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# THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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ALBERT G. CLAY, EDITOR

## FROM PRESIDENT WILLIAMS

To those who did not attend the Annual Meeting of the Chapter may I express through the OCULUS my gratefulness for their confidence in electing me to the office of President. I have no illusions about the job and I shall do my best with it.

These are trying days for the profession. Not only the profession but society is being broken apart and remoulded to a great war effort. Many members have left New York in that effort. Others will be taken. I hope that those who go will retain their loyalty to the Institute and to the Chapter. I hope those who stay will serve with greater sacrifice and energy.

It is said by many officials in high places that war work needs no architects since there is no fine building to be done. While we deplore the lack of understanding of the architects' creative abilities, versatility, planning and organizing capacities, let us take comfort from the recognition that when fine projects are to be built the architect is the man to plan them.

We shall fight for wider participation by architects in the war effort and maintain our demand for the architects' basic position in post-war planning. We give way to no group or individual in our willingness to serve our country now in any capacity. There is no lack of patriotic duty in holding fast to the high ideals of the Institute so that our trained talents may be used to help plan for a better world when the war is over.

## COMPETITION

We are asked to announce a competition sponsored by the Fine Arts Federation for the selection of an alternate design for the development of Battery Park.

Participation is limited to registered architects and landscape architects residing or having their offices within City limits of Greater New York.

Program will be issued July 11, and competition will close August 11. Apply to the Professional Advisors, John A. Thompson and Egerton Swartwout, 139 East 53rd Street, on or before July 11.

See report of our Civic Design Committee, page 3.—Ed.

## DETROIT 1942

The 74th Annual Meeting of the A.I.A., just adjourned, was conducted throughout with brisk and business-like efficiency, and with a realistic awareness of the practical problems of the present day as well as of the future.

The appearance on the program of Lieutenant General William S. Knudsen was evidence that more national attention than ever is focussed on the profession. Also present were Senator Elbert Duncan Thomas, Hon. Alfred F. Beiter, Representative from the 41st N. Y. Congressional District, Dal Hitchcock, Chief of the Post War Division of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Guy E. Greer of the Federal Reserve System, and last but not by any means least, Mayor Jeffrys of Detroit, who welcomed the 300 delegates and guests in person. The Mayor assured all present that he knew architects to be sober and peace-loving fellows but, nevertheless, should anyone get into any trouble in Detroit, he would guarantee personally to get him out!

Resolutions were passed urging uniform qualifications for registration; uniform building codes regarding strength of materials and provisions for safety; a long range public relations program; immediate steps towards a post war planning program.

The By-Laws were adopted substantially as printed in the May *Octagon*, except that the proposed new membership class of "Institute Associate" was voted down.

This Chapter was represented by 14 members, through whose efforts the clause regarding architects' commissions, contained in the Schedule of Charges, was deleted. See *Octagon* for May, p. 52.

Among the honors given were 2 Honorary Memberships and 12 Fellowships, one of the latter being awarded to Electus D. Litchfield of our Chapter. A special Institute medal, the first of its kind, bronze embossed upon a steel ingot, was presented to Albert Kahn in recognition of his contribution to the war effort.

It was on the occasion of this presentation at the Annual Banquet, at which 400 were present, that General Knudsen addressed the architects in the dramatic setting of a general blackout.

## NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Luncheon: Tuesday, July 14, 12.30 P.M.

Place: Architectural League.

Subject: Report on the Annual Meeting of the Institute in Detroit. The responsibility of the Chapter and the individual architect today will be discussed.

## ANNUAL MEETING

At the annual meeting of the Chapter, held June 3 at the Architectural League, Edgar I. Williams was elected President. The others, swept into office as a result of an unusually heavy vote, are: Vice President: L. Andrew Reinhard; Secretary: Robert S. Hutchins; Treasurer: George A. Licht; Recorder: Hugh Ferriss.

Elected to Executive Committee to serve to 1945 are: Leopold Arnaud, and Harold R. Sleeper.

The out-going President, Harvey Stevenson, reported at length on the affairs of his administration, laying especial emphasis on the activities of the last few months.

