

Oculus

Chapter Reviews **Westway**

On Nov. 18 '76 the Chapter held a well attended meeting on Westway. Norbert Turkel, the Chapter's Urban Planning Committee Chairman presented a concise summary of the Chapter's involvement since Nov. '74.

Lowell K. Bridwell, Executive Director of the Westside Highway Project, and Victor Marrero, the Chairman of the City Planning Commission were present as the Chapter's invited guests to answer questions and to provide accurate and factual information to the members. Mr. Bridwell did just that. He displayed a copy of the recently released Environmental Impact Statement prepared by his office. It is a most imposing document of some 320 pages. He pointed out that it was beyond the scope of the two and a half hour meeting to offer any reasonable summary of the document and indeed it is even beyond the scope of OCULUS to fully summarize Westway, the data presented at the meeting, and all the pertinent issues which revolve around the subject.

It can be said however that Mr. Bridwell offered thorough answers to previously prepared written questions.

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The Executive Committee **It Works**



Sketch of some of the Executive Committee members at their Nov. 9 '76 meeting. From l. to r. John Belle, Roy Friedberg, Anna M. Halpin, Peter Samton, and Richard G. Stein. Drawing by Denis Glen Kuhn.

The pattern of these monthly afternoon meetings has changed little over the years. An hour before starting time, the president, first vice-president, secretary and treasurer meet in the executive director's office. They preview items on the agenda and often look ahead to anticipate problems facing architects, or New York City, or the way the Chapter functions.

Six members are a quorum. Seven members are present, so the president calls the meeting to order. It begins with a report from the secretary proposing individuals for membership, transfer or termination. The committee discusses, votes and passes on to the financial condition and prospects of the Chapter which are described by the treasurer. The president begins his report. Two more members drift in, help themselves to a potato chip apiece from a well-stocked sideboard and join the discussion on the intended use of electric heat at Battery Park City. The Chapter had opposed its use by UDC on Welfare (now Roosevelt) Island in 1972. Now, the chairwoman of the

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The Executive Committee It Works

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Chapter's Energy and Environment Committee urges the executive committee to reaffirm the Chapter's opposition to electric heat, Debate ensues. The matter is put to a vote, and passes without dissent, as urged. A new statement will be drawn up. The executive director will follow through in making this position public.

Next item. It is billed on the agenda as: "Alliance for Women in Architecture. The president will report on his attendance at the Alliance's last meeting." A contretemps. One male chauvinist committee member asks dryly, but with tongue in cheek, whether "last meeting" means there will be no more such reports. He is rebuked for his pains by a conscientious president. The Alliance complains it is more effective through its own organization than through the AIA. An ad hoc committee is proposed, to study the affirmative action program for women. A list of candidates for national AIA awards is read, after switching a candidate from one category to another, the group moves to send the entire list to the national jury.

It is dark and the lights are on behind the white marble of the public library as the visitor stalks in, tall, thin and hollow-eyed. He is invited to sit, and to comment on the Chapter's handling of the Villard Houses/Palace Hotel controversy. The visitor, an architect member of a Community Board task force that opposed the solution approved by the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate. It is suggested that he write up his criticisms for OCULUS.

Committee members begin to grow restive; one or two edge towards the bar and another checks his commuter schedule. But the agenda is still alive and new business beckons. Two candidates are proposed for the Fine Arts Federation, and will be contacted in the next week to see if they will serve. Three dates in early '77 are proposed for chapter-wide discussion meetings. A position paper submitted to Jimmy Carter's campaign staff before the election, will be expanded upon and again submitted. The president describes his practical response to a reportedly unrealistic energy memo from the national AIA.

A staff person next produces a long list of members who owe dues to the Chapter, State and National AIA. Many famous names. Considerable embarrassment all around. Pity to lose them--but idea of special reminder called discriminatory. Final effort urged: Last letter reminder will go to all delinquents.

