



POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

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OF ARCHITECTS

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The articles in this magazine represent the personal opinions of the authors and/or the editor and should not be construed as representing the viewpoint of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the A.I.A.

ON THE COVER

A birds eye view of Annapolis, from the exhibition *Historic Annapolis* opening at the Octagon on October 17. The photograph is courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, sponsor of the show.

NOVEMBER MEETING

12 Noon, November 6

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

EVENTS and EXHIBITIONS

AIA OCTAGON

October 17 through November 10
Historic Annapolis

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

through October 13
Turner Watercolors
October 26 through November 24
Eighteenth Century Venetian Drawings

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

through October 24
70th Annual Exhibition, Society of Washington Artists
through November 7
Intaglio Prints by Marie Micossi
through November 30
Out of the Middle East
through December 1
Photographs by Andreas Feininger
October 15 through January
Masterpieces of Japanese Art
November 3 through 24
Contemporary American Painting
November 4 through December 8
Intaglio Prints by Jan Gelb

PHILLIPS COLLECTION

October 15 through November 18
Pottery by Shoji Hamada

PAN-AMERICAN UNION

through November 27
Drawings by Pedro Friedeberg of Mexico
October 11 through November 3
Sculptures and Paintings from Argentina by Oscar Capristo and Leo Vinci
October 28 through November 3
Photographs by Morton Beebe, U. S. A.
November 4 through 25
Oils by Cesar Valencia of Ecuador
November 26 through December 12
Paintings by Maria Thereza Negreiros of Colombia

WASHINGTON GALLERY OF MODERN ART

through November 1
Sculptors of Our Time
November 5 through December 8
James Brooks

CORCORAN GALLERY

through November 3
Washington Artists—Mimi Bolton
through December 1
Contemporary Painting in Belgium
October 26 through December 29
Progress of an American Collection
November 12 through December 8
Washington Artists—Benjamin Abramowitz

TEXTILE MUSEUM

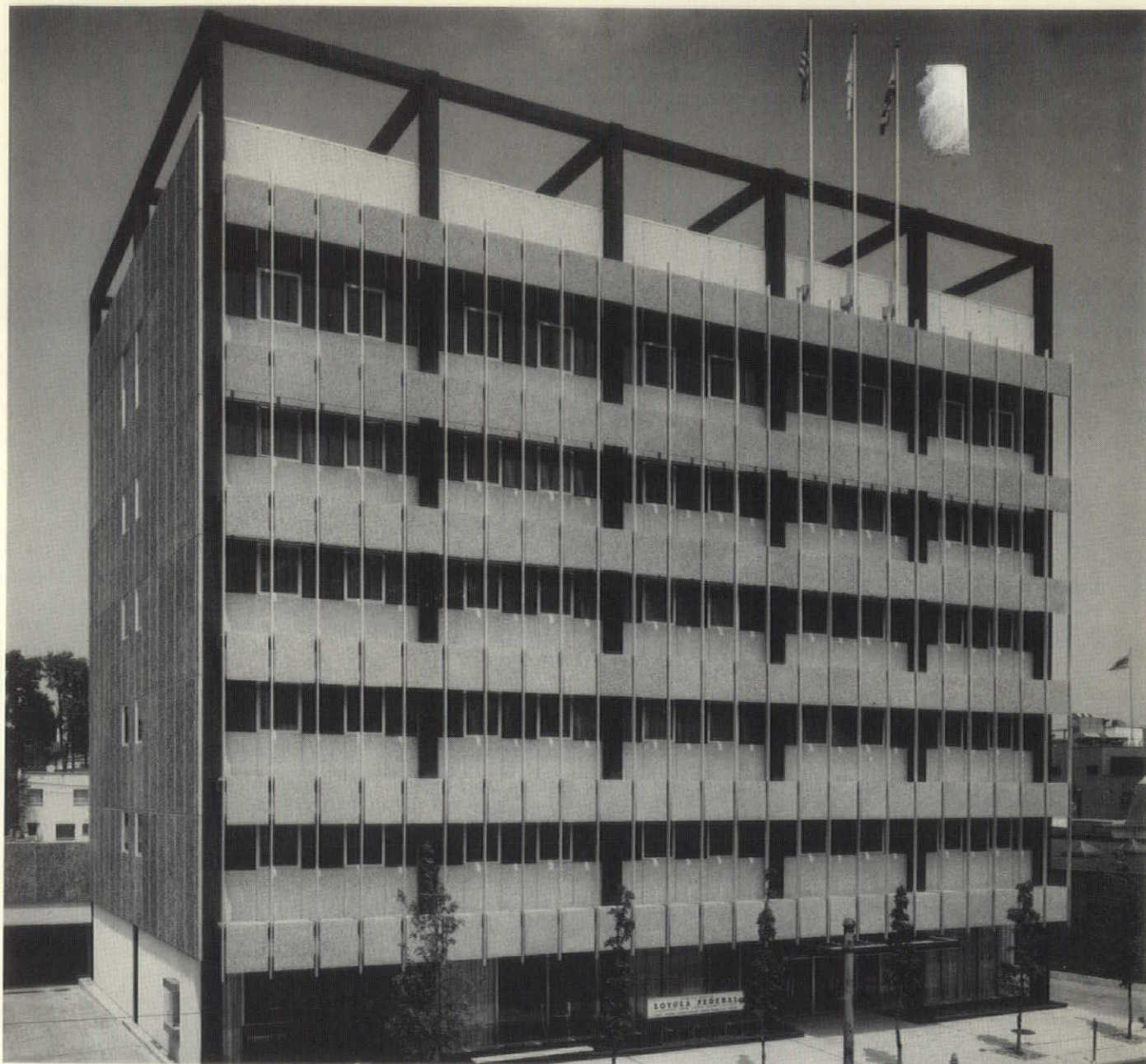
October 15 through January 15
Spanish Rugs and Textiles

