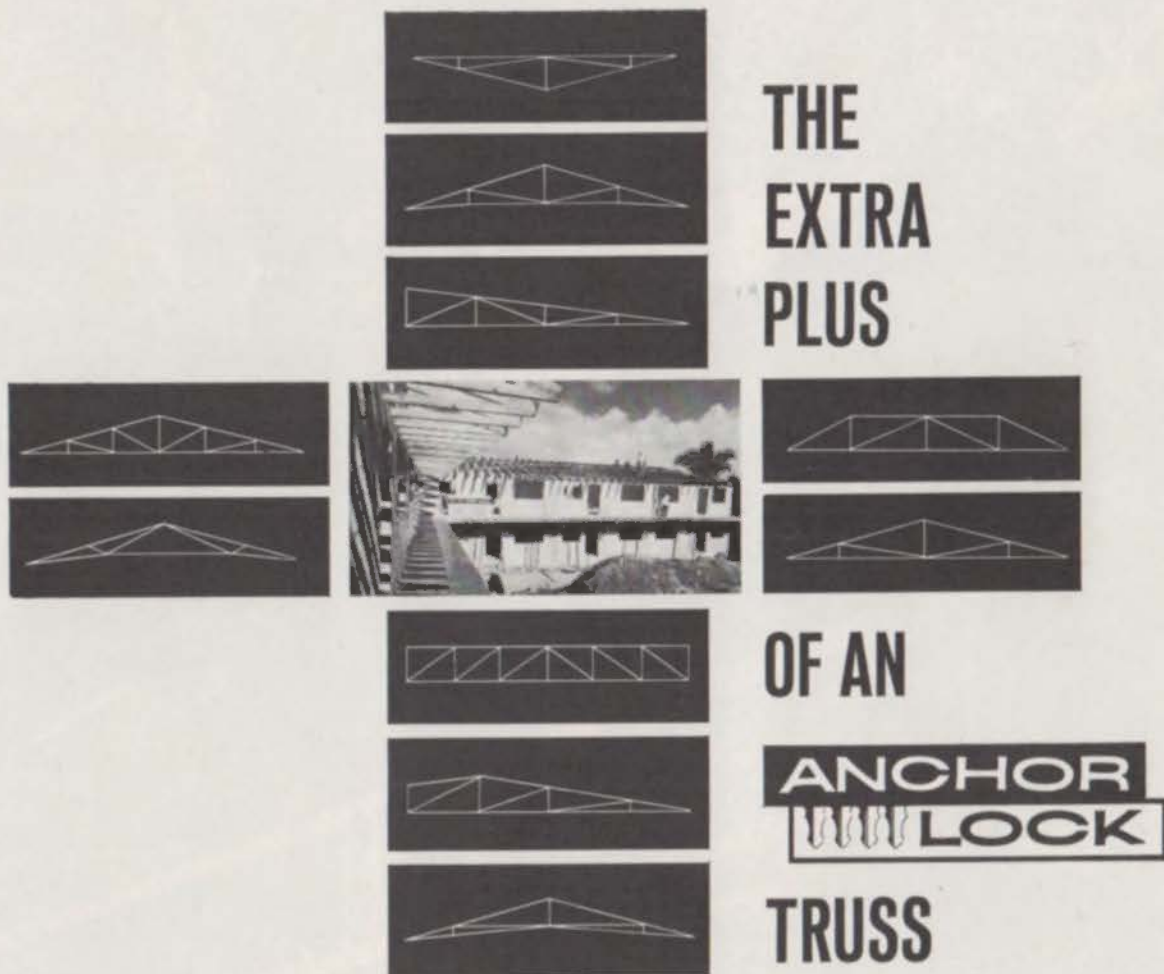


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## Round Table Talk

And now since we have been seated around our "Round Table," do we know one another? Do you know your mayor, your city manager, your council, your commissioners' court? Does the County Commissioners' Court or the City Council know what you as an architect have to offer? Do they know that you too are a public servant and are willing to serve on committees, boards and councils? That you are trained in planning? The planning of a neighborhood or a city is in a sense no different from planning a livable home. We must distinguish a house from a home. Houses are just built and often lack many of the refinements, conveniences and generally the thought thru plan of one space related to another space. In our cities, the open spaces are more difficult to plan than the enclosed spaces. Let's take a good look at our present environment and ask ourselves: "Is this the best we can do?"

