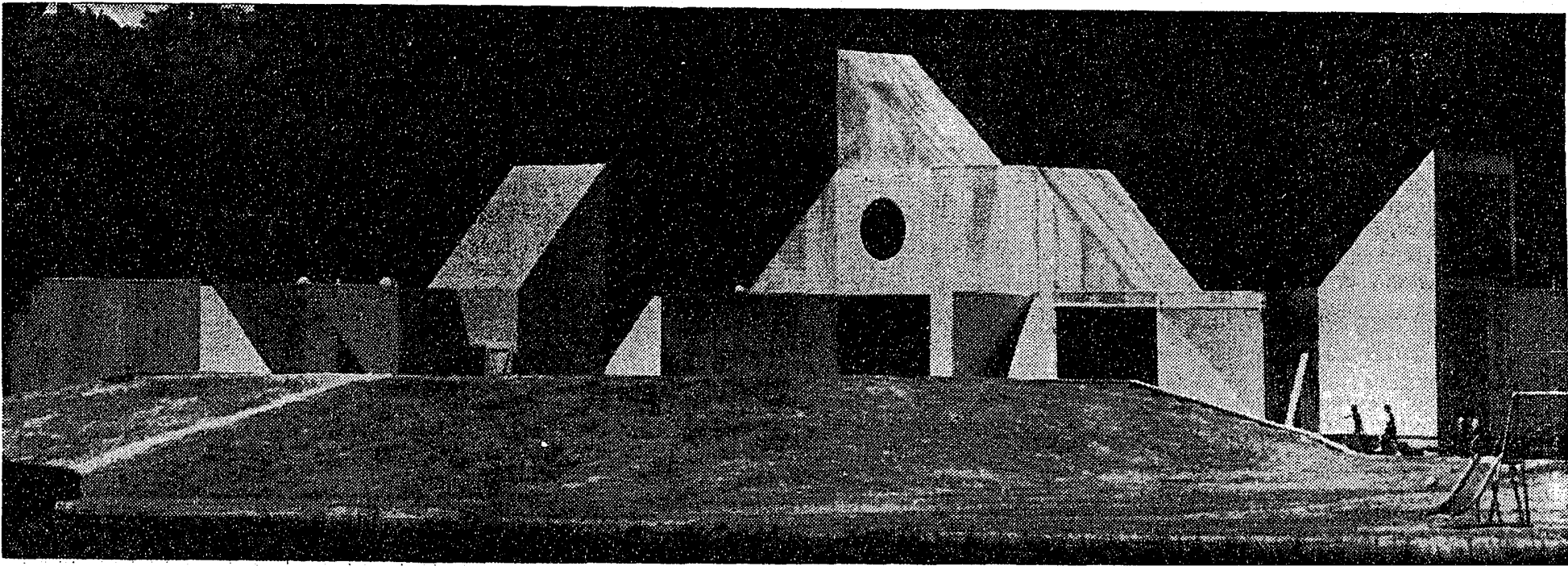


A.I.A. Bestows Awards: A.I.A. Bestows Annual Awards

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

New York Times (1923-Current file); Apr 30, 1972; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times  
pg. R1

Below, the Alley Theater in Houston, the work of Ulrich Franzen and Associates of New York. "Inside and out, a brilliant theatrical event," the A.I.A. jury said of the civic center-like building.



Of the YM-YWHA Day Camp in Mount Olive, N.J., that Claude Samton and Associates designed, the jury applauded siting of buildings and simplicity of construction, materials and finishes. Don Richardson was landscape architect.

A.I.A. Bestows Awards

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

The American Institute of Architects yesterday announced its 1972 Honor Awards, an annual event that has long since ceased to stun with surprise or titillate with anticipation, but that consistently confirms that architecture is still an art, and that some American architects produce very good buildings indeed.

The yearly spring rite of selection is a solid, predictable ritual in which the professionals single out solid, predictable work for praise by their peers. The judgment is always made just before the A.I.A. convention—this year in Houston from May 7 to 10—where the awardees get their prizes. And the results are an excellent professional weathervane of taste, style and the collective architectural psyche.

The winners present no shock, only minimal or surface controversy, and some superior design and execution. It is the best the Establishment has to offer and there is no better work anywhere in the world. This is architects' architecture.