The Chairmen of the various Chapter committees were called upon to make their reports. The Secretary read those of absent Chairmen. We have not space in one issue of the OCULUS to publish these reports in full. Anyone interested in looking beyond the abridged accounts here published, can read the full text at the Office.

President Stevenson handed to the several winners Certificates of Merit for small house design. These awards were the result of the second annual competition held by our Small House Committee in cooperation with ten other professional societies of New York and vicinity. Those receiving awards were:

Wm. F. Dominick

House (Alteration and Renovation) at Fairfield Ave., Greenwich, Conn.

Owner: Mrs. Archer H. Brown

Harry C. Starr

House (New) at 9 Kimberly Place, New Canaan, Conn.

Architect-Owner

Arthur H. Goddard

House (New) at 32-16 215th Street, Bayside, L. I.

Owner: Leslie Cretty

(See following pages for committee reports.)



## President's Report

If there is any virtue to which I lay claim in the administration of the Chapter it is brevity of meetings. This is not always possible of achievement in an open meeting where the prerogative of the citizen to life, liberty, and the pursuit of an audience cannot be abrogated, but it has been true in the Executive Committee meetings and, as far as my own pronouncements have been concerned, in all meetings. I think we have grossed the fewest talking hours since 1929.

The initial effort of the administration was to simplify committees, to emphasize the importance of certain ones, and to try to insure some continuity with work done in preceding years.

A few highlights about activities:

- 1: The A.I.A. has been invited to hold its 1943 Convention in New York.
- 2: The Convention of the New York State Association of Architects in Syracuse in October was attended by 20 members of the Chapter who took an active part in the program.
- 3: Your President attended the convention of the American Designers Institute, after which its two leading lights, Ben Nash and John Vassos, came to the Chapter with some constructive thoughts.
- 4: The New York Chapter was active in helping clear the atmosphere regarding past Institute finances. Incidentally the present Institute President, while maintaining a strictly hands-off policy regarding any local affairs, has been helpful to a degree that only those who know him best can appreciate. In the same way our Regional Director, Roy Newkirk, has taken the greatest interest and been always willing to come down to confer with us.

Tops among the more boring duties wished upon us—this one by special dispensation of our National President—was beginning the revision of the *Hand-Book of Architectural Practice*. I say "beginning" because the *Hand-Book* was something like a Remington-Rand Edition of the Holy Bible. We worked like the devil without getting even a satisfactory card index on the Ten Commandments. So the President took it away from us and sent it to the House of Lords in Boston whence it will doubtless emerge as a good King James version with a high polish and a slight odor of cod.

We have a publication, however, which is at once immediate and valuable in highest degree. Time and again individuals demand to know why we

don't notify all the members about this or that. The answer is that we just have not got the time, the personnel, the stationery, nor the money to run the sort of ticker tape service that we should today. Our one salvation has been the OCULUS.

Our occasionally very sympathetic confrère, Mayor LaGuardia, recently made two statements which I think most significant. The first was that while all municipal construction must necessarily be stopped, due to the need for materials on the Active Front, there were, however, no priorities on thinking and planning.

This is where Architects must assert leadership; we have the talents, we have the vehicles in the Civic Design Committee, and the Brunner Awards, and we have the opportunity in the expected program of the City Planning Commission. If at the end of this war the architectural profession is not leading the way, it might just as well fold up for all time.

The other remark was perhaps less obvious in its relation to us. The Mayor, in commenting on his own appearance on the same platform with the head of a great corporation with whom he had occasionally been at odds, said there was no place in the field of construction for political differences.

The moral of this remark is that while the program to which this country is now committed may not be in accord in every detail with our way of life, yours and mine, it is nevertheless what we are committed to. There is not now, and it is possible that there may never be again, the exact method of handling jobs which architects used to expect.

Furthermore, we cannot afford to be in conflict with those who design under any other name. I should like to forsee the complete unification of all those engaged in any creative work, whether they be listed as Architects, Engineers, Decorators, Designers, or what have you. They, at their best, all represent the professional idea, and we need their strength in maintaining that professional idea.

