

# AIA Library and Archives

## The American Institute of Architects Architectural Biography Project

(The following is a somewhat abbreviated form specifically designed for the purpose of updating the records of the members of the College of Fellows.)

Information on more than 100,000 architects is contained in the AIA Archives, a part of the AIA Library and Archives at AIA Headquarters in Washington. This material is heavily used by members, scholars, the press, AIA staff and others. The ABP is designed to insure that material on the membership becomes a part of that collection, already the largest collection of biographical and project data on American architects in a single collection. The form evolved from requests for information made to the Archives. You may fill in the blanks on the form, or provide data already prepared, or both. Firm brochures, articles about the firm and its work, articles about individual members of the firm, are especially desirable.

(Please type or print all entries)

Architect's Name: VERGER, MORRIS DAVID  
Last First Middle

State: CALIFORNIA

County: LOS ANGELES City: LOS ANGELES AIA Chapter: LA / AIA

Date form prepared: Nov 17, 1992 By whom prepared: Morris D. Verger

1. Personal history (please furnish complete data: a biographical data sheet, curriculum vitae, firm or individual history, etc., may also be submitted):

a. Date of birth: MARCH 25, 1915

b. Place of birth: FT. WORTH, TEXAS

c. Names of parents: DORA AND JOSEPH VERGER

d. Education (school, degree, year): UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
A.B., School of Architecture 1943

2. Type of current employment (please circle appropriate word): individual practice partnership firm member government industry education other

3. Name of practice/employment: Morris D. Verger, FAIA Architect/Planner

6/25  
ACK

ack  
12/20/92  
tw



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4. Address of practice employment: 10801 National Blvd #570, LA 90064  
LOS ANGELES, CALIF 90064

5. Current address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Practice/Employment history (firms, location, positions held, etc):  
Self employed

7. Year architectural practice began and where: 1951 Los Angeles

8. Architectural licenses (give state or states, number and year issued):  
CALIFORNIA 1951

9. Year retired from architectural practice and where (if no longer in active practice); Disposition of office records, drawings, correspondence, other project files (please identify successor firm, institution or collection, name and address of private owner, etc., holding records): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Remarks concerning type of practice (include specialty if any, and comment on architectural philosophy, general practice and influence on practice; attach additional sheets if desired):  
SEE ENCLOSED SHEETS & REPRINTS

11. Work for which you were or are architect, or were or are associated with others as architect (you may wish to list or describe your most important commissions, or projects representative of the practice; lists previously prepared or publications on work may also be submitted; a chronological listing is suggested; use extra sheets if desired):

Date	Location	Project, Name and Type of Building	Client	Cost
<u>SEE ENCLOSED</u>				

12. Year joined AIA 1951 Year became Fellow 1974

13. Portrait photograph of architect (preferably 8 x 10 black and white; please identify photographer, credit line required, any restrictions on use; more than one may be submitted): \_\_\_\_\_

14. Photographs of work (preferably 8 x 10 black and white; please identify each photograph by subject and location, date of photograph, credit required if any, and or/name of photographer; DO NOT USE BALL POINT PEN OR SCOTCH TAPE ON PHOTOGRAPHER; LIST BELOW PHOTOGRAPHS SUBMITTED, WITH DATA, USING EXTRA SHEETS AS NEEDED):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Honors or awards won (please include name of award, purpose of award, by whom awarded and date; a list may be attached):

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16. Publications by or about you or your work (include citation given author, title, publication name, publisher, date; you may supply copy of publication or a list previously prepared):

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17. If information about you or your work is included in biographical dictionaries such as Who's Who, not already included, please list:

WHO'S ~~WHO~~ WHO

18. Please add such additional data as you may wish on additional sheets.

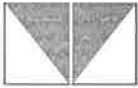
19. May this information be made available to AIA Archives users? Circle either yes or no.

Return form to:

Tony P. Wrenn, Hon. AIA, CA  
Archivist  
The American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

\*

Morris D. Verger  
Signature  
MORRIS D. VERGER  
Name  
Nov 17, 1992  
Date



MORRIS D. VERGER, FAIA • ARCHITECT/PLANNER

VITAE

Architectural Practice -- Established 1951

Partial list of completed projects;

Building Types: Institutional, educational, medical, industrial, commercial and residential.

Flow and Control System Design: Office, industrial, warehousing and distribution operations.

Programming Projects: Terman Engineering Center, Stanford University; City of Hope Medical Center, Duarte; Huntington Drive and Lanterman High Schools, Los Angeles; Retirement Home, Southern California Presbyterian Homes, Irvine; S.E. Rykoff & Co., Los Angeles.

Forensic Architecture

Expert technical witness, Consultant to legal profession in preparing standard of care documentation, Member, American Arbitration Association.

Lectures

University of California, Los Angeles; Cal State University, San Luis Obispo; University of Southern California.

Published Projects and Articles

Architectural Forum, Architectural Record, Architectural West, Art International, Better Homes & Gardens, Building News, Daily Pacific Builder, Designers West, L.A. Architect, Los Angeles Times Home Magazine, Office Design, Construction Moderne and California Builder.

Monograph: "The Design of Interstitial Space."

American Institute of Architects

Corporate Member - 1951, Elected to Fellowship - 1974  
Los Angeles, Chapter: Director 1966-68, President 1975  
California Council: Director 1967-68, Secretary 1970, President 1980  
National: Continuing Education Committee 1971

California State Board of Architectural Examiners

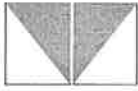
Commissioner - Practice and Enforcement Committee 1981 - 1984

Education

B.A., School of Architecture, University of California, Berkeley  
Post Graduate Courses and Seminars in Management, Communication, Behavioral Science, Hospital Planning and Urban Planning.







