

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
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DECENTRALIZATION

At the Fall Dinner Meeting of the Chapter, Anthony Minoprio, noted English town planner, discussed London's program of decentralization and pointed some lessons for the over-crowded cities of the United States. Mr. Minoprio, who is here on a three week tour of the major cities of the United States, is the planner of two of the new towns in England.

Mr. Minoprio discussed England's two-fold plan of building 14 new towns. One phase of the program calls for eight towns to reduce the population of London by decentralization. The other, to create six towns out of scattered industry by population groups deficient in social services and facilities, such as schools, shops, health clinics and public buildings.

The planner stated that London's mistake in the 1919 and 1939 period was to permit outward expansion of the city through the peripheral spread of housing and industrial areas rather than by means of planned communities. "With the New Towns Act of 1946," he stated, "we are now planning for self contained and balanced communities for working and living."

The population of each new town is to be limited to 50 or 60,000 and will be broken down into communities, or neighborhood units, of about 5,000 each, he said.

England has found that communities of that size are best; homes and shopping centers are within walking distance of each other; they are served by only one primary school, which can be located in the center of the neighborhood.

Unlike conditions here, 95 percent of the people in England prefer to live in small homes as opposed to the 5 percent who prefer apartment buildings. Winding streets, a variety in layout, materials and colors, and strategic location of the few apartment buildings will make the town attractive and interesting, in spite of the preponderance of small two-story homes. They are also incorporating shopping centers into the new cities. 11 percent of the land will be devoted to school sites and traffic, segregated by type.



FALL DINNER MEETING

Beside the stimulating talk by Mr. Minoprio, there were other highspots to this occasion: The firm of Kelly and Gruzen received an Award of Merit for 1951 for distinction in hospital design; another went to Isadore Rosenfield for his association with this firm in the design of the Veterans' Administration Hospital at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Messrs. Freehof, Burns, Smith and Vaughan, collectively known as the "A.I. Aires", are to be congratulated on their fine rendition of barbershop harmonies, as well as for some highly original lyrics.

MERCHANT-BUILDER HOUSES

THE MAGAZINE OF BUILDING (perhaps you remember it as THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM) is looking for merchant-builder houses designed by architects. Beginning next January they will issue a new monthly magazine devoted to residential architecture and building and will have ample space in which to illustrate the work you have done for your builder clients. The editor can also use small houses designed for individual owners if the houses have ideas that would interest merchant-builders. Photographs and plans should be sent to Carl Norcross, Associate Editor, THE MAGAZINE OF BUILDING, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

BRUNNER SCHOLARSHIP

There is still time to apply for the Chapter's Arnold W. Brunner Scholarship before the November 15th deadline. Application forms are at the Chapter Office.

SPOTS

Jim Short, freelance commercial artist, has provided the amusing spot drawings for this issue. Mr. Short can be considered a "member-in-law" of the Chapter through his connection with our Executive Secretary. Any of our "members-at-large", with similar talents, are cordially invited to undertake the illustration of future numbers of the OCULUS. Surely the architects will not let themselves be outdone by the artists!

MENTION THE ARCHITECT

The Public Relations Committee advises architects to insist on inclusion of their names whenever their drawings, sketches, renderings or other material are used for publication. To simplify this task, the Chapter has designed a sticker to go on the back of all such material when released to the press. They are available in pads at \$1.00 per 100 at the Chapter Office.

Order a supply of these now:



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CONTROLS AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The Defense Production Act precludes allotment to the New York area of a quota of critical building materials proportional to its population and construction requirements and does not designate New York as a defense area. As a result, at least 15,000 building-trades mechanics in and around the city are unemployed.

Two months ago the total unemployed stood at 10,000, and it is thought that the number may reach 60,000 within a year. Furthermore, the present count is not a reliable gauge of the seriousness of the situation, since it does not include the many workers who have been forced by unemployment to leave the metropolitan area. They may be still unemployed or may be engaged in other than building activities.