A motion to adjourn is carried without discussion. Commuters don coats and rush to the station, six blocks away. Some of the locals chat in a small group around the bar; others make for the subway; one hardy member sets out for his two and a half mile hike home to write up the minutes. □

Stephen A. Kliment

Candidates for Membership

Information received by the Secretary of the NYC/AIA regarding the qualifications of candidates for membership will be considered confidential:

CORPORATE

Christopher D. Chadbourne
Andre M. Hurni
John H. Machinist
Georgia S. Porter

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATE

C. Jay Hoe

ASSOCIATE

Dilip K. Trivedi

New Members

The NYC/AIA Welcomes the following members:

CORPORATE

Norman K. Dorf
Lenora F. Garfinkel
David R. Gura
Peter C. Kurth
Rudolph F. Moreno
Kenneth A. Schwartz
William J. Slack

ASSOCIATE

Peter B. Hansel (AIA)
Ralph A. Krass (AIA)
Susan P. Schaub (AIA)
O'Byrne Waithe (AIA)

*The (AIA) is to distinguish
National Associates from
Chapter Associates.*

A Trip to Ultima Thule by Bryant P. Gould

Last Christmas Eve at our local cafe,
A drifter lurched in from the cold,
He slumped at the bar in an abject way,
And this is the story he told:

"In '74 I was famous and rich,
An F. of the A. I. of A.,
Then came a man with a siren's pitch,
That promised prestige and high pay."
"

"The client's whiskers were white and tufty,
He was jolly and fat as a buddha,
I knew in a flash it was Santa in mufti,
But I failed to scent barracuda."

"He needed new shops and a reindeer shed,
Plus a brig for helpers unruly,
So I bought 8 dogs and an arctic sled,
And set out for Ultima Thule."

"I inspected the site in a blizzard,
I wallowed and slipped and fell,
I was frozen through to the gizzard,
And kicked by the reindeer as well."

"At last I mushed home to the City,"
(Here the speaker stifled a sob)
"And drove all my staff without pity,
To get out from under the job,

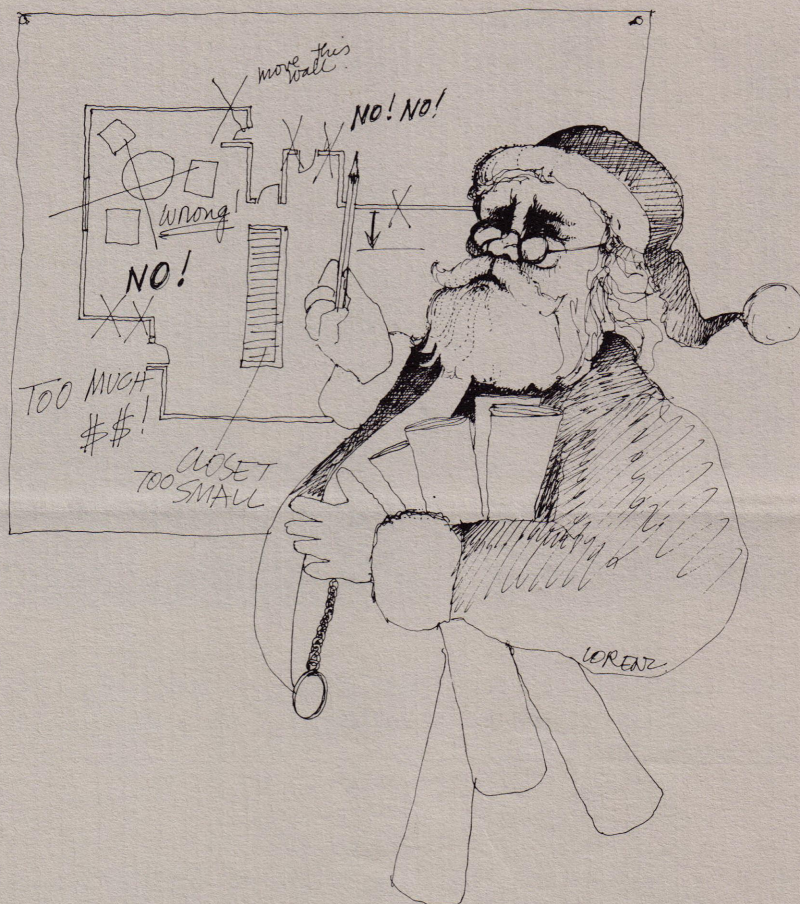
But the Builder was Santa's cousin,
and like Santa, a fly-by-night,
He committed mistakes by the dozen,
Then charged extra to set them aright."

