



# POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

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## APARTMENT SITE SELECTION

*The following article is from a talk given by Mr. S. E. Saunders of S. E. Saunders & Associates, Land Planners & Landscape Architects, to the Suburban Maryland Builders Association. We feel this article is particularly appropriate at this time in view of the apartment hearings which are going on in our area.*

I want to say a few words about sites for housing, multi-family housing in suburban areas. The important thing in relating multi-family development to community life is the site selection. The big problem is the selection of adequate areas. Usually the zoning that is established for multi-family use is an area that is left over due to the urbanization. It is not useful for commercial and is not useful for individual houses. They say, "there is no other use for this so we will set it up as a buffer between the commercial and the individual houses, it will stabilize the property values."

I found that in 90 percent of these cases those housing areas are not suitable for good substantial housing. Many times the sites will be crowded against stores, against traffic arteries; they are too narrow, they aren't wooded, they aren't properly related to good outdoor, healthy living. I think more consideration should be given by planning agencies and by the governing bodies to the zoning of areas that are suitable for healthy living. I think every project that is designed for people is a successful project. If you find trees, if you find nice topography, and if you find a nice quiet area where you can fit in a project that relates to the community pattern you have potentially a good site. I don't think that you can isolate people living in individual homes. They're all the same kind of people. They may be younger or they may be older. But those kind of people help make a good community—a well balanced community.

I think that in the future with all this new apartment boom ahead of us coming to the suburbs, that we have to think far ahead and plan these communities so that the multi-family housing is a part of them, not simply a buffer

between one land use and another.

Another thing that should be considered is the tax base of the County. In Prince Georges County the apartments yield a tax surplus of \$31.37 per year, per apartment unit. That certainly is a factor that should be considered in development of communities. You may have on one hand houses that will cost the county considerable money in public facilities, but with properly balanced land use you can balance the tax base.

Now, regarding this business about the number of units that should be allotted by the counties. Some people say we have too much now zoned for multi-family use, other people say there are not sites available for development. That is something that could go on forever and probably you could prove your case with facts and figures no matter which opinion you might have. That isn't the point at all. The point is that a certain number of people need multi-family housing. Many, many people can't afford to live in houses, other people don't want to live in houses because they're beyond the age where they can maintain a house and the area around it. So I think that's another thing that has to be considered; I think there are a lot of facts and figures that have to be developed before anybody can make any such statement about the needs.

I'd like to leave this subject with one last thought and that is the criterion that should be set up in selection of sites for multi-family housing. In the first place they should form an integral part of the neighborhood. In the second place the site should not be subjected to noise, heavy traffic or bad environment of any kind. And the zoning laws should be revised to encourage creative, good design.

## New Hearings to Decide Contested Apartments

The Montgomery County Council yesterday again postponed eight long-pending apartment zoning requests with a call for new testimony and additional planning reports.

In three related applications involving a total of 23 acres at Georgia Avenue and Windham Lane north of Wheaton, the council took the unusual step of voting for new public hearings. The first hearings on the applications were held in February, 1958, at which time the Montgomery County Planning Board recommended denial.

The planners last September reversed themselves after completion of the new Kensington-Wheaton master plan and recommended to the council that 18 acres of the tract be rezoned for apartment use.

The council did act on one major apartment request and in so doing revealed a split among council members on the subject of booming apartment construction. Last summer, new multi-family construction reached a record high in valuation of about \$15 million.

By a 4 to 2 vote, the council gave preliminary approval to a 26.6-acre low-density apartment project on property fronting on both Georgia Avenue and the Glenmont-Colesville Road.

The technical staff of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the county planning board had recommended denial of the application. The planners stated the request did not conform to the new Kensington-Wheaton master plan. In the council vote, the rezoning was favored by Councilmen David L. Cahoon, Grover K. Walker, William F. Hickey and Jerry T. Williams. Voting against the rezoning were Council President Stella B. Werner and Councilman Stanley B. Frosh.

Mr. Frosh has on several occasions asked for a determination by council members of long-range policy regarding county growth, especially in the apartment field.

(continued on page 2)

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**NEXT REGULAR MEETING**  
12 Noon, November 4, 1959  
Brook Farm Restaurant  
7101 Brookville Rd., Chevy Chase, Md.  
December Meeting — December 2, 1959

## PV Chapter Votes Locraft Scholarship Fund

At its October meeting the Potomac Valley Chapter A.I.A. acted to donate \$250 to the Thomas H. Locraft scholarship fund at Catholic University. The fund was recently established as a memorial to the late Thomas H. Locraft F.A.I.A., long-time head of the School of Architecture at the university, who passed away early in September.

## COMMITTEE LISTS OUT

A list of member committee assignments has been distributed to Potomac Valley Chapter members.

The Executive Committee has announced that your assignment to a specific committee does not preclude the opportunity of any member serving also on any other committee of the Chapter.

## APARTMENT HEARINGS

(continued from page 1)

Mrs. Werner said the Glenmont apartment development would "change the character of the area."

