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CONTENTS

Features

1987 FA/AIA Awards for Excellence in Architecture 17

1987 “Test of Time” Award 35

Award of Honor for Design 42

The Mediterranean Legacy
Jose Gelabert/Navis, AIA 49

Departments

Editorial 11

News 12

Office Practice Aids 37

The Slip and Fall Primer, Part II
Dr. Randall L. Atlas, AIA

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The cover photograph of the Stan Jordan Residence in Lake Wales is by Steven Brooks. The project was designed by Mark Hampton, FAIA.
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Circle 26 on Reader Inquiry Card
This year's Design Award jury produced fifteen winning projects and a definite trend in what they like to see from Florida architects. Almost without exception, the preeminent projects were vernacular buildings which drew their inspiration from the domestic architecture of the Caribbean islands and the Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean Revival styles so popular in Florida in the 20's. Clearly, this jury, which met in Atlanta, knew what it was looking for, stylistically speaking, and went after it.

Vernacular architecture in a state as culturally and geographically diverse as Florida is many things to many people. It is consistently, however, the architecture of logic. It is, of necessity, regional, energy-efficient and it uses indigenous materials and local building techniques and traditions. It is less a style than a sensibility springing from man’s need for shelter.

The following is a composite definition of vernacular architecture which, I think, applies to much of Florida’s architectural heritage.

“It [vernacular] is not architecture produced by a few intellectuals. Rather, it is the product of the spontaneous activity of a group of people with a common heritage acting under a commonality of experience. Its humanness causes a response in us. Vernacular architecture does not go through fashion cycles. It is nearly immutable, indeed, unimprovable, since it serves its purpose to perfection.”

Diane D. Stever
New Commissions

Carrie Schneider Associates, AIA, PA, has been selected to design the renovations for Redford's Restaurant in Lantana. Completion is scheduled for fall, 1987. • Fugeberg Koch Architects has designed a new 7-Eleven Store for one of downtown Orlando's oldest neighborhoods. • Brown-Cleary-Smith & Associates have completed plans for Catalina Grove, a New England-style community of attached single family homes in Vero Beach. The developer is Orlando-based Catalina Homes. • Architects Design Group, Inc. in association with Clements, Rumpel, Goodwin & d'Avi have recently been selected to provide master planning and design services related to a major expansion of the Marion County Judicial System. The proposed complex will include a new 120,000 s.f. judicial center, and renovations to the existing courthouse and annex buildings.

Architecture and construction management for South Florida's new attraction, Butterfly World, will be provided by Barrgeta & Associates. Butterflies have been fighting a losing struggle against pollution and destruction of natural habitats and the new park will be home to 4,000 butterflies, the first such facility in the U.S. • Architects Design Group, Inc. and Cornerstone Architects in Albany, Oregon, have been selected to design a new police station for the city of Albany. The 12,000 s.f. facility will cost about one million dollars. • The Design Advocates, Inc. will design Riverbend at Indian River Plantation, a ninety-one unit waterfront condominium community in Stuart. Radnor Corporation is the developer. • Wedding & Associates, Architects, Inc. is designing and serving as engineer for a $30-million manufacturing complex in Pinellas Park. The firm is also designing an $800,000 office building in Venice for Guaranty Bank of Southwest Florida, a newly chartered bank.
ville. The Smith Korach Hayet Haynie Partnership has been commissioned to add in the design of the interior alterations for Frenchman’s Reef Resort Hotel in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. The interiors of all the public spaces will be completely refurbished. David Perez and Jorge Cibran of The Architectural Partnership, Inc. have completed the design of the West Gables Shopping Center.

Robert M. Sudlow, AIA, has completed the design for the 24-story condominium, Bal Harbour Tower. The half million square foot tower will contain 104 luxury units. Keith C. Hock, AIA, will design the new council chambers addition to the City Hall of New Smyrna Beach. Kenneth Hinsch Associates Architects, Inc., in association with The Ryan Group, PA, of Middlesex, New Jersey, has been commissioned to design a new club facility for the Bamm Hollow Golf and Country Club in Middlesex. Barretta & Associates will provide space planning for three new facilities for NCNB National Bank of Florida.

