

# OCULUS

an eye on new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 50, Number 8, April 1988



*The new park facing the Javits Convention Center, where the AIA Convention will open in May. Photo: Stan Ries*



# OCULUS

## NEW YORK CITY: BIRTHPLACE OF AIA

Volume 50, Number 8, April 1988

### Oculus

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*Plaque commemorating the founding of the  
AIA is on the Trinity & U.S. Realty  
Buildings immediately north of Trinity  
Church.*

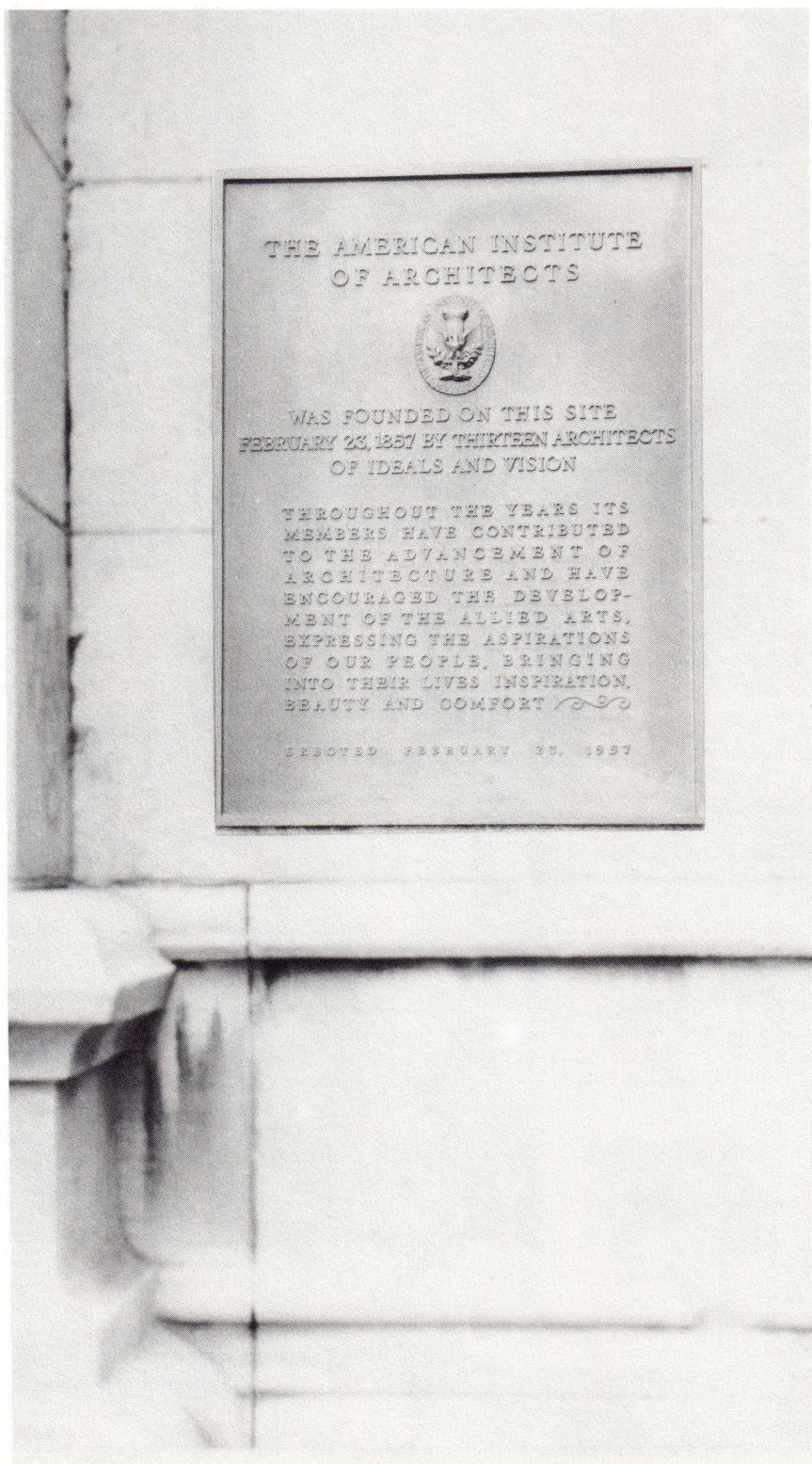


Photo: Stan Ries



**Steven H. Rosenfeld, AIA, currently manages the New York office of GSGSB Architects/Engineers/Planners. He has served on the Institute staff 1970-74 as Director, Professional Practice Programs, and now serves on the Convention Public Relations Committee.**

by Steven H. Rosenfeld

The AIA National Convention's occurrence in New York has a special significance, for New York was the birthplace of the American Institute of Architects—one hundred thirty-one years ago. The official date of birth—February 23, 1857. The place—the office of architect Richard Upjohn. The proud parents: Richard Upjohn, Richard M. Upjohn, J. Wrey Mould, Fred A. Petersen, Edward Gardiner, Leopold Eidlitz, Charles Babcock, H.W. Cleaveland, Henry Dudley, Joseph C. Wells, Richard Morris Hunt, John Welch, J.M. Priest.

This history is outlined in *The First Hundred Years*, published by AIA in 1957 for the centennial celebration. No record exists to say whose idea the formation of an architects' society was. It had been tried unsuccessfully before, and the American Society of Civil Engineers and Architects had existed since 1852. The use of Richard Upjohn's office may have been simply because his was one of the largest and best established practices in the city.

The thirteen founding fathers constituted the membership of the New York Society of Architects. At this first meeting of self appointed members, the date of February 22, George Washington's birthday, was selected as the official day of organization. They also voted that Mr. Upjohn be president, that Richard Morris Hunt be secretary, and that the membership be expanded to include: Calvert Vaux, Alexander Jackson Davis, Fred C. Withers, John Nottman, Edward Cabot, John Davis Hatch, Fred Diaper, Thomas U. Walter, John W. Ritch, Joseph Sands, George Snell, Ammi B. Young.

This expanded membership included architects from Boston, Philadelphia, the District of Columbia, and upstate New York. This geographic expansion may have been the reason that, at the next meeting of the Society, the name was changed to (The) American Institute of Architects. The New York Society of Architects did not reappear until ten years later when the Chapter concept was adopted. The New York Chapter (1867) was followed by

Philadelphia and Chicago (1869), Cincinnati and Boston (1870), Baltimore (1871), Albany (1873) etc., etc.

In these formative years of the Institute, due to economic considerations and social conditions, architecture was on hard times; architects were just beginning to make their presence as a profession known in the community. To organize and keep the Institute alive, these original members gave of themselves in such a way that the volunteer tradition of the Institute was established.

#### The Founding Fathers

Some of the distinguished careers of founders are outlined below, excerpted from now-standard reference works.

Richard Upjohn (1802-78) was one of the leading architects of his day. His Gothic Revival Trinity Church was a landmark before it was completed. The broad range of his practice included some 150 churches around the country and public work such as the State Capitol of Vermont. His extraordinary drawings; books on architecture such as "Rural Architecture" (1852), and his eighteen years of service as President of the AIA marked him as a giant of his time.

Richard Morris Hunt (1827-95) the third president of the Institute and designer of the AIA Seal, was another giant and his mark on the profession is highlighted by the regard that is still held for his work. The first American trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Hunt introduced French architecture to America. He was the architect for the Lenox Library, additions to the Metropolitan Museum, the Breakers in Newport, RI, the Biltmore in Ashville, NC, the Vanderbilt mansion on Fifth Avenue, the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, the Tribune Building (first office building with elevators), and numerous fine homes in Bar Harbor, Newport, Lenox, and Tuxedo. Hunt's atelier trained many of America's distinguished architects—Frank Furness, Charles Gambrill,

George Post, William Ware, and others.

Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892) was the architect whose work encompassed both Gothic revival and Greek revival. His work includes Colonnade Row on Lafayette Street and U.S. Customs House in New York; State Capitols in North Carolina, Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana; U.S. Patent Office in the District of Columbia; Virginia Military Institute; and Alumni Halls at Yale and the University of Michigan.

Leopold Eidlitz (1823-1908) worked for Richard Upjohn upon his arrival in the United States. His first independent work in New York was St. George's Church. Subsequent work included the American Exchange National Bank, Church of the Holy Trinity, and the Dry Dock Savings Bank. Mr. Eidlitz's best known work was his collaboration with H.H. Richardson on the reworking of the State Capitol in Albany. He was also an accomplished artist, author, and theorist on architecture.

Calvert Vaux (1824-95) was both an architect and landscape architect. He arrived in the United States to be a partner to Andrew Jackson Downing. He also collaborated with Frederick Law Olmsted on such projects as Central, Prospect, and Morningside Parks. He collaborated with J. Wrey Mould on the original Metropolitan Museum of Art and with Fred C. Withers on the Jefferson Market Courthouse in Greenwich Village. He was also the architect for the Museum of Natural History. The wonderful parks of New York owe much to Vaux's understanding and love for natural settings. (His name is pronounced Vox.)

Thomas Ustick Walters (1804-82), the Institute's second president, will always be associated with the design of the dome on the U.S. Capitol building. A Philadelphia architect who designed the Jayne Building, Girard College, and an early Philadelphia Savings Fund Society building, Walters worked in the Greek Revival



## New York City: Birthplace of AIA

*Trinity Church, on Broadway at Wall Street, was designed by Richard Upjohn, the first president of AIA.*



style. He also designed the U.S. Treasury Building, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, and the extension of the Old Post Office in Washington, DC.

Fred E. Peterson, was the architect for The Cooper Union.

J. Wrey Mould (1925-84) illustrator, author, architect, and public servant, designed All Saints Church and the 2nd Unitarian Church in Brooklyn. He also served as Chief Architect for Public Parks in New York City.

Henry Dudley practiced as Wills & Dudley in upstate New York and New Jersey. His major works were Holy Trinity Church and 1st Christ Science Church, both in Nashville.

Fred C. Withers (1828-1901) practiced in Newburgh, NY, and was a partner with Vaux and Olmstead on the design of Central Park.

Edward Cabot (1818-1901) was a Boston architect whose major works were the John Hopkins University Hospital and the Boston Theatre.

Ammi B. Young (1798-1874) was a Boston architect whose work includes Thornton, Wentworth, and Real Halls at Dartmouth College; the Vermont State Capitol; and the U.S. Customs House in Boston. He was also Supervising Architect for the U.S. Treasury.

### Institute Growth

Membership in the Institute became the vehicle by which professional standing was gained. This was particularly true in the eyes of the membership.

The Institute's structure — as well as its reputation — was that of an exclusive club: expensive, difficult to join, and very selective in admission to membership. The Institute took fifty years for its ranks to exceed 1000 and another twenty years to reach 3000 — a benchmark that was reached in the 1920s.

It was not until 1886 that the first woman architect — Mrs. Louise



*The nearby Equitable building was built out to the building line and to such an unprecedented height that it prompted the city's (and the nation's) first building code in 1916.*

Bethune of Buffalo, NY — was admitted to membership.

Vaux proposed admitting practitioners of related arts to membership — “those whose pursuits are connected to the art of architecture.” This was not acted upon because it would have detracted from the Institute's purpose.

The structure established by the Institute permitted it to function as a defacto registration system for architects. It wasn't until the early twentieth century that licensing laws began to be adopted, with the last state law passed in 1951. The strength of this system was recognized by several states that had admitted AIA members to registration without examination.

The early Institute functioned as a clearing house for technical information. There were few schools of architecture, few available architecture books, and no structure for the sharing of information. The Institute created a correspondence with other similar organizations in Europe, particularly the just slightly senior Royal Institute of British Architects (founded 1834), to acquire and share information.

The first efforts by the Institute to establish criteria for determining proper fees for services could not be agreed to. This question could not be agreed to then and continues as an issue to the Institute to this day.

The more we change as a profession and as an Institute, the more we stay the same. The founding principles of the Institute are very much the same today except that it takes us longer to resolve questions, and costs more to promulgate.

New York City has another special significance for the AIA Convention because the first convention took place here also.



Photos: Stan Ries

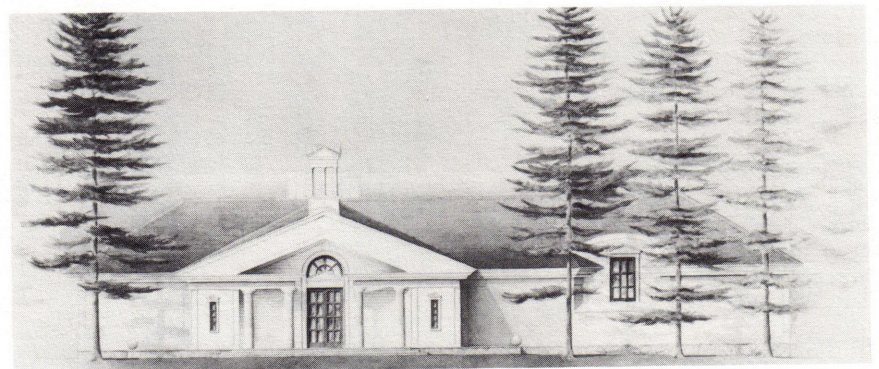


## Names and News

Fox & Fowle Architects are the designers of the first apartment house to be built on Riverside Drive in 35 years. It is scheduled for completion in the spring of 1989. The firm's first goal, explained Bruce Fowle "was our concern that the building express the spirit of the neighborhood, much of which falls within the proposed Riverside West End Historic District." . . . Philip Johnson and John Burgee are the designers of a 75,000 square foot wing of the New York Botanical Garden's 88-year-old Beaux-Arts museum building. It is to be part of the Garden's ambitious expansion program . . . James Stewart Polshek and Partners have announced the opening of an office in Paris for the practice of architecture, urbanism, historic preservation, and interior design. The Paris office will be directed by Alain Salomon, a registered architect in France . . . Diane Blum, Evan Carzis, Stewart Jones, and Kala Somvanshi have been named associates of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates . . . The Parliament House in Canberra by Mitchell/Giurgola & Thorp Architects will be opened by Queen Elizabeth on May 9. One of the main events during the International Conference on Architecture in Sydney (June 11-16) will be a guided tour through the project by Aldo Giurgola . . . John H. Beyer and Robert A.M. Stern will be chairing panels during the conference on Waterfront Development: How to Put Together Successful Projects, sponsored by the Real Estate Institute, NYU, May 12-13 . . . John Ellis & Associates have been selected by the New York City Partnership — leading sponsor of middle-income housing in New York — to carry out the first comprehensive evaluation of cost effectiveness of Partnership housing projects . . . John A. Selby and Raymond Skorupa have joined Ellerbe/Becket Associates, Architects; Selby as vice president/chief architect, and Skorupa as vice president/project director . . . The Westchester/Mid Hudson Chapter /AIA presented an Honor Award to Bradford Perkins for the Girl Scout House that he designed in Scarsdale. His firm, Perkins Geddis Eastman, has