23rd Street

**FRANK D. LANTERMAN HIGH SCHOOL**  
**GRADES 9-12 LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PUPIL CAPACITY: 400 HARRY HANDLER, Superintendent**  
**MORRIS D. VERGER, FAIA Architect/Planner**

St. James Place

PARKING

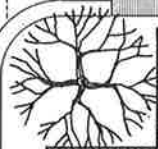
**PERFORMING ARTS, MULTI-PURPOSE AND FOOD SERVICES BLDG.**  
 music and dressing rooms, auditorium  
 kitchen, dining, teachers lounge  
 and transportation office

**GYMNASIUM**  
 physical education classrooms,  
 toilets, showers and lockers

**DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR THE HANDICAPPED**  
 classrooms, common area and clean-up room

private property

private property



**ADMINISTRATION AND CLASSROOM BLDG.**  
 classrooms, speech therapy rooms,  
 testing and conference rooms,  
 health unit and administration offices

ST. JAMES PARK (city park)

COVERED LUNCH AREA AND ARCADES

**NATATORIUM**  
 hydro therapy pools,  
 showers and lockers

ORCHARD

ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE

GARDEN

**VOCATIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS BLDG.**  
 classrooms and shops

St. James Park



Lanterman High School for the developmentally disabled was designed and built to satisfy the traditional goal of providing the best possible education and training within the available resources.

The inside pages are a reprint from Designers West. The back page briefly summarizes how Interactive Planning, an untraditional planning method, was used for the planning and design of a building to serve a traditional goal.

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# EDUCATION UPDATE

**S**usan, a hypothetical person, is a teenage girl who was born with Down's Syndrome. Her muscular control, hand-eye coordination and music response are at a level equal to others her age without this condition. However, her hearing, eyesight, memory, social awareness and ability to see a task in concept are limited. Susan and millions of other children born with developmental disabilities do have a capacity to be trained to perform repetitive tasks and learn acceptable social behavior. (Developmental disability is the term now used to replace the phrase "mentally retarded.")

It is surprising to find that many stereotypes still exist concerning the developmentally disabled. Do we believe, for example, that they are not aware of their environment? Or do they, as do those who are "mentally fit," notice when spaces are dull, institutional, cramped or downright dehumanizing?

Los Angeles architect Morris D. Verger, FAIA, recently had the opportunity to help high school age students like our imaginary Susan. Verger was responsible for designing the Frank D. Lanterman High School which opened its doors to more than 400 developmentally disabled students in the Los Angeles area who have been classified as trainable by the school's administrative staff. The school relates, to an unusual degree, the design of the physical environment to the sensory responses of these particular students and their individual needs, to the specialized curriculum and to the skills of the staff.

Says Verger, "Teaching the developmentally disabled requires special facilities, yet the facilities should not call attention to themselves. It is important to retain a normal appearing physical environment in the school so students are prepared to function in similar surroundings once outside.

"As with any project undertaken, I, along with more than 200 people who assisted in various stages of the planning process, set about to establish



## *Frank D. Lanterman High School*

### DESIGN FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN BY MORRIS D. VERGER, FAIA  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DENIS FREPPEL

clearly defined goals by assembling "resources," which are the capabilities, knowledge and experience of the teachers, parents, administrative staff, school board and even people in the community. This rich base of information was collected through an interactive, visual group participatory process. Then, I developed a computer program to make this data usable. Part of the goal was to find a way of advancing the state of the art of teaching the developmentally disabled!"

Verger approached the designing of specific spaces by having each person on staff fill out a form describing in detail the functions he or she would perform in that space. The main question asked by the architect was not 'how do you want the room designed,' but instead 'what do you use and do in the room?'

Rather than institutionalizing the students and thereby creating a burden for society, Verger and the staff believe that it is of prime importance to have them learn useful skills in a constructive environment. Concurrently, the staff needs to determine the students'



capabilities and limits for training. The architecture of the school responds functionally in that it is designed as a mechanism for the staff and its goals. Aesthetics — contrary to the belief that the developmentally disabled are less aware of surroundings — are very important too.

"The students," notes the architect, "require direct circulation patterns, positive and limited complexity of architectural shapes and positive sensory reinforcement."

An example of a direct circulation pattern is the layout of the school's hallways where at all times one can

*Continued on page 150*

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# EDUCATION UPDATE

Continued from page 148

see the beginning and the end, thus determining where one is. This is also limited complexity; students do not feel lost. An intersection in the hallway where stairs, windows looking into offices and mirrored panels can be found is positive complexity. Verger took such elements into consideration in planning the hallways as adequate lighting, reverberant sound qualities, durable building materials, enough height and width to handle students without crowding. Creating an absence of chaos was his key objective. Positive sensory reinforcement in the hallways take the form of carpeting, wainscoting and handrails — the latter two scaled for the children and all three in different colors to distinguish their functions.



It is interesting to note that, for the most part, students are exposed to the same equipment and classroom layout found in regular high schools. This is a way of exposing them to what must be dealt with outside the school. Says Verger, "It's a disservice to purposely treat them as though there was something wrong with them — that would be institutionalizing!"

Classrooms are of a standard size, although the teacher-student ratio is about 1-12 with each teacher having an aide. Movable partitions are used to divide rooms into alcoves for special training. All rooms contain conventional desks, tables and chairs without special devices or designs that would call attention to handicaps. It is in these classrooms that students learn physically repetitive, salable skills. Since the children have a limited capacity to deal with abstractions (such as languages or algebra), they learn by rote rather than reason.

A parents' lounge is available for smaller activities such as birthday parties. This is the only facility designed for parents' participation in any of the school's day-to-day functions because of the emphasis on the school being like, not unlike, other high schools.

For the sake of safety, hot water faucets in the student lavatories are thermostatically controlled to prevent burning of hands. Otherwise the toilet facilities are standard.

Developmentally disabled children have a lesser capacity for maintaining their attention span; thus associating with cause and effect can often be difficult. Spills and other accidents occur quite often because of these factors, so a cleanup room provides showers and clothes washing facilities.

