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TexasArchitect

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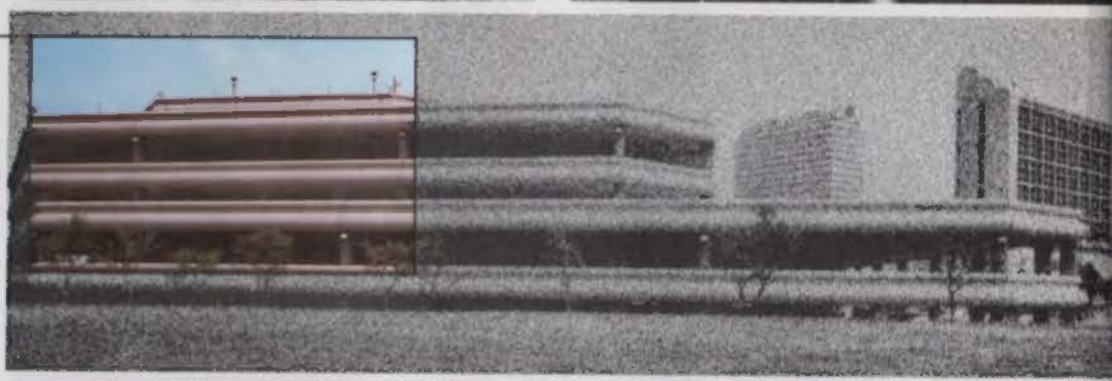

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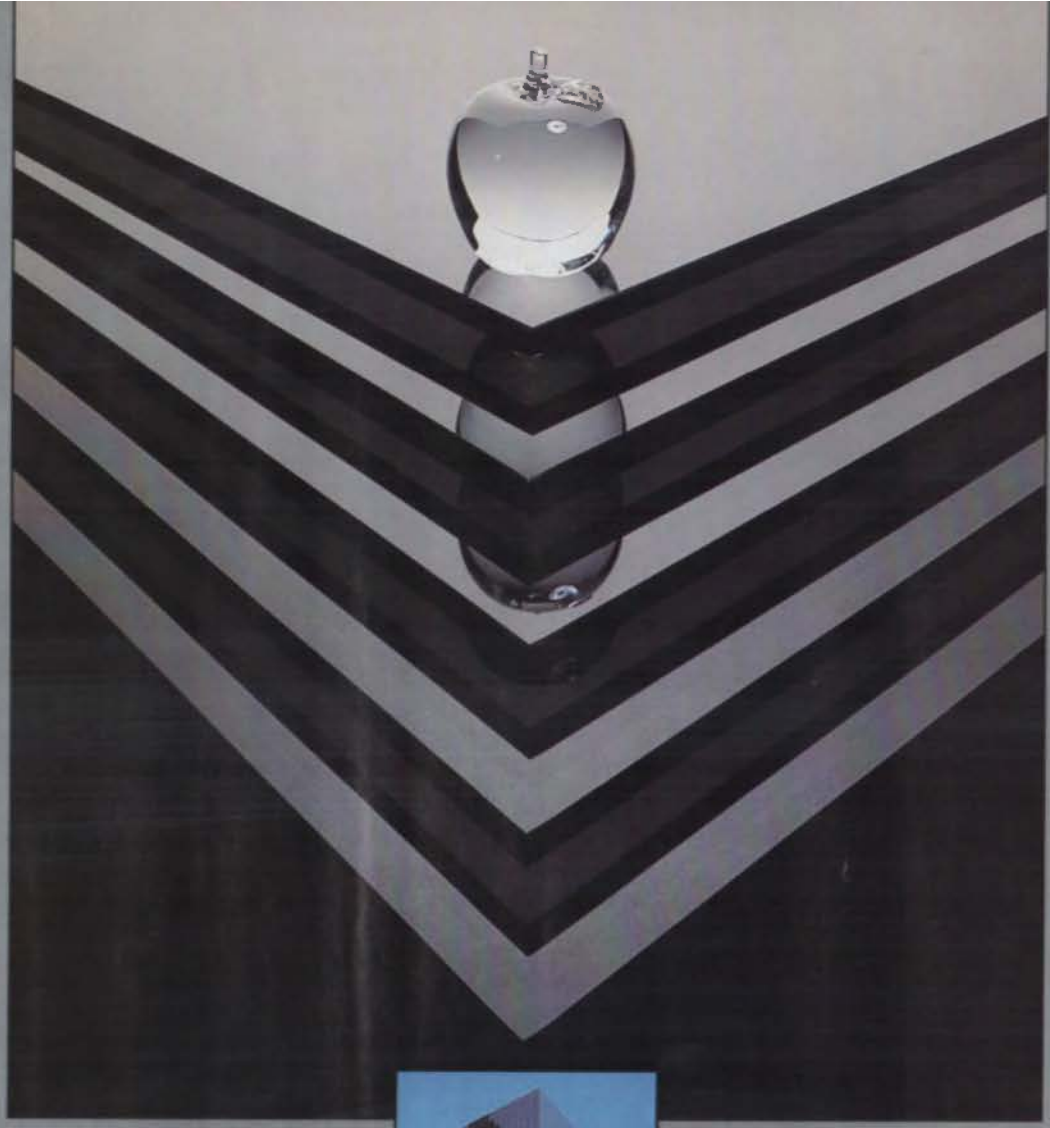

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HOUSTON

COMING UP: *Next issue,* Texas Architect *will feature the general design, adaptive reuse and interior architecture of TSA Design Awards winners.*

ON THE COVER: *The incongruous urban design visions of Wright and Le Corbusier have been blended in Houston to create a city of towers in a giant garden of suburban lawns.*

40

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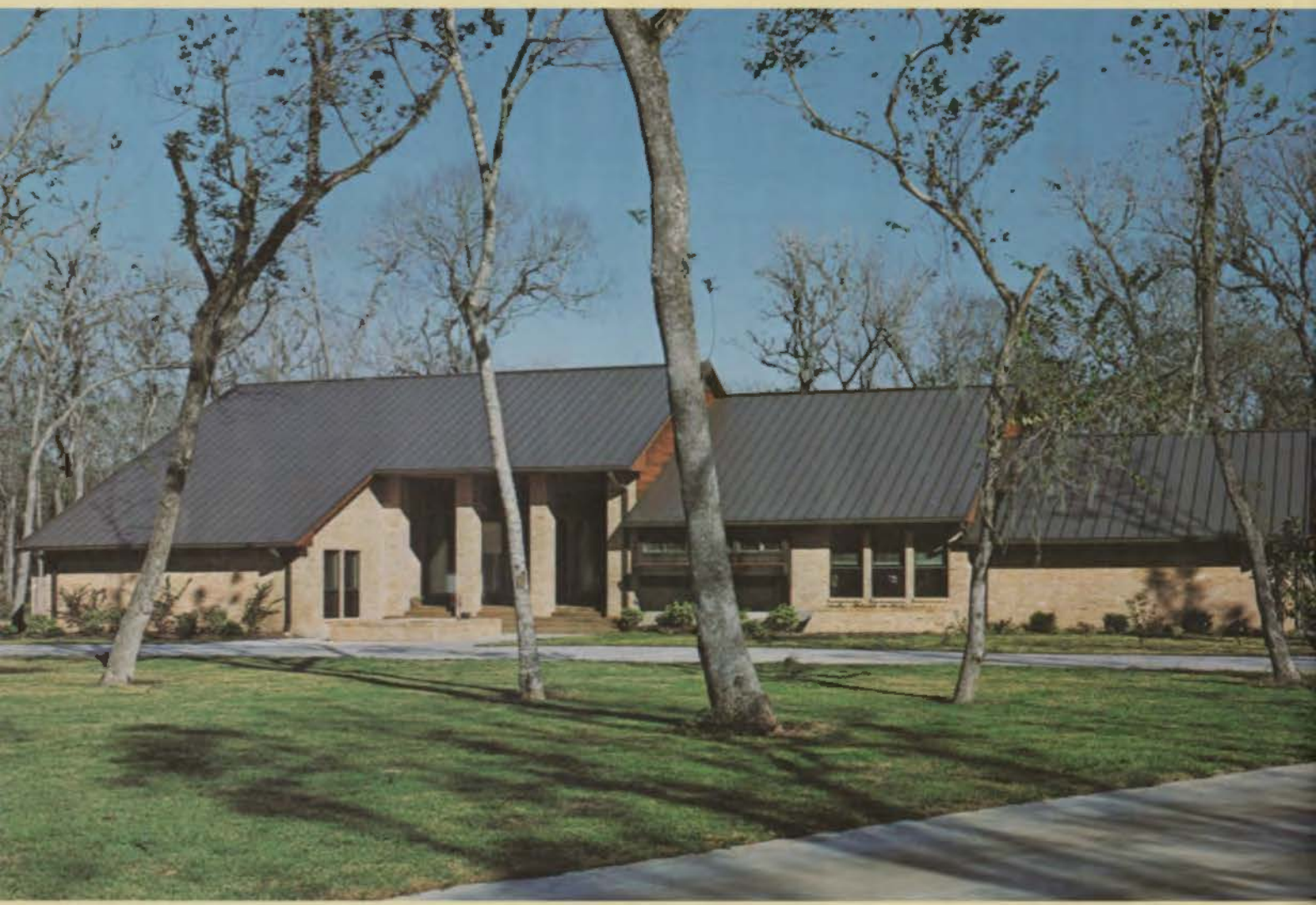

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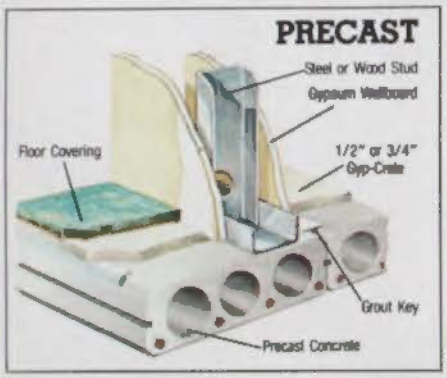

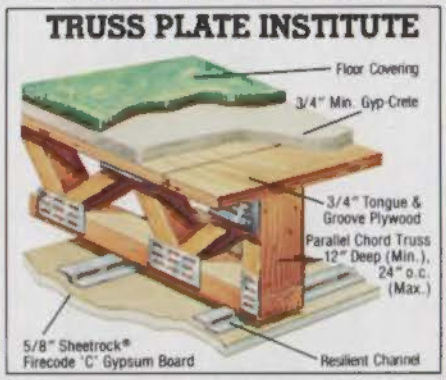

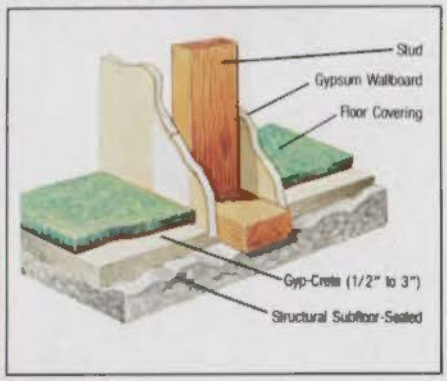

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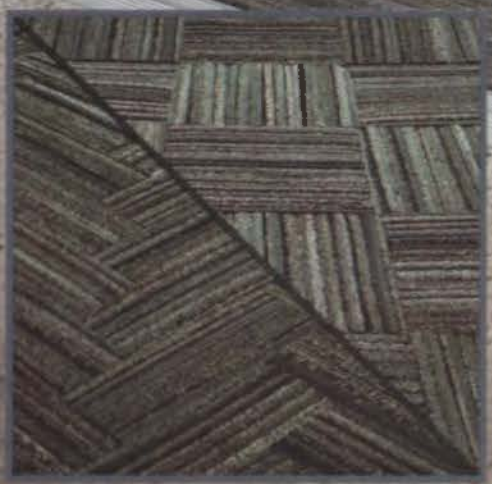

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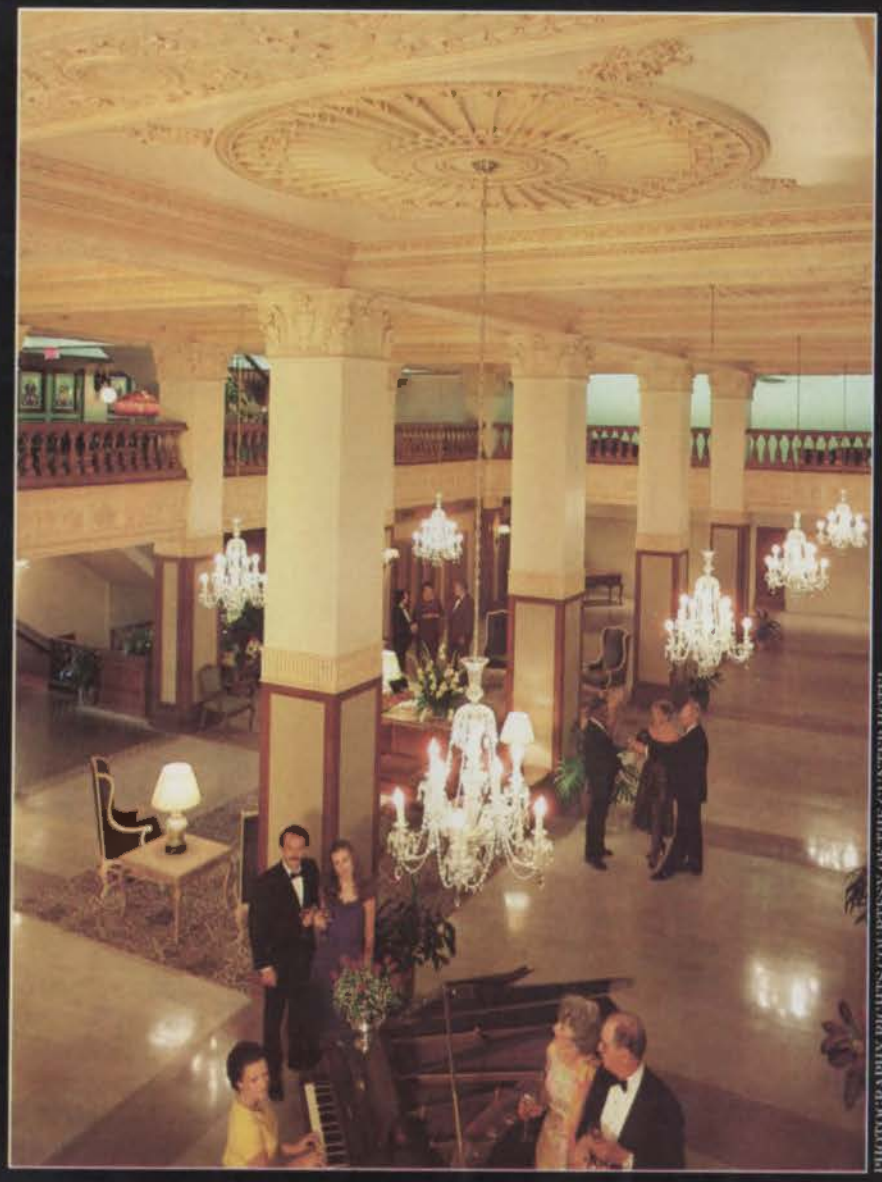

