

### POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

November, 1964 • Volume 8, No. 8

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION • POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER OF MARYLAND AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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# POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

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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, A.I.A. A.I.A.

### ON THE COVER

A poetic and very seasonal study by the camera of Lowell A. Kenyon, Architectural Photographer. For the curious, it is a morning study of a concrete walk.

# **NEW ADDRESSES**

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### **EVENTS** and **EXHIBITIONS**

AIA OCTAGON November 24 through December 4th Exhibit of Architectural Student Theses

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS INSTITUTE
Regular Meeting: Tuesday, November 17th at Thomas
Somerville Co. Meeting Room, 6th & Buchanan Sts., N.E.
Dinner & Cocktails: 5:30 P.M. – Reservation, please.
Subject: Division 11 – Commercial Kitchen Equipment.
Moderator: Joseph C. Dennison

CORCORAN GALLERY through November 29th Contemporary Japanese Paintings November 10 - December 6 Alexander Russo

NATIONAL HOUSING CENTER through November 22nd HHFA Honor Awards

PAN-AMERICAN UNION November 18 - December 9 Angel Loochkart of Colombia - Oils

PHILLIPS COLLECTION through November 17th Cubist Period of Jacques Lipchitz - Sculpture November 17 - December 27 Sculpture by Etienne Hajdu

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION through the Fall Photographs by Sam Falk through the year Masterworks of Iranian Art - Freer Gallery TEXTILE MUSEUM through January 16, 1965

A Survey of the Textile Museum Collections 1-5 P.M., Tuesday through Saturdays. No admission charge. WASHINGTON GALLERY OF MODERN ART

November 6 - December 31 Richard Diebenkorn – Retrospective Show of Oils and Drawings

### CHAPTER NEWS

Governor Millard Tawes of Maryland has appointed Chuck Soule' to fill the vacancy on the Maryland State Board of Examiners and Registration of Architects. Chuck, a charter member and past president of the Chapter, has the best wishes of all its members.

### NEW MEMBERS

We take pleasure in welcoming two new Corporate Members to the Institute and to Potomac Valley Chapter:

ANTHONY N. JOHNS, JR., AIA 7904 Echols Ave. Lanham, Md. JOHN J. BRENNAN, AIA 405 Chestnut Rd. Washington Grove, Md.

Mr. Johns is associated with the firm of Walton & Madden, while Mr. Brennan's firm is located in Rockville. Occasionally our critics publish an article of such potency and astuteness that it brings one up short and gives food for lingering reflection. The following is just such an article and I am reprinting it in its entirety for your pleasure or pain, however it may strike you individually. At any rate, it deserves an even wider audience than the impressive circulation of The New York Times affords.

LIBRARY

# POP ARCHITECTURE: HERE TO STAY

### Mass Taste Creates a Mass Art that Reveals the Face of America in the Sixties

### By Ada Louise Huxtable

There has been a lot of pseudo-profound theorizing about the democratization of the arts in our time, but the only art in which the process has actually taken place is architecture. What has happened in painting and sculpture is, more properly, popularization. The product itself still follows the standards of a small group that might be called the creative elite, although it is merchandised to the masses.

The public, in the case of these arts, is merely the consumer, and it is presently consuming at a record rate; but it sets no standards for what is produced. And if it chooses to consume the products of, say, a Washington Square outdoor show, this work, in turn, has little effect on "art." The real thing continues to be produced by a cultural and creative aristocracy, if aristocracy is defined as that portion of the trend-setting minority that operates on a genuine tradition of knowledge, talent and taste.

This used to be particularly true in architecture, where the style and standards of past periods have been established consistently by the creative elite. Today, however, the situation is virtually reversed.

### Democracy at Work

Except for a pathetically small showing, the cultural aristocracy is no longer responsible for most building styles. It is barely holding its own, with those isolated examples that represent structural and design excellence, against the tide, or better, flood, of what we propose to call Pop Architecture.