ARTHUR FEHR

## Cover

*This living deck of the Herschel Fisher residence looks out through the tree tops to the skyline of Dallas. The Texas Architecture 1963 Award of Merit was designed by architects J. Herschel Fisher and Pat Y. Spillman, AIA.*



*Before dismantling and moving. Note heavy later gable.*

# The Restoration of the Nichols-Rice House

*Houston is developing an "Ante-Bellum Texas Village" in Sam Houston Park. The Preservation Officer of the Houston Chapter, AIA, gives the story of the Preservation Committee's work in planning, directing and supervising a major restoration there as a public service.*

Harvin C. Moore, AIA

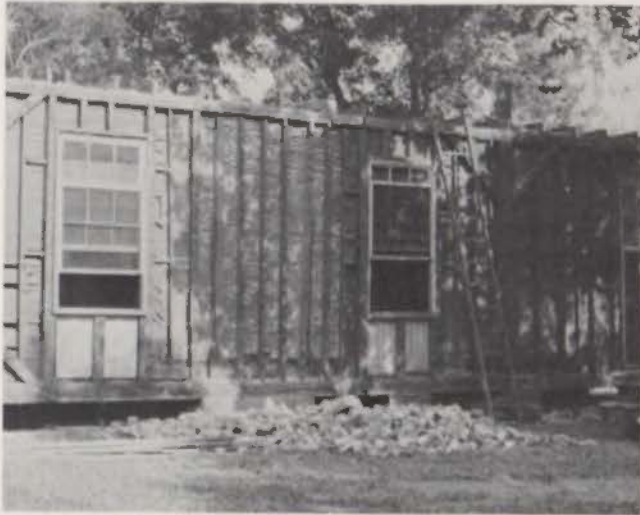
The physical restoration of historic buildings along the Texas Gulf Coast has been given emphasis by two restorations in Houston under the direction of the Committee for Preservation of Historic Buildings of the Houston Chapter AIA.

In 1954, a group of ladies invited this committee to assist in the organization of the Heritage Society which would raise funds primarily to restore the one-hundred-year-old Kellum-Noble House in Sam Houston Park. A fire in that structure precipitated the restoration, and, after some three years, the house was opened to the public in its original location, on its original foundation, and with a large part of its original structure.

Partly because of the success of this restoration, the city of Houston and the City Parks Department, as well as the City Planning Department, have suggested that Sam Houston Park be developed toward an Ante-Bellum Texas Village representative of this early period of Texas as a state.



*Dismantling uncovered original terne roof and widow's walk, hidden by high gabled roof for many years.*



*Note hinged panels beneath first-floor windows (covered with siding in 1900), discovered during restoration.*



Currently, the second restoration in the park is some eighty per cent complete. In downtown Houston, in the year 1850, General Ebenezer B. Nichols constructed a residence across the street from the County Court House. General Nichols had come from Cooperstown, New York, and claimed a prosperous and cultural background. Having entered business with William M. Rice, founder of Rice University, General Nichols sold the house to Mr. Rice in 1856 and moved to Galveston.

Mr. Rice lived in the house only a short time when he, in turn, left Houston. The history of the delightful Greek Revival house is a bit vague until 1886 when it was purchased by John Finnegan, who moved it a block away to the corner of San Jacinto and Franklin.

Two years later, Charles Evershade leased the home until 1897 at which time it was put up for public auction. D. B. Cherry, the husband of a local artist, Mrs. E. Richardson Cherry, bid \$25.00 for the Greek entrance alone. No other bids were received; therefore, the Cherrys acquired the entire home for \$25.00.

