

# THE ARCHI

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## Architects, Engineers Need Research Center, Root Says

*THE ARCHI is privileged to publish a discussion by the Fraternity's Master Architect on the importance of construction research and the part which architects might take in its development.*

BY JOHN WELLBORN ROOT, F.A.I.A.

Architects, engineers and builders of all kinds need a great construction research center. The center should be unbiased and impartial in its analyses. It should be capable of exploring and analyzing new methods submitted to it. It should be able to suggest and test ideas that may be developed within the center itself. It should be able to explore ways and means of reducing costs in building construction. These are only some of the responsibilities that it could assume for the benefit of the industry.

### Correlation Needed

True, in the industry there are agencies and manufacturers who have a wealth of information available to the architect and the builder but it is scattered, unassembled and difficult to pin down. There are such agencies as BRAB — Building Research Advisory Board, doing an excellent job with limited funds, headed by the brilliant William H. Scheick — the Forest Products Laboratory, the research facilities of Illinois Tech and other universities, the Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute, and many, many others, public, industry-wide, and developed by the manufacturers themselves. But they need correlation and assembling at the very least. It is not sufficient, for instance, to rely on catalogs, the opinion of a sales department, the conclusions of the most conscientious of manufacturers or the designers' and builders' own too frequently inadequate experience.

### Data for Building Codes

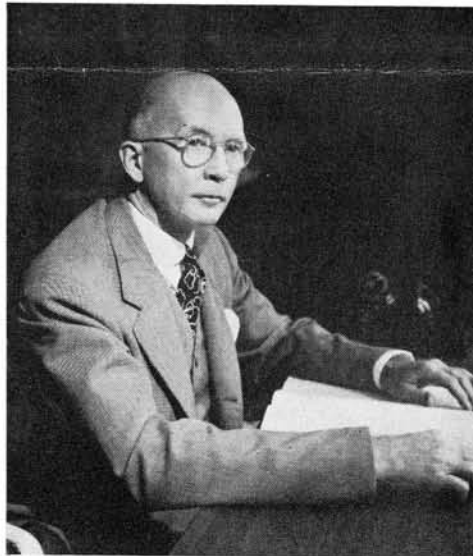
A great research center can furnish data, factual tested data, for the modernization of our obsolete build-

ing codes, can verify and check new structural methods involving the assemblage of a variety of products, and can analyze materials and experiment in developing new ones. Such a research institute could even undertake to provide information on standards for basic community planning such as land coverage, etc. Its possible services are almost unlimited.

This center could be partially self-supporting at least. Fees could be charged but rather than jeopardize its impartial attitude, deficits should be met by the industry itself.

It is curious that in matters relating to health great sums of money are donated for or allocated to research, basic and otherwise. In matters relating to shelter, such as the effort that BRAB is making in Washington, it is difficult to find a few hundred thousand.

A center that will undertake at least



John Wellborn Root

a part of this type of work exists in England. Robert H. Matthew, Chief Architect, until recently, of the London County Council, indicated at least one type of service that the center there renders. It analyzed, for instance, for the London County Council the basic planning problem of the central "City" of London to find out if codes and policies could be revised to permit the requirements of the city in population and in use to be met satisfactorily in buildings planned for natural light and ventilation. This had been thought impossible. The center found that by certain changes in these codes and through some radical replanning the city could be planned to meet these objectives. Mr. Matthew told me that this British Research Institute had been of great value and is growing in influence.

### Research Can Aid Design

The center I am thinking about can serve a great fundamental service to progressive architectural design. It would encourage new ideas by eliminating uncertainties that act as breaks on radical conceptions. The architect is not in the position of an easel painter whose canvases can be tried out at his own expense. He is spending his owner's money. He hesitates to experiment too far and so his new ideas are held in abeyance. If he could be fortified and reassured by accurate information he would be justified in proceeding with the knowledge that in releasing his new ideas he is entitled to commit his owner's funds.

### Owners Have Assisted Experiment

Some of my firm's better buildings were made possible because the owner was willing to share in the responsibility of certain experimental ideas from which we might otherwise have shied away. The A. O. Smith Building in Milwaukee, erected in 1923, for instance, was largely enclosed in fixed plateglass units 8 x 14 feet. This great company, research and experiment minded, perfected suction cups that allowed the contractor to raise these heavy plateglass lights and set them from the outside. Again, to

wash them they perfected a small truck on rails on the roof on which hung a dolly, a scheme used twenty-five years later by Lever Brothers. For the distribution of air conditioning they suggested ducts inside the clear spanning girders and inside the columns.

