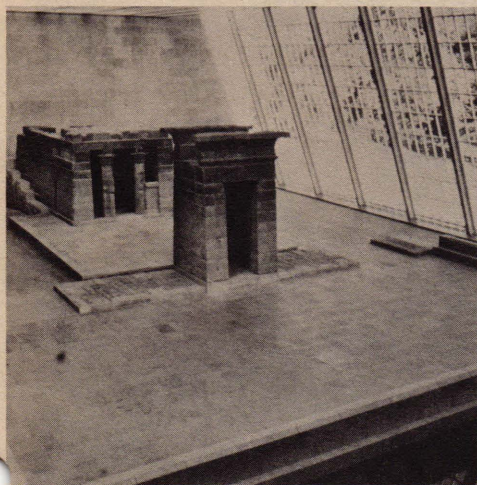


Oculus

Chapter Annual Meeting to be Held on Wed. 20th June at Metropolitan Museum



*The Temple of Dendur in the
new Sackler Wing.*

The Metropolitan Museum has graciously made it possible for members and friends to gather in the Grace Rainey Auditorium (5:45 p.m.) for the giving of awards and induction of William Conklin as our new president - and then, a generous and very special gesture on the Museum's part, to go on into the area of the Temple of Dendur for refreshments.

This year's awardees are as follows:

Medal of Honor, our highest award to an architect, George Nelson.

Award of Merit, our highest award to a non-architect, James Marston Fitch.

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Chapter Celebration for I.M. Pei. See pages 2 and 3.

Chapter Holds Reception for I.M. Pei at Guggenheim Museum in Celebration of his AIA Gold Medal

I.M. Pei said it was a cliché to mention his family's and partners' contributions when discussing the gold medal he is to receive from the Institute at the 1979 convention.

Pei recalled that when Philip Johnson received his medal last year Johnson said he had to divide it in two for himself and Burgee. But Pei said that he will have to break his medal into many more parts, at the reception in the Guggenheim Museum on 31 May '79, and he acknowledged his partners - Henry Cobb, Eason Leonard, Leonard Jacobson, James I. Freed and Werner Wandelmaier.

His acknowledgements were not clichés, as he feared they would be, but just right. Shouts went up for the various partners from different groups of rooters in the audience as the partners were introduced by Pei smashing any impression of their anonymity.

But it was Pei's party and he seemed to enjoy every minute of it. Open, friendly, confident, he described the practice of architecture in New York as the "cutting edge" and said that he was proud to be part of it, surrounded by his distinguished colleagues.

Over 750 people were also most certainly happy to be part of the celebration. Pei said that he only regreted one thing -- that it was not his firm that had designed the Guggenheim. The final acknowledgement, most fittingly, went to Frank Lloyd Wright. □



I.M. Pei



Mrs. I.M. Pei



John Belle

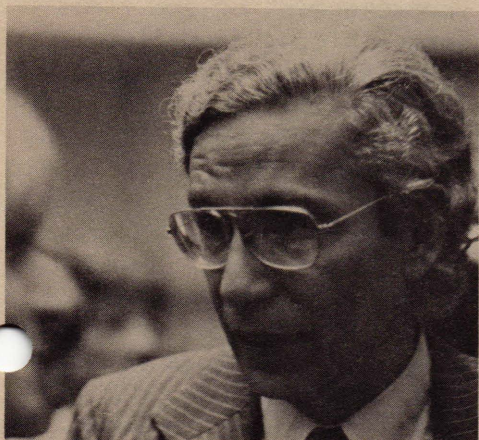


Philip Johnson with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Meier.

Donald Elliott Looks Back to Past Accomplishments at the City Planning Commission and Ahead to the Many Exciting Development Proposals for New York



Joseph Wasserman



Alex Cooper



Iris Alex and Susan Niculescu

Photos of I.M. Pei celebration by D.G. Kuhn.

An office in Rockefeller Center, New York's premier urban complex, would be the right place for a lawyer who once served as Chairman of the City Planning Commission and now specializes in an innovative brand of real estate development. Donald Elliott, whose spacious, comfortable office is high in Rockefeller Center, loves New York. He also understands the ins and outs of power in the city.

