

MAY·JUNE 1983 VOL. 33 NO. 3

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# TexasArchitect



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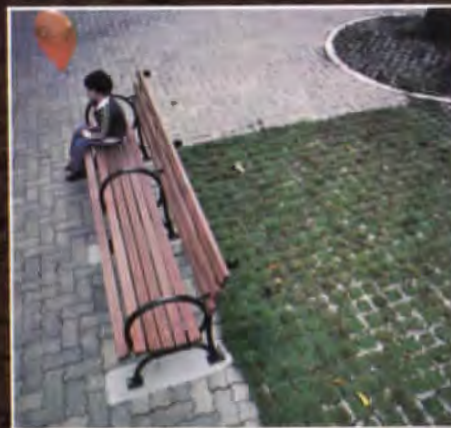
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Firm principals—Lee Reyna and  
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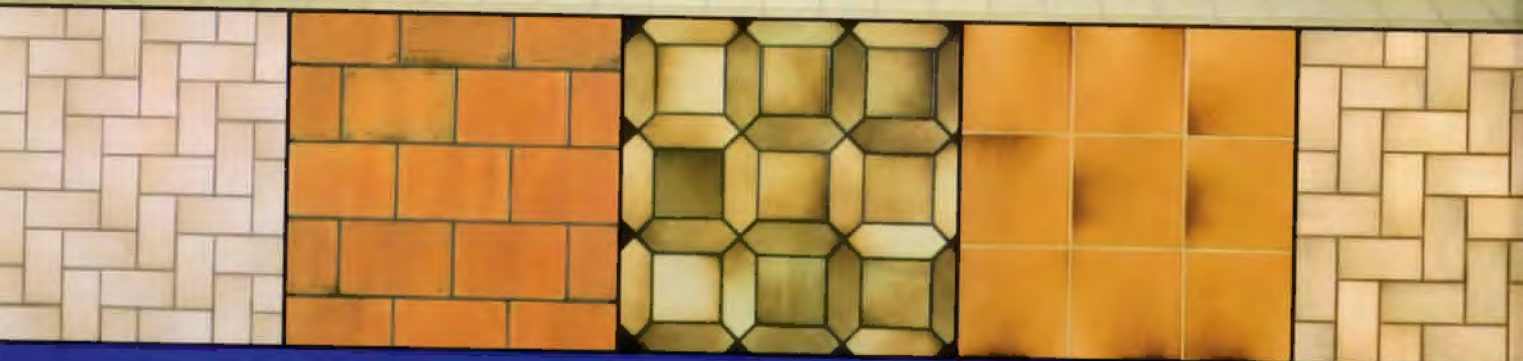
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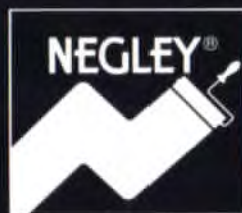
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**LETTERS** 17

**NEWS** 18

**ABOUT THIS ISSUE** 35

**HOUSES, MYTHS, AND DREAMS** 36

*New York architect and author Gerald Allen introduces the six houses featured in this issue by way of reflecting on the character of Texas' neighborhoods, towns and cities. Individual project reports by Michael Benedikt, Larry Paul Fuller, Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, Michael McCullar and James Coote.*

**ON THE HOUSE: AN ESSAY** 58

*Noted Texas "house architect" Frank Welch, of Midland and Dallas, reflects upon the creation and substance of a good house.*

**PAPER ARCHITECTURE** 66

*Houston architect William W. Caudill, founder of the eminent Houston firm Caudill Rowlett Scott, admonishes us never to underestimate the power of an architect's unbuilt vision.*

**FOUR NEW FELLOWS FROM TEXAS** 74

*Profiles of four Texas architects elected to the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows this year for outstanding contributions to the profession of architecture.*

**BOOKS** 80

**DAVID BRADEN/MUSINGS** 102

*COMING UP: The July/August issue of Texas Architect will look at places of worship as a building type that has maintained an emphasis on symbolism in architecture throughout the ages.*

*ON THE COVER: Ranks of travertine-clad columns descend to the sea from the bayfront side of House on Ocean Drive in Corpus Christi (see page 50). Architecture by Batey & Mack of San Francisco. Photography by Robt. Ames Cook of Dallas.*



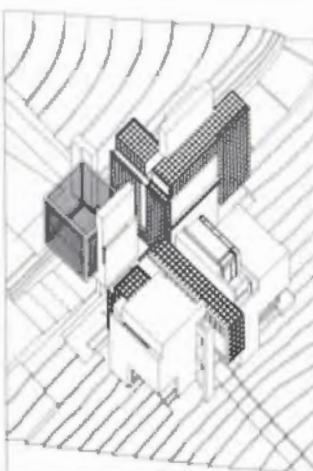
36



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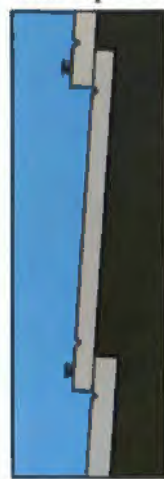
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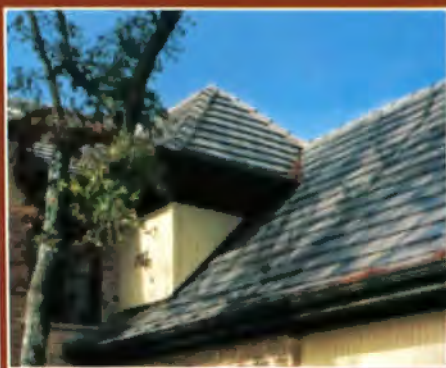
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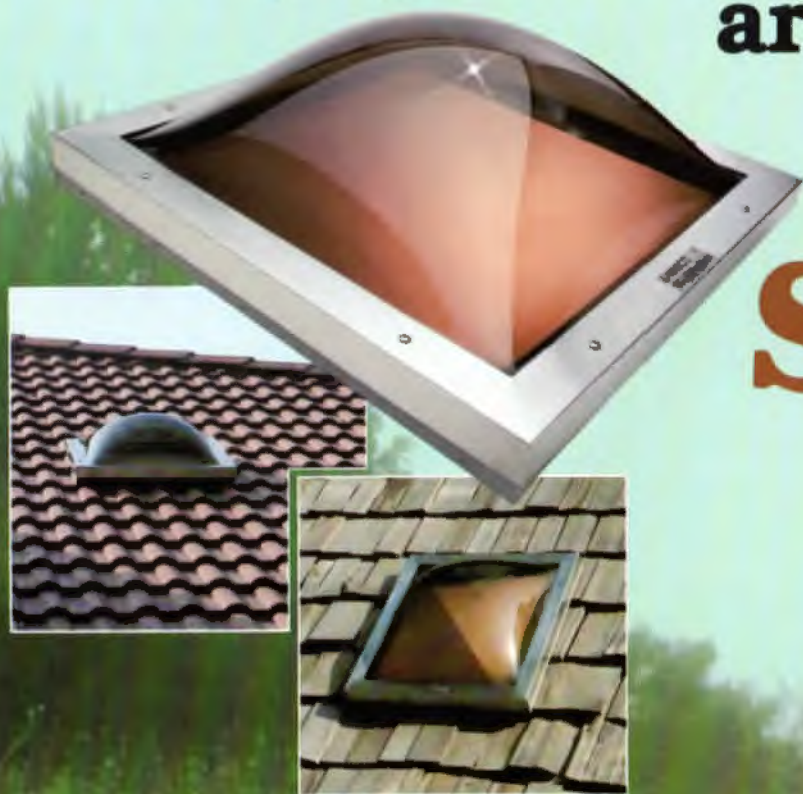
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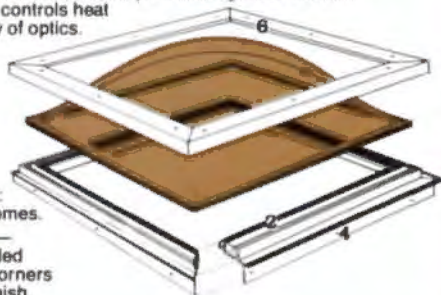
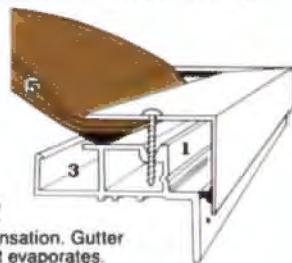
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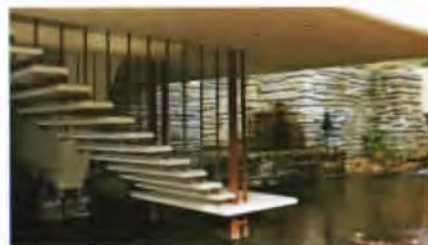
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**LETTERS**

EDITOR: Hail the death of Post-Intelism. Or, as some would spell it, Post-Lentilism. Remember, students, that a lintel is a beam, while a lentil is a bean. We're speaking here of a "has-been."

Stillborn, fetus-first, base-awkward, Post-Intelism (or is it Post-Mud-Urn-Isim?) has been laid to rest. To visit the site, let us venturi out onto the misty moore. There leans the graves-stein, canted over a pit of bones. Reach deep and raise aloft: "Is this a scully see before me, highbrow toward the void? Alas, New York! Aye, new hymn."

But why was this creature conceived, and why do its graven images survive to haunt the future? As work went slack, the people were heard for the first time. They'd reacted against the smooth-box syndrome; they were more comfortable with Traditional. Now that architects were listening, they anticipated enrichment. Grab up bits of their dear Traditional; have another go at Eclecticism. But the old name won't do; promote a new one. Magazine buddies join in: announce another ism. Some clients said "Yea!" and the misadventure was launched. Yet the few re-creationists have performed a service; they have cautioned the profession, reminded all of what every diplomat knows: extremes can be folly; there is a sensible, durable middle. For architects, there is, simply, good design. Let's see it!

*Professor Dik Vrooman, FAIA,  
Texas A&M University,  
College Station*

EDITOR: In concluding his article ("Ten Years Into the Energy Crisis," March/April 1983), Raymond Reed stated: "As architects—as a profession—we have a responsibility to provide the best possible service to sustain the environmental health of our clients and our society." We feel the same way—as engineers.

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*Buddy M. Beard,  
Xenarx Inc.,  
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Edited by Michael McCullar



Robert Venturi

**VENTURI, RAUCH, SCOTT BROWN  
ANNOUNCED AS DESIGNERS OF  
NEW LAGUNA GLORIA IN AUSTIN**

Growing ever more concerned in recent years over the lack of any Big-Name architecture in Austin, local patrons are beside themselves over the announcement in April that Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown of Philadelphia will design the new Laguna Gloria Art Museum downtown.

Robert Venturi, FAIA, 58, was the architectural *enfant terrible* of the late '60s whose influential book *Learning from Las Vegas* (MIT Press, 1972) espouses an heretical appreciation of certain aspects of popular culture that most architects consider vulgar (the "iconography" of the commercial strip, for one). He is now considered somewhat of a Post-Modern standard-bearer for having also promoted ornament and such before it became fashionable again. And he is the biggest name to enter the Austin architectural scene since Edward Durrell Stone worked on the Westgate Apartments near the Capitol in the early '60s.

"The marriage being watched carefully now," wrote Joan Bassin on the arts in the *Austin American-Statesman*, "is that between Laguna Gloria Art Museum and Philadelphia architect

Robert Venturi's firm. . . . So far the architects and museum personnel show all the signs of newly wedded bliss. They appear to be in a state of intense infatuation that should help them get through the grueling months of planning and building that lie ahead."

The Laguna Gloria project involves an interesting marriage indeed, but not necessarily that between Laguna Gloria and Robert Venturi. Urban development in the 1980s makes strange bedfellows, and no where is this more evident than in the joining together of Laguna Gloria/Robert Venturi and Watson-Casey/Holt+Fatter+Scott. The Watson-Casey Companies is an Austin development firm that has given Laguna Gloria its downtown museum space practically free of charge as part of a redevelopment package for the city's old warehouse district. Holt+Fatter+Scott Inc. of Austin are their architects of long standing, and the relationship between the two firms is a loyal one. Watson-

Casey and Holt+Fatter+Scott have worked together for five years to develop some 800,000 square feet of prominent downtown architecture, including the almost-complete First City Centre (see *Texas Architect*, May/June 1982). Both firms are aggressive, pragmatic, hard-core, not given to intellectual flights of fancy when it comes to architecture.

Enter Robert Venturi, "one of the most important intellects in architecture of the latter half of the 20th century," as University of Texas architecture dean Hal Box calls him. Although major projects by such renowned out-of-staters usually involve a local firm for construction liaison, the arrangement between Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown and Holt+Fatter+Scott seems to be shaping up a little differently. The roles of the architects have yet to be officially determined, says "developer-donor" Jim Casey, but the Laguna Gloria project will be a kind of "joint endeavor in which the creative input of both firms will be



Tom Bernard

Venturi's Allen Memorial Art Museum addition at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio.

appropriately reflected." (Another local firm, Renfro, Steinbomer & Petty, Architects, will serve as Venturi's Austin office, since Bob Renfro worked six years for Venturi before coming to Austin.) According to Laguna Gloria director Lawrence Miller, the museum board has commissioned Venturi's firm to design the new Laguna Gloria "in its totality," inside and out.

Either way, the museum building—for which Holt+Fatter+Scott has written a preliminary program—will in fact be an individual architectural entity within a multi-block mixed-use complex that Holt+Fatter+Scott has been master-planning for two years, and some of which has already been designed. Plans call for Denise Scott Brown, Venturi's wife and partner and an urban planner by specialty, to assume a major role in the master-planning. Once an exact location for the museum is determined, then the concerted design effort will begin. Miller's optimistic estimation is that ground will be broken for the museum in 12 to 18 months.

Laguna Gloria is understandably excited about getting Venturi's firm involved in the project, at whatever level. Not only is Robert Venturi an architect of international stature, but just about every major Texas city has an art museum by one: Edward Larabee Barnes' Museum of Fine Arts in Dallas, now under construction; Louis Kahn's famed Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth (widely considered the most significant work of architecture in Texas to date); Philip Johnson's Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth and Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi; Mies van der Rohe's addition to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston; and Cambridge Seven Associates' San Antonio Museum of Art (formerly Lone Star Brewery) in San Antonio.

Housed in an old Mediterranean villa in West Austin since its founding in 1946, Laguna Gloria has been trying to deal for a larger downtown location for years. First they were offered space in a Trammel Crow restoration project on Congress Avenue, (the old Davis Hardware store), but declined in view of prohibitive long-range operating costs. Then in January, Watson-Casey offered them free land and a "substantial

contribution" toward construction of a downtown museum, an offer that was too good for Laguna Gloria to refuse. Finally, after seven months of soliciting proposals from some 130 firms across the country, the museum picked Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown over three other finalists: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates and Richard Meier and Associates, both of New York City, and Mitchell/Giurgola Architects of Philadelphia.

In spite of some uncertainty, at this stage, over architects' roles in the project, this odd-couple relationship may prove to be beneficial for all concerned. One reason for its popularity among illustrious architects may be that the art museum is an unusually difficult building

to design. Since its primary purpose is to serve as a stage and backdrop for art, its architecture must shelter, present and complement its contents while making a statement all its own that is not overwhelming. The medium, in other words, must not become the message. Fortunately, Holt+Fatter+Scott seems every bit as gung ho as Laguna Gloria about working with such a celebrated firm on such an important Texas commission. Although the architectural chemistries and egos involved are potent and various, such a mixture could result in a dynamic work of architecture for Laguna Gloria and downtown Austin, with a balance of flare and practicality that wouldn't have been possible otherwise.



YWCA Masterson Branch and Office Building, Houston.

#### TAFT ARCHITECTS WINS 1983 AIA HONOR AWARD FOR NEW YWCA IN HOUSTON

The Houston firm Taft Architects has won an Honor Award in the American Institute of Architects' 1983 design awards program for its design of the YWCA Masterson Branch and Office Building in Houston (see *Texas Architect*, March/April 1982).

This 20,000-square-foot flagship facility for the Houston YWCA system, completed in the fall of 1981 (and winner of a 1980 design award from *Progressive Architecture*), was one of 11 projects picked from a field of 599 entries in the

competition. Awards were presented during the AIA national convention May 22-25 in New Orleans.

The new Houston YWCA is "a building of anticipation and hope," said the jury. "Its colorful entry and deceptively small interior scale invite the public into expansive yet personal interior spaces."

Jurors for the program were: Charles Gwathmey, FAIA, New York City (chairman); David Browning, Dallas; Chris Coe, Ruston, La.; Robert J. Frasca, FAIA, Portland, Ore.; Graham Gund, Cambridge, Mass.; George J. Hasselein, FAIA, San Luis Obispo, Calif.; Bates Lowry, Washington, D.C.; Antoine Predock, FAIA, Albuquerque; and Milo H. Thompson, Minneapolis.

One major attraction of practicing architecture in San Antonio is the city's pervasive sense of place, part of which springs from an identification with the art and craft of building. The local building traditions are derived in large part from the handworked nature of Mexican and Hill Country German construction which, if not taken as a precedent for derivation, is still cherished for its directness and integrity.

The close proximity of those traditions has led many local architects to take up the arts and crafts as a fuller expression of their design talents, usually to supplement their architectural practice, sometimes to eclipse or supplant it.

Though most San Antonio architects have long been familiar with the design, art and craft talents of their cohorts, only recently has the diversity and depth of that work been brought together in one panoramic overview. The occasion was an exhibition sponsored by the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Architecture Program. The gallery exhibit, titled "The Creative Works of Architects," featured the work of over 50 local firms and individuals, and focused on three areas.

At the center of the show were examples of some of San Antonio's earliest practitioners. The oldest drawings, 12 x 18-inch sheets of yellowed linen, were of a small frame house by Alfred Giles, circa 1880. The prolific office of Atlee B. Ayers was represented by meticulous ink elevations of the city's landmark Smith-Young Building, with its octagonal shaft and illuminated copper roof. The studies were drawn by an exacting hand, while an apparently less experienced draftsman had lined in the jutting gargoyles as plump plucked chickens. In true Beaux Arts tradition, San Antonio's Federal Building and Post Office by Ralph Cameron showed study after study of coffered ceiling lobbies and intricate tile mosaics.

The second portion of the show consisted of current work by local firms, though Chumney Jones & Kell chose to dedicate their section to the work of their founder, Bartlett Cocke, Sr. Of consider-

able interest to the reception audience was Mr. Cocke's student work from his days at M.I.T. in the 1920s, showing the evocative atmospheric effects in ink and wash so important to the era. Adjacent were studies of his Joske's department store. While architects today prefer an antiseptic axonometric or a hesitant wavering ink line sketch, the renderings of Joske's and an unidentified skyscraper by Cameron were both lit as though ascending into heaven, dark brooding northers blowing in from behind, their front facades lit strongly by the acute rays of a setting sun.



Copper light fixtures by Isaac Maxwell.

The office of O'Neill & Perez presented a floor-to-ceiling collage of sketches, plans and models, including concept development sketches on swatches of napkin, paper towel and old newspaper, illustrating the time-tested design process common to most architects. And though the city has its traditions, the vast majority of the contemporary work in the show was national if not international in expression. The montage constructed by the office of Reyna/Caragone was a *tour de force* of Post-Modernism. Resembling a Roman funerary wall, it featured, in addition to photos of the firm's work, panels of *trompe l'oeil* marble and looping garlands of blue and purple chintz.