The old house was then moved three miles to the country which location later became known as Fargo and Hopkins Street and its modern history began.

From time to time, Mrs. Cherry added numerous features of her own design. A porte-cochère, certainly not of the original period, was built to the west with a studio above. Bathrooms were tacked on and numerous additions to the rear built, including a sort of kitchen.

As in all restorations, these things challenged the Committee to establish what constituted the original house.

By 1959, the aged relic was in delicate condition and could not be moved without wrecking. Each piece, molding, windows, doors, and numerous other parts, were coded carefully, then painstakingly taken apart, bundled and moved to the park two miles away.

During the restoration, parts that were too rotted or damaged by the years had to be reproduced. For example, several of the capitals of the columns were found unfit for continued use. Skilled wood carvers, using the remaining capitals for models, carefully and authentically copied new ones for the restoration.

When the house was dismantled, it was found that

*(Continued on page 8)*



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*Original stair with the old flooring exposed showed the location and extent of the balustrade.*

along the years a high gabled roof had been put over the original terne roof. Atop the original mansion had been a "widow's walk." Only a piece of the surrounding railing was found, but this was a guide for a restored walk.

Each mortised timber was carefully noted and an original chimney chase between the two back rooms was discovered. This chimney was constructed on the new site.

Exposure of the first floor wall structure indicated a rather unplanned system of bracing which seemed to have been applied after the 1900 storm.

Dismantling revealed that, behind the siding below the downstairs windows, there were panels to the floor that were exposed to the outside, and that the window openings had been framed with trim that continued to a sill at floor level. It is probable that, after severe damage during the 1900 hurricane, the siding and trim were not put back as they were originally.

Ceiling joists had been damaged severely by a fire, and rather curious moulded pieces were used to strengthen the ceilings.

It was necessary in the interest of permanence to discard the wood lath and substitute metal lath on the interior.

Some question was raised as to the authenticity of the column on the front galleries and the Committee is of the opinion that the columns were obtained from some other building or were ordered of a size that did not fit. In any event, it appeared that the downstairs columns had had some two feet cut off the bottoms and the upstairs columns had been shortened by about three feet.

Completion of the main house exterior with shutters, trim, and paint suggested the planning of additional facilities and construction is now under way on the separate kitchen and gardens.

It has been a source of great pride to this Committee of the AIA to have been able to plan, to direct, and to supervise so delightful a project as the "Houses in Sam Houston Park" and the Committee feels confident that this work has been and will be a credit to the public service conscience of the AIA as well as a landmark in the preservation of the early heritage of Texas as a state.





