

CIVIC CLUB HONORS PRIVATE BUILDING

Pepsi-Cola Structure Cited —City's Architecture Hit

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

The City Club of New York, which last year refused to give its prize for civic excellence to any city-sponsored building and started a still-simmering architectural controversy, announced the results of this year's Bard Awards Competition yesterday.

This year, the scope of the competition was changed from publicly-sponsored to privately-sponsored buildings completed since Jan. 1, 1960.

The First Honor Award went to the Pepsi-Cola headquarters, a small, sleek, glass and aluminum corporate palace on Park Avenue at 59th Street, by the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

Three Awards of Merit were also given to Marcel Breuer's Begrish Hall on the University Heights campus of New York University, an apartment house at 333 East 69th Street, by Mayer, Whittlesey and Glass, and Cinema I and Cinema II at 1001 Third Avenue near 60th Street, by Abraham Geller and Ben Schlanger.

City's Architecture Scored

At the same time, the City Club continued its tradition of denunciation rather than premiation with a stinging criticism of the quality of New York architecture in general.

Although the jury said that the award-winning buildings were exemplary, it noted that their design quality was an exception rather than the rule. The jury agreed that the overall standard of private architecture in New York was considerably below that for similar buildings in cities like Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

Speaking as a member of the jury, Peter Blake, an architect and managing editor of Architectural Forum, said, "Just as the jury last year deplored the low level of public architecture of New York City, so this year's jury deplores the comparatively low average standard of private architecture in New York today. Other great cities could have matched these award-winning structures in quality many times over."

Last year, the City Club's no-award stand was taken as an indictment of the city's architects as well as of municipal architectural policies.

The Blame Shifts

This year, the blame was bounced from the architects to their clients. Speaking for himself, Mr. Blake said, "The reason for the deplorably low average of private architecture in New York is, quite simply, that the quality of New York City's clients seem to be deplorably low. Bad clients will get bad architecture."

The three Merit Award winners are the same buildings that were selected by the Municipal Art Society for its certificates of merit last May, which supports the City Club's contention that these are not only New York's best, but that the city has little else to offer.

The buildings were cited for individual excellence, and also for their effect on the cityscape as good neighbors, in terms of design quality, siting and scale.

Members of the jury were Mr. Blake, Edward Larrabee Barnes, and I. M. Pei, architects, and Sidney W. Dean Jr., a trustee of the City Club.



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HONORED BY CITY CLUB: The Pepsi-Cola Building, on Park Avenue at 59th Street, received first place in urban design. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill are architects.