

POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

January/February • Volume 8, No. 10

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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.

NEW MEMBERS

Potomac Valley Chapter welcomes two new Corporate Members: DONALD S. JOHNSON, JR. is a lifelong resident of Montgomery County, graduating with a B. of Arch. from Catholic University in 1961. He was employed by Bernard Locraft as surveyor and draftsman before joining the firm of Johnson & Boutin. He recently became a partner in the firm and established the Rockville office. Mr. Johnson is married and lives in Silver Spring with his wife and 3 small children.

EVENTS and EXHIBITIONS

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS INSTITUTE Regular Meeting: Tuesday, February 16th at Thomas Somerville Co. Meeting Room, 6th and Buchanan Sts., N.E. Dinner and Cocktails: 5:30 P.M.-Reservations, please, Washington Artists Series-Douglas Teller; Prints Opening February 20th Garmen and David Lloyd Kreeger Collection Opening February 27th 29th Biennial of Contemporary American Paintings "Portrait of a Man in a Fur-lined Coat"-Rembrandt Gallery No. 47 PAN-AMERICAN UNION Efrain Recinos of Guatemala–Oils through February Ricardo Macado of Argentina–Oils Dead Sea Scrolls-Natural History Museum TEXTILE MUSEUM Opening February 18th through February 14th "Group Zero" February 22 - March 28 Lecture on Anthony Caro by Michael Fried at Teamsters Union Anditorium SEMINARS IN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION EXPERIENCES Saturday, February 20th-9:15 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Auditorium, School of Engineering & Architecture, 2300 Sixth St., N.W. Subject: Making, Placing & Forming Concrete Concrete Association; James F. Long, Concrete Contractor

ARTHUR F. WALLACH is a native of Lvov, Poland, receiving his general education in that country. He holds the equivalent of Master of Architecture from Haifa Institute of Technology in Israel. As a student he worked with Erich Mendelsohn; he practiced in Haifa, eventually becoming sole owner of his own office, in addition to working as Chief Architect of "Rassco" of Haifa, the largest development and building organization in Israel. In New York he worked with Philip Birnbaum, Max Simon and Edward Durrell Stone. Mr. Wallach is now associated with Benjamin P. Elliott. He and his wife reside in Silver Spring. His hobbies are philately, music and art.





AMERICA

THE BEAUTIFUL!

Thanks to the efforts of Mary A. Hepburn, new President of the County Council, Montgomery County is planning to lend its assistance to a national movement for the beautification of the country.

This movement, begun a few years back with a Symposium in New York City entitled "Who Is Responsible For Ugliness?", tried to pinpoint the blame for the general shoddiness of our urban and rural scene. The outcome of this effort was the conclusion that we are all responsible and all play an active or passive role in the general image our country is presenting.

Many thought of this as purely an architectural problem. True, architecture has and is contributing its share to the confusion, but this is only one aspect of the total picture. The list of contributors is long. Careless litter on our streets and roads, jungles of wires and poles, a profusion and confusion of signs and lights, poor layout of roads with resultant congestion and fumes, general lack of planting and planning, zoning and codes all play an active role in what we see or what is seen of us. And it is generally agreed that the situation nationally is a bit out of control.

The architectural profession, more than willing, is most anxious to assume its share of the burden and responsibility and is planning to inaugurate a national campaign to actively assist in its fullest capacities a positive effort for the beautification of our country. But we can't do it alone. It is not one man's battle.

The news of Mrs. Hepburn's positive assistance is welcome to the Potomac Valley Chapter of The American Institute of Architects. By recognizing the need and lending the weight of her position to the effort, and with the added assistance of a comprehensive committee appointed by her, Montgomery County should be in a good position to face its own beautification problems and perhaps to point the way for others by its leadership.—Hilleary

WASHINGTON IN TRANSITION-NEIL R. GREENE

Within the next few weeks President Johnson will send to Congress the most significant legislation to physically effect the Washington Metropolitan Area in decades. If passed it will have a profound impact on your professional practice, your clients, your draftsmen, your jobs, your family, your government and the peace of mind for you and the other two million inhabitants of Washington.