*Detail of the exonarthex of St. George Basilica, in Norwalk, Connecticut, designed by Stephen P. Papadatos of Papadatos Moudis Associates. The quadrafoil arched roof was poured in place.*



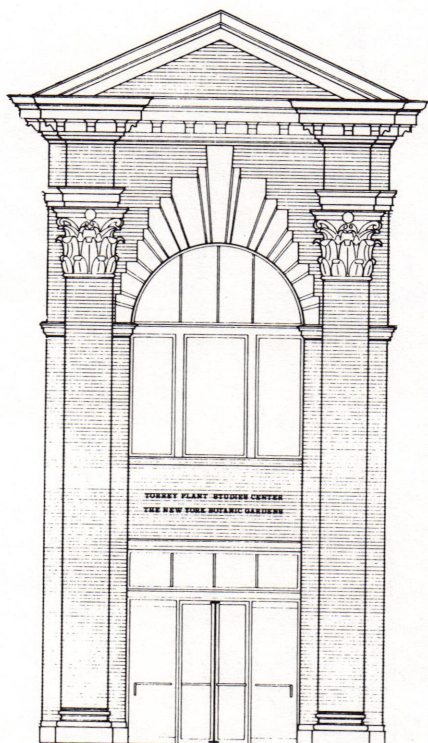
*Rendering of elevation of Robert A.M. Stern's winning design for a new gallery building for the Norman Rockwell Museum.*

also created a new Interior Design Group headed by Susan L. Boyle and Susan DiMotta . . . Robert A.M. Stern with his associate, William Georgis, were named winners of a limited invitational competition to design a new gallery building for the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The competing architects were asked to consider the relationship of the design to the site and its existing buildings and Norman Rockwell's work . . . Marilyn K. Benoff has joined Alan Gaynor & Company

as senior project designer and Richard F. Basta has joined the firm as associate . . . Carson, Lundin and Thorson have been commissioned to design a new Law Library building for St. John's University School of Law in Queens . . . During the Restaurant and Hotel Industry Design Convention in Chicago last month former Chapter member Walter A. Rutes received the Platinum Circle Award in Architecture for his outstanding contributions to hotel design . . . Ronald T. Ryan has been appointed a member of



Detail of plant science center at  
New York Botanical Garden by Philip  
Johnson and John Burgee.



## Letters/Interior Design

Dear Editor:

On behalf of Interior Designers for Licensing in New York (IDLNY), I would like to address your readership with regard to Ms. Lucey's recent article (*Oculus*, February 88, p. 11).

It is not at all in the interest of the problem at hand—that of public protection and safety being in the hands of responsible professionals.

Those of us who design interior environments are excited by shaping and creating our *immediate* surroundings rather than our cityscapes. Personally, I thought architects cared primarily about the greater relationships of earth-sky, the urban panorama, reshaping and refitting our skyline, and plotting site relationships. We interior designers haven't invaded your turf—we *enhance* your turf. We interior designers are your Adam's rib—you created us with your modular mass-production architecture of the 1940's, allowing non-load-bearing walls to articulate any kind of tenant-desired square footage.

Your initial lack of interest freed us to explore your world of space, but on a much different scale, with a much more detailed focus, and as a much more collaborative effort. We cannot do without your first creating the building...

We don't want to practice architecture because we perceive and define architecture to be the *building*. And we've become *your* experts to plan the spaces you've created between the floors and the windows and the elevators and the stairwells. If the architect is interested in doing interiors as well, that's fine with us. You're *included* in our certification bill to practice interior design.

Perhaps, more important, we should begin to talk *with* each other to see if by collaborating we might establish some very meaningful and common goals.

In other words, collaborate as a group of qualified professionals who have

grown up (and out!) together. The definition of the practice of architecture in the State of New York does *not* include "utilization of the space within."

Most important, for those of us who really do care about the safety and well-being of the public, interior designers *must* be licensed. The materials that we specify often cover over the architectural materials, and some have the capacity to burst into flame within 3-5 minutes—unless trained professionals are making those selections.

And mandatory, not voluntary, certification by the State is required because, like it or not, the State brings distinction, discipline, and maintenance to the profession, making us all rise to periodically reconfirm our knowledge.

There are many unqualified people practicing interior design and the public really has a right to assume that the space in which they are enjoying themselves is inherently protected and safe.

Non-load-bearing partition locations do *not* affect the structural integrity of the building. Architects and engineers will *continue* to act as our consultants in all cases where building systems and structure might be affected. And the Bill distinguishes those responsibilities we must bear for interiors work in obtaining stamp and seal drawing privileges with the Building Department. Drawings for which we bear the responsibility *now*!

Our appeal is for *support* from the architectural community, not harassment.

I think it is very important for us to act with professional dignity and distinction and not deal with this critical issue as if we were playing verbal volleyball with each other. Collaborate with us to address those concerns that really matter. Together, we are many more, and better and stronger.

Susan A. Forbes, ASID  
IDLNY Licensing Co-Chair

the interior design advisory committee of Brookdale Community College.... Three Chapter firms, Gruzen Samton Steinglass, Perkins & Will, and Richard Dattner & Associates have been selected to develop prototype elementary schools for the Board of Education. The capacity of each school will be 600 to 900 students; the schools will be built in Manhattan and the Bronx.... *Oculus* regrets the death of Irwin Chanin at 96. He was responsible for many of New York's Art Deco buildings, including the Chanin Building on East 42 Street, the twin-towered Century Apartments and Majestic Apartments on Central Park West, and six of Broadway's legitimate theaters.... *Oculus* regrets the sudden death of Douglas F. Thomson last May.... *Oculus* regrets the death at 89 of Franco Scalamandre, co-founder with Flora Baranzelli (later Mrs. Scalamandre) of Scalamandre Silks. A leader in historical textile reproductions, the firm has been responsible for restoration projects throughout the country.



# OCULUS NYC/AIA APR 88

Send *Oculus* Calendar information to:  
New York Chapter/AIA, 457 Madison  
Avenue, N.Y. 10022.

*Oculus welcomes information for the calendar pertaining to public events about architecture and the other design professions. It is due in writing by the 1st of the month for the following issue.*

*Because of the time lag between information received and printed, final details of events are likely to change. It is recommended that events be checked with sponsoring institutions before attending.*

## MONDAY 4

**5 ARCHITECTS INTERVIEWED**  
Billie Tsien, partner, Tod Williams/ Billie Tsien Associates, fourth in 5-Mon. series, 6:15 pm. Cooper-Hewitt Museum. 860-6868.

## CONTINUING EVENTS

**EXHIBITION**  
"Firing the Imagination: Artists & Architects Use Clay," Terra Cotta. The Urban Center. Susan Tunick 228-8265. Closes April 6.

**EXHIBITION**  
John Hejduk: Lancaster/Hanover Masque. Max Protetch, 560 Broadway. 916-5454. Closes April 9.

**EXHIBITION**  
Vermont Structural Slate Company's 1st International "Design a Gazebo" Contest. NIAE, 30 W. 22 St. 924-7000. Closes April 15.

## TUESDAY 5

**EXHIBITION**  
The Art that is Life: The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1929. Cooper-Hewitt Museum. 860-6868. Closes June 26.

**SEMINAR**  
"The Sick Building Syndrome" will examine the role of architects vis-a-vis other professionals. Sponsored by Besttype Office Environments. 8:30 am -12:00 pm. McGraw Hill Auditorium. Reservations: Eve Harris 888-9009.

## TUESDAY 12

**NYC/AIA PANEL**  
"Rainbow Room Collaboration," panel discussion sponsored by Art & Architecture Committee. 6:30 pm. The Urban Center (see Coming Chapter Events).