Hatcher, Ziegler & Gunn was the firm responsible for the design of the new 23-story, 300,000 s.f. World Trade Center in Miami. Nastery & Root Architects, PA, has been selected to provide 10,000 s.f. of space planning and interiors for Building One of the Research and Administrative Complex for Rodine, Inc.

Construction documents have been completed on the Moog Engine Controls Division Facility by Reefe Yamasita & Associates. The facility includes approximately 70,000 s.f. of assembly, test and production space for aviation control systems. Scott Bray Design Associates, Inc., recently designed 17,000 s.f. for the First Family Federal Bank in Eustis in conjunction with Orlando architect Alan B. Arthur, Jr., AIA. Architects International, Inc., has been commissioned for the design of Dade-land North Metrorail Station Parking Garage in Miami. Principal in charge of the $13 million project are J.N. Garcia-Hidalgo, AIA, and Juan Crespi, AIA. The Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale has retained Schwab & Twitty Architectural Interiors to do the space planning and create the interior design for their 80,000 s.f. addition and renovation program.

Currie Schneider Associates, AIA, PA, has been selected by The Linpro Company to design phase two of The Linpro Distribution Center in North Palm Beach County. Currie Schneider is also designing additions to Pompany Park for the City of Delray Beach and Ponce Inlet homes at Newport Bay Club for the First Building Corporation of Florida. Mark S. Hartley Architect has recently completed additions and renovations for Coleman Junior High School in Tampa, as well as a 2,300 s.f. expansion of the Corporate Headquarters for Marketing Associates located in the Tampa International Airport. Wedling & Associates Architect, Inc., will design and serve as engineer for two 44,000 square foot educational complexes for the elderly in Pinellas County and Daytona Beach.

The Architectural Partnership has been commissioned by P.N.B. Developers to design a 55,000 s.f. shopping center. Project designers are David Perez, AIA, and Jorge Cibran, AIA.

Belinson Architect, PA, has been retained to restore the 1925 Freedom Tower in Miami for $7 million. The building was originally designed by Shults and Weaver as a replica of the Giralda Bell Tower and it was once the first skyscraper in downtown Miami. DowDouglas Gilmore Associates, Inc., has designed an addition to the Palm Springs Public Library. The expansion will double the facility’s book storage capacity and will provide a new audiorium/collection space that will accommodate 100 people.

Cypress Centre, in Fort Lauderdale, is by Barretta and Associates.
Awards and Honors

Kay West, Architect, Jose Andres Gonzales, AIA, was appointed to serve as the new Chairman of the Florida Committee on Housing for the Elderly. The appointment was made by the Department of Community Affairs Secretary, Thomas Pelham.

John W. Anderson, AIA, Vice President and Division Manager for Environments for the Aged at Helmsley Horner Charvat Peacock Architects, Inc., addressed a statewide conference on “Aging in Florida” sponsored by the Gerontological Society of Florida. The issues were related to the design of retirement communities and a case study of the Alzheimer’s Care Center of Orlando was presented.

Steve Kuhle, CSM, Chief Specifications Writer for the Orlando architectural firm of Schweizer Incorporated, was recently appointed to the MasterSpec architectural review committee of the AIA. The MARU meets quarterly to review and comment on the next proposed issue of MasterSpec, a guide used by construction specification writers in the U.S. and Canada.

Mark Reeves, AIA, is an architect and attorney with the Miami law firm of Sparber, Shevin, Shape & Hellemann. He was recently selected by the editors of Progressive Architecture for inclusion in its special June, 1987 issue on young architects. The men and women profiled in the issue were selected through a competition open to all young architects. Reeves, who is 32, has a Bachelor of Architecture and a Juris Doctor from the University of Miami. He practices law with specialty in construction, zoning and land use law.

