



NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
115 EAST 40th STREET, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

In response to the questionnaire prepared by our Public Relations Counsel, some 50 members indicated their willingness to write or speak on a variety of architectural subjects. Thus encouraged, our P.R.C. made known to publications at large that such material could be made available, and asked for an expression of interest. The reaction was prompt and most promising. To date, 68 publications have indicated a receptive mood. In many cases specific requests were made for material on designated subjects.

With this hungry market craving grist for the mill, our P.R.C. approached a number of members who had volunteered to furnish the subject matter. We are informed that in every case there was marked reticence to fulfillment of the promise. Some were too busy. Some said they had experienced no actual contact with the problems involved, but were interested in purely academic fashion. Some may have been playing at April Fool. Whatever the reason, at this writing no material has been forthcoming.

There has been much conversation and lament concerning the lack of public interest and information about architects and their work. It has long been a matter of general opinion that the fault lies not in our stars but in ourselves. Here is one avenue which invites us to approach. Much is to be gained by marshalling our typewriters and starting the parade. The benefits are of sufficient importance to warrant concentration and effort. The results, we are confident, will be increased public interest, greater familiarity with the profession at large, its exponents and the A.I.A., and even (who knows!) an occasional plum dropped into someone's lap.

Please give this the benefit of your second thought. If you are approached,

JUNE IN SALT LAKE

If you are planning to go to the AIA Convention, or even *thinking* of it, won't you give Miss Waters a ring? We will soon be sending out the Ballot for Delegates and we'd like to see your name included.

try to find the time required for the preparation of material desired. It need not necessarily be a completely composed article. Many publications have staff writers to develop your notes and suggestions if they are meaty. In such case you will have opportunity to review and edit before publication.

Let us not turn our backs on this chance for dignified publicity.

BETTER COMMUNITIES

Several hundred civic-conscious men and women filled the corridors and conference rooms of the Hotel Roosevelt on April 8 to examine the exhibits and to hear and take part in the discussions at the All-Day Planning Conference which had been arranged by seven civic organizations in this area including the New York Chapter.

The morning session offered a choice of two subjects:

1. The City's central area—how to re-develop the older parts of town; how to master traffic and parking problems. 2. The outlying areas—what kind of neighborhoods should we be building; how can we shorten the journey to work.

In the afternoon, discussions centered around how to fit the City to the Citizen.

This being primarily a citizens' conference, audience participation was invited, and many were the hands that flew up when the question periods began.

At the lunch, which filled the

Grand Ballroom to capacity, the principal address was made by the recently appointed Chairman of the City Planning Commission, Hon. Robert F. Wagner, Jr., preceded by some pertinent comments by Judge Thomas D. Thacher of the State Court of Appeals, who a dozen years ago was Chairman of a Commission to revise the City Charter, the body originally responsible for setting up the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Wagner in a straightforward and well delivered talk said that this city can no longer afford the luxury of unplanned growth, and in his opinion we have reached the point where we must proceed in terms of over-all city needs. The first step is a comprehensive revision of the Zoning Resolution, for which he anticipates the necessary funds will soon be available. Of significant interest to our Chapter's Civic Design Committee was the Commissioner's statement that "the basic information acquired in the course of this re-zoning survey should prove of inestimable value in evolving a sound and realistic Master Plan as a guide to future development."

It is Mr. Wagner's belief that the best results in city planning "can be achieved by a continuous and free exchange of ideas among the Commission, the Borough Presidents and other city departments, and with the business and civic groups throughout the city." He expressed the hope that a permanent organization would emerge from this conference through which the views of the many civic groups represented could be transmitted to the Planning Commission.

The conference closed with a vote that the original Executive Committee of the conference, which included three members of this Chapter, be continued pro-tem to plan for a permanent Committee to work with the City Planning Commission.

STORE SHOW

At Grand Central Palace, from July 6 to 10, the Second Annual Show on Store Modernization will be held and once again a section will be devoted to an architectural display. The Show last year was so successful and the public interest so encouraging that it was decided this year to enlarge the architectural exhibit and to invite architects from all over the country to participate. Notices have therefore gone to the Secretary of every AIA Chapter inviting their members to send in entries.