There are twenty-five reasons why you as Architects and Engineers should support Rapid Transit in the nation's capital. Briefly, a Rapid Transit Subway System will:

- 1. Provide a balanced system of rail, bus, and automobile transportation.
- 2. Provide low cost mass transit for commuters and non-drivers.
- 3. Provide smooth, safe, clean, dependable service.
- 4. Reduce door to door time with high speed comfortable service.
- 5. Ease the continuing buildup of highway congestion.
- 6. Generate efficient high density centers instead of residential and commercial sprawl.
- 7. Connect downtown centers with other urban and suburban centers.
- 8. Reduce downtown street congestion and expensive filled to capacity parking lots.
- 9. Provide easier driving for those who must travel by automobile.
- 10. Provide attractive air-conditioned cars that are bright, pleasant and quiet.
- 11. Provide convenient, modern stations and transportation centers.
- 12. Connect transit lines with bus routes to complete systems.
- Provide automobile fringe parking at suburban stations.
- Allow for extended rail lines into the counties for future services.
- 15. Allow D. C. and surrounding counties to spend less per capita on rapid transit than on highways and bridges.
- Use narrow 35 foot right-of-ways instead of 350 foot ten lane freeways.
- 17. Disturb fewer communities and reduce the staggering costs of family relocation.

MEMBERS' APPOINTMENTS

WALTER BUCHER, JR., AIA, has been appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals of Montgomery County for a term of 3 years.

JACK C. COHEN, AIA has been appointed by The American Institute of Architects to serve as a Corresponding Member of the Committee on Housing.

PRESIDENT JOHN E. MOORE will serve on the Institute Committee on State and Chapter Organization, having been appointed by The American Institute of Architects.

- 18. Interfere little with highway and surface transportation.
- 19. Be hidden from view in subways or depressed right-of-ways.
- 20. Transport people safely in snow or other hazardous weather.
- 21. Use many existing right-of-ways with little burden to surrounding communities.
- 22. Allow family cars to be used by housewife and family.
- 23. Reduce smog and carbon monoxide damage to life and property.
- 24. Allow Washington to develop a modern subway system to preserve its architecture, city and landscape.
- 25. Allow Washington to join other great cities such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, Toronto, London, Paris, Moscow, Berlin, Tokyo and others in becoming a proven system of transportation.

The following people and organizations are supporting the Rapid Transit Plan:

President Johnson National Capital Planning Commission National Capital Transit Agency National Capital Regional Planning Commission Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments District of Columbia Commissioners Redevelopment Land Agency Washington Board of Trade Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission Federal City Council Downtown Progress, Inc. The American Institute of Architects Washington Metropolitan Chapter, A.I.A. Potomac Valley Chapter, A. I. A. Montgomery County Council North Virginia Transit Commission Prince George's County Council Arlington County Board of Trade Fairfax City Council Rockville City Council Silver Spring Board of Trade Federation of Civic Associations American Automobile Association Our local and newly elected Congressmen, community organizations and the press.

Support the Rapid Transit Plan through your service, community and professional organizations.

NEW ADDRESS

ARLEY J. KORAN, AIA, announces the removal of his offices to:

2311 University Boulevard, West Suite 7

Silver Spring, Maryland Phone: 933-1154

DONALD F. HOGAN, AIA is now a partner in the newly-named firm of Collins & Kronstadt, Leahy, Hogan, Collins.