Colors and design elements of the neighborhood were borrowed so that the building appears as part of the community. Red shingles and white and buff colored walls lend themselves to the surrounding Hispanic-influenced architecture. Notes Verger, "The site is small, and a walled gymnasium would have crowded the site; so we put the gym outdoors with just an overhead roof and garage-like doors leading to special enclosed exercise areas. Whatever their activities, it was decided to make the students aware of the world around them."

The school's auditorium is built with varying levels so that it presents itself as a bigger classroom without an overwhelming scale. Light fixtures and air conditioning elements are suspended from wire cables to visually negate the height. To perform in front of a large or small group in the auditorium can be very difficult for these children, and this appropriately scaled space helps to place attention on people and not its dimensions.

A range of warm and cool colors can be found throughout the school in an effort to avoid, in the words of the architect, a "sensory deprivation." The goal was to satisfy sensory stimuli through the use of colors without catering to a child-like mentality. Off-white walls, rust brown and orange carpets and cool gray and blue doors are the basic interior colors for the school. "The emphasis," states the architect,



"has to be on students, not the colors. Most of the arts and crafts pieces are displayed on the classroom walls and to have yellow or pink walls would be too contrasting to the students' handiwork. With off-white walls, the handiwork or even the students' clothing becomes more important, and that's what we wanted.

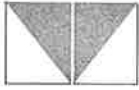
"Each part of the building has a sensory reinforcement, such as the hallways' mirrored walls which create a sense of space. (All mirrored edges are butted and polished for safety.) There is also a good sense of movement and sound reverberation — this place is lively. Ramps in place of some staircases induce a rhythmic flow to otherwise static spaces; reflective panels ringing classroom walls add visual interest to dead space below ceilings; and grass-edged walkways of concrete and wood with 7-foot-high wood and plaster overhangs bring a patio feel to passage areas. We didn't depend upon one sense to be the key index in designing spaces for the school."

Although Verger's role in the project is now complete, his information gathering and processing system can continue, by the staff comparing achievements with expectations periodically. That's a real plus for this undeveloped area of design: the advancement of education for the developmentally disabled will depend on such information upgrading.

—Gregory Firlotte

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The guidelines for planning Lanterman were developed from a series of group decisions that resulted from the unique, visual thinking process of Interactive Planning. Under this method, the decision making and planning were facilitated by the collection of individual wants and needs, which were categorized and enabled the persons involved to envision the end product.

Practices and expectations of the School District were expressed, recorded and displayed. The process documented the traditional, general goals; critical details; individual goals and expectations; and the many specialized tasks considered necessary.

Planning groups were formed from representatives of the Los Angeles School District, the California Department of Education, administrative and teaching staffs, parents and regulatory agency officials. Also represented were public and private groups with programs to help with training or employment of the developmentally disabled, as well as those trying to gain acceptance for these individuals.

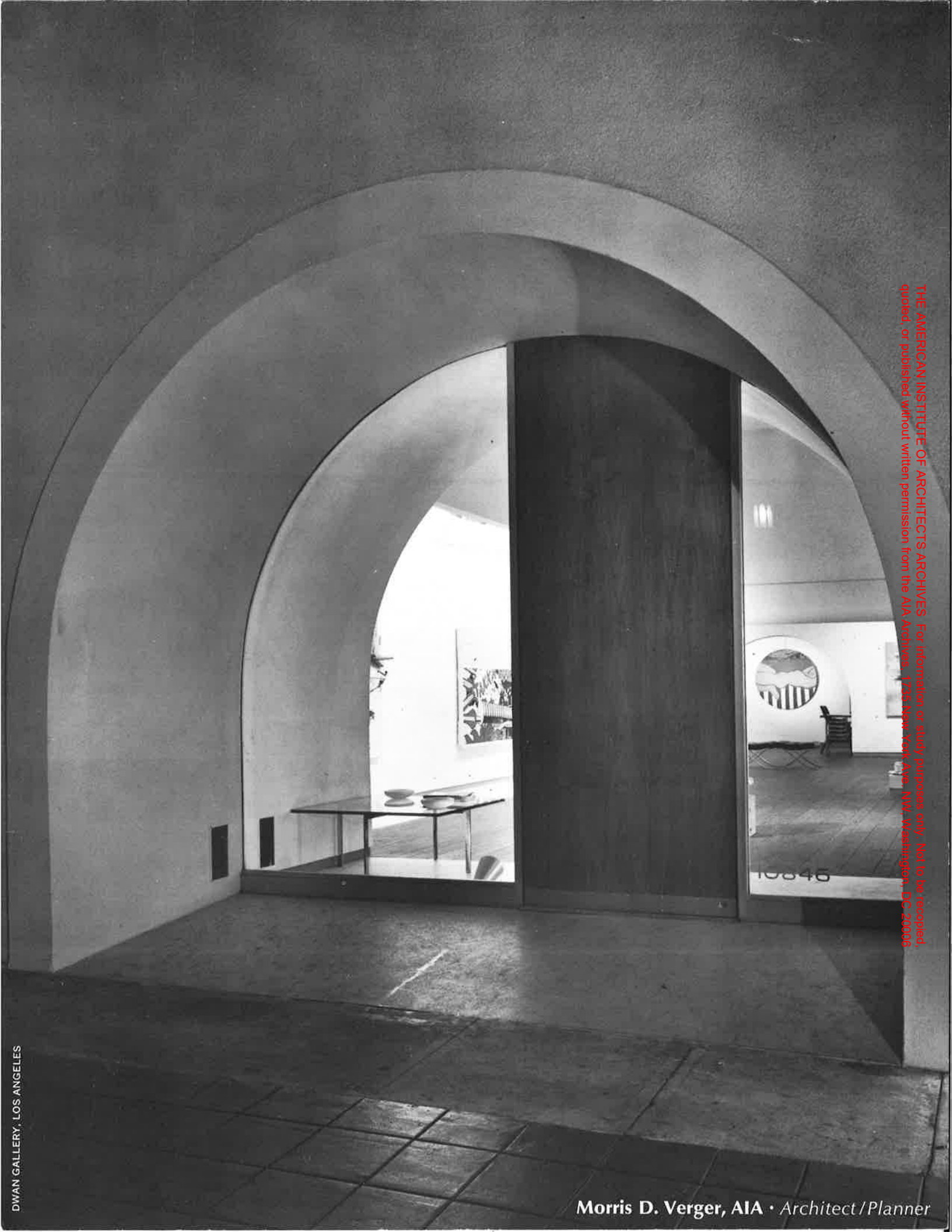
More than 200 persons participated in the visual, group think sessions, during which assessments were made for the following areas: the general teaching goals, the curriculum, the quality of the environment, the activities that would take place and a budget. Participants with specialized knowledge and responsibility supplied detailed information and the opinions needed for decision making and planning.

