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# Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



DANIEL H. BURNHAM

May, 1945

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Architects With Two Legs

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Autobiographical Sketch by Ernest Flagg

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Public Housing Charts Its Course

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Again: The Question of Modern Architecture

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Qualifying for Hospital Architecture

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A.I.A. Statement on Bill S. 191

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Awards in the JOURNAL'S Competition II

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# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

MAY, 1945

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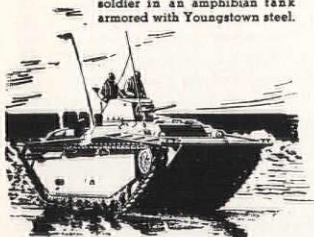
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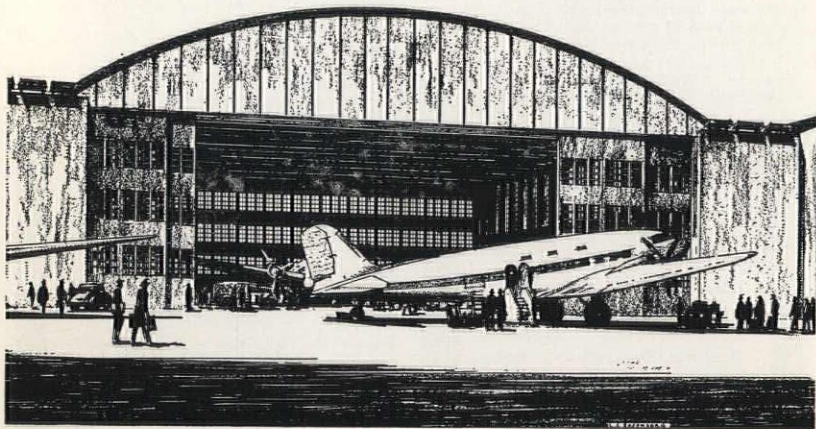
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## Architecture With Two Legs

By *Hugh Ferriss*

An address before the Art Commission Associates on the occasion of their Annual Dinner, The Century Club, New York, January 5, 1945.

Mr. President, and Gentlemen:

It is very flattering indeed to be invited by your President, Henry Hering, to speak before this distinguished group. Mr. Hering has suggested that I talk about the architectural appearance of "The City of the Future". Of course, no one, including myself, has the faintest idea what the Future City is really going to look like; since we meet on a common ground of complete ignorance, I can say anything I choose and you can't contradict me—that is, not for some years, by which time all that is said this evening will be safely forgotten.

However, I have only one idea to suggest: that the appearance of cities and buildings of the future will be chiefly characterized by a reintegration to be effected between the artistic approach, and the scientific approach, to architecture.

The fact that no true integration exists, in this respect, in our time, was first brought home to me on the day I entered the School of Architecture and Engineering at one of our universities. I discovered that the architects were

housed on one side of the campus, the engineers on the opposite side, and after dark, they literally threw stones through each others' windows. I was surprised by this, as I had previously taken the common dictionary definition of Architecture as gospel truth, "the art and science of building". Not, mind you, "the art opposed to the science", but "art *and* science", the two as one. The masterpieces of the past, I had imagined, from the Parthenon down, were the witnesses, silent but convincing, that there two forms of genius, artistic and scientific, had worked as one. But I learned, that day at school, that the two had somehow fallen apart, in our time, and were now in opposition. It was a problem often to reappear in later years.

During the 1920's, as I remember them, the adult artists and scientists of the building field were in opposition, and were still throwing stones, with the artists having rather the better of it. In the drafting room of a famous architect (where I worked for some years) the situation was something like this: When a new job came

in, the head designer and his staff retired to the library. The library was well stocked with handsome volumes dealing with all past architectural styles. After a week or so, they emerged with drawings of some facades which were extremely beautiful, even if somewhat familiar, and which expressed what the architect himself once gave me as being an ideal architects' motto: "Select from the past, but always with good taste." After the drawings were finished, some well-known engineer from the outside world was called in and employed to provide the steel to hold up the beautiful facades. So it is inaccurate to say that architect and engineer were exactly opposed, in this case. The architect simply employed the engineer to hold the architect up. This is not opposition, yet it is not integration.

Indeed, all of the distinguished architects of the '20's, whom I later had the honor of meeting, seemed to accept the dictum that architecture is primarily an art, a fine art. I do not mean that they were *unaware* of modern science and engineering; if you said, "architecture is the art and science of building", they would say they agreed; and they used engineers—but somewhat as though in the servant class. They seldom got any *inspiration* from scientific or technological discoveries—their inspiration came from the other side of the fence. On the whole, they

tended to agree with my first employer, "Select from the past, but always with good taste".

I sometimes wonder how many masonry columns I drew in those days, columns which were absolutely correct in proportion and which supported absolutely nothing. How many skyscraper facades divided, like classic columns, into three parts, base, shaft, and capital, and I never knew why. I had to draw a rather nice Parthenon, once, which had somehow gotten up onto the 40th floor of another building. And a rugged pyramidal tomb, which is still on top of the old Bankers Trust Building and you can still see the steam coming out of it. What this free-for-all catch-as-catch-can eclecticism might have led to, I don't know, for one day in 1929, the Skyscraper Age came to an end.



In the 1930's, opposition between artist and scientist continued, but now, I thought, the scientist was getting rather the better of it. Design took a more calculating turn. Of course there were many amusing things about that debut of "Modern Architecture". Some young men, hearing somebody say "A house is a machine to live in" proceeded to design homes that could only be lived in by machines. They damned their elders as eclectics and then, with equal eclecticism, arbitrarily chose to borrow from the "Modern Style" simply



because it was the modern style. They said that their elders had become sentimental, and in throwing sentimentality overboard, they threw over all true sentiment, to boot. Some of them took to designing buildings on typewriters. I remember one group of students who asked me, "Why should we make drawings showing how buildings look?" I found, after a while, what was on their minds: they didn't *care* how buildings look, they just wanted them to work. What this purely technological architecture might have eventually led to, I also don't know, for as the earlier phase was halted by a depression, this one was halted by a war.

When constructive work resumes, after the destruction is over, I imagine that art commissions will be faced, among other problems, with a question of where to throw the weight of their sympathy as between the two schools of design just referred to—the artistic eclectics of the '20's, the technological experimenters of the '30's. I suspect that you will have, on one hand, architects designing beautiful buildings which no longer work, and, on the other, architects designing workable buildings which are not yet beautiful.

This conflict of opinion is not clearly expressed, in my opinion, by saying it is between "older generation" and "younger generation"; that conflict has always been with us; nor by calling it "Tradi-

tionalist" vs. "Modernist"; both sides have some claims to both terms. The conflict is between those who find their chief inspiration in art, in forms of beauty, and those who find their chief inspiration in science, in truthful statements of actual functions. If you are one who devoutly believes that architecture is mainly a fine art, if you value beauty above all else, you will scarcely see any reason for any particular change at this time. A Greek temple is as beautiful today as it ever was; if beauty is the sole criterion, there is no reason why we should not go on building Greek temples forever. On the other hand, if you take truth as your basis—if you devoutly believe that an untruthful architectural design, however beautiful, is immoral—if you think science and engineering have a direct bearing on the design of buildings and cities, then you will not only tolerate, but in all conscience insist upon, a change at this time. For science, in our day, has been evolving so swiftly as to constitute a revolution.

May I state my own credo in this matter? I believe that architecture has two legs to stand on, science and art. That to be upright, it has to stand on both of them. That to get anywhere, it has to use both, putting one forward just as firmly as the other. That when this happened we got the "grand epochs" of architecture,

and only then. That it has not happened in the lifetime of anyone in this room. That in the younger generation, and their designs, are grounds for believing that it will happen within the predictable future. That the exact appearances

of this future architecture cannot yet be delineated, except that we may confidently say it will resemble neither that of the '20's nor the '30's. That, meanwhile, we do well to keep an open mind; and do better if we lend a hand.

## Public Housing Charts Its Course

By Philip M. Klutznick

COMMISSIONER OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

Excerpts by permission from an article  
in the *Survey Graphic* for January, 1945.

ON ALL FRONTS of the Nation's economy one senses a desire to preserve the fruits of inevitable victory in war by insuring a peacetime economy of abundance. The housing front is no exception. Advocates of more and better housing—and I am one of them—maintain that, given the proper conditions, a housing program, including public and private operations each in its appropriate sphere, can be a major factor to insure full post-War employment and provide Americans with homes worthy of our Wartime aspirations.