**EXHIBITION**  
Artistic Houses: Lavish Interiors of Nineteenth-Century New York. The New York Historical Society. 873-3400.

**EXHIBITION**  
Times Square 2000: Bright Star or Black Hole. Municipal Art Society at the Urban Center. 935-3960. Closes April 29.

## MONDAY 11

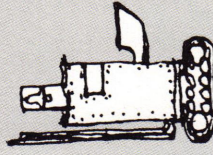
**EXHIBITION & AUCTION**  
International exhibition (April 11-16) and benefit auction (April 14, 6 pm) of architectural drawings sponsored by ADPSR/NY. Max Protetch Gallery, 560 Broadway. 966-5454.

**EXTERIOR WALL SYMPOSIUM**  
Organized by Tishman Research Corp. Grand Hyatt New York. 399-3631.

**EXHIBITION & LECTURE**  
The Architecture of Herman Hertzberger. Introductory lecture by Kenneth Frampton, 6:30 pm. Columbia GSAPP, Avery Hall. 280-3414. Exhibition closes May 6.

## FRIDAY 1

1858: Olmsted and Vaux submit plans for Central Park.



*Detail of sketch by John Hejduk.*

**EXHIBITION**  
"Reweaving the Urban Fabric: International Approaches to Infill Housing." Paine Webber Gallery, 1285 Avenue of the Americas. Joyce Matz at NY Landmarks Conservancy: 744-3958. Closes May 27.

**EXHIBITION**  
A New Brooklyn Museum: the Master Plan Competition. Brooklyn Museum. 718-638-5000. Closes July 4.

## FRIDAY 8

**EXHIBITION OPENS ON SAT. APRIL 9**  
Creative Copies: Interpretive Drawings from Michelangelo to Picasso. The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166. Closes July 23.

## THURSDAY 7

**EMERGING VOICES 1988**  
Ralph Lerner (Ralph Lerner Architect), Princeton; Brian Alfred Murphy (BAM Construction/Design), Los Angeles. 6:30 pm. The Architectural League of New York at the Urban Center 753-1722.

## FRIDAY 15

**TOUR, APRIL 15-22**  
Tour of New York Architecture sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For more information. 202-673-4138.

**EXHIBITION OPENS ON SAT. APRIL 16**  
Designs for Independent Living. Products for the Aging and Physically Disabled. The Museum of Modern Art. 708-9795. Closes June 7.

## THURSDAY 14

**EMERGING VOICES 1988**  
Patricia Sapinsley (Sapinsley Architecture), NY; Harry Teague (Harry Teague Architects), Aspen. 6:30 pm. The Architectural League at the Urban Center. 753-1722.

**UNDER NEW YORK**  
Lecture by Sherene Baugher, NYC's first official archaeologist & project director for excavations, 6:30 pm. New York Historical Society, 873-3400.

**GRAHAM GUND**  
"The Art of Architecture." 6:30 pm. Pratt School of Architecture, Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

## WEDNESDAY 13

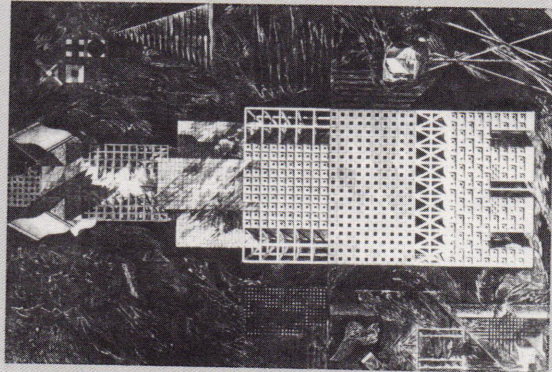
**SEMINAR**  
"The Effective QA/QC Program: How to do it." 1-day seminar for managers & professionals in engineering, architecture, and other planning & design firms sponsored by American Society of Civil Engineers. New York City. Information & registration: 1-800-628-0041 from NY State.

**LECTURE**  
"Architecture, space, landscape: Recent Work," by Adele Naude Santos, Prof. of Architecture and Urban Design, U. of Pennsylvania. 6:30 pm. Columbia GSAPP, Wood Audit., Avery Hall. 280-3414.



## MONDAY 18

1906: San Francisco earthquake.



*Drawing of Franco Purini in ADSPR exhibition/auction.*

## MONDAY 2 MAY

CONFERENCE, MAY 2-3

Tenth Annual Conference on Federal Taxation of Real Estate sponsored by the Real Estate Institute & the Institute on Federal Taxation, School of Continuing Education, NYU. The Marriott Marquis Hotel. To register: 790-1300.

A/E/C SYSTEMS '88, MAY 2-5  
Ninth International Computer and Management Show for the Design and Construction Industry.  
McCormick Place-North, Chicago.  
For more information: 800-451-1196.

## TUESDAY 19

NYC/AIA LECTURE

Barry Milliken of SOM on "Data Bases/Computer Graphics" in series sponsored by the Computer Applications Committee. 6 pm. The Urban Center. 838-9670.

## TUESDAY 26

NYC/AIA SEMINAR

"New Markets: Opportunities or Headaches?" last of three seminars presented by the Professional Practice Committee. 5:30 pm. The Urban Center, 838-9670.

EXHIBITION

Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood: Recently completed work. Harvard Graduate School of Design, Gund Hall Gallery, 48 Quincy St., Cambridge. 617-495-9340. Closes May 13.

## WEDNESDAY 20

EXHIBITION

"Grands Projets, Paris 1979-1989," the nine architectural projects that are changing the face of Paris. Old Customs House on Bowling Green. 308-8880. Closes May 25.

BRICKWORK SEMINAR

Designing Brick to Work. 11:30 am. Glen-Gery Brickwork Design Center, 211 E. 49 St. 319-5577.

CONFERENCE, APRIL 20-23

The management & rejuvenation of historic religious buildings sponsored by the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corp. Phila. Registration: 215-568-4210.

## WEDNESDAY 27

1822: Central Park designer Frederick Law Olmsted born (1822-1903).

## THURSDAY 21

LECTURE

John Johansen on "The Poetics of Technology." 6:30 pm. Pratt School of Architecture, Higgins Hall, St. James Place & Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

## THURSDAY 28

EXHIBITION

Destruction and Construction by Kawamata from Tokyo. Storefront for Art & Architecture, 97 Kenmare St. 431-5795. Closes May 28.

EMERGING VOICES 1988

Peter Forbes (Peter Forbes and Assoc.), Boston; Ross Anderson, Frederic Schwartz (Anderson/Schwartz), New York. 6:30 pm. The Architectural League of New York. Urban Center, 753-1722.

## WEDNESDAY 4

BRICKWORK SEMINAR

Movement Joints in Brickwork. 11:30 am. Glen-Gery Brickwork Design Center, 211 E. 49 St. 319-5577.

## THURSDAY 5 MAY

PAUL KLEE

Exhibition. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 879-5500. Closes Jan. 8, 1989.

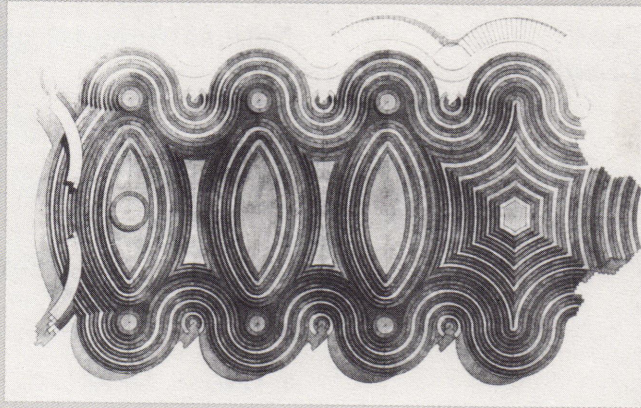
## FRIDAY 22

TOUR ON SAT. APRIL 23

Tour of Olmsted's Park sponsored by the Municipal Art Society and Prospect Park Environmental Center. 935-3960.

