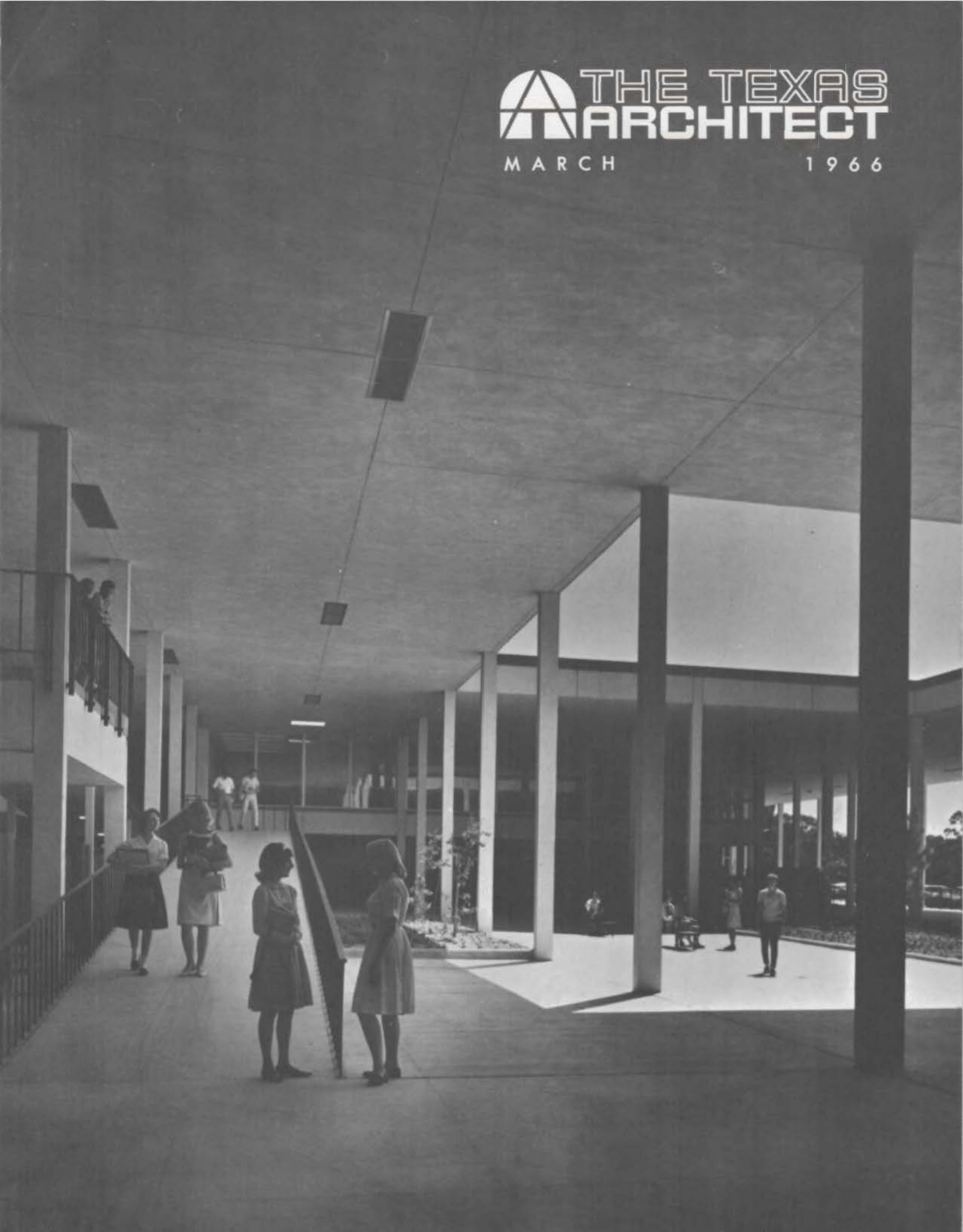


 THE TEXAS
ARCHITECT
MARCH 1966



COVER:
THE
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BY
THE
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VERANDA
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CAUDILL-
ROWLETT-
SCOTT
ARE
ARCHITECTS
FOR
THE
TEXAS
ARCHITECTURE
1965
SELECTION.

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**THE TEXAS
ARCHITECT**
VOLUME 16 / MARCH 1966 / NUMBER 3

Problems and opportunities concerning the development of the human environment on the Texas-Mexico border are of vital concern to all citizens, particularly so to the public officials and professionals who are charged directly with the formation of policies and plans for the border region. This issue of the Texas Architect features a white paper document "The Texas National Border" to assist these persons of leadership toward better understanding of the need for collaborative efforts and to suggest actions toward fulfilling the potentials of the border and its people.



SPRING WOODS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SPRING BRANCH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOUSTON, TEXAS

CAUDILL - ROWLETT - SCOTT

ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS

To achieve its objective, the design of the new high school had to be a balance of many factors. Prime consideration was given to three — education, environment and economy.

EDUCATION. This school was designed to house 2200 students in grades 9 through 12 in a departmental organization. Future expansion of these facilities to increase the capacity to 2500 students would be possible by the addition of a parallel classroom wing to the north.

The library, as the heart of the curriculum, is centrally and prominently located. It serves students in class groups and as individuals doing research and review. It serves teachers in curriculum work, professional research and materials production. It can serve individual departments by a cart system.

Provision is made for large group instruction by folding partitions in certain classrooms and in the auditorium. The auditorium can be used more frequently by groups smaller than its total capacity by being divisible and allowing for the stage to be used by the adjoining drama rooms.

Unforeseen changes in the educational program demand convertibility of teaching spaces. The back-to-back classroom arrangement and removable partitions will allow for the redivision of spaces required by these changes.

ENVIRONMENT. In this compact plan, the main corridors on both floors open to the spacious outdoor lobby to the school — the Activity Veranda. The veranda was created by grouping the programmed outdoor covered elements, such as exterior corridors; lobbies for the auditorium, the gymnasium and the administrative suite; student locker area; and outdoor snack bar dining space.

The east-west axis of the school provides protection to the veranda from the north-northwest cold winds. Designed with air conditioning in mind (added during construction) the school has a minimum of glass in its perimeter brick walls, except in those spaces which face the protective veranda.

ECONOMY. The building embodies many of the established criteria in construction cost controls. Chief among these are: (1) compactness, (2) use of outdoor corridors, and (3) repetitive units in structure. These also effect the economic installation and operation of the air conditioning system when considered with the environmental controls such as maximum brick walls and protected glass areas.



This view of the veranda of the Spring Woods High School shows the entrance to the auditorium at the right. The entrances to the gym at the far end (right center) and the two-story library (left corner) are also shown.

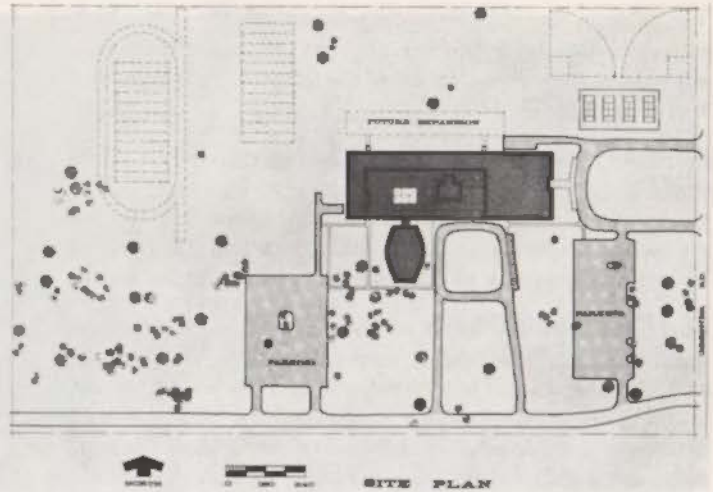


Principal W. W. Emmons shows new students how partitions in auditorium divide space into three large-group instruction areas. Auditorium can also be used as theater-in-round, and also has open area behind stage.