With the possibility of building homes for civilians—whether in war work or not—coming nearer every day, with Congress likely soon to consider legislation for such peacetime needs, the time has come to evaluate the results and operation of the pre-War housing program which was interrupted by

hostilities as far as new building went. We completed more than 105,000 family dwellings in public housing projects before the War, with an additional 25,000 under pre-War contracts suspended for the time being, and 62,500 built for War needs which will revert to the low-rent housing program after the War. This experience should be scrutinized in preparing for a post-War program.

Though one hears varying figures of the probable need, on one premise all the authors of these figures are agreed: We are going to enter the post-War period with a gnawing hunger for houses and a pitiful shortage in our supply.

Post-War housing should not and must not become a dispute between advocates of public and private housing. Those in public and private housing must shoot at the target of better housing for Amer-

ica, not at each other. Their energies must not be expended in civil war when every ounce of effort must be mustered toward the constructive conquest of America's housing problem.

On the one hand, advocates of a large public housing program must give assurance that they do not intend to encroach upon the proper domain of private industry—and, as a representative of public housing, I am prepared to give private industry that assurance. On the other hand, private industry must be ready to prove by works, not by words alone, that it will cooperate in seeking alternative solutions to meet housing needs of low-income families wherever it cannot profitably serve them.

The area in which public housing should operate must be clearly delineated. I would suggest adhering to three simple principles—and I am confident that most public housing advocates will subscribe to them:

1. No new public housing should be provided where it is possible to fill the need by utilizing decent existing housing.

2. No public housing should be built that will compete with private capital in building for families who can afford private housing of adequate standards.

3. In recognition of the determined effort which we hope private capital will make to provide standard housing for the lowest possible income market, the scope

of public housing need in a locality should leave a gap of some reasonable percentage, say fifteen to twenty per cent, between the highest income to be served by public housing and the lowest income which can be reached by new private housing. Thus, if new private housing could not profitably be provided for families earning less than \$100 a month, then the highest income that public housing would admit in that locality would be something less than \$80 a month.

This would leave a "no man's land" with housing wants unfilled, offering private capital a challenge to devise ways to meet them. To do this job, private capital will have to tap its fullest resources and tax its ingenuity to move downward in the housing income scale. To produce more value at lower cost will not be easy. It will call for the active collaboration of builder, investor, and worker in the housing industry. It will require the sympathetic assistance of government to private building. But private capital will also have to make something of an about-face. It can no longer refuse to venture into new fields, nor can it retreat to the false security of a higher-priced field. No longer can a smug attitude be tolerated—that it will be time enough after the cream of higher-cost housing has been skimmed off, for private industry to turn attention to other needs.

I hope that I will not be mis-

understood if I express a friendly warning. People will not wait forever. They have been patient about their housing needs. They are beginning to tire of talk and demand action. There is real danger that, if private capital and industry do not fill this void in the no-man's land of housing need, the government will be forced, by pressure of need and popular demand, to use its powers to provide. This is not a threat. It is a realistic estimate of a situation which private capital must recognize.

Even with much more of the housing field thus fenced off for private capital than it now is able to serve, the task left for public housing is still so huge and urgent that to attempt to expand it further would not be wise. The need for decent housing by families whose incomes cannot support good private housing at a profit, under any circumstances at present conceivable, is still appallingly large. Here let me point out that an analysis of the 1940 housing census indicates that nearly thirty per cent of the urban dwelling units are in need of major repairs or are deficient in necessary facilities.

How many new dwellings will be needed after the War? The National Housing Agency estimates that 12,600,000 additional homes will be required in the next ten years to achieve any substantial reduction of existing substandard housing and to provide the additional accommodations necessary

when soldiers return and families unscramble. This means an average of a million and a quarter homes a year, thirty-six per cent of which fall in rental brackets under \$20 a month. Even with wide allowances for error, obviously the area of need for public housing is a tremendous one, since private housing of adequate standards to rent much below \$35 a month has never been produced in substantial quantities.

Today, families who cannot afford the rents necessary for good private housing must live in slums, or else decent homes subsidized with public funds must be built for them. What will our decision be? To try to provide decent homes—or to continue with our slums and their mounting cost in crime, disease, fire, juvenile delinquency, and destructive community attitudes that result?

Our short-term experience in the attempt to provide low-rent housing for this large group of Americans under the U. S. Housing Act has developed a workable and desirable pattern. The act permits Federal loans to local housing authorities up to ninety per cent of the capital cost of housing projects, in addition to annual subsidies in order to achieve low enough rents. However, experience has also shown that the formula should be improved and made more efficient.

Besides recommending certain improvements which I shall later

outline, it is my opinion that not only public housing objectives, but the larger over-all housing job would be easier to accomplish if the nation were committed to an "urban redevelopment" program. In its broadest implications, such a program opens the way to the wholesale reclamation of misused and abused sections of our great cities on an over-all plan which would involve proper development of business sections as well as residential, and provide for the destruction of decayed structures as well as the rehabilitation of sound ones. The program should include a recognition of the responsibility to make provision elsewhere for the persons displaced from the sites redeveloped, and emphasize the need to enrich cities and preserve their future rather than to enrich individual owners of reclaimable property.

This is a subject for independent discussion. Redevelopment of our cities embraces goals and therefore difficulties which are more complex than those that have usually confronted us. The assembly of land into areas of sufficient size and character to permit sound and substantial re-growth; the acquisition of land at costs low enough to allow for its proper re-use; the methods of absorbing the write-off of land values necessary for their recapture and proper redevelopment; the problem of controlling density both in redeveloped areas and in areas of resettlement of dis-

placed families—these begin to picture the difficulties that must be met by coordinated and full use of community and governmental talents and resources.

But such a program would not be impossible of achievement, for there are a number of cities where local housing authorities already have the power needed to acquire land, and dispose of it to private individuals as well as to public agencies. The formula of annual Federal contributions to local authorities borne under the aegis of the U. S. Housing Act, could likewise serve as a means of absorbing the mark-down between acquisition cost of land and its true value.

Furthermore, the proven acceptability in the financial market at low interest rates of the securities of the local authority could provide a pattern for an urban redevelopment program, and thus eliminate the time-consuming and uncertain task of creating the body of legal opinion and market backgrounds without which the securities of an agency might have questionable sale value. Finally, with the many huge public housing projects that have been built, experience in reasonably large-scale redevelopment has already been gained under the U. S. Housing Act.

In the last few years a great deal of controversy has centered around the possibilities of rehabilitating old housing. But no one really has made a studied effort to find

out what can be done to preserve the value and livability of our current housing inventory instead of letting it decay into slums. As a result of this omission, our ideas as to the practicability of such a program range all the way from assumptions that rehabilitation holds the key to the whole housing problem to categorical statements that rehabilitation is rarely feasible.

While I do not feel that the rebuilding or renovating of old structures can produce a large volume of housing—particularly if carried on in line with the basic concept that remodeling, repair or reconstruction should be done only where it will prevent or arrest the spread of blight in a neighborhood—I am confident that we can capitalize on some part of our existing housing asset if we substitute genuine effort for guesswork in an effort to rehabilitate housing not too far gone.

Let me emphasize my conviction, however, that it would be tragic if such a tool were used to perpetuate the life of buildings structurally inadequate or located within neighborhoods which have gone down grade so far that their recoupage would be contrary to the public interest.

As a complement to new construction, the rehabilitation of old structures in a post-War public housing program should be based on certain principles:

1. The objective should be the use of existing buildings for low-rent housing under certain circum-

stances instead of new construction.

2. Loans and annual contributions should be available to public housing agencies for this purpose when it involves the remodeling, repair or reconstruction of existing buildings located in neighborhoods where blight can be prevented or arrested by this means.

3. Instead of a sixty-year period during which annual contributions would be payable, the period should not exceed thirty years. This more closely reflects the expectancy of rehabilitated existing housing.

4. In order to recognize the realities of this situation, the permissible annual Federal contribution should be four and one-half per cent of development cost for rehabilitation as against a maximum of three and one-half per cent for new construction.

5. Within the limits of the economic expenditure of subsidy, public housing agencies should have the option of purchasing or leasing the existing buildings.

One might ask, why spend an additional one per cent in subsidy in order to rehabilitate rather than to build new? The answer is simple: If by a relatively small increase in expenditure we not only add to the supply of decent and sanitary housing for families of low income but, at the same time, arrest or prevent the blight of entire neighborhoods, that additional annual cost becomes justified.



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One of the six winners in the  
JOURNAL's Competition No. 2



INDIRECT LIGHTING FOR ESCALATORS  
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JAMES R. EDMUNDS, JR., ARCHITECT

Designed to obviate direct vision of lighting source—a result somewhat difficult of attainment when the eye is successively at varying elevations in relation to the up-and-down runs

One of six winners in the  
JOURNAL'S Competition No. 2



## Awards in the JOURNAL'S Competition No. 2

OF the nineteen photographs submitted in the JOURNAL'S Competition No. 2, the Jury selected six for publication. Three of these appear in this issue; the remaining three will appear in the June issue.

