



POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

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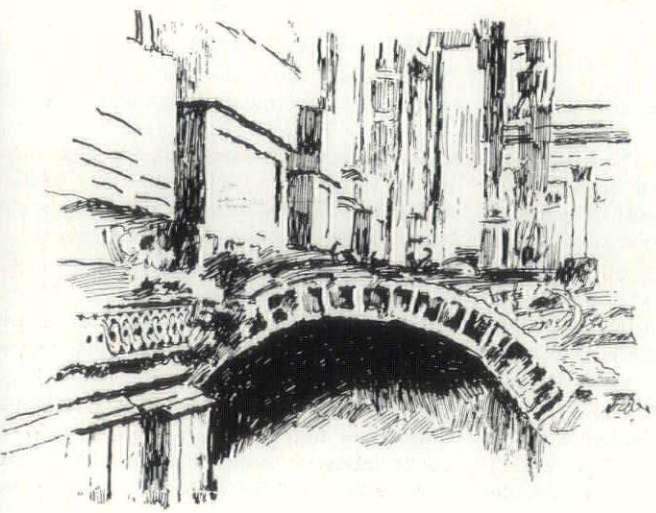
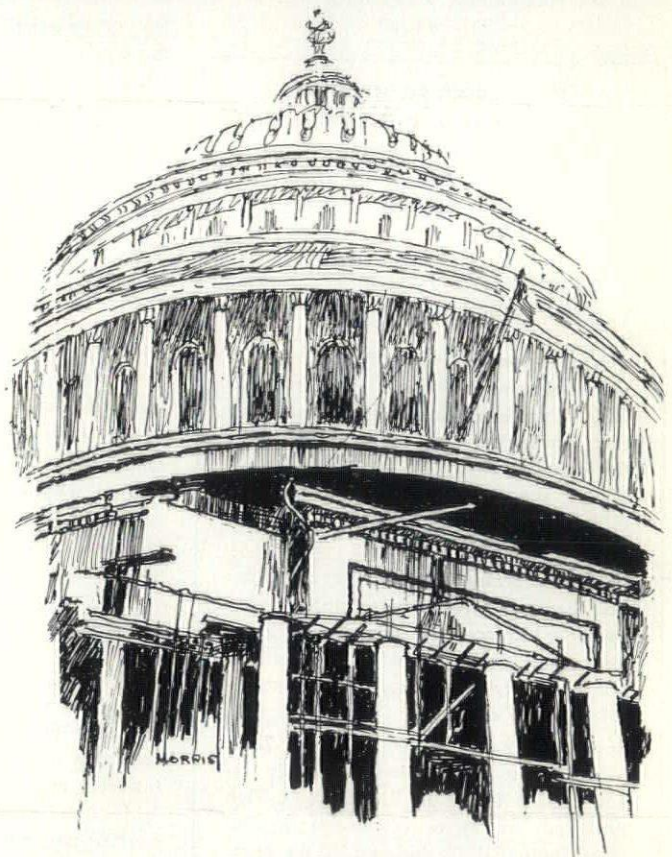
Vol. 3, No. 8

EAST FRONT OF THE CAPITOL

The sketches you see on this page are those of Edwin Bateman Morris, Sr., AIA. They represent his interesting impressions of historical and architectural facts that have been revealed as a result of the demolition work necessary to proceed with the East Front extension.

In the sketch on the right, Mr. Morris notes the pronounced overhang of the dome. From the sketch below he observes that "it seems evident from the fact that the structural arch for the east front steps rests right on the guilloche ornament, that the east entrance was an after thought."

The sketches were made during a visit of the AIA Board of Directors to the Capitol.



When the new Capitol East Front is completed, the extension will add seventy thousand square feet of extra space. Three stories high and matching the previous appearance, it will contain eighty-six rooms. The over-all dimension of the extension will be thirty-two and a half feet.

Prior to this construction, the building measured seven hundred and fifty feet long and three hundred and seventy-five feet wide with a floor area of fourteen acres and four hundred and thirty rooms.

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American Institute of Architects

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NEXT REGULAR MEETING

12 Noon, April 6, 1959

Stone House Inn

Four Corners, Silver Spring, Md.

May Meeting — May 4, 1959

Notice: Liability
Insurance News

Chapter members who attended the insurance seminar which Ted Cromar's Office Practices Committee sponsored a few weeks back were so interested in the subject matter that we have scheduled a speaker on the professional liability phases of the insurance question for our April 6 meeting.

Adequate professional liability coverage has become increasingly important recently with reports that architects have been held legally liable in situations not normally considered the responsibility of the architect.

Speaking on the subject: "A New Look at Architects' Professional Liability Insurance" will be Carl A. Anderson, Vice President of Victor Schinnerer & Co., Washington, D. C. Judging by the reaction of those who learned something about this important question at the seminar, this is a subject of vital interest to all practicing architects.

An Invitation

All members of the Potomac Valley Chapter are invited to be the guests of the Armstrong Cork Co. at a luncheon to be given at the Bethesda Naval Officers Club on Thursday, April 23, at 12:00 noon.