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS INSTITUTE

October 16, 8:00 P.M. Corinthian Yacht Club
Site Work

NATIONAL HOUSING CENTER

October 8 through 27
1963 Reynolds Aluminum Prize for Architectural Students



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ALFRED M. RINAUDOT

1910 - 1963

The Potomac Valley Chapter lost one of its charter members with the death of Alfred M. Rinaudot, on September 6.

A native of Philadelphia, Mr. Rinaudot moved to Washington as a child, and received his architectural degree from the Catholic University. In 1945 he established his own firm, and in the years from 1945 to 1961 designed and supervised over 425 projects of all sizes and types, including commercial, industrial and governmental work, as well as private housing developments and extensive work for the University of Maryland. Some of his representative projects were: Congressional Shopping Center; markets for Giant, Jumbo and Grand Union Food Stores; office buildings for GSA, the City of Rockville, and Montgomery County; and the Skinner Building, Woods Hall, and the Computer Science Building for the University of Maryland. In 1961 Mr. Rinaudot began to curtail his large commercial practice, and spent most of his time as inspecting architect for many local firms, work he continued until shortly before his death.

The community will long remember Alfred Rinaudot for his many architectural contributions and his numerous civic activities. Architects will remember the time and devotion he brought to his years of work on the Maryland State Board of Examiners and Registration of Architects. His death is a loss to us all.

INSTALLATION DINNER FOR 1963-64 OFFICERS

Will take place on December 4, at the Crystal Room of St. Bernard's Church, Riverdale, Maryland.

Cocktails: 7:30 P.M.

Dinner: 8:00 P.M.

Installation ceremonies will be conducted by Charles M. Nes, Jr., FAIA, Director of the Middle Atlantic Region. Also featured will be
(continued on page 4)

POINT OF VIEW

NEIL R. GREENE, A.I.A.

Pennsylvania Avenue's new master plan, soon to be unveiled, has already stirred the conservatives in Congress and the "awakened" in the planning commission with remarks portending a new and exciting Washington design controversy. For background in this "episode in monumentality" remember that a ten-member Pennsylvania Avenue Advisory Council, including four prominent architects, has been working on the plan for more than a year, charged with the task of transforming the Avenue between the White House and the Capitol into the grand axis of the city and of the nation.

In the House, Representative Widnall (R-N.J.) called the plan "so staggering that it almost beggars description and can only be compared with some of the more extravagant flights of fancy of the urban renewal planners in Cleveland, Ohio, New Haven, Connecticut, and in Washington, D. C. where structurally sound buildings have been destroyed or are scheduled for destruction to give free rein to the planners."

In direct contrast, The National Capitol Planning Commission, having seen the plan, was reported to be amazed at "its magnificent and awe-inspiring proportions." With due respect to the Pennsylvania Avenue Advisory Council and NCPC, we hope the President can be convinced that the plan will result in "modern buildings in a modern idiom to compliment the historic buildings they frame." I predict the President, Jackie, and the Fine Arts Commission will buy it.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments was dealt a crippling setback by the Alexandria City Council in September, temporarily defeating its efforts to win a congressional charter. The Council of Governments seeks to provide the chief instrument for area-wide development and make it eligible to receive Federal planning

