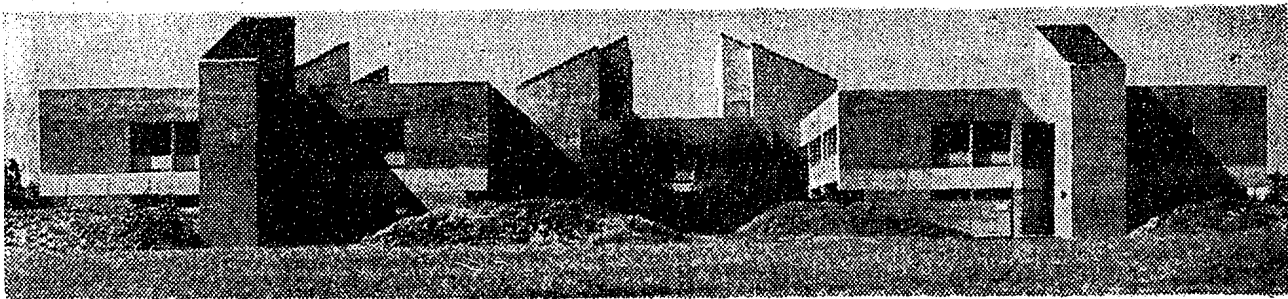


Architecture: 6 Designs Win Bard Merit Awards



Bill Rothchild

One of the Bard Awards of the City Club of New York went to the Bronx State Hospital Rehabilitation Center, designed by Gruzen & Partners for the New York State Health and Mental Hygiene Facilities Improvement Corp.

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Just a little more than 10 years ago, the City Club of New York made news by not giving its Bard Awards for Excellence in Architecture and Urban Design. It made the nonpresentation with considerable fanfare. There was nothing good enough, the City Club announced, to merit recognition in the public sector, which it alternates annually for the prizes with buildings of the private sector. The nonprize was meant to chasten city and state agencies for the parlous state of the city's public architecture.

A decade later, the picture has changed. The Bard Awards, announced today, have gone to six "outstanding achievements in publicly sponsored construction completed in the past two years within the five boroughs of New York." These include a hospital facility, a community swimming pool, and four examples of housing.

The City Club's joy in the results, however, was not untempered by criticism. No First Honor Award was given because nothing was consid-

ered a "hero achievement." Recreation and Cultural Affairs Administration; and an Merit, signifying "design assortment of housing project, client awareness, and sensitivity to surroundings." City Housing and Development Administration and the New York State Urban Development Corporation.

The real significance of the announcement, however, is the indication of a vast increase in attention to the design of socially important construction — a category that represented the nadir of architectural achievement in New York a short time ago.

The trend is more remarkable than the individual buildings. It is representative of the profession's turn to the problems of the public sector, and an accelerated concern with public and urban design categories. This is part of the social and environmental consciousness that has invaded the architectural world in recent years.

The prize-winning buildings are the Bronx State Hospital Rehabilitation Center, designed by Gruzen and Partners for the New York State Health and Mental Hygiene Facilities Improvement Corporation; the Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Pool by Morris Lapidus Associates for the New York City Parks,

Associates, built for the East Midtown Community Housing Corporation. It is on East 23d Street between First and Second Avenues.

The jury found its selections superior, but "flawed." It criticized the lack of innovative planning and construction in most of the housing, but considered the projects' markedly higher design quality a good omen for the future.

Jury members were architects Hugh Hardy, Henry C. Horowitz, Edward F. Knowles and Charles H. Warner. Donald E. Weeden represented the City Club. Allen B. Strauss was chairman of the program.

The Bard Awards, established in 1962, honor Albert S. Bard, a long-time crusader for better architecture in New York. He would be pleased that the score has gone from zero to six.