Following the policy established for these competitions, the six winners are not placed in order of merit—in fact, with a widely varying subject matter, such evaluation would be difficult and of dubious value. Arranged alphabetically by author, the six entries chosen for publication are:

Rollin C. Chapin,  
Minneapolis, Minn.

Stairway Detail  
James R. Edmunds, Jr.,  
Baltimore, Md.

Indirect Lighting for an Escalator

Frantz & Spence,  
Saginaw, Mich.

Residence Balcony  
Howard Moise,  
San Francisco, Calif.

Remodeled Doors  
Pomerance & Breines,  
New York City

Open-riser Stair  
William Webb Sunderland,  
Danbury, Conn.

Church Tower  
The Jury for Competition No. 2:  
Reginald D. Johnson, F.A.I.A.,  
Los Angeles; Richard Koch, F.A.  
I.A., New Orleans; Alfred Shaw,  
F.A.I.A., Chicago; George Wel-

lington Stoddard, Seattle; Ralph Walker, F.A.I.A., New York.

In view of the meager participation in the two competitions—16 entries in the first, 19 in the second—it would seem that the competition idea is not, at the moment, a completely satisfactory source of illustrations for the JOURNAL. It had been the Editor's hope that, through such a series of competitions, the difficulties of making a personal choice from among the works of contemporary architects—a choice that is particularly hazardous for an official organ of The Institute—could be avoided.

That hope having gone glimmering for the moment, the Editor is taking it upon himself to invite illustrative material from selected individuals, and is starting with the six eminent architects who served as Jurors in the JOURNAL'S two competitions.

## Scholarships at Syracuse

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, College of Fine Arts, announces a competition for five scholarships, to be granted architectural students entering the University as freshmen next September. One of the scholarships provides \$400; four others, \$200 each. Full particulars may be had from H. L. Butler, Dean, College of Fine Arts, Syracuse, N. Y.

# A Fish Story

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE  
EDUCATION OF AN ARCHITECT

*By Ernest Flagg, F. A. I. A.*

Condensed from an address before the New York Chapter, A.I.A., on the occasion of an exhibition and luncheon honoring the author, March 29, 1945.

I DON'T want to talk shop, so if there is no objection I will tell you a fish story. That does not mean in this case it is not true. I don't hold with Charles Lamb that truth is so precious a thing that it should be used sparingly. I think it should be used unsparingly, unless there is some very good reason for not doing so, and I will so use it in what I have to say.

This fish story might be called the education of an architect, for it is my own experience. Under ordinary circumstances, I would not talk so much about myself, but as you seem to have taken an interest in my work, you may like to know how I came to do it.

When I was born, my father was Rector of Grace Church, Brooklyn Heights. It was then, and is perhaps now, the most aristocratic parish of Brooklyn. Many rich men lived on the Heights in those days because from there the financial district could so quickly be reached by the Wall Street Ferry.

According to the family Bible, I made my appearance at 3 A.M., February 6, 1857, so I am now in my 89th year.

In 1863, my mother's health failed and the doctors said that if her life was to be saved she must leave this climate. So my father resigned his rectorship and we moved to St. Paul, Minnesota. Her health seemed to improve, but these were false hopes, so within about a year we came back and lived at New Haven, where my father had built a house designed by Mr. Upjohn, architect of Trinity Church.

But my mother died when I was ten years old, and two years later my father married again. Under my stepmother's influence, he moved to New York and I was sent to the Columbia Grammar School whose headmaster, Mr. Bacon, had been my father's assistant at Grace Church. But times were hard for the family and, at fifteen, I became an office boy with a Wall Street firm. We had moved about so much that, at different times, I had attended ten different schools and never learned much in any of them.

My brother Jared, who was four years older than I, was also in a Wall Street office, but he had lost his place, which greatly dis-

tressed my father, and when a former parishioner told him of what was represented as a wonderful opening for a young man who had a little capital, he offered to supply the necessary amount. For only \$1500 a partnership could be obtained with John Winans, a young man who had a salt fish business, and my brother became his partner.

The new concern had not been going very long when it seemed to my father that there was something wrong about it, and he suggested that I should keep the books and try to find what the trouble was. I was then seventeen and knew nothing about bookkeeping, but Mr. Winans showed me how he had done it. It did not seem to be a very good system, and I thought if I was to keep books, I had better learn how to do it properly. So I went to the Packard Business College to inquire about taking lessons, but the person I saw there gave me such a lucid explanation of the principles that I saw no reason why I should return.

With the information thus supplied, I had no difficulty in opening a double-entry set of books, and that knowledge has been of great value to me through life. A few years later I taught my younger brother Allston, who was a messenger boy in the office of Lee, Ryan & Co., how to do it, and when the bookkeeper there was taken ill, he told the firm that he could keep the books, and did so

with such success that they were sorry to have him stop when the bookkeeper recovered.

But soon after that he, with George Post, son of the architect, started the firm of Post & Flagg, which became one of the largest commission houses of Wall Street.

To return from this digression, I had been keeping the books of John Winans & Company only a short time before I discovered that the concern was hopelessly insolvent and had been so from the start. I advised my father to supply no more money, and an assignment was made for the benefit of the creditors, of whom he was by far the largest. However, he got nothing, for the lawyer, to whom the assignment was made, collected all the assets and charged an equal amount for his services. My brother and I were now stranded.

My father was security for the rent of the building, but we determined that he should not lose by it if we could help it. Shortly before the failure, the concern had been engaged in skinning salt codfish and packing it in thirty- and sixty-pound boxes. That seemed a promising business, so we determined to continue it. We would occupy the two upper floors and try to rent the rest of the building.

We had \$25 as capital, with which we bought a four-quintal box of codfish, skinned and packed it ourselves. Then with a sample piece of codfish in a tin box, we

each set out to sell our product, my brother going to the grocery stores on one avenue and I on another. Some proprietors refused to buy, some laughed at the idea of a sample, and some both laughed and bought, but before night we had sold all we had. The cod to be delivered next day, c.o.d.—in two senses. What a pleasure it was when the expressman returned with the money! Here was \$5 profit—not very high pay for three days' work by each of us.

We had made only two or three ventures of this kind when a calamity occurred. The expressman made off with our money—our whole capital was gone. I was completely discouraged, but for my brother the misfortune seemed to have a stimulating effect. Like the Romans who, when Hannibal was at their gates, sent an expedition to Spain, he was for branching out. If I would attend to the manufacture, he would do the selling.

He was right. We bought fifty quintals on thirty days' credit, hired a number of girls to do the skinning and two men to do the packing; we sold to wholesalers and before long had fifty girls at work.

It may seem surprising how we could compete in the wholesale market at a profit. The Gloucester concerns were our competitors. They, too, put up skinned codfish in boxes. The operation of skinning was called codfish jerking.

The skin was yanked off, carrying with it some of the flesh, whereas we had the girls pull with their left hand and keep down the flesh with a knife in the right hand. We got 97 pounds to the quintal and the Gloucester people 85. It took them two years to discover how we did it and then they drove us out of the business.

We finally rented the whole building and so had to move. We had slept on the top floor; now we hired rooms uptown and moved our establishment to lofts on Harrison Street, over a wholesale grocery concern. The cost of moving and fitting up the lofts made a big hole in our capital; my brother was taken ill; sales fell off; no one seemed to want codfish. I saw ruin staring us in the face when we were saved as if by a miracle. Summer had come on; the codfish began to leak down on the grocer, who said his goods were spoiled and everything he had smelled of codfish. He offered us \$400 to get out—we were saved! We hired the ground floor of a building in Duane Street, business revived, and in about a year our capital had grown to about \$5,000.

One day an old man came to the office. He wore a wig and had a moustache dyed black to within about a quarter of an inch of his face, where the hair was white. He introduced himself as Mr. Pierce, husband of the landlady of the house where we slept. He said he had come to cast his

lot with us. He said he had gone into our room and had found a Bible in which was pasted an obituary notice of my mother. If we boys had had such a mother as that, his lot was to be with us. The obituary had been written by Donald G. Mitchell, whose nom de plume was Ik Marvel.

Mr. Pierce was a kindly old man and was, as he had said, a good salesman. Nevertheless, the Gloucester competition soon became too much for us—we could make no profit.

