

# Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



SIR PATRICK ABERCROMBIE

April, 1950

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Guest Editorial by Norman J. Schlossman

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Functional Standards of Dwelling Units—I

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The Architect's Duties and Responsibilities

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Preserving Historical Church Buildings

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We Need Teachers

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I Remember McKim, Mead & White

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The Renovation of The White House—II

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# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

WITH THE AIM OF AMPLIFYING  
AS THROUGH A MICROPHONE  
THE VOICE OF THE PROFESSION

APRIL, 1950

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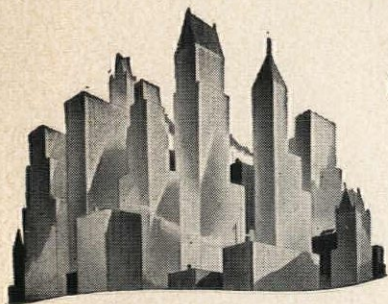


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*Our quest for a Guest Editorial this month led us much nearer home than did our recent excursions into the fields of homebuilding editores and esthetic appreciation. In the March Bulletin of the Chicago Chapter the Chapter's president was saying something, under the title "Skin-Deep" that, to our way of thinking, has long needed saying. We are glad to bring before a wider audience the words of—*

*Norman J. Schlossman*

A TOUR through the Potter Palmer Mansion, now being razed, was impressive for the conspicuous opulence of its carvings, panelling, parquetry, crystal and mosaics—detailed descriptions and photographs of which have appeared so recently in our daily press. Here was the fabulous castle of a fabulous leader of a fabulous era. This was no common thing. This was the quintessence of luxury and elegant living only sixty-eight years ago.

What do we have today? Compare these luxurious and exceptional facilities with our present *minimum* standards of housing. Beneath its ornament, plush and decorations, it is doubtful that the Potter Palmer structure offered anything towards comfort, health,

and convenience superior to that of almost any modern, new home. Most of us today enjoy a standard of housing at least as good as did the very wealthiest families only a few score years ago.

If this is so, who deserves the credit? This advance has been an unparalleled contribution by the building industry—architects, engineers, and manufacturers—to our nation's basic welfare. Food, clothing, and shelter—the essential three. Of these, in the last, alone, has the nation shown its greatest progress. The building industry has been so frequently characterized as backward, inefficient and unprogressive that sometimes even we, who should know better, accept it as a complete statement of fact.

Instead, we should remember how far building has come; we should take deserved pride in this prog-

ress; and we should glory that we are in a profession that had a part in it.

## We Need Teachers

By *Ralph Walker*, F.A.I.A.

Somewhat abbreviated, an address before the North Central States Regional Conference, Minneapolis, Minn., February 17, 1950

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS is interested in the education of the architect and, as you know, it has started a survey as to his needs, his preparation for professional life, his relation to the society in which he lives and works. As President of this august body I believe it is my right—more, my duty—to stir up, to stimulate if possible, action and reaction, to the result that future architects will meet the everchanging problems with new aspirations, new techniques combined with a richness of a philosophy gained in ever ripening experience.

One thing which rather interests me is the large number of architectural schools with their real lack of diversity in teaching as to *what architecture is*; the real lack of disparity of belief in the way the education of an architect should be accomplished. My main object is to point up what seems,

to me, to be the reason for this and so stimulate discussion. My further purpose is to develop written opinion—the JOURNAL needs live material.

In a world much too literate and much too desirous of expressing itself as history long before all the evidence is in, the teacher often is a frustrated non-practitioner of the art and science, often an inexperienced philosopher whose mind is captivated by ideas generally expressed on paper and not always tested in actuality. These ideas are often abstract and withdrawn from physical knowledge of human needs and compromises. One who often thinks that these compromises denote the "Philistine" is quite willing to see repeated again and again so-called experimental ideas which, again, are not well executed.

Recently, in a symposium on the education of the sculptor, George Demetrios told a story, as follows:

"In Paris, an art instructor asked a youth what she was trying to do. 'I am expressing myself,' she answered. The art instructor said: 'Ah, ma chere, your papa and mama did that. *You must learn how to draw here.*'"

As often happens in all the arts, *the teacher knows little but how to draw*, and so we find neophyte teaching neophyte something that should have come from papa and mama—but without the spiritual competence to express even the callowness which is theirs, and which in truth might even have some charm. So finally the result is that which might be expected: no deep quality of cultural meaning, but only the smart and the seemingly simple.

Demetrios further says about art: "Slowly but surely the picture and the statue have deteriorated into the check, the bank check. We are interested today in the signature below and the endorsement on the back first, and then the significance of the amount, i.e. the picture or statue."

I have found, in many interviews, that the average young student of today is impatient to practise, thinking that he may do so with a few ideas called "design." He, however, is immature in re-

sponsibility and in that necessary quality of trusteeship, as well as in the practical experience of an increasingly difficult profession; a profession, moreover, which demands a thorough self-discipline to accomplish its ends satisfactorily. The teacher also seems insufficient in experience, and unable to build a firm foundation and steer this desire into channels of future self-education and *the absolutely necessary patience in acquiring the solid background of experience*, so that the young architect will be thoroughly prepared before offering his services to the betterment of his community. I have talked with many recent graduates and have found few who are seriously continuing their studies or who are earnestly preparing themselves for registration and license.

Nor is there any sensitiveness in the arrogance which this impatience to practise indicates; an arrogance which has often been built upon the idea that the present practitioners are old fogies. The teacher, moreover, has seemingly failed to develop the principle that professional responsibility is morally as well as economically important; so that the student complains that the public does not understand the purposes of the

architect, or his qualities, or his rightful position in our society.

Shall we take a moment or two and examine what the young architect now finds as the justification of his impatience? There has developed an architecture, built upon the factory and the industrial world's needs in structure and in profit-making economics. It has finally achieved an impersonality and negative esthetic, the primary virtue of which is in its withdrawal into nakedness rather than into the rich clothing modern resources would permit—especially in America. We see everywhere a negative factory architecture, without meaning to local climatic conditions or cultural background; one copied continually without analysis—and seemingly without mature criticism on the part of the teacher, who again and again has admitted to me his inability to control the situation. The teacher too, if he builds, follows the present trend because of the fear that he will not be thought "modern." Now, this whole type of architectural thinking reminds me of a phrase once used by the famous Countess Potocka concerning "Malmaison": that it held "paltiness rather than simplicity and pretentiousness rather than

largess." Nor should we forget that pretentiousness can be achieved negatively in the factory esthetic, for there is quality of the baroque even in the use of the famous line of beauty, the twisted plan, the addition of masses based wholly on a cubist conception of the picture plan. The result is that man, our client, finds himself moving and resting in space without dignity and without form.

Unfortunately, in my opinion, this type of architecture throughout the world is no longer the result of original and balanced thinking regarding economic if not social needs; but is of wrist motivation only. For now all buildings—hospitals, city halls, apartment houses, department stores, factories—are alike in appearance; and if given any amenity it is generally with the ugliest mud-colored marble to be found—mosaic ashlar walls and zebra-striped wood.

You can go from a midwestern university in the United States to the university in Cairo, Egypt, and see the same solutions based on the same few "accepted" motifs: actually the same paucity of engineering motifs and a similar lament on the part of the teacher concerning his lack of authority and the almost Koranic influence of the architec-

tural magazine. You are asked in these days of dollar shortage for help in getting the very magazines which lessen his authority and influence.

Or, again, the teacher goes out so thoroughly trained in the present ideology—always taking the proper preliminary steps but always pointing to the same results—i.e., any problem, whether in Egypt, in Boston, in Texas, in Missouri, is resolved by the same solid-ended box, one story or many stories in height, upon the same stilts—regardless. If this is the desired end of architecture, there is little more to be said save to politely applaud.

The same phenomenon happens in the city planning courses. If you are trained in Liverpool you will endeavor and strain to fit all planning to English ideas, no matter how different the locality or the life lived there. At Cairo, I was proudly shown a student's study of an unusual portion of Cairo: a stark tableland of limestone in the middle of the city. It lifted itself as a barrier to the city's growth. I was struck by something familiar in the plan as developed in a model; and I turned to the teacher and ask him whether he had been trained at Harvard. He said "Yes," and I knew it because this

plan was exactly similar in idea to the "Concord Problem" once studied there, and in which this teacher had been one of the pupils. Now, frankly, I was amazed because of the wide difference in every aspect of culture and climate (in Egypt the constant dust factor from the surrounding deserts) between Concord, Massachusetts, and Cairo. Here a "solution" had been carried, somewhat unthinkingly, thousands of miles, *rather than a method*.

The same lack of philosophy, like an industrial designer's Mother Hubbard, blankets the local necessity; and the same motif, unadulterated, is used in Boston, Rio, Cairo, Texas, Fairbanks, Stockholm, Peking, Marseilles. Wherever you go you find the same pattern, so that finally you try to find some logical reason for this universal aspect of modern architecture, and you ask: 1—Are living, climatic and social conditions so alike all over the world?—here the answer is obviously No; 2—Is there some universal cultural force which makes all solutions alike, resulting in a universal agreement among teachers that there is such a desirable influence?—again this is, obviously, not so, for I have found nowhere teachers that much

in actual agreement; or, 3—The students have found another source which they think more important than local conditions or the opinions of their teachers.

As an example of a difference in thinking, may we consider the philosophy of one Egyptian architect who is doing an Arab village outside Luxor—here trying to bring new life into the ancient city of the dead, Thebes. The climate there in Egypt changes from extreme heat and glare to chill air in which one needs warm clothing; the dust is everywhere—off the fields when dry, off the desert which rims the Nile Valley. This architect believes that the modern idea of plate glass and lally columns cannot influence the fellaheen for many years—years in a dim distant future. He says the window function for Egypt cannot be taken from current illustrations in an architectural press. He says the window has three functions: 1—to look out; 2—to obtain light; 3—for ventilation. Even in the oases the dust is present; but who but fools would build without the trees overhead?