This year the architects' exhibit will be in two parts. One part, similar to the exhibit last year, will be devoted to photographs showing recently completed jobs of our members. These photographs should show completed store interiors or exteriors and need not represent the entire store. The photographs will be grouped to present effectively the various phases of store design. All photographs will have to be mounted on identical mats. The size of the mat regardless of the size of the photograph itself is to be 16" x 20". The other part of the exhibit will be devoted to the display of complete modernization programs, from inception to completion as represented by photographs.

Members wishing to enter this Show should communicate with the Chairman of the Chapter Committee, Morris Lapidus, at 256 East 49th Street. Mr. Lapidus would appreciate your either forwarding material to him or writing to say what material is available.

FIELD TRIP

On March 30th, the General Bronze Corporation played host to a contingent of 35 members on a Chapter field trip arranged by J. Gordon Carr. Miss Waters acted as chaperone and put everyone on his metal.

At 12:30 all hands boarded a comfortable bus at number 115, the heavens smiled an early spring setting, and we were off in a cloud of aluminum dust. At a quaint wayside inn at Westbury we were plied with cocktails and a wonderful luncheon. Back again in our chariot, we gleefully puffed excellent cigars at the no-smoking signs in the bus and arrived shortly at the General Bronze plant in Garden City.

It is a wonderful plant, new, modern, and well equipped for production. The delegation was divided into small groups, each with a competent guide who piloted his charges through

the varied processes of converting aluminum and bronze into windows, doors, grilles, plaques and castings. At the end of the tour, the various groups reassembled in a cheerful conference room where the company president, Mr. Aaron S. Saphier, gave us cordial welcome. Mr. Herbert King, general sales manager, then invited questions. Each category had its own special expert who made answer. We learned the following: 1. The company stocks residential double hung aluminum sash and will soon follow with standard casements and doors. 2. Aluminum requires bitumastic coating as protection against corrosion where it comes in contact with masonry. Such chemical action takes place only until mortar or concrete has set. 3. Aluminum can be soldered but lock seams are preferred to avoid electrolysis. 4. Oxidizing with aluminate is permanent and surfaces need only be kept clean to maintain the original finish. 5. Aluminum can be dyed, but colors are not permanent. 6. Aluminum is not recommended where it is subject to contact with salt spray. 7. A large factor in establishing cost of aluminum is the removal of oxygen from the ore by electricity. 8. Inclusion of hardware in the metal specification simplifies fabrication. 9. Stainless steel cannot be extruded.

At 5:30 we re-embarked and were transported westerly and thence northerly back to the point or place of beginning. All who attended were enthusiastic about a thoroughly enjoyable, informative experience. Your reporter believes there should be more of the same. Much is to be gained by seeing a product in the making, learning the limitations and performance of materials, and by the greater understanding which must result from personal contact between the designer and manufacturer.

CANDIDATES

The following have applied for Institute membership:

1. Thomas M. Bell
Sponsors: Otto F. Langmann
Harry M. Prince
2. Salvatore Grillo
Sponsors: Otto Teegen
Benjamin Lane Smith
3. Irene Artemia von Horvath
Sponsors: Jedd S. Reisner
Max O. Urbahn

Associate Membership:

4. Richard Melvyn Recker
Sponsors: Otto Teegen
Eleanor Pepper

PLUG FOR THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Since last summer, under the leadership of Al Butt, the Chapter has gained 57 new members. This figure is partly offset however by 21 losses.

Many potential members when invited to apply have come up with the bright answer "what good will it do me?" If we want to enlarge our membership so that it is representative of the profession as a whole, we should be ready to meet this question with a strong and persuasive answer.

The New York Chapter is the most active local group of architects in this area, working always towards unifying the profession, guarding its ethics and helping its members through the fields of legislation, fees, codes, technical information, etc. The advantages, therefore, lie in being able to participate in the formation of the policies and activities of the Chapter as well as receiving the tangible benefits deriving therefrom; and it does not stop there, for the specific workings of the committees are in themselves a rare pleasure.