Interactive Planning allowed the participants to display information and opinions in an orderly and understandable format. The assemblage of key factors at such a forum minimized the dissent of pressure groups that advocated single-minded goals and plans. Agreements on general, traditional wants were quickly reached, with few conflicts.

Interactive Planning also enabled the decision makers and planners to focus their attention on what they really wanted: the design and construction of a facility that allows immediate use of proven educational methods and flexibility to make constructive changes.

The result is a school facility that helps the students feel that they "can make it in the world" and faculty members feel that their environment supports their teaching efforts.





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DWAN GALLERY, LOS ANGELES

Morris D. Verger, AIA • Architect/Planner

DWAN GALLERY



SUNSET BROADWAY CHINATOWN CENTER



The value of architecture/planning should be measured by how well it serves the owner/client. One of the criteria is how well the design helps the owner/client manage the activities that will be conducted in the facility.

Planning and design should be pragmatic and aesthetic expressions of the owner/client's intent. Perhaps, the essence of a design is the satisfaction the owner gets when the new facility not only meets his expectations, but reveals and exploits new and unexpected capabilities.

Mr. Verger has designed into these projects a versatility that lends itself to growth and change, as well as to new circumstances which frequently come into being when a new facility is born.

BINDER RESIDENCE



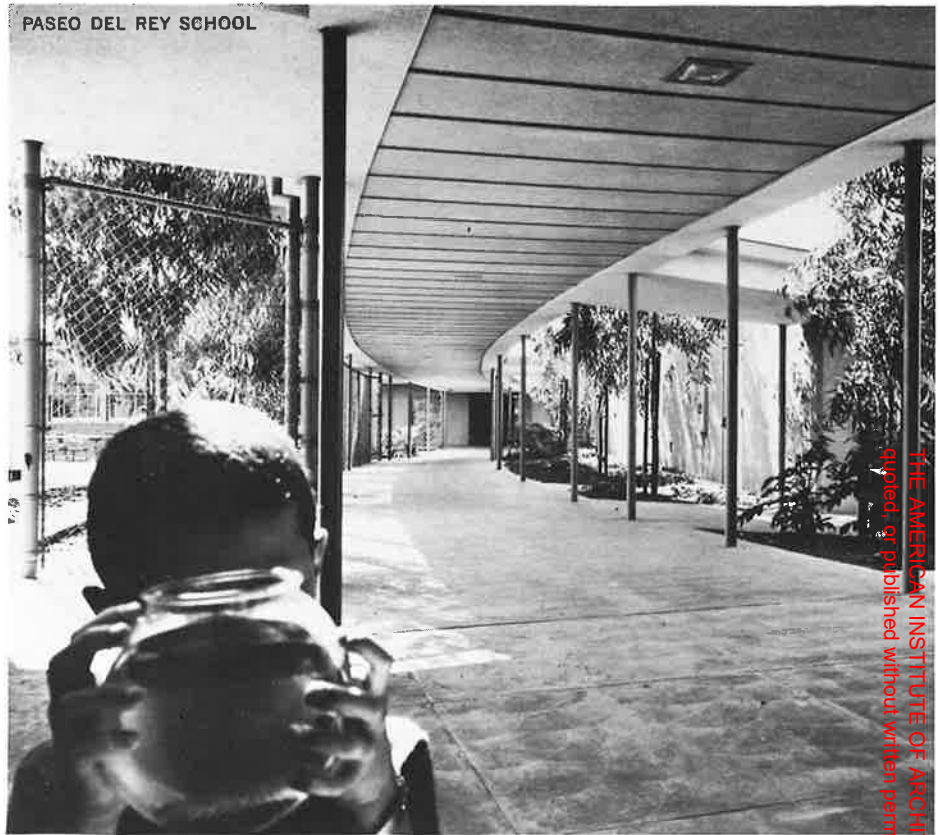
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH, LONG BEACH

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NO. VALLEY JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

