

Samton Calls for More Membership Participation

The first fall issue of OCULUS traditionally carries a message from the new chapter president. It has often been a rallying cry to the membership, a vision of possibilities with which few would quarrel.

Last year Richard Stein stressed the urgency for a massive program of neighborhood and community revitalization and urged the chapter committees to investigate opportunities in these areas. The year before, Robert Gatje noted that the chapter was "embarking upon a broad study of the ways in which concerned citizens and architects can best contribute ideas and services to the resolution of some of the awesome problems confronting our city - and all cities." In 1974, Herbert Oppenheimer's statement in part discussed how we architects... "have been uniquely licensed to maintain the physical quality of life. It is...futile for us to complain that our portion of responsibility has been usurped by the developers, the builders, the politicians and the bankers...we architects are held responsible for the leviathan disorder created by their decisions. But as long as we bear the blame, let us also

continued on page 2

NYSAA Restructuring: Chapter Meeting Sept. 28



"We need improved communications."

The proposal to make the N.Y. State Association of Architects a council of chapters instead of a membership organization is well advanced. At present all AIA members must belong. A chapter meeting Wed., Sept. 28 at 5:45 - cash bar at 5:00 - has been called to discuss it prior to its being voted upon at the NYSAA convention Oct.

13-15.

NYSAA represents architects in Albany with the Legislature and the State agencies. That is its main purpose, and it should be able to function quite efficiently if directly controlled by the eleven AIA

continued on page 4

Chapter Urges Delay On MOMA Decision

Enclosed with this mailing of OCULUS is a chapter statement recommending "that the City Planning Commission reserve judgment on the Museum of Modern Art's application at this time because we do not believe that the available options have been sufficiently explored." The statement was submitted by Peter Samton at a CPC hearing Sept. 7 on MOMA's application for a special permit involving a 42-story expansion of the Museum.

MOMA's proposal has raised a storm of controversy, largely because of the urban design implications of a mid-block tower on 53rd Street. A special chapter committee consisting of John Belle, chairman, William Conklin, Charles Hoyt, Charles Hughes, and Norbert Turkel met numerous times including a meeting in the office of the architect, Cesar Pelli, and with MOMA director Richard Oldenburg to analyze the financial basis of the proposal. Messrs. Oldenburg, Pelli, Drexler and others presented the design to a packed chapter meeting on Aug. 10, after which the executive and special committees reviewed the discussion over dinner.

On the 22nd in a special meeting the Executive Committee approved the Belle committee's recommendations. It was felt that the statement to be presented to the Planning Commission fairly represented a wide base of chapter opinion. □

Continued from page 1

seek to enjoy the responsibility." And four years ago, during the last mayoral campaign, Tim Prentice suggested..."to further increase the voice of the profession in the public arena, we should constantly look for ways in which the architects can exercise their skills more broadly outside the immediate client-consultant relationship...by becoming increasingly active in the communities."

My point in recalling these statements is to show how the chapter leadership has made repeated efforts to encourage the membership to contribute to the profession's effectiveness in a city that is struggling with the most serious economic and social problems.

While the chapter has established a considerable reputation as a factor in New York affairs, has it really achieved the kind of progress for both the city and the profession that it should? Do not most of us continue to fight our own personal battles rather than join forces? It is ironic that while a remarkable number of New York architects have been recognized individually as spokesmen for design excellence, the city in general, and most of us in particular, would benefit more from greater awareness of "The New York Fifteen Hundred" (NYC/AIA) than from "The Five."

Where the chapter has succeeded in playing a constructive role in city affairs, it has usually been accomplished through the devotion and hard work of a

smallish contingent of activists aware of the power they have in coming together as a professional body. Committees with too few active members have influenced actions of the Planning Commission, the Board of Estimate, the Board of Standards and Appeals, the City Council, as well as other city and state agencies and the construction and real estate industries in general.

At the annual meeting in June I stressed the necessity of picking battles and fighting them together - for further organizing the great latent resources of the chapter so it could be a more assertive force and remind the city's leadership of the increasing commitment we all have to making and keeping a livable environment in New York City. Each of us should take advantage of the organization we affectionately call "The Chapter" and participate in those areas where we can both add our skills and, of course, benefit from the input from others. Theodore Roosevelt, one-time New York City Police Commissioner, said "every man owes a part of his time and money to the profession or business in which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere."

I hope that in the course of this year's activities we will see our chapter in operation more like a large office with a significant sharing of responsibility, so that a host of different available talent can be brought to bear on the array of problems facing all of us. □

Peter Samton

Chapter Meets with Candidates for Mayor



Bella Abzug and Carolyn Konheim, her campaign co-chairwoman, meet with Rosaria Piomelli, Herbert Oppenheimer, Jonathan Barnett, Jordan Gruzen. Joseph Wasserman and George Lewis were also present.

Photo by George Lewis

Groups of chapter members met before the Sept. 7 primary with Mayor Beame, Ed Koch, Bella Abzug, Joel Harnett, and representatives of Mario Cuomo, Herman Badillo and Percy Sutton. There will be further meetings during the campaign, probably arranged jointly with the engineers, planners and landscape architects.

