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New York State Association of Architects Development Corporation

By JEANNE DAVERN

A new kind of effort to respond to the nation's housing needs has been launched with the establishment by the New York State Association of Architects of a corporation to sponsor nonprofit housing. It is believed to be the first development corporation to be set up by any U.S. architectural association.*

In cooperation with the city of Utica, New York, which has already designated a cleared downtown site, the New York State Association of Architects Development Corporation hopes to be under construction with its pilot project, a 100-unit apartment complex for the aging, by September 1 of this year.

Sixty-one architects throughout New York State entered a competition for the design of the project. The competition winner, who will become the architect for the complex, was selected on January 25 in Utica by a professional jury assisted by technical advisers experienced in housing construction and housing costs.

Financing will be arranged through a combination of state and Federal funds. Under Title I of the Federal Housing Act of 1949, the city of Utica has already acquired and cleared the site. The New York State Association of Architects Development Corporation will buy the site from the city of Utica and develop the project with funds to be sought under the Mitchell-Lama program administered by the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal and the interest subsidy program, Section 236 of the Federal Housing Act of 1968, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In entering the development field as nonprofit housing sponsors, architects hope to demonstrate the housing quality that can be achieved with a client who uses architectural services for maximum effectiveness. They hope also to pioneer a new role for architects in responding to the social challenges of their time. The NYSAA Development Corporation is explicitly committed by its certificate of incorporation not to practice architecture.

"What we have done is to design a client," says Thomas F. Galvin, who is president both of the New York State Association of Architects, the state component of The American Institute of Architects, and of the New York Chapter, AIA, a New York City component.

Mr. Galvin, who is also executive vice president of the New York City Convention and Exhibit Center Corporation, credits Mayor Michael R. Caruso of Utica with expediting a pioneering effort to develop housing which is more responsible to the needs of older citizens. "Without the enthusiastic and effective cooperation of Mayor Caruso and his urban renewal director, Joseph Pacito," Mr. Galvin asserts, "we could not have hoped to get under way with our first project so soon."

How the "Client" was "designed"
The idea of involving the Association in housing development as a nonprofit sponsor was generated almost two years ago in the Association's Housing, Urban Development and Community Planning Committee, whose co-chairmen were and are Joseph D. Monticciolo, deputy director for the New York Area office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Frank Visconi, director of architecture for the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

At the 1971 annual convention of the Association, the idea was presented to the membership in the form of a resolution sponsored by the Committee and passed by the convention. The resolution, titled "NYSAA/AIA as Sponsor of Housing," called upon the Board of Directors to "take whatever action is necessary at the next meeting to enable the Committee on Housing, Urban Development and Community Planning to do all those things required of a sponsor in the State of New York, under Federal and/or state programs for our housing project, provided the Association is not financially involved."

The result was the decision to form a nonprofit housing corporation to develop and construct housing for families of low or moderate income. The Committee was instructed to develop a program to that end; and on September 19, 1972, a Certificate of Incorporation of the New York State Association of Architects Development Corporation, under Section 402 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law of New York State, was filed with Attorney-General Louis J. Lefkowitz, who approved it on October 6. The other approvals required were received on October 17 from New York State Supreme Court Justice Arnold J. Fraiman, on December 8 from the New York State Department of Education, and on December 19 from the New York State Secretary of State.

How a site was found
A nonprofit sponsor must select and buy a site on which to build, and if the sponsor is — like the New York State Association of Architects — dependent entirely on public funds for financing, urban renewal property will be the best buy. The Association circularized all the local renewal agencies in New York State and had responses from 12. Of

*An increasing number of individual architects and architectural firms around the country are, however, becoming involved as developers, and some interesting indications of this trend are given in the new book by C.W. Griffin, "Development Building: the Team Approach" (an AIA book distributed by Halsted Press Division, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, New York).
these, three emerged for final consideration, and they all were subjected to thorough analysis (and on-the-spot scrutiny) against the objectives of the Association program.