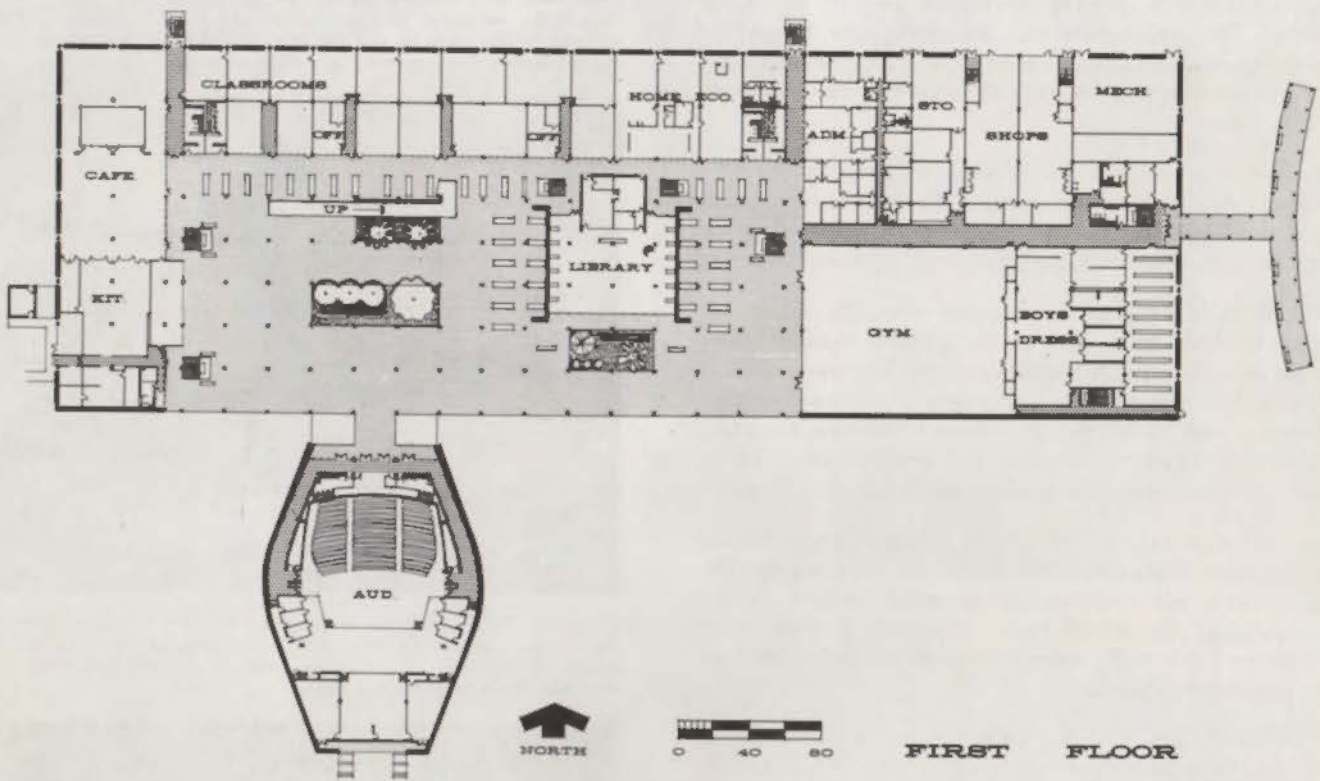


Spring Woods High School is spacious building with all classrooms reached from mall area. Wheel chair ramp at lower left and auditorium entrance is at right.

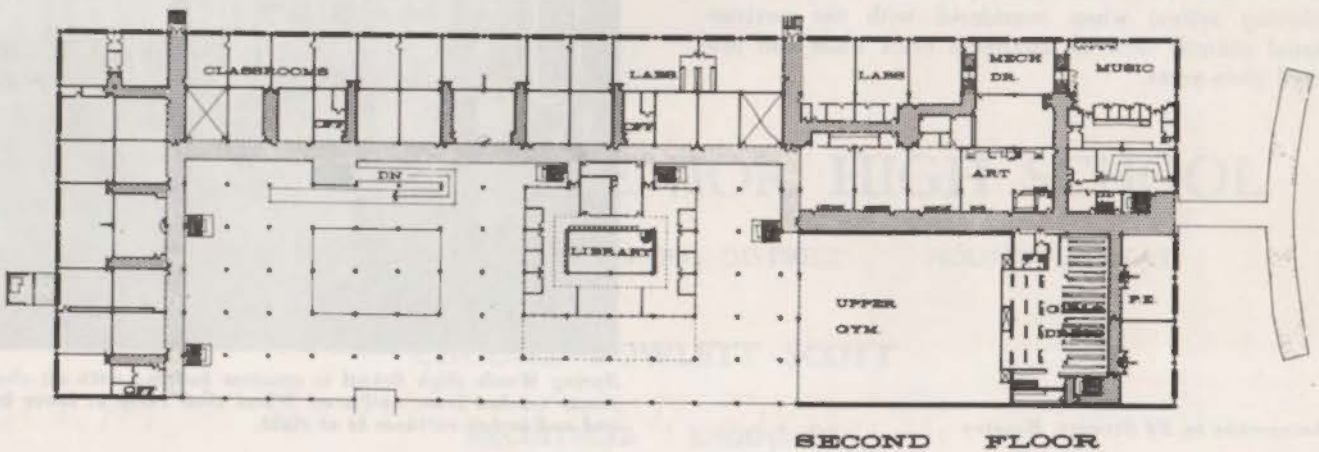
SPRING WOODS HIGH SCHOOL



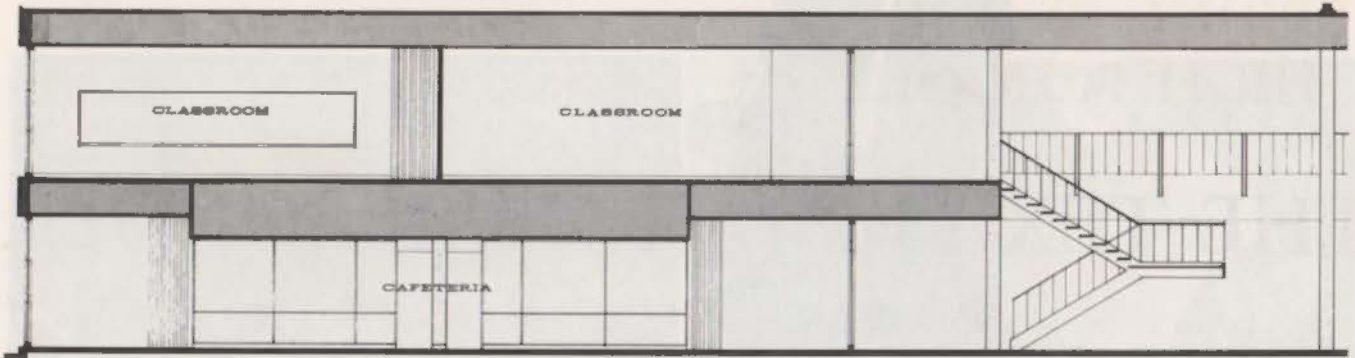
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SITE PLAN



NORTH
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FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