GOING UP...WITH FLEXICORE Another structure takes its place in the sun with a FLEXI-CORE floor and roof system. The construction is rapid — just a crane and a few helping hands are all that are necessary to swing a precast concrete FLEXICORE deck into position. Moments later, the deck is ready for other trades to begin working. No lengthy pours, no wait for curing, no bad-weather delays. The smooth hollow cells provide electrical raceways or ducts for warm and cool air circulation as well as a 50% reduction in weight over solid concrete slabs without sacrificing structural strength. Ceilings need only a spray of paint to bring out the **natural beauty.** FLEXICORE is fire resistant and reduces noise transmission. Contact a STRESCON Representative for further information.

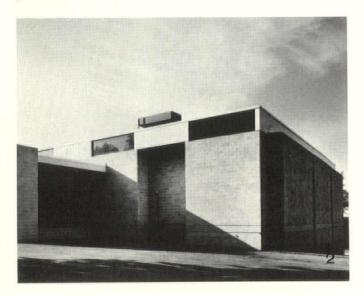


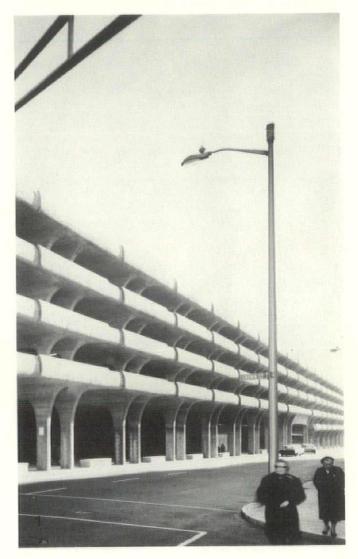
In Washington, phone 588-9233.

COMPETITION FOR COMPLETED PROJECTS

As promised in our last issue and while the Fifth Biennial Competition for Awards in Architecture is still in our minds, I would like to pursue the subject with the hope of not only improving all our chances when the Sixth rolls around in Sixty-Six, but of assisting in a small way toward up-grading architecture for the benefit of a more beautiful America, a subject much discussed at present.

Premeation, or just plain good design, begins at the start of every new commission. Many feel and have expressed the opinion that we all receive competition caliber commissions and non-competition caliber commissions and pursue the project accordingly. This I believe to be somewhat fallicious. True, some projects have an edge by type and budget, but I believe that all buildings have potential. Where budget helps, beauty is not directly related to square foot costs nor equated to luxurious materials. A beautifully designed building must consider budget and purpose, but this should not be looked upon as a limitation to creativity. How much more beautiful our environment if every building could realize its potential, not a screaming forest of avant gardes but solutions infinitely suited to purpose and placement. This is part of the true challenge and that it is recognized and appreciated in its time was proven recently by National A.I.A. Awards program on giving and award of merit to Paul Rudolph for a parking garage (figure 1) and to Ulrich Franzen for a plant project (figure 2). In making the latter award, the jury commented, "A skillful use of minimum means to achieve appropriate results in a building type which is commonly offensive". In our own 5th Biennial, the judges singled out for comment a greenhouse building by Deigert and Yerkes, praising the application of good design principles to a mundane building type.





This article was not undertaken as an attack on the ability or integrity of our practitioners and I hope no one will construe it as such. It is being undertaken in part to explain why some seemingly worthy projects were passed over recently and to pass on the benefits derived from being an observor at and participant in past jurored events.

Collaboration with our project associates, structural engineers, mechanical engineers, etc. should begin at the initial concept stage, for it is only through the closest cooperation and attention to all details that the end results will live up to our hopes and the expectations of the judges in a competition. Some worthy projects in our competition were rejected because of obvious signs of poor collaboration or careless construction. In judging, the jurors must look at total performance, therefore every detail becomes important and cannot be overlooked.

