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Number 3
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Scraping the Sky in Austin
Cardboard Skyscrapers of Texas
On Human Scale

Texas Architect



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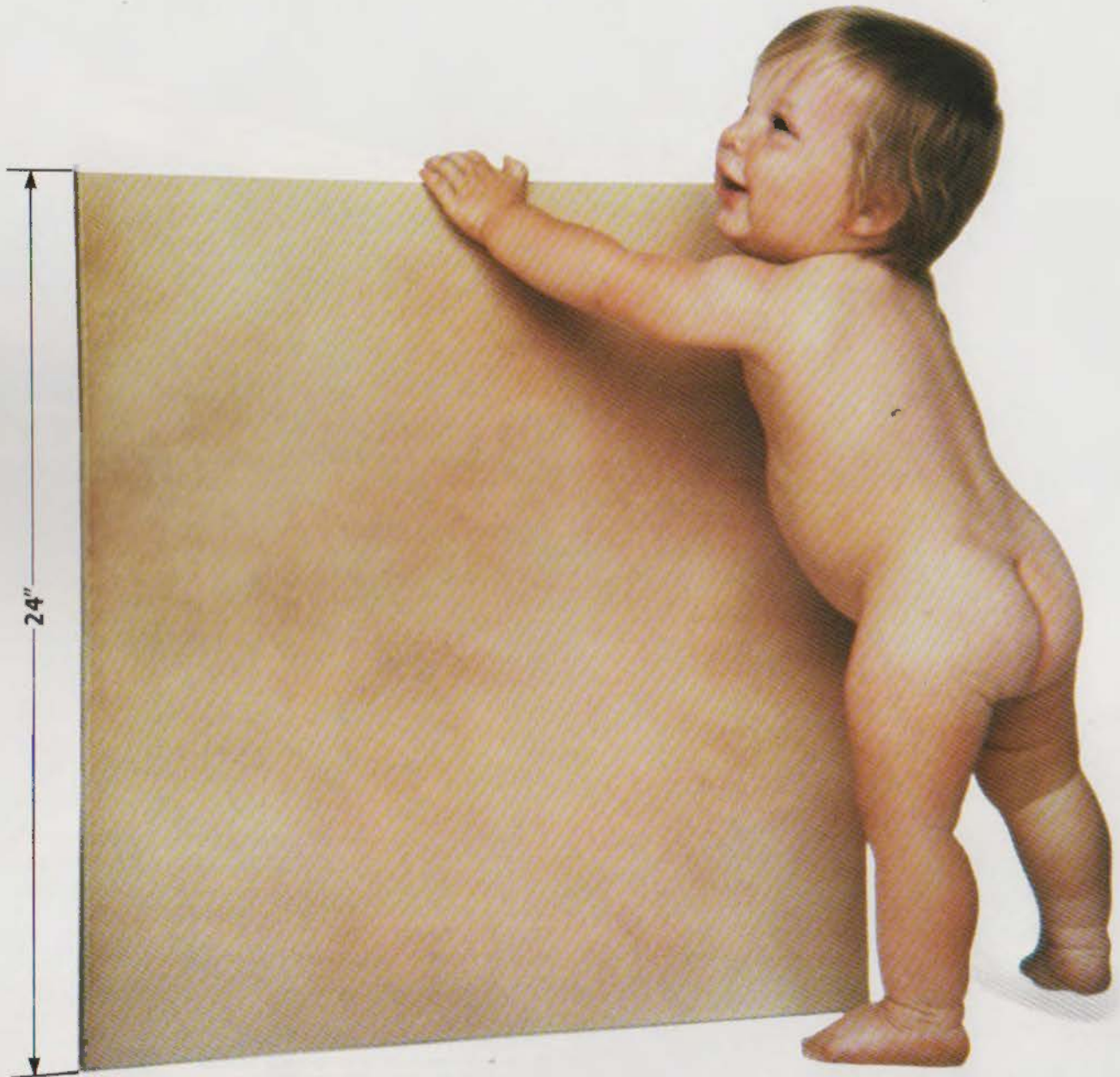


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Coming Up: *The July/August issue of Texas Architect will examine the subject of "Houses and Housing."*

On the Cover: *A piece of Houston skyline from the pedestrian's point of view, dominated by First International Plaza. See page 38. Photograph by Richard Payne.*



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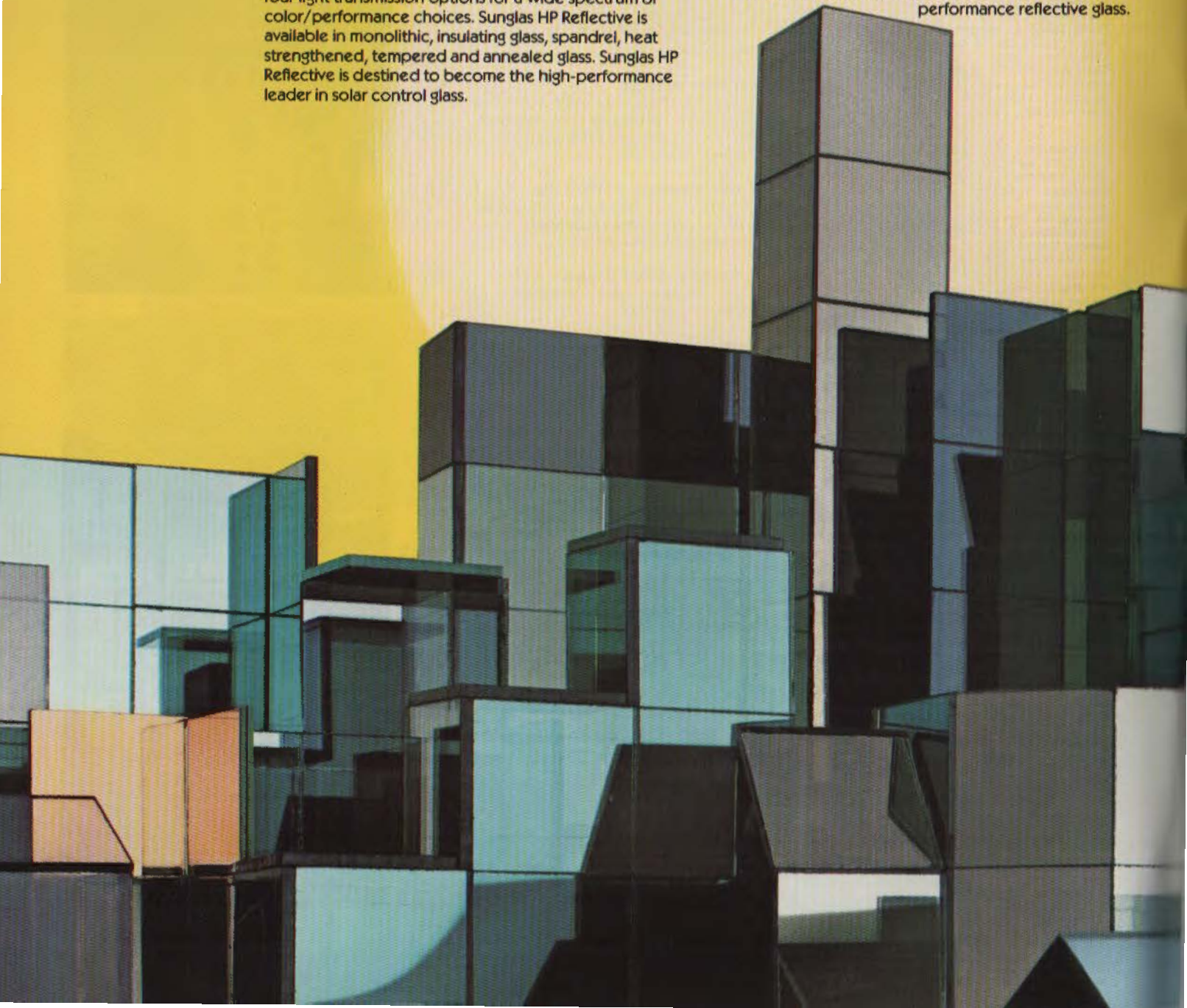
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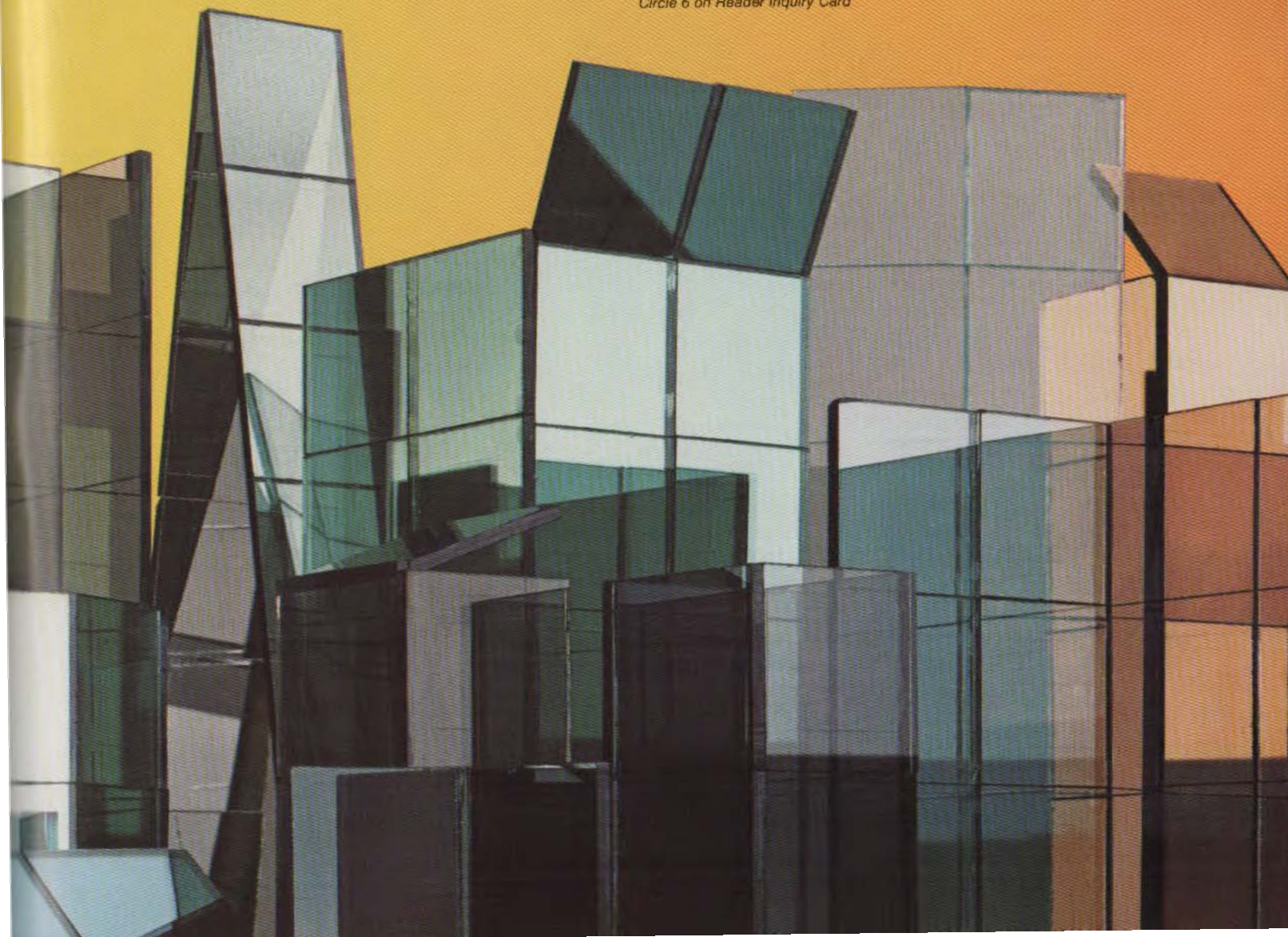
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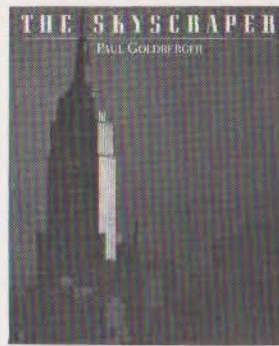




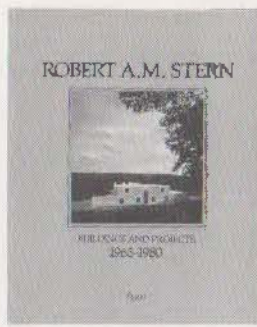
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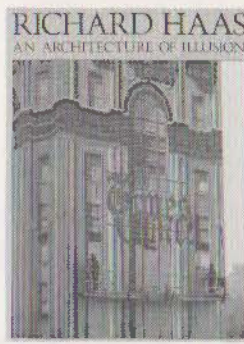
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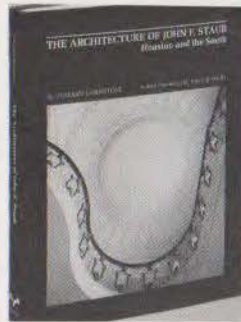
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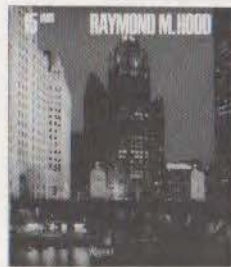
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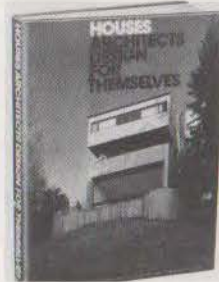
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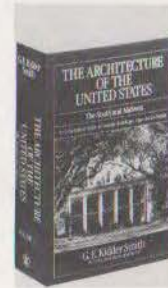
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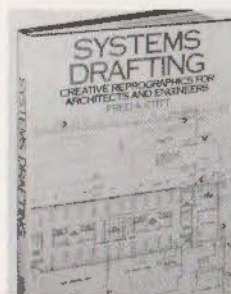


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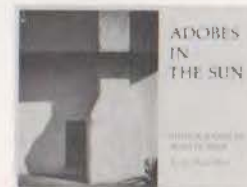
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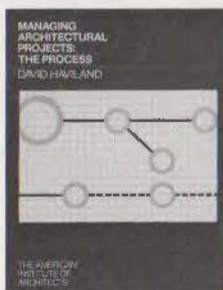
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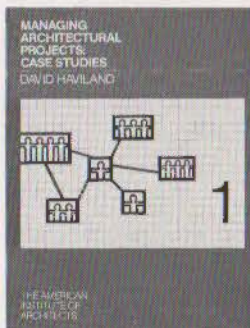
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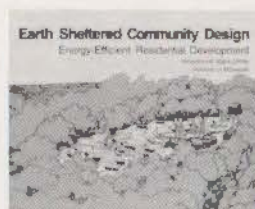
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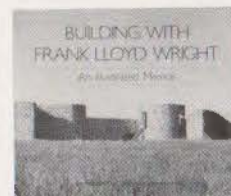
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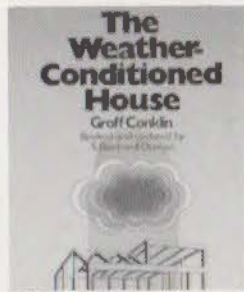
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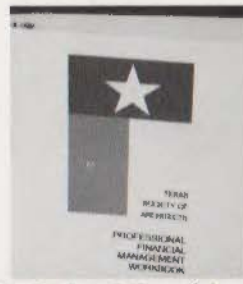
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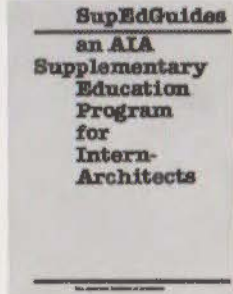
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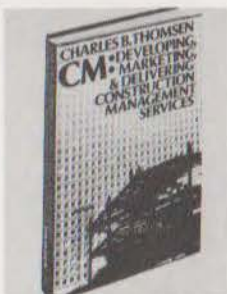
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Letters

Editor: I want to take just a moment to say thank you for a very handsome issue on historic preservation (Jan./Feb. 1982). As ever, the *Texas Architect* staff has performed admirably in presenting concise and accurate evaluations of important aspects of a timely topic. We do, however, regret the confusion we may have generated regarding the relationship of the new federal tax law with the Texas Historical Commission. To clarify, the Commission's National Register Department administers the agency's state-wide programs relating to historic conservation. The Commission's Main Street Center, of which Anice Reed is director, promotes economic development in the 10 designated Main Street cities specifically and, upon occasion, becomes peripherally involved in the tax abatement programs for historic structures. Therefore, questions regarding the new Economic Recovery Tax Act and other tax incentive or abatement programs for historic buildings should be directed to the National Register Department.

Joe Oppermann
Director
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Austin

Editor: I have just received my March/April issue of *Texas Architect* and find it truly outstanding in every way. I think we're nearing the time when regional magazines of quality will find more support and have broader appeal. Your use of color is delightful, and the David Braden article is a classic.

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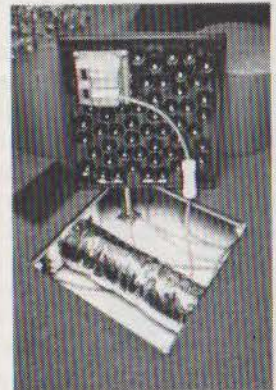
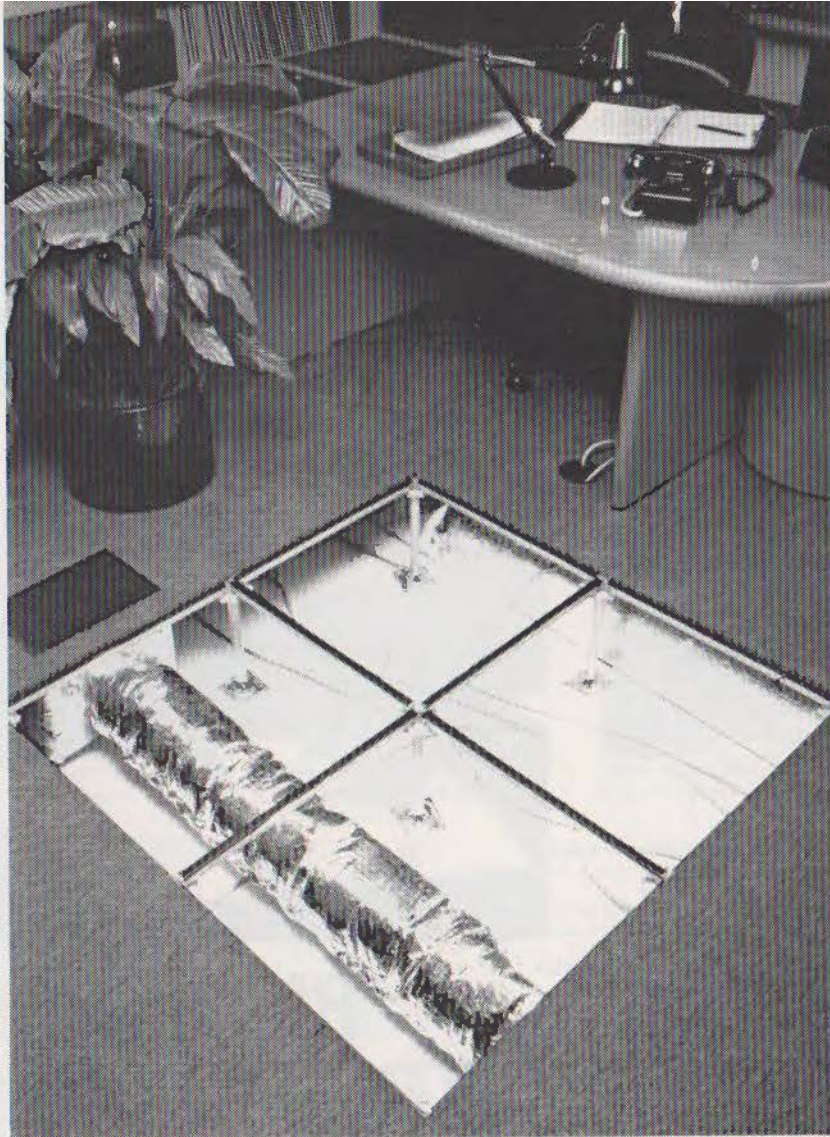
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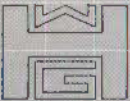






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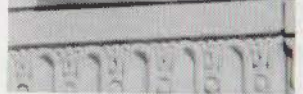
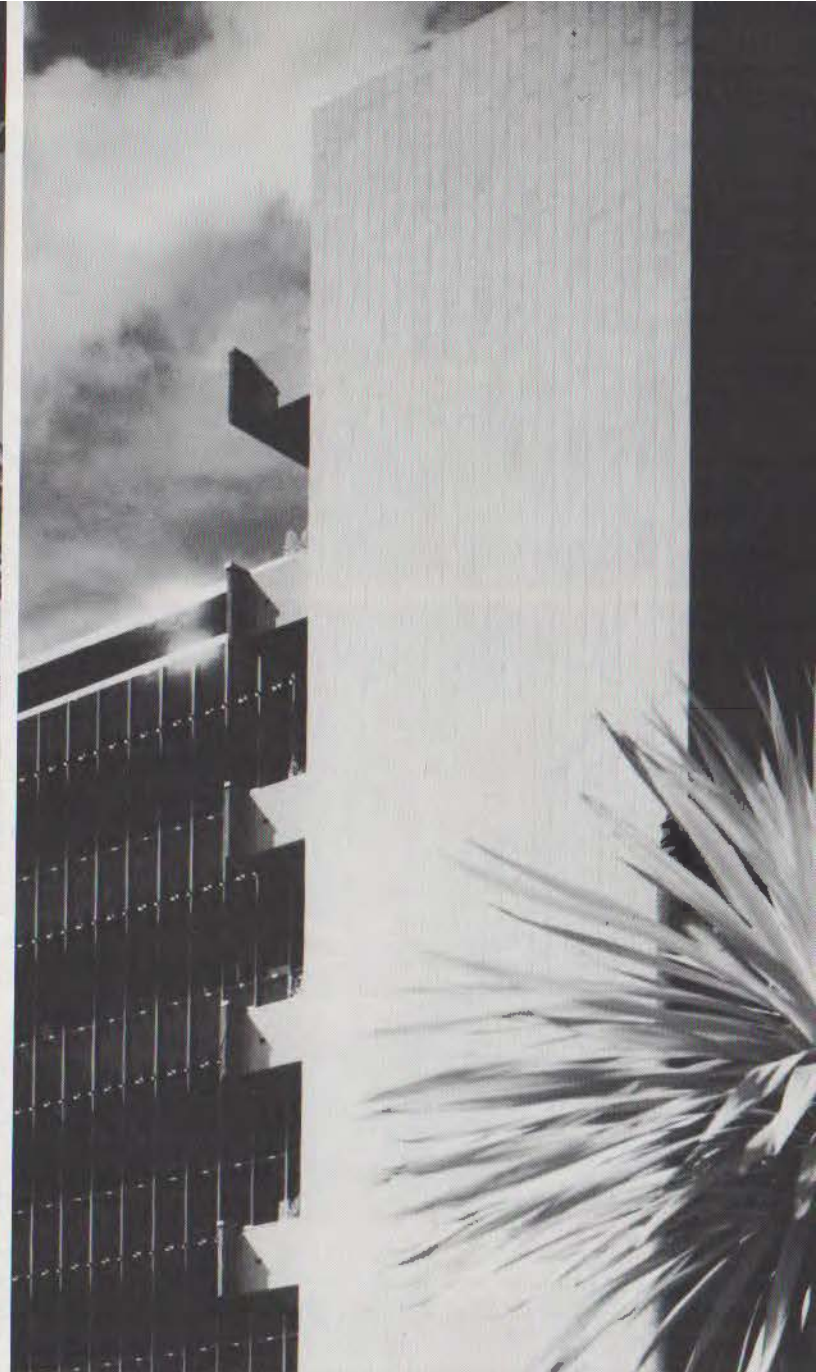
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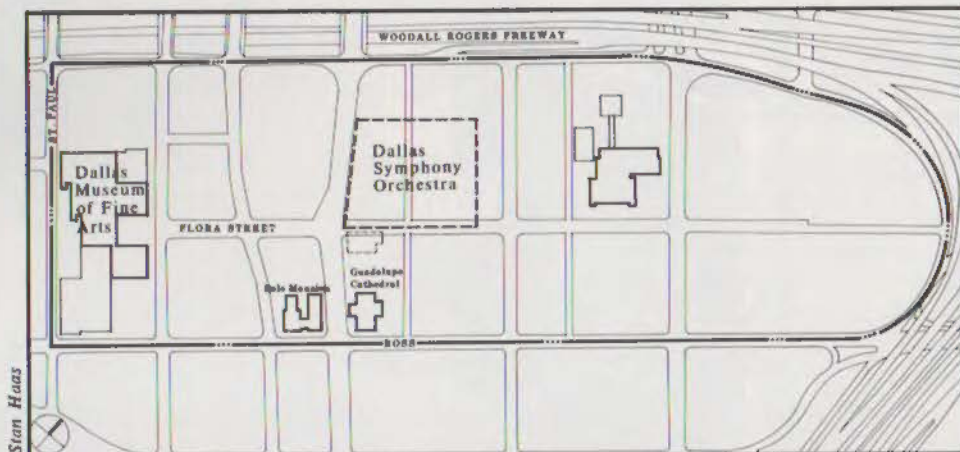
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Edited by Michael McCullar



Proposed site for Dallas arts district.

Dallas Arts District: Compromise Between Commerce and Culture?

The idea of a Dallas arts district has been kicking around for a decade, but only in the last three years have steps been taken to make the idea a reality. The new Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes, is coming out of the ground on Harwood Street, between Ross Avenue and Woodall Rodgers Freeway in the northeast quadrant of downtown. The Dallas Symphony Orchestra has acquired a site several hundred yards to the east, and on Aug. 3 will ask voters to appropriate \$28 million as the city's share of the cost of a new concert hall, to be designed by I. M. Pei. These two facilities will anchor the proposed district, which may eventually include theaters, galleries, hotels, and restaurants, along with the customary cordon of high-rise office buildings.

"May" is the operative word in this situation. Although everyone seems to endorse the arts district in principle, no one has yet presented a clear and compelling vision of what the arts district should be. The prototypes have ranged from an urban carnival like Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens to assorted cultural mono-

liths such as Lincoln Center in New York and the Pompidou Center in Paris. But no master plan for the proposed district exists, nor is there much chance of getting one. Dallas prides itself on a history of successful public-private ventures so the proposed arts district will be designed by representatives of the city, the DMFA and DSO, and six private developers who own large chunks of land within the boundaries. It is problematic at this point whether the nine parties can agree on what the district should be, and if they can whether the result will represent the best that can be achieved or merely an expedient compromise between commerce and culture.