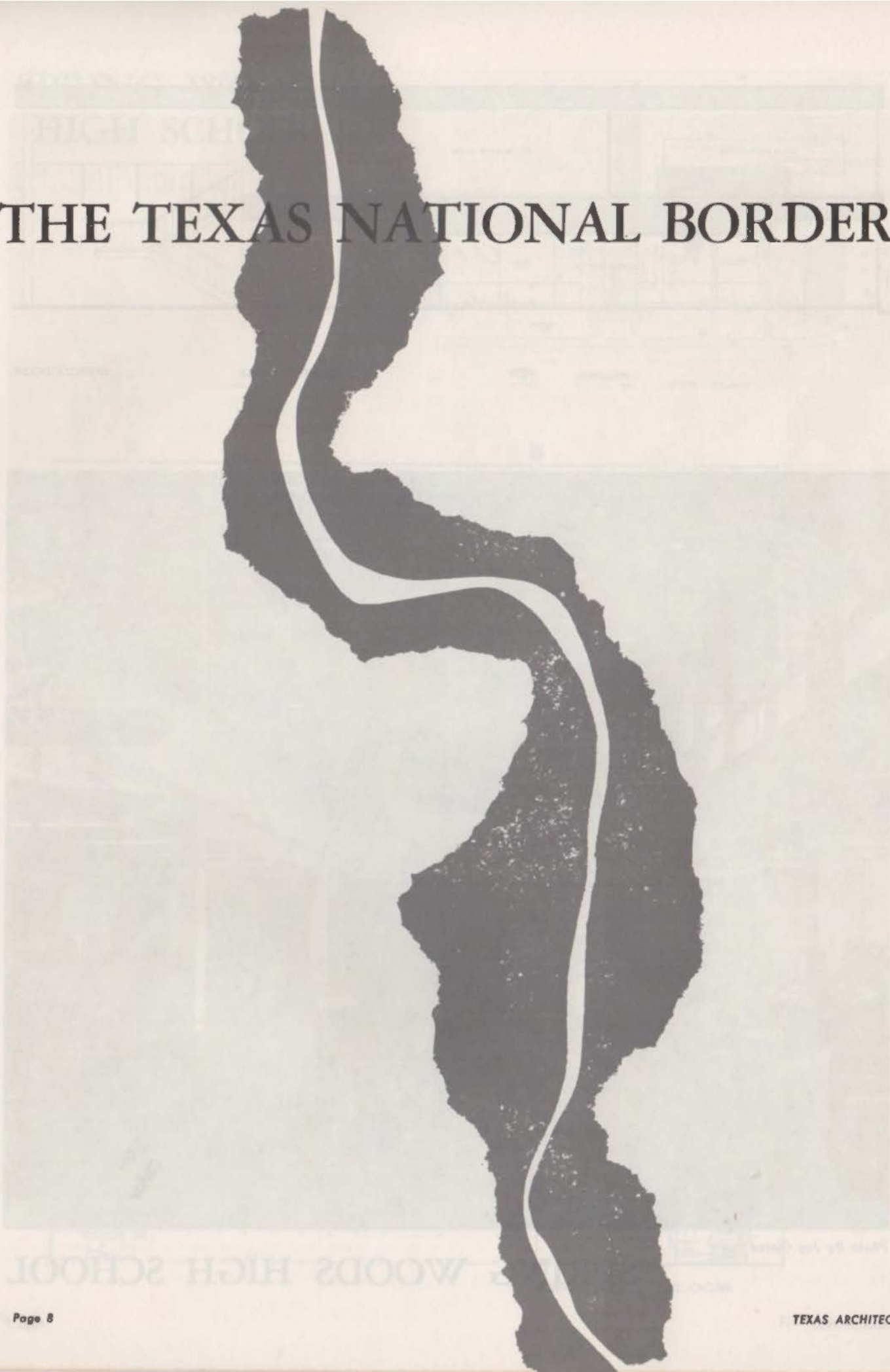
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Photo By Jay Oistad

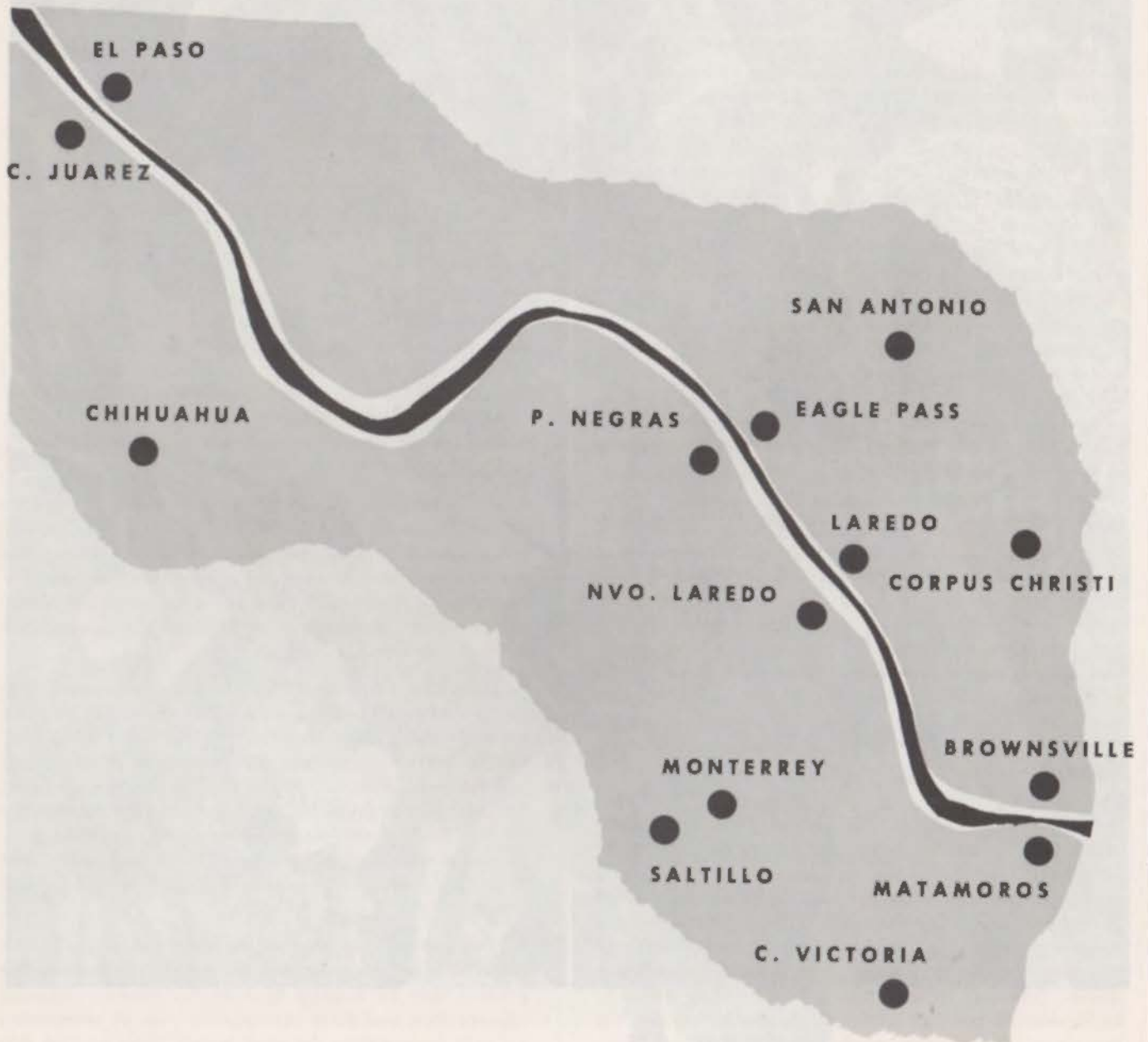
SPRING WOODS HIGH SCHOOL

THE TEXAS NATIONAL BORDER



*Planning cannot be the end in itself;
it must be the means to an end.*

The Texas Society of Architects has dedicated itself to this task and welcomes other professions and other citizens to join them in this enviable and exciting opportunity for Texas to assume the leadership with action in the border development program. It is a challenge to this generation to leave as its heritage to future generations of Texans and Mexicans the tangible evidence of their glorious historical traditions in developing this hemisphere.