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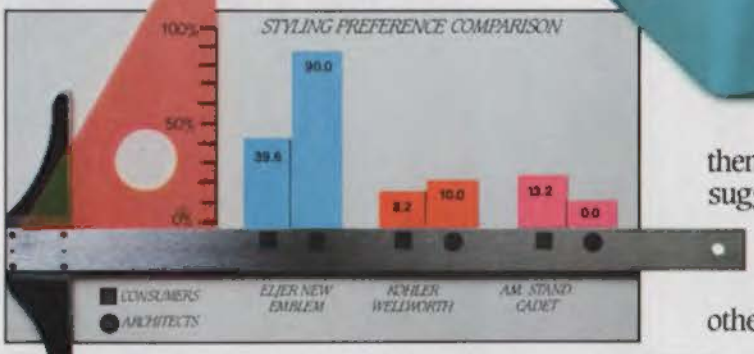

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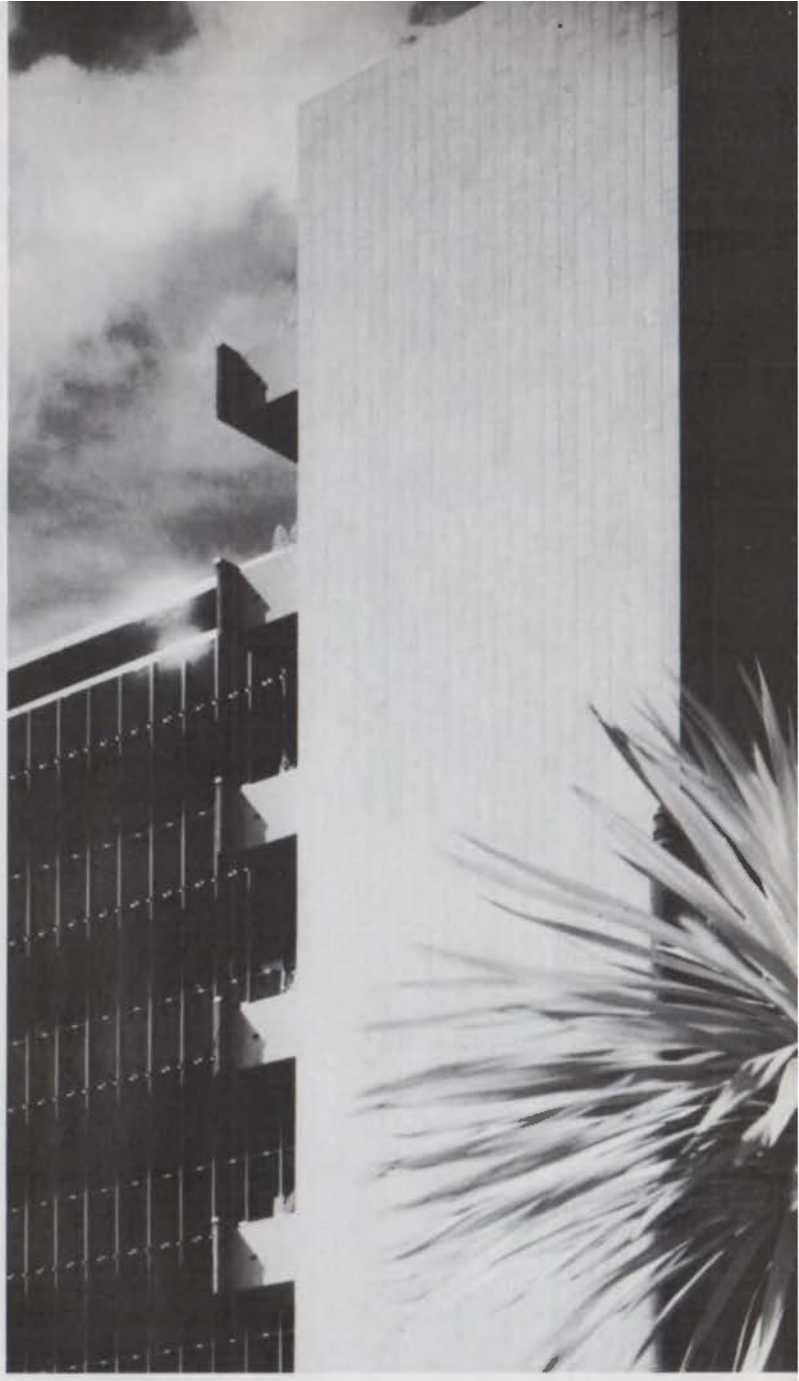

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Number Three in a Series of
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Innovation

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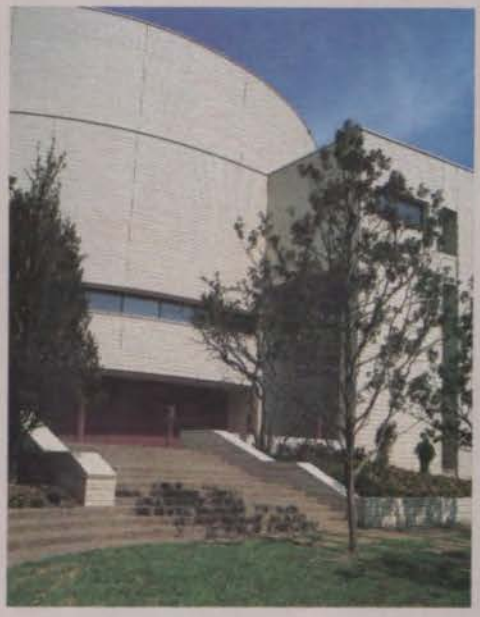

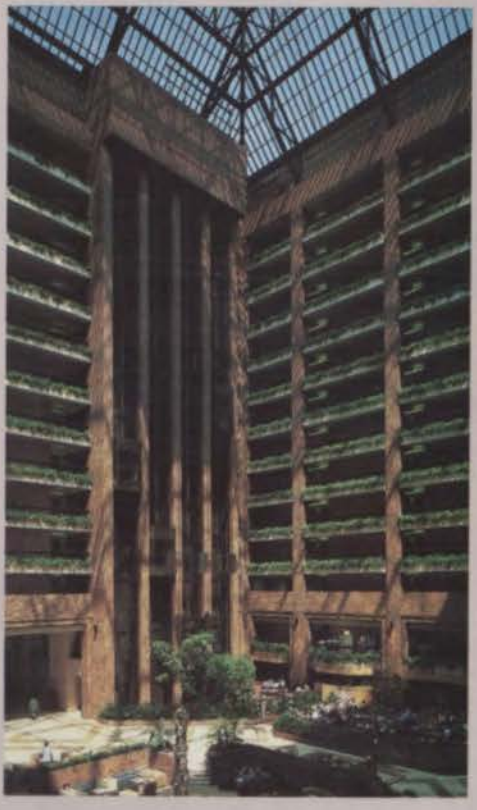

◀ **Omni Theater**

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Architect:	Hammel Green and Abrahamson, Incorporated St. Paul, Minnesota
Associate Architect:	Albert S. Komatsu & Associates Fort Worth, Texas
Masonry Contractor:	Fenimore-Blythe, Incorporated Fort Worth, Texas

◀ **Loews Anatole Hotel — First Atrium**

Owner:	Trammell Crow Hotel Companies Dallas, Texas
Architect:	Beran & Shelmire Dallas, Texas
Masonry Contractor:	Dee Brown Masonry, Incorporated Dallas, Texas

▲ **Cedar Valley Community College**

Owner:	The Dallas County Community College District
Architect:	JPJ Architects, Incorporated Dallas, Texas
Masonry Contractor:	Dee Brown Masonry, Incorporated Dallas, Texas

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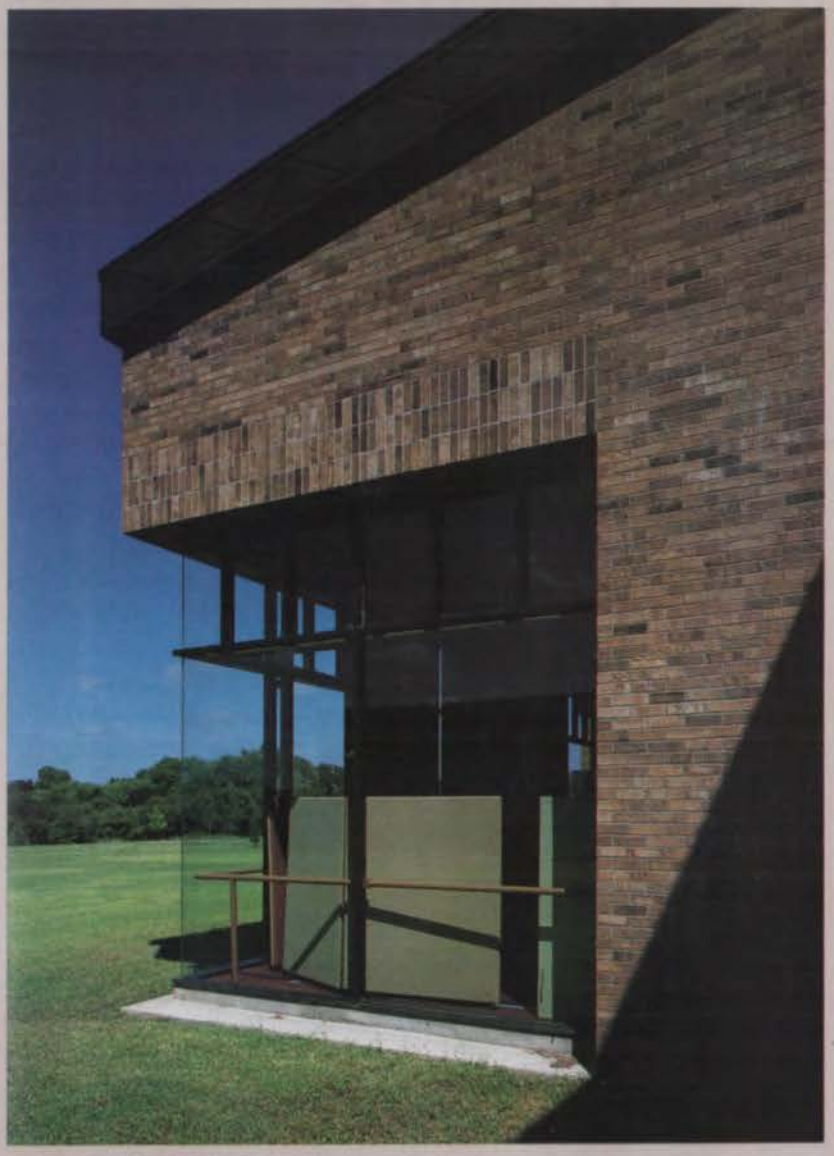

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Architect:	Williams Pollock Associates Wheaton, Illinois
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▲ **Brookhaven Community College**

Owner:	The Dallas County Community College District
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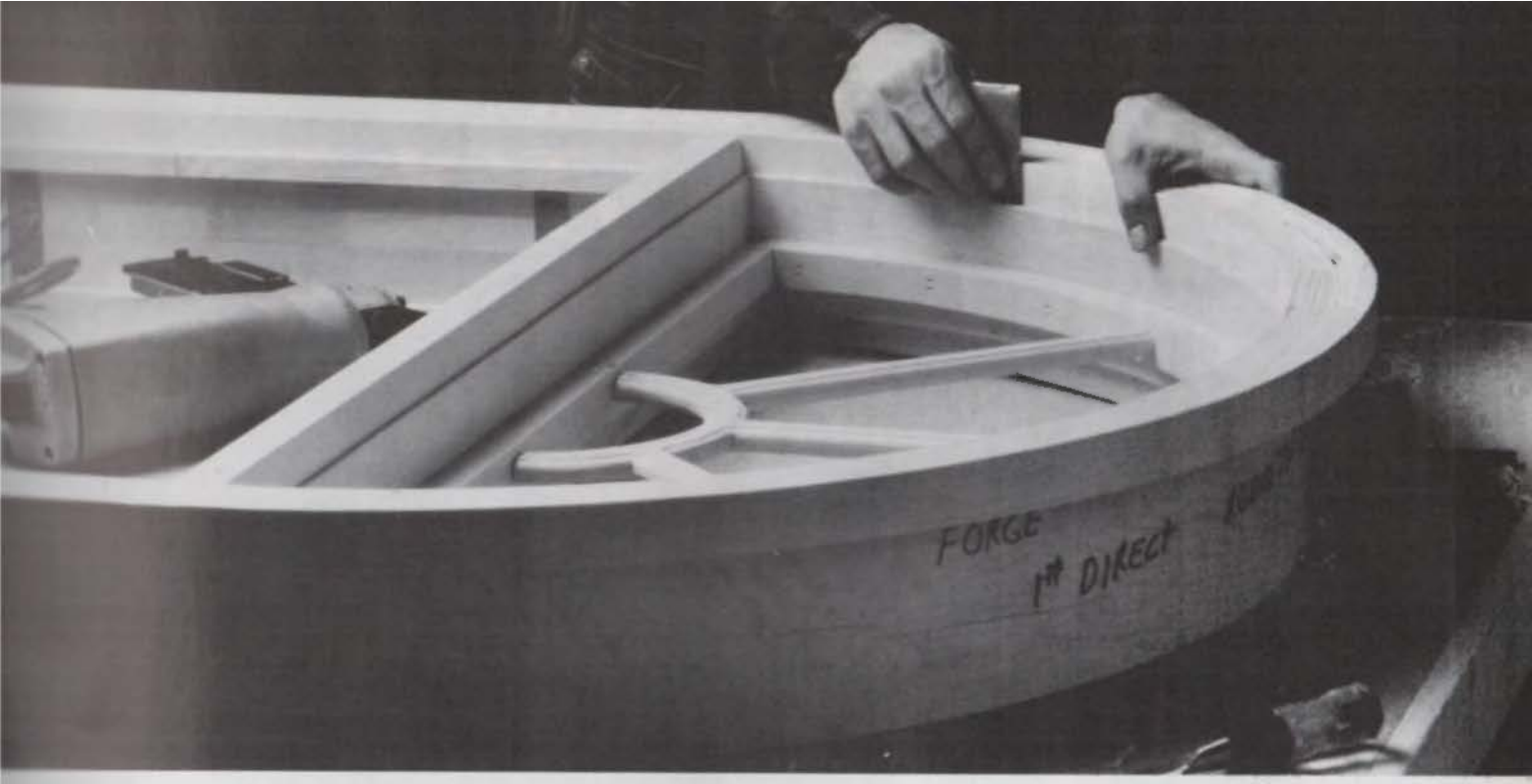

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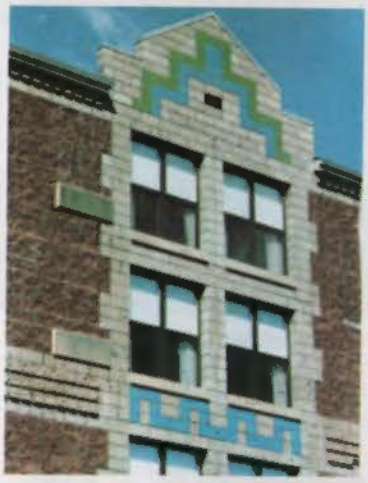

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led the city and the absentee owners of Fourth Ward property to begin to plan the redevelopment of the entire Fourth Ward area.

Residents of the area, in turn, began to look for a way to protect their neighborhood. The Freedman's Town Association, a group formed in 1981 to promote rejuvenation of the area, proposed the creation of a 40-block historic district. The city and the owners accepted the idea of a district, but suggested that it should be much more restricted, encompassing an area of only six blocks. They feared that a larger district would restrict their ability to coordinate redevelopment of the area. Efraim Garcia argued that using federal funds, the existing street grid and utilities infrastructure would be entirely replaced under the city's redevelopment plan. Once the plan was in effect, the land could be marketed to a single developer who would then produce a coordinated development project. These events would be impossible, Garcia argued, if a larger historic district were created.