Pop Architecture is the true democratization of the art of architecture in that it represents not just mass consumption but mass taste.

Its standards are set not by those with an informed and knowledgeable judgment, but by those with little knowledge or judgment at all. It is the indisputable creation of the lower rather than of the upper classes. As such, it is a significant first: probably the only architectural style in history to be formed at the bottom, rather than at the top.

Even more significantly, it consists of the vast, inescapable, depressingly omnipresent and all-too-typical bulk of American building. This includes the greatest part of today's construction and capital investment.

In Pop Architecture, the timeless determinants of comparative knowledge and trained evaluation have been supplanted by the typical parvenu love of the novel, the flashy and the bizarre.

The characteristics of Pop Architecture are gaudy misuses of structural effects for aggressive and often meaningless eccentricities of form, the garish misapplication of color and material for jazzed-up facades of fluorescent brilliance and busy metal enamel panel patterns unrelated to underlying structure, with glittering grilles and append.ges that conceal nothing but bad plans.

It is, of course, Miami with its uninhibited monuments to lavish pretentions ignorance like the prototypal Fontainebleau. It is every Miracle Mile in suburbia, offering every new effect in the architect's sample book and a frankly phony, but eyecatching version of every new structural technique. It is dazzling glamor to the optically naive; consummate vulgarity to the visually educated.

Like Pop Art, Pop Architecture shows mass taste at its most cruelly self-revealing. Unlike Pop Art, it is the real thing, rather than a sophisticated, detached commentary. Pop Art is the ironical statement of those who know, being outrageous. Pop Architecture is the straight-faced product of those who don't know, just being themselves.

### Architectural Reality

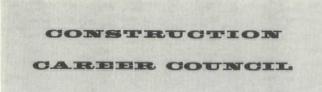
Pop Architecture may be derided, but it cannot be dismissed. While the Washington Square canvases and all of their kind may not make a ripple on art's surface, the hotels, motels, stores, shopping centers, bowling alleys, restaurants, office buildings and commercial complexes of Pop Architecture, and those churches, community centers, speculative buildings and civic and other structures that ape their style stack up as the country's major building effort, in quantity, size and expense.

This is architectural reality, and an esthetic and historical phenomenon not to be dismissed just as "bad design." It is atrocious design, of course, but it is obviously here to stay in appalling amounts unless its characteristic look of transient tinniness indicates a fortuitous built-in obsolescence. It is determining the face of America in the sixties and it is, inescapably, our architecture, whether we like it or not.

And whether we like it or not, it will have its place in history as well, as an awesome demonstration of the first truly democratic style and popular art on a scale that the twentieth century only promised until now, but has finally delivered. It will go down in the record with bad generals, decadent states and corrupt societies when submitted to the cool, objective scrutiny of future scholars.

It is pointed, legitimate commentary on our current cultural condition and the general level of architectural practice, even among qualified professionals. And where Pop Art shocks the layman, Pop Architecture does not — perhaps the most terrifying comment of all.

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The students of Fairfax County High School will benefit from the joint efforts of the newly formed Washington Metropolitan Construction Career Council. The first "career day" presenting only the construction industry to the students will be held on Saturday, November 7, 1964 at the W. T. Woodson High School in Fairfax County.

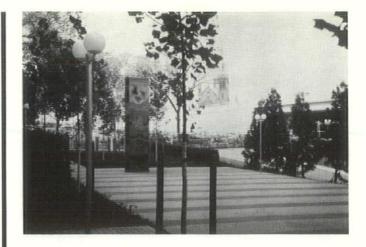
It has been the custom for some years to hold a career day in the local high schools with all the professions taking part to present a brief summary of the education and duties required of each profession. These career days are part of the young citizen's guidance curriculum and the local business men and professionals are on hand to speak and answer questions from the audience concerning various facets of the working world.