Whether one is out to win a competition or merely trying to better his own public relations, photography is a vital tool. Many worthwhile projects have been damaged by poor photography and by poor photography I don't necessarily mean poor photographs. Some of the most artistic photographs can be damaging to architecture. A beautifully photographed slum remains a slum despite the artistry of the picture and if your building is not photographed to carefully convey your design concept, then it is a failure for you as a competition or public relations tool. It is not sufficient to hire a good photographer and trust to luck. First rate architectural photographers capable of expressing with their lines the character of your design concept are few. However, by cooperating with a very good photographer, offering assistance and guidance the desired results can often be obtained. This will not only assure you of getting what you want, but will be tremendously helpful to the education of the photographer who, if he is worth employing, is naturally interested in improving his performance. Award winning designs may have their flaws, but careful photography can minimize or obliterate their appearance. Ideally, the jury should visit all projects under consideration for awards. This could substantially alter the results of their judgment. However, by the number of competitions per year, the number of entries and the preciousness of time, photographs must take the place of the individual site visits and here you have the opportunity of controlling what the judges will see. Edit your photographs for content and remember it is better not to compete if the caliber of the photography doesn't assist your chances or convey your message. However, a point to remember is that we are not always the best judge of the photography of one of our own projects. Our familiarity with subject causes us to see in a photograph only what we want to see and we are blind to other aspects. Try the photograph on someone qualified but not over-familiar with the project before including it in your presentation.

The final step in competition preparation is the actual presentation mount and here many of us fall down despite photographic proof of design ability. Where it is possible for a good design to win an award, despite photography and presentation, both can better our chances by inclusion. One recent award winner commented that his presentation had been planned as a General might plan a battle. The strategy in this case paid off for the jury, by its comments, proved that they saw what the architect intended that they see along a set path of inductance. Convincing a jury is like convincing a client initially with emphasis on simplicity, clarity, intelligibility and concentration on important aspects. Many presentations in our own competition left the judges bewildered as to just what they were seeing without the necessary graphics and lettering to adequately explain or defend the solution.

Graphics is a field in itself and it is no disgrace to lack ability in this media of expression. If one lacks the ability and can afford to, it would be wise to employ the assistance of a professional in this field to help organize for a competition, an exhibition, or even a brochure. We are judged by what we show and how our work is seen.

There is a recent book published by Norbert Adler of Norbert Adler Associates, Binghamton, New York, a public relations firm for architects and engineers, in which he discussed and made recommendations relative to presentation. I found it an interesting and useful little book devoted to the problems here discussed. He advises that "just as the architect is needed within his field of competence, so too an effective exhibit needs the professional capable of handling display concept and interpretation, layout, art work, lettering and specialized photography."

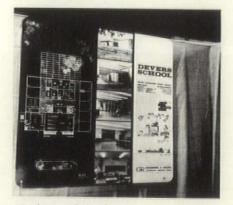
In summary, I would like to make some random quotes from this book, along with some illustrations from it, with the hope that they will prove interesting and useful.

UNITY

"A good layout must have unity. But unity makes its own demands on material. It would be a serious error to predicate the layout on the basis of existing materials; photographs should never be used just because they are there."

PHOTOGRAPHY

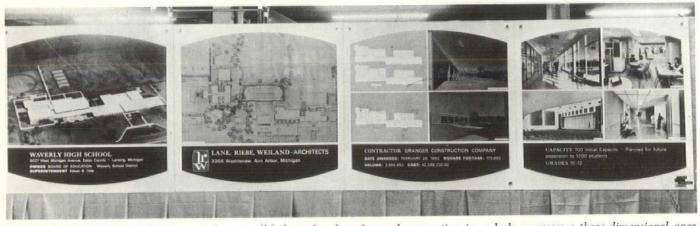
"The same holds true for photography. It is a plain and reasonable statement of fact that most architects are not able to judge what a really good architectural photograph is. In the first place, there are few really good architectural photographers. Thus, it is not surprising that photography is taken lightly. Further precisely his professional competence as an architect makes it well nigh impossible for him to see startling differences between ordinary work and expert work. He knows his work and his field so well that he instantly recognizes what is there. But he has no easy way of telling whether the photograph communicates to the non-expert, to the uninitiated observer; unless he has studied this aspect, he has no way of knowing whether the photograph carries over those specific qualities in a building which he instantly recognizes."