The clearest discussion of the arts district is the Carr-Lynch report, a survey of Dallas' arts facilities published in 1977. Although the term "arts district" was not used, the report recommended that Dallas' major arts organizations (DMFA, DSO, opera, ballet, etc.) consider relocating downtown, preferably in the emerging northeast quadrant. Such a concentration of facilities, the report maintained, would be mutually beneficial to

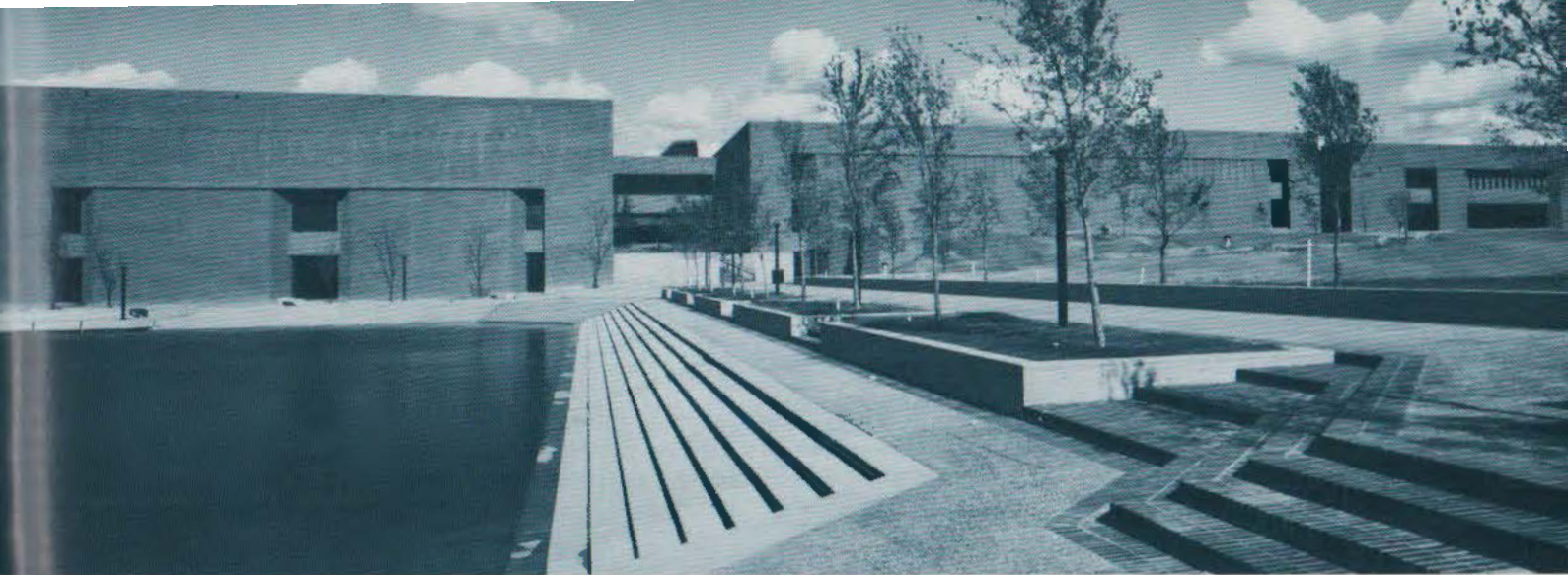
the organizations involved and also contribute to the revitalization of the central business district, then hard hit by the defection of stores and restaurants to the suburbs.

The Carr-Lynch report recommended what several arts organizations were in the process of doing. The museum was looking for a way out of its cramped quarters at Fair Park. The symphony was equally dissatisfied with the acoustics of the State Fair Music Hall, not to mention having to compete with rock groups and ballet dancers for choice dates. The efforts of both organizations were enhanced by the public perception of Fair Park as unsafe and inaccessible.

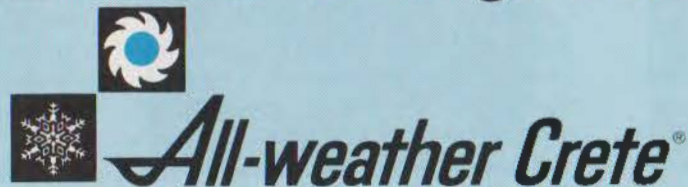
On June 10, 1978, the city held a bond election that included a \$45 million appropriation for arts facilities in the district. Through a combination of inept campaigning and unfortunate timing (the election was held four days after the passage of Proposition 13 in California) the arts portion of the bond issue failed.

The DMFA, then as now the most farsighted of the Dallas arts organizations, continued to buy land in the proposed district for between \$15 and \$30 a square foot. The current price is \$125 to \$150 per square foot and climbing.

A second bond election, containing \$24.8 million for a new museum and \$3 million for a symphony site, passed convincingly on Nov. 6, 1979. The museum broke ground for its new building the following autumn. The Dallas Symphony Orchestra, undone by soaring land prices and its own indecisiveness, was unable to find a site until September 1981, when in effect Dallas Mayor Jack Evans became the site selection committee and wrested a donation of land from the Borden Company. That site, approximately 25,000 square feet, will be enlarged as soon as the city and several developers in the district complete a series



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of land swaps.

As of April 1982, the Dallas Arts District consists of the half-completed Museum of Fine Arts, a site for the proposed Symphony Hall, two landmark buildings (Guadalupe Cathedral and the Belo Mansion) and acres of unpaved parking lots. Most of the parking lots will be covered eventually by office towers, although no decisions have been made about height, setbacks, materials and other architectural features that will determine the overall character of the district. The city has also commissioned an engineering study to determine if a 15,000-space parking garage can be built beneath the proposed district.

Recognizing the randomness of the arts district planning process, as well as the mounting pressure of the Aug. 3 bond election, the city recently appointed Dr. Philip Montgomery, a pathologist and medical school professor, as arts district coordinator. Montgomery's job, which carries no real authority, is to assist the major landowners in coming up with a development strategy that they can live with and that the public will applaud.

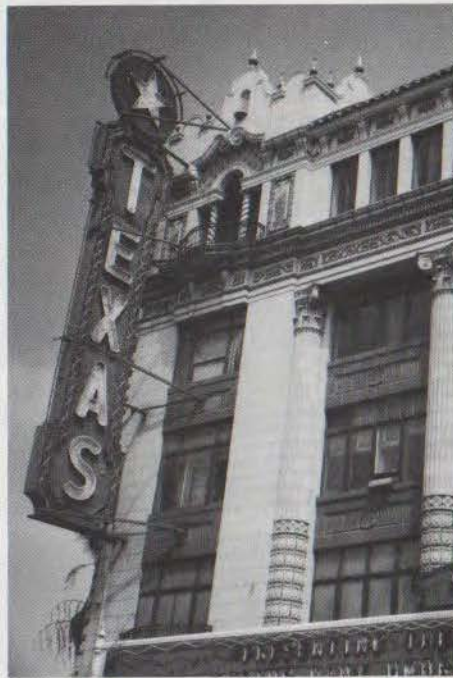
One of his first moves was to initiate a national competition for the design of Flora Street, the 100-foot-wide corridor that will form the spine of the proposed district. So far the competition has attracted such nationally known urban design firms as Sasaki Associates and Wallace, Roberts and Todd as well as several Dallas firms. But the fact that the designers are being asked to come up with a plan for Flora Street without knowing whether the parking garage will be above or below grade only points up the persistent confusion in the arts district planning process.

Much depends on what the urban designers do with Flora Street, but even more depends on how effectively the Dallas Symphony Orchestra presents its case to the voters on Aug. 3. Without a symphony hall, the arts district will probably become just another office park, in which the Museum of Fine Arts provides a dash of exotic seasoning. Yet a key to the DSO's success is the public perception that they are voting for an arts district, not just a single isolated facility. Politically, the two go hand in hand.

Cultural districts are becoming a national craze, popping up in such unlikely places as Reno, Nevada, and Anchorage, Alaska. Yet Dallas has rejected the conventional solution of lumping its major arts facilities into one vast complex, such

as Kennedy Center or Lincoln Center. It is attempting instead to create an entire district, from scratch, in a section of the city with few vintage buildings and no public image. It is the kind of challenge to which the city has risen in the past. The critical question is whether, in the middle of a recession and without a master plan, it can rise to the occasion again.

—David Dillon



Old Texas Theater, San Antonio.

High-Rise Architecture And Historic Preservation At Odds in San Antonio

Two major trends in recent architectural practice—the high-rise multi-use office building and architectural preservation—are apparently at odds again, this time in San Antonio, where RepublicBank of San Antonio has unveiled its plans for a downtown site presently occupied by the old Texas Theater. Opposing the demolition of the theater is a diverse group of citizens led by representatives of the San Antonio Conservation Society.

The old Bexar County National Bank—now RepublicBank of San Antonio—acquired the property over a period of years, hiring the San Antonio firm Ford, Powell & Carson to design a complex that will eventually include a seven-story facility to house the bank, a 15-story office structure, and a 30-story office building, all organized around a plaza which opens onto the adjacent San Antonio Riverwalk. The current plans show the

three buildings clad in flame-cut pink granite, grey spandrel panels and tinted glass, the two lower levels given over to commercial space open to the plaza.

The controversy centers on the fate of the Spanish Revival theater building, built in the 1920s and designed by Robert Boller Bros., of Los Angeles and Kansas City, a firm that designed 127 theaters across the country during the golden era of the cinema palace. Patrick Steel, director of the Missouri Heritage Foundation, visiting San Antonio to tour the building and speak to the Collegiate Preservation Society at UTSA, commended the Texas Theater as being one of the last two "tent theater" designs, where the ceiling is a shell of plaster suspended from the roof structure.

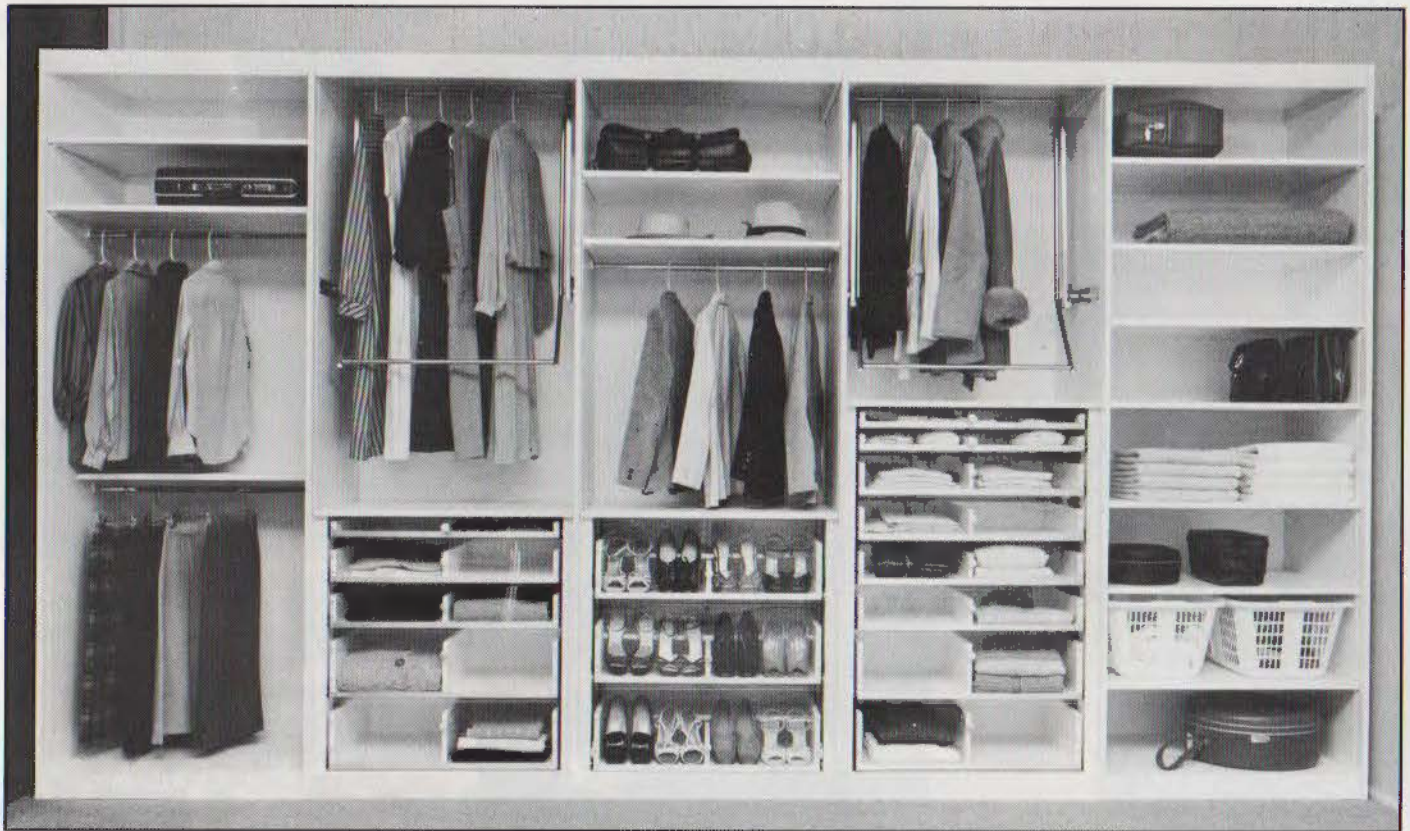
At a design preview at the Ford, Powell & Carson office, Robert Rork, president of RepublicBank, defended the theater demolition by saying, "San Antonians have stayed away from the theater in droves for 20 years. We don't believe it is feasible to reconstruct the theater and have them continue to stay away." However, the bank does plan to preserve the facade of the existing theater, incorporating it into the new design as a public access to the interior patio and commercial space.

Opponents of the demolition differ with the bank's evaluation of the theater's potential. In 1980, the conservation society hired the San Antonio firm De Lara Almond to research the feasibility of rehabilitating the theater. Killis Almond, who wrote the report, says "The Texas Theater and the adjacent Gunter Office Building are definitely rehabitable. I firmly believe there is a way to get the return on his investment the client needs and keep the theater," Almond said. "Just because we don't think we need the theater right now is no reason to tear it down; when it's gone, there's no way to bring it back."

The bank, on the other hand, feels it is making a substantial financial commitment to the local urban environment by incorporating the existing facade into a dynamic new urban space. Says Architect Powell, "This is to an extraordinary degree a public space, with plaza and open space, with walks and arcades that reduce leasable space."

Proponents of the Texas Theater seem mainly interested in preserving a building that reflects the city's stylistic heritage. Powell, on the other hand, says "The primary issue here is quality urban design. Preservation is a *tool* of urban de-

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sign, not the other way around." And successful urban design, he feels, can only come about by developing the urban core of San Antonio, building more prime office space, more retail space, more residences. For that to happen, private investors must be able to make a profit on such developments.

"Any project like this is balanced on the thin edge," Powell says. "The popular conception is that the bank sits back there with a pool of money, and to save the theater, all they have to do is appropriate a little extra. That is not the way it works; it will be financed on the basis of major investors who will make their de-

cision on the basis of return."

At press time, both sides are working on the wording of a court order which would require negotiations to continue until July 12, at which time a U.S. district judge would decide whether to allow a demolition permit to be issued. Regardless of the outcome, it can only be hoped that the final project—whether it includes the theater in its entirety or just a facade—will have been enriched through a productive give-and-take between enlightened developers and practical conservationists—with architects on both sides.

—Jon Thompson



Talbot House in Nevis, West Indies.

Taft Architects Receives 1982 AIA Honor Award For Talbot House

The Houston firm Taft Architects has won an Honor Award in AIA's 1982 design awards program for its design of the Talbot House in Nevis, West Indies.

The residence, completed in 1981, was one of 12 projects cited in the competition, awards for which will be presented during the AIA national convention June 6-9 in Honolulu, Hawaii. The 12 winners were selected from a field of 481 entries in two categories: current-use (designed or completed within the past seven years) and extended-use (involving restoration, rehabilitation or adaptive use during the past seven years).

The Talbot House is located halfway up a mountain overlooking the Caribbean, on the site of a former plantation house. Making use of the traditional local architectural palette of stone and painted wood, architects designed the structure to consist of four towers of cut stone (found on the site) defining a central living

pavilion. The organization of the house, which also contains a kitchen and three bedrooms, permits cross-ventilation in all rooms through oversized casement windows, regardless of breeze direction. The jury cited the "use of local materials, forms and colors in a direct and bold manner, creating a strong composition of bright-colored roofs against the mountain background."

Jurors for the current-use category were Joan E. Goody, Boston; Howard Barnstone, FAIA, Houston; Thomas H. Beeby, Chicago; Gary Chan, Seattle; John O. Merrill, Jr., FAIA, San Francisco; Jay C. McAmis, Mission Viejo, Calif.; and Robert Venturi, FAIA, Philadelphia.

Another Houston architect, Peter Papademetriou, also a teacher at Rice and a *Texas Architect* contributing editor, served on the jury for the program's extended-use category.

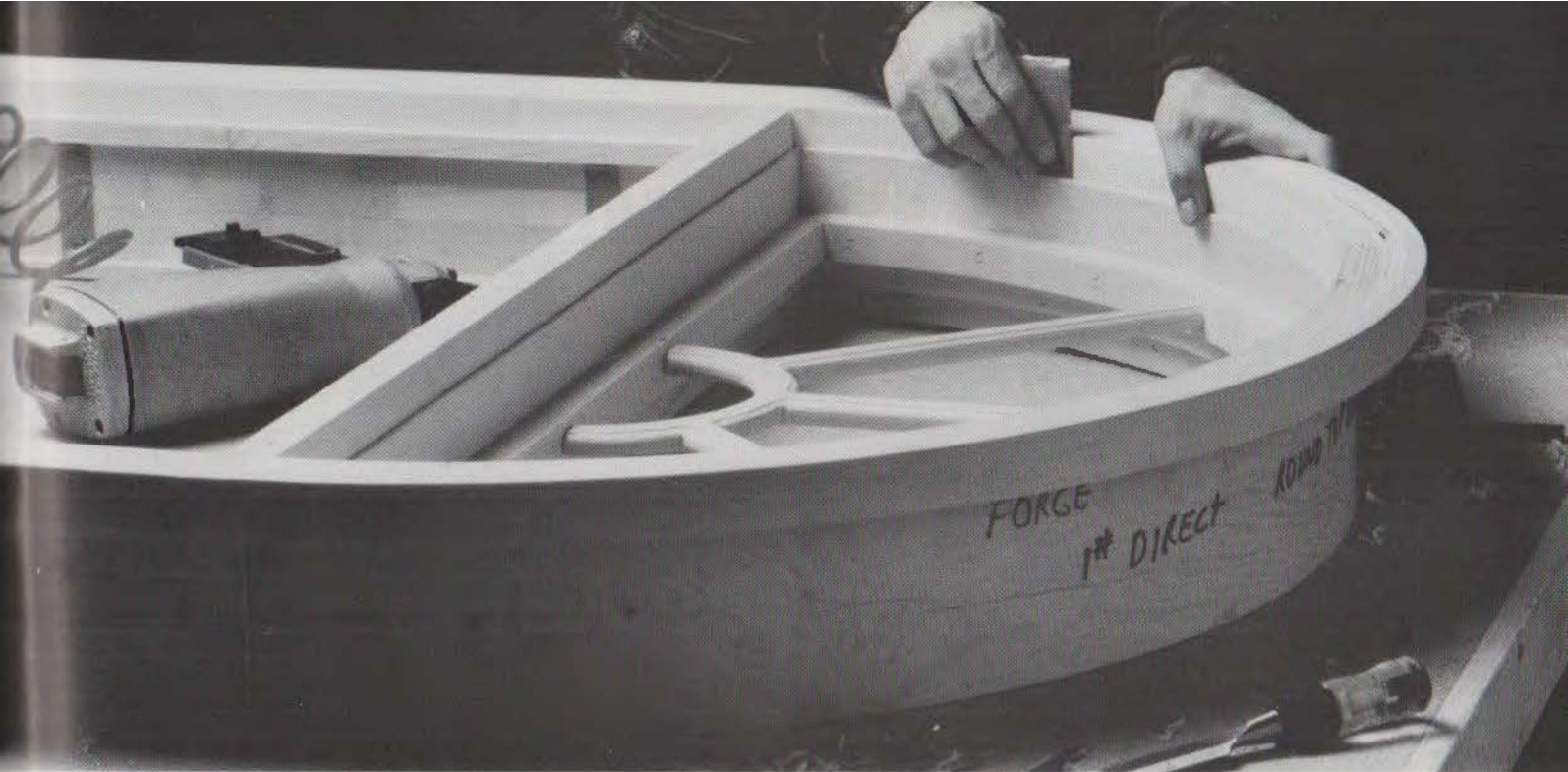
Graves Speaks at CONDES, Sans Sunar Showroom, Which Opens a Month Later

Plans called for the fifth Sunar showroom by Michael Graves—and his second in Texas—to open in the World Trade Center in Dallas during the Contract Design Show there March 11-13. By the time Graves had arrived at the Trade Center to give a featured talk March 12, however, furniture for his showroom had not. The showroom's distinctively chunky, pastel and earth-tone facade, on the sixth floor of the Trade Center, remained locked throughout the design show, causing a good bit of keyhole curiosity and prompting the soft-spoken Graves to open his talk with the disclaimer that—oddly enough—the delay was the fault of neither architect nor contractor. (See the July / August issue of *Texas Architect* for a report on the showroom's April 15 opening.)

Sunar showroom or no Sunar showroom, Graves presented a well-packaged lecture on "thematic issues related to furniture and interiors," in which he mainly elucidated his aversion to the machine as architectural metaphor. Citing the cave as man's first house, or "spatial void," Graves went on to recount man's historical propensity for fashioning subsequent dwellings above ground in such a way that they relate to his own "bodily landscape" as well as that of earth's. Grave's operative word here is "anthropomorphic," which he used frequently to describe an almost anthropological theory of design.

"The landscape of architecture was born out of humanism and the natural landscape," he said, emphasizing a primal essence in architecture with which man should be instinctively familiar. Although all man-made objects are technological, he said, we do not think in terms of technology first, but in terms of our bodies and the landscape. A window is a window, a door a door, both of which should be designed and placed according to the nature of their human user and to provide function and a distinct hierarchy of symbolism (the window sill, for example, corresponds to the human waist).

Projecting a slide of Thomas Jefferson's Pavilion #9 at the University of Virginia, Graves pointed out the sublime form and detailing of the entryway, how it communicates just the right associations with proper dimension, scale, color, hardware and effect on natural light and



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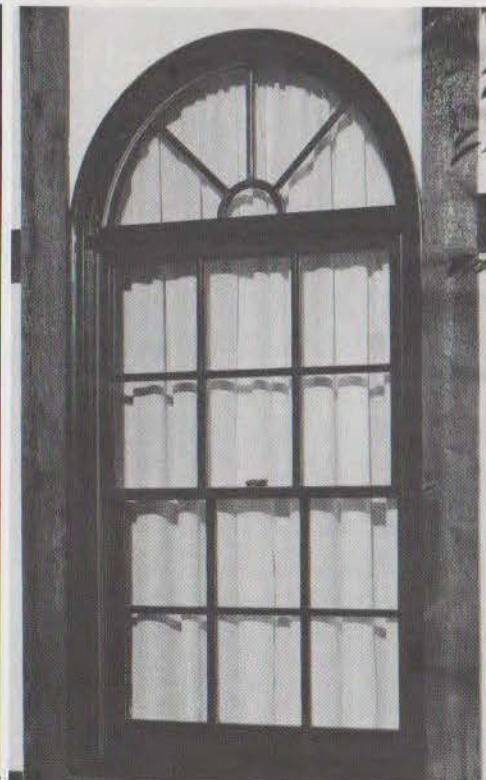
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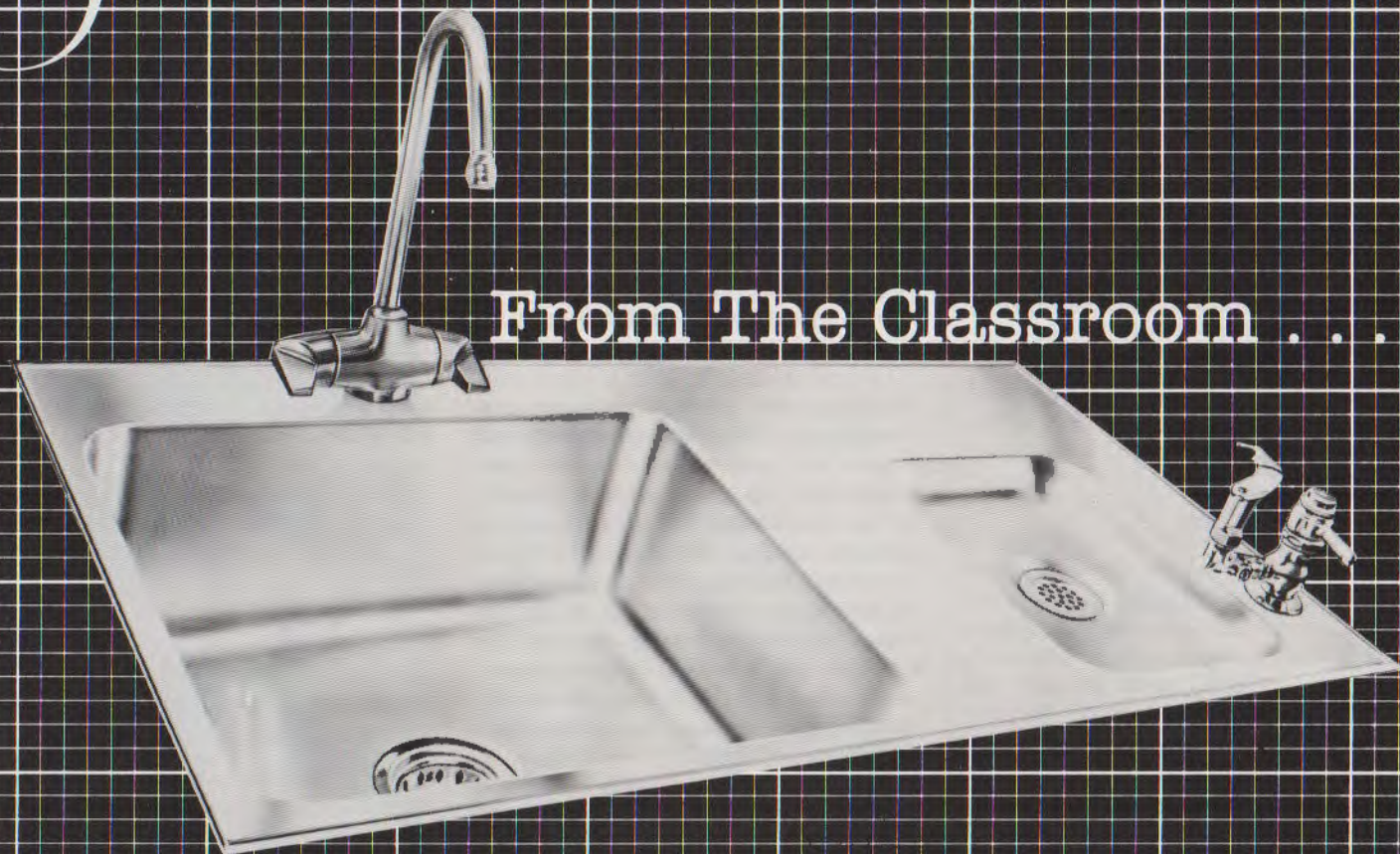
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the elements. Then he contrasted that with the all-too-familiar image of a modern-day sliding glass door. "Something has happened between that syntax and this," he said.

That something was Modernism's 20th-century machine metaphor, Graves said, which replaced the anthropomorphic in architecture with the mechanical—which often took the form of the aeroplane, among other technological wonders of the age. Instead of the cave as a fundamental architectural reference, with its strata of earthen color and texture, now we had LeCorbusier's French biplane, with its layers of wings and struts and ribbon windows.

