

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Vol. V

MAY, 1917

No. 5

Shadows and Straws

THE GOVERNMENT PUBLIC BUILDING situation was the subject of the following editorial in the *Washington Post* of April 28, last:

BLUNDERS IN BUILDING

While the distinguished visitors from England and France will be too courteous to comment, one may imagine their impressions as they gaze upon the unique disarrangement of Washington's public buildings.

Their very haphazardness of situation and construction is symbolic of the blunders of the past that must be rectified in every field of endeavor. The original plans of the Nation's Capital were laid down by the skilled hand of L'Enfant, whose rare foresight and broad vision contemplated a seat of government which would transcend in beauty and grandeur that of any of the capitals of Europe.

And then we began to build in any fashion and after any model. L'Enfant mapped the approaches and Jefferson searched Europe for plans to aid in building designs. The Capitol and the White House were set on commanding hills, with an uninterrupted vista between. Then the Treasury Building, though of noble and dignified design, was thrust across the vista of the White House from New York Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue, to be balanced later on by the State, War and Navy Building, blocking the vista on the opposite side. The Botanic Garden was placed in an area reserved by Washington and Jefferson for a wonderful park approach to the western entrance to the Capitol. Together with these and after came new styles of architecture, such as the State, War and Navy Building, the Postoffice Department and the Pension Office—huge, clumsy, awkward piles without any relation to the classic lines of the early architecture. The L'Enfant plan had become a "scrap of paper."

Thus they stand today as monuments to the blunders of the past. They accentuate the demands for better methods of construction and coordination in every sphere of the Nation's development from now on. Fortunately there has been no period in our history when these matters have been more in the public mind than they are today. With the intelligent support of Congress, as is being given

at present in park and building development, one may look hopefully forward to the time when the National Capital will present in its architectural structures the unmistakable evidences of its stability, grandeur, and order.

Admirable as is this summing up of the regrettable blunders which have so disappointed the lovers of Washington, it yet fails in emphasizing the real heart of the problem. The fifty years of shortsightedness, during which time the needs of the Government have grown apace, have left the departments in the worst possible condition to grapple with the avalanche of extra work which has now descended upon them as a result of the war. Congestion and disorder are crippling effort. Office room is sought wherever it can be found and must be occupied, under stress, no matter how poorly it may be located with respect to the center of its particular activity. At the moment when the whole world is looking toward our ability to organize, systematize, and create an effective instrument, the misguided public building policy of the United States lays a heavy hand upon the enthusiasm and the zeal of those upon whom the burdens are falling.

But it is precisely because of these things that we would point out the fact that the architectural development of Washington must be based upon a systematic and comprehensive plan. Making Washington beautiful must be incidental to making Washington useful, orderly, convenient. We are not pleading for millions to be spent in ornament, but for the necessary sums to be spent in giving the departments the proper equipment with which to carry on their work. The nearly \$700,000

Obituary

William Rotch Ware 1848-1917

William Rotch Ware, educated as an architect, first at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in its early days and later at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, became, at the age of twenty-eight, the editor of the *American Architect*, and devoted thirty-one years of a very earnest and industrious life to that journal. During this period the art of architecture in America developed from an imitative admiration for many peculiar expressions of both French and English antecedents, crudely performed, to many admirable examples of studied, refined work thoroughly consistent with modern conditions and appreciative of the best of the past. Eccentricity, gradually yielding to sanity, with the standard of requirement constantly rising, was accompanied by corresponding improvement in the art itself. During this period Mr. Ware as editor of the *Architect* made it the exponent of the advancing interest in architecture. His editorials and comments were stimulating to the best efforts and enlightening as to the best purposes and results. Recognizing the fact that architecture is one of the three fine arts, he held it high and stated its ideals. By the public as well as by the profession, the *Architect* was welcomed for its frank and fearless advocacy of the best in study and design. He obtained critical articles at a time when ignorance of architecture was profound, and the journal occupied the position of being one of the few American weeklies which was frequently quoted abroad. Under his hands it became a forum for all subjects related to the profession. His brusque personality thinly veiled a sincere and kindly humor, associated with an intolerance for shams and a dislike for suavity. Though he at times regretted that he had not been active in the actual work of his profession,

his influence as an editor was so unique that no such regret was justifiable.

In a formative and adolescent epoch in American Architecture he fostered high ideals, guided endeavor and called attention to achievements, and therefore encouraged all that was best in the art—a work which was widespread in its influence and well befitted the man who devoted his life to it so successfully. Few have more materially benefited the work of their profession than Mr. Ware did with his pen instead of with his pencil.

C. HOWARD WALKER.

Samuel Huckel, Jr.

Elected to the Institute in 1881; to Fellowship in 1889.
Died at Philadelphia, April 18, 1917.

Mr. Huckel was born in Frankford, Pa., in 1858, and began the study of architecture in the office of Mr. Benjamin D. Price. He later traveled extensively, and in 1883, entered into partnership with Mr. Edward Hazelhurst. The Manufacturers' Club at Philadelphia, the Executive Mansion at Harrisburg, the Odd Fellows Temple, and the Church of the Messiah, Philadelphia, were some of the works of this firm. Mr. Huckel received the commission for remodeling the old Grand Central Station at New York City, about 1900, at which time the partnership was dissolved. In 1902 the firm of Watson & Huckel was established, continuing until Mr. Huckel's death. By this firm there were designed, among many other buildings, the Union Station, Worcester, Mass.; the New Monmouth Hotel, Spring Lake, N. J.; the Monterey Hotel, Asbury Park, N. J.; St. Mark's Church, Frankford, Pa.; Christ Church, Norfolk, Va., and the Cumberland County Court House, Bridgeton, N. J.

Town-Planning and Housing

GEORGE B. FORD, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Architect and City Planner*

Even a casual glance at the status of city planning as a science in this country at the present time reveals two fundamental obstacles to success which it is our bounden duty to effectively attack and overcome. The first, and probably the more familiar, is that insistent and ever-recurring gibe, which shows the confusion in the lay mind of the highly trained city planner with the dreamer of the old "city beautiful" type. We, as architects, have long shared the opprobrium conveyed by the term "dreamer," at least in the sense as employed in the periodical attacks on the profession in Congress and by those ever-sternly

practical organizations which might, without injustice, be termed "designing contractors."

"Dreamer" in its true sense, and in the sense in which it properly applies, is very different, for no project with breadth of scope, with far-sighted vision, was ever conceived save in the mind of the dreamer who could translate his dream into terms of a practical reality. Nevertheless this misconception is one of the bars to progress which we must break down.

The other obstacle was very happily and wittily treated in the brilliant address made at the Fiftieth Convention of the American Institute of Architects, by President Vincent of the University of Minnesota, who outlined the growth and development of this vast unwieldy country

*Address made to the City Planning Conference in Kansas City, May 9, 1917, by John Lawrence Mauran, President of the American Institute of Architects.