Seattle's Calendar for Architecture and Design March 1981
Vol. 1 No. 1 One Dollar

INTRODUCTION

Greetings. The new publication ARCADE, which you are holding in your hands, is an experiment in integration. ARCADE brings news of interest to architects and designers each month, drawn from many sources in and around Seattle. We will also include items of note from Portland, as it has always been a lively center of architecture and activity, and is close enough that people here can make the trip often. If you have any news you would like to present or are part of an organization with activities that would be of interest, please contact us or put us on your mailing list. "Presentable" news includes articles, essays and letters and we urge you to consider this paper as a forum for discussion. Four pages might easily become eight if ten pens were dusted off and taken to hand.

Our city Seattle is growing physically at an enormous rate. Every time we turn around, the edge of the city has moved another block or two. This is not surprising. Seattle has been the site of the first and only symposium to be held at the University of Washington, and we feel there is a need for a paper that can report these events.

THE URBAN BLOCK SYMPOSIUM: TWO VIEWS

by Dennis Ryan

A dead horse was beat again one rainy day last November in Seattle, but fortunately not for long. Efforts to deflect the blows took hold and the energies of flagellation were turned to assessing the dismal situation and most important suggesting what could be done about it.

The horse in this case was the present urban architectural orthodoxy and its dominant model - the tower on the plaza within the urban grid. Ministering to its needs was the symposium at the University of Washington titled The City: The Urban Block. The symposium's purpose was to seek a better model for downtown architecture than the current practice-of-the-art supplies. Attended by approximately 500, it was cosponsored by the Henry Art Gallery and the College of Architecture and Planning, and was under the direction of Larry Rouch. The event was completely underwritten by the Howard S. Wright Construction Company as a public service in celebration of its centennial of construction activity, and is close enough that people here can make the trip often. If you have any news you would like to present or are part of an organization with activities that would be of interest, please contact us or put us on your mailing list. "Presentable" news includes articles, essays and letters and we urge you to consider this paper as a forum for discussion. Four pages might easily become eight if ten pens were dusted off and taken to hand.

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by Katrina Deines

Last fall's Urban Block Seminar was a major architectural event in Seattle. It is still discussed, mainly because of the upcoming design competition for a block in the Denny Regrade. But the most significant value of the day-long Seminar itself was the attention to historical traditions in urbanism. In order to better define and address the problems of today's cities, we must recognize the sources of their problems and the reasons for their successes. The Seminar was a rewarding exposure to a varied and learned interpretations of the history of city development - a kind of "how we got to where we are now."

Virtually all of the speakers presented some historical information, but the major portion of the historical groundwork was laid by Anthony Vidler, Professor of Art History at Princeton. His lecture was based on the history of the European city from the eighteenth century (the era of the beginnings of "modern" Western thought) to the Modern Revolution, represented most typically by the work of LeCorbusier. Vidler's thesis was that the ideas of the Industrial Revolution gave birth to the "modern city." Unfortunately many of these ideas were fundamentally anti-urban. The city in the nineteenth century became part of a process with its growing problems of overpopulation, pollution and traffic. The absence of these problems led to models such as the Garden City, which is based on the idea of a rural ideal as Corbusier's La Ville Radieuse. The city fabric itself, the basic stuff of which the city is made, became repugnant, messy, uncontrollable. Utopian theorists spawned schemes for ideal cities, ideal buildings, and ideal environmental in which the modern human could dwell. The Utopians' plans had sociopolitical overtones as well: since the crowded, polluted city caused crime and corruption, a good environment would cause people living in it to be good.

In combination with this anti-urban bias, Vidler pointed out a growing tendency to monumentalize all new building, even commonplace functions such as the market or the dwelling. These became as grand as a temple, church or palace in pre-industrial times. The result is that there is no balance between the monumental and the background fabric, for every building becomes a monument. Each building stands alone, and thus there is no interaction, no intercommunication, no community. The city becomes a fragmented group of independent elements.

Fred Koetter, Professor of Architecture at Harvard and practicing architect/urban designer, shared the role of historical anchorman with Vidler. Koetter emphasized urban development in the United States, and concentrated on the idea of "public space," a recurrent theme of the Symposium. Without the intercommunication of buildings, there is no public space. In today's cities each plaza is the precipice of its building alone. It is not "public" space in the sense of a common contribution of the architectural fabric, or of a civic focal point. This public realm reinforces and realizes the city's community spirit. Koetter showed the American tradition for public space: the Piazza green, the downtown square, Main Street spaces as focal point. In the "space-positive city" the space left between the buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. This is why urbanists like Koetter, are so sanguine about the Nolli map of Rome: it depicts Rome in plan, showing the structures dark and the spaces (streets, plazas, arcades, courtyards within buildings) light, so that either the buildings or the spaces can be the "figure," the positive area, and the other "ground," or negative. The streets, squares, alleys, and sidewalks are the city's circulatory system, its interconnecting network. The recognition and celebration of this is the impetus behind the creation of public space.

