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A Line on Texas

Plus regular columns. See Contents.

Texas Architect

NUMBER 1 VOL 24 MARCH/APRIL 1974



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Revised Publishing Dates

With this issue, we adopt the following publishing schedule:

Issue:	Issued Last Week In:	Insertion Order Deadline:	Copy Materials Deadline:
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Education There Will Be

This is a new year for TSA, for *Texas Architect*, for the student, the educator, the practitioner — for the whole architectural profession.

From AIA and TSA comes a probing questionnaire: what is the future of the profession? the threats? the opportunities? the basis for growth or restraints to the built environment?

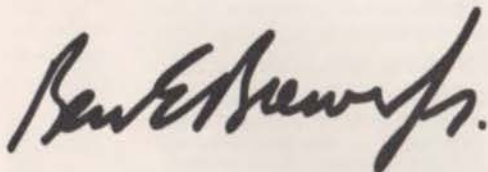
Education is not a startling new concept nor a catch phrase, but in this context of concern for our future, it merits our attention.

TSA will provide the practitioner with a clear view of the architectural schools of Texas, their educational philosophy, their students, their faculties, and their designers. The practitioner, likewise, can explain his own needs and present his own understanding of our future profession. This will be education.

TSA has added Marc Brewster as Director of Professional Development Programs and, already, these programs of continuing education are being scheduled on subjects ranging from the energy crisis and architecture to the professional improvement of office systems. The ability to take continuing education programs to every part of the state and to offer hundreds of subjects in a variety of form and scope is our goal. This will be education.

TSA will continue its programs of public relations and governmental affairs as it monitors our interests in the state legislature and informs members and the public how we can improve the built environment of our state. We must continue our efforts to insure a future for Texas that will enable the students of architecture today to become the professional leaders of the future. Protection of our heritage, the solution of today's growth pains and the ability to guarantee a proper future must be understood and created for the architect and his client. This will be education.

Among the student, the practitioner and the client, there needs to be an interchange of ideas on the questions: the future of the profession, the threats, the opportunities, the orderly growth of the built environment. This will be education. And, hopefully, education there will be.



Ben E. Brewer
President
Texas Society of Architects



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17

Architects on the Profession

Just ask the average working architect what's going on these days. We did. And the responses fill the next six pages. Actually, it was seventeen architects that we questioned—one from each of the AIA chapters in Texas. And "what's going on" was in the form of a full-page questionnaire that each respondent agreed to answer in advance. It all began several months ago as an attempt to get some "grassroots input" on the state of the profession. This time lag itself is an indication that *something* is going on. The responses didn't come pouring back upon us by return mail; that told us architects are busy people. But we were always impressed with the thoroughness of the answers when they did come back; some respondents wrote as many as ten typed pages. The time lag also accounts for the conspicuous absence of any specific reference to the energy crisis, although a concern for conservation of dwindling resources was inherent in many of the replies. There was also a frequent, though not total, absence of catchwords and phrases being bandied about by today's spokesmen for the profession—terms such as "fastrack," "land use policy," "life cycle costing," and "computerized design." Instead of an aptitude for mouthing the latest jargon or for spouting architectural platitudes, we have found in the respondents a propensity for telling it, in plain and simple terms, like it is. On the following pages we have allowed them to do just that, having selected quotes (in nine general categories) directly from their questionnaire responses. As architect Henry Ortega writes in an addendum to his replies, this dialogue should be a continuing process, for answers will always be changing. But, certainly, we are thankful for this beginning.—L.P.F.



Robert S. Bennett
Bennett, Carnahan, Hearn
and Thomas
Waco

1.

On Social Involvement

Too many architects have over-reacted to social and ecological issues . . . One can approach ecology in a rational way as opposed to the "wild-eyed" radical "over kill" method used by some ecology groups.

On Architectural Services

We are idealistic and relish the challenge to fulfill our client's needs, yet we are reluctant to bill them for our services or to limit them to what is reasonable or required . . .

On Design Excellence

I judge design excellence by how well I feel the design has met the requirements of the program and the client's needs. Originality or innovation is important only if it successfully meets the design criteria.

On Architecture and Politics

. . . I do not appreciate either the AIA or TSA taking a stand on social, ecological or political issues under the guise of representing the majority of the profession.

On Architectural Education

. . . Students today are too involved in intangible theories, ideological and ecological concepts and have little knowledge of the basics as "master builders."

On Job Applicants

The student I *don't* look for is the one whose primary concern is what his salary will be or what security and fringe benefits he will receive.



Kenneth Bentsen, FAIA
Kenneth Bentsen Associates
Houston

2.

On Architectural Services

With inventive design and the use of new technology, I believe the architects' greatest contribution to society will continue to be providing good shelter, pleasurable spaces and good overall planning. That is our area of expertise.

On Design Excellence

I believe design excellence might contain just one special or a combination of design elements. An exciting design might be "timeless" or spontaneous and "transitory." My own belief is that good design should cause a sense of response, a sense of feeling.

No longer does facade design or the lowest construction cost necessarily bring the highest monetary return for the client. A decisive change is occurring with a more sophisticated public demanding a better built environment.

On Architecture as Business

The greatest opportunity for increasing business? Belief in your profession, involvement in your community, and working like Hell.

I believe students should be encouraged to take one course each in simple accounting procedures, letter writing, public speaking, and business law. It is true that one learns these things by experience, but having some background in these subjects would make the transition much less painful.

It has been our experience that Texas schools graduate individuals as good as, and often superior to, those of other states.

On the Future of the Profession

The greatest threat to our survival, I feel, is the eventual development and acceptance of computerized design components which could be automated into a complete design package.



Marvin Boland, Jr.
Landscape International Inc.
Brownsville

3.

On Social Involvement

I don't think anyone in my community listens to me because of my being an architect. If they listen to my suggestions it is because I am a thinking individual who hopefully recognizes existing problems, and searches for an answer.

The profession touches so few people in a community; the banker, the school superintendent, etc., that 90% of the community doesn't even know how to pronounce "architect," much less look to him for any profound statements.

It seems that architects plant more asphalt and eliminate more trees than anyone else. It would appear that we are intensely involved in ecology but evidently do not take it seriously enough to say no to a client who we feel may be causing ecological harm.

On Architectural Services

Generally, there are the projects that we tend to laugh about because of their design or construction, but we have not offered our services, probably because of the fee structure. Nor have we offered an alternative to this segment of the population.

On Design Excellence

The old statement "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" is very true in my opinion. I agree with design critics about 50% of the time in their choice of "winners." I have often wondered why architects were chosen to criticize other architects. Why not use the public, who, after all, is the user?

On Architectural Education

Students generally appear to have the problems of the profession solved, when they graduate, when they don't even know what the problems really are.



Ray L. Fraser
Ray L. Fraser, Architect
Lubbock

4.

On Architectural Services

There are many facets of an architect's responsibility to his client; however, once the decision has been made to proceed with a project, I think the focal point of all facets is to insure that the owner is spending his money wisely.

On Architecture as Business

As a profession, the quality of an architect as a businessman is constantly improving. I think this is due to the increased legal pressures encountered in practicing architecture and the measures an architect must take to protect a reasonable amount of his earnings against taxation.

If an architect is willing to speculate, if he is willing to accept some financial exposure, there is ample opportunity to increase his business through promotion of projects. He must train himself to recognize a need and then pursue it until it is filled.

On Architectural Education

With the tremendous advancement in technology, it is without doubt that the recent graduate has a broader base of knowledge than graduates of 10 to 15 years past. However, this doesn't compensate for a deficiency in the main vehicle of communication for the architect — draftsmanship.

On Job Applicants

Seldom does attitude play a significant role in the decision to hire an applicant. It usually plays a major role in the dismissal of an employee.

On the Future of the Profession

Public apathy to custom design is probably the greatest threat to the architect's survival.



T. Z. Hamm
Kneer & Hamm, Associates -
Architects - Engineers - Planners
Fort Worth

5.

On Social Involvement

The role of the architect in the community is the same as that of any other responsible individual in any other field of endeavor in the community. In the community it is the individual, not the professional, that plays out the role to which professional trappings are incidental.

On Design Excellence

Through the superstitious belief in majorities, which are probably wrong more times than right, individual opinions are grouped together to form jury verdicts or collective opinions, but the verdicts, though collective, are still opinions.

On Architecture as Business

Architecture in today's world is business, and to survive in the business milieu, architects will have to be businessmen and probably good businessmen, if they are to be marked by reasonable success.

On Architecture and Politics

Historically, very few architects have distinguished themselves as politicians. Even fewer politicians have distinguished themselves as architects. One reason being that both professions require dedication of time and talent.

On Architectural Education

So little of the practical execution of the business of architecture is occupied with design that, as a matter of principal, the student whose deficiencies are limited to design certainly should not be flunked out of an architectural school.

On Job Applicants

First you look *at* the new graduate or student applicant. Is he a freak in long hair? Is he a clown in costume? Is he clean? Does he look like a human being? And, hopefully, does he look like the role that you would assign him through employment?



J. Lynn Harden
SET GROUP: Associated
Architects
Beaumont

6.

On Social Involvement

We could be more active in community action and decisions, including those affecting private development. But our influence will remain limited as long as we are not involved in the decision-making (as owners and developers with some control of the purse strings).

On Professionalism

Yes, professionalism in architectural practice is diminishing. Architects don't seem to know how to bridge the obsolete "position on a pedestal" to one of complete involvement in the development of projects.

On Architecture and Politics

Individual architects should be involved in positions of leadership, elected and appointed. Why should our profession be excluded from these positions? We will never achieve the results we believe in until we are "in politics."

On Architectural Education

The major gap that I have seen is the absence of an understanding of the "total" picture of a practice of architecture. My view is from that of a small firm. I think most schools of architecture present a view which would best represent a large practice.

On Job Applicants

In an applicant, attitude and basic problem-solving mental capabilities are the most important skills—some understanding of the complete process from a clear, concise programming to finished building.



James Langford

Fouts Langford Gomez Moore, Inc.
El Paso

7.