The decision to undertake housing for the elderly as a pilot project had been made for a combination of reasons: maximum present need and therefore optimum marketing prospects; availability of certain special funds earmarked only for housing the elderly; and exceptional possibilities for architectural contributions to greater human amenities in a building type that badly needs and often lacks them.

The Utica site offered a number of advantages over the others which were given final consideration. To begin with, it was already cleared and immediately available; it is owned by the city's urban renewal agency. Its location, near the city's main business district and immediately adjacent to a new shopping mall, was excellent. It had spectacular views of the Mohawk Valley and the hills beyond, and pleasant vistas of a nearby park. The city's mayor and urban renewal director showed exceptional enthusiasm for the project, and the city's efforts made desired zoning and tax abatements possible.

**How an agreement was formalized**

So, on October 20, 1972, a “Memorandum of Understanding” was signed by the City of Utica, the Utica Urban Renewal Agency and the Association’s development corporation. It set forth “the understanding and intent of the parties” that:

1. “The corporation agrees to develop and sponsor a project providing one hundred dwelling units of housing for senior citizens of low or moderate income; and in order to achieve a development which will be a permanent and enriching asset to the community, compatible with the urban renewal plan, and to achieve high living standards for its occupants, will hold a competition to select a creative design for such a development....”

2. “The agency agrees to reserve a site... within the John Bleeker Renewal Area... to enter into negotiations to convey such a site to the... corporation, pursuant to a land disposition agreement and deed with the price to be fixed in accordance with Section 107 of Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 at fair value to residential use for occupancy by low or moderate income elderly families...”

3. “The city agrees to provide tax exemption pursuant to the appropriate provisions of the Private Housing Finance Companies Law; to provide any required zoning revisions; and, acting through its local legislative body and other affected agencies, to do any and all necessary acts to facilitate the feasibility and effectuation of the housing development.”

**Details of the design competition**

The New York State Association of Architects announced in October 1972 that it, in cooperation with the development corporation then being formed, would sponsor a design competition for a 100-unit apartment complex for the aging to be built on the Utica site. All 3200 members of the Association qualified to practice architecture in New York State would be eligible to compete for the first prize of $2000 including the architectural contract for the project (at an estimated fee of $105,000); second prize $1000; and third prize of $500. The schedule called for registration of competitors by November 30; judgment of entries on January 25, 1973; and notification to winners by February 1, 1973. H. Dickson McKenna, AIA, executive director of the Association, was appointed professional adviser, with the responsibility to direct the conduct of the competition.

Appointment of a five-member jury plus a three-member panel of technical consultants was also announced. Members of the jury are architects John Fisher, AIA dean of the Syracuse University School of Architecture, Syracuse, New York; Patrick Quinn, AIA dean of the School of Architecture, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, and David F.M. Todd, FAIA, of New York City; Professional Engineer Joseph Stein, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Buildings; and Planner DeForest Winfield, AIP Director of Planning for the city of Utica. The technical consultants were Richard Ravitch, executive vice president of the HRH Construction Corporation, New York City; Victor Peretta, Executive Director of the Municipal Housing Authority of the City of Utica; and Sal Gentile, Chief Cost Analyst for the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

**How a design competition works**

In electing to select the architect for its first project by holding a design competition, the N.Y.S.A.A. Development Corporation has adopted a method architects have long recommended to clients both public and private for projects of special importance.

Advantages to a client include: (1) making it possible to select the architect for a project on the basis of actual performance on design of the particular project involved; (2) eliminating any possibility of personal or political influence as a factor in selection; (3) focusing on analysis and design of the project, at perhaps a tenth of the cost of one architect’s fee, the abilities of the many architects who enter the competition; (4) discovering “hidden talent” — the gifted architect, young or not so young, whose work has not previously been widely known.

To permit entry by members of The American Institute of Architects, a design competition must have the official approval of the AIA. Such approval can be obtained from the AIA Committee on Architectural Competitions only by strict adherence to precise conditions set forth in the official document issued periodically by the AIA, “Code for Architectural Competitions.”

