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# THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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ALBERT G. CLAY, EDITOR

## MONOGRAPHS

Our Committee on Professional Practice—Arthur C. Holden, Chairman—recently received from a member a request for opinion on a monograph series published by the Architectural Catalog Company entitled, "Architecture and Design." Question: Does this publication constitute an appropriate vehicle for the work of individual architects, who are A.I.A. members and who desire to adhere to its ethical standards?

Before releasing its opinion the Committee submitted recommendations to the Executive Committee. These were approved with emphasis on the fact that this is not a blanket approval of monographs but applies for the present only to the above-mentioned magazine. We quote from the Committee's letter to the publishers:

"The Committee believes that the monograph system of publishing the work of individual firms is a valuable contribution to the public relations of the profession. The Committee appreciates that in order to make such publication commercially possible it must be supported, as are other architectural magazines, by advertising matter. Provided pressure methods in soliciting advertising are not used, and provided that the value of space to the advertiser is reasonably equivalent to the price charged, our Committee can see no objection to this method of publication.

"The spirit in which advertising is solicited would determine the maintenance of ethical principles. For this reason, if pressure methods are resorted to through irresponsible advertising solicitation, such methods should be immediately reported to the Committee on Practice.

"We believe that the publication of this letter in full, under the Statement of Ownership of the Magazine, would constitute a protection to all."

It should be of interest to all civic-minded architects, whether looking for a city job or not, to acquaint themselves with the City's plans for building next year, and the amounts being appropriated. This information is contained in the proposed Capital Budget for 1942. Copies may be obtained for 10c from the Office of the City Recorder, Municipal Building.

## ARCHITECTURE— A COMMODITY

The topic of our next meeting, "Architecture as a Commodity," will be discussed after a Chapter dinner to be held on January 27 at the Architectural League.

The Associates of our Chapter are arranging a forum in six topics: Our Product; Present and Future Markets; Demands; Packaging; Advertising and Education of Public; Improvement of Our Product.

Benjamin J. Rabe is recruiting speakers among our Associates. Among those who have already signed up for topics are Messrs. Bissell, Clarkson, Petroff, Shelov, Swinburne, Tyler and Wareham, and Miss Pepper. Apparently there are other topics waiting for volunteers.

We hope for a record attendance. Watch your January OCULUS for more details.

## SMALL HOUSE COMPETITION

The second annual award of Certificates of Merit for Small House Design is now under way. This competition, open to all registered architects in the Metropolitan area, is conducted by the Small House Committee of the Chapter in cooperation with ten other professional societies of New York and vicinity.

New and remodeled detached houses completed between January 1, 1939, and December 1, 1941, are eligible. The rules provide that the ground area of a one-story house shall not be larger than 1200 square feet and for a two-story house the ground area is limited to 1000 square feet.

The entries will be judged by a committee consisting of William Lawrence Bottomley, Randolph Evans, Harvey Stevenson, Edward D. Stone and Otto Teegen.

Entries are already being received at the Chapter office, according to Elisabeth Coit, Chairman of the Subcommittee in charge of these awards. Members of the Chapter or others interested who have already received announcements of this competition are asked to post them on their bulletin boards and otherwise to pass the word along.

The closing date for entries is December 29. Entry blanks can be obtained at the Chapter office.

## MEETINGS

Two Chapter meetings have taken place since the November OCULUS appeared.

The latter, on Thursday, December 11, was a combined meeting with the Architectural League. As advertised, it was a notable evening devoted to wining, dining and other diversions. It was entitled "Night of Stars" and featured as guest stars such talent as George Chappell and Tony Sarg.

We are not going to record the party in detail. It was an overwhelming success. Those of us who missed it, missed an occasion which will long set a standard for future cooperative efforts between our societies.

The former meeting was the regular November luncheon held Tuesday, November 25. After the introduction of new members and guests President Stevenson proceeded with the business meeting, which was divided into three topics: Priorities, Civic Design, and Legislation.

## PRIORITIES

Mr. Stevenson stated that he had received from various chapters and state societies copies of resolutions regarding priority rulings, and asked the Chapter what protest, if any, we wished to make on these rulings.

A.I.A. President Shreve urged that the more individual protests made the better, and suggested that the Chapter express itself. He also reported on the appointment by the A.I.A. of Mr. Purves, who will study the "Washington Situation" as a full time job until the end of the year (see your copy of the current *Octagon*). Purves will ferret out opportunities afforded architects in the present government program.

Charles Higgins suggested that too many protests have been made already and that, if possible, we should in a resolution offer some constructive suggestions. For example, it is well known that rents form about 80% of the cost of defense work and some means should be found for keeping these rents down.

Sidney Strauss referred to the resolution on priorities passed at the recent State Convention, in which the need for some form of regulation on materials was recognized.