# TEXAS ARCHITECTURE 1962

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## FISHER RESIDENCE

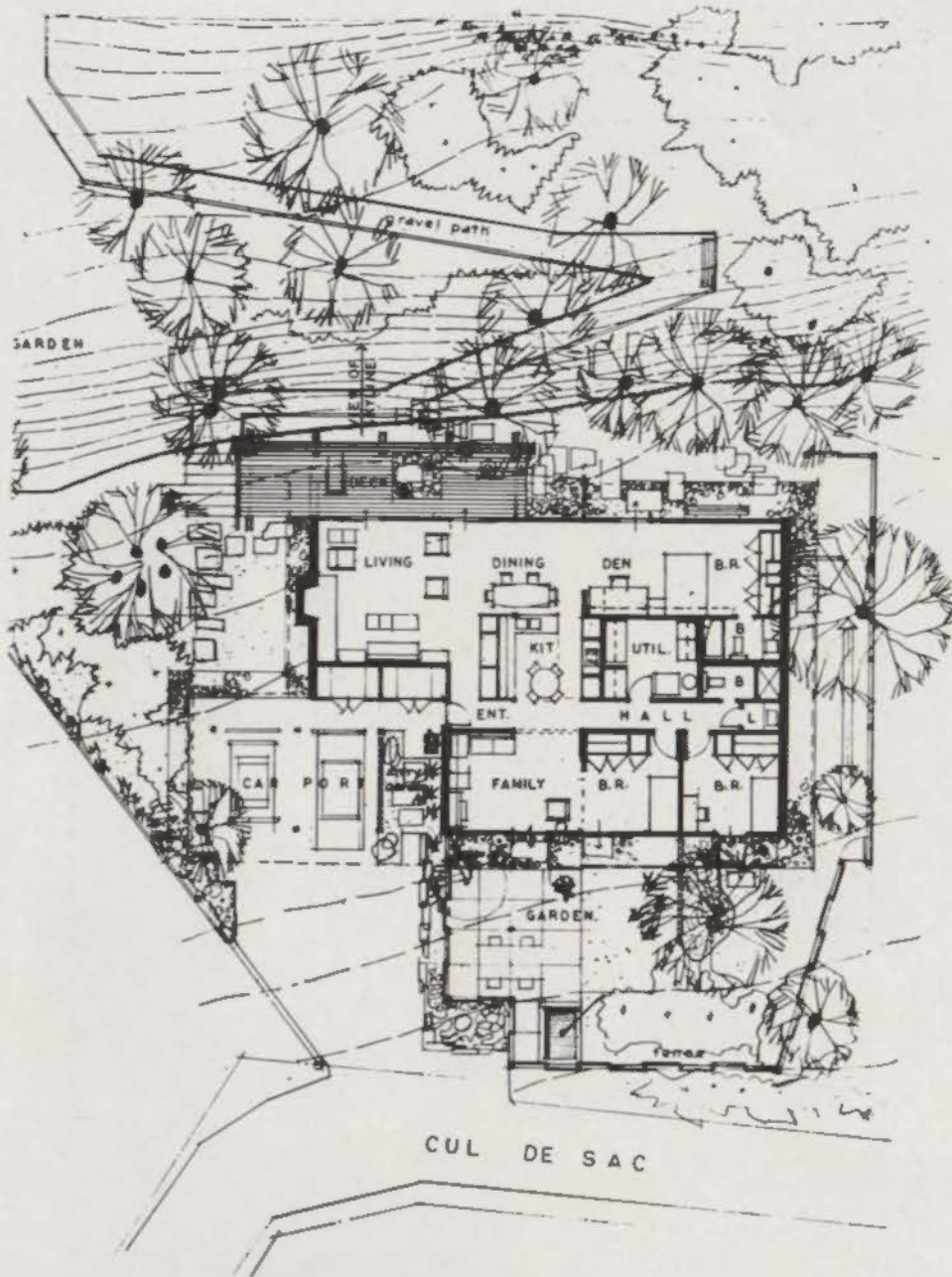
D A L L A S

ARCHITECT

J. HERSCHEL FISHER, AIA  
PAT Y. SPILLMAN, AIA

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

DICK MYRICK



Vividly demonstrating the potentials of its hillside site, the plan turns its back on the service road and opens instead, with an expanse of glass, decks and gardens, to the view across the trees. The street side gardens are screened for privacy.

The plan is organized into three zones—one for children, one for parents, and third a central core common to both and containing all utilities. Only one habitable room, used as a music room, is closed from the rest of the house; the remainder relies on sliding and rolled screens to alter the spaces as desired.





*The simple structural system of post and beam is developed to provide its own rhythmic and geometric order in contrast to the irregular curves of the treetops.*



The following is excerpts from an address delivered by Congressman Clem Miller in the House of Representatives. His remarks were concerned specifically with one project—a public housing development in Marin City, California, which received strong criticism from the General Accounting Office. In discussing that project and GAO's evaluation, he exposes a point of view that can endanger all architecture, both government and private.

Mr. Miller strongly questions GAO's methods of evaluation. He points out that the agency has over 2000 accountants and 100 lawyers, but not a single architect or engineer. He maintains that GAO ignored essential considerations—social, aesthetic, main-

tenance. "We are given," he states, "the two-dimensional world of the adding machine and told to make from it the three-dimensional world of the value judgment."

