



POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

Library

Vol. I, No. 2 Official Publication Potomac Valley Chapter of Maryland, A.I.A. November 1, 1956

AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF
ARCHITECTS

NOV 19 1956

LIBRARY

A PAT ON THE BACK

AN UNUSUAL and well-deserved honor was awarded the Potomac Valley Chapter, during its first year, for meritorious service to the architectural profession. This was an AIA Board citation given in recognition of the significant results achieved by the chapter in its negotiations with the Montgomery County Board of Education relating to unfavorable recommendations on school buildings contained in the McKinsey Report.

The Potomac Valley Chapter can indeed be proud of its accomplishments. Through organization and quick direct action it removed a sore spot within its own boundaries that constituted a threat to the existing high standards of school buildings in the area. Perhaps even more importantly it prevented the establishment of precedents which could affect educational construction all across the country.

The recommendations of the McKinsey Report which the chapter opposed as very detrimental were (1) that the Board of Education establish its own staff architectural bureau and (2) that the Board consider the use of prefabricated schools as an economy. The Chapter's actions, which are a matter of record, were largely instrumental in the defeat of the more dangerous proposal for an architectural bureau, and in putting the prefabricated building in its proper perspective in relation to conventional construction. Although an experimental prefab is going ahead at Viers Mill, sufficient facts were uncovered and aired so that no one acquainted with these facts labors under the delusion that miracles of speed, economy and quality are synonymous with prefabricated construction.

The role of the Chapter could serve as a model for proper chapter procedure in such cases. The Chapter kept alert to activities within its jurisdiction and at the first hint of trouble alerted its members. The Chapter then called in the national AIA organization which is equipped to provide records, case histories and experienced help—which are obviously beyond the scope of local sources.

Working together, the Chapter and headquarters were able to enlist the help of other organizations, which foresaw the dangers in the McKinsey recommendations and presented a united front to the County Council, The Board of Education, the PTA's and the general public. Carefully prepared oral and written testimony, letters to organizations concerned, cooperation with the press and individual conversations all played their appropriate parts in the eventual outcome—an outcome which, while not resulting in total victory, nevertheless indicates how effectively an organized professional society can, and should, carry out its public and professional obligations.

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER OF MARYLAND
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MEETINGS

First Monday of Every Month
at 12 o'clock noon

NEXT MEETING

Monday, November 5
Stone House Inn, Silver Spring

LETTERS

American Institute of Architects

Congratulations to you and your editors on the first issue of the Potomac Valley Architect!

Philip Will, Jr., Vice President
The American Institute of Architects
Washington, D. C.

Thanks very much for sending me the first issue of the Potomac Valley Architect and please accept my congratulations on the launching of this valuable document.

We, in Texas, have found that such a publication is of great value in bringing our members into better understanding of what the Society is doing. In fact, several years ago it was the means of rejuvenating our Texas Society of Architects from a position of practically inactivity to a thriving organization at the present time.

With best wishes for your continued success, I am,
Edward L. Wilson, Secretary
Fort Worth, Texas, Chapter
American Institute of Architects

Bank

Thanks very much for sending me the first copy of the Potomac Valley Architect, which I have read with a great deal of interest. I wish you every success with this newest and creditable venture of your very active chapter.

William D. Blair, President
The Bank of Silver Spring

Washington Post-Times Herald

The Potomac Valley Chapter is congratulated for its growth and taking such an active part in so many A.I.A. activities during its first year and, now, for publishing a fine, most readable and interesting chapter bulletin.

I am looking forward to reading and finding material for use in future issues.

Paul Herron, Real Estate Editor
Washington Post-Times Herald

Press Association

This is to compliment the Potomac Chapter, A.I.A. and its editor on your excellent new publication, The Potomac Valley Chapter.

All newspaper and other members will be glad to have such an informative, architectural publication on the local scene and we take pride in the professional caliber of the new periodical because your editor is one of our veteran members and our immediate past president.