A motion was made and carried authorizing the Executive Committee to formulate and issue a resolution along the lines of the discussion. This the Committee did at its December 2 meeting in the following words:

"WHEREAS the members of the New York Chapter, A.I.A., heartily support all efforts for Defense and will willingly submit to any curtailment of their normal practice which is consistent with the best interests of the nation to this end, and

"WHEREAS the curtailment of private building affects not only the employment and relief of workers in the building industry, but also costs in rent, in health and in morale to citizens in every other field, upon whom the Government depends in this emergency,

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the New York Chapter, A.I.A., having devoted its training and experience to the use of materials for the physical needs of industry and human beings, offers its immediate assistance to the Government in determining proper control of building supplies and distribution, to the end that the greatest efficiency of the whole people in this country's service be achieved."

#### CIVIC DESIGN

J. Davidson Stephen of our Civic Design Committee reported a committee study of the Battery Park Area. Representatives of the Tunnel Authority, Park Department and other interested organizations have taken part in general and informal discussions of the subject. The net result of this and other efforts is the hope that architects will inject themselves more firmly into city planning efforts.

Mr. Stevenson backed this up by quoting from a message sent to the meeting by Arthur C. Holden, consultant to the Civic Design Committee:

"Civic and community planning is a subject to which we as architects should be giving a great deal more thought, especially at this time. One of the important functions of the Civic Design Committee should be to develop men of imagination and experience who can act as Professional Advisers on problem areas of this City. With the backing of the members of this Chapter and the advice and help of the technicians serving as members of special committees formed for the purpose under architectural leadership,

such men can present to the public a sound and constructive plan."

#### LEGISLATION

Chairman Matthew DelGaudio briefed committee functions and current activities. His plea to all members was for help by sending in comments and suggestions for amending existing unsatisfactory legislation.

"Our State Legislature," he said, "convenes January 1, and many of the new bills will undoubtedly concern us professionally. We must voice support 'pro' or 'con,' and furthermore, bear in mind that our representatives are always ready to lend a willing ear to the wishes of constituents—provided that what we propose is for the general good."

He then introduced his guest, John A. Devany, Jr., member of the State Senate. Mr. Devany, after assuring us that in his opinion the architects' contribution to the community is a very valuable one, reminded us, nevertheless, that our group is a small one compared to other professions, and for that reason we must be even more united and forceful in our overtures to our representatives.

On behalf of the 150 Assemblymen and 51 Senators of New York State, he guaranteed that we would receive from them the utmost consideration. We must be able to convince them, however, that when we speak we represent every architect and every architectural organization in the State. Moreover, we need never hesitate to approach our Senators and Congressmen; in fact, they should be the first persons to solicit when we have legislative problems.

Nor should the political aspects in these matters be overlooked; it is important always to have a good sponsor, the right person to represent us—one who has had experience and understands how to approach our legislative bodies.

#### CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS

As the emergency tightens around us, more and more calls come in to the Chapter for volunteers in all kinds of defense work.

Already some of our members are working at diagram maps of the City's traffic light system for use in black-outs. Many are serving as air raid wardens. A call has gone out for technicians to be ready to advise regarding construction damage in the event of a real emergency. The Chapter is making up a list of members engaged in war work—let us know what you are doing, or can do.

#### WASHINGTON PLAN

The main gallery of the League will house during January a comprehensive exhibit of the work of the National Capitol Park and Planning Commission and the Fine Arts Commission, both of Washington, D.C. Included in this exhibit will be the working model of the Mall System and many photographs and drawings.

This will be the first time in many years that such an exhibition of the progress of the Washington Plan has been shown in New York City and it should be of great interest to all architects.

On Thursday, January 8, the League is giving a dinner in honor of the present members of these two Commissions. A cordial invitation is extended by the League to Chapter members and their ladies.

#### HOUSING STUDY

An abridgement of Elisabeth Coit's study of housing for the lower income family from the tenant or tenant-owner viewpoint appeared in the October and November issues of the *Octagon*.

The study was made on a Langley Scholarship award of the A.I.A. for 1937-39. The form now published was prepared partly because of the impossibility of publishing some three score illustrations forming a portion of the original and partly to eliminate statistical and other statements either no longer true or no longer significant.

#### MEMBERSHIP

##### CANDIDATES

The following names have been submitted for Institute membership:

1. Thomas Dunn

##### Sponsors:

William Lawrence Bottomley  
Matthew W. DelGaudio

2. Daniel Schwartzman

##### Sponsors:

Herbert Lippmann  
Frederick J. Woodbridge

##### NEW MEMBERS

The following have been elected:

##### Institute Members

1. Addison Erdman (former Associate)
2. Alexander Dean Knox
3. George E. Kidder Smith

##### Associates

1. Charles Evans Hughes III
2. Herbert H. Swinburne

##### Loss

Wallace K. Harrison, resigned