Outstanding single-panel display presents adequate information in a limited space, by means of clean white-on-black plan, good photos and sketches, and attractive lettering, in a coherent layout.

BUDGET

"All this raises the practical question of budget. Like the architectural photographer, a good display man will not hesitate to charge adequately for his services. The individual architect's reluctance to 'spend that kind of money' is based on inexperience rather than sound reasoning. The architect must decide early in his planning how much he is willing to spend; this may involve asking himself how much it is worth his while to spend." If, after all this effort and expense, we do not number among the premeated, it is regrettable and our only consolation is that we have a personal sense of accomplishment, a fine set of public relation tools. And we can always say that we did not have a sympathetic jury. But then, the jury is not here under discussion and might make an interesting topic for discussion or a future article. Some one said that the ideal jury is one that agrees with our point of view. May all of us get an ideal jury when we next compete.



Clearly the best exhibit. The four panels are well-balanced and uncluttered, presenting in orderly progress a three-dimensional overall view, a two-dimensional plan, two detailed plans, and six high quality photographs, arranged with great sensitivity. Renderings were meaningful, each illustration was clearly identified. The copy presents adequate information in good type, well arranged. The four panels formed a cohesive unit yet allowed leisurely attention to each element of each panel. The archway design provided a simple, imaginative unity.



INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR ADM #70-01A

Congratulations, Mr. Architect. Your purchase of the DO-ALL Architectural Drafting Machine model number ADM #70-01A means you now have the finest automated draftsman now available. The manufacturer urges you to read the following instructions very carefully to get the maximum use of the services of this fine machine.

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Located on the upper front panel are the control levers marked "Sketches", "Prelims", "Working Drawings", "Specifications" etc. Be careful to pull the correct lever. Directly below is the control for "Blueprints" or "Whiteprints" and the dial for the number required.

STARTING THE MACHINE

To start the machine simply plug the power supply cord into the nearest available electrical outlet. The large incandescent bulb on the top of the machine indicates the machine is in operation. If the machine makes a slight humming or whistling noise reverse the plug for silent operation. (Note: Early models required a slight warm-up period.)

The machine will operate for several hours accelerating at a moderate rate until the mechanisms overheat and the machine automatically turns off. A built-in warning device wafts a coffee-like aroma across the room just before the peak heating load is reached. No adjustment is necessary as the machine will resume operations after a 10-20 minute cooling-off period. The machine should be turned off at midday by pressing the button marked "Lunch". And the machine can be reactivated by pressing the "Back To Work" button after a suitable period of time. At the end of the workday the plug should be removed from the wall.

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Many attachments and adapters are available and special orders can be filled. Several of the most popular are listed below and further information can be obtained directly from your local dealer.

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A genuine coffee making machine is available in a unit that can be easily installed with a 4, 8, or 12 cup capacity. Especially useful for conferences. FULL COLOR ATTACHMENT

This device allows the machine to produce color sketches, mark colored notations on existing prints, or you can have your blue printing done in exotic colors. TECH-COLOR ADAPTER

Using this with the above, your drawings could show all the various functions each in a distinctive color producing a most impressive technical drawing.

The preceding instruction sheet was lent to me by Jack Gruss, Architect of Silver Spring, Maryland. Whether it accompanied a gift he received for Christmas or is the result of a hallucination brought about by too much holiday festivity he didn't state. I laughed when I read it for all the mental pictures it conjured up. However, the horrible truth is that it may not be too long in coming. Is this a prediction for 1965, Mr. Gruss?

It is an all too infrequent occurrence when architects get to design for themselves, and when they do it is of great interest to both their fellow practitioners, wanting to see what they will come up with, and the public anxious to see if they will practice what they preach.