On Social Involvement

I do not feel that architecture is well enough understood by the typical citizen, and I have not found many people looking to architects for leadership and/or guidance.

I think we should become active in those things we believe in, though they may be in direct opposition to stands the profession may be taking.

On Professionalism

I do not feel professionalism in the architectural practice is diminishing. The profession is much more demanding than it was years ago. We are required' as architects' to rely on the talents of many other professions. If anything, I think we are more professional about our profession.

On Architecture and Politics

I am involved in politics as an interested citizen of my community and not because I am an architect.

We, on a person-to-person basis, should explain our profession, our problems, our goals, and our aims to the legislators. We cannot rely on a paid lobbyist and a few dedicated people to carry this load for us. We do need, however, long-range goals prior to any legislative session.

On Architectural Education

I believe a graduate of an accredited school of architecture has obtained the basic skills that will enable the person to become a real asset to a firm very quickly. The key is the individual's attitude.



Henry Ortega

Martin and Ortega, Architects
San Antonio

8.

On Social Involvement

I feel that the profession's involvement in the arena of our environmental crisis will have to be a virtually self-imposed requirement, for although people are willing to listen to what we have to say, they are somewhat reticent to initially ask for our opinion.

By and large, the true architects have also been individuals sympathetic to social responsibilities. I believe this to be consistent with the reality that our profession's responsibility is people. Our works must satisfy people's needs— as profound, sophisticated and emotional as they are.

On Architectural Services

An architect's primary responsibility to any client is that of satisfying the client's program needs — spatially and economically. The greater question, however, is that of who is the client. I believe that we often ignore the impact that our work has on all persons who use, pass by, live in or live by it.

The average American can visit architectural works of significance both here and abroad on vacations and understand their value and worth. He returns, however, to surroundings of mediocre quality with little desire for change. I generally believe he is satisfied with no more because he doesn't understand it to be available.

On Architectural Education

The teacher in a classroom is faced with the problem of making students aware of constantly multiplying problems within the ever-changing time frame of academic curriculums. Consequently, I think many students can identify problems, but few are oriented towards problem solving.



Paul E. Pate

Paul Pate & Associates
Dallas

(Formerly of College Station)

9.

On Social Involvement

The profession's collective problem has been that we have been without a vehicle; a method by which we might embrace problems that affect all of society, research them, synthesize them, and project meaningful solutions to those pressing needs . . . I would propose a strong program on a national basis (touched upon timidly by the Urban Design Centers in Model Cities) by which practicing, experienced architects would have an opportunity to contribute to immediate needs of society.

On Architecture and Politics

It has often been a curious point to me that architects were not involved in politics or appointed offices to a greater degree. Architecture touches every discipline and I can think of no greater resource for creative, objective, thinking individuals than architects.

On Architectural Education

With some significant exception, the professors teaching the "new professionalism" are virtually without a meaningful professional experience. And it is not only the profession that loses in that proposition, but aspiring, energetic young men and women are having valuable time and energies wasted for them by this lack of depth in leadership in architectural education.

On the Future of the Profession

The greatest threat to the architect's survival is our own inability or willingness to viably relate to and work at solving some of the significant problems that plaque us all. We share a greater responsibility in solving society's physical problems because we possess a more complete awareness of not only what those problems are, but potential capability in approaching their solutions.



Robert Reinheimer, Jr.
Reinheimer, Cox, McGowan &
Crumpton, Architects, Inc.
Texarkana

10.

On Architectural Services

There must be a realignment of values. The American public must begin to appreciate and desire *quality* in the man-made environment. Actually, most clients want quality in their building, but few are willing to pay for it; money is still the overriding consideration. Traditional bidding practices, plus the trend toward mediocrity as a way of life are preventing us from protecting the good interest of our clients.

On Professionalism

Professionalism isn't selling too well these days. And after all, architects have to eat too. So idealism suffers a little, that bank accounts may endure.

On Architecture as Business

Most of us are definitely not good business men, because we're idealists. We'd rather do a good job than make money. But, like it or not, we're going to have to become good business men if we are to survive.

On Architecture and Politics

I believe architects can be more effective for their profession by not seeking elective office. Architects should seek appointive offices, where their particular expertise will be most helpful.

On Architectural Education

I think most graduates come out with good basic design ability. They just don't know how to apply it realistically. They can *talk* architecture, but they can't *do* architecture. I shudder to think how tragic it would be if graduates were permitted to go into practice immediately without a period of internship in architectural offices.

On Job Applicants

What I don't want is someone who thinks *he* has to re-invent the wheel to make it turn.

March/April 1974



William J. Scudder
Scudder and Wadsworth
Austin

11.

On Social Involvement

We should be involved in the planning of bridges, highways, utility systems—the whole city. Historically, transportation patterns and sewer systems have controlled the design of our cities. We've been in the ivory tower too long; people haven't even thought to ask us for input into city planning when, in actuality, our discipline provides the best background for understanding and coping with the problems.

On Architectural Services

We don't concern ourselves so much with fees. We've discovered that if we're doing something for people—something relevant for society—people will be knocking at the door wanting our services.

The trend among architectural firms is to compete heavily for the big buildings, which of course comprise a small percentage of the total environment. We need to try to be more relevant in the total design picture.

On Design Excellence

Design awards are false goals. The one and only judge of a structure should be the person who uses it. Rather than giving each other awards for design, we should go out and talk to the people using the space we've created.

On Architectural Education

Generally speaking, I feel that our teachers in architectural schools are people who can't succeed in the real world.

On Job Applicants

Somehow our young applicants have often picked up a negative attitude somewhere along the way—from the very outset, they seem to be thinking, "You're not going to let me practice good design here, are you."



Allen C. Sharp
Wingler & Sharp Architects
Wichita Falls

12.

On Social Involvement

Architects should be more intensely involved in social and ecological issues by volunteering at the grassroots level in an effort to provide additional control and leadership in programs which are progressing in a runaway direction at the present time.

On Architectural Services

I do feel that most professionals, including architects, have depended too heavily on fee schedules and other averages and standards in determining compensation for their services without ever really knowing their true direct and indirect costs for performing those services . . . Architectural practice should not be known as "the lowest paid profession in the state of Texas."

On Architectural Education

There appears to be a credibility gap between practicing architects and architectural schools; however, I feel that this is a natural occurrence primarily because of the inherent differences between the two experiences. It would be as impossible to realistically impose all the design restrictions and business problems of day-to-day practice on architectural students as it would to remove them from the practicing architect's environment.

On Job Applicants

Applicants are generally weak in working drawing production, unless they have had employment outside the school, and in their understanding and knowledge of construction methods and systems, including mechanical and electrical systems.



Pat Y. Spillman, FAIA
Fisher and Spillman Architects
Dallas

13.

On Design Excellence

My understanding of architectural design is that it involves—simultaneously—exacting objective and subjective judgments. This seems the natural outfall of an enterprise which is—simultaneously—art, science and business.

On Architecture and Politics

Politics is a special field requiring specialized talents and abilities in its practitioners. Some architects carry this equipment, some don't. I see no reason why individual architects—if equipped and interested—should not seek elective or appointive public office.

On Architectural Education

We have been pleased to see how quickly the graduates of area schools can grasp complex assignments.

An architectural student should not be flunked out of school for not passing design courses, provided that is his only shortcoming. Some splendid minds may simply be unable to deal with the design process even though understanding it. I subscribe to the proposition that our profession—particularly where it deals with large and complex projects—requires a variety of abilities and personality types.

On Job Applicants

We recognize the new graduate will have skills and we try to identify them. We then try to ascertain if those identifiable skills are what we require at the time of consideration. We put great stock in attitude and aptitude. We also look for how the new graduate uses language, explains himself, discriminates between what is real and what is imaginary, between what is important and what is superficial and between what is urgent and what may be deferred.



John S. Ward, Jr.
John S. Ward, Jr., Architect
Amarillo

14.

On Social Involvement

As is the case in most communities, the man-made environment in Amarillo could stand considerable improvement. I strongly feel the guiding hand of the architect is sadly lacking in many areas, whether it be a much-needed slum clearance project, upgrading of the depressed downtown area, character lacking residential developments, or you name it. First, however, the architect has to be given the opportunity.

On Design Excellence

Design excellence a matter of opinion? Absolutely not. Though not comparable to such tangible matters as legal interpretation of the law by a lawyer, architectural history furnishes many guidelines on which to judge good design; proportion, use of material, proper siting, texture, color, and on and on.

On Professionalism

The architectural profession is only part of a complex industry, much of which is more lucrative than practicing architecture. Perhaps this influences some architects to lean more toward making the fast buck rather than improving professional service.

On the Future of the Profession

As a business, the greatest threat to architecture's survival is that of permitting more aggressive elements of the construction industry to outsell us and to push us more and more into the background. As a profession, the threat is that of being undermined from within by taking a weak position on matters of ethics and required standards of practice.



Frank D. Welch
Frank D. Welch, AIA, Architect
Midland

15.

On Social Involvement

Architects should be involved in social and ecological issues to whatever extent they are able. The amount of involvement varies among individuals, but I consider noninvolvement to be "not giving a damn!"

On Design Excellence

Design excellence is a matter of opinion, but the range of opinion is as narrow as the band of excellence.

In judging design excellence, I look for clarity of purpose and grace of execution. It should *look easy*.

"Design" is more important to the general public than it was 15 to 20 years ago. Nearly everyone has an opinion of the newest celebrity structure, but there is little concern about the great bulk of construction which is without professional guidance.

On Professionalism

Individuals in the profession should enter public life if the desire is there. The difficulty is the amount of time each endeavor requires. A professional and political life are almost mutually exclusive for this reason.

On Architectural Education

If a credibility gap exists between practicing architects and architectural schools, it is because each forgets the nature and value of the other. The "real world" is a proving ground for advancing ideas which the "academy" nurtures.

On Job Applicants

In looking at a new graduate or student applicant, I guess the attitude means most to me: enthusiasm, sincerity, intensity, *soul*. Skills develop if one has some of these.