As a result, a heated confrontation developed between the Freedman's Town Association and the owners and the city. On July 29, the State Board of Review met in Houston to consider the nomination. The emotionally charged meeting was attended by about 200 people. After hearing a presentation about the district and listening to testimony both pro and con, the Board of Review voted unanimously to approve the nomination so that it will now be forwarded to the Department of Interior for final consideration. In voting to approve the District, the State Board members strictly followed the law listing criteria for eligibility and were not swayed by local political considerations. Several Board members later privately said they were not aware that the nomination was so controversial. Several also said that they might have considered tabling the nomination, but after presentations by the district opponents, they felt it was necessary to follow the strict letter of the law and so had no choice but to vote for the district.

The nomination will now be forwarded to the Department of the Interior, which must contact the property owners about listing. If over half object, which appears likely since their association is working with the city on the redevelopment plan, the district will not be listed.

As a result, the future of the Fourth Ward is unknown. Even if the area is not listed as a National Register District, its historic character must still be recognized in any application for federal funding (such as an Urban Development Action Grant, which could be used by the city for the restructuring of streets and utilities). Even if only a six-block area had been nominated, this consideration tion of the historic character of the *entire* area still would have been required if any federal funding had been sought. With the district, the Freedman's Town Association now hopes to obtain funds for rehabilitation of the dilapidated structures, but given the general opposition of the owners, this does not appear likely. Efraim Garcia suggested that many owners may now demolish structures before they might be designated as historic.

The city plan for razing and redevelopment has, at least temporarily, been halted, but residents' hopes of revitalization are probably unrealistic. The controversy appears to echo many of the

Breisch, THC

Dilapidated housing in the Fourth Ward.

urban renewal battles which took place in northern and eastern cities in the 1960s, of which Houston was largely spared. On the one side, the city seeks to clear the land so it may be developed in a coherent fashion by a single developer. On the other side, the residents are fighting to preserve their neighborbood with the limited tools at their disposal. A third alternative, incremental redevelopment into an area of townhouses on narrow streets like New York's Greenwich Village or Washington's Georgetown, might be the best solution, but may be precluded by the existing utilities and appears to have little support.

HOUSTON OPENS THREE DESIGN CENTERS

Consistent with Houston's philosophy of doing things bigger, the city will soon have not one center for interior design and architecture but three, scattered miles apart from each other.

The first to open is the **Interior Resource Center**, developed by Allen Properties. Designed by House Reh Associates, the IRC is located in a 15-acre, park-like setting on Old Katy Road, just northwest of the 610 Loop. The IRC's first phase consists of a V-shaped, two-story building with covered external corridors that surround a large automobile

Interior Resource Center

courtyard. The 240,000 sq. ft. building features front door parking and back door service, permitting designers to "carry out" some selections. A courtyard gazebo in center of the courtyard will be used for gatherings and receptions.

The IRC's second phase expansion, currently under construction, will add a 110,000 sq. ft. building overlooking a man-made lake. The new building will feature a central open-air atrium with private balconies, a trellis-like glass canopy enclosing a restaurant, and a covered walkway connecting to the rest of the center. When completed the IRC will include over 400,000 sq. ft. of showroom space.

The **Houston Design Center** by Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc. and Lloyd Jones Brewer & Associates reflects a sharp contrast in attitude to the IRC's car-oriented style. As the latest addition to one of the most urban sections of Houston, the Greenway Plaza area, the ten-story HDC is clad in slick black granite with bands of rough-hewn grey

NEWS, *continued on page 34*

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granite. This austere facade will be enlivened by multi-story red banners over the entry and five double-story cubic terraces visible from the exterior.

One of the building's chief assets is a lively plan punctuated with strong circulation patterns. Escalators cascade through the building's vertical, zig-zag canyon, moving visitors to terrace landings. A clerestory light monitor on the top floor runs the full length of the building, offering splendid internal and external views.

Decorative Center of Houston

The 500,000 sq. ft. HDC emphasizes contract showrooms and office-related technology. Tenants will have use of three fully equipped conference rooms and dining facilities. Houston's AIA Chapter and the Institute of Business Designers have leased space in the building. To the added benefit of the design community, the HDC will sponsor lectures by some of the major names in the design community.

The 128,000 sq. ft. **Decorative Center of Houston** first opened its doors at Woodway and Sage, just west of Loop 610, in 1974. The 340,000 sq. ft. expansion, which includes a ten-story tower and five-story parking garage, is scheduled to open mid-October. Developed by the Dallas Market Center Company, the building was designed by Morris/Aubry; the public entrance space, "Designer's Gallery," by Charles Moore; and contract floors by Sally Walsh. Of the three, the DCH is the most eclectic, in both outlook and built form. The existing building, a two-story walk-up around a fountained courtyard, and the first six stories of the tower are dedicated to residential, fabric and floor covering showrooms.

Floors seven through ten are exclusively contract. The finishes of the public spaces will change to reflect this; the lower floors have muted gray-green

Houston Design Center

walls, cut pile carpets and natural wood, while the contract floors are black and white with chrome and brass. These tower showrooms can incorporate exterior windows or block off daylight entirely.

The potentially confusing plan at DCH encourages the visitor to navigate by landmarks—the fountained atrium at the center of each tower floor, or the gaily festooned restaurant/bar by Charles Moore that turns into a small amphitheater for public or private functions. The exterior of the new building, clad uniformly in green reflective glass, bears little relationship to the two "rusticated" stucco buildings that act as its forecourt. A two-story Texas pink granite portico will mark the main entrance.

The competitive situation between these three rival centers will undoubtedly benefit the designer. Each center will aggressively market its showroom spaces to suppliers who might have leased space in Dallas or New York. But unlike Dallas' compact design center, comparative selection in Houston will involve extensive time behind the wheel.

—Janet O'Brien

BBC FILMS DOCUMENTARY ABOUT TEXAS ARCHITECTURE

Filmmakers from the BBC, the British television network, were in Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston in July to film a segment for a 10-part series on world architecture. Although producer Peter Adams and assistant director Roger Last did a whirlwind filming tour of six American cities in three weeks, architecture in Texas impressed them enough to devote a one-hour program to buildings in the state.

"The architecture of this moment," Last said in a telephone interview from London, "is not about Modern architecture. The older Eastern cities of North America have excellent Modern buildings but few of these cities have really new architecture. It seems that Dallas and Houston are at the vanguard of design. The great names in Post-Modernism have built in a very compact area in Houston: Philip Johnson, I.M. Pei, Cesar Pelli. If you're making a film about the new world architecture, Houston simply could not be omitted."

Although Last admires the architecture of both Houston and Dallas, he finds the overall urban amenities of the two cities less than hospitable. "To a European accustomed to walking and enjoying the pedestrian life, I'm afraid Houston and Dallas simply can not compare favorably," he said.

"Downtown in Texas is really a daytime affair with everyone fleeing to the suburbs in the evening, and leaving the central core deserted. But this is my personal bias, and I can see why some people would prefer to live in a city geared towards the automobile."

SAN ANTONIO CONSIDERS PEDESTRIAN MALL

The face that San Antonio shows in its travel brochures is gracious and welcoming—the River Walk, lush parks and gardens, splendidly restored historic facades and sizable new office buildings. Locals, however, can no longer ignore some troublesome realities: much of the new and adaptive commercial space remains unleased, established retailers are packing up, the streets are noisy and polluted, the sidewalks are crumbling and filthy, and many downtown users walk them in fear. Too many people and vehicles are competing for narrow right-of-way.

There have been periodic efforts in the past to shore up downtown retailing, to reduce congestion from buses or to im-

prove the pedestrian environment, but only recently has the city begun to look at all of these as an interdependent system.

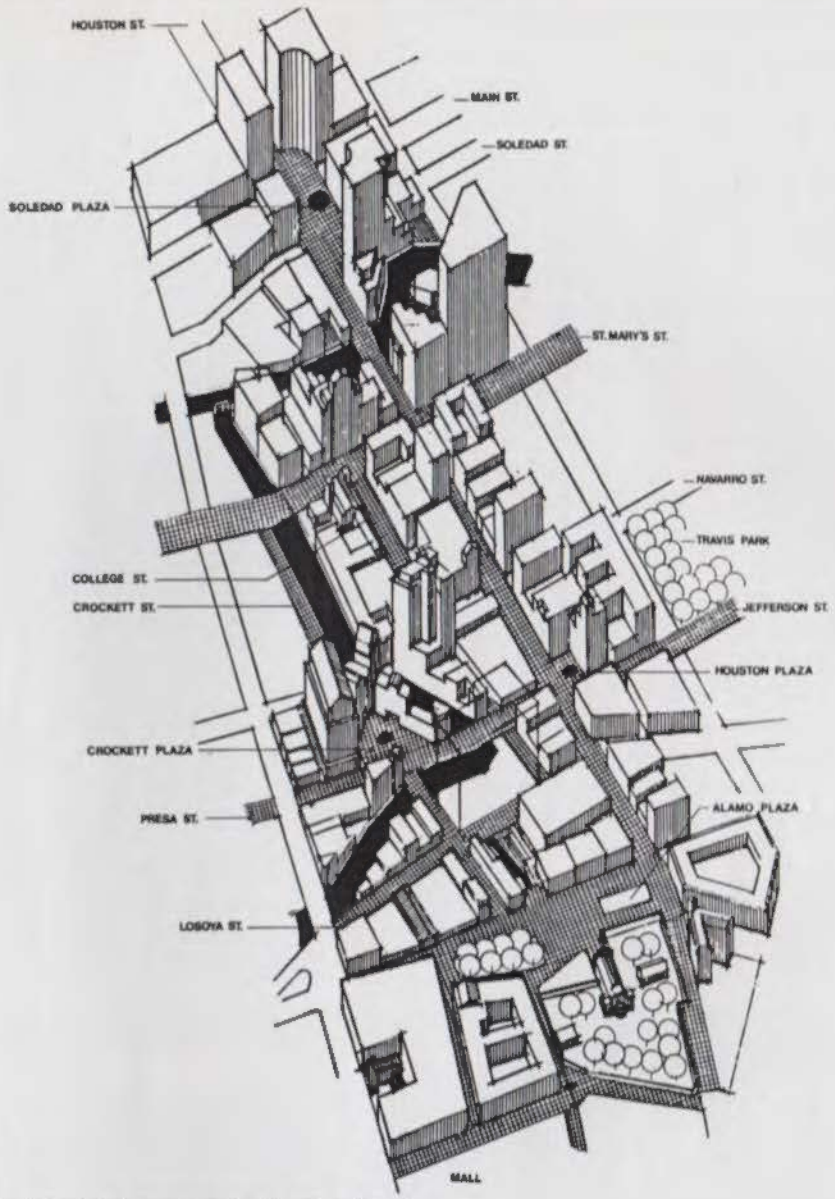
Last fall, the city of San Antonio, VIA Metropolitan Transit and the Downtown Owners Association formed the Tri-Party Downtown Transportation Initiative to commission a study of the business district's future transportation needs, including pedestrian movement, from Cambridge Systematics Inc. of Cambridge, Mass. After projecting future development trends, studying traffic and business data and interviewing locals, Cambridge submitted a report last July that defined downtown's problems and examined possible solutions.

Three items of major importance emerged from the study:

- First, the pedestrian environment was, often literally, the pits. The Cambridge team urged investing in a "pedestrian-friendly" system of sidewalks, plazas and parks.
- Second, the connections between disparate activity centers were ill-defined, and the pedestrian's mental map was becoming increasingly confused with the geographic expansion of downtown far beyond its traditional compact bounds. This perceptual difficulty would be exacerbated by future projects, especially Tiendas del Rio, a large retail-commercial center to be built on a visually isolated site behind the Joske's Alamo Plaza department store and the Menger Hotel. Integrating this center with the downtown core is of major concern both to the project's developers and to Houston-Street retailers.

The consultants proposed "a hierarchical order of pedestrian emphasis streets," with Houston Street and Alamo Plaza—the traditional retail core—being the major pedestrian spine. Lesser pedestrian linkages would connect this spine to the city's tourism, government and office centers. Depending on specifics of location and their place in the hierarchy, these streets would be dressed up with items from a "kit of parts," a collection of street furniture, signage, lighting and paving of unified and distinctive design.

- Third, the single most negative perception of downtown concerned buses—their noise and exhaust fumes, littering and sidewalk congestion at bus stops,



Arrow Associates' proposal for Houston Street.

and the social stereotypes of bus riders. Some powerful business interests had been pushing to get the buses off the streets, or at least the ones that passed in front of their establishments. Since half of all waiting passengers at bus stops have no downtown destination, but are merely connecting from one bus to another, the consultants urged creation of a central transfer terminal to reduce street-corner congestion, together with some rerouting.

These three problems, the Cambridge team stressed, have economic consequences. They scare away potential office building tenants, discourage shopping by downtown office workers, and add impetus to the evening rush back to the suburbs. It is necessary to design a pedestrian system that would encourage strolling and spending by office workers, bring tourists up from the River Walk and be delightful enough to compete with suburban shopping malls.

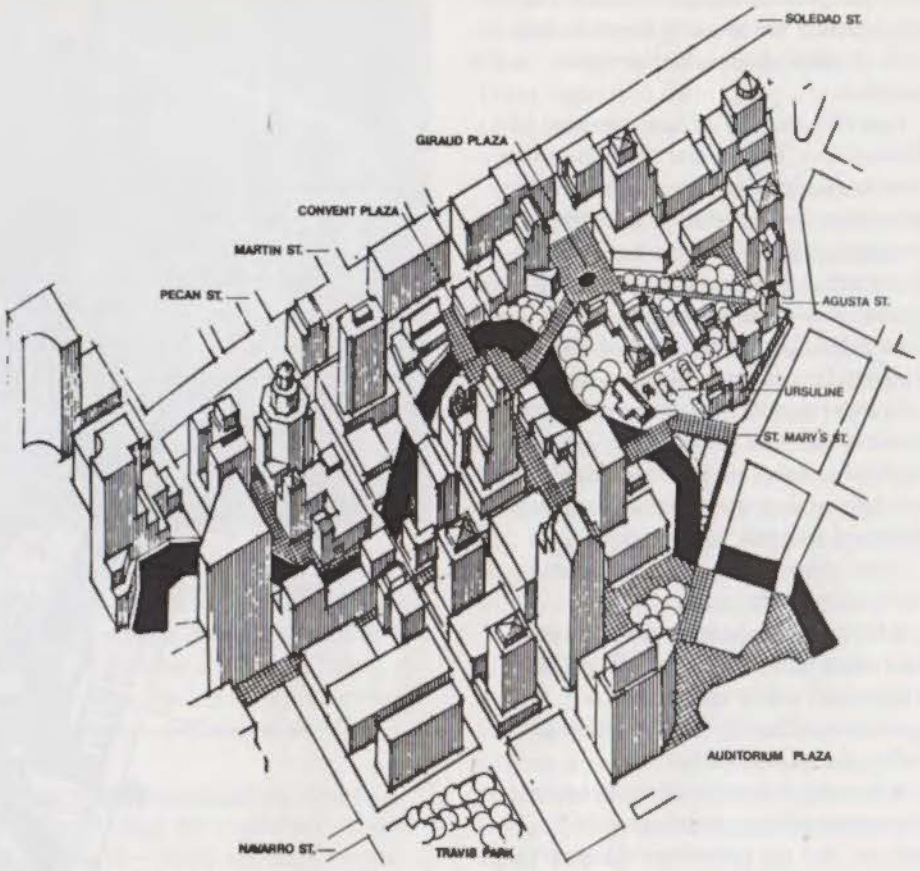
Rather than present a detailed all-or-nothing solution, the Cambridge team evaluated numerous possibilities—some mutually exclusive, some complementary. After gathering comments from San Antonio's Byzantine network of public boards, commissions, task forces, societies and associations, the three clients will decide what mix—and what cost—would be most suitable. In mid-August, the initial consensus-building process is still continuing.