His “new invention” is the result of many centuries of rule-of-thumb invention and experiment, a pragmatic approach which appeals

to man throughout history. His house turns away from the noisy dusty street; the *look-out-of* windows are narrow—and filled with wooden grilles so that “peeping toms” cannot easily look in; but like the old church squint, the inside looks out on the drama of the world outside. The daylight comes relatively high-up from slits around a cupola, and cool illumination is delivered completely free of glare, no matter how brilliant the sun; and, finally, hollow walls, using natural sun heat and shade, draw down from the roofs a cool flow of air—again without draft. The sun, both friend and enemy, is treated intelligently, and the result is a mastery of nature.

The designer of the village is not only using nature but he is also using the immediate skills found at hand to develop a better life, because these houses are built with the mud of the Nile: the mud, which while it feeds him, has in the past degraded the fellaheen. No new materials are necessary, no new techniques, only a new purpose—and this is where the true teacher enters; because it is his job to indicate the basic need and from the immediate surroundings develop the purpose.

The peasant farmer of Japan



was poor but he had personal dignity; and cleanliness and respect for his neighbors' rights. In Japan I found in rich and poor the same qualities of taste existed, and there had even come about an aristocracy of selection in the surroundings of the very poor.

So, too, in the past of Egypt the houses of the poor and of the merchant, of the noble, had similar characteristics so that, in disregarding these factors, the modern teacher, dependent upon the architectural press, in my opinion, may be too inclined to throw out the nylons with the soapflake suds.



Recently, and I hope every architect tries to understand its fundamental qualities, *House Beautiful* in its remarkable survey of climatic differences within relatively small areas—a survey I am proud the A.I.A. is privileged to publish—shows up the stupidity of the international idea, and the need of local comprehensive studies of physical conditions. It needs only a step further to indicate another study pointing out the differences of *local social needs*.

Like all new professions, we have seen a rapid development in the number of schools devoted to

architecture, and an increasing demand at low salaries to fill the resulting professional posts. I believe there are ten thousand architectural students. There has also grown a great need for fundamental points of view related to the increased body of knowledge within the scope of architectural practice and education. One profession after another has done a soul searching and a world searching to discover how their new knowledge relates to society as a whole, and in most cases the need of a new type of teacher as well as practitioner is immediately apparent. Perhaps therefore it would be worth while to indicate the qualities in teachers that perhaps we should be looking for to meet these conditions which are now markedly different from what they were at the beginning of the century. We might state at once for the sake of discussion, this principle, remembering that when I say we will need teachers in architecture, I am merely stating a common need found throughout all education.

We will need in increasing numbers teachers who are philosophers, and who have given serious thought to their own creative personalities, who seek a rich life for mankind

and who resent poverty of invention in cultural satisfaction.

We will need teachers who believe that humanity's needs are greater and more beneficial as guides than the maanderings of the "painter into architecture" philosophy; and who realize that inspiration is better than the number of graduates; and whose pupils are guided into ideals of competence and service to humanity.

We will especially need teachers who resent the clichés of fashion, no matter how smart, no matter how intellectually satisfying for the moment; and who have built themselves; and who are willing to criticize, without fear, their own mistakes. I listened to Pietro Belluschi at Greenbrier Inn give a frank discourse on his recent jobs and everyone, as well as myself, felt that we were being treated as adults; and that his works, many of which I disagreed with, *were serious attempts to find solutions to living.*

We need more ripened practitioners who will devote the richness of their experience to the training of youth. No other profession leaves so much of the teaching in the hands of those who have not built a practice of their own.

We will need teachers who teach fundamentals such as: "survey before plan; analysis before synthesis;" for in that way their students know "for whom they build and for what purpose; where they build and why; and the social economics required to develop good citizenship and individual self-respect."

To these ends they must question the universal solution, as well as the present monetary economics. We will need, therefore, teachers who can conduct their own surveys without prejudice and who, coming upon a new solution, can evaluate it against past experience, themselves not influenced by the fashionable.

We will need teachers who believe in our profession and its possibilities; who are modest and sincere; and whose pupils do not talk of frustration before they practise.

We will need teachers who lead their pupils to continually question their own results, so as to improve their techniques. I have no admiration for any man who has been using the same detail for twenty years or more, and who accepts a sloppy execution of it; who has not in all these years been able to perfect or discard the theoretical

because of its practical difficulties in execution.

We will need, therefore, teachers who will lead their pupils critically to the actual—asking them to distrust the picture, regardless of the signature or the endorsement, unless they have tested it by complete analysis.

We will need teachers whose own self-discipline, whose own known curiosity, whose own balanced judgments are examples of what the student must attain as the disciplines necessary to practise a difficult and engrossing profession.

And we also need schools which will consciously develop teachers, realizing the continuing need of replacement and of revitalizing inspiration, the continuing need for well-trained men to guide youth and to prepare others to teach. The teacher is not lightly made—nor are the schools at present doing other than develop technicians, forgetting that philosophy, a necessary adjunct to good teaching, as well as to practice, cannot flower in a narrow field of knowledge. The schools must develop a diversity of opinion, contrary to what may be thoroughly believed in for the moment, and so encourage teachers and pupils to seek out the reverse sides of their own opinions.

Our ugly cities—and they are ugly—our regimented housing projects, our increasingly standardized concepts of architecture in which structure and materials are the masters rather than the servants, our need for a new way of life lifted from the sordidness of the machine esthetic into a gracious way of living—all cry aloud for new teachers, in practice, in school, wherever one man influences another. Long ago, there was a teacher given to wisdom and he thought it his duty "to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

With all respect to the many devoted men who are at present teaching—many of whom I know and admire—and who are doing their best, we need teachers and we must try to set up the means for their development.

I take it to be the job of the Architectural Education Survey Commission of The A.I.A., now working, to come forward with suggestions as to how we may accomplish this, for I firmly believe it is our job, i.e. that of The A.I.A., to see that our educational ideals are furthered by the best teachers among us.

# Functional Standards of Dwelling Units

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

By Henry D. Whitney

CHIEF OF ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS SECTION, DIVISION OF HOUSING RESEARCH,  
HOUSING AND HOME FINANCE AGENCY

A paper read at the Seminar on Housing Design, Philadelphia, February 4, 1950

IT IS a great pleasure to participate in this regional discussion of public housing design. Seven billion dollars, more or less, are going to be spent for new subsidized low-rent dwellings under the 1949 Act, and we ought to take thorough stock of what we have learned thus far before the program starts.

Roughly speaking, we've had 170,000 permanent low-rent dwelling units before us for study for ten years. Meetings like this are of great importance in analyzing the results of this previous experience and in pointing profitable new directions for architectural thinking.

I have been asked to talk about Architectural Standards. This is a very broad subject and I hope you won't mind, under the circumstances, if I talk extensively about one part of this field, instead of trying to deal briefly with a great many parts.

The Architectural Standards

that seem the most important, in this initial phase of the program, are those which deal with *space and livability*. They answer the question "How big is a house?", or "How big is a two-bedroom house?" or, more particularly to us today, "How big is a two-bedroom publicly-subsidized dwelling unit?"

These are simple enough questions—perhaps too simple—but they are certainly noteworthy in having no commonly accepted answers. And this is a situation which we want to devote more attention to because these questions, simple as they are, underlie our future operations in housing. They deal with what we hope to have, from a human standpoint, when we get through.

The Housing Act of 1949 defines our national housing objective as being (among other things) the production of dwellings of "sound standards of . . . livability and size for adequate family life."

This emphasis of Congress upon adequate livability is much more explicit than heretofore. The Act of 1937, as you will remember, defines low-rent housing as decent, safe and sanitary dwellings which are not of elaborate or expensive design or materials and which, in effect, are merely *serviceable, efficient, economical and stable*. In the new program, by contrast, we are charged, in the first place, with the development of sound standards of livability and size for adequate family life and, in the second place, with finding means of reducing the costs of housing without sacrifice of such sound standards.

If future projects are to reflect this new emphasis, we should re-think public housing design. This means that we should find answers to such critical questions as these:

What are the items of furniture which most families consider essential to adequate family life?

What bulky household objects are owned by the average family for which storage space must be provided?

How important is the provision of individual laundry facilities, indoor laundry drying space, indoor children's play space and elbow-room for minor carpentry and home maintenance activities? Are

provisions for these functions necessary parts of any dwelling which aims to be truly adequate or can we continue to omit them from publicly subsidized housing?

How important is private yard space to the average family? What proportion of your tenants actually do not want such space?

In other words, what we appear to need, as a starting point, is a clearer definition of the physical characteristics of the *minimum adequate American home*. As a rough framework for such a definition, and as a means of providing tentative answers to some of the foregoing questions, I would like to suggest four basic requirements or criteria for residential adequacy in low-rent housing design today.

Several special characteristics of this framework should be mentioned at the outset. In the first place, the requirements are expressed, for the most part, in *performance* terms. I think most people are convinced that we can't say a home is a dwelling with certain minimum-sized rooms, and leave it at that. Such a standard would be too specific to be correct for anything except the average condition and it would be too rigid to be useful to the architect. Nor does it help materially to go to the

other extreme and say that the minimum adequate American home is a dwelling which accommodates sleeping, dressing, cooking, dining, bathing, laundry, sitting in the living room, etc., in a comfortable and economical manner. Family activities and functions are too intangible to produce, in themselves, a space standard or guide which would be useful in the drafting-room.

What we should be able to set down as an architectural program, however, is what the dwelling is excepted to *do*—not in terms of intangible activities which overlap in an intricate manner, but primarily in terms of the accommodation of concrete physical objects and of simple functions with which everyone is familiar and whose space requirements are fairly obvious.