The third portion of the exhibit featured arts and crafts by local architects. Most obviously continuing the local tra-

dition were the punched and hammered copper and brass lamps and planters of Isaac Maxwell, intricate in design and execution, dazzling with their polished sheen, Moorish in character.

Bruce Duderstadt, an architect who 20 years ago took up rug-making as a hobby, has now established his gorgeous hooked rugs as a San Antonio tradition. Hung throughout the city in homes, banks and restaurants, his work was represented in the exhibit by a luminously intricate 5 x 7-foot tapestry-like hanging, its flowering profusion of rambling mandalas stabilized by an underlying axial symmetry.

Best known of the artist-architects was Tom Pressly, who contributed seven large canvases done in either acrylic or watercolor. His most striking piece seemed at first an abstract hard-edged chevron in vibrant magenta and cool grey. Informed contemplation revealed the pattern to be in fact an almost photographic closeup of an exterior corner of a new bank building on San Antonio's Loop 410.

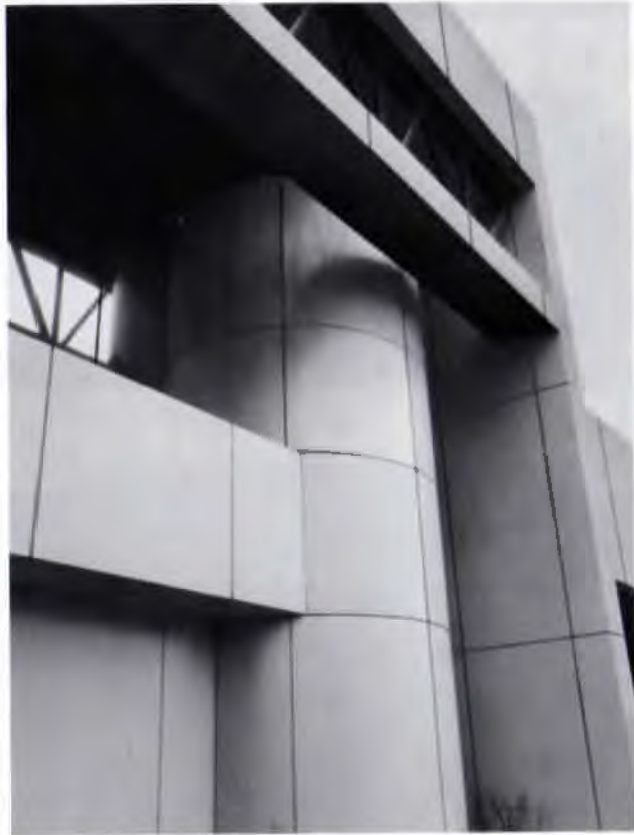
While the semi-utilitarian crafts seemed a logical extension of an architect's education and practice, some who attended the opening reception were adamant in claiming that fine art pieces had no place in the show. One viewer, examining an enigmatic sphere-within-a-cube ceramic, asked what place such work had in an exhibition of architecture. The ceramicist in question? Boone Powell. More often, though, the response of the audience was a confirmation that, rather than separate fields, the art, craft and architecture represented in the show were parallax reflections of the same talent in a city that encourages their mutual expression.

—Jon Thompson

#### McKITTRICK SPEAKS AGAINST COMPETITIVE BIDDING BILL

The President-Elect of the Texas Society of Architects, testifying against a proposed bill that would permit Texas towns to select architects on the basis of competitive bids, told the House Urban Affairs Committee April 12 in Austin that competitive bidding is definitely not in a city's best interests.

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Architect Jensen and Halstead  
Right: Capitol Bank  
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Foley's, like all department stores, was in a constant state of remodeling... moving the jewelry department,

changing the size of the sporting goods area... in other words, continually changing the lighting loads all over the store.

It became increasingly more evident that the high cost of remodeling and the

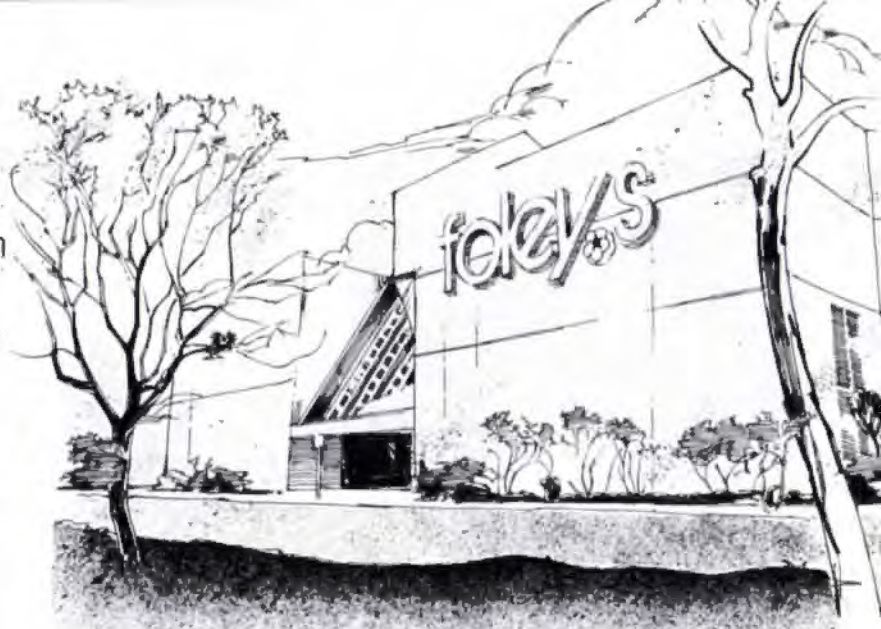
re-design of the wiring system for each change was making light a heavy proposition.

Bill Marshall, Project Manager, A. Naman + Associates, Inc.: Construction costs were skyrocketing. Foley's needed a system flexible enough to move power from one area of the store to another without redoing the system or running more wire. So, we

invented a small, transformer module. Essentially, we replaced the one-unit distribution system with 40 little transformers all over

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Ideas don't usually occur on



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Tom McKittrick before House committee.

"There is no evidence that competitive bidding would improve the city's process for selecting architects and engineers," said Houston architect Tom McKittrick, FAIA, who will assume the TSA presidency in 1984. "But we believe there is much evidence that indicates the city would, in fact, end up with more expensive projects."

McKittrick explained to the committee that A/E fees are a very small part of total project and life-cycle costs. If A/E fees were reduced by price competition, he said, the owner would save little compared to what he would lose if the quality of the design or contract documents were reduced in kind.

"Since the architect/engineer fee is a function of time spent," McKittrick said, "a reduction in fee means a reduction in effort, which could very well result in more expensive construction and life-cycle costs."

House Bill 2146, introduced by Rep. Gerald Geistweidt of Mason, would have amended Texas' Professional Services Procurement Act, enacted in 1971, which states that no state, county or municipal entity may engage "personal or professional services" on the basis of competitive bids, since so doing would most likely result in the selection of the least able or qualified. Instead, the act requires such contracts to be awarded "on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications." H.B. 2146 never made it out of Committee during the session, which ended May 30.

McKittrick went on to debunk the notion that if contractors can submit competitive bids for construction projects, then so should architects. The fact is, McKittrick said, contractors' bids are based on detailed drawings and specifications prepared by architects, who have

no such definition of the scope of their work at the beginning of a project.

"An architect sells not a product," McKittrick said, "but his own creativity, ingenuity and expertise."

#### WINNING PROJECTS ANNOUNCED IN 1983 DALLAS AIA DESIGN AWARDS PROGRAM

Sixteen projects have been cited in the Dallas chapter of the American Institute of Architects' 1983 Design Awards Competition.

Merit Awards went to The Oglesby Group for the Travis III Condominiums and for the Majestic Theater, both in Dallas; Townscape Architects for 4020 Oaklawn Ave. in Dallas; Woodward and Associates for the 712 Commerce Building in Dallas; and Rossetti Associates for the Electronic Data Systems processing center in Camp Hill, Penn.

Receiving Citation Awards were Fisher and Spillman, and Haywood, Jordan,

McCowan for the Student Union at the University of Texas at Dallas; Parkey & Partners, and Good, Haas & Fulton for the Denton Town Center in Denton and for the McKinney Medical Office Building in McKinney; Warden/Evans/Hill for One Brookriver in Dallas; The Oglesby Group for the M/PF Research Office Building in Dallas; Selzer Associates/Selzer-Volk-Born for the Highland Park Village Shopping Center in Dallas and for the Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Arlington; Corgan Associates for the SPG Building in Dallas; Milton Powell



712 Commerce Building, Dallas.



Travis III Condominiums, Dallas.



4020 Oaklawn Ave., Dallas.



Majestic Theatre, Dallas.



EDS Center, Camp Hill, Penn.

& Partners for the Summertree Shopping Center in Dallas; Woodward & Associates for the Knights of Pythias Building in Fort Worth; and Sumney, Weeter & Associates for the Interfirst Bank Galleria Motor Bank in Dallas.

The Dallas AIA Design Awards Competition is conducted each year to honor outstanding architectural projects designed by Dallas firms and completed within the past five years. All the winning firms received their awards this year at a presentation May 3 in the Dallas Communications Complex Soundstage at Las Colinas. Jurors for the competition were: Louis Sauer of the firm Archiris in Pittsburg, Penn.; Austin architect Alan Tamiguchi; and Peter Papademetriou, an associate professor of architecture at Rice University in Houston.

#### TEXAS CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY SHOWS HEFTY INCREASE FOR FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 1983

Construction contracts in Texas for the first three months of 1983 reflect a 27 percent increase compared to the same three-month period in 1982, according to McGraw-Hill's F. W. Dodge Division.

Dodge Vice President and Chief Economist George Christie reports that contracts for residential and non-residential building statewide totalled \$4,516,013,000 for January through March 1983, up from a total of \$3,315,175,000 for the same period last year.

In the Houston metropolitan area, residential and non-residential building contracts show a 26 percent increase for the first three months of 1983. In Brazoria, Fort Bend, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller Counties, contracts for January through March this year totalled \$1,234,363,000, up from a total of \$981,650,000 for the first three months of 1982.

Building activity in the Dallas/Fort Worth area shows a 55 percent increase for the first three months of 1983. Residential and non-residential construction contracts in Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise Counties totalled \$1,593,421,000 for January through March 1983, up from a total of \$1,031,091,000 last year.

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## PELLI, SALADINO SPEAK AT 'CONDES '83' IN DALLAS

This year's annual Contract Design Show gathering of architects, interior designers, buyers and aesthetes, "CONDES '83," was held March 3-5 at the Dallas Market Center. Among the speakers highlighting the planned activities were Cesar Pelli, FAIA, dean of the School of Architecture at Yale University and principal of Cesar Pelli & Associates in New Haven, Conn. and New York interior designer John Saladino.

Perhaps the most straightforward presentation was that of Cesar Pelli. Steering clear of the pedantic pitfalls that weave their way through the architectural lecture circuit, Pelli's lecture was simply entitled "My Work," and it was at once a presentation on and a searching for a "legitimacy" in architecture. Historically, according to Pelli, this legitimacy was granted as a result of the function and derivative form of a particular building type. With the overriding influence of the Modern Movement, however, this clearly defined legitimacy gave way to the anonymity of the glass box as characterized by the articulated I-beam cages punctuating the skylines of most of our cities today. These all-too-familiar buildings "depend on their silhouette to give them form," Pelli said, "versus the delicacy and straightforwardness" of the buildings of the past. Pelli's contention is that it is the use of materials to their fullest potential that, in part, gives a building its legitimacy (the honesty of masonry construction, for example, versus the use of stone veneer). Citing several of his projects, some of which he designed as Partner for Design at Gruen Associates, as well as some of his more recent work, Pelli illustrated how the contemporary influences of economics and technical advancements have enabled the glass "skins" of buildings to be used and manipulated to help achieve this legitimacy today. He feels that there is an "unlimited potential in the polychromatic treatment of glass and solids, and this seems to offer as diverse an architecture as stone architecture." Referring to his current project on the shores of the Hudson River in Manhattan's financial district, Pelli said that while today's buildings have to respond to

today's building technologies, an architect designing a project in a dense urban fabric should "reexamine the constituent elements of the older buildings around the site" and adapt these elements to reflect contemporary technologies and aesthetic attitudes.

As a less pragmatic presentation of interior architecture, John Saladino's lecture on "Interior Design as Art Form" was both thought provoking and entertaining. Through the presentation of his own work as well as a mixed bag of historical references, Saladino illustrated his attempts at abstracting the interior spaces in which we work and live, creating, as he said, "an interior of illusion to detract from the absence of natural light and views." His stated "passive response to history" was readily apparent in the fragmentary play with scale he employs effectively in dealing with such architectural elements as facades, staircases and false perspectives. Throughout many of Saladino's interiors there is an extremely thoughtful application of lighting as well as a skillful use of fragments of the past in a modern envelope. It is in the corridors of our interiors, however, that he feels is the appropriate place to "pull out the plugs."

—Kevin J. Lorenz

#### WINNERS ANNOUNCED IN KEN ROBERTS MEMORIAL DRAWING COMPETITION

Fifteen architectural drawings by area practitioners and students were cited in the 1983 Ken Roberts Memorial Delimitation Competition sponsored by the Dallas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Judged Best of Show was a watercolor house elevation by Richard Ferrier, assistant dean of the School of Architecture and Environmental Design at the University of Texas at Arlington. Ferrier also won two other awards in the program's professional category.

Other winners in the professional category were Brent Byers of Corgan Associates; Gary Garmon of Howard Gilzbrook, Architect; and Janet Needham-McCaffery, of Needham-McCaffery Associates.

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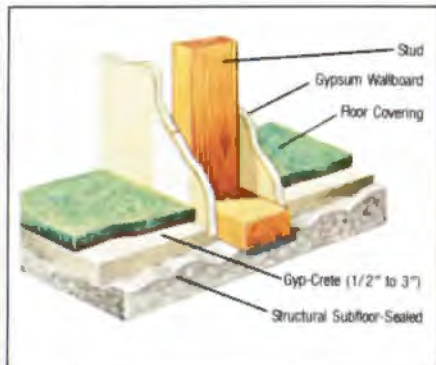
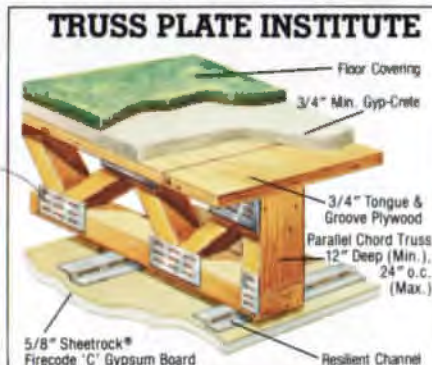
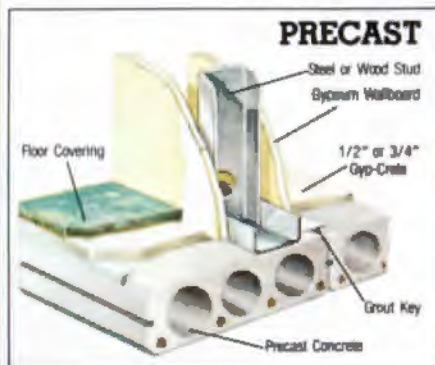
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NEWS, continued from page 27.



Best of Show by Richard Ferrier.

Honor Awards in the student category went to Anita Toews, Susan Ingle and Sherry McGlochlin, all of the University of Texas at Arlington.

Merit Award winners were Keith Cady, Linh Tran and Brian Welty, of the Skyline Architecture Cluster; and Wes Robbins and Jeff Payne of the University of Texas at Arlington.

The annual drawing competition was established in 1974 in memory of young Dallas architect Ken Roberts, who died that year, and is open to members of the Dallas AIA chapter and students of architecture in area colleges and high schools. Jurors for this year's program, reviewing 108 entries in all, were Carlos Diniz of Los Angeles; New York architect Gerald Allen (see page 36); and Dallas theater designer Peter Wolf.

#### ARCHITECT HARPER ELECTED TO WICHITA FALLS CITY COUNCIL

Wichita Falls architect Charles Harper was elected April 2 to the Wichita Falls city council, winning 60 percent of the vote in the four-person race for place three.

It was the first time that Harper, a principal in the Wichita Falls firm Harper/Perkins, had ever run for public office.

Wrote the *Wichita Falls Record News* March 31 in support of Harper's candidacy: "Charles Harper, without running for public office until this spring, has become one of the most widely known persons in Wichita Falls. His

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background as an architect made his experience valuable to this community following the April 1979 tornado and last year's flooding. When that need arose, Charles Harper was there to help. Harper believes in action. He believes it is not enough to determine there is a problem. He is not satisfied until action is taken to solve that problem. He is the kind of person citizens of Wichita Falls need on the city council."

#### HOUSTON'S GULF TOWER WINS ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Gulf Tower in Houston, designed by CBS with Walter P. Moore and Associates as structural engineer, has won a 1983 National Honor Award for Engineering Excellence from the American Consulting Engineers Council. The award is one of only 14 awarded nationally, and the only Texas winner among 130 entries.



Gulf Tower, Houston.

The 52-story, 1.3 million square-foot granite and glass office tower in the downtown Houston Center development combines two structural systems, which reduced construction time and met Gulf's requirements for corner offices with unobstructed views by eliminating all corner columns.

NEWS, continued on page 91.



## BIG MAN IN STRUCTURAL STEEL

He's still trim enough to handle himself on a baseball diamond, even though his playing days are well behind him.

He's Fred Peters, 26-year Moshier veteran and Plant Manager in San Antonio.

Fred grew up in Corpus Christi, and played varsity baseball before graduating from high school at the age of 16. He continued his career in semipro and for the Ft. Gordon Army team, before going to work in 1956 for Campbell Steel, a firm later acquired by Moshier.

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Faithful readers—perhaps even those not so faithful—by now will have noticed the new look we rather eagerly present with this issue. It has been almost four years since Houston architect and graphic designer Dennis Felix “tightened up” our recent format. And it has been a whole decade—*precisely* 10 years—since our last full-scale overhaul. The May/June issue of 1973 bore a spiffy new look by Houston graphic designer Jim Culberson, including the now-familiar logo that has served as our identity—“Texas Architect” stacked in two lines of Helvetica Bold. That issue represented a virtual rebirth of the then-23-year-old magazine, a renewal of commitment to quality in form and content.

Ten years later, we find ourselves at another plateau, with a bigger (three times bigger), healthier, more substantive, and more colorful publication. It simply *feels* like the right time for another change, and we are indebted to 3D/International in Houston for its generous assistance in developing our new format. Frank Douglas, head of 3D/I’s graphics division and a member of TSA’s publications committee, helped communicate our initial guidelines to senior designer Bill Hewson, who very capably—and with visible enthusiasm—rendered our expectations into a tangible system.

Our growth to a consistent size of more than 100 pages per issue precipitated what is perhaps the most dramatic modification in our format—the shift to a “perfect-bound” book, with a flat spine that lends the publication an air of permanence. On the cover, we have discarded the band of white space at the top in favor of a full-page cover image, which provides more visual impact and even makes the magazine look larger. (We resisted the temptation to increase our trim-size from the standard 8½” × 11” in deference to readers who like to photocopy or clip and file.) Our new

logo retains the spirit of the old and familiar while setting a precedent for the bold bars used for emphasis, clarity and continuity throughout the book.