Among the important requirements of the AIA Code, the first is employment by the client of a registered architect as “professional adviser” to assume sole responsibility to the client, to the AIA and to all competitors for the entire conduct of the competition.

The first duty of the professional adviser is to write
the "program": that is, the detailed description of the client's requirements for the project; of the site and of all other considerations which must be taken into account by the competitors in planning and design; of the form submissions from competitors shall take (number, size and nature of drawings and supporting descriptive data); eligibility requirements for entering the competition; and the schedule for registration of competitors and submission of entries. The professional adviser is the sole communications link between the competition's sponsor and the competitors throughout the competition. Competitors may ask questions, including requests for clarifications of the program, only by anonymous letter addressed to the professional adviser, who must distribute copies of his replies to all competitors simultaneously. Submissions, with identification concealed, are sent to the professional adviser, who records them, checks them for adherence to the competition rules and prepares them for inspection by the jury. Anonymity of all competitors until the competition winner has been selected is an absolute requirement of the AIA Code to insure that the quality of the submissions alone is the basis for jury deliberation.

A jury of no fewer than three members, a majority of whom must be registered architects, is selected in consultation with the professional adviser to examine and rate the submissions. In addition to the top winner, who normally receives the commission for the project with or without a cash prize, there are usually two or more prizes or "mentions" for other specially meritorious submissions.

Jeanne Davern is a freelance Architectural Journalist, Editorial and Communication Consultant. Miss Davern was on the Editorial Staff of Architectural Record for 21 years, for the last six as managing editor. A graduate of Wellesley College, Miss Davern is an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects.
Encouragement of a sense of community both among and between residents and the surrounding neighborhood was the underlying motivation of the design.

The basic concept is a square “doughnut” cut on the diagonal into three-story and six-story segments enclosing a 65-square-foot garden covered with a 70x30-foot sloping skylight. In one building, there are thus the options of either garden apartment living or high-rise apartment living, or of both successively, if in later years residents who at first prefer to live closer to the ground in walkup apartments should require the greater ease and security of elevator apartments.

The design recognizes a rugged northern climate by turning inward for most of its social spaces — the enclosed “Winter Garden,” seen as providing “a little bit of Florida” in upstate New York, and as a space which could be used by the community as well as the residents, where the residents could be host to the community for exhibits or performances or perhaps a neighborhood Christmas party; the sitting areas on each floor; the “leftover spaces” which residents might develop for purposes of their own, perhaps as concessions — a newsstand, or a lending library. The effort is to make the building itself a community for its residents, to provide spaces which let the residents welcome their friends and neighbors from the surrounding community, and to offer its residents a “window on the world.” The building also reaches out toward its neighborhood in its orientation to Chancellor Park, in its fenestration and in its provision of a “tot park,” which anticipates visiting grandchildren.

The intent of the design is philosophical and social rather than “architectural.” The architects say, “We were trying for an interesting facility rather than an interesting design. We were also trying for a familiar kind of architecture; we were trying to do something that would recall what the residents have always lived in rather than something new and different.”

Construction is conventional load-bearing masonry with precast concrete floor slabs.
JURY COMMENT:

We were very impressed by the concept of the Winter Garden as an organizing device. It is an excellent response to the problems presented by Utica's winter climate. It provides an opportunity for community interaction within the building and the possibility for development of a strong sense of place. The spatial relationships between the interior court, the peripheral balconies, the corridor recesses, the small entry vestibules, and the units themselves provide a range of degrees of privacy for the occupants. The concept further allows for easy comprehension of the environment by the occupants as well as a clear sense of security.

Sharp corners in central space and corridors, as well as configuration of enclosed stairs, present potential hazards and will need modification before implementation. Access to the community room despite the latter's good relationship to exterior activity is somewhat obscure. Access to the nearby apartments at the lower level will require further study.