THE TEXAS NATIONAL BORDER

I. THE TEXAS BORDER

The unpredictable Rio Grande, fierce or languid by turns, forms the 900 mile border between Texas and Mexico. This far reaching frontier begins at Brownsville where the ancient Rio Bravo ends its long journey to the Gulf of Mexico and traces upstream, northward. This fertile lower valley is a corridor of urbanized communities of San Benito, Harlingen, Mercedes, Weslaco, Donna, Pharr, McAllen and Mission. In the Mexican counterpart of this corridor on the south side of the river are the towns of Matamoros, Reynosa and Camargo.

The land becomes arid and rolling as the river border edges northward past the towns of Roma, Zapata and San Ignacio. At the historic twin cities of Laredo-Nuevo Laredo the crux of the trade routes from Mexico to the United States between Monterrey and San Antonio is reached.

The ranch country of Eagle Pass-Piedras Negras and the prospering agricultural area of Del Rio-Villa Acuna, with the nearby Amistad Dam, separate the lower from the central region. For 300 miles along the border these are the only cities in existence.

Sweeping wide around the Chisos Mountains with the Big Bend National Park at its crest, the boundary crosses the Sierra Madre Oriental to the west side of the mountain range, and passing only the twin communities of Presidio and Ojinaga, it reaches the high El Paso valley where the metropolitan complex of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez rises from lush surrounding fields.

Our national boundary ceases to be the Rio Grande after it reaches El Paso. It stretches westward for 175 miles across New Mexico, 350 miles across Arizona, and finally over Baja California to the Pacific Ocean. From the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, with the exception of the short California border and two or three other cities, there are no major population centers other than those in Texas.

Because of our nearness to Central Mexico and its concentration of industrial and commercial cities, Texas shares the most important segment of our national frontier with our increasing affluent southern neighbor. Indeed, Texas is the gateway for vehicular and railroad traffic to Mexico. The most frequently traveled international highways cross our border from Texas towns to their twin communities in Mexico. Railroads also cross many of the points or have border terminals such as that at Ojinaga across from Presidio, and other crossings are local in character.

The historic trade routes from Mexico to the United States are from Tampico and Ciudad Victoria to Matamoros and Brownsville to the east; from Mexico City to Monterrey to Laredo to San Antonio in the central region; and from Durango to Chihuahua to Ciudad Juarez and El Paso to the north. The ten Texas counties along our national border are populated by 800,000 people, more than 65 per cent of them bearing Spanish surnames. American tourists spent \$670 million annually in Mexico. 80 per cent of this in the border region. Yet because of the growing purchasing power of the Mexicans, more than half our money is returned to the United States.

Citizens of both sides cross the border at will, numbering 70,000,000 times a year. Other than the Immigration and Custom officials, our border is scarcely guarded. Fort Brown, Fort Duncan and other bygone garrisons are now transformed into parks and college campuses. This is the Texas border—peaceful, drowsing, sometimes yearning for greater opportunities, but lulled by an imbued sense of manana. This is the national frontier between a country of great cultural heritage and emerging industrial might and an acknowledged economic, political and military power of the world. That this border has remained so unprepossessing is almost incredible.

II. THE CASE FOR BORDER DEVELOPMENT

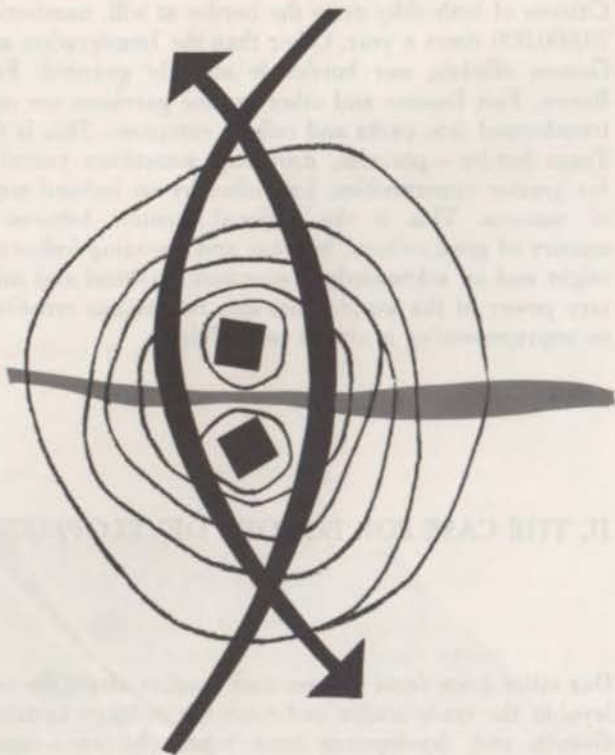
Our cities grew from villages and hamlets along the valleys, at the trade routes and near the military bastions. Growth and development have taken the what-comes-naturally method. One may justifiably ask the purpose for concern about the future development of our border cities at this mid-twentieth century.

Years ago events moved gradually, but today our communities need to strive hard not to be left behind. Industrialization and mechanization have made us a new people—more mobile, with more leisure time. Many of the old structures are now anachronisms due to the immensely accelerated pace of urbanization. Our border cities have not moved forward with new developments to merit the potentially available benefits.

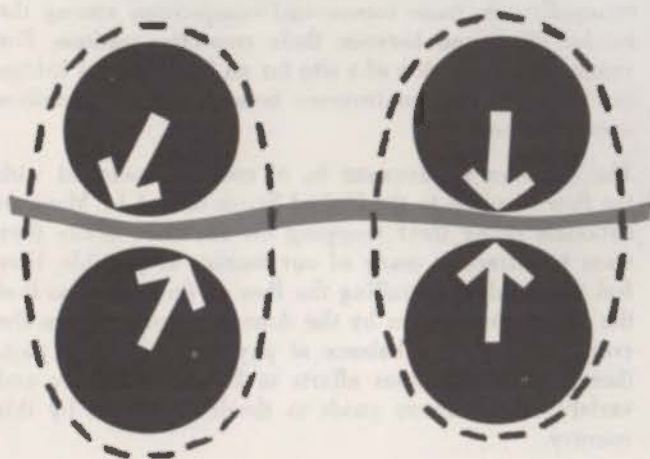
Fast changing events will not long permit this negative attitude of the border to endure. Underlying the surface tranquillity is tense commercial competition among the border cities and between their respective nations. For example, the selection of a site for an international bridge can mean serious controversy between the communities across the border.

The Mexican Government is, of course, concerned with the flow of pesos to the United States caused by Mexican nationals doing their shopping on our side. While they want to attract as many of our tourists as possible, they feel the need of curtailing the flow of their own, so that the dollars brought in by the Americans can stay on the credit side of their balance of payments. On their part, there are conscientious efforts to boost the quality and variety of consumers goods to the level offered by this country.

All this points to the fact that the status quo of our border cities will not be permitted to remain. Both from the positive side of forging forward for greater economic opportunities and from the negative side of overcoming national competition, the need is well demonstrated that development of much greater scope than the past must be carried out on the Texas national border.



Industrialization and mechanization have made us a new people—more mobile, with more leisure time.



The selection of a site for an international bridge can mean serious controversy between the communities.

An effective case for border development should embody the following considerations:

1. **INCREASED URBANIZATION**—A marked increase in the concentration of population and urbanization of the Texas border has created an imperative need for planned and implemented development of border communities which will either remain static or will develop haphazardly at each other's expense.

