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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ber of small homes built with the number of plans supplied by the A. S. H. S. B. will show just how far short. Why this condition? Simply because the small-home builder is inclined to follow the line of least resistance and the other factors of the building industry, like sheep, follow the same course.

There are literally hundreds of agencies offering small-house plans in this country and the total number of plans (good, bad, and indifferent) would run into the tens of thousands. The small-home builder can buy a plan for the cost of a postage stamp on upward. Every contractor who has built a dozen houses has a plan library all his own. It might even be added that an occasional lumber dealer has been known to offer free plans. Is it any wonder that *your* bureau is not called on for more plans?

We dealers think we have prolific and tough competition but you architects are in worse shape. But it is not only within the industry that you have competition, but your worst competitors are the draftsmen in the employ of the autobody companies, those artists who sketch the allurements of travel—those designers of beautiful furs, clothing and jewelry. The greatest competitors of the building industry are the transportation, amusement and vanity industries. And this is the most serious of the problems that face us. We must face the fact that these other industries are better salesmen than we are.

Just two things have made a six billion dollar building program possible in the face of this competition: first, the housing shortage brought about by war conditions; and, second, the American's inherent love of, and desire for, a home of his own. *The force of these two factors is gradually diminishing.* The housing shortage is being gradually caught up with and unless something is done to stimulate home ownership on a larger scale—a few more six billion dollar years will see us completely caught up.

Another discouraging and detrimental factor which has entered the building industry and is increasing in numbers and destructive capacity is the so-called "Jerry Builder." He is to the building industry what a fake oil promoter is to the oil industry. The "Jerry Builder" has four parts, the "Jerry Architect," the "Jerry Contractor," the "Jerry Dealer," and the "Jerry Owner." The "Jerry Architect" is the one who produces the two-cent plan. The "Jerry Contractor" bids too low and cuts every corner to eke out a profit, to the serious loss and disappointment of the owner. The "Jerry Dealer" who is blind to everything except his own selfish interest and who, too, cuts every corner to eke out a profit, and finally, the "Jerry Owner," who is too careless or ignorant to take the proper precautions in his building program. This "Jerry Builder" must be removed from the industry or at least his ravages minimized.

Perhaps you have noticed the tendency of lumbermen to get directly to the owner in a building program. That policy is not to eliminate the reputable architect and contractor. We are ever anxious to, and do, cooperate with these, but this policy is an effort to protect the owner against the "Jerry Architect, Contractor and Dealer."

These are some of the facts with regard to the present situation in the American Building Industry. Out of these facts arise certain specific problems for the building industry to solve.

The architect's part in solving these problems is logically a large one.

From a lumberman's viewpoint there are certain things he can and should do from the start. It would seem a good plan to tackle the present problem of the small house plan. You are on the right track in providing the right kind of plans at low cost through your service bureau—but you do not go far enough. Your costs must be lower, your dis-

tribution widened. There are two ways of lowering costs: to give the same service for less money or more service for the same money. You may work along both lines.

Centralization of the distribution of plans would be a tremendous help. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if there should be one central service station under the supervision of the American Institute of Architects in every city where every man in the city who wanted to build a home could go for a plan? At this central station you could have a library of all available house plans from the postage stamp plan up. It should not take the directors of that station long to find the right plan to fit the requirement of every home builder.

Why would not such a central plan station be practical? The realtors would welcome it, reputable contractors would be glad to avail themselves of such a service; it would be a godsend to every reputable material dealer; every worth-while factor of the industry would endorse it, and with all factors endorsing it, distribution would be simple.

Only two drawbacks appear: management and costs. The management should be in the hands of, or closely supervised by, capable architects. The management would be required to see that every factor of the industry got a square deal, as well as the home builder. Difficulties would vanish under such management.

There remains only the knotty problem of costs. We have said that plan costs for the small home must be lowered. Well, the costs could be lowered in a central station because the tremendous waste of the dozens of more or less elaborate plan services in every city would be eliminated.

On the other hand, your literature from the Service Bureau states that your plans are furnished practically at cost. This means then that the architect receives his profit more from planning larger dwellings than the average small home. Isn't it logical that if all small homes were under the supervision of architects it would be much easier to sell the services of an architect on a larger home and thereby increase your profits? Why cannot architects, realtors, contractors and material men cooperate on a program whereby the man who is building a home of two thousand square feet and under could have his plan without cost, by depositing a fee at the time of receiving the plan, said fee to be refunded at the completion of the home. Then concentrate on selling plans for homes from two thousand square feet up on a graduating scale of profit-producing prices. The deeper you delve into the possibilities of this plan the more practical the scheme sounds.

ARTHUR A. HOOD.

NOTE: Mr. Hood concluded his paper with an imaginative elaboration of the duties that might be performed by such a "central plan station," but as these do not bear specifically on the subject under discussion we are obliged to omit them for lack of space.

Obituary

Alfred Dwight Foster Hamlin

Elected to the Institute in 1911

To Fellowship in 1916

Died at New York City, 21 March, 1926

Mr. Hamlin, professor in the School of Architecture at Columbia University for twenty-two years, was killed in New York by an automobile.