The Market and Horse Walk, both designed by The Evans Group, were recognized for their outstanding architectural design by the South Florida Builders Association. Three homes designed by the Jacksonville office of The Evans Group were recognized as winners in the Northeast Florida Builders Association Parade of Homes.

Patricia L. Crawford, Executive Director of Schwaab & Twitty Interiors, has received an award for her design of the Acura of the Palm Beaches Building. The award, for commercial design with a limited budget, was presented by IDGand National Home Fashion League.

Charles Brock & Associates received an Honorable Mention Award for their entry in the Flamingo Gardens Design Competition. Stephen M. Joss and R. Randall Buchanan, planning and landscape architecture department heads at CBA, accepted the award for their work in the site redevelopment of the South Florida tourist, research and education facility.

Miami architect Barry Sugarman, AIA, has been recognized for excellence in homebuilding by the Builders’ Association of South Florida. Selected for honors were the Townhomes at Doral Park, a development of attached, single-family homes in Miami built by Lenmar Homes, Inc. The Florida Achievement in Marketing Excellence Award (FAME) recognizes excellence in homebuilding and encourages outstanding performance in design, construction and marketing.

"Marketecture '87" was the title of a seminar conducted by Donald E. Evans, AIA, at the 1987 Southeast Builder Conference. Evans is known for his market driven approach to home design, which he calls marketecture, and at this meeting he discussed top-selling detached single family homes, high-rise patio homes, stacked flats, mid-rise condos, mixed-use projects and show homes.

The Building Owners and Managers Association of South Florida has named architects Barrett & Associates as recipient of the association’s first annual award for Special Achievement for Outstanding Design. Two buildings designed by Barrett also won top honors from ROMA in the 4-6 story office building category — Cypress Center in Fort Lauderdale and Limpee Sabre Centre I in Boca Raton.

The 1985 Miami Freedom Tower will be restored by Beichmann Architect, PA.

CORREX

Apolgies to Orlando photographer Bob Braun for an editorial oversight in the May/June issue of FA. The photo of the Beaches Library which appeared on page 30 was taken by Braun, as was the photo of the Eckerd Building on page 42.
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1987 FA/AIA Awards for Excellence in Architecture

This year, 157 entries in the FA/AIA Awards for Excellence in Architecture program resulted in fifteen winning projects ranging from a Catholic church to a cruise line terminal. The jury felt that the quality of most of the submissions was very high and that the projects showed an awareness of the complexity in today's design process. The jury consistently selected projects with a vernacular feeling and addressed their comments to the relationship between building and site.

This year's jury members were Merrill Elam, AIA, of Scoggin Elam and Bray Architects, Inc. in Atlanta, Chairman; Faye Jones, FAIA, of Faye Jones Architect, Fayetteville, Arkansas, and Peter Blake, FAIA, of Metcalf and Associates, Washington, D.C.
Russell Residence
Tampa, Florida

Architect
Rowe Holmes Hammer
Russell Architects, Inc.
Michael L. Russell, AIA
Project Architect

Owner
Michael and Jan Russell

General Contractor
Michael and Jan Russell

Jury: “This delightful residence is a classic 1980's revival reminiscent of Le Corbusier. An interesting combination of solid and void to delineate.”
Interim Cruise Ship Terminal  

Tampa, Florida

Architect  
Fleischman-Gorcia Architects

Consulting Engineers  
David Volkert and Associates  
civil and structural  
Emlee Corporation  
electrical, mechanical, plumbing

Graphic Designer  
Design Smith

Landscape Architect  
Eugene Barnes and Associates  
Central Florida Landscape

Owner  
Tampa Port Authority

General Contractor  
Angle and Schmidt, Inc.

Jury: "By augmenting standard details, this simple building is charged into a very interesting and delicate structure."
Museum Tower  

Miami, Florida

Architect  
Spillia Candela & Partners, Inc.

