

Commissioner Jason R. Nathan left; NYCAIA Chapter President-Elect William B. Tabler right.

CITY RENEWAL COMMISSIONER OFFERS FIVE POINT PROGRAM

Mr. Jason R. Nathan, City Renewal Commissioner and Chairman, of the New York City Housing and Redevelopment Board spoke before the New York Chapter, American Institute of Architects on September 20. Excerpts from his speech are forthwith.

First: Let me say here and now that I have no toleration for red tape and bureaucratic second-guessing. Endless review of minutiae and lack of firm decisions will not insure good design; they do insure that our best designers and architects will refuse to work for HRB — and some of them have. I want the "architectural drop-outs" back!

We intend to simplify and rationalize the review process in our middle-income housing program. The Board has a prime obligation to insure that the available funds be invested only in those projects that will maintain their values throughout the life of the buildings. But, in addition, no project, regardless of the soundness of its economics, will be allowed to proceed beyond a preliminary stage until the basic design concept has been approved.

Up to now, middle income housing projects have been approved on the basis of a sponsor with a gleam in his eye and evidence of title or an option

on a piece of land, and the name of the architect. To this we intend to add the submission of sketches and other supporting data sufficient to establish the level of quality and the realism of the proposal.

As long as you stay within certain costs as decided upon in the early stages of your submission, and we agree on the basic concept in terms of architectural quality, the full and proper responsibility for the project will be borne by the architect of record. We are not going to second-guess the architects—the burden of responsibility for a creative solution within acceptable costs will be up to them. Once approved, there will be little interference or restrictions from our Board or its staff.

Second: Fees. In the past four years, HRB has increased architects fees by 46 to 60 percent, depending on the complexity of the development. But I am also aware of the argument that fees were far too low to start with.

I am today reopening the entire question of fee schedules, and I am ready to meet with AIA's representatives to explore the entire matter.

My third point relates to urban renewal land sales. Here is an area of vast potential. There are several ways of selling land under Federal regulations; based on price alone, or by auction, or by negotiated bid, among others. HRB's across-the-board policy henceforth will be land disposition based on a fixed price, with quality of design as our primary consideration in the selection of sponsors.

There are various ways in which this decision can be put into effect, including different kinds of competitions and the establishment of a design review process. Here again, I invite AIA to work with us on establishing the proper mechanism. What we need is a continuing design review process that smooths the path to quality, but not a review process which results in a new excuse for delay or indecision.

My fourth point deals also with our renewal program, and one might label this "attention to amenities." Here is the entire area of treatment of

(Continued on Page 2)

NEW YORK CHAPTER, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
115 East 40th St., New York, N. Y. 10016 — MU 9-7969

H. DICKSON McKENNA, Executive Director
MARGOT A. HENKEL, Executive Secretary

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Max O. Urbahn, FAIA | President |
| William B. Tabler, FAIA | First Vice President |
| Philip C. Johnson, FAIA | Vice President |
| Gillet Lefferts, Jr. | Vice President |
| Owen L. Delevante | Secretary |
| Lathrop Douglass, FAIA | Treasurer |

OCULUS COMMITTEE

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| John B. Schwartzman, Acting Chairman and Editor | |
| Elisabeth Coit, FAIA | Forrest Wilson |
| Gerald C. Lenaz | Marvin A. Flam |
| Harvey Kagan | Seymour D. Gurlitz |
| Sheldon Licht | |

NATHAN SPEECH, continued

open spaces, street furniture, pavements, signs, street lights, landscaping and the use of water in pools and fountains—all the things that are found in the public spaces of our projects which contribute significantly to the sense of community. Yet up to now have been developed by any one of a dozen city agencies, each designing and working to its own traditional standards because no single design vision or standards was imposed. HRB itself can have these amenities designed. We intend to do so, and I assure you if we are presented with imaginative designs that can be produced, HRB is prepared to push their installation by other City departments.

Fifth. Our City cannot afford to give up easily its historic landmarks which not only depict the heritage of which we are so proud, but which also gives us a feeling of continuity in a rapidly changing world. The Housing and Redevelopment Board, in cooperation with the Landmarks Preservation Commission, is establishing a joint program which seeks to assure a new level of concern and sensitivity for landmarks buildings and historic districts.

These five points — on fees, red tape, design as the major criterion in land sales, attention to amenities, and landmarks preservation — are by no means a final answer, an absolute assure of quality. But they are a beginning, and they do represent our commitment in tangible terms.

I ask you to join with us in this striving for quality, for our City and her people. Let us not accept past habits as inevitable for today and tomorrow. Let us look for new and better solutions. George Bernard Shaw probably put it best when he said: "Some people see things as they are and ask why. I see things as they have never been, and ask why not." With this vision, this commitment, this determination to achieve a new New York, we can succeed.

ARCH NEEDS SUPPORT

The Architects' Renewal Committee in Harlem, Inc. (ARCH) was established in October 1964 at a meeting held by the NYCAIA Housing Committee. Essentially, ARCH provides free professional assistance to Harlem neighborhood groups who work on community redevelopment projects. Since June, 1966, ARCH has been consultant to the Community Association of The East Harlem Triangle in developing a renewal plan that will shortly be reviewed by the City.

The recent Federal rent supplement program makes private development possible for local, non-profit groups such as ARCH. An Advisory Panel appointed by the NYCAIA (William J. Conklin, Lewis Davis, and William D. Wilson are now serving as members) will help these groups with the selection of project architects. Typical rehabilitation projects involve five to ten buildings and FHA mortgages under Section 221(d)(3) of from \$500,000 to \$1.2 million. Architects interested in receiving contracts to prepare final designs and contract drawings for rehabilitation projects should consult the Chapter's Advisory Panel.