Cyril J. O'Brien, President
Montgomery County Press Association

Benjamin P. Elliott front paged the Montgomery County Sentinel when his master plan for Damascus appealed more to the community's officials and civic leaders than did an authorized costly survey made by an outside expert.

CALIFORNIA AMENDMENT GIVEN SUPPORT

Prompt aid has been extended by the Potomac Valley Chapter to the California Council of Architects for its campaign to break the bottle-neck of public construction in the western state.

In California it is required that all state architectural work be done in the State Division of Architecture. An amendment to the state's constitution to permit allotment of work to private architects will be voted on next month. Clearly in the public interest, the proposition has the support of more than 200 California groups.

While too young a chapter to have built up its treasury, Potomac Valley has sent \$100 to the California Council's campaign fund.

LAST CALL FOR STAMP DESIGN

Entries of a design for a U. S. Postage Stamp to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the American Institute of Architects must be received by November 9.

All chapter members should have received the details of the competition. Any member who has not and is interested please call the president's or secretary's office at once.

A jury of philatelists and architects has been named to judge the competition. The first prize will be \$500 and three additional prizes of \$100 will be offered.

SENSEMAN'S BIRTHDAY OBSERVED

It was business as usual at the Chapter's Executive Meeting held Friday noon October 19 in President Ronald S. Senseman's conference room—until the ladies of the office broke it up.

The boss was having a birthday and Mrs. Sammie Cerovski, Mrs. Marion Rothgeb and Mrs. Joyce Lind had not forgotten. In marched these charming hostesses with a special luncheon and an appropriate cake while Ben Elliott, V. T. H. Bien, Ted Englehardt, Paul Kea, Chuck Soule, Dana Johannes and their editor, Gene Glasgow,—being all in lusty voice—sang the "Happy Birthday" song.

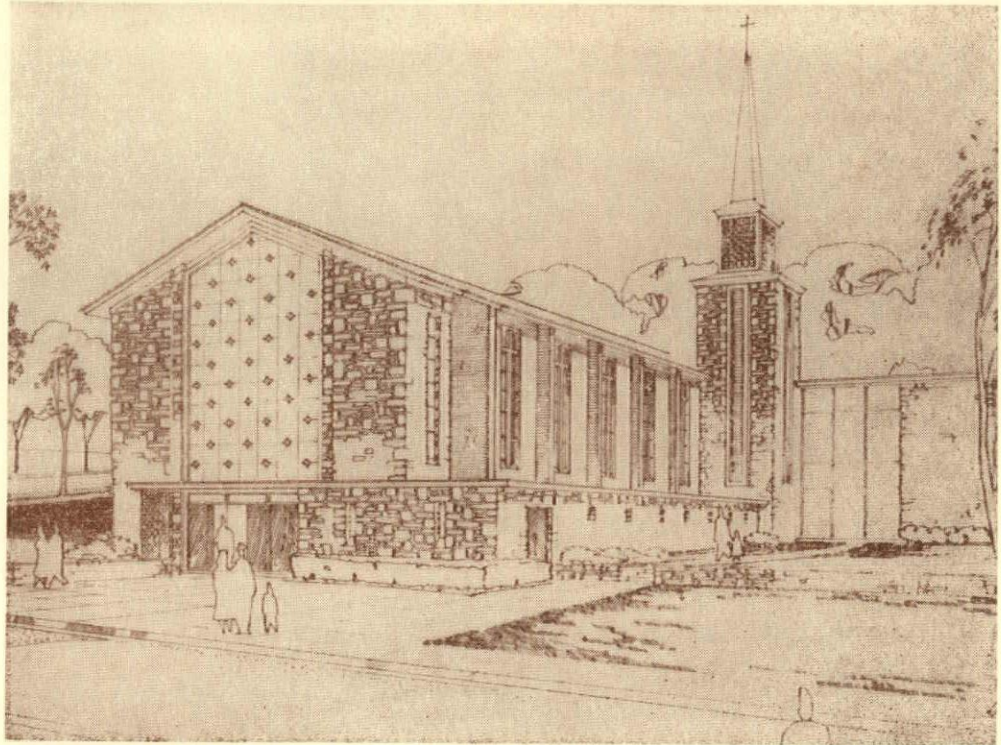
MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

John S. Samperton's home for Harry Boswell in Ray Park, Prince Georges County is featured in Town & Country magazine October issue. Jack Samperton has also been getting wide publicity for the latest home he designed for Geraert's Twinbrook Park development, Rockville. It has been selected as the "Scholarship Home of '56" by the Montgomery County Press Association.

