



Vol. VI, No. 1

THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

115 EAST 40th STREET

OCTOBER, 1943

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, October 14, 1943

5:30 p.m. Business Meeting

6:30 p.m. Dinner

Subject: City Planning—Eliel Saarinen

Mr. Saarinen, head of the Architectural School at Cranbrook Academy of Art, has accepted an invitation to be our guest on next Wednesday evening at dinner. This invitation was extended at the suggestion of J. Davidson Stephen, member of the Chapter and holder of the Civic Design Scholarship at Cranbrook, where he has for the past year been working under the direction of Mr. Saarinen on a study of the development of city and regional planning, based on an analysis of the Detroit area. Mr. Stephen will also be a guest of the Chapter.

Concurrently there will be shown on the League's walls a series of maps, charts, graphs, contour models and other material, prepared by Mr. Stephen in connection with the Saarinen plan.

The dinner is sponsored jointly by the New York Chapter and the League. A group of members from the Connecticut Chapter, who have been attending a seminar on City Planning at Yale, is also expected to attend.

The short business meeting called for 5:30 p.m. will start promptly in order that the members may adjourn for refreshments before dinner.

Please fill out the enclosed card and return promptly.

CHANGE IN NAME

The Chapter's Committee on Civic Design has made formal application to the Executive Committee for a change in its name to "Committee on Civic Design and Development." As the added word does in fact more accurately describe the work which that Committee is now carrying on, the Executive Committee favored the idea.

A change in name, however, entails an amendment to the By Laws of the Chapter, since that imposing document sets forth specifically the title and functions of each standing committee.

Accordingly you are herewith notified that at the next Chapter meeting your vote will be taken on amending

the Chapter By Laws so that the aforesaid Committee will be hereafter known as the "Committee on Civic Design and Development."

POSTWAR PLANNING

This all important problem, foremost in the minds of every one today, is being undertaken in a most realistic manner by our New York Chapter Committee, headed by Reginald E. Marsh.

As a first step, the Committee will devote its efforts towards bringing about a Coordinating Group on Planning in New York, to be made up of all agencies in this area who have Postwar Planning Committees or who are otherwise concerned with the problem.

Our Committee is also gathering data on similar coordinating groups in other cities where successful planning programs have been worked out in conjunction with the local Chambers of Commerce, Merchants Associations, etc.

The question of a new Chapter Committee on Technical Development is also under discussion. In view of the many changes being promised for the Postwar Era, the new materials and equipment and improved building techniques now being developed, it is highly important that architects, instead of passively accepting what the manufacturers have to sell, should take the initiative in charting the course of these developments.

SURVEYS

The Committee on Surveys of Unsafe Buildings is the one and only Chapter Committee whose members are paid in cash for their work.

Each year the New York Chapter and eleven other architectural and engineering Societies in the Metropolitan Area are invited by the Civil Service Commission to submit ten names each of members qualified to make surveys of buildings which have been declared unsafe by the Department. The fee for each survey is \$25. To qualify, a member must have had ten years' experience in building construction and must comply with the Lyons Residence Law (three years' residence in New York City immediately preceding appointment).

The New York Chapter has six vacancies to be filled for the coming year. Members with the above qualifications desiring to serve on this Committee should so indicate to the Chapter office on or before October 16.

THE FARM FRONT

Have you a week—two weeks—three weeks to give to help save the crops this fall? If not, is there any one in your household, your office, or among your friends or clients, who will help in the fall harvesting?

We have been asked by the War Manpower Commission to broadcast the call for emergency workers for vegetable farms from now until November, for apple pickers during October, for work in canneries through November.

This is one way of making a really practical contribution to the war effort. Crops are ripening now, and must be harvested, after which they must be processed both for home use and for shipment to our troops overseas.

Both men and women are needed on farms in New York State and on Long Island.

These "Victory Vacationists" will be paid the prevailing farm wages for inexperienced workers of the area in which they work. The fare one way will be paid to those guaranteeing to remain at least two weeks, and both ways to those staying four weeks. Food and lodging are provided at cost.

For further details and application forms, call Mrs. Abbot Low Moffat, who is in charge of the New York City Farm Placement office of the W.M.C. (44 East 23rd Street) at ALgonquin 4-8500.

ERRATA

We regret to call your attention to a misprint in the 1943/44 Chapter Year Book, mailed to you last month.

The enclosed slip is to correct that error, and we ask you kindly to paste it at the top of page 15.

Our apologies to Lieutenant Donnelly for the omission of his name, and also to Mr. Dominick for having classified him as a "j.g."

HOUSE IN GREENPOINT

By way of preface to this tale (and also by way of gentle reminder to the reader), A.I.A. contract forms and other documents are sold at the Chapter Office.

