

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

# O C U L U S

VOL. XVI, No.5 February 1955

## STORM WARNINGS AGAIN

This is an advance warning. Two bills that would permit corporations to perform engineering services as corporations have been proposed, but are not yet officially in the hopper. They differ in the techniques proposed to permit this.

A group calling itself Committee on Engineering Laws (C.E.L.) intends to introduce a bill at Albany to permit a kind of registration of corporations which do engineering design and construction, etc. The A.I.A. and N.Y. State Association of Architects are opposed to incorporating any professional services and the Association will fight this at Albany as it did the past two years.

The situation is complicated by the possibility that the State Association of Professional Engineers will file a compromise measure, which, in addition to other undesirable features, would permit corporations to register provided certain key individuals are registered engineers. This State Association has 4200 members; about 1700 cast ballots 53% for and 47% against the measure. The minority 47% has life in it and is still fighting the majority 53%.

The danger not only to engineers but to all licensed professionals is obvious. The very basis for licensing, the public's protection through the architect's or engineer's or lawyer's or doctor's personal responsibility for his actions is threatened. Since engineers are permitted to file plans in New York State it is obvious that this proposed legislation would permit corporations to practice architecture, as well as engineering.

Last year when a similar piece of legislation was introduced, Hugh Ferriss, as President of the Chapter, used the *Oculus* as a medium to request all members to write, wire or visit their state legislators and express their opposition to such a proposal.

While this year's bills have not yet been officially introduced or given numbers, our legislative representative in Albany informs us that the corporations sponsoring the proposed revisions to the requirements for practicing engineering are preparing an intensive campaign including publicity, representatives and other devices to influence the outcome.

Architects have tentatively agreed upon a coordinated counter action. The Chapter Legislative Committee urges that members write to the Committee on Public Education, Assembly Chambers, Albany, New York immediately. When the legislation is further advanced they will make additional reports and recommendations.



## CHAPTER PUBLIC RELATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

The Public Relations Committee was very much gratified at the response to the questionnaire recently sent out to the membership asking pertinent and impertinent questions regarding the membership's thoughts about the profession's public relations, and, incidentally, their own public relations. A summary of the results shows:

80% of those replying think that the profession's public relations are not effective now. 70% were not satisfied with their own firm's public relations but only 12% of the firms replying now employ a public relations counsel, and only 17% had ever employed a P.R. Counsel. In spite of this, or because of it, 76% said that they think the Chapter should employ such professional help in public relations.

Only about 50% of those replying said that they send news releases to the press, thus indicating that twice as many architects might be active in calling attention to architectural achievements by informing the press about their own projects and activities. About 75% of those who do send out photographs, etc. to the press request a credit line to be published with the photographs. Only about 10% replying use the A.I.A. photo stickers to request credit lines.

No more than half the respondents do cultivate their clients' public relations men, indicating again a lost opportunity to have names of architects used in clients' publicity and public relations. Two-thirds of our replies indicated that they requested the clients to include their names in any releases. While 43% said they had ideas for improving the Chapter's public relations, only 33% agreed to jot them down for the committee's use. For these we are truly thankful.

We can also take pride in the fact that 72% said they are active in local, civic and educational projects, which is one of the most effective public relations works in which architects can engage. 77% indicated that they have given talks on architectural subjects, but only 40% agreed to have their names put on the list of volunteer speakers on architecture which your committee holds in readiness for requests that come into headquarters. In answer to the question of interest in a 16-week public speaking course, costing \$125.00, only 7 replied that they would be interested, and even then the cost was questioned.

The committee greatly appreciates this cordial and very helpful response, and hereby further solicits suggestions and active cooperation.

## GOLD MEDAL EXHIBITION

The National Gold Medal exhibition for 1955 will be held by the Architectural League from March 1st through 25th. The exhibition will comprise executed work in the categories of Architecture, Mural Decoration, Design and Craftsmanship, Sculpture, Landscape Architecture and Engineering. Preliminary submissions closed January 15th. The committee is headed by C. Dale Badgeley and an august body of jurors has been impanelled for the final awards.