This year there are nine winners chosen from 470 entries, of which 24 projects were visited by the jury. The selection is an interesting mix: two performing

arts complexes, one fine arts center, a convention-exhibition hall, a small day camp, a corporate headquarters, a house, and two conversions of old buildings to new uses.

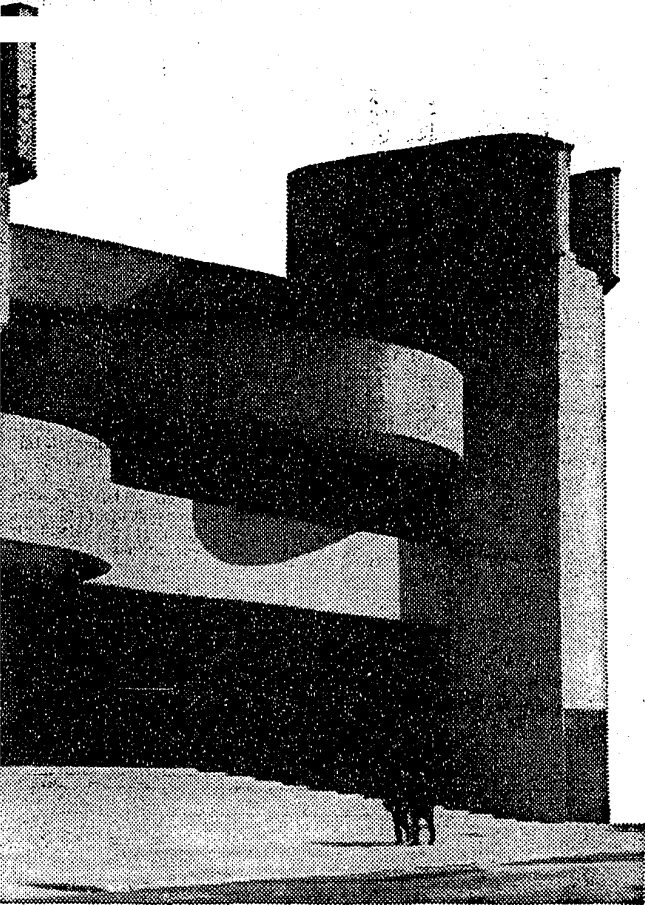
In architectural alphabetical order they are the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, by Edward Larabee Barnes of New York; the Koerfer House, Lago Maggiore, Switzerland, by Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard of New York; the Alley Theater, Houston, by Ulrich Franzen and Associates of New York; and the Mummers Theater, Oklahoma City, by John M. Johansen of New York.

Also McCormick Place, Chicago, by C. F. Murphy Associates of Chicago; the New York State Bar Center, Albany, by James Stewart Polshek and Associates of New York; YM-YWHA Day Camp, Mt. Olive, N. J., by Claude Samton and Associates of New York; the Weyerhaeuser Headquarters, Tacoma, Wash., by Skidmore, Owings' and Merrill of San Francisco; and Ice Houses I and II, San Francisco, by Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Inc., of San Francisco.