No one can predict what the future holds nor the degree to which architects can assert their talents, but whatever be the job, or what be the title, architects can and will continue to be architects. It seems to me that the important thing in the readjustment period will not be a question of title, fees, or organization, but a struggle to maintain the professional ideal itself, superior to hours, codes or mass opinion.

There is a tough period ahead. Some 20 of our members have gone into

service and they include the men who are most energetic, far-sighted and unselfish. But the strength of architects is not numbers. Had it been, we should all have starved long since. It is not pressure, it is not publicity. But it is an awareness of developments and social change; it is a realistic technical skill; it is a knowledge of the power of mechanical things and an equal knowledge of its limitations; it is above all, a sensitivity in interpreting human needs; and an unquestioned personal integrity.

This sensitivity and this integrity are qualities which no man in our profession feels more acutely than your Presidential nominee, Edgar Williams, for no one has lived these qualities more consistently. With that kind of leadership, with this broadening of our own point of view, there is no reason why, in the world that will have to be reconstructed, the place of the architect will not be greater and more important than it has ever been before.

## Professional Practice.

*Arthur C. Holden, Chairman*

The Committee on Professional Practice is an elective committee, with a membership of three. During the past year the committee has been more active than in the immediate period preceding.

Among the cases called to the attention of this committee have been the following:

1 Case—Practicing without license.

3 Cases—Charges brought by clients against members of the profession for alleged unprofessional conduct. One case withdrawn, one case dismissed, and the other is yet to be adjudicated.

The committee has also heard two cases where the opinion of the committee was solicited in advance by architects, before agreeing to the publication of their works in monographs or brochure distributed by organizations or groups interested in special types of architecture.

The committee has taken the position that its attitude should be positive, and that it should exert itself to be helpful to the interests of the public and the profession—that it should abstain from "buck-passing," and that it should meet all issues presented.

## Activities.

*Willis N. Mills, Chairman*

Last June, President Stevenson presented the program of most important subjects to be considered during the



year: Public Relations, Unification, Defense Efforts, Large and Small Scale Housing.

The meetings have been devoted largely to discussion, clarification, and action on these four problems.

Public Relations and Unification can be considered together. Our Public Relations Counsel recommended that—in order to achieve their greatest usefulness, architects should:

- a—Have an Executive Director in Washington.
- b—Amalgamate as many societies as possible under one head.

The appointment of Mr. Purves as Washington Representative of the A.I.A. was the answer to the first recommendation. Under him, the profession is in a stronger position in relation to the Washington Scene that it has ever been. He spoke to us in March about what he was doing and what he hoped to achieve. Plans leading up to Unification are taking shape as fast as present conditions allow.

The matter of "Defense Efforts and Housing" started as a discussion of Priorities and Defense Preparations, and has now become the problem of the architect's adjustment to Total War.

In February Mr. Shreve gave us an outline of the situation architects were facing at that time. He said that architects in order to fit into the new Architect-Engineer-Construction-Management set-up, would have to enlarge the scope of work that, in the past, has been considered their normal function.

In March Mr. Purves discussed the part being taken by architects in the War Picture. The situation was complicated at that time by the fact that Washington was trying to unify its many miscellaneous building agencies under one head.

Our Anniversary Dinner in March was devoted to South American Relations, with Wallace Harrison, Philip Jessup, and dignitaries from South American countries as guest speakers.

Other activities of the Chapter during the year included:

- 1—Cooperation of the Chapter with the Monthly Small House Club.
- 2—Cooperation of the Chapter with the American Designers Institute.
- 3—Discussion of New York State Architects' Convention.
- 4—Legislation affecting architects. In November Assemblyman John A. Devany addressed us on this subject.
- 5—Award of Honorary Associate Membership to Dr. Goldwater, Commissioner of Hospitals.

## Admissions,

*Frederick G. Frost, Jr., Chairman*

In our examination of candidates we asked four questions:

- 1—Why do you wish to join the Institute?
- 2—Are you familiar with the Standards of Practice of the A.I.A.?
- 3—Are you a registered architect? If not, do you propose to obtain registration when eligible, or what are your circumstances which make registration unnecessary?
- 4—If elected to membership, will you be an active member and make a contribution by serving on Committees to the extent that you are able?