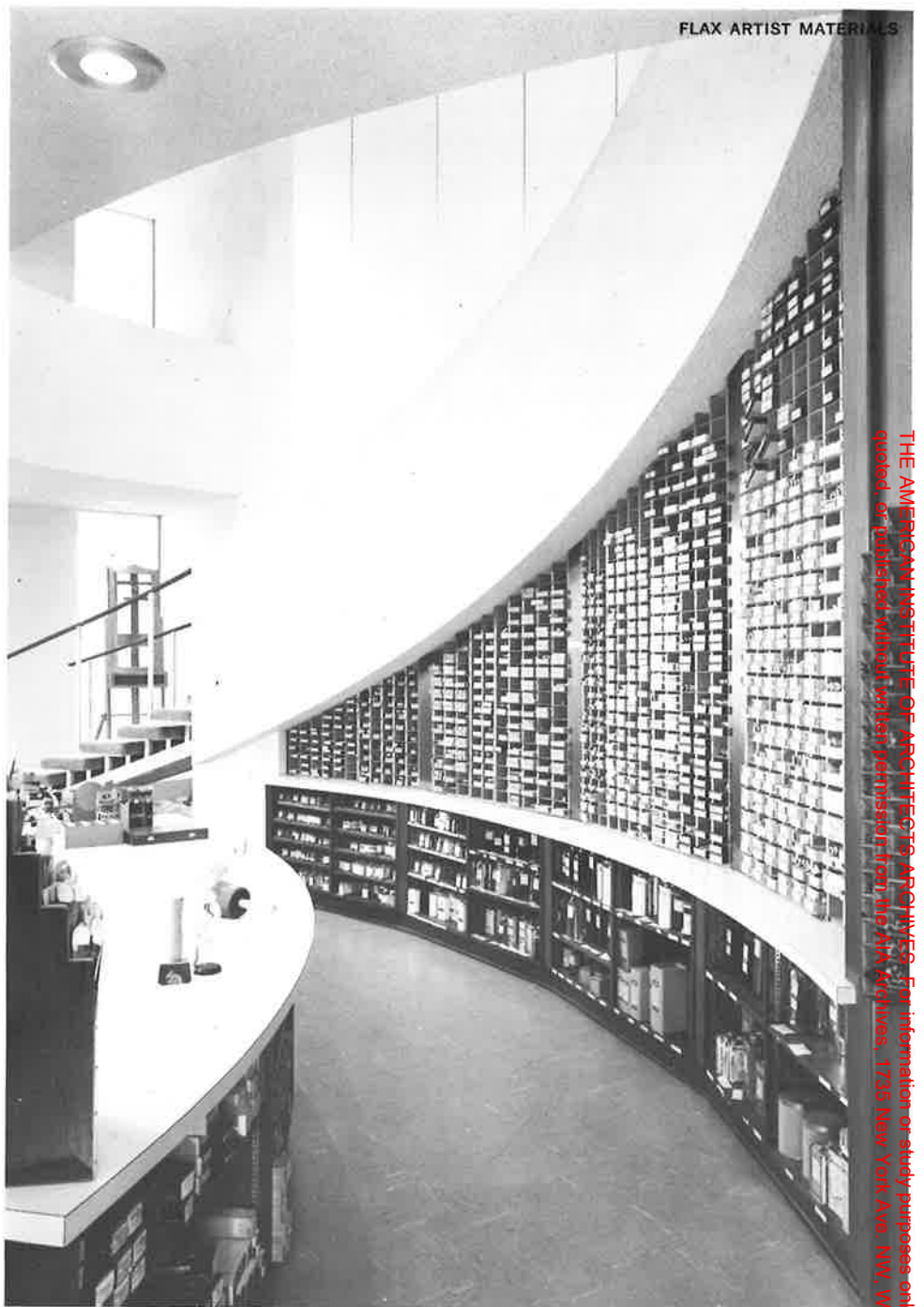


PASEO DEL REY SCHOOL



WORKMEN'S CIRCLE CENTER

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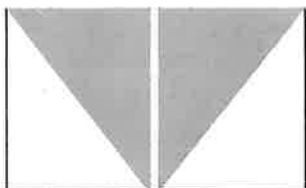
Mr. Verger believes that architectural design is effective only when the client finds it so. Several years ago, he and a behavioral scientist colleague, Dr. Elias H. Porter, developed a technique for achieving effective design. During the early planning stages for a project, this technique involves the people who will manage the activities which will occur in the new facility. This approach, called Interactive Planning System (IPS), provides for the input of valuable knowledge on the function of space by those who are most knowledgeable, and provides direction for the architect in achieving a design that is practical, versatile and aesthetically appealing.

The wisdom of this approach to architecture/planning has been reaffirmed in the design of hospitals, schools, churches and offices. This approach ensures the realization of the owner's intent.

