

May 15th

1895

To the Board of Directors of the American Institute of Architects:

My full name is William Johnston Marsh.

My business address is 1503, Pennsylvania Avenue Washington D.C.

The name of my firm is _____

I have practiced the profession of architecture independently for six years.

The accompanying photographs numbered respectively 1, 2 and 3, show completed buildings erected from my plans and under my supervision.

No. 1 is a (here give general description of building) Residence of Mr Crosby S. Hayes, near Silver Spring, Maryland, built in 1891.

No. 2, do. Mausoleum in Rock Creek Cemetery Washington D.C. built in 1894.

No. 3, do. Houses in Norfolk, Virginia, built in 1894.

The accompanying drawings are (here enumerate and describe such drawings as the candidate desires to submit)

Design for Louis P. Shoemaker Esq. Washington D.C.

We, Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, hereby indorse Mr. W. J. Marsh's application for Fellowship. We know him personally; we know his work; we believe him to be worthy of membership.

Robert Stead - President Wash. Chapt. A.C.A.
Oliver Brown See " " "

2-3
Marsh

COPY TO MR. FENNER.

September 28th, 1915.

Dear Mr. Mauran:-

Mr. W. J. Marsh, a Fellow of the Institute and a member of the Washington Chapter, called at the Octagon today. He spoke of several Institute matters of importance, not in a spirit of fault finding but in a spirit of broad criticism, exercised in the hope that some change might be brought about for the better in the methods and policies which he believes are not quite as they should be at this time.

With his consent I am advising you fully as Treasurer, knowing your own desire and that of the Board to overlook no suggestions from an Institute member and to act favorably on them whenever possible.

Copy of this letter will also be sent to Mr. Marsh, for his correction if I have not written clearly, and also to the President and Secretary.

Mr. Marsh received the letter of September 10th with regard to his dues for 1915. One also went to his partner, Mr. W. G. Peter. They both feel that a personal letter of this kind, addressed to members of the Institute who have always paid their dues sometime during the current year, is in bad taste; and that it is not a proper way to proceed in the collection of dues, even though previous notices have brought no response. ^{Mr. Marsh} He feels that it would be better in every way to send a form statement, without a personal letter of any kind, as was previously done - such statements to be marked second or third notice as the case might be. Thereafter it would be entirely appropriate for the Board to post the name of a delinquent member or take any other action prescribed in the By-laws, as he had had due and sufficient notice.

I explained to Mr. Marsh that the Board, in directing that such a letter be sent, was fully aware of present business conditions, but felt that some special effort should be made to collect the large amount outstanding, because the work of the Institute is crippled in proportion to its large delinquent list. I advised him that a similar letter to the one he received was sent to all of the delinquents, without exception, and for that reason it was not a personal letter in the stricter sense of the word.

Mr. Nauran

In a general reference to matters of finance, Mr. Marsh pointed out that at the present time he receives very little from the Institute in return for his dues of \$25.00 a year. He willingly concedes that his membership in the Institute is an honor, which he places above a money basis, but he feels that there is missing in his relation to the Institute a personal sense of affiliation or membership which he should have. All that he receives from the Octagon during the year are the Annuary, the Proceedings; and a few official notices. He has no means of knowing what the Board of Directors is doing or what action it takes on the various matters before the Institute, even if he knew what they were. He suggests that some record of Board meetings and other subjects of Institute business be sent to every member without charge if they are expected to keep in touch with the Institute and to be interested in its work. I explained that many of these things are fully printed in the Journal, but neither Mr. Marsh nor his partner subscribe to the Journal, and do not feel that they should. They believe that they should receive the Journal as an Institute publication free of charge. He called attention to the American Society of Civil Engineers which sends to its members, without cost, a great many communications during the year of a technical nature or relative to its administrative affairs.

He also spoke of the attitude of the American Federation of Labor in the matter of a recent building, and this I am bringing to the attention of President Sturgis.

Because of the very few helpful or constructive suggestions which come to the Octagon from Institute members generally, I was more than glad that Mr. Marsh came in.