Eschewing such imagery, Graves said that the utopian notion of the house as a "machine for living" was no longer valid. "I want my Lamborghini to be my Lamborghini and my house to be my house," he said. But Graves did not indicate any nostalgic longing for the architectural Good Old Days that never were, expressing instead his desire simply to resume an age-old dialogue between man and his surroundings. "I would not like to return to the past," he said. "I only want to re-establish the language that architecture has always possessed."

TSA Disaster Action, Inc. Once Again into the Breech, This Time in Paris, Texas

The Texas Society of Architects' Disaster Action, Inc., on standby since the devastating Wichita Falls tornado in April 1979, has once again gone into action during the Texas tornado season, this time to assess property damage in Paris, Texas.

A twister hit Paris the afternoon of April 2, killing eight people, injuring at least 200 others and destroying or damaging some 1,329 houses and apartments.

Following an official request from the City of Paris, necessary for TSA Disaster Action to respond to an emergency, TSA staffers Larry Paul Fuller and Sandra Wark were enroute to Paris April 6 to help set up a base of operations. Dallas architect Ed Rawls and Wichita Falls architects Charles Harper and Ralph Perkins, chairman of TSA Disaster Action, had been in Paris earlier in the week, shortly after the tornado struck, helping city officials determine the extent of the damage.

Also involved in the Paris relief effort were local architect Bill Lightfoot and

32 other architects from Dallas, Fort Worth, Northeast Texas and Wichita Falls.

The architects operated out of the Red Cross' main "one-stop center" in Paris' old Gibson Building on Clarksville Road, which also housed other disaster relief agencies. The TSA Disaster Action desk was open from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., during which homeowners could make appointments for architects to inspect their damaged homes. Some 130 Paris residents took advantage of this free service between April 7 and April 14, the period in which the center was officially open.

TSA Disaster Action, Inc., was established in 1971 as a non-profit corporation to provide quick, professional and reliable advice to small homeowners and businessmen in Texas communities hit by natural or man-made disaster. The damage assessment report filled out by the inspecting architect may be used in making loan applications, insurance settlements and other aid requests.

Three Projects Cited In Houston Residential Design Awards Program

Three Houston projects have been cited in the 1981 Houston Residential Design Awards Program sponsored by *Houston Home & Garden* magazine and the Houston Chapter AIA.

Chosen to receive architectural design citations from among 19 entries in the program (a record low, according to sponsors) were a townhouse by Robert Griffin, a detached residence by Russell King and a greenhouse addition by Robert P. Moroz.

Griffin designed the 3,000-square-foot townhouse to be simple and boxlike and to maximize views of its bayou setting. The wood- and steel-frame structure, clad in stucco, is linear in organization due to the narrow configuration of the site, with private spaces on the street side and public spaces in back.

The 4,000-square-foot detached residence by (and for) King, also clad in stucco, is similarly simple in form and feature to minimize its impact on a sloping, wooded site. The layout is designed mainly to facilitate cross ventilation. Other energy saving features include double-glazed windows, overhangs on the west and south sides and styrofoam insulation.

Moroz's 2,400-square-foot greenhouse, made of wood and fiberglass, connects



Griffin townhouse, Houston.



King residence, Houston.



Greenhouse addition, Houston.

the main house with a guest house and envelops the backyard and swimming pool, creating a space for a collection of some 500 house plants and also acting as a buffer against noise from a nearby freeway.

Jurors for the competition were Michael Benedikt, Austin; William Turnbull, Jr., FAIA, San Francisco; and Peter Chermayeff, Cambridge, Mass.

Texas Construction Activity Shows 16 Percent Decrease For First 2 Months of 1982

Total construction contracts in Texas reflect a 16 percent decrease for the first two months of 1982 compared to the same two-month period in 1981, according to McGraw-Hill's F. W. Dodge Division.

Dodge vice president and chief economist George Christie reports that contracts for residential, non-residential and non-building statewide totalled \$2,041,206,000 for January and February 1982, down from a total of \$2,427,353,000 for the same period last year.

In the Houston metropolitan area, total residential and non-residential building contracts show a 39 percent decrease for the first two months of 1982. In Brazoria, Fort Bend, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller Counties, building contracts for January and February this year totalled \$520,692,000, down from a total of \$848,068,000 for the first two months of 1981.

Building activity in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, however, shows a slight increase for the first two months of 1982. Residential and non-residential contracts in Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise Counties totalled \$507,735,000, for January and February 1982, up four percent from a total of \$487,936,000 for the same period last year.

Profile: Hermon Lloyd, on the Occasion of his 50th Year As a Houston Master Builder

It isn't hard to understand just how paradoxical it was to begin an architectural practice in Houston in 1932. That was the year that building permits in Houston—in the depths of The Great Depression—plunged to an all-time low of \$2.9 million (compared to \$3 billion in 1981). Obviously, the last thing Hous-

ton needed in 1932 was another bright young architect. Nevertheless, 1932 also was the year that Houston native Hermon F. Lloyd, 21, fresh out of Rice Institute with a bachelor's degree in architecture and a wealth of professional optimism, decided to become one. And today, on the 50th anniversary of that momentous decision, it is almost impossible to live very long in Houston without encountering a structure influenced in some way by that optimistic Hermon Lloyd brain.

You have encountered structures so influenced in Houston if you have beheld the following: Rice Stadium, The Melrose Building, eight Foley's department stores, Hofheinz Pavilion, the Astrodome, Conoco Tower, Capital Bank Tower, The Heritage Club, to name only a few Houston landmarks designed over the years by Lloyd's firm, now known as Lloyd Jones Brewer Associates.

Back in 1932, however, as the nascent Moore & Lloyd, Architects, the firm was doing work that was somewhat less monumental. Although building permits had plummeted in Houston, there were still a few wealthy clients keeping a few lucky architects busy, if doing nothing more than decorating ballrooms for debutant dances. Having developed some expertise in that "specialty" as fellow Rice undergraduates, Lloyd and his first partner Harvin Moore survived on it as practicing architects during the early years of the Depression.

Ballroom decorating did prove to be a good way to make contacts, and Lloyd and Moore made the most of them. One valuable contact made was with Benson-Markson Co., one of the two or three top homebuilders in Houston. E. Newman Benson, then building many of the finest homes in River Oaks, was a master salesman and an architect's dream. He insisted that the home bear the name of its architect, unusual generosity in a builder. Benson took a liking to Lloyd, who designed several homes for Benson that ended up as featured "homes of the month" in *McCalls* and *House Beautiful* magazines, which didn't hurt Lloyd's developing reputation or his marketing efforts.

Lloyd's ideas about design also were taking shape, influenced in part by a trip he took in 1932 to the Chicago World's Fair, where he was deeply impressed by buildings painted with "buttermilk," or casein, paint in bright, strong splashes of color. He had never seen anything like it. An early chance for him to use

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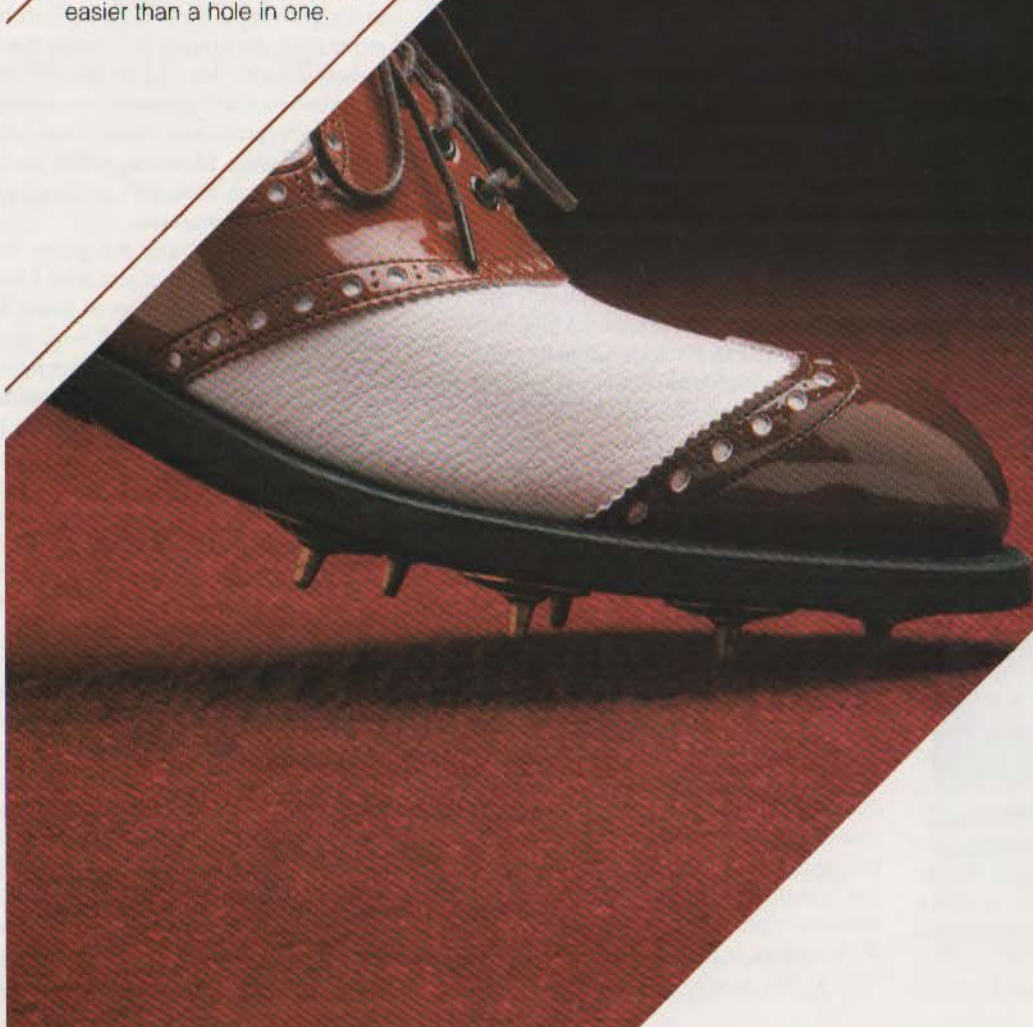
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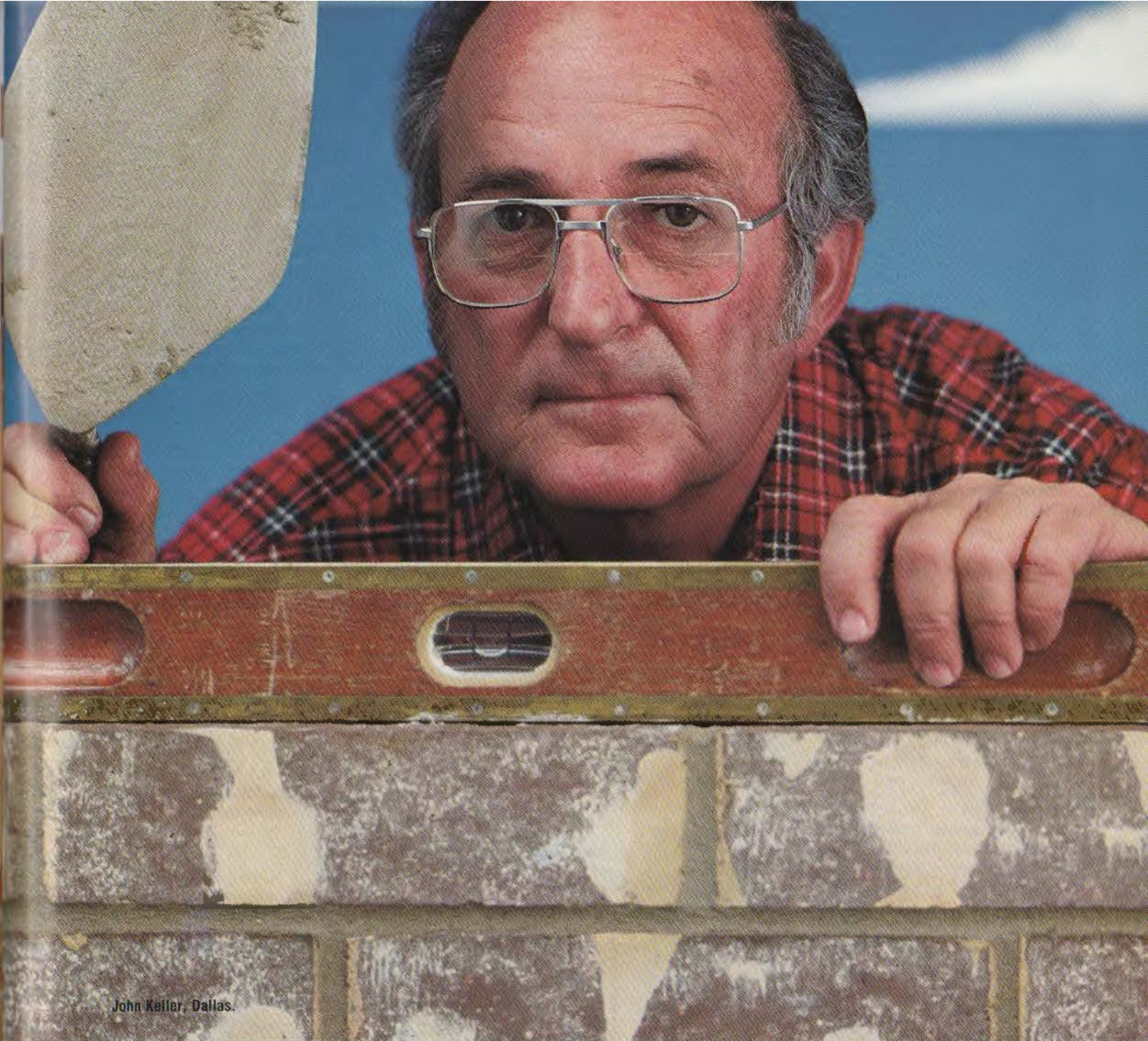
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Richard Payne



Hermon F. Lloyd.

this painting technique was in his design of a filling station on San Jacinto Street in Houston in the 1930s, his first commercial commission and an attention-getter for its day. The little yellow, white and blue building was "expositional" in design, Lloyd says, with a distinctive Art Deco tower and horizontal banding. Lloyd also saw glass blocks for the first time in Chicago, liked what he saw and used them in an International Style home for the Virgil Childress family in Houston in 1936.

After the hiatus of the war years, Lloyd's firm continued to evolve. Bill Morgan, who Lloyd always felt was one of the best architects Rice ever produced, had worked for the firm before the war and he returned to it afterwards, forming the new partnership Lloyd & Morgan Architects. In 1947, Lloyd and Morgan were joined by Arthur E. Jones, and the firm soon became Lloyd, Morgan, Jones, Architects.

Unlike 10 years before, bright young architects were in demand in Houston during the postwar boom. Prosperity was here at last. Houston's population was just beginning an uninterrupted surge that would take it from the 26th largest city in the country to the fourth. Houses were going up in the suburbs and office buildings were going up downtown—both building types rising rapidly to meet desperate postwar shortages. Lloyd, Jones and Morgan made the best of it, but it wasn't until 1950 that the firm received its first major commission—the 21-story Melrose Building. Then came Rice Stadium in 1951, the Fannin Bank Building in the early 1960s, the world-famous Astrodome in 1965 (in joint venture with the Houston firm Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson).

Today the firm has two new partners:

Ben Brewer, who came from Neuhaus + Taylor in 1976, concentrates on firm management; and Bob G. Fillpot, who joined the firm in 1978, specializes in architectural design and project management.

And today, Hermon Lloyd, at 71, is still an ambitious and optimistic man. He comes to the office every workday to help oversee an architectural operation that now numbers some 70 architects, interior designers, draftsmen and support personnel. His firm is also involved in the beehive of construction activity in Houston with such projects as the 42-story America Tower, the 50-story Four Allen Center, the 71-story Allied Bank Plaza. From all indications, Houston is still a good place to be an architect, and Hermon Lloyd is still taking advantage of that situation.

—Jack Burney

Projects in Progress

Construction to Begin Soon On Houston's Proposed Woodbranch Energy Plaza

Construction is scheduled to begin soon in Houston on Woodbranch Energy Plaza, a 32-acre office park designed by Michigan architect Gunnar Birkerts (with Morris * Aubry of Houston as associate architects) and located near the new Shell and Conoco offices on I-10 near Dairy Ashford.

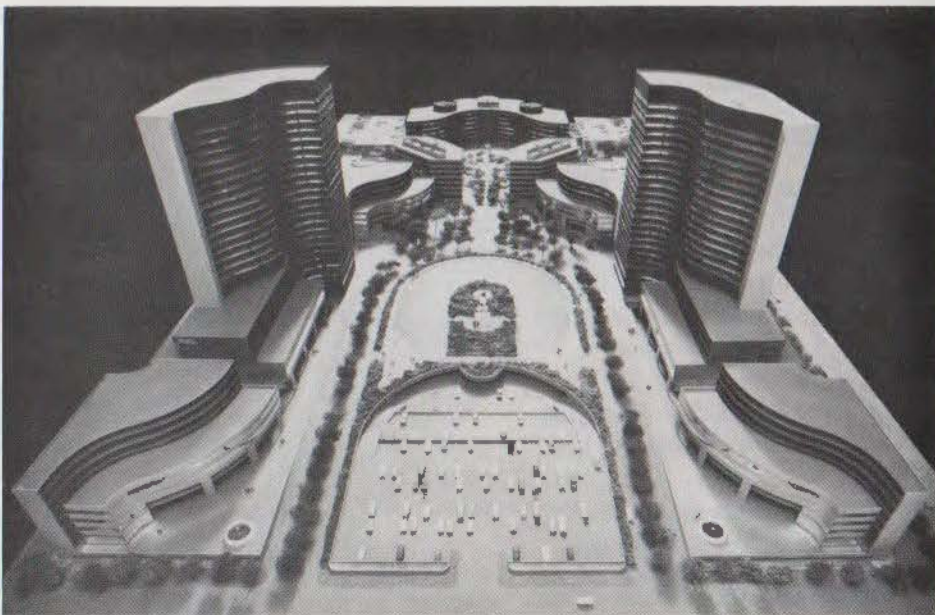
The \$300 million-plus complex will contain 10 multi-level office buildings, affording a total of 2.5 million square feet of lease space; garage parking for 10,000 cars; restaurant and retail facilities; an athletic and social club; and extensive landscaping to incorporate existing oak trees on the site and to include a lake and a circular plaza "reminiscent of the large formal plazas in the capital cities of Europe."

A prime building feature will be a system of tubular solar heat reflectors hung horizontally on building exteriors at the top of the window panels. The tubes are designed to deflect direct sunlight away from the building while redirecting and diffusing it onto interior ceiling planes for natural daylighting. The tubes also are painted muted shades of blue and red to add color to the building skin.

Facades of two of the buildings (all 10 of which will be structures of poured-in-place concrete) will be alternating bands of reflective glass and precast concrete panels with granite aggregate finish. The other eight buildings will feature bands of reflective glass alternating with metal panels.

Of the 10 buildings in the complex, eight will be seven stories high and two will rise to a height of 24 stories. All the buildings are designed to relate to each other with symmetrical curves and by facing inward toward the landscaping and pedestrian walkways.

The entire project is scheduled to be completed in five to seven years.



Woodbranch Energy Plaza, Houston.

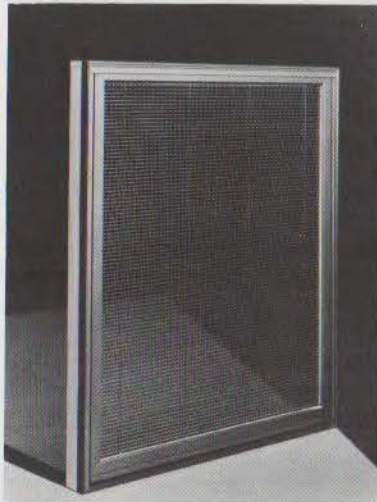
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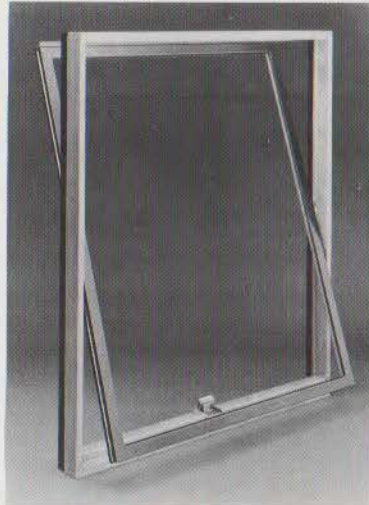


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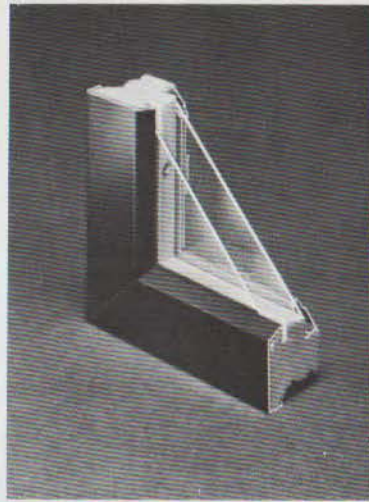


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Houston Design Center.

Plans Announced for Houston Design Center

Plans have been announced for a 10-story, 500,000-square-foot Houston Design Center, designed by Cambridge Seven Associates of Cambridge, Mass., (with Lloyd Jones Brewer of Houston as associate architects) to provide showroom space for contract and residential furnishings in Houston.

The \$70 million facility, part of phase III in Houston's Greenway Plaza development, will feature a stepped interior core cut diagonally through the center of the structure, where a series of escalators will link each floor to a "circulation canyon." According to architects, this canyon will be shaped like a giant staircase, with floors linked by the escalators in a pattern reminiscent of a switchback road zig-zagging up a mountainside. The staircase configuration will extend through the north and south sides of the building, where glass walls, terraces and special lighting will reveal activity inside.

In addition to showrooms for interior furnishings and accessories, the building will include meeting rooms and a 450-car parking garage on the three lowest levels.

Office Building Going Up Near La Grange Town Square

An 18,000-square-foot office building designed by the Houston firm Wm. T. Cannady & Associates to combine the vocabulary of existing 19th-century storefronts with the programmatic requirements of the Auto Age will soon be under way near the courthouse square in



Office building, LaGrange

Paul Hester

La Grange.

The Z-shaped building, for the Fayette County Savings and Loan Association, will be organized around two entrances, one forming a symbolic "front lawn" complete with flag poles and bank marquee, the other directly connected to the parking lot and drive-in teller windows. The two entrances will be linked by a two-story gallery, which also will form the banking lobby (accented by a clock tower) and an elevator lobby (accented by a wedge-shaped skylight). The clock tower, skylight and crenellations are derived from the roofscape of adjacent one- and two-story commercial buildings on the square a block away.

The steel-frame building, scheduled to be completed in early 1983, will be clad in two-tone brown-red brick with precast concrete handrails, metal arcades and standing-seam metal roof.



Texas Plaza, Dallas.

Texas Plaza Under Way In Suburban Dallas

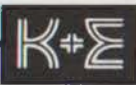
Now under way in Dallas is a 90-acre mixed-used development called Texas Plaza, designed by St. Louis-based Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum.

The nucleus of the \$500 million project, on the high ground across from Texas Stadium and adjacent to the University of Dallas, will contain over one million square feet of office space in three mid-rise buildings, 700 hotel rooms in two towers and 30,000 square feet of restaurants and shops in a glass enclosed courtyard connecting the office buildings with the hotel.

A 11.5-acre corporate headquarters site occupies the highest point in the development, and another 27 acres on the periphery of the complex will be devoted to midrise garden office buildings.


The entire development is designed to be a pedestrian-oriented environment, according to architects with HOK's Dallas office. Buildings will be clustered to form a strong sense of community and interior public spaces will be designed to provide human scale.

Continued on page 84.



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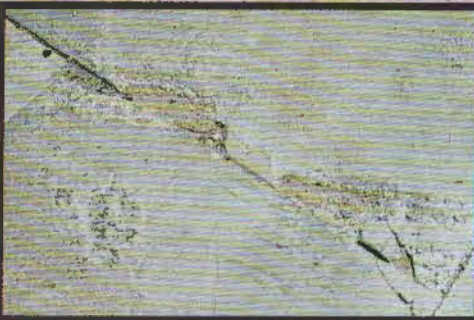
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About this Issue

In this issue we consider that most beloved and most bemoaned of all building types—the skyscraper. (The term itself evokes something of the ambiguity with which the building type is perceived—skyscraping as giddy flirtation with the heights, or as a source of abrasion and pain.) Perhaps the less romantic “high rise” is a better term for today; or, more precisely, “tall buildings.”

But how tall—we are obliged to ask—is tall? Tall in Chicago, which boasts the tallest-in-the-world Sears Tower at 110 stories/1,454 feet; or tall in New York, where the twin towers of the World Trade Center top out at 110 stories/1,353 feet; is taller than tall in Houston, home of this state’s tallest building, the 75-story, 1,002-foot Texas Commerce Tower. And of course tall in Houston is taller than tall in Austin, or Amarillo or Gilmer.

Tall, then, is relative. And it is not always in predictable correlation with population. As John Pastier’s collection of postcard skyscrapers (page 55) reveals, early Texas high rises sprouted up errantly in such unlikely places—from today’s perspective—as Big Spring, Beaumont and Waco. And even today, several 30- to 50-story buildings—including one by I. M. Pei—are in the works for oil-rich Midland, which ranks only about 20th among Texas cities in population.

Tall can also be deceptive, since the appearance of tallness comes with thinness, or a low ratio of bulk to height, as in the University of Texas Tower. But while the tower, at 370 feet, is tall, it is not *very* tall, at least by current Texas standards. The 600-foot level, of which the tower falls far short, seems to be a suitable—if arbitrary—benchmark for the very tall in Texas, eliminating all but about a dozen buildings in Houston and Dallas and nine or so more under construction in those same cities.

While there is still a certain fascination with tallness for its own sake, and the tallest-building listmakers are far from idle, the attainment of great heights has diminished as a measure of architectural achievement. One reason is that heights now technologically feasible are far beyond the limits of social or economic acceptability. Another is that tallness, multiplied over and over again, has changed the character and scale of American cities and has created widespread resentment of a building type directly responsible for oft-cited urban woes—lack of fresh air and open space, loss of views, traffic congestion, and the sacrificing of historic urban fabric, not to mention the proliferation of stylistic banality and monotony. In his lead article on tall buildings, Jeffrey Ochsner illuminates some of these issues and traces the stylistic evolution of the skyscraper in Houston from the early, romantic age, through the minimalist, Modern period, and into the current era in which architects are attempting—in various ways and ever so desperately—to break out of the box.