The exterior image and relationship to site caused considerable controversy. Considerable attention to detail and articulation during design development will be necessary to avoid formidable facades. The fenestration presents some functional problems, e.g. floor to ceiling narrow windows, undesirable for the elderly unless there is a balcony or similar visual interruption to eliminate feeling of vertigo in the upper stories. Main entrance is well placed but could be more open and inviting with perhaps a view of the interior court. Site landscaping is quite schematic and in development should consider pedestrian flow very carefully as well as relation to scale of buildings and park across Bleecker Street. Good landscaping will also help to modify the possibly formidable character of the exterior.

A major consideration in the selection of this scheme was that of economics. Its compactness and directness made it one of the most realistic schemes submitted.

Despite the fact that the scheme had not been developed to the degree of completion that others had, it was felt that this was an exciting, compact, economical and realistic schematic which could be developed into an excellent solution to the problem.
SECOND PRIZE
Claude Samton
Henry Korman, AIA
Don Richardson, Landscape Architect

First Floor Plan
PERSPECTIVE:

The concept is "to encourage involvement by the elderly in LIFE, in each other, in activities, in crafts, in passive pursuits, in exercises such as walking" by creating "a vivid environment in which the elderly can participate in numerous activities among themselves and with people of all ages."

All the apartments are oriented towards the sun and a central "Community Garden-Activity Court." Ground-level units have their own gardens; upper-level units have small, shallow terraces to encourage growing plants and for outlook over the community space. Community gardens would be densely planted, with narrow paths "wandering through flowering shrubs, fragrant plants, bird-feeding stations, surrounded by sunlit seating areas protected from cold winds."

The "activity court" consists of paved area surrounded by amphitheater seating and opening into an enclosed activity space which has large overhead rolling glass doors. It is intended to be programmed by the residents themselves for such activities as performances, dancing, an open air cafe, flower shows, exhibitions, net games, ice skating, lectures, folk singing, or just sitting and relaxing in the sun. An adjacent "playground for the elderly" provides a bocci court, horseshoes, shuffleboard and game tables bordering the paved walks.

Within the building, "core areas" at the two entry corners provide small sitting spaces on each floor and, on the top floor of each, a laundry and sun room. Adjoining the ground floor enclosed activity space is a two-level crafts area which at ground level opens onto the street to create the possibility of inviting the interest of passersby, or even of having a little shop where the handiwork of the residents might be sold.

Construction is brick bearing wall, floors precast concrete plank.

JURY COMMENT:

A modest and interesting scheme whose scale and relationship to both site and community are excellent. Strong reservations were expressed about the practicability of the activity court in the Utica climate. The separation of the community room from the building poses a similar problem. The provision of nicely lit meeting and gathering spaces on every other floor at the corners was considered most inviting.

The single loaded corridor distribute the units in a fashion that would minimize social interaction, make it difficult for occupants to comprehend the totality of their environment and result in an uneconomical use of space. Corridors are very long and elevators too far apart.

Provision of private gardens at the lower level was applauded as were many of the considerations of detail (flower pot, balcony, etc.). Handling of landscaping, site and general relationship to the community is good.

In summary, the jury felt that the scale and character of the building, the site development and handling of parking were excellent, but that climatic and cost considerations raise serious questions.
THIRD PRIZE / Howard Cohen, AIA

SITE PLAN

TYPICAL UNITS
PERSPECTIVE:

The basic concept provides the option of choosing an apartment on grade in a low-rise building or apartments with elevator security and views in a high-rise building. The high-rise building was positioned as a barrier against the industrial development to the north, but tenants of the upper floors are able to look over this neighborhood to the Mohawk Valley beyond. The stepped-back levels maintain human scale and allow passive recreation on the roof decks at each level.