In the architectural profession, up to the present time, no corresponding shortage of jobs has been felt. In fact, the Architects' Emergency Committee has been unable to find a sufficient number of draftsmen to fill the positions available. But as long as New York is not considered a defense area, there will be less and less money spent on construction and architects may look forward to fewer and fewer commissions.

The 15,000 jobless building-trades men, averaging \$70 a week each, represent a weekly loss of about \$1,000,000 to the city's purchasing power. It is obvious that such a reduction in spending will, if continued, eventually affect all types of business, and, since new private buildings constitute the commodity most easily dispensed with in times of financial difficulty, the architects will not be the last to suffer.



The unemployment figures and their existing and future consequences have been brought to the attention of the defense production authorities by representatives of the architectural profession and of the building trades. The answer has been that the workers concerned should move to defense areas where their services are in demand. This is not a solution to the problem as far as New York City is concerned.

At the A.I.A. convention in Chicago last May, the New York Chapter submitted a resolution to the effect that the Institute "urge those concerned in the Federal Government to promote a more balanced level of construction activity throughout the country by allowing private enterprise to proceed with enough private construction to maintain an active industry in those areas where little or no defense construction exists or is proposed." Forwarded to the proper authorities nearly six months ago, this suggestion has resulted in neither action nor comment. It is apparent that further pressure must be applied.

If New York cannot be declared a defense area, — and, in view of the importance of its industries, its harbor, and its many military and naval installations, it is hard to understand why it should not be, — it is essential that architects and builders together continue to appeal to the appropriate federal agencies for relaxation of controls unfairly hampering activity in this area.

STATE CONVENTION

The Buffalo-Western Chapter was host to the New York State Association of Architects at the Statler Hotel in Buffalo, October 11th to 13th. The Convention proved to be the most interesting one to date.

Affirmative action was taken on the following resolutions presented by Harry M. Prince, Chairman of the Resolutions Committee. (Those sponsored by the New York Chapter are marked with a *):

- 1* that the Association increase its efforts to have fees for architectural services equitably adjusted by the State Division of Housing for low-rent public housing under its jurisdiction.
- 2* same as above concerning fees on work under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Public Works.
- 3* that the Association establish a committee to study, with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, means of expediting improvement in interstate registration and for gaining a broader acceptance of more equitable and expeditious regulations of the N.C.A.R.B.
- 4 that the State Education Law be amended to require the architect's signature on original drawings in addition to his seal and that an affidavit be filed with the proper authorities to the effect that he has been engaged to prepare and personally supervise their preparation.
- 5 that the Association establish a Public Relations Committee to report at the next meeting of the Board of Directors on suitable publicity material for use by the Association and its constituent organizations.
- 6 that the Joint Legislative Committee on Housing and Multiple Dwellings be commended for work done and that it be continued with increased funds to acquaint all concerned with the intent and objectives of the new statewide Multiple Residence Law effective July 1, 1952.

A television program was broadcast covering the architect's participation on national, state and local levels in Civil Defense. The manufacturers' exhibits pointed up current technical developments of interest to architects. The Buffalo-Western Chapter is to be congratulated on the excellent arrangements for the Convention and for the entertainment of the delegates and their ladies.

CANDIDATES

According to the By-Laws of the Chapter, the names of candidates for membership shall be submitted to all members before consideration by the Committee on Admissions. Information received regarding the qualifications of the following candidates will be considered confidential:

Corporate Membership

EDWARD COE EMBURY	✓	Sponsors: Howard S. Patterson and Edgar Williams
ISADORE ROSENFELD	✓	Sponsors: William Gehron and Henry Churchill
EMANUEL N. TURANO	✓	Sponsors: George C. Rudolph and B. Sumner Gruzen

Associate Membership

WALTER ELY BUSER	Sponsors: Edwin H. Cordes and Richard T. Leslie
WILLIAM THOMAS HARVEY, JR.	Sponsors: C. H. Wheeler, Jr. and A. W. Clark