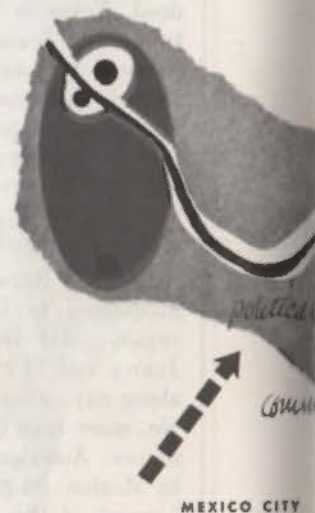
2. **TOURIST INDUSTRY**—To sustain and improve upon the vital tourist industries, our border towns must seek means to replace or expand the meager facilities now existing.

3. **INTERNATIONAL HARMONY**—Maintenance of a harmonious and cordial relationship with Mexico along the national frontier is essential.

Uncoordinated competition and discord are harmful to our mutual interests. There is an urgent need for continuous liaison and awareness of each other's development along the border. A prime objective is the creation of a corridor of binational showcases through development of twin cities along the border. Such sites are ideal to present samples of the best of each nation's culture as a means of strengthening friendship and understanding.

4. **ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**—Planned development can prevent economic drought in our border cities. Increased awareness of changing social, economic, and cultural trends and of the reservoir of human and natural resources will enable our border regions to make timely adjustments for survival and growth.

A detailed study and analysis of the vital border region is an integral and essential part of the overall planning by these states and nations.



III. CURRENT EFFORTS

PLANNING IN TEXAS BORDER CITIES

In the last two decades or so there has been a general awakening to the need of comprehensive planning in the American cities. This need has gained the attention of our border cities individually. The advent of federal grants to assist small communities in meeting the cost of planning, known as the 701 Program, provided the necessary incentive to spur local action. Within the last five years nearly all the Texas border cities have entered into this program.

With all these individual plans, many of them prepared most competently, a comprehensive development plan of real meaning to the border as a region is still lacking. Each of the local comprehensive plans deals with the specific problems of the particular community. While some consideration is given to regional influences in the make-up of the community, the main emphasis of the plan is on such matters as public work for streets and utilities; master plans for major thoroughfares and land use; detailed analysis of zoning, subdivision and housing codes; identification of substandard housing and blight, and others. All these are extremely beneficial to the community involved. They will, as a whole, have an important bearing on the well-being of the entire border region, of which each community is an integral part. Yet there is no general study of regional scope, taking into consideration common resources, a common development theme and a common program for implementation.

On the 4th of November, 1960, the architects of the

THE CHARTER OF EL PASO

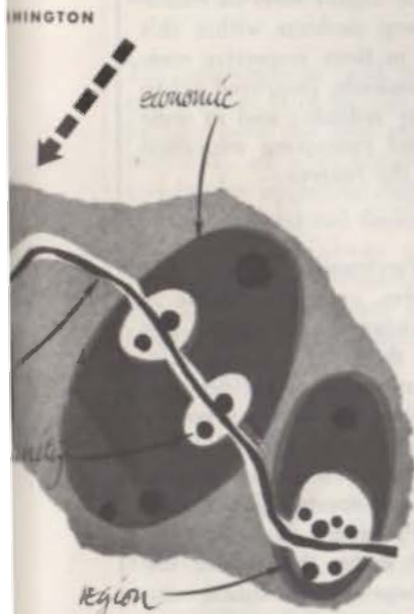
United States and Mexico gathered in El Paso in a joint convention. In this meeting they acknowledged

- (1) The responsibility of the architectural profession for creating a total physical environment in harmony with man's highest aspirations.
- (2) The need of the two nations to coordinate their efforts toward the development of the border region.

They declared this mutual interest and dedication under the name of the Charter of El Paso.

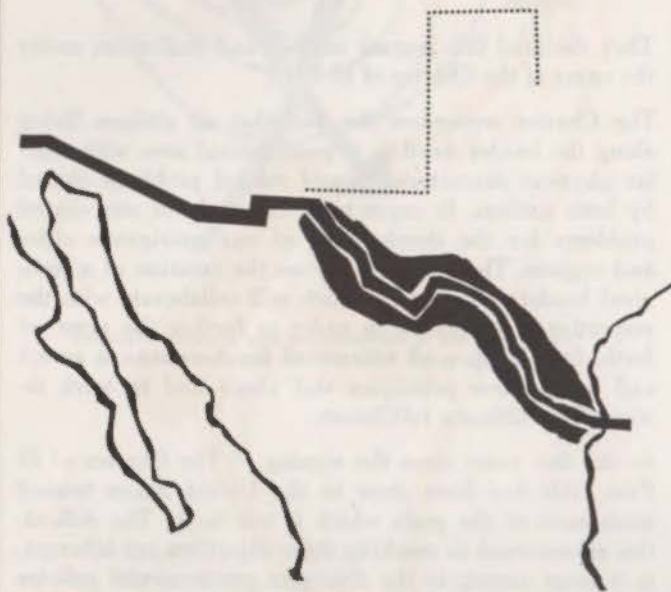
The Charter recognizes the fact that all citizens living along the border dwell in a geographical area with similar physical characteristics and related problems shared by both nations. It urges technical study of our shared problems for the development of our contiguous cities and regions. The charter proposes the creation of a technical border commission, which will collaborate with the respective governments in order to further the aims set forth. It calls upon all citizens of the Americas to accept and adopt these principles and ideals and to work toward their ultimate fulfillment.

In the five years since the signing of The Charter of El Paso little has been done in the United States toward attainment of the goals which it sets forth. The difficulties encountered in reaching these objectives are inherent, to a large extent, in the divergent governmental policies and structures of Mexico and the United States.



The Charter of El Paso proposes the creation of a technical border commission to collaborate with the respective governments.

THE TEXAS NATIONAL BORDER



Aimed toward the entire 1600 miles of U.S.-Mexico border, the program envisioned a wide range of economic and cultural developments.

PROGRAMA NACIONAL FRONTERIZO

On the Mexican side a much more ambitious program called the Programa Nacional Fronterizo has been established. Aimed toward the entire 1600 miles of United States-Mexico border, this program envisioned a wide range of economic and cultural developments. A permanent research plan was established and specific requirements of each zone were determined through careful and knowledgeable analyses. Cooperation was established among Mexican local, state and federal authorities, as well as between these bureaus and private agencies and investors. This was achieved largely through an intensive promotional and educational campaign.

Through this program land was purchased which the government transformed into public parks and gardens; financing was channeled into the most worthwhile and essential directions; buildings were purchased or constructed and then sold or leased to responsible and sympathetic individuals. Both government and private capital was used.

Merchandising shortages and voids are being corrected by assuring that Mexican manufactured goods and the best examples of folk art, music and crafts from the many regions reach the border area. Sales are being materially increased through the modernization or replacement of the traditional central or city markets. Tourist trade is accelerating by provision for the comfort and entertainment of visitors in first class hotels and motels, good restaurants and bars; by setting up information centers, attractive displays of arts and crafts, and service organizations. Emphasis is placed on historical and cultural values through construction and organization of libraries and museums. A higher level of educational facilities is stressed to keep students within this region, to make them take root in their respective communities and to attract foreign students. Improved urban environment is being achieved by reducing and in some cases eliminating slum areas and promoting education and technical knowledge among the citizens.

Two government agencies—the Patrimonio Nacional and the Programa Nacional Fronterizo, each responsible to the President of Mexico administer the program. The first is responsible for planning the cities through privately commissioned architect-planners who, incidentally, have completed plans for more than ten Mexican border towns. This agency is also responsible through local Juntas for construction of such over-all city improvements as water and sewer systems and streets. The second agency (the National Border Program) is responsible for specific facilities which fall under the border improvement program, such as inspection facilities, museums, shops and parks.