Locating the low-rise building perpendicular to the high-rise extends Chancellor Park onto the site. By taking advantage of the slope of the site, grade-level entries are provided on either side of the lower floor and on one side of the second floor. The third floor is reached by outdoor corridor connected to the elevator core of the high-rise building. Planting provides privacy at these entries. There is a considerable saving of both construction cost and maintenance expense by completely eliminating interior corridors from this building.

The small community spaces on the third and seventh floors are convenient for informal gathering. The larger community space on the lower level may, at the tenants' option, be used as a day care center for extra income and the pleasure and interest of the presence of children. This space leads directly to a garden area and is separated from the main outdoor activity areas for the tenants. With its separate entrance and parking, it could also be used in the evenings as a community meeting room.

Larger than ordinary baths and convenience details such as grab bars, slip-proof floors, individual air conditioning sleeves, buzzer, intercom and emergency generator and lighting are included in the design. Skylights allow natural light into corridors and upper-floor apartments.

All parking is hidden from the main public areas, including 11 covered on-grade spaces. The diagonal walk across the park-like main open space is on axis with Chancellor Park. There is a small tree-shaded plaza with seating at the bus stop.

The color banding of these panels and evergreen planting will offset the drab gray climate of the neighborhood. Utility cores of two bathrooms, two kitchens and all doors and closets are 12 feet wide (maximum trailer width) and are designed so prefabrication is possible. There is a great economy in that there is generally only one plumbing stack per unit.

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All parking is hidden from the main public areas, including 11 covered on-grade spaces. The diagonal walk across the park-like main open space is on axis with Chancellor Park. There is a small tree-shaded plaza with seating at the bus stop.

JURY COMMENT:

The strongest architectural image of the lot. Good sitting and use of land. Multiple setbacks with small staircases, somewhat pretentious. Access in relation to community, excellent. Lack of variety of apartment type was considered something of a defect. The concept of combining community room with a potential day-care center is a great idea, but the jury felt that the major allocation of space in this area can be questioned in view of the budgetary restrictions. It was considered to be a very expensive scheme and difficult to keep within the bounds of cost established.
HONORABLE MENTIONS

Werner Seligman, AIA
CORTLAND, NEW YORK

Anton J. Egner, AIA
ITHACA, NEW YORK

Henry C.K. Liu, AIA
Comment: A competent scheme with a good relationship to site, views and adjacent urban patterns, reasonably economical system (structure, materials), interesting use and location of community spaces. This one of the few entries which expressed awareness of building systems in the construction process.

The addition of commercial shops to original program as considered innovative, but questionable in view of budgetary restrictions. There is no data to support the commercial viability of such an addition and in the event its deletion during implementation of the project a major alteration to the concept would result.

The relationship of central open space to Chancellor Park isenuous but acceptable. The usability of the open space as questioned in the light of the Utica climate. The lower block is a reasonably good apartment complex but a mere provision of lounges on each floor does not necessarily make it appropriate to the needs of the aging.

summary, the jury concluded that this was a sophisticated, direct but somewhat arbitrary scheme.

Comment: A competently planned, adequate heme, not spectacular. Relationship between community spaces, entrance, public and outdoor spaces is good. Central location provides orientation for the occupants. Wyout of individual apartments is economical and equitable. The user could find his way around the complex with comparative ease. The division of the overall building into three major and several sub forms aimed a little arbitrary and unconvincing. The rather melded relations and juxtaposition of these also raised questions of both image and economy.

Comment: A very strong sculptural complex. The trance atrium is exciting but plan drawings were confusing, especially in terms of circulation. For example, the jury found it impossible to work out how you get from one place to another around the periphery of the atrium. The uncovered ramped aerial links would probably be unusable in winter weather and their practicality was questioned. The scheme as a whole was questioned on economic grounds. In summary, this was considered one of the more elegant submissions with serious problems of cost, climate, and circulation.
THE UTICA COMPETITION

Various scenes photographed in the Council Chamber of the City Hall, Utica, New York, on February 25, 1973 during the ceremonies of presentation.

