



POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

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March 1, 1958

HOW TO BUILD A HOUSE *Without* AN ARCHITECT

Reprinted from the Michigan MONTHLY BULLETIN

1. Let it be known that you own a lot and intend to build. The best way is to let your wife tell it at the Club as a secret. This will produce a prodigious crop of advertising matter which you must study night after night. Then get a large trunk to keep this stuff in. Do not destroy it because it contains so much air that you can use it for insulation.

2. Subscribe to a magazine like "Home Hand-some" or "House and Yard." Study each issue diligently. Clip out everything which appeals to you. You may not know much about architecture, but you know what you like. Prepare a scrap-book of all attractive plans. You should now be well advanced in your education.

3. Select nine or ten of your favorite plans from your scrap-book and proceed to combine all the best features of each in a new and original plan. For this you will need cross-section paper and a 6H pencil which must be kept very sharp.

4. If, in your plan, you find the stair running smack against a chimney, or if a bath-room persists in remaining in the very middle of things without a window, or if there is no room for the kitchen sink, do not despair. A good maneuver is to turn your plan upside down and start over. Always remember that the second floor is just above the first, except in Southern California.

5. Do not be disturbed if your plan does not seem to fit your lot. The modern method is to engage a steam shovel to make your lot fit the plan.

6. Prepare a list of the many short-cuts and devices that should save you money—those unconventional ideas which the regulars in the building game never think of, or stubbornly refuse to adopt.

7. The next problem is the blue-prints. This is one of the silly fetishes in the building business. Somebody has to make the blue prints; although your wife took interior decorating in college, her sketches are always apt to be rather vague. Maybe you can get the F.H.A. to put on a blue-print project.

8. Get some bids on your blue-printed designs. You do not need specifications since it is well known that all houses are built of just about the same materials. When you get your bids, don't forget that even the low bid is too high, and should be drastically deflated. Finally, when you are ready to go ahead, do not go to the expense and trouble of a written contract. A good verbal agreement is all that is necessary. There is a lot of nonsense about contracts, lien laws, building codes and zoning ordinances, which can be ignored as superfluous.

9. As the job proceeds, do not hesitate to make changes and improvements. Your verbal agreement includes all this; anyhow, the builder will never think of charging for extras.

10. When you have your house-warming, secrete some dictaphones about the house. You will then secure fresh off-the-record criticisms of your work from your guests. You can then judge whether you are a success as a builder. Of course, you will not be present at this house-warming. You will by this time have suffered a nervous breakdown and are on your back muttering. You will soon owe the doctor the money you should have paid an architect, for there is no peace in store for you; every door and window in the house sticks, there is a big crack where one corner has settled; the cellar, like the great Salt Lake, has many inlets for water but no outlets; the front porch has parted company from the house at the roof line, and the sewer refuses to work because it runs up hill. Furthermore, the contractor has failed and you have nobody to fall back on except the fellow who told you you could do a professional job in your spare time and still live!

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MEETINGS

First Monday of Every Month
at 12 o'clock noon
NEXT MEETING
Monday, March 3
Stone House Inn, Silver Spring

LETTERS

Maryland U. Project Commended

Dear Mr. Englehardt:

I was delighted to hear your Chapter has proposed a School of Architecture at the University of Maryland. I think this is a splendid idea, one which I have thought of for many years, and I want you to know that, as the youngest member of the Board of Regents, and a member of the A.I.A., I will certainly do all I can to help you in your endeavor.

Alvin L. Aubinoe.

Tennessee's Experience

Dear Mr. Englehardt:

The "Potomac Valley ARCHITECT" is a peppy little publication and I always enjoy reading it. I got a big kick out of the cartoon in the February 1st issue.

The article in that issue by Mr. MacIntire was of special interest because of our experience here in Tennessee. We have no school of architecture in this state, and there was quite a bit of pressure a few years ago to start one at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. All of us, of course, felt that it would be helpful to the profession to have a school of architecture here but we wondered if the present or prospective enrollment would justify it. So we asked the Southern Regional Education Board to make a survey and give us their recommendations.

Since Walter Taylor worked very close with the S.R.E.B. in its survey, I am sure that he has told you about the Board's report titled: "Architects for the South." However, I am sending you a copy in case you haven't seen it. If your efforts to start a school of architecture at the University of Maryland should be unsuccessful, you may wish to explore the out-of-state tuition assistance which is now in effect in Tennessee and if so, you can get further information from the Southern Regional Education Board, 881 Peachtree Street, N. E., Atlanta 9, Georgia.

Harry B. Tour
Past President
Tennessee Society of Architects

**Move for Maryland Architectural
Course Getting Wide Attention**

The petitions and presentations of Potomac Valley for Maryland's first course of architecture to be established at its state university are being heralded in many quarters.

Members will appreciate the interest shown in the letter from Alvin L. Aubinoe, now one of the University's regents, and the information from Harry B. Tour, past president of the Tennessee Society of Architects, which society has engaged in an effort for a similar school in the Volunteer State.