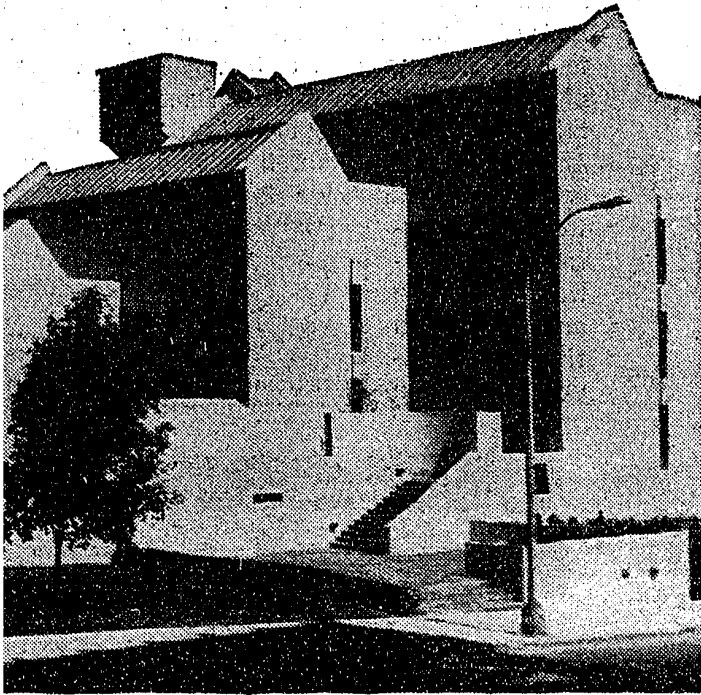
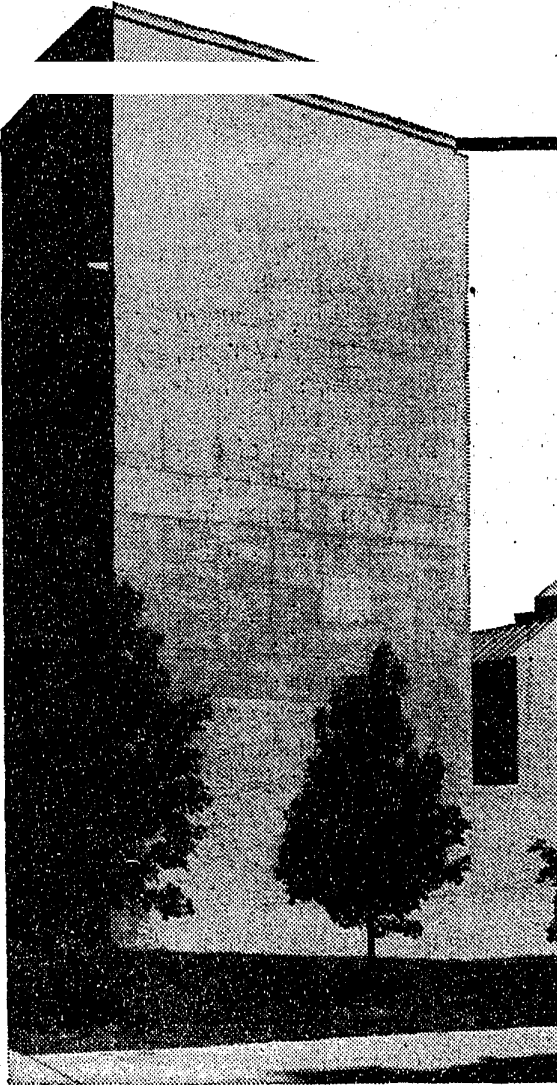
The jury consisted of Henry N. Cobb, chairman, New York; Antonin Aeck, Atlanta; Gerald L. Allison, Honolulu; John G. Dinkaloo, Hamden, Conn.; Harry M. Weese, Chicago; Harry C. Wolf, Charlotte, N. C.; and Milton L. Grigg, adviser, Charlottesville, Va.

Why do architects persist in giving awards to each other? Ideally, because they still believe in architecture as art no matter how much compromise is necessary to make it business or how much lip service is given to prove its relevance to the social condition. More cynically, or practically, because the buildings

Continued on Page 9, Col. 1



Ezra Stoller



George Cserna

James Stewart Polshek and Associates was honored for the New York State Bar Center in Albany, a "happy blend of historic preservation and imaginative design." Restored 19th century houses and new structure complement each other.

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and the A.I.A. get good publicity.

And why do the award-winning buildings get published, year after year? Because people like to know what the pros admire, in anything. And because they are always good and often interesting additions to the American scene.

But the juries must be getting more and more fraught with angst. How many awards can be for art and how many must evince social purpose, to meet today's standards? And do the twain ever meet? The sigh of relief can almost be heard as a modest day care camp balances splendid corporate headquarters.

How to avoid the balanced architectural ticket? Or the big building syndrome? What trends to espouse or reject?

The two winning theaters, for example, the Alley in Houston and the Mummies in Oklahoma City, are almost pat polarities in design. Both get a stamp of approval.

The first is an extremely artful and expert exercise in handsome, formal, monumental esthetics. The second is an equally artful agglomeration of purposefully pedestrian pipes and parts that are supposed to express their uses with consummate clarity for plumbing or people. Both arrive, through totally different routes and styles, at a kind of conscious abstract sculpture.

The jury calls the Alley, "inside and out, a brilliant theatrical event," a civic center-like building that makes a successful marriage à la mode with its "intimidating" classical neighbors.