During the luncheon program, scheduled for a maximum of two hours, members will be introduced to: New Developments in Resilient Flooring.

Sense of Humor Plus Good
Company Equals Architect

Architects are found to be better company than most people, according to John Betjeman, a New Yorker book reviewer.

Mr. B. made this observation recently in a review of Osbert Lancaster's book, "Here of All Places", a collection of his architectural drawings and commentary—the first of this British author's to be published in the United States.

Mr. B.'s observation on the good companionship of architects stems from his belief that architecture, "besides being concerned with plan, outline, texture, setting and purpose, is also a matter of proportion. A good architect is bound to have a sense of proportion, and that implies a sense of humor."

He recommends a walk with an architect through a town looking at buildings and having him point out what is good and what is bad. The latter, he maintains, "is often ridiculously funny."

A sober note is introduced by Betjeman in this observation: "With the humor of architecture there goes a great deal of pain, for many a mistake is there forever, or at any rate for as long as you and I live. In this sense, architecture is much more important than any other art, for paintings can be put away in a cellar, music need not be played again, and books can be forgotten or pulped, but architecture remains for all to see in the public streets."

Quoting the author, Mr. B. likes this description of what is attempted in the book: "My object," Lancaster says, "was two-fold. First, to do for buildings what so many popular writers have done for birds, to render them a source of informed interest and lively excitement for the passerby so that his quiet satisfaction at having identified a nice bit of Banker's Georgian might equal that of the keen bird watcher on having spotted a red-breasted flycatcher; second, and with no very sanguine hopes of achievement, that such an interest, once stimulated, might become so widespread as to cause inconvenience to speculative builders, borough surveyors, government departments, and other notorious predators."

Lancaster, the reviewer claims, does the reader a great service in relating the buildings he caricatures to the people who live in them. We get some inkling of this in such phrases as "Stockbroker's Tudor" and "Wimbledon Transitional" which the author uses to describe various caricatures.

One other attribute of the work, according to the reviewer, is Lancaster's ability to personalize and inform in the architectural field as contrasted with other treatises which try only to instruct "without enjoyment".

The author's disdain for the ruination of the American landscape via poles, wires and billboards is summed up in a one-word description: "Coco-Colonial."

Stump the Spexperts

If you don't have the answer to all your spex problems, chances are you'll get the answer at a panel forum sponsored by the Washington Specifications Institute on April 21, 1959 at 7:30 P.M. in the National Housing Center at 1625 L Street, N.W.

Here are a few of the questions which will be discussed by the panel:

- How many copies of free drawings and specifications should an architect furnish to owner and builder for the proper execution of the work for: (a) a \$30,000 residence; (b) a 15-classroom school; (c) a 20-story office building?
- What can be done to make the "time of completion" more effective?
- Does the owner have any redress for delay caused by jurisdictional strikes?
- What length of time is reasonable promptness in checking and returning shop drawings to the builder?
- Should a bond be for 50% or 100% of the contract?
- Who pays the architect for his time and expenses required of him, when the completion time is extended due to failure of the subs being paid or going "broke"?
- When should a completion and payment bond be omitted?
- Is a "scope of work" paragraph in the general conditions of a specification of any benefit to builders?
- If the architect feels the sub-contractor is incompetent and the builder (general contractor) does not agree; what happens?
- What is the advantage of the ALA bond form "B-1" over the latest form "107"?

Serving on the panel with others will be the Presidents (or designates) of the Baltimore, Potomac Valley, Washington and Richmond Chapters.

Baltimore Report
Gets PV Advisor

Four months ago the Baltimore Chapter launched a new quarterly periodical entitled "Architect's Report". Its purpose is to recognize top quality architecture, bring such architecture to the attention of community leaders in the Washington-Baltimore area and stimulate architects to create better architecture.

Its winter issue dealt with religious architecture and its current spring issue deals with residential building. Coming up is a summer issue dealing with commercial and recreational building.

The Baltimore Chapter has asked neighboring chapters to designate representatives to serve on its advisory board for future publications and our President Chuck Soule has named Ben Elliott as our representative.

Maryland Assembly Passes Urban Renewal Legislation

Maryland counties and cities moved one step closer to go ahead authority with urban renewal plans at this session of the Maryland General Assembly when the law-making body passed legislation authorizing a Constitutional Amendment referendum on urban renewal plans. At the present time, Baltimore City alone has the power to undertake urban renewal activities.

Backers of the legislation were not fully pleased with the bill as it came out of the Assembly, since amendments were added which will still require Assembly approval of specific plans for cities and counties. The bill as originally written would have given cities and counties a free hand in going ahead with their plans once the constitutional amendment was approved. The double-check amendment was insisted upon by some rural county law members and passage of any kind of legislation hinged on general acceptance of the amendment.

Despite the qualifications of the new law, qualified observers feel that cities and counties can now go ahead with preliminary plans for urban renewal on the assumption that the constitutional amendment will be approved in 1960 and then come to the Assembly in 1961 with specific plans. At that time approval of such plans can be assured if the Delegates and Senators of the counties involved support the plan.