Again, in a second building, the Forest Products Laboratory of the United States Government, we urged wooden fins separating the windows on the exterior as an expression of the purpose of the building. We hesitated to use them here until the Laboratory developed ways and means of protecting them against the weather.

The third example is a two-story tax-payer, the Monroe-Dearborn Building, built twenty-five years ago in Chicago. The design has today's popular trend of continuous windows with stainless steel spandrels backed with micarta and columns covered with stainless steel. We felt, as I recollect, and the owners concurred that since the building was planned as a tax-payer and so a temporary improvement, this then rather novel way of enclosing the building was justified. In this building, by the way, is an example of the use of a material without full information. We approved a "satin" finish of the stainless steel exterior as against a polished finish. Due, I believe, to a

process used at that time, this finish unexpectedly gathered dirt and is black today. If it had been polished as on the bridge from the Northwestern Station to the Daily News Building it would still be bright.

#### *Experimenters Need Facts*

There are many new and exciting designs that have experimented without full information and have proven so unsatisfactory in some phase that the owner is no longer interested in the beauty and novelty of the design. The architect and the builder need the protection of factual, tested, unbiased information.

The South American architects manage to create startlingly radical buildings. If you would look through the Brazilian number of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* you would see what I mean. Are the Brazilian architects taking chances? Probably not, but we here, I think, would be reassured in attempting some of them if we had the results of a great research center's conclusions to back us up.

#### *Scientific Reports Invaluable*

Though great advances such as skeleton construction were conceived without such a research center, I cannot help feeling that the architects and engineers of the day would have welcomed such a service. In

the eighteen eighties the firm of Burnham & Root sent a competent young man to Kansas City to superintend a Romanesque commercial structure. An important element in the construction was a great brick arch supporting several floors of the facade. This superintendent was persuaded somehow to agree to a substitute brick for this arch other than specified. The arch collapsed when loaded and several workmen were killed. This young superintendent did not have available a scientific, tested report. He never got over this tragedy and it almost ruined Burnham & Root.

The influence for progress of such a center, entirely outside of the routine and valuable other services that it could render with the help of modern tools and methods could have a very far reaching effect on the trend in designs in the future.

#### *Research Must Be Impartial*

This idea, incidentally, is not new. It was discussed, for instance, at a gathering in February 1949 that Professor Bannister organized. It has been mentioned also in various public relations talks with the thought that it might well be initiated by the architectural profession. This research center should not be government subsidized, I feel. It should be an industry affair, perhaps managed and operated by some great university as an assurance of complete impartiality.

#### *Architects Can Lead*

As Chairman of the Public Relations Committee of the Institute, I would be eager indeed to see the architectural profession take the initiative in such a scheme and so establish it as a leader in the industry. I cannot think of a better public relations procedure. The Institute might well appoint a committee to do what is needed to write a tentative program to meet the objectives.

I have taken the opportunity offered me to write about this idea in *THE ARCHITECT*. This is a trial balloon and I am doing it for three reasons: First, in the conviction that such a center would render a great and needed service to architects, engineers and builders; second, that it would stimulate progressive design, and third, that if the architects will take the lead, the position of the profession throughout the country would be greatly strengthened.



"Duke" Strong (left), Anthemios Alumnus, and Jim Lendrum, W.G.S., Michigan Alumnus and Illinois Faculty member. Picture taken at Champaign during recent visit by W.G.A. Bob Calrow for conference with active chapter and local alumni. Lendrum, who is Director of The Small Homes Council at Illinois, addressed the Forestry Department at University of Minnesota in February.

## Mnesicles Chapter

John I. Schlossman writes from Minneapolis, "On Feb. 6, Mnesicles held its annual Bowery Party for actives and alumni. This year for the first time, the party was held in our new contemporary home. On hand also was the moose head which we acquired from our Brothers at Iktinos after the Minnesota football victory over Michigan last fall. The costumes were colorful, the refreshment and entertainment superb.