One day, one of our salesmen came in with an order for 100 tubs of oleomargarine. "What are we to do with that?" I asked. He said: "We can buy the goods from a factory in 27th Street and make a dollar a tub." Here seemed to be something that might take the place of our dwindling codfish business. I visited the factory. It was a poor, little establishment in a basement, but the product was good and the proprietor undoubtedly understood his business. After dealing with him for some time, I agreed to buy the business for \$1,500, provided he would teach us how to make the butter—for butter it was to all appearances. It was made of beef suet melted at a very low temperature, and cream. Previous to this, I had bought my brother's interest and was alone. I took such parts of the machinery as could be used and made a factory on the two upper floors of the building I had occupied, rented the

lower floors and retired from the codfish business. The factory was a model of its kind, if I do say so—an early example of mass production. The raw materials went in at one end and the finished product out of the other, with no lost motion and at the least possible cost, but the cost of constructing it had been a heavy drain on my resources.

For a time all went well; then the dairy interests went to work to kill the oleomargarine business, and they succeeded so far as I was concerned. I was unable to sell the product in this country but could sell it in England. I dealt with commission houses in London and was allowed to draw on them for a percentage of what was expected to be the selling price.

Then came a complete collapse. There was a drop in the European market; the goods were sold for less than the amount I had drawn against them. I could not meet my maturing bills. I was solvent if the value of my factory was taken into account, but I could borrow nothing on it. I was forced to fail. All sorts of claims were made against me, some just and others unjust, but I had no fight left in me. I was crushed and wished I was dead. I saw no hope for the future.

About the time I was going through this dreadful ordeal, a man named Hubert was trying to found what he called a Home Club; that is to say, a cooperative

apartment house; but he met with no success until my father heard of it. He liked the idea and asked several friends to join with him in building one. They formed a company, bought a plot on 57th Street, 50'x100', and built the first cooperative apartment house in the city, called the Rembrandt, which still stands next to Carnegie Hall. An uncle of mine, the late Wm. J. Flagg, liked the idea, so he and some of his friends built a second house on the northeast corner of 28th Street and Madison Avenue.

It seemed to me that what they had done without profit to themselves might be done by me with profit to myself. There was a stable on an L-shaped lot, corner of 31st Street and Madison Avenue. The owner wanted to sell. I found that I could get a 60-day option on the plot for \$500. Similar options could be obtained on three adjoining plots for \$1750; a fifth owner offered an option on his plot for nothing. The whole cost of the property was \$202,500. I told my father that if he would lend me \$1000 I would give him a third of the profits, and my uncle offered to let me have the remaining \$1250. I was to form a company and sell the land to it for \$225,500, thus making \$22,500. If I did not succeed in sixty days, the amount paid for the option would be forfeited, so it was a wild gamble on the part of my father and uncle.

Mr. Hubert had invented what he called a duplex apartment, the ceiling of the front rooms being very high and those of the back rooms very low. I thought it a very poor plan. A much better one, it seemed to me, would be to make two-story apartments, the lower story in each case being somewhat higher than the bedroom floor above. So I made a plan of that kind and offered to divide the commission with Hubert if he would carry it out.

During the first thirty days, I carried through all the preliminaries, and during the next thirty days sold all the apartments, some of them twice over for a \$1000 bonus, on each of which I got half.

During the next sixty days I put through a similar operation at the southeast corner of Fifth Avenue and 28th Street, going halves with Mr. C. W. Clinton, an architect. On that operation I risked \$14,000 of the money I had made on the Madison Avenue house, for the options, and cleared \$50,000 profit. So in four months I had made more than \$75,000.

I paid my old debts, but I cannot say I took much pleasure in doing so, especially for some which were unjust. My feelings were similar to those of James I, who issued a proclamation to the Scotchmen who followed him to England, forbidding them to petition for favors. It said that of all kinds of importunity, the most distaste-

ful to the king was to be asked to pay old debts.

I did not pretend to be an architect, but I had made the floor plans for both of these buildings, the apartments being of the two-story kind. For twenty-five years no one copied them, but now there are a great many in the city and they are called duplex. As a result of these operations, I had some reputation as a planner.

One day I received a note from my cousin, Mrs. Vanderbilt, saying that Cornelius wanted to see me about some plans and would I come to dinner. He said he was very much dissatisfied with the plan of his house and thought I might be able to tell him what to do about it. I asked him what he wanted. He laughed and said what he really wanted was more and larger rooms.

As the frontage on 57th Street was 125' and there were only two rooms, the rest being occupied by a conservatory, which he had no use for, an enormous butler's pantry and some other things, I had no difficulty in showing how he might have more and larger rooms. He expressed himself as delighted when I showed him the plan, but still there were difficulties which could not be overcome on the plot, as it stood. He said the old lady who owned the house next door on Fifth Avenue was more than eighty years old in very poor health, and when she died he might be able to buy it, so he told

me, "See what you can do with that added." The result pleased him still more; then he said, "Take another house", and so on 'till the whole block front was used.

As I made the plans, Mr. Vanderbilt had them traced by his secretary and took them to Mr. Post who had been the architect for the house. Mr. Post was very much mystified as to how they were obtained and asked Mr. Vanderbilt who made them. The latter probably thought truth was too precious to use in this case and told him they were made by his secretary. He told that to me and seemed to think it a great joke.

These plans kept me busy for several months, but nothing could be done about them 'till the old lady died. When all was finished that I could do, he told me that I ought to become an architect and that if I would go to Paris and enter the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he would pay the cost.

I went, but found it a pretty hard job, as I knew not a word of French, and the examinations, though elementary in character, went far beyond what I had learned at school. They were both oral and written and all were competitive. Two examinations were held each year and the admissions limited to thirty, of which five might be foreigners. There were usually about two hundred applicants at each examination.

At the first examination after my arrival, I could only take what

were known as the admissibles, that is to say, examination in architectural design, drawing from a cast, and modeling in clay; for these required no French. At the next examination, I took the other things: descriptive and solid geometry, history, algebra, arithmetic, etc. The mark in each subject was multiplied by a coefficient supposed to represent its relative importance in the education of an architect. Take for example history, having a coefficient of only one, but failure in which would bar admission. The aspirants were furnished a list

of fifty great epochs of world history, upon some one of which each would be required to write at the written examination, and on another to discourse and be questioned about at the oral examination. So it was necessary to familiarize one's self with a great part of world history. To master any one of the subjects required considerable time and study.

Imagine my joy when the results were posted to find that I had entered No. 5 on the list!

So that is how at least one architect came to be educated.

## A. I. A. Statement on Bill S. 191

AT HEARINGS held by a Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, U. S. Senate, The Institute presented a statement setting forth its approval of S.191—"a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize grants to the States for surveying their hospitals and public health centers and for planning construction of additional facilities and to authorize grants to assist in such construction". D. K. Esté Fisher, Jr. presented the statement, March 14, the text of which follows:

Committee on Education and Labor—U. S. Senate

Honorable James E. Murray,  
Chairman

Gentlemen:

The American Institute of Architects, through its Board of Di-

rectors and its Committee on Hospitalization and Public Health, is strongly in favor of the basic objectives proposed to be attained by the passage of the bill S.191.

The American Institute of Architects is the national society, founded in 1857, representing the professional practicing architects in the United States. Our membership of about 5000 includes the great majority of active practitioners, and, through our affiliated State Societies includes an additional large number of registered architects and employees. Among these technically trained men are most of the experienced hospital designers who have been and will, no doubt, continue to be responsible for practically all civilian hospital construction in this country.

It may be said that our appear-

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ance here before you is actuated by self-interest. Let us say "granted"—to the extent that all architects are interested in active construction programs. We are not, however, here to favor any large Federal construction program nor to urge authorization of Federal funds for local construction, except under those special conditions in which private enterprise and local Government seem to have been less effective than present-day conditions demand, and in which Federal stimulation and supplement to local effort seems necessary to reach objectives for the future which we might otherwise fail to attain.

The members of The American Institute of Architects who are experienced in hospital and public health center design are convinced (along with physicians, hospital consultants and managers, State and county health officials, and other expert members of the American Hospital Association and the American Public Health Association) that the entire hospital and public health facilities picture in this country should be reviewed and analyzed as an overall regional picture, with a view to laying plans—developing "master plans" if you will—for the proper distribution of the greater and more completely adequate facilities which unquestionably should be provided in the years following the War. It is believed that existing facilities are often-

times basically inadequate in size or arrangements, and, perhaps more importantly, are oftentimes ill-distributed. In other words, they have been originally located and designed without reference to any over-all regional plan—without adequate factual bases for judgment of the suitability of location or design.