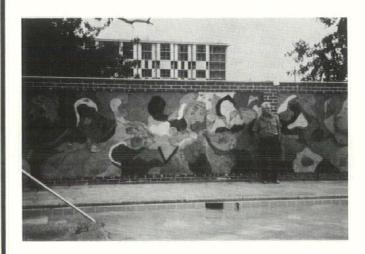
A group of architects from The Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, after participating in a number of these career days, realized that many of the students attending the Architectural lectures were interested in other phases of construction rather than Architecture. Since the construction industry is one of the largest in the nation, these Architects thought that a day devoted to Construction alone may benefit and guide these youngsters toward their rightful niche in the Nation's economy.

Taking the hint after seeing a story about a similar day in the Philadelphia area, The Construction Career Council was organized. The initial program will be for the Fairfax County Students with the goal in mind to eventually serve all the local high schools.

The local organizations represented in this new group are: The American Institute of Architects, The Potomac Valley Chapter and The Washington-Metropolitan Chapter; The Consulting Engineers Council; The Associated Builders and Contractors; The Washington Building Congress; The Producers Council; The Construction Specifications Institute; Women in Construction and The Maryland Society of Surveyors and Land Planners.

The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a general session in which each professional and tradesman will give a five-minute talk relative to his own field. Next will be a short film entitled "An Architect At Work," which depicts every phase of construction from design through completion of a building. The students will then separate into various groups to listen and question in more detail a leader in their choice of subjects. After lunch a tour of nearby construction sites is planned to further acquaint the students with the field problems. It is hoped that these construction career days will enable the youngster to select his field of interest early, without the needless dropouts and vacillations later in life.







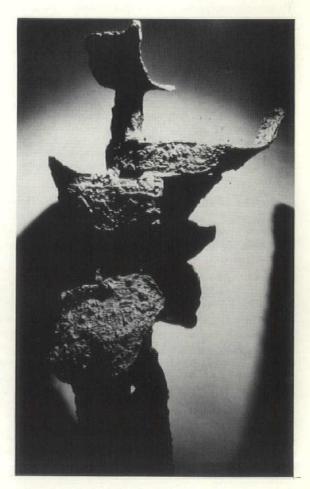


### ARTS FOR ARCHITECTURE Pietro Lazzari - Painter - Sculptor

Anyone who had the opportunity of seeing the recent showing of Mr. Lazzari's work at the National Housing Center can attest the versatility of this artist. He seems equally at home in all media; sculpting in concrete, welded metals and some bronze castings. His paintings are rendered in all the usual materials with the addition of one particularily personal expression, cement on canvas. Some of the handsomest canvasses in his studio are so rendered.

He has always been a highly experimental artist, expressing himself particularily well in concrete, a material he understands thoroughly. It is this particular art form which offers the greatest latitude for architectural application since, by its durability, it is well suited for either indoor or outdoor use. A wonderful fresco has been standing in his studio garden exposed to the elements for a very long time without the slightest sign of material wear or color loss. His technique of using dry color in the mixture is capable of the subtlest tints to boldest primaries.

A Roman by birth, he has lived in this country for many years, has been affiliated with many of our outstanding galleries and is an associate of many of the greats and near-greats in American Art. A glimpse at Who's Who can fill in all the statistics for here we are more concerned with the work and its architectural possibilities. A particularily interesting use of his polychrome concrete can be seen at the Capitol Park Apartments where architect Chloethiel W. Smith had him execute a pool-side wall mural and some of the free standing pieces illustrated. A visit to his studio, where he lives and works amidst a fascinating clutter of experiments, completed works and present commissions is not only rewarding but stimulating to the creative instincts. Here one is apt to come up with an entirely new idea for the application of his highly individual techniques.



