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The President's Letter

By
L. W. "SKEET" FITTS
President
Texas Society of Architects

London, Paris, Madrid, Rome, Athens, Florence, Venice, Bern, Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen in one month with two to six days in each major city (plus side trips to numerous smaller cities) is fantastic traveling. In fact impossible except for the superb international Airways, the fine European trains and the remarkable driver-guide service in many cities. The Brooks and Pitts saw and photographed everything within our grasp.

It is inspiring to review in this short time the great story of man's progress and periodic decline which the architects of many centuries have so accurately recorded. In many cities this is reflected by buildings situated within a stones' throw of each other. The pagan civilizations before Christ — the imprint of the Roman Empire in so many countries — the results of the Dark Ages — the flowering of The Renaissance into an existence of great culture and refinement — the decline or lapse into baroque and rococo. All a chronological record of the tenor of the time.

And then in many cities a vigorous activity of twentieth century construction. Notably reflected in Spain by the concrete creations of the late Eduardo Torroja — the Sports Palaces for the 1960 Olympic games in Rome and the Pirelli Office Building in Milan by Pierre Luigi Nervi. All truly of our time and accurately recording the contemporary life and the circumstances justifying their creation with materials of today. But then the modern effort is much like the construction of former years — imagination by some — a repetition by others and true refinement by a few. Most outstanding in the general field of creative form — sensitive imagination and exquisite detail are the Scandinavians. Our brief encounter with this far advanced civilization was in Copenhagen where every new thing today is produced with a flair of good taste.

A satisfying impression gained from this trip is the importance and dignity of the profession of Architecture through the centuries — from the Acropolis in Athens — the world's oldest stock exchange building in Copenhagen designed by the King who was also Architect — the great commissions of the Medici family — to the 1960 Olympic Sports Palaces and the current efforts of mass housing. Another impression of great impact is the cause or sociological reason behind these buildings of the centuries. Pagan culture required certain structures — the Christian faith has possibly accounted for more architectural effort than all others — then today a need to house the rapidly expanding masses of Europe.
It is of particular interest to see the effects of the social state on the architecture of our time—apparently no great demand for new houses of worship in Denmark—where it appears that the social protection by the government has created a diffident attitude toward religion.

A tragic record of architecture exists in Berlin. Here again the activities of civilization are reflected by the ruins from bomb damage during World War II. The vigorous life of the free world and the stark production of simple housing by the Communist world are brought into sharp focus in this city. A five minute drive from the exciting new architecture of West Berlin to the heavy handed efforts of buildings in East Berlin brings the two world forces into strong contrast. In leaving this city one can only wonder what historical records architecture will keep of the future.

At every opportunity in each city we talked with numerous average people. Gratifying is the impression they have of our country. The U. S. is the land of their fondest dreams. The young plan to go to America—the old fondly remember their visit or regret they have never been. Most disturbing is their attitude of helplessness concerning the great sociological and political issues of the day. These countries have known wars for centuries and the current population has lived with invasion and occupation. They seem to indicate an attitude that the issues must be settled between the U. S. and Russia—almost a viewpoint of standing on the sidelines—a "What can we do—we are a small nation" philosophy.

Yet with it all a vigorous local activity in most countries—everyone concerned with their affairs of the day. The great population explosion seems to be demanding and obtaining a vigorous economy by their standards in spite of a marked decline in American tourist trade since last year. Apparently we have done much good for them with our Marshall Plan and other foreign aid programs. Possibly we have created a sensitive relationship; one can only wonder how strong are the ties. It appears that the U. S. is still the prime defender of the good life as we know it.

The greatest impression of the entire trip is the fantastic speed of travel by the new jet planes. Leaving New York at eight in the evening and seeing the sun rise at midnight New York time. Leaving Amsterdam at 7:15 p.m. and seeing the sun finally set at 1:30 a.m. Amsterdam time. Surely this matter of rapid transportation will exert a great influence on the future relationships between countries. Experiencing such travel makes one wonder if we are playing a new game with old rules. Much good could come of this speed of transportation.

Faithfully yours,

L. W. "Skeet" Pitts

TEXAS ARCHITECT
PRESTRESSED CONCRETE

H. C. PFANNKUCHE

While the prestressed concrete industry had been in operation in Texas on a limited basis prior to 1956, it was in the Fall of that year that it came of age and became an integral part of the construction industry in Texas. It was at that time that a meeting was held in Austin between engineers in the Bridge Division of the Texas Highway Department and prestressed concrete manufacturers. The producers were assured that the Highway Department would continue to use the three Highway Department standard bridge girders so long as their use effected economies in bridge construction and that no radical changes in dimension would be made. With this assurance, the manufacturers felt that substantial capital investment in plant and forms would be justified.