Very truly yours,

Executive Secretary.

Mr. J. Lawrence Nauran,
Mr. W. R. B. Wilcox,
400 Boston Block,
Seattle, Washington.

K:B

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2-3

September 28th, 1915.

My dear Mr. Marsh:-

In accordance with our talk this morning, I am sending herewith copies of letters written to the President and Treasurer of the Institute, and to the Chairman of the Committee on Publications. It is hard to express clearly, in a letter, the real spirit of a general discussion on matters of this kind. If I have not written fully to any of these Institute officers, I am positive that they would be glad to have a supplementary letter from you.

The Executive Committee is now on the Pacific Coast, where a number of meetings will be held. As this will bring these officers together, the suggestions made will certainly receive their full attention.

Personally, I will be appreciative of any suggestions you may make in the future for improvement in the methods of handling the routine correspondence, publications, and notices of the Institute which are sent from the Octagon. It is our aim here to give the Institute member the very best service in this respect, and to do so we must have his suggestions.

Very truly yours,

Executive Secretary.

Mr. W. J. Marsh,
520 Thirteenth Street,
Washington, D. C.

K:B
ENC

WILLIAM J. MARSH, F. A. I. A.

OFFICES OF
MARSH AND PETER
ARCHITECTS

WALTER G. PETER, F. A. I. A.

520 THIRTEENTH STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C. November 20th. 1915.

The Board of Directors,
American Institute of Architects,

Gentlemen:

I have been a Fellow of the Institute and a member of the Washington Chapter for twenty years and in the past have taken much interest in the affairs of the Institute.

I am not a subscriber to the Journal and, while I do not in the least criticise it as a publication, as a matter of principle I have opposed the attempt to force it upon members at an extra expense, as the only way they may be kept informed and in touch with matters of the association.

During a recent trip through the middle West I met a number of members and was surprised to learn that their views largely agreed with mine. The suggestion was made that a limited number of members be asked to express their views on several matters. A slip with six questions was sent to 70 members, south and west of Philadelphia, with a request that they merely answer YES or NO, and not sign the slip. 59 replies were returned, ten or twelve signing their names, two slips (to members retired from active practice) were returned blank, and one envelope was returned marked "deceased". Several notes were added to the slips, one member from the south mentioning instances where appeals to the Institute had received no attention.

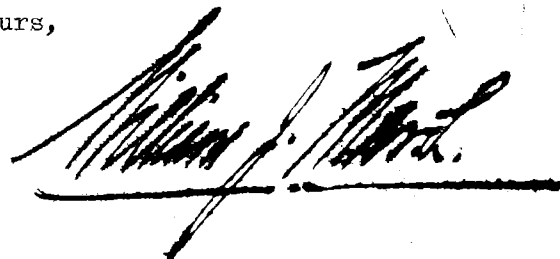
A list of the questions and a summary of the replies are given on the enclosed sheet, and while such a poll or "straw ballot" may be of no special value, yet it is possible that the percentages represent in a general way the views of the whole membership. It would seem that the only way to ascertain that this poll does not express the views of the entire membership would be for the Board of Directors to send out a similar list of questions to each member.

When 57.6% of members do not feel in proper touch with the Institute it would seem that there is something wrong, and when 54.25% want a monthly bulletin of current matters, and 74.6% want the proceedings of the convention, I think they should have them.

I felt it my duty to forward the result of the poll for your information, for such action as you may consider proper.

Very truly yours,

WJM. K.
1 Enc.



2-3

Do you consider that you are in proper touch with the activities of the A.I.A. at the present time?

Answers:

17 yes.	28.8	per-cent.
34 no	57.6	" "
3 non-committal . . .	5.1	" "
<u>5 qualified answer .</u>	<u>8.5</u>	" "
59	100.	

Are you a subscriber to the Journal of the A.I.A.?

Answers:

30 yes.	50.85	per-cent.
<u>29 no</u>	<u>49.15</u>	" "
59	100.	