Consulting Engineer  
Spillia Candela & Partners  
electrical, mechanical, civil  
The Office of Irwin G. Cantor,  
structural

Owner  
Intr-Amercia Investments,  
Inc. & Prudential  
Insurance Co. of America

General Contractor  
Wittens Construction Co.

Jury: "This well-disciplined building is packaged in a most elegant skin."
The Bryant/Kennedy Medical Office Renovation

Sarasota, Florida

Architect
Michael Shepherd, AIA

Consulting Engineers
A.L. Conyers, P.E.,
structural
Eric Isemann, P.E.,
mechanical, electrical

Owner
The Hawthorne Medical
Trust, North

General Contractor
Thompson/Brusline, Inc.

Jury: "This project demonstrates a minimalist approach where extreme care was taken with every detail."
Private Residence

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Architect
Donald Street, FAIA

Consulting Engineer
Gaston de Zarraga, PE

Landscape Architect
Ted Baker Group

General Contractor
John R. Elwell

Construction Company

Jury: This bold house has a strong, well-handled plan. Although it is Botta-esque, it sits well in the Florida landscape. One can imagine the rich interior quality as a counterpoint to the Florida heat and light.

Photo by Steven Brooke
Bet Breira Synagogue

Miami, Florida

Architect
Charles M. Sieger

Consulting Engineer
Davis Engineers

Landscape Architect
William Rosenberg

Owner
Congregation Bet Breira

General Contractor
Allman/Meyers

Jury: "This building is successful and compelling on many levels: architecturally, philosophically, intellectually, symbolically. You cannot separate meaning, content and form in this building."

Photo by Mark Sturloff
Office of the Fire Prevention Bureau

Architect
Donald Singer, FAIA

Consulting Engineer
Gaston de Zurraga, PE

Owner
City of Fort Lauderdale

General Contractor
Mansari-Halous
Building, Inc.

Jury: "The City of Fort Lauderdale should be applauded for commissioning this wonderful piece of architectural sculpture which was derived from a scale and solid concept for light control."

Photo by Ed Zealy
Private Single-Family Residence

Dade County, Florida

Architect
Charles Harrison Pawley

Owner
Carlos Solis

General Contractor
Edward Vihlen

Jury: "This house is very much one with nature. It maintains the pavilion theme throughout and is consistently well-detailed."
Sanborne Square Park
Boca Raton, Florida

Architect
William Cox Architect

Landscape Architect
Thorprough and Sabold
Landscape Architects

Owner
Boca Raton Community
Reinvestment Agency

General Contractor
McConnell Construction
Street Construction

Jury: "The architect is to be commended for attention to small-scale details in the urban fabric. The delightful use of color and texture made this park very humane."
Miller Residence  
New Smyrna Beach, Florida

Architect  
William Miller, AIA

Landscape Architect  
Herbert Hallack, Inc.

Owner  
William and Sandy Miller

General Contractor  
William Miller

Jury: "This highly imaginative house is consistent throughout and has a very successful spatial flow."
Beach House
Boca Grande, Florida

Architect
Gene Leedy, Architect

Owner
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Carlion

General Contractor
Scheveling Construction Co.

Jury: "This house is uniquely regional and well adapted to the site."
Jury: "This is a building type that is often categorically rejected by jurors. However, the logarithmic progression on the south-west facade energizes the building with foreshortened perspective."
Lido Beachfront Residence
Island near Sarasota, Florida

Architect
Carl Abbott Architect FAIA

Consulting Engineer
A.L. Conyers

General Contractor
John Miller

Jury: "This small house was made bold by the strong sculptural forms and the beautifully resolved plan.”

Photo by Steven Brooke
St. Thomas More Catholic Church and Chapel

Sarasota, Florida

Architect
Carl Abbott Architect, FAIA
Job Captains/Church—Michael O'Donnell
Job Captains/Chapel—Michael Shepherd

Consulting Engineers
A.L. Conyers, structural
W.R. Frizzell Architects,
Inc., mechanical
John Maguire, lighting
Bertram Kinsey, acoustical
Willy Malarz, liturgical consultant

Owner
St. Thomas More Catholic Church

General Contractor
Dara-Hennessey Construction Co.