At a time when the skyscraper seems to be bemoaned as much as beloved, it is perhaps fitting to offer an observation in defense of tall buildings. Many objections to high-rise development are based on the resulting high density of the urban core. But the fact is that, by and large, Texas cities are not dense *enough*, not concentrated enough to foster the range of street life and activity that reflects genuine urban vitality. The right *kind* of tall buildings, those that offer a mix of uses and viable pedestrian amenities, afford the potential for increased vitality through greater concentrations of people involved in a wide variety of everyday activities. Such buildings offer higher hopes, as it were, for producing the social interaction and collective drama of which great cities are made.—Larry Paul Fuller



Paul Hester

Tall Buildings

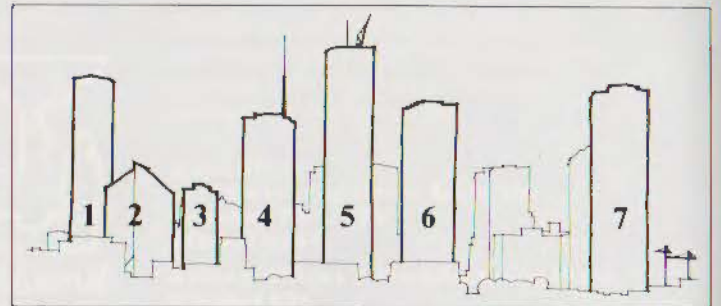
Houston as a Case in Point

By Jeffrey Karl Ochsner



Richard Payne

Houston skyline as viewed from the west. 1) Texas Commerce Tower, I. M. Pei & Partners, 1982. Associate architects: 3D/International. 2) Pennzoil Place, Philip Johnson/John Burgee, 1975. Associate architects: S. I. Morris Associates (now Morris* Aubry Architects). 3) Electric Tower, Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson, 1968. 4) One Shell Plaza, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (Chicago), 1971. Associate architects: Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson. 5) Allied Bank Plaza, SOM (Houston) and Lloyd Jones Brewer Associates, under construction. 6) First International Plaza, SOM (San Francisco), 1980. Associate architects: 3D/International. 7) Capital Bank Plaza, Lloyd Jones Brewer Associates, 1980, part of the adjoining Allen Center complex designed largely by the same firm. It will come as no surprise, even to casual observers of architecture, that most of the buildings featured in this article are projects of the eminent developer Gerald D. Hines. Notable exceptions include Allied Bank Plaza and Capital Bank Plaza, by Kenneth Schnitzer of Century Development Corporation; and Four Leaf Towers, by Giorgio Borlenghi, of Interfin Corporation.





Niels Esperson Building, John Ebersohn, 1927, and, below, Gulf Building, Alfred C. Finn and Kenneth Franzheim, 1929. These two buildings dominated the Houston skyline in the '30s and '40s, echoing the flamboyance of New York skyscrapers.



The progressive urbanization of Texas over the past half century is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in its changing skylines. Television's *Dallas* focuses on the Dallas skyline and the mythical Ewing Oil Headquarters (actually the 56-story First International Building) as much as on the Southfork Ranch—demonstrating that the urbanization of Texas is associated with its new skyscrapers even on a national level. Around the state, tall buildings are no longer confined to Houston and Dallas, but are also rising in Austin, Amarillo, Corpus Christi, Midland and El Paso. And although each new edifice generally is seen as a monument to success and civic pride, at least in Austin tall buildings have become a source of concern as they alter forever a skyline once dominated by the Capitol Dome (see page 49).

Although the current spurt of growth continues the transformation begun a half century ago, the forms of these new tall buildings are radically different from those just a decade old. In a sense, we are entering a new age in skyscraper construction. The new buildings are found throughout the state, but the development of innovative architectural forms is most advanced in Houston, where a boomtown economy has spawned a much-publicized assortment of skyscrapers notable in terms of both scale and form.

The Three Ages

The first office skyscraper built in Houston, the Bankers Mortgage Building (1908), stood only 10 stories tall, and another decade passed before the 20-story mark was crossed. During the early period of skyscraper construction, Houston's tall buildings echoed the flamboyance of New York landmarks such as the Woolworth Building and the Chrysler Building. In Houston, this era is best characterized by the two buildings which dominated the skyline through the thirties and forties, the Niels Esperson Building (1927) and the Gulf Building (1929). Both are marked by rich detail, historical reference and setback forms typical of the theatrical-historical mode of skyscraper design developed in New York. The Esperson Building, a 27-story structure topped by a five-story circular cupola (choragic monument) is a setback composition with clear allusions, particularly in details, to Renaissance forms. The Gulf Building, at 30 stories, is Houston's best example of a Manhattan setback skyscraper. It appears vaguely Gothic

from a distance, but actually is styled as 1920s *Art Deco* moderne. Although these two buildings no longer reign as the king and queen of the Houston skyline, they remain two of the city's most beloved landmarks.

The next period of skyscraper development, the fifties and sixties, was marked by the triumph of Modernism. Buildings of this period were abstract prisms devoid of historic reference or symbolic content. Designed in the era of second-generation Modernism, these cold, clean, clear expressions of undifferentiated office space and structural efficiency followed the lead of Chicago, the city of Mies, Murphy and SOM. Two buildings of the early 1960s, the 32-story First City National Bank Building (1961) and the 32-story Tenneco Building (1963), both by SOM, are Houston's best examples of the modern sensibility. Although the first is clad in stone and the other in bronze anodized aluminum, both are simple rectangular prisms with clearly expressed regular structural frames, similar on every side. The Tenneco Building, which is widely recognized for design excellence, particularly due to its recessed shaded glass in response to Houston's climate, received an AIA design award in 1969.

Although modern rectangular skyscrapers remained dominant in the early 1970s, a series of explorations by Philip Johnson—beginning with the 51-story IDS Building in Minneapolis and culminating with Pennzoil Place (1975) in Houston—began a third age of skyscraper development. In this period, plain orthogonal towers have been displaced by buildings with a plethora of forms and colors, representing a change of emphasis from structure and function to sculpture and skin. The new tall buildings are sliced, folded, terraced and curved, their skins' painterly compositions rendered in glass, metal and stone. Some show signs of clear historical reference, as if heralding a return to the romantic era of the twenties. Although the technology of tall buildings has advanced, the earlier motivations supporting the theatrical-historical mode appear to be reasserting themselves. In virtually every case, the structural expression of the sixties has been replaced by a search for the stunning image of the eighties.

Form

Pennzoil Place, designed in response to a request for the "most distinctive" building in Houston, showed architects and developers that success did not have to come in rectangular packages. Although Pennzoil was seen as a radical design when it was announced, it leased rapidly and remained a subject of conversation for months—clearly a help in the competitive field of office leasing. Pennzoil was not particularly tall, however, each tower rising 36 stories to its peak; at this height, the formal variations did not require structural innovation. But could a significantly taller building break radically with rectangular prismatic forms without bringing structural feasibility into question?

The answer was found in the new structural theories of the late 1960s and early 1970s when tall buildings came to be designed as cantilevered tubes rather than as rigid frames. Although the tubular theory was first applied in rectangular structures such as Houston's One Shell Plaza (1971), it was soon demonstrated that tubular structures could assume any shape as long as surface continuity was maintained. It is thus a combination of new formal freedom and the structural possibilities of tubular forms which has led to today's situation in which distinction through theatricality is the goal.

Pennzoil broke with tradition in plan and elevation through a scheme in which two trapezoidal towers with sloped tops mirror each other across a ten-foot void. A similar trapezoidal plan was the basis for the 55-story First International Plaza (1980) by SOM. The pink granite and pink mirror glass structure has four different elevations generated by various combinations of faceted angles and flat planes. The series of faceted bays on the angled side of the trapezoid may have been generated by a demand for more "prestige" corner offices as well as a desire for an unusual image. Now under construction on an adjacent block, the 71-story Allied Bank Tower, also by SOM, rises in a continuous shaft clad in green mirror glass. As a result of its uninterrupted rise and the vertical accents provided by two-colored mullions, this building truly looks tall. Instead of a typical rectangular prism, its form is composed of two slightly skewed quarter cylinders (resulting in the usual four corner offices per floor, but not in the typical locations). I. M. Pei's 75-story Texas Commerce Tower, the

Richard Payne



Tenneco Building, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (San Francisco), 1963. A leading example of the Modern sensibility, viewed here beyond the grand banking hall of First International Plaza (foreground), designed by the same office of SOM.

Richard Payne



Philip Johnson's Pennzoil Place and, left, the Gulf Building as seen in 1979 against a clear patch of sky subsequently pierced by new construction. This same scene taken late next year would show Johnson's RepublicBank Center facing Pennzoil in the right half of the picture.



Pei's Texas Commerce Tower, at 75 stories, is Texas' tallest building, at least for now. Sheathed in cool gray granite, the pentagonal tower is one of several recent skyscrapers to eschew the metal-and-glass curtainwall for a more traditional material.



Visible from Tranquility Park, lessons in the evolution of the skyscraper. From left, Niels Esperson with its ornate cupola—a product of the romantic age; the strongly vertical Electric Tower and the marble-clad One Shell Plaza—second generation boxes; and, breaking out of the box—the semi-curved, blue-green Allied Bank Plaza flanked by the notched and faceted First International Plaza, sculpted in pink granite.



Four Leaf Towers, Cesar Pelli & Associates, 1982. Associate architects: Melton Henry/Architects. Sloped tops and patterned skins.



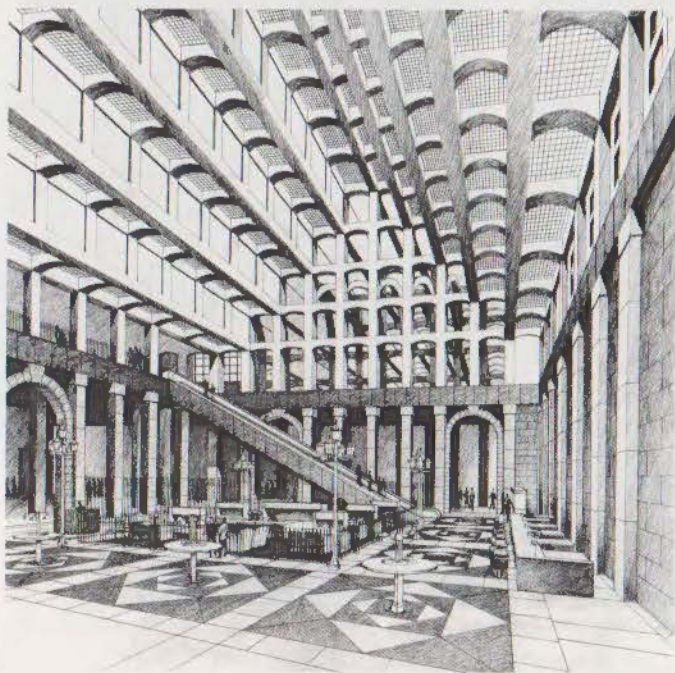
First City Tower, Morris*Aubry Architects, 1981. A parallelogram with stair-stepping vertical notches.



LEFT: RepublicBank Center, Philip Johnson/John Burgee, to open in late 1983. Associate architects: Kendall/Heaton/Associates. BELOW: Transco Tower, Philip Johnson/John Burgee, to open in late 1982. Associate architects: Morris Aubry Architects. The Neo-Renaissance RepublicBank and the Art Deco Revival Transco—both projects of Gerald Hines—reflect Johnson's penchant for historic allusion and promise to rival Pennzoil as eye-catchers.*



BELOW: RepublicBank's grand banking hall, its tiered roofline rising to 125 feet, appropriately reflects the building's external flamboyance. The skylit space will evidence sympathy for the period through four 17½-foot "street lights," ornate iron balustrades and grillework, and custom-designed furniture, all in conjunction with a patterned floor of red, charcoal and white granite. Interior architecture by Gensler and Associates Architects (Houston).



Tim Justice

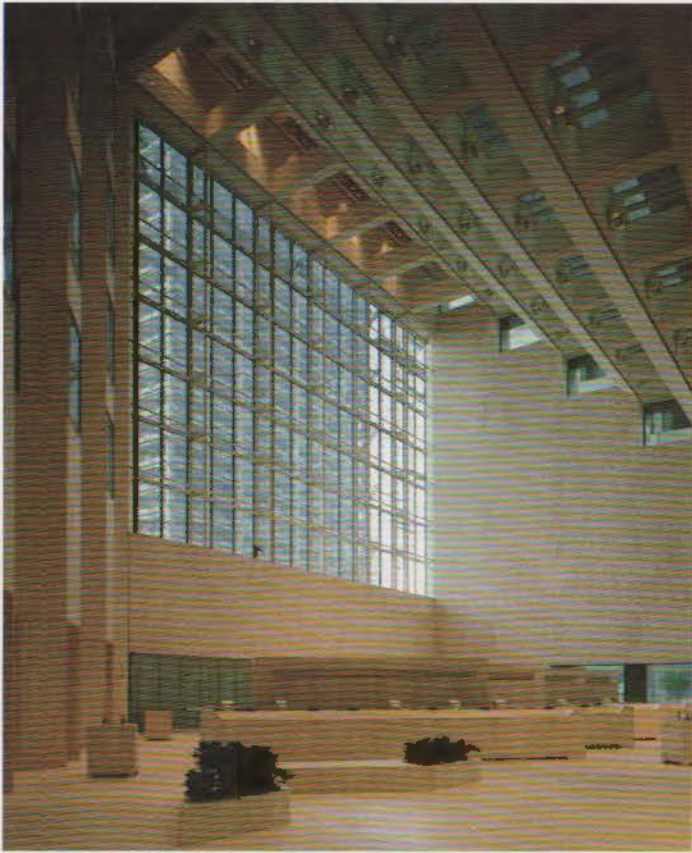
tallest building in Texas, now nearing completion, is a five-sided shaft created by cutting one corner off of a square. The First City Tower, by Morris* Aubry, is a 49-story parallelogram with notches marking the various levels of elevator lobbies. But the most radical (or most eclectic) formal expressions are those of Philip Johnson, whose new 64-story Transco Tower, now under construction in the City Post Oak area, is a mirror glass skyscraper marked by a series of setbacks deliberately recollective of the *Art Deco* moderne buildings of the twenties.

Tops

In a city of tall buildings, the tops are seen at a distance and often become their identifying feature. Pennzoil Place demonstrated that the International Style flat roof might be replaced by something more dramatic. The top of First International Plaza is marked by a series of stepped faceted bays—a feature which cannot be seen from the surrounding streets but which is clearly noticeable at a distance. Cesar Pelli's two Four Leaf condominium towers nearing completion in the Post Oak area are square shafts topped by angled setbacks and sloped roofs. Pelli's Four Leaf office complex nearby will have four towers with similar features. The most unusual top, however, will appear on Johnson's RepublicBank, only recently under construction. This 53-story tower of red granite will be topped by a series of stepped-back gables modelled on Dutch Renaissance guild house facades. In plan, the building is a straightforward rectangle, but this overt historical reference will establish a new precedent on the Houston skyline.

Facades

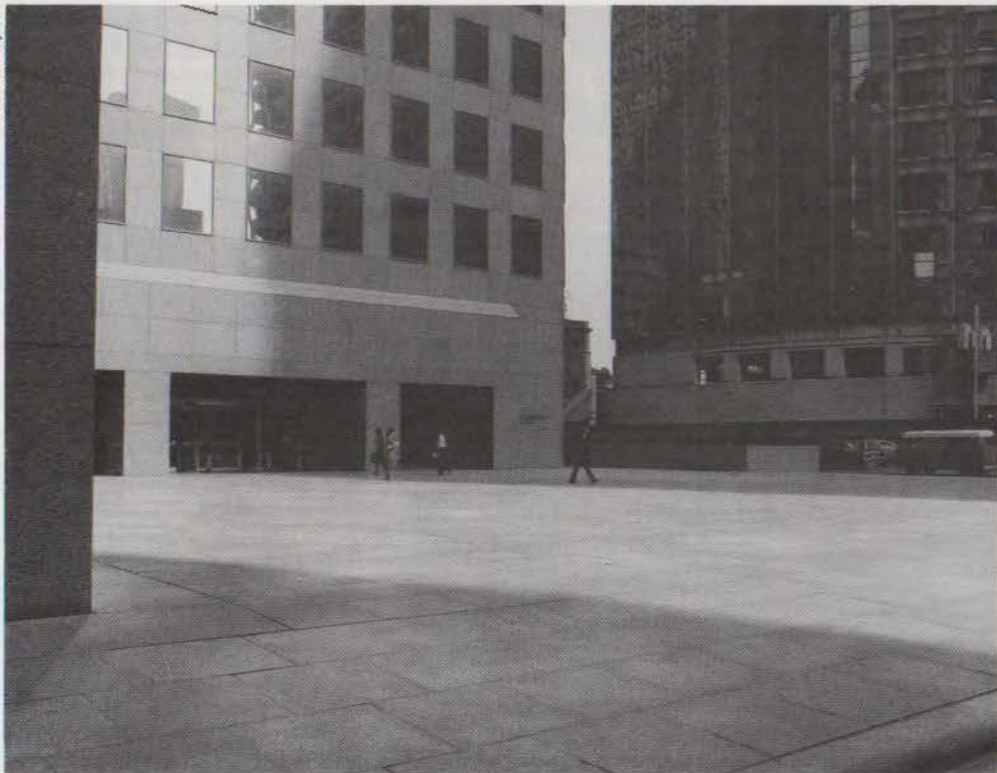
The facades of the new towers differ from their predecessors in the wide range of colors and the decorative effects sought in color application. Streamlined moderne was the acknowledged source for the black and silver (mirror glass) stripes of Johnson's Post Oak Central, a three-tower complex in the City Post Oak area. The mix of dark tinted and reflective glass for his Transco Tower has similar roots. Pelli's experimentation with color patterns is developed in his Four Leaf condominium facades composed of salmon, red-brown and white panels and dark gray tinted glass (see *Texas Architect*, May/June, 1981).



First International Plaza's marbled, skylit banking hall rises in a stepped form 106 feet above street level and serves as an image in itself adjacent to the tower. Interior architecture by Gensler and Associates Architects (Houston).



Post Oak Central (One, Two and Three), Philip Johnson/John Burgee, 1975-1982. Associate architects: One (center)—S. I. Morris Associates; Two (right) and Three (left)—Richard Fitzgerald & Associates. Shimmering skins, stepped profiles and rounded corners create striking companion images.



First International's open space: a windswept, treeless corner.

Entries and Lobbies

Johnson's explorations of procession in architecture, and his creation of the splendid Crystal Court at Minneapolis' IDS Building, set the precedent for the rebirth of the grand lobby as part of the office tower. Grand lobbies, such as the banking lobby of the Gulf Building, were one of the best-loved features of skyscrapers from the romantic era.

In the fifties and sixties, these grand spaces disappeared and building entries became almost anonymous. In Houston, Johnson's Pennzoil Place lobby, a glass-enclosed pyramidal space between the two towers, was the first of the new series of great spaces. The First International banking lobby, standing adjacent to the tower, rises in a stepped form to 106 feet above street level. The new Texas Commerce Tower lobby, rising to a height of 65 feet, reads as a continuation of the building's exterior plaza space and serves as the commercial counterpart to the general customer banking hall which remains in the Gulf Building. Both of Johnson's latest projects, RepublicBank and Transco Tower, will have arched entries several stories high leading to grand lobbies.

Urban Space and Streetscape

Urban space characteristics of the new buildings are varied. The combination of First International Plaza, Allied Bank Tower and One Shell Plaza (all designed by SOM) on three adjacent blocks has allowed the creation of a three-block layer of open space in downtown Houston—a visually unified space which adds variety to a downtown otherwise marked by a totally uniform street grid. The open plaza in front of Texas Commerce Tower, recently endowed with its traffic-stopping Miro sculpture, functions as an effective forecourt to the tower lobby. In a less constricted setting, Johnson's Post Oak Central complex of three towers creates a unique triangular urban place.

While these spaces are compositionally interesting, they offer little in terms of pedestrian amenities. First International's open space is a windswept, treeless corner in pink granite offering no incentives for building tenants or passersby to linger (although an outdoor sculpture is planned). The Texas Commerce Plaza offers its sculpture and trees, but otherwise is a place to be crossed as rapidly as possible. Generally, the new tall buildings offer little in the way of places for people. Some new buildings may recall the moderne forms of 1920s New York, but they have not yet found ways to create the streetscape or engender the human activity of a place like Rockefeller Center.

Concerns

The rapid proliferation of the new skyscraper forms must be taken as a measure of their success. These bold new shapes appear to satisfy a human desire for something other than minimalist rectilinear towers. However, once the craving for newness wears off, the success of these towers may be questionable. Pennzoil depended for its drama on the contrast of its forms with a skyline otherwise composed almost entirely of modern minimal boxes. As each new tower assumes a new shape or a more unusual profile, the impact of each is lessened. Contrasts disappear in a skyline where every shape is different.

Interior space planning is also a concern in some of the new towers. Column placement and core space have affected planning in both the First International Plaza and the Allied Bank Plaza (see *Texas Architect*, March/April, 1981). While the lower floors of First International have served the bank very well, planning on some upper floors has been made more difficult by the typical

column spacing and the faceted wall module. In the Allied Bank Tower, traditional rectilinear office systems do not work well with the curving walls. The sizes of private offices vary considerably along the curve so that order and logic in space planning is difficult to achieve. However, other new towers such as RepublicBank and Transco, with their basically rectilinear plans, will not present these interior difficulties, even with their theatrical exteriors.

The high-rise growth of Houston and other Texas cities is causing other related problems as well. Downtown Houston is currently the center of employment for 175,000 persons, but if growth continues at its present rate this number could increase to 275,000 by the year 2000. Given current levels of traffic congestion in Houston, how all this space will be served remains a matter of conjecture. In the City Post Oak area, the growth will be even more dramatic and traffic levels are already worse than in downtown. Furthermore, recent surveys indicate that at least five additional new office towers are currently under construction in downtown Houston and perhaps 10 others have been announced or are in early planning stages. In the City Post Oak area, nine additional office towers are under construction and others are planned. Although a Regional Mobility Plan for 15 years of transportation improvements was recently announced by the Houston Chamber of Commerce, the cost is estimated at \$16.2 billion and funding and implementation remain uncertain.

The Future

The current economic health of Texas relative to other parts of the country means the growth of Texas cities will continue. Integral to that growth will be high-rise buildings, not only because of land costs and development economics, but also because tall buildings are important as symbols of corporate strength. Less predictable, however, are the design directions which will give form to these high rises of the future. As bold geometry becomes familiar, perhaps the parade of shapes will yield to a renewed discipline and an affirmation that there are qualities beyond the surface of a building which call attention to it and which make it a good design.

Architect Jeffrey Ochsner is coordinator of special projects for Houston Transit Consultants and lectures at Rice University.

Paul Hester



Houston's Louisiana Street: a canyon.

Texas Skyscrapers in the Works

The following projects, in various stages of completion, are presented as a representative sampling of forthcoming additions to Texas skylines.



First United Tower, Fort Worth, 40 stories, 1983. Geren Associates/CRS, Fort Worth; Sikes Jennings Kelly, Houston, consulting architects.



Thanksgiving Tower, Dallas, 50 stories, 1982. Harwood K. Smith & Partners, Dallas.



Texas Commerce Plaza, Corpus Christi, 23 stories, 1983. Morris* Aubry Architects, Houston.



Dallas Main Center, 72 stories, 1984. Jarvis Putty Jarvis, Dallas.



Four Allen Center, Houston, 50 stories, 1984. Lloyd Jones Brewer Associates, Houston.



First International Plaza, San Antonio, 28 stories, 1983. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Houston.



ARCO Tower, Dallas, 49 stories, 1983. I.M. Pei & Partners, New York (Dallas office).



Water's Mark, Austin, 21 stories, 1983. Harry Weese & Associates, Chicago; Alan Y. Taniguchi, Austin, associate architect.



Eagle Plaza (First National Bank), Midland, 46 stories, 1985. Wood & Associates, Dallas.

Nathan Lieberman



First City Center, Dallas, 50 stories, 1984. WZMH Group, Inc., Dallas.



Olympia & York Office Tower, Dallas, 36 stories, 1982. WZMH Group Inc., Dallas.

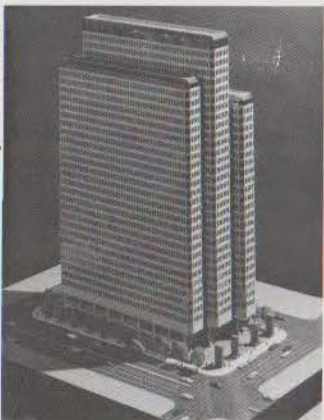


Renaissance West, Midland, 31 stories, 1984. Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum, Dallas; GBA Associates, Midland.



Southwestern Bell Texas Headquarters, Dallas, 37 stories, 1984. Jarvis Putty Jarvis, Dallas.

Wayne Thom Assoc.



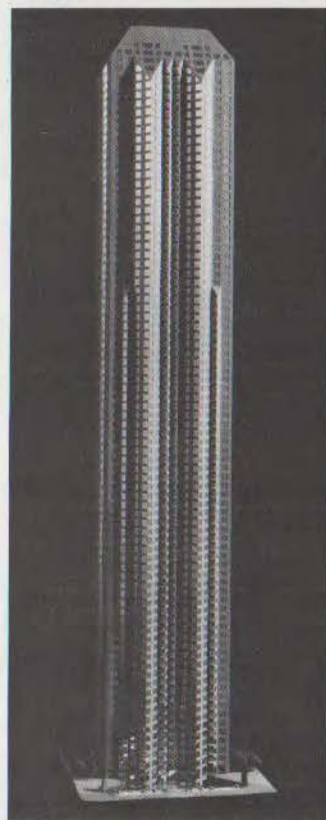
San Jacinto Tower, Dallas, 33 stories, 1983. Beran & Shelmire, Dallas.



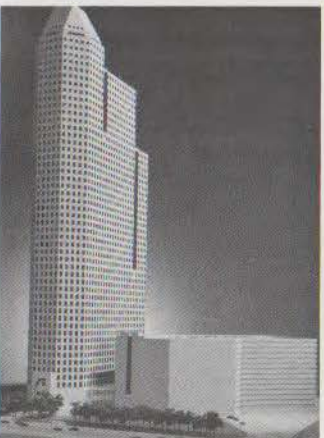
One Lincoln Plaza, Dallas, 45 stories, 1983. Harwood K. Smith & Partners, Dallas.



San Felipe Plaza, Houston, 45 stories, 1984. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Houston.



Campeau Tower, Houston, 80 stories, indefinite. Skidmore Owings & Merrill, Houston.



Cullen Center, Houston, 55 stories, 1984. Morris Aubry Architects, Houston.*

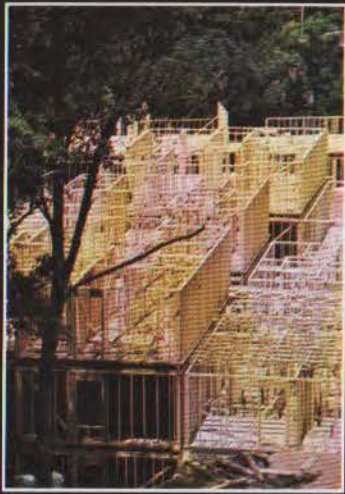


Three Houston Center (Gulf Oil Tower), Houston, 52 stories, 1983. Caudill Rowlett Scott, Houston.



First City National Bank Operations Center, Houston, 25 stories, 1983. Morris Aubry Architects, Houston.*

THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE. BEFORE IT CAN SEE, IT HAS TO KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR.