James H. Wheeler, Jr.
Boone and Pope Architects
Engineers
Abilene

16.

On Social Involvement

Architects could have more influence in improving the man-made environment by playing a major role in community affairs, but we must establish our credibility more firmly and be involved in the initial decision-making process.

On Architecture as Business

Architects are not good businessmen. Most are too wrapped up in the nitty gritty of design and production. Generally, profit margins are too low, particularly in the smaller firms, to staff for good business management.

On Professionalism

Professionalism is not necessarily diminishing. The form of professionalism must change with the times, but this does not necessarily mean it has to diminish.

On Architectural Education

The primary reason for the credibility gap is that the schools for a number of years have not really allowed practitioners to participate in the education process. I think that most practitioners are happy to participate when invited.

On Job Applicants

We look for students with some grasp of the design process, who realize they are not finished products, and show an eagerness to learn. We do not expect them to have a great deal of skill in the production area.



Walter Wisznia
Wisznia & Peterson Architects
Corpus Christi

17.

On Architectural Services

Our greatest service comes to low-cost, low-income housing, which seems to suffer the most from lack of ideas and design. In the design of present multiple housing, we are building tomorrow's slums.

On Design Excellence

Design is not a matter of opinion; "taste" is a matter of opinion.

In judging design excellence, you look at the program and the solution both. To look at the solution alone is not correct. While it may be an excellent appearing design solution, it may not solve or fit the program.

On Professionalism

Professionalism is diminishing because the day of the individual is disappearing, not only in architecture, but in our society as a whole. The big are gobbling up the little, and the little cannot compete and survive.

On Architectural Education

It is my sincere belief that schools should not suppress the roving and searching mind of our students; let the practicality of life come upon them in the field. It may come as a rude awakening. However, their imagination will otherwise be stifled from the start.

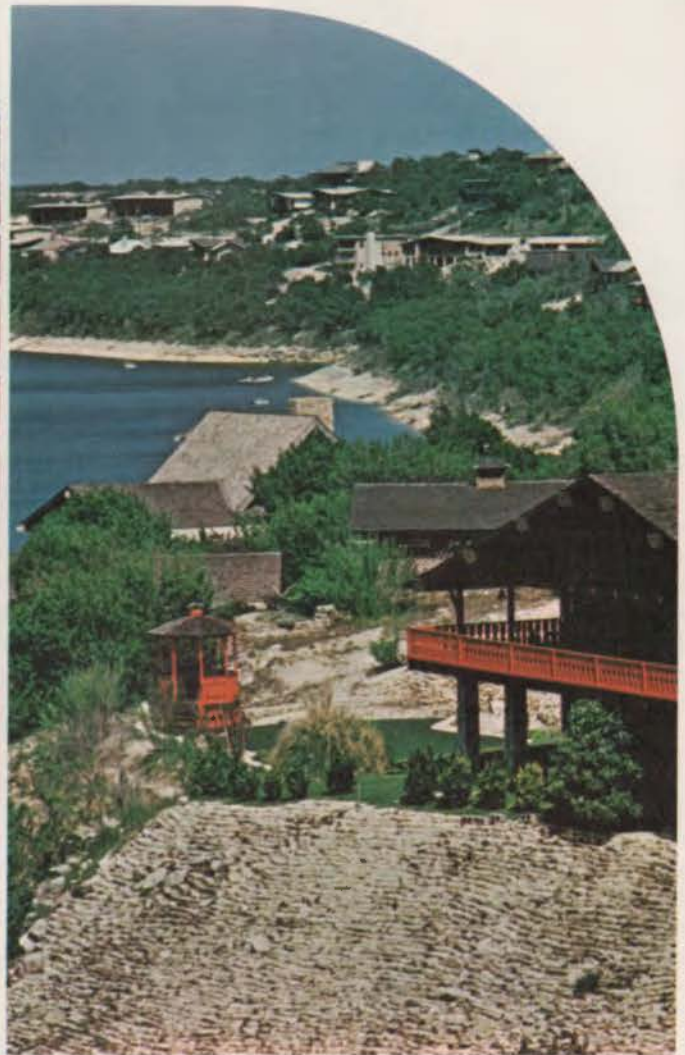
On Job Applicants

Attitude can be developed, but skills you are born with.

On the Future of the Profession

The greatest threat to the survival of the profession is the "package deal." This will eventually change the practice of architecture, as we practice it today. To a great extent, it has happened already.





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TOWNHOUSES IN THE ROUND

a study in neighborly seclusion



A small group of Fort Worth families recently submitted a formidable design challenge to the local architectural firm of Albert S. Komatsu & Associates. The clients wanted to live in single-family dwellings, but they also wanted to leave behind the usual chores connected therewith—like mowing the grass, raking the leaves, and chasing neighborhood dogs and cats from the yard. They wanted the seclusion of a private home, but they were also amenable to the collective atmosphere of an apartment complex. They wanted space for their automobiles, but they also wanted to minimize the paving over of the rolling green environment around them (a golf course).

So Mr. Komatsu, as principal-in-charge, and his project architect Robert E. Ayers came up with a solution—Shady Oaks Townhouses—which won the firm a design award. The six townhouses had to be fitted onto a 1-1/4 acre site, while still providing a maximum of per-unit floor space (ranging from 2700 to 4000 square feet). This requirement happened to mesh with the owners' desire to limit environmental disturbance, and it led the architects to cluster the units around a central motor court, thus affording each



Robert Ayers



Albert S. Komatsu

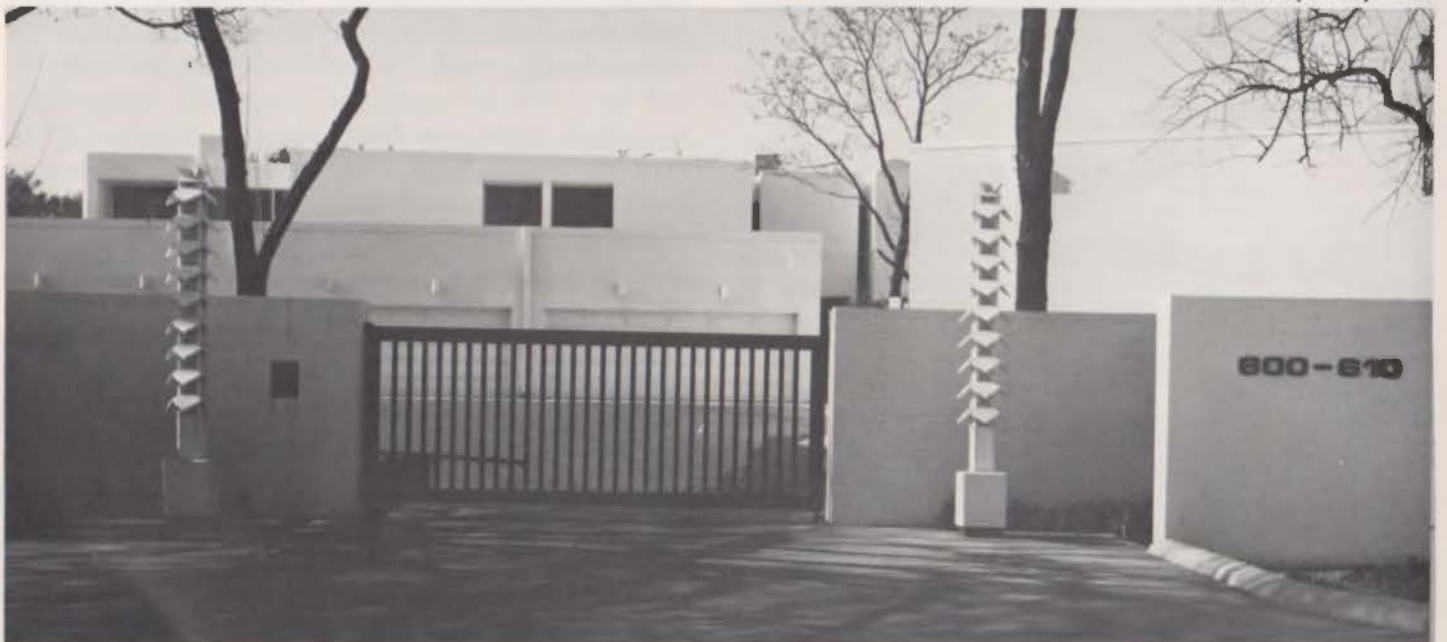
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resident a circular drive and ample parking (every dwelling has a two-car garage) without an excess of concrete and asphalt. The cluster concept further provided an "optimal utilization of ground area for patios within the peripheral masonry fence." Said patios, bricklined gardens and strips of grass help bring some of the green of that golfcourse into the confines of the house-cluster.

As with any sophisticated townhouse project, there was the problem of balancing the unity of the whole complex against the need for individuation in each of the dwelling components. The unity was achieved by a constant application both of basic rectangular planes and of painted masonry for all exterior surfaces—from the seven-foot-high enclosure to the walls of the townhouses. Individuation, on the other hand, came through an asymmetrical placement of units, a variety of floor plans (some of the units are two-story, with balconies, some are one), and custom interior design. Unit distinctiveness was further enhanced by the leaving of vistas between each dwelling and by masonry facades behind which the families in question might disappear into their own private worlds. They might do that—or they might walk back through those same gates and enjoy the nice weather with their neighbors.



Photos By Phillip Poole



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Taking Down the Signs

(Editor's Note: We are indebted to several persons for assistance in preparing this article. They include Dallas architect Howard Parker, AIA, who sat on the Dallas Sign Ordinance Advisory Committee; Houston architect Ralph Anderson, AIA, who helped spearhead a recent sign struggle there; Tom Niederauer, Dallas Urban Planning Department; Norman J. Bowman, Director of Urban Planning in Gainesville, Florida; and Lynn T. Vandegrift, City Planner for Denver, whose new and pioneering sign code we regret not having been able to accord the attention it is due.)