GAO's approach, Mr. Miller asserts, can lead to only one conclusion: "That public housing should be institutionalized. It means every breath of imaginative design withdrawn." Mr. Miller opposes this conclusion, and shows that it is contrary to the direction envisioned by Congress.

Congressman Miller's address clearly, persuasively and thoroughly states the case against "judgment by adding machine." Though not reprinted in full, the nature and intent of the address, we believe is retained. Ed.

# JUDGMENT BY ADDING MACHINE

"The task of General Accounting Office is essential, but it is a most difficult assignment, as difficult a task as there is in Government."

"It is the watchdog of Congress. An excellent role. A fine concept. Congress has instructed GAO that it "should be something more than a bookkeeper or accountant, that it should be a real critic. A magnificent role for any Government officer."

"This, then is the role. A bookkeeper. Accounting, but much more than an accountant. Lawyer, but much more than the law. It seems like a big role. It is. But where are the engineers, the Architects?"

"We are given the two-dimensional world of the adding machine and told to make from it the three-dimensional world of the value judgment."

"Right here is the dilemma. GAO is given the two-dimensional tools in manpower and machines to add and subtract, but it often returns with a value judgment on efficiency and economy about matters containing a thousand other ingredients. Beauty, for example; pleasure for another; justice; or take farming, forestry; mental illness."

If that is all its about, says the observer, then the victory clearly belongs to GAO. GAO does not concern itself with these things. And what does beau-

ty or pleasure or happiness have to do with our laws?"

"Well, I say that laws have everything to do with such things as these. I say further that accountants are not qualified to make these evaluations, and I say there is need to remind GAO of this upon appropriate occasion, because whether they admit it or not, their evaluations are continually appearing. Its job is difficult enough without further burdening it with the impossible. I believe I can give such an example."

"It is the report filed with Congress by the GAO on the public housing project at Marin City. This project is one of the best of its kind. It has received high praise on all sides. It has won international awards for its excellence in architecture and design.

"In the world of barrackslike public housing structures at Marin City give satisfaction and pleasure to see."

"Yet, this is a project singled out by GAO to report adversely. The report was a long time coming, over a year of investigation by a platoon of accountants. GAO seemed determined to find adversely against Marin City. It did this in face of the fact that it met the requirements of law. Yet GAO pressed ahead until it found a basis of its own choosing for an adverse report. It almost seems as though the

very fact of creating a pleasing public housing project must find some censure at GAO; that public housing must be spartan rather than esthetic."

"The Marin City public housing development was no back-alley tenement lost in a big city. It was solidly out in front for all to see.

It was also the toughest of sites from an engineering view. A small flatland rising abruptly upward with a ring of imposing mills."

"It would have been easy to repeat the Lanham Act formula. Brown, wooden barracks pasted on the slopes, parallel to the contours of the hills. It was easier and it looked cheaper. Actually, that is not the case. It would not have been cheap to build, and certainly not to maintain."

"So Aaron Green hit on the bold idea of multistory buildings at right angles to contour but yielding gracefully to the slope. Yet withal, he retained a sense of strength, of design, of beauty, a fitting accompaniment to the costly private developments envisaged for the upland acres."

"For this imaginative design, Aaron Green has won the plaudits from experts all over the world. From the non-professionals, the commuters in Marin County, pleasure and relief that the barrack days of public housing was not here reproduced."

"This is the project that the General Accounting Office has found unacceptable, and tells us is an abuse of congressional intent."

"I take vigorous exception to this finding. So do many others who are competent in the field of housing and housing law."

"Where did GAO err? It overreached itself in two respects. First, it arrogated to itself duties which were beyond its capacity to perform, and second, when conclusive evidence was offered, refuting its charges, not only did it fail to remand its case as closed, it pressed contentiously on with its report, determined to find some flaw. Certainly, it is the duty of the watchdog to press with vigor. The usefulness of the watchdog is impaired when it barks and snaps at an innocent passer-by rather than an intruder."