Beyond the parts of his letter printed in these columns, Mr. Tour describes work done in setting up a system whereby students from Tennessee receive a subsidy from the state of \$200 per year to cover their out-of-state tuition at Georgia Tech, V. P. I. and Auburn. As we go to press, a story written by R. K. Jones covering the facts and opinions presented to Dr. Wilson H. Elkins, President of the University, is being handled by the Diamondback, student weekly. It is expected to include comments by President Elkins on the Chapter's proposal.

How Our Client Has Changed

The need for all segments of the public to be better informed as to the requirement in better building for the services of the qualified, professional architect is well shown in a speech made last month by Leon Chatelain, Jr. President of AIA, before the Associated General Contractors of America, Inc. He says, "It is very seldom today that we design a building for one person. This is the age of the corporate client — the collective client, if you will. The criteria for an office building are decided by a committee appointed by and responsible to a board of directors. A church project is supervised by a building committee. A school — when the job is planned properly — is dependent upon the entire community for the conceptual process which guides the design. There is no segment of the public to which we can point and say — it has no connection with architecture and building. The Girl Scout and housewife of today are among the people who will decide upon a new civic center, a church, a school, or even a bank tomorrow. They will participate in planning a new kind of architecture — building in the mass."

**FLASH! WE WILL STAGE PREMIER
SHOWING OF NEW AIA COLOR FILM
AT OUR MARCH 3 MEETING**

BE FIRST TO SEE JOHNNY, star of AIA's new, semi-animated color film on school building. His school, the film shows, is the best bargain on the school market today. It's the product of intensive, intelligent teamwork between educators and architect — tailored to the very specific requirements of the community.

MONDAY NOON — DON'T MISS IT!

Fee Schedule Investigation

Standard architectural fees in neighboring states are being investigated by the Baltimore Chapter preparatory to revising its existing minimum fee schedule. Potomac Valley's Office Practice Committee will extend all assistance. The fees from all areas studied will be superimposed on one graph for comparison.

D. C. Planners Blasted

The Capital City's planning procedures have been blasted in a report distributed by Louis Justement, chairman of the A. I. A.'s National Capital Committee. Urging a new organization with power to "plan, finance and construct" Mr. Justement told the Committee of 100 on the Federal City the main trouble with D. C. planning groups is they have no positive authority for big projects like bridges and highways and the "advisory authority" they do have "merely incites arguments and delays". At the same time, he said the National Capital Planning Commission with complete control over such matters as housing and urban renewal wastes time on "trivial details instead of the creation and realization of a powerful and imaginative city plan." The Committee of 100 will discuss the Justement report at its March meeting.

Carroll on Reynolds Jury

Our popular Regional Director, J. Roy Carroll has been named to serve on the jury for the \$25,000 1958 R. S. Reynolds Memorial Award for the best use of aluminum.

The Reynolds firm, incidentally, with considerable fanfare, this month will open its new, striking home office building at Richmond, Va. Figuring importantly in all of the national magazine photography is a \$40,000 landscaping job accomplished by our advertiser, Gustin Gardens, Inc.

See Historic Drawings By March 8

The exhibition of original architectural drawings and related material in the gallery of the Octagon will continue through Saturday, March 8. This is the unusual exhibit arranged to coincide with the annual meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians.

News of Chapter Members

The Case of the Insouciant Bell Captain

The most private exhibit of architectural designs ever held in the history of A. I. A. has been conducted by Elliott & MacIntire. In fact, no one saw it at all.

This was not the idea of Ben and Andy who had slaved for two weeks getting a special exhibit of church drawings and models ready for the Mission Board of the Methodist Church meeting at the Willard Hotel. It was entirely that — and sloppy public relations — on the part of the hotel's bell



Armed with all possible, factual material supporting the Chapter's proposal for a course in architecture at the University of Maryland, this committee has made its proposal to the University's President, Dr. Wilson H. Elkins. Pleased at their reception are, from left, Andrew H. MacIntire, Chairman, Special Study Committee; Ted Englehardt, Chapter President and George H. Schoneberger, Jr. To George, the official A. I. A. action is especially pleasing. From the time he was a student at the University he has been urging the establishment of a Maryland school of architecture.

Delmar Is Where He Belongs

After years as an Associate member, and more than qualifying himself in every way, Eugene A. Delmar is now welcomed as a corporate member of the Chapter. He continues with Ronald S. Sensaman.

Nice Work When You Can Get It

Our Secretary Stanley H. Arthur is enjoying trips to the Bahamas. He is the architect for a new hotel on the Island of Eleuthera. (How about convincing the owners your reporter should cover this for Bahamas publicity?)

Stan has more elbow room in new offices at 7989 Norfolk Ave.

Andburg Is Speaker

Another group of students is now better informed about the architect. On their "Career Night" Eric W. Andburg addressed the students of Wheaton High School on "Architecture".

captain who was entrusted with the drawings for delivery to the Board.

On the last afternoon of the meeting the architectural team visited the exhibition to view all drawings and hear the verdict on their own which were nowhere in sight. A house detective turned up the E & M's still unwrapped masterpieces in the bell captain's closet.

Moral: When you take your work to the Biennial Competition don't give it to an Indian Spring Country Club waiter. He might have his mind on an order for something on the rocks and a fat tip.

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