"With the able guidance of our alumni chapter, we are obtaining much furniture to fully equip the new home. Alumni contributions of furniture along with some new carpeting have been major advancements, in addition to which the pledges have taken it upon themselves to design and build a contemporary cushioned bench and table for the lounge."

The Chapter entertained other architectural students and alumni at a smoker on Feb. 15, with a discussion led by Don Kiley, landscape architect from Vermont, visiting critic at Minnesota.

## News from Hammett

Bob Calrow in Minneapolis sends news he has received from Ralph Hammett (Minnesota '19, Ann Arbor Faculty) in Rome.

"Brother Hammett wrote me Jan. 16th that he and Mrs. Hammett are in residence at the American Academy after an extensive tour of Portugal, Spain, France and Italy. His two daughters have returned to the States, leaving the 'old folks', as Ralph puts it, holed in for the balance of the winter.

"He says it is really only cold at night and on cloudy days. When the sun shines it is delightful—flowers in bloom, mimosa, violets and narcissus—oranges on the trees, and everything is lush and green. Apparently for beauty Rome is at its height now and in the spring; in summer and fall everything gets pretty well dried up.

"The Hammetts are enjoying their visit very much and Ralph is doing a project in the library. He says it is wonderful to be able to enjoy the luxury of reading, studying, and browsing without the clanging of telephones, interruption of students, or clients wanting something—a real rest and change.



*Thanks to Minneapolis Gas Company's THE PILOT LIGHT for this flash of our W.G.A., returning from a trip to see the boys at Champaign. Of the picture, they write, "Debarking in Minneapolis after a recent plane trip, Bob Calrow, Advertising Manager, was greeted by a flurry of exploding flash-bulbs. Slightly puzzled but immensely pleased, Calrow quickly prepared to review the highlights of his career for the waiting reporters. Unfortunately, his ego never got a chance to flex its muscles, for the reporters surrounded the lady in front of him, who turned out to be Hedda Hopper. Though the world was denied the Bob Calrow story, as a consolation prize it caught a glimpse of him the next day when this picture appeared on television."*

## 40th Founders' Day April 11th

April 11 marks the anniversary of the day in 1914 when two groups of architectural students who wanted "to secure a closer fellowship and to encourage a greater interest in the study of architecture" completed the formalities of a project "to organize and unite in fellowship the architectural students in the universities and colleges of America, and to combine their efforts so as to promote the artistic, scientific, and practical efficiency of the younger members of the profession".

While many conditions of university life in 1914 may seem to have disappeared, the feeling for closer fellowship and greater interest in the study of architecture can be as real to students in 1954 as it was 40 years ago.

If social attitudes toward fraternities have become more mature and democratic, the changes have only emphasized the real value of fratern-

ity life. "Fraternities and sororities offer to their members the opportunity to live in small groups in houses which they manage themselves; they offer friendship and the companionship of students with like ideas and interests. Because of the lasting loyalty usually resulting from the experience of fraternity and sorority living, membership also offers to students opportunities for broader acquaintance and friendship after college." (The Michigan Alumnus)

## G. C. Officers at Ann Arbor

Bob Calrow and George Whitten visited Iktinos Chapter the week end of March 6. Alumni representing the Chapter's Building Association joined the discussion of chapter and Grand Council problems. Calrow hopes to continue his visits until he has met and exchanged views personally with each active chapter and its alumni.

## ALUMNI DUES . . . SINCE MARCH, 1954

Alumni dues for support and expansion of the Fraternity's national organization were established by the 1938 Convention and affirmed by the 1948 and 1952 Conventions. Annual dues are \$2, and Life dues \$25, payable at one time or in three annual installments. Payments of Life dues are designated "Life Membership". In 1953, 304 alumni of 10 chapters paid annual dues of \$468. Fifty new Life Members were added and 22 alumni made partial payments on Life Memberships, adding \$1,394 to the Alumni Endowment Fund. Income from the fund is earmarked for promotion and expansion expenses.

Grand Council income from alumni annual dues covered costs of Medal distribution, new officer installation, secretarial and general office expense.