# **POINT OF VIEW** – NEIL R. GREENE WASHINGTON IN TRANSITION

WASHINGTON GOES CONTINENTAL as Commissioner Tobriner launches European inspired vitality drive with city officials. He said Washington should be "dressed up with some charm and a warmer atmosphere" and the downtown areas should have a "vitality about them that a little money and a little imagination could bring to the Nation's Capital quite To encourage a greater enjoyment of working or visiteasily." ing in the city or just living, the little things become important. The flair of the continent could come to our famous avenues or parks with alluring kiosks, refreshment stands, parks along the streets, benches and tables, picturesque sidewalk cafes, coffee shops, small neighborhood retail shops, gayly covered bus shelters, large attractive city maps on downtown corners, flower vendors and increasing numbers of planters and planted areas along the city streets. A rather exciting and ambitious plan, the mere mention of which could create demand. What is the price of this beauty, this concern for humanism and continental flair? With the Commissioners' recognition and direction, now only half the problem remains for the frequently unsympathetic congressmen. In spite of the villains of this continuing game, progress is being made. The city is becoming more mature as it achieves its own unique identity. History will note the Washington of the sixties in the throes of a socioeconomic-architectural renaissance, for as we watch, the city becomes vibrant with character, gracefully trying to preserve its tradition while busily planning the promise of the new facade of Washington in transition. BUSINESSMEN'S SUBWAY PROPOSAL sounds like the

answer to the present stalemate among the city's transportation agencies. The Federal City Council (who I sometimes think should run the city) is a well-informed group of prominent and effective private businessmen in the Washington area. Their recommendation for the subway may read as the consensus of what is now taking shape through the city after three years of bitter debate delay. The subway should be owned by the public, but operated by a private contractor. Practically speak-ing the bus lines and transit unions have the political influence to preclude any alternative. Meanwhile, an interstate transit compact is being drafted to give the ultimate control of the subway to the local governments. The Council also believes that the downtown subway loop should be built first and that the idea of paying for construction out of commuters' fares was never more than NCTA local optimism in an effort to get things rolling. The Council says the subway will be worth whatever subsidy it costs - something NCTA could have said but who would have listened last year. It is inconceivable that the subway plan should have been delayed this long, but with the Council and the Board of Trade support further progress should be rapid for Washington in transition.

# BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SEMINARS

Building Construction Seminars, sponsored by Howard University on the third Saturday of each month, are now under way. The third in the series, "Excavating and Grading," is scheduled for Saturday, November 21 at 9:30 a.m. in the auditorium of the Architectural Department. There is no fee or preregistration requirement. Participants for this session are Arnold Parreco of Arnold Parreco and Haass, Inc., Excavating and Grading Contractors; Jack Baker, partner in the firm of Hutchinson Brothers Excavating Co., Inc.; Sam Wolf, Consulting Engineer and Land Surveyor and Edwin T. Pairo, partner in the firm of Chatelain, Gauger and Nolan, Architects.

So far, the attendance and reaction has been most favorable. However, there is a capacity for greater attendance and the sponsors would like the practitioners to know that all on their staff are welcome to attend. STAMP OUT SLUMS. The nation's cities have the potential now to stamp out slums and poverty "once and for all," said Urban Renewal Commissioner William L. Slayton. New flexibility given urban renewal under the 1964 Housing Act coupled with anti-poverty legislation, "can work hand in hand to rebuild our cities." Slayton envisions "the kind of program that would take a family at the time it is being displaced from slum housing, analyze its social and economic needs, provide the kind of retraining necessary to permit the head of the family to improve his economic condition and help the family, as a unit, to deal with health, welfare and social problems." Another step for Washington in transition.

DOWNTOWN DISAPPOINTMENT is the frustrating, exasperating result of Congressional procrastination accorded the Downtown Progress Plan. Over one million dollars of private funds for a 533 million dollar plan to revitalize downtown has now died until the next session of Congress. The group has been seeking urban renewal powers in Washington's commercial districts where Washington is presently using 1945 redevelop-ment law as a tool for slum clearance and the provision of good housing. What is being delayed by broken promises and congressional delays is an ambitious "action program" intended to reverse the downtown districts' slide into deterioration and the exodus of shoppers to suburban stores. The program includes among its features a National Visitor and Student Center, Pedestrian Promenades, the now famous minibus, the downtown rapid transit system, a new automobile traffic plan, concentration of high rise apartment houses, office buildings and recreational activity centers. To do these things with private funds, federal financial aid would be needed to carry out such improvements as street widening, construction of underpasses, tree planting, street lighting, provide condemnation power necessary to assemble tracts of land and the controls necessary to bring about new patterns of land use. Urban renewal funds would also provide relocation help for families and businesses. Washington with its outdated rules and unrepresentative