Do you consider the Journal a good proposition?

Answers:

36 yes.	61	per-cent.
16 no	27.1	" "
5 non-committal . . .	8.5	" "
<u>2 qualified answer .</u>	<u>3.4</u>	" "
59	100.	

Do you favor the publication by the Institute of a News Bulletin each month, sent free to all members?

Answers:

32 yes.	54.25	per-cent.
18 no	30.50	" "
<u>9 non-committal . . .</u>	<u>15.25</u>	" "
59	100.	

Do you favor the publication by the Institute of the full proceedings of the annual convention, as heretofore, to be sent free to members?

Answers:

44 yes.	74.6	per-cent.
13 no	22.	" "
<u>2 non-committal . . .</u>	<u>3.4</u>	" "
59	100.	

Do you consider that you are receiving any benefit from your connection with the Institute, aside from the honor attached to membership?

Answers:

18 yes.	30.5	per-cent.
28 no	47.5	" "
3 non-committal . . .	5.1	" "
<u>10 qualified answer .</u>	<u>16.9</u>	" "
59	100.	

4 members in touch and do not take Journal,	6.8	per-cent
16 " not in touch but take Journal	17.1	" "
4 " in touch, take Journal, no benefit,	6.8	" "
6 " not in touch, take Journal, no benefit,	10.1	" "

2-3

December 9, 1915.

My dear Mr. Marsh:

Your letter of the 20th instant addressed to the Board of Directors of the Institute was read with much interest at its meeting on November 30th, and I was requested by the Board to express its appreciation of the interest you have taken to ascertain the feeling of members in regard to certain questions of Institute policy. The Board welcomes every constructive suggestion looking toward the betterment of the service which the Institute renders to its members and to the public and it recognizes in the suggestions which your questionnaire has brought out much that is constructive.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the points of your memorandum it may be well to recall what you of course know, namely, that the law-making powers of the Institute are vested solely in the Convention, and not in the Board of Directors, which is the machinery set up by the By-Laws for carrying out the orders of the Convention.

The answers to your first question are interesting, but the Board may perhaps be pardoned for doubting whether the failure to keep in touch with the Institute's activities on the part of your correspondents is in most cases entirely due to mistakes in policy or omissions on the part of the Institute's officials. It would seem that the main question might well have been supplemented by these further questions: How many meetings of your Chapter have you attended this year? How many Conventions have you attended during the last five years? Have you read the "Proceedings" of the last Convention, including the Committee reports?

The answers to your second question disclose a condition with which the Board is familiar. Of the entire membership of the Institute approximately 65 per cent. subscribe to the Journal. This is an increase of about 15 per cent for the year 1915.

The Board assumes that in your third question you meant to ask whether the Journal is "a good proposition" for the Institute. The answers to your second and third questions are particularly interesting when read together. Apparently all who subscribe, and some who do not, consider the Journal worth while.

Question number three might well have been supplemented, in the opinion of the Board, by the following:

Do you consider that it is worth while for the Institute to endeavor to create in the public mind a more intelligent understanding of what the Institute is striving to accomplish aesthetically, practically and ethically? If so, can you suggest a more effective medium for reaching the public either directly or by quotation in the newspapers and periodicals of the country, than a magazine of the general type which the Committee charged with the publication of the Journal is aiming to produce?

The Board welcomes the opportunity offered by the answers which you received to your fourth question, to explain its policy with reference to the free distribution either of the Journal or of any other news bulletin.

If it be admitted that the Journal as an Institute activity is worth while, and the majority of your correspondents so regard it, it becomes incumbent upon the Board to make it a financial as well as a literary and artistic success. It is, of course, impossible to support such a publication except by advertising, and advertising, as every one knows, has become a science, controlled by very definite principles which long experience has developed. It is the business of experts, and the Board and the Committee on Publications, who have no expert knowledge, have taken the advice of many experts, all of whom agree that it is a settled fact that advertising space is of very little value in magazines which are sent free (or included in the dues), to all members of any society. Therefore, the Board is forced to believe that if the Journal were sent free to all members, its advertising value would be reduced to a minimum, and its cost of production would become at once prohibitive.