This annual exhibition was a feature of the professional life of the twenties and thirties, and the luxurious yearbook memorializing the awards was on every student's desk, a rich repository of examples to be copied, adapted or admired. The revival of the exhibition and awards in 1950, under the Presidency of Chester B. Price, has proven a happy contribution to the winter season.



## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE COCKTAIL PARTY

The cocktail party given by the Membership Committee on January 21st was attended by 123 persons including 81 prospective candidates for membership in A.I.A., introduced by 29 members. The Committee and Chapter Officers were present to answer questions and to distribute applications for membership. The A.I. Aires supplied a spirited musical background for the party and the guests had the opportunity to see the fine Illumination exhibition upstairs.

## LIGHTING

On Tuesday, January 18, the Chapter was a co-sponsor with the Illuminating Engineering Society of a meeting devoted nominally to residential lighting. It was accompanied by an exhibit of architectural work incorporating new principles in lighting design, and a room was shown where light and translucent materials were used — on the surfaces of which varying light intensities could be controlled. The principal speaker at the dinner was Louis Kahn, F.A.I.A. — whose illumination was philosophical as much as electrical.

The potentialities of the subject were barely hinted at the meeting, since black and white photographs are a poor substitute for the aspect of space in light — and since ten minutes of discussion cannot do justice to such an important technical and psychological subject.

## LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The sub-committee of the Legislative Committee of the New York State Association of Architects after discussion with state officials has sent revisions to sections 269, 270 and 271 of the State Labor Law for legislative consideration. Still in council committee are consideration of local laws to amend charter on set-up of Department of Housing and Buildings and to add to the charter a section on the creation of a city Multiple Dwelling Law.

## MAINTENANCE AND GUARANTEE BONDS

Members who have had to call upon Bonding agencies to assume the responsibilities covered by Maintenance and Guarantee Bonds are requested to write of their experiences to Theodore Irving Coe, Technical Secretary, 1735 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. The Joint Committee of the Institute and The Producers Council is investigating this subject.

## BRITISH ARCHITECTS' CONFERENCE

An hospitable letter from Mr. C.D. Spragg, Secretary, Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place, London, W.I.:

"I am writing to let you know that the British Architects Conference in 1955 will take place from the 8th to 11 June, and will be held at Harrogate at the kind invitation of the West Yorkshire Society of Architects.

"Visitors from the United States have always been very welcome at our Conferences and if any of your members contemplate being in England during the period in question, I should be glad if they would let me know in good time so that I can send them the Conference programme."



## NEW BOOKS

### MOTELS, by Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro (Reinhold, \$12.00)

In the motel it is possible that the United States has made its unique contribution to the world's repertory of building types. "Motels", by Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro, gives us a comprehensive survey of this most modern variation on the theme of innkeeping. In the last century the turnpikes of the country were well served by wayside inns where the traveller might stay the night, and the coach and horses be serviced. Then in the age of the railroad these inns were all but displaced by the railroad hotel. Now with the great volume of automobile travel, the inn is making its reappearance in the form of the motel. Beginning somewhere in the 1920s as the not too inviting tourist cabin, the motel has risen to a point where it is sometimes hardly to be distinguished from a deluxe resort hotel. Conversely the motel has had great influence on hotel design, so that the two tend ever to come closer together. Although most of the examples shown in this book have appeared in periodicals, it is good to have a comparative view of them all together. Individually many of them are interesting as architecture and some are, in fact, quite beautiful. The book closes with a section intended as a guide and handbook for the prospective motel designer.