Washington with its outdated rules and unrepresentative government is apparently barred from employing the Federal program in non-residential areas. Right in the heart of the Nation's Capital an archaic law ironically makes Washington the only major city that cannot employ Urban Renewal in non-residential areas. A Congressional tragedy for Washington in transition.

THE FINEST AND FIRST FEDERAL CONTEMPORARY BUILDING to be built in the Nation's Capital will be the National Air and Space Museum. The brilliant design of Architects Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum of St. Louis received unanimous and elated approval by the Fine Arts Commission and they were told to proceed on the final design of the structure which will house the marvels of flight and space. The unusual design, a space feat in itself, combines huge column free volumes and multi-level viewing balconies towering to a height of 97 feet, a breadth of 250 feet and a length of 784 feet, almost the identical proportions of the National Gallery of Art. With as many as 50 thousand visitors a day, five million a year, skylights and walls of glass will welcome the public to a tribute to America's space industry. When ground is broken next summer this handsome addition to the Mall will add another fabulous feature to the City of Washington in transition.

### SPECIAL NOTICE

Potomac Valley Chapter has received a letter from Mr. J. C. Robertson, State Fire Marshal, advising that a new State Fire Prevention Code went into effect September 1, 1964. This code will be applicable in all counties which do not have their own building codes. At the same time this cancels the booklet "State Regulations for Building Exits." Members are advised to check with the State Fire Marshal for additional information.

Congratulations are due Simon Enterprises on the occasion of the unveiling of the first village in their satellite city 18 miles west of Washington. The New Town, an outstanding example in planning and quality employs the estimable talents of Geddes, Brecher, Qualls & Cunningham; Whittlesey & Conklin; Charles M. Goodman Associates and Chloethiel Woodward Smith. Though a golf course has been in operation through the summer and model houses are being shown, it is too premature to venture on a critical analysis or comprehensive study. However, with the aid of renderings and a text prepared by Charles F. Dettor, Project Architect at Reston for However, with the aid of renderings and a text prepared by Charles F. Dettor designed by Charles M. Goodhis office's contribution, we may glimpse what is materalizing in a hillside cluster designed by Charles M. Goodman with whom Mr. Dettor is associated.

# HE ENRANCE DOOR TO THE COMMUNITY-IE GARDEN DOOR TO NATURE'S WONDERLAND.

The auto is segregated from the pedestrian. It is put to rest

370

ler the houses and under the central plaza. Broad winding rways descend to the parking and the woodlands. Private terraces and garden courts look out to the rural landscape. anses of pavement offer ample opportunities for bicycles,

84 A82

# WHERE THE COUNTRY AND THE CITY MEET AT RESTON. Site Plan of the Hill Clusters

340

11 111

90 Town Houses grouped in three tightly organized clusters, disposed on the slopes of a heavily wooded Y-shaped glen which. forms a natural park. Stream beds course down two arms of the Y and merge into a single stream bed at the third arm, which continues into Lake Anne. The design exploits a flood plain area for recreational and scenic purposes while improving the storm drainage carrying capabilities of the stream beds.