"Came the day of the dedication,
It was well-covered by press and T.V.,
They gave Santa a tedious oration,
But said not a word about me."

"As he stood beside Blitzen and Donner,
A spurious smile on his face,
All the buildings split loudly asunder,
And sank in the snow without trace."

"Like a contagion the word went round,"
'It's the fault of the Architect!'
"It was ice in the concrete I later found,
But by then my career was wrecked."

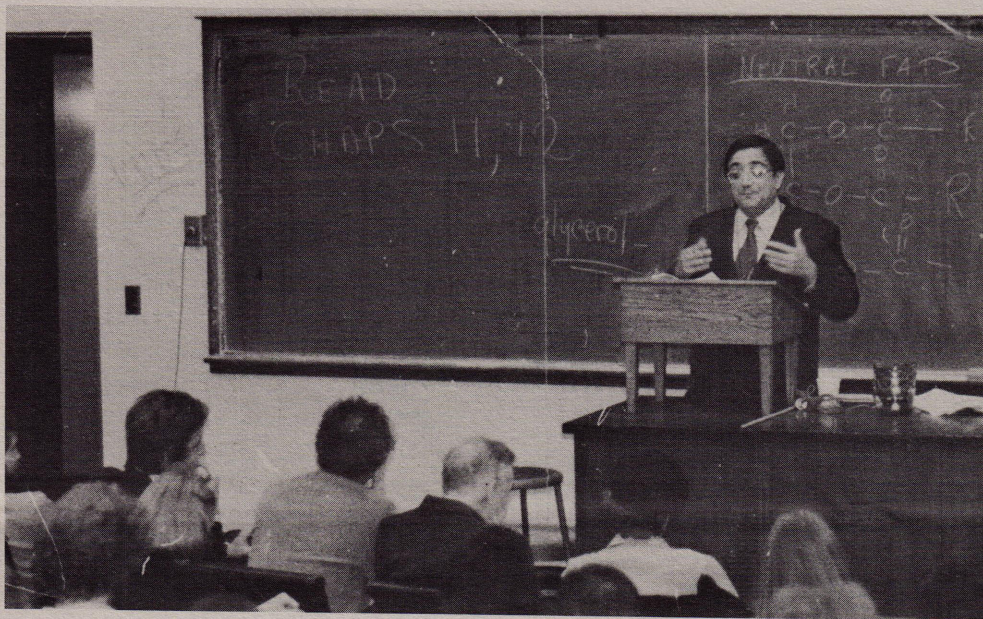
"And here's the final turn of fate,
The jest that burns to my core,
'I'm starting work tonight at eight,
Playing Santa at Macy's toy store!'"



*Drawing of Santa by Albert Lorenz, Assistant
Professor Pratt Institute.*

*Bryant P. Gould is a member
of the New York Chapter.*

John Zuccotti From City Planning to City Hall



John Zuccotti, First Deputy Mayor of New York City, during his lecture at Columbia University this fall. Photo by Stephen N. Carter.

When he moved from the City Planning Commission where he was its Chairman to the position of First Deputy Mayor, John Zuccotti adopted a new set of customs and a new vocabulary. At City Planning, he states, we talked of community and citizen participation, at City Hall he deals more with demonstrations. At City Planning he called for stage implementation, at City Hall he thinks in terms of moving things right away. At City Planning he hypothesized about goals, at City Hall he talks about "the bottom line." At City Planning he discussed resources, and at City Hall he bargains primarily about money.