A few seasons ago in the late autumn, there came an order by telephone from a firm near Greenpoint, L. I., for 6 construction contracts with general conditions. Such calls were rare in those days of the Architectural depression, and the order was filled with pleasure and alacrity. A week later came a call from the same firm for 6 more sets, which were likewise mailed promptly.

The following Saturday, about noon, came a third order by telephone, this time for 18 contracts with general conditions. The Executive Secretary remarked that business in Greenpoint must be looking up. "Looking up?" came the voice over the wire, "why, our work is running about normal. Of course February and March are our best months. However, we're not complaining."

"February and March!" echoed the E.S. weakly, and added that she would mail the package that day. The man from Greenpoint, however, needed the contracts over the week-end and would send a man right over. The E.S. reminded him that this was Saturday noon and the office was about to close. "Oh, I'll have a man there in no time," said he, "won't you please keep open till he comes?"

Nine dollars worth of documents is not to be treated lightly at any time, so the office stayed open.

Some twenty minutes later, a man appeared for the documents. "I suppose you're the N. Y. representative," remarked the E.S. "No, ma'am," said the man, "I've come from Greenerpt." E.S.: "But not since that telephone call!" Man: "Sure, why not?" E.S.: "But how on earth did you get here so fast? Did you fly?" Man: "No, ma'am, I came in an ambulance."

This of course was carrying a joke just a little too far. The man, however, was quite serious. "I'm not joking, lady," he said, "just look out the window, if you don't believe me." And there, sure enough, right at the front door of the Architectural League building, stood an ambulance, waiting.

"You see," said the man, "my boss is in the undertaking business, and when we have to get anywhere in a hurry, we use the ambulance—a no speed limit, just clang the bell and go

through all the red lights." "A wonderful idea," said the E.S., "but tell me, what is an undertaker doing with so many construction contracts?" "Oh, that!" said he. "Well, the boss is building himself a house, see, and him and the contractor's always having arguments about it, and everytime there's an argument, the boss he gets mad and tears up all the papers. He's kinda quick, if you see what I mean. Then they begin it all over again. The house is going to be real nice, though."

MEMBERSHIP

CANDIDATES:

The following names have been submitted for Institute membership:

1. Livingstone H. Elder

Sponsors:

Harvey Wiley Corbett
Harry M. Clawson

2. Clarence H. Higginson

Sponsors:

Harvey Wiley Corbett
Matthew W. Del Gaudio

3. Hippolyte Kamenka

Sponsors:

Julian Clarence Levi
Edgar I. Williams

4. Francis A. McKeown

Sponsors:

Harvey Wiley Corbett
Matthew W. Del Gaudio

5. Paul Cornelius Reilly

Sponsors:

Matthew W. Del Gaudio
William L. Bottomley

Members are requested to submit privileged communications upon the desirability of these candidates, for the information and guidance of the Admissions Committee.

A.I.A. JOURNAL

Your attention is called to an article in the August "Octagon" called "The Revised Octagon—Attention Please!" in which the author, Edgar Williams, poses seven questions.

Mr. Williams has spent time and thought, and in all probability some of his own hard-earned money, working on the development of a more effective "Octagon." Let us hope his own

colleagues in the New York Chapter will come through with answers to his seven questions.

MEMBERS IN SERVICE

The questionnaire on War Records of members, enclosed with the last issue of OCULUS, has already resulted in about 100 replies. We quote from one, that of Ides Van Der Gracht, sent by a member of his family:

"He just wrote me that the desert is beautiful but that the fleas and yellow long hairy spiders are a problem. He wants thumbtacks, matches, Life-savers, candy, Pepsi-Cola and something to read."

This brings up a question that has already been in the minds of some of us for quite a while: What can, and will, those of us here at home do for our fellow members in North Africa, the South Pacific and other distant theatres of war? The question is the more pertinent now that Christmas is approaching.

We can see how bottles of Pepsi-Cola might present a problem in mailing. However, a chatty letter full of the latest architectural gossip might prove quite as welcome.

The Chapter Office will give names and addresses on request and to those who may feel inspired to send a small package, it offers its fullest cooperation.

Packages to Army men overseas must be mailed before October 15, and to the Navy, Coast Guard and Marines, before November 1. Post-office instructions as to size are: not over 15" long and not over 36" in combined length and girth; weight: not over 5 pounds. No perishables, no liquids and no poisons.

INTERIM REPORT

Our attorneys, Messrs. Eidlitz, French & Sullivan, report that the first hearing in the case of the Civil Service Technical Guild vs. the Board of Estimate, et al., was held on September 10, before Mr. Justice Pecora. The case was argued and briefs were filed. The Judge's opinion is now awaited.

In the suit against the Board of Education, now pending in the Appellate Division, the appellant has not yet filed a Note of Issue requesting that a date be set for the hearing, and until that is done, the case will not appear on the calendar.