Nonetheless, consensus seems to have been achieved already on some major

points. Though some dissenters are heard, there is wide agreement on the creation, by stages, of a Houston-Street transit mall to be served only by small streetcar-styled circulator buses, with full-size buses banished to other streets. The notion of banning all vehicular traffic from Alamo Plaza, which would become a unified pedestrian space, is almost uniformly applauded. City and county officials have already begun talking seriously about applying for federal UMTA funds to build a transfer station into a proposed city-county administration building. The 1984–85 city budget is likely to include additional funds for downtown street and sidewalk cleaning, police patrols and maintenance. Many downtown property owners say they are interested in creating a special assessment district to pay for and maintain capital improvements.

The big question is how far the city and the business community will be willing to go. Arrow Associates, the local architecture and planning firm that con-

NEWS, *continued on page 78*



Arrow Associates' St. Mary's Street proposal.

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HOPE FOR HOUSTON

The 45th Annual Meeting of the Texas Society of Architects, in Houston November 1–3, occasions a look in this issue at Texas' largest city, indeed the fourth-largest city in America. The convention will serve as the culmination of a year-long exploration of the theme "Let's Grow . . . Better," tidy terminology for the position that no-growth policies are unrealistic, that growth is both inevitable and potentially positive, and that attention should therefore be focused on the quality of the growth that is bound to occur in Texas cities.

As a setting for "Let's Grow . . . Better," there is perhaps no better place than Houston, which over the last decade has been under close world-wide scrutiny as an urban design case study in the effects of laissez-faire development and unrestrained growth. Attitudes toward the Houston phenomenon on the part of its many observers have ranged across a full spectrum from sheer indignation, to a kind of wait-and-see ambivalence, to awe and admiration.

One of the most caustic assessments of Houston as city came recently from architect and critic Peter Blake, writing in *Interior Design:*

> Why do critics (like myself) think Houston is the pits? Answer: Because it isn't a city at all—it's a stack of megabucks, piled up to the sky and shrink-wrapped in some kind of reflective curtain wall. It has no people (they're scurrying around like moles in all those tunnels), so it looks as if the place had been neutron-nuked. Its streets are dead, and designed to be. The only visible, moving objects are air-conditioned limousines that circle those stacks of megabucks on elevated highways.

The tragedy of Houston, Blake goes on to say, is that "it isn't a city at all—and that Houstonians don't know it. Houston is, in fact, the prototypical anti-city."

Blake epitomizes the not-uncommon view that it's entirely too late for Houston, that the city should be written off, and that all available energies should be focused on preventing the "Houstonization" of still-salvageable cities such as Austin, Dallas, Denver and Atlanta. Critics in this camp are fond of flaunting photographs of crowded Houston freeways or downtown streets that are sadly void of pedestrians after five o'clock and during the subtropical steam of mid-day summer.

The fatal flaw in this viewpoint, it seems, is that it results from the imposition of textbook standards—longstanding eastern notions of city—on a place that is neither longstanding nor eastern. Dismissing Houston because it fails to satisfy the "I love New York" mentality is much too easy.

A more reasonable assessment can be gleaned from the collective sentiments of observers such as Robert Venturi, Ada Louise Huxtable, American landscape specialist J. B. Jackson, UT-Austin professor Lawrence Speck, and, in particular, one of Houston's most articulate apologists, Douglas Milburn, of *Houston City*. It was in the spirit of Venturi's "almost all right" that Huxtable wrote of Houston in the mid-seventies: "Houston . . . requires a new definition of urbanity. Houston is THE city of the second half of the twentieth century." It seems fair to surmise that those who fall into the Huxtable camp do not summarily dismiss Houston because of its love affair with the automobile or its dislike for inhumane heat and humidity. Rather, they evaluate Houston in the context of what Jackson and Speck refer to as the "emerging American city"—places that were formed, and continue to be shaped, in response to the automobile rather than, as in the case of denser eastern cities, the pedestrian. The point is, Houston street life will never be the same as street life in New York, and maybe that's all right. As Milburn says, "Houston is its own city . . . You either take it for what it is, or you move back to Lansing."

In evaluating what Houston has become and is becoming, one would do well to consider several sources of hope. Remember the potential of the brash spirit that produced a teeming metropolis—and the world's best recent collection of tall buildings—in spite of a bleak and hostile natural environment. Remember, too, that part of Houston's problem is its newness, its roughness around the edges; after a decade of boiling hot activity, the current simmering should enrich the whole mixture. Remember, in this context, one of the main lessons from Rice—the overwhelming aesthetic power of such a simple gesture as the planting of trees. And remember, in short, what they always say about Rome.

—Larry Paul Fuller

HOUSTON: HOW AND WHY?

By John Kaliski
and Peter Jay Zweig

Photography by Paul Hester

Easterners often ascribe the growth of Sunbelt cities to the climate, or perhaps a proximity to the great outdoors or the sea. Quality-of-life quotients outside of the frost belt are on average quite high. But Houston, unlike many cities in the sun, appears to have everything going against it. Yet still it grows.

As all realize by now, the weather in Houston is, much of the year, awful. One either gets wet from the rain or from one's own perspiration. Yet still the city grows. It is common to wake up in the morning to the stench of refineries. Hurricanes and West Texas dust storms periodically roar through the city. Traditional standards and measures of urban life simply do not apply here. Yet still it grows; even at this moment, the city continues to expand at the rate of 5,000 newcomers per month.

Houston, then, is an unlikely spot for a great metropolis. Throughout its history, its people have made up for its natural shortcomings with hyperbole, tall tales, and outright lies. Early views of the city drawn in the late 1830s depict Houston as pastorally verdant and surrounded by beautiful low mountains. One might expect that the first settlers—after a year of floods, mosquitoes, and heat—would have written to their relatives in Virginia or Czechoslovakia and told them to go someplace else—but they did not. They invited them to come here. The first government of the Texas nation did, however, flee the city for Austin's gentler climes.

Houston is wet, hot, flood-prone, smog-filled and traffic-jammed, suffering from decades of rapid growth. And still it grows. An ever-present question must haunt both those that visit and those that stay to live. Why and how do Houstonians survive in their City? Contradictions abound and difficult intangibles await the observer of Houston.

SURVIVAL VISIONS

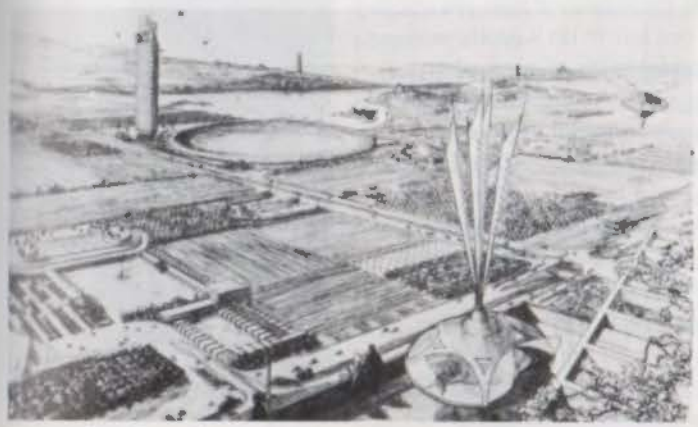
Many first-time visitors to Houston assume they will step off their plane and step onto the set of *Giant*. Cowboys rounding up cattle will be in sight just beyond the airplane hangars, and as one wipes the dust out of sun-blinded eyes, a gleaming NASA rocket will blast off in the distance. But the gap between this myth and physical reality is quite large. For the student of cities and architecture, Houston is more akin to a synthesis of two great visions of the 20th century as dreamed by two of the most iconoclastic architects of the age—Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier.

Wright developed his vision of Broadacre City based on a personal interpretation of Jeffersonian ideals and a lifetime adoration of the 19th century city. Broadacre was conceived as a city where people would live predominantly in single-family houses and tend their own vegetable gardens. Scattered throughout the region would be several high-rise towers where the unattached would live. Wright's ideal city had a well developed system of freeways, which permitted activities in civic, religious and commercial centers to be dispersed throughout the countryside. The ideas behind Broadacre were grounded not only in modern architectural ideology but also the dream lifestyle as propagated in this country during the great depression. This vision became an obtainable city dream after World War II and, on an ideological level, Houston was developed according to these notions.

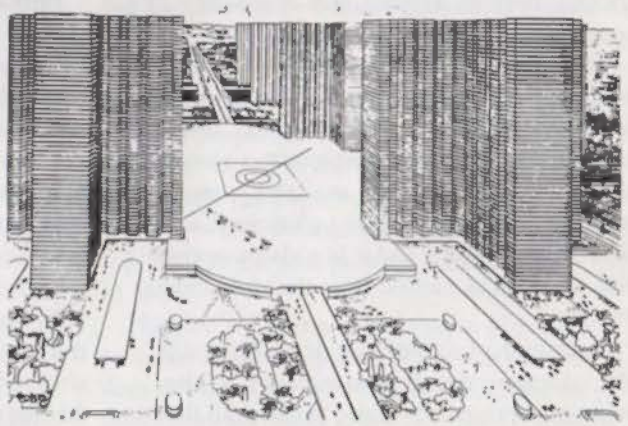
For Wright, the architect as technocrat was meant to have total control over the process of growth. However, in Houston, as throughout the nation, a more realistic power center developed. Developers and private speculators, not architects and planners, control the growth and physical form of Houston. With few constraints from the local authorities, private enterprise has rejected Houston's grid-ironed past for the enormously popular "ideal suburb." The city's continued appeal is at least partially based on the enduring belief of the masses in this type of lifestyle and the ability of Houston

A tower-in-a-park view from Inwood Manor, looking east.

View from Riverway, on the West Loop, panning east to south.

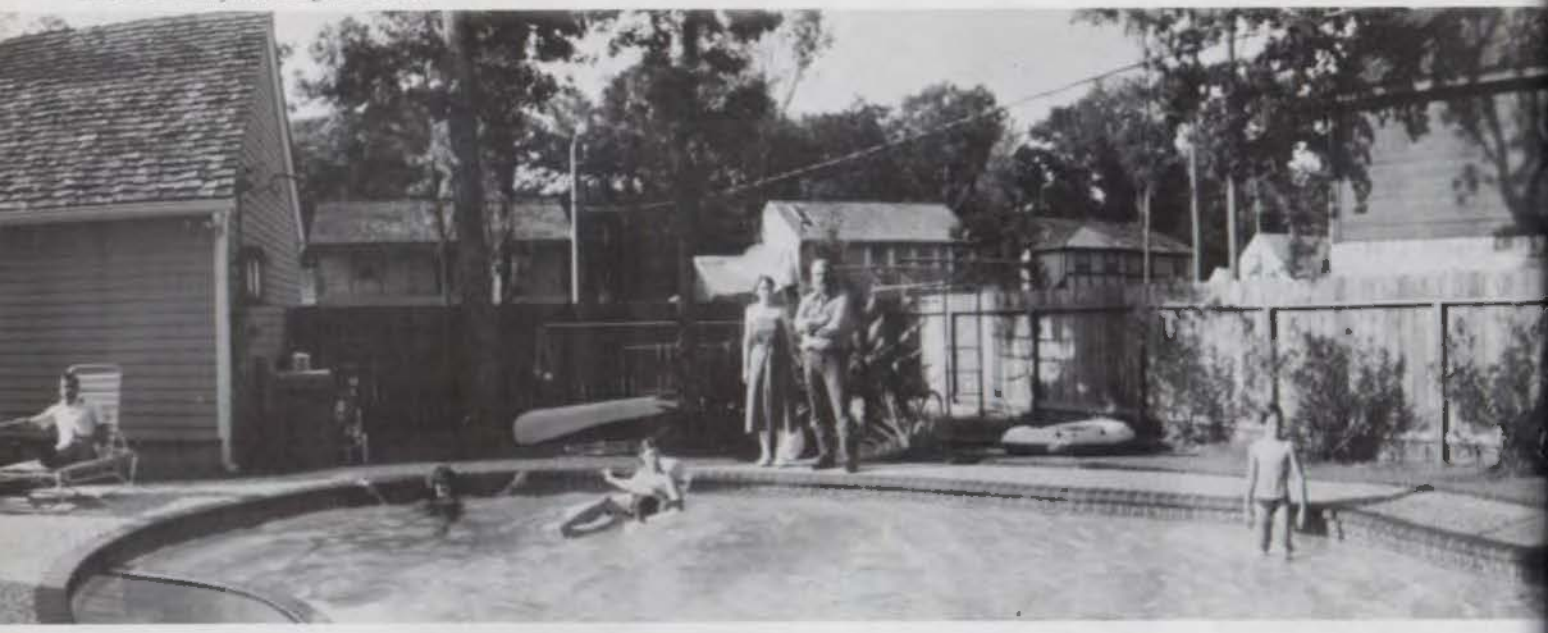


Wright's Broadacre City.



Corbu's "City of Tomorrow."

Surburban back yard, along F.M. 1960.



developers to make it accessible for the majority of citizens.

The average Houstonian buys and lives in a single-family home with a private back yard. Whereas in places like Manhattan, life in a single-family home is unobtainable for all but the very rich, in Houston the ideal of the suburb in the city is available to all but the very poor. Houston remains a city where the amenities of suburban life are desired and, first and foremost, available. In a sense, Houston is Broadacre City incarnate.

In contrast to Wright, Le Corbusier in his didactic work, *The City of Tomorrow*, shows vast highways ripping through agglomerations of gleaming towers. These towers are set amidst a park-like setting and the landscape is developed in a linear manner dictated by the ribbon of the highway. The tower in the park with instant accessibility by automobile is certainly one vision of Houston that continues to drive the making of the city. Elevated above the streets, Houstonians see a reassuring image of their city. From above, on the road, the city gleams; from an airplane, it is impossibly green.

In many of the drawings of the City of Tomorrow, Le Corbusier draws the horizon line at the level of the tops of the towers. This is an impossibly high perspective point: a view of the city of the future only available from an airplane or helicopter. It is a glorious if somewhat suspect vision and it is a vision uncannily like Houston as viewed from the surrounding freeways.

Both in the Le Corbusier drawings and in the view from the elevated highway, a false horizon is presented—false because all that is seen is an image of the city, not the reality of its streets and people. Houston, like the City of Tomorrow, is a dream vision from above; it is most impressive from the comforts of an air-conditioned car. For true discernment of Houston's problems and possible futures, one must get off the freeway and get out of the ever-present car.

FALSE HORIZONS

There are no dominant natural features, such as a great bay or mountains, that make Houston geographically unique. There are instead a sheer flatness and giant scale to the landscape, equalizing all places under the horizon—a valueless Cartesian grid. Neglected bayous do wind through the region, but are used mainly as drainage ditches. City leaders never cease to dream about the day these waterways organize the outdoor spaces and provide a natural orientation for the city. At present, however, the most remarkable quality of the Houston landscape is its overwhelming artificiality.

In Houston, only the works of man are visible. Anything that has to do with the non-abusive use or contemplation of nature has been sublimated to a minor role. Yet in the private sense, Houston remains today one giant garden of back yards and landscaped subdivisions. Houston can be thought of as a giant series of private gardens; nobody knows the garden next door. As in other cities, there are neighborhood institutions such as the "Yard of the Month" that contribute to civic responsibility, but the yard that is chosen is always the front yard. Access to the back of the house is rarely granted.

Looking north on Harvard Street in the Heights.

