

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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YOUNG ARCHITECTS WIN SMITH COLLEGE COMPETITION. CHAIRMAN OF JURY
DRAWS ANALOGY FROM ARCHITECTURAL GROWTH OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY.*

Prize-winning plans of the Smith College architecture competition will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art from Wednesday, February 6 through April 7. Young people have won the first, second and third prizes in the competition to select an architect for a group of three dormitories for Smith College, Northampton, Mass. The first prize--the contract for the dormitories and immediate payment of \$2,000 advance on the architect's fee of 6%--has been won by Benjamin Thompson, Norman C. Fletcher and his wife Jean Bodman Fletcher.

The second prize, \$1,000, has been won by a young couple, Sarah and John C. Harkness. The winners of the first and second prizes have their headquarters in Cambridge, Mass., where they have formed with Walter Gropius an organization known as the Architects' Collaborative. Three young New Yorkers won the third prize, Roy S. Johnson and Julius Stein of 14 East 39 Street, and Fred Ginsbern, 205 East 42 Street.

There were 91 entries in the competition and the jury based its decisions upon the following points:

- 1) Preservation and exploitation of the pleasant park-like character of the steeply sloping site.
- 2) Exposure of students' rooms for sunlight and for view of the lake and the mountains beyond.
- 3) Well organized floor plans with conveniently grouped activities and easy circulation.
- 4) Informal, non-institutional appearance, harmonious in scale with the existing buildings and the adjacent residential street.

The first three prizes are evidence of the jury's insistence upon point four. All three of the projects divide each dormitory into two or three parts to achieve a friendly domestic scale. In the first-prize plans each of the buildings is in two parts: a rectangular dormitory block connected by a bridge with a more freely composed wing devoted to living, dining and service.

The jury was composed of

William Allan Nielson, former president of Smith College
 Mrs. Alan Valentine, Chairman of Planning Committee, Smith College
 Kenneth Reid, Editor, Pencil Points
 Morris Ketchum, Jr., architect
 Elizabeth B. Mock, Curator of Architecture, Museum of
 Modern Art

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Philip L. Goodwin, architect, Chairman of the Jury
Professional Adviser: Richard M. Bennett

The Chairman of the Jury, Mr. Goodwin, commented on the choice of prize winners as follows:

"American colleges--and Smith College at Northampton is no exception--have changed their style of architecture with each succeeding fashion. You may, therefore, find on the Smith College Campus Greek revival, Richardson Romanesque, simplified Gothic, white wooden New England architecture of no particular period, and 1930 Colonial red brick. The most recent and largest additions to the group of buildings have been the latter. It is now proposed to build three new dormitories on a site adjoining all these varied styles. Many people interested in Smith are anxious to give the College a unified character by continuing the Colonial red brick style of the latest additions to the plant.

"The reasons against this are that until recently all this architecture was simply a matter of fashion and had no relation to the structural revolution which began in the 80's, and has only lately penetrated into the minds of any considerable number of the American public. New dormitories must be fire-proof. The construction, therefore, will be either steel or reinforced concrete. This being so, any exterior wall is merely a skin, and this skin should admit frankly what it is, and not pretend to be a solid wall with moulded window frames and other trimmings derived from the past. This is a main reason for contemporary architecture; but there is still another important one, and that is that the girls who are studying and growing up in this atmosphere, are living a contemporary life, which should be reflected in their surroundings, in the furnishings of their rooms as well as it now is in their manners and in their college courses.

"To lessen any contrast between the new buildings and the large groups in red brick, there is no reason why the new buildings should not consist largely of the same brick also, and, as the units are fairly small and not high, they would not conflict with the quadrangles, once they had been planted and grown a little into their surroundings. At Oxford there was continuous building from the 16th century into the 20th century. During that time there was no radical change in the fundamentals of building, as there has been in the last half century. In spite of that a number of different styles were used, but, due to the use of approximately the same material--stone--time has mellowed the different buildings and made them a completely happy family. Such a revolution as has occurred now in building may not happen again for centuries, but it has happened, and it would be ridiculous ignorantly to continue the 19th century eclecticism, when all the world will have acknowledged the situation within a few years. Already such countries as South Africa, many of the South American countries, Shanghai and other cities throughout the world are mentally in advance of our American colleges in this respect."

Ten entries in the Competition received Honorable Mention.

They are:

GEORGIA, St. Simons Island: Carl Koch and Alfred Parker, N.R.T.S.

ILLINOIS, Chicago: Richard Filipowski, Institute of Design,
1009 N. State Street

MASSACHUSETTS, Cambridge: Marcel Breuer, 1430 Massachusetts Ave.
Robert W. Kennedy and Robert A. Irigoyen,
9 Wendell Street
Ieoh Ming Pei, 14 Old Dee Road (2 awards)

NEW YORK, Brooklyn: Sigurd Ellison, 3223 Glenwood Avenue
New York: Percival Goodman, 19 East 48 Street

OHIO, Cleveland: Robert A. and Ann Halle Little, 2163 Harcourt
Drive.

PENNSYLVANIA, Pittsburgh: S/Sgt. John N. Sill, 5862 Burchfield Ave.