Initially, plants were located at rather widely separated sections of the State and preparations were made to produce bridge girders to meet the needs of the expanded highway program just getting under way. It soon became apparent, however, that while highway bridge construction could provide a substantial market for prestressed concrete units, building construction offered a much more fertile field. Consequently, the various manufacturers augmented their plant facilities to meet this demand and developed units particularly adaptable to buildings and based on latest design criteria. Included in the prestressed concrete elements available are slabs, both solid and cored, channel slabs, single- and double-tee units, beams, girders, columns, and wall panels. Currently, more than 20 efficiently managed plants are in operation, serving all portions of the state.

In 1960 in Dallas and in 1961 in Houston, the Prestressed Concrete Manufacturers Association of Texas sponsored seminars dealing with prestressed concrete to acquaint engineers and the building industry further with the advantages of prestressing.

Most plant-produced prestressed concrete work is pretensioned while cast-in-place prestressed concrete structures generally are post-tensioned. Both techniques are used extensively in Texas.

As the term implies, in pretensioning the stress is induced in the steel by jacking against heavy abutments or anchors and this stress is maintained until the concrete has developed sufficient strength to transfer the stress from the steel to the concrete by bond. In this case, no end anchors are needed.

The post-tensioning procedure, on the other hand, requires that openings or channels be left in the concrete through which the stressing tendons are inserted. When the concrete has developed sufficient strength, the tendons are stressed by jacking against the concrete. Generally the holes are grouted after stressing is completed so as to protect the steel from rusting and to effect a bond between the steel and the concrete. In some cases, the prestressing tendons are wrapped with a plastic cover to inhibit bond, covered with the cast-in-place concrete and then tensioned when the concrete has attained sufficient strength. In such cases, of course, the tensioning strands are not bonded. Generally, anchorages are required in post-tensioned work.

It should be noted that the highest stresses in the concrete and the steel occur immediately after stressing. Because of shrinkage and plastic flow and creep in the concrete and relaxation in the steel, these stresses begin decreasing immediately and under design loads are ALWAYS lower than at the time of release.

The plant-manufactured channels, slabs, and single- and double-tee units are examples of pretensioned concrete construction. Prestressed concrete lift-slabs, such as the Ramada Hotel in Houston, the prestressed concrete folded plates in the Corpus Christi Air Terminal, and the prestressed concrete hyperbolic paraboloids in the Texas Instruments building in Dallas are examples of post-tensioning.

Plans have been completed in Dallas for a 15-story apartment house in which a cast-in-place concrete ribbed slab floor system will be prestressed by post-tensioning. Substantial savings in reinforcing steel and reduction in construction depth for comparatively long spans brought about the decision to apply prestressing in the design of this structure.

Definite economies accrue by the use of prestressed concrete as attested by its increasing use. For most advantageous use of prestressing, high quality concrete must be used, usually with a minimum specified strength of 5,000 psi. High strength steel also is needed with ultimate strengths varying from about 145,000 psi for high strength alloy bars to about 250,000 psi for high strength wire reinforcement to be used in groups or in strands.

Specifications relating to prestressed concrete are covered in "Tentative Recommendations for Prestressed Concrete," a report of Joint ACI-ASCE Committee 323, published in the January 1958 issue of the JOURNAL of the American Concrete Institute.

Several of the universities of the State have offered courses dealing with prestressed concrete in the engineering curriculum. Additional information can be obtained from the producers of prestressed concrete units, from the Prestressed Concrete Manufacturers Association of Texas, in Dallas, and from the Portland Cement Association District Office in Austin.
The accent on outdoor living as well as on modern educational concepts are magnified in the Robert E. Lee Senior High School in Tyler. The school is situated on a 72 acre site and has an enrollment of 1,600 students, with provisions for future expansion for 2,000 students. The school also serves as a community center.

The decentralized educational plant is zoned according to departments. The library is the hub of the school plan and faces the academic court. The adjoining exterior corridor, the "Hall of Fame," contains the trophy case and a metal screen on which the names of the outstanding scholars and athletes are attached.

The school was designed to minimize the problem of noise, confusion, and discipline in the corridors by directing the student circulation out-of-doors and under cover. Locker rooms are in essence out-of-doors, and have large sliding glass doors for which to close the area at night and during extremely cold weather.