Jury: This theatre-in-the-round approach is a very strong statement of simple elegance. The building gains strength from the clarity of its parts.
Appleton Museum of the Appleton Cultural Center

Ocala, Florida

Architect
Rowe Holmes Hammer
Russell Architects, Inc.

Consulting Engineer
Rast Jones Associates, Inc.

Landscape Architect
Wallis Baker & Associates

Owner
Appleton Cultural Center, Inc.

General Contractor
Ajax Construction

Jury: “This building relates strongly to the classicism of the 30’s. It has a sense of quiet permanence.”

Photo by Eric Oxendorf

FLORIDA ARCHITECT September/October 1987
The Astronauts Memorial Foundation announces a competition for
a memorial to the astronauts who have lost their lives in the pursuit
of space exploration. The memorial must be striking, impressional
tribute to these astronauts and, above all, it must stand for their
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2121 Camden Road
Orlando, FL 32803

Programs will be available in September. No registrations will be accepted
after October 1, 1987. For more information, write to the above address or call
(305) 898-3737. The competition advisors are Lawrence P. Witzling and
Jeffrey E. Otiswng.

The Astronauts Memorial Design Competition is sponsored by Southern Bell
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The Stan Jordan Residence in Lake Wales, Florida was designed by Mark Hampton and built in 1955. For thirty-two years the house has been occupied and beautifully maintained by its original owner. This year’s “Test of Time” jury, Alfred Browning Parker, FAIA, Dean Rowe, FAIA, and Clyde Brady, AIA, selected the house to receive this prestigious award. The “Test of Time” program, now in its second year, recognizes distinguished architectural design after a period of time has elapsed in which the function, aesthetic statement and execution can be reassessed.

There is no question that the house is one of the architectural jewels of the 1950’s, a time when Florida was truly the “mecca for contemporary architecture” in America. Although it is clearly a product of the Modern era, it also represents the beginning of a break with the International style. The house is a romantic glass building that is clearly in touch with nature. It is further significant because it was built at a time when it was difficult for an architect to get a commission for a “modern” house. Rarer still was the builder to build such a house or the bank to finance it. The fact that this house looks as good or better today that it did when it was built is a tribute to its simplicity, order and attention to detail. The house has a timeless quality.
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Steps, Stairs & Slipping

by Dr. Randall I. Atlas, AIA

This is the second in a three part series on stair design and stair system safety.

Accidents caused by slipping on a floor usually occur on a forward step as the rear edge of the heel meets the floor surface. At this stage of walking the other foot remains in contact with the floor, until the heel rocks forward and the leading foot is fully planted. For slipping to be avoided, the friction between the sole-heel of the foot and the floor surface must be sufficient to resist the maximum horizontal forces.

External stair treads should have a perforated, or a well-drained surface. Polished wood, polished stone, and smooth ceramic tile should not be used for stair treads. Mat wells should be provided to remove moisture from people's feet. Non-slip strips parallel with the edge of the tread should not be used as they are likely to be confusing to users with bad eyesight. This position is consistent with the AIA's Design for Aging; a guide that recommends that different colors and surfaces be used to differentiate tread edges in facilities used by the elderly. This guide further states that risers and treads of contrasting colors are particularly helpful to people with visual impairments. Friction must not be too great or the foot may lock on the tread surfaces. The user must be able to slide and pivot his foot slightly while ascending or descending a stair. Thus, rubber matting is not recommended as an acceptable covering for the treads.

Building codes in this country are silent with regard to standards for the slip resistance of walkway surfaces, other than those for stairs and ramps which must have a "non-slip" surface. However, few codes define what a "non-slip" surface is.

The most appropriate measure of the slip resistant quality of various walkway surfaces is the static anti-slip coefficient of friction (COF). The accepted industry standard as adopted by Underwriter's Laboratories and the American Society of Testing Materials is that a static anti-slip coefficient of friction of .50 or above is safe on a dry walkway surface. A reading below .50 indicates an unsafe walkway surface.