Inside, we have remained loyal to the classic look of a serified typeface—Times Roman—while drawing upon a system of bars and rules for a counterbalancing contemporary touch and a sense of orderliness. A standard 3-column grid has been retained for news pages and standing departments, but more layout flexibility has been provided for feature pages by creating a choice among 4-column, 2-column, and 2½-column grids.

As we have grown through the years, we have been able to use higher percentages of full-color pages. This fortunate circumstance is being addressed in the new format by a renewed commitment to excellence in architectural photography. (And we are indebted to the small network of photographers on whose talents we have come to depend.) In addition, our layouts will reflect a deliberate preference for the juxtaposition of large and small images, as opposed to a consistent use of middle-size images in rejecting small ones.

We hope our readers will share our own enthusiasm for the new *TA* that emerges with this issue on custom houses. Perhaps it won’t be stretching a point to observe that, like a good house, our new format has a visual appeal and character of its own, it serves its purpose well, and it’s something we can live with.

—Larry Paul Fuller

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# HOUSES, MYTHS, AND DREAMS

*An Introduction by Gerald Allen*

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When I and my colleagues Donlyn Lyndon and Charles Moore wrote our book *The Place of Houses*, we meant it to be a guide not just for architects but for anybody who wanted a house. Unlike the famous pattern-book writers of the nineteenth century, we did not see ourselves as offering a collection of actual house plans, however varied they might be; instead, we wanted our book to provide the kind of patterns that would help people *think* about houses. Our goal was to turn away from the object of desire, the house itself, to the creators of that desire, its inhabitants, to show that from their point of view any set of ready-made plans would probably not be adequate.

From the inhabitants' personal vantage, there would only be attitudes, predilections, dreams, and possibilities, some of which we tried to suggest in our book. We also tried to argue that the selection of just the right mix of all these things could rightly be made only by the housebuilders themselves, and by nobody else. It seemed to follow from this, and it was our cheery hope at the time, that, once worlds of potential housebuilders had actually made their choices and built houses in this way, not only would they be happy with the results, but we as a whole—you, me, and everybody else—would be proud possessors of an architectural environment as rich, as varied, and as properly polyglot as the culture we live in.

I still have all of these past hopes and intentions stored in memory, so I was particularly glad to be asked by *Texas Architect* to say something about the six houses that make up this issue. They are custom-

designed by architects and recently built in Texas, or in one case designed by Texas architects and built elsewhere. They are all fun to look at and to try to imagine living in. And, after getting past the initial impression that they all have that spit-shined and spiffy look of architecture with a capital "A," what we can notice most of all is how different each is from all the rest, and how different are the specific images and values that each tries to portray. This, for all the reasons I have been saying, makes me happy.

**T**he townhouse designed by Robert E. Griffin in Houston is a fine and individually tailored essay in the classic Modernism that European architects like Le Corbusier created in the early twentieth century and which more recent American architects have refined to a breathtaking degree. It is also, I have noticed, a kind of architecture that forward-looking, up-scale Texas urbanites seem to feel increasingly comfortable with.

Two other houses—the Strauss House in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and the Allen House in Longview—also use early twentieth-century Modern design as a starting point. But at the Strauss House the result is stark rather than lithe, and powerful more than beautiful, in response to what the architects Lonnecker + Papademetriou of Houston note are the "austere" and "minimalist" tastes of the owners.

In Longview, the Allen house uses our now-familiar spare, Modern shapes, but the thing to notice



LEFT TO RIGHT: *Houston Townhouse*, by Robert E. Griffin, Architect, Houston; *Strauss House*, Lake Charles, Louisiana, by Lonnecker + Papademetriou, Houston; *Allen House*, Longview (also on previous page), by The Allen/Buie Partnership, Longview.



here is the site plan. The architects, The Allen/Buie Partnership, have let their minds wander a good deal further back in time than the early twentieth century, for the idea of long axial vistas and a garden complete with water-works would have warmed the heart of a seventeenth-century ecclesiastical prelate as he planned his villa outside Rome. Too much for a house in Longview? Before answering, think of that little wood-frame church down the street with its gothic windows, or the courthouse on the square with Corinthian columns.

If it is acceptable for us now—as it was for our forefathers—to re-embodiment in new terms memories of formal Italian gardens, Chartres Cathedral, and the Pantheon in Texas buildings, what could be next? Ancient Pliny's seaside villa near Rome, that's what—at least according to San Francisco architects Batey and Mack who, with John Wright in Corpus Christi, were responsible for a house on Ocean Drive there, with its columns, pillared porches, and walls clad in travertine marble. In Houston again, Howard Barnstone used traditional motifs characteristic of John Staub, the esteemed architect of houses like Bayou Bend, as partial inspiration for his Bramlett House. And in Austin, James Coote has provided a carefully up-dated recollection of the South Texas Spanish mode for the David-Peese house.

If these houses are representative of what is going on, or of what we may look forward to, it would seem that we could be on our way to having that architectural environment I mentioned before: varied and as polyglot as our culture. I, for one, have two small caveats, however, plus one more extensive proposition.

Here are the caveats: I *hope* that the quest for inspirations evident in these six houses was a martial campaign in which the clients with their own dreams were allowed to be allies of the architects with theirs, and not just casualties of the battle. And since minds clearly wandered near and far to produce the houses

shown here, I wish some other image closer to home could also have been included—the Texas ranch house, or the Texas farmhouse for instance.

My more lengthy proposition, though, is as follows. When my colleagues Moore and Lyndon and I tried to advocate individuality in the design of houses, we knew—as many other people also knew, had known before, and have re-learned since—that this was only part of the ideal. For each drop of sentiment in the cause of our individual dreams, there would also have to be a compensatory drop applied to the cause of our *collective* dreams, the dreams that would help us put together our separate houses to make neighborhoods, and our neighborhoods to make towns and cities. Only in this way could the whole environment made up of our individual buildings become, as it *should* become, a physical sign of our mutually accustomed selves. It would thus reflect not just our cultural diversity, but also some larger, different, harder to define, but still embracing cultural unity.

**I**n regard to the notion of whether or not such a unity actually exists, we ought to ask ourselves this question: to what extent is our current proud advocacy of cultural pluralism the expression of a laudable ideal for society, and to what extent is it a fearful avoidance of the task of collectively deciding for ourselves what we really are? For, clearly, our regions have—and indeed our nation has—identities, just as a family of diverse individuals has a shared identity. It may not be readily apparent, and it may not surface of its own accord, but that family identity, or that shared cultural unity, certainly can be grasped imaginatively. And if it can be imagined, then I have to believe that it can be critically affirmed, and that it can be built into reality.

This is an issue that was not fully addressed in our book, was meant to have been in a sequel, and finally never was. But it is still worth bringing up





LEFT TO RIGHT: House on Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, by Batey & Mack; Bramlett House, Houston, by Howard Barnstone, FAIA; David-Peese House, Austin, by James Coote, Austin.

here. How, for instance, would houses like the six shown in this issue go together to make neighborhoods, and what would those neighborhoods be like? I raise this question not because it was necessarily within the purview of their architects to answer it, and certainly not because I myself am able to answer it. It does, though, represent a broader concern which I have noticed keeps getting expressed every so often in *Texas Architect*: the issue of the quality of Texas cities.

Are Texas cities “urban” or are they “anti-urban”? Are they too spread out or just right? Are they wonderful or are they awful? These questions surface in the letters-to-the-editor column, and they lurk in the biases of the authors of individual articles. But one often gets the feeling from reading them that one is witnessing a profitless exercise—that, because they have been improperly framed to begin with, these questions and many others like them can never be answered in either a truly creative or truly effective way.

What these questions demand of us is that we make an impossible choice. If we see Texas cities as anti-urban, and therefore unsatisfactory, then we must imagine ourselves capable of totally making them over in the image of cities from some other time and some other place, usually east of Texas. And if we see Texas cities as being just right, then we must will ourselves into believing that what we have is just as wonderful as all those other places we have long known and admired. But something in us tells us that the first is plainly impossible and that the second is, just as plainly, implausible.

What is the way out of this impasse? Let me say again that, if the question is what Texas towns and cities should ideally be like, I do not know the answer. I do, though, think I know of a way, a way of thinking, in which we all might finally come up with an answer. It is provided by, of all things, myth, and in

particular the way humanity in its long history has used myth as a way of loosening itself from the strictures of circumstance. I am thinking of classical myths, Nordic myths, and the folk myths that live on in the fairy tales we are all told as children.

Think, for instance, of the story of the Frog Prince. Its outlines are familiar: the beautiful princess kisses the frog, and he becomes a prince. That is the story. But the question it leaves unresolved, and therefore keeps raising, is: what really happened? Notice that the two most obvious answers both have obvious defects. Either the frog really did turn into a prince (which is satisfying but implausible), or the princess merely imagined he was a prince (which is plausible but unsatisfying).

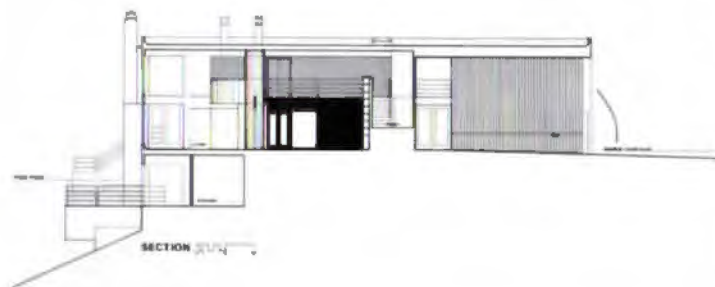
What the myth does is to invite us to entertain all of the possibilities that lie *between* these two choices. No, what the myth really does is to invite us to adopt a frame of mind that could *create* an array of choices between the obvious two.

Perhaps this can provide us with at least a clue to the answer to the question of Texas neighborhoods, Texas towns, and Texas cities. As long as we limit ourselves to the two obvious choices—either deluding ourselves that these places are princely, or trying to make them over into some prince we have met in our travels—as long as we do that, the situation will remain either implausible or unsatisfying. Let me offer the notion that we heed the lesson of the fairy tale and open ourselves to the possibilities that lie in between. Then we could create for ourselves wholly unimagined forms and places—part frog and part prince, part reality and part dream. ■■■■■

*Gerald Allen is author of several books on architecture and is an architect in New York. His firm Gerald Allen & Associates has recently been involved in a number of private and public projects, including new designs in connection with the current restoration of Central Park.*

# HOUSTON TOWNHOUSE

By Michael Benedikt



Upper middle class single-family dwellings since, say, 1930 and the growth of suburbia, have been eclectic in style—if anything. Victorian, Georgian, Craftsman, Shingle, Usonian; castles, manors, barns;—examples of all these and more are readily found in Houston where, as elsewhere, they often stand a stone's throw apart in the older and/or "better" neighborhoods. Yet every decade or so also has its more-or-less orthodox version of what up-to-dateness and true modernity mean in home design. The white cube assemblies with steel corner windows of the '30s and '40s; the low sweeping roofs, sliding glass and teak built-ins of the '50s and '60s; and today what is so well exemplified by Robert Griffin's townhouse in Houston—all represent styles that, though far from the cutting edge of design, are refined and avowedly "contemporary." The result can be a house quite brave in its context, and most likely commissioned by clients who "know something about architecture" but are suspicious of fads.

Griffin's townhouse, for a middle-aged couple in Houston's exclusive Indian Circle, has its roots in the work of Le Corbusier, Neutra and, more recently, Meier, Gwathmey/Siegel, and others. Griffin is not alone in finding the language congenial. Several components add up to a modernism that is rapidly becoming orthodox—the use of rectilinear double volumes with pipe-railed stairs and walks touched by circles, the graphic treatment of large areas of fixed glass that transform the outer walls somewhat ambiguously into framework, and the relative unimportance of materials or construction as sources of expression.

But conventions liberate as much as limit. Indeed, without a set of conventions, without an orthodox set of formal features and a "game plan" for combining them, no architect could even begin to design, let alone do so in a style, however idio-

syncratic. What Robert Griffin has done here so admirably, then, is work with apparent ease and considerable skill within the current orthodoxy of contemporary design to organize a long townhouse lot, half in a floodplain, into an autonomous, efficient, spacious, gracious and light-filled living space.

Pulling six feet away from the adjacent party wall (but coming back to it in the kitchen to capture a view of garden and ravine), the house gains a measure of independence. The upper living level, smaller than the main level, narrows progressively to the private, view side of the site, allowing the double-high space to widen and emerge onto the stairs and decks that overlook the ravine. At the lower level, under the 100-year flood plain, are hot tub, deck and storage.

The plan is immaculate—a model of geometrical alignment serving functional organization. The only awkwardness, perhaps, lies in the placement of the living room fireplace. Attempting centrality and vertical massiveness in relation to the long volume of the house as a whole, it seems to pull the living room furniture into a compromise between symmetry (evident in all other rooms) and a concern for circulation, optimal view and orientation toward the hearth.

Nonetheless, in a field of entries not unlike it in style, this townhouse was awarded one of three residential design citations by *Houston Home and Garden* and the Houston Chapter/AIA in their 1982 awards program. And it has drawn further recognition here. For this design shows how, in capable hands, an unadorned architecture of refined and contemporary—if orthodox—forms can produce satisfying experiences in terms of light, space and organization, as well as efficient architectural solutions to a variety of real and self-given problems.

*Michael Benedikt practices in Austin and teaches at the UT-Austin School of Architecture.*



*LEFT: Townhouse steps down hill toward ravine. BELOW LEFT: Simplicity of entry facade belies complexity of form on view side. BELOW RIGHT: Living area. Liberal use of wood warms an all-white setting.*



*Exterior walls as framework.*

*Photographs by Richard Pevoni*



**PROJECT:** *Townhouse, Houston.*  
**ARCHITECT:** *Robert E. Griffin, Architect, Houston; project team—Robert Griffin and Randall Gay.*  
**CONSULTANTS:** *Gerald S. Prickett, Houston (structural); Love, Glasgow & Lewis, Inc., Houston (MEP).*  
**CONTRACTOR:** *Tommy Gee, Houston.*  
**INTERIORS:** *Robert E. Griffin, Architect, Houston.*

*RIGHT: In contrast to approach side, bayou side of house has relaxed composition and scaled-down massing.*

Photography by Peter C. Papademetriou



*ABOVE: Gallery connects primary wing with secondary wing. LEFT, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Approach side; detail of front facade; living room; indoor/outdoor spaces.*

# STRAUSS HOUSE

By Larry Paul Fuller

Approaching this big, blue-banded house above a Louisiana bayou, one is struck by its formidable scale and formality—attributes that are appropriate, perhaps, in the context of an ante-bellum plantation, but that obligingly dissolve into a more relaxed composition and friendlier scale at the rear of the house. Here, scaled-down irregular massing and a diverse range of interior/exterior spatial relationships create an inviting setting for social activity with views toward the bayou.

Responding to an "empty nest" situation in which college-age children will be away from home much of the time, Houston architects Lonnecker + Papademetriou developed a scheme in which a primary master suite/living wing and a secondary children's/service wing are connected by a gallery for the owners' art collection.

While both wings have two stories, higher ceilings and more generous spatial treatment characterize the primary wing. The gallery is articulated as a vertical slot that extends the higher roofline of the main wing across to the lower secondary wing, which in turn wraps around behind the gallery to form the living room volume and to achieve a stronger interlock between the two main masses. The two-level gallery forms a series of socializing spaces and is enlivened by clerestory windows and two double-height volumes. As a means of integrating the building into its gently sloping site, the floor level drops slightly from the main wing to the children's wing.

Image-wise, the house responds to the clients' tastes through an austere minimalism

that also appears in their artwork and furnishings. Yet this Modernist aesthetic gives way to formal symmetries as well as to touches of Art Deco found in the color palette and the use of glass block panels (whose translucence affords both light and privacy).

The inside color scheme consists of a broad range of pastels, changing subtly from surface to surface, with neutral greys for trim and floor surfaces to establish continuity. The blue exterior scheme provides a scale-giving visual "base" for the building—as well as a foil for damp-climate discoloration—in the form of a broad, blue-grey band at ground level. The blues are recollections of Art Deco, but also allude to the bayou and nearby Lake Charles. Specifically nautical is the narrow, blue-green stripe, which is intended to suggest a displacement line. This particular one-liner, and the very idea of a big, blue-banded house, exemplify the whimsicality that has come to characterize much recent custom design. Just how whimsical a house has a right to be is an open question. But the Strauss House remains an undeniably bold statement that has strong meaning at the gut level, and at several other levels as well.

**PROJECT:** *Strauss House, Lake Charles, La.*

**ARCHITECT:** *Lonnecker + Papademetriou architects, Houston*

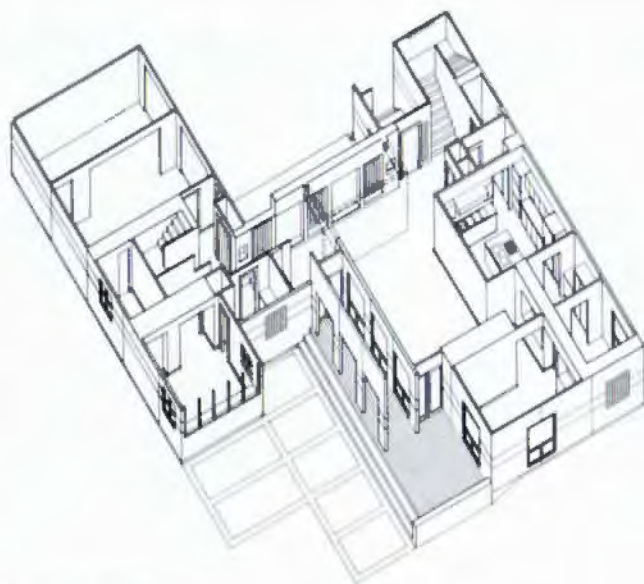
**PROJECT ASSISTANT:** *Stuart Billings*

**OWNERS:** *Kenneth and Julie Ann Strauss*

**CONSULTANTS:** *Karl A.*

*Krause Engineering (structural)*

**CONTRACTOR:** *Owner*



*Axonometric, rear view.*



*Second floor: 1. upper gallery, 2. master bedroom, 3. dressing, 4. master bath, 5. sun terrace, 6. open, 7. reading nook, 8. upper hall, 9. children's bedroom, 10. children's bath.*



*First floor: 1. entry/porch, 2. gallery, 3. living room, 4. kitchen, 5. pantry, 6. breakfast room, 7. dining room, 8. bar, 9. garage, 10. garden shed, 11. rear entry, 12. utility, 13. vanity/bath, 14. music room, 15. terrace, 16. car court.*

# ALLEN HOUSE

By Larry Paul Fuller

When Longview architects Robert Allen and Jim Buie developed the 24-parcel Huntington Park subdivision, they were left with one lot that most buyers regarded as unbuildable—a narrow, 285 x 110-foot, heavily wooded tract with a 30-foot slope from front to back. Allen accepted the lot and its inherent challenges for his own house and, with partner Buie, produced a design that has achieved wide acclaim as a programmatic and aesthetic success.

The Allen House, which has the distinction of being the only Texas work featured in *Record Houses 1982*, represents a mélange of stylistic influences and personal impressions. Overtones of stark Modernism are tempered by the formality of classical symmetry and the use of a warmth-giving terra cotta color inside and out. It is a color equally reminiscent of East Texas clay, of Postmodern pastels, and of the Italian villas and hill towns the architects visited with their families prior to designing the house. Also of European inspiration are the marble floors and the back-yard-as-garden concept, developed here as a 100-foot-long water cascade with intentionally narrowed perspective.