One is tempted to call the Mummies a bit of chic overreaching or bandwagon jumping inspired by such things as James Stirling's brilliant pipe-vent English innovations. But one would evidently be wrong. The jury remarks that "photographs convey a deceptively capricious image of this project." A visit to the build-

ing, the report states, "reveals that the architect is in full command of his very own personal vocabulary and has employed it with great skill to create a superb theatrical instrument."

The architect of the Walker Art Center, on the other hand, will have no truck with capriciousness. It would be quite proper to call Edward Larabee Barnes an immaculate architect, with a propensity for taut, knife-sharp elegance.

That kind of demanding intelligence is not very popular in architecture, or anything, right now. But then there aren't that many good buildings, either. According to Hilton Kramer, the art editor of this newspaper, the Walker is a singularly suave and successful act of museum design.

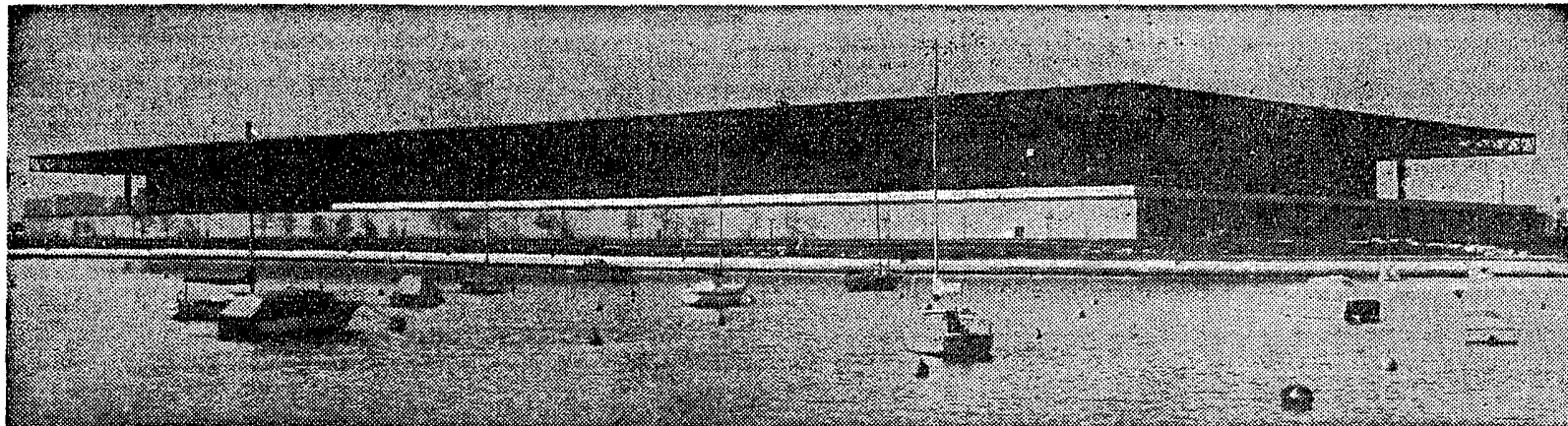
The same exceptional skill and sophistication have gone into McCormick Place, Chicago's immense new convention-exhibition hall. This building type is traditionally a dreary, pedestrian mass.

Here 600,000 square feet of display and meeting space are covered by a single, huge truss roof, cantilevered 75 feet beyond the glass walls. That, also, is a suave act of disciplined elegance.

But for the ultimate in suaveness one must turn to that American specialty, the corporate headquarters. None is more coolly magnificent than the Weyerhaeuser building in Tacoma by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, masters of the corporate genre.

The absolute assurance with which the building's long, low forms bridge the span between two wooded hills quietly upstages the natural site at the same time that the design suits it perfectly. The luxury of superbly detailed steel, glass and concrete and the carefully unostentatious lushness of the finest fittings put the showy gold-leaf past to shame.

These corporate structures are the Pittis and the Blenheims of our time. Or more accurately, the Versailles.