The activity court near the cafeteria takes advantage of Tyler's mild climate. This great court was designed for the more noisy outdoor functions such as...
assemblies, pep rallies and dances. The outdoor stage backs up to the stage of the “little theatre” which seats 250. In addition to a court for noisy programs, there is an academic court with a grove of sweetgum trees and dotted with “toadstool” seats for the quiet academic activities—a college campus atmosphere.

Outdoor living is accented through the use of two small courts adjoining the home economic area. Outdoor dining takes place in the activity court adjacent to the snack bar. The physical education program includes shuffleboard, badminton, volley ball, and tennis, accordingly, a paved area has been provided for these activities.

The indoor dining area has a small planting court and a change of floor levels which together break the large room into several areas, each with a different quality of lighting, space, and view. Several small dining-meeting rooms for student groups are located adjacent to the interior court.

The large overhangs keep the sun off the walls and glass. Low transmission glass is used to eliminate the glare caused by excessive sky brightness. The use of outdoor corridors not only help solve the noise problem but it is economical from the standpoint of the air conditioning system. Only teaching space is mechanically cooled. A flexible air conditioning system allows the cooled refrigerant to be piped into any of the building units when needed although the compressors have only the capacity for a third of the total plant.

The new Tyler High School is a Texas school for Texas children and takes advantage of the mild Texas climate.

ARCHITECTS:
Caudill, Rowlett and Scott, AIA

ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS:
Bruce and Russell, AIA, Tyler, Texas

CONTRACTOR:
Clanahan Construction Company, Tyler

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:
Edward F. Nye, Caudill, Rowlett and Scott

MECHANICAL ENGINEER:
Gregerson & Gaynor, Dallas, Texas
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND THEIR ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSES

• This is a comprehensive high school with a departmental organization.

The school plant is decentralized and zoned. Functions are decentralized in separate buildings and areas.

• The library should be stressed as the educational center of the school.

The library is the hub of the school plan. It has views toward the academic court and onto the exterior corridor called the "Hall of Fame." This hall has trophy cases and a metal screen on which the name plates of outstanding students will be attached. The emphasis is on outstanding scholars as well as those students prominent in activities.

• Provision must be made for the social, recreational, and cultural activities of students.

A variety of outdoor courts. The quiet academic court surrounds a grove of sweetgum trees and is dotted with "toadstool" seats. The activity court, on the other hand, is planned for outdoor activities, assemblies, dancing and dining. The home economics area has two small courtyards accenting outdoor living.

Dining areas which mute the mass feeding aspect of the large high school. The indoor dining areas has a small planting court and a change of floor levels which together break the large room into several areas. Several small dining-meeting rooms for student groups are located adjacent to the interior court. Outdoor dining takes place in the activity court, adjacent to the snack bar.

A little theater seating 250 students and an outdoor stage-assembly area in the activity court.

• The school should minimize the problems of noise, confusion and discipline in corridors.

Nearly all circulation is out-of-doors, under cover. The use of back-to-back classrooms with covered corridors on the perimeter further reduces the circulation loads.

• Sixty Percent of all students arrive at school by automobile.

The magnitude of the automobile problem forced the solution—an education "shopping center," which is surrounded by a sea of asphalt.

• Encourage the students' respect of the property of others. There must be provision for students to store their belongings, but there is no need for "lockers."

The student storage rooms are located along the main circulation lines. The individual book storage units have doors (for neat appearance) and are double tiered above the coat rack.

• The school will be a community center. The plant has:
  (a) An indoor and outdoor auditorium.
  (b) Meeting rooms near the food service center.
  (c) Gymnasium seating 2,000 spectators.
  (d) Convenient parking for units which may offer adult education courses.

• Consider the possibility of using the school for periods longer than the present nine month term.

The mechanical system has fifty tons of cooling which can be switched to most buildings in the plant. The entire system is designed for future air conditioning.
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FARFEL RESIDENCE, HOUSTON

ARCHITECTS: BOLTON AND BARNSTONE, AIA

Premiated projects in this program which have not yet been published should be forwarded to the editor.