With respect to the relation between professional eligibility for membership in the Institute and in the Chapter, about which questions are frequently asked, we have carried out the principles established by Mr. Bottomley last year. For the information of the Membership, we restate these here.

### CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP:

(1) All registered architects who either have practiced or are practicing under their own names, or who have held or do hold positions of responsibility in the offices of Registered Architects are eligible for Corporate Membership.

(2) In addition, all those who are not registered and are not practicing architecture as defined in the Registration Law, but who are otherwise qualified and do possess some direct professional relation to architecture, are eligible.

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:

(1) All those who can be classified in either of the two foregoing groups but who lack the degree of responsibility or the extent of experience are eligible for Associate Membership. In general, however, the majority of registered architects are eligible for Corporate Membership and in that way ineligible for Associate Membership.

## Civic Design,

*Alfred Easton Poor, Chairman*

The major problem facing the Architectural Profession in New York during of fall of 1941 coming within the scope of the Civic Design Committee, was the planning of the Battery Park Area. A proposal by the Fine Arts Federation to hold a competition for the area, in which this Chapter was asked to participate, was abandoned after reviewing the report of James C.

Mackenzie, Consultant to our Committee, and because the plan already worked out by Mr. Moses made a competition futile. Instead it was agreed to sponsor a collaborative study of the entire area by all the interested organizations within the Fine Arts Federation.

Your committee has declared itself opposed to the demolition of the Aquarium, to the excessive open cut ramps, to the proposals for ventilating pylons and to the acceptance of any final plan prior to a very searching analysis of the whole problem.

At a recent meeting, the Committee withdrew its offer of \$500 of its funds for a competition for Foley Square, in association with the Municipal Art Society, as the Society had done nothing to further the competition. Instead the money has been offered to the Brunner Scholarship Committee to be used for studies in Community Planning.

The Committee believes it can be of greater service to the profession by sponsoring planning studies and it recommends that members, during their term of service on this committee, pledge themselves not to accept an architectural commission from the City for a project within any area on which they make such studies.

## Education,

*Leopold Arnaud, Chairman*

Although the Committee on Education of the Chapter has been theoretically fairly large, the fortunes of life and war have reduced its ranks to a bare skeleton. For the past year there were not more than five members present at any one meeting.

Your Committee has directed the routing of an exhibit of drawings of the design requirements for the Examination for License to Practice, as given by the New York State Board of Examiners. This exhibit was shown in the six schools of Architecture in the State, and in six cities where the examinations are given.

Last year several volunteer lecturers—members of the Chapter—were asked to speak on architecture to students in several City High Schools and Preparatory Schools. The results, however, hardly justified the efforts expended, especially under present conditions, and the lectures have therefore been temporarily discontinued.

There is need for a booklet for the architectural profession, similar to "Engineering, a Career and a Culture," issued by the engineering societies. At least two such pamphlets have been written on architecture, but they are



woefully inadequate and out of date. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture is working on such a booklet and intends to ask the A.I.A. for its collaboration in producing it. When this publication is available, it could serve as a guide for talks by our lecturers to the schools.

Your Committee is also responsible for the award of the Brunner Scholarship. The first award was made in 1940 to Truman J. Mathews for a study of Regional Architecture in the American Southwest.

The Scholarship of 1941 was awarded to Hobart Upjohn to enable him to assemble the valuable material in his possession concerning the founding and early history of the A.I.A. Mr. Upjohn has worked assiduously and is progressing satisfactorily.

Your Committee sent out announcements for the Brunner Scholarship for 1942. Applications were received from two candidates. As the proposals submitted did not seem especially appealing, it was decided not to award the Brunner Scholarship this year.

Since the Architectural League this year had, for the same reason, made no award of its Brunner Scholarship, it was proposed that the League and the Chapter pool the resources of their Brunner Scholarships and thereby obtain a large enough sum to carry out a project. This will be determined by a joint committee representing both the League and the Chapter.

This proposal was accepted and the Chairmen of the League and the Chapter Committees have since conferred with representatives of the Regional Plan Association and the City Planning Commission, and have obtained the cooperation and support of the Chapter's Committee on Civic Design. It is hoped that within a few weeks an interesting program can be formulated and that the Brunner Scholarship funds, thus pooled, will serve a really important purpose.