"I asked who was the architect in the investigation team. The supervisor said there had been none. I asked who

the planning consultants were. There had been none. I asked who the engineers had been. There had been none. I asked who had there been. There had been several accountants and a supervisor. That was all. Absolutely all."

"Mr. Speaker, I ask how a complete, well-rounded picture of a complex housing project can be obtained under these circumstances? It reached architectural conclusions without an architect, engineering conclusions without an engineer, esthetic and historic conclusions without a planner. The answer is that it has failed."

"When one gets down to their report on Marin City, the analysis is hard to believe as worthy of a year's time by an investigating team. As I have said, it appears they were attracted to the Marin City housing project because it was a different treatment of public housing problem. It seemed to conclude that when things are different, or bizarre, or unfamiliar, there must be malfeasance or inefficiency."

"Since the costs for the project met the overall standards and requirements of law and regulation, then the investigators hit on the novel idea of examining the component parts of the project individually to see whether the individual components were excessive in cost."

"GAO agreed that total costs met the requirements, but that components did not. What does this approach mean to sensible design planning? It means sterility at best, chaos and an inability to perform at worst. It hamstring design to place it at the mercy of such unpredictable and ignorant criticism. What is a designer for if he cannot accommodate—to give here, take there, all to solve a problem? Particularly as here at Marin City, acknowledged to be a tough problem? It just can't be done. Design suffers. Designers are increasingly unwilling to submit themselves to such inconsidered judgment. Let there be no mistake, the GAO tragedy at Marin City is widely known in the world of design and bitterly resented."

"Furthermore, the GAO report rejects any consideration to the esthetic qualities, the nature of the community itself, and the living standards of the residents."

"Mr. August Heckscher, special White House consultant on the arts, recently spoke before a national con-

ference of the American Institute of Architects. He warned us as follows:

*"A civilization begins to manifest itself when men and women have begun to take thought about what they construct, and why, and to what end."*

"In order to 'descend from a spiral of ugliness and irrationality,' we must be in readiness to undertake on a large scale the kind of public works which are truly public—in the sense that they serve the highest interests of the citizenry; and truly works—in the sense that they are made to endure and to be judged by future generations."

"He has also said in another place:

*'It [the State] seeks through concerted action to lift men above private comforts and to give them some vision of public happiness. The citizens of such a state will have found themselves, because they will have found the purpose and values which they share with others in creating this world, in shaping these works, men are made more confident of their own destiny.'*

"The GAO would reject this view, certainly for purposes of their function in government. I daresay it would do so with spirit and enthusiasm."

"The GAO would reject this view, certainly for purposes of their function in government. I daresay it would do so with spirit and enthusiasm."

"To some degree we have become a nation of accountants. The figure sheets have become sacred talismen. Among other things this leads to the destruction of beauty. One only need to look at the buildings going up in the Capital City of our country to see some of the most graceless architecture conceived by man."

"And let no man say that we can forgo beauty for utilitarianism. Utility is beauty, and has been so for all ages. The angry critic who accepts the barracks architecture at home is crossing to Europe by the plane to see the outpourings of other cultures and other ages. It is quite clear to me that the Parthenon could never have been built under the watchful eye of GAO. Notre Dame at Paris would not have been attempted with GAO approval. We need not fear for our country when we are putting up great buildings of imaginative design. We need fear for ourselves when we stop doing it."

# MONARCH TILE SCHOLARSHIPS

Winners of the annual architectural scholarships awarded by Monarch Tile Manufacturing, Inc., of San Angelo, Texas, have been announced by Fred J. MacKie, Jr., F.A.I.A., of Houston, Texas, President of the Texas Architectural Foundation.

First place winner is Edward V. Kemp of College Station, Texas, architectural student at Texas A & M College. Second place winner is Elmer Joe Wallis of Lubbock, Texas, archi-

tectural student at Texas Technological College.