In the second place, this standard aims at being a list of basic criteria, a set of technical objectives, a general architectural program—or even a simple drafting-room guide—rather than a standard, in the conventional sense. It is called a standard only because a standard is primarily a measure of value. It is offered as a measure of the value of quality of low-cost housing design in the light of our

present knowledge of how families live.

Finally, the standard attempts to reconcile two somewhat contradictory concepts, namely, *adequate quality* and *minimum cost*. This would be more disturbing, however, if the character of the entire housing problem were not determined in the same way, by these two objectives which point in opposite directions. In other words, this definition, to be valid, must result in a dwelling which is adequate and complete but which still includes no waste space or other unnecessary facilities. The unit must be permanently livable, as we understand livability today, and not merely a step to something better later on. It must constitute a true American home with no essentials omitted, but with no extras added.

With these facts in mind, therefore, we suggest that the minimum adequate permanent dwelling for an average family is a living unit

- (1) which has direct access to private outdoor space for family sitting and small children's play,
- (2) which accommodates certain essential furniture and fixtures with adequate space for use and circulation,
- (3) which provides storage fa-

cilities for certain essential types of family belongings, and

(4) which includes either a conventional basement or a "basement-equivalent" above grade.

In filling in the necessary data to make this definition of practical use, I want to start with the most quantitatively important of these four considerations, namely, the proper accommodation of essential furniture and fixtures.

We believe that the sizing of interior space is primarily dependent on furniture and other large physical objects not because we think that household possessions are the same for every family; nor do we close our eyes to the fact that houses are primarily for people and their activities and not for the accommodation of inanimate objects. We use these concrete physical possessions as points of departure because they *embody* the activities in which we are primarily interested in a manner which is easy to understand and to communicate to others. They don't embody all the essential activities of the average family, but it is quite hard to think of an activity which is not associated directly with such an object or objects. Home carpentry might be said to be one, but even this is dependent

on the use of a lot of individual small objects, as are other hobbies.

So we go as far as we can with this furniture approach to the proper sizing of living space, and then we have to end by considering certain family activities which don't submit so easily to this sort of analysis. These will be mentioned later.

Again, it is perfectly true that *actual* furniture and possessions differ between different families but *essential* items differ very little. In spite of this normal variation, we shouldn't close our eyes to the fact that there are certain pieces of furniture which the average family cannot do without. There is fairly wide agreement among housing specialists as to what these pieces are at the moment, although much firmer documentation of this situation is necessary if it is to be of real help in low-rent housing design.

I won't bore you with reading our tentative list of essential furniture and fixtures, although it is available to anyone who wants it.

Incidentally, this list is composed of regular movable furniture, rather than so-called built-in pieces. We have no objection to built-in furniture. In fact, we favor it as a method of getting

more use out of a given amount of space. But worthwhile efforts to define spacial adequacy in dwellings have frequently been hampered in the past by the argument that you had to take built-in furniture into account. And, obviously, since you never knew how much built-in furniture there was going to be in a house, you ended up by never defining spacial adequacy at all. And since there has been a general reluctance to come to grips with

this problem, some of the housing we have been building is not as adequate as it should be.

So our tentative formula says that, since you have to start somewhere, you start with normal movable furniture and modify the standard as necessary (if you think it otherwise desirable) to take care of the built-in items which you may wish to include in an actual building or project.

*(To be concluded in May)*

## The Renovation of The White House

IN TWO PARTS—PART II

*By Douglas William Orr, F.A.I.A.*

An address delivered before the Washington Building Congress,  
January 5, 1950

WHEN the building was provided with a new roof and third floor in 1927, the structural design was such as to put onto minor interior partition walls and piers the concentrated loads of the new trusses supporting the roof and third floor and weighing, in themselves, much more than the original construction. These walls and piers, without adequate or even reasonable footings, bearing on compressible soil, have settled and cracked, and while movement has been going on for some time, it was determined to be progressive and

there was no way in which this failure could be remedied except by removal of these loads or by inserting adequate structure to carry them. This condition is the number-one reason for the necessity of reconstruction.

Once again, we find a structure with fire-resistive first floor, third floor and roof, a combustible floor between these, the loadings of the third floor and roof on inadequate support, and good foundation more than 20' below the ground-floor level.

The Commissioner of Public



Buildings prepared an estimate of the cost of general rehabilitation, and an appropriation was requested from the Congress to renovate and repair the building. The request and its amount caused a nationwide furor, as no one had any realization that such difficulties could have been suddenly discovered in the famous White House.

Perhaps it may be that in some of the previous changes, neither were sufficient funds allocated nor sufficient time allowed to do a thorough piece of work. I believe that both will be adequate on this occasion.

Early in 1949, it was decided that it would be desirable to put the conduct of the work under the supervision of a Commission, and, as a consequence, Public Law No. 40 was passed by the Congress creating a commission, officially known as "The Commission on the Renovation of the Executive Mansion." Two members were appointed by the Senate, Senators McKellar and Martin; two members by the House, Representatives Rabout and Keefe; and two members by the President, Mr. Dougherty and myself.

The Commission was organized in June 1949, and immediately set

about its task of trying to determine the best course to pursue in light of the facts put before it.

You will realize that much study had been put on this problem by both the White House Architect and the Public Buildings Services, in order to form some basis of making up an estimate for the appropriation request. The appropriation was somewhat delayed, due to differences of opinion as to what should be done, but the language of the appropriation measure finally placed in the hands of the Commission the determination as to whether the building was to be maintained and reconstructed or a new building constructed. There were many in both schools of thought on this subject.

The Commission sought diligently to reassess all facts and get additional ones, but approached the whole problem with open mind without preconceived notions or opinions. It endeavored to obtain all information which would furnish a sound basis for formulating its judgments. One of its first acts was the appointment of its own engineering and architectural consultants, to consider with it the problems involved in any of the possible solutions. Also, the Com-

mission appointed its own director, Major General Glen E. Edgerton, his assistant, Colonel Gillette, and staff members to coordinate its work with the other agencies involved, notably the White House Architect, P.B.S. and the Commission's own consultants.

Technical staff meetings were held with great regularity, usually including all consultants, the technical members of the Commission, the White House Architect and the staff members of P.B.S. concerned in the particular phase of the work.

The Commission had estimates submitted for a totally new structure; for demolishing and rebuilding the existing structure entirely, but with exterior wall material salvaged and reused; for remodeling and reconstructing the building, leaving the existing exterior walls, present roof and third floor; and for removing the third floor and roof and building them anew, leaving only the walls standing.

All of the phases were carefully considered architecturally, engineering-wise and cost-wise. The problems of maintaining present structure while removing old bearings were gone into in great detail with endless Commission and technical staff meetings. Findings for

one method were balanced against another, soil tests were made, borings taken down into the underlying strata of soil; load tests conducted on different strata. The condition of the exterior walls was thoroughly gone into, and much deliberation as to how much, if any, they might be chased if they were to remain, how they might be anchored to the new steel frame, how underpinning could best be done and at what depth.

All drawing preparation and technical data was generally prepared by the Commissioner of Public Buildings and his staff and Mr. Winslow, White House Architect, and his staff, and checked by the Commission consultants and the Commission.

A complete record set of photographs of the entire building was made, and Mr. Winslow had prepared an exact record set of drawings of the entire building and its details.

After a diligent and thorough study of the whole matter, the Commission announced its decision to retain the outer walls, third floor and roof and put a new steel frame within the building and reconstruct the interiors.

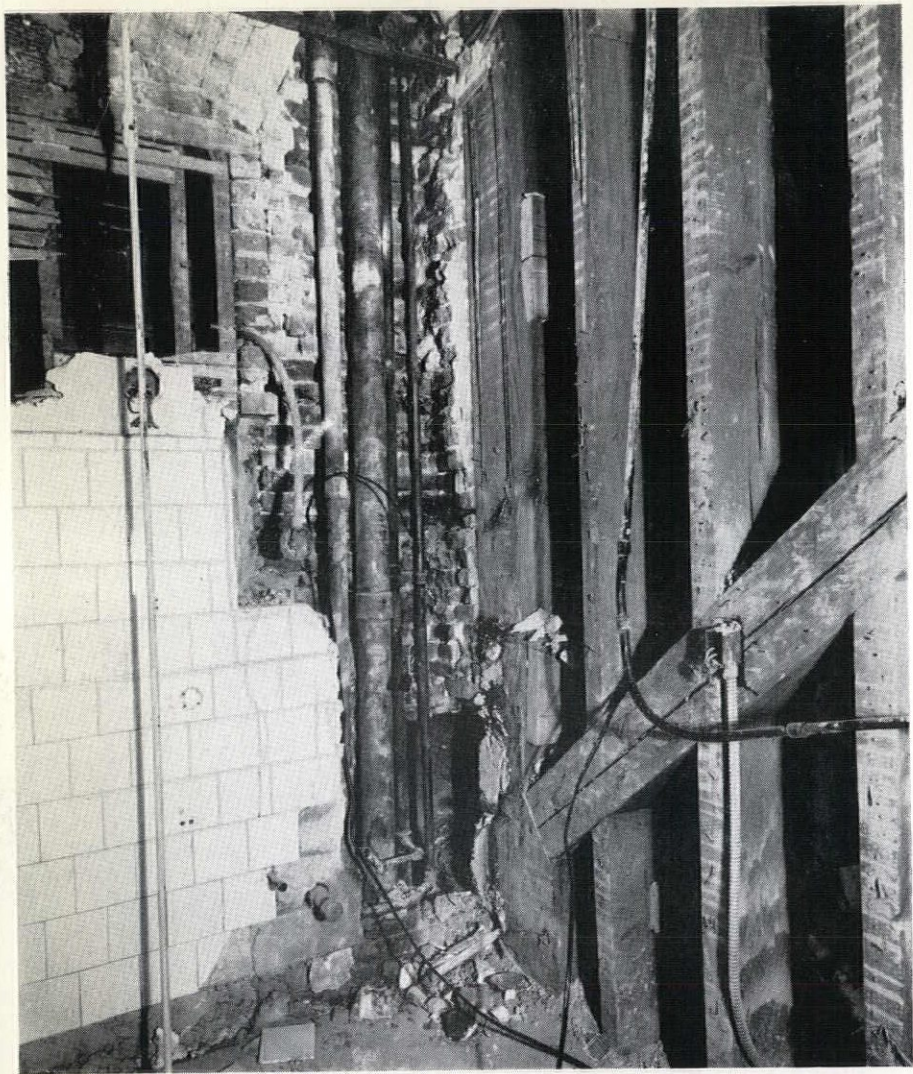
I believe this was a decision that found general favor—for as the



Conduits under the second floor of center hall. No wonder the floor squeaked.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
*Photograph by Abbie Rowe*

*Journal  
The AIA*



THE WHITE HOUSE  
*Photograph by Abbie Rowe*

Note previous cutting of brick wall in lower center. On this support was the 90-ton thrust of a roof truss.