SEPTEMBER, 1961
TENTATIVE CONVENTION PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 8, 1961
8:30 Golf Breakfast—Rivercrest Country Club
9:30 Tee-off
2:00 Called Committee Meetings
3:00 Chapter Officers Conclave
5:00 Visit Exhibits
6:00 Finger Tip Supper—Texas Hotel
7:30 Transportation to Casa Manana Theatre

NOVEMBER 9, 1961
8:00 Acme Brick Breakfast—Fort Worth Club
9:30 Opening Business Session 22nd Annual Convention
12:00 Architects & Exhibitors Luncheon—Texas Hotel
Ladies—Shady Oaks Country Club
1:30 Visit Exhibits
2:30 Open Seminar Session
4:30 Visit Exhibits
6:30 Producers' Council Cocktail Party—Texas Hotel
7:30 President's Dinner—Texas Hotel—Crystal Ballroom

NOVEMBER 10, 1961
8:00 Committee Breakfast Meetings
9:00 Visit Exhibits
9:30 2nd Seminar Session
12:00 Awards Luncheon—Texas Hotel
2:00 Visit Exhibits
2:30 Closing Business Session
4:30 Post Convention Board Meeting—Texas Hotel Parlor R.
6:30 Costume Party—Pioneer Palace

vacation time is TSA convention time!
FOAMED ALUMINUM

The world's first commercial facility for the manufacture of foamed aluminum has been developed by a small independent company, Dynamic Metals, Inc., in Houston, Texas. The new patented material floats and is twelve times lighter than solid aluminum.

The fascinating new metal creation has been introduced to the national market in a variety of dramatic ultra modern products for the home decoration and construction fields. Dynamic Metals, Inc., the prime developer of the amazing metal, was independently financed by a Texas group headed by the president, Norval Schneringer. The youthful president directed the development of the unique metal against almost insurmountable technical and financial obstacles. At times during the research program Schneringer paid the engineers working on the project stock in the company because of lack of cash.

Today, after several years of struggling for existence and acceptance of the new product, the factory is buzzing with activity created by the surge of demand for products made from foamed aluminum.

At present commercial production is concentrated primarily on items in the decorative or building fields. Among the items being marketed is an excitingly modern line of room dividers and folding screens that were the star attraction at a recent summer trade show in Dallas, Texas. Also being made of the foamed aluminum in the Houston plant is Alumacel acoustical tile. This Grade A fire-rated tile has been approved for acoustical value, insulating value, and light reflection. The aluminum foam tile is not affected by moisture or fire and suffers practically no breakage in shipping and handling.

According to Schneringer, chemicals mixed with molten aluminum under closely controlled conditions produces the metal foam. The chemical leavens the mixture, causing it to rise in the mold and gas bubbles are trapped within its structure. By regulating the amount of trapped gas, the metal can be made much lighter than cork or balsa wood. The material may be machined, cut with a bandsaw, nailed, bolted, glued, screwed or pressed into shape.

The other possible uses of the aluminum foam range from rustproof automobile mufflers, water skis, novelty items, solar screens, to a wide variety of industrial uses.

The possibilities of foaming a metal has intrigued scientists for years. The first commercial production of foamed aluminum opens vast new fields of application and the impact of this amazing discovery will soon be seen throughout the nation in a variety of new and useful products that will become household words, just as aluminum pots and pans were introduced not too many years ago. Aluminum deserves the title "miracle metal of the Twentieth Century."

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RICE: CAUDILL

William W. Caudill, partner of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott, of Houston, Oklahoma City and Stamford, has been appointed Chairman of the Department of Architecture, Rice University, by Dr. Kenneth S. Pitzer, President.

Caudill will assume full responsibility for the teaching program and administration for the department September 1. He will continue to practice architecture, and there will be no major changes in his firm. Caudill, a former teacher and research architect at Texas A & M and a visiting critic at such schools as Princeton, Cornell and Washington University, says his job is to make the Rice Department one of the top schools of architecture in the country.

Caudill holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Oklahoma State University and a Master of Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree by Eastern Michigan University in 1957.

Caudill points to the direction taken by medical education as the probable solution for architectural education. He states, "Architectural education should parallel that of medicine in that practitioners should be involved in the educating process. I hope to give the Rice students a blend of scholarship, theory and hard-nosed practice."
BRI CONVENTION

Seven timely topics, each of vital interest to the entire building industry complex, make up the program for the Building Research Institute's 1961 Fall Conferences, taking place this year at the Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D. C., Nov. 28 to 30.

Leading off the parade of sessions will be a day-and-a-half meeting (Nov. 28-29) on Prefinishing of Exterior Components, which will contribute further to the development of information on structural components brought out at the highly successful meeting on preassembled components held by BRI in the fall of 1960. Chairman of this conference on prefinishing will be W. E. Kemp, Koppers Co., Inc. (Verona, Pa.).

