

Design Critique Seminar

AIA members only

Starring:

George Rockrise, FAIA
Jason Moore, AIA
Thomas R. Vreeland, Jr., AIA
John McHugh, AIA, moderator

The afternoon of the second day of the conference was devoted to the design critique seminar. A new technique for stimulating architectural thought and criticism, such seminars have been held at regional meetings of the AIA in various parts of the country over the last two years. The national office in Washington has sponsored the program by sending men experienced in the technique of conducting such seminars to various meetings in the hope that once local members of the Institute had taken part in one, they would be interested in and able to conduct additional seminars on the local level.

A seminar is limited to a discussion of one or at most two designs, and attendance is limited. (The 65 enrollment at the Santa Fe critique is probably more than should be admitted to any one presentation, and a large, empty auditorium is hardly an ideal local.) It is probably a good idea to limit participation to practicing architects as they impose less restraint on criticism and a free exchange of ideas than would an open meeting.

The idea behind the seminar is excellent. It is that an architect present for criticism a design project upon which he is currently working. It is better that the project be not too far along on the drafting boards so that the designer will not have too strong a "parental feeling" for the design, i.e., not feel compelled to defend it to the bitter end. Also he is able to change his design if weaknesses or possibilities of which he had heretofore been unaware emerge in the course of discussions. It is really a splendid opportunity for an architect to pick the brains of his colleagues, to get the benefit of their advice and talent *all for free*. All he has to have is the courage and self restraint to face the critics!

Taking perhaps fifteen minutes and using slides, the designer traces the development of his project from the very beginning, describing the program, the changes in program that may have come about, and the evolution of the final scheme from preliminary space analyses and initial sketches. Once he has made his presentation, the floor is open for any and all questions and comments.

At the Santa Fe seminar two projects were discussed. Jason Moore of the Albuquerque firm of Flatow, Moore, Bryan, and Fairburn presented the design for the Colleges of Engineering building planned for the University of New Mexico. Following that, George Rockrise, who has taken part in a good many such seminars on behalf of the Octagon, presented the campus layout and large, coeducational dormitory planned for Chico State College, Chico, California. No summary of the actual discussions are here presented nor was a record made of them as such reporting also might inhibit the spontaneity of the seminar.

— B. B.



James Hunter, FAIA conducts the AIA Business Session.

RESOLUTION NO. 1

WHEREAS:

It has become apparent that the complex construction industry has brought forth the need for some limitations in regard to the time to consider legal matters that may arise out of construction projects;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the members within the States comprising this Western Mountain Region be urged to work with their State Legislature to pass a "Statute of Limitations" to cover Architects and related parties in the construction industry.

RESOLUTION NO. 2

WHEREAS:

The Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Western Mountain Region of the American Institute of Architects convened in the heart of the historic Southwest where we are generously reminded of the work being done to preserve our cultural heritage;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Chapters of the States comprising the Region be urged to continue and expand Programs of Restoration and Preservation of our historic environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 3

WHEREAS:

The 15th Annual Conference of the Western Region of the AIA is aware of the disastrous effects and irrevocable loss that the construction of the proposed Highway through the Village of Las Trampas, New Mexico would have upon the integrity of that community and upon any future efforts to preserve it as an example of a Spanish village;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this Convention go on record in support of local efforts to preserve the Village in its entirety, and furthermore to encourage the responsible Government Officials to study the present Highway Development plans and to establish a route that will not destroy this historic community.