New York *Herald Tribune* commented editorially: "The Commission members have done well. Heaven alone could have offered safe refuge had they done otherwise." I could say that if in its considered judgment it had felt another alternative was best, the Commission would not have hesitated to so recommend.

Completed general plans for the reconstruction have been prepared and have been approved by the Commission after complete review by it and by its consultants, and after careful consultations with Mr. Winslow and P.B.S.

By reason of carrying down the underpinning to the new depth and excavating the interior, very valuable new space is created, suitable for mechanical equipment and the sorely needed storage space, previously lacking.

Architecturally, changes to the principal rooms will be of a minor nature. It is, of course, necessary to make minor adjustments to accommodate the new steel frame, the numerous ducts and distribution systems, but all of this has been done with the most thorough care after detailed study, and the resulting arrangements, so far as they affect the design of the rooms, will probably not be recognized by any-

one not thoroughly conversant with the problem.

Such changes in materials for the interiors will undoubtedly be considered, particularly where these changes will aid the building in withstanding the effects of its heavy traffic and use.

The living quarters on both the second and third floors will, of course, be brought up to date and be made more useful and livable for the President, his family and guests.

Corrections, so far as is possible, to provide adequate toilet rooms for functions of consequence, have been placed in a mezzanine below the ground floor in the newly created space. Service elevators to properly service the building are planned. Stairways have been redesigned to conform to modern fire exit requirements.

The main stairs have been somewhat modified, to enter from the main lobby so as to better serve official functions.

It is planned to thoroughly air-condition the building and to provide it with uptodate communications and public address systems.

As soon as the major decision had been reached, preparations were made for the awarding of a contract for construction. The

fact that the Commission was preparing to consider bidders was publicly advertised and forms sent to those interested to fill out, setting forth their organizational make-up, financial statement and other qualifications for consideration as bidders. After the returns were received and screened, first by P.B.A. and then by the Commission, fifteen of these were considered to meet the proper qualifications and these were asked to submit a figure on a fee basis. The form submitted to these contractors was unusual for a fee contract, as it included in the fee not only profit and overhead, but most job management personnel, all small tools and all equipment, leaving virtually only "on-job" expenditures and sub-contracts (which must be bid on firm basis) as costs. The only exception on non-firm sub-contract was the underpinning, which by law was permitted to be cost-plus-a-fixed-fee.

These bids were received, publicly opened and read, the low bidder being John McShain Company of Philadelphia with a low fee bid of \$100,000.

Bids were reviewed by the Commission, and the Commissioner of Public Buildings, acting as contracting officer for the Commission,

was authorized to enter into a contract with McShain Company for the construction work.

The McShain Company has started on the work as the public now knows and the "moles" have started down with the first construction to get footing and frame for shoring the most bothersome roof truss; and five underpinning pits are going down.

One of the problems which is of major consequence in the rehabilitation work is the disposal of materials from the building as it is rebuilt. This problem was recognized by the President and by Congress, as it put the responsibility on the Commission for disposing of the materials without "commercial exploitation." A great many proposals have been made as to the disposition, but all of them involve very complicated procedures. Much consideration has been given to all of these proposals, but the Commission has not as yet arrived at a completely satisfactory solution. In the meantime, the material as it is removed, is being stored on government property pending decision as to its final disposition.

In conclusion, I might add a personal view. *Any* building, at best, is an inflexible thing, and

in our rapidly developing country, the inflexibility of buildings and their lack of adaptation to changing function develops more quickly than elsewhere; and perhaps this also applies to The White House and its function.

It is now almost fifty years since its principal rehabilitation—and regardless of what use to which the building is put (as has been suggested by some, made an historic monument for use only on State occasions and for housing distinguished guests—with a new residence for the President) this work

had to be done. Perhaps it was due, but very fortunately it was caught in time before some unfortunate accident occurred.

The Executive Offices still continue in the “temporary” quarters provided fifty years ago, so that the President and his family could have the second-floor living quarters to themselves.

I believe now, that, with some of the most bothersome hurdles behind, the work should proceed with dispatch and conclude within the stipulated contract time of 660 days.



## Honors

ELIEL SAARINEN, F.A.I.A., our Institute Gold Medalist of 1946, is to receive the 1950 Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects. The presentation is scheduled for April 4 in London. This is the 100th time the award has been made, and the fifth time it has come to the United States.

LEOPOLD ARNAUD, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at Columbia University, has been appointed acting director of the Casa Italiana,

university center for advanced instruction and research in the field of Italian culture, language and history.

ALFRED SHAW, F.A.I.A. of Chicago has been appointed a director of Research Foundation, the community group subsidizing production and distribution of the anti-tuberculosis vaccine BCG. Twenty-four nations are cooperating to provide tuberculin tests for fifty million youngsters in Europe.

HARVEY WILEY CORBETT, F.A.I.A., has been elected president of the Avenue of the Americas Association, Inc.—the organization undertaking the proper growth and beautiful development of what was formerly called Sixth Avenue in New York City.

In connection with the New York Chapter's award of its Medal of Honor to Ralph Walker—announced briefly in the March JOURNAL—The Jury of Award presented the following citation:

RALPH WALKER, architect, who has served the public and his profession well.

To his competence as a designer, the New York Telephone Building, The Bell Telephone Labora-

tories, the Irving Trust Building, the Library at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology bear witness. For his community spirit in the fields of city planning and large-scale housing, the public is indebted. Through his untiring work in architectural education, public relations and the exchange of ideas between architects of all countries, he has advanced the whole profession. As President of The American Institute of Architects he is showing a devotion to its interests that may never be excelled. In appreciation, The New York Chapter of The American Institute of Architects awards to Mr. Walker its Medal of Honor for 1950.

EDWARD A. WEHR, veteran builder with a degree in architecture, has been elected an Honorary Member of the Pittsburgh Chapter, A.I.A.

Getting started in architecture  
near the turn of the century

## I Remember McKim, Mead & White

*By Goldwin Goldsmith, F.A.I.A.*

SIXTY YEARS AGO as a boy of seventeen with a desire to become an architect, and with an abysmal ignorance of what it took, I was simple enough to approach Mr. William R. Mead with a letter of introduction. Of course I failed to gain anything more than

an interview, but the sympathetic way in which I was turned down made me more determined to get into the office of McKim, Mead & White. I did have sense enough to strike for the top.

A year later, while employed as a stenographer, I learned that there



was a similar position open in the office of my choice and again I went to see Mr. Mead. It was at noon on a Saturday and I was fortunate enough to find him still there.

On telling him my errand he told me I was too young. (I did not look even my eighteen years.) I explained that I had had two years' experience. Then he said the position was under the office manager and specification writer who was rather cranky. To this I replied that I was then working for a crank who put stickers on his letters asking the post office not to let the letters travel on Sunday.

At that Mr. Mead smiled—he had a most attractive smile—and made one more protest. He would not want me to give up my present position, as I might fail to satisfy the manager. I replied, all in one breath, that I was about to start my vacation, I would be willing to work two weeks without pay, and the employment office said to tell him that I was the last man they could send him at the salary of twelve dollars a week.

He smiled again at my use of the word "man" and gave in. I was to be at the office at 8:30 Monday morning. The office was then at 59 Broadway. I was there before the elevator began running.

The manager was a hard taskmaster. Before I had been there three days he would dictate specifications from nine to twelve and from one to five. Then he would leave, saying tersely: "Six copies by tomorrow morning." He got them. I had an early morning nap on an old couch in a back room.

Six months later, when I was hanging over a drafting-table while the manager was at lunch, I made a hesitant suggestion to the draftsman, adding: "I think that ought to work." Mr. Mead's voice from behind me said: "I think so, too."

This was my opportunity. I asked him if he didn't think that entitled me to a chance in the drafting-room. The result was a position as a sort of boy-of-all-work of no real importance, and a one-third cut in salary. At that I was not worth one-half of what I was paid.

About that time Mr. White had a stenographer working from five o'clock to seven, writing much of his private correspondence. Shortly after my change in status he sent for me and asked me to take over the evening work. Despite his excitable manner in the office, I had realized that underneath he was really very fair and considerate. Nevertheless I felt doubtful of my

ability to satisfy him. I said that if his present stenographer, a court reporter, could not do his work I was sure I couldn't.

He snapped: "Yes, you can. He's afraid of me. You're not." Then we agreed that if I failed to suit it would not affect my connection with the drafting-room.

So began a most interesting experience for a boy of eighteen. Mr. White, three rooms away from my cubby hole, would suddenly shout: "Dear Gus," and proceed to dictate as he tramped noisily through the long drafting-room and around a corner to my door, generally finishing as he reached me.

"Got that?" he would bark. My procedure was to follow down the page of my notebook until I could begin to distinguish words and then get what I could. My reply to his question was: Not the first part, Mr. White," and he would repeat until I could say I had the rest.