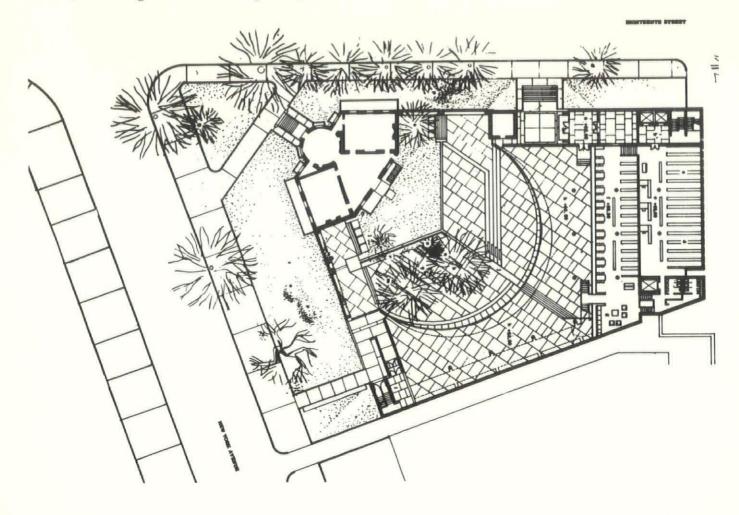
The recent announcement that The American Institute of Architects would build a new headquarters building stimulated an even broader interest. Not only is it the spokesman for its national membership but, being located in Washington at a time when the whole nation's attention is focused on the Architectural development of the Nation's Capitol, it is of interest to the nation.

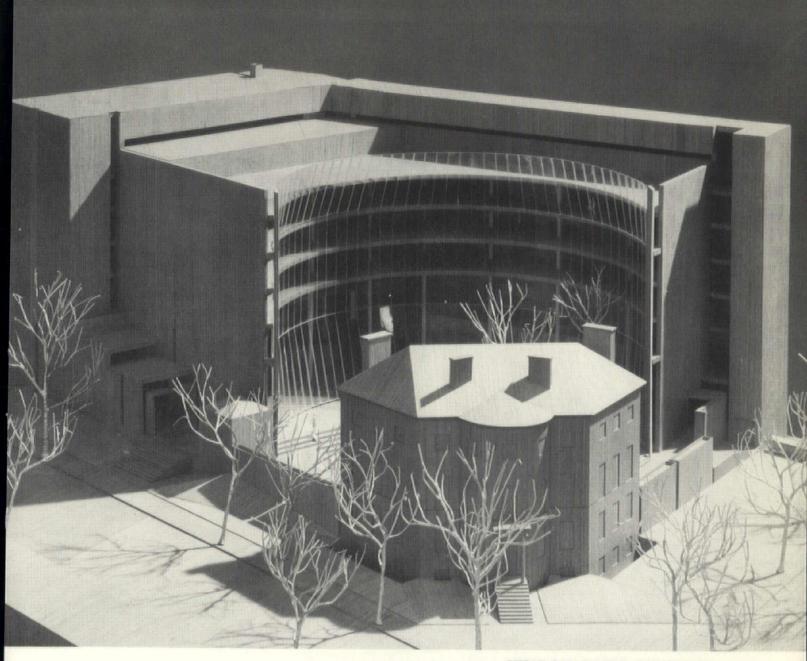
It is only logical that to determine who would have the honor of designing our national headquarters, we would turn to a design competition in fairness to all our membership. This competition was announced over a year ago and the entire profession anxiously awaited the results. The announcement, somewhat eclipsed by Christmas, was made finally at the end of December. The winning firm is Mitchell-Giurgola Associates of Philadelphia.

The problem faced by the winners as well as others competing is an interesting one. The site is the northeast corner of Eighteenth Street at New York Avenue, and the famed Octagon House and its gardens occupy the tip of the property at the intersection. Completed in 1800, the Octagon has been the proud possession of the AIA since 1899. Fully aware of its architectural as well as historic value, the Institute sought a design that would protect and preserve the beauty of this house and grounds while providing an office building expressing the creative genius of our time. The concern of the AIA for the Octagon was corroberated last month when it was placed on a list of landmarks which must be preserved by the Joint Landmarks Committee of the National Capitol Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts.