2



3



1



4

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Scraping the Sky in Austin

A Problem of Conflicting Views in Texas' Capital City

By Michael McCullar

When Judge Edwin Waller first laid out the city of Waterloo in 1839, picking the high ground between two creeks just north of the Colorado River as "Capitol Square," he probably never dreamed that the Texas Capitol would someday be only one of several urban landmarks in a city called Austin—and arguably not the most prominent. Topping off at 311 feet in 1888, the pink dome of the second and most majestic state Capitol on the site stood unchallenged, for all practical purposes, for only 49 years. In 1937, having decided it needed an architectural symbol too, the University of Texas erected its 307-foot administration building tower on the UT campus to the north. Since 1965 a handful of other tall buildings have sprouted near the Capitol (including the 18-story Westgate Building practically on the Capitol grounds), all detracting from its historic dominance of Austin's skyline. Today the building can still hold its own, to be sure, offering a regal countenance from Congress Avenue and through various other "view corridors" around town. But the Capitol's once-commanding presence on the shores of the Colorado now appears to be in the eye of a high-rise development storm.

In the last year, in keeping with the city's growing reputation as one of the best investment opportunities in the Sunbelt, developers have announced plans to build more than a dozen major projects in or near downtown Austin, three of which—on Congress Avenue between the river and the Capitol—will be considerably more imposing than most of the tall buildings already there. This has raised the ire of a group of Austinites dedicated to preserving what's left of the Capitol's architectural stature downtown and dusted off a 50-year-old ordinance that can be interpreted in more ways than one, depend-



Cranes swing in front of State Capitol in Austin as new high rise goes up nearby.

ing on whether you want to limit tall buildings in Austin or encourage them.

The controversy began last November when Capitol Mortgage Bankers in Austin said it wanted to build a 15-story (215-foot) office building on Congress two blocks south of the Capitol. A provision in the city zoning ordinance, on the books since 1931, prohibited a building from rising higher than 200 feet in downtown Austin unless it is "set back," for every foot of which its height could be increased by three feet. The ordinance defined setback as "the minimum horizontal distance between the front wall of any projection of the building, excluding steps and unenclosed porch, and the street line." As designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in Houston, the Capitol Mortgage Building—15 feet higher than the ordinance allowed—rose flush with the streetline from the building's base, with setbacks at the top of the base and on

the 11th floor.

Not to worry, said the city building inspector. For 50 years the city has interpreted the ordinance to read that the setback can be measured from any point on the building, not just at street level, thereby allowing a "wedding-cake" configuration as the three-foot height bonus is added with each foot of setback above 200 feet.

Texans to Save the Capitol, a local citizens group concerned about the direction (vertical and otherwise) of Austin's growth, vehemently disagrees with that interpretation. They say it could conceivably permit the tallest building in the world to be built on Congress Avenue as multiple setbacks continue *ad infinitum*—hardly the intent of the ordinance. The correct interpretation, they contend, is that for every foot the whole building is set back once from the street, the three-foot height bonus is awarded. This would effectively limit the height and bulk of a

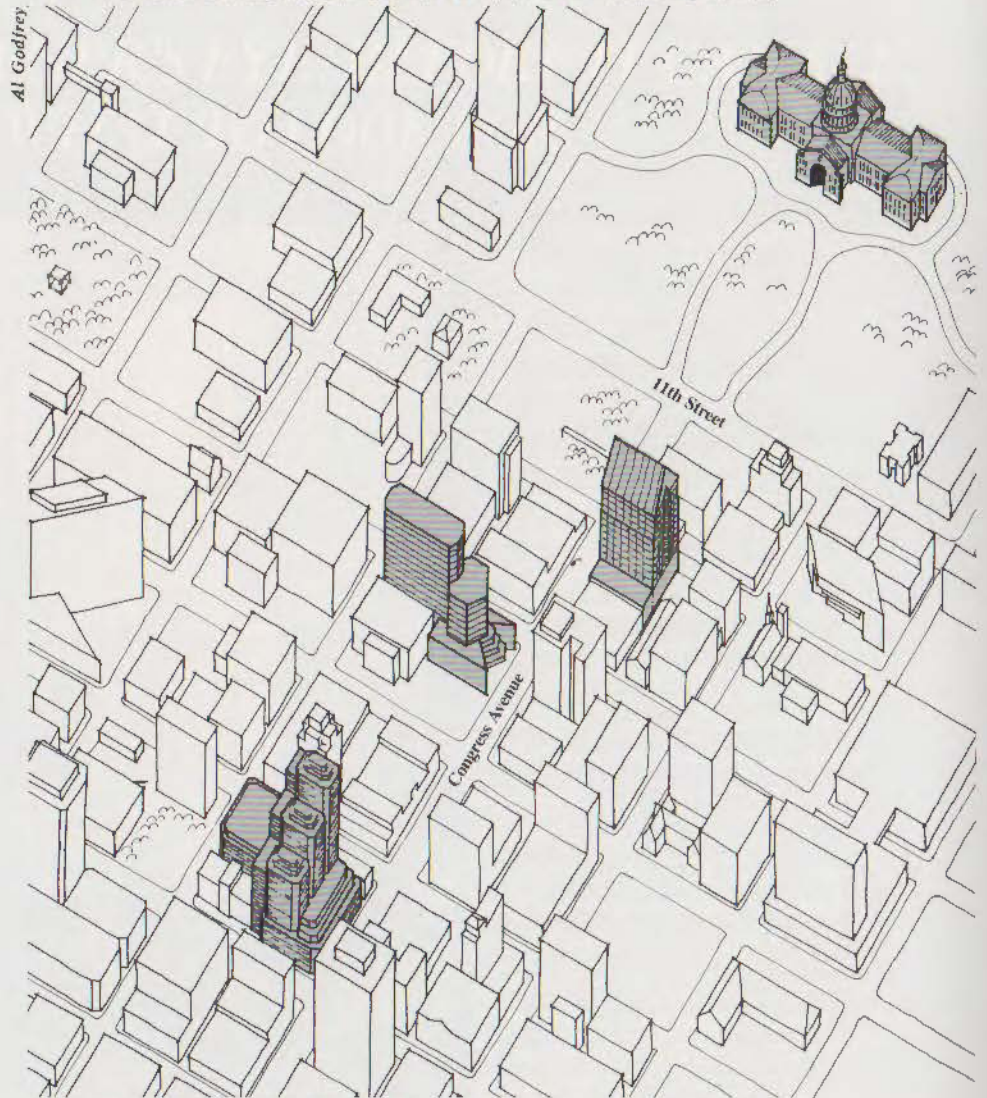
building by making it less profitable to go much above 200 feet, since the taller the building the smaller its floor-area ratio.

Texans to Save the Capitol took the issue before the city Board of Adjustment, which ruled in favor of the traditional interpretation of the ordinance. The group then took the city to court, wherein State District Judge Charles Matthews saw fit to determine only whether the Board of Adjustment had acted legally, then ruled that it had. Texans to Save the Capitol has appealed the ruling, and the Austin City Council has imposed a moratorium on issuing building permits for buildings higher than 200 feet, as the Planning Commission works on ironing out ambiguities in the ordinance. Another group, the 17-member Downtown Revitalization Task Force, appointed by the City Council in 1981 and now working on a new zoning ordinance, has recommended some interim measures that include a 120- to 200-foot building height limitation within one-quarter mile of the Capitol. Meanwhile, site work continues for three major high-rise projects on Congress Avenue: the Capitol Mortgage Building, 20-story First City Centre at Ninth and Congress, and the 33-story One American Center at Congress and Sixth, all exempt from the moratorium because their building permits were in the process of being approved before it went into effect.

Preserving views of the Capitol (designed by Detroit architect E. E. Meyers) is not a new issue in Austin. None other than J. Frank Dobie led the fight against the UT Tower's usurping the Capitol's skyline preeminence in 1937. In the early '60s, citizen opposition to the Westgate Building's going up so close to the Capitol was vociferous, if in the end unsuccessful. And the city Planning Commission has been specifically recommending a blanket 120-foot height limitation in Austin since 1979, a proposal with which Texans to Save the Capitol enthusiastically agrees.

Texans to Save the Capitol believes that the stretch of Congress Avenue between First and 11th Streets leading up to the Capitol, placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, should be jealously guarded from the encroachment of any more modern high rises, which the Register generally classifies as "intrusive." Congress was placed on the National Register in part because it offers the most direct and scenic ap-

Artist's depiction of building configurations based on information available at press time.



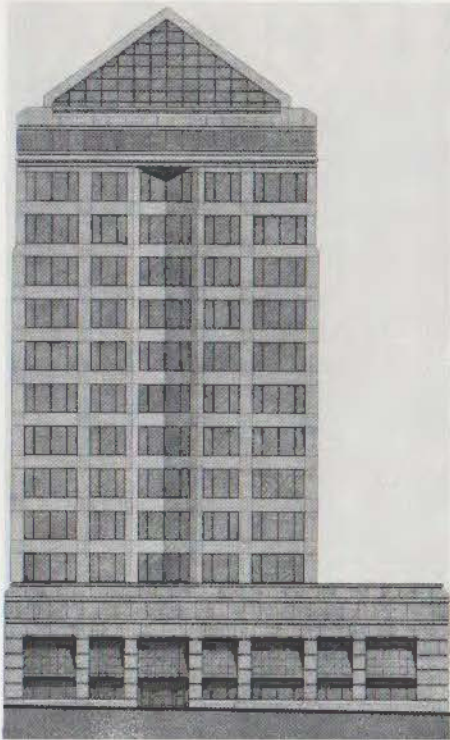
Three new high rises under way on Congress Avenue approach to Capitol.

proach to the Capitol (which also is on the National Register). Barring the construction of a high-rise building in the middle of the Avenue, Congress will always provide a clear shot of the Capitol looking north from the river. But Texans to Save the Capitol is primarily concerned with the construction of tall buildings along both sides of the Avenue, which would block views of the Capitol from other directions (most notably, various "sustained approach views" identified by the planning department, such as approaches to the city from South First Street, Red River and Interstate 35, portions of South Lamar and I-35 and Riverside Drive, not to mention numerous "dramatic glimpses" of the Capitol from various public places within and around the city).

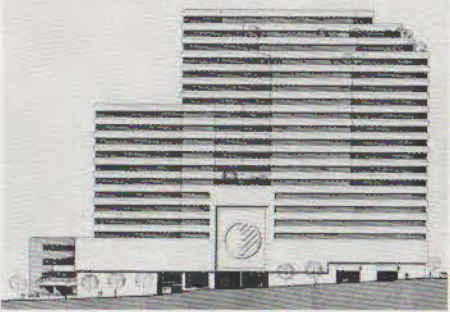
Other cities have ordinances that preserve views of various things, as Texans to Save the Capitol points out. Seattle, Wash., for example, has a stringent design-review code that insures visibility

of the Cascade and Olympic Mountains flanking the city. In Lincoln, Neb., the state capital, a city ordinance effectively limits building height around town to safeguard public views of the Nebraska State Capitol. And in Washington, D.C., to preserve views of important government structures, a 1910 act of Congress limits buildings in the central business district (with a few exceptions) from being more than 20 feet higher than the widths of the streets they face.

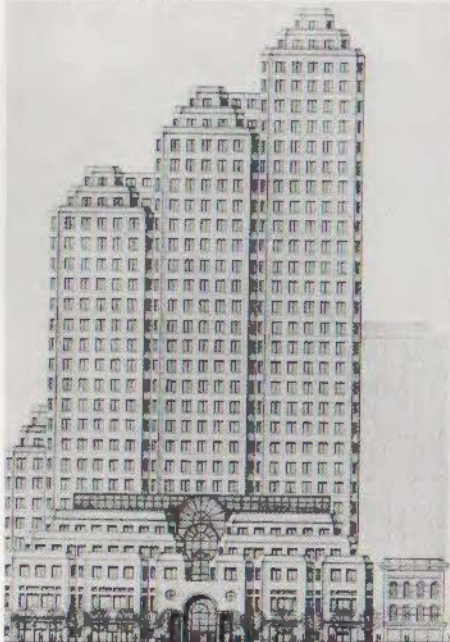
Unlike Washington, however, Austin is not a city of public monuments. Buildings in the Austin central business district have grown taller and taller in response to developments in architectural technology, style and the economic pressures of the marketplace. The first high rises to break Austin's low 19th-century profile were the eight-story Scarbrough's Building and the nine-story Littlefield Building, both built in 1910 on opposite corners at the intersection of Congress



Capital Mortgage Building.



First City Centre.



One American Center.

and Sixth. In 1924 came the 10-story Stephen F. Austin Hotel north on Congress a couple of blocks. As far as Texans to Save the Capitol is concerned, everything would have been great had subsequent high-rise construction in Austin stayed within the height boundaries set by Scarbrough's, The Littlefield, and the Stephen F. Austin—approximately 120 feet, or about the height of the Capitol's lower wings beneath the dome. This was not to be, of course. By 1929, O. O. Norwood had built his 14-story Neo-Gothic Norwood Building a block west of Congress and four blocks south of the Capitol. After passage of the new zoning ordinance in 1931, nothing rose high enough to challenge it for years (except the Stephen F. Austin, to which five floors were added in 1938). Then in 1965 came the 15-story City National Bank at Ninth and Congress, followed by the 21-story American Bank Tower two blocks west of Congress on Sixth Street in 1973 and the 26-story Austin National Bank Tower at Sixth and Congress in 1975, all granted height variances by the Board of Adjustment.

Clearly, the city was being somewhat lenient in its regulatory role. "When these requests for variances came up," says Austin architecture critic John Pastier, "the city seems to have forgotten one purpose of its zoning law—the protection of the Capitol and the character of Congress Avenue." Notwithstanding its oasis-like setting, Pastier says, Austin was becoming much more like *laissez-faire* Houston than Austin patriots would have cared to admit. But Austin still lacked the kind of development sophistication for which Houston was gaining a certain worldwide renown. When Gerald Hines was building Pennzoil Place in Houston in the early '70s, Pastier points out, he also was building the Austin National Bank Tower, the former a bold and pacesetter departure from the architectural norm, the latter a rather hackneyed glass box. It was as though Hines just threw the bank tower up in Austin to use up surplus curtainwall from the Pennzoil project, Pastier says. "It's pretty obvious that he was saying, 'that's good enough for Austin.' Unfortunately, not enough people said, 'no, that's not good enough for Austin.' That's when the battle should have been fought."

Locked in mortal combat at this point, Austin developers are at least trying to meet the increasingly sophisticated demands of a growing speculative market. Development interest in Austin has

caused downtown land values to soar in the last three years (now \$50 to \$75 a square foot on Congress), along with interest rates and rents (up to \$15 a square foot per year for prime class A office space). Accordingly, downtown developers are now touting their projects as sensitive and first class additions to the Congress Avenue Historic District as well as the central business district:

- Far from competing with the Capitol, says Capitol Mortgage Bankers, its new high rise is designed to complement the venerable landmark, as well as other older buildings on the Avenue. The building's base will follow the cornice line of adjacent 19th-century structures; windows, canopies and doors will be scaled to the pedestrian level; and its peaked roof and pediment is intended to relate to distinctive pediments on the Capitol.

- The 430,000-square-foot First City Centre (including 10,000-square-feet of ground-floor retail), developed by BWC & Associates of Austin, is designed by the Austin firm Holt + Fatter + Scott in direct response to the Congress Avenue view corridor. The building will be set back 57 feet from Congress, stair-stepping up and back five levels to a 14-story tower. An adjoining 12-story tower in back will sit atop an eight-story, 550-car parking garage. The whole complex will be clad in a non-reflective tinted glass, with overhangs, alternating with bands of earth-tone masonry.

- Last, but certainly not least, the 33-story, 500,000-square-foot One American Center, designed by Morris * Aubry of Houston and developed by Austin-based Rust Properties, is the largest of the three major projects on Congress, virtually consuming a whole city block bounded by Congress, Sixth Street, Seventh Street and Colorado. It too is designed to be artfully complementary to its downtown context, clad in limestone-block and pre-cast look-alike veneer, with a terraced building form stepping back from Sixth Street and set back 70 feet from Congress. Two historic structures on the block—the Sampson-Hendricks Building (1859) and UT's O. Henry Hall (1881)—are respectfully accommodated by the design, if somewhat overwhelmed by its magnitude. And with 100,000 square feet given over to retail (and space for 1,000 cars), the project—like First City Centre—does attempt to add to the growing mixed-use vitality of downtown.

Continued on page 81.

Color is a Concrete

SITE: Highrise condominium, Palm Beach, Florida.
DESIGNER: Schwab & Twitty Architects, Inc., Palm Beach, Florida.

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The Cardboard Skyscrapers of Texas, 1911–1932

Postcard Views of the State's First Generation of Tall Buildings

By John Pastier

If buildings are the true record of civilization, then postcards are the unaffected record of that record. They provide a color illustration on one face, frequently a printed or written statement on the other, and are designed for convenient storage in 4 by 6 card files. They document buildings that architectural historians and conventional-minded critics omit from their writings for lack of space, or that they would not be caught dead including if they had all the space in the world.* Postcards are the poor person's Bannister Fletcher, purchasable in flexible installments for just a few cents a page.

Well, at least they were. The former penny postcard now costs as much as 25 or 30 cents brand new, and some of the choice older ones sell for several dollars each. And of late, architecture seems to have declined in popularity as a subject: In many small Texas towns with fine courthouses, the only cards available show a nearby lake or a generalized landscape that may not even be in the same county. In the larger cities, individual structures are no longer the common subjects they once were, and when they are, they are more likely to be moderate-sized institutional buildings than the larger offices and hotels. As Texas skyscrapers have become taller, their pasteboard images seem to have become scarcer.

The first generation of the state's tall buildings was well-recorded on cards. In a society that was still mainly rural, they were seen as evidence of urban status and tangible proof of progressive attitudes and local prosperity. Then, as now, the buildings were taller than one would predict from urban population alone, and

*None of the two dozen buildings illustrated here, for example, appear in the first post-depression history of the tall building in America, sweepingly titled *The Skyscraper*, written by Paul Goldberger, and published late in 1981 (see page 82).



the reasons seem to have held constant over the decades—absence of developmental restrictions, a competitive spirit between rival towns and entrepreneurs, and, quite often, the cash and the investment psychology that are produced by oil booms.

In the view of Fort Worth above, none of the taller buildings is exceptional architecturally, yet each is labelled as though it were, or perhaps simply because it is there. Repeated eleven times over, this act of identification draws the eye upward and transforms an ordinary urban view into one pregnant with possibility: Perhaps the words themselves will eventually solidify as a taller palisade of buildings, each with its own new label that can in turn become an even higher skyscraper. In fact, the first cycle of such an improbable process has already taken place in Fort Worth, and in more aggressive cities such as Dallas and Houston the opening bet has been raised two or three times, so that the older skyscrapers

that still remain (too many have been demolished or barbarously remodeled) are no longer peaks but valleys in the skyline.

Fort Worth's downtown view epitomizes the boosterism that went hand-in-hand with early high rises, but the sturdy, unremarkable structures themselves give little hint of the architectural richness and variety that marked so many of the state's first-generation skyscrapers. On the next two pages, a dozen postcards provide a sampling of the individual buildings that dominated the centers of other Texas cities, large and small, 50 to 70 years ago.

Los Angeles architecture critic John Pastier, a contributing editor of Arts and Architecture, is currently a research associate at UT-Austin and is writing a book about the architecture of Texas. He wishes to thank Stephen Fox, of Rice University, for his assistance with dating and attribution in this article.



AMICABLE LIFE INSURANCE BLDG., WACO
Sanguinet & Staats, 1911

Unlikely as it seems, Waco was the home of the tallest building in the South until it lost the title to Birmingham. Today, ALICO still stands, with an electric sign on its roof and an incongruously remodeled base that evokes Miami Beach on the Brazos.



MAGNOLIA PETROLEUM BLDG., DALLAS
Alfred C. Bossom, 1921

Aided by an English architect, Dallas returned the title of the South's loftiest building to Texas with a double-winged structure that rose nearly 400 feet. The Mobil horse, also double-winged, was added later. The Baker Hotel has been demolished, the Adolphus has just been remodeled by a Los Angeles firm, and the Mobil has been bought by a San Francisco architect. The Tower Petroleum Building challenged no height records but gave downtown Dallas a classic Moderne presence still gratifyingly visible a half-century later.



TOWER PETROLEUM BLDG., DALLAS
Mark Lemmon, 1931



NIELS ESPERSON BLDG., HOUSTON
John Ebersson, 1927

Designed in New York, the Esperson tower surpassed the Magnolia Building and made Houston the Southern skyscraper capital. Its culminating choragic monument enabled it to break the 400-foot barrier without the help of flying horses. Two years later Gulf set a new record at 37 stories and 428 feet, its design showing the strong influence of Eliel Saarinen's runner-up entry in the *Chicago Tribune* competition. Even after 50 years, it is arguably Texas' best example of high-rise architecture.



GULF BUILDING, HOUSTON
Alfred C. Finn; Kenneth Franzheim, 1929



BASSETT TOWER, EL PASO
Trost & Trost, 1930

Only 15 stories high but seeming much taller, Henry Trost's hybrid of Art Deco, Chateausque, and Chicago School influences uncontestedly remains the finest skyscraper in the western half of the state.



HOTEL WOOTEN, ABILENE
David S. Castle, 1930

In at least a dozen Texas towns and cities, from Port Arthur to El Paso and Mineral Wells to Corpus Christi, the tallest buildings were not offices but hotels. Spawmed by forces as diverse as tourism, ranching, or local oil production, they were social and even economic centers of their regions, their lobbies the scene of frequent business dealing. Each of these towers seems optimistically large for its town (Big Springs' 1930 population was less than 14,000), and the Edson even claimed the distinction of being the tallest hotel of the state.



SETTLES HOTEL, BIG SPRING
Peters, Strange & Bradshaw, 1930



HOTEL EDSON, BEAUMONT
F. W. Steinman & Son; Wyatt C. Hedrick, 1929



MEDICAL ARTS BLDG., SAN ANTONIO
Ralph H. Cameron, ca. 1925

Odd wall angles and shaped tops are common in San Antonio highrises. Irregular street patterns usually account for the first feature, and the city's romanticism may explain the second. Unlike its counterparts in Dallas and Fort Worth, the Medical Arts Building still stands, refurbished and renamed the Landmark Building. Smith-Young is now called Tower Life, but its top is still proudly illuminated in two colors every night.



SMITH-YOUNG TOWER, SAN ANTONIO
Ayles & Ayres, 1929



PEOPLES NATIONAL BANK, TYLER
Alfred C. Finn, 1932

Another big building in a not so big town, this Moderne tower has been joined by a larger yet deferential glass neighbor. It has also been given a vertical-striped facelift that undermines much of its original delicacy and scale.

On Human Scale

An Essay

By Michael Benedikt

Most of us are aware that the notion of *scale* and the idea of *human scale* have significance beyond architecture and urban design. We hear, for example, that government is too large, our corporations too powerful, that our legal system is labyrinthine and unwieldy, that our economic system is beyond the understanding or control of experts, that, in all, the pace and complexity of modern life offer enormous but frustratingly unclear possibilities for personal action.

Now the term "human scale" is implicitly value-laden. Somewhat like the term "humanism," to mention human scale in discussing architecture—or life in general—is to ask for it, or regret its absence. Places that are wonderful are pretty much bound to have human scale—just as wonderful people are always humanists. Both make you feel warm all over and generally philanthropic. Clearly, "human" is good, whereas "inhuman" is bad. ("Inhuman scale"—it conjures nightmarish images.)

If my tone is a little ironic, it is not to denigrate human scale or to imply that one should not more often strive to achieve it in the environment. For to better understand the phenomenon of human scale one cannot start out captivated by its goodness or, worse, by the notion that all things fall on a scale (as it were) having human scale on one end and inhuman scale on the other. Indeed, two objections to a Human Scale scale come to mind, one to its linearity, the other to its bipolarity.

There are as many things in the world which do not have human scale because they are too small, too swift and unimaginably complex in operation—brain cells for instance, or even computer chips which are the work of our own hands and minds—as there are things that lack human scale for being too big and slow, like the pyramids, or glaciers. Our scale

of Scale thus would have to be a "circle of sizes," with ourselves at the top, the north pole, bigger things curving off in one direction, smaller things in the other, meeting in the south pole of inhuman scale where the indifference and constancy of the sea and the galaxies are one with the mindlessness and evanescence of the tiny teeming processes of life and matter itself. Up here, on the north pole, are things we can deal with, things we can pick on because they're our size, man to man as it were. This is one key to the problem of human scale.

The second objection to the Human Scale scale arises from the first, for there is more than one "opposite" to human scale. We must allow not only inhuman scale but also *nonhuman scale*. To confuse the two is tragic. Considering our relationship to the nonhuman world, inasmuch as it is literally not human-made or -thought, is the second key to understanding human scale.

If human scale is not simply a matter of bigger-than-us-ness, and if we need to make a distinction between the scale of things we make and the scale of things we find, how can we gain some insight into what precisely constitutes human scale or, for that matter, whether human scale in the environment is always appropriate?

Aliveness and Effectualness

It is good to feel alive. Actually feeling alive is probably the primordial good feeling. But in what does "feeling alive" consist? Being alert, healthy, tuned-in, effectual—these are some of the main components, and it is the last—the feeling of being effectual—that has particular bearing on the issue of human scale. One knows one is alive when one's actions have an observable effect on an otherwise indifferent world of persons and things. (If you are totally ineffectual, you might as well be dead, right?) The



range of evidence that one is alive is wide, however. Some are satisfied with hammering a nail or training a dog, some only with command over the destiny of a thousand strangers. Nor, in the matter of effectualness, is there any intrinsic difference between constructive and destructive action. Chainsawing firewood or cultivating a stand of spruce—in either case we leave our mark as individuals.

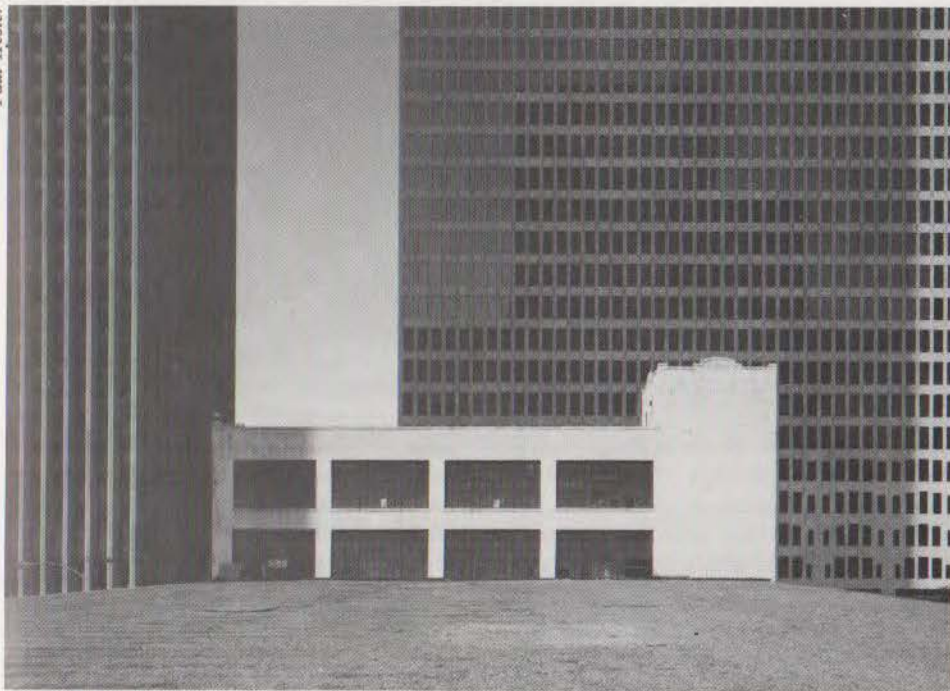
As families, as groups, as societies, but especially as individuals, if effectual we must be, what are we to do or feel about that which we cannot affect? These are things which are either too large or too complex to be impacted by our presence. We mind the size of a bureaucracy less than we mind its inability to get things, our things, noticed, let alone done. Similarly, we cannot move mountains, slow the tide, tame the wilderness. We cannot change the weather to suit a ball game. Toward these things we can react in two ways: with acceptance or rejection, and each of these in two ways again: acceptance that is grateful there are some things in the world that we aren't dreaming or manipulating and that can serve as standards of external reality, or acceptance that is resignation and defeat; rejection that fuels greater ambition through cooperation to change the world to suit us—as when we join the seas with a canal or turn to genetic engineering with recombinant DNA—or rejection that is frustration and anger.