By Ray Reece

The dilemma, while challenging, strikes one as nonetheless manageable. We Americans have cluttered our cities with far too many signs and billboards that are far too big (or too small), poorly designed, and distracting to the point of being a threat to physical and mental health. Accordingly, we must now dismantle these signs and replace them with something better planned, if not more beautiful. It would seem but a matter of trucks and equipment and hands to do the work. Yet in city after American city, where well-meaning people have tried to mute the flashing lights, still

the pinwheels, and open up the sky and the mountains again—storms of controversy have arisen, bringing with them legal and ethical questions ranging from rights of property and freedom of speech to the value of aesthetics and the relationship between sign-snarl and community well-being. So far, the only major Texas city fully to have confronted and survived this trauma is Dallas. After three and a half years of struggle, research, and compromise, the people of that city have got a new sign ordinance — drafted with the help of architects — and, since the battle will doubtless visit other Texas municipalities, it is useful to review both the Dallas episode and what has happened in other parts of the country as well.



The nuisance and potential hazards of sign-pollution have long been recognized as such, especially by persons with a sensitive or an "educated" eye—artists, for example, architects, environmentalists, urban designers, and perceptual psychologists. Europeans, in particular, have traditionally

been wary of the overzealous merchant or industrialist whose outdoor advertising might tend to despoil the sophisticated architectural character of their cities, many of which have evolved over centuries of careful and artful planning. To avoid such blight, they have been writing stronger and stronger sign ordinances since the turn of the century. Americans, on the other hand, have shown less concern for such matters, a fact which helps explain both the sign-clutter itself and the difficulties of cleaning it up. It is because of this difference between the American and the European vision, a difference stemming from larger and deeper cultural differences, that the authors of a recent and highly influential book called *Street Graphics* turned to Europe for ideas as to what a rational, enforceable sign ordinance would look like.

A central concept in *Street Graphics* is the distinction between the use of signs for *indexing* and the use of signs for *selling*. The authors are emphatic on this point: "Most of all they should clearly *index*. Using the environment for selling . . . is a legitimate but special privilege to be granted only by official action of the community at particular, specific locations (p.4)." Regarding



Drawing by Mark Stinson

the possibility of implementing this, the authors raise the question of *aesthetics* or *amenity* as part of the legal basis for regulating signs. In Europe this is not a problem—citizens there have grown accustomed to the idea of the use of police powers to maintain the physical beauty and uniformity of their communities. Most U.S. statutes do not extend this power to the police, hence many of the legal problems confronting Americans who try to write strong sign codes based on community aesthetics. There might, however, be some changes in the air. The authors of *Street Graphics* point to a recent trend in the U.S. toward “increasing judicial recognition of aesthetics as a proper purpose to be served by the police power (107),” especially when there is a demonstrable relationship between aesthetics and the “economic well-being” of a community (110). A collateral problem is that of the First Amendment rights of the advertiser—freedom of speech. But the authors hold that “the long-standing rule that free speech objections may not be raised in the context of commercial solicitation would seem to protect most sign regulations . . . from attack on a free speech theory” (110).

With these and other citations as a legal basis, the authors proceed to the construction of a “model sign ordinance” which borrows heavily from European codes. There are, according to the authors, four primary criteria for judging the quality (and legality) of street graphics: (1) a sign should express the “individual identity” of the proprietor; (2) it should be “appropriate to the activity” of the business or institution in question; (3) it should be “compatible with the visual character of

“The central opponent . . . is the organized sign industry, though the signmakers are frequently supported by local merchants and national franchise corporations (especially oil companies and auto manufacturers).”

the surrounding area;” (4) it should be “legible in the circumstance in which it is seen” (39-40).

In working out the specifics of their model code, the authors have assumed the continued dominance in the U.S. of the automobile. Thus they arrive at one of their two most important innovations: street graphics ought to be designed and regulated in direct relation to the pattern of traffic on adjacent thoroughfares. If, for example, a sign is to be located on a street posted at 30 mph, it should be restricted in size to 40 square feet. If the speed limit is 60, the sign can go to 150 square feet—and so on through a carefully developed table of ratios between traffic speed, sign area, and legibility.

A second innovation in *Street Graphics*, based on an exhaustive study of drivers’ perceptions in Baltimore, is the notion that signs must be restricted not only in terms of size and placement but also in terms of the *amount of information* they convey. The authors suggest that no single premise exhibit more than 10 “items of information” to any one right-of-way. And by “items of information” they do not mean simply the words on the sign. All other elements in the sign’s composition—irregular shapes, lights, variations in letter-style—are “chargeable”

to the 10-item maximum. Hence a sign that is oval in shape, illuminated, and multi-colored has already forfeited three of its allowable “items,” leaving only seven for actual words.

The points above, while among the more prominent, do not by any means cover the major design considerations analyzed in *Street Graphics*. I shall touch on others presently.



Dallas is but one of a growing number of U.S. cities trying to deal in a meaningful way with the sign-plague, and it is instructive to look briefly at some of the other struggles, both to learn more about the issues involved and to get an idea of the tactics used by opponents of sign-reform. The central opponent, at least to the more austere suggestions for reform, is the organized sign industry, though the signmakers are frequently supported by local merchants and national franchise corporations (especially oil companies and auto manufacturers). Since the sign companies are well organized not only at the local and state levels but at the national too, they have had a strong influence even on the sole piece of federal sign legislation

“ . . . a chief weapon in the sign industry arsenal is that venerable American tradition . . . which prohibits the use of judicial and legislative powers to maintain the physical beauty of a community.”

which has been passed—the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, since renewed and modified by succeeding Congresses. Not that the sign companies have had to fight this battle very hard. The record to date indicates that Congress has been and still is at best half-hearted about the idea of diminishing the presence of billboards along interstate highways, that being the ostensible objective of the Act.

The lawmakers did get around to establishing a Commission on Highway Beautification—five years after the original law was passed—but that Commission (chaired by Ft. Worth Congressman Jim Wright) has not made a serious attempt to execute the law. Indeed, while the statute clearly ordered the removal of *all* billboards from interstate rights-of-way by 1972, only 107,000 of the 800,000 signs involved have come down (and most of those through attrition rather than direct legal action). Meanwhile, new billboards have gone up (some 200,000 of them, according to John Francis, highway beautification coordinator for the Transportation Department), particularly along interstate highways cutting through cities where federal authorities have little or no jurisdiction. And just last year, according to the Wall Street Journal (5/10/73), Wright himself led a fight to impose a “moratorium” on the removal of “directional” signs (as opposed to “product” signs) which missed passage by the House only for want of a quorum—another indication of Congressional interest. Wright still won, though, because when Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973, it conveniently neglected to allocate a single penny for billboard removal.



It is at the local level that the sign industry has been more conspicuous in its opposition to strong reform. In Seattle, for example, the industry spent \$100,000 on a last-minute media blitz to defeat a referen-

dum aimed at sign-clutter (ST 1/18/74).^{*} And in San Diego, where a proposal was made to restrict the size of all street graphics to 32 square feet, the sign companies introduced their chief theorist and expert defender into the fray—Dr. James L. Claus of Palo Alto. In fact, while simultaneously serving as a paid consultant to the Outdoor Advertisers Association of America (as well as the Arizona Sign Association), Claus was hired by the city to rewrite the proposed ordinance. He did, applying a watered-down version of the formula tying sign-area to traffic-pattern, and produced a code permitting signs of up to 300 square feet along freeways. It passed.



Claus turns up in other places too, among them Portland and Dallas. In Portland he was hired by the Oregon Electric Sign Association to help draft a “Uniform Model Sign Ordinance” which the Association now expects, according to the industry journal *Signs of the Times*, “to be adopted by (other) Oregon municipalities.” Retained in Dallas by the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metropolitan Sign Association, Claus argued that a proposal to limit sign-area to 30 square feet on grounds of public health—a notion implicitly supported by the Baltimore study described in *Street Graphics*—was “clever but illogical.” (He also remarked that the “Dallas fight may end up being the industry’s most critical battle.”)

It thus becomes apparent that a chief weapon in the sign-industry arsenal is that venerable American tradition, mentioned earlier, which prohibits the use of judicial and legislative powers to maintain the physical beauty of a community. Lacking such a footing, sign-reformers are compelled to levy their arguments on some other grounds, usually those pertaining to

^{*}Reference to *Signs of the Times*, a leading industry journal.

economic well-being (signs are bad for tourism) or public health. Here, though, what’s food for the goose is sauce for the gander—the sign industry counters the economic argument with its own rendition of the same thing: if you take down the signs, you’ll destroy our business, thereby removing blank number of dollars from the city’s economy and blank number of jobs from people who need them. (This argument may be losing some of its punch, due to the fact that in those cities which have enacted strong sign-codes there is mounting evidence that sign companies not only are not suffering fiscal losses but are flourishing more than ever—sign-reform doesn’t eliminate signs, it merely transforms the manner of their use.) The health argument, being very difficult to prove, is even simpler for the sign industry to combat.

These defenses somehow failing, the sign-people have another—perhaps ultimately the strongest of all: signs are private property, and you can neither take away a man’s private property nor dictate to him the use he shall make of that property. Furthermore, if you do find a way of confiscating or limiting that property, you must pay a just compensation. This leads, in cities with new sign ordinances, to the very sticky question of “amortization of existing signs.” What happens is that after the ordinance finally becomes law, there remain on the streets all those iron-buttressed billboards and blinking lights and revolving cows at whose removal the



new code was aimed in the first place. These signs represent a financial investment that is often quite substantial, and the sign companies argue that the least the city can do is allow the signs to remain standing until they have depreciated for tax purposes. Such reasoning is generally persuasive, the only alternative being full rebates paid by the city to the owners of the signs—an ex-

“Dallas . . . is the only major Texas city with a new sign ordinance that can be expected to make a noticeable improvement in the city’s appearance.”

pense few cities can afford. So a compromise is struck whereby the signs are classified “legal nonconforming” and allowed to stand until they have “amortized”—usually a period of three to five years. This would be alright, one supposes better than nothing at any rate, except that an awful lot can happen in five years—for example, while the pro-ordinance fervor of citizens’ groups subsides, and vigilance wanes, the legal and political machinery of the outdoor advertisers is overhauled and restocked for a whole new battle on the eve of amortization. Can the sign-fighters regroup their forces and summon the energy for this?



