

'No Architect'

Mayor Wagner recently presented certificates of appointment to 21 leading New Yorkers who are serving as members of the Citizens' Advisory Committee of the Housing and Redevelopment Board. The ceremony unwittingly called attention to the fact that this important advisory group directly concerned with the rebuilding of the urban environment includes no architect.

"No architect," until very recently, seems to have been the single consistent policy in New York's less-than-consistent planning and urban renewal practices. Not until Harmon Goldstone's appointment to the City Planning Commission last year was there anyone in official capacity who was qualified to consider the design factors that are ultimately responsible for making new buildings and new neighborhoods a positive, pleasurable addition to the New York scene.

Good business without good design does not make good cities. The city with the best urban redevelopment record to date—Philadelphia—has an architecture-oriented, architect-headed City Planning Commission. William Slayton, the Federal Government's Commissioner of Urban Renewal, has stated that the Urban Renewal Administration "is going to emphasize the importance of design in all projects as it never has before," to avoid "more monuments to sterility, negativity and futility." New York's persistent addiction to renewal-in-a-rut remains one of the city's administrative mysteries.