EL CHAMIZAL

An unprecedented opportunity to integrate border planning came with the historic settlement of the century old Chamizal boundary controversy and focused attention on the limitless opportunities offered by this international treaty of 1963.

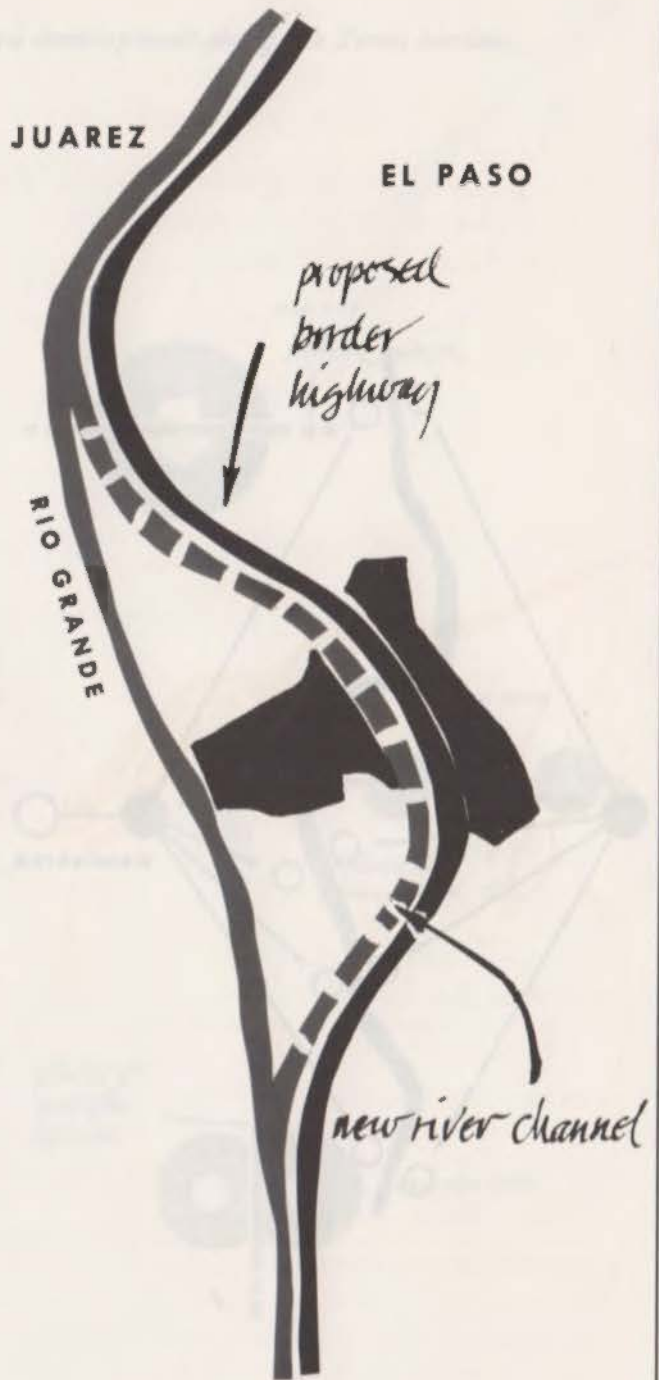
Briefly, the treaty transferred 630 acres of land within the city of El Paso, Texas to the City of Juarez, Mexico, and likewise transferred 193 acres of land within Juarez to El Paso. This exchange of land was accomplished after the Rio Grande, through a natural and even predictable occurrence, changed its course.

The international problems created by this seemingly simple act of exchange are multiple. The land exchanged and involved in the treaty is adjacent to and a part of the great international metropolitan area of El Paso and Juarez, a center constantly increasing and expanding both in population and industry. The industrial and commercial opportunities in the section are boundless and the development of the Chamizal in both countries presents an occasion for an infinite degree of international cooperation and consistent liaison between the two nations. It is a real challenge to the highest skill, imagination and forward vision of civic planners.

In the particular case of the Chamizal, city planning becomes a vast and encompassing project presenting the first opportunity in our history for international metropolitan creativeness. Necessarily, the overall picture brings into action numerous agencies of both Mexico and the United States, and city planners, architects, officials and citizens of both Juarez and El Paso. The magnitude of the plans for the Chamizal creates numerous mutual problems and conflicting interests.

The requirements and needs resulting from the mere exchange of land include construction of new highways, bridges over the new river bed, new railroad bridges, relocation of interchange yards, new irrigation canals and border inspection stations, additional utility facilities, schools, recreational facilities and other public buildings and a border highway system. Far reaching objectives are a national monument park and cultural center, an international trade zone and fair, an international vocational school and the beautification and general development of the entire area.

A contingent and more difficult problem is apparent in planning and achieving a complementary program for the redevelopment of private property contiguous to the Chamizal and acquiring the cooperation of property owners. However, much progress has already been made in the Chamizal area, and doubtlessly the ambitious program will see full fruition in the future.



The Chamizal is a vast and encompassing project, presenting the first opportunity in our history for international metropolitan creativeness.

THE TEXAS NATIONAL BORDER



Texas municipalities are basically autonomous while the Mexican municipalities are not.

IV. DIFFERENCES IN POLICIES AND STRUCTURE

Texas municipalities are basically autonomous. There is to this day not one agency in the State of Texas that is vested with the sole responsibility of coordinating the development of cities within a region and in the State. Texas accomplishments and progress, due to the traditional structure of our government, must begin at a local level, with support and cooperation coming from the state and federal levels.

On the other hand, with almost complete freedom for each municipality to act in its own behalf, dynamic activities have been carried out, though these activities are not necessarily related in a regional sense. Good examples are the preparation of comprehensive plans and the construction of many civic and private projects important to the border.

The state and federal governments are also responsible for many far-reaching and energetic programs. The recent Chamizal settlement, the construction of highways and dams, the development of parks and recreational areas are but a few notable activities that have great implications on the border development. Because of our unmatched national resources many of these activities were carried out without fanfare.

On the Mexican side, local governments have little authority or resources as far as executing improvements of any magnitude. Any direction must come from the national government. With comparatively restricted resources many of the good intentions of the Mexican national government could not be implemented at the opportune time. A change of their presidential administration would set forth a chain of reverberations down to the village and hamlet. There is no question that the local community suffers a lack of strong motivation which reduces the meaning of planning.

The coordination between Mexico and the U.S. in the area of border development is extremely complex. In dealing with development problems there are no counterparts of our local officials; Mexican mayors and city officials are simply not vested with the authority needed. Conversely, regional and national officials of Mexico in charge of the border development program find that their counterparts in Washington or at the state level cannot direct the actions of the local officials. This difference extends to the professionals involved, the city planners, the architects, the engineers and the entrepreneurs.

V. REQUIRED ACTION

There are many steps needed to bring about the desired development along the Texas border.

1. REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

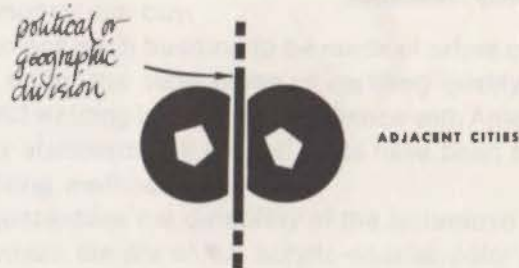
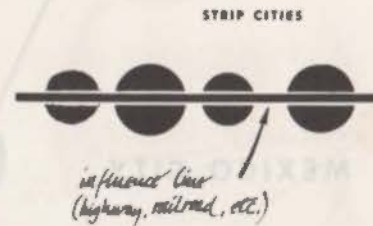
One step which has recently been taken toward this objective was the passage of House Bill No. 319 which provides necessary legislation authorizing the setting-up of regional planning commissions to act on behalf of constituent communities on matters related to the comprehensive plan and to negotiate with the state and federal governments on grants and assistance.