Architects are responsible for specifying the materials used for floor surfaces, and they can be called as defendants in major slip and fall cases. For that reason, materials with a history of being dangerous should be avoided. Terrazzo has a very low anti-slip coefficient of friction, i.e., it is very slippery. Terrazzo is composed of granite and marble chips bonded with cement, and chemically sealed. Terrazzo is extremely slippery under wet conditions and is so dangerous that the National Bureau of Standards has listed it as a high-risk material for stairway treads. The safety of marble as a walkway surface depends on whether it has worn to a higher safer COF value or sealed and polished to a low unsafe COF value. Marble steps generally have a low COF. One way to make an unsafe marble or terrazzo area safe is through the use of non-slip mats. Tile comes in so many different surface conditions that it is difficult to generalize. Its COF depends on whether it is glazed, has non-slip additives or is in a virgin fired condition. The architect should review the product literature and specifications with regard to the coefficient of friction. Brick often has a good COF if it is dry and grease free, but it is sometimes difficult to perceive brick step edges. It is crucial that brick tread edges be painted white or treated with a bright or contrasting color.


The author is a registered architect in South Florida. He is frequently called as an expert witness on walkway and ramp design with regard to slip and fall accidents.
FA/AIA 1987 Fall Convention

THE CHANGING FACE OF FLORIDA ARCHITECTURE
October 8-11, 1987

Convention Highlights

Thursday, October 8
5:30-7:30 p.m. Exhibit Hall Opening Ceremony and Reception
7:00-10:00 p.m. IDP Seminar #1 – “Design Exam Review”
7:00-9:30 p.m. Architects At Home Dinners

Friday, October 9
8:00-8:30 a.m. Delegate Accreditation, Main Lobby
8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open
8:30-9:45 a.m. Seminar A: “Living With the Sales Tax”
9:30-10:00 a.m. Delegate Accreditation, Main Lobby
9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. IDP Seminar #2 – “Programming and Client Contact”
9:00-11:15 a.m. Seminar B – “Dollars from Deeds – The Architect As Developer”
10:00-11:15 a.m. Seminar C – “Computers – Can’t Live With ’Em... Can’t Live Without ’Em”
10:30-11:45 a.m. Seminar D – “What’s New With AIA Documents”
1:30-2:30 p.m. Tour of the Biltmore – Presented by Connie Mudano
7:00 p.m. until Host Chapter Party
“Tacky Tourists at the Kapok Tree Restaurant”

Saturday, October 10
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. FA/AIA Annual Meeting and Caribbean Region Annual Meeting
12:00-5:00 p.m. 1987 FA/AIA Awards of Excellence in Design
8:00-10:00 p.m. Awards Banquet – Starlight Room

Sunday, October 11
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Farewell Brunch – A chance to reflect on the weekend and rekindle our
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*These and many more events await you at this year’s convention.

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1987 AWARD OF HONOR FOR DESIGN

Mark Hampton, FAIA

"His dedication and discipline is so thorough that it makes his work seem simple and inevitable. There is great consistency and refinement of space and detail which has influenced the work of many architects in Florida."

These words describe the work of Mark Hampton, this year’s recipient of the 1987 FAIAIA Award of Honor for Design. The jury, all of whom are previous winners of this prestigious award, Carl Abbott, FAIA, Peter Rumpel, FAIA, and Don Singer, FAIA, selected Hampton in recognition of his design work over an extended period of time. The high quality and originality of his work has inspired leadership for his fellow practitioners and has advanced the cause of good architecture in Florida.