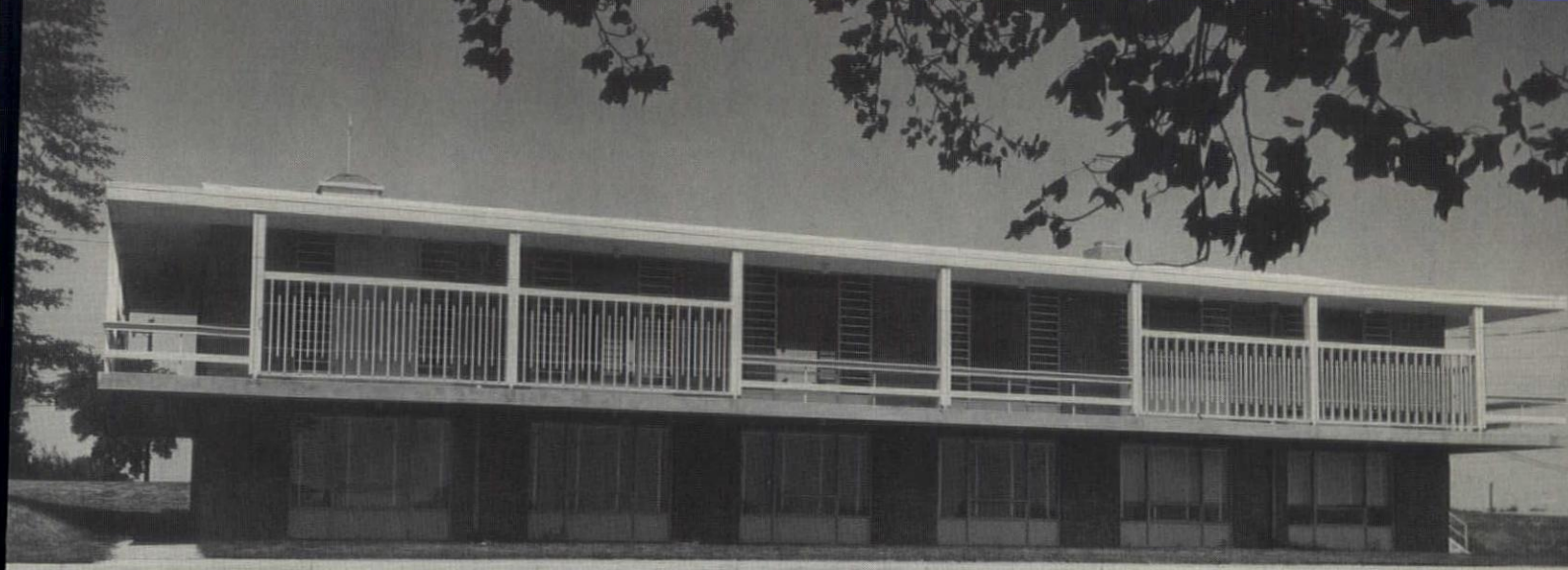
grants. Hopefully, such a representative group could become a metropolitan Washington regional planning commission.

Prince Georges County claims that the County rate of growth is the fastest in the United States. The County has doubled the number of residents entering into and residing there in one year; adding 600 new citizens a week with 9% growth each year. It behooves architects, planners, developers, and lending institutions to recognize the value of good planning in Prince Georges County. The developers and planners of Prince Georges Plaza can take great pride in creating a commercial, residential, and recreational area of great value to the community. Fortunately, the capability of many architects in the Potomac Valley Chapter has contributed to some of the good design residents of Prince Georges see around them.

The most important single connecting highway under consideration in the Washington Metropolitan area is the center leg of the Inner Loop Freeway. This eight-lane highway will join the Southwest Freeway to the Fourteenth Street Bridge and the Southeast Freeway toward Anacostia. In the North, one route will lead to Silver Spring, Baltimore and to a controversial route ultimately winding up at Foggy Bottom. We agree with the necessity of the freeway and share with District Highway Director, Harold L. Aitkin, the hope that the highway design and construction will "measure up to the high standards appropriate for the nation's capital."

May we soon see the results of these and of all good plans; the efforts of worthy people deciding the fate of this fascinating city—Washington.

(Ed. note) Mr. Greene was also responsible for the fine presentation of rapid transit plans in the mid-summer issue of PVA.



