

ENGLISH SUMMARY

NEW YORK, N. Y.: PLURALISM AND ITS POSSIBILITIES

Robert A. M. Stern

Unquestionably, New York is the center of architecture in the United States. Though this is not as true as it once was from the point of view of the volume of its production (before the depression of the early 1970s, there were almost as many practicing architects in New York as in the rest of the country), it is indisputably so in regard to the production of ideas and to the establishments of trends: architecture as an art thrives in New York; which is as it should be, given New York's role as the leading American cultural center.

In this essay I would like to concentrate on representative institutions and phenomena which characterize New York's role and which are unique to it. Not only is New York important because it is the home of some of the more provocative architectural formalists of our time, it also is the nation's architectural communications center, housing its professional press as well as two of the best among the handful of journalists who write architectural criticism on the newspapers; it is home to some key educational and cultural institutions; it is attractive to expatriated foreigners who guarantee to it a lively mosaic of conflicting ideologies; and its impact reaches out into neighboring smaller architectural centers such as Princeton, New Jersey and New Haven, Connecticut.

In attempting to capture the essence of the New York architectural scene I of course touch on the role key architects play but it seems to me at this time that the work which they produce would not be what it is were it not for their interaction with New York and its institutions, and that, therefore, the latter is the principal focus of my remarks.

WHO'S WHO IN NEW YORK CITY 1979

Andrew MacNair

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«The current profile of the architecture scene in New York emanates from the kaleidoscopic collage of the myriad architects and architecture students working in Manhattan. As the primary American center, New York not only acts as the port of entrance for architects coming to the United States from Europe, but it also acts as the hub containing the greatest volume of activity generated by an architecture community anywhere in this country. It symbolizes the epitome of the architecture world in America because of its dense accumulation of major architectural achievements..., because of the current hyper-activity among the architecture community as a professional, a social, an intellectual and artistic collective. And finally, because New York represents the apex of the American architecture world through her remarkably powerful Manhattan skyline.

This particular review about architects in New York focuses on Manhattan, as one large, heterogeneous town with many groupings, tendencies, and inclinations. The positions are both coincidental and contrived. The architects' purposes, methods and tactics depend upon the heritage of one's antecedents and the furrows of one's ambitions. All the line of genealogy cannot be properly outlined here yet the affiliations, allegiances, and struggles between the groupings can best be understood by articulating the specific groups according to their own way of «practicing» architecture. «Practicing» architecture does not necessarily mean that they are literally running offices which are building projects for clients. But it means that each grouping combines, in various weights and measures, aspects of the work of architecture as formulating a particular commitment and way of life. Incorporating different combinations of teaching, lecturing, writing, drawing, building, and planning, one can only begin in this article to present

a part of a comprehensive view of the current architectural picture today.

Another, and certainly more convincing, profile of the New York architecture scene today is to define the collective, philosophical, and ideological positions of those architects who are aggressively active and compassionately committed to contributing something more to the public life of architecture in New York than just doing their own private work. So that in a highly visible way, they are the architects who, in spite of their style or their tactics, publicly and collectively, are contributors towards the greater public architecture community.»

Mr. MacNair continues his article describing «The Old Guard» (Johnson, Harrison, Pei, Rudolph, etc.), «The City Fathers» who «plan, prepare, watch and check the condition of the city as a whole», the deans of academic institutions, the non-existent Five, «The South Americans» and the war boom babies.

IMMEDIATE ACTION PROGRAMS (P.A.I.s)

Rudolfo García Pablos

Alberto López Asenjo

The authors present an analysis of the new planning legislation affecting the metropolitan area and a discussion of the recently completed pilot program for the Hortaleza section of Madrid. Traditional planning strategies focussing on large areas of Madrid have been unable to alleviate the many problems confronting the city (including; rapid population growth, lack of urban services, weak economic base, congestion and high densities). The new P.A.I. program is an attempt to complement general planning efforts with immediate small scale analysis of the most urgent local problems. Through the work of technical teams and public participation strategies definite plans of action are suggested as well as directives for the revision of Madrid's General Plan.

In the Hortaleza area professionals and some 13 neighborhood groups inventoried housing, transportation, services, infrastructure, etc of the area and established needs and priorities. Their recommendations (graphically summarized on the accompanying plans) provide both immediate and long range goals and hopefully will the gap existing in current municipal development plans.

BANCO PASTOR

A Modern Facade

The office building for Banco Pastor by J. Corrales, R. Vázquez, R. Olalquiaga and G. Molezun is presented in this issue along with a critique by Gabriel Ruiz Cabrero.

The author of the critique states that through an analysis of Banco Pastor, a dignified and interesting building, it can be argued that the Modern Movement is unable to solve architectural problems relating to construction in the historic city, the enlargement of existing buildings, problems related to the «distribution» of facades and «the city as architecture». Using the facade of Banco Pastor as the central theme of the article the architects' intentions are analyzed and their compromise solutions using traditional elements within a modern context are viewed.

The bank's location in the center of Madrid on a site surrounded by existing buildings presents difficulties in employing the concept of the «modern glass box office building». The architects' attempts to allow the new building to «fit in» to its surroundings include the sloping roof, cornice, false columns, and miradors (protruding windows). While these elements of compositions work within the older buildings, each forming a part of a readable whole, in the new Banco Pastor, these elements become «designs» or details added to a basically modern intent.