The stakes, incidentally, appear to be higher than the ordinary mortal would imagine. Last year in Cincinnati, when local officials put up for auction a 1-1/4 acre tract of city land skirting a freeway, they attached a sign-height restriction of 25 feet. The highest bid they got was \$11,000, so the city reoffered the land with a 40-foot restriction. This seemingly minor concession brought them \$145,000. Meanwhile, in New York, officers of the state sign association found it incumbent on themselves to spend the time and money necessary to establish a kind of industry intelligence operation. They held a training session for their “legislative committee”

which, according to *Signs of the Times*, “concentrated on means of detecting and combating unreasonable control proposals before they reach municipal bodies for action.” One imagines a band of hooded horsemen galloping round the house of the local environmentalist in dead of night.

With this as backdrop, let us return to the signs of the times in Texas. There are plenty of them, and except in Dallas they are evidently going to be with us for a while. A quick survey reveals the following: Austin’s lenient sign-code, last changed in 1966, is not due for any further revision—despite a relatively progressive city council. Nearby San Antonio does have a new statute, drafted and submitted by the sign industry, which concerns itself largely with fees and engineering specifications. In Houston, where architect Ralph Anderson helped lead a struggle for sign-reform, the compromise code enacted last year is apparently a bit on the timid side. One city official said there might as well not be a code, and Billboards Limited!, the group led by Anderson, issued a statement that the “10,000 or so billboards in Houston will remain. There is nothing in the ordinance to improve the status quo.” (It goes without saying that the Houston sign industry is thoroughly organized and well connected.) In Fort Worth, as in other Texas cities, the story is the same, except in Garland where planners are studying the new Dallas code for possible application to their own municipality.

Dallas, then, is the only major Texas city with a new sign ordinance that can be expected to make a noticeable improvement in the city’s appearance. It was a long and arduous struggle, though apparently never uncivil, that commenced in earnest in 1971 when the City Council, rejecting a strong interim code proposed by the Planning Board, established a Sign Ordinance Advisory Committee and charged it with the task of producing an effective, workable statute. This committee— whose 17 members included businessmen, architects, planning officials, environmentalists, and sign company executives— proceeded methodically through several stages, the first of which was identification of 11 “major sign problems.” Then, following a period of “self-education,” the committee retained a Boston consulting firm to help map out a body of tentative solutions. From these, after a series of meetings and public hearings, suggestions, objections and compromises, came the ordinance itself



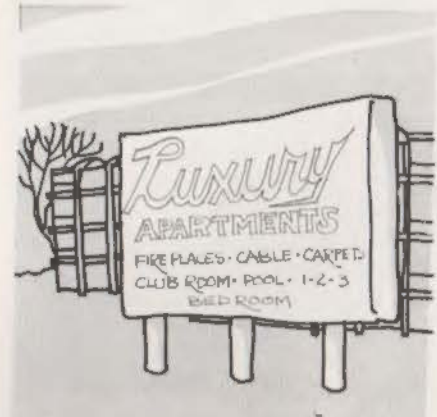
which the Council signed into law on April 30, 1973. There was, on the advisory board, a dissenting minority which published a letter contending that the new ordinance “sounds the death knell for a legitimate business.” The dissenters, of course, included the sign company



CONGRATULATIONS, HANK, IT'S AN ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECE.



THANKS, FRANK. ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE SIGN.



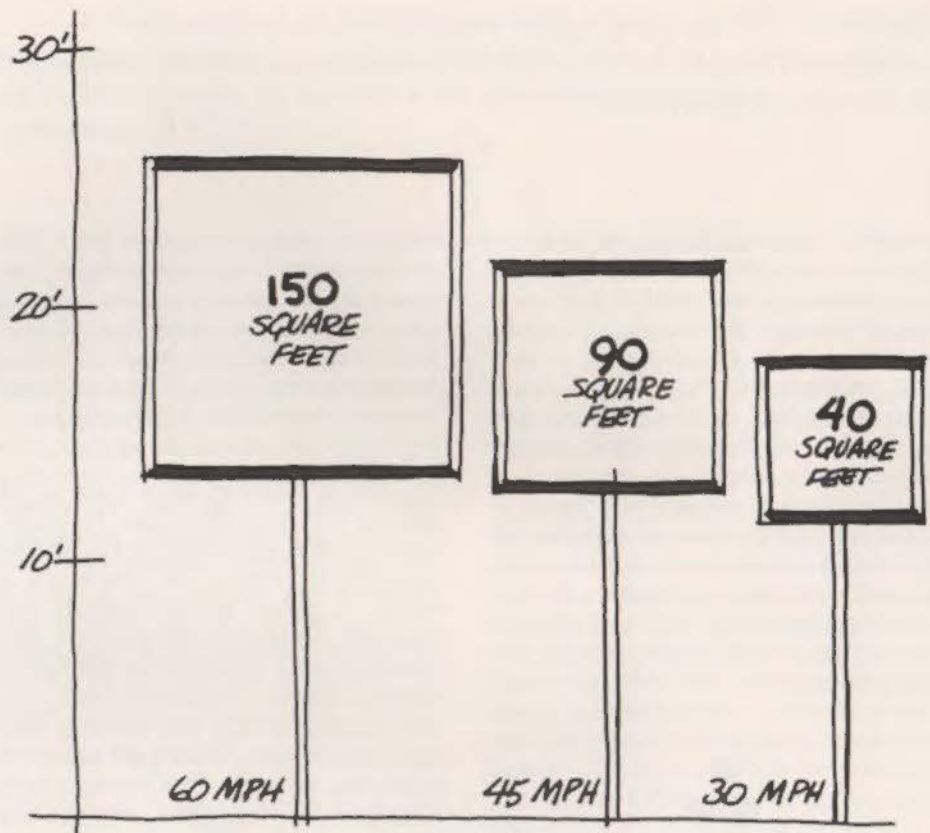
executives, along with a restaurateur and a real estate man.) Upon enactment, the city hired additional zoning inspectors, purchased new equipment, and gathered a small army of young Dallasites to take an "inventory" of every street graphic in the city that was subject to the provisions of the code.

It is, by most accounts, a strong code, perhaps as strong as possible in a city as big as Dallas with so diverse a spectrum of interest groups. It is both similar to and different from another code adopted last year by Gainesville, Florida—and, since the Gainesville ordinance was fashioned almost verbatim after the model ordinance in *Street Graphics*, it is enlightening to compare the key features of the Dallas and Gainesville laws.

Both statutes open with a statement of purpose which refers not only to public safety and efficiency of communications but to the importance of preserving "the overall aesthetic quality of the community (Gainesville)." Such a provision—in granting the cities a legal basis for regulating signs in the interest simply of beauty—represents an important departure from the American judicial tradition mentioned earlier (though in both cases the effect is softened by an apologetic attempt to relate the value of aesthetics to land values).



In terms of specifics, there are four main categories of rules by which the relative character of a sign-code may be judged: rules pertaining to size, height, and distance from auto right-of-way; rules pertaining to detached or free-standing graphics; rules pertaining to attached or wall graphics; and rules pertaining to "auxiliary devices", i.e. flashing lights, rotating or moving elements, etc. The Dallas code, in reference to detached signs in a "business" zone, posits a basic rule of one graphic per premise, unless the property has a frontage exceeding 750 feet, in which case the owner may erect one additional sign per 500 feet of frontage. Signs of 40 square feet or less may be fixed as close as five feet to the auto right-of-way, with a height limitation of 20 feet. If the sign is 150 square feet in area, it may rise to a height of 30 feet, with a minimum distance of 15 feet from the right-of-way. A 400-square foot sign must be 25 feet from the right-of-way and no more than 40 feet



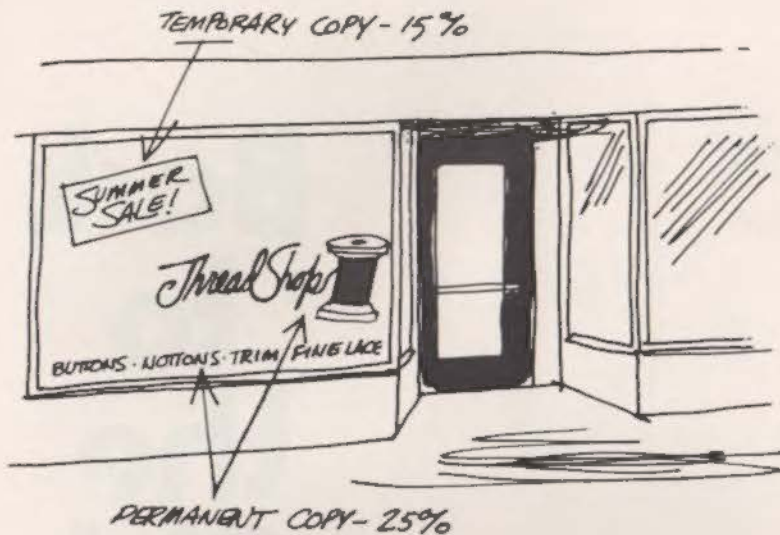
high. The latter figures—400 square feet and 40 feet in height—are the basic Dallas maximums, with two important exceptions: when a sign is located within 100 feet of a freeway and "oriented to be visible" therefrom, it may rise to 60 feet; and any sign set back 40 feet or more from the right-of-way can be as large as 1,000 square feet in area.