Our plea, therefore, is that all members make a definite effort to encourage potential members to turn up. Every registered Architect that you know in New York should be a member of the Chapter. If not, why not? The non-licensed Architect or draftsmen (surely you have some in your office) can become an Associate member, enjoying many of the privileges of AIA members for only half the regular dues.

WHAT WILL IT COST?

Here is the first reply to our suggestion in the March OCULUS. Let's have some more.

Type of building—Training school for Nursing Sisters
Number of stories—3 and basement
Type of construction—Fireproof
Location—about 50 mi. from New York*
Cubage—337,000 cu. ft.
Cubic Foot Cost—\$1.47 per cu. ft.
Date when bids received—Mar. 24, 1948

Eight bids were received on a lump sum basis, the three lowest within 3% of one another. Total cost about \$500,000. General contract includes general construction, plumbing, heating, electric-wiring, elevator and a sewage disposal plant, which item amounts to \$15,000.

*In future reports, kindly indicate city or county when giving location.

THE CATCH BASIN

It is the conviction of one of our members that Architects are best qualified to establish standards for many manufactured items. In view of the scheduled (and at this writing still anticipated) discussion regarding the Journal and the Bulletin, his letter is timely. Here it is:

To the Editor:

One of the many features which a Journal with the "New Look" should include is a technical section devoted to standards. My experience with engineering standards during the war and the resulting close contacts with the American Standards Association, convinced me that the architectural profession is rather backward in this field. It is true, of course, that admirable work has been done on the A. S. A. project A-62, dealing with modular sizes of building materials, but what concerns me is that such data as that assembled by the sub-committee on Paraplegics (giving furniture heights, etc.) has not been published. Again, in terms of general practice, who decided, for example, that lavatories should be installed 31 inches above the floor, or that electric light switches are best located at a height of 48 inches?

It seems to me that this is a job for the Institute. Manufacturers will cooperate and the American Standards Association will coordinate.

Ronald Allwork

ARCHITECTURAL SIDELINES

The monthly meeting on March 17 was devoted to an exposition calculated to answer in part the question: How Far Afield Does Your Practice Go?

President Sleeper opened the meeting with mention of the possibility of New York City being considered for the national A.I.A. Convention in 1951. A motion was made and passed that a committee be appointed to investigate all the angles and report back to the Chapter.

The chair was then turned over to Otto Teegen who introduced the subject matter on behalf of the Committee on Fields of Practice. He said the old masters had been versatile, developing many facets of the profession, often entering fields now covered by specialists. He felt that architects are equipped by education and training to broaden the scope of their endeavors. Such expansion would not only tend to bridge periods of meager architectural commissions, but could be made a component part of normal practice.

The first speaker was Peter Schladermundt, who described some of the work of his firm in the field of industrial design. His talk was augmented with lantern slides depicting the design of seating for cars and planes, electric toasters, pressing irons, and the evolution of a bath tub. Mr. Schladermundt divided the design process into the following steps: 1. Pre-design research, including assembling of pertinent data. 2. Study and analysis. 3. Visual and functional consideration. 4. Consumer testing. 5. Final design and engineering.

William Lescaze described the advantages of a new type of wall construction he had developed. It consists essentially of prefabricated metal panels, 4' x 4', fixed to spandril beams, and with factory finish on both exterior and interior surfaces. Its virtues are reduced cost and time of construction. This speaker used slides to illustrate the contrast between this type of wall and conventional masonry. In addition, Mr. Lescaze showed us by slides the design and assembly of a prefabricated sectional house.

Richard Belcher, Chief Architect for R. H. Macy & Co., gave an interesting talk on department store design, also illustrating his points with slides. He stated that many large department stores have been expanding into suburban communities as a means of increasing business without increasing operating costs. Economic land values in suburbs allow for buildings lower in height but spread out in area, making for greater convenience and better facilities for customers.

Morris Sanders described his tortuous experiences incident to the design and marketing of module furniture. He illustrated the various types of units, showing their flexibility and multiple combinations.