Before long, as he wanted to get away for his dinner or an appointment, he had me practise his "S. W." signature that looked like a butterfly. After that he would leave, telling me to finish the letters, sign and mail them. I signed many a letter to "Gus" St. Gaudens, "Bob" Goelet and others of his cronies. I was cautious

enough to put a distinguishing but not easily observable mark on the letters I signed. But I never had any difficulty working for Mr. White, and his excited explosions were never directed at me.

When Madison Square Garden was about finished and the opening show was in rehearsal, Mr. White telephoned me to have a typewriter sent up to Mr. Daniel Chester French's studio in the tower and to report to him at the Garden prepared to work. For two weeks I was there with him. Usually he arrived around ten or eleven o'clock in the morning and remained until midnight, dashing out for something to eat. I followed his long stride about the building, taking down notes or letters and typing them when he went to lunch or dinner or often after he left. My own meals were sketchy and infrequent.

Thirty years later, when Mr. French came to the University of Kansas to arrange for a memorial statue, he was good enough to say he remembered the boy who worked in his tower room. Perhaps so. He was always courteous that way.

Mr. Mead was quiet and placid, even under stress, and businesslike yet genial. Once, when Mr. White

was away, Mr. Mead took me with him when he made a final inspection of the Plaza Hotel. This experience was as different from the one at the Garden as up from down. Where Mr. White dashed from one place to another about the building, Mr. Mead made a systematic and careful survey of the hotel from top to bottom, the owner's representative accompanying us and pointing out matters he thought required attention. When the survey was over it was my task to transcribe the notes I had taken. Mr. Mead made no criticism of the results. If I made any errors, and I must have, he corrected them himself. He was that way.

One Saturday noon Mr. McKim asked me to meet him at Grand Central Station at one o'clock, prepared to accompany him to Boston. I dashed up town to my room for a traveling bag. At the station I was met by an office boy who came to change the reservations to the three-o'clock train and to inform me of the change in time. I was glad of this opportunity to get some lunch. At three o'clock the same boy changed the reservations to the five-o'clock train and warned me to be on time as Mr. McKim would be in a hurry.

As the gateman announced the departure of the five-o'clock train, gave a warning "All Aboard!" and started to close the gate, Mr. McKim strolled into and across the waiting-room. I jumped into the way of the closing gate, Mr. McKim got through and we had to run a bit to board the train. As we entered his drawing room he turned to me and said: "Goldsmith, never procrastinate." I have never forgotten the twinkle in his eyes as he said it. And I think I have lost more time being on time than any other way. The procrastinators have seen to that.

That evening after dinner, my first experience in a diner, he dictated letters and notes until he was ready to turn in. At the Boston office I typed until noon and had finished. Mr. McKim asked the office manager (of the Boston office) to take me to lunch and then show me through the Public Library, then under construction.

Later, when Mr. McKim and I were crossing the Common on the way to an afternoon train, an office boy caught up with us and gave Mr. McKim a telegram. He stopped, read it and said: "Wells has died. We cannot replace him with any two men in New York. I must stay over for the funeral."

And so I returned to New York alone.

That summer, after a siege with typhoid, I realized that the road to architecture, for me at any rate, was not through an office. After two years in "prep" school I entered Columbia University. Later, one summer, when I was again in the office, Mr. White came in, greeted me and asked if I had come back to stay. He wanted me to be his private secretary. I told him I had two years to go before I could get my degree and said: "You wouldn't want me to give that up?"

"Hell, no," he said, "but I wish you would."

Mr. Mead was good enough to promise me a position when I had been graduated. On my return

from a year in Europe I went hopefully to see him. I was married and needed a job. It was in the depression of 1897. Mr. Mead greeted me with: "I guess I know what you want, Goldsmith." I said I hoped he did. He reached for a paper with a list of names and said: "Last week I let twenty men go. I am letting twenty more go this week. I can make it twenty-one."

A week later I met him near the office at Fifth Avenue and Twenty-first Street and he asked me if I was working and where. I said: "In the building next door. The firm is Van Vleck & Goldsmith."

These were a few of my early experiences with three of the finest and most kindly men I have ever known.

## Calendar

*April 10-16:* VII Pan American Congress of Architects, Havana, Cuba.

*April 14, 15:* The Ann Arbor Conference on The Theater, sponsored by the College of Architecture and Design, University of Michigan.

*April 22-29:* Historic Garden Week in Virginia, under the auspices of The Garden Club of Virginia.

*May 8-9:* Annual Meeting of the Association of Collegiate

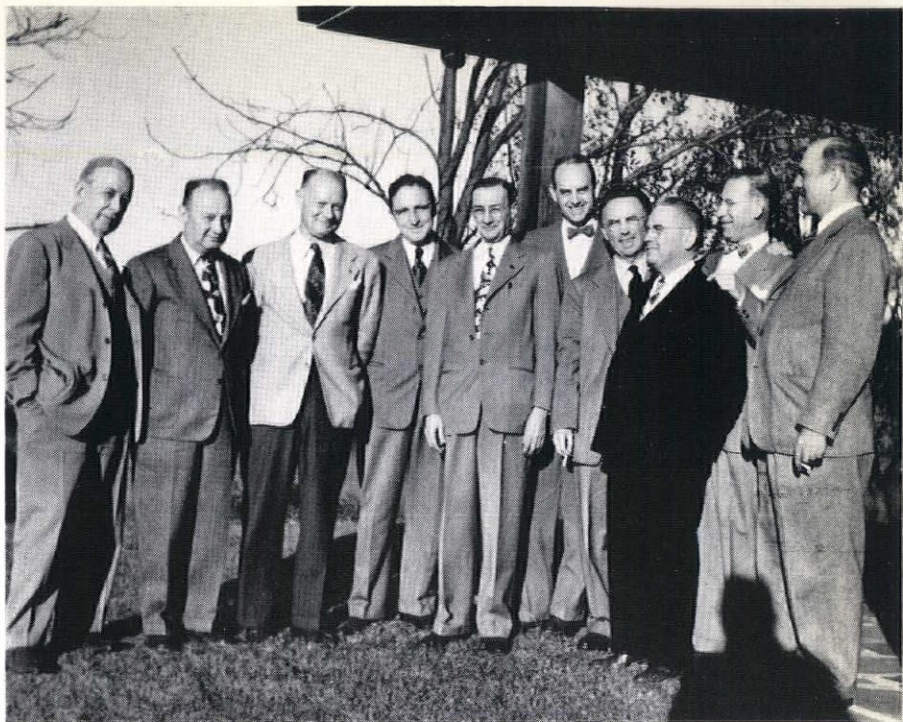
Schools of Architecture, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D. C.

*May 9-10:* Annual Spring Meeting of The Producer's Council, Washington, D. C.

*May 10-13:* Eighty-second Convention of The American Institute of Architects, Washington, D. C.

*June 7-10:* Annual Conference of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Bristol, England.

*November 2-4:* Annual Convention of the N. Y. State Association of Architects, Syracuse, N. Y.



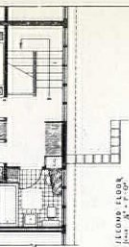
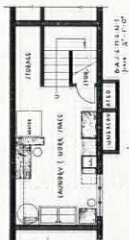
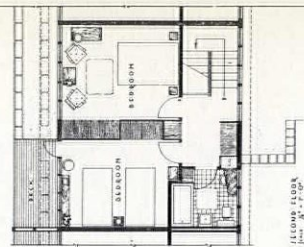
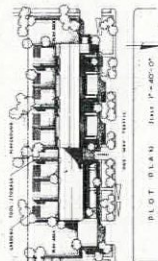
MICHIGAN MEN VISIT THE NEW HOME OF ROGER ALLEN  
GRAND RAPIDS, OCTOBER 12, 1949

*Photograph by Robert Frantz*

Left to right: Roger Allen, C. B. McGrew, L. M. Bauer,  
A. J. Zimmermann, T. C. Hughes, A. N. Langius, A. B.  
Dow, J. C. Thornton, J. W. Leinweber, C. C. F. Kressbach.



## WOOD GARDEN APARTMENT COMPETITION



TYPICAL TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT

WEST ELEVATION—PLAN N° 107  
SOUTH ELEVATION—PLAN N° 108

# The Architect's Duties and Responsibilities

*By Slocum Kingsbury*

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON HOSPITALIZATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH, A.I.A.

A paper, slightly abridged, read to the New England Regional Seminar, Boston, Dec. 2, 1949

**M**Y FIRST THOUGHT when the subject of this paper was proposed to me was that the duties and responsibilities of an architect designing a hospital were just the same as in designing any other building. I still think this is true but, as an answer, I'm afraid it is too simple. It needs elaboration.

In the beginning a building was only walls and a roof, with an opening for entrance. Its design caused few headaches in the prehistoric drafting-rooms. After a time however certain things were added, such as ornament, columns and pediments, more openings, the forerunner of what we now call windows. Still later in Rome and elsewhere plumbing came into being, water pipes and drains for the bathers. It's amazing how much has been added to the architect's difficulties by this idea of bathing and performing certain other functions indoors. Following this troublesome innovation, refinements appeared very slowly except in the architecture itself, but at the beginning of the industrial age

they came on with a rush. First, central heating and different methods of lighting and, finally, elevators, air conditioning, radiant heat and the like. Sometimes we architects may wish our lives hadn't been made so complicated. Modern buildings seem often to be built merely to house the machinery that goes into them.