The winning design, judging by plan and model, is up to expectations and certainly offers a unique approach to the manifold problem. The Architects expressed their solution well in their statement that the "building order develops naturally from the condition of the site, oriented toward the gardens and facing the Octagon, a building form completed only by its presence. The garden is a quiet place, a meeting ground of the historically traditional and the contemporary."

We of the profession are most anxious to get on with the building. We feel that it will be a decided addition to the national scene. Full appraisal will have to wait because we can't know a building until it is there to see, walk through and experience. But judging by what can be seen so far, it is well worth the wait. Mitchell-Giurgola Associates are to be congratulated on a very sensitive performance. May it prove an eloquent spokesman.





HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS WASHINGTON, D. C. MITCHELL-GIURGOLA, ARCHITECTS

ARCHITECTS DESIGN FOR THEMSELVES



WHY SHOULD BUILDINGS NEED PAINTINGS?

This question proffered in a recent letter from a painter, is both a challenging and frustrating one; challenging because one's immediate inclination is to leap to the floor with a ready answer, frustrating because if he counts to ten before answering, there is time for him to realize the import of the question and the inadequacy of a single point of view. One wishes immediately to be philosopher, psychologist, art historian, critic, practitioner and enthusiast to reach a meaningful conclusion and do justice to the question. Recognizing limitations, however, I shall plunge on.

It would have been much easier to handle the question in reverse, for the perishable quality of most painting makes a shelter a must, and a greater knowledge of the qualities of shelter would have netted an enlarged legacy of art treasures. Perhaps herein lies the germ of an answer. A gallery, treasury or archives is a building with a specific purpose and, according to Webster "architecture is the art or science of building especially for the purpose of civil life." Architecture then is a purposeful art, and the purposes are as varied and numerous as the demands of man and growing more so with each advancement.

If required, a building can be a complete work of art in itself, so complete as not to require or tolerate collaboration of any sort and regrettably there are some examples of art totally unsuitable for an intended utilitarian purpose. For the most part, buildings are more or less suited to a specific use: shelter, education, worship, work, play, etc., and the purpose dictates the nature and use of the resultant spaces. The question why should a building need paintings is closely related to the question why should people need paintings. Here it would be rewarding to have the collaboration of a psychologist. But accepting as fact man's need for the art of self-expression as evinced by the earliest cave paintings and every succeeding development in art history, it is not unreasonable to assume that man not only has a desire to express himself artistically, but also to adorn the spaces he inhabits. The architect then has to accept this to a greater or lesser degree depending on the type of commission being executed. In most forms he must tolerate the collaboration of the occupant, realizing man's desire to surround himself with meaningful possessions. To ignore this would negate the purpose of the structure with which he is involved and, just as he provides for all other needs, light, heat, ventilation, plumbing, etc., he must provide space for the furnishings and self-expressions of the occupant. Here then is an indirect need for painting controlled by the requirements of the inhabitant.