Corresponding rules in the Gainesville code are both more complicated and more severe. One important general difference is that instead of limiting the number of signs per premise, the Gainesville code restricts the number of items of information, the basic maximum being 10 such items per premise (see reference to *Street Graphics* above). Another important difference is that Gainesville limitations on size, height, and placement are tied strictly to the nature of the traffic-pattern on the right-of-way adjacent to the sign. Hence, in keeping with the model suggested in *Street Graphics*, no sign on a street posted at 35 mph or less may be larger than 32 square feet nor higher than 16 feet (or the height of the owner's building, whichever is lower). The

basic maximums in Gainesville (applicable only to properties with at least 50 feet of frontage) are 160 square feet by 24 feet in height, with a minimum of 20 feet from any other graphic and 10 feet from the nearest property line. Expressed in area, this is 240 square feet less than the Dallas maximum, though in Gainesville each additional 100 feet of frontage earns the advertiser a proportionate increase in size and height of graphic—up to an absolute limit of 300 square feet for detached signs and 400 feet for billboards (Dallas doesn't make this distinction).

The two cities' rules on signs attached to buildings are somewhat more comparable, except that the Gainesville code specifically relates such limits to a building's architectural design. The rule in Dallas is that no attached sign may be larger than 20 square feet in "effective area," with a maximum of eight words whose letters exceed four inches in height (no restriction on the number of words less than four inches high). The Gainesville rule is that no sign may exhibit more than 10 items of information, regardless of letter-size, nor may it occupy more than 30 per cent of the "signable area" of the building in question—this determined in relation to the building's design. The code stipulates that



"signable areas do not include major architectural features, and a graphic may not cover or interrupt major architectural features." Another stipulation in Gainesville pertains to "window graphics," the most conspicuous of which are advertising posters in the windows of supermarkets. The rule here is that such graphics may not exceed 30 per cent of the window space. Dallas makes no reference to "window graphics" *per se*, though it's possible they are thought to be covered by the rules applying to attached signs in general.

As with detached signs, "auxiliary devices" in Dallas are less stringently regulated than in Gainesville. Such devices are permitted on any sign in a "business" zone, but cannot "produce any apparent motion of the visual image" nor change a message nor rotate more frequently than three times per minute. In Gainesville, "auxiliary devices" are prohibited from streets posted at more than 30 mph and from premises with less than 300 feet of frontage. When such devices are used, however, the maximum rate per-minute of rotation and message change is the same for both cities. Finally, where Dallas places no restrictions on wind-propelled devices (streamers, pin-wheels, etc.), Gainesville has banned them altogether.

It is fitting, I think, to conclude this comparison with a reference to something mentioned earlier—the question of "amortization" of existing signs. Here, as with other points in the comparison, Gainesville appears to have taken a stronger stand than Dallas (though with uncertain final effect until the period of "amortization" is over). It was on this question that the Dallas City Council, in considering the new code for

enactment, imposed its only substantial compromise. It extended the period of amortization—the maximum period during which "non-conforming" graphics, as defined by the new ordinance, could remain on Dallas streets—from three to ten years. Gainesville provides for amortization and removal or modification of all existing signs within three years. Before one assumes, however, on the basis of this and other discrepancies between the two statutes, that the sign-reformers in Dallas have performed less thoroughly than their counterparts in southern Florida, it is imperative to note the differences between the two cities themselves. One is a sprawling metropolis of more than a million people, with all the diversity of opinion and interest which that implies, while the other is a relatively small urban area known as "The University City"—a reference to the presence in Gainesville of the main campus of the University of Florida. It was from this university community, in fact, that the strongest impetus for sign-reform came, and it was the formidable political voice of this community, relative to other interests in the city, that enabled it to score so dramatic a triumph in its campaign against sign-pollution. Dallas, for its part, has made a bold and a promising start. It is up to other Texas cities now—with architects hopefully in the lead—to carry the struggle to the sign-choked arteries of their own environments.

(Note: Street Graphics, by William R. Ewald, Jr. and Daniel R. Mandelker (legal analysis), with an extensive bibliography, was published by The American Society of Landscape Architects Foundation, 1425 H Street N.W., Washington, D.C.)

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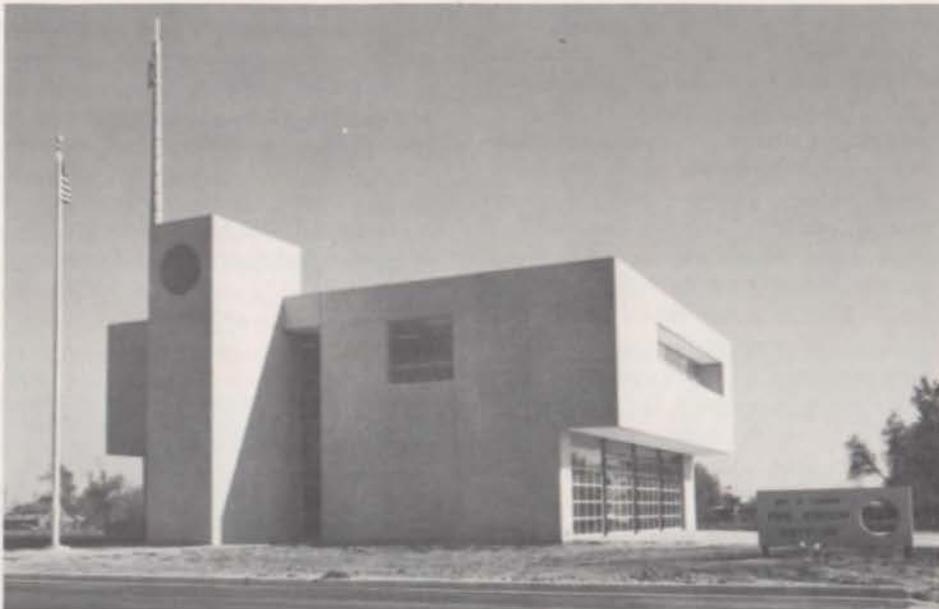
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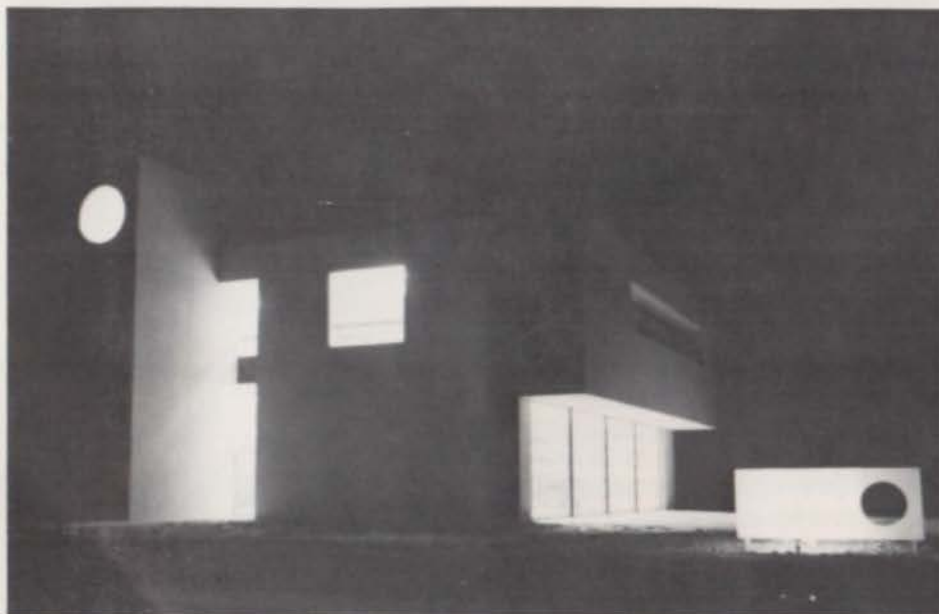
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Back to the Old Slide Pole



It is commonly assumed that the growth of a city like Houston—with suburb spreading out from suburb—leads inherently to a mushrooming bigness in the design of facilities like shopping centers and municipal institutions. Buildings get taller, housing additions more labyrinthine, shopping complexes more complex, and police and fire stations larger and more forbidding. The result, of course, is still more “distance,” psychologically speaking, between these structures and the human beings whom they are supposed to serve. All too often, this pattern of construction has in fact accompanied urban population growth, since otherwise we would have been spared the grimmer features of urban monsters like New York, Tokyo, and Chicago. Increasingly, however, there are signs of a reversal of this trend, even of a kind of paradox: bigness, instead of producing more bigness, starts producing smallness.

Houston city planners, for example, in trying to contend with a dizzying growth rate in the northwest quadrant of the city, have developed plans for a regional complex of municipal facilities that in-



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Architecture
1973



corporates, among other things, a fire-station designed on the scale of the people in the neighborhood. Indeed, part of the design problem confronted by Century A-E, of Houston, was to plan a building that would be as much a community center as a fire station. It would serve, on the one hand, as a site for activities like bicycle registration, disaster relief, community information dispersal, polling and voter registration, youth and safety programs, and ambulance dispatching. On the other hand, it was to house a modern fire-fighting unit comprised of 19 firemen, three trucks, an ambulance, and assorted collateral equipment. Furthermore, the place had to *look nice*.

The architects started, logically, with a couple of good old traditional slide-poles, one from the second floor and one from the

mezzanine watch-office, both situated to drop the speeding firemen almost on top their trucks. (Another function of these poles might be to catch the eye and imagination of neighborhood kids.) Most of the second floor is occupied by a lounge or dayroom, replete with kitchen, which features recessed, full-height windows directed north for maximum sunlight. The walls, floors, and ceilings here, as elsewhere in the station, are surfaced with stainless steel, plastic laminate, vinyl fabric, enamel, ceramic tile, and terrazzo—all with a view toward heavy use and easy cleaning. Accent panels are yellow, orange, and lime green, with "supergraphics" adding further interest and character.

If you're not in a hurry, you can reach the station's first-floor apparatus room not by

slide-pole but by tubular steel staircase, above which hovers a large skylight. The building's front doors, some of them glass and some plastic laminate, are protected from the weather by the cantilevered design of the second floor—a feature which enhances the building's unique design. The stout geometry of this exterior is further strengthened by sandblasted concrete panels, with an eye, again, toward durability.