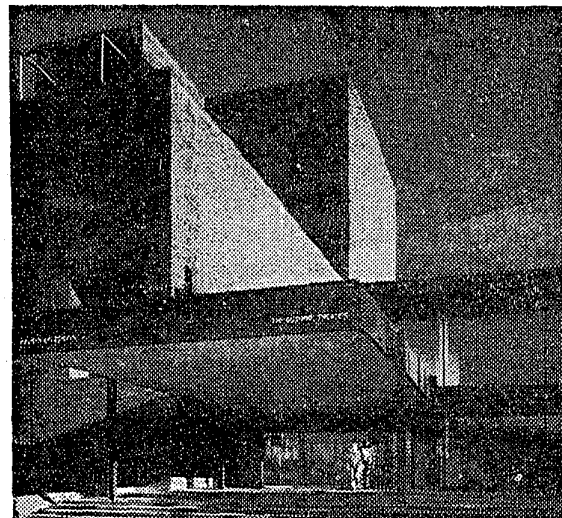


Hedrich-Blessing

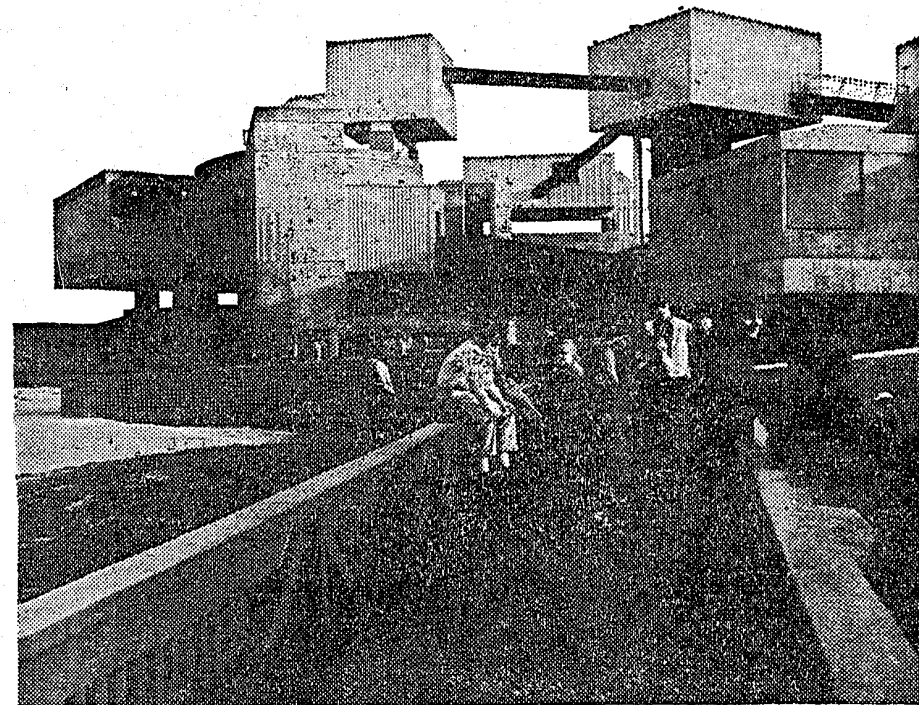
Above, McCormick Place, Chicago convention-exhibition hall. C. F. Murphy Associates, Chicago, architects.

Right, Mummies Theater, Oklahoma City, John M. Johansen, architect. "Fresh and provocative," jury said.

Below, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, by Edward Larabee Barnes. "Executed with admirable restraint."



Eric Sutherland



Balighaz Korab

Sometimes one thinks one hears the tumbrils rolling.

The New York State Bar Association chose another and necessarily much more modest approach for its institutional headquarters. In doing so, it made an important philosophical decision. Its Albany complex carefully preserves a row of 19th-century brownstones as part of a contemporary design of notable style, blending old and new in a sensitive statement about the continuity of past and present.

The same blend marks the conversion to showrooms of the 60-year-old storage warehouses called Ice Houses I and II in San Francisco.

Their paneled, Victorian, industrial brick walls are joined by a sleek glass and steel section serving as a bridge that makes rich, cross-century contrasts. Architecture becomes an environmental and cultural act. Here it is also a commercial success.

It is instant trauma to leave these favored commissions and return to the spec-built world. These are buildings designed and put together with intelligence and even beauty in a world that willingly accepts shoddy expendability, not as simple greed, but as some kind of noble virtue. Ars longa, vita brevis, in case anyone hasn't heard.