Joseph Monticciolo, committee chairman; Mayor Caruso, Commissioner Charles J. Urstadt, Thomas F. Galvin, President of New York State Association of Architects, before the TV cameras.

Commissioner Charles Urstadt, Mayor Caruso and Tom Galvin. Mr. Urstadt praising the concept of the competition and the sponsorship of a project by NYSAA/AIA.
The winners: John Garment and Kent Hawks, flanked by Tom Galvin and Mayor Caruso.

The winners receive congratulations from Darrel D. Rippeteau, FAIA, Senior Regional AIA Director for New York State; Joe Monticciolo and Frank Visconi, Co-chairmen of the NYSAA Committee on Housing and Urban Design.

Tom Galvin and Mayor Caruso greet winners (l to r) Henry Korman, Kent Hawks, Claude Samton, John Garment, Howard Cohen, Werner Seligman and Anton Egner.
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BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES
OF THE PRIZE WINNERS

Hawks/Garment Associates


Claude Samton & Associates
Claude Samton, Columbia University School of Architecture, 1966, Associate Professor of Architectural Design, New York University since 1964. Currently design critic at Columbia University. Firm established since 1963 at 119 East 18th Street, New York, N.Y.


Howard Cohen, AIA

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CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT LABORATORY

The New York State Association of Architects is sponsoring a Seminar-Laboratory by the American Institute of Architects on Construction Management, designed for architects, project administrators, owners, and contractors.

Mr. William Jarratt, currently an Associate and Director of the Education and Commerce Division of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, Inc. in Detroit, will conduct the laboratory. Emphasis will be placed on providing each participant with both a starting capability and a "road-map" for immediate implementation in his own situation. He will learn to deal with conditions, constraints, and problems inherent in any job. Time and cost controls, contracts, responsibility definitions, and sales will be learned.

The seminar will be held all day Friday April 6, 1973 at the Holiday Inn, New York City Coliseum, 440 West 57th Street, New York, New York. Fee is $50.00 for A.I.A. Members including course material, lunch, and coffee breaks. (Non-Members fee is $55.00). Reservations, limited to the first 48 persons, are made at NYSAA/AIA, 441 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017. Telephone: (212) 697-8866. No refunds after April 2, 1973.
Sal P. Gentile, Chief Estimator and Cost Analyst of the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, was an excellent choice as Cost Consultant for the competition sponsored by NYSSA Development Corporation for Housing for the Elderly in Utica. The experience that Mr. Gentile brings to his analysis is the result of many years of estimating costs in government service.

Here follows an interview between the Professional Advisor, H. Dickson McKenna, AIA and Mr. Gentile prior to the judgement:

H.D. McK.: How do you feel about the possibility that your analysis will be about the final arbiter in this jury?

S.P.G.: The architect always has the most difficult task in creating a building. That's why I admire him, but no matter how innovative or aesthetically beautiful the building may be, it must be built within cost parameters. It seems to me that architecture is part science and part art. The task of the architect is to combine art and science to arrive at a suitable design which exemplifies sound engineering and good esthetics. It is in this area that the architect's judgement is of paramount importance. The architect must also be aware of costs which seems to be a real mental block to many architects.

H.D. McK.: When can cost considerations best be introduced as a control factor?

S.P.G.: Cost control is, under a governmental program, one of the most important supervisory responsibilities an agency exercises. It is at this stage that monthly room rentals and carrying charges are established. The early stages of developing the budget for any project is the best time. Careful review of design concepts is imperative in order to avoid excessive costs. High constructive cost, high maintenance cost, and high interest rates have combined to make it harder than ever for families of moderate and low income to obtain decent housing. New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal is tackling this problem by fostering techniques brought about by the parameter cost estimating system and endeavoring to control costs by establishing economy at the budget stage.

H.D. McK.: How much does a particular site influence the costs of a building?