The house's three-level vertical form derives from the sharply sloping site and the desire to preserve as many trees as possible. A narrow wooden bridge extends from the street through lush greenery to the second level, which contains the major living spaces. The upper level accommodates three bedrooms, while the ground floor is occupied by the carport and a gameroom. All three levels are

linked by an interior circular stair.

From certain vantage points, the crisp angularity of the box-like form is softened by the barrel vault skylight which, beginning at the entry, defines a double-height volume extending through the living area the full depth of the house. At the third floor level, a bridge spans this volume as a stair landing and as a connector between the master suite and the two additional bedrooms. The barrel vault contributes to an overall sense of openness and airiness created through the use of operable patio doors doubling as large-scale windows. As is always the case with the best of houses, the Allen residence reflects a satisfying blend of architecture as art, and architecture as accommodation. ■

PROJECT: *Allen House, Longview*  
ARCHITECT: *The Allen/Buie Partnership, Longview*  
OWNERS: *Mr. and Mrs. Robert Allen, Longview*  
CONSULTANTS: *Hixson & Harris (structural); John J. Guth Associates (mechanical/electrical).*  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: *Joseph Bramlette.*  
CONTRACTOR: *M. Cline Brown Company*



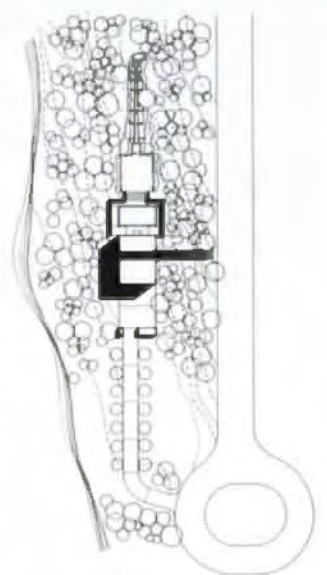
First level.



Third level.



Second level.



*TOP: Bridge from street connects at second-level entry. LEFT: Stair connects all three levels, terminates beneath barrel-vault skylight. ABOVE: Kitchen has garden view. FACING PAGE: View from water cascade shows formal symmetry.*

# BRAMLETT HOUSE

By Jeffrey Karl Ochsner

When Howard Barnstone first decided in 1977 to create a small (approximately 5000 square feet) lot behind his own John Staub-designed house (the Copley House of 1926) on Shadowlawn Circle, it was with the intention of building a smaller house for himself. But, according to Barnstone, the architectural control committee was not sympathetic to his initial scheme. Its estimated cost also proved to be higher than he wished, so he chose to sell the small lot to a friend and remain in the Staub House. Ultimately, this lot passed to Mr. Robert Bramlett, a self-made oil man, who turned to Barnstone for a design. Barnstone states that he had some misgivings but accepted the commission in order to insure a design that would be sympathetic to his adjacent property.

The curved shape of the plan was set by the dimensions of the lot and a 25-foot setback from the street. The Bramletts requested three bedrooms, a study, living spaces, a working greenhouse, and a sloped roof. By placing the greenhouse on the second floor over the living spaces, maximum use could be made of the site. The generally south-facing glazed front wall of

this space rises to its full 15-foot height but is shaded and given privacy by the evergreen oaks along the street. Numerous windows give the house a feeling of openness but are placed so as to protect the privacy of adjoining properties.

The house is recessed 18 inches into the site, which reduces its scale relative to the other houses on the street. Use of gray marble throughout the ground floor creates interior spatial continuity. Living spaces are extended by an outside terrace of flagstone, which is repeated in the second-floor greenhouse. The gray stucco exterior features quoins and other details which relate to houses in the neighborhood.

*Note: Following completion of construction documents, Mr. and Mrs. Bramlett chose to have the house constructed by their son, who is a contractor, without supervision by the Barnstone firm. During construction in 1982, the Bramletts made changes, particularly in the interiors, which Mr. Bramlett has called "quarterback audibles."*

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner is a Houston architect, a lecturer at Rice University, and a frequent contributor to *Texas Architect*.



Chas McGrath



Chas McGrath



Ground level.



Second level.





*FAR LEFT: Barnstone's scheme for a house he originally intended to build for himself on the Bramlett site. (Stanley Tigerman gets credit for the flying beam.) LEFT: Site plan illustrates difficult site restrictions.*



*Bob Muir*



*Section.*

**PROJECT:** *Bramlett Residence, Houston.*  
**ARCHITECT:** *Howard Barnstone, F.A.I.A. Architects, Inc., Houston*  
**CLIENT:** *Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bramlett.*  
**CONSULTANTS:** *Luis Lemus Consulting Engineers, Inc., Houston (structural).*  
**CONTRACTOR:** *Bramlett Construction Company, Houston.*



Photography by Bill Kennedy



TOP: Ivy-covered facade of David-Peese House with overscaled columns supporting porch and arbor. ABOVE: A merging of regional materials and flora at entryway. FACING PAGE: Two-story common room.

PROJECT: David-Peese House,  
Austin  
ARCHITECT: James Coote, Austin  
CONTRACTOR: Doug Mueller,  
Austin



First-floor plan.

# DAVID-PEESE HOUSE

By Michael McCullar



Second-floor plan.

suites—one each for two people who want to maintain privacy and individual lifestyles while sharing communal areas. Both suites are open to a two-story common room for eating and socializing.

On the Balcones Escarpment, where regional climates as well as cultures coalesce, the David-Peease House has a minimum of surface area and openings and is oriented to take advantage of prevailing breezes as well as views. The mission tile roof slopes steeply in front to form a porch supported on one end by a fat, overscaled concrete column. Similar columns support a steel arbor covered with grape vines at the south-front corner of the house. An exhaust fan high in the gabled end of the common room, which has a thick terracotta tile floor, ventilates the interior, and a large dining bay directly beneath acts as a suntrap in winter.

The grounds have the mossy, unkempt texture of a well-worn estate—something that has been delightfully lived in for a good while, like O'Neil Ford's Willow Way—making the house look not only larger but also older than it really is (it was completed in 1979). Fast-growing ivy already has covered much of the facade. In fact, the lush one-and-a-half-acre site appears to have been left as undisturbed as possible to preserve an indigenous and abundant cloak of Spanish and live oak, evergreen sumac, mountain laurel and native grasses and wildflowers (one of the owners is a landscape architect with an affinity for Hill Country flora at its pristine best).

Coote, a professor of architecture at UT-Austin, says the project is "an attempt to create a house that is respectful of place, evocative of local tradition, even charming. There is also concern for a comfortable spatial complexity within, and control of exterior scale, so that what is a very small house is elusive in size, perhaps a fragment of something much larger."

Old-world building traditions, adapting to new-world circumstances, made their way into the Texas Hill Country in the 1840s, along with German immigrants moving northwest from Port Indianola to found such Teutonic Texas settlements as Fredericksburg and New Braunfels and Boerne. Already there by then, along a faded northern frontier, were established traditions of the colonial Spanish, having made their way up from the south over the preceding 300 years.

Reflecting the multicultural heritage of its region, the David-Peease House in the hills of west Austin exhibits a kind of hybrid "style" derived from—among other influences—the *fachwerk* tradition of limestone and log and the Mexican tradition of earthen stucco and tile. This blending is clearly expressed in the melting away of pink stucco on exterior walls around the entryway, revealing a creamy limestone base beneath like old brick exposed by peeling plaster.

A provocative play on regionalism is the ghostly continuation of the profile of the house by a pitched steel framework, as though part of the house were unfinished, and the repetition of the garage-door grid in a stepped extension of the facade. The metal framework is a trellis, in fact, intended to soften the transition from the main pitched-roof volume of the house to the low horizontal wing wall of the garage as well as to provide an armature for running roses over an upstairs deck. Along with the repeating garage-door grid, which creates the illusion of an eight-car garage, the metal framework also makes the 2,100-square-foot house look like it might be larger than it really is. This ambiguity is enhanced by "discombobulating" the elements of scale, Coote says, which also reveals to the viewer that the architect is not trying to fool anyone with a cute little regional replication.

Inside, the house is programmed to provide two private



# HOUSE ON OCEAN DRIVE

By James Coote



*FACING PAGE: From the seaward side, a procession of columns leads down to the water, evoking images of a "noble ruin." From within the house, the water of the pool appears to mingle with the sea itself. ABOVE: From Ocean Drive, the house is virtually closed and elusive in scale. The major axis runs through a walled courtyard, through the house, and into the sea.*

More than most houses, those along the bay side of Corpus Christi's Ocean Drive must confront their setting, wedged as they are between the streams of cars on that palmed and lawned boulevard and, on the other side, the beautiful and relentlessly destructive gulf, with its violent shifts of mood and pervasive humidity. Among the eclectic variety of houses along the drive, this recently completed residence by Batey & Mack is a unique response, seeming to recall an ancient past, a more serene and classical world.

Toward Ocean Drive, the house presents a certain mystery, not only because it is virtually closed, but because its elusive scale suggests a quiet nobility which some would find admirable and others too little domestic for their tastes. The sheer extent of walls clad mainly in Italian travertine complemented by rosy Mexican ashlar veneers, creates a presence of luxury both refined and opulent, and in any case very beautiful glowing palely in the late-afternoon sun.

It is, however, the other side, the water side, that seems to convey the essential spirit of the house. Its pillared porches and arbors, and its rows of columns descending to the sea (or rising from it?), evoke resonant suggestions of Pliny's Roman seaside villas. It is also the ocean side that reveals the geometric order of the whole construction, an alternation of 12-inch square pillars and 36-inch interstices. This order appears along the sides and back of the house, as well as pervasively throughout the interior.

The other principal method of organization is the use of axes and bilateral symmetries. The major axis runs from the front entrance, through the house, and into the sea. Along this axis are strung a series of events, beginning with a pleasantly scaled walled court, paved and partly clad with travertine. The court is enlivened by water trickling down a pair of delicately carved

antique columns and by the shadows of trellises and planted borders. The processional symmetry continues through an imposing polished red-granite doorway and into the first of three small, square, skylit spaces, which serve to suffuse the interior with ample but gentle light. They also create transitions which partake of inside and outside, space that is psychologically part of both and which, especially at the end of the spectacular vista through the house toward the bay and sky, mitigates the too-powerful brilliance of the dazzling sun. The eye continues across the gentle arc of a pool whose blue-green mosaic tiles and trembling sheet of water appear suspended within the bay itself. Descending on either side of this pool, one can follow the last of the procession of columns into the sea. To reuse a comment on one of Paul Rudolph's early seaside houses, "It would make a noble ruin."

Apart from the central axis, the interior is composed of minor axes that link both directly and through intermediate halls the several rooms. Modularity appears and reappears, but with a presence that escapes being too rigorous. The order appears in the deeply coffered ceilings, sometimes in shallow pilasters, or in travertine strips in the marble floors. The persistence and precision of this order is largely responsible for the effect of lyrical clarity and elegance within the spacious rooms. It is, however, an order which accommodates less easily the usual varieties of personal eccentricities which often complicate the twentieth century—and probably the second century Roman—domestic scene. This is an idealized vision. One almost wants to see this villa with faded frescoes and chaises draped in something white and billowing, perhaps a bronze torchiere to illuminate some of the beautiful antique fragments now displayed in those pale cream and gray-green rooms.

At the root of the unmistak-

able sense of quality which the house conveys are the fine and precious materials and craftsmanship of a caliber very rarely seen today anywhere, especially in residential construction. The creamy travertine imported from Italy, the rosa blanca cantera and rough brown paving from Mexico—all are cut precisely in 12-inch squares and fitted in a flawless veneer around columns, walls, and floors, each joint and line of mortar perfectly set. There are lovely birch cabinets and cypress doors that have been rubbed with a transparent stain and hand-waxed to produce a soft patina of age in no way suggesting the vulgarity of "distressed" or antiqued effects. There is fine bronzework in the fireplace screens and hardware. Handsomely wide wood floorboards are carefully edged with marble.

Under all this elegance is an elaborate foundation of piers and beams coping with the shifting soils, sturdy exterior walls of concrete block under the continuous veneer of finish stone, and a microzinc roof with precise standing seams and batteries of scuppers ornamenting the sides. Woven into the geometric order are transoms, ventilating exhausts, ceiling fans, and high ceilings which traditionally help moderate that climate.

In all, this house seems to illustrate the possibility of buildings that are both metaphorically eloquent and sensible, well-crafted, albeit expensive both in money and time. It demonstrates that historical references may be made and used in ways that are not self-conscious, theatrical, or trivial. And it demonstrates that regionalism need not be provincial.

*James Coote is a professor of architecture at UT-Austin and a Texas Architect contributing editor. He also has an Austin practice in which he focuses on the design of houses.*



*LEFT: Water trickling down delicately carved antique columns enlivens the pleasantly scaled entry court. BELOW: A procession of finely crafted columns parallels the central axis down to the sea.*

**PROJECT:** *House on Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi*  
**ARCHITECT:** *Batey & Mack, San Francisco.*  
**ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT:** *John Wright, Corpus Christi.*  
**CONSULTANTS:** *Wallace Wilkerson (structural).*  
**CONTRACTOR:** *O.J. Beck and Sons, Corpus Christi; Joe Ortiz, construction supervisor.*  
**INTERIORS:** *Norman Foster, Corpus Christi.*  
**CRAFTSMEN:** *Curtis Domingue (marble and stonework); Kurt Voss (brasswork).*

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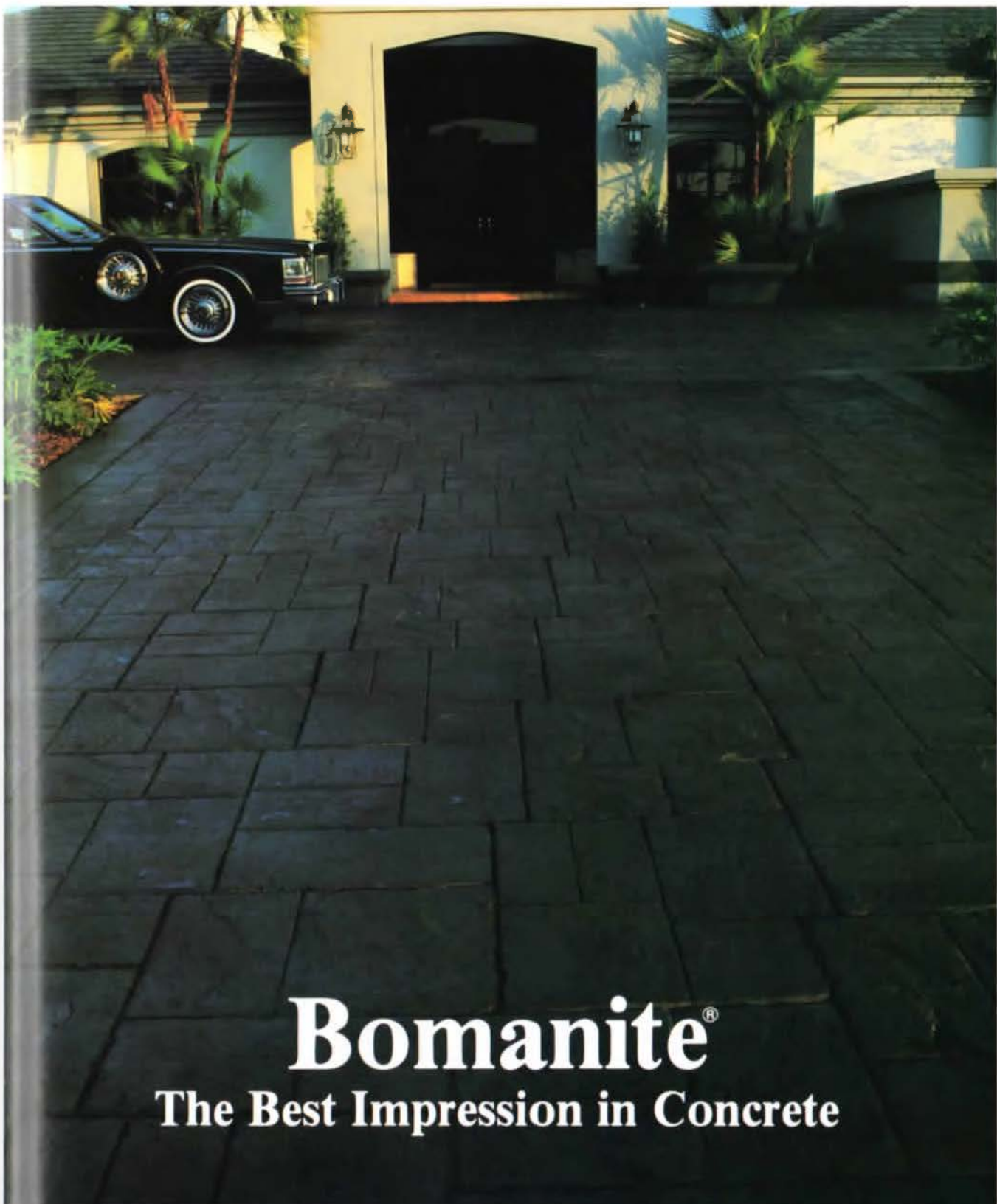
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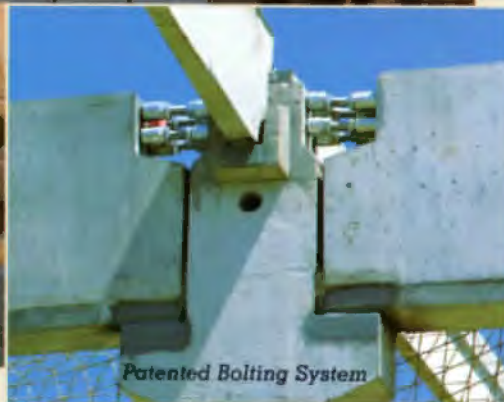
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# ON THE HOUSE: AN ESSAY

By Frank Welch, FAIA

**A noted maker of houses reflects on good ones—houses that combine a diversity of accent and dialect with a respect for structure; that reflect their roots without overdependency on nostalgia; that exude self-effacement and formal quietude. He says the good house results from a process in which “the architect and owner are in quest of something, in concert, like dancers or lovers.”**



It isn't necessary to elaborate on the traditional, familiar and well-documented “drawbacks” that designing a house entails, like the huge amount of energy required to maintain control of the budget, the client and especially one's own foolish notions of good design. But the fact is that designing a house covers it *all*—everything that architecture is about—and covers it most intensely. There's the rub.

With a house, *an* architect must be in control; successful houses are not done by committee, but instead by consensus. It is a most personal and intensely involving enterprise, this process toward accord between the designer and the owner. The emotional energy on both sides creates a potentially dangerous drain on the endurance and faith needed to stay the course. You can't design a good house with a hollow heart. To paraphrase, of those whose satisfactions are deep, much will be required.