CHRIST MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ELICOTT CITY, MARYLAND
STANN & HILLEARY, AIA, ARCHITECTS

photo by J. Alexander

CHAPTER WORK

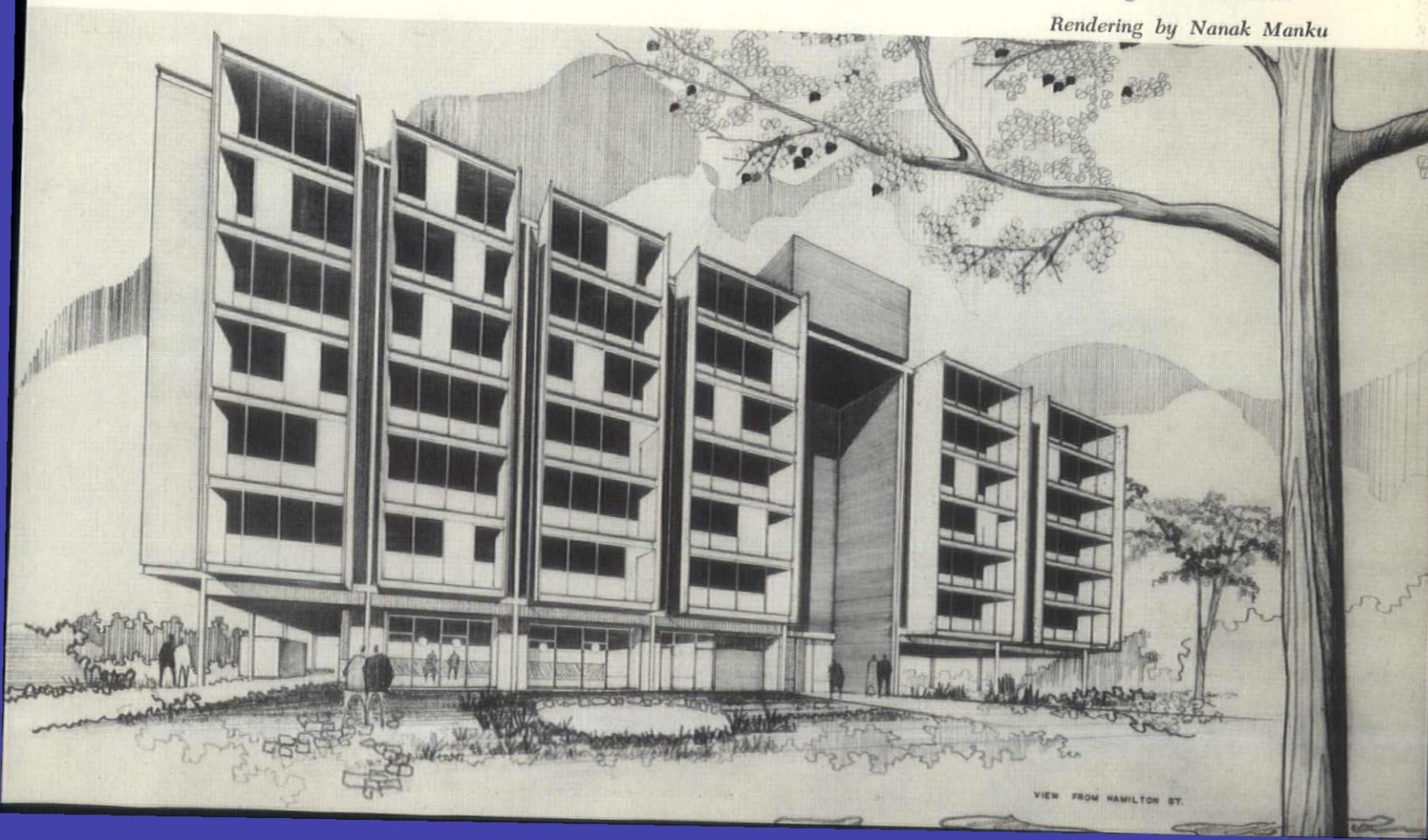
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Rendering by Nanak Manku



(continued from page 2)

the first area showing of "The Sacrifice and the Resurrection"—a color film on the rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral, narrated by Sir Basil Spence. This Dinner will take the place of the regular December Meeting. *Wives and guests are welcome.* Tickets: \$6.00 per person.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE

"Ugliness and Aesthetic Responsibility" will be the topic of this year's regional conference, to be held at St. John's College, Annapolis, Md., October 17 through 19. Information and registration material has already been distributed to all Chapter Members. A unique feature of the conference will be the presentation of an award by each chapter to a layman who has contributed to improving the architectural climate of his community.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Governor Millard Tawes has appointed Chapter Member Stanley H. Arthur to fill the vacancy on the Maryland Board of Examiners and Registration of Architects, left vacant by the death of Alfred M. Rinaudot. The five-year term of office expires June 30, 1967.

Fon J. Montgomery & Associates have announced the formation of a partnership with Neil R. Greene, AIA. The Partnership will be known as

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Loewer, Sargent and Associates, Architects and Engineers have announced the appointment of William L. Johnson as associate architect and A. Julian Brylawski, Jr., as associate and head mechanical engineer.

NEW MEMBERS

The Chapter welcomes four new corporate members this month:

WILLIAM J. CASAGRANDA, born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, attended school in New York City and graduated from Columbia University with a B. Arch. in 1953. Since that time he has worked for Alfred Eas-

ton Poor in New York City, Anshen and Allen in San Francisco, and Johannes and Murray in Clearwater, Florida, and is now with the Design and Construction Section of the Agricultural Research Service, U.S.D.A. Married and the father of two children, Mr. Casagrande's pasttimes include golf, bowling, gymnastics, sculpture, and the guitar.

JACK GRUSS was born in Passaic, New Jersey and attended high school there. Enlisting in the army after graduation he served in the honor guard to General MacArthur during the occupation of Japan. He studied architecture at Georgia Tech and after a short interruption for combat duty in Korea received his B.S. and B. Arch. Subsequent studies at the Catholic University earned him a M. Arch. He has worked for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lublin-McCaughy and Associates, Ted Englehardt, AIA, and since 1960 has been with Cohen, Haft and Associates. Mr. Gruss lives in Silver Spring with his wife and five children. He enjoys photography, wood sculpture, silversmithing, and camping — and has applied for patents on several of his inventions.