Dues are payable to W.G.E. George Whitten, who reports the following receipts in the six months ending March 1:

### PAID UP LIFE MEMBERS

135 Clarence J. Olsen	Mnesicles
136 Richard F. Middendorf	Anthemios
137 Frank Lee Cochran	Iktinos
138 James Kratky, Jr.	Demetrios
139 E. W. Barber	Mnesicles
140 Gus W. Kalionzes	Andronicus
141 Tevis C. Freeman	Anthemios
142 Carl R. Paulson	Anthemios
143 Alden B. Dow	Iktinos
144 Paul L. Wood	Demetrios
145 R. J. Pfeiffer	Anthemios
146 Raymond C. Perkins	Iktinos
147 John Pickett	Anthemios
148 Robert J. Stoll	Iktinos
149 Robert E. Bryan	Anthemios
150 Gerald H. Bense	Andronicus
151 Robert F. Potter	Anthemios
152 James MacAdam Willson	Demetrios
153 Robert F. Calrow	Mnesicles

### PART LIFE PAYMENTS

#### ANDRONICUS

Randall Duell	Stanley L. Melone
Rodney R. Garner	Lester S. Tanner
William D. Holdredge	

#### ANTHEMIOS

Dale Benedict	Norman H. Meyer
Carl R. Blum	Herbert R. Savage
Albert O. Bumgardner	Savo M. Stoshitch
Harry J. Harmon	Robert P. Torkelson
Karl J. Lohrmann	

#### DEMETRIOS

Arthur S. Brewer	Keener G. Smith
Lot Green	Walter A. Taylor
John R. Hagely	Robert C. Yoakum

#### IKTINOS

Russell D. Alexander	William Muschenheim
Arnold B. Perg	Willard C. Nelson
Charles V. Cowan	Dale R. Paape
Fuad S. Hassan	David H. Reider
Prof. Emil Lorch	David L. Stiffler
Robert D. McClure	James E. Tomblinson
Prof. G. M. McConkey	John J. White, Jr.
John D. Martindale	Richard C. Zimmer

#### KALLIKRATES

Eric Donald H. Beall

#### MNESICLES

Donald Campbell	Robert Wilmsen
Elving L. Johnson	

#### PAEONIOS

Volney A. Chase

#### POLYKLITOS

George Dick Smith, Jr.

#### THERON

Hugh W. Brown, Jr.

### ANNUAL DUES

have been paid by the following members from Sept. 1, 1953, to March 9, 1954:

#### ANDRONICUS

Melville Garton	Kenneth E. Norwood
Kenneth W. Hohmann	Roderick L. Royer
Wesley P. Hollinger	Theodore C. Stuart
William G. Laffin	

#### ANTHEMIOS

W. S. Arrasmith	John E. Lundstrom
John F. Bartels	Paul B. Marxen
Fred G. Billings	Norman H. Meyer
Walter G. Bishop	N. Holger Mortenson
John R. Bowman	Edwin E. Newcomb
Frederick P. Cole	Raymond I. Olson
Ralph W. Crain, Jr.	Jos. J. Patterson
Wm. P. Crane	Adrian M. Pearsall
Harford Field	James A. Russell
Willard E. Fraser	Robert Alan Schennum
Raymond J. Gauger	Raleigh J. Spinks
Carl A. Gerfen	James T. Strong
C. P. Griffith	W. Harold Tanner
Charles T. Hand	James W. Viger
Robert E. Howe	Wilbur C. Webb
Bernard H. Ivey	James F. Whisenand
Robert A. Jorgensen	Leonard S. Wicklund
Bernard E. Kinsock	William R. Williams
Frank Klein	

#### DEMETRIOS

Donald D. Bolinger	William R. Henry
Frank J. Dickerson	Theodore R. Majdiak
George B. Dolby	E. Paul Shisler
C. Russell Dole	Howard W. Tuttle
John D. East	George W. Wegner
Donald B. Ewing	

#### DINOCRATES

Carl L. Glaser Karl Kamrath

#### IKTINOS

Kenneth L. Derr	Willard A. Oberdick
D. Burr DuBois	Stanley D. Peacock
Robert C. Gaede	Alfred J. Przybylowicz
Prof. Emil Lorch	Austin B. Race
Alger W. Luckham	Warren L. Rindge
Walter E. Lentz	Charles M. Smith
Frederick A. Melms, Jr.	Donald F. Steinbaugh
Frederic John Morse	Leo Teholiz
Harold F. Naser	Wesley W. Webb