Deep as these satisfactions are, few young architects “stay with” residences when opportunities for larger (and more impersonal) projects appear. Why do so few maintain interest in houses, while others become “house architects”? Natural selection is one answer—survival of the fittest, or best suited. Designing residences offers the unparalleled opportunity to affect people's lives in a most personal way. Here the architect and client form a symbiosis of interests; the objective of achieving something fine is shared by both, though their paths to that goal differ. But the house architect finds this challenge agreeable (there is no satisfaction and only small viability in a *carte blanche* design commission) and loves orchestrating the seemingly disparate elements into a whole. The house architect truly loves people, regardless of their individual limitations and idiosyncracies, and respects their dreams, whether informed by sophisticated sensibilities or plebeian pop culture.

Architects become identified with houses because of success at designing them. One successful house treasured by its owners, and admired by its owners' friends, leads to more jobs. House commissions come through referral almost exclusively—you don't go hustle a

house client, though you might be called on to “sell yourself” to someone shopping.

Though a house owner is reluctant to downgrade his architect—it's a reflection on the client's judgment and the value of his house—“horror stories” travel fast. Leaky roofs and inadequate air conditioning do not a happy client make. The worst thing a proud architect can have said about him is that “he's a good designer, but he can't handle the technical part.”

When Sir Laurence Olivier was young, just beginning his stage career, the critics ignored him until his performance as the fiendish Iago. During Olivier's preparation for the part, a wise elder had counseled him, “Until you *truly* care about the character you are playing, you won't succeed.” Heeding this advice, Olivier achieved his first great critical success. Similarly, the designer must care deeply about the client, and his needs and dreams. Years ago, an architect refused an owner's request for built-in bookcases since it didn't fit into his design scheme. Each was the loser when the client later had the shelves designed and built by a carpenter. Today, stories are circulating about a well-known New York architect who has little tantrums if he can't have his total way with the design of a multi-million-dollar house.

**T**hose who design houses must confront an interface between esthetic vision and the client's own practical program. It's a delicate matter—sometimes an impossibility—to reconcile the disparate interests meeting head-on in the design formulation. But this is an aptitude as important as any for a house architect—a penchant for gracefully resolving opposing parts into something better than their simple sum. Many times a demanding client has forced an alien issue into an architect's scheme, requiring heart-wrenching and regretful acquiescence. But the result can be a totally new and fresh aspect reflecting the owner's needs after being filtered through the architect's sensibility and ability to cut, fill,

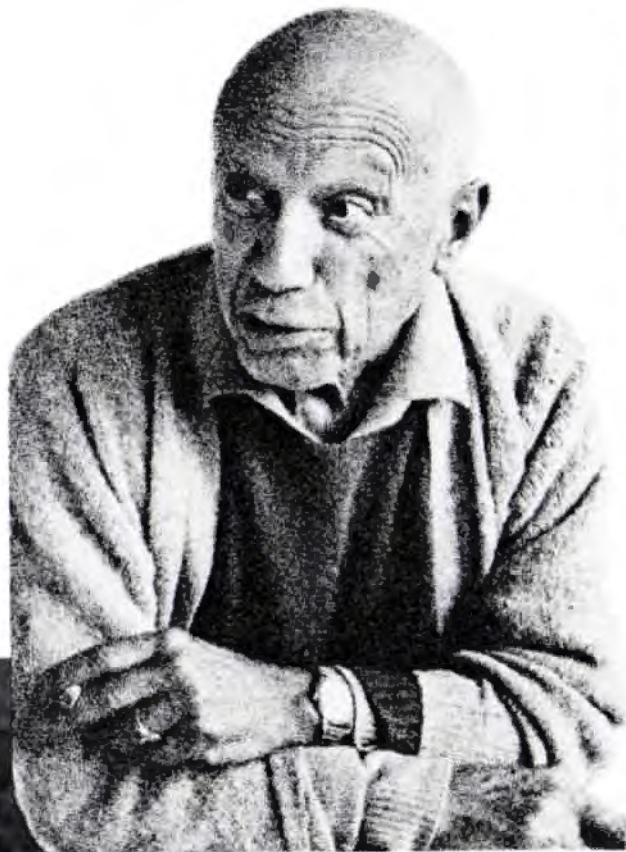
FACING PAGE: “Glass House,” New Canaan, Conn., by Philip Johnson, 1949.





"A successful house design is not unlike a painted portrait, which must meet the technical requirement of bearing the sitter's likeness, but which bears it as the artist sees it."

Cecil Beaton



juggle, or dissemble in keeping the design whole. A successful house design is not unlike a painted portrait, which must meet the technical requirement of bearing the sitter's likeness, but which bears it as the artist sees it. The likeness is transcribed, translated, not into a foreign tongue, but into a familiar one of personal interpretation. After working for some time, Picasso unveiled Gertrude Stein's portrait for her and asked what she thought. Stein replied, "It doesn't look me." Picasso came back, "It will!"

The architect and owner are in quest of something, in concert, like dancers or lovers. Regardless of the energy, thought, and imagination involved, the *result* is the important thing—a work of clarity embodying a seemingly effortless execution and a modulation of its parts. House architecture *is* communication—it really speaks—and is only possible through another discourse, the effective dialogue between client and architect.

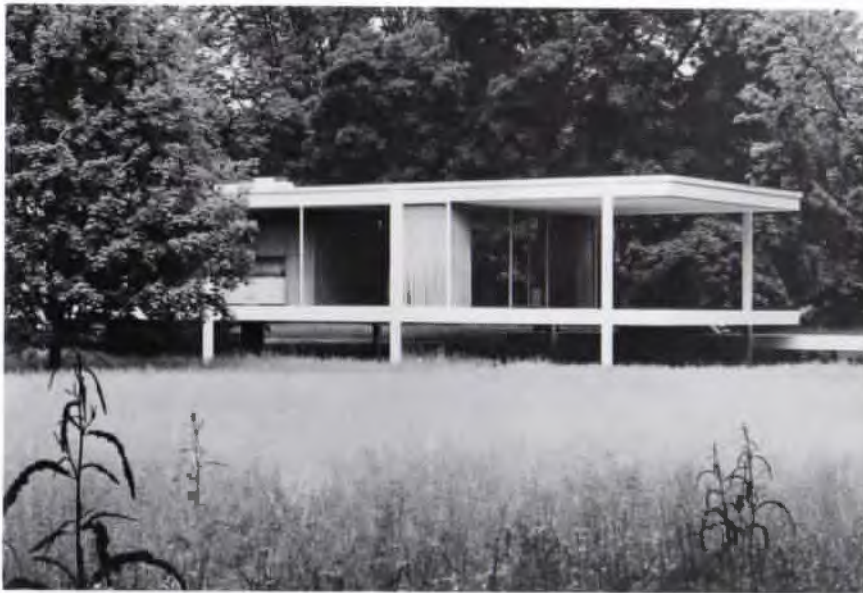
What communicates and characterizes high quality in a house? Certain houses and places come to mind: Johnson's Glass House, Mies' Farnsworth, Wright's Robie, the Queen's House in Greenwich, Blenheim in Oxfordshire, the *Petit Trianon*, Monticello, the White

House, and here in Texas, the Elbert Williams House by Dave Williams, as well as O'Neil Ford's Berger House. Also, there are special clay houses in New Mexico, red brick bow fronts in Boston, stone houses in the Texas hill country, and eighteenth century frame houses in Nantucket.

What informs all these built things is a proportionate and almost seamless quality in which the parts relate agreeably to an *idea* and become a whole piece. Whether springing from a formal design or a cultural imperative, these houses—small or large, known or anonymous—possess ineffable qualities that reflect a *control*, a holding of the style reins. The ultimate goal is a dwelling as background and stage for affairs of living or ceremony—never visually abusive or intrusive on the business of conducting life with grace and meaning. Perceived or sensed or remembered elements of mass, line, volume, light, space and texture have limitless combinations, but into the architect's hands falls the responsibility of bringing them together into a harmony of proportion and detail that reflects particular circumstances. Significant among the circumstances is how the house expresses its time—its moment in the history of architectural style.

Most architects practicing today "grew up" with a bias toward the highly exclusive Modern/International line of argument. After World War II, the architectural schools welcomed a group of articulate young teachers, in transit to practices. With missionary zeal, they argued strongly in behalf of Bauhaus principles and the rational *rationale*, eschewing all references to the historical architectural past and styles. Sulking in the wings were the Wright champions and what could be called the Humanist Moderns: less doctrinaire, more pragmatic, more open to alternatives, but no less devoted to the fundamental bases of the Modern movement. They included the likes of Breuer, Wurster, Belluschi, Esherick and, here in Texas, O'Neil Ford. There was also Robert Woods Kennedy of Massachusetts, who wrote a highly influential book on house design.

To believe Tom Wolfe, "worker housing" was the only thing the Moderns produced. But, truthfully, there was always a ferment of individual inflections and personal dialects under the mantle of Modern. As the International Style moved west, it seemed to lose some of its Calvinist rigor. Craig Elwood's pure-Mies work seemed more anomalous in Los Angeles than it might have in Cambridge. And the ambience of Eames' assembled house above the Pacific derived more from the protean life



Heath & Blasing

Julius Shulman

Deary Tomkinson

lived there than from a machine-made self-consciousness. As for Wright, he was strongly put down as archaic, really only a Victorian in new clothes, with no relevance to the mid-century questing for a better world through better design.

**W**hile admiring the precision and thoroughness and wholeness of Mies and his disciples, a number of young architects were drawn to the work of people like Ford and Wurster and Belluschi. Their buildings—mainly houses—were certainly not Revivalist. Rather, they revived the idea of simple, direct, “readable” forms—not pretty or stunning—but well crafted and associative with native materials and naive building types. Ford, in self-mocking overstatement, said: “If I don’t understand it, I can’t do it. It’s got to be simple.” (A house of Pietro Belluschi’s in Oregon, built of weathered wood, had gabled roofs and deep overhangs and was encircled with frame constructed walls and a nicely crafted gate. It made an impression by being modern/contemporary and also looking like a house.)

*CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Farnsworth House, Plano, Ill., Mies van der Rohe, 1950; Eames House, Pacific Palisades, Charles Eames, 1949; Elbert Williams House, Dallas, David Williams, 1932; Robie House, Chicago, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1909.*



House at 4606 St. Johns Drive, Dallas, The Oglesby Group, 1965.

But then, as now, young architects got high on the conversation-stopping buildings by stars whose unalloyed designs demanded attention and photographed so well. Life was lived vicariously through *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, and *Arts & Architecture*. We have come a long way from that terrible, but necessary, invocation by our elders that less is more and purity of line and form produces purity of the political soul. From a highly exclusionary sort of artistic morality, we find ourselves now in a confusing but exhilarating period of pluralism, with stylistic multiple choices bouncing off our sensibilities as fast as we can riffle through P/A!

Much of this phenomenon is natural reaction to strict ideology, much as the International Style reacted to the enervated architecture of the 1920s. But each age is different. In the thirties, even the men in the breadlines wore suits and hats. If the varied street attire in vogue today is a valid indicator, the shake-down to a cumulative style of architecture—one that is accessible and agreeable to many—might take longer than we can imagine.

Here in Texas, O'Neil Ford and Austin's Charles Granger were just two who hewed to fundamental Modernist tenets, but Ford's flat-roofed Berger House in Dallas, while displaying geometric affinities to contemporary thought, was built of soft Mexican brick and had deep overhangs, large double-hung windows and cross-ventilation. In the late '40s, Granger surprised a group of students by asking, "What is wrong with charm?" and then launching into a discussion of "Sex in Architecture."

Beginning with Dave Williams, house architects here in Texas long have expressed their own time, but in very personal and subtle ways, they have evoked the past without being slavish to it. People like Ford, Granger, Preston Bolton, Enslie Oglesby, Howard Barnstone, Downing Thomas, Bill Booziotis and Charles Tapley have in various ways addressed modernist design issues with one eye over the shoulder looking to the traditional, regional or vernacular archive.

We are focusing here, however, on such a



Erin Snyder

tiny percentage of the constructed dwellings in this country. What of the thousands and thousands of houses built without adequate architectural influence? Several things work against the hiring of an architect as an essential part of the process. In Dallas' Highland Park and the newest "high-rent" district, Bent Tree, the quality of many of the new houses is abysmally low. Lots of money spent on land (\$250,000 for a small lot or tear-down in Highland Park) and high construction cost (\$100 plus per square foot) tend to mandate against an architect fee.

In the past, when large numbers of single-family "spec houses" were built (post-war cottages and bungalows, for instance) there was always an accessible vocabulary or accepted popular style of the period to employ. It was not distinguished, maybe, but was perfectly acceptable and well mannered. Today, in contrast, there is a visual cacophony and babel of tongues—mostly unknown—in the new high-end developments of any Texas city from El Paso to Houston to Dallas. Here is the ugly side of pluralism, self-defeating in its insistence that everyone have a stylistic say—no visual consensus or cohesion of ideas concerning appearance or form, but rather a grab bag of mail order gestures and accessorized *strut*. (It is interesting to imagine a venerable enclave like Houston's River Oaks being built in the '70s instead of the '30s and '40s.) In times past, even builder houses were "educated" and restrained compared to the current imagery of glut and ego.





Another manifestation of the architectural pluralism increasingly visible across the land is the Postmodern New Wave (some of which has been around almost long enough to qualify as Old Wave, if not yet Permanent Wave). Architecture has become almost anything one wants it to be. Historic retrievalism of a highly personal nature characterizes the most visible of the Postmodern work—Decadent Deco, De-Mille Old Testament, or Chicago Dada—anything goes, including a kind of Urban Guerilla Manifesto on the West Coast. It's a feverish time, and a time that might not produce a consensus or common language in the classical sense, but rather a various group of mature dialects, a plurification that might be the most correct and appropriate expression of a humanist democracy.

While we wait for the current architectural music to modulate, architects could do worse than to reflect on the current hard sell of so much high-visibility design. These buildings seem to be saying, "I am Architecture and I am in charge." This "me Tarzan you Jane" effect on the senses makes great photographs and garners laurels for the designer, but where do the mortals go to escape formal, ornamental, and chromatic KO? Some of this excess is understandable overreaction to the strictures of the past, but there is also a connection to the shake-and-dance of the high-rolling suburbs.

As brilliant and influential as Venturi and

Moore were for a new generation of architects, their assured interest in history and period style in less tutored hands often results in striving, strident buildings with an air of masquerade chic. Understandably, this quality appears in the houses of hip young architects anxious to make a mark with a "highly relevant"—and highly visible—house design. Since there are no rules and there is no definable vocabulary for Postmodern design, the houses are notably heterogeneous in style and demonstrative in expression—real "statement makers"—whether consciously contextual or inadvertently disputatious. Unlike some styles of the past, Postmodern started *High*, instead of developing slowly and tentatively. It is hoped that some stylistic modulation will occur.

One can optimistically imagine a canon of house design developing in the secondary phases of Postmodernism that will embody some virtues often missing now. Ideally, it would be an architecture of diversity in accent and dialect, but one that respects structure and delineates it truthfully; an expressive design language not fearing the past—especially its Modern roots—but recognizing the dangers of overdependency on romantic nostalgia; and, above all, an architecture that produces houses of self-effacement and formal quietude. When the advance guard realizes it has outdistanced the enemy, surely it will rest from the labors of being "original" and will relax the heavy hand. Is it too early to hope for a reaction to a reaction?

*Frank Welch is principal of Frank Welch Associates, of Midland and Dallas, and a "house architect" of estimable reputation.*



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## ECONOMY COMBINED WITH PROVEN PERFORMANCE AND DESIGN FLEXIBILITY

# PAPER ARCHITECTURE

By William W. Caudill, FAIA

**Paper architecture is widely derided as being trivial and irrelevant. But, for several good reasons, we should never underestimate the power of paper.**



William Turnbull's "late entry" in the 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower design competition.

Paper architecture—that expression has been batted around for a long time. To most architects it represents a deep-seated, emotional schism between theory and practice. We ask: can a building be significant if it isn't a building, only a design on paper? We get upset when magazines give so much ink to silly, dreamy unbuildables. To most of us, paper architecture connotes the zany, eccentric things they design in the Postmodernistic paper mills like Princeton, Yale, and Columbia.

We get nervous when more space is given to paper architecture than to real architecture. The *AIA Journal* has featured it; so has *Newsweek*. There are exhibitions everywhere showing architectural drawings, no buildings. And there are elaborate exercises in no-build paper architecture, like the recent repeat of the Chicago Tribune Tower competition. *USA Today* ran a story concerning an exhibit about "the architect's vision from sketch to final drawings," with no mention of real buildings. The January/February issue of *Texas Architect* had a naked cover that looked more like a painting than a building. No furniture. No people. The only thing that made it look real was an outlet to plug in a vacuum cleaner.

Why this fascination with paper architecture? It could be the down economy. In times of recession, people like to dream dreams. Drawings make wonderful dreams. More likely, the obsession with drawings has been brought about by the design leaders who consider aesthetics the main thing and look upon architecture as purely visual art. Philip Johnson tells critics, most of whom love him dearly because he is so sharp with the blurb, that there is only one problem in architecture— aesthetics. Critics love such simplism. Most lean toward art appreciation and have not the slightest idea how buildings are designed. They think of a building as an artistic, personal expression—a big piece of sculpture that stands alone, or a giant painting on continuous facades. Michael Graves, with his beautiful drawings and the pretty words to match, has been the critics' perfect hero.

What about the present state of architecture

from the viewpoint of a hard-nosed pro like me—an architect who believes technology is a wonderful generator of new forms and spaces; who is committed to the total design approach that leads to a total solution in which aesthetics is only one problem; who wants to live in his own time; who abhors retrogression in any form; and who advocates an evolving architecture?

First, I don't think Johnson, or Eisenman, or Graves are villains. To the contrary, they make us think. Postmodernism is no threat—merely a label. It's been said that when you can't think of a name, you put "post" or "neo" in front of what you have. Neoclassic II just wouldn't do. Nor would Romantic Modernism. Classical Revival? We did that one. So far, the name Postmodernism has won the battle of interim labels. Such labels fade. Paper architecture, however, is not a passing fancy.

## ARCHITECTS ARE MORE INFLUENCED BY DRAWINGS THAN BY REAL BUILDINGS.

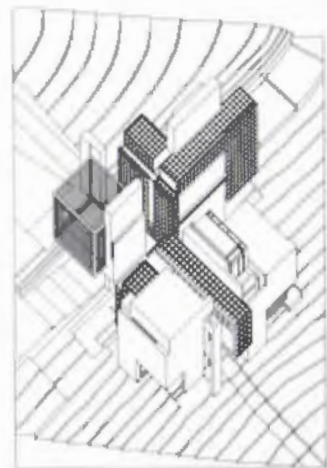
We are programmed to work with paper. It starts in the schools. Students and professors live and learn in a paper world. So do I. Concepts on paper are real things—as real as buildings. But conceptual drawings are easier to copy than buildings. Let's face it—architects copy. They copy drawings and prose of their heroes. My students at Rice copied I. M. Pei's fuzzy renderings to the last fuzz when he was their hero. As a student at MIT, Pei had a great influence on his classmates, who copied his drawing technique. I should know; I was one.