Looking south on Valentine Street in the 4th Ward.

Not that long ago, in the 1950s, there was an amazing interconnecting world of back yards and hidden paths that was open for the child to explore. In Houston, with the unending erection of fences, closing off the private domain to all but the immediate family, is it possible for children—even in their own neighborhoods—to live a social life?

Social connections do exist in the churches and the neighborhoods, but the fences are perhaps physically and symbolically much higher than we realize. A desire exists in Houston to control space, and this desire is reflected in the interiorization of the back yards. There is a desire to control even that which is outdoors, to make it indoors, because of an inability to accept the climate. Many Houstonians keep the air conditioning on all year to prevent the humidity from seeping into everything they own. This ceaseless air conditioning forces the family indoors and makes them more reliant on themselves for their own amusement, whether it be television or Scrabble. The life of the Houston family is an interior life that extends eventually to working, shopping—all phases of living.

In Houston, except for the poor, citizens rarely venture onto the streets of downtown or take advantage of an increasingly accessible public transportation system. The street, which was the great vehicle for change and protest in the 19th century city, is in Houston neutered to a consumption-oriented arcade or completely given over to the vicissitudes of the automobile. From the inward-looking apartment complexes to the closely guarded shopping malls, the public life is monitored in a way that would probably embarrass many students of constitutional law.

Are Houstonians giving up too many freedoms when they brick up sidewalk facades and put parking lots behind them? On an extreme level, is the type of single-minded development that encourages interior shopping malls with controlled private streets leading inevitably to a kind of subliminal totalitarianism in which freedoms of speech and thought are replaced only by the freedom to consume? A good example of the problem that exists is seen in a comparison between the "Gallerias" of Houston and Milan.

Milan's Galleria connects two great institutions of the city—the opera and the cathedral. The great celebrations of the church and cultural life necessarily mix with Milan's commerce, inextricably tying the three together. The Milan Galleria is more than a great shopping arcade, it is a public gathering place where people meet in the course of the average day. Symbolically, it is a place of commercial as well as civic and cultural exchange. At times it can be a place not only of celebration, but also of protest. Milan's Galleria is a stage where all aspects of life, both good and bad, are witnessed—where citizens come face to face not only with the pleasures of urban life, but also the problems. Boccioni's famous painting "Brawl in the Galleria" shows not only young men fighting but also women strolling with flowered hats and a man cheering the fight on with pastoral balloons held in hand.

Houston's Galleria in contrast to Milan's is a terminus of consumption. While one certainly does not advocate brawling in public, the only celebratory activities at the Houston Galleria

are those that reinforce the marketing of products and the concurrent commercialization of holidays. People in Houston do desire to be comfortable and to be indoors when they shop, and the private automobile is the most convenient way to move around this sprawled-out city. These are facts that cannot be ignored; to desire some other vision of utopia is naive. Yet if the malls are the main centers of the public life in Houston, one must conclude that this interiorized world presents a narrow vision of life as an unceasing quest for new products and means of entertainment. The problem with these spaces is not aesthetic; no degree of design skill can lessen the diminished sense of the public life that these indoor spaces engender.

Unfortunately there is little tradition in Houston of making grand indoor spaces where commercial and civic needs can be fostered in the same place. The functional has sufficed so far. The Astrodome is quite spectacular as an engineering feat, but 20 years after its completion one does not hear of too many people exclaiming its beauties or virtues. Like the Galleria, it is a terminus of activity rather than a connective link in everyday life. One makes the conscious choice to go to the Astrodome. Once there, the visitor is only at the Astrodome, and when not there has little reason at all to be near it. The Astrodome, like the Galleria, becomes a private domain to which the public is granted access.

Unlike New York's Grand Central Station, which is a railroad station, shopping mall, and interior space providing protection from the elements, Houston's large indoor spaces are too often devoted merely to one exclusive use. The Galleria does have hotels and office spaces, but in truth these are only different nuances of the same activity—commerce. Nobody lives in the Galleria, and for good reason. Houston may not have zoning but it is nevertheless effectively zoned by the marketplace.

Like the Le Corbusier drawing, Houston's grandest spaces and places exist under a false horizon that suggests, from the freeway, complexity and urban stability. The freeway obscures the view from the ground and the true significance of the order. The idea of the Galleria, like the image of the downtown skyscrapers, promises more than the reality delivers.

THE SIGN AND THE SKYLINE

Flying over Houston in a plane, one is struck by the near-total covering of the earth by a green carpet of jungle-like growth. Pleasant-looking freeways wind their way through lovely green forests, connecting nodes of activity where gleaming buildings thrust to the sky. In an automobile, the experience of entry into the city is quite different. The freeway that from the air was a ribbon through fields of rice becomes the speedway. One is startled from nearly 50 miles out by the proliferation of billboards and the beginnings of highway sprawl. There are certain points on the highway where the billboards become overwhelming and almost transcendental, like giant beacons of happiness—consume a new car, consume a new house, consume a new radio station. The intake of visual stimuli in the form of signs is dizzying, yet nothing of a traditional city is even in sight. On the flat landscape, the billboards are the first features to identify the coming of the city. While they do reference specific places, in truth they mark only a distant unknown.

One series of recent boards shows a Corvette crashing through a flat signboard and threatening oncoming drivers with a head-on collision. Another famous landmark, "The Big Apple," greets the traveller from Galveston with promises of sexual titillation. Driving by the huge billboard facade of the structure that advertises "girls, girls, girls," one realizes that the expected floorshow is contained within the space of a double-sized mobile home.

Most Houstonians feel that the billboards are a blight on the beauty of the city, and in some ways they are. Yet as hideous as the billboards may be, they do establish a monumental scale in this flat landscape. Without the billboards, Houstonians would have nothing to reference themselves to as they sped down the road. Fifty miles out, the signs address the presence and tenor of a city where everything is for sale.

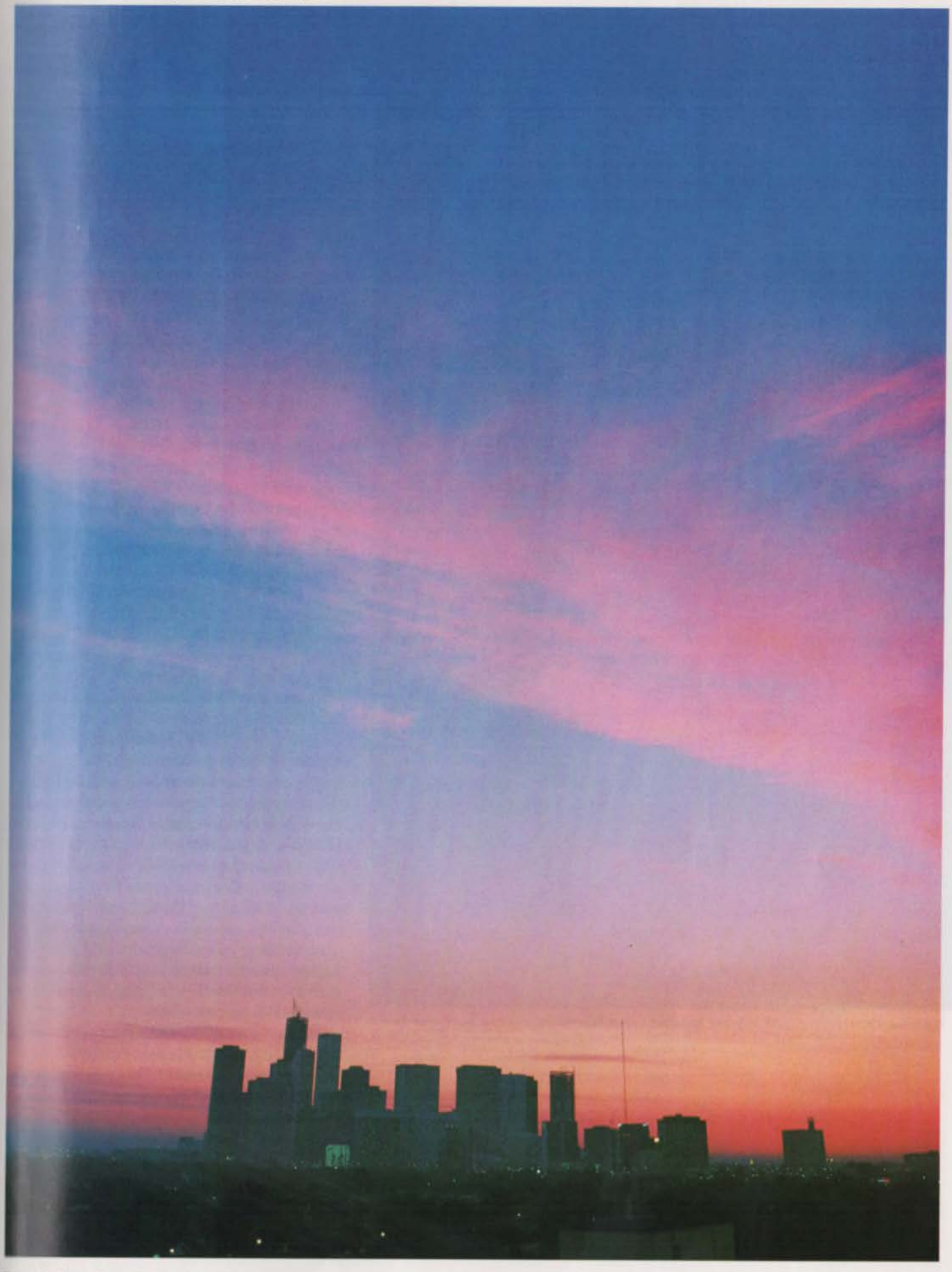
Experiencing the billboards can be compared to experiencing the Houston skyline. Like the billboards, the skyline is mainly an image of temptation. Like the billboards, the skyline marks the presence of a city, without delivering the promise of urban life. While the skyline of tall buildings is the most immediate manifestation of Houston's economic power, one need never confront their reality unless one's job is downtown. The city's downtown towers symbolize a place that is located on the map but is nowhere, for very few people call it home. Downtown is at present rootless and

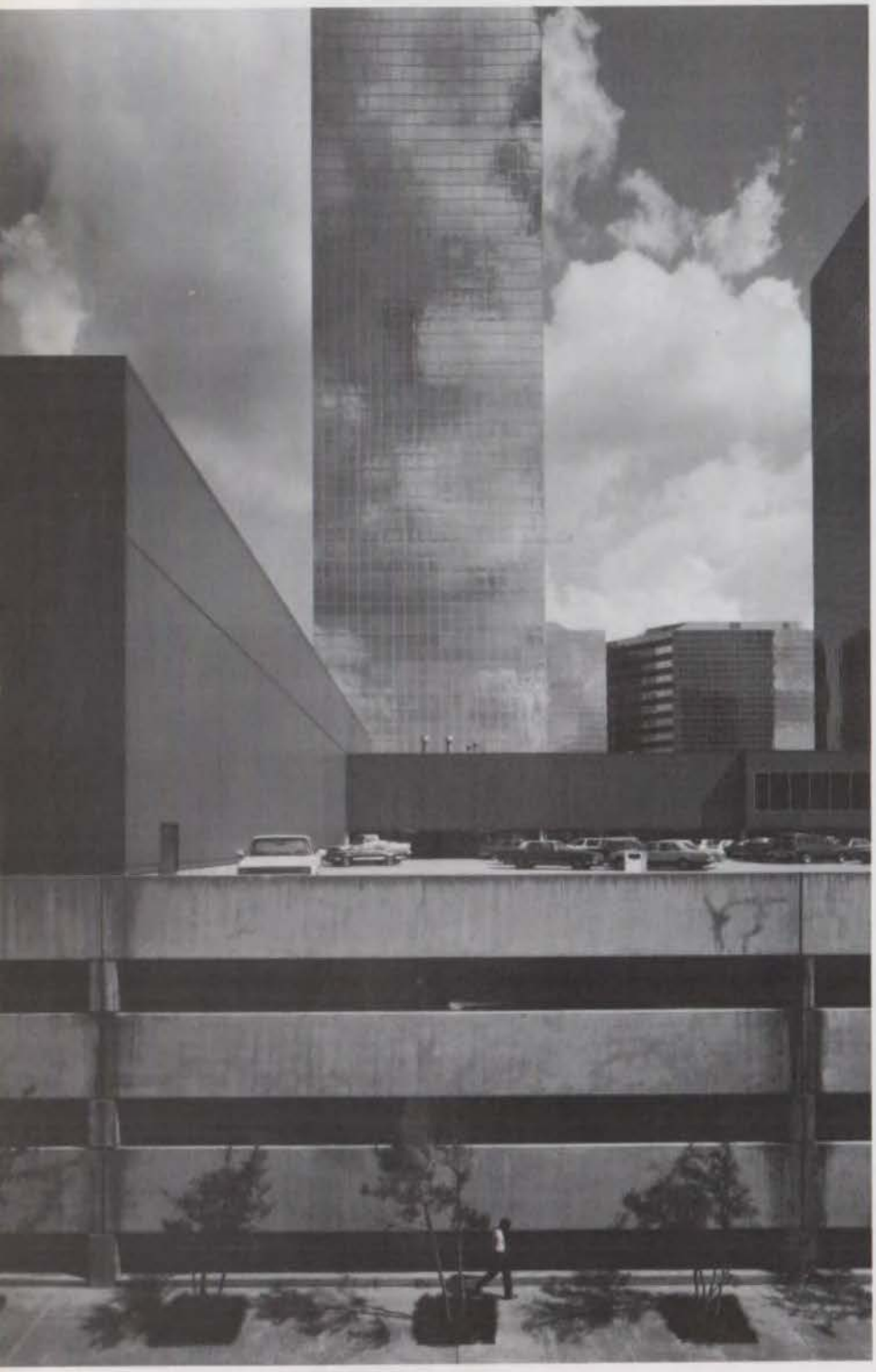
Southwest Freeway.

Gulf Freeway.

West Loop.

Skyline as billboard, looking northeast from Montrose Blvd.





Greenway Plaza, looking north from The Summit.

subject to change with the whims of fancy or finance.

Houston's gleaming new skyline advertises the idea that makes this city truly attractive to the newcomer—new growth, hence opportunity. Houstonians survive because their city is a great man-made monument that preaches opportunity, success, and consumption. The horizon dominated by billboards and towers is the essence of the place, the ethos that drives its making.

FALSE HORIZONS VERSUS TRUE TOMORROWS

Even if the majority of new jobs being created in the city today are not in the blue collar sector, the tone of Houston is still set by the oiled boomtown years and the freewheeling speculators who always had to believe that tomorrow would bring a fortune. After all, they had come here to make one. This is a comparatively young city and the ethic has always been to plan great futures at the expense of the present. Thus downtown is an awesome image from the freeway, but a lonely place on the street. Streets are devoted to parking one's car in the least obstructive manner. The city is torn apart by freeways and the land is consumed for cars, yet few question the validity of it all. Rather, Houstonians historically have preferred to rush on to the next deal and the next district. Great swaths of the southeastern portion of the city are being abandoned for the far west and north. Huge sections of the downtown remain effectively abandoned, held for speculative development decades away. The land is consumed first where it is cheapest.

Yet in Houston the possibility always exists that a great city will result. Streets such as Montrose, Main, Westheimer and even F.M. 1960 tie different spread-out sections of the city together. One cannot help but imagine the promise of inhabiting those streets with something besides automobiles and strip shopping centers. Some recent hopeful signs include the beginnings of increased streetside pedestrian activity, condominium building, and efforts to rebuild, replant, and improve the medians and sidewalks of Montrose Boulevard.