And along with these complications has now come the intricate planning of our day. Steel and concrete have made it possible to do what we've never been able to do before. Furthermore as life becomes more complex, our buildings become a reflection of it. More and more, the architect must call on specialists to help him, engineers of all descriptions, experts on a variety of subjects, consultants in many fields. Here we come back to where we began. What are the architect's responsibilities? He cannot know everything about the multitude of things that go to make up a complicated modern building. Yet his principal function has remained through the

years the same, whether we call him Architect or Master Builder or something else. All of the complexities must be welded by him into the final plans for the building. He is the hub of the wheel on which the whole planning operation turns. That is architecture as it was in the past and as we know it today. That is the architect's over-all responsibility. Why? Because architects are important people? Because they look well in dark blue shirts and yellow wool ties? We keep hearing it rumored about that this is the reason but it really isn't. It's because they are trained to be the hub of the wheel, and if anyone else is to be the hub, call him what you will, he would have to have the same training. Otherwise the whole process of designing our buildings would fall apart. That's what's important; the kind of architecture we do, not just the handful of architects that do it.

Before I give you my idea of what the architect's responsibilities are in detail, let me touch on a few more generalities. I think it fair to say that of all modern buildings the hospital is the most complicated. Modern factories are, too, but a factory houses only machines—once it is set up it func-

tions almost automatically. There is nothing automatic in the function of dealing with the human machine, which is what occurs in a hospital. Each human machine is completely different, for the parts of one are never exactly like the parts of another. And there is still a great mystery as to what makes them go, how they get out of order and why they stop.

I want to say something which may sound unorthodox. I think we talk too much about designing our hospitals for the patient. Don't misunderstand me, the patient is our ultimate goal. He goes to a hospital to be taken care of and to be made comfortable, but the real occupants of a hospital are the doctors, the nurses and the employees. Unless we design our hospitals for them, how can we design them for the patient? Sunlight, a pleasant view, good color in his room, all these are helpful to anyone who is ill, but without the care that the people in the hospital give him, he would be better off at home. Too little thought has been given to those who spend so much of their lives within a hospital's walls, too little importance has been attached to what they do and how they occupy the hours they are there. If you make a central



sterilizing room an unpleasant place to work in, if you put it in the basement as is sometimes done, you are not giving the people who work there a square deal. The responsibility for the patients rests with them, the responsibility for their being able to work efficiently is with you.

I've been trying to put off a more detailed description of the architect's responsibilities—of just how he carries out this over-all responsibility he must assume. It seems to me a little presumptuous to try to tell a lot of architects this. You all know what to do. Yet, there are one or two steps in designing a hospital that are different and which we should perhaps discuss.

First of all, there is this question of preparing the program of hospital needs which you've just heard about. Some people believe the architect should do this or at least be in on the making of it. Personally I don't. First of all, it's difficult for an architect to get paid for it—which he should be. Secondly, he has today all he can do to be a good hospital designer without spreading himself too thin. And a last reason for architects not making this program is that they are seldom asked to—almost

always a hospital job comes to an architect with all the decisions as to number of beds, type of facilities, etc. made. But don't ask me to debate this question. You'll just have to take it or leave it, so far as I'm concerned.

What is important of course, and quite the architect's job, is the writing of the program for the building itself. No matter who assists with this, no matter who advises, the architect must be the one to guide it and see that it gets done. After all, it is from this program that the drawings are made, and he and no one else is responsible for them, and if he doesn't have complete charge of preparing this part of the program, how can he do a proper job with the drawings? This should hardly be open to argument, but since it has been, I want to emphasize it.

Once you have your program, you can proceed pretty much as in any other project. But at this point we must understand that the architect's duty and responsibility is much greater than on the usual job. Everything that goes into a hospital—the laundry, the kitchen, the heating plant, the wiring system, all those things which you find in other buildings, all of them must be thought of as hospital kitchens,

hospital heating plants, etc. A hospital kitchen isn't like any other kitchen, for you're feeding from it not a group of people concentrated in one place but people in separate rooms on different floors of a building. A hospital heating plant is not just like any other heating plant, for not only must it supply a variety of pressures but it must be so planned that in case one boiler breaks down it can keep the hospital going even in the most severe weather.

This same need for guidance carries over into the supervision of the construction, for supervising a hospital is a different game from any other kind. Few mechanics and contractors are familiar enough with hospital design to proceed without a lot of help. The drawings can't show everything, and the decisions which are necessary must be made by either yourself or a member of your staff familiar with hospital planning.

I have purposely left to the last our most difficult problem—the question of equipment. Is the architect meeting his responsibility if he merely puts in what the equipment manufacturers recommend and the hospital staff asks for? I'm sure you'll agree he is not. Let

me say this. We have books written on the subject. We have standard plans for rooms. We have notes copied down from seminars we've attended, and all kinds of lists made up by experts. Lastly, we have the previous hospitals we've designed. All this is helpful but there is one thing that is better—observation. And when you go to a hospital to observe, let me suggest that you don't bother too much about how it is planned; try to see what's going on.

And this idea of observing—we ought to apply it to everything; the size of rooms, the location of rooms and departments. What do people do in them and between them? Go and find out. We are fed today with so many books and pamphlets, so many standard plans, we're beginning to forget our real responsibility—designing. That's what architecture is—not copying some predigested diagrams drawn on a blackboard or printed in a magazine. Forgive me if I seem to be emphasizing what we all know to be true; it just needs to be repeated.

It sometimes baffles me why any architect wants to design a hospital. Yet all of us who have know why. We've all had pretty

much the same experience. You sweat and worry over the damn job. You design it and redesign it and then perhaps one evening you stay down at the office. Everyone's gone and the only light in the drafting-room is on the table where you're turning over the drawings. You have a melancholy feeling that perhaps you should begin all over again once more. You remember when you started out how your first *parti* was going to work so beautifully with that flow chart the fellow lectured on at the hospital conference. The one with all the pretty red arrows on it. What the devil happened to it anyway?

You look out the window at the lights coming on in the city. You ought to go home. You ought to read a good book or listen to your South Pacific records. You ought to be thinking perhaps of Mary Martin and a South Pacific isle. But you know what would happen if you tried to go home. The job would go with you. And you've got to get it finished—out for bids. It should be being built. People can't wait to be sick.

You turn over a drawing, and your finger moves down a corridor into an operating room. In this room one day some poor devil's

life may be saved. You know the scene. A group of figures in white around a table under a bright penetrating light. There is little sound except for a sharp voice giving orders—not always very politely. A slender piece of steel touches a vital organ—guided only by an ordinary human hand. A miracle is about to be performed. Twenty years ago, no one believed it could be done. Everyone in that room has his or her responsibility. Stopping the flow of blood, watching the patient's breathing, handing up the proper instrument at the right time, holding a basin of water. You won't be there, but you'll be sharing the responsibility. Perhaps it's not the best-designed room in the world but it's pretty good.

I've been told surgeons can't afford to be sentimental. Architects fortunately are allowed to be. So many of the things vital to the human race happen in a modern hospital. Men die there and others are born. They suffer and their suffering is relieved. The damage to their bodies is so often repaired in the most amazing fashion. It's not just an ordinary building. Sitting there in your drafting-room, feeling a little frustrated, just a

little baffled by the whole thing, it still seems worthwhile. You're glad you've learned what you have

—that you have the know-how to make it, in the end, a pretty good plant.

## Preserving Historical Church Buildings

*By Milton L. Grigg*

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS,  
VIRGINIA CHAPTER, A.I.A.

An address, slightly abridged, made before a joint meeting of the Church Architectural Guild of America and the North American Conference on Church Architecture, held in Columbus, Ohio, Jan. 21, 22, 1950.

I WOULD have you think with me in the next few minutes of our churches, their worth to us, the place they fill in our society, and more particularly of those intangible elements which, related to our churches, are of a nonspiritual but psychological nature.

In the beginning let me say that this is not to be a discussion on the traditional versus the contemporary approach to ecclesiastical design. I think that this is adequately taken care of in the popular press, and a group such as this is of such discrimination as to be aware of the virtues of either approach, and to follow conscientiously that school of thought which most adequately serves the needs of a particular program, location, cultural background or environment.

An ill-disguised Quonset hut

may be quite adaptable to the extremely devout as a place to find God; but as yet no one has written a notable ballad on the "Corrugated Shelter in the Wildwood," nor is it likely that in years to come we will recall "how dear to the thoughts of my childhood is the little rust-brown spacial concept in the dale." But through the years that song on which it would be a parody has revealed man's affection for tens of thousands of hallowed memories. Therefore I speak only to arouse an appreciation and a challenge for the preservation of those solutions to problems of other days and those notable works of other designers which have stood the test of time, and by their very success have stimulated and housed ever-expanding congregations, now causing these edifices to be inade-

quate. "Our duty is to preserve what the past has had to say for itself, and to say for ourselves what shall be true for the future."

Too often the physical inadequacy of a certain plant is considered to be justification for its thoughtless demolition. Protection of our cultural inheritance requires vigilance, for there is an American characteristic to "clear the way for progress" by the destruction of really magnificent cultural contributions of our past. We build impermanently and likewise make broad alterations or obliterations from time to time. Those things we remove may later prove to be invaluable as civic, national or spiritual assets.

Their values cannot be established in the idiom of the counting-house. They are intangible! They give us a feeling of continuity with the past; recall wholesome traditions, faith in and with our ancestry and provide visual symbols to join in our minds our cultural, social and religious inheritance with the present and future.

Now I speak of their intangible value, and here I think would be the time for our review as churchmen and as architects of the function of a church building.

The architect's problems in

church design are increasingly complex, and I hope that in our preoccupation with the economical and the adequate solution to the multitude of requirements inherent in a program today that, among other things, we do not overlook the fact that we are creators of mood; for no matter in what school of design we find our expression, this omnipresent requirement remains for solution. It is true that we may find God where we seek Him. But let us be realistic (even at the risk of seeming irreverent, or at least disrespectful of the provocative abilities of our clergy!) How much easier it is to find God in surroundings congenial to quiet thought and spiritual susceptibility! An organ prelude is not a musical exhibition. Its function is to create mood. Soft lighting and quiet color are resorted to to create mood, and in fact, we find the church throughout the ages, subconsciously in its early life but now deliberately and after great study, resorting to every psychic trick to enhance and create a responsive and susceptible frame of mind and openness of spirit as a promotion toward religious experience. Indeed, mood and its creation have been the guiding criteria in church design throughout the

history of its architectural development. Most of us here, in our zeal for the creation of mood, have resorted to arrangements, forms and techniques, the composite results of which are of questionable value as self-justifying examples of a vital architectural tradition. But in our satisfaction of the criteria of psychological conditioning of our congregations perhaps they are not too bad, and we hope that sensitive and indulgent future generations will again capture a realization of this intangible function of a place of worship and be more charitable in their evaluation of our efforts than many of our contemporaries are today.