As a result of the recent passage of rent strike legislation ARCH is seeking as many volunteers as possible to inspect buildings and prepare reports for the court. The Department of Buildings under Commissioner Charles Moerdler reports that the rent-impairing violations law will affect over 17,000 buildings. Architects who want to volunteer for building inspection or want further information about the program should telephone ARCH (427-2450) or write to its headquarters at 306 Lenox Avenue, New York, N. Y.

WHO WANTS ANONYMITY?

Architects are often amazed to find that although their buildings are exciting enough to reach the newspapers their firm names do not appear. Recent anonymous architecture in the *New York Times* include a school and a hospital, in spite of the stated policy of that paper to give credit to architects.

With the prevailing journalistic urge to write about landmarks, we find McKim, Mead and White getting more publicity than our distinguished Chapter members.

One way to express concern is to protest to the papers who fail to mention the architectural office responsible. Some architects provide a photograph with the notation, "Not to be reproduced without credit to the architect," or a rendering signed on the picture itself, not on a clippable border. The renderer should also be given credit if he is not on the architect's staff.

PUT A LITTLE ZIP INTO YOUR ADDRESS

The *Oculus* now uses the Bulk Mailing permit of the U. S. Post Office. Please check your address in the current (1965) Chapter Membership Directory; if your Zip Code is not included, send or telephone it to the Chapter Office, 115 East 40, N. Y., N. Y. 10016, MU 9-7969.

The Post Office plans soon to charge extra for bulk mail material lacking zip code numbers.

NYCAIA MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

The Urban America-sponsored Conference in Washington, September 11, 12, 13, included among its events the presentation of HUD Honor Awards for Design Excellence.

Of seven awards chosen from over 350 entries, two of them went to members of the New York Chapter. I. M. Pei and Partners received one for the Society Hill Towers, Philadelphia, (private housing category) and Pomerance and Breines for the Riis Houses Plaza (public housing category). The landscape architects and sponsors concerned were also given awards: Zion and Breen and Alcoa for Society Hill Towers, which was built under the jurisdiction of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia; and M. Paul Friedberg and Associates, the Astor Foundation, and the New York City Housing Authority for Riis Plaza. William J. Conklin was a member of the jury.

Syracuse University reports that Marcel Breuer, FAIA architect and planner, has given drawings and manuscripts to the University which trace his work from 1934 to 1953. Acquisition of the papers was announced by Chancellor William P. Tolley on the eve of the opening (Sept. 27th) in New York of the new home of the Whitney Museum of American Art, designed by Mr. Breuer. As part of the Syracuse University Manuscript Collections, the Breuer papers will be available to students and faculty of the School of Architecture as well as to researchers and scholars interested in the development and the trends of architectural history. There are more than 20,000 items in the Breuer papers. The design and construction of many of Mr. Breuer's buildings may be followed from his earliest ideas and sketches to designs and blueprints.

THE EAGLE, THE COLUMN, AND THE NYCAIA

Two years ago the NYCAIA Executive Committee voted to enlist the services of Chermayeff and Giesmar, Graphics Consultants, to study possibilities for a Chapter emblem. As a result of their study, we now have our own logograph. The design development is shown in the sketch.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The New York Chapter extends its warmest welcome to the following new members:

Corporate

Daniel J. Bertovich
Harold E. Buttrick
James E. Costopoulos
David E. Guise
Stephen Lepp
Melvin S. Leshowitz
Perry D. Lord
Janko I. Rasic

Associate

Wing C. Chin
Fortunato B. Cohen
Alfred W. Wensley

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP

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

Corporate

Harold Gray Caufield
Walter Hart
George Van Deusen Hutton, Jr.
Krzysztof J. Kossak
Paul M. Lochart
Peter Christopher Nanos
David M. Pellish
Hugh Nanton Romney
Theodore David Sherman

Associate

David Brian Shoesmith

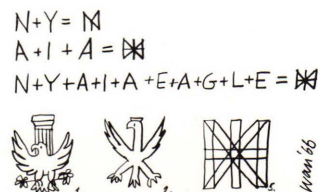
NYCAIA COMING EVENTS

October

• Fall opening meeting of the NYCAIA will be held at the Whitney Museum on Thursday, October 20 at 6 p.m.

November

• Medal of Honor for City Planning will be presented by the NYCAIA, the Brooklyn Chapter AIA, the New York Chapter of the Landscape Architects, and the Metropolitan Section of the Society of Civil Engineers to Samuel Ratensky, AIA. The award will be given at the Tavern on The Green; Wednesday, November 9, at 7:00 p.m.



CONCEPTS IN PLAYGROUNDS

Scale and placement of playforms as related to numbers and ages of children is the subject of our new brochure. Send for "New Concepts in Playgrounds".



PCA

PLAYGROUND CORP. OF AMERICA

Exclusive Agents New York Area

furniture associates

division of lighting associates, inc.

351 east 61st street, new york 21/pl 1-0575

SEVERUD - PERRONE FISCHER STURM - CONLIN - BANDEL

Consulting Engineers

Reports - Buildings - Airports
Special Structures
Structural Design - Supervision

OLKO ENGINEERING

Consultants — Designers

Structural and Civil Engineering
500 FIFTH AVE. NYC BR 9-2822

RAPHAEL OFFICE SERVICES

Specification Typing, Mimeo, Offset

18 East 41st Street
New York, N.Y. 10017
MU 3-4324 - 2787



NEW YORK CHAPTER
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
115 EAST 40TH ST., NEW YORK 10016

U.S. POSTAGE
BULK RATE

PAID

Permit No. 9272
New York, New York