## FRIDAY 29

On April 30, 1870 The Metropolitan Museum of Art was founded.



*Roof plan, Church of San Lorenzo at Caposele, Salerno, Italy. Vittorio Gigliotti, architect in ADSPR exhibition/auction.*



## NYC/AIA88! Student Exhibit

This year's National AIA Convention promises to be a healthy and stimulating deviation from the norm in that the student members of our profession can look with some anticipation toward a proper recognition of their endeavors, and potential. Visiting the usual National AIA Convention, one is confronted with, if anything, a few meager student drawings usually tucked away in some corner behind the exhibit booths — not the most inspiring of situations for anyone. The New York Chapter has appropriately made a commitment to present a comprehensive student exhibit that we can all look forward to with avid expectation.

The five schools of architecture in New York City (City College of CUNY, Columbia University, Cooper Union, New York Institute of Technology, and Pratt Institute) will present a major exhibition of student work, representing the strength and diversity of their respective programs. Each school will have 40, 4 ft. x 8 ft. panels, double-sided, on which to display student work. The schools' deans are collaborating to ensure that visitors to New York, eager to see our professional strength, will also experience the richness of student work produced in our fine academic institutions.

Clearly, a comprehensive view of the New York student architecture scene promises to be just one of many stimulating intellectual activities that visitors to the National Convention will have the opportunity to enjoy. For our five schools of architecture it is also a unique opportunity for a collective exhibit. As visitors to the National Convention view the youthful optimism of students' work, they might, in today's dreams, find the seeds of promise for future realities.

**Paul Heyer**  
Dean and Professor  
School of Architecture, Pratt Institute  
Member of AIA Convention Steering  
Committee

## National Talent Search

by Lenore M. Lucey

In the fifth year of its existence the Pratt Institute National Talent search (NTS) has again awarded four full scholarships to outstanding students from around the country. The NTS, a two-stage competition for high school students interested in a career in architecture begins with requests for a portfolio of slides of their art/design works. After review by a Pratt School of Architecture faculty committee, the selected finalists are asked to complete a design project and submit their entry on one twenty by thirty board. This year's project was a pavilion for a 1988 celebration of an organization's founding.

Along with Donald Cromley, Chairman, Undergraduate Architecture, Pratt Institute, and Wayne Turett (Pratt '81), I (Pratt '70) was asked to jury this year's entries. It was an exciting experience, and an eye-opening one. There is an incredible amount of talent out there in our high schools, and an amazing awareness of architecture. Projects ranged from the obviously well considered, well designed, and buildable, to the ultimate fantasy. Beautiful drawings, detailed and well made models that were also well photographed, and vibrant drawings marked the awarded entries. Also impressive was the amount of funding that Pratt commits to this program. Four full scholarships, ten half scholarships and ten partial scholarships were awarded.

The four full scholarship winners were: John M. Bacus, High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Houston, Texas; Jairo Cuevas, High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Houston Texas; and Jennifer N. Mujat, Osceola High School, Seminole, Florida. They are to be congratulated, along with the twenty other young people who received second and third level awards.

Pratt's National Talent search is open to all high school students who want to pursue an architecture education at Pratt. To forward a promising student, or appropriate high school program, contact the National Talent Search at 718-636-3551.

## Coming Chapter Events

- **Tuesday, April 12, 6:30 pm.** The Urban Center. "Rainbow Room Collaboration," panel discussion sponsored by the Art & Architecture Committee on the recent renovation. Panel will include Hugh Hardy and Milton Glaser as well as associated designers.

- **Tuesday, April 19, 6 pm.** The Urban Center. Barry Milliken of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill will speak on "Data Bases/Computer Graphics" in lecture series sponsored by the Computer Applications Committee.

- **Tuesday April 26, 5:30 pm.** The Urban Center. "New Markets: Opportunities or Headaches?" last of three seminars presented by the Professional Practice Committee.

- **Tuesday, May 3, 6 pm.** The Urban Center. Roundtable discussion on "Free Work: A Catastrophe or the Best Marketing Tool Around?" sponsored by the Compensation Committee. Panel will include private and public clients, architects, and attorneys.

## Urgent Convention Notice

If you have not sent in your host chapter member registration for the convention by now, you must hurry if you want to take advantage of the heavily discounted rate.

**Reduced rates for NYC/AIA members are good only until 15 April 1988.**

After April 15, the Institute considers all registrations as "at the door" and you will have to pay the full rate. Send in your form immediately. Signing up for basic registration will qualify you for the reduced rate, you can then order tickets and workshops separately, later.

**Sign up now. Do not miss this opportunity to attend your home-town convention at a significant discount.**

## Tax Reform

One aspect of tax reform has been to change the deductibility of AIA dues. If they are included in personal income tax filing, you may be subject to minimums that effectively bar your claiming professional association dues. Dues that are paid by firms may continue to be deductible as a business expense. Contributions to the New York Foundation for Architecture, the Chapter's charitable and educational 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit foundation are deductible to the extent permitted by law. We suggest you consult your tax adviser if you have any questions.



## "Remaking Cities" Conference

NYC/AIA was well represented at the recent "Remaking Cities" conference. Convened jointly by AIA and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the conference was held March 2-5 in Pittsburgh, and had as its centerpiece a R/UDAT for the distressed Mon Valley. Honorary Chair for the conference was HRH The Prince of Wales, who addressed the closing session on Saturday, and was the guest of honor at a luncheon and reception on Friday.

Representing the Chapter were President Gene Kohn and Executive Director Lenore Lucey. Other members attending were John Morris Dixon, Editor of *Progressive Architecture*; Mark Strauss; Michael Kwartler, who participated in the R/UDAT; and architecture critic (and Brunner Award winner) Suzanne Stephens.

### Foreign Visitors

The Chapter frequently gets requests from groups of foreign architects for recommendations of firms, buildings, and sites to visit. We are also asked to recommend people who would be willing to meet with and speak to foreign architects, sometimes in their own language. If you are interested in being on a referral list for such requests please send in your name, firm, and the topics you are willing to speak on, or the names of buildings or construction sites you will give tours of. Include any language abilities. We usually receive requests about one month in advance of visits; groups vary from 10 to 50.

### IDP

The NCARB Intern Development Program in New York State is under the coordination of Sidney Shelov, AIA. The Chapter frequently receives requests from interns; they are referred to Sid. However the supply of advisers frequently cannot meet the demands. If you are interested in serving as an adviser in this valuable service to interns, please contact Sid Shelov at 718-636-3405.

## "Remaking Cities" Conference

by HRH the Prince of Wales

*The following is excerpted from an address given by HRH the Prince of Wales at the "Remaking Cities" Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Saturday 5 March 1988.*

"... I do believe there is *less* chance of getting things wrong if sensible and effective ways are found of consulting the existing inhabitants of our cities. This is where people like David Lewis and Rod Hackney, the President of RIBA, have been playing such crucial and pioneering roles. They, and others, have been trying to find a way to an acceptable, living, human environment for everyone. Perhaps this way we shall encourage people's concern for the continuity of the past, for conservation and a search for an acceptable, if reminiscent, vernacular by architects which will help to reinforce people's sense of belonging and involvement in places. If we help to re-create places where people can talk in comfort and security and can look about and be entertained by buildings that are tuned to the eye; if we encourage a renaissance of craftsmanship and the art of embellishing buildings for man's pleasure and for the sheer joy in beauty itself, as opposed to mere functionalism; then we shall have made our cities centres of civilisation once again. Clearly, urban regeneration has to be fuelled by a renewed economic incentive, but if the money motive for development is the only serious force in urban renewal then we shall not succeed. Building is about more than just money and market forces. Urban renewal cannot be left entirely to the kind of developer who lacks an awareness of the type of old-fashioned philanthropy that was evident in a city such as Pittsburgh when universities like the Carnegie-Mellon were founded ...