Your correspondents, if they read the Proceedings of the recent Convention, will note that the Journal, which in its first year made a deficit of about \$6,000, and in its second year one of nearly \$4,000, has in this, its third year, made an actual profit of something over \$500. If this rate of progress can be maintained, and there is every reason to suppose that it can, the time is not far distant when the Journal will be paying into the Treasury of the Institute a sum which will justify a reduction in membership dues by an amount greater than the subscription price.

There are but two alternatives. We must either continue with the Journal along the lines which we are now following or we must abandon it and issue instead an inexpensive leaflet of Institute news to members only. The Board is firmly convinced that the best interests of the Institute will be served by the continuation of the Journal, and it is confirmed in this belief by the enthusiasm with which the recent Convention received and endorsed the report of the Board and of the Committee on Publications.

The answers to your fifth question are in line with the answers which the Board has received from those Chapters which have taken the trouble to ascertain the views of their members, more than half the answers received are opposed to making any change in the custom followed in the past; and the Proceedings will therefore be published as heretofore.

The answers to your last question cannot not be considered constructive. What benefit should a man expect to derive from membership aside from the honor which attaches to it, and the satisfaction which comes from contributing his share to the general welfare? Is it, or is it not, a fact that the Institute is doing its part in stimulating interest in the education of the architects of the future?

Is the Institute doing its part in the effort to educate public taste and to create an intelligent interest in the character of our physical environment?

Does the influence of the Institute count when it is exerted for the preservation of the landmarks of our early history and the beauties of our natural scenery?

Do such undertakings as are represented by the new standard contract documents add anything to the practical efficiency of our profession?

The dishonest competition and the undignified scramble for a commission which formerly went by that name, have been largely eliminated through the influence of the Institute. Has this change added anything to our own self-respect as a profession, or the respect in which we are held by the public?

In short, is the Institute worth while? If it is, no member can truthfully say that he derives no benefit from it.

In conclusion, I want to assure you once more that the Board is glad to receive such communications as yours, and that its answer is not intended to be contentious. I have tried in this letter to make clear to you the reasons which have governed our action, and I wish that they might be known to all your correspondents. If our reasoning is at fault, we want to be set right.

Very truly, yours,

Secretary.

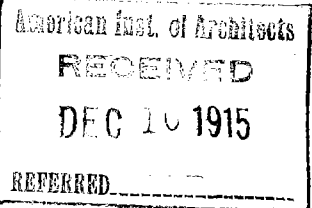
MR. WILLIAM J. MARSH,
520 Thirteenth Street,
Washington, D. C.

WILLIAM J. MARSH, F. A. I. A.

OFFICES OF
MARSH AND PETER
ARCHITECTS

2-3
WALTER G. PETER, F. A. I. A.

520 THIRTEENTH STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C., December 11th, 1915.



Mr. B. L. Fenner, Secretary,
American Institute of Architects,

My dear Mr. Fenner:

I thank you for your very cordial letter of the 9th instant, in reply to my letter of November 20th addressed to the Board of Directors, A.I.A., and I wish to say that, in my opinion, it would be of great advantage to the Institute if several of the explanations and facts stated in your letter could be arranged in an impersonal form and sent to each member, which would be one way of keeping the members in touch with the activities of the Institute.

Probably 60% of the membership, for one reason or another, can not attend meetings of the Chapters, or the annual conventions, and I find it is this class who do not feel in proper touch with the Institute.

They receive the proceedings of the Convention, followed later by a few minor communications and notices of applications for membership.

Until the next proceedings come to hand they are unaware of the actions of the Board of Directors or Committees, the election of new members, changes in membership, nominations for officers, etc.