MICHAEL F. SOFRANKO is associated with the office of Benjamin P. Elliott, AIA. He attended the University of Alaska, spent four years in the U. S. Air Force and in 1958 received his B.S. in Architectural Engineering from the University of Miami. Before moving to Takoma Park this year Mr. Sofranko spent five years with Frank Schutt Associates in Gary, Indiana, where he was an active member of the Junior Chamber of

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER OF MARYLAND, AIA
912 THAYER AVENUE
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

Please find enclosed a check in the amount of \$..... for..... reservations for the Installation Dinner to be held on December 4, 1963, at St. Bernard's Church, Riverdale, Md.

Tickets: \$6.00 per person

(Signed)

Commerce and the Gary Symphony Orchestra.

GEORGE MURRAY TUEL is a graduate of Howard University where he received his B. S. in Architecture in 1951. He served with the U. S. Marine Corps during World War II. Previously employed by Guy B. Panero, Consulting Engineer and McLeod and Ferrara, Architects, Mr. Tuel has been with Walton and Madden, Architects since January, 1956. He is married, has five children and resides in Rogers Heights, Maryland.

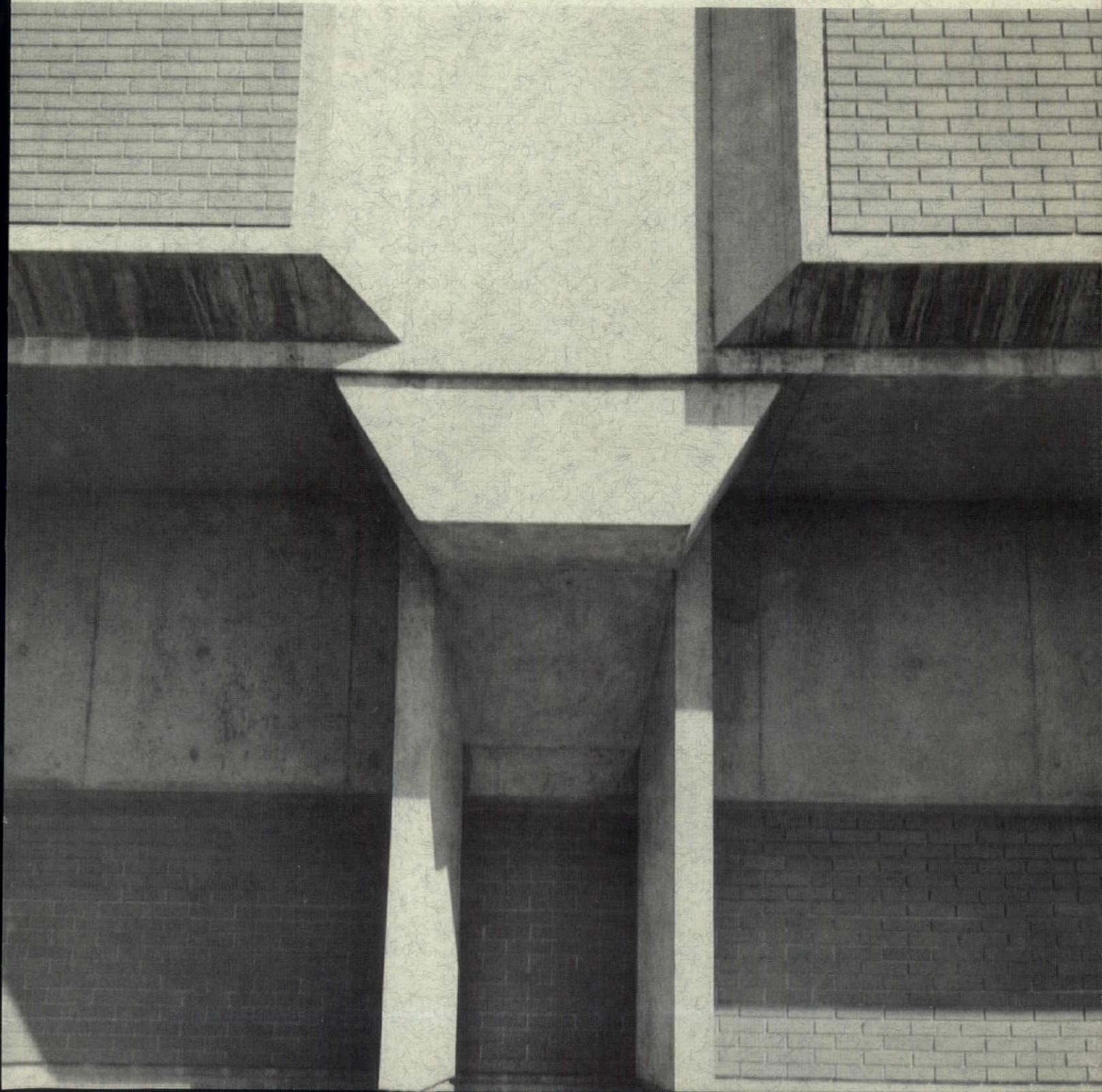
We also welcome three new Associate members:

RONALD E. BLOMBERG graduated from the University of Kansas in 1953 with a B. S. in Architecture. He served with the U. S. Marine Corps during the Korean conflict. Mr. Blomberg has been employed by Walton and Madden, Architects, since November, 1961. He is married, has two children and resides in Belair, Maryland.

GEORGE C. A. BRUNATTI is a graduate of Catholic University, receiving his Bachelor in Architectural Engineering in 1950. He has been employed by Walton and Madden, Architects, since 1950 and has been Chief Draftsman since 1952. Mr. Brunatti served with the U. S. Marine Corps during World War II. He is married, has four children and resides in Greenbelt, Maryland.

FRANK A. ENDO, who has been with Walton and Madden since 1950, received his B.S. in Architecture from the University of California in 1941. He now lives in Kensington with his wife and three children.

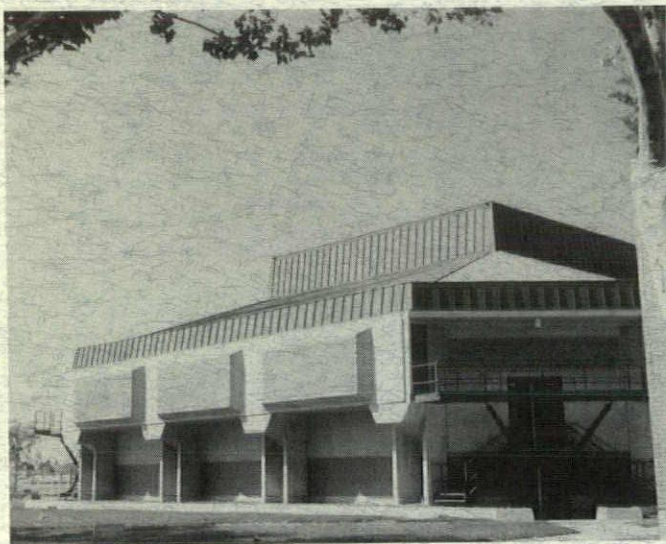
**SCRUTINY and
EXCITEMENT:**
on viewing Arena Stage



by PLINTH

Close scrutiny of the Arena Stage, a sharp-edged, strongly modeled yet low keyed buff brick and concrete walled exponent of a new architecture and a new theatre, generates excitement among sensitive viewers and theatre-goers. The excitement has a double aspect, one part associated with discovering how the character of the building permeates one's consciousness and the other keyed to witnessing a performance. On this dual nature hinges any evaluation of the building; on the one hand as an example of the means by which raw exposed materials are jointed to create a unique spatial experience; on the other judging the structure as a setting for staging and viewing plays. The special significance of the Arena Stage is that with either critical base one's praise is equally high.

As one of the recently completed buildings in Washington's still unfinished urban renewal area, the Arena Stage presently rests in somewhat chaotic circumstances. Though the materials are familiar, the visage is not, as befits one of the few structures built solely to house theatre-in-the-round staging. Two wings, each a generous two stories in height are the main features.



The main theatre wing measures overall somewhat more than one hundred feet on a side. With corners cut out and recessed it resembles an uneven octagon in plan. This wing's lower level base is recessed; against it on the main sides are four sets of attenuated twin concrete columns. Each set supports an inclined element which ends as a trapezoid projecting beyond the face of the columns. The trapezoid's end plane is the same as the concrete wall surfaces above. These in turn have three brick panels, resembling shallow blank bay windows, projecting before it. Such bays are a recurrent theme within and without the building. The main entry, for example, is a two story all glass bay window, and the auditorium's "boxes" prove to be bays in the usual sense, even though combined. The

theatre's wall surfaces containing the brick panel bays are given further prominence by being isolated from each other. Our first contact with the building thus shows a constant interplay of projection and recession, or hump and hollow, which is reinforced with closer acquaintance.

The sculptural byplay on the exterior walls might strike one as irrational were it not that it is held in check by the dominating roof. With its double slope, and dark metal surface lined with raised parallel ribs this resembles a huge tent topped by a square canopy. The roof outline gives the building a unique skyline which contrasts well with the surroundings. The form is the response to a specific characteristic of arena staging. Though no stage house is necessary, sight lines must be calculated for all directions and permit viewing without interference from the essential lighting and staging grids. These grids are housed in the roof's square cap raised out of normal view but not so high as to unnecessarily increase the cubage and cost of the building.

