

# ARCHITECTS BACK CRITICISM OF CITY

## 42 in Institute Rebut Their Chiefs' Defense of Design —Bureaucracy Scored

### LEADER CALLED BIASED

## Dissent Cites His Municipal Contracts—Club Upheld on Withholding Award

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Forty-two members of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects took issue yesterday with their leaders' defense of civic architecture here.

"The political system and bureaucratic procedures involved in New York's civic architectural commissions," their dissent said, "have bred even in the good architects weariness and listlessness resulting in what might be called architecture by default."

The controversy began last month with an announcement by the City Club of New York. The club said it had been unable to find a building worthy of its Bard Awards for excellence in civic design. Instead of giving the awards, it published a sweeping denunciation of the city's municipal building program.

The City Club's charges were answered last Tuesday evening by Simon Breines, a member of the institute's executive committee, at the Architectural League of New York, 115 East 40th Street.

### Contest Termed 'Hoax'

Mr. Breines called the City Club competition "a hoax." He scored it as "misleading and irresponsible" and nothing more than a superficial, lazy and slipshod review of a small fraction of the buildings eligible to compete." He spoke for the New York chapter.

That speech has aroused considerable disapproval among younger members of the chapter, who find it unrepresentative of architects' feelings.

They called Mr. Breines's speech "intemperate and selfish—a defensive whitewash with which we do not agree." Their statement also said:

"These views do not represent the views of the chapter at large, but only of its executive committee and a segment of the membership committed to the status quo. Many serious architects, including many of those who have worked for the city, feel the City Club report to be pertinent and accurate."

### Spokesman Criticized

The signers included such leading architects as Edward Larabee Barnes, Ulrich Franzen, John MacL. Johansen, Philip Johnson and Edgar Tafel. They took exception not only to Mr. Breines's opinions but also to his role as spokesman.

"It is particularly inappropriate for a member of the executive committee who has continually received commissions from the city administration to act as agent of the committee in attacking the Bard Award report," the statement added. "A conflict of interest occurs here which we can ill afford to countenance."

The group rebutted Mr. Breines's accusation that the City Club had considered only 24 "random brochures" out of 300 buildings erected by city agencies in the last five years.

"Although only 24 buildings were submitted to the jurors," they said, "it was an open competition available to all architects. And as the 300 buildings are known to the profession, no serious member of the profession is likely to give them the title of 'excellence.'"