition of his editorial activities in bringing the problems and services of the profession before the public and his showmanship, enthusiasm and significant contributions to American architecture. After reading the citation Mr. Stevenson presented the medal to Mr. Nelson, which he accepted amidst hearty applause.

MONTHLY SMALL HOUSE CLUB

The question of the New York Chapter cooperating with this Club was discussed at the June meeting of the Chapter, at which the President was authorized to appoint a Committee of Three to study the proposal and make its recommendations to the Chapter. The Committee of Three, Messrs. Hatch, Holmes and Prentice, presented the following recommendations to the meeting:

1. That the Chapter enter into a trial cooperative agreement with the Monthly Small House Club for a pe-

Continued, page 2

NOT A "STOP ORDER"

The official bulletin of defense agencies in the Office for Production Management publishes in its October 28th issue of *Defense* a statement to the effect that while the priorities will put sharp limits on new construction which may hereafter be initiated, they are far from being a blanket stop-building order.

"Such basic building materials as lumber, brick, stone, mortar, concrete and various clay products, are not particularly scarce, are not under priority control and hence may be obtained freely for any building job whatever. The man who plans a construction job which uses only these materials and does not involve the use of steel, copper and brass, is as free to go ahead now as he was a year ago.

"As time passes," continues Production Chief Donald M. Nelson, "the increasing scarcity of copper and steel will almost certainly make it impossible to get them without a priority rating. It is that scarcity which has made this policy unavoidable."

QUEENS SOCIETY DINNER

Sidney L. Strauss is again Chairman of the annual Queens Society dinner to be held at the Elks Club, Queens Boulevard, Elmhurst, L. I., on Thursday evening, December 4. Mr. Strauss extends to all Chapter members a cordial invitation to attend.

The dinner will be served promptly at 7 p.m.

TRIVIA

Actual letter to Patrick Shannon after he had sent a check to Ireland for Christmas—Ed.

Queenstown, Ireland
December 22, 1940

Dear Cousin Patrick:

Your welcome letter was received and me and your Aunt Bridget thank you kindly for the money you sent. We have seven masses said for your grandfather and grandmother, God rest their souls. You have gone high places in America, God bless you, I hope you have not forgotten your native land. Your cousin Hughie Shannon was hung in Londonderry last Friday for killing a policeman—may God rest his soul and may God's curse be on Jerry

Ryan, the informer, may his soul burn in hell. God forgive me.

Times are not as bad as they might be. The herring is back and everyone, or nearly everyone, has a boat or an interest in one and the price of fish is good, thanks be to God. The Orangenmen are terrible. They go thru the country in their lorries and shoot the poor people down in the fields where they are working. God's curse on them. Your Uncle Toby took a shot at them yesterday from the hedge, but he had too much drink and missed them, God's curse on the drink.

Well, I hope this letter finds you and your family well and happy, and we all join in sending you our best wishes. May God bless you. Am sorry you are not with us. The Shannons are a hundred strong now since the best of them stopped going to America. Father O'Flannigan, who baptized all the Shannons and who is now feeble-minded, sends his blessing. May God bless you and your younger brothers, Brian and Thomas, and keep you from sickness and sudden death.

Your cousin Cremora.

P.S.: Things might be worse than they are. Every police barracks and every Protestant church in the country has been burned down, thanks be to God.

MEETING

(Continued)

riod of one year. During this trial period the organization shall operate on a non-profit basis and under a new name, with the provision that the existing dormant corporation retain its corporate entity and if the trial period prove unsuccessful, resume its previous operation.

2. That the President appoint three members of this Chapter who will assume duties as majority directors on the Board of Directors of the new non-profit corporation for the trial period of one year.

3. That these three members be charged to direct the functions of the corporation toward realization of:

- Education of the lending institutions to the value of complete architectural service as a method of enhancing their investments.
- General elevation of residential design.
- Elimination of the "plan services" by offering better plans which enable the prospective home owner to receive competent architectural service at a reasonable fee.
- Direction of all net earnings of the corporation toward accomplishing the three foregoing points

and acquainting the public with the profession of architecture.

4. That at the end of the one-year trial period the three appointees shall report the result of the trial to the Chapter for approval for continuation of the cooperative agreement.

5. That the Chapter, either during the trial period of the cooperative agreement or any continuation thereof, shall have no financial obligation in connection with the operation of the new corporation.

These recommendations were offered as a resolution and seconded. After a discussion, during which both Mr. Hatch and Mr. Holmes answered questions, it was carried unanimously.

AMERICAN DESIGNERS INSTITUTE

Before introducing the two speakers of the evening, both officers of the American Designers Institute, President Stevenson described a recent dinner meeting of the A. D. I. which he had attended as a guest and at which he had been very much impressed by the alertness of its officers and members and their awareness of present-day problems.

This experience emphasized the need for closer cooperation between designers and architects, and he had, therefore, asked both the National and New York Chairmen to come to the Chapter in order to discuss this idea. He then introduced the New York Chairman, Ben Nash, who described himself as a product development consultant.

Mr. Nash said that the creative professions were losing a brilliant oppor-

tunity by not integrating themselves more actively into present-day planning and designing.

"We must aim to be promotional rather than professional, assume leadership and stop being merely on call. The restriction on materials, which we have come to look upon as everyday necessities, should not discourage us but rather whet our creative ingenuity. The defense program is forcing changes upon us daily, and architects and designers are the technicians who are specially fitted to meet and solve these conditions through proper planning and creative ability."

Mr. Nash made several concrete suggestions for cooperation between the A. I. A. and the A. D. I. in meeting present emergency problems.

The second speaker was John Vassos, National Chairman of the A. D. I. He warned the architects that in trying to solve practically our present-day problems we must not lose sight of the value of aesthetics and beauty in our functional planning.

A. I. A. CONVENTION FOR 1943

The Chairman stated that the drive for holding an A. I. A. Convention in New York had again been brought to his attention. Inasmuch as the 1942 Convention is scheduled for Detroit, he asked for the members' comments on holding the 1943 Convention in New York City, particularly since the A. I. A. President is a member of this Chapter.

The Chapter moved to invite the A. I. A. to hold the 1943 Convention in New York City.

RESULT OF OUR QUESTIONNAIRE ON PRIORITIES

	Yes	No
Have contracts for private work in your office been affected seriously by priorities?	9	8
If so, by delays in deliveries of materials?	10	4
Certain materials not obtainable?	13	3
If so, have adequate substitutes been found?	9	4
Have there been labor shortages?	4	12
Have contracts been halted or canceled?	4	12
Have reserve materials been stored at job in advance of actual needs?	12	4
Has your office been obliged to expend more time and effort as a result of priorities?	11	5
Have you found that some subcontractors are taking advantage of the situation by trying to substitute inferior or cheaper products and are using priorities as a pretext?	4	12
What approximate dollar volume of construction has been in your office in the past 12 months?	\$15,810,000	
What proportion of the work was residential?	7,338,000	