The American Institute of Architects does not consider itself qualified to offer suggestions to this Committee as to the number or type of hospitals or health centers that may be needed in the United States. It appears to us that the collection of data on which such suggestions could be based is one of the most urgent objectives of this bill. Our reason for appearing before you may be expressed briefly thus:—

The architect, by his technical training and background, approaches any problem with profound faith in the efficiency of making a painstaking analysis of facts and needs, and following this with orderly planning based on that analysis.

The bill and the Interim Report of the Subcommittee on Wartime Health and Education, particularly the proposal for a Coordinated Hospital Service Plan, convince us that here, for the first time in our knowledge, is sketched a procedure for health that is to be based on the solid foundations of a painstaking analysis of facts and needs, followed by orderly

planning. Here at last appears to be a serious effort to end haphazard and accidental growth of our country's provision for hospitalization and public health, and to institute instead an analytical, coordinated and truly economic procedure.

We, therefore, support wholeheartedly the program envisioned by the bill and urge its early passage, in order that the arduous and time-consuming work of both survey and planning may be begun at once—in order that plans may be completed, or at least may be well under way, when peace and a free construction market will permit dreams to materialize. Only thus can we avoid further haphazard construction which would undoubtedly be demanded if we are not prepared.

We believe that the architects of this country have a considerable and an important contribution to make to this program. On them will, unquestionably, fall the major responsibility for the design of such hospitals and health centers as will be built. They will work

in close cooperation with hospital consultants, directors, physicians, State and county health officials, and others expert in the operation and use of such facilities. They should also be called upon to bring to the preliminary survey stage of the program their knowledge and experience in hospital design, construction and maintenance. We, therefore, urge that the bill, as finally presented, be so worded as to assure the inclusion of architects of recognized hospital experience in both the State advisory councils and the Federal Advisory Council called for in the bill. In this way they will not only be able to contribute their technical knowledge and training in planning but to assist in setting up and maintaining those standards of design and construction which will be so important a part of a successful accomplishment.

With this minor revision which would allow a group of specialists to contribute their best efforts, we believe the bill, as now before you, presents a long stride forward in caring for the health of this great nation.

## Qualifying for Hospital Architecture

THE American Hospital Association is frequently asked for guidance by those in its membership who face problems of building anew or remodeling: "To whom should we go in our search for an

architect particularly qualified for this kind of work?" The A.H.A. has found it difficult to answer such questions, originating over a wide geographical range. With the imminent probability of enormous

expansion of the country's facilities for hospitalization and public health, the A.H.A. decided that it must answer these questions, and answer them in full recognition of the responsibility involved.

A plan was evolved calling for the admission to A.H.A., as personal associate members, of architects who could qualify in hospital and health center work. With such a roster, A.H.A. could say to inquiring organizations: "The following architects in your locality, while perhaps not the only ones able to solve your problem, have individually demonstrated their ability in this field before a qualifying board."

So far, so good. But how organize the qualifying board? A.H.A. came to A.I.A. for help. Submitting a list of the Association's present architect associate members—all practitioners who had a particular knowledge and experience in hospital design—A.H.A. asked the President of A.I.A. to nominate four of these men to serve on a Hospital Architects Qualifications Committee. This Committee was to be made up as provided in the resolutions given below. It would be required to study hospitals erected from plans in which the architect applicant had a major responsibility, and to conduct examinations.

Qualifications, according to the program, will be considered with relation to the size and character of hospitals the candidate has cus-

tomarily been called upon to design and construct. For architects of established reputation in hospital design, written examination will be waived for a limited period.

Parts of the A.H.A.'s implementing resolutions follow:

"RESOLVED, that the executive secretary is hereby instructed to take all necessary steps to put this program immediately into effective operation, to invite architects of proficiency in hospital design to become associate personal members, to promote the general practice of engaging hospital architects of established qualifications for the design of hospitals or as consulting architects in association with architects lacking specialized knowledge of hospital requirements, to further the dissemination of data on hospital requirements among the architectural component of the Association membership, to publish a roster of hospital architects admitted to membership. . . and to pursue actively a policy of furnishing this list to all hospitals known to be contemplating new building operations . . .

". . . the term of the chairman shall be concurrent with his tenure of office as chairman of the Council, and the terms of other members, except for specified variance during the first two years of the committee's operation, shall be for three years each; the committee other than the chairman shall always consist of four active hospi-

tal administrators and four active hospital architects, selecting all members of the committee from the membership of the American Hospital Association. . . ."

In accordance with these resolutions, Dr. Frank R. Bradley, chairman of the Council on Hospital Planning and Plant Operation, will serve as chairman of the Hospital Architects Qualifications Committee. Hospital administrator members are: Lucius R. Wilson, M.D., George D. Sheats,

Herman Smith, M.D., and Albert W. Snoke, M.D.

Architect members are Francis Bulfinch, Boston; Carl Erikson, Chicago; H. Eldridge Hannaford, Cincinnati and George Spearl, F.A.I.A., St. Louis.

Following the first meeting of the Qualifications Committee, further information regarding the rules established by them, covering the examination and admission of qualified architects, will appear in these pages.

## Again: This Question of Modern Architecture

*By Ernst Payer*

Address before a joint meeting of The A.I.A. and the Ohio State Society of Architects, in Cleveland, January 3, 1945

WE ALL ARE, I believe, brought up to accept some values as absolute, yet we observe that our conception of the seemingly best established facts and values is constantly changing. Almost the only unchanging fact is the desire of the human mind to find something unchangeable, something firm behind the picture of constant flow. Religious, philosophic and scientific systems—if you want to make this distinction—are trying to find the pole, the last cause and explanation which would bring system and reason into this world as it appears to us. Such a rule, applicable to all things, would free unmeasurable energies for other tasks; free us from uncertainties; soothe the un-

easiness we feel when facing unexplained phenomena; replace hostility by understanding.

It is uncomfortable to admit how little we know; to accept the limitations of the human mind; to recognize with Kant that this world we see and love is only the world as it appears to our senses and not the thing as such; to accept with the Taoist philosophers the relativity of all human values. It is because of the almost universal desire for simple explanations and rules that some simple and easily understandable systems enjoy such great popularity.

It is from the feeling of uneasiness in facing anything that does not fit into our particular system, anything that has as yet

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not found a satisfying explanation, that the desire arises either to explore the unknown, to extend one's system to cover the new phenomenon or even to suppress it or to explain it away. We see here the cause and beginning of science, but also the cause for intolerance in religious, political and in cultural questions.

Nothing is so important in a creative profession as the preservation of a free vision, and the ability to approach problems in an unprejudiced manner.

We should realize that any rules—legal, moral or esthetic—are the expression of the experience of the past, and that they may, but also may not, apply to the present and the future. Any rule or definition is an abstraction, is limitation, and as such imperfect, in varying degree.

It is true that we have to agree upon and use a great number of abstracta, such as "Moral" and "Beauty" and "Law", to be able to get along in a closely knit world, but we should realize that these terms are not ultimate and self-contained, that they are variable and subject to change, as life itself never stops changing. Especially dangerous is the habit of abstracta to change imperceptibly while the word by which we refer to them remains the same. I recall some remarks by a very learned philologist who had translated Chinese texts well over two thousand years old. Chinese ideograms

change little, and an ideogram designating a cooking-pot then still designates a cooking-pot now. Not so, abstracta. An example from European languages will explain what I mean: When the Romans spoke of the *virtus* of Mucius Scaevola and when the French today speak of the *vertue* of a woman, they mean two very different things, although *virtus* and *vertue* are practically the same word. To find the true sense of his ideograms, this philologist had to make extensive studies of the time when his text was written, gain a complete picture of the social, economic, political and moral background of those days, and then interpolate and make conclusions, and he found deep wisdom where less conscientious researchers had attempted to excuse obvious mistakes by suggesting that the text must have suffered through the centuries.

There are, of course, basic laws and basic facts which are anchored so deep that movements on the surface do not affect them. That it is not the material but the immaterial which is the essence of things was expressed in the sixth century B.C. by Lao Tze: "Mould clay into a vessel: from its non-being (the empty space) arises the utility of the vessel." "Walls and floors and roof form the house: the empty space between them is the essence of the house." Although we believe that we go far beyond such seemingly simple principles

with 'most anything we do, it is good and helpful to remember such basic facts once in a while and to forget all superimposed complications. It will help us to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential, it will enable us to separate precious cargo from mere ballast, to discard the one and take on more of the other.

We shall not all agree on what is cargo and what is ballast. We are judging from different platforms and by varying rules. We have few principles today which are universally accepted. In the architectural profession we hear that "Form follows function"; we hear that "Function creates form"; we hear both these principles—which are aiming at new solutions—rejected by others who place the following of one or the other esthetic concept of a bygone style above all else.