So much for mood *synthetically* created; for why should we resort to our steel-framed Gothic or our air-conditioned Georgian to satisfy by false means the cravings for the Gothic, or the Georgian, or the Mission, or any other historic style unless our thinking is projected, for identification, against the background of what Wordsworth called "flashes upon that inward eye," those more compulsive associations of the human heart? This background defies verbal definition. But perhaps you can identify it for yourselves by recalling Hadrian at Athens, the humble

pilgrim at Rome, the Templars at the Tomb, or great-grandmother's needlepoint on the wall of a Lustron house. The cynic will define this only as a sentiment. The sensitive will not attempt to define it but will be satisfied to recognize it as a legitimate tool in our hands. A tool of great potential, for whatever this mystical force may be, certainly it can produce spiritual results not only in adaptability of mind to the surroundings in our church structures, but in a broader sense on our community life and in the very social and moral fibers of the community and the nation. How well this was phrased by Justice Samuel Null when he wrote:

"Whatever may be said for the concept that the old must yield to the new, I think there is still room for values which, while they may fail to impress in a material sense, nevertheless make for a fuller national and community life. A people indifferent to the landmarks and monuments of its past will not long retain its capacity to achieve an honored future."

Many of you may feel that you come from regions where the architectural heritage is lacking in these qualities. To you this paper on preservation has little relevance other than, I hope, to recall for

you some of the values that others have unconsciously created in the past, and that you with conscientious effort and true purpose can create in this age of challenge. To you I say that from your efforts in this day, through your contribution to a long-unbroken thread of survival and development characteristic of the history of the Christian Church, you too may prove to be the author of a vital tradition which will be provocative of a worthwhile sentiment.

To retain these intangibles which we have been evaluating we must realize that preserving or restoring an old church, or making necessary additions to one, is entirely different from designing a new structure. These procedures require paradoxical qualities, and contrasting approach from the architect, not inventive imagination but a well-organized knowledge of historical and liturgical tradition; not exhibitionistic originality but subordination of self-expression.

Each problem in this field is unique, therefore we must generalize as to approach. A very sound guide is furnished by the recommendations of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments.

1. No final decision should be taken as to a course of action before reasonable efforts to exhaust the archeological and documentary evidence as to the form and successive transformations of the monument.

2. Complete record of such evidence, by drawings, notes and transcripts should be kept, and in no case should evidence offered by the monument itself be destroyed or covered up before it has been fully recorded.

3. It is well to bear in mind the saying: "Better preserve than repair, better repair than restore, better restore than construct."

4. It is ordinarily better to retain genuine old work of several periods, rather than arbitrarily to "restore" the whole, by new work, to its aspect at a single period.

5. This applies even to work of periods later than those now admired, provided their work represents a genuine creative effort.

6. In no case should our own artistic preferences or prejudices lead us to modify, on esthetic grounds, work of a bygone period representing other artistic tastes. Truth is not only stranger than fiction, but more varied and more interesting, as well as more honest.

7. Where missing features are to be replaced without sufficient evidence as to their own original form, due regard should be paid to the factors of period and region in other surviving examples of the same time and locality.

8. Every reasonable additional

care and expense are justified to approximate in new work the materials, methods and quality of old construction, but new work should not be artificially "antiqued" by theatrical means.

9. Work on the preservation and restoration of old buildings requires a slower pace than would be expected in new construction."

Graphic preservation is too often the last resort and an expedient to the only form of preservation feasible against the hazards of urban transformation, changing requirements of use, or fire, or indifference. Since 1863 when R. Clipston Sturgis made measured drawings of the John Hancock House, until now when the HABS serves as a depository for the volunteer efforts of architects, historians and interested amateurs, a gratifying wealth of record of our earlier culture has been preserved. It is possible that this thesis in behalf of structural preservation may not be relevant to your current challenge, in which eventuality architects should be mindful of future cultural interests and, before demolition, should conscientiously record data on the structure and file with a local historical society, library or with the HABS.

Within the vision of one generation the taste of another cannot be

predicted. In 1841 in a student competition, a church problem, at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts the use of the Gothic style was expressly prohibited; but in 1941 Goodhue's adaptations of this style were models for nearly all of us. In 1797 Dr. William Thornton designed and built a notable church in Washington; late in the last century a dilettante of the East-lake persuasion, aided by an aggressive pebble-dash applicator, made the little gem "up to date"; the congregation now seeks \$75,000 to recapture its former charm. What waste! How futile! For we cannot recreate an art form from the past—as Ruskin said, the materials must return to the soil and be wrung from it again by the same force, spirit and circumstances which gave them their original form. Thus we must evaluate our monuments and, in a professional sense, our responsibility, for our trusteeship of these cultural inheritances.

In some parts of our world today creative effort is dominated by the police state, where an all-consuming nationalism extends its restrictive compulsion on the output of writer, musician, artist and architect alike. Here we have not, nor do we want, such a na-



tionalistic approach. Our taste is not dictated. We may be eclectic or original. One may choose between Palladio or Le Corbusier and we recognize this right to choose—even though we may question the choice. But we owe it to all schools of taste to provide standards or criteria on which an

informed judgment can be founded. Thus we should preserve those evidences of our past creative effort as well as in our own time build tomorrow's precedents, for in due humility let us ask ourselves, who of us today has the stature to deprive the future of the lessons of the past?

## The Michigan Case

Sheill *vs.* Howard

**P**ROGRESS REPORT No. 1. Considerable publicity has been given to this suit on a contract by Gordon Sheill, A.I.A., against Reginald Howard, heard in the Circuit Court for the County of Sanilac, Michigan. It is desirable that the membership understand the meaning and effect of this suit, which is in its preliminary stages.

The contract was prepared by Mr. Sheill on the Standard Owner-Architect Agreement Form. It involved the usual architectural services plus some landscaping. A considerable payment was made on account of the contract, disagreements resulted, and the architect sued the owner for the stated balance under the contract.

Prior to answering the complaint, the defendant-owner moved

to dismiss the complaint on the ground that suit on the contract could not be maintained since, allegedly, by its terms the contract was illegal, having been prepared by an architect and containing provision for preparation by the architect of contracts between the owner and the contractor, the said architect not being licensed to practice law, and that the use of such a contract and more particularly the undertaking in the contract to draft forms of proposals and contracts by the architect constituted and undertook the illegal practice of law.

The portion of the Owner-Architect Agreement Form relied upon by the defendant for this motion, reads:

"1. The Architect's Services.—

The Architect's professional services consist of the necessary conferences, the preparation of preliminary studies, working drawings, specifications, large scale and full size detail drawings; the drafting of forms of proposals and contracts; the issuance of certificates of payment and the keeping of accounts, the general administration of the business and supervision of the work."

The Court, on this motion, made an order January 7, 1950, reading, in part, as follows:

"A motion having been filed in this Court to dismiss the plaintiff's declaration based upon a certain contract between the plaintiff and the defendant, wherein the plaintiff contracted to 'the drafting of forms of proposals and contracts', and, it being and appearing to this Court that the plaintiff is not a licensed attorney, and that he did draw the contract between the defendant and the contractor, and that the drawing of contracts is the practice of law, and that such part of the contract between the plaintiff and defendant is therefore illegal, the entire contract is therefore void.

It further appearing to this Court that due notice was given to the attorney for the plaintiff, and no person appeared in behalf of the plaintiff, the motion was heard in open Court. And, after reading the pleadings and listening to the argument of the attorney for the defendant, from which plead-

ings and argument it appears to this Court that the motion of the defendant is well-founded, and, on motion of Leonard J. Patterson, attorney for the defendant:

It is hereby ORDERED that Count I of the plaintiff's declaration be dismissed for the reason that it is based upon a written contract between the plaintiff and the defendant wherein the plaintiff agrees to do certain work which constitutes the practice of law, and since the plaintiff is not an attorney licensed to practice law in Michigan, such work is illegal and the contract is void."

After this order The Institute was notified of the status of the case by Mr. Russell Knister, attorney for Mr. Sheill. Through Messrs. Ditchy, Black and Cellarius, Counsel in Detroit, Mr. Albert Stern, was retained to assist Mr. Knister and to protect the interests of The Institute in this attack on the Standard Documents.

Mr. Stern then proceeded to re-argue the motion and submitted a brief to the Circuit Court, showing that any architect using the Standard Documents (which were prepared under legal advice) is not engaged in the practice of law as a regular activity, but is participating in fixing the relations of the owner and contractor as a technician.

At this writing no decision on

this reargument has been handed down by the Court, which, it is trusted, will at least remand the matter for a trial on the merits.

The membership will be promptly notified of such decision and its bearing on the Standard Documents, as soon as received.

## News from the Educational Field

YALE UNIVERSITY'S Department of Architecture announces a new program in city planning, leading to the degree of Master of City Planning. Beginning next September, the course will require two years of study. It will be on a graduate level and will be open to a limited number of architects, landscape architects, civil engineers and others who already hold a degree in a related field. Christopher Tunnard, Associate Professor of City Planning, will be Director of Planning Studies in the program.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S College of Architecture and Design announces that the George G. Booth Traveling Fellowship in Architecture will be offered again

this year. There will be no formal competition in design, but upon request applicants will be issued an application form to be completed and returned not later than May 15, 1950. This Competition is open to all graduates of the school who have not reached their thirtieth birthday on the date mentioned above. Prospective candidates should write at once to the office of the College of Architecture and Design, Ann Arbor, Mich.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON'S School of Architecture and Allied Arts has been notified that full accreditation has been given to its curriculum in landscape architecture by the American Society of Landscape Architects.