Mark Hampton received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from Georgia Tech in 1949 after serving in the U.S. Army as a Captain. He came to Florida from Atlanta in 1961 and joined the firm of Twitchell & Rudolph in Sarasota. In 1974, after having worked in Tampa and Miami, he began his own firm in Sarasota where he continues to practice. Hampton is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and has been the recipient of many awards at the local, state and national level. His design work, which includes a number of distinguished residences, has been published many times in Progressive Architecture and the Architectural Record. Notable projects include the Hampton Residence in Tampa, the Weiss Residence in Savannah, Georgia and the McIntosh Student Center Middle School.

According to the Jury, "Hampton’s approach to architecture represents an uncompromising dedication to the highest standards of design which raises his work to a remarkable level of artistry."

Opposite page, left, McIntosh Middle School, Sarasota, FL. Opposite page, right, Wolfe Residence, Miami. Photos by Steven Brooke.

Wolfe Residence, Miami. Photo by Steven Brooke.

FLORIDA ARCHITECT September/October 1987
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The Mediterranean Legacy
The Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Architects
by Jose A. Gelabert-Narvia

In 1884, two sons of well-to-do British merchants from Bradford, England, Charles Douglas and Frederick Delius, set sail on the ship Galila for Jacksonville. They stopped first in New York City and Fernandina, Florida, where a man by the name of C.R. Pride met them and proceeded to exchange the necessary sales agreements for a property called Solano Grove on the St. Johns River.

Douglas and Delius, like so many others, had become part of a generation of eager settlers who saw in Florida the possibility of a quick fortune and a sedentary, idyllic life.

At the end of the 19th century, Florida remained a seductive, but dangerous, wilderness in which Henry Flagler and Henry Bradley Plant had just begun to stretch their network of railroads on both coasts. Delius stayed in Jacksonville one year; he then left, going first to Virginia and finally to Leipzig, Germany, then the cultural capital of the musical world. In time, he would go on to become one of the greatest composers of the 20th Century. In Leipzig he wrote his first significant work of music, a suite in four movements which he titled Florida. It was made up from nostalgic passages of the tunes and the spirituals that he remembered from his brief Jacksonville sojourn.

About the same time that Delius was writing about Florida in Germany, an architect was born there who would eventually make the opposite journey. His name was Richard Kienel. Kienel had studied at the University of Breslau, the Fine Arts Academy in Berlin and the Ecole Des Beaux Arts. He arrived in Florida in 1917 and brought not only the expectations of a promising future practice in a rapidly expanding state, but also a serious and profound education and a distinguished and proven record. In Pittsburgh he established a reputation from his designs for the Catholic Cathedral, the Oakland Turveriein buildings (1912), now in the University of Pittsburgh, and a series of excellent private houses like the Stengel House (1915). This record earned him the commission for John Bindley's Florida retreat, El Jardin, which he designed in 1917.

Kienel arrived in Florida a year before Addison Mizner, who, over the next ten years would conceive, create and popularize the myth of Mediterranean Florida for the winter weary. The title "boom-time architects" in Florida has come to signify quick profit, low skill, eclectic taste and a reputation to eclipse with the frenzy that had nurtured and created it. For years, Addison Mizner was the most classic and vilified example of the character. Self-taught and a raconteur, Mizner's legend spoke of adventures in Central America and the South Seas finding their way into the architectural fantasies that he would create for his wealthy Northeastern clients.

"El Jardin," now the Carollton School, Coconut Grove, designed by Richard Kienel, FAIA, in 1917. Photo by Steven Brooke.

The history of architecture in Florida at the turn of the 20th century was like a series of designer showcases coming like a circus troupe to an unsuspecting state.

In a 1925 issue of The House Beautiful, Matlock Price wrote: "To say that the new Florida Architecture lacks seriousness is unsuitably to compliment its architects on the attainment of their real aim. They do not mean to be serious. While they do not intend it to be frivolous, they definitely intend its picturesque informality to express the spirit of a land dedicated to long, carefree vacations."