Houston is a city that has reached a critical mass of activity. Barring some tremendous failure on the part of the business leadership to develop industries for continuing wealth, the city will have the resources for self-improvement. Houston is now too large and too diversified to be developed in only one manner—the suburban manner. Varied life styles will force the city's developers to meet

differing expectations and conform to differing definitions of urbanity. Some constituencies will desire and pay for life styles not yet acknowledged in this city while others will demand the continued expansion of the models of development we have all come to understand. To develop into a great metropolis rather than a collection of vacuous centers, Houston's growth must accommodate these many lifestyles and expectations in a cohesive way, thereby reflecting the diverse groups that have immigrated into the city over the last 20 years. Houston should be neither an ideal suburb nor a traditional 19th century city; Houston should be Houston.

There is an old story comparing the life of cities to the stages of man. Scribes have repeatedly depicted Houston as a city that has reached adolescense, with all its attendant problems. There are those who would claim that Houston is like Chicago in the late 1800s when that city was experiencing its initial problems of rapid growth. But, perhaps it is best not to compare Houston to any other, or to have expectations of it based on any other. Perhaps it is best to look again at the Le Corbusier drawing and consider the two directions in which Houston might develop. It can stay on the freeway and continue to see itself in terms of a gleaming false horizon. Or it can get off the freeway, examine itself, and change according to what it is. Both possibilities exist at this time; the challenge is to grow with the threats and possibilities of either future. Houston—full of people of different life style, races, jobs, and incomes—is simultaneously a false horizon and a true tomorrow.

Out of the air-conditioned car, out of the air-conditioned house, Houstonians survive in a city that is often inhospitable. Yet despite this inhospitableness, Houston will remain a city for people from many lands. Abundant economic opportunity draws people here who in turn dream and leave a new layer of life, creating new urban possibilities. One senses that, like New York or Los Angeles, both of which are on a continental edge, Houston has become a final destination—the late 20th-century vision of the place of disembarkation. In these final destinations, there is an urge to dream about individual futures and, ultimately collective futures. People come here because they desire to make a future for themselves. In their collective futures, they cannot help but make a great city—because this is a city of people who dream. ▬

View from a glass-covered sidewalk cafe in the Galleria.

Both John Kaliski and Peter Jay Zweig teach architecture at the University of Houston. In addition, Kaliski is editor of Cite: the architecture and design journal of Houston, *and Zweig is a practicing architect.*

HOUSTON'S CLUSTERS AND THE TEXAS URBAN AGENDA

By Ed. B. Wallace

Ed. B. Wallace

Galleria/Post Oak now contains over 21 million net leasable sq. ft., the third largest concentration in Texas.

The downtown skyline that dominated the horizon in the early 1970s, now handsomely enriched with distinctive architectural landmarks, currently serves as a backdrop for the multiple skylines of the city's new high density urban centers towering above the tree-covered landscape.

From its inception as an 1836 speculative land venture by the Allen brothers, Houston has cultivated an entrepreneurial spirit that continues to drive and shape the city to this day. Both public and private ventures overwhelmingly reflect the patronage of development-oriented individuals whose fortunes were made from the growth of agriculture, shipping, oil, finance and space technology. The economic success of each industry is evident in such great institutions and developments as the Texas Medical Center, Rice University and River Oaks. However, none of the previous eras of economic growth have changed the face of Houston more extensively than the 1970s Sunbelt oil boom. This decade of prosperity accelerated emerging development patterns, transforming the city from a single centralized urban center into a multi-centered city with a variety of high density urban office/retail centers.

The impact of the previous decade on the cityscape has become more evident as construction cranes continue to withdraw from Houston's horizon and the last of the boom-era construction in office, retail, hotel and residential space nears completion. This current, and most likely temporary, stasis offers the opportunity to examine what the private sector has created, so the shapers of the city can adjust their course as they anticipate the next construction surge.

EMERGENCE OF MULTIPLE CENTERS

Houston's growth since 1970 can be examined in a variety of quantifiable aspects. Its population increased by 50 percent in the last 14 years, adding over a million people and surpassing Philadelphia as the country's fourth largest city. During this period, city leaders continued the policy of aggressively annexing neighboring areas and added 25 percent more land, for a current total of more than 565 square miles—an area equal to the combined cities of Dallas, Denver, Atlanta and San Francisco. Extra-territorial jurisdiction now expands Houston's control over infrastructure in new developments to more than 2,000 square miles, an area the size of Delaware. The number of vehicles on the freeways more than doubled, though highway expansion and maintenance did not keep pace with demand. For this reason, congestion on Houston's freeways also doubled during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Despite the mobility problems, net lease office space expanded five-fold to 153 million square feet, third in the nation behind New York and Washington, D.C. Eighty-five percent of Houston's 460 office buildings exceeding 100,000 sq. ft. have been built since 1970; fifty-five percent appeared since 1980. However, only 33 structures built since 1970 appear in the central business district. The downtown skyline which dominated the horizon in the early 1970s, now handsomely enriched with distinctive architectural landmarks, currently serves as a backdrop for the multiple skylines of the city's new high density urban centers towering above the tree-covered landscape.

Two centers, Galleria/Post Oak (dramatically marked on the skyline by the new 64-story Transco Tower) and Greenway Plaza, have been prominent for over a decade. Their success is due, in part, to their visibility on Houston's first tier loop, 610. Less apparent are the emerging centers in the city's 22 office markets, many that followed Galleria's and Greenway's lead.

While downtown contains over 38 million net leasable sq. ft. in 88 buildings, Galleria/Post Oak contains over 21 million in 102 buildings—a third more area than downtown in 1970. Four areas each have between 9 and 11 million sq. ft.: Greenway Plaza, Westheimer/West Belt, Far West Katy Freeway and the North Belt. Five additional markets contain five to seven million sq. ft. with the remaining 11 markets reporting between a half to four-and-a-half million sq. ft.

The locations of these concentrations show a pattern of development similar to Toronto, with high density building at points of major access. The pattern differs only in that Hous-

ton's suburban office markets are adjacent to major freeways and thoroughfare connections, where Toronto's office centers follow the path of its rapid transit stations. This pattern reinforces suburban retail concentrations that began in the 1950s, with access being a principal location criterion for botb speculative office and retail developments. The retail market for consumers, the office market for their employee pool and business amenities, both operating with visibility and convenience in mind.

As land prices and freeway congestion increased along the existing freeways and loops (two factors responsible for offices moving away from downtown Houston), newly conceived projects began moving out to second and third tier loops (the Beltway and Route 6/ FM 1960) in anticipation of roadway expansions or upgrades that require years of lead time. It's no surprise that mobility is now recognized by business, civic and government leaders as the most critical growth issue facing the city—ranking ahead of crime, the economy and the infrastructure.

Ed. B. Wallace

Richard Payne

TOP: Office tower and castle home meet in Westlake Park in the Far West/Katy Freeway cluster.

Houston's entrepreneurial tradition, combined with market forces, the economy, the freeway system and freedom from zoning controls, transformed the city's previously apparent central core form. The traditional downtown focus evolved into a freeway-spawned, multi-centered city, with the result that there is enough master-planned development to absorb projected space demand through the end of the century.

CLUSTERS OF PROBLEMS

Despite the prevalence of these office concentrations with their mixture of uses, the form of these new pieces of city fabric and the relationship of building form to the fabric, remains relatively unexamined.

These new concentrations occur in three different situations:

- *Overlay Clusters*: multiple building projects over multiple blocks of existing city fabric like Greenway Plaza, and similar in concept to other 1960s downtown projects such as Cullen Center, Houston Center and Allen Center. All are master-planned, large-scale developments with office, hotel, retail and parking along freeway frontage with underground, platform or skywalk links between buildings.
- *Roadway Clusters*: composite of large single buildings and mixed-use developments along freeways and thoroughfares like the Galleria/Post Oak area where many developers are creating projects within the established roadway and ownership patterns. These clusters are characterized by their lack of master-planning and by the canyonizing of a stretch of freeway with dissimilar buildings.
- *City Edge Clusters*: mixed-use developments creating new city fabric in 100- and 1000-acre multiples across the natural landscape. Prime examples include Westheimer/ West Belt, North Belt and Route 6 areas, where building construction commenced before an upgraded access system was in place.

These three development situations have similarities. The first two, overlay and roadway clusters, involve reworking existing street and ownership fabric rather than creating city fabric on cropland. However, the overlay projects, like the projects at the city's edge, are master-planned as single large developments; the former in superblocks, the latter as "towers in the park." The roadway projects evolve without an overall plan to guide or regulate development but sometimes include smaller versions of superblocks, "towers in the park" and single towers with adjacent parking garages.

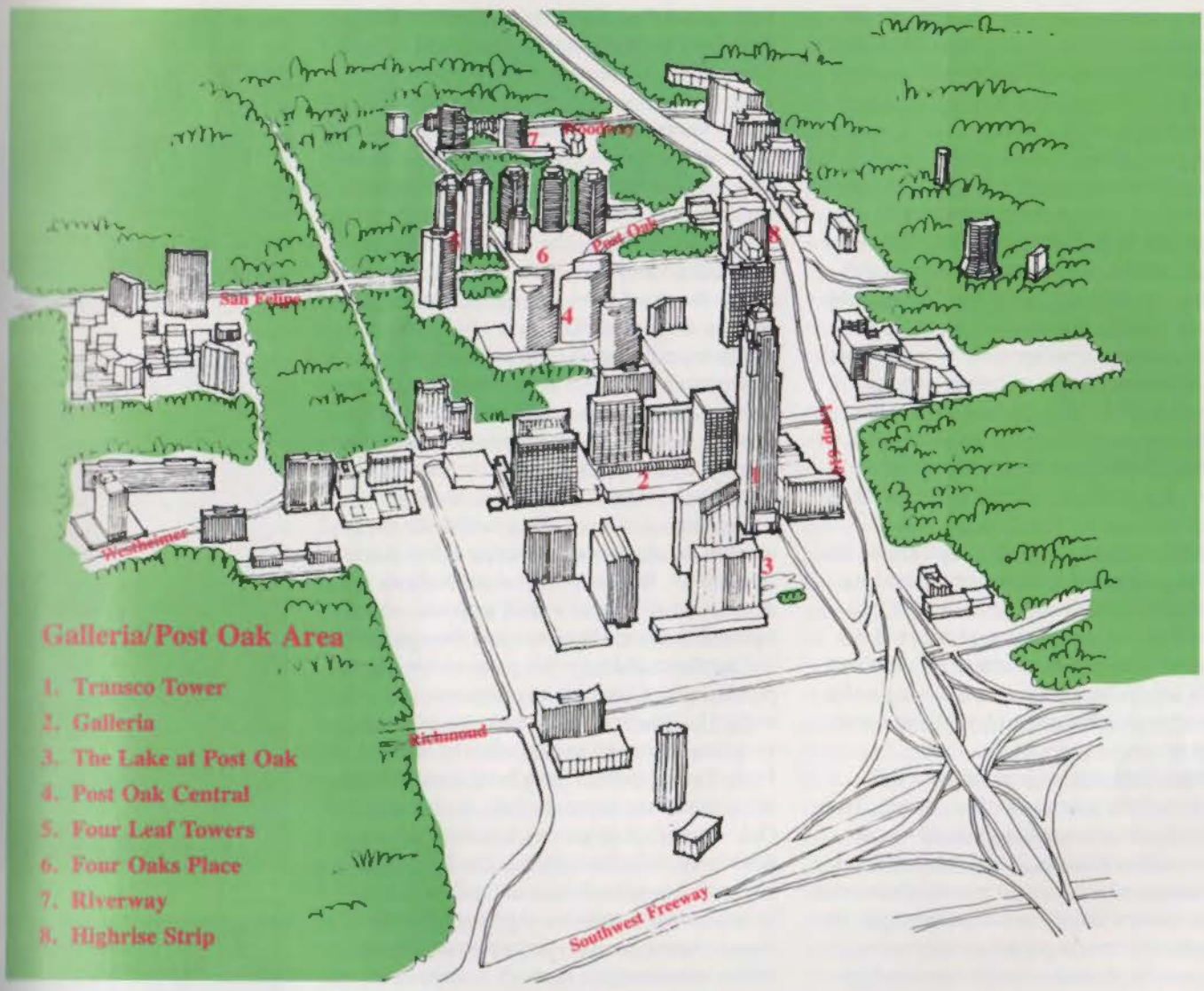
The evolving Galleria/Post Oak area serves as a microcosm of these situations. It's the oldest such center in Houston, and its concentration of office space ranks third in Texas behind the downtowns of Houston and Dallas. The evolution of Galleria/Post Oak into its present 4.3 square mile, high-density, prestige-office area began in 1959 with shopping centers serving the residents of the adjoining affluent River Oaks and Tanglewood neighborhoods. Retail expanded early in the 1960s with major department stores and additional shopping centers, culminating with the opening of Galleria I in 1970.

Loop 610 began construction simultaneously with the influx of stores and shops. The first sections opened in 1962 and the eight-lane West Loop bordering Post Oak was completed in 1969, connecting two of the city's major arteries, U.S. 59 and I.H. 10.

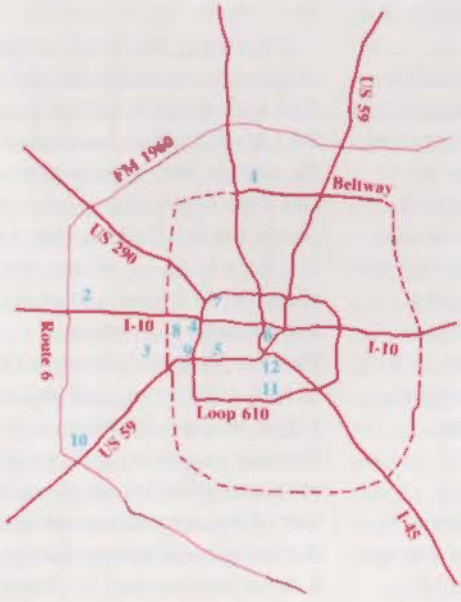
As construction of the Loop progressed, the emphasis on building retail spaces in the area shifted to speculative offices. By 1970, 1.6 million net sq. ft. of office space were completed; five years later 4.2 million additional sq. ft. were finished. By 1980, the area totaled 11.2 million net sq. ft., nearly doubling in 1984 to 21.3 million.

Retail and office activity are side by side with Houston's highest concentration of high-rise condominium units and hotel rooms (surpassing downtown and the Intercontinental Airport/North Belt area). Galleria/Post Oak also contains more than 100 restaurants, including some of Houston's most exclusive, as well as numerous nightclubs, cinemas and

Mary Hardin



Richard Payne



Houston's Clusters

1. North Belt
2. Far West/Katy Freeway
3. Westheimer/West Belt
4. Galleria/Post Oak
5. Greenway Plaza
6. Central Business District
7. North Loop
8. Central West/Westheimer
9. Central Southwest
10. Far Southwest
11. South Main/South Loop
12. Texas Medical Center

Congestion in Galleria/Post Oak is threatening further development.

parks to comprise the work place for 85,000 Houstonians. Despite its suburban location, the area, with its concentration of uses, workers and consumers, is more truly an urban core than the daytime-only downtown.

As the area grew, various cluster developments began to take shape. A "high-rise strip" paralleling the Loop emerged in the 1970s in the form a towering version of the 1960s low-rise commercial strips. Each building stands with its parking garage unto itself making reference only to the freeway and frontage road, with little or no encouragement of pedestrian contact. The buildings, with their unusual shapes, like CRS' U.S. Homes (now Sysco), function as signs advertising its corporation as a billboard does its product. The buildings' designs owe as much to their location on the freeway as to architectural trends.