"... it seems to me that the most essential feature of this whole debate is how to re-create communities. At the heart of the question lies the human individual and how his surroundings are designed and laid out can make a huge difference to his state of mind and to his behavior. Man seems to function best in small,



HRH the Prince of Wales.

recognizable units — hence the village — where he is a part of a community of people to which he can relate. It is the anonymity created by postwar urban design which seems to have produced a breakdown in the normal functioning of a community ...

"... I want to emphasize a point which I believe is absolutely crucial to the whole question of regeneration. This hall is crammed full of professional people whose very considerable skills and talents amount to a formidable potential for solving problems. It has been my experience in the UK that the professional "enabler" — whether an architect or whatever — can have a dramatic effect on a community, by acting as an honest broker to bring a whole range of public agencies, commercial corporations, voluntary bodies and central government together to sit down and work out solutions in partnership with the local inhabitants. Such dedicated professionals, by their remarkable willingness to live and work within the local community (and this is the most vital factor) can bring the kind of leadership, based on knowledge of the whole bureaucratic system, which is the secret ingredient that provides the catalyst for action.

"... Above all, it requires people like yourself who are concerned enough to *want* to make a contribution and who are humble enough to make it in this way. The final point I would make is that, when talking about re-making cities or bringing new economic life to certain parts of them, we must never forget that at the heart of the question is the human individual: a person who is more than just a cog in a gigantic utilitarian machine; someone who responds, often subconsciously, to things of the spirit as well as of the material. As Von Mises, the Austrian economist and philosopher, said on one occasion — "Every individual must derive a psychological, as well as an economic profit from his actions or else he could not act at all." So, let's go out and show the skeptics what can be achieved!"



# ARCHITECTURE COMPETITIONS

## From an Interview with Ronald Soskolne

*Continuing our investigation of architecture competitions (see interview with A. Eugene Kohn, Oculus, Dec. 87), the editors present another viewpoint—the advantages and disadvantages of the competition process as understood by a major developer of our day—and some sobering recommendations.*

*Ronald Soskolne is vice president of planning and development for Olympia & York Developments Ltd. His responsibilities include the selection of architects and design concepts for the firm's major projects. He has been involved both in selecting and commissioning architects to design buildings for O & Y-owned sites, as at Exchange Place, Boston, as well as being involved in the competition process—both in competitions that O & Y has organized and in competitions organized by public agencies to which O & Y has made submissions, sometimes successful, sometimes not. Among Olympia & York competition-designed projects have been 425 Lexington Avenue, Manhattan; Madison Square Garden, Manhattan; and Canary Wharf, London.*

**Soskolne:** We have been involved in both the giving and receiving end of competitions. We have entered several calls for proposals from government agencies that were looking for a developer and a design for the redevelopment of a major urban redevelopment project. Queens Quay Terminal in Toronto, Fountain Plaza in Portland, Yerba Buena Gardens in San Francisco, World Financial Center in Manhattan, were all responses we made to competitions where we were the successful proponent.

O & Y have also initiated competitions for the purpose of selecting an architect and a design concept for a site that we already controlled. Those include the World Financial Center, two in Toronto, 425 Lexington Avenue in Manhattan, and Madison Square Garden, as well as the one we are putting together right now—for Canary Wharf in London.

**CRS:** What does an owner feel he gets from a competition that he does not get from a one-on-one direct interchange with a commissioned architect?

**Soskolne:** There is no question in my mind on that subject. What one gets is the benefit of six or seven very skilled minds rather than just one being applied at the same time to the problem we are trying to solve. Therefore we get six or seven different perspectives on how to approach the problem, from which we can then select the one we are most comfortable with. And therefore in all probability the mind set that we are going to be most comfortable with in terms of the ongoing relationship with the architect.

**CRS:** What is the moral and ethical responsibility in inviting all those professional designers to provide their ideas? Do you pay all of them?

**Soskolne:** Yes, we always pay, each time. What we usually do is we either invite a very short list of people and pay them from the word go, or we do a two-stage process as we are doing in London now, where we shortlist, say, eleven firms from around the world. We then ask them to make a very preliminary submission of one kind or another, which doesn't take them very much time. And on the basis of that we will then shortlist down to six or seven; that is the number we are comfortable with. And from that point on we will pay what we think is a reasonable amount—sufficient to cover basic costs, cost of staff time, and the cost of producing models and drawings.

**CRS:** Is that on an hourly basis or . . .

**Soskolne:** No, we give them a flat fee, and they know what it is up front. I must say that in most cases architects tend to go overboard and do a lot of work that is really not called for, not required. In most cases it is not necessary.

**CRS:** Can you give counsel on how to

determine what is realistic as a submission?

**Soskolne:** What we usually tell them, very clearly, is a specific list of things that we want and how we want them mounted. We try to tell them that those of us who will be interpreting their materials are skilled at reading drawings and models and don't need to be snowed with fancy graphics, elaborate renderings, and so on. But a lot of them insist on doing that.

**CRS:** Aren't we all moved by such materials?

**Soskolne:** No. I guess I have seen so many now that I don't see the technique any more. I am not looking for the mood, I am looking at the building, at the response to particular problems that I want to solve. And showing nice trees and people with balloons and all that, doesn't help me. It gets in the way, in fact. But that is a relatively minor detail. The main thing is that we are looking for a design concept, for the kernel of an idea. As long as that idea is apparent, we don't need elaborate presentations. If the idea is not there, it doesn't matter how much presentation there is, we still won't look at it further.

**CRS:** Surely though if you see the parti sketch on a barroom napkin, something more finished will sway you more strongly?

**Soskolne:** Beyond a certain point . . .

**CRS:** Perhaps that is the question, beyond what point?

**Soskolne:** I think beyond the point of making the idea clear. Usually there are both objective and subjective aspects to a design. And we as a team tend to look first and foremost at the objective ones. For example, in Toronto, on a site where there were three Mies van der Rohe buildings and a corner vacant lot, we asked what do you put on that corner? We asked ten architects in Toronto to submit proposals . . . I regard competitions not only as a way of generating ideas but also of seeking ideas from people





Ron Soskolne

you might not otherwise immediately go to if you were commissioning only one architect—many of the young up-and-coming designers who have shown expertise but really have not had a crack at a big office building, for example... In the Toronto case we asked five of those and five more experienced firms.

Anyway, one of the most attractive design proposals for that site was for a perfectly cylindrical geometric form. It made an enormous amount of sense; it looked great. But it didn't get beyond square one because our technical people, who are concerned with how you lay out office space and how you sell it to a tenant, said absolutely not, that will not sell. End of story. No matter how many beautiful perspectives were done on that scheme, the basic idea was wrong. So that really is the first cut.

**CRS:** Can you tell us more about the technical skills of your team-jury? And how they know what to look for so quickly?