He relates that at City Planning he could establish his own timetable. At City Hall the agenda is usually set by outside forces such as police strikes, strikes of hospital workers, and a projected increase in the transit fare. At City Planning it took years before a project was built and the impact on the Community felt. At City Hall there is a daily feedback. While at City Planning, Zuccotti made an attempt to go out into the neighborhoods and listen to what the people had to say. "At City Hall, he states, the neighborhoods come to us."

He sees that people want their government to function well, to deliver its promises. "If we had the capacity, he said, to do what New Yorkers expect us to do, we could provide good housing at reasonable rates, splendid schools and marvelous beaches, and we could wipe out crime and drug addiction, and we could clean up after thousands of dogs." He often sees the

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The Chapter vs. Community Planning Boards

As a member of Community Board 5 since Mar. '74 Chapter member Jim Morgan has found himself on the opposite side of the NYC/AIA on two important City Planning Commission proposals: the Open Spaces Amendments to the Zoning Resolution in '74 and the Villard Houses/Palace Hotel legislation in '76. He was the Chairman of the Villard Houses Task Force CB5. The following was submitted by Jim.

It is important that NYC/AIA develop a positive policy toward Community Boards. Under the City Charter revisions, these Boards become the first agency for review of land use proposals requiring zoning variances. Many Chapter members will be appearing before the Boards as parties to such applications. The necessity for optimal communication between architects and Board members thus has a pragmatic basis the Chapter cannot ignore. Furthermore the Boards will need as much technical assistance as they can get. Chapter members who live or work in a Board district could well serve as volunteer sources of information.

In developing this relationship, NYC/AIA must accept the political nature of Community Boards. That does not mean party politics it means that the Boards generally put community and human needs before technical and legal considerations. Community Boards learn, as in the Harwood case, (the proposal by a private developer to integrate a commercial retail facility with City owned open space at 59th Street and 2nd Avenue) that they cannot approve well-intentioned concepts, as the Chapter tends to do, because the Boards must

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Guest Column

A Time for Humility by Roger Starr

Roger Starr is Henry Luce Professor of Urban Values at New York University. He spent nearly three years as New York City's Housing and Development Administrator, and five as Chairman of the City's Rent Guidelines Board. For fifteen years before '74, he was the Chapter's neighbor at Citizens Housing and Planning Council. His most recent book was Housing and the Money Market. America's Housing Challenge will appear in '77.

These have been humiliating years for architects. The drawing boards stand about awkward and waiting to be spoken for, like folding tables stored in the caterer's basement during a fast. As an ex-administrator, with no money to spend and growing doubts about the wisdom of spending what one hasn't, I may have no words of cheer, but I can perhaps offer a few of consolation.

These have been bad years too for others who make their livelihood turning the ideas of architects into three-dimensional realities. The blueprinters are truly blue; the engineers have moved to Iran spending sleepless nights in airports; the mason tenders are hopeless and hodless. Stretching far out into the horizon, a long line of journeymen and contractors and materials men waits for the happy word to be passed down that somewhere an architect has been offered money to raise a pencil once more. The news would mean as much to them as to the architect.

We are worried, all of us in the world of shelter and monument, about our living and our liabilities. But there is another worry, too, that troubles our nights. I refer to the worry that the profession, in the case of architects like you, or our calling, as in the case of people like me, must necessarily be less significant than we had thought them to be, for otherwise, such calamities as this idleness, and the readiness of the world to manage without architecture could not happen. We worry that our pride and aspirations for a better world may have been misguided.