Mere function, as usually understood, neglects the emotional side of architecture. We do not live on logic alone. The enormous emotional force of the Gothic cathedral does not spring from the perfection of its engineering. We may admire the keen conception, the skill, the scale of the structure, but even the non-believer cannot but be gripped by those qualities which are the result and expression of a religious life and religious fervor hardly understood today.

Great architecture, as any great art, results from far more than a knowledge of technique. This

common quality of expression which we recognize as "style", which we have lost and which we hope we shall create again, will slowly develop as the sum of the work of many, carried by the common need and demand of many; not without struggle, not without differences of opinion. The inspiration will come to, and the movement will be carried by, those who set their work before material gain and public acclaim; it will come when we are so completely familiar with the subject, with the technique, that we shall have freed ourselves entirely from questions of detail; it will come when we can see our problems clearly, free from the influence of solutions which were valid under other conditions; it will come to those who have made themselves fit and prepared for it.

Better architecture will not result from an ever-increasing command of nature alone, from a greater variety of more perfect materials, new alloys, radiant heat and more gadgets. These are valuable additions to our vocabulary, but the use of many new materials in a structure does not make it better architecture. The use of new or rare and startling words does not make a poet out of a gossip columnist.

Architecture is a very complex art, covering many fields of human activity, and its complexity resists simple formulation. If one could establish fixed rules about how to

create beautiful objects we could, as Mr. Saarinen pointed out, build machines and create beauty by throwing a lever. And architecture, as we know, is not merely a question of beauty.

The purely rational approach has been overemphasized in protest against too much *l'art pour l'art* and too much copying of the details of old styles. As soon as we master the technique, the rationalization will be so natural that we shall not be tempted any more to show it off, and our energies will go toward satisfying deeper psychological needs. To be functional in the best sense, the universal sense in which the word should be understood, architecture must satisfy not only our demands in technical but in many other fields too. In a great synthesis it must meet psychological, social, political, economic and a hundred other demands.

It is not so much the human mind which changes, but the emphasis and the philosophy. In the classic world, with Man the measure of all things, the world the center of the universe, with gods as human as the gods of Greece, we find the balanced and very human architecture of the temple. When the emphasis shifted from the gods who were so very human to the Emperor, who was so very much like God, and when the free man, who formerly stood upright and talked to his gods on almost even terms, was turned into a mere

subject, architecture had to be overpowering to impress and humble the citizen. The passionate faith, the seeking of redemption, found its expression in the medieval cathedral. And, to change continents, in the Far East, under the influence of Taoism, the worship of Relativity—if we may simplify it this much—we find buildings not built for eternity, but of such materials as wood, reed, bamboo. The dynamic nature of this philosophy laid more emphasis on the process through which perfection is sought than upon perfection itself. True beauty, they held, could be discovered only by the one who mentally completed the incomplete. The virility of life and art lay in its possibility for growth. Symmetry was avoided as expressing not only competition but repetition. Uniformity of design was considered dangerous to the freshness and fertility of imagination. This thought, universally applied, was carried down to the shape and choice of objects of daily life, and created a world as harmonious as under any philosophy we have known.

In this moment the past meets the future, and this day parts yesterday from tomorrow. If we realize and more humbly accept the relativity of our great dogmas and doctrines, our moral and esthetic codes, we shall not only be freer to see, freer to create, freer to be ourselves and allow others to be themselves; we shall be happier

and more adaptable. Relativity and adjustment are inseparable. You can easily see how this principle can be applied to 'most any question and realm of life, to politics, to morals, to the arts.

We are to think about the question of contemporary architecture. Anything more I may say is an application of these ideas. Working as we are in a creative profession, we know that no form exists in a vacuum but is expressing something back of it. If we study history intelligently, we shall follow the philologist who does not take the word at its apparent face value, who does not use it naively, losing the sense it had centuries ago, but who first creates in his mind a picture of the past to gain the necessary perspective. We shall realize that our life today is not

the life of yesteryear, that the art of the past, in toto and in detail, is not necessarily an example of what to do today. If we understand the past more and honor it more profoundly, we shall copy it less and we shall not degrade the true expression of the life of some other period to cover up and take the place of what our own imagination fails to produce.

We should see what we can do with our times, our social, political, technical possibilities; how we can utilize commerce and mass production rather than sit and complain that times have changed. It is not lack of character if we recognize and give credit to changed conditions, making ourselves and our work truly a part of our own times. It is riding the storm instead of perishing in it.

## A Forgotten Document

QUESTIONS from Institute members which reach the Committee on Contract Documents indicate a rather widespread ignorance of A.I.A. Document No. 276. Most of these questions, if not all of them, are answered in the Review of the Standard Documents—a section of No. 276—which has been available in print since 1928. Time, labor and postage would be saved by members, and by Chairman William Stanley Parker of the Committee, if Document No. 276 were consulted first

in connection with questions of interpretation; it contains most of the answers. This forgotten document includes: Report on Fire Insurance, Full-Cover Builder's Risk Fire Insurance Policy, Standard Form of Arbitration Procedure, and a reprint of A Review of the Standard Documents, first issued in 1928. It explains revisions of the various documents culminating in the Fifth Edition, now in effect. Price of Document No. 276 is one dollar, and it is available at The Octagon.

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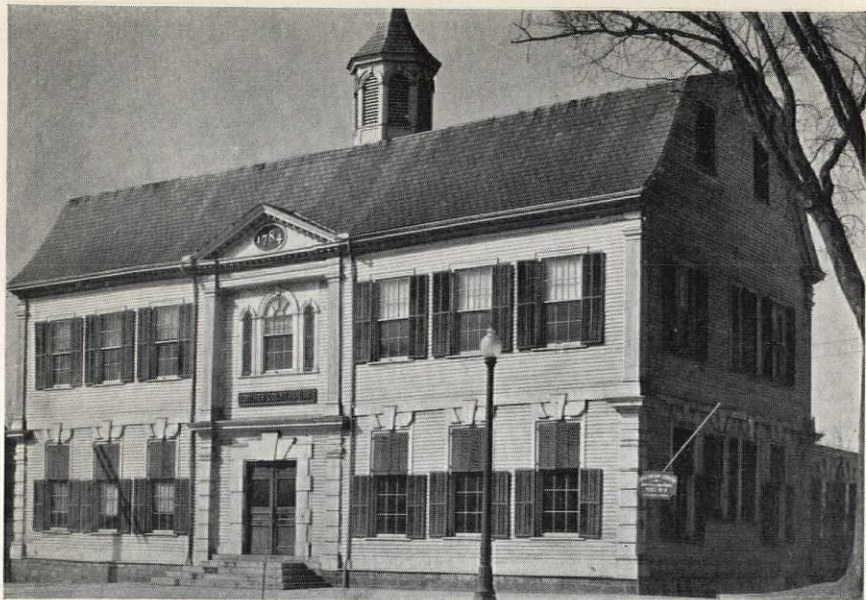


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ROLLIN C. CHAPIN, ARCHITECT

Glass screen serves both design and utility. Railing is of aluminum, stair treads of linoleum. Landing at left lower corner is one step above grade at main entrance

One of six winners in the  
JOURNAL'S Competition No. 2



*Do you know this building?*

*Photograph by Don Houghton, 1934, for  
Historical American Building Survey*

ARCHITECT UNKNOWN

NEW LONDON, CONN.

NEW LONDON COUNTY COURT HOUSE (1784)



# Architects Read and Write

*Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative.*



## MORE ABOUT ART COMMISSIONS

BY LOUIS JUSTEMENT, Washington

There are few living architects for whose work I have a greater admiration than that of Paul P. Cret. I therefore value his opinion very greatly and am correspondingly distressed at his remarks concerning my article in the February JOURNAL. I am convinced, however, that he read the article hurriedly and inferred from it conclusions which I did not state and which are, in fact, as repugnant to me as they are to him. Were it not for this fact I would feel properly chastized and say no more about it. Under the circumstances, however—and despite the paper shortage—I hope both Mr. Cret and the Editor will permit me to say a word in rebuttal.

Mr. Cret accuses me of having made of the Fine Arts Commission a straw man which bears little resemblance to the model. I have re-read my article in the light of Mr. Cret's comments and I believe that I was perhaps unfair in ignoring some of the more recent decisions of the Commission. Let me quote again, therefore, the statement of the chairman which was quoted by Mr. Cret: "The strict and rigid compliance with

the tenets of the classical school in architecture, *which have obtained altogether too long in Washington*, must be abandoned in favor of a more fresh approach to the problems which will confront the designers of new buildings in the future." I applaud Mr. Clark's remarks and I hope he will excuse my italics. Am I unreasonable in inferring that the Commission has been unduly biased in favor of the traditional styles in the past?