Elliott enjoys talking, with characteristic enthusiasm and humor, about its potential for progress and development. "I've always been interested in the city," he says. After heading a neighborhood renewal group, he became Counsel to the Mayor in the first Lindsay Administration. A year later the Mayor appointed him Chairman of the City Planning Commission, a post he held through the turbulent years of the late sixties.

Not the first, nor the last, lawyer to be Chairman, he is proud of the large number of architects whom he brought onto the Commission's staff. There was one when he started, 75 when he left. It was easy, he recalls, to attract talented young architects, "because architects are trained to make decisions. They get things done."

Elliott considers the creation of the Urban Design Group, "which resulted in improved standards for public design," and the '69 Plan for New York City to be the most satisfying achievements of his term. Although the Plan has been largely ignored - the fate of so

many plans, - he believes it set goals for the city which are still valid. He is also proud of the Special District zoning idea, which began with the Special Theatre District, trading off floor area bonuses in return for the development of new theatres. The Special Districts have become an important tool of City Planning.

Another major accomplishment was the establishment of the Community Planning Boards. "They represent a change from the urban renewal type of planning to a more decentralized process. It is important to get support for projects from the local community." But the worries about the "balkanization" of the city and believes in the need for a degree of centralized planning, the need to consider city-wide priorities along with local ones. "With less public building going on, this conflict is less apparent now. But it still exists."

Elliott is unabashedly pro development. He looks forward to the construction of the new Convention Center, although he favored the proposed 48th Street site over the chosen 34th Street location. And he thinks that "Westway is a terrific idea - using a road to create land, to provide access to the water." While he contends that "this road wouldn't generate new traffic," he would support it "even if it did increase pollution." The price, he thinks, would be worth the benefits. He adds, "the real world is imperfect."

Commenting on the current "superheated development climate" - which he thinks will

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Honorary Member: Adolf Placzek, Avery Librarian.

Andrew J. Thomas Pioneer in Housing Award: John Louis Wilson.

Harry B. Rutkins Award, George Lewis.

Special Citations will be given to the National Institute of Architectural Education/NIAE; The Drawing Center; Arthur Rosenblatt, the Metropolitan's Vice President, Architecture and Planning; Barry Benepe for creating Greenmarket; The Architectural League; and Walter McQuade.

Following the awards Arthur Rosenblatt will describe the Museum's expansion and answer questions.

The Museum will cover the costs of guards and related expenses, and the \$10 charge will cover an open bar and hors d'oeuvres. Please send checks to the chapter office or call by June 20 to make reservations. □

New York Chapter
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New York, New York 10018
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Denis Glen Kuhn
Kenneth Ricci
Cathanne Piesla
Chapter Staff Member



Donald Elliott. Photo by Bonnie Parsons Marxer.

continued from page 3.

cool off but not completely freeze over as in '74, Elliott says that "the City has the opportunity to shape development with reasonably sophisticated zoning and taxation techniques. "For example, with most office construction occurring on the East Side, "it would be useful for the City to encourage westward movement, possibly with greater tax abatements and zoning bonuses in targeted areas." To succeed, it is important to give the development community advance notice: "you can't expect developers to react immediately to changes in planning strategy."

Two projects, with which he is currently involved, particularly excite him. The proposed Museum of Modern Art apartment tower, for which Elliott fashioned the innovative and controversial legal strategy is "about to go." Negotiations with a new developer are underway. The

plan will allow MoMA to expand its gallery space and to increase its revenues by putting tax payments from the apartment tower into a trust for use by the museum. He thinks that the mid-block tower "won't assault people, won't be out of scale." The rule of building high on corners, low on mid-blocks, "doesn't hold in the concentrated city center. The office center is a forest." The other project, now in the planning stage, proposes the redevelopment of the Times Square blocks from 41st to 43rd Sts. between 7th and 8th Aves. The plan calls for renovated theatres, Film and TV studios, 'high-tech' audio entertainments, and a shopping promenade: in all, an urban amusement center. As counsel to the 42nd St. Redevelopment Corp., sponsor for the project along with the Ford Foundation, Elliott says, "it will be built" and he foresees the project spurring development in the Times Square area.

Donald Elliott is a realist. He understands the political complexities of the city, its formidable social and economic problems. But he remains an optimist, saying "the future of the city is bright." And he makes this future sound very possible. □

William Stein