Regional planning commissions within the State of Texas may be concerned with adjacent, split, or strip cities in the border region. But the new law grants little power to the regional commissions. It does not go far enough to provide a base for unified practise. The law merely allows the communities to voluntarily associate.



2. GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION

To assist these regional planning commissions there should be instituted a state agency, possibly in the form of a governor's commission, not primarily as an addition to the bureaucratic structure, but as a means of providing communication among the regional planning commissions. The regional planning bill recently enacted does not contain this requisite feature. Continuous support by interested citizens, professionals and organizations is necessary in order to finally achieve full legislation.



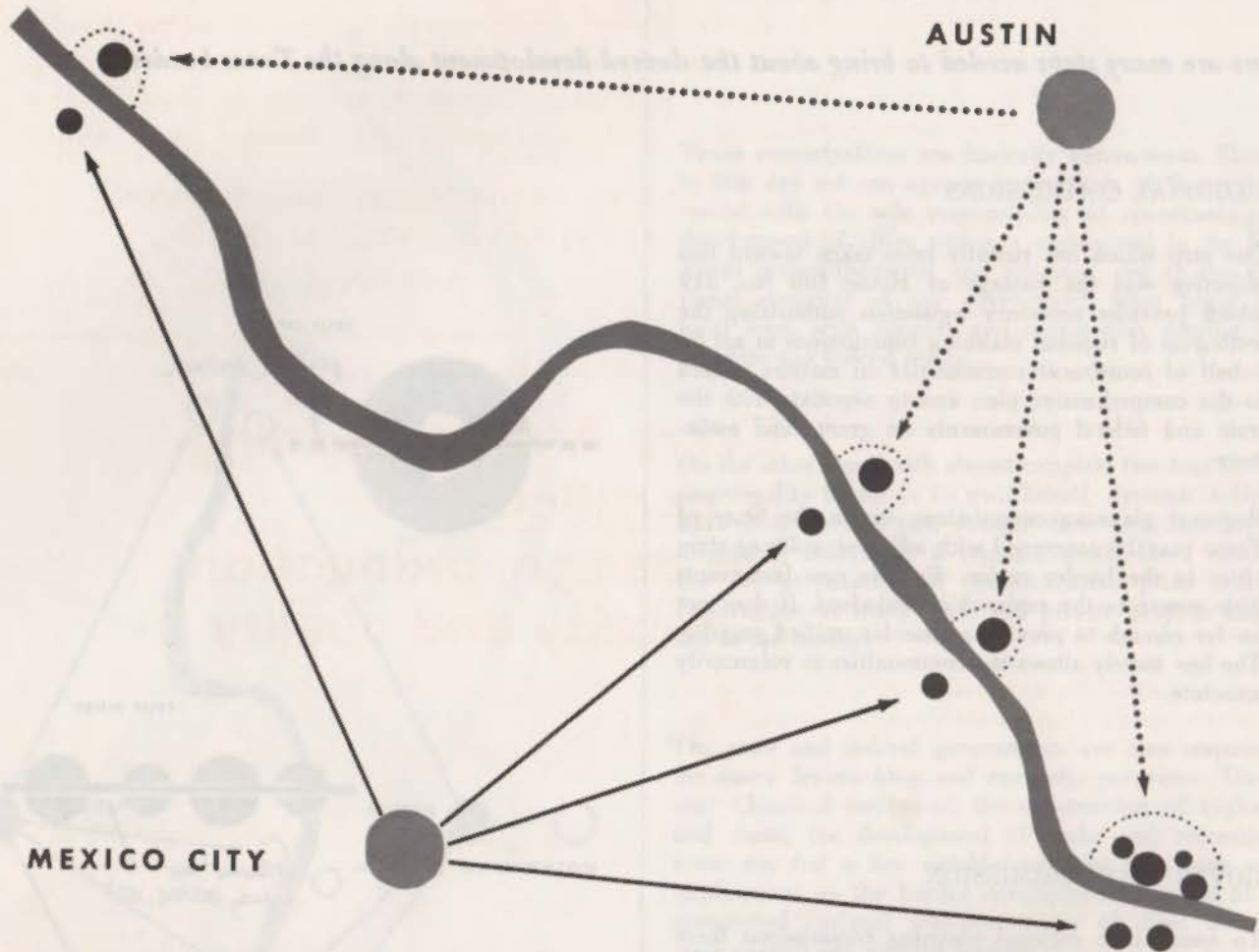
3. TECHNICAL BORDER COMMISSION

The creation of a technical border commission is a highly important action called for in The Charter of El Paso; it should be created with the sanction of both governments. Professionals of proven abilities, with insight into the many problems and the capabilities of carrying out their assignments should be appointed to this commission. This commission would act as a brain trust for border development, providing both ideas and methods for carrying them out. Such an effective organization would require only a minimal financial burden.

Regional planning commissions may be concerned with adjacent, split or strip-cities.

THE TEXAS NATIONAL BORDER

THE TEXAS NATIONAL BORDER



There should be instituted a state agency as a means of providing communication among the regional planning commissions.

The prime aim of a socio-economic survey of this nature would be the development of an overall scheme which balances human factors with those of physical planning.

4. BORDER REGION STUDY

To develop the border in the direction of the objectives stated there must be a true grasp of the social, economic and cultural facets of the region, which are of an international character. Such an understanding can be arrived at only through a comprehensive, in-depth study which would provide a basis for planning and a framework for joint action by both countries. The path of social transition—the motivations, needs and desires of the communities involved—should be carefully delineated through such a study. The prime aim of a socio-economic survey of this nature

would be development of an overall scheme which balances human factors with those of physical planning. The assignment, which can be visualized as including a field survey of the border area, compilation and revision of relevant literature and statistical analyses and close liaison and cooperation among social scientists and planning officials of both countries, should be undertaken only by organizations of the highest competency.

To date there has been no such study conducted, although work of this nature can be funded from many national sources, and action should be taken.

5. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The socio-economic study should, as indicated, be the forerunner of a comprehensive development program for the border region, with strong emphasis on immediate and continuous long range implementations. A readily identifiable theme should be included in this development program. This theme must be wide in scope and thus avoid transforming the border to a gaudy tourist mecca; it should encompass the conservation of natural resources, the broadening of basic industries, the infusion of needed public works programs and the nurturing of the Mexican-American cultural heritage.

This material was published by the Texas Society of Architects on November 4, 1965, the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of El Paso. Editorial and graphic contents were the responsibility of the Urban and Border Development Committee of TSA: Edward Mok, AIA, AIP, Chairman; Edwin W. Carroll, FAIA; William M. Pena, AIA; Edward J. Romieniec, AIA; Alan Y. Taniguchi, AIA; Gayle D. Wilhite, AIA. Funding for publication was by the Texas Society of Architects and the Texas Architects Foundation-M.D. Anderson Grant made available through the School of Architecture of The University of Texas. Printed by The University of Texas Printing Division.