S.P.G.: Land costs are a primary portion of housing costs. Presumably, land cost is established by market conditions over which we have no control. However, we may have a choice of which piece of land is best suited to our purposes; given size, abnormal foundation conditions, zoning and price. We also have a choice of what type of project is to be placed on a parcel. When land costs in an area are "very high" and zoning permits, it is obvious that a tall structure is required. It is not so obvious as to what constitutes "very high" land costs when the price of different types of construction are combined with land costs to give total cost per apartment.

H.D. McK.: Is one particular structural system always the most economical?

S.P.G.: Not always. A simple economical design where the layout is direct and easily apparent to the unskilled worker on the job is best suited to a wall bearing system. There should be bar joists at 3.5 pounds of steel per S.F. Our experience indicates that wall bearing construction for a 3 to 6 story building is the most economical. As the building heights increase use reinforced concrete; the columns grow in size and become more important as a factor. Shear walls are required. Buildings from 12-20 stories using reinforced concrete frame are most efficient in cost.

H.D. McK.: Are there some techniques of reinforced concrete design that make for economy?

S.P.G.: Yes. Investigation of a typical floor slab area show small slabs more expensive than larger slabs. However, if the slab is too large to permit an efficient monolithic pour, but not large enough for two pours, the slab price is increased. Floors with pongs of either 250 to 300 cubic yards pour per floor or 450 cubic yards and over, are most efficient. Modular column spacing of 15' to 16' and no spandrel result in a minimum slab thickness of 6" using 4.5 lbs. reinforcement per S.F. A grid system of columns rather than placement mostly dictated by architectural requirements will lead to economics.

H.D. McK.: Where should steel frame construction be used?

S.P.G.: In buildings of 8 to 10 stories high, if the following criteria are followed:

1) 12" beams spanning 22' and 14"
H.D. McK.: Open-web joists spanning 25'.

2) 2½” concrete slab with mesh cast on permanent metal forms welded to joists.

3) Gypsum wall board ceiling screwed to furring channels tied to joist bottom chord.

4) The height of steel, including joists should not be more than 9 lbs. per S.F.

H.D. McK.: How much does the dwelling unit layout affect cost?

S.P.G.: A great deal. For example: The gross area per typical floor can remain constant and the perimeter can vary from 10 to 30%. Excessive perimeter generally relates to excessive breaks, creating additional internal and external corners, resulting in added exterior area and loss of continuity and consistency for labor which results in lower production and higher costs. The chart that follows shows the model relationship of area and distribution to the perimeter. For example: A 3.5 distribution with 790 S.F. per apartment indicates a 39 L.F. perimeter per apartment. If a project is submitted which shows a 3.5 rental rooms per apartment distribution and a 790 S.F. per apartment area and the actual perimeter is 44 L.F. per apartment; this would increase construction cost by 2.5%. A minimum of 3.5 fixtures per chase and 48 fixtures per floor result in an economical layout. A poor chase and fixture ratio can increase plumbing cost by 30%. This would increase a project cost by 3%.

H.D. McK.: Is there an ideal size project for economical reasons?

S.P.G.: That's difficult to state since the ideal is seldom achieved. When zoning and demand permit a one building project, it should have at least 200 dwelling units. For larger projects, using the cost criteria established above, a building 28 stories high with 260 dwelling units would cost at least 5% more than 2 identical buildings 13 stories high with a total of 260 dwelling units.

H.D. McK.: What is the relationship of gross area to room rent?

S.P.G.: Comprehensive studies were made to determine the effect of the gross area per rent room, based on the entire typical floor, which includes the total floor area. The average gross area per typical floor of 233 S.F. per room conforms with the division's requirement for room sizes. When the gross area factor increases it can generally be attributed in part to the following:

1) Oversized room areas.
2) Corridor perimeter relationship to exterior perimeter exceeding 50% of exterior perimeter.
3) Interior corridors within apartments.
4) Excessive foyer areas.
5) Typical floor area is less than 9,000 S.F. with less than ten dwelling units per typical floor.

H.D. McK.: Do most architects realize that these are the governing criteria to achieve economy?