As land adjacent to the freeway became unavailable, individual buildings thickened the strip to form a "high-rise cluster," and Post Oak Boulevard became the next focus of development. The buildings remained aloof and at arm's length from each other, while the density of workers increased to levels that could support an active street life.

Multiple building projects on Post Oak range from Pelli's series of office towers, Four Oaks Place, which stand individually as objects, to shaped groupings like Johnson's Post Oak Central, which contain ground floor retail in office towers. Mixed-use developments, like the nearby Riverway, organize different uses (office and hotel) into separate freestanding buildings sharing a central green space on a gentle hillside as "towers in the park," while The Lake at Post Oak replaces the concept of a shared park with a man-made lake.

The Galleria superblock, with its complex linking of offices and hotels with the active, pedestrian zone of retail and recreational uses, remains the most successful integration of buildings and uses in the city. In the second and third tier developments, the forms of development are not as varied as in Galleria/Post Oak. The typical large development in these outer tiers is master-planned as office "parks" with lush landscaping between separate buildings linked by streets, unconnected to adjoining malls, residential areas or other uses.

LEARNING FROM POST OAK

These developments offer essential lessons for the shaping of such concentrations and for the relationship between city fabric and building design. Each development stands as an "enclave," whether it's a single building isolated on a grassy knoll, a series of towers, or as the Galleria itself, isolated by parking and thoroughfares from adjacent developments. Each is internally focused with barriers to adjacent uses, and occasionally parking garages with no buffer to residential zones. The street fronts of these structures are grandly landscaped as if each was a large-scale version of a suburban single-family house.

Developments like the Four Leaf Towers (residential) and Four Oaks Place (office) stand across the street from one another, connected only by driveways. This is reinforced by an architecture that scales "image" entrances to the automobile and its plaza instead of the pedestrian, while the primary entrances from parking garages receive various levels of attention, though none as grand as the ones designed to be viewed from inside the car.

Congestion is threatening further development in these automobile-linked office concentrations. Both the internal traffic from one destination to another within a cluster, and the external traffic on freeways and throughfares linking the cluster to other parts of the city, are problematic. Congestion is particularly acute at the Galleria/Post Oak where the external flow interrupts and exacerbates the internal flow. Two responses have been contemplated to minimize the internal traffic at Galleria/Post Oak: a transit loop service patterned after the downtown mini-bus system, The Texas Special; and a proposed skywalk system, kindred to one in use downtown. Although the bus system seems likely to be implemented, alternative schemes for a skywalk system to link all area buildings have proven inconclusive, and only one link, connecting Transco Tower and the Galleria, has been built.

Continuing the Houston tradition of the business community taking the initiative to deal with these and other area-wide concerns, the City Post Oak Association is working with the Urban Design Committee of Houston AIA and Rice University to prepare a series of proposals for the Galleria/Post Oak area as a part of TSA's Let's . . . Grow Better program. Responding to similar situations downtown, Central Houston Inc. released its "Interim Design Plan for Houston's Central Business District" in May with a range of physical design proposals that would enhance the downtown pedestrian experience. These efforts to deal with problems of whole concentrations are indicative of the respective association's intent on nurturing a collective identity and image. It is a thrust necessitated by competing clusters.

The key problem now is how to orchestrate the transition from the automobile-based systems that made concentrations like Galleria/

RIGHT: Office tower and parking garage in Westlake Park stands as an enclave, with little connection to the surrounding neighborhood. BELOW: The Houston landscape showing three of Houston's largest clusters: Galleria/Post Oak, foreground; Greenway Plaza, far left background; Texas Medical Center, background.

Ed. B. Wallace

Richard Payne

LEFT: Post Oak Central is one of the few cluster projects that combine ground floor retail with office towers.

Ed. B. Wallace is an assistant professor of architecture at The University of Texas at Austin and principal of Ed. B. Wallace, Architect and Planner. He is also the coordinator of TSA's Let's Grow . . . Better Summer Student Program and its accompanying exhibit.

Acknowledgements: This article draws data from a number of sources including publications from the Rice Center, the Grubb and Ellis Company, the Urban Land Institute, the Houston Chamber of Commerce, the City Post Oak Association, Central Houston Inc., the West Houston Association, the Office Network Inc., Cesar Pelli and Associates and from interviews with area architects and developers' representatives.)

Post Oak successful, to alternative linkage systems that facilitate movement within these concentrations and allow development of skipped parcels. These linkage systems must integrate with a mix of city-wide movement systems that reduce external congestion while increasing access to these concentrations for an ever-growing group of people.

Houston's strategy for dealing with traffic congestion in and out of urban centers will equally influence the shape of new development in both city form and building form. The mixture of transit and roadway options will produce a different urban fabric, as earlier developments are reworked and new ones add further transportation amenities. Houston's Metro is developing options that must be integral with the strategies of reshaping internal linkages. Intercept parking, park-and-ride and light rail would each have a substantial effect on the shape of the urban center.

New models for these emerging urban centers are needed, both to facilitate the transition of established centers like Galleria/Post Oak, and for new developments. If emerging office concentrations anticipate these transitions and incorporate the mechanisms or development opportunities necessary to shift to pedestrian or transit linkage systems as part of development phasing, they could avoid the monumental task awaiting Galleria/Post Oak.

One alternative for new development is found in the master plan for Pin Oak Stables, a proposed 95-acre development near the Loop and the Southwest Freeway, planned by Cesar Pelli and Associates. This development addresses the city form/building form relationship:

"The Master Plan for the Pin Oak Development proposes . . . a grid of streets bringing the buildings into a close and coherent relationship, focusing on a central park as many American cities do. The plan is that of a city, emphasizing overall accessibility, thriving business activity, and life at the street level, thus marking a significant departure from the more common kind of 'office park'. . . . The office towers, hotels, and shopping center are set close together with traffic conducted smoothly along avenues leading to and from the highway. Each structure facing the central park will have a granite facade bringing thematic harmony and architectural definition to the open space. Their fronts are connected by a pedestrian arcade facing the central park."

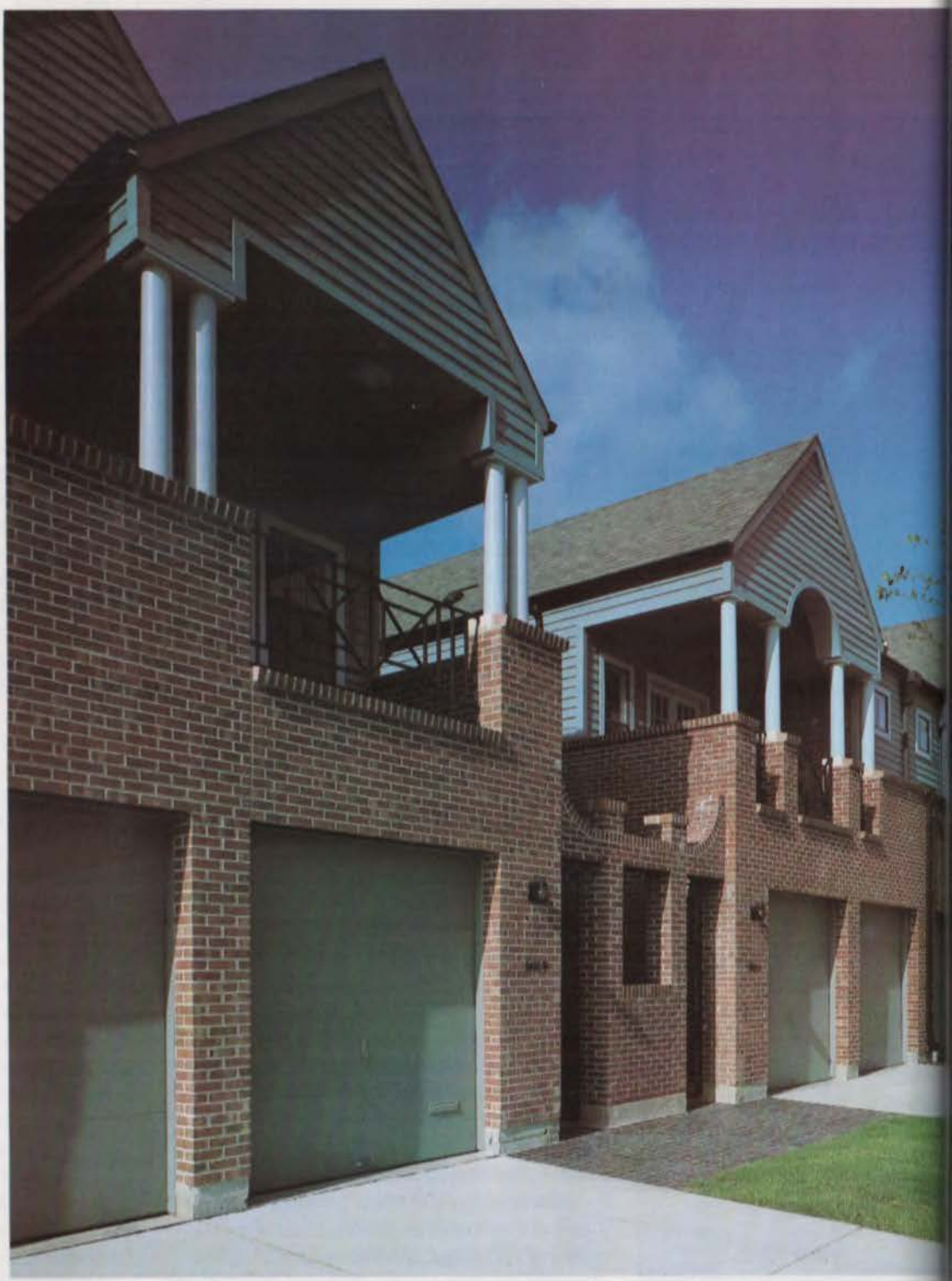
This kind of model could have applications to other office concentrations outside Houston but with similar characteristics. Outside Paris, the same Houston pattern of isolated, architecturally unique office towers arranged on grassy knolls and addressing an internal loop thoroughfare typifies La Defense. There, the office towers banned from the old city began congregating in the early 1970s in a master-planned development as though they were along a freeway instead of a street. The Metro station stands nearby but the vast pedestrian plaza is unpleasant and the pedestrian linkage to each building is via unhospitable sidewalks at street's edge.

In Dallas, the Central Expressway and North LBJ corridors spawned the same range of projects from integrated, mixed use centers to high-rise strips. Las Colinas Urban Center and Cityplace, private developments measured in hundreds of acres, are tackling the issue of city fabric at the city's edge and in existing fabric. Market forces and access apparently influence our new patterns of city fabric more than do zoning regulations.

The Pin Oak model is only one of many that must be analyzed as possible guides for our multi-centered urban future. The proliferation of these highrise clusters, graphically evident in our cities' skylines, establishes this multi-center scenario as eminent and mandates a two-fold urban design agenda in Texas. First, the remaking of city form/building form patterns in established high-density concentrations, especially a reweaving of the fabric of linkage systems within high-rise clusters and downtowns that relieves automobile congestion and increases density and urbanity. And second, the refinement of the design of new large-scale chunks of city fabric being created at the cities' edges that recognizes development patterns that may shift away from automobile-structured developments to other linkage systems, and incorporates that shift in its phasing.

Much of Houston's future is tied to the effectiveness of such efforts to adjust the course in the city's patterns of development. Further, those efforts in relieving automobile congestion and supporting greater densities in its existing and emerging urban cores has the potential of providing models for other auto-inspired cities, that will face a myriad of growth-related symptoms as they continue to mature. Although Houston's ability to apply its can-do spirit to examine and give bold solutions to these problems remains to be seen, its efforts are eagerly anticipated by all. ▬▬

Houston's architectural claim to fame is generally considered to be its growing assortment of tall buildings, which have received national attention both individually and as a group. But equally notable architectural accomplishments are taking place at the small scale, particularly in the form of innovative multifamily housing being inserted into the city's now-high-dollar neartown neighborhoods. On the following pages, Austin writer Jim Steely examines three such projects, as well as some of the issues they create.



The continuous base, with masonry gate walls, provides a sense of security; wood forms above tie the project to its neighborhood.

WROXTON STREET RESIDENCES

Photography by Paul Hester

End unit, stair and loft.

A 12,000-population enclave not far from downtown Houston and adjacent to the Highway 59 growth corridor, West University Place has capitalized for years on its close-in residential status. As Houston has exploded around it, "West U." has stubbornly resisted uncontrolled growth; as a result, its quaint little pre-World War II houses have become incredibly valuable—many for their quaint little lots alone.

The Wroxton Townhouses, by William F. Stern & Associates, respond to the West U. milieu by honoring the image of house. Stern says the project was intended to appeal to "the buyer who 15 years ago would have bought a cute little cottage and fixed it up. That's too expensive now, but the notion of 'the place where I grew up' was worked into this traditional design and concept."

In a highly disciplined design, six units—paired into three separate masses to respect property lines—have been fitted onto three consecutive 50 × 100-foot lots. To unify the row of three masses, and to meet the 51 percent masonry zoning requirement, Stern created a continuous brick base that rises to handrail height on the second level. Masonry gate walls tie the units together while enhancing the sense of security and stability provided by the base.

On the upper level, materials and forms capture the spirit of the traditional residential neighborhood, which is filled with well-crafted cottages produced by early-to-mid-century builders. The material shifts from the brick below to six-inch clapboard siding painted blue-grey. The forms—gables, chimneys, porches, balconies—create a playful rhythm in contrast to the heavy base while modulating scale and establishing unequivocal compatibility with the neighborhood.

Lower-level proportions relate well with the second-level composition of porch balustrades, columns and gables. By using single garage doors, even on double garages, for example, the vertical-bay emphasis and rhythm of the units is not lost to the utilitarian horizontal. Also, structural elements extend logically through upper-level configurations.

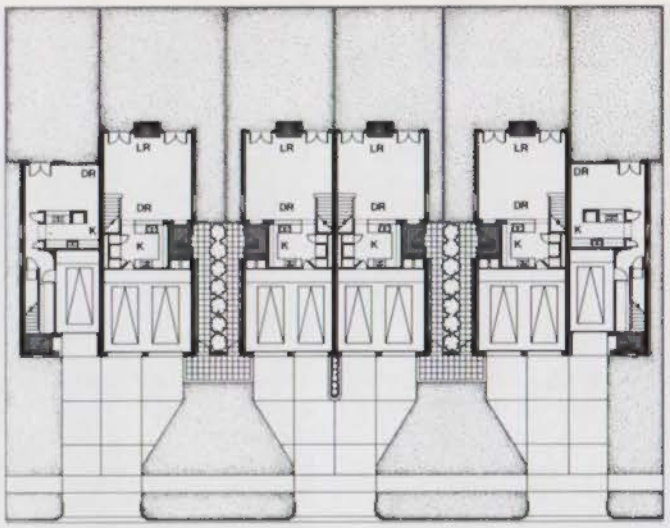
The developer's program called for entry, living room, dining area and kitchen to occupy the ground floor of the four larger

Front (south) elevation.