In one sense, at least, the imposition of humility is useful. It is probably good that the drop in demand for architectural services tends, for a while at any rate, to make us question some of our elaborate notions of our own importance. People like me, who work at arranging for housing to be built, need to be reminded that the difference between bad and good housing, while important, is not the most important determinant of our civilization. It is probably good that the young recognize the connection between the construction of shelter, and basic economic facts. An economic order is not necessarily capable of producing better shelter if the originator's notion of better shelter excludes such mundane questions as original cost and maintenance cost and safety and speed of construction. Perhaps we might have guessed that we were approaching some sort of climax when we heard the architectural students wander further and further afield from the basic issues of creating enclosed space. "We will not work for the owners of buildings," read the manifesto of a group of architectural students a few years ago, "we will only work for the users of buildings." I was not sure what this meant when I read it; I'm sure I know now. The students thought they had a choice of who it was they were going to work for. Economic downturn helps to concentrate the mind.

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OVER-THE-COUNTER QUOTATIONS

Denis Glen Kuhn

A Time for Humility

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As our industry becomes less grandiose in its ambitions, it will gradually find itself returning to work, making homes for people in which they can keep their fears under control, maintain reasonable sanitation, count on decent plumbing and heating, construct their own personal relationships as they wish, and learn to do part of the maintenance themselves. As we go back to work, happily our vision of life's possibilities will expand once again; we will once again discover the gifts of art in shaping human experience. They will always astound us. Last summer, for example, my young temporary driver of a city car followed me into the Bobst Library at N.Y.U. He was waiting for me on the steps of the building when I emerged. We had scarcely exchanged a word before that moment but suddenly he burst out: "Sir, that's the most beautiful building. I didn't know a building could make me feel like that!"

The time for string quartets will come again, it always has. But they exert all the more profound an influence on us after we have spent some years, humiliated, on finger exercises and scales. □

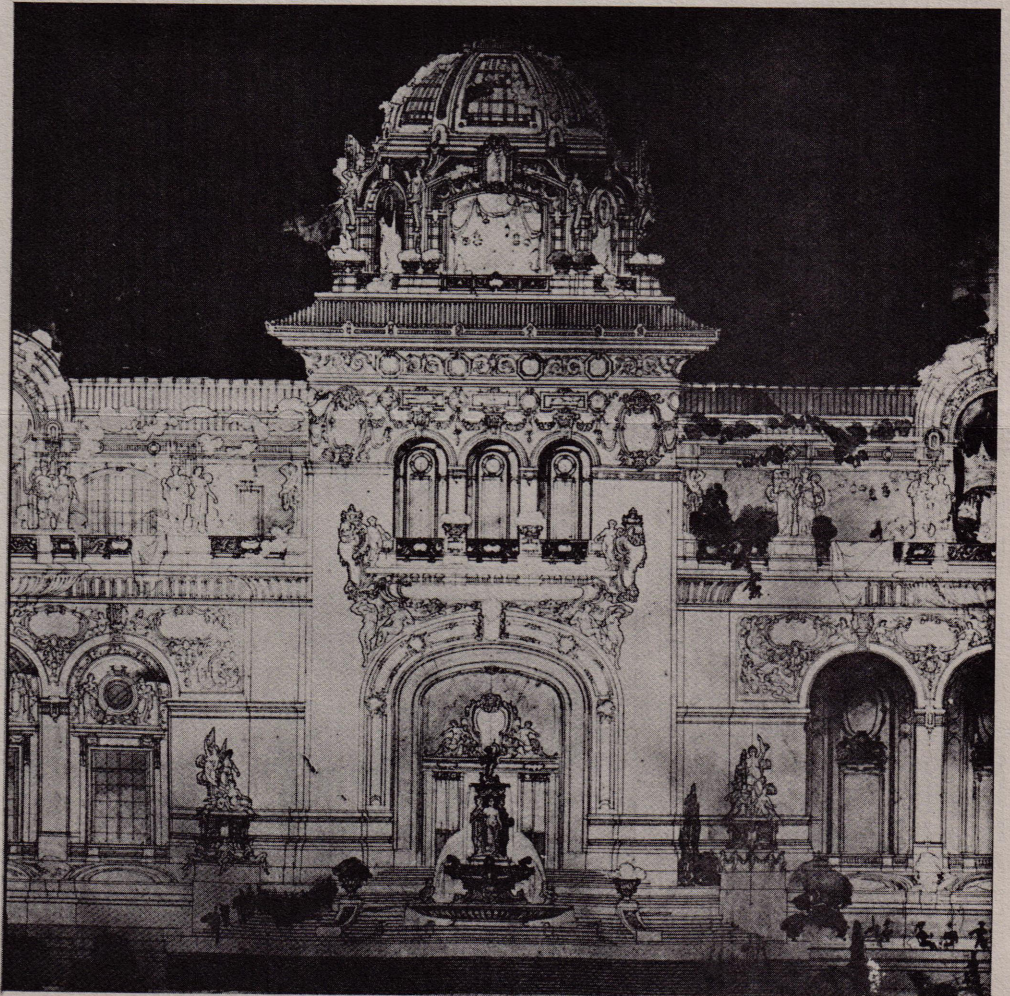
Center section of Frederic C. Hirons 14 foot drawing which won the Paris Prize in 1906. Original is at the NIAE.