James Gordon Carr felt that architects should not underestimate the possibilities of work which may at first glance seem to be outside the usual scope of architectural practice. For illustration he cited two specific cases in his own experience. One was the design of a standard sign for a client company, to be used for all purposes under many varied conditions, and to be adaptable to several media. This involved some interesting research on materials. The other was a study conducted for a small town for the purpose of discovering whether this community could support facilities for air transport on a practical economic basis.

Francis X. Gina also spoke on the use of materials in design. His firm, in its capacity as consultant for the Kawneer Company, had made a spe-

cial study of metals best adapted for store front use. Package design and modular wall panels are additional fields in which his firm has engaged and which he believes are interesting and profitable subjects for the architect to explore.

A brief discussion from the floor brought us to the curfew hour and terminated an interesting, instructive evening.

THE HOUSE FOR YOU

Catharine and Harold Sleeper have presented to the Chapter library a copy of their latest book, published by John Wiley and Sons under the above title. In this volume our indefatigable President and his author-wife have told the complete story of how to buy, build, or rent—though principally, of course, "how to build"—written in an easy and readable style, in language that is always clear, instructive and entertaining.

Profusely illustrated both by cartoon-type and serious drawings and details, and replete with tables, questionnaires, facts and practical ideas, this book is essential to the layman who would avoid the adventures of "Mr. Blandings." It further offers young architectural students a preview of the profession, and should help many older practitioners to recall much they may have forgotten.

The chapter "Meet Mr. Architect" is a new approach to the oft-attempted "Outline of Functions", this time given in narrative and cartoon form, telling all the facts in an amusing, popular style.

Though the OCULUS policy is opposed to editorial comment by its reporters, the Book Review Department cannot curb its enthusiasm for this volume, and so recommends it for both the office and home library of every A.I.A. member.

NOTE TO SPECIFICATION WRITERS

Commercial Standard CS20-47 for Staple Vitreous China Plumbing Fixtures is now on file at the Chapter office. This pamphlet gives the current voluntary standards of the trade, including grading rules, definitions, methods of test, detail requirements and standard dimensions for the staple items of vitreous china plumbing fixtures.

Copies may be purchased for 10¢ from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D.C.

If and when other commercial standard bulletins are received, we will so note in these pages.

WHAT IS PUBLICITY?

We call your attention to a small item hidden among the pages of the last Bulletin of the AIA, resulting from this Chapter's recent inquiry:

"At its meeting on March 4 and 5, 1948, The Executive Committee of The Board of Directors of The Institute interpreted the first sentence of section 7 of Part II of the 'Standards of Professional Practice,' which now reads, 'An Architect shall avoid exaggerated, misleading or paid publicity,' as meaning 'An Architect shall avoid exaggerated or misleading publicity, or paid advertising.'"

"This question was raised specifically in regard to the practice of hiring public relations counsel, and it was determined that the employment of such counsel was proper, but that their acts, when they are agents of the Architects, must conform to the 'Standard of Professional Practice.'"

COMING EVENTS

Apr. 27, Tuesday Lunch 12:30

"Sound in the Theatre" will be discussed by Harold Burris-Meyer, Professor of Physics at Stevens Institute and graduate of Yale School of Drama.

May 5, Wednesday Dinner 7:00

The present policy of the NYCHA and the Architect's place in its program will be discussed by our Housing Committee.

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN ACTION

As a part of our P. R. program we are endeavoring to supply speakers to groups who come to us seeking to increase their knowledge of matters architectural.

Our most recent request came from the Chatham Men's Club, a group of practical citizens who believe in getting first-hand information before advising on any new local buildings.

Accordingly, Frederick J. Woodbridge spent the evening of Mar. 16 in Chatham, New Jersey, as principal speaker at a dinner meeting of the Club, at which apparently a good time was had by all. Mr. Woodbridge reports an enthusiastic and interested audience, and the Program Chairman of the Club has since called to thank us warmly for having provided for them such an informative and worthwhile evening.

What better public relations than this!

NEW YORK CHAPTER, A. I. A.

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