Vidler and Koetter established a forum in which the other speakers participated. George Baird, architect and teacher at the University of Toronto, questioned the applicability of European models to solutions for cities in the United

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continued on page four
WINTEREND AT THE UW: All during this week the evening lectures will be roaming the campus and the architecture department in particular. Open forums will be held at noon time in Gould Court. For further info, contact the Department of Architecture, 543-4180.
Augustus Pugin, Englishman born 1812.

LECTURE: Paul Thiry on the Seattle CBD, Johnson Hall, Room 6, UW, 8 p.m., Free.
EXHIBIT: "Lake Union Neighborhood," Downtown Library, 100 Fourth Avenue, Third Floor.
Northwest Regional Conference of Student Chapters of the AIA. Through March 7 at the UW.

LECTURE: Gerald Gerson on the Seattle CBD. Architecture Hall, Room 207, UW, 8 p.m., Free.

LECTURE: Lars Lepur from the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies in New York. Architecture Hall, Room 207, UW, 8 p.m., Free. Lars Lepur has been published in the series, "Pamphlet Architecture."

LECTURE: Victor St. Architecture Hall, Room 8 p.m., Free. Verify it with the Department of Architecture, 543-4180.

LECTURE: Dan Peters Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition and the Brooklyn-Queens University Branch Library. Roosevelt Way NE, 7-301.

EXHIBIT: "Needle Images."
1981 Photography Extravaganza
Space Needle Observation Deck
February 2 - March 22

WALKING TOUR: Volunteer Park. Day tour led by tour leader. Also on Tuesday, March 10

City Council on Housing and Urban Development Committee meets every Tuesday this month at 9 a.m. Room 1101, Municipal Building. Meetings open to public.

WALKING TOUR: Ellsworth Storey's Craftsman Cottage. 7114 Washington Ave.
Rob Anglin, tour leader. Also on Sunday, March 15.


March 31 is the deadline for project proposals and applications for residencies, in the Washington State Arts Commission's 1981-82 Artists-in-Schools program. Specialists in all areas of design and fine arts are eligible. Info: Washington State Arts Commission, Attn: Marcia Pinto, Mail Stop SF-12, Olympia, WA, 98504.

LECTURE: Alan Growans: "Natural Symbols of the Second British Empire."
322 Gould Hall UW, F 12-1. Exhibition.
EXHIBIT: "Portland Victorian Home, 1870-1900."

LECTURE: Anne Hill, PM, Pauline Hanover, tour leader. Also on Saturday, March 21.
Arcane Items of the Month: The Urban Block Competition. Sources have it that this interesting and mysterious competition is very much in the works and will probably be good scoop material some time in April. It's a long way to Tipparary.

LECTURE: J. M. Neil, "Seattle's Southern Neighborhoods: Rainier Beach, Beacon Hill and Mount Baker." Rainier Beach Library, 9125 Rainier Ave. S., 7:30 p.m. Free. Same lecture Thursday night, March 26 at the Greenlake Library, 7634 E. Green Lake Drive No., 7:30 p.m.

WALKING TOUR: Georgetown, PM, Ernest Marrs, tour leader. Also on Sunday, March 22.

Within its two primary faces external structural assertions are not binding; its internal space exists as a realm of pure possibility. Fred Koetter, "On the In-Between."

LECTURE: Howard Dreker, "Lake Union's Houseboat Community." Fremont Library, 731 N. 35th St., 7:30 p.m. Free.

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WALKING TOUR: Historic Ballard, PM, Ernest Marrs, tour leader.
For those of you planning downtown projects, be sure to consult Ralph Doel, City Planner, whose desk adorns the lobby of the Municipal Building.
C. T. Chew's work is currently on view at the Fourth Avenue Entrance.

RAYMOND HOOD, American, born 1881. An early skyscraper proponent; see Rem Koolhaas "Delirious New York.
Sir Edwin Lutyens, Englishman, born 1869. Recently featured by Architectural Design Monographs. Many country houses and work with Gertrude Jekyll, the landscape. "Oddly impish details."

CONFERENCES: April 1-4: Society of Architectural Historians. Headquarters hotel is the Empress where most meetings will be held. Subjects range from Medieval architecture to present-day trends. Victoria, April 1-4: group tour to Vancouver, B.C. April 5 and 6. For info, contact Earl Leyman, 625-4502. Notice from the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation Newsletter.