2 MODEL BOAT BASIN 3 ANGLERS POOL 4 SWIMMING POOL 5 BATHOUSES, TOILETS, ETC. 6 CHILDRENS PLAY AREA

PADDING POOL

7 PICNIC AREA 8 FOOTPATHS

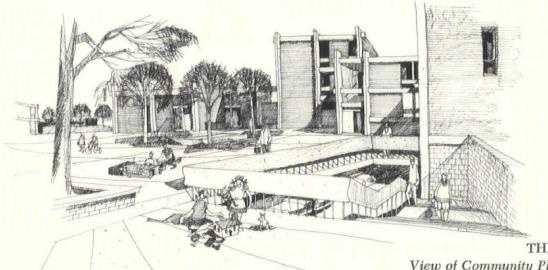
9 MUSIC AND DANCE BAVILION IO VISITORS PARKING

SITE PLAN SCALE 1-50' 10-31-1962

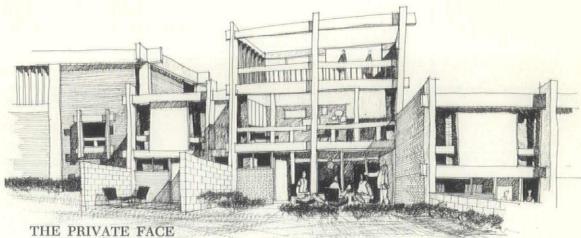


# EXPLORATION

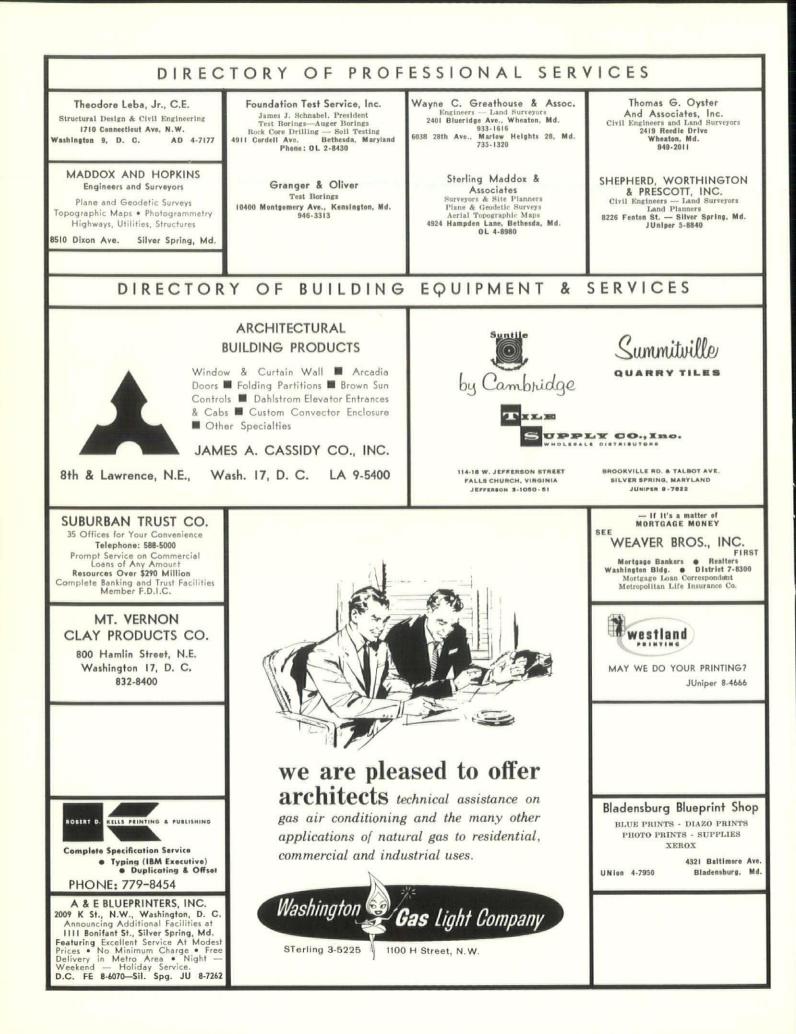
Broad stairways rise with the natural terrain from plaza to plaza, giant platforms which unify the varied facades of brick, precast concrete, and stucco.



THE PUBLIC FACE View of Community Plaza with parking below.



View of Roof Terraces, Living Rooms and Garden Courts merging into the woodland park.



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