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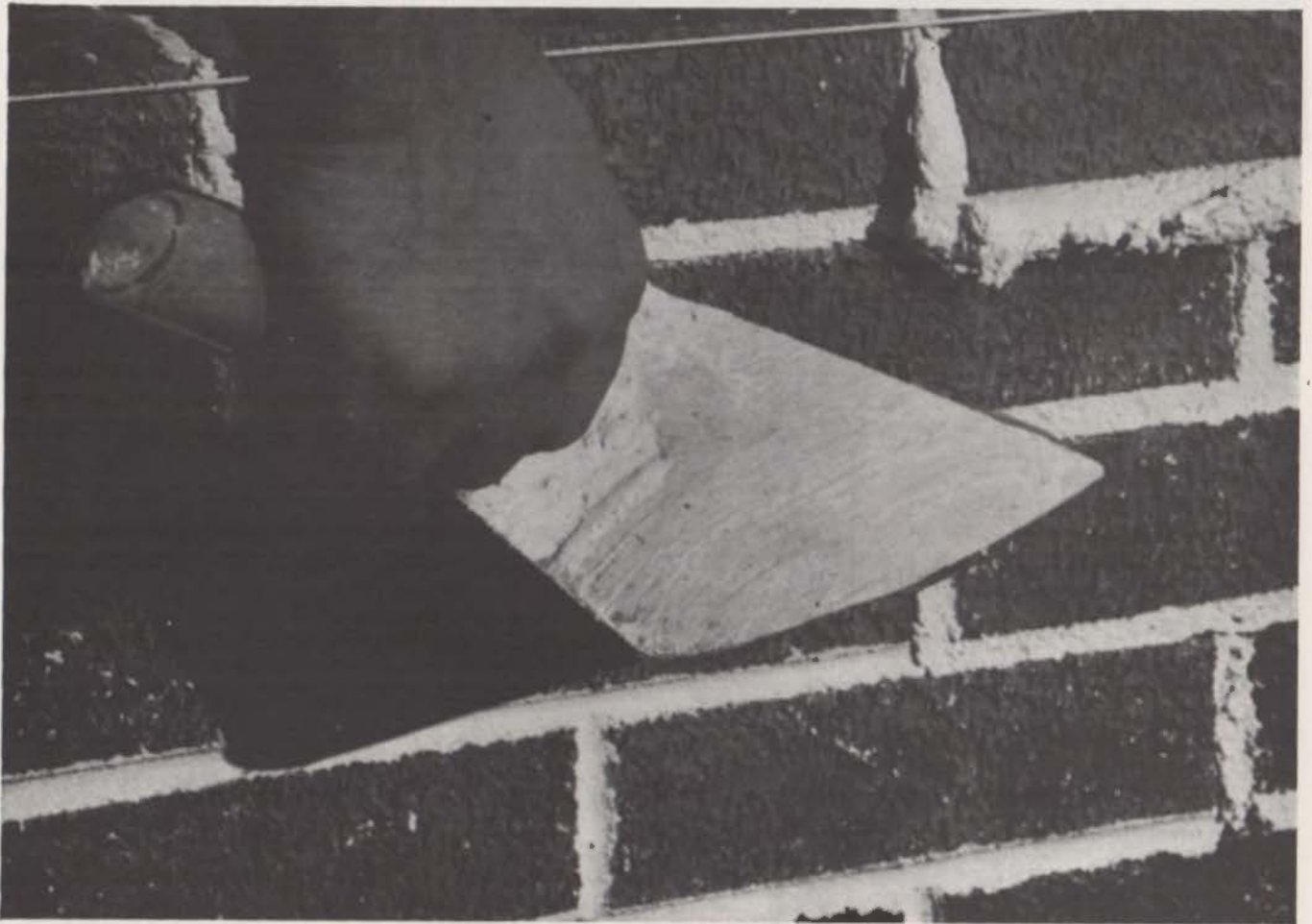
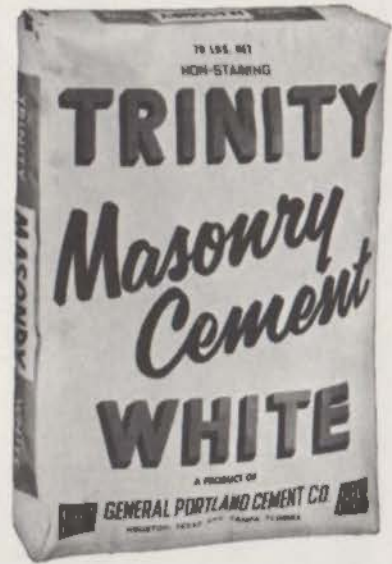
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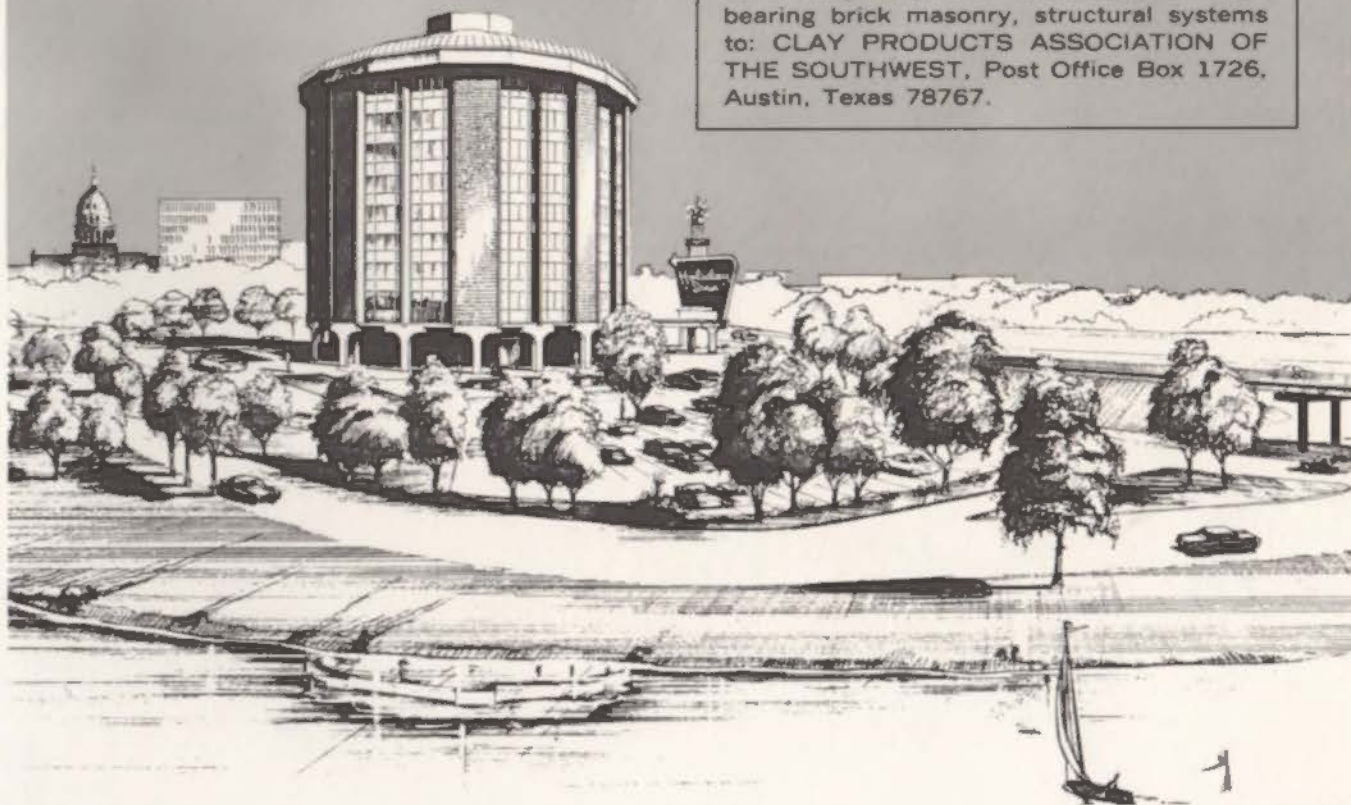
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