## Boutet de Monvel Visits the U. S. A.

A REPORT comes from Noel Boutet de Monvel covering his travels through the United States as 1949 Delano and Aldrich Fellow. His visit here was completely upset near its end by the

death of his uncle, Bernard Boutet de Monvel, in the crash at the Azores, and by the death of his wife's mother. Nevertheless the two young people managed to see an astonishing lot of this country.

A few sentences from his report are characteristic of the whole:

NEW YORK—We arrived in New York just before the sunset. The skyscrapers were very much coloured and hardly drawn, and we found this view of Manhattan from the river as wonderful as an Italian landscape painted by the *douanier* Rousseau. We went and see the City Hall, New York Stock Exchange, Pennsylvania Station, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Bellevue Hospital, Chrysler building, and also the ferryboat at Battery Park, and the view in night from Brooklyn Bridge. We soon used to flirt with the squirrels of Central Park and to look at the shops of the 5th avenue, at the skating of Rockefeller Center, and to go to bed very late.

BOSTON—We appreciated the wide avenues, the parks and the green of Boston which houses make us think of England. My friend J. P. Carlhian, teaching city planning in Harvard University showed us Cambridge where the houses do not want to face the river.

CHICAGO—We visited the university of Chicago with our friend Miss Lelah Bell who is teaching French there, and we were astonished to find a swimming-pool in a gothic cathedral. We found that the Art Institute of Chicago has the best pictures of French painters of the XIXth. and XXth. centuries. Particularly we admired the Picasso from 1898 to 1903 that

we did not know, and the Jockey by Toulouse Lautrec, etc. There was too a show of living painters: Jean Arp, Nitro, Jean Klee, that we did not understand.

TAOS—We arrived in Taos at dawn and were enthusiastic for the landscape which was the first which was quite different from every one we had ever seen. We admired as much Santa Fé. We were pleased to see dooby houses instead of wooden one and we found the neighbourhood of the city extraordinary as surrealist's visions.

GRAND CANYON—The Grand Canyon was another great spectacular feeling. We went down half of the Bright Angel Trail and looked at every thing we could from the Yavapai Observation Station. We admired the sunset painting towers and strongholds with the rocks and we surely would have liked to spend many days along the river trail, but however we had heard too much of great canyon and we had been more surprised at Boulder Dam. The highway from Kingman in the arid desert make us think we were travelling in the moon. We discovered Hoover Dam at sunset. We found that Boulder City was one of the more pleasant little city of the States, and we went back to the Dam in the morning. The lake Mead was blue, the Colorado green, the rocks yellow, and it was still one of the most impressive picture.

SAN FRANCISCO—The first thing we did in San Francisco was to go up to the top of the Mark Hopkins where we admired the sunset on the city. I went in Maiden Lane to see the Morris' shop by F. L. Wright, and I visited the garage under Union Square. We quickly liked San Francisco; we went to a rodeo at the Cow-Palace, we used to walk in Market street, to go at the fisher's wharf and in the Chinese quarter where we had dinner.

PHOENIX—In Phoenix no one could tell us where was Taliesin West. We rode in bus until Sunny-slope and there a taxi took us to the camp. We stayed all day to look at this camp so well appropriated at the desert. I found that everything in this construction was new clever and artistical. We went back to Scottsdale with two students of Mr. Wright and we were sorry only to have not seen Mr. Wright himself.

NEW ORLEANS—We enjoyed very much New Orleans, the life of Canal Street, the picturesque of Bourbon Street and Royal Street, reminding of the rue Jacob in Paris, with its antiques, the Lieutaud Gallery, the Absinthe Houses. We met Mr. Goldstein who invited us at lunch at Antoine's. Mr. Arthur Feitel who received us in the Galatoire's restaurant and showed us many patios of Bourbon street. Professor Ditchy offered us lunch at Arnaud's and made us visit the French quarter, the St.

Louis Cathedral, the little theater, Jackson place, the museums, and many old court yards. We saw the French market, the Pirate's alley, the docks along the Mississippi. We drove in Audubon Park with Miss A. Gregory, sculptor, and saw with her the post-office, the City-hall and the university of Tulane. With Mr. and Mrs. Estachy and many friends of them, we went on boat on the Mississippi, and visited the old plantation of Evergreen.

WASHINGTON—We arrived in Washington at night. Compared to the others great cities of the States, the capital does not seem very much lighted, but the monuments illuminated were in that way more impressing. We went at the top of the Washington monument where we had a very good view of all Washington. The view on the Potomac and the harbour is the most living and the one I preferred. The plan of Charles L'Enfant offers yet avenues too wide and empty and on the Mall, the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Institution, so much different seems to be here in provisional state.

We spent the last evening with the Commandant Zanger of the French Line, and his wife. And as they had been the first we met on our arrival, Mr. and Mrs. Levi were the last American friends we saw on the ship before our departure, and we left New York feeling very thankful for the Delano

and Aldrich Fellowship which had given us the opportunity to discover so many wonderful landscapes, to

know the way the American architects worked and to meet such nice and welcoming friends.

## The Editor's Asides

THE UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE the other day issued Patent No. 2,500,000—almost 160 years after issuing No. 1. And yet we are still plagued by the lack of synchronized latching and unlatching of the two-door bathroom.

GEORGE HOWE, F.A.I.A., Yale's newly appointed chairman of its Department of Architecture, told the alumni recently that "there are more good young architects being turned out in the United States than ever before . . ." President Ralph Walker's views on the subject are expressed elsewhere in this issue of the JOURNAL. Well, differences of opinion are what make horse-racing possible.

SURVEYS attempting to show color preferences for interior decoration have long been a favorite branch of indoor sport. Cool modified blues and blue-greens have been fairly regular favorites in past years. This year, according to William M. Stuart's findings, the top nine favorites are composed either of yellows, neutral

grays or grayed yellow-greens. Maybe the cold war is warming up our color appreciation.

FIFTY YEARS AGO our plumbing moved indoors and brought us the shower-bath. Perhaps another fifty years will bring us an infallible means of persuading the nozzle against radical changes of water temperature while we are at its mercy.

ONE OF THE new financing gadgets that seems not widely known is the so-called "open-end mortgage." Not all states permit its use but its wider acceptance seems likely.

In general, the plan permits the owner of a house to reborrow for modernization purposes a sum not exceeding the amount by which the mortgage has been reduced. Thus, if through regular monthly payments a \$6000 mortgage has been reduced to \$5000, the owner could borrow up to \$1000 for home improvements and repay the additional loan over the life of the mortgage.



# The WINNERS!

Hats off to M. E. FREITAG of Iowa State the Major prize winner in the \$5,000 architectural competition for the best Eight-Family Garden Type Apartment designed in Wood Frame Construction.

Thirteen professional men and 15 students led the field of 276 entrants from 34 states and Canada.

## MAJOR AWARDS

M. E. Freitag, Iowa State Student ..... First Prize \$1,500.00  
 C. E. Stade, Architect, and M. J. Dolan, Engineer,  
 Chicago, Illinois (Joint Entry) ..... Second Prize \$ 750.00  
 R. T. Morrisett, Architect, Springfield, Illinois ..... Third Prize \$ 500.00

## 10 Major Honorable Mentions, \$100.00 each:

John Combs, Designer, Los Angeles; N. N. Culin, Architect, New York City; E. A. Dwyer, Architectural Examiner, Binghamton, New York; Anthony Ferrainolo, Student, Carnegie Tech; W. H. Freitag, Designer, and R. F. Schroder, Draftsman, Cincinnati, Ohio; W. G. Jones, Designer, New York City; G. W. Wiesner, Draftsman, Frithiof Lange, and Louis Mosley, Hollywood, California; R. J. O'Donnel, Student, University of Colorado; P. S. Skiles, Student, Iowa State; C. H. Talcott, Architect, Greenwich, Connecticut.

## STUDENT AWARDS

E. A. Ingram, Jr., Texas A. & M. .... First Prize \$500.00  
 Allan B. Mitchell, Carnegie Tech ..... Second Prize \$250.00  
 Milton Holtzman, Georgia Tech ..... Third Prize \$150.00

## 7 Student Honorable Mentions, \$50.00 each:

D. L. Bonsteel, Washington State College; C. E. Estes, Texas A. & M.; Carl Gerken, University of Florida; D. E. Hunter, Carnegie Tech; D. E. Jarvis, Texas A. & M.; L. W. Klei and F. H. Strauss, Lawrence Institute of Technology; P. D. Snyder, Ohio State.

## THE JURY OF AWARDS

Mr. George W. Petticoord, Jr., A.I.A. .... Washington, D. C.  
 Mr. John M. Walton, A.I.A. .... Washington, D. C.  
 Mr. Edward R. Carr, Builder ..... Washington, D. C.  
 Professional Advisor: Mr. Lawrence M. Stevens,  
 Architect ..... Washington, D. C.

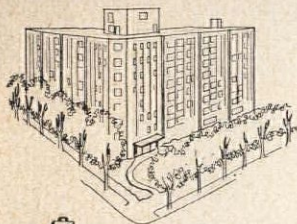
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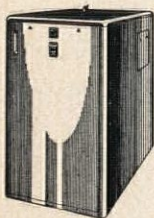
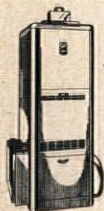


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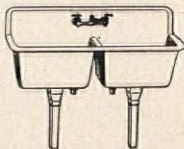
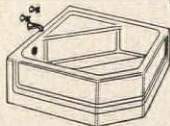
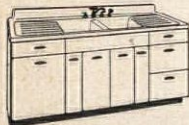
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