Though the roof's shape is easily accepted and understood I am not so sure the same is true for its color. I must confess that when I first saw the original black color of this terne roof surface I had misgivings that the effect was too oppressive and therefore inappropriate for a theatre which, willy-nilly, acts as a cultural symbol in the community. But time has both lightened this color and quieted my doubts. For the building needs strong capping to keep the play of surfaces from flying off in all directions. And in the special setting of Southwest Washington's urban renewal area where views down on the theatre from the surrounding tall buildings are as common as ground level contacts, the dark, lined, and sharp-edged forms carry far better than flat or colored roof surfaces.

Rather than color in the building an observer is more conscious of actual material and, by extension, of structure. There are a number of likely reasons for this: the relatively small number of openings, with even necessary windows grouped to resemble a brick grille, increasing awareness of surfaces; a tight budget, suggesting a concentration on essentials; the fact that the building is seen more frequently at night when artificial light provides the greatest accent; and, of course, the architect's personal esthetic.

Budget restrictions have made no visible difference in the public spaces of the building. Though ubiquitous and inexpensive concrete block is used in the shops, dressing rooms, and other attendant facilities, it does not seem out of keeping after brick and concrete. By the same token, more expensive materials, such as the travertine marble and black slate of the public lobby floors are equally at home. All materials are in the same color range of dark grey and pale umber, all are treated respectfully with no pretense at mas-

querade, and all are appropriate to their respective use. Probably the chief awareness of any effort to stay within a limited budget comes from the knowledge that arena staging allows combining the cubage of an auditorium and that of a stage house with consequent savings.

Many details recognized the fact that most observers see the building at night. The glass bay window-like entrance is the obvious example. There are two surfaces of glass, both two stories high; the bay itself, projecting from brick end walls, and an inner one roughly in the same plane as the brick.



All photographs by Robert B. Riley

Within this small outer lobby and outlining its plan form just above the level of the glass doors are two continuous lines of small bulbs. Above the bulbs, hung from the ceiling centered between the glass surfaces, are plastic square serif letters roughly twelve inches high and four deep. White on the outside surfaces, orange on the reveals hiding an inner light source, the letters proclaim "Arena Stage." At night, with bulbs and letters lit, reflections in the lobby's glass surfaces, spotlights on the brick panels of the theatre wing, and the subdued hubbub of the active and expectant audience, the theatre quite literally comes alive. The small bulbs also provide an unexpected bow to an old theatrical tradition, recalling both the line of exposed footlights in front of earlier stages as well as the exposed ceilings of overhanging marquees. These bulbs are repeated with lesser intensity in the connecting link between the lobby and auditorium reminding one of the relations between the interior and exterior of the design.

The lobby has other reminders of a different sort. The roof over the rectangular wing housing the lobby is largely flat, leaving proper skyline emphasis to the theatre. But this surface does not meet the outside

walls at a right angle; instead, canted walls of *terne* at the same shallow slope as the first of the theatre roof planes, act here as transition between the vertical and horizontal. With a little imagination the whole roof can thus be thought of as a huge bay-window like form neatly covering the service wing. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the reverse image in the coffer-like ceiling of the lobby. The coffer's surface is white plaster, which achieves a number of effects. The plaster absorbs some of the sound naturally produced in a lobby during intermissions, and as the first use of white the color highlights the continued use of natural materials elsewhere in the lobby—wood is added to the brick, stone, and concrete—while also reminding one, though not insistently, of the exterior modeling.

The impression one has by this time of a minimum of fuss and a willingness, not to say eagerness, to reveal the various elements of the building, is further enhanced on encountering the theatre proper. The low ceilinged passageway which leads the audience to the banked rows of seats helps emphasize, by contrast, the spaciousness of the acting and viewing area. Sets, in the usual sense do not exist; to convey something of a play's locale, atmospheric pieces are usually hung from the roof grid. Theatregoers enter at a level above that of the last row of seats, and below the boxes; from the periphery they filter down to their places, the lowest row of which is still above the playing area. Thus, their eyes on first coming into the auditorium are virtually level with these set pieces. This encounter engages the observer in another interplay of scrutiny and excitement that is the special characteristic of the theatre. The initial contact with the set pieces suggests the atmosphere of the play while reminding one of the exposed technical facilities. Inevitably, the roof enclosure is also dominant, though modified by the triangular subdivision of the supporting ribs. Alternate triangles are sheathed in wood and house lighting facilities; elsewhere, the dark undersurface of the roof is exposed. The different materials and the triangular subdivision reduce the huge form into one more proper for the closer neighbor it now is, and its slope seems like the mirror image of the raking seats surrounding the playing area.