Speaking for the majority, Mr. Cahoon said that planning experts had testified recently that the Kensington-Wheaton plan did not show a sufficient amount of land recommended for apartment development. He said the presence of a 16-acre community shopping center on the opposite side of the Glenmont Road tended to make the intersection suitable for apartments.

—Condensed from THE EVENING STAR  
October 28, 1959

## Decorators Display In District

Builders and architects will be particularly interested in the floor plan display of local homes which were winners in a recent A.I.D. contest for "the house that best lends itself to good interior design" at a current showing at the National Housing Center, 1625 L Street, N.W., which will continue until November 15.

Entitled "Interiors 1959", this public showing, which includes thirty-one small room settings, was planned by leading members of the District of Columbia Chapter of the American Institute of Decorators.

"This series of thirty-one furnished vignettes offers convincing evidence that all decorators are not alike", according to Mrs. James Reistrup, General Chairman of the A.I.D. exhibit.

For the homemaker there will be fresh and interesting ideas in color, fabric, furniture, rugs and accessories. For the business executive these displays will contain new concepts in office furnishings.

Adding to the educational impact of the display at the National Housing Center will be historical restorations, interiors for veterans hospitals, a scale model of the U.S. Embassy in Morocco, with photos and fabric samples used, plus color renderings of proposed interiors by students of the International School of design.

This exhibition is presented to educate area homemakers and home builders in the fundamentals of good interior design and its relationship to increased enjoyment of home ownership, according to Mr. Robert H. Niepold, President of the local A.I.D.

## BALTIMORE MEETING

Chapter member John Henry Sullivan and his associate, Edward Itevan, recently attended a Baltimore Chapter dinner at the new Church of the Redeemer in Baltimore. The occasion, the first Centenary observance of the church which was founded in 1858, was also an opportunity to display the recently completed church itself—a contemporary design which was blended into the century-old structure.

Jack and Ed were both enthusiastic over the church design and pleased with the program which was headed up by Archibald Rodgers A.I.A. of the Baltimore Chapter.

## C.U. Professor Honored

Veteran faculty member Professor Harry D. Gallogley of the School of Engineering and Architecture of Catholic University was honored at a testimonial dinner on October 29 by the Senators' Club of the C.U. Alumni.

In addition to a plaque which cited Professor Gallogley "for distinguished service and sustaining effort on behalf of Catholic University", appropriate personal gifts were also presented.

## Memorial Award For U. S. Chamber Building Official

Five leading building industry associations have joined in the establishment of an F. Stuart Fitzpatrick Memorial Award to be given annually in honor of the late building industry pioneer for "outstanding individual achievement in the unification of the building industry."

Mr. Fitzpatrick, who died in 1956, headed up the construction and civic development department of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for 25 years. Among his achievements was a pioneering role in the founding and growth of the Building Research Institute of the National Academy of Sciences.

Sponsors of the award are The American Institute of Architects; the Building Research Institute; the Producers' Council; the Associated General Contractors, and the National Association of Home Builders. Named to represent the sponsoring groups are: Leon Chatelain, Jr., past president of AIA; Edmund Claxton, vice president of the Armstrong Cork Co., and past president of BRI; William Gillett, vice president of Fenestra, Inc., and past president of the Producers' Council; Welton A. Snow, manager of building division of AGC, and John W. Dickerman, executive vice president of NAHB.

Mr. Chatelain, chairman of the advisory group, announced that proceeds of the fund, solicited from within the building industry, will be used to make an award annually to the American "who best typifies the spirit, vigor, and accomplishment which the building industry recognized in the late F. Stuart Fitzpatrick."

In appraising Mr. Fitzpatrick's work, Mr. Chatelain pointed out: "As a focal point of organized effort in the nation's biggest industry, Mr. Fitzpatrick was instrumental in broadening the scope of FHA as an instrument for aiding private building. But this was only another of his many interests. He worked tirelessly for the modernization of building codes. He was an ardent supporter of sound zoning and city planning; he had a keen interest in highway problems and understood, long in advance of his time, the vital necessity of considering these environmental problems as a single concern. To him, befitting the title he gave to his department at the United States Chamber—construction was civic development. It is our purpose to see that his name will never be forgotten."

## PV MEMBER APPOINTED

Past A.I.A. president Leon Chatelain, Jr. of the Washington-Metropolitan Chapter and the Potomac Valley Chapter, has been appointed chairman of a committee of the American Standards Association that will study the planning of public buildings as related to the requirements of the physically handicapped.

## Criterion of an Architect

Has your advice been sought on the question of whether one should enter the field of architecture? Here is some advice given by Pietro Belluschi A.I.A., a prominent architect who served as a member of the National Commission of Fine Arts and as Dean of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's School of Architecture and Planning. His remarks appear in a booklet published by the New York Life Insurance Company as a vocational guide.

"How can you tell if you are suited to be an architect? Ask yourself these questions:

"1. Can you draw? An architect does not have to be a Rembrandt but he must be able to sketch neatly and accurately.

"2. Can you visualize. You should be able to describe, in words and sketches, buildings you've seen. Your school, for example. Or a friend's house.

"3. Do you have a grasp of dimensions? An architect must have a good eye for the size and shape of things.