What I am proposing, then, is that human scale is not a matter of the sheer size of things relative to ourselves, but of the effect we can have upon them. Whereas inhuman scale is a quality of places and systems that are oblivious to our existence but that *ought* not to be, nonhuman scale, on the other hand, may be just fine, whether taken as a challenge to act as gods, or as an imperturbable backdrop to our vanity.



Throckmorton Street, Fort Worth.

Paul Hester



Up on the roof, Houston.



Dallas City Hall: nonhuman or inhuman?

How does this analysis throw light on the question of human scale in architecture?

Human Scale in Architecture

When a building is handmade it almost necessarily has, displays, human scale. For one, the size of building parts has to do with their manipulability and, by implication, human strength and ingenuity relative to their weight. Their connections are often a record of the building's being put together. What is evidently put together can be seen as take-apartable and changeable, hence potentially subject to our will. Even buildings that are very large and hard to imagine changing—like Chinese wood temples—display their crafted summative quality and the patience exercised in completing them. Strictly speaking, however, few buildings today are handmade. The sizes and strengths and weights of building parts and the power of machinery to transport, hoist and fix them have steadily increased. The human scale of, say, modern commercial buildings has less to do with the construction process than the necessity for certain minimum elements to remain manipulable—such as windows and doors—or sized to the human figure—such as handrails and ceiling heights. Le Corbusier's Modulor was an attempt to achieve this kind of human scale by adopting a dimensioning system tied directly to absolute—if idealized—human dimensions and extrapolated into a universal and mathematically attractive system. He knew that, with modern building technology, scale could become irrelevant or at least subservient to other considerations. Perhaps his earlier vision of Ville Radieuse came to scare him, too. (Leonardo's Vitruvian man, one should note, stood for something quite different than Le Corbusier's Modulor man. In the former, proportionality and ideal form were the issues rather than actual or absolute sizes. Renaissance palazzi for example, for all their wonderful intra-proportionality, are surprisingly enormous against real human figures. Modulor man's hand touches the ceiling; Vitruvian man was not supposed to be comfortable in his six-foot square and circle.)

Today it is a cliché to see 40-story buildings with blank curtain walls as symbolizing faceless corporations (I am not sure that 40 stories of exposed structure is any better). These buildings are without the human scale of constructedness or "effectability." (Philip Johnson may "break the box" as though allowing

human imprint—yours and mine—but he is in fact quite coolly engaged in the game of corporate image one-upmanship.)

But this can be no simple diatribe against large office buildings (you know how it goes) for a number of reasons. These buildings have interiors, which, depending on the management and design, can be personalized to a greater or lesser extent with individual choices in color, furniture, memorabilia, climate, lighting, and even work schedule. The experience of the building's scale is also mediated by the effectualness of the individual in the social organization, his or her understanding of the organization and commitment to its goals. Thus, on the interior, the building may well have human scale. Nor is it clear whether, as a class, tall downtown buildings are inhuman in scale or nonhuman. Though very likely a source of pride to owner and architect, there is no reason why a large cooperative feat in the form of an office building also should not be seen by its users and daily viewers as something that aspires to the nonhuman scale of landscape, as though technology and economics had given inevitability to its presence and justness to its size and shape, just as natural forces shape the land. Thus the building's size and indifference *can* be accepted positively.

The thesis of effectualness as the basis for human scale also tells us that visitors are more likely than habitues to perceive as inhuman the scale of, say, downtown Houston. Why? Because outsiders have no effect and think they ought to. The buildings shun them. Sailing the freeway, visitors see buildings pass like so many icebergs. Open doors along a small-town sidewalk beckon and engage; not so a tight glass entrance across a parking lot.

But if size and repetitiveness have their perils, so too do smallness and overarticulation. We see this in so many housing (read condominium) projects where achieving human scale is a major concern. Gables and chimneys and walls and little roofs going this way and that can all add up to terminal cuteness. Endless variety becomes tiresome as these buildings break up and squirm to please. Without the severity and grace of things natural and necessary, they are often mirrors to our eclectic whims. Little squares and little fountains, little shutters and little porches, do not lend human scale, only a caricature of an imagined long-gone village life. We might look with

new respect at some classic "middle-modernist" work: Breuer's Doldertal apartments or Jacobsen's housing in Soholm, for example, where the modernist penchant for impersonality and a certain strictness of form combine with an easy consciousness of the size and individuality of the dweller. The same sense of scale is often found in agricultural buildings, West Texas cotton gins and mills for example, which, in the disposition of archetypal (and not un-house-like) forms respond unselfconsciously to the practicality of tractors turning and the paces that make a day's work.

Finally we are led back to that most elusive sense of aliveness—of the need to see our effect on the environment.

Imagine the following. You are walking down a huge hall-like room toward a distant desk behind which sits a man who is waiting for you. You can hardly make him out. Your steps echo. The walls are featureless or perhaps have a repetitive motif. Though you *know* that each pace surely brings you closer, you do not sense the difference. You walk as on a treadmill. This building, this man, is denying your existence. Not only do you have no effect on the place or situation, your very motion is ineffectual—even to you. Something is going on here that is a little different than what we have discussed. Whereas we may or may not have an effect on our environment, we always expect to have an effect on *ourselves* through a sensed changing relation to a fixed and real world. Our aliveness and our sense of mobility—both physical and mental—are inextricably bound up. One senses oneself through the environment.

Go back to this room. All that is needed are signs of progress—the parallax effect of a colonnade, a change in level, a view come and gone. Sealing spatial articulation and richness of incident to the speed of individual movement is of course a design principle long in use (more so perhaps since Team 10's and Peter and Alison Smithson's work on urbanism in the 1950s), but I think we know now a little better why it is valid.

It follows that feeling alive is not only the result of a satisfactory give-and-take between a person and his humanly scaled physical world but can arise also in relation to nature and places made without particular regard to human size or actual effectualness; i.e., from places of nonhuman scale. The wake of a



Soholm Housing Estate, Kampenborg, Gentofte, Arne Jacobsen, 1950.



Doldertal Apartments, Zurich, Marcel Breuer, 1934.



boat, the wind on our face, the rock displaced underfoot, the trees flicking by as we drive—neither sea nor air nor hill nor tree care that we exist or remember our passing, yet they suffice to make us feel alive.

I think buildings should be comfortable. They should fall to hand and be used. But this is not enough, nor is the appeal for human scale. Even as we strive for the divine and the divine is not human, so do we strive to make our buildings more than big servants. They carry the eternal in light and shade, substance and void. We send our photographers out to catch them doing that.

Michael Benedikt, a frequent contributor to Texas Architect, is an associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture.

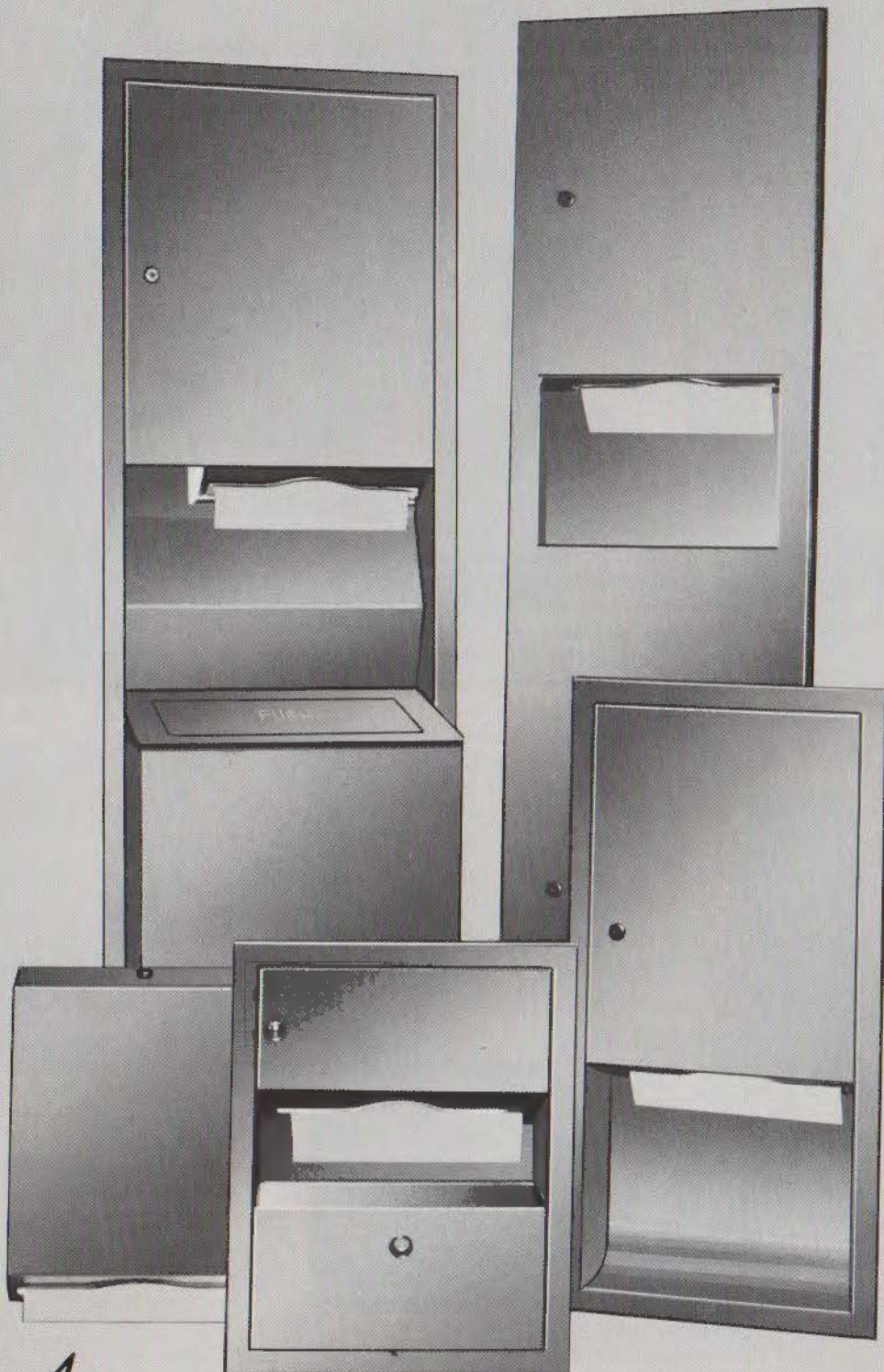


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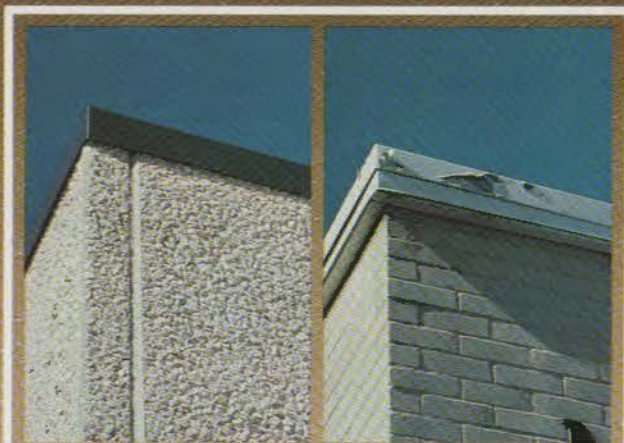
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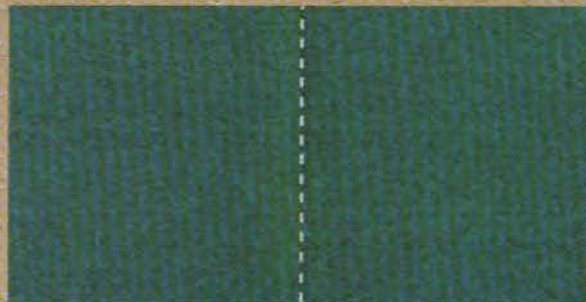
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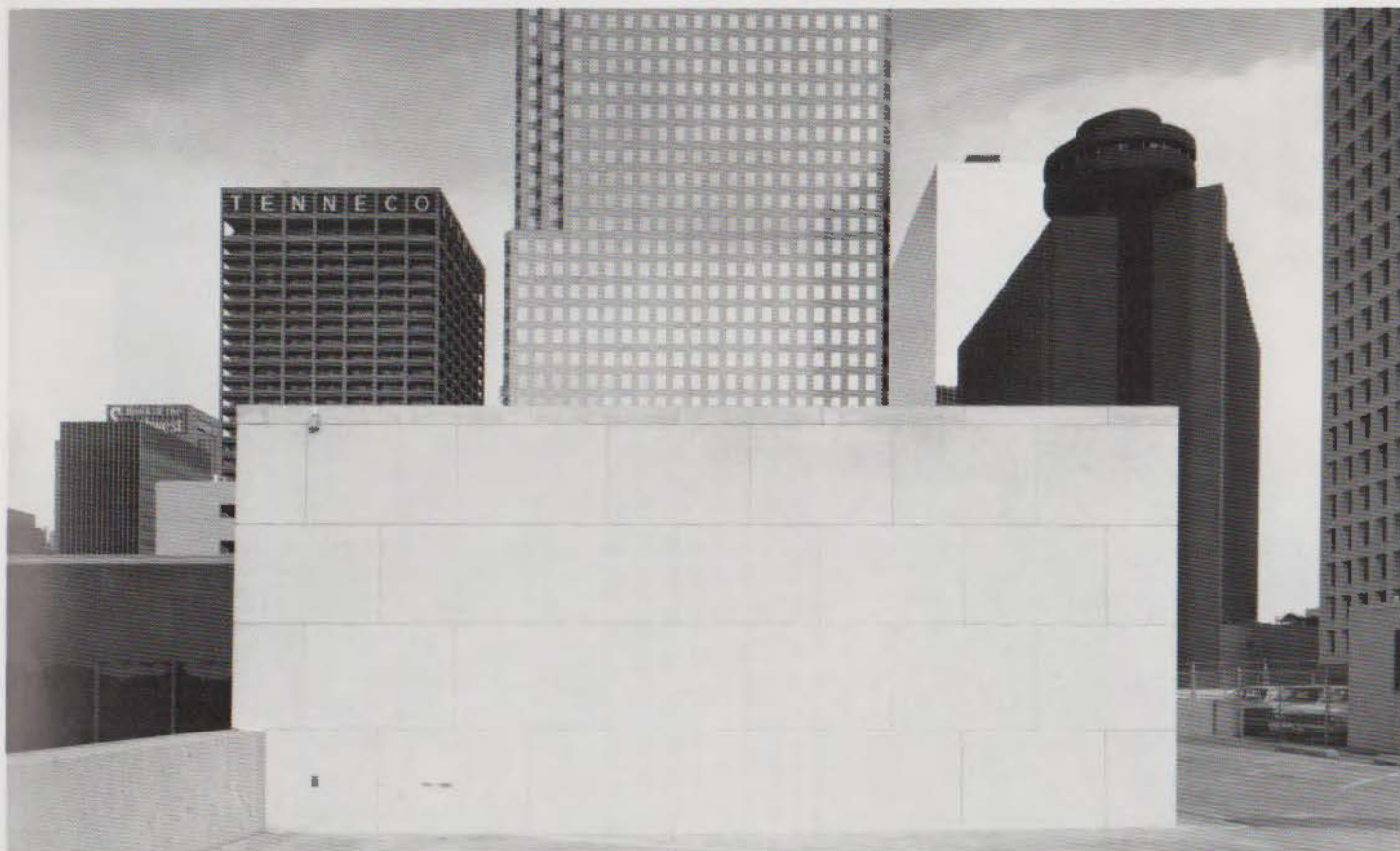
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Urban Settings: A Portfolio

Photography by Paul Hester



Houston architectural photographer Paul Hester is a graduate of Rice University and the Rhode Island School of Design. He has taught at Rice and the University of Houston, and

has received several grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and other institutions. He serves as president of the Houston Center for Photography and currently is producing a series of panoramic Houston photos for the Cultural Arts Council. Hester's work has been widely published and exhibited and has appeared in several special publications, including La Arquitectura: Spanish Influences on Houston Archi-

ecture and Our Ancestors' Graves: Houston's Historic Cemeteries.

This portfolio of images was drawn from Hester's work in Houston during the period 1978-1981. While the photographs were not conceived as a set, they have been assembled here to convey a collective impression of the urban environment as a multifaceted setting for human activity. These pictures are about geometry and scale, the sheer awesomeness of urban form. They show us hardness, slickness, and the abundant sheen of forced newness. They capture with great finesse the harsh interplay of sunlight and buildings and people. And, throughout, we sense that vague uneasiness which too often taints the relationship of people with the city.—L.P.F.

Looking east from parking garage, Federal Land Bank, 1980.

International Terra Cotta, Inc.



Looking southwest from Tenneco, 1981.



1100 Milam Building, 1980.



Entrance to tunnel system, Houston Center, 1980.



Looking southeast from Houston Center, 1978.




Waiting for the bus, Preston Street, 1980.



Looking for the bus, Main Street, 1978.

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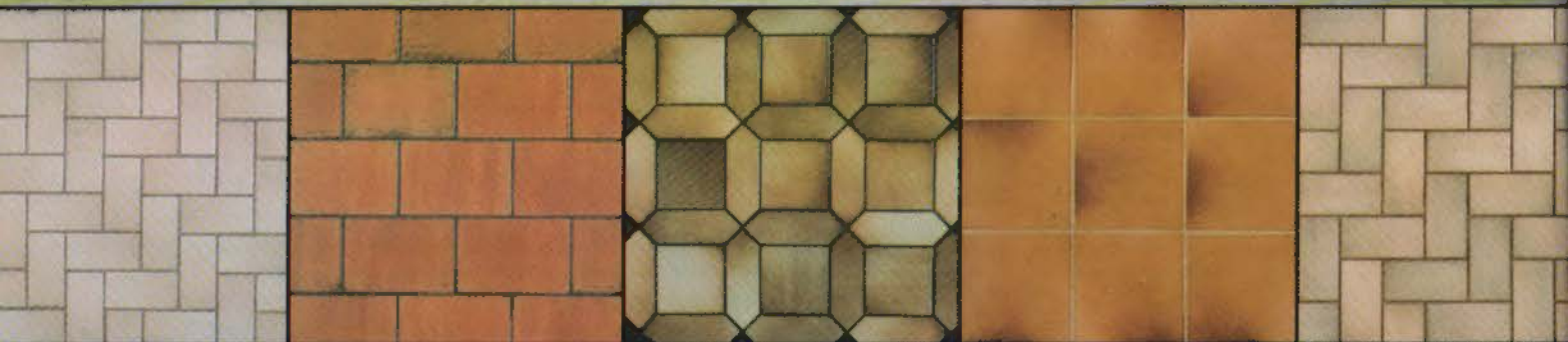
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Computer-Aided Design

One Firm's Assessment

EDITOR'S NOTE: In view of the growing interest in the computer as a means of increasing productivity, we asked the Houston-based firm 3D/International for a report on its experience with Computer Aided Design (CAD) and an assessment of CAD's potential as a design tool. The following is 3D/I's response.

Rarely has a new technological tool created such a stir among design professionals as the Computer Aided Design/Drafting (CAD) system. Reports of computer wizardry excite the design world's imagination, but the most pertinent question asked by both administrative and technical personnel remains: Is CAD a productive tool for the design industry *right now*?

At 3D/International, the answer is yes. Within the 3D/I framework, which includes five major design divisions and 450 employees, CAD is an efficient and productive design and drafting tool.

One of 3D/I's first projects to be developed on CAD, the Bass Brothers' twin-tower City Center in Fort Worth, provides an excellent example of the system's capabilities in a multi-service project. An unusual design by 3D/I and design architect Paul Rudolph produced two nearly identical 32- and 37-story towers. For the City Center project, all plans, building sections and elevations, both engineering and architectural, were developed on CAD. Although the basic floor plans were similar, several jutting vertical exterior wall sections necessitated a significant number of different plans, some 27 in all. "Manually, these changes would have entailed arduous manhours and delayed the construction schedule," says project architect Robert Mason, who credits CAD with reducing the time required to produce construction documents by almost one half.

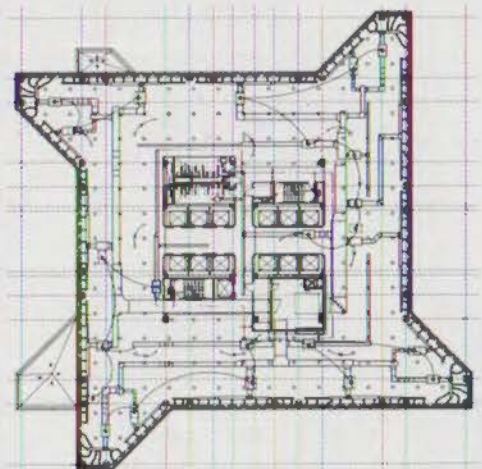
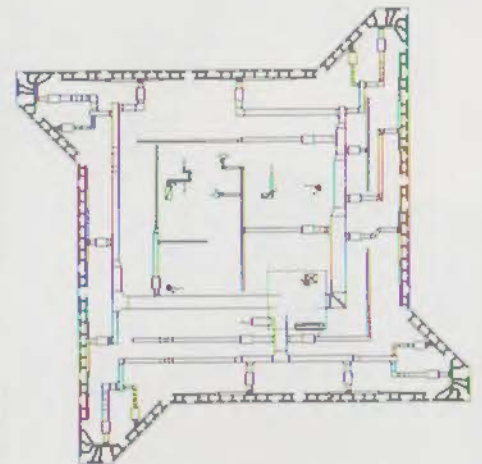
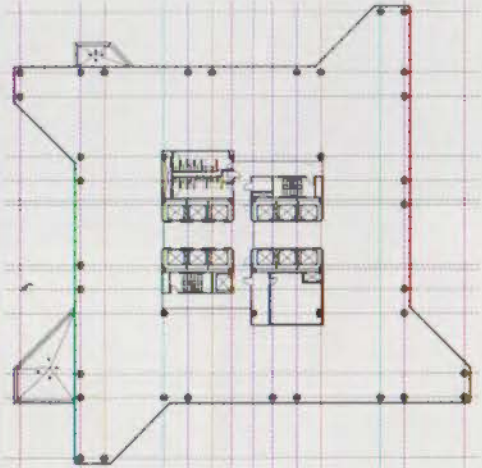
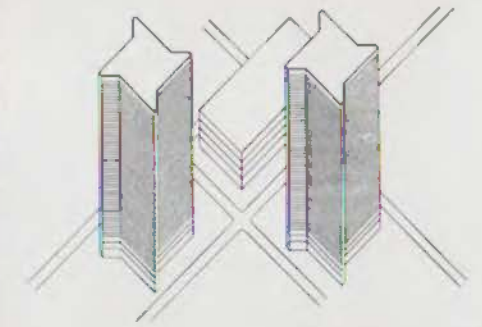
The immediate benefits realized from CAD have been higher quality documen-

tation, more effective facility planning, more accurate and comprehensive analysis approaches—such as energy conservation and environmental considerations—and a significant reduction in time-consuming manual production. Additionally, CAD drawings provide a quickly usable reference base for future modifications.

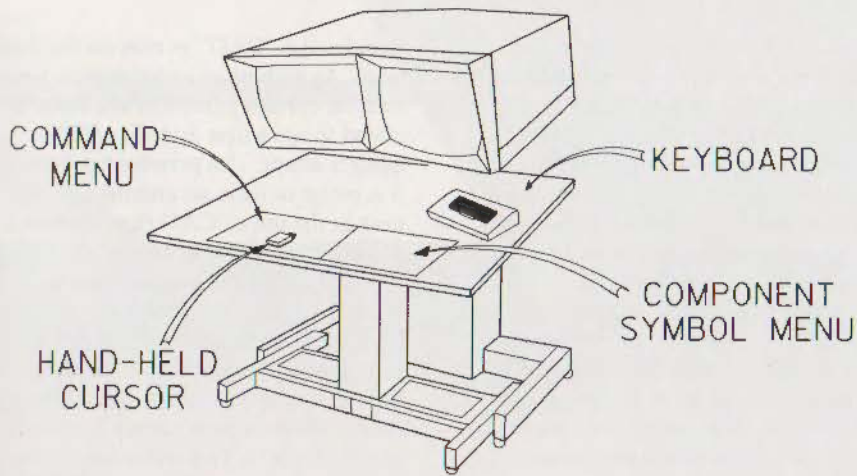
All documents produced by CAD can be easily reduced, enlarged, or modified, then reproduced in minutes on mylar or vellum—a tremendous advantage to architects who traditionally spend hours, or even weeks, to reproduce documents manually or photographically during the evolution of a design. A corollary advantage is the ability to produce design plans at a fraction of the cost of manual methods. Presently, productivity ratios can go as high as 3:1 or 4:1, depending upon the nature of the project, and are expected to increase to 6:1 and more in the future. The production and design quality benefits of CAD translate into direct savings through reduced design and documentation time, better managed projects, and fewer field modifications. CAD also has the ability to produce area calculations for the client, including gross square footage, net rentable space, and net usable space for accurate estimates of project cost and returns.

Typically, there are several hundred layers of information which must be developed in the design process, such as location of column grid lines, structural columns, elevators, stairs and electrical systems. Input from various design divisions into these different layers must be superimposed to avoid incompatible a/e design involving such considerations as mechanical systems and core wall placement. Without CAD, this task is still done manually, floor plan by floor plan; with CAD, it can be completed rapidly with absolute accuracy.

Although computers have been ex-



Above are CAD-generated drawings of Fort Worth's City Center. As illustrated in this series of plans, various layers of information can be combined at will.