S.P.G.: No, I don't think so. If economy is to be achieved, careful attention must be paid to the foregoing factors. It is too late to save real money after the design concept has been implemented by detailed plans. We are all familiar with last minute attempts to change the door knobs in an attempt to achieve economy. It looks to me like your competition is headed in the right direction if a good architectural solution can be found which will provide some answer to the housing shortage.

Mr. Gentile is the co-author, with M. Slutsky, of a technique for estimating construction costs. Copies of a document entitled "The Art of Estimating Thru Research and Analysis" may be obtained from the Public Information Office of the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, 393 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10001.

The unique design submitted by the first place winner features a carving out of the plaza in an oval shape leaving two islands in the center. The islands are reached by a broad bridge which features display areas open and enclosed.

The lower level, framed by the carved exposed natural rock which recalls the edges of Niagara, is used for wind sheltered pedestrian areas including restaurants and shops and other summer and winter time activities.

At the southern end of the plaza, an open amphi-theatre which will seat 3,000 persons, has been carved into the rock. This entry, as with the second and third place winners, includes an enclosed bridge to connect the pedestrian mall to be located along Falls Street with the Convention Center.

THE COMPETITION—

The first prize winners of the Rainbow Center Plaza competition for the five acre plaza that fronts the Niagara Falls International Convention Center are Abraham Geller, FAIA, (a member of NYSAA), Raimundo J. Abraham and Giuliano Fiorenzoli.

Mayor E. Dent Lackey and Edward J. Logue, President and Chief Executive Officer of the New York State Urban Development Corporation, co-sponsors of the competition, presented six honorable mention awards as well as the first, second and third place prizes.

The jury that judged the entries (there were a total of 292 from all the provinces of Canada and 266 firms from 33 of the United States) was chaired by Pietro Belluschi, FAIA, Dean Emeritus of the School of Planning and Architecture, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Jury spent three days examining over 1,000 drawings and photos, the names of the entrants were carefully concealed from the Jury by Charles G. Hilgenhurst, AIA, the professional advisor who organized and administered the competition on behalf of the City of Niagara Falls and UDC.

The Jury's main criterion in the selection of the winner was the function of the plaza and its ability to adapt to year-round activity as well as the aesthetic quality of the design. Whether the design effectively met the needs of the people of Niagara Falls and the five million tourists who annually pass through Niagara Falls was given serious consideration.

A mandatory part of the design requirement was to conceive of a weather enclosed pedestrian connection that would allow convention attendees to move freely and in comfort between the convention center and the convention hotel and commercial development to be constructed on the opposite side of the plaza on old Falls Street.

Other architect members of the jury were:

R.T. Affleck, RAIC, Principal - Partner in ARCOP Associates - Architecture.

Benjamin Thompson, AIA, Principal - Partner in Benjamin Thompson and Associates, Inc.
The second prize went to Dean Abbott, 157 East 35th Street, New York. His design featured a simple flat plaza paved with informal tree planting at the north and south ends. These areas are designed for flexible use as outdoor display and activity areas. The center section of the plaza creates a series of large rock outcroppings and a waterfall symbolizing the elements of the Falls itself.

Third prize was awarded Tarapata, MacMahon, Paulsen Corporation of 1191 West Square Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Their solution consisted of a raised amphitheatre at the southwest corner of the plaza beneath which is an enclosed restaurant with outdoor dining on the Plaza itself. Another feature was the glass enclosed bridge over the plaza that contains a restaurant at mid-point. The restaurant is surrounded by a park framing an exhibition garden, curling rink and music pavilion.
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2000L — For larger homes and smaller commercial — and other — buildings, this "lo-set" boiler-burner unit using light oil features quick, easy installation without the conventional combustion chamber. Efficient flame retention burner keeps fuel costs low. 4 to 7 sections. Net I=B=R Ratings: Steam, 201 to 363 MBH; water, 233 to 420 MBH.

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