#### KALLIKRATES

C. M. Smith

#### MNESICLES

F. W. Segerstrom	Carl H. Johnson
A. John Brenner	Paul W. Jones
Earl Wilford Brink	Robert Lloyd Kennedy
Gerald H. Buetow	Gilbert B. Langseth
John P. Damberg	Leonard A. Melkus
Paul S. Damberg	E. E. Olson
Rheuben Damberg	Reynold M. Roberts
W. D. Gerlach	Richard C. Robinson
Wallace Holm	

## INITIATES



The Grand Council records new initiates in the official membership roll in order of receipt of complete initiation reports. Initiates for six months ending March 1, with serial numbers in official record are the following:

### INITIATES

#### KALLIKRATES, Oct. 8, 1953:

2097 George A. Bock
Charlottesville, Va.
2098 James M. Glave
Ashland, Va.
2099 Michel M. Parlier
Charlottesville, Va.
2100 Thomas E. Parrish
Portsmouth, Va.
2101 Robert B. Stokes
Camden, N. J.
2102 Frederick G. Wilson
Norfolk, Va.

#### DEMETRIOS, Nov. 7, 1953:

2103 Raymond Yansick
2104 John Nolting

#### MNESICLES, Dec. 6, 1953:

2105 George Leilani Ah Tou
2106 Donald Douglas Hanson
2107 Charles David Malmer
2108 Robert Milo Nelson
2109 John Isaac Schlossman

#### IKTINOS, Oct. 10, 1953:

2110 Robert Lee Brown
Clio, Mich.
2111 Vernon Joseph Rietdorf
Ridgefield Park, N. J.
2112 Robert Thomas Stevens
Detroit, Mich.
2113 Hans Martin Wiemer
Dusseldorf, Germany
2114 Harry Drogo Montague
New York, N. Y.

#### IKTINOS, Feb. 21, 1954:

2115 Richard Koichi Tanaka
Davidson, Mich.
2116 Ronald Alexander Rogers
Detroit, Mich.
2117 Stanley Anthony Bohing
Cleveland, O.
2118 Martin Daniel Gehner
Monroe, Mich.

### ANNUAL DUES, Continued

#### PAEONIOS

Fred G. Billings	Col. Lawrence W. Byers
Howard T. Blanchard	Clarence Rinard
Ulrich W. Busch	

#### POLYKLITOS

Germano Milono	George Dick Smith, Jr.
Charles A. Pearson, Jr.	

George Whitten is compiling corrections and additions to the Fraternity's membership directory. The August 1951 edition, the first revision in many years, has been widely circulated and many changes have been reported. Send information for the 1954 Directory to Whitten at 1619 Walnut Ave., Wilmette, Ill.



THE ARCHI, published by Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity. EDITOR, John Joseph Zimmerman, 147 East 18 St., New York 3. Circulation office, Box 713 Station A, Champaign, Illinois. ALPHA RHO CHI is a national social college fraternity limiting its membership to students of architecture and the allied professions GRAND COUNCIL, Robert F. Calrow, W.G.A., 4828 Garfield Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn.; George A. Whitten, W.G.E., 1619 Walnut Ave., Wilmette, Ill.; James T. Lendrum, W.G.S., 21 Greencroft Rd., Champaign, Ill.; Dale Benedict, G.L., 1422 37th Ave., Seattle, Wash.; Dwight P. Ely, G.A., 40 South Third St., Columbus 15, Ohio; Winthrop M. Wadsworth, N.I., 2525 Dupont Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn.; Grand Council Deputies—Robert H. Bowen, 4100 Ridgelea, Austin 3, Texas; Jay G. Ingels, 7220 Seward Park Ave., Seattle 8, Wash.; Winthrop M. Wadsworth. ACTIVE CHAPTERS: ANDRONICUS—U. of So. California, 710 W. 28th St., Los Angeles 7, Cal.; ANTHEMIOS—U. of Illinois, 1108 So. 1st St., Champaign, Ill.; DEMETRIOS—Ohio State University, 101 E. 12th Ave., Columbus, Ohio; IKTINOS—U. of Michigan, 640 Oxford Rd., Ann Arbor, Mich.; KALLIKRATES—U. of Virginia, A.P.X. Box, Fayerweather Hall, Charlottesville, Va.; MNESICLES—U. of Minnesota, 605 Ontario St. S.E., Minneapolis, Minn.