The point was made to all candidates that the City has not taken command of the allocation of Federal funds - that there is no coherent plan for rehabilitating areas of the city; projects are approved in locations hopelessly deteriorated since they were initiated. The Mayor said he expected better coordination with the new regional head of HUD, Thomas Appleby. The other candidates viewed rational allocation of Federal funds as a major issue.

A recurring subject was the caliber of mayoral appointees - HDA, Planning Commission,

Board of Standards and Appeals, Municipal Services, Building Dept., DPW. Most of Mr. Beame's challengers expressed an intention to consult the Chapter; Ms. Abzug and Cuomo's people particularly made a point of wanting our advice (one of the main purposes of these meetings was to establish contacts to be pursued in the future).

The importance of an effective Planning Commission was stressed in all meetings, and the Mayor was complimented for his support of a strong staff.

Beame viewed Westway as high priority; Cuomo had not fully studied it; Koch and Abzug opposed it.

The matter of large in-house architectural staffs preempting City work at the expense of private practitioners was brought up at each meeting. The Mayor said increased capital budget funds would soon permit retention of private consultants; the other

candidates looked on this issue as an example of how City policies have been driving the private sector out of town. Ed Koch, who spent 90 minutes at chapter headquarters, was quite critical of civil service inefficiency.

The Political Affairs Committee, Herbert Oppenheimer, chairman, organized the meetings. □

George Lewis

Samton Criticizes Murdoch's NY POST Policy

In a letter to Rupert Murdoch, Peter Samton expressed alarm that the Post has sharply reduced its previously good coverage of planning and historic preservation. "It is disturbing to the N.Y. Chapter/AIA...that the Post would turn away from matters in which so many New Yorkers have a deep interest," he said.

Samton's letter was acknowledged in two brief sentences by an assistant to Murdoch. □

Document Sales Reminder 1:00 to 4:00 ONLY

Members are reminded that sales of documents at the chapter office or by telephone are handled between 1:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon. This was instituted a year ago because of reduction in staff. □

Dudley a Candidate for NYSAA President-Elect

continued from page 1

chapters plus the New York Society (a non-AIA organization here in the city). Each would have one director on the new board, except that our chapter - with over half the AIA members in the state - would have 3. Upcoming issues such as consolidation of State construction agencies, required continuing education for license renewal, and licensing of interior designers, would be addressed more expeditiously than now.

The headquarters would continue in Albany, with a new executive director, Ms. Mildred Wennar (Helene Conroy resigned earlier this year but is staying on through the transition). Martin Schaum would continue as NYSAA's very effective legislative consultant.

In a parallel development, arrangements are nearly complete for the national AIA to collect all individual dues on one bill to include national and chapter dues, and an amount to cover NYSAA expenses (the latter will replace NYSAA dues). Staff time now spent keeping track of dues will be freed, and members will receive one consolidated bill instead of three. □

Chapter vice president George Dudley is opposed by Milton Petrides of the Long Island Chapter for the position of president-elect of the New York State Association of Architects. Petrides is a vice president of NYSAA.

The Chapter strongly supports Dudley, who has had very extensive experience in New York State affairs, particularly as Chairman of the New York State Council on Architecture 1967-75. □

New York Chapter
The American Institute of Architects
20 West 40th Street
New York, New York 10018
212/730-1221
George S. Lewis, Executive Director

Executive Committee 1977/78
Peter Samton, President
Charles E. Hughes, 1st Vice President
George A. Dudley, Vice President
Joseph Wasserman, Vice President
Stephen A. Kliment, Secretary
Anna M. Halpin, Treasurer
Jonathan Barnett, Director
Michael McCarthy, Director
Rosaria Piomelli, Director
John Belle, Director
Roy Friedberg, Director
Robert A.M. Stern, Director

Oculus Committee
Denis Glen Kuhn, Editor/Chairman
Albert Barash
Stephen N. Carter
Mary Jane Clark
Bonnell Irvine
Lawrence Levine
Kenneth T. Lydon
Kenneth Ricci
William C. Shopsin

Robert A.M. Stern
Executive Committee Liaison
Stephen A. Kliment
Secretary, NYC/AIA
Cathanne Piesla
Chapter Staff Member

Candidates for Membership

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

Corporate

Edward Blankenship
William Bobenhausen
Donald L. Bostwick, II
R. Scott Bromley
Frank J. Capone
Seymour Churgin
Carl R. Goedecke
Charles Marks
Robin Moore
Takeo Nakata
Richard L. Rice, Jr.
Burton L. Roslyn
Albert G. Saman
Steven I. Steinberg
William A. Swaan
Pak-Cheung Wong

AIA Associate

Donald Lavin
Roger Torriero

New Members

The NYC/AIA Welcomes the following New Members:

Corporate

Henry H. Abernathy
Charles E. Baskett
Peter M. Bernholz
John A. Caiazzo
Stanton Eckstut
Joseph L. Fleischer
Anthony Giordano
John P. Hesslein
Douglas R. Hoffman
Carl K.W. Mark
Hortensia Mateos
Richard N. Pollack
Benedetto Puccio
Henry C. Smith-Miller
William T. Springer
Robert C. White
Jane Yu