The winners were selected from a list of qualified candidates from the five schools of architecture in Texas, by the Awards and Scholarships Committee of the Texas Architectural Foundation Board of Trustees. Mr. MacKie was chairman of the committee and was assisted by Theo Keller, President Houston Chapter, AIA, C. Herbert Cowell, member Texas Board

of Architectural Examiners, and Wallie Scott of the firm of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott.

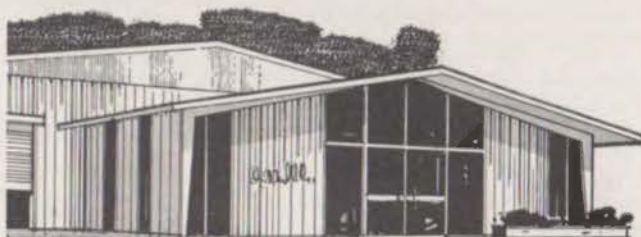
In notifying Bill C. Baker, President of Monarch Tile, the names of the winners, Mr. MacKie said that the Officers and Directors of the Foundation "have again asked me to express sincere appreciation for the dedicated interest in furthering architectural education which you and the Monarch Tile family have so long demonstrated."

Mr. Baker expressed pleasure at the selection and displayed deep interest in the statement by the selection committee that "many of the applicants whose names were submitted were eminently eligible."

First place winner Kemp was born in Atlanta, Georgia, is a graduate of Arlington State College, Arlington, Texas, has attended the University of Texas, and is scheduled to graduate from Texas A & M College next year with a degree in architecture. He is married, has two children and has gained practical architectural experience with architectural firms in Greenville, Mississippi and in Arlington, Texas.

Second place winner Wallis was born in Phillips, Texas. He is a graduate of Abilene High School, holds a B.A. degree from Hardin-Simmons University of that city, and is scheduled to graduate next year from Texas Technological College with a degree in Architecture. He is married, has one child and for more than a year has worked for a Lubbock architectural firm.

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## COURTHOUSES

Publication in Brownwood of "Courthouse of Texas," has been announced. The 260 page book contains photographs of the county courthouses of all the 254 counties in the state.

The photographs were made by Clark Coursey, for the past twenty years editor of "County Progress," the official publication of the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas.