### T V STATIONS, by Walter J. Duschinsky (Reinhold, \$12.00)

Anyone suddenly confronted with the problem of designing a television station might do much worse than to look into "TV Stations," by Walter J. Duschinsky, published by Reinhold at the not especially modest price of \$12.00. Mr. Duschinsky has had much to do with planning the broadcasting and telecasting facilities of the U.N. His book, which is intended as a guide for Architects, Engineers and Management, covers the whole subject of television station design, master plan and planning organization, site selection, utilization of station space, programming and equipment, personnel, the different types of programs, lighting, special effects, planning, equipment and industrial and educational television. There are many excellent illustrations of working models, photographs of actual equipment and installations and pen and ink diagrams. It is an attractive and interesting presentation of a highly specialized subject in which great and rapid changes are bound to take place.

### HOUSING DESIGN, by Eugene Henry Klaber (Reinhold, \$8.50)

"Housing Design," by Eugene Henry Klaber, is a most valuable and informative treatment of an often covered subject. The author begins by considering the various types of dwelling unit in relation to the different kinds of family most likely to occupy them. Each individual room is studied with reference to furniture arrangement and desirable as against theoretical minimum sizes. Always against inchpinching, the author gives us comparative plans of apartments where a few inches added in each horizontal direction make all the difference between tightness and considerable comfort. Row houses and all the multiple dwelling types are treated with much discerning comment. The plans and sketches accompanying the text are attractive, sometimes witty, and in every way excellent.

## PERSPECTIVE MACHINE IN ACTION

On Thursday, February 24th, the League is having a luncheon during which Dean Fausett, muralist, will demonstrate with color slides and drawings, a high precision instrument called a "PERSPECTOGRAPH" which transcribes plans and elevations in accurate 3 dimensional perspective drawings; a great time saver for architects and designers.



## HOUSES FOR SALE

On January 31st the Committee on Houses opened a one-week showing of Houses designed by Architects for the speculative builder. Theodore Hood was in charge of this exhibit which featured the work of 17 of our members. A cocktail party on the opening day was well attended by builders and journalists as guests of the Chapter. The exhibition has excited the interest not only of these but of several publishers as well.

## THE DELINEATOR AND FATHER TIME

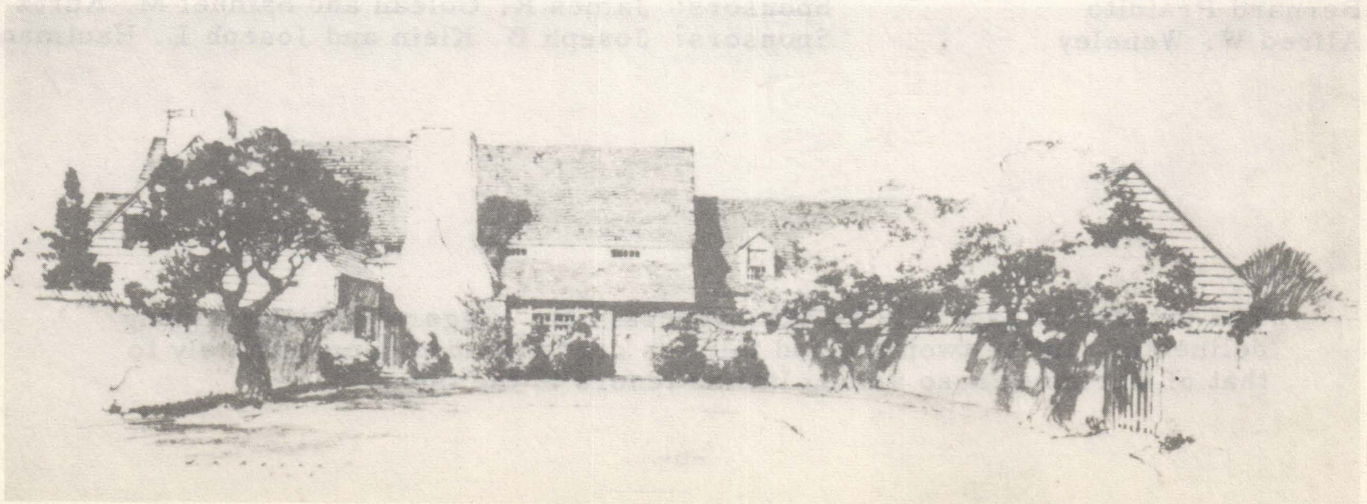
"When I was a student of Architecture a good many years ago —" writes an interested observer, "the goal of every renderer was to make a building look as if it were starting on its second or third century. Every device at the command of lead pencil or brush was brought into play to impart a haunting mellowness, a serene decrepitude suggestive of Tintern Abbey or the terrace of Mont St. Michel. Ivy climbed, ridges sagged, glass rippled and stones glowed with warm sunlight and lichens.