The sense of carefully composed spaciousness stays with a viewer, and underlies all the subsequent discoveries of correlations for the exterior forms and details. The discoveries are small, but cumulative. Perhaps the most telling aspect of the hump and hollow aesthetic in setting up the correlations are the boxes. These actually ring the auditorium, at the farthest remove, though this is only ten rows from the acting area. Having boxes is due to a desire on the part of the theatre's producing staff to avoid any sense of an empty house. There are seats below the perimeter circulating aisle for 640; the eleven boxes hold 88. By

planning the latter to be filled last, it was thought that even with only better than half capacity the audience need not seem scanty. Fortunately, there has been no need to test this theory; the Arena is extremely popular and usually plays to large as well as sympathetic audiences.

The boxes, three on a side, except at the link, are separated by the attenuated twin concrete columns noted on the exterior. Set behind vertical wood boarding the boxes are another sort of hollow and explain the recessed base for the theatre wing; recessions within, the cantilevered boxes are projections from without. Another sort of recession are the vomitoriums which allow access for the actors at the stage level. These vomitoriums are at the cutout corners of the main space, and line up with exit doors at audience level; the two sorts of exits combine to remind us of the theatre's octagon plan.

The playing area is rectangular; roughly thirty by thirty-six feet. There is even a bit of surprise in realizing it is not square. As one passes a corner it is obvious that the vomitoriums do not line up, as they would if they were extensions of the diagonal of a square. The rectangle was a deliberate choice of the theatre group; directors preferred having a definite direction within which to work, rather than a static square. The architect's response to this request is admirable, as are his answers to all the points submitted to him by taping an eight hour staff session recording requirements and reactions. Harry Weese, the architect, has designed a playing area frame not too large in size, just slightly removed from the nearest seats, fully trapped and capable of enlargement by removal of seats from the South Tier. The frame is neutral only in its complete honesty. For the "room" that unites actors and viewers welds them together as well as the separate materials which define its limits.

Scrutinizing a work of architecture never really ceases. Impressions over time and under different conditions modify any evaluation, with subsequent influence over a viewer. The impact of an architectural work differs from that of a poem or play. A play is a determined effort at a form of revelation within a limited time and space. A concentration of attention is required by the viewer-observer that is different to degree and kind from that of viewing the building alone. No longer do we bring ourselves to the work of art; the work is presented to us. We need re-orient ourselves to the playwright's special world; in doing so the room that is theatre is placed in the background of our consciousness. But not entirely, and especially not at the Arena.

The question is an aspect of the larger one of whether the activities within a building are achieved with ease, and under conditions that do not attract attention to themselves. A building should be as a

frame to a picture, containing it, distinguishing it, and complimenting it. My reaction to some of the Arena's presentations is that thus far only on a few occasions have they lived up to the potential of the building. With seats raking upward from the playing area, it is inevitable that one's fellow audience occupy a large part of the field of vision. Some way of acknowledging this therefore seems necessary. Directors can move their players so that it is not disturbing to occasionally view an actor's back. But those rapt eager faces all around, what of them?

The Arena has suggested an answer in an approach which I liken to a performance around a camp fire. This was magnificently accomplished in the production of Brecht's "Caucasian Chalk Circle", where the performance broke the bounds of the stage and brought in elements of the room. I had the sense of a message directed by pilgrims to their fellow wayfarers as a means of illuminating a long journey while resting from it. Thus my analogy with the camp fire. Within Arena's room, any playing directed solely at the actors, carrying over from proscenium staging the pretense that the audience isn't there, wreaks havoc with possible desired effects for it fails to take account of the evidence of our senses.

The closeness of seats to stage at the Arena brings audience and actors into a close and intimate relationship appropriate to sharing a mutual goal and understanding. Inevitably, as a building is used for regular activities, immediate and constant awareness of it as a spatial creation fades. The long range effect is a physiological one; not whether the space is exciting to look at every instant, but more whether it is comfortable to be in for whatever purpose. These are not concerns that a single viewing can determine, which is why architectural criticism in general is somewhat deficient. Thus the necessity for discussing various productions of the Arena Stage; each tells us something about the building and its use and the success or failure of both.

I think it is fair to say, therefore, that the new Arena Stage is a successful example of the response of a talented architect to a talented client. This is revealed by the result; a building with an inherent sense of order respecting both the designer's tastes and the occupants' purpose. The lesson for the sensitive observer is to recognize the restraint and realize a consequent responsibility. A building designed as a frame, which the Arena needs be in large measure, depends for its success on sympathetic understanding and use. Beyond this is the observer's further responsibility of helping promote those conditions with which buildings of like nature may be built. The Arena, by echoing one art through another, illustrates the highest purposes of our society and its success should serve as a beacon.

Irish Architecture of the Georgian Period

A portfolio of photographs from the exhibition of that name being
circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

Tower, Church of St. Anne, Shannon, Cork, 1722-6





Dr. Steeven's Hospital, Dublin, 1721-33. Thomas Burgh, Architect



The Custom House, Dublin, 1781-1791. James Gandon, Architect

The Gardens, Powerscourt, County Wicklow. Laid out by Daniel Robertson in 1843



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