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and that if the architect fails to believe this, then certainly all those outside the profession  
will feel the same way."**

### **Self-fulfilling Prophecies**

As a sole practitioner in Manhattan, I am constantly confronted with the question of power and architecture. All too often I hear from colleagues who say "I can't make any money in this profession" or "I didn't go into this profession expecting to make any money," or "the architect is always blamed when things go wrong." I also hear architects lament that clients are impossible, that they don't appreciate what we do, and are totally unrealistic about the cost and timing of projects.

These comments foster the sense that architects are powerless and are losing more and more of the limited powers that we have. This way of thinking becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy for the profession. Even in your own column you refer to finding architects who are relatively well paid. Why is it that your magazine felt it necessary to say relatively and not just well paid? The architect's power lies in our ability to clearly define our expertise. What we do is unique and all too often we presume that the general public feels that they can do it just as well, if not better than, the trained professional.

The architect's real power lies in our commitment to the fact that architecture is extremely important to everyone, whether consciously or subconsciously, and that if the architect fails to believe this, then certainly all those outside the profession will feel the same way. Architects must have clarity! We must have clarity of vision, clarity of purpose, and clarity of desire. When architects feel that we can be compensated only so much, we are subconsciously relaying that

what we do is not worth very much. We place limits on our power. Those negative perceptions translate into lower fees and diminished respect from not only those paying the fees but from the other members of the building team and even the general public. Sentiments that architects are unrealistic in our expectations also limits what can be accomplished and can lead to failure and thus a reduction in power. The opinion that architecture is apolitical is also limiting in that it fails to recognize a powerful force in making design decisions.

Architects' power lies in our commitment to explaining what the architect and only the architect can do. It is time for architects to focus on what we can do and what we are doing instead of concentrating on all the things that are limiting us!

*Paul S. Gleicher, Architect  
New York*

### **The Architect's Influence**

Your use of the word "power" bothers me. I much prefer the word "influence." To me the word "power" applies to those with great political and financial clout. When any project approaches the conceptual design stage, the people involved usually recognize the architect as the leader at this stage. The architect has assimilated the input of those who have preceded him in the development of the project, i.e., client, public planning agencies and financiers. He also has assimilated the design requirements of the client and his design consultants, i.e., civil, structural, mechanical and electrical engineers, and has incorporated their requirements

into the project. Because the architect's "plans" are the basis which these consultants follow in their work, the architect is the leader during this stage and has the most influence. However, the architect should not let his influence at this stage cause him to have an inflated opinion of his importance to the entire project.

In 1957, Time Inc. published a booklet titled "Building, U.S.A." about "the men and methods that influence architecture in America today." In it the people, organizations, and methods involved with producing a completed project are presented in some detail. They are presented as the real estate operator, lender, contractor, labor force, manufacturer, engineer, corporate client, public, and lastly the architect, in that sequence. I feel that when the architect realizes that the efforts of many people and organizations are involved with producing a successful project, his perception of his importance will be placed in its proper perspective.

The architect's financial involvement and risk are relatively small when compared to the risks of the others involved. Many of the risks taken by others depend upon the adequacy and thoroughness of the architect's work. He knows that any errors or omissions caused by his work may cause large additional expenses during construction or after the client begins to use the project.

I think that most of any dissatisfaction by clients with architects work could be avoided if architects would thoroughly understand the clients' requests, re-examine their work fairly and thoroughly, earnestly improve their professional performance,

and avoid relaxing into sub-professional performance. In this way, architects could vastly improve their public image.

*Roland K. Kuechle, Architect  
Walnut Creek, California*

### **Stars and Power**

Your editorial "Star Gazing" and the companion article "Architects and Power" tapped a vein which I saw exposed at this year's AIA Grassroots in Washington. I wonder if we will ever know whether it contains ORE or BLOOD.

Self-doubt appears to dominate this profession, quite possibly as a reflection of the doubt that grips all of this country. What an opportunity for architects to use our skills as visualizers, designers, planners, collaborators, and consensus builders. Today, plans are being developed everywhere to rebuild our cities, to restructure our industries, to rejuvenate our economy. The country recognizes we must protect and respect our environment and allow it to heal. The profession of architecture is not leading this effort. One must wonder if architects are true participants in the process or are simply following the direction of others.

Power will be there for those who use their skills to produce quality in the cities, in the economy, in the environment. Those people, regardless of education, regardless of affiliation, will become real Architects. Those trained to be architects who do not will have become dress designers, have become....

The discussion P/A is starting with these articles is an appropriate one for the last of the millennium, for if we do not broaden our horizons and expand our