So much for my sins of omission. Mr. Cret takes great delight in the spectacle of "buildings to be erected first, then duly inspected by, say, six million New Yorkers, or a million Washingtonians, and if not accepted by the majority, to be at once ordered demolished". Who is setting up straw men now? Nowhere in my article did I suggest substituting a jury of millions for the present Fine Arts Commission. I merely questioned the need for any jury of any number. When I spoke of the appreciation of architecture being based on the people's choice I assumed, perhaps rashly, that it

would be understood that I referred to the same kind of popular approval that is extended to artists in other fields. One of the most effective art forms of today is that of literature. Is this not due in part, at least, to the fact that there is a greater responsiveness and understanding on the part of the public? Public tastes in literature are strongly influenced by the critics but there is an ample variety of critical opinions.

It is my belief—a belief apparently shared by Mr. Cret—that the Fine Arts Commission can, at best, merely prevent excesses of bad taste; it cannot design and it should not be considered a substitute for the selection of competent architects. I believe that architects should be entirely responsible for their designs and not share their responsibility with, nor seek excuses resulting from the decisions of, a Fine Arts Commission. I believe that the designs of buildings should be criticised fearlessly, as we do other works of art and that television may offer the mechanical means for critics to present their comments vividly and effectively—if architects and owners have the good sense to permit honest criticism without suing for libel. I believe that if architecture is to have any meaning for the people it must be on the basis of a conscious effort on their part to understand it. The people may and should be guided in this understanding by professional criticism

and comment freely expressed; this is a different thing from solving the question of esthetic appreciation by relegating decisions to a board of experts; for in the second instance the layman is not presented with various points of view but with a single decision which requires no further thought on his part.

Mr. Cret suggests that I am invoking as supreme authority the "culte de l'incompétence". I have merely tried to say that perhaps we did not need any supreme authority in the field of art today any more than we did in the past—but that we do require public understanding. I am not sure that I know how to stimulate public appreciation of architecture, but I am inclined to place my hope in a frank admission of our own uncertainties and a critical examination of our strivings and frustrations as well as our accomplishments. Perhaps it is visionary to strive for genuine esthetic appreciation and understanding instead of placid admiration on the part of the public. To admit this, however, is to admit that we are incapable of producing an architecture which is significant for the civilization in which we live; at best we may perhaps win the plaudits of the traditional school of architects or of the modernists. This is an admission of defeat which I am not yet prepared to accept.

## LET'S POSTPONE MEMORIALS

BY PERCY CASHMORE, Ridgefield, Conn.

THERE IS much talk these days of monuments and memorials. Communities, cities and states are all busy discussing where the inevitable memorial will be and what form it will take. And architects have been drawn into a controversy as to whether the monument will be a "living memorial" or simply a useless esthetic commemorative object.

Critics of the esthetic type point to the cannon balls and half-life-size Union soldier, perched on a pedestal in hundreds of small towns, and say we want no more of this. Advocates for this sort of thing, on the other hand, point to the Jefferson Memorial to prove how beautiful an otherwise useless structure can be. But no one seems to be sure. On the one side we have the community-center, public - library, slum - clearance, state-highway, green-park enthusiasts; on the other side the sharp, clean-cut, academic but modernized version of the Arch of Septimus Severus, Column of Trajan, Lincoln Memorial boys.

Both sides are wrong. No one tearing over that elevated monstrosity, the Pulaski Highway, stops for a moment to think of the general: few even know who he was. This is a perfect example of the "living memorial". Even where the engineering is better

and the name more illustrious, there seems to be no connection between the structure and the man. George Washington's stature is not raised by using his name either for a coffee or a bridge. The bridge would be as beautiful and as useful with no name at all, and the coffee would taste the way it does with any name. As for the inert statuary so beloved of mankind, the world would be better rid of it. Nothing more inglorious and meaningless exists than the brazen image of the departed. If a statesman is depicted nude he looks ridiculous; if he is depicted with pants, cutaway and beaver he looks worse. Better that a statesman be immortalized by his acts than to have schoolboys jibe at the pigeons' droppings in his outstretched hand.

Monuments to individuals are unconvincing and get terribly out of date, so that the following generation is ashamed of them. But monuments to regiments and whole groups of people are even worse. The reason for this is that nothing can symbolize a nation or a group action so eloquently as the good that comes out of that action. If no good comes from an act, there is no point in glorifying it. If good results, then the glory lies in the good, and the good becomes the monument.

It is not likely, however, that the memorial commissions now forming in the towns and villages of the country will agree with this unemotional view. There is no doubt that they will go ahead with their programs and competitions. They should, however, for the sake of the generation that will have to

live with their decisions, not be too hasty in their conclusions. And when one reflects a bit and considers how fashions and, above all, how men's prejudices change with each generation, it might be worth while to postpone the construction of any form of memorial indefinitely.

## Honors to Architects

MARK DANIELS has been elected president of the Art Commission of the City and County of San Francisco.

LOUIS J. GILL, F.A.I.A., has been appointed by Governor Warren to serve another four-year term, adding to his sixteen years of service as a member of California's State Board of Architectural Examiners.

ROBERT E. ALEXANDER has been

made a member of the Los Angeles City Planning Commission by Mayor Bowron.

ERNEST PICKERING, head of the division of architecture at the University of Cincinnati, and president of the Cincinnati Chapter, A.I.A., has been appointed by Mayor Stewart to fill the unexpired term, ending with 1947, of the late Alfred Bettman on the Cincinnati Planning Commission.

## The Ravenna Mosaics

MAJOR Albert Simons, F.A.I.A., pauses long enough in his military activities to send us the following clipping from *The Manchester Guardian* of March 6, 1945:

Our Rome Correspondent writes to me of a recent visit to Ravenna and the state of its mosaics. Ravenna became the capital of the Byzantine Empire for a hundred and twenty years in A.D. 402, and has the only examples in the world

of those early Byzantine mosaics, which no one has ever been able to imitate since. "Bombs have dropped so near the little mausoleum of Galla Placidia and the famous churches of Sant' Apollinare and San Vitale that the people in Ravenna take it as a miracle that these places are unspoilt. I set out one morning to visit them. Fortunately I had gumboots on, for the drainage in this city has been badly damaged and, lying as it does below sea-level, there are

patches of flooding everywhere. One of the worst patches is around the mausoleum. The custodian would not venture, but he gave me the keys and I splashed my way knee-deep in water to the little door and unlocked it. Inside everything was dark. I flashed a strong torch on the familiar walls, which I remembered as being studded with the richest gold and white and colored mosaics imaginable, with occasional designs of fruits and flowers, and saints with instruments of their martyrdom. The mausoleum is very small and the mosaics come almost to the ground, so that some are under water already. The rest can hardly profit by the damp air which now pervades the place.

"In Sant' Appollinare Nuovo the windows have not been bricked

in, and the mosaics are high on the walls. Here, as in San Vitale, the famous white-robed, immensely tall figures of the Apostles, executing what always looks like a slow circular dance around the solemn, wide-eyed figure of Christ in the center, have been covered with a kind of silver paper for protection and are not visible. But the water was far more than knee-deep here and I gave up. In San Vitale the roof and apse of the church have been damaged, but repairs are already in progress. The mosaics on the walls of the nave are uncovered and undamaged. They were made in A.D. 500, a hundred years later than those in the mausoleum, and are already a lesser imitation of an art which was lost very soon after it was born."

## Local Meetings on Dimensional Coordination

THE Producers' Council recently announced a series of eight meetings in major cities for discussion of dimensional coordination now proceeding through Project A62 of the American Standards Association, of which The A.I.A. and The Producers' Council are joint sponsors.

In each city the presentation was to be made by A. Gordon Lorimer, Chief, Bureau of Architecture, Department of Public Works, New York City, under whose direction various post-War

projects are being designed on the modular coordination basis. Mr. Lorimer, who is a member of The A.I.A., is also on Study Committee 7 of the A62 Project dealing with building layout. The meetings were scheduled to coincide with Mr. Lorimer's vacation period, which he dedicated to this cause in which he believes wholeheartedly.

Local meetings for the purpose of bringing these important developments to the attention of architects had previously been held in

a number of cities, among them one in New York on March 15th in a joint gathering of the New York Chapters of The Institute and The Council. The Architectural League was crowded with 92 architects and 63 producers. Mr. Lorimer demonstrated modular brick, tile, concrete and glass block, also wood and steel windows, with panels viewed through a modular grid. In response to a request there was a practically unanimous show of hands in favor of modular coordination.