**Soskolne:** Usually we have people in design and construction who look at it from the point of view of construction process—in the approach to detail, is there a lot of repetition, is there a lot of special-purpose stuff that will make it a complex construction project. Then we have people who look at cost and a lot of marketing people who have to sell space; those usually include interior design people. Then also, obviously we have the Reichmanns, who, as the owners of the

firm, look at entries from all perspectives. That is usually our jury. And the process is usually quite quick.

**CRS:** When you have two-stage competitions, is the first stage paid?

**Soskolne:** In London now we are, first of all, asking architects to form a team. We are picking the key urban designer architects—since the scheme involves ten or twelve buildings around a major public space. So the first thing we are looking for is the right urban design approach. Subsequent to that we will need a lot of skilled architects who are experienced in various kinds of land use—residential and hotels being two of the uses that have to be considered. So we are selecting the urban designer first, and asking him to put together a team that includes expertise in hotels and residential, and that will be capable of producing a lot of buildings at one time. He puts together a team with the necessary skills and experience, puts them on a list, and brings that to us. On that basis we will look at the eleven submissions, we will pick six or so, and we will then provide all six with the detailed terms of reference and give them six weeks.

**CRS:** "Detailed terms of reference"...

**Soskolne:** Absolutely. We are very particular about making sure that everybody understands the rules on the same basis. So we will also attempt to presolve as many problems as we can.

**CRS:** Each of those teams gets a fee?

**Soskolne:** Yes, when we give them the program and terms of reference. For example, on Madison Square Garden, where we have an enormously complex situation, with the operating Penn Station, over which we will build some office buildings, we provided a lot of detailed analysis of what is under there, and spelled out specifically where columns could go and which points on the site were interesting to us as locations for office towers. And we showed them how the

*Note: In May the Architectural League of New York will sponsor an exhibition on architecture competitions — "The Experimental Tradition: American Architecture Competitions of the Past Twenty-Five Years." The catalog to that exhibition will trace the history of architecture competitions—the process rather than the results—from the Acropolis and the Renaissance to our own time. It should add an invaluable perspective to discussions of present-day competition procedures. — CRS*

zoning worked to determine how the buildings were shaped, so that they would not have to go through the whole zoning matter. We predigest as much as possible.

The other thing we do, because this was a response to a concern that was raised in Battery Park City, was that architects said, "You know the trouble with competitions is that they produce a relationship in which you have no interaction with your client. And therefore you are just shooting in the dark—at the time when you most need to be able to see your client's eyes and understand his reactions." So way down the piece, which is about two weeks into the competition, we will make ourselves available to each team to discuss the ideas they have, the approaches they are taking, the issues they are having difficulties resolving, and we will give them basically anything except a critique of their design. We will then furnish all of the information that we give each of the teams to all of the other teams. And everybody is treated equally.

We also make ourselves available in the ensuing three or four weeks to answer specific questions they might have. So we try to reduce to a minimum the concern about lack of interaction.

**CRS:** At what point do you tell them what they may submit and what they may not submit?

**Soskolne:** That is in the terms of reference, which include a detailed list of what they should and shouldn't submit.

**CRS:** One of the questions architects seem perennially to ask is why it sometimes appears that the decision of which architect is going to be commissioned has already been made in the minds of the client, yet a competition is still staged?

**Soskolne:** I can't answer that question, because I can't think of any instance in which we have done that. Or in which it has even been an issue. We don't always hold competitions. We only



## Architecture Competitions

*Cesar Pelli's Competition entry, World Financial Center.*

*O&Y's Pelli-designed World Financial Center.*

hold competitions when we think a competition is going to help us solve a problem more efficiently than going directly to an architect.

**CRS:** Can you say when those times are?

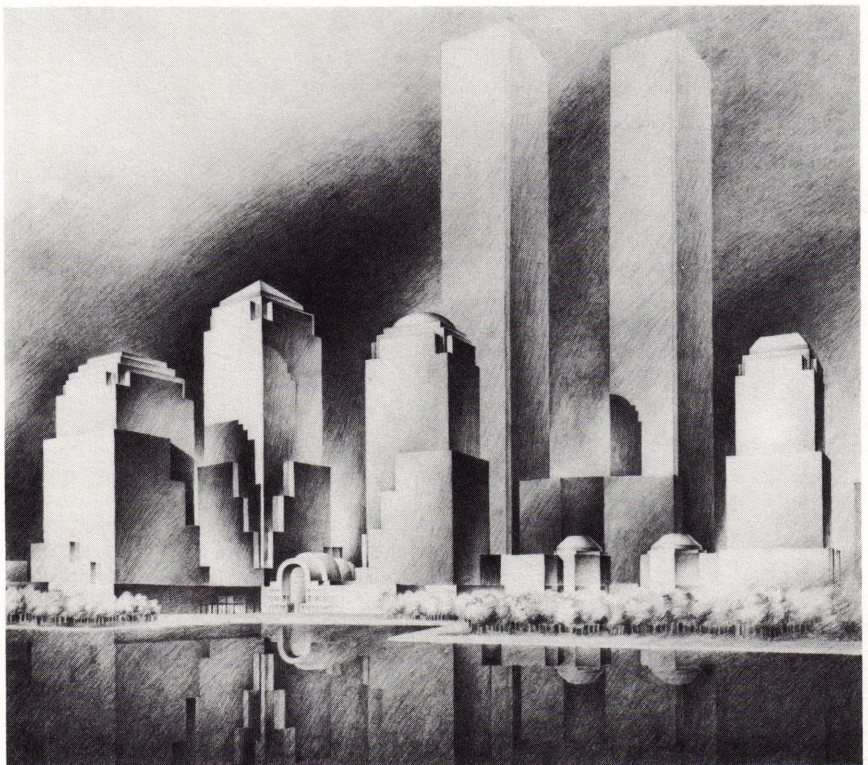
**Soskolne:** Yes, it is usually either when there is an opportunity of such tremendous breadth that it is obvious that you would be selling yourself short if you don't get a lot of different points of view and approaches to the opportunity. The World Financial Center was such a situation. We had that phenomenal site at the tip of Manhattan Island and what do you put there? If you look at the results of our competitions—take the South Ferry competition, in which we were unsuccessful—the range was staggering.

That was a competition we entered that the City staged. And each developer must have put in something like \$250,000 to \$300,000.

**CRS:** Isn't that situation the same for developers as when architects enter a competition that is not paid?

**Soskolne:** No. I don't have a problem with spending money where I stand to gain a job. Obviously that has to be kept in balance—the amount of money in relation to the opportunity. Where I do have a problem, and I guess this parallels your initial question, is when government agencies request detailed design proposals when what they actually are looking for is a financial offer. Because what inevitably happens is that both the developer and the architect have to spend enormous amounts of money producing material that will only be looked at after the financial information has been looked at, and basically a decision made about which one or two schemes seem most attractive from that standpoint. The way to approach those competitions is to do them in two stages: to request a financial offer first and later to talk about design.

**CRS:** Is there a parallel bit of advice



there for architects entering competitions with developers?

**Soskolne:** I think when developers put out calls for proposals from architects they are looking for designs. When public agencies put out requests for proposals, most of the time they are not looking for designs, they are looking for money.

**CRS:** Architects should not do fancy renderings just as developers should not present designs instead of financial plans?

**Soskolne:** You can't tell them that because once again, it is the developer that would be calling the shots and in those situations we have always paid the architect for covering costs. We expect the architect to absorb some risk along with us, since if we are the successful proponents then the architect stands to gain as we do. But in most cases the architect will be under pressure from the developer to produce the best possible show. Because everybody else will be producing a show. My argument is with the public agencies. I believe they should consider the alternative approach, which is the one that we had here in New York with the World Financial Center. They said they did not want to look at buildings. They said, "We've got a financial problem here. Here is an opportunity, bid for it. Tell us about how much you will pay for the opportunity and under what circumstances."