Michael Graves' road to fame is paved with paper. He was famous before he had built a significant building. It was his drawing that did it. Pure inspiration, sold as art—is art. You'd probably love to have one of his drawings hanging in your living room. But would you like to live or work in one of his buildings? The point is this: Graves' drawings have had tremendous influence in the schools and in practice—not his buildings. Philip Johnson

*"I don't think Johnson, or Eisenman, or Graves are villains. To the contrary, they make us think. Postmodernism is no threat—merely a label. . . . So far, the name Postmodernism has won the battle of interim labels. Such labels fade. Paper architecture, however, is not a passing fancy."*



ABOVE: A thumbnail sketch closely resembles the real thing (CRS' Edwin J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall, Akron, Ohio).  
BELOW: Axonometric of Peter Eisenman's House X, an unbuilt project which is the subject of a treatise by the same title (Rizzoli, 1982).



was quoted as saying, "Michael Graves may be the leading architect in this country today . . . the brightest boy around . . . the best man in the movement to incorporate neoclassicism in contemporary architecture." Graves has received an inordinate number of awards in that wide open P/A competition—buildings that haven't been built. He is the champ of the paper architects. And he writes as beautifully as he draws. In fact, his theory touches linguistics. His heroes are linguists. Drawing well, writing well—those two talents sell design. CRS was commissioned to do nine hospitals before we ever got one up. Before that, I wrote a little book called *Space for Teaching* on how to design a schoolhouse—without ever having designed one. It started CRS.

#### IDEAS ON PAPER SELL BETTER THAN BUILDINGS.

In an August issue of *Time*, Wolf Von Eckardt mercilessly panned Michael Graves as being a paper architect. So what. The man has been a force in shaping architecture. He brought on change when change was needed. Paper is powerful. Remember that Mies van der Rohe built little before he was 60 years old. He was a paper architect most of his life.

We are told that Bauhaus and its derivative styles have come and gone. Not true. Every month in the journals I see vestiges of International Style, Machine Aesthetics, Corbu's Cubism, Brutalism, and Miesian Style. Postmodernism does not completely rule the roost. But it's in there pecking, to be sure. Graves, Moore, Venturi, Eisenman, Stern, and others have exerted tremendous influence through words and sketches.

The religious furor and intellectual fermentation of the late '70s stemmed from paper architecture. P/A, once called *Pencil Points*, publicized Postmodernism and started a movement with sketchy models and cleverly seductive drawings. At first, on-the-line practitioners like myself thought P/A was making paper airplanes and throwing them into the wind. We soon learned that they landed in the schools,

even on our drafting boards. Young designers were ready for anything that would take architecture away from the banality of what most of us were building. So students, young practitioners, and a few old ones got on the Postmodernistic band wagon. A long-time friend jumped on it with great fanfare. He made a public confession in a Houston newspaper declaring, "I am a Postmodernist."

My friend repented of all sins committed in the name of Modernism, at a time when very few buildings of the Postmodernistic vernacular had been built. His "manifest destiny" came from paper architecture contained in recent issues of the magazines. If everyone else is doing it, why can't I? This kind of reasoning prevails. In our profession, as in medicine, or law, or accounting . . . we crib.

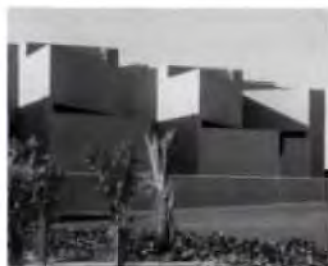
I cribbed a schoolhouse from a journal. It was paper architecture in the purest sense—no client, no site, no region. Douglass Haskell and Matthew Nowicki designed what I thought was a new kind of school, one that could respond rapidly to fast-changing teaching and learning methods. Just what CRS had been searching for—a school that could flex. We copied it, to put it crudely; *built* the son-of-a-bitch. And we did it while our competitors were putting in a "modern fold door" and bragging that their school had maximum flexibility. Later I found out that in 1895, 60 years before the article came out, Architect C. B. J. Snyder built a New York school that could out-flex the Haskell/Nowicki design by a mile.

*Life* magazine once commissioned CRS to design an educationally advanced middle school. No client. No location. Pure paper architecture. Only four months after our design was published, Washington State Education Agency approved 120 classrooms submitted by architects throughout the state who were "inspired" by the *Life* article. Their classrooms were based on the quadruplex design which CRS had created especially for *Life*. Copycats work fast—to keep up, to be with it, to be far out, or to be like, *tubular*.

#### HISTORY OFFERS MORE THAN A WISHFUL CATALOGUE OF INNUMERABLE FORMS TO COPY.

History is a reservoir of timeless programmatic and architectural concepts. History feeds intuition. History gives us a backlog of ideas. Better to copy ideas than forms. The way some of us are using history to achieve "historic allusion" is a dilution of intelligence rationalized in jargon. What's needed is architecture that evolves forward, making its own history, and

Michael Graves' depiction of his Fargo-Moorhead Cultural Center, an award-winning unbuilt building.



TOP: Buildings designed in the '60s often resemble the chipboard models from which they were derived. MIDDLE: Chipboard begat foamboard. This foamboard model depicts a building that wants to be built. ABOVE: Chipboard model made during the design of the CRS headquarters reflects the way the author was practicing in the '60s, in contrast to the way he was taught, depicted at right.

that keeps architects from sliding back into the past with decadent mannerisms. Revivals are always messy at best. Even Charles Moore worries about this. The *Christian Science Monitor*, February 3, 1983, voiced Moore's fears that his fellow Postmodernists "are getting more and more conventional in their use of historical elements."

History also supports the following paper-related theory:

#### THE MEDIUM INFLUENCES THE DESIGN.

In other words, the what-you-do-it-with largely determines the what-it's-going-to-look-like. Admittedly, this smacks of Marshall McLuhan, the architectural hero of the '60s. As you recall, he concocted and popularized "the medium is the message." I'll never forgive McLuhan for screwing up my partner, who took his theory one step further by pronouncing "the process *is* the product." How abstract can you get? My many arguments with Herb Paseur invariably would end up something like this: "Herb, I don't care if the design process was perfect, the building still stinks." Although I long have recognized that the design process affects the product, I am now concluding that the medium is a design determinant.

During those grand old Beaux Arts days, when Paris (instead of New York) controlled architectural thought, studies and renderings were made using charcoal as the medium. Lo and behold, the buildings began to look like charcoal drawings—gray in color, if not in spirit. Later Art Deco brightened up the scene. Someone had invented color pencils and pastel sticks. Then in the '40s came crow-quill pens, waterproof ink, and zip-a-tone. These media kicked off another style. Buildings took on those same clean lines of the ink line and zip-a-tone drawings of that day. In the '60s came chipboard—cardboard, if you please. Oh, the power of chipboard! When it came upon the scene, they stopped drawing in the schools. And designing architects put down the 2B pen-





*“Architects found more reality in those photographs of cardboard models than in their buildings. Some architects actually specified concrete to have color and texture to match the chipboard. Buildings designed during the '60s look like blown-up chipboard models.”*



cil and picked up the Exacto knife. Making models was the vogue.

Oh, how we loved those chipboard models! Talk about visual unity. You could really get it with that warm gray, textured cardboard. Our clients, too, loved our sexy chipboard models. Architectural photographers did handsprings working with them. Architects found more reality in those photographs of cardboard models than in their buildings. Some architects actually specified concrete to have color and texture to match the chipboard. Buildings designed during the '60s look like blown-up chipboard models. Today you can spot hundreds of them throughout the country. Chipboard came close to bankrupting the brick industry. Yes, cardboard is stronger than brick.

But brick is back. Why? Because we are learning to draw again. A member of the recent Louis Sullivan awards jury remarked seriously, “The new material is brick.” Brick, the oldest material, bounces back. But alas, technology has reared its ugly head again. Now we have foamboard, CRS housing projects in the Mideast look like the sons of chipboard. Chipboard begat foamboard.

Having been fed as a boy-architect on Beaux Arts' esquisses, esquisse-equisses, charettes, and ink wash, I'm convinced that the Beaux Arts method of design extended the life of classical symmetry by, of all things, a drawing technique—the medium of “rubbing studies,” the Beaux Arts CAD. All a designer had to do was first draw a center line, then draw on only one side of it. Next he would fold the thin tracing paper on the center line, and with a dime (a nickel wouldn't do) rub the mirrored image onto the other side to achieve the traditional, classic symmetry. You ended up with a “rubbing study.” Saved drawing time, like CAD. The right side looked like the left side—like people. Professors told us architectural symmetry is basic to human need. Being a trombone player, I didn't fully appreciate this notion of classic symmetry since my right arm grew longer than my left. After my educational overdose in symmetry, the asymmetrical Bau-



Photo Acme Photo

*ABOVE: Graves' design for the Humana Building (Main Street elevation) in Louisville, Ky. This paper architecture is destined to become a real building. LEFT: Beaux-Arts era drawing produced by the author as a student at Oklahoma State University.*



haus box—an intermixture of cubism and architecture—was a welcome relief.

#### WHAT LIES AHEAD? THAT DEPENDS ON THE NEW MEDIUM.

About 15 years ago, CRS and Rice University experimented with video tape—an electronic pencil, if you please. We took “video study trips” through proposed spaces by a moving snorkle-type camera among model stage-sets to predict the spatial experience. This technique allowed us to study the dynamics of moving composition on the credulous TV screen. Then, unlike today, video taping equipment was very expensive. Electronic studies ran us over the design budget, so we went back to soft pencils. I’ve often wondered what our buildings would look like today had we stuck to the electronic pencil.

CAD is another kind of electronic pencil. I’m enthusiastic about what CAD will do to design. If the design medium is the computer, the product will be much different than when the medium was chipboard. Right now the best designers prefer to think with their hands. Will they be able to think with a keyboard? In three years, I can hear the chief designer say, “Play it again, Sam.”

With computerized word processing becoming more common, along with the seductive verbosity of the Postmodernists, words are beginning to have a powerful influence on design. Once we scorned the architect who “talked a good architecture,” implying that he wasn’t very good at design. During the ‘60s he was called an architect who did “talkitecture.” Today, most of the established design leaders talk well. They generously offer us their “verbal hand,” as the song goes. And they exert great influence. I visit six or seven schools a year. Many students and practitioners mouth the words of the Postmodernists without understanding content. They feed us with words. There is danger that too many students will become only erudite wordsmiths whose main purpose in life is to massage the trivia.

#### RHETORIC CAN’T BUILD BUILDINGS.

What I have said is simply this:

1. Don’t underestimate the power of paper architecture. Drawings will win over real buildings consistently. The reasons are: You don’t see the warts in drawings; design quality generally erodes during design development; and the time it takes to get a building up, if

nothing else, gives paper architecture a substantial edge in the advancement of design.

2. The medium used during the design process will help determine what the building will look like.

3. This is true also with the design process itself, although contrary to what many professors believe, there is no design process nor methodology that will take the place of a skilled designer. Nor will words do it.

4. Words about architecture are becoming embellished and more precious than architecture, the first sign of decadence.

To put paper architecture in its place: it is a very important phase in the development of the architect, just as adolescence is in becoming an adult. But there are other phases through which the architect must evolve to reach professional maturity.

#### THE EVOLVING ARCHITECT GOES THROUGH FOUR PROGRESSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT TO ACHIEVE OPTIMUM GROWTH.

*The Paper Architecture period:* This is what the article has been all about. During the paper architecture period, drawings and models are more important than buildings. Age of the architect has nothing to do with it. Some architects in their 60s have never developed beyond this first stage. Their buildings mean little; their sketches everything.

*The Photo Architecture period:* This is the stage in which photos become more important than drawings. The Barcelona Pavilion is recognized as a major achievement in modern architecture, yet no one whom I know has ever seen it. Photos did it. Not a single person appears in those gorgeous photos that inspired hundreds of architects. The visitors at the 1929 Exposition hardly noticed it. The photo period is when we go to the books and journals and are moved and “inspired” by the gorgeous photos of form and space. Most awards are given to the photo architects. A photograph can make you famous. My partner Willie Pena tells the story of a visit he took to Copenhagen. He was being ushered around by a young architect. They came upon a school designed by a famous architect. The fresh, crystalline effect was spoiled by nasty cracks. “Too bad; how sad!” Pena said. “It does not bother the architect,” said the young man. “You see, the school had already been photographed before the cracks showed up.” Many of us think that way. Let’s get it photographed before they dirty our building.



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*"Many students and practitioners mouth the words of the Postmodernists without understanding content. There is danger that too many students will become only erudite wordsmiths whose main purpose in life is to massage the trivia."*

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*The Space Architecture Period:* It's that period when the architect loves to experience new buildings. I recall the time a friend of mine and I visited a new building just before the dedication. We oohed and aahed over the fresh forms and spaces. It even had that new car smell. We were walking inside sculpture. Pure spatial joy. Then he exclaimed, "I love this place. I want it always to be just like it is . . . untouched by people." He was dead serious. The space architect has transcended photo architecture. He or she loves the spatial experience. But, deep down, the preference is that users will stay away.

*The Humanistic Architecture Period:* Not many of us reach the fourth stage of development—professional maturity. It should be our goal. More important than drawings, more important than photographs, more important than experiencing new buildings, this stage carries the architect to a higher humanistic level—the personal commitment that architecture is for people (not for architects), that buildings are to be used, that architecture must transcend art to fulfill human needs physically, emotionally, and intellectually. Worn down masonry steps, doorknobs that shine, and wood handrails oiled by thousands of hands—these will become important and aesthetically pleasing. Most architects don't relish visiting their old buildings. We try to avoid seeing users misuse them. We don't like old buildings unless they are very old. That's why there are very few mature architects. It's more fun playing around with paper problems than with people problems. One of these days architects will take architecture seriously. Then they will realize how important buildings are, how buildings can hurt or help people, and that buildings should not be considered toys to play around with. When this happens, the majority of architects will have reached the fourth stage.

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*William W. Caudill, founder of the Houston firm Caudill Rowlett Scott, is currently a member of the board of directors of CRS Group Inc. and is director of CRS Group Research.*



*Barcelona Pavilion: famous from photos.*



*CRS' Activities Center, Santa Clara, Calif.: spatial experience.*



*CRS' University of Petroleum and Minerals, Saudi Arabia: a product of 17 years of interchange with the users, one key to "fourth-stage" architecture.*

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Mort Levy



Overton Shelmire

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Four Texas architects were among 94 AIA members nationwide invested into the Institute's College of Fellows May 22 during the AIA National Convention in New Orleans. Fellowship is a lifetime honor bestowed for outstanding contributions to the profession of architecture. Aside from the AIA Gold Medal, which may be awarded each year to one architect anywhere in the world, AIA Fellowship is the Institute's highest honor. All AIA Fellows may use the initials FAIA after their names to reflect the esteem in which they are held by the profession. With the following brief sketches of their exemplary careers, Texas Architect pays tribute to these Texas architects who have accomplished so much for themselves, their profession and those who have beheld their work.*

VELPEAU E. HAWES,  
HELLMUTH, OBATA & KASSABAUM,  
DALLAS

Since joining the HOK-Dallas office at its formation in 1975, Val Hawes' efforts in business development have contributed greatly to the growth of HOK-Dallas into the largest regional

office in the firm. As senior vice president and principal-in-charge of projects, Hawes also has advocated an interdisciplinary approach to project management, which has resulted in a number of state and local design awards as well as a well-integrated office. Contributing not only to the vigor of HOK-Dallas, Hawes also has been instrumental in developing goals programs for the Texas Society of Architects and the Dallas AIA chapter, of which he served as president in 1982. The year before, as chapter president-elect, Hawes instituted Dallas' first Architecture Month, which featured a series of events that effectively raised the public's awareness of architecture. In 1982 Hawes was selected by the Dallas Chamber of Commerce to keynote the chamber's Leadership Dallas Program and served as chairman of the Real Estate and Building Industries Council in Dallas, a group of 11 association presidents and executive directors. A native of Corsicana, Hawes graduated in 1959 with a bachelor's degree in architecture from Texas A&M, where he lectures frequently.

JAMES L. HENDRICKS,  
HENDRICKS & WALLS ARCHITECTS,  
DALLAS

Jim Hendricks is advanced to AIA Fellowship for his trailblazing contributions in the field of historic preservation. In 1970, his firm's preservation and retrofit of Dallas' old Cumberland School into SEDCO's national headquarters—a project promoted by the Dallas drilling company's founder and former Texas governor Bill Clements—generated a great deal of public awareness of the nascent preservation movement by virtue of the fact that it was the first major adaptive reuse project in North Texas. Other preservation projects of note by Hendricks' firm include the Texas Governor's Mansion, the Texas School Book Depository and the Tarrant County Courthouse. The firm also has diversified its efforts to include new construction, with such projects as the Employers Insurance Company Office

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*An innovator in business development and project management. Another who thinks that buildings should look as good 100 years from now. For a third, communication makes the difference. Echoing a fellow Fellow's sentiments, a fourth says a building should, above all, stand the test of time.*

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Building, SEDCO Tower, Southern Methodist University's Dedman Center and the Highland Park United Methodist Church Family Activity Center, all in Dallas, and a library at Texas Women's University in Denton. In designing new buildings or refurbishing old ones, Hendricks says, he's interested in an architecture "that will age well, that will look as good 100 years from now." In addition to orchestrating an architectural practice, which he helped found in 1965, Hendricks has been involved in numerous historic preservation groups and is currently serving a three-year term on the Board of Trustees of the Historic Preservation League in Dallas. A native of Fort Worth, Hendricks received his bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Texas in 1958.

MORTON L. LEVY,  
LEVY ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS,  
HOUSTON

President of a small Houston firm specializing in commercial and industrial architecture, Mort Levy chaired the national AIA Committee on Architecture for Commerce and Industry in 1981, and his leadership in this specialized area of practice continues to have a far-reaching impact. His most valuable contributions to the profession, however, may have more to do with improving the ability of architects—regardless of their specialty—to communicate about all aspects of architecture, to the public as well as to each other. "Communication Makes the Difference" was his theme during his term as TSA president in 1982, during which he hosted the Society's first state-level "grassroots" program, bringing together some 50 chapter representatives to share local problems and plans. Levy also has served as president of the Houston chapter Newsletter Committee, chairman of its Commission on Public Affairs, chairman of the TSA Editorial Policy Committee, and chairman of the TSA History of Texas Architecture Task Force. He is the author of "Design for Merchandising," a

major feature in the July/August 1979 issue of *Texas Architect*, and a 1956 graduate of Rice University, where he served as president of the architectural alumni association in 1961-62.

OVERTON SHELMIER,  
BERAN & SHELMIER, ARCHITECTS,  
DALLAS

Since establishing his practice in 1958 with Ed Beran, FAIA (who died in 1980), Overton Shelmire has led a 12-person Dallas firm in designing more than a half billion dollars' worth of construction covering a broad range of building types, much of which has been award-winning. Among the firm's most notable projects are the Loews Anatole Hotel, World Trade Center and the renovation and restoration of the Adolphus Hotel, all in Dallas; the Forney Engineering Company Plant in Addison; and the Glass Container Plant for the Armstrong Cork Company in Waxahachie. An interest in architecture of the past is evident in much of Beran & Shelmire's work, along with a predilection for solving modern-day problems with age-old solutions. "A building should, above all, stand the test of time," Shelmire says, echoing Jim Hendricks' sentiments precisely. In addition to practicing architecture, Shelmire is currently the 1983 president-elect of the Dallas AIA chapter, a member of the School of Architecture Foundation Advisory Council of the University of Texas at Austin and a member of the board of the Dallas County Heritage Society. He has been a member of the Architecture Advisory Council of the Texas Commission on the Arts and Humanities and a member of the Dallas Historical Society. A Dallas native, Shelmire graduated in 1953 from the University of Texas with a bachelor's degree in architecture and worked for the Austin firm Page, Southland, Page before forming the partnership with Beran. ■



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By James Coote

**California Counterpoint: New West Coast Architecture 1982**, edited by Kenneth Frampton and Sylvia Kolbolski. The Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies and Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., New York, N.Y., 118 pages, \$18.50 (paperback).