### Legislation,

*Matthew W. Del Gaudio, Chairman*

This committee was appointed by the President on July 25, 1941, with instructions "to keep informed on activities of all legislative bodies in city, state and nation; to propose, support or oppose legislation affecting architects; to function through the Joint Committee of Architectural Societies (City), the New York State Association of Architects (State), and the American Institute of Architects (National), and to keep chapter membership informed, and marshal its support when necessary."

Nine meetings have been held.

While the committee consisted of seven members besides the Chairman, at only two meetings were there more than three members present, and at many meetings only two men besides the Chairman. It is regrettable that greater interest was not displayed by all members of the Legislative Committee. However, the committee appreciates the very fine assistance rendered to it by President Stevenson. He was present at at least five of our meetings, and kept in close touch with the Chairman on matters affecting the Chapter. The Chairman desires to pay a tribute of appreciation to him personally.

### Membership,

*William E. Shepherd, Chairman*

This year's Membership Committee, at its organization meeting, agreed that its prime function, i.e. to increase membership, could best be accomplished by trying to disseminate a clearer understanding of the A.I.A., particularly to the younger men, by following up new members, especially at meetings, by more closely collaborating with the other Chapter committees, and finally by issuing a brochure or leaflet describing the classes or membership, qualifications and procedure in joining, and some of the objects and functions of the A.I.A.

This Committee has also been following up members in arrears and proffered resignations, as it is considered as much a part of this Committee's function to retain the members we have as to seek new ones.

A single mimeographed sheet, explaining briefly the two classes of membership, dues of each, qualifications and procedure in joining, has been prepared and approved by this Committee, and is now sent out to each prospective member.

Increase in membership has been gradual but steady. We have grown from 368 in 1922 to 457 as of the date of this report.

### Monthly Small House Club,

*Randolph Evans and Cameron Clark, Directors*

The Monthly Small House Club, Inc., at the beginning of the year 1942 was prepared to act as a non-profit corporation serving the Institute, the building and loan institutions and others in an effort to foster the use of architect-designed houses throughout this district. The Monthly Small House Club, Inc., as a corporation has been servicing building and loan institutions. These institutions were advised as to

the likelihood of a program being worked out in connection with architects and almost without exception the building and loan institutions were favorably impressed.

Inasmuch as it is now impossible for individuals to build homes outside of defense areas and very few homes are being built for individuals even in defense areas, and inasmuch as the program of the Monthly Small House Club, Inc., tied in with the architects presupposes that homes will be built for individuals, it has become necessary for the Monthly Small House Club, Inc., to take an inactive position until such time as the existing rules and regulations prohibiting construction are lifted.

The corporation is solvent and is enthusiastic over future prospects. It will stand by for the duration and will be ready to carry on its program when building activity is revived.

*Public Relations and Unification to be printed next issue.—Ed.*

### NECROLOGY

While those present at the annual meeting stood, the names of the members of the Chapter who died during 1940-1941 were read by the Secretary.

James L. Burley	1921
Alfred Freeman	1925
William Mitchell Kendall	1902
Arno Kolbe	1915
Louis R. Leonard	1912
Pleasants Pennington	1922
Charles W. Romeyn	1902
Ehrick K. Rossiter	1912
H. Craig Severance	1914
Charles Magill Smith	1940
John A. Tompkins, II	1911

### MEMBERSHIP

#### CANDIDATES

The following names have been submitted for Institute membership:

- Charles DuBose  
Sponsors: Walter B. Sanders  
George Foster Harrell
- Luther Hammond Lewis  
Sponsors: Arthur L. Harmon  
John A. Thompson
- Eric Mendelsohn  
Sponsors: Ely J. Kahn  
Harvey Stevenson
- Hugh Nanton Romney  
Sponsors: Willis N. Mills  
Maurice Gauthier
- Hermon Wick  
Sponsors: Ely J. Kahn  
Leonard Schultze
- Morris Ketchum, Jr.  
Sponsors:  
Max Abramovitz  
Richard M. Bennett