So now the folks in this particular Houston suburb have both a new fire-station and a community center with old-fashioned slide-poles for young and old alike.

endangered species

Historic old Texas buildings are valuable—period. They are valuable because they are old, because they were built with a sturdy elegance that we are in danger of forgetting how to approximate, and because they are reservoirs of important clues to our own past.

Such value cannot be measured in dollars. We live, however, in a dollar-value society. Many of our most valuable old structures, therefore, have been destroyed by parties whose interests included more dollars than a given historic building could produce (parking lots, for example, are generally better investments than 100-year-old Victorian mansions). Somewhere in Texas, this very day, someone is dismantling another token of our heritage. Someone else is planning a similar enterprise for tomorrow.

This waste ought to be stopped, and Texas architects ought to participate in the stopping—or at least the slowing down. To encourage such efforts, we at the *Architect* here introduce a new column devoted to the identification and attempted rescue of “endangered species” of historic Texas structures. The column is intended, among other things, to be a “reader-input” feature, meaning that the staff of the magazine must depend on readers for the bulk of information pertaining to old doomed buildings that might, under the glare of public attention, be saved. If you know of such a structure, please contact us.

Our first featured building, we are happy to report, has evidently been saved—but just by the skin of its shingles. It is the splendid Hunnicutt Mansion built more than a hundred years ago on Guadalupe Street in Austin. The record of this struggle actually dates back to 1925, when destruction of the house was averted by moving it some 30 yards from its original site. About a year ago, the present owners of Hunnicutt (an adjacent church wishing to use the land for a parking lot and daycare center) notified tenants of the house that they intended to start demolition in January, 1974.

Public reaction was strong, leading the church to offer the



Photo by Alan Pogue

house free to anyone who could generate the \$250,000 it would cost to transplant it again. Initial attempts to raise the money failed, as did legal actions against the church. (A stalwart in these efforts was the Travis County Heritage Foundation Committee.) The church set a final deadline for February 9, after which the wrecking ball. Letters were fired to editors. Concerned people huddled in meetings till two and three in the morning. February 1 approached, and still no means of salvation. There was talk here and there of a sit-down blockade against the bulldozers.

Then, seemingly out of thin air, a new group called Preserve Austin, Inc. stepped into the dispute and pledged the money to save the place. After further deliberations, the church agreed to stay demolition until the group could finalize plans for the move.

Preserve Austin, Inc., among whose founders is an Austin architect named Milton McMurrey, intends to rescue other old structures through the same unique financial means by which it saved Hunnicutt. A primary feature of this arrangement is a pledge system whereby “donors” give not cash but their signatures to guarantee bank notes required for a salvage operation. Theoretically, according to Mr. McMurrey, few of these pledges will have to be redeemed, because of a plan by Preserve Austin, Inc. to adapt its rescued buildings in such a way as to stimulate income — without marring the historic value of the structure. It is likely, for example, that the Hunnicutt House, once fixed on its new site, will be leased to a group of Austin lawyers who have promised not to alter basic architectural features even inside the house. (This will be achieved by the application of a design concept called “interior landscaping,” a system that eliminates items like floor-to-ceiling partitions).

Because we live in a dollar-value society, it took dollars to save the Hunnicutt House, and it took a group like Preserve Austin, Inc. to combine the vision and the ingenuity required to attract those dollars. We should all be glad they came along.



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A Line on Texas



There's something about Texas that stirs the blood in an artist's veins—the sky, the vast and variegated terrain, the people grown tough from living on the land, the structures they have built and the history they have made. Long before the white man came, Indian artists carved and painted their impressions of Texas on pebbles and cave walls, trying to interpret the splendor, the mystery, and the threat of what they saw. Artists since have used other media, from charcoal to oil to celluloid film, but all, for the most part, have shared with the Indians a profound, almost religious regard for their subject.

Houston artist Norman Baxter, while not a Texan by birth, has joined with this tradition, experiencing in the process a kind of trial by fire and ant. He writes in the preface to his recent book *A Line on Texas*, from which the following sketches were selected: "The challenge of getting a line on Texas has had its pleasures and drawbacks, too. I've learned a lot of history and I've met a lot of interesting people. I've been chased by dogs, spiked by cactus, stung by ants, denied passage by a longhorn steer, and followed by a suspicious sheriff. I've endured Panhandle cold and South Texas heat. I've suffered East Texas rain and West Texas dust. I've survived meals that included a main course of rattlesnake, armadillo, and opossum. But that's just part of the

game. After all, being an artist isn't all sitting in a plush studio and creating 'Art.' "

Many of the artist's sketches, including the one above, were drawn from material in West Texas. He writes of those on the facing page:

"The ghost town at Study Butte, names for mine manager Will Study, was built in 1905 and abandoned in 1946. Recently, though, the Lone Star Mine was reopened in response to growing demand for mercury. Nearby Terlingua, the site of another quicksilver mine, was once a town of 2,000. According to legend, the mine belonged to a man named Howard Perry, who had accepted the land in payment for a debt. With his new mining wealth, he proposed to a New England lady and built her a home on a hill near the mine. She arrived in due time, spent one night, and returned the next day to the East. Afterward, it was Perry's habit to spend four months overseeing the mine, and the remaining eight months of the year living as a cultured gentleman in New York and Maine."

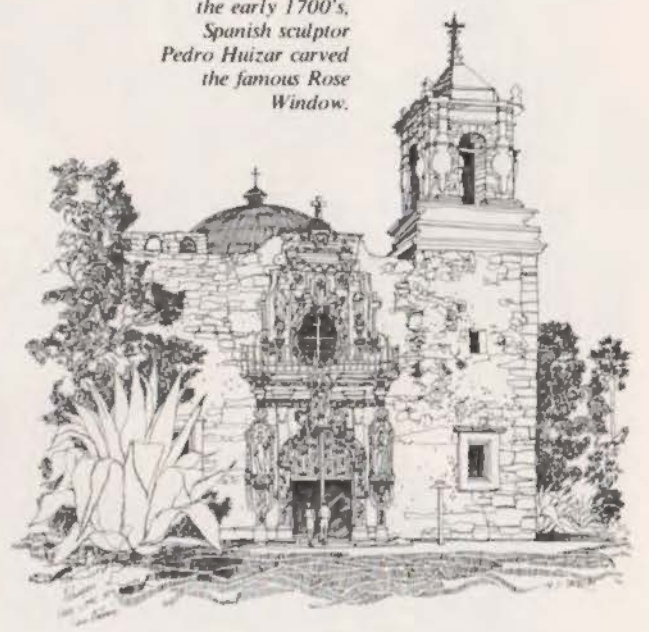
EDITOR'S NOTE: Since 1959, Norman Baxter has worked as an illustrator at the Houston studio of Baxter + Korge, Inc., a graphic design firm which published "A Line on Texas." The book—beautifully bound, with 160 recent sketches (most of them a full page in size) and text—is available, but in short supply, only from Baxter + Korge, 8323 Westglenn, Houston, Texas 77042. The price is \$15 plus \$1 for mailing.

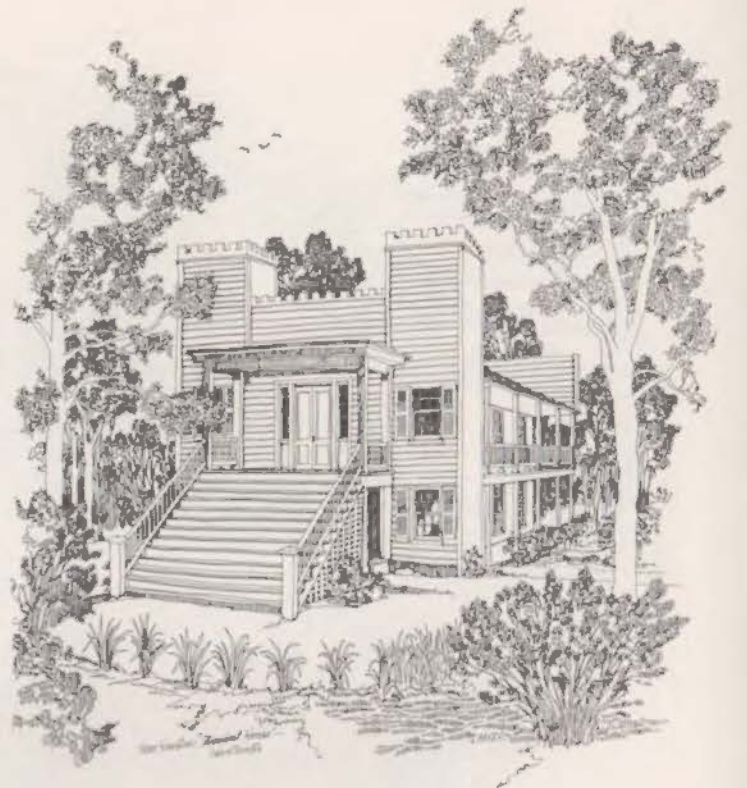


game. After all, being an artist isn't all sitting in a plush studio and creating 'Art.' "



*Mission San Jose
Aguayo in San
Antonio, where, in
the early 1700's,
Spanish sculptor
Pedro Huizar carved
the famous Rose
Window.*





Here the artist probes the character of three different regions of Texas — North Central, East, and South (the Gulf coast) — and two different styles of grist mill. The "Steamboat House," above right, was purchased by Sam Houston in 1859, shortly after resigning, in disgust, from a Texas legislature that had just voted to join the Confederacy. "Wrapping his blanket about his shoulders," writes artist Baxter, "the old warrior retired in dignified defiance to Huntsville where he bought the Steamboat House. There, in 1863, he died, still mourning the state he had brought into being."







"The town of Sweetwater, to the north, is host to one of Texas' most curious festivals — the annual Rattlesnake Roundup. The rocky uplands there offer perfect accommodations to the poisonous vipers, which abound. During roundup time, hundreds of parties poke under hillside rocks and ledges in search of dens. Finding a den, a snake hunter squirts in gasoline. To escape the fumes, the reptiles emerge, whereupon they are caught, bagged, and carried to a weighing station. Prizes are awarded for the longest, heaviest, and most. At the close of the hunt, some 6,000 snakes are killed, skinned, cooked and eaten."