We were the successful bidder. Also at the time they put out the request

for financial proposals they put out a set of design guidelines, which spelled out quite clearly the level of quality and the type of buildings they were looking for. So we understood that there was a certain level of expectation. For example, quite a considerable amount of money was going to have to be spent on the public environment, the creation of the Wintergarden, and so on. We understood that and our bid reflected it.

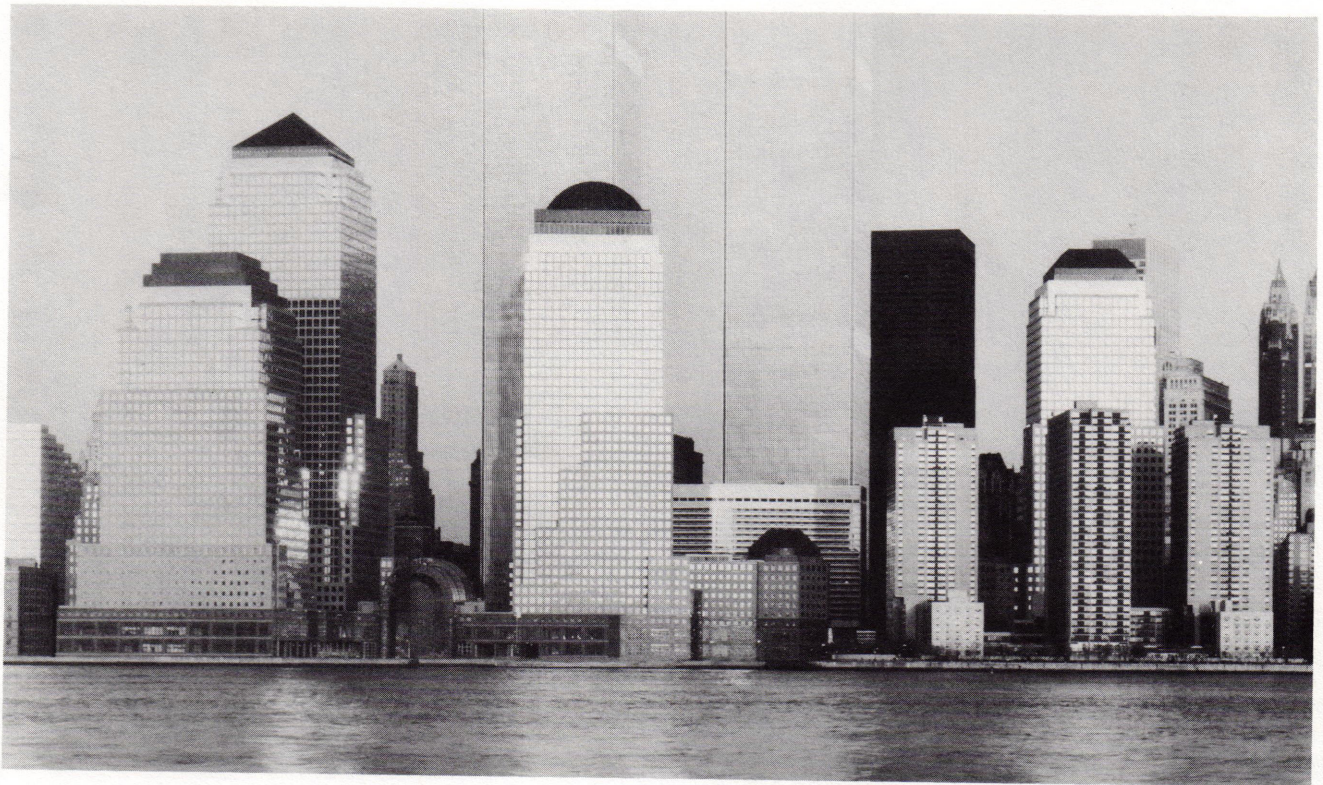
Once we were nominated as the developer, we then sponsored a competition. They wanted us to, but we also thought that was the best way to do it. And it was specifically a design competition. We selected seven firms of architects. We gave them clear terms of reference. We gave them three weeks.

That is the other thing: it needs to be quick. You can't give them too much time. Otherwise they spend too much money and it is not necessary. We were looking for the basic idea. In three weeks time they submitted their basic design concept including a rough cardboard model. We then shortlisted those down to three.

**CRS:** How many submitted a cardboard model with gold and silver on it?

**Soskolne:** One of them submitted quite an elaborate cardboard model, and it absolutely bowled me over. How that architect could manage to both do the design and get the model built in that time. But again, he didn't win. To his





credit Pelli hit the spot: not only was his design superb, but he found a technique of making a model that was simple and very effective and not expensive. It was one of the first that employed the technique of cutting thin sheets of plastic film with a laser.

We shortlisted them down to three, paid them an additional larger amount of money to refine the design directions we gave them. That took another three weeks. Then we made our choice. In my view that is the most effective way, because there the public agency didn't cause all of the developers who were responding to the Battery Park City request for financial proposals to commission architects.

**CRS:** A question about juries . . .

**Soskolne:** There is an issue here, because often there will be a lay jury. People will be invited, sometimes for prestige, sometimes because the developer is really seeking some outside points of view. And in that instance you might in fact get some benefit from an elaborate presentation. We don't do that. We have all the in-house expertise we need.

**CRS:** It is often said that juries do not stick to whether a competing architect has observed either the budget or the program. You all just plead better performance.

**Soskolne:** Where a design seems to us inherently very expensive, and in particular where such a design doesn't

indicate to us any substantial benefit that would be worth paying the difference for, we won't look at it much further.

**CRS:** Have you any counsel for others on how to set adequate fees for ideas as opposed to fees for execution?

**Soskolne:** I think you start on the basis of having a sense of how long it takes to develop an idea, crystallize it, and put it down on paper. From my experience, and this goes for simple and complex projects alike, once you understand the problem — and that understanding should take no longer than four or five days of work time — then it should take you no longer than ten days after that to come up with the idea and work it out. And another week or two for development of the idea; and a couple of more weeks for the production — the actual drawing up of the scheme and the models. Usually it takes us a span of five or six weeks. That is how things work out in the real world. And the key to it is to make the process of getting to the core of the problem as efficient for the architect as possible.

That is the reason we spend a lot of time at the beginning before we launch a competition, sorting all the issues out and distilling all of the problems down to a few key questions that we then try to put as specifically as possible. That way we really focus the architect's attention. That is critical.

**CRS:** What have you learned that is most important for other developers

or for architects to learn?

**Soskolne:** 1. Keep it short. There is no benefit in prolonging it.  
2. Pay a fair price for the job. We recognize that architects put out not only money but put a lot of their practices to focus on a competition for a while, and that could cost them other jobs.  
3. Focus it as much as possible.  
4. And make yourself available during the process to test the project. This last is absolutely critical. If you don't do that you are liable to waste time, and have the architect waste time and come up with the wrong idea. When if you had given him the opportunity you could have gotten another entry that was really worth considering.

It is clear that it is much more comfortable for an architect to have a client relationship that is secure, that when the architect starts out he knows he has the job. That works in the favor of the larger, more established firms. The downside of that is that the smaller guys seem to like the idea of competitions because they give them the opportunity of showing themselves that they would not otherwise have.

**CRS:** They are the ones who have the greatest danger of going broke, however.

**Soskolne:** Right, that is why I say you have to pay a fair price for the work.

**CRS:** Thank you, Mr. Soskolne.



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