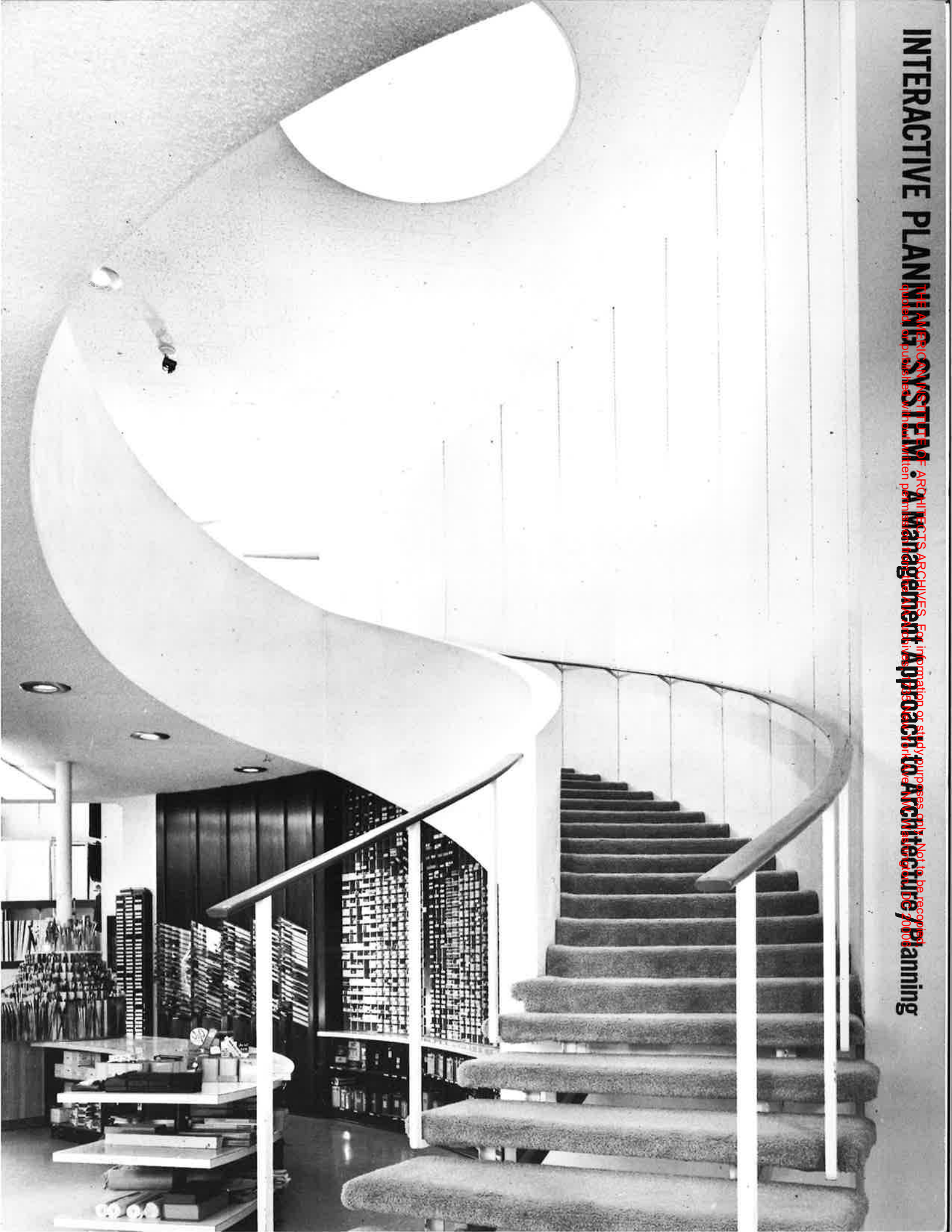
## PROJECTS AND COMMISSIONS

- Abbott Laboratories** (Diagnostic and Research)\*
- Menda Scientific Company** (Plastic assembly plant)
- Dorell Fabrics** (Upholstery and drapery fabrics distribution and warehouse facilities)
- IMC Corporation** (Electronic equipment manufacturing plant remodel)
- Alondra Associates** (Industrial park)
- Los Angeles Unified School District** (New schools, additions and remodels)
- City of Hope Medical Center** (Hospital and research buildings)\*
- City of Los Angeles, West Los Angeles Police Station** (Joint venture with Robert Kliegman, AIA)
- Medical Offices** (Physicians in private practice)
- The Laurence School** (Classrooms for educationally-handicapped children)
- Howard Veterinary Laboratory** (Diagnostic and research)\*
- Flax's** (Artist supply store)
- Dwan Gallery** (Art gallery)
- Unitarian Church of Long Beach** (Plaza structure and master plan)
- Sunset-Broadway Chinatown Center** (In preparation)
- Dr. Maxwell Binder**, residence, Lake Arrowhead, California
- Blake Staub**, residence, Mammoth Mountain, California

\*Consultant to project architect







**INTERACTIVE PLANNING SYSTEM**

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**A Management Approach to Architecture Planning**

Historically, architecture has been associated with the building of structures. Today, architecture must provide management with designed-in controls for effective use of space.

The innovators of Interactive Planning System (IPS) believe that no architect—regardless of how gifted he may be—can design a building that will truly fulfill all of the major requirements of his client until it is known in detail what activities interact and require control within the proposed environment.

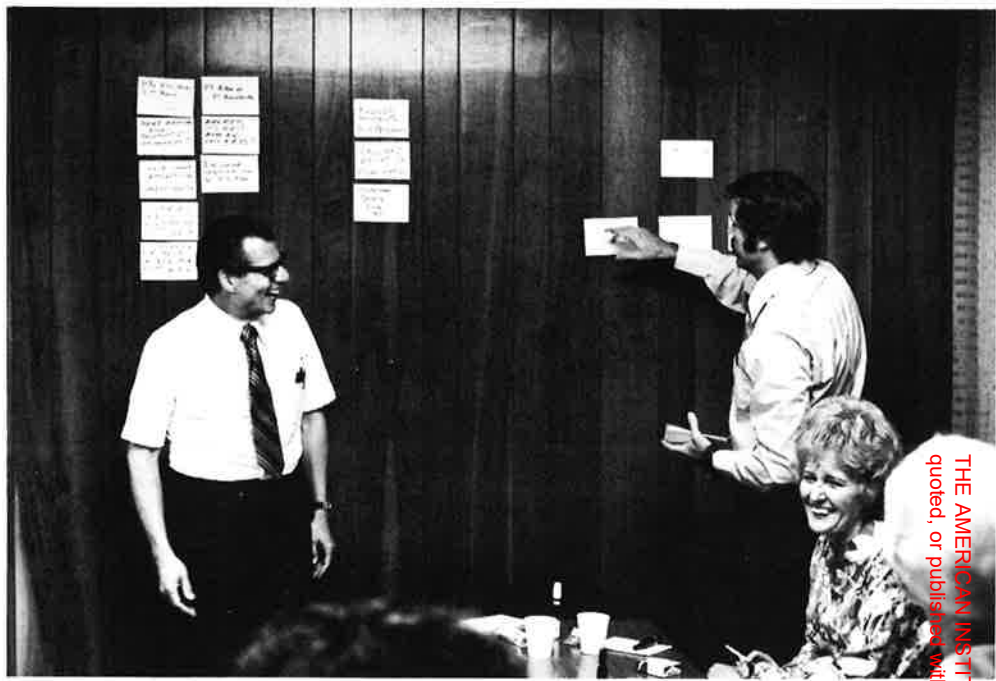
IPS forms an *ad hoc* planning team which includes those most knowledgeable about the critical interaction within the client's organization. Each member communicates his special knowledge and judgment, and is exposed to the entire spectrum of thinking of the other team members.