Two and a half days of reports and discussion will be devoted to a subject that is at the top of every architect, builder and building owners interest - the Performance of Plastics in Building. Under the chairmanship of Donald R. Gray, The Dow Chemical Company (Midland, Mich.), an array of speakers will present performance experience and data for evaluation and discussion by the conference-at-large.

Occupying a full day of program each will be two more programs packed with building industry interest: Mechanical Fasteners for Wood (Nov. 29), and Design for the Nuclear Age (Nov. 30). Presenting much-needed information on shear plates, mechanical fasteners for wood diaphragms, trussed rafters and glue-nailed construction, the former will be under the chairmanship of Jack Godley, Gregory Industries, Inc. (Lorain, Ohio). Design for the Nuclear Age will deal with fall-out protection in various types of buildings, and will be staged under the chairmanship of Gifford H. Albright, Pennsylvania State University (University Park, Pa.).

And, in an effort to achieve better communication about, as well as better description of colors, there will be an exploratory program on Identification of Colors for Building, featuring a trio of experts on various aspects of color design, and a panel discussion by architects, builders and others from the industry.

Another half-day session which will have keen attraction particularly for the owners and operators of commercial and industrial buildings, is the program on Methods of Building Cost Analysis, which will be offered on Tuesday, Nov. 28, and will present methods used by some of the nation's top firms, under the chairmanship of Charles Bogert, Engineer, American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

And, rounding it all out, the BRI Research Committee will again present one of its increasingly popular roundups of widely varied aspects of building research. Here, conference attendants will hear reports on new research projects just getting under way, results of recently completed projects, and reports on research in other fields that has real importance for the building industry, but which otherwise might be completely overlooked in the flood of scientific information pouring out today.

Said Milton C. Coon, Jr., BRI Executive Director, "We would like to emphasize that BRI most heartily welcomes the attendance at these conferences of anyone who has a genuine interest in building research and the science of building. Attendance is not limited to BRI members. Non-members wishing to participate may write for advance registration materials, and be assured of prompt service and a very worthwhile experience in attending one of our conferences."

A unit of the Division of Engineering and Industrial Research of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council (2101 Constitution Ave., Washington, D. C.), the Building Research Institute holds two conferences per year, one in the spring and one in the fall, as part of its program to correlate and stimulate research that will improve tomorrow's buildings.
The Texas Architectural Foundation offers scholarships in architectural education and sponsors research in the profession.

Contributions may be made as memorials: a remembrance with purpose and dignity.

TEXAS ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION
327 PERRY BROOKS BLDG.
AUSTIN

ARTCRAFT COMPETITION

Sam T. Middleton, Jr. was named first place winner of a recent competition in the El Paso Chapter of TSA. Co-sponsored by Artcraft Tile Company of El Paso and Cambridge Tile Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, the competition was under the supervision of the local TSA chapter.

The problem presented to the competitors was the remodelling of downtown El Paso's Cole Building utilizing ceramic products.

Second and third place winners were William D. Boyd and Bart Fischer, respectively. Each of the winners received cash awards and plaques from the representatives of the sponsors, John Woelfel and Fran Francis. Termed a “pioneer project” by John F. Ring, professional advisor, the competition was officially sanctioned by the Texas Society of Architects.

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PASEUR PARTNER IN CRS

The Houston architectural firm of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott has elevated C. Herbert Paseur to full partnership following the annual meeting of the firm held Friday, August 4th.

Paseur, who was an honor graduate of Oklahoma State University in 1955, has been with the architectural firm since that time. In his new position, Paseur will direct all of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott's domestic operations except Houston, Oklahoma City and Stanford, Connecticut, where the company maintains offices. Volume of business under his direction is over 27 million construction dollars.

John Rowlett, partner in the firm which employs 81 persons, also announced the elevation of seven men to associate status, including two city planners, two engineers and three architects.

Elevated to associate status were Richard R. Sawicki of Greenwich, Connecticut, and six Houstonians: James R. Cox, 1419 Wisterwood; Louis E. Finlay, 7135 Neff; Philip C. Williams, 910 Constance; Donald B. Wines, 4505 Kinglet; William W. Harper, 4513 Kinglet; and W. C. Bonvillain, 8345 Park Place.

Caudill, Rowlett and Scott is a fifteen-year-old architectural and engineering organization which has headquarters in Houston and operates in nineteen states and several foreign countries. It is currently handling jobs amounting to over 70 million construction dollars.

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Architect: George L. Dahl
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