A born idealist, he came of Puritan stock, and inherited that nobility of soul and courage which carried his father's crusade for Christian enlightenment to victory in the Near

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East. In that atmosphere he was born with the ideals which ruled his life, given as it was to the cause of helping others to see truth and beauty.

He prepared for his life work at Amherst, then at the School of Architecture of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, and later made extensive studies of the principal monuments of architecture in Christian lands.

He was accomplished as a linguist in both classical and modern languages, and his mother tongue, English, flowed in pure, beautiful volume. His writings clearly expressed his ideas in a forceful, convincing, and scholarly style.

His books on the *History of Architecture* and *History of Ornament* set a new standard of correct teachings in these subjects and his numerous essays and lectures are profound in illuminating the humanism of our inherited record of the building art.

To the School of Architecture and to the realization of his ideals of scholarship and professional attainment he gave his whole busy life. A real architect in knowledge and feeling, his teaching was valuable to the student both in its sound instruction and cultural import.

In his teaching record of forty-three years at the University, Professor Hamlin was an indefatigable worker for the School, the success of which was his one ambition, but he always laid down his pen when a student came to him, for it was his pleasure to help the inquiring mind along the right road. He was lovable, and beloved of his students and co-workers, with whom he worked in sweet accord.

Courageous in the right, he was a fierce fighter against wrong, accepting no compromise in principles. To him the way of truth was normal, verity was always expected; his cleanly soul abhorred deception, and he could not abide any one so base as to cheat.

Professor Hamlin received the degree of M. A. from Amherst in 1885, and the degree of LL.D. from St. John's College, in 1912. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, a member of the Archaeological Institute of America, of the City Plan Committee of the Merchants' Association, and of the Century Club. He was Chairman of the Art Committee to raise funds for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

His interest in the Near East, especially in Armenia and Greece, continued throughout his entire life. In 1919 he made an extended tour of the Near East as a Special Commissioner of the Greek Relief Committee, for which he was decorated by the Greek Government.

Surely he digged not in the earth to hide the talent given him! He has gone to show his good work to his Master and to receive his just reward. His Master will say—"Welcome, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."
WILLIAM A. BORING.

J. B. Noel Wyatt

Elected to the Institute in 1875

To Fellowship in 1889

Died at Baltimore, Md., 25 February, 1926

Mr. Wyatt was born 3 May, 1847, in Baltimore. When his family moved to Cambridge, Mass., he entered Harvard, graduating with a B.A. in 1870. After six months, studying

at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he spent three years in Europe in travel and at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Returning to Baltimore to enter the architectural profession, he presently formed a partnership with Joseph Evans Sperry. This firm designed the Mercantile Trust & Deposit Company Building and St. Michael and All Angels' Church. Later he formed the partnership of Wyatt & Nolting, with William G. Nolting, which—during the forty years of its existence, up to the time of his death—was responsible for a number of important buildings in Baltimore, notably the Fifth Regiment Armory, the Keyser Building (in which the firm's offices are located), the Garrett Building, the Federal Land Bank, the Harriet Lane Home, one of the units of the Johns Hopkins Hospital; and the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Sabillasville. The War Risk Insurance Building in Washington, the Baltimore Country Club, and many of the fine residences in the Roland Park section of Baltimore were designed by the firm, which also won the competition for the new Baltimore Court House. When the new campus for Johns Hopkins University was selected, Mr. Wyatt was chosen to serve with Walter Cook and Frederick Law Olmstead as the advisory board in its architectural development.

Mr. Wyatt was the oldest member of the Institute in Baltimore, and one of the first members of the BALTIMORE CHAPTER, of which he was past president.

Ernest George Washington Dietrich

Elected to the Institute in 1921

Died at Freeport, N. Y., 24 December, 1924

The BROOKLYN CHAPTER requests publication of the following memorial notice of Mr. Dietrich, whose sudden death at Freeport, L. I., the village where he resided, was a great loss to the profession and his many friends. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 22 February, 1857, he was educated in the local public schools and was later graduated from Duff's College, Pittsburgh. He also attended the Western College of Pennsylvania, now known as the University of Pittsburgh, and studied architecture under Drum & Kuhn. During the years 1881-3, he was employed by James T. Steen, a Pittsburgh architect.

In 1884 there was formed, with Mr. C. M. Bartberger, a partnership known as Bartberger & Dietrich, located in Pittsburgh. This was dissolved in 1889 due to Mr. Dietrich's desire to enter practice in New York City. For many years he specialized in residential work but in his later practice his work became general. He was elected to the Institute in 1921, was at one time Treasurer of the BROOKLYN CHAPTER, and a member of the Fine Arts Federation.

This brief outline of his career will perhaps mean little to those without knowledge of his personal qualities. He was a man of sterling character, kind, considerate, always a gentleman, ready to render service and to give advice to anyone who asked, and to work for a worthy cause. In brief, to know him was to love him, and his passing was a grief to his many friends who held him in their highest esteem.

WILLIAM H. STANGLE,

CHARLES C. WAGNER.