AUTOMATIC DIMENSIONING

PLACEMENT			WITNESS LINES		INT/EXT		STRING/STACK	
AUTO	SEMI	MAN	ON	OFF	←	→	←	→
PAR	AXIS		RADIAL	LABEL LINE	ANGULAR	ARC		

USER COMMANDS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

RASTER VIEW CONTROL

ZOOM		PAN	EXIT	EXIT & SAVE	DRAG ON/OFF
IN	OUT				

VIEW CONTROL

DELAY	VIEW ON	VIEW OFF	OVER VIEW	ALIGN VIEW	ZOOM IN	ZOOM OUT	FIT	WINDOW AREA	CENTER	VOLUME
L	R									

VIEW SCALE

ELLIPSE

1 2 3	1	1	AA	TERM
2 1	2			

LINE

1 2 3	6

SHAPE

□	◇	△

CURVE

1 2 3 4 5 6	STREAM	SPACE

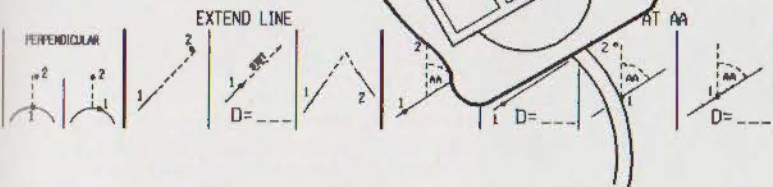
CELL

ACTIVE	PLACE
REL	VI
SELECT	FIT
REL	VI

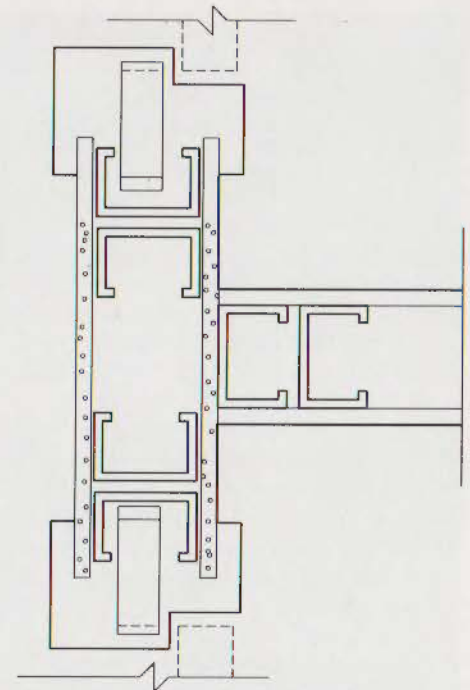
ELEMENT MANI

COPY	SCALE	ROTATE	CHANGE SYMB
MOVE	DELETE	MODIFY	DROP

CURSOR



Typical command menu and cursor for use by the designer or drafter.



CAD-produced door jamb detail.

Drawings on this page courtesy of Engineering Graphics Technology, Houston. All other drawings produced by 3D/International.

tensively utilized in architectural and engineering design processes, CAD use now is expanding into 3D/I's Planning Division. Studies involving extensive land analysis and environmental site data, always a time-consuming process and often neglected in architectural projects, can now be produced in hours so as to free time for creative thinking.

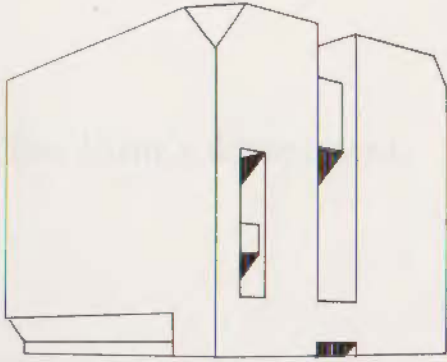
The time required to become proficient on CAD is usually two to three months, although training may be completed in several weeks. At 3D/I, technical personnel usually are trained for a particular project and, quite often, one person

remains the "CAD" person on the design team. As with most technological innovations, certain personnel are more inclined to use a new system, and they quickly adapt. The premise has been that it is better to train an architect or engineer in the use of CAD than to train a computer-operator to design a building.

While CAD has proved itself as a useful tool, it is not a panacea. The computer will never be a substitute for sound design judgement, indispensable though it is as a facilitator of creativity. And CAD does pose certain problems and difficulties. The technology is expanding at an incredible rate, requiring substantial resources to remain competitive. New hardware and software programs are constantly being introduced. Present pen printers, for example, take 30 to 45 minutes to reproduce a drawing, whereas new electrostatic plotters will reduce that time to a minute or less.

Another consideration for a firm implementing CAD is the necessity for reorganizing the design process. CAD's enormous capabilities require streamlined design methods, which have an impact on the entire design team, as well as the client and contractor. Once the system is in place, however, the design team has the ability to consider and evaluate more alternatives, resulting in better designed buildings and time and cost savings for both architect and client.

Visions of CAD communication among client, architect and engineer, and contractors are no longer abstract. Trends indicate that, eventually, these systems will be as common as the drafting board and pencil are today. "In the future, however, the most successful 'computer architects' will be those who do more than merely replace the T-square with the electronic pen," says George McDermott, a 3D/I vice president who has worked extensively with CAD. "These architects will use the computer as a means of significantly advancing aesthetic and economic concerns of the built environment, a process that often requires conceptual and aesthetic breaks with practices that may have taken a lifetime to develop."



Service Bureaus: An Answer to the CAD Dilemma

Amid all the hubbub and glowing testimony surrounding Computer Aided Design, architects cannot help but be aware of its benefits and its potential for dramatic impact on the practice of architecture. Nor can they ignore the competitive advantage afforded through technology which reduces production time by one half or more. It is a virtual certainty that, eventually, the role of CAD in the business of design will be as pervasive as that of the memory typewriter and word processing.

Meanwhile, although some of the larger firms have had CAD systems on-line for years, most architects are just now facing the question of how and when to begin. Larry Engelken, of Engineering Graphics Technology (EGT) in Houston, is quite familiar with this "CAD dilemma," which he describes as follows:

In examining the CAD alternative, you begin to hear cost figures that scare you—\$400,000 for a large turn-key system, \$150,000 for a medium-sized system with two work stations and a plotter, maybe \$50,000-\$75,000 for a small starter system. And in addition to the hardware there is the cost of personnel training and the attendant time period when low productivity must be absorbed as overhead. There is the cost of maintaining both the hardware and the software. And while there is little a CAD system can't do, it requires people who understand it to make it effective—so you must acquire the system personnel to manage and support it. Thus you are faced with a dilemma. Is CAD just for the "big guys"? If not, which one should

I buy? Or should I lease? Is the small system too small, a potential bottleneck? Who do I believe? The result: frustration, confusion and continuing indecision about an option that seems mindboggling to a design professional who just wants to practice architecture, not become a computer jock.

As a direct response to this dilemma, Engelken and his associates at EGT have developed their CAD Service Bureau, one of a small but growing number of enterprises across the country which exist to ease the design industry's transition into a new and changing technology. The concept is that, drawing upon the resources of the service bureau, the architect can become acquainted with CAD before assuming the risk of large capital expenditures or the initial personnel staffing problems involved with an in-house system. EGT has a CAD system installed and operational, the staff to manage it and explain it, and the expertise to develop specific software applications. The architect may use the bureau as a kind of branch office, purchasing production services directly from EGT or sending personnel there to utilize the system. Or, in the case of large projects and extended involvement, an in-house terminal can be connected via phone lines to the service bureau's computer. The whole idea behind the bureau, Engelken says, is to make it all less painful. "It's a way for architects to get their feet wet, without having to take the plunge."



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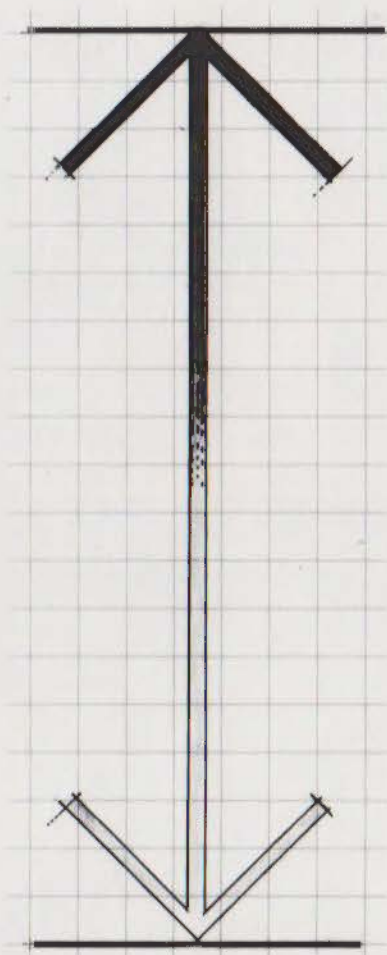
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New Texas Fellows

Ten Texas Architects Elected to AIA College of Fellows



Booziotis



Falick



Fitzgerald



George



Morehead



Rapp



Rucker



Thomas



Tucker



Zemanek

Ten Texas architects will be among 81 AIA members nationwide invested into the Institute's College of Fellows June 6 during the AIA national convention in Honolulu, Hawaii. Fellowship is a lifetime honor bestowed for outstanding contributions to the profession of architecture. Aside from the AIA Gold Medal, which may be awarded each year to one architect from anywhere in the world, AIA Fellowship is the Institute's highest honor. All AIA Fellows may use the initials FAIA after their names to reflect the high esteem in which they are held by the profession. With the following brief sketches of their careers, Texas Architect pays tribute to these Texas architects who have accomplished so much for themselves, their profession and those who have beheld their work.

Bill Booziotis Thomas, Booziotis & Associates Dallas

With a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Texas at Austin (1957) and a master's degree from MIT (1960), Dallas native Bill Booziotis has done much to increase alumni financial support for both institutions. In addition to directing a successful fundraising campaign for the UT School of Architecture, Booziotis also founded the School's Dean's Council, a body of "friends of the School," now numbering 85, that helps generate support from around the state. During his tenure as a leader of MIT graduate school of architecture alumni,

financial support for the school increased three-fold, resulting in Booziotis' being awarded MIT's Lobbell Distinguished Service Award. Lending his effective leadership to civil affairs, Booziotis organized a conference in Dallas in 1965 that brought together some 400 Texas civic leaders and MIT experts to explore "The City in the Year 2000 A.D." In addition, Booziotis has served as a trustee of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and was instrumental in drafting the museum's nationally influential code of ethics. He also has lectured on architecture and art at Rice, Texas A&M and UT-Arlington and helped write the classic *The Prairies Yield: Forces Shaping Dallas Architecture from 1840 to 1962*, and *Detour: See for Yourself Art in Dallas*, a guide to Dallas architecture and public art.

James Falick The Falick/Klein Partnership Houston

James Falick, director of health facilities for the Houston firm The Falick/Klein Partnership, has been a major influence in guiding trends in health-care design in recent years away from the institutional and closer to the humanistic. During a 10-year tenure at CRS in Houston, from 1964 to 1974, he developed a progressive health facilities group that is still winning awards for the firm (see *Texas Architect*, March/April 1982, page 48). Falick also has taught as a lecturer and adjunct professor at eight schools of architecture, including Rice, Columbia, Princeton, the University of Wisconsin and the Harvard Graduate School of Design. A New York native, Falick graduated from high school in Brooklyn in 1952. After attending Johns Hopkins and New York Universities, he went on to Columbia University, where he received his bachelor's degree

in architecture in 1961 and a master's degree in architecture in 1963. After 10 years with CRS, he joined with Irwing R. Klein in 1974 to form the Houston firm The Falick/Klein Partnership and since then has played a significant role in designing over 60 health-care facilities nationwide.

Richard Fitzgerald Richard Fitzgerald & Partners Houston

In a city that thrives on unbridled investment construction, Richard Fitzgerald has given Houston developers an architecture of sophistication and constraint. Since establishing his Houston firm in 1963, he has designed a host of speculative buildings in Houston distinguished by their simplicity, materials and proportions—and by their completion on time and within budget. These projects include the Gateway Office Building, Metropolitan Furniture Store, Coldwell Banker Building, the Todd Road Distribution Center and the Graustark Street Townhouses. By achieving a maximum of quality with a minimum of means, Fitzgerald has done much to raise the aesthetic standards of Houston's dollar-minded developers. Fitzgerald's resulting reputation has led to his repeated selection to be an associate architect on Houston projects with such nationally prominent figures as Philip Johnson, John Burgee, I.M. Pei, Charles Moore and Lorenzo Piano. A native of Houston, Fitzgerald graduated from St. Thomas High School in Houston in 1948 then went on to Texas A&M, where he received his bachelor's degree in architecture in 1953.

Reagan George Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum Dallas

Reagan George, director of operations for HOK in Dallas, has most recently been involved as principal-in-charge or project director in HOK's proposed Main Place project in downtown Houston, The Forum in San Antonio and Prudential Insurance Offices in Las Colinas near Dallas, now under construction. Previously, as a partner in the Dallas firm The Architects Partnership, George developed quite a reputation as a specialist in camp planning and design, due largely to his ability to deal with the volunteer committee client in steering the program away from

more stereotypical approaches. Demonstrating an equally progressive knack in serving his profession and community, George has been president of the Dallas AIA Chapter, on the board of trustees of the Historic Preservation League, on the City of Dallas' Urban Design Task Force and has been instrumental in creating the Dallas chapter's popular bookstore in the Quadrangle shopping center (of which he was project architect) and Environmental Awareness Committee. He also was the author of a key working paper in the Texas Society of Architects' acclaimed Texas Tomorrow Goals Program. George was born in Ardmore, Okla., but reared in Dallas, where he graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1954. He received his bachelor's degree in architecture in 1959 from Texas A & M and, after a stint in the Army, worked in the offices of William B. Tabler in New York, Pratt, Box & Henderson in Dallas and was a partner in the Dallas firm The Architects Partnership for 13 years before joining HOK's Dallas office in 1981.

James C. Morehead, Jr. Rice University Houston

Florida native James C. Morehead, Jr., with a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Princeton and a master's in architecture from Carnegie Institute, first came to Rice in 1940 as an assistant professor of architecture. During the distinguished professional as well as academic career that followed, Morehead not only served as chairman of the department of architecture and as university registrar but also co-authored several volumes of textbooks and practiced architecture with the Houston firms Wilson, Morris & Crain, Morehead & Ransom Architects and Dunaway & Jones Architects. Morehead also maintained an active involvement in local professional and civic affairs, serving as treasurer of the Houston Chapter AIA, and on the planning and zoning commission, as commissioner of permits and as chief building inspector for the city of Piney Point Village, a Houston suburb. He was named a full professor at Rice in 1951 and retired as a professor emeritus in 1979, upon which he received the Mentor Recognition Award for his "outstanding contributions to the student body at Rice University."

Raymond R. Rapp, Jr. The Rapp Partners Galveston

Raymond Rapp, president and chairman of the Galveston-based firm The Rapp Partners, is a second generation architect who in turn has begotten a third. The parent firm was originally established in Galveston by his father, Raymond Rapp, Sr., in 1921. Following World War II, in which he served as an Army officer in the Pacific, Raymond Jr. joined the firm for a 13-year internship, having attended two years of college before the war. In 1959 he was licensed to practice architecture by the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners and certified by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. In the years since, Rapp has been involved in the design of some 1,400 projects in the Houston-Galveston area and has reared a son to be an architect, Don Rapp, who practices out of the firm's Bellaire office. Raymond Rapp also has been active in civic and professional affairs, serving as chairman of the Galveston City Planning Commission, president and director of the Houston Chapter AIA and was instrumental in setting up the Texas Society of Architects' renowned Disaster Action, Inc., which furnishes professional assistance to communities that have suffered natural or man-made disasters (see page 26).

James R. Rucker Killebrew/Rucker/Associates Wichita Falls

James Ronald (Ronnie) Rucker, a native of Bowie, is president of the Wichita Falls firm Killebrew/Rucker/Associates and a 1962 graduate of Texas Tech with a bachelor's degree in architecture. Since establishing his partnership with Wichita Falls architect James Killebrew in 1968, Rucker has gracefully combined an active practice with generous service to his profession and his community. He has served as secretary/treasurer, vice president and president of the Wichita Falls AIA Chapter, as secretary, treasurer and director of the Texas Society of Architects and as a member of the NCARB/AIA National Coordinating Committee for Intern Architect Development. Appointed by the governor to the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners in 1975, Rucker also has been a secretary/treasurer, vice chairman and chairman of the TBAE. Locally, he has served on

numerous civic advisory committees, including the Mayor's Advisory Board on Land-Use Control and the City's Redevelopment and Reconstruction Committee following the disastrous 1979 tornado in Wichita Falls. Rucker also is a member of the board of directors of the Southwest National Bank and treasurer of the Floral Heights United Methodist Church.

Downing Thomas **Thomas, Booziotis & Associates** **Dallas**

In partnership since 1968 with Dallas architect Bill Booziotis (also a newly named AIA Fellow), Downing Thomas has developed an enviable reputation in Dallas as a top-notch designer and a tireless public servant. He has won four design awards for his architectural projects (as well as a first prize in a Dallas Museum of Fine Arts furniture design competition) and has served on some 30 civic and professional boards, task forces and committees. As chairman of the city's Urban Design Task Force, director of the Historic Preservation League and president of the Dallas Chapter AIA, Thomas helped bust the notorious banking practice of urban "red-lining" and saw two historic and endangered Dallas neighborhoods—Munger Place and the Wilson Block—placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Thomas also has done much to raise the architectural standards of Dallas public schools. Serving on various Dallas school district, city and local AIA chapter committees, he helped draft a position paper recommending that the city commit a fixed percentage of its school construction budget to incorporating works of art into school buildings. He also secured a \$50,000 grant for the Dallas Independent School District to create a new design approach for an inner-city school. Thomas is a native of Chattanooga, Tenn. Following combat service in France during World War II, he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he received a bachelor's degree in architecture in 1949.

Marcus R. Tucker **3D/International** **Houston**

Marc Tucker, senior vice president and director of architectural design for 3D/

International in Houston, graduated in 1964 with a bachelor's degree in architecture from Texas Tech. After practicing with several firms in South Texas, during which he worked on the Padre Island National Seashore development, among other award-winning projects, Tucker joined 3D/I (then Neuhaus + Taylor) in 1969 as director of interior architecture, the firm's first. Since 1971 he has done much to promote the importance of interior architecture in the process of building design, helping to create a special committee on interior design within the organization of the Houston Chapter AIA, the Texas Society of Architects and the AIA. Tucker also was co-founder and first chairman of the Houston Interior Architecture Awards Program in 1973 and co-founder and first chairman of the Houston AIA/*Home & Garden* residential design awards program (see page 26).

John Zemanek **University of Houston** **Houston**

John Zemanek, an associate professor of architecture at the University of Houston, is a native of Fort Bend County, near Houston. Following his graduation from high school in 1939, he went on to Texas A & M, where he received his bachelor's degree in architecture in 1943. After 39 combat missions as an officer in the 15th Air Force during World War II, Zemanek attended the University of Texas on the G. I. Bill, receiving bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture from there in 1947. He then went on to Harvard, where he received a master's degree in city planning in 1949. Following 10 years of travel, study and practice abroad, Zemanek started his own Houston firm in 1960 and his teaching career at the University of Houston in 1962. He became an assistant professor of architecture in 1964 and an associate professor of architecture in 1969. Although primarily a teacher, Zemanek also has designed numerous award-winning projects (mainly residential), many of which reflect a distinctive Japanese lightness of form and materials which he embraced while studying and practicing in the Orient. As a teacher of architecture, Zemanek also has imparted the fruits of his foreign study to his students, introducing the university's first courses on oriental art and architecture; Wright, Corbusier and Mies; and Post-Modernism.

Scraping the Sky in Austin, continued.

From all indications, says critic Pastier, One American Center is by far the best of the current Congress Avenue projects.

Although the project may be a net gain for downtown Austin, all things considered, it will result in some symbolic losses. In spite of its monumental scale, One American Center will not fully replace its humble predecessor, a low-rise, buff-brick Woolworth's store built in the 1940s. For years, residents of old neighborhoods near downtown—mostly low-income in recent years—gathered there on the northwest corner of Sixth and Congress to shop, drink coffee and wait for the bus. Putting a 33-story office, hotel and retail complex in its place—regardless of architectural quality—represents a kind of commercial gentrification in downtown Austin, replacing a more broadly based retail marketplace with nothing but expensive hotel rooms, boutiques and fern bars.

The project also is far bigger than need be, says Texans to Save the Capitol. Although in clear violation of the height ordinance, in their view, One American Center won't so much be too tall as it will be too massive, creating a glut of downtown office space upon scheduled completion in 1984, when other urban needs will be far more pressing.

Indeed, the Downtown Revitalization Task Force, feeling somewhat rushed into isolating building height as the paramount urban issue in Austin, points to others of equal importance: parking, building bulk, density, historic preservation, energy conservation, all part of the big planning picture. If not the most critical issue, however, limiting building height may be the most complex. Legal problems of property rights vs. eminent domain complicate the matter, raising the simple question of fairness. Planners and developers both say that the problem lies in imposing building height restrictions on downtown property owners who have as much right to preserve the fair market value of their real estate as the public has to preserve views of the Capitol. Nevertheless, guarding the visual sanctity of the Capitol is an issue that no one in Austin really wants to oppose. "It's like Motherhood and Apple Pie," says one city planner. Nor does anyone want to argue the fact that Austin, with the State Capitol as its centerpiece, is a unique Texas city with special charms. The real problem lies in preserving the very urban quality of Austin that attracted all this attention in the first place.

The Skyscraper is Almost All Right

By Larry Good

The Skyscraper, by Paul Goldberger. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, N.Y. 180 pages, 217 illustrations, \$25 (hardbound).

Reviews of *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger's book, *The Skyscraper*, have appeared in the *AIA Journal*, *Progressive Architecture*, *The Dallas Morning News* and more. Most serious reviews have dismissed this book as a superficial aesthetic history, inappropriately written with a New York slant, predictable in its examples and mediocre in its photography. The book is all these things, but like its subject matter, it's still "almost all right." For not only is *The Skyscraper* enjoyable to read, it also offers comment on density, design and the urban "spirit" which Texans (who will certainly build the most skyscrapers in the 1980s) should thoughtfully consider.

It is apparent from the preface that the author is going to inflect his study toward New York. Goldberger praises the city's flamboyant and theatrical structures, epitomized by that "Mozart of Skyscrapers," The Woolworth Building, and compares the mood and spirit of New York to that of Chicago. Altogether different traits were developing in both cities in the late 19th century which would shape their future identities. Chicago, in the American heartland, was the home of young skyscraper theorists influenced by new technology and new forms of expression for tall buildings. In New York, international trade encouraged the import of culture which manifested itself in Second Empire or Gothic detail on romantically composed towers. And in Manhattan, more than anywhere, geography, land costs and transit encouraged the concentration of these structures to a density that generated by the 1930s a zestful, albeit congested urban life.

It is the rich visual quality of the New



Courtesy Rockefeller Center, Inc., New York

Rockefeller Center, New York.

York skyline and individual buildings that Goldberger finds captivating. The Chrysler Building, for instance, is "romantic and irrational, yet stopping just short of being foolish." In a similar vein, the author subscribes to the philosophy of Rockefeller Center collaborator Raymond Hood, who considered the skyscraper a catalyst to an enlivened city. "Congestion is good," said Hood. "New York is the first place in the world where a man can work within a ten minute walk of one-quarter million people . . . Think how this expands the field from which we can choose our friends, our co-workers, and contacts; How easy it is to develop a constant interchange of thought."

A generally underrated designer, Hood was concerned with poetry and romance on one hand, and order and context on the other. Nowhere is this balance more apparent than at Rockefeller Center (1929-40). Goldberger correctly emphasizes Hood's Rockefeller Center as an important model for skyscrapers and skyscraper groupings—a first example, in

fact, of a carefully conceived mixed-use project which has yet to see its peer. Rockefeller Center celebrates congestion, yet the buildings have an undeniable order to their relationships to each other. The centerpiece, the 70-story RCA Building (which was "sculpted" by Hood, we are told), possesses the power of a simple International Style slab, yet was given poetic grace by the addition of thin cascading setbacks to each of the long sides of the slab. Selection of limestone and dark metal spandrels for all of the original buildings lends a sense of dignity that makes them appear to be "designed for the ages."

But, in the 1950s a new model appeared. With the completion in 1952 of Skidmore Owings & Merrill's Lever House and in 1958 of Mies Van der Rohe's and Phillip Johnson's Seagram Building, New York was opened up. At both the ground level and above, light poured into the tight city. New York's street walls, rows of buildings extending block after block, are a crucial part of the city's visual identity created by the grid. Until S.O.M. and Mies, every building had a responsibility to line up with its neighbors and be a part of a greater whole. Still, the carefully proportioned and beautifully detailed plaza of Seagram was so liberating in the 1950s that new zoning laws were written to grant floor area ratio bonuses in return for the creation of street level plazas. The result in New York and elsewhere was a spate of sheer glass towers on windswept plazas, all lacking the refined elegance of Seagram.

In his earlier work, *The City Observed: New York*, Goldberger elaborates on the problem of the multiplication of imitation Seagrams, represented by New York's Third Avenue:

The joy that characterized New York's architecture for so long, the zest of the

skyscrapers of the 1920s that made one forget how harsh was the city of which they were a part, seems lost. What joy is there in Third Avenue? What presence, even, is there in Third Avenue?

Indeed, what joy is there in downtown Dallas? What presence is there on Houston's West Loop? In Texas it is the Seagram model which dominates. Here, on the prairie, even prior to having a street wall to break, our cities are getting plaza upon plaza such as the Arco Building and First City Center on Thanksgiving Square in Dallas. Who needs a plaza on a plaza? Would Gertrude Stein tell us that there is no *there there*?

Nevertheless, a sizeable number of Texas buildings are surveyed in *The Skyscraper*. Unfortunately, however, none are discussed from the standpoint of real context, but rather as isolated events with strong visual imagery. Pennzoil Place is called "a dazzling abstraction"—a complex possessing the most recognizable skyscraper top since The Empire State Building. Its eye-catching form is "just right" for Houston's strong image. The Hyatt Regency at Reunion is "the best of the Portman imitations" beckoning at the edge of a freeway like "the Emerald City." Post Oak Central in Houston has nostalgic associations "alluding to the romance of Art Deco." Apparently the author was confused about Texas' tallest building, I. M. Pei's Texas Commerce Tower in Houston, which he called "round and full of cut-in sections and projecting sections . . . rather discordant." (I, frankly, would describe this clean pentagonal extrusion as serene.) Pelli's Four Leaf Towers Condominium has, in its pyramidal roofs, "symbols of domesticity" at the top. About the RepublicBank Center in Houston, designed by Johnson/Burgee and now under construction, Goldberger has mixed feelings. On one hand, the building is reminiscent of the most romantic expressionist skyline views of the 1930s; but, on the other, the author feels that "the architects have been so eager to let us sample their historical wares that they have given them all to us in a single building!" But the strongest praise for any of the new buildings surveyed is reserved for Houston's Transco Tower, also by Johnson/Burgee. Goldberger feels that this is one of only a handful of new buildings (Battery Park City and the Chicago Board of Trade being the others), which successfully blends the romantic impulses of the historicist strain with the computer aesthetic which 1980s technology allows.

"It is a complete integration of works of the past into a fresh and clear whole . . . a work which expands our view of what skyscrapers can be. It is hard not to look at this tower and think again of Root, Sullivan, Goodhue, and Hood . . . It is a design which has learned from the past, and has carried that knowledge somewhere one could not have imagined going before."

The Skyscraper concludes that the almost Baroque inventiveness of the 1980s parallels the spirit of the 1920s, when in each era the concern has been to enliven the average building's effect on the cityscape—when the "spirit" of New York has won out over that of Chicago. It will be exciting to see which "spirit" prevails in Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth—or even Midland. Or will Texas cities develop a totally new "spirit" evident in our own brand of skyscraper design?