This, catalogue number 18, is the latest in a series by New York's (Peter Eisenman's) Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies that is alluring for the wealth, variety and clarity of its graphic images as well as for its brief descriptions of projects and buildings and its longer, more ambitious essays. The series has included the work of Aldo Rossi, Rob Krier, O. M. Ungers, Austria's New Wave and the enigmatic Kazuo Shinohara. The Americans, of a distinctly New York connection, have included Philip Johnson, Gwathmey/Siegel, John Hedjuk, and Raymond Hood as revived by Robert A. M. Stern. The series is presented with sleek brevity on the shiny pages of slim, almost-square, perfect-bound volumes.

Within the deliciously fondant air-brushed covers of Stanley Saitowitz paintings, this volume contains the work of 10 young (30s and 40s for the most part) designers: Frank O. Gehry, Coy Howard, Frederick Fisher and the firms Morphosis (Thom Mayne and Michael Rotondi) and Studio Works (Craig Hodgetts and Robert Mangurian), all in Los Angeles; and Stanley Saitowitz and the firm of Andrew Batey and Mark Mack in San Francisco. There are also two introductory essays, one "hot" by architectural writer Nory Miller of New York, one "cool" by New York architect and freelance writer Michael Sorkin.

The first essay by Miller offers some straightforward observations about the creative environment of Los Angeles and San Francisco, about the role of geographical distance, of self-employment, of the almost Japanese coexistence of



*Fritz B. Burns Buildings by Frank Gehry, Loyola University Law School, Los Angeles.*

craft and computer. Their work is described as "architecture about architecture," the result perhaps of a "California banking to try different things." Frank Gehry, at 54 the oldest of the bunch, is described as "pivotal," a "master of factory material; wrenched geometry; robust, ungainly, tactile immediacy and spatial effects on a scale that artists could only envy." Of Studio Works, Miller writes: "The work is like a quest to discover how haywire order can be without losing all trace of a reassuring cogency."

The "cool" essay by Sorkin, explaining Los Angeles, is a clever bit of historical plunder of L.A.'s literary-artistic past, a montage character study of the city drawing on snippets of Horace Greely, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Joan Didion, Henry Miller and The Beach Boys as a counterpoint to a very hyped-up "his-

tory" of successive waves of influence that included the Greene brothers, Maybeck, Coxhead and Polk; the later-1930s wave of Neutra, Schindler, Harris and Soriano; the post-World War II "booming, monstrous sprawl"; and the recent rediscovery of Los Angeles as no longer the brash, tasteless *avant-garde* (a role that Sorkin suggests may have already passed to Houston), but rather a mature—indeed patined—place, "the town that apotheosized ugliness." Sorkin also agrees that "Gehry, of course, is the titan, the singlehanded redeemer of a whole home supply mart of taboo possibilities."

After the essays there is a brief, handsome color section representing all the architects who thereafter have their own sections with more ample coverage in black and white and their own descriptive texts. These subsequent sections are, by and large, charmingly pretentious, emphasizing conceptual content (or at least ambitious artistic hopes) for these largely unbuilt projects. For instance: "The expression of the two pieces is purposefully banal, camouflaging the nature of the interior which is spatially diverse, unpredictable, and idiosyncratic." We know this is not Alvar Aalto or Lou Kahn at any age. The projects are interesting, however, and presented with an intriguing array of drawings and photographs of models, which are often very expressive in their own right. Perhaps this has to do with the affiliations of many of these designers with schools of architecture as well as with the art world—particularly Gehry's relationship with painters such as Ron Davis, and Coy Howard's almost perverse reluctance to accept differences between architecture and other arts.

*James Coote is a professor of architecture at the University of Texas at Austin and a Texas Architect contributing editor.*

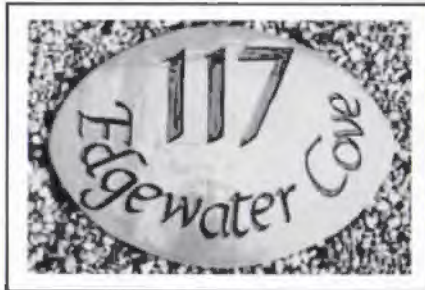
## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**Prairie School Architecture: Studies from 'The Western Architect,'** edited by H. Allen Brooks. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York, N. Y., 333 pages, \$20 (paperback).

First published by the University of Toronto Press in 1975, this is the first issue of the book in paper by Van Nostrand Reinhold. Like the hardbound original, the volume is a compendium of articles on the Prairie School from the old architectural journal *The Western Architect*, published from 1902 to 1931 in Minneapolis and the only journal to extensively document the School's work. Editor Brooks, a professor of fine arts at the University of Toronto and author of *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwest Contemporaries*, introduces facsimiles of original pages and plates with a chronical of the School's relatively brief but widely influential lifespan. Featured are the works of the leading Prairie School designers: Frank Lloyd Wright; Walter Burley Griffin; Purcell, Feick & Elmslie; William L. Steele; George W. Maher; Spencer & Powers; Guenzel & Drummond; John S. Van Bergen; Tallmadge & Watson; Louis Sullivan; and Barry Byrne.

**Cities: The Forces that Shape Them,** edited by Lisa Taylor. Cooper-Hewitt Museum and Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., New York, N. Y., 174 pages, \$14.95 (paperback).

*Cities* is a sequel to the Cooper-Hewitt's *Urban Open Spaces*, published as a tabloid in 1979 and as a paperback by Rizzoli in 1981, both part of the museum's "Immovable Objects" series. Editor and museum director Lisa Taylor conceived the ongoing study as a way to illuminate, observe and discuss certain "objects" that relate to daily life—with which the museum mainly concerns itself—but that are too big to be exhibited in a museum, such things as a city park, for example, or an entire city itself. The volume brings together 66 essays by such luminaries as Lawrence Halprin, Robert A. M. Stern, Wolf von Eckhardt and Ray Bradbury on such topics as "Urban Rituals," "Toward an Urban Suburbia, Once Again," "Cultural Planning" and "Beyond 1984: The People Machine." —



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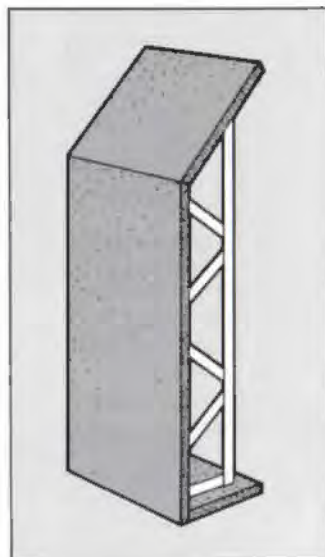
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## MCNEEL ELECTED TO RIVER AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Clifton McNeel, Executive Director of the San Antonio Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, was elected Jan. 15 to the board of the San Antonio River Authority, defeating an incumbent for the six-year director's term.

SARA is responsible for flood control, pollution prevention, and soil and water conservation within its four-county watershed district.

McNeel has been the Executive Director of the San Antonio AIA chapter since February 1977. She also has served as a board member for the San Antonio Conservation Society since 1977 and as a member of the Zoning Commission since 1981. In addition, she is on the board of the River Road Neighborhood Association, the Artist's Alliance Advisory Board and the San Antonio River Corridor Committee.

### IN PROGRESS

## REIDEL LAKE HOUSE, LAKE CONROE, BY WM. T. CANNADY ASSOCIATES, HOUSTON

A Houston couple with grown children and a lot on Lake Conroe's Corinthian Point wanted a weekend and future retirement house thereon. Specific needs included ample guest accommodations separate from the master bedroom, and living and dining spaces easily accessible to people and to views of the water and sunset. Owner preference and deed restrictions limited the 3,500-square-foot scheme to one story.

The house, by Bill Cannady, FAIA, and Val Glitsch, is zoned for land or water arrival, with a strong axis uniting both fronts. Landlubbers enter on the north through a formal courtyard flanked by his-and-her garages; amphibians cross a similar threshold at the bulkhead

through a his-and-her boat house to a columned porch across the southern facade.

North to south (land to water), the house is programmed for private, enclosed spaces on the courtyard side and open, family spaces on the water side. The natural slope of the land enhances this distinction by allowing the ceiling

height to gradually increase along the path toward the water. East to west (sunrise to sunset), functions are sub-organized to provide "prominent views from prominent places."

The gabled structure is clad in limestone and cedar, and operable windows are placed to take advantage of southern breezes off the water.



*Reidel Lake House, Conroe.*

## LONG CHAU TOWNHOUSE, HOUSTON, BY JERRY N. GARNER & ASSOCIATES, HOUSTON

The primary design intent of the Long Chau townhouse was to emphasize its dual personality as a corner residence in a neighborhood just west of Houston's Galleria complex. Part of the house wants to identify with the townhouses around it, part wants to stand separate and distinct and relate to the street.

Incorporating purpose into this duality, architects designed the part of the house closest to the street to be the "formal" zone, formal in the sense that it is the more public realm and because it contains the formal living, dining and circulation areas. Raised on pilotis, the formal end allows the street corner to become a part of the house by wrapping it in a volume of space, which also frees the yard underneath for outdoor activity. On top is a terrace, which provides views of the city beyond.

Reference to the streetcorner is emphasized by a curved facade on the formal side, which turns the corner and

leads the eye to the two entryways—one at the top of a cascading exterior stair, which separates the two zones, and the other off a spiral stair, which serves as a buffer between the street and the swimming pool. The pool is situated in a courtyard formed by separating the streetcorner side of the house from the party wall.

The informal, private zone is self-contained. The owner may enter by vehicle and use a stairway from the garage to



*Long Chau Townhouse, Houston.*

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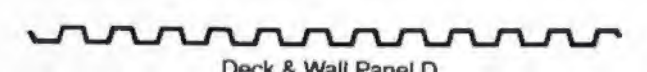
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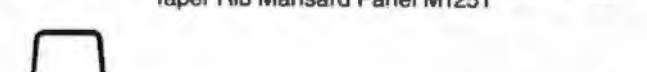
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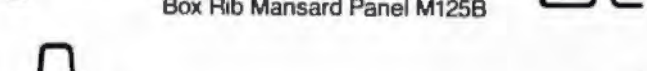
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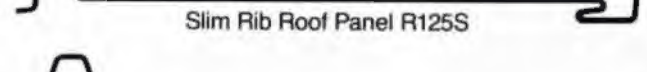
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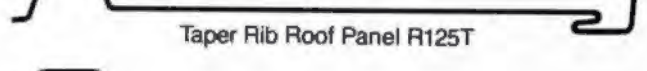
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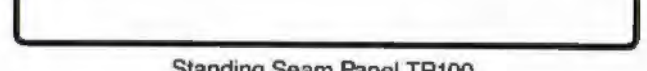
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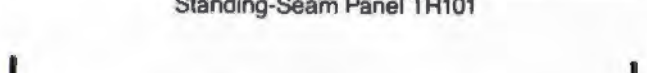
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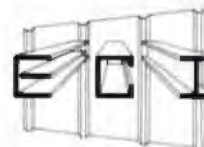


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reach family room, bedrooms and kitchen above. Rectilinear in form, with windows on the street side, this part of the house also is designed to modulate the formal zone as well as to link the whole townhouse to its neighbors.

In spite of its thoughtful gesturing to its neighbors, however, the design of the townhouse—one of Jerry N. Garner's most contemporary—has not been warmly received by the subdivision's architectural control committee. The \$320,000 project is currently on hold as architects make the design a little more compatible with its context, which consists mainly of "conservative, builder-type townhouses with bricks and shutters," says the architect. "They want it to be more colonial."



Hill Country House, Austin.

HILL COUNTRY HOUSE, AUSTIN,  
BY HEATHER MCKINNEY, BOSTON

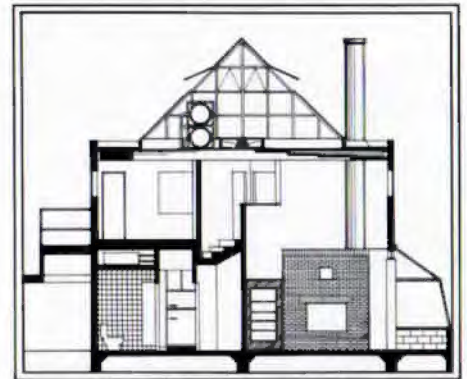
Situated on the edge of a Hill Country canyon just outside of Austin, this 3,000-square-foot residence for one owner is designed to be site and client specific, says the architect, "responding to the drama of the first and the desire of the second for a very personal home that will reflect her interests and grow with her."

The design has been described as "Texas Tuscan," evolving as a family of small buildings based on the vocabulary of an existing stone cabin in the middle of the two-acre site. The house is sited between the canyon edge and the cabin, which has been outfitted with a small

HORSE-FARM HOUSE, GARFIELD,  
BY J. H. ECCLESTON  
JOHNSTON, JR., AUSTIN

The idea was to create a simple yet sophisticated rural house with some allusion to its place on an Arabian-horse farm near Garfield. Exterior forms are designed to recall ancient Mideastern shapes in a contemporary manner—walled compound as oasis, cube-like massing and pyramidal roof. Wood and metal outbuildings, cedar posts and wire fencing, stock tank and a crude trellis serve to soften and contrast with the machine-like crispness of the house proper while reflecting the range of man's dealings with nature, from rudimentary to refined.

Interiors are meant to reflect the "contradictions of modern living." Slick,



Horse-farm house, Garfield.

curving walls—depicting a smooth, orderly flow of things—cut the house in half diagonally. These lines of flow are then interrupted by hard, cube forms of antique brick (fireplace and storage area), with some roof trusses exposed. Interior finishes also include paint on gypsum board, tile and wood. The pyramidal roof is actually a skylight, which can be closed off with insulated, translucent panels, or it can serve as a thermal chimney for passive solar cooling.

The 1,600-square-foot house is wood frame on a slab foundation, clad in a stucco-on-styrofoam finish. Estimated construction cost is \$50,000 to \$85,000, depending upon whether the owner builds it.

The hope, says the architect, is that all this is being done in a fashion that will not require the perceiver to have to read the architecture so much as *feel* it.

kitchen, bath and screen porch to serve as guest quarters for the residence. The location of the main house is intended not only to take dramatic advantage of views from the cliff but also to provide sequestered courtyards on the entry side of the house. Like the cabin, the main house is clad in limestone and topped with a standing-seam metal roof.

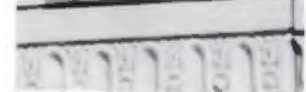
Inside, a gallery delineated by columns links the living room and dining room, ending in each with a display space for three-dimensional objects of art. Upstairs, past a small reading nook on a landing halfway up, is a library loft off the stair tower, a guest room with views of courtyards and rooftops and the master bedroom, which features a tree-top balcony overlooking the canyon.

**SCHOOLS**

A&M: GREER REAPPOINTED  
DEPARTMENT HEAD; ROMIENIEC  
RECEIVES SILVER MEDAL

John Only Greer, head of the architecture program's department of environmental design at Texas A&M for the past eight years, has received a non-term reappointment as department head in a move that could set a precedent for future department-head appointments.

Greer accepted the offer after administrators first offered him a two-year term appointment, a move that could have been aimed at limiting the overall terms of department heads campus wide. Greer is opposed to such a policy as a matter of principle, he says, believing that the



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terms of all faculty appointments should be based on performance and not an "arbitrary period of time."

Also at A&M, professor of architecture and environmental design Ed Romieniec, FAIA, has been awarded the Silver Medal from the A&M chapter of the national architectural honor society Tau Sigma Delta.

Romieniec, former dean of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, is the first person to receive the local chapter award, which is presented for outstanding service in the field of architecture and its allied arts.



Barton House, Lubbock.

**TECH: HISTORIC BARTON HOUSE DEDICATED AT RANCHING HERITAGE CENTER**

The 74-year-old Barton House, an elegant Victorian ranch house built in 1909 near Abernathy, was dedicated May 14 at Texas Tech University's Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock.

The three-story, 14-room structure was built by Joseph James Barton from memories of his childhood home in Calvert and from architectural plans ordered from *Modern Dwellings* magazine.

Moved from its original site 30 miles northwest of Lubbock and restored to appear as it did when the Bartons moved in, the house depicts a relatively recent era of Texas ranching history when the architectural style, detailing and technology of the age were evident in even the most rural of ranching communities. The Barton house was willed to the Center by Josephine Waddell Barton, who moved into the house in 1917 as the bride of John "Jack" Sneed Barton, son of the man who built it.

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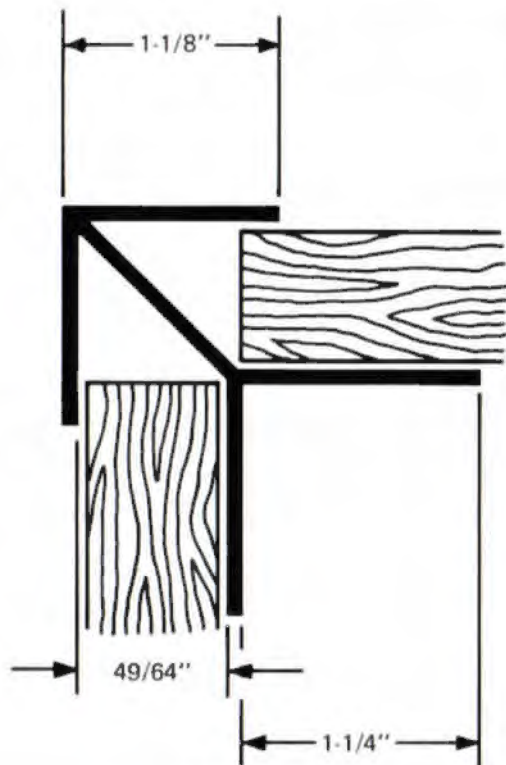
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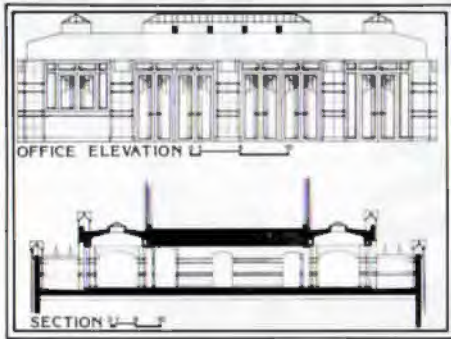
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Winning entry by Montgomery Howard.

**UT-AUSTIN: WINNERS  
ANNOUNCED IN NORWOOD  
TOWER COMPETITION**

Montgomery Howard, fifth-year student of architecture at the University of Texas at Austin, has won the \$1,200 First Prize in a competition to design an adaptive reuse scheme for the 15th-floor penthouse atop the newly restored Norwood Tower in Austin.

The competition, sponsored by Rust Properties—the Austin-based development company that restored the 54-year-old Neo-Gothic highrise downtown—was conducted by visiting critic Richard Oliver of New York as an exercise in a fifth-year design studio at the UT-Austin School of Architecture.

Judges for the competition were: Chris Carson, of Ford, Powell & Carson in San Antonio, restoration architects of the Norwood; Eugene Aubry, FAIA, of the Houston firm Morris/Aubry Architects; and Austin interior designer Arthur Watson.