"To the student who chanced to visit one of these jobs on the site, however, a curious shock was in store. The buildings looked new, eternally new. The cut stone glistened, every line was irreproachably plumb, every angle unchallengeably right, every oaken panel unquestionably varnished. The Department of Buildings and Grounds obviously had attacked any climbing ivy with weed killer.

"Today a curious mutation in the respective roles of delineator and builder may be observed. Renderings gleam, sparkle, dance. The unsentimental touch of the ruling pen is everywhere apparent, filled with white ink. For large simple expanses of stone or metal 'glistening' is perhaps the only word.

"Again, however, a visit to the completed building is apt to be an unsettling experience for the young. The buildings indubitably show signs of senescence. The ravages of water are apparent on the glistening stone, much of the plywood is delaminate, paint has peeled. Settlement cracks and general derangements which would have warmed the heart of the renderer of the twenties are readily discernible.

"It is obvious that many more decades of concerted effort must ensue before renderer, specification writer and builder achieve a common concept of chronology."





## SHOPPING CENTERS

Victor Gruen has sent the Chapter a copy of an important and very provocative article which he wrote for the Harvard Business Review for Nov.-Dec. 1954. "Dynamic Planning for Retail Areas" treats in considerable interesting detail not only the planning and circulation patterns for suburban shopping centers but the reclamation and rehabilitation of downtown shopping areas by bold re-planning rather than mere palliatives. An interesting example is cited of a program for Appleton, Wisconsin. The paradox of this enlightened sort of downtown planning is worthy of the late Gilbert Chesterton; to get motorists into a downtown shopping area you have to keep them out of it.

Anything Mr. Gruen has to say on planning for retail business is naturally worthy of the utmost respect. The present article is particularly compact, informative and well written. See it at the Chapter office, or order a reprint from Harvard Business Review, Soldiers Field, Boston 63, \$1.00 per single copy.

## CANDIDATES

Information regarding the qualifications of the following candidates for membership will be considered confidential by the Admissions Committee:

### Corporate Membership

Ernest Akam  
Arthur Harrison Peckham, Jr.  
Elijah Enoch Tompkins  
Peter Schuyler Van Bloem  
Joseph M. Hirschman  
Robert Hamilton McKay  
Peter Paul Muller  
Boris Riaboff  
George Eugene Via, Jr.

Sponsors: Ralph Walker and Paul Wood  
Sponsors: Helge Westermann and Francis Day Rogers  
Sponsors: Leopold Arnaud and Bruno Funaro  
Sponsors: Perry Coke Smith and Bruno Funaro  
Note: Under the most recent rules of procedure, sponsorship of applications for membership has been discontinued.

### Associate Membership

Katherine Chandler  
Patricia C. O'Brien  
Dorothy Benz Dallas  
Seymour Louis Fish  
Frank Kucera  
Bernard Prainito  
Alfred W. Wensley

Sponsors: Joseph B. Klein and Ralph Walker  
Sponsors: Roger G. Spross and Robert S. Lundberg  
Sponsors: Joseph B. Klein and Roger G. Spross  
Sponsors: Stanhope B. Ficke and Lester H. Maxon  
Sponsors: Joseph B. Klein and Roger G. Spross  
Sponsors: James R. Colean and Samuel M. Kurtz  
Sponsors: Joseph B. Klein and Joseph L. Hautmann

The picture on page 5 is by Otto Eggers. Mr. Eggers' position among delineators in the twenties and thirties corresponded approximately to that of Enrico Caruso among Italian tenors in the 'teens.