I have found in my intercourse with members in various parts of the country that there is a general lack of proper interest in the Institute and a decided lack of knowledge of what the Institute is doing. The methods employed by the American Society of Civil Engineers to keep members in constant touch with current activities are cited to the disadvantage of the Institute. It may be merely one touch of human nature that causes individual members to expect as a right to be kept promptly informed of the current activities of the organization they help to maintain, and when such information is withheld there is the appearance of the organization being conducted as a close corporation.

I am myself a believer in publicity and I certainly think that the interest of members in the Institute would be greatly increased if they received at intervals information of current matters before the Board of Directors, Committees, etc., with the resulting action.

I can furnish the names of some thirty or forty members who concur in this view and with a little effort could obtain a hundred.

I take this opportunity to apologize to the Board for an expression in my letter of November 20th, namely:—"the attempt to force the Journal upon members as the only way they may be kept informed and in touch with matters of the association". No such attempt has been made and I was informed during the recent convention that copies of the Journal containing official matters would be sent free to each member. As I had never received a copy of the Journal I was under the impression that each number contained official matters of interest to the members.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William J. Marsh".

Marsh, Wm. J.

2-3

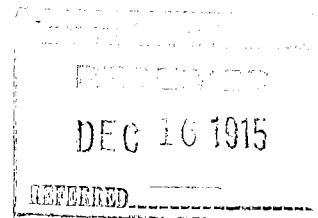
R. CLIPSTON STURGIS, PRESIDENT
THOMAS R. KIMBALL, 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT
D. KNICKERBACKER BOYD, 2D VICE-PRESIDENT

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
THE OCTAGON WASHINGTON D.C.

BURT L. FENNER, SECRETARY
J. LAWRENCE MAURAN, TREASURER
CABLE ADDRESS: OCTAGON WASHINGTON

December 14, 1915.

MR. E. C. KEMPER,
The Octagon,
Washington, D. C.



Dear Mr. Kemper:

I enclose a letter just received from Mr. Marsh. I am glad to note that he received my letter in the spirit in which it was intended. I am not yet satisfied that we have satisfactorily answered the plea for information with reference to the Institute's activities. I shall give the question serious consideration between now and the next Board meeting and bring it up then for further discussion.

In the meantime I would like to have a copy of Mr. Marsh's letter sent to each member of the outgoing Board who will also be a member of the new Board. Please also include Mr. Sturgis.

Yours very truly,

Burt L. Fenner

How about To new members

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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
THE OCTAGON, WASHINGTON, D. C.

COPY

Marsh, W m J

2-3

January 6th, 1917.

My dear Mr. Marsh:-

After your visit to the Octagon, I inquired of Mr. Frederick W. Perkins, Chairman of the Institute's Committee on Chapters, whether a non-Institute member of long standing is eligible for the office of Treasurer in the Chapter, notwithstanding Article six, Section six of the fourth paragraph of the new By-laws.

Mr. Perkins has replied today as follows:

"Existing non-Institute chapter members whose charter or incorporate rights to office are inalienable may hold office of Treasurer This would accord with the letter but not the spirit of By-laws which intends that only Institute members shall be chapter officers and yields only in case of inalienable existing rights".

I trust this will prove a satisfactory answer and that you will call on me if there is any further information that I can furnish or secure for you.

Very truly yours,

Executive Secretary.

Mr. William J. Marsh,
Washington, D. C.

COPY TO
FILES PRESIDENT SECRETARY TREASURER
K.B

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
THE OCTAGON, WASHINGTON, D. C.

2-3
COPY
Marsh

October 1, 1945

Memorandum for the Records:

Walter G. Peter, Architect and Member of A.I.A., deceased in 1945, was a member of the firm of Marsh and Peter.

As of possible use in future calls from persons who might wish to contact the responsible party who could arrange to supply plans of buildings designed by Mr. Peter, they should get in touch with the Executor of his estate:

Mr. C. F. R. Ogilby
Metropolitan Bank Building
Washington, D. C.

So far as we know, no architects are carrying on the work of the former firm of Marsh and Peter, as both are deceased.

FHG

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