**WHAT the IPS approach to design planning accomplishes . . .**

- Gives management control over the work environment, rather than forcing management to adjust to it;
- Insures contributions of important information from all levels so that staff requirements throughout the facility can be determined;
- Stimulates the contribution of valuable knowledge from "unlikely" sources;
- When conflicts arise, they quickly become visible. "Trade-offs" can then be negotiated by those whose direct interests are involved.

**HOW the mechanics of IPS operate . . .**

- (1) Participants print their thoughts on cards which are mounted on the wall for all to see;
- (2) As the ideas become visible, additional cards are generated;
- (3) The cards are then positioned and repositioned until those things which should go together are together;
- (4) When, through the use of the cards, everyone is in accord, the basic plan has been developed. These final card arrangements are photographed and serve to guide the architect in his design, and also to guide management in their evaluation of the architect's designs.



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IPS enhances creativity in the planning process.

**PREMISE:** The IPS approach moves rapidly to tap the contributions which users of the space have to offer.

**GOALS:** Aesthetically-pleasing spaces that lend themselves to good management.

**EXAMPLE:** IPS was used successfully in the planning of a Unitarian church project. This example, not as specialized as a medical or industrial project, lends itself more readily to explaining IPS. The first planning group of 20 church leaders participated in an IPS session. They developed and listed the goals they would like to achieve in the new facility and the activities which would take place. The two lists were combined in a goal/activity matrix:

From this first experience, each member of the original planning group became a leader of a new planning group of 10 other members and the process was repeated until every member of the church had an opportunity to let his thoughts and wishes be known. The individual goal/activity matrices were summarized into the conclusive matrix which included activity time scheduling and individual responsibility.

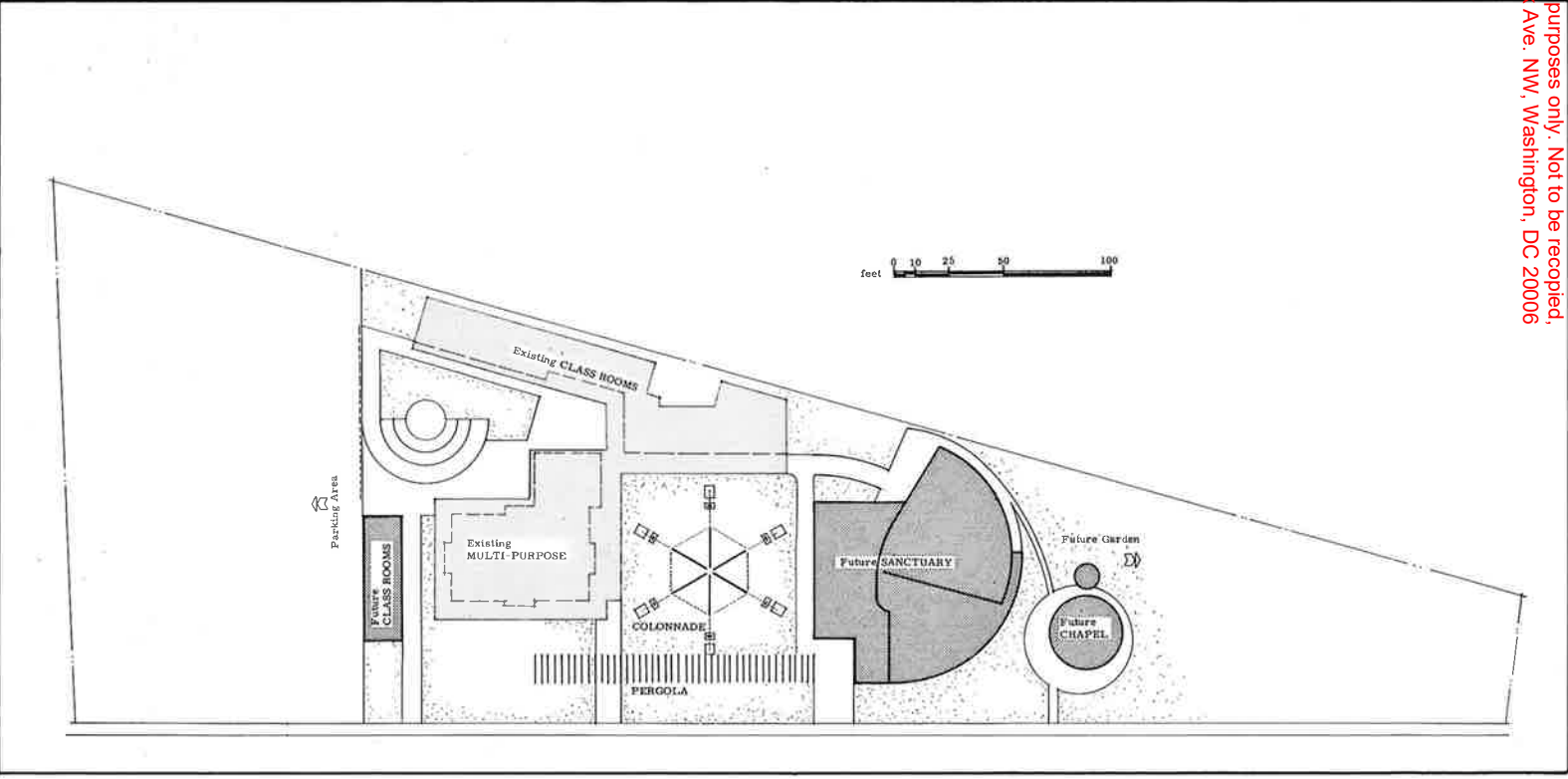
The relationships generated between the members of the church during the search for information were almost as valuable to the planning process as the information itself. Because of the relationships, which they now understood, they were able to develop agreement on what was essential and what actions should be taken. When the preliminary drawings were presented to the building committee, the conclusive matrix was used as the yardstick to measure the quality and adequacy of the solution.

IPS provides information to the architect guiding him to the design which gives users specifically what they need, not a stock solution or the answer to someone else's problem.