NIAE Rehabs Hirons Prize

The National Institute for Architectural Education has announced the '77 Hirons Prize, an architectural design competition for "The Rehabilitation, Recycling or Restoration of an Old or Historic Building." The competition is open to all persons in the architectural field under 35 years of age, up to June 1'77, and who are not enrolled in a "full time" architectural academic program.

The program has been formulated to promote entrepreneurship in architecture. It offers the young professional the opportunity to submit a realistic proposal for the rehabilitation, recycling or restoration of a building in his own community. The proposals will be judged by a jury from the NIAE and invited guests. Winners will be awarded prize funds with which to complete their proposals so that they can be used by the competitors in their community, city or region to assist them in bringing such proposals to fruition as projects.

The competition may be done anytime between Jan.15 and June 15 '77. All persons interested may obtain a copy of the program by writing to: Howard H. Juster, Director of Education, National Institute for Architectural Education, 139 East 52nd Street, New York, New York 10022. □



John Zuccotti From City Planning to City Hall

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role of government as the "fall guy" faced with so many demands it struggles to keep its balance. The First Deputy Mayor feels that there are governmental imperatives that are not necessarily solutions.

● **Legislating:** passing a law that is drafted in such a way that it cannot solve the problems but only appease the constituencies battling about the issue. The result has been to over promise. He feels this is the problem with our national housing policy.

● **Organizing:** the irresistible urge to organize and reorganize. Zuccotti spoke of Mayor Lindsay's reorganizing 50 agencies into 9 "super agencies," resulting in power struggles and poor communications. Zuccotti is dismantling the "super agencies," "unorganizing the reorganizing," as he puts it.

● **Auditing:** Zuccotti lives with this every day. He sees that auditing has two grievous flaws: the focus is on getting rid of political corruption of one kind or another, while operational inefficiencies are ignored. The other shortcoming is that auditing finds problems but never solves them. He says, there is more emphasis on passing a law instead of making it function properly. Public acclaim goes generally to the fault finders not to the problem solvers.

Zuccotti maintains that action and planning must be decisive if the City's three year financial plan will balance out by '78. "Planning must be more clearly defined, Zuccotti commented, and become part of the decision making process. The City should be criticized for not matching its goals with its resources."

The Business community has urged the City to develop a five year Economic Recovery Plan. Zuccotti feels that under our present form of government that such a plan, would stray from the reality of the situation. Eighty percent of the City's jobs are in the private sector, over which the city management has no direct control. Zuccotti said, a reality must be kept in mind that the City will define the task in the framework of what it can do. Society must plan in order to allocate its resources. These resources must be dispersed intelligently and productively and on the basis of the goals derived from a democratic consensus.

Whether he is in City Planning or City Hall, John Zuccotti believes that a strong central power can balance city life and local priorities. He says, "power should be shared not abdicated or dispersed. Plans and actions are given their validating force by the people they serve."□

Stephen N. Carter



*Sketch of John Zuccotti at
Columbia University. Drawing
by Denis Glen Kuhn.*