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DID YOU MISS?


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MARCH 1981

PETER EISENMAN IN PORTLAND

Peter Eisenman, New York avant-garde architect, Pioneer Courthouse Square contestant, and director of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, will discuss his own work and that of European and earlier American plazas in contemporary design of spaces. This is the second in the series, "The City Placable: Water and Magic in an Urban World," funded by the Oregon Committee for the Humanities and the Portland Chapter AIA. The series will be moderated by E. Kimball MacColl, Portland historian and author. Future lecturers are Rudolfo Machado (April 20, 1981) Edmund Bacon (May 19, 1981), and Charles Moore (June 1, 1981).

John Owen

EVOLUTION OF THE POPULAR HOUSE IN SEATTLE

John Owen's Study of Popular Housing includes a broad range of professional and academic work. As project manager for Historic Seattle's Urban Resources Inventory, he worked with Victor Steinbrueck and Folke Nyberg in identifying the architectural character and urban design elements of Seattle's communities. In the production of an inventory that is one of the most innovative surveys to date, his thesis on Popular Housing dealt, among other topics, with the processes by which popular life-styles and imagery combine to develop housing types and styles over time. John has written articles and lectured. His talk will be a visual history of Seattle's common house types examining the questions: why do they look like they do, what made them popular and what is their importance in designing Seattle's future.

WALKING TOURS, ETC.

WALKING TOURS: some LECTURES and EXHIBITS are from the publication, "This City, Seattle: Calendar of Events," published by the History Department of the Seattle Public Library. WALKING TOURS are free but tickets are required as tours are limited to 20-50 participants. Tickets are available from the History Dept. of the Downtown Library. For info call 625-4893. WORKSHOPS are free but pre-registration is required. For registration forms call 625-4893 or visit the History Dept. of the Downtown Library.

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RESOURCES

Those of us who get The New Yorker were amused upon reading of the $65 million proposed for the University of New York City’s first architectural bookstore. "Urban bliss," an architect, "without a library in the city, and it’s filled to the gills with design professionals. So naturally it’s already been decided that there are already a number of bookstores here that cater to our interest."

Foremost among those is Peter Mil- ler Books, a small paperback shop that carries a small selection of new and used architecture books, magazines, and really anything that can be described as "architectural," including magazines, pamphlets, and other literature. Peter Miller Books is located on 142 East 19th Street, on the corner of First Avenue and Second Street, and is open daily from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Books

F.P.O.** TWO VIEWS ... From Page One

D. Ryan

George Baird dealt with the whole question of the FAR system for con-
struction development in his book, "The Problems of Big Block De-
velopment," which seeks to explain the elaborate floor area rules and
how they affect the development of new buildings. He used his
research to show how the different parcel sizes and the differ-
ent floor area requirements affect the viability of different sites.

For those who search out-of-town markets, Powell’s in Portland is con-
"連續性は重要です。"

REFERENCES

Although the exact dates for the various stages have not been determined, the team of eight or ten people, skilled in a variety of fields including sociology, political science, economics and city planning, urban architecture and urban design, is expected to arrive in late April or early May. The study area is bounded by Denny Way, First, the Kingdome and 115th Street.

Obviously the astuteness and orien-
tation of the team members who participate in Seattle’s R/UDAT will affect the final report, as will the selection of specific background materials.

One of the most interesting findings is that the city’s planning and design processes are too complex for the average citizen to understand. It is clear, however, that the team members will work independently and must be able to communicate with each other and with the public. The study is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

In acknowledging the increasingly complex nature of the city’s planning and design processes, we might be advised by a Belgian architect, Maurice Culot who is quoted in Architectural Review (Dec. 1975): "For the quality of the urban landscape, it is impossible to achieve the ability of the technician, but rather on the quality of the decision making." Without the quality of the decisions, the planning will fail.

For more information on how to participate in the R/UDAT debate, contact the Seattle Chapter American Institute of Architects at 601 Fifth Avenue.

COMPETITIONS

WESTERN SUNSHINE

The Washington Passive Solar Design Competition is on its way. It is closed: all 275 registrants have been assigned numbers and are busy working on their entries. However, we thought it useful to publish the schedule as it stands so that you might make plans for the results. The entries are due April 1, 1981 and will be announced through April and May. In June of this year the winners will be announced and a portfolio of the building plans will be published in the Western States Edition of SUN. For further information, contact Nancy Nye at 543-7414.

K. Deines

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struction development in his book, "The Problems of Big Block De-
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