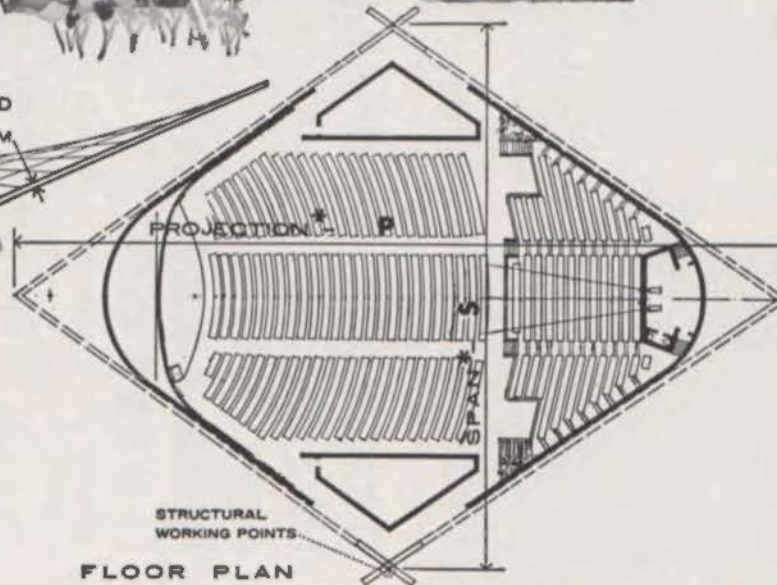
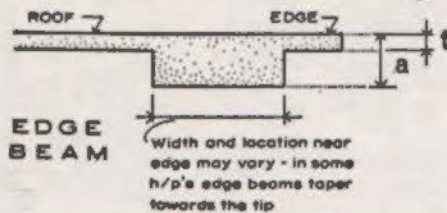
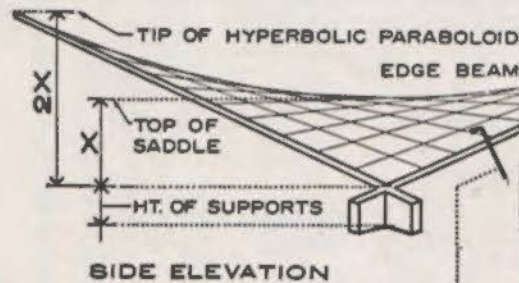
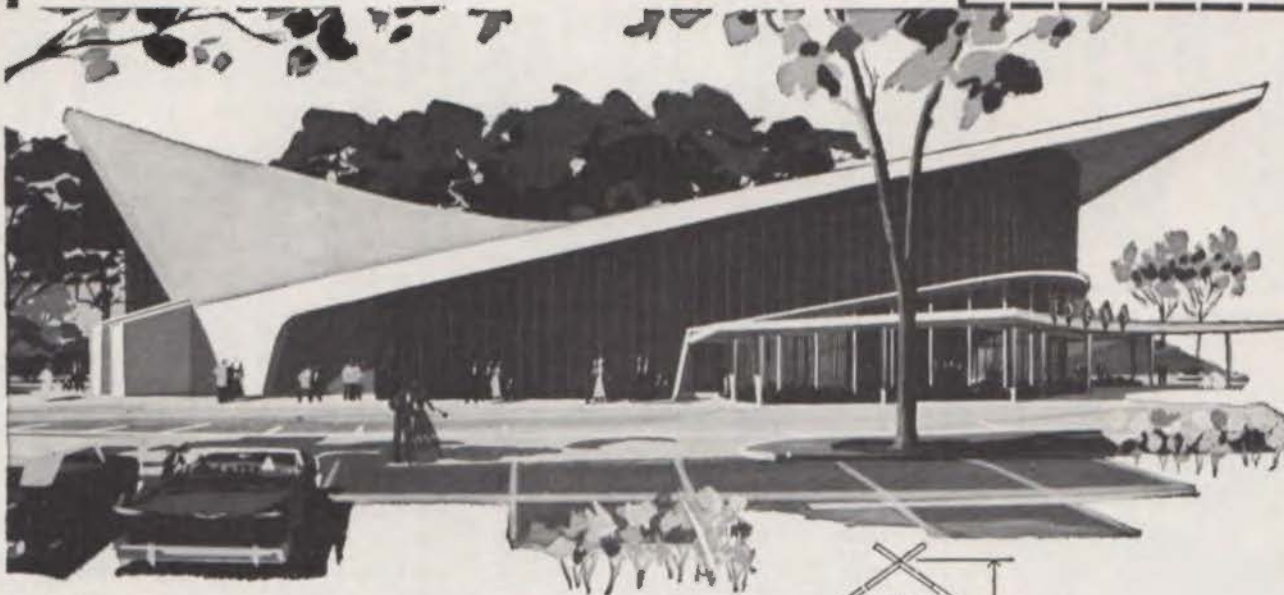


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50'	50 - 70'	3 - 5'	1'	2 3/4"	2 - 3 lb.
60'	60 - 85'	4 - 6'	1'	2 3/4"	2 - 3 lb.
75'	75 - 105'	6 - 8'	1 1/2'	3"	3 - 4 lb.
100'	100 - 140'	9 - 13'	2'	3 1/4"	3 - 4 lb.
125'	125 - 175'	13 - 20'	2 1/2'	3 1/2"	4 - 5 lb.
150'	150 - 210'	17 - 25'	3'	4"	5 - 7 lb.

(1) figures given are recommended lower limits; maximum feasible limit =  $S/5$ .  
 (2) average depth of edge beams. (3) average shell thickness in inches. (4) average reinforcing steel of hyperbolic paraboloids in pounds per square foot of surface.

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ABOVE—Above ground entrance to the new underground residence and fallout shelter in Plainview, Texas.

BELOW—One of a number of Monarch Tile installations in the new underground residence in Plainview.

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