*Rattlesnake Roundup
Sweetwater*



"To the west, you'll find Midland and Odessa, which until 1921, were tiny ranching settlements. (Midland, begun as a water stop for the Texas and Pacific Railroad, was so named because it was halfway between El Paso and Fort Worth.) But in 1921, the potential of one of the world's major oil producing areas — the Permian Basin — was discovered."



*Cable Tool drilling rig
Odessa 1920*

In the News



TSA President Ben E. Brewer (L) with AIA President Archibald Rogers at Grassroots.



Ralph Spencer

Grassroots

TSA generated 100% chapter attendance at the **AIA Grassroots Central** in Kansas City January 21-23. A record total of 32 Texas architects attended workshops on subjects ranging from AIA dues structure and the ethics of paid advertising to selection of architects for government contracts. Other topics included motivation of chapter leaders, AIA programs, land use, and the energy crisis. The workshops, headed by AIA national staff and officers, were exploratory in nature, with formal action scheduled for the AIA national convention to be held in May in Washington, D.C.

New Appointment

Ralph D. Spencer, former executive director of the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners, has been appointed director of professional affairs in the School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin. "We believe the University resources are valuable to the profession," says Mr. Spencer, "and we believe the profession's resources and experience are not only valuable but necessary to the educational program of the School of Architecture."

Recognition

Fred MacKie, FAIA, of Houston, was named Architect of the Year by the Houston Producers Council. The award, given annually to "the architect who most consistently produces good design and specifies high quality materials," was made at a January meeting of the Producers Council and the Houston Chapter of TSA.

An award for urban planning and design was granted last month by *Progressive Architecture Magazine* to the Houston firm of **W. Irving Phillips, Jr.**, AIA and **Robert W. Peterson**, AIA. The projects named were three new Texas communities.

Harry Goleman, of Houston, has been appointed chairman of the Economic Development Committee, Houston Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Goleman is organizing a task group to study land use legislation.

Dallas architects **David R. Braden**, President-Elect of TSA, and **Jim Clutts** participated in a conference on "The Land and the River" January 24 and 25, sponsored by the Center for Urban and Environmental Studies of SMU.

Anniversary

The **San Antonio Conservation Society** will celebrate its 50th anniversary March 22 at the Institute of Texan Cultures, Hemisfair Plaza, San Antonio. Plans include a two-day seminar (March 21 and 22) on "Historic Preservation: Past, Present and Future." For more information write the Society at 511 Pasco De La Villita, San Antonio, Texas 78205.

Competition

Architectural students at **Texas Tech** have submitted entries in a canvas furniture design competition sponsored by, among others, *Japan Interior Design Magazine*.

New Book

Houston architect **Harry Goleman** is the editor of a new book called *Financing Real Estate Development*. It is available from the TSA office at \$19.20 for members of the Society.

Chapter News

The **Houston Chapter** launched its new Interior Architecture Design Awards Program recently with the presentation of 13 awards for outstanding interior design projects in the Houston area. So well

received was the competition, which invited entries from any member firm of AIA doing interior work in Houston, that the Chapter will make it a biennial event.

(Editor's Note: We regret having been unable, for reasons of space, to provide a fuller report on this program. Inquiries pertaining to the next competition should be addressed to the Houston Chapter.)

Austin City Councilman **Jeff Friedman** appeared before the **Austin Chapter** last month to request support for a citywide energy conservation committee. The request was approved, and Chapter president **Bill Martin** subsequently attended a City Council meeting to express the Chapter's support for the measure. Since then, Council has appointed a 21-member Austin Energy Conservation Committee which includes three architects: **Mac Holder**, **Lamar Youngblood**, and **John Gallery** (Associate Dean of the UT School of Architecture). According to Mr. Holder, the new committee will concentrate initially on four areas of concern: energy and transportation; illumination levels in the city; building design criteria; and public information.

News of Firms

Goleman & Rolfe, of Houston, has promoted **Jim D. Jackson** and **John M. Farrell** to Associate.

Thomas W. Hainze has joined RYA Architects Inc., of Dallas, as project engineer. Diversified Design Disciplines, Inc., a Houston-based firm, has announced the formation of 3D/International Consultants, Inc. with **William N. Bonham** as President and Chief Executive. The new subsidiary, to be headquartered in New York City, will provide "a complete range of consultation and project management services."

The Houston firm of Gernsbacher-Hughes has become **The Gernsbacher Group, Architects, Planners, Development Counselors**.

William R. O'Connell, **Victor G. Probst**, and **Robert F. Zelsman** have formed a corporation in Austin to be called O'Connell, Probst & Zelsman, Inc.

The Dallas office of **Neuhas & Taylor** has relocated to 2001 Bryan Tower, Suite 801, Dallas, Texas 75201.

Paul Kinnison, Jr., AIA-Architect, a firm in San Antonio, has moved to 418 West French Place, San Antonio, Texas 78212. The New York office of **Claudill Rowlett Scott** has been relocated to 299 Park

Letters

Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

The Houston firm of Wyatt C. Hedrick Architects & Engineers Inc. has announced the promotion of four staff architects to the office of vice president: **Daniel B. Barnum**, **Wayne R. Hamilton**, **Charles R. Howard**, and **Mermod C. Jacard, Jr.**

In Dallas, **Paul M. Terrill, Jr.**, **Jack R. Yardley**, and **Ronald M. Brame** have become principals with the firm of Harwood K. Smith & Partners, Inc., Architects-Engineers-Planners.

Pierce, Goodwin & Flanagan, AIA, of Houston, has appointed **William R. Lenzen** to Associate Partner and **Donald K. McLarty** to Associate.

David C. Mills, a criminal justice specialist, and **James L. Holt**, an educational facilities specialist, have joined the Houston staff of Caudill Rowlett Scott. Mr. Mills will direct the firm's correctional facility planning and design activities, while Mr. Holt will head development of new educational planning and design programs.

Industry News

"The oak flooring industry," according to a release from the Oak Flooring Association, "has decided to reduce the thickness of nominal one-inch flooring from 25/32-inch to 3/4-inch, effective Feb. 1, 1974." This will "help alleviate oak lumber shortages in the hardwood flooring industry . . . by permitting a more productive yield of available lumber."

Johns-Manville Company has sponsored publication of a special promotional edition of Professional Builder entitled "Insulation: the Builder's Key to Energy Conservation." The 24-page document treats a wide variety of questions pertaining to the use of insulation materials—including "new minimum property standards" set by the Federal Housing Administration. For a free copy write Johns-Manville, Box 5705, Greenwood Plaza, Denver, Colorado 80217 (refer to Volume II, Form HIG-113A).

Deaths

Houston architect **Oren Smith Beasley** died in November.

The Austin Chapter has belatedly announced the death of corporate member **Charles B. Marshall**.

Texas Architect encourages communications from its readers and reserves the right to edit for style and/or economy. We assume that any letter, unless otherwise stipulated, is free for publication in this column. Please address correspondence to: Editor, Texas Architect, 800 Perry-Brooks Building, Austin, Texas 78701.

Editor: We would like to know the method of selecting projects you use when compiling your issues for publication. Are articles sent to your office voluntarily, or do you contact the architect for publication of the project? Do you provide special forms for particular information to be submitted, or is typewritten information sufficient?

In order to ethically and professionally submit our articles we would appreciate knowing your criteria for selection of news items.

Richard & Huckabee
Tommie J. Huckabee, AIA
Lubbock

Due to the potential complications involved in making our own selections of architectural projects for publication, major articles of this nature are limited to winning entries in "Texas Architecture," a design award program sponsored annually by TSA in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. Thus, Texas Architect will feature fourteen design award articles in 1974, each covering a winning entry in Texas Architecture 1973. Items for In the News may be submitted in any typewritten form. General content of the publication is a responsibility of the TSA Editorial Policy Committee, Harry Golemon, Chairman. — Editor.

Editor: Great praise to Texas Society of Architects for its imaginative ad, "The egret and the 8.55 x 15 4 - ply nylon cord fish," which appeared on the back cover of the Nov. - Dec. 1973 issue of Texas Architect.

If I were the chief award giver for environmental messages, TA would take first-prize, hands down. Congratulations for demonstrating such keen ecological perception and responsibility.

Donald V. Williams
Community Relations Director
Lutheran General Hospital
San Antonio

Editor: We are most appreciative of your thoughtfully written and com-

plimentary double coverage of our work in the current Texas Architect.

I personally agree with your approach of relating the presentation of a project to a firm's overall practice. Please add my compliments to the many you have already received on the new magazine format in general.

Bob Halford, AIA
The Oglesby Group, Inc.
Dallas

Editor: The 1974 Lloyd Warren Fellowship for an American Enclave in Peking, calls for administrative, security, residential, educational, recreational and general facilities. All seems reasonable, except the program calls for an Enclave with all facilities for staff, presumably behind a barbed wire fence or a wall to rival that surrounding the Forbidden City.

If our young student architects are encouraged to continue the concept of colonialism, which created American enclaves in the 19th and 20th centuries in Shanghai, Nanking and Peking, what hope is there for a real understanding and give-and-take between this programmed American Mission and the Chinese people?

When our oil companies first went into Venezuela in the 1920's, similar enclaves were built which not only isolated our personnel from Venezuelans, but continued the American idea of superiority. The Venezuelan government no longer tolerates such enclaves.

If our security is so hazardous that one counts on a wall to protect Mission members, then we should **not have** a mission there, as no riot or abduction goes on without the tacit support of local police.

All the lessons of the private clubs and enclaves for Englishmen, only, in Cairo, Bombay, Delhi, and everywhere, are thrown to the wind by this programming. If we get kicked out of China again, it will be due to the kind of thinking that programs an enclave as presumed in this competition.

What an unfortunate example of lack of prudence in high office. A reconstructed mind could not stick to the program as outlined.

Howard Barnstone, FAIA
Houston

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