It was in that 1920's heyday of myth building that the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects took shape. The Florida South Chapter was perhaps the most important because of the concentration of population. It was founded by Richard Kienel in 1929. Anthony Zink, a painter and architect, was its first president. It is ironic that it happened in 1929. That was the year of the Great Depression, three years after a tragic hurricane, and the lowest point in building activity. To have formed an association of architects in 1929 must have seemed truly like a union of the unemployed. In the following years,
The Douglas Entrance, Coral Gables, designed by Walter De Garmo, Phineas E. Paist, and DeWitt Fisk. Photo by Steven Brooke.
well known architects Russell T. Ponce (1925), E. L. Robertson (1964), Phineas E. Paist (1966), Vladimir Virick (1917), and August Geiger (1939) would serve as President of the state association.

And yet those individuals were not the vanquished or the self-serving. Phineas E. Paist, who came to Florida in 1916, had already established his firm, Howitt and Paist, in Philadelphia and was responsible for the Belleview-Stradford Hotel. He became F. Burrill Hoffman's Project Architect for the Villa Vizcaya, but his greatest contribution came after 1925 when he established the civic architecture of Coral Gables. August Geiger arrived in 1905 at the age of 17. He was responsible for the grand neoclassical schools of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the Biscayne County Courthouse (with A. van Eyck Brown, 1925), for years the largest structure in the State. Russell Ponce was the grandson of Miami Beach pioneer John Collins and was already responsible for two of the most outstanding examples of architecture in Miami: the Mediterranean Surf Club (1929) and the Art Deco Bass Museum (1939) in Miami Beach.

Kieschnel was the force behind the group. The Florida South Chapter was his idea, as was Florida Architecture and the Allied Arts, which predated Florida Architect and was the first magazine to document architecture in the state. In the editorial of the 1935 issue, after outlining the on-and-off history of his magazine, Kieschnel felt positive about continuing the publication. The magazine's purpose was stated in the last paragraph:

“This publication is an effort to bring the work of architects, contractors and sub-contractors, craftsmen and artisans to the attention of all those who may sooner or later become interested in building.”

The 1936 issue promised to be impartial and general in its distribution. The 1940 issue carried as editorial by the then current president of the AIA, George Spohn:

“For some time there has been growing in the United States a movement toward a better appreciation by all classes of people for good quality and artistic design. This is a distinct phase of American cultural history and applies to all things used by human beings.

Good design is apparent today in the humble label of a tomato can, in the fountain pen you use, in your radio and in such things as automobiles, airplanes and streamlined trains as well as in houses and commercial buildings. The reason — the increased sales appeal adds real value and makes good design a necessity in these days of intense competition.

These things are not designed by mechanics or salesmen, but by specialists — trained designers. In the industrial field, the specialist is the industrial designer — in the building field, it is the architect.

A house without a good architect is as obsolete as a 1910 automobile. This applies just as much to the modest bungalow as to the large structure. It is recognized by financial institutions, by experienced speculation and by progressive individuals. Good design is worth many times the architect’s fee.”

This plea for quality and professionalism, written forty-seven years ago, underscores the labor and the virtues of the Florida Chapter of the A.I.A. Perhaps as a result of the deeply puritan upbringing of many of its early members, the A.I.A. stood precisely as an organization which chastised false pretenses in advertising and shady dealings in real estate — the much publicized mortals sins of boom-time architecture.

The Florida Architect was born at a time when architects had little reason to be hopeful, and more reason like George Fink, who had designed so many structures in Coral Gables, to emigrate. And yet they stayed. Kieschnel’s obituary in 1944 records that he arrived in the U.S. in 1899, was naturalized in 1906, married in 1915 and arrived in Florida in 1917, never to depart. Ponce came from Merchantvile, New Jersey, Geiger from New Haven and many others from Philadelphia. They were all buried in Florida. Like Deles they were trained in the grandest of the classical traditions of the 19th Century. Like Deles, they Esokk the tradition in the search for a romantic and vernacular tradition which looked to the themes of anonymous architecture for inspiration. That their work endures and has in turn become our tradition is a lasting tribute to their labor and the organization which they helped to create.

Jose A. Gelber-Navia
The author is an assistant professor at the University of Miami.
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