Manufacturers of metal windows have already announced modular coordinated sizes of non-residential windows, which are being produced as standard units for immediate requirements, where authorized by WPB, and for incorporation in design of post-War

projects. Manufacturers of brick and clay tile have agreed upon modular sizes which will be available for post-War construction. Similarly, manufacturers of concrete masonry units and manufacturers of wood doors and windows have virtually completed their studies under this project. Announcement of modular sizes will follow.

Before this issue of the JOURNAL reaches the membership, eight cities will have had the opportunity of learning, with special visual aids, how dimensional coordination can be a useful tool to architect and to builder. These cities are: Minneapolis, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Louisville, Cincinnati and Cleveland.

## Highlights of the Technical Press

*The Architectural Forum*, Feb.: The Corner Lavatory (a design idea); by George Kosmak, Ruth Gerth & Assoc.; 4 pp. t. & ill. Swedish Theater; Eric Lallerstedt, Sigurd Lewerentz, David Hellden, archts. 10 pp. t. & ill. Postwar Building Techniques—2. Materials; 8 pp. t. & ill.

Mar.: ATC International Air Terminal; Charles M. Goodman, archt.; 10 pp. t. & ill. The Wind-sor Chair; 8 pp. t. & ill. Puerto Rico—a school and hospital system by Richard J. Neutra, archt.

Joseph Blumenkranz, hosp. consult.; 12 pp. t. & ill. Hillside House in San Francisco; Gardner Dailey, archt.; 4 pp. t. & ill. Town House, New York; William Lescaze, archt.; 3 pp. t. & ill. Post-War Building Techniques—Equipment; 8½ pp. t. & ill.

*Architectural Record*, Feb.: Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Engine Plant Kansas City, Mo.; Albert Kahn Assoc. archts. & engnrs.; 8 pp. t. & ill. Jai Alai Sports Center in Manila; Walter Wurdeman and Wel-

MAY, 1945



ton Becket, archts.; 6 pp. t. & ill. Shopping Types Study No. 98 in collaboration with Fairchild Publications; 24 pp. t. & ill.

Mar.: Architecture's Place in City Planning, by Joseph Hudnut; 4 pp. t. Stabilizing the Construction Industry, by Thomas S. Holden; 4 pp. t. Banks, Building Types Study No. 99 in collaboration with *Banking*; 12 pp. t. & ill. Modern Offices, in collaboration with *Buildings and Building Management*; 20 pp. t. & ill.

*Architect and Engineer*, Mar.: Ernest Kump Speaks Frankly (of an architect's taking off the smock and donning overalls); 5 pp. t.

*Pencil Points*, Feb.: Nine houses in the contemporary manner of design—two, the homes of the architects—in a wide geographical distribution; with selected details; 39 pp. t. & ill. Fluorescent Lighting for Houses, by Frank G. Lopez; 6 pp. t. & ill.

Mar.: Sill Building, Bakersfield, Calif.; Franklin Kump & Assocs., archts.; 17 pp. t. & ill. Maintenance Buildings, Greenbelt, Md.;

Victorine Homsey, Eugene H. Klaber, assoc. archts.; 2 pp. t. & ill. An American Introduction to Sir Ebenezer Howard's "Garden Cities of Tomorrow", by Lewis Mumford; 6 pp. t. & ill.

## Sperry Memorial Competition

THE Sperry Gyroscope Company, Inc., and The Association of the Alumni of the American Academy in Rome announce a competition for "A Memorial to Dr. Elmer A. Sperry". The competition is open to teams composed of from two to four representatives of the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture and landscape architecture. The awards: one prize of \$1000., one of \$200. and three of \$100. each. Eric Gugler, F.A.I.A., is acting as professional adviser. Word of the competition reaches us very late to be of much help to contestants, for the closing date is May 14. Full details may be had from the office of The Alumni Association of the American Academy in Rome, 101 Park Ave., New York City.

## The Editor's Asides

Two short articles in this issue—on pages 188 and 190—together with one in the November JOURNAL, "More and Better Hospitals", add up to a significant fact. For the first time in this country,

we are likely to embark on a nation-wide program, based on factual premises, for a broad and properly coordinated system of hospitalization. The movement apparently has no opponents; the

medical profession, the U. S. Public Health Service, the American Hospital Association, the technical and professional journals—all are enthusiastically for it.

The significant fact mentioned above, however, is this: the architectural profession is welcomed by the allied forces listed in part above, not merely as technicians who will help carry the project into execution, but as part of the directing commissions at State and Federal levels. The States of Massachusetts and Missouri, at the moment, have architects on their Hospital Commissions. Every State in the Union should have an architect member on the fact-finding and planning body appointed by the governors to carry out the national program. The A.I.A. Committee on Hospitalization and Public Health, and our State Association Members, have been handed the responsibility of working with their State health officers and governors to bring about this professional representation. This is not a scramble for hospital jobs; it is a civic responsibility that we are expected to assume; it is an opportunity for that leadership to which we have so frequently of late been self-exhorted.



THE ARCHITECT talks almost daily about the shortcomings and uneconomic provisions of our building codes, but that isn't news. He is merely an expert. What *is* news

is that the public is beginning to talk about these building codes, waking up to the fact that they are making housebuilding absurdly expensive for the man in the street. The February *Atlantic Monthly* prints an article "Breaking the Building Blockade", a case study of Chicago, by Robert Lasch, one of that city's most capable newspapermen. Still better news is the *Reader's Digest* perception in printing a condensation of the article in its April issue, under the title "Can We Break the Building Blockade?"

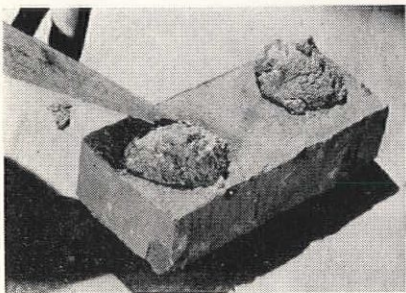
*The Foundation*, official publication of the Engineering Society of Detroit, asks: "Just how good is our engineering education? Thoughtful persons . . . are deeply concerned . . ."

Aren't we all?

A long-time member of a State Registration Board tells me that the subject in which most aspirants fail—not once but repeatedly—is Design. The record of failures in the Design examinations has been growing slowly but surely worse in the last ten years. The reason why is something for the educators to uncover. There may be more than one reason—probably is—but I keep asking myself whether the tendency of architectural schools to abandon the B.A.I.D. system of over-all comparison and competition, to go it alone, has anything to do with the apparently deteriorating product.

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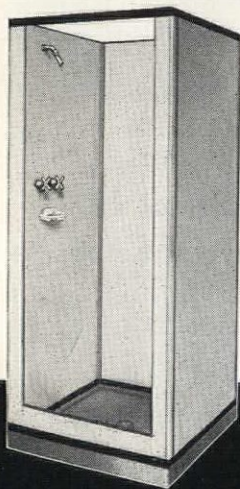
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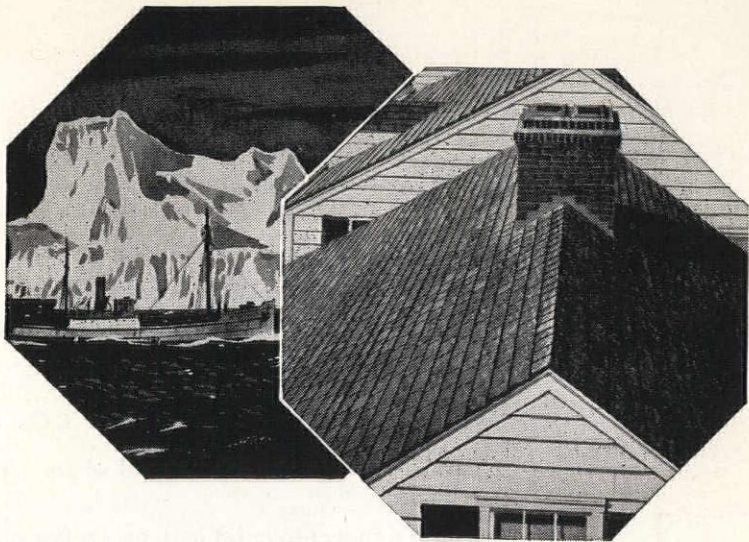
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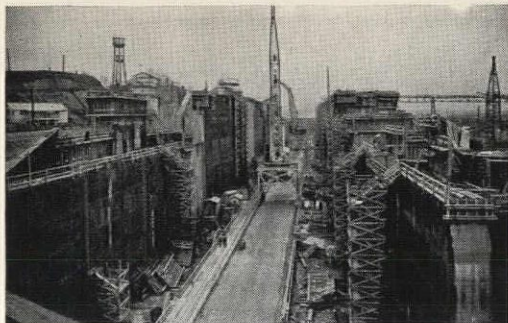
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