**FIRMS**

G. Norman Hoover, FAIA, has joined **3D/International** in Houston as a senior vice president and director of design in the firm's architecture division. 3D/I also has announced the opening of a new office in Washington, D.C., headed by Nikolai Kolesnikoff.

**CRS Group** in Houston has acquired the San Francisco-based interior design firm **Environmental Planning & Research**.

Keith Bailey, George Jezek and Donald F. Rose have been named principals of the Waco firm **Dudley and**

**Associates.**

The Amarillo firm **Miskimen & Associates** has moved its offices to 4005 S. Western St., Amarillo 79109. Telephone: (806) 358-1970.

The Tyler firm **Sinclair & Wright-Architects** has moved its offices to 230-S. Broadway, Suite 200, Tyler 75702. Telephone: (214) 595-2656.

John Firestone, Gary Riner and Ken Smith have announced the formation of the Fort Worth firm **FRS Design Group, Architects/Space Planners**, with offices at 2501 Parkview Drive, Suite 407, Fort Worth 76102. Telephone: (817) 334-0556.

The Carrollton firm **Calvert & Co./Architects** has relocated its offices to 1001 E. Crosby Road, Carrollton 75006.

Austin architects Charles Croslin and Robert Cox have merged their practices to form **Cox/Croslin and Associates**, with offices at 1613 W. Sixth St., Austin 78703. Telephone: (512) 474-6610.

**Ellis Durham Associates** has moved its offices to 6720 Sands Point, Suite 206, Houston 77074. Telephone: (713) 981-0698.

The Dallas firm **Bogard Architects** has moved its offices to 2607 Walnut Hill Lane, Suite 100, Dallas 75229. Telephone: (214) 357-4800.

Raymond H. Harris has announced the establishment of his firm **Raymond Harris & Associates Architects**, with offices at 2909 Maple Ave., Suite 2B, Dallas 75201. Telephone: (214) 871-1871.

Calhoun, Tungate, Jackson & Dill, Architects, in Houston has changed its name to **CTJ & D Architects** and has admitted Mermod C. Jaccard, Jr., into the firm as a partner.

Linda W. McGarity and Bruce A. Fehn have announced the formation of **McGarity Fehn & Associates**, with offices at 4230 Villanova, Houston 77005. Telephone: (713) 660-6110.

The Diboll firm **Temple Associates** has moved its offices to 700 N. Temple Drive, Diboll 75941. Telephone: (713) 829-4786.

The Austin firm Coffee and Crier, Architects, has named William C. Schenck a partner and changed its name to **Coffee Crier and Schenck, Architects**.

Ron Sipe has joined the Abilene firm **Tittle, Luther, Loving** as a partner.

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**W. F. Burwell, Partner**  
**Helen Burwell, Partner**

Michael L. Petty has been named a partner in the Austin firm Renfro & Steinbomer Architects, which is now known as **Renfro, Steinbomer & Petty, AIA Architects**.

The Austin firm **Bell, Klein & Hoffman** has moved its offices to 603 Brazos, Austin 78701.

### EVENTS

**June 6–Oct. 1:** "Pomodoro in Spectrum," an exhibit of the works of master sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro, open to the public free of charge 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, at Spectrum Center, corner of Belt Line Road and Dallas Parkway, Dallas. Sponsors: Criswell Development Co., Delphinance Development Corp., Architectural Arts Coalition, The Marlborough Gallery, and Myrick-Newman-Dahlberg & Partners.

**July 31:** Postmark deadline for entries in the 1983 *Historic Preservation Photography Contest*. Contact the magazine at 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

**Sept. 8–10:** Design technology conference, focusing on the newest production tools and techniques of designing and drafting by architects, engineers, draftsmen and graphic artists, at the Albert Thomas Convention Center in Houston. Contact Brad Lee, The Convention Company, 4447 North Central Expressway, Suite 310, Dallas 75205. Telephone: (512) 522-6009.

**Sept. 10:** Opening of three-part tribute to San Augustine architect Raiford Stripling, the dean of preservation architects in Texas, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Texas Committee for the Humanities, at the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio. The retrospective will include a series of videotape interviews with Stripling, a photographic exhibit of his work and a symposium on Texas heritage and historic preservation.

**Sept. 25–Nov. 6:** "Scott Burton Chairs," an exhibition of the sculptor's abstract furniture, at the Fort Worth Art Museum, 1309 Montgomery St., Fort Worth 76107. Telephone: (817) 738-9215.

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**Nov. 13-15:** "Architectural Research 1983: Priorities, Prospects and Funding," a conference for architectural researchers, practitioners and educators sponsored by the Architectural Research Centers Consortium and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Texas A&M, in College Station. Contact Norah Albright, Assistant to the Dean, College of Architecture and Environmental Design, Texas A&M University, College Station 77843. Telephone (713) 845-1260.

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#### PRODUCTS

**Monarch Tile Manufacturing** in San Angelo has introduced a new line of textured tile called the Plantation Series. The tile features a woven burlap surface accented by a high-gloss, double-glaze finish and comes in blends of earth-tone colors or combinations of gray and white. Monarch Tile Manufacturing, 600 South Oaks, P.O. Box 2041, San Angelo 76902. Telephone: (915) 655-9193.

New from the Griffolyn Division of **Reef Industries** in Houston is a puncture- and abrasion-resistant vapor barrier called Permalon, designed to keep from being damaged during installation as well as to prevent water migration under concrete slabs and in walls and ceilings. Reef Industries, Griffolyn Division, P.O. Box 33248, Houston 77233. Telephone: (713) 943-0070.

Underwriters Laboratories in Northbrook, Ill., has approved Prestique and Prestique II laminated fiberglass roofing shingles by the **Elk Corporation** in Dallas for application with staples on existing roofs as well as in new construction. Previously, according to Under-



*Plantation tile by Monarch.*

writers, staple application was approved only for new construction or where the roof had been torn down to the deck. Elk Corporation, 6750 Hillcrest Plaza Drive, Suite 218, Dallas 75230. Telephone: (214) 934-9540.

**Nodoré** in Tyler has introduced an air-purification system designed to freshen and deodorize bathroom air by pulling it through a coconut shell charcoal filter. The system comes in two models: the self-contained CR-100, for retrofit of existing toilets; and the wall-mounted NC-300, for new construction. Nodoré, 5528 Old Bullard Road, #104, Tyler 75703. Telephone: (214) 581-2266.

**Hidden Space Components** in Dallas is now custom-designing wall systems that include the "Disappearing Wallbed" by SICO. The bed is made of 16-gauge tubular steel framing, 1/8-inch steel hinges and automotive-type coil springs and occupies 18 inches of floor space when raised. Hidden Space Components, Inc., 13617 Inwood Road, Suite 220, Dallas 75234. Telephone: (214) 960-1315.

**Carpenter Prefabrications**, a division of Carpenter Plastering Company in Dallas, has developed a stone veneer called Stoneclad, which combines the technology of light-gauge steel framing with thin cast-glass, fiber-reinforced concrete to produce a high performance composite panel for all forms of stone facings. Carpenter Prefabrications, P.O. Box 222049, Dallas 75222. Telephone: (214) 742-3806.

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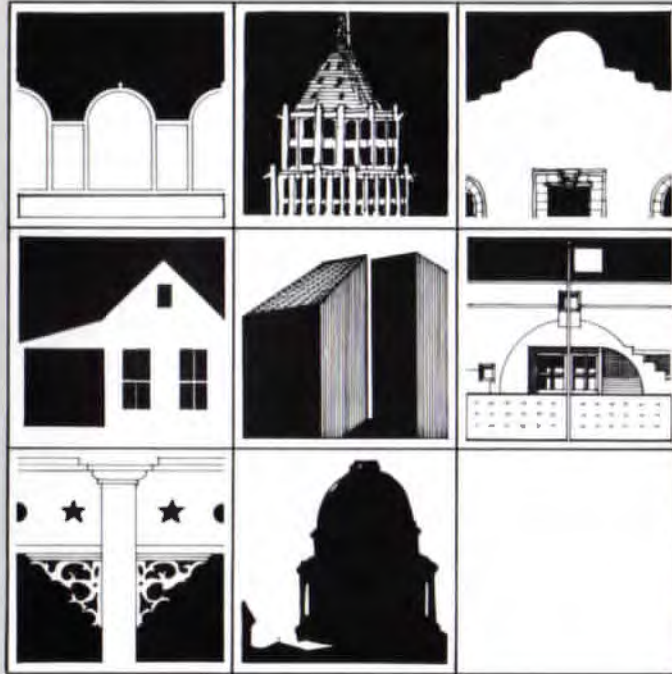
TSA has endorsed the program and has appointed Assurance Services, Inc. for Austin as administrator.

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## ARCHITECTS AT HOME

Because there are a limited number of facility types, it is inevitable that *Texas Architect* regularly returns to past themes. And so it has once again come to pass that we address "Houses." It is difficult for me, from my peculiar vantage point, to be "up" for a subject already discussed twice before.

Fortunately for me, my groping eye focused on the cover of the March '83 issue of *Dallas-Fort Worth Home and Garden*. In bold print it heralded: "Local Architects at Home." Voila! A feast was on my table.

Why should the public be interested in architects at home? Recognizing that the architect's home is an extension of his personal and professional skills, why isn't similar interest focused on the extensions of other professions? There could be an interview with a sick physician in his own hospital room (surely a private room), or with a lawyer serving a sentence in a federal prison (ten years at hard tennis). One could visit a mausoleum to review the final deposition of an undertaker "at home" in his tomb.

There never seems to be any of that kind of good stuff on the newsstand, but *DFW Home and Garden* has laid bare what architects themselves go home to. First there is Richard Scheer and Showkat Shirazi, a husband-and-wife architect team that transformed "an undistinguished suburban house in Arlington into a snazzy space." They did this by developing a "thick-wall solution." "Thick wall" is a new phrase to me, but like "Fast Track," "interface," and "parametric harmonics," it has enough mystique to soon muscle into the architectural buzz word repertoire.

The next page headlines my friend Jim Wiley. Jim and his wife Sally have this neat townhouse in Dallas. It has been my good fortune to visit there many times. The only problem I have with the house is that it always seems to be full of peo-

ple, and I have a lot of trouble moving around in there. This place has a garden room with a bridge in it that probably would be ticketed by OSHA, but it is architecturally spectacular to the Nines.

Aubrey Hallum, shown wearing a three-piece suit and dignity to match, stands tall on page 77, holding tight to a step ladder. Why Aubrey walks around the house leaning on a ladder is never explained. His Fort Worth domicile is a passive solar design of regional character. The text gives you the idea that Aubrey's utility bills are so low that he is personally responsible for the crack in OPEC.

Beyond that, it's all downhill. The magazine asks six other architects, including me, what we would build for our "Dream House" if we could. You get into a no-budget fantasy like that, and you find out how much architects think alike. The combined program indicates most of us would like a Texas-vernacular, rustic, passive-solar, steel-framed, functional, multi-purpose, pristine-cluttered high rise, with lots of computers and fireplaces, Mexican tile floors, sand blasted glass block windows, thick-walls (see, there it is already), and a huge television screen hidden behind secret panels (so nobody can know we watch television).

We couldn't collectively decide whether to build it in Florence, Rome, or New York City, so we compromised on Fort Worth (presumably so we could catch "That's Incredible" on the big screen). There hasn't been a programmatic amalgamation like that since the Democratic party set the criteria for an ideal Secretary of Agriculture appointee and came up with a black, Spanish-speaking female farmer who lives in Ohio.

The conclusion I have reached is, when you are "at home," just be glad you have one. ■■■■■



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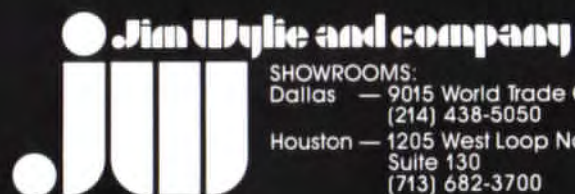
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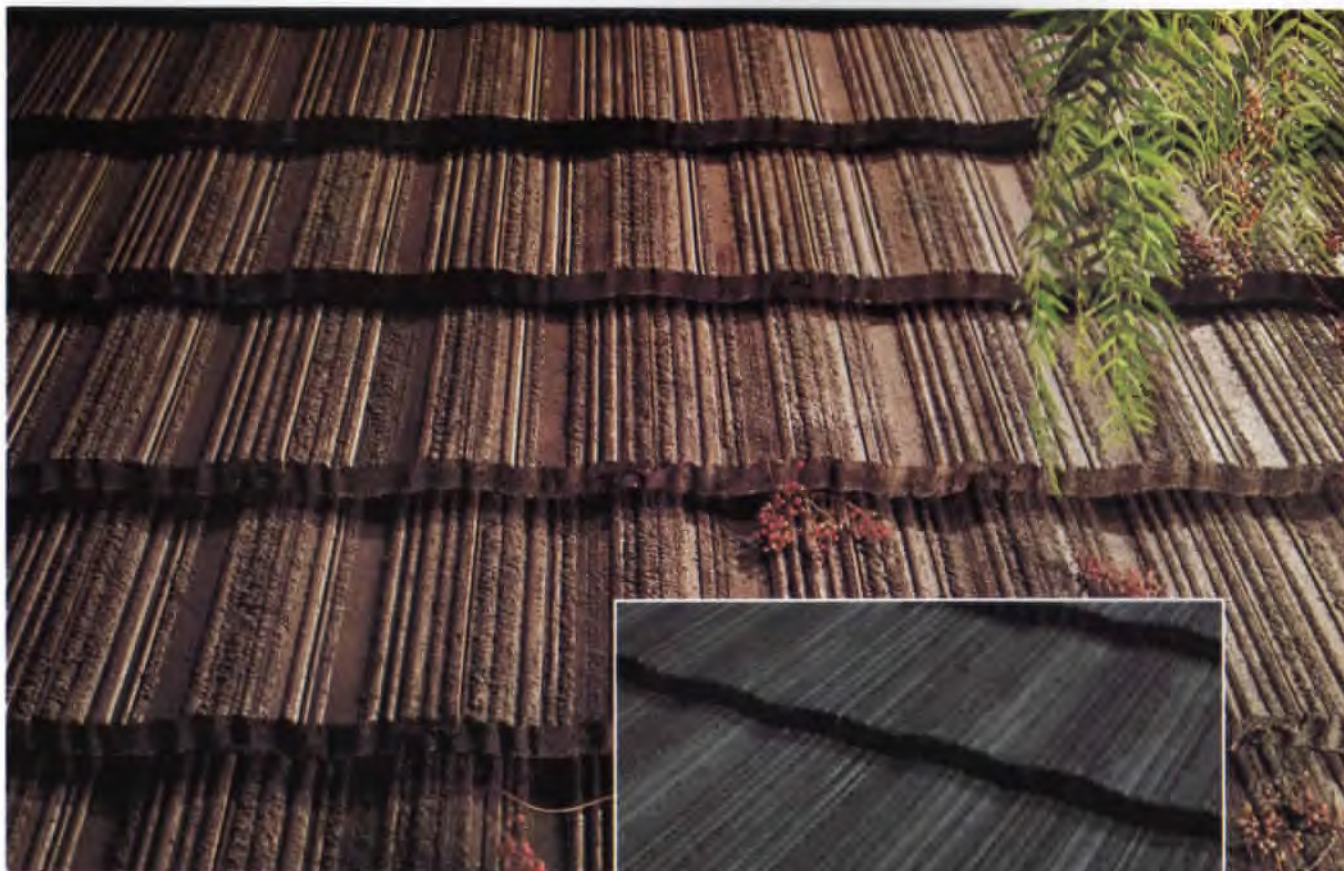
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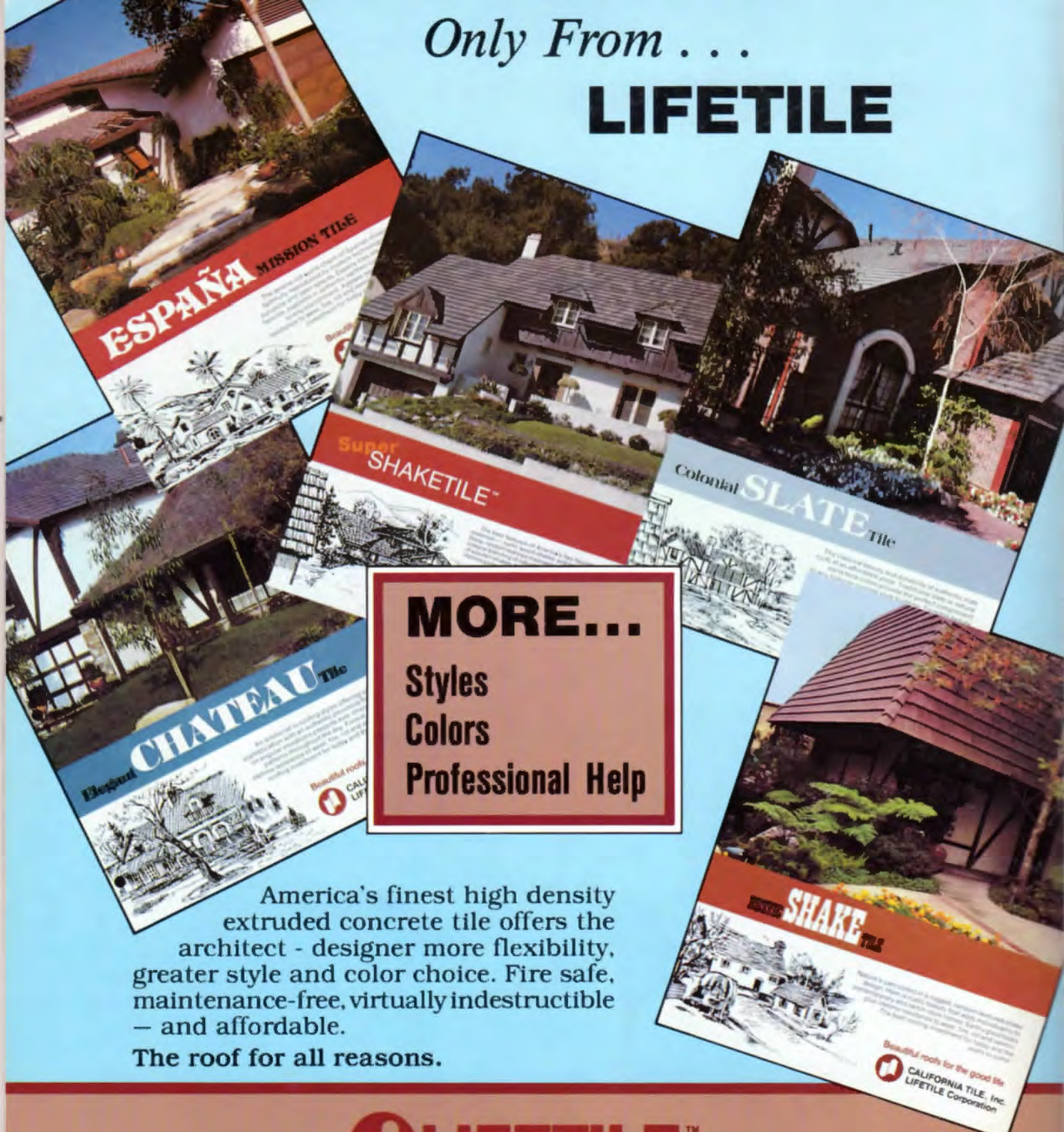
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