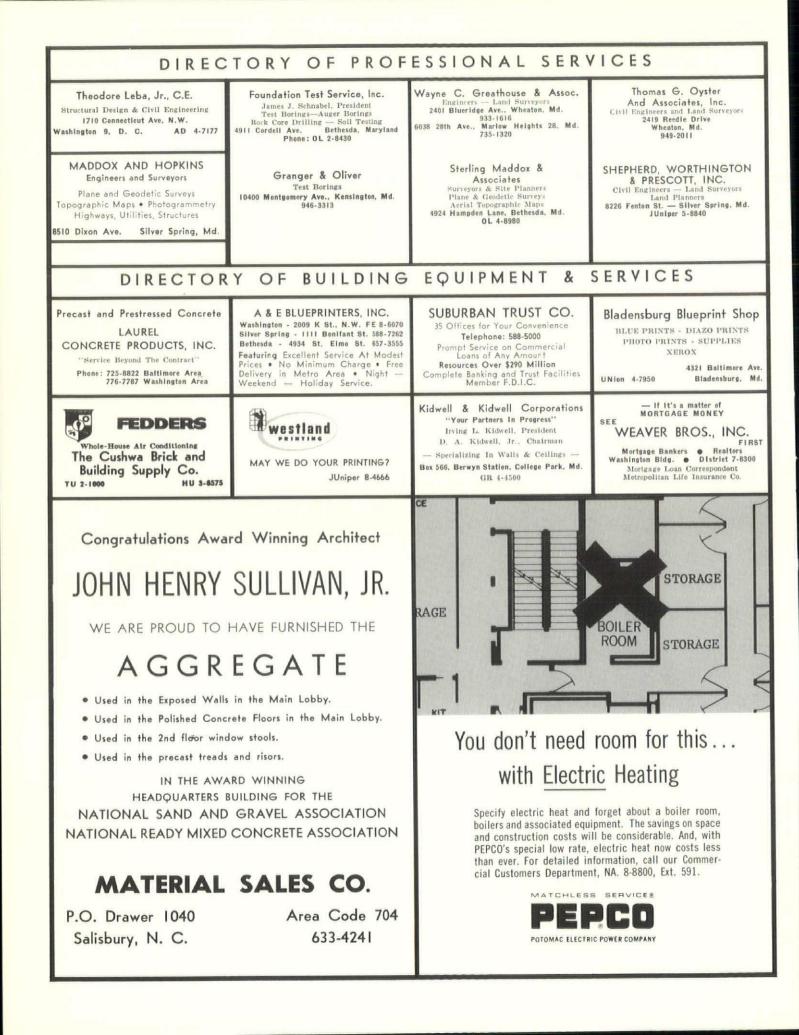
More directly the need is realized when the architect is asked to control the environment he is creating. This is most apt to happen with a commission for a public building, church or memorial. Then it is left to the artistry of the architect to select the medium of artistic expression that satisfies his own requirements. Whatever they may be, other arts are most assuredly brought into play, whether limited purely to the art of building or broadened to include stonecarver, metal worker, sculptor or painter. Here it is the architect's choice to include or exclude the painting to fulfill or deny his need to seek for meaningful expression.

I am led to conclude that there is not a yes or no answer to the question. Some buildings need paintings, other buildings do not, just as some people need paintings and others require a different mode of selfexpression. But as long as the need is somewhere in evidence, buildings need paintings and are the better for their inclusion.

In defense of pure painting, however, I recognize that painting is not an adjunct of architecture. It is an art form unto itself as distinct as music or dancing, and to try to limit its development purely for the adornment of buildings would have impeded its development. The artist must pursue his theme unmindful of its decorative possibilities. That it may have these possibilities should be considered a by-product or happy accident. Many of our inherited masterpieces are highly decorative, while others would be a decorator's nightmare. One couldn't imagine, for example, Picasso being preoccupied with the decorative possibilities of his Guernica when painting it. Had he been, the masterpiece would have been greatly impaired.

An artist should be influenced by space, volume and light when he is painting on commission for a specific location. However, should he limit his thematic material and handling to be purely decorative the results are generally less than first-rate and a disappointment to the artist and the commissioner. Many of our murals and frescoes are thus impaired. Fortunately, Michaelangelo's Sistine Chapel is a beautiful example of a commissioned work fusing artistic freedom to pre-conceived space.

No serious painter would like to consider himself purely decorative, but mankind is grateful that a good many unintentionally are for, because of his need to surround himself with meaningful treasures man can surround himself with masterpieces indulging in his own form of self-expression, the creation of his own unique environment.



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