Larry Good is a Dallas architect and a Texas Architect contributing editor.

In Brief

Raymond Hood: Pragmatism and Poetics in the Waning of the Metropolitan Era, with an essay by Robert A. M. Stern, with Thomas P. Catalano. Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies and Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., New York, N.Y. 126 pages, \$17.50 (paperback).

Stern *et al* trace the roots and evolution of Raymond Hood as "the last great architect of America's Metropolitan Era." Hood's claim to fame was his winning (along with John Mead Howells) of the 1922 international competition to design the Chicago Tribune Building (a competition theoretically restaged last year by architects Stanley Tigerman and Stuart Cohen and art dealer Rhona Hoffman—see *Texas Architect*, Nov./Dec. 1981). For the remainder of the '20s, Stern writes, Hood developed into the decade's most outstanding commercial architect, succeeding like no other of his generation (1881-1934) in harmonizing the aesthetic ideals of public architecture with the hard pragmatism of commerce. The monograph features photos and drawings of some 30 projects and competition entries designed between 1903 and 1933, including student work, houses, Rockefeller Center and the McGraw-Hill Building as well as the Chicago Tribune Tower and other Gothic tall buildings that seemed to be Hood's forte.

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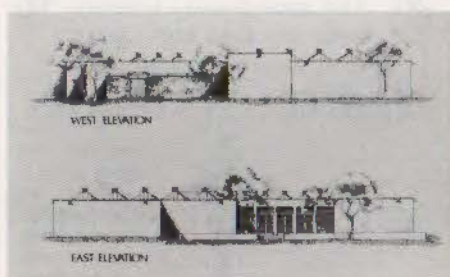
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Cowboy artists museum, Kerrville.

Cowboy Artists Museum Under Way in Kerrville

Under construction in Kerrville is a \$3 million museum and national headquarters for The Cowboy Artists of America designed by the San Antonio firm Ford, Powell & Carson.

The 15,000-square-foot facility, on a shady hilltop near the Riverhill Country Club, will include a main gallery, two smaller galleries, a library and board room. The main gallery and a circulation gallery will be roofed with "boveda" brick domes handmade by Mexican craftsmen and similar to the domes in the ceiling of the firm's famed Marshall Steves house in San Antonio. The museum complex also will include an amphitheater and artists' cottages and studios.

The Cowboy Artists of America was founded in 1965 in Sedora, Ariz., "to perpetuate the memory and culture of the Old West as typified by Remington and Russell; to insure authentic representation of the life of the West, as it was and is; to maintain standards of quality in contemporary Western paintings, drawings and sculpture; and to guide collectors of American Western Art."

News of Schools

Rowlett Lecturers Address Money, Monuments at A&M

In keeping with the theme of the 1982 John Miles Rowlett Lecture March 26 at Texas A&M, "Money and Monuments: The Impact of Rapid Economic Growth on Architecture," graduate students in architecture produced their own "monument" of sorts, a 13-foot-high cardboard Greek temple in the lobby of the building where the lecture was held, complete with classical pediment and four fluted columns. "Mouey," of course, came from the sponsors of this second annual event, the founders of CRS in Houston (of which the late John

Miles Rowlett was one) and Rowlett's widow, Mrs. Virginia Rowlett.

Tracing perhaps a more historical link between money and monuments, lecturer Ernest Connally, an architectural historian from Washington, D.C., noted that most influential building projects in years past do not seem to have been reactions only to the economic impact of the times but to favorable circumstances in general. Buildings that have so emerged have tended to cause sharp cultural changes through major technological or philosophical advances. And their promoters have usually been governments, institutions or corporations, although individuals certainly have played what Connally called "energizing roles of leadership and discrimination." In these terms, architecture has transcended its sheltering function and adopted a symbolic role, one of glorification—glorification of



Rowlett "monument" and student builders.

Eternity in ancient Egypt, the Church in Medieval Europe, the Papacy in the Renaissance, the State in 17th century France and, in the words of Cass Gilbert, "the Cathedral of Commerce" in 20th century America. Connally suggested that the present challenge is to take wealth to create an urban order worthy of civilized use and meaning.

John S. Samuels, 3rd, a Galveston-born financier and industrialist now living in New York, reviewed the relationships between money and monuments in the Texas context and suggested that 19th century entrepreneurs produced pace-setting architecture through a background

of enlightened sensitivity. Unlike their 20th century counterparts, these captains of industry and commerce took risks with their aesthetics as well as their capital. Samuels, whose personal interests have included chairmanship of the New York City Opera and the Lincoln Center Theater Company, has had the opportunity to work closely with architects and the arts. He joined Connally in hoping for a more sensitive architecture, but noted that architecture, like poetry, must be internalized.

It would have been easy for Richard Keating, general partner of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in Houston, to play the part of the apologist. Instead, he moved to identify the architectural response to the present dramatic growth in Texas as one of "formula" and "image." He suggested that these are largely dictated by exactly the kind of corporate insensitivity that Samuels described. Keating expressed a confidence that within this context there was still great architecture, although he regretted that the city was too often seen as a citadel, the 20th century cathedral as defensible space. The professional must still strive to provide civility as well as order.

In response to the three speakers, John McDermott, distinguished professor of philosophy at Texas A&M, reviewed the American attitudes to city and countryside and described the current situation as "the enthronement of schlock." The ensuing discussion was lively and informative for the panel, as well as the audience, which was composed of students, faculty, professionals and visiting faculty from schools of architecture in the Southwest. The panel concluded that architects must be involved, that education is at least as important as skill development, and that hearts must be turned to find meaning in architecture, not just heads to see spectacle. As American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The world is as we make it . . ."

—David G. Woodcock

O'Neil Ford Chair Endowed at UT-Austin

The School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin has endowed its first chair in architecture.

The \$50,000 endowment for the O'Neil Ford Centennial Chair in Architecture, for which fundraising had been underway since early 1981, will be matched through UT's share of the Permanent University Fund.



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In the News, continued.

The chair is named in honor of eminent San Antonio architect O'Neil Ford and is the first teaching chair in the 70-year history of the UT-Austin School of Architecture.

Vivian Silverstein, director of professional affairs for the UT School of Architecture, wrapped up the year-long fundraising campaign, which was begun under her predecessor, the late Austin architect Hyder Joe Brown, Jr.

Coming Up

June 1-5: "The Renewable Challenge," solar technology conference and international exposition in Houston sponsored by the American Section of the International Solar Energy Society. The Texas Solar Energy Society will offer a series of pre-conference workshops May 29-31 covering such topics as daylighting, photovoltaics, solar access, active and hybrid solar cooling, biofuels, solar hot water heating and earth sheltered buildings. Contact Renewable Challenge, AS/ISES, U.S. Highway 190 West, Killeen 76541. Telephone: (800) 531-5255 (ex. 817), or (800) 252-9146 (ex. 817).

June 15-18: NEOCON 14, international congress of environmental planning at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. Speakers will include Elissa Makissiemi Aalto, who will present "A Tribute to Alvar Aalto," her late husband; Italian architect Paolo Portoghesi and Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, who will face off in a session entitled "East Meets West"; *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger, who will speak on "Why Modern Architecture Lost Face"; and Philadelphia architect and urban planner Edmund Bacon, who will address the NEOCON 14 Conference of Mayors and lead a city planning workshop. Contact NEOCON 14, The Merchandise Mart, Suite 830, Chicago, Ill., 60654. Telephone: (312) 527-4141.

June 23-25: Advanced Non-Structural Plan Review Seminars on the *Uniform Building Code*, sponsored by the Texas Department of Community Affairs, at the Texas A&M Extension Service Training Center in San Antonio. Contact Roy Fewell, Housing and Community Development Division, Texas Department of Community Affairs, P.O. Box 13166, Capitol Station, Austin 78711. Telephone: (512) 475-2431.

Oct. 24-27: "The Maintenance and



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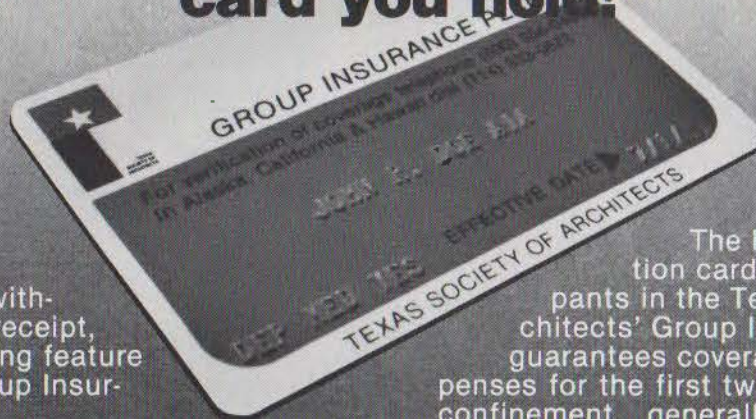
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In the News, continued.

Stabilization of Historic and Cultural Resources," the 1982 Annual Conference of the Association for Preservation Technology in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Contact Program Chairman Thomas Taylor, c/o APT-82, P.O. Box 341, Williamsburg, Va., 23187. Telephone: (804) 299-1000, ext. 2314.

Nov. 4-6: Texas Society of Architects Annual Meeting, Fort Worth. Contact TSA, 1400 Norwood Tower, Austin 78701. Telephone: (512) 478-7386.

Nov. 13-14: ISID International Trade Fair '82, homefurnishings market held by the International Society of Interior Designers, at the Design Center of Los Angeles in Los Angeles, Calif. Contact International Society of Interior Designers, 8170 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif., 90048. Telephone: (213) 655-2201 or 655-2206.

News of Firms

The Houston office of **Gensler and Associates/Architects** celebrated its tenth anniversary with a reception at Rice University's Farish Gallery April 29. Originally established to provide interior architectural design services for Pennzoil Company's corporate headquarters, the Houston office has grown under the direction of managing principal Antony Harbour to become a 95-person regional office, one of five in the Gensler organization.

Houston-based **3D/International** has appointed four new directors to its board: James E. Furr, Gil Thweatt, John Pearson and Richard E. Wainerdi. 3D/I also has announced that James E. Pittman, Jr., has joined the firm as vice president and manager of business development for the project management division.

Golemon & Rolfe Associates in Houston has elected its 1982 corporate officers: Harry A. Golemon, chairman of the board and president; Charles Kerner, executive vice president; Lynn Hanson, secretary; and Joe Richards, treasurer.

Austin architect Robert Steinbomer has announced the formation of the firm **Renfro and Steinbomer, Architects**, 500-B East Sixth St., Austin 78701. Telephone: (512) 474-2331.

The **Pierce Partnership** in Dallas has moved its offices to 1920 North Akard, Dallas 75201. Telephone: (214) 748-8407.

The Dallas office of St. Louis-based **Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum** has named Wayne Cage director of design

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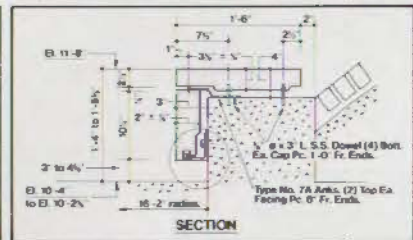
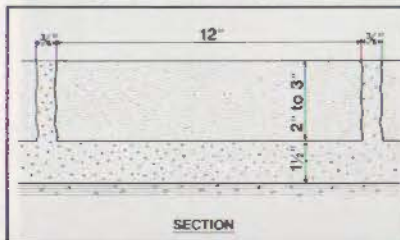
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for the firm's Texas interiors group. As such, Cage will be responsible for the design direction and coordination of all interior design projects coming out of HOK's Dallas office.

Paul Kennon, FAIA, president and design group director of **CRS, Inc.**, in Houston, has been appointed to the board of directors of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York.

Ruth Fuller, former executive director of the Houston Chapter AIA, has been named president of **The Auden Company**, a firm specializing in placing architects, interior designers, engineers, construction administrators and other support personnel in Houston architects' offices.

The El Paso firm Fisher & Associates Architects has changed its name to **Fisher, Keirse, Cordova Associates**.

The Odessa firm Covington-Shelton-Taylor has changed its name to **Covington and Taylor Architects and Engineers**.

The Austin firm Dailey & Wann has changed its name to **Dailey, Wann, Michael**.

Pfluger & Polkinghorn AIA Architects, Austin, has changed its name to **Pfluger Polkinghorn Cline AIA Architects**.

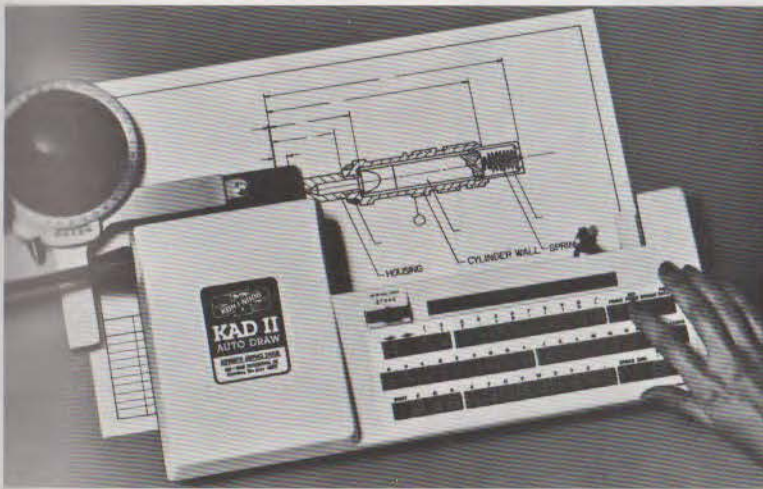
News of Products

Moncrief-Lenoir Manufacturing Company in Houston has announced plans to carry Kynar 500 finishes on all stock building components and wall and roof panels. The finish will come in eight standard colors and a variety of other colors by special order and will be available through any of Moncrief-Lenoir's branch offices in Dallas, San Antonio, Lubbock, Harlingen or Houston. Moncrief-Lenoir Manufacturing Company, P.O. Box 2505, Houston 77001. Telephone: (713) 225-1441.

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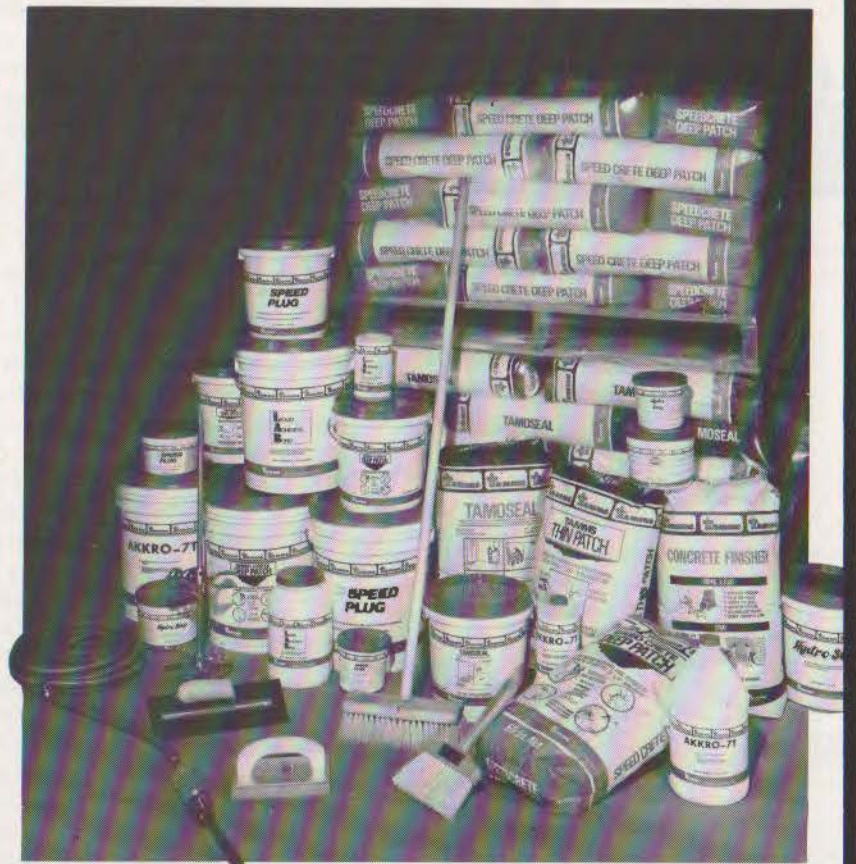
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In the News, continued.



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Humor by Braden



Tawl Buildins

It happens to me several times a year, as I sit there munching my rubber chicken, on the dais at the Annual Chamber of Commerce Meeting—one of those nights in "my other life" on the lecture circuit. On my right is the rostrum, on my left is the president's wife trying vainly to make me feel at ease in a strange town.

"Mr. Braden," she says, "do you do this every night—or do you have some other field of endeavor?"

"Oh no and yes," I quickly respond. "I couldn't possibly do this every night and survive." (Everyone knows Chicken Kiev causes cancer.) "I'm an architect."

"Well," says the First Lady, "what kind of architecture do you do?"

"Tall buildings, Ma'am," is my inevitable modest rejoinder.

Her eyes widen and she turns to the president. "Virgil, did you hear that? Dave here is an ARCHITECT, and he does Tawl Buildins!" Simultaneously, Virgil (who is president of the bank as well as the Chamber) and Irma turn their gaze back on me, and I feel the transformation begin to happen once again:

Slowly the Tall Building Macho Mantle of Mystique settles around me. There, next to Irma and Virgil, appears the archetypical Skyscraper Architect. In their vision they see him, lean and tall, replete with white hard hat, three-piece dark pinstripe suit—a roll of plans under his arm—standing on the Robertson Deck of the yet unfinished 52nd Floor, a Benson & Hedges Menthol 100 firmly gripped between his lips, his icy blue eyes looking out across the city and the prairie beyond—thinking—"To achieve is to build for Man!"

The spell breaks and Virgil says, "You do tawl buildins, Dave? Well our back . . ." Inwardly I smile. The marketing plan is working again; I have a prospective client in the bush. The plan is simple: Banks build tall buildings and bankers are successful businessmen. So where do you

meet successful businessmen if you're from out of town? On the dais of the Annual Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, that's where! (This theory is really nothing new. After all, when 3D/International decided to meet some Saudi Arabians they didn't start hanging out at the First Baptist Church of Waxahachie.)

Every town aspires to have a tall building; it is the American way. Americans invented the darn things, didn't they? So I am not surprised at Virgil's interest; it has happened before. He speaks again: "Our bank has been thinking about a tall building for our town." As my inward smile expands, Virgil reaches to his inside pocket and slowly extracts a tattered, and many-folded, article torn from the April issue of *Texas Monthly*.

"We know we need an architect," Virgil says, looking down at the article. "Do you know this fellow Philip Johnson or I.M. Pay?"

It's hard to eat Chicken Kiev when your aura has just been busted. But I survive. I have experienced previous rejection before.

If I were to manufacture a cologne for REAL MEN, I would not call it "Brut" or "English Leather" or "Eau Savage." I would name it "TAWL BUILDINS." When amply smeared on your flabby body, TAWL BUILDINS would immediately cause the female heart to flutter and inspire envy in other males, providing, of course, that you always wear a hard hat and a 3-piece pinstriped suit when you smoke your Benson & Hedges Menthol 100s.

The design of the American skyscraper, like all building types, has its required areas of special expertise. The architect who works in that arena in the speculative marketplace must know a great deal about leasing desirables, flexibility, and the three "E"s: efficiencies, elevating, and envelopes. What has been sorely lost in

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many creations is the sense of art this building type needs. Like gun fighters, we have been notching the facade to create corners, failing somehow in the process to corner creativity.

Frank Lloyd Wright believed the skyscraper should cast its shadow on the ground to be a proper art form. But his Price Tower design in Bartlesville is only successful as sculpture, and merely quaint as functional architecture. As a profession, we should aspire to greater artistry for these building behemoths, but not to the point that they fail to earn their daily bread. Perhaps, as a source of inspiration, we should search out the reason for the tall building in the first place—not just to create intensive use of a small piece of land, but to provide the climax scene for King Kong movies.

There is no way Kong could achieve the summit of most of today's tall buildings, with their sleek skins totally bereft of handholds, buttresses, cupolas, pinnacles and such—the "frosting" of earlier architecture, so to speak. If you wish to be inspired in your artistry, you have only to dream of millions of Americans watching a six-story ape crawl up the side of YOUR DESIGN clutching Bo Derek (my personal choice for the next remake) in glorious dishabille. Give Kong a hand, fellow architects—think TAWL, and clutter it up a bit.

Dallas architect David Braden, FAIA, is a Texas Architect contributing editor.

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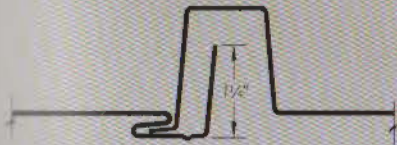
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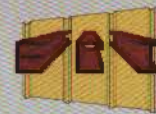


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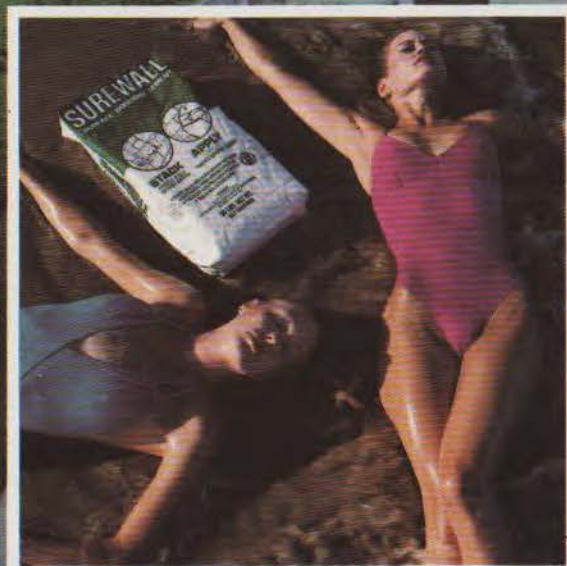
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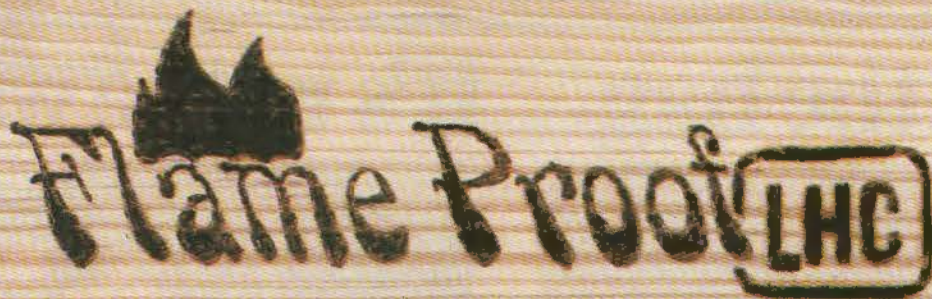
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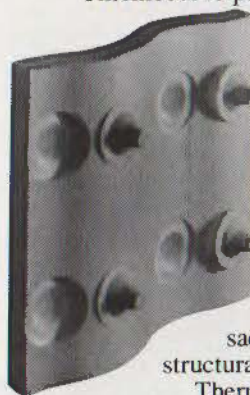
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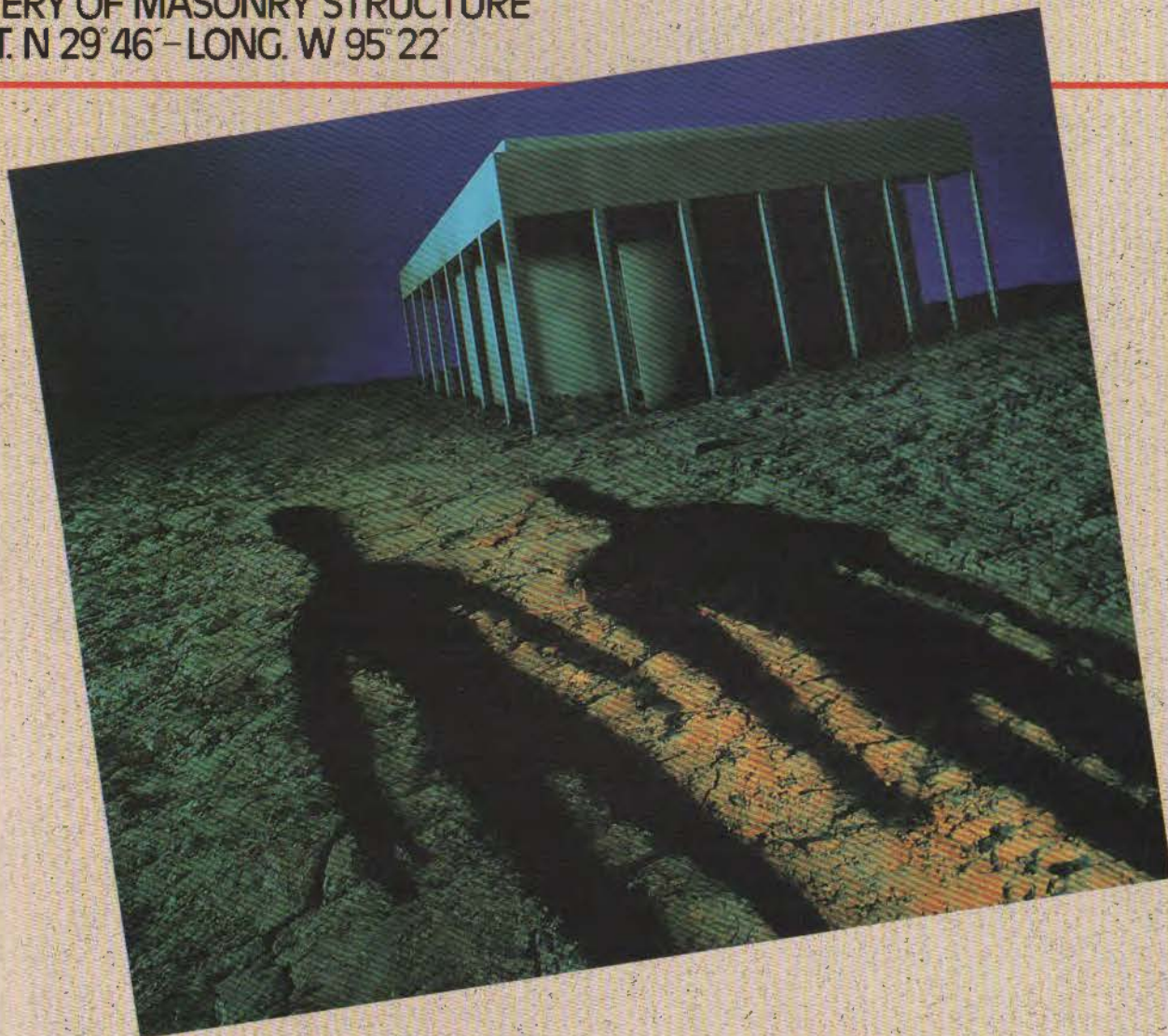
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Structure is some type of amphitheater typically constructed during the mid to late 20th century. As was originally thought the outer surface is of a high quality masonry material predominantly a mineral form of calcium-magnesium carbonate. Aside from obvious signs of exfoliation and heavy deposits of calcium sulfate, damage to the outer surface is surprisingly minimal.

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