ACTIVITIES \ GOALS	Worship Relig. Exp. Aesthet.	Culture	Community Participation Involvement	Identity	Relig. Educ.	Fellowship	Ceremony	PERSONAL GROWTH	MANAGE- MENT EFF.
COFFEE HOURS						X			
OUTDOOR AREAS	X				X	X			
NATURAL SETTING	X			X					
COUNSELING			X		X			X	
OFFICE SPACE			X	X	X				A
BANQUETS & DANCES			X			X			
SUNDAY SERVICE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
QUIET MEDITATION	X							X	
FORUMS & FILMS		X	X	X	X			X	
CULTURAL PROGRAMS	X	X	X	X				X	
CULTURAL WORKSHOPS		X			X	X		X	
DISCUSSION GROUPS			X		X	X		X	
TEEN GAMES			X			X			
COMMITTEE MEETINGS						X			X
CHORUS CHOIR	X	X				X	X		
NURSERY									X
CHILDREN'S WORSHIP	X			X	X	X	X		
CLASSROOMS ADMIN.					X	X			X
LIBRARY & BOOKSHOP		X	X	X	X			X	



FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH, LONG BEACH



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**PREMISE:** Only the users know their individual, specific needs and what they require to manage their activities.

**GOALS: CONTROL** for the users, **DIRECTION** for the architect.

**EXAMPLE:** In the planning of a major hospital addition, IPS sessions revealed how room and department location affected the quality of patient service and the cost to the hospital for providing that service.

In a previous planning project, which was conducted in the conventional manner, the administrator was forced to consider 11 preliminary designs. With the IPS approach, only three were required, before agreement was reached. When asked how he thought IPS compared with the usual programming and design methods, the administrator said IPS was clearly faster and the data used for design were directly from the specific needs of their facility and their specific goals. In addition, the administrator reported that, for many of the hospital personnel, the IPS sessions gave them their first view of the part their work played in the overall operation of the facility.

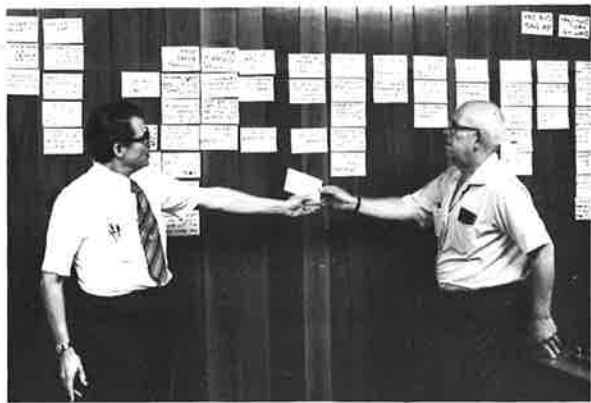
Information generated in IPS sessions is more relevant and complete, since users contribute to the planning process and discover mutual needs and interdependencies.

**PREMISE:** Only by revealing, through IPS sessions, how departments and responsibilities interlink and overlap can users and management appreciate the real needs and desires of colleagues.

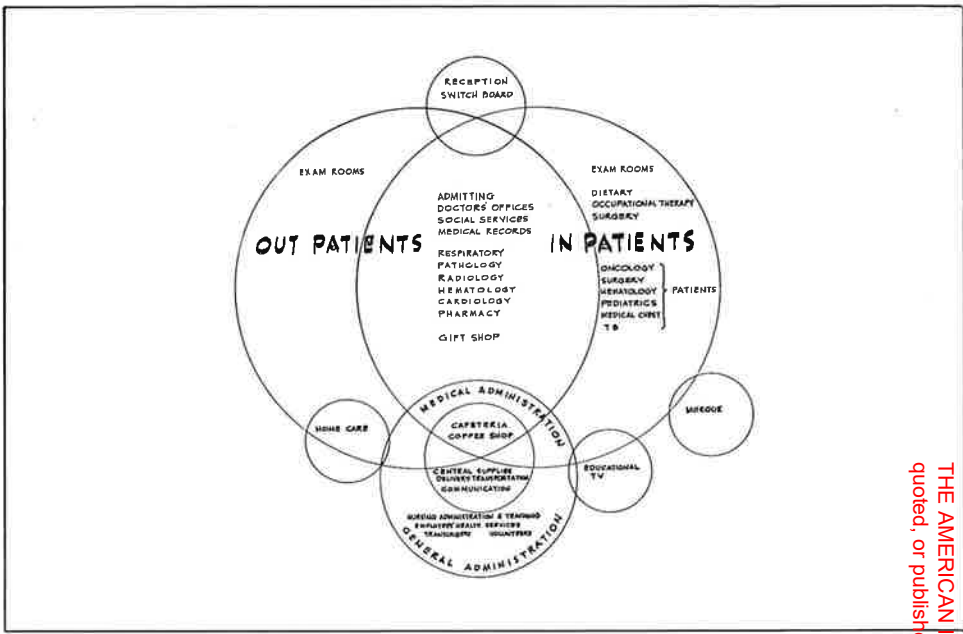
**GOAL: RELIABILITY** of information.

The effectiveness of architecture can be measured by how efficiently the space lends itself to good management. IPS has proved itself to be an effective approach to determining the quality and quantity of space that management needs to control the work environment.

**THE IPS INNOVATORS . . .**



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Mr. Verger received his architectural education at the University of California's School of Architecture at Berkeley and, upon graduation, served for three years as an associate naval architect for the U. S. Navy. During the years he has spent in private practice, he has designed schools, medical facilities, public buildings and commercial offices and has served as consultant to other architects and planners.

He has been a member of The American Institute of Architects for over two decades and has served several years as director of both the Southern California Chapter, AIA and the state AIA organization, California Council, AIA. Currently, he is serving as chairman of both the SCCAIA and CCAIA Professional Development committees.

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