"4. Do you have a feeling for what is appropriate? An architect should not design a railroad depot to look like a gas tank.

"5. Are you good at mathematics and technical subjects? An architect must know his engineering. A mistake can cause a building to collapse.

"6. Can you synthesize? An architect must be able to cope with a wide variety of information and come up with the correct solution.

"7. Are you persevering? It takes a colossal amount of detail work to develop the plans for a building.

"8. Can you work under pressure? An architect's work comes in spurts and he frequently must labor 16 or hours a day to meet deadlines.

"9. Are you a diplomat? You must be able to "sell" yourself to people. An architect must have a client before he can build anything.

Most of all, you should have imagination, enthusiasm and common sense. They must be in equal parts. The man with too much imagination and too little common sense will never get anywhere. And vice versa.

## Outstanding Remodeling Jobs To Be Publicized

Examples of suburban house remodelings and additions with "before" photographs included, plus examples of attractive, colorful, and practical contemporary houses designed for the average size family and built for under \$30,000, will be selected by American Home Magazine, a widely circulated publication. Send working drawings and snapshots to Building Dept., American Home Magazine, 300 Park Ave., New York 22, N.Y. One page credits will be given and photographs and prints presented to architects.

## A. I. A. Christmas Cards Available

The American Institute of Architects has just announced the availability of a handsome Christmas card for 1959 which may be imprinted with a firm name or as a personal family card.

The card, which is approximately eight by five inches in size, is a full-color reproduction of the A.I.A. donated window in Chartres Cathedral in France.

The stained glass window is a gift of American architects, provided by the American Institute of Architects, in homage to craftsmen of Chartres.

This card is available to A.I.A. Chapters or individual A.I.A. officers for their own individual imprint at \$15.00 per hundred, including envelopes. These cards can also be supplied unfolded without A.I.A. imprint for imprinting locally.

Those interested in purchasing the cards should have their orders in by November 15 since later orders will not be considered.

## Meaning of Architecture

Available at the American Institute of Architecture are three new pocket size booklets which should be of interest both to the practicing architect and an inquiring public.

"The Meaning of Architecture . . . to you" is the title of one with this provocative preface:

"If you live in a HOUSE, send children to SCHOOL, worship in a CHURCH, work in a place of BUSINESS, seek entertainment in a THEATER, dine occasionally in a RESTAURANT, place your money in a BANK, trade in a variety of retail STORES, drive a car made in a FACTORY, bind up your family's wounds in a HOSPITAL, and demand a reasonable amount of consideration and protection from your COURTHOUSE, POLICE STATION, and FIRE HOUSE . . . read on. ARCHITECTURE IS YOUR BUSINESS."

An informative discussion of the whys and wherefores of sound school construction aimed at public understanding is contained in the booklet: "Facts and Fancies about School Building."

Dealing with a variety of questions concerning the important problem of providing our children with an education, the booklet points out that "the average new school building program takes only between 10 and 20 cents from the school tax dollar." The rest goes for such items as administration, faculty salaries, etc.

It is pointed out that if the building program takes 15 per cent of the taxes for schools, the average taxpayer with a tax bill of two hundred dollars of which fifty per cent is for schools, would be paying fifteen dollars for school construction.

## HERE and ELSEWHERE

### Federal School Construction Aid Pushed For 1960

In the wake of a statement of Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Fleming to the effect that it would take "a whole school generation to eliminate the accumulated (classroom) shortage", now estimated at 140,000, an attempt is being made by a bi-partisan Congressional group to get some "veto-proof" legislation through the next Congress.

Rep. Cleveland M. Bailey (D., W.Va.) and Rep. Carroll D. Kearns (R., Pa.), ranking party leaders in the House on educational matters, are attempting to work out such a bill. Promoting such a move is a bi-partisan citizens' committee for emergency school construction headed by former Senator William Benton, a Democrat, and the president of the Motion Picture Association of America, Eric Johnston, a Republican.

Various bills for Federal aid to school construction were introduced in the first session of the 86th Congress. The House Education and Labor Committee put through a bill but it was killed by the Rules Committee and never reached the floor. After the Administration announced it would fight a two-year billion-dollar program approved by the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee, no effort was made to get further action on it by the Senate.

In the above mentioned statement, Flemming commented further: "We just cannot afford to wait that long. If we do wait to see how long it will take the State and communities—through their own efforts—to solve the classroom shortage we will be weakening our human resources in an irreparable manner. And this will be taking place at a time when there is wide agreement that the Nation's number one problem in the years ahead will be shortages of well trained people. . . ."

### Maryland Billboard Code Lacks Federal O. K.

Although Maryland tightened up its billboard control law during the last session of the General Assembly, the Bureau of Public Roads has ruled that it still does not meet Federal standards.

A provision of the Highway Act of 1958 allows a bonus of one-half of one percent, over and above the 90 per cent Federal share, to States whose roadside protection laws comply with the established Federal standards. The deadline for application for the bonus is July 1961. Not a single state has yet taken advantage of the Federal inducement to control billboards on the Interstate Highway System and it appears that only three states, Wisconsin, Connecticut and South Dakota, are eligible.

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