Dana Johannes has been appointed to a committee by the Washington Board of Trade to select judges for its next architectural competition.

Soule & Donnelly's unusual octagonal St. John's Catholic Church in El Nido, Va. was pictured and described in the Washington Post-Times Herald and was dedicated on Sunday, October 21 by the Bishop of Richmond.

THIS IS THE HYATTSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH as on the boards of the Chapter's Vice President, Benjamin P. Elliott. A contemporary design, the building, a \$300,000-\$350,000 project, is scheduled for construction early next year. It is located across from the Sanitary Commission and facing the park at that location. The church will seat from 400 to 500, as well as providing for an educational wing with facilities for all present and future activities of a progressive Presbyterian congregation.



TALENTED VEEP IS A.I.A. SPARKPLUG

MOST PROFESSIONAL MEN AND WOMEN, by reason of definite aptitudes, talent and a desire to be of greatest help and service have early felt a strong pull to their vocations.

This is fortunate for people who like to live, work and worship in well designed and constructed homes and buildings, who hope for best attention when sick and who want to keep out of jail when in trouble.

In the case of Benjamin P. Elliott, the Chapter's busy Veep, the professional tugging was present at a tender age. His grade school teachers may often have wanted to give him a sharp ruler rap on the knuckles because his preoccupation with sketching in class left little time for attention to the subjects being taught. An exasperated fifth grade teacher said, "Benjamin, you should be an architect!" The young Ben, probably wearing the same soulful, dedicated look he has today, undoubtedly thought, "Dig that teacher, she's hep."

At McKinley Technical High School, Ben's tendencies and talents were appropriately conspicuous; at Catholic University, where he was graduated in 1948, he won the Second Medal in the national Beaux Art Competition and comparative awards in other architectural contests.

Meanwhile, the architectural student's rapid progress was interrupted by long service with the Army—except that the Army did discover his abilities and, while in the European theater, and in England, Ben worked in the control section of the Office of Chief Engineer. The military service and his sincere interest in what goes on in a church, as well as what a temple of worship should look like, brought about the most important meeting of his life. It was in an Eng-



Benjamin P. Elliott

lish church that Ben met his wife and great helpmeet, Mary. And so in the delightful Elliott household in Damascus there are Mary, son Paul, 8, and daughter Sara, 4.

Industrial, school, apartment, motel and other buildings, as well as homes, come off Ben's boards but a church project always has its special appeal for him. This artist is a collector of old coins but money he puts in collection plates is being currently minted and, while the contributions are not so marked, they do seem to work out as so many big loaves cast on the waters. Whatever else may be on Ben's boards, there are usually several churches which, when they are built, provide fine places for other well wound up Big Bens to meet other nice Marys.

Ben Elliott has only one main hobby—A.I.A. When the local architects were trying to keep up a local organization as a Division of the Washington Chapter sometimes only four or five members showed up at meetings. Ben became secretary and then, because of his tireless work in telephoning and getting out notices, attendance began to get up to 20 or more. He served in this office for three industrious years. He has traveled long distances to serve as a delegate to two national and two regional conventions at his own expense.

Today Ben is one of those principally responsible for keeping the Potomac Valley Chapter's ball rolling at high speed. He doesn't just talk A.I.A., he works at it—if necessary for success of any chapter project, 24 hours a day.

Die

Fred S. Gichner
Good Friend of All Architects

Frederick M. Moss

Arthur J. Kelsey

Joseph G. Morgan

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For information, contact Charles B. Soulé at OL 6-4441 or Benjamin P. Elliott at JU 9-7126.