On the national scene, AIA's Carl Feiss, chairman of the Institute's Committee on Community Planning, takes issue with a statement of economist Robinson Newcomb that even if there is an increase in the appropriation over and above that requested by President Eisenhower, "architects would feel such an increase only several years hence."

Feiss points out that the present bill contains a clause which would eliminate the self-imposed "rationing" policy of the Urban Renewal agency.

The clause provides that the agency consider plans on a first come first served basis regardless of size. This, he claims, would take many urban renewal plans "off the shelf" and many projects, now lying dormant, can be reinstated and architectural work previously underway can start up again almost immediately.

Commenting further, Feiss states: "Considering the nature of the urban renewal process as it had been developing, one of the urgent reasons for our recommending more money to take care of applicants was to make possible the resumption of the programming which had been well underway before the cutback, so that necessary planning, architectural and engineering work could go forward right away and continue at an accelerated pace. The renewal of American cities is a gigantic task in which the services of architects are prime requisites at all stages of planning and development."

President Appoints Nominating Committee

The annual meeting and election of officers of the Chapter will take place on Monday, May 4. In accordance with the by-laws which provide that the President appoint a nominating committee at least one month prior at the annual meeting, President Soule has announced the appointment of the following chapter members to serve as a nominating committee: Alfred M. Rinaudot AIA, Chairman; Ted Englehardt AIA; and David Shaw AIA.

Offices to be filled are those of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. There will also be a two-year term directorship to be voted upon to fill the vacancy created by retiring Director Clifford B. White AIA.

Montgomery County Planner Wins AIA Writing Award

Frederick Gutheim, Poolesville, Maryland, resident and well known architectural critic and planner in the Washington area, has won the first magazine writing prize of \$500 in AIA's Sixth Annual Journalism Award competition.

The prize was awarded for Gutheim's article on New York's proposed Lincoln Art and Cultural Center, "Athens on the Subway", which appeared in Harpers, October, 1958.

In making the award, the AIA jury commented: "Mr. Frederick Gutheim was awarded the first magazine prize for an outstanding work of architectural criticism. Such criticism is much needed, and unfortunately, all too rare. He and Harper's deserve the honor for publishing not only a highly perceptive analysis of Lincoln Center, but for raising questions about the design of cultural centers everywhere."

Generally speaking, the AIA jury was "impressed by the many diversified approaches to architectural journalism such as architectural criticism, biographical sketches of architects, various building categories, design issues, preservation of historic buildings, building technology, and political issues arising from building and planning problems."

First prize in the newspaper field was awarded to George McHugh of the St. Louis Post Dispatch for a series of articles on architecture which the paper ran on the Music and Art's pages. The jury observed that by doing so, the paper recognized its readers' concern with architectural ideas.

Gutheim is Director of a Joint Senate and House of Representatives Committee conducting a study of Washington Metropolitan area problems.

CLASSROOM SHORTAGE

Some progress was made last year in reducing the serious classroom shortage throughout the country but more rooms are still needed. According to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 140,500 additional rooms are needed with current public school enrollment exceeding classroom capacity by 1,843,000.

HERE and ELSEWHERE

Self Employed Retirement Tax Bill Passes House

Everyone is tax-conscious at this time of year but chapter members in particular should be interested in the progress of a tax bill on Capitol Hill relating to income tax exemption on funds put aside for retirement by self-employed persons.

The bill, referred to as the Keogh-Simpson bill, recently passed the House of Representatives and is now before the Senate Finance Committee for consideration. In reality a tax postponement bill, the measure provides that a self-employed person under the definition of the Social Security Act, may put aside up to ten per cent of his income each year—not to exceed \$2500—and take a deduction on this amount on his current income tax during the years he is self-employed. The retirement fund cannot exceed \$50,000 and must be invested in an annuity or other qualified investment of which a bank is trustee. At retirement time, income tax will be payable on the funds as it is received in retirement payments.

Those chapter members who are interested in this type of legislation may wish to write their Maryland Senators indicating their interest. In writing, they should refer to either H.R. 9 or H.R. 10, identical bills.

BUSINESS BUILDINGS

"Buildings for Business" is the title of a new film strip which the AIA has just released, showing the architect's role in the design and execution of commercial and industrial structures.

The purpose is to explain to public groups, primarily businessmen audiences, the manner in which the planning of business buildings is approached. Emphasis is placed upon the relationship of the architect and the building owner. The architect's function is described in three situations involving a factory, a retail store and an office building.

Thirteen and a half minutes in length, the film is available from AIA at \$5.00 per rental or \$65.00 per print.

U.S. Chamber Annual Meeting

Coming up in late April is the annual meeting of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Potomac Valley Chapter will be represented at the meeting, which is customarily held in Washington, D. C., by its President, Secretary, two delegates, and two alternate delegates. The 1959 session is scheduled for April 26-April 29.

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