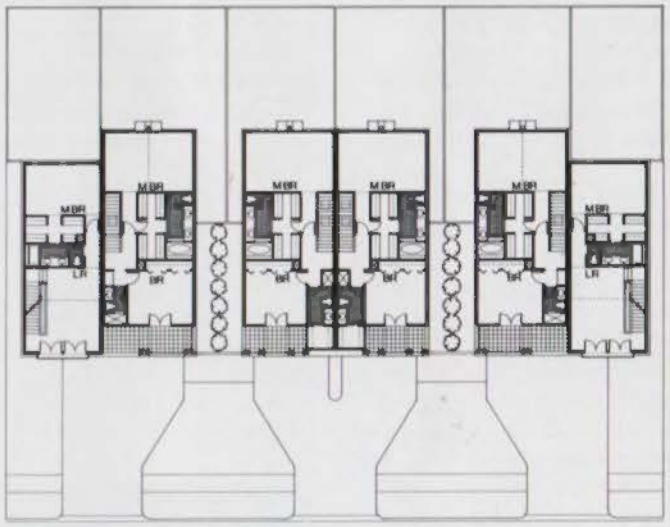
Front elevation.

End unit, stair.

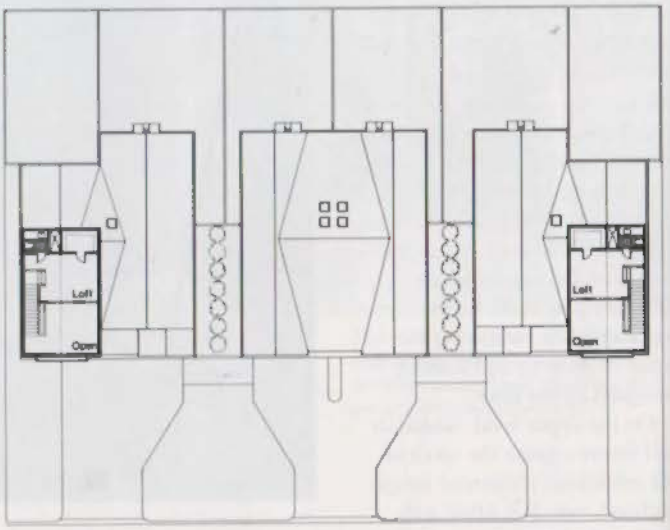
End unit, loft.



First floor plan.



Second floor plan.



Mezzanine plan.

units, with two bedrooms upstairs. Flanking these four larger units like bookends are the taller, narrower end units, each containing kitchen and dining area on the first floor, with living room, bedroom and loft/mezzanine above.

Stern's classically composed, picturesque forms are arranged so as to provide individuality without compromising a prevailing sense of unity and integrity—not unlike the balance one perceives in rows of houses along neighborhood streets. Similar gestures include: the individual drive-up; the landscaped, formal entry, completing an entry sequence usually reserved for the single-family dwelling; and the front porch, which continues the living space while serving its traditional role as intermediary between street and house. These devices not only enhance the project's appeal for its market, but serve to reinforce an ambitious parti—preserving the notion of "house" in a multi-family setting. ▬▬

PROJECT: *Wroxton Street Residences, 2621–2629 Wroxton, Houston.*
ARCHITECT: *William F. Stern & Associates, Architects, Houston. Project team: William F. Stern, principal; Alex Engart, associate; Janet O'Brien, job captain.*
CLIENT: *Andover Group, Inc.*
CONSULTANTS: *Cunningham & Associates (structural).*
CONTRACTOR: *Neartown Builders, Inc.*
SELECTED FURNISHINGS: *Robert E. Kinnaman & Brian Ramaekers, Inc., and I.C.F.*
PAINTINGS: *Courtesy of the Texas Gallery*

Two-bedroom unit, living room toward kitchen.

Two-bedroom unit, kitchen toward living room.

NORFOLK STREET RESIDENCES

Photography by Paul Hester

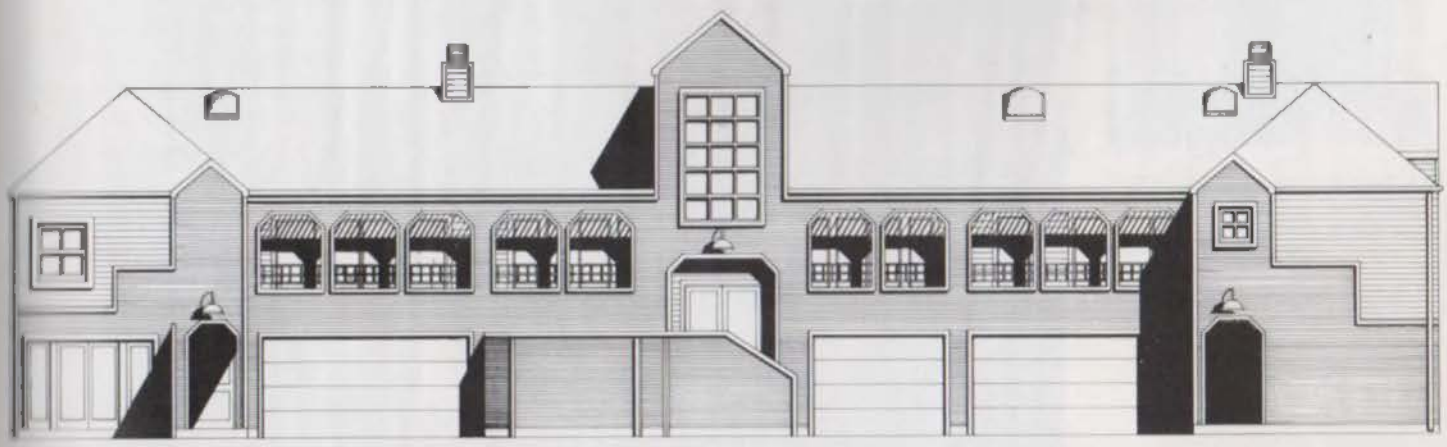
Houston's Montrose area received considerable attention a few years ago during its "rediscovery" and a revived interest in its early 20th-century architecture. Residential flight from the downtown area had left Montrose neglected and only partially in possession of its formerly cohesive, residential character. The circa 1970 renaissance focused primarily on rehabilitation of existing structures of varying historic value.

As Houston strangles on its commitment to the automobile, proximity to downtown is once again an attraction to a new generation of young business people and lots in Montrose are hosting new high-density townhouse construction. Attempts to design multiple housing projects within the traditional context of the area, and within the limitations of its lots, is a challenge to local architects.

Project designer John Rogers of Chelsea Architects likens their Norfolk Street Residences to a Palladian villa. A central mass, in this case the high gable of the center townhouse, is connected to two flanking masses by an arcaded, open porch. Overlapping of planes gives depth to the exterior and allows for insertion of the porch.

While the porch defines a *piano nobile* for some distance across the facade, it is actually partitioned along its march, to provide an elevated deck for all three units. All this design attention faces the entry drive, or "honorific" court. The elongated structure is turned at a right angle to the street and situated on a deep, 47-foot-wide lot. Such lots were platted when single-family home owners de-

The elongated Norfolk Street Residences are turned at a right angle to the street and are situated on a deep, 47-foot-wide lot.



West elevation. FACING PAGE: A central mass, the high gable of the center townhouse, is connected to two flanking masses by an arcaded, open porch.

sired, in progressive order from the sidewalk: a front yard, front porch, house, back porch, back yard, and clothes line, all paralleled by a diminutive drive and garage.

The close-in residential area may have recovered its appeal to those who work downtown, but the quest for privacy that accompanied those who first fled the area is as strong as ever. So, no matter that the principal facade of Norfolk Street Residences can only be enjoyed by its occupants. Their real reward is inside.

"A great deal of what the units are about," Rogers explains, "is the way the space underneath the gable of the roof is utilized." In the second-level living areas (bedrooms are relegated to the ground level with the garages) ceilings are sculpted to suggest structural and mechanical activity, neatly clad and finished.

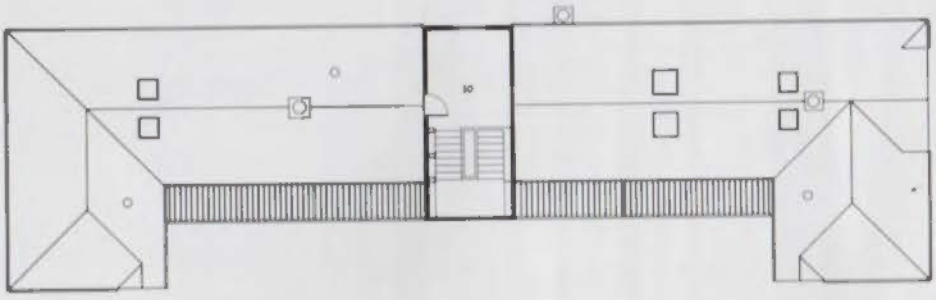
"We were trying to make the living space appear as large as possible," he continues, "so there's a lot of layering that occurs . . . of planes and use of light."

Hardwood floors contrast comfortably with off-white walls and the white "sculpture" above. Natural light is invited to play on these elements throughout the day, through east windows, skylights, and glazing on the west side facing the porches. Though the elevated, lattice-screened porches afford "a nice long view to the sunset," Rogers says their placement on the west side was not so much for the view as for the light.

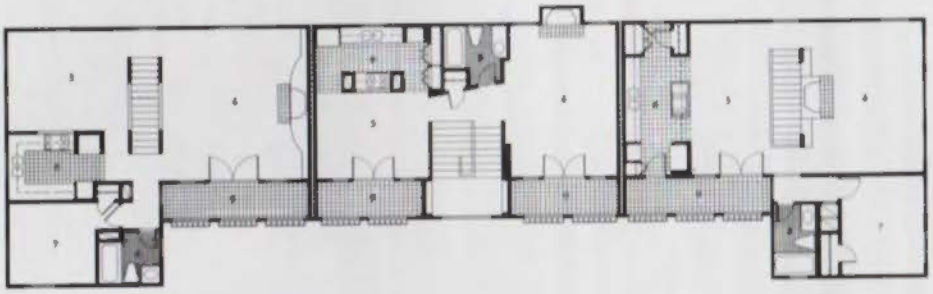
Two sizes of milled-wood siding clad the exterior, reducing unbroken wall areas with texture, form, and color. Two shades of gray were applied to the siding below a roof covered in still darker gray composite shingles. White window molds and black railings and downspouts accent the subtle scheme.

Describing the wood washboard siding, Rogers noted that the client wanted a traditional appearance for these condominiums, placed in a traditional neighborhood, appealing to buyers who are returning to at least some traditions related to living near their work.

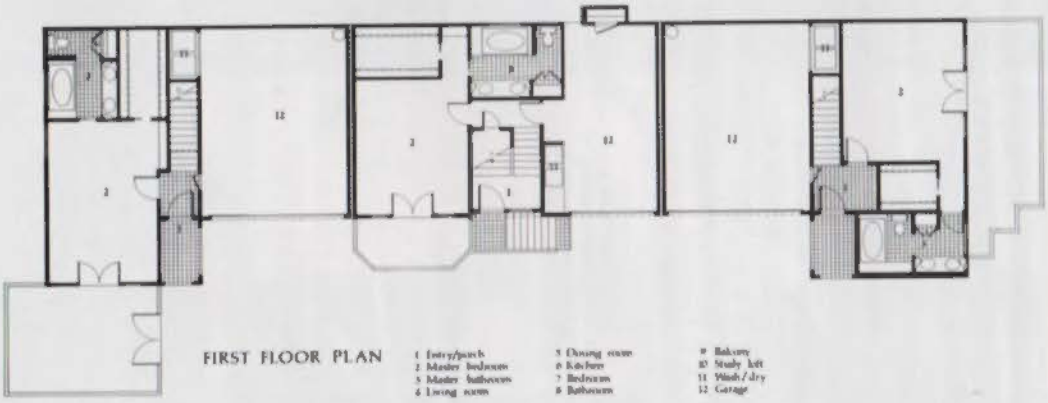
"The client didn't want anything that was going to be threatening to potential buyers," he remembers. And "the client hates stucco." ▬▬



LOFT PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

"We were trying to make the living space appear as large as possible, so there's a lot of layering that occurs . . . of planes and use of light."

PROJECT: *Norfolk Street Residences, 2002 Norfolk, Houston.*
ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER: *Chelsea Architects. John Rogers, project designer; Stuart Billings, Annette Fierro, Richard Ashworth and Robert Taylor, project team.*
CLIENT: *Post Oak Development, Houston.*
CONTRACTOR: *Post Oak Development.*

Natural light is invited in through east windows and skylights. Ceilings are sculptured to suggest structural and mechanical activity.

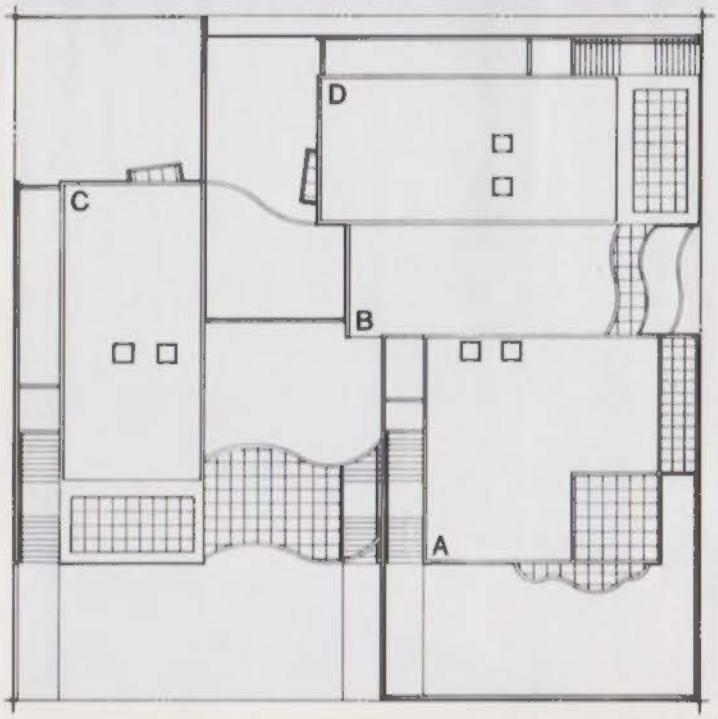
RIGHT: Hardwood floors contrast comfortably with off-white walls.

TAGGART TOWNHOUSES

Photography by Richard Payne

Exterior configurations clearly divide the four units of the Taggart Townhouses through varying heights and wall surfaces.

RIGHT: Roof plan.



While appearing at first glance to be a non-contextual play of geometric figures and colorful stucco, Taggart Avenue townhouses do manage to acknowledge a major neighborhood feature. Memorial Park, which spreads its lush acres just down the street, is viewed diagonally from the townhouses across the intersection of Taggart Avenue and Coppage Street. Each of the four units has been oriented to enjoy a glimpse of the park.

This corner lot traditionally would have dictated four linear units set 20 feet back from Taggart. But by placing one square-plan unit on the corner, Arquitectonica architects nestled an L-plan unit—facing both Taggart and Coppage—behind the square. Two linear units—with mirrored floor plans—then complete the complex, one fronting Taggart and the other Coppage.

Exterior configurations clearly divide the four units through varying heights and wall surfaces. The square-plan corner unit presents a similarly squared facade, with balcony cutouts, on both street elevations. The adjacent L-plan townhouse faces both streets with an undulating "free-form" garage frame, patio wall, and parapet. The linear units revert to plane geometry for identity, presenting the street with inset terraces above their double-garage doors.

As if the wall surfaces couldn't convey individuality for each unit, a splash of colors leaves no doubt. Integral pigments mixed into the stucco—cream for the linear units, turquoise for the L-plan, and pink for the corner—are accented with a red balcony

wall on the corner unit, and gold and linear-plan units, kitchens are placed in "twisted" islands within the soaring living and dining spaces. Small open lofts, with views to the courtyards and across living spaces to the streets, rest over the kitchens as extensions of their partitions.

The client's desire to place master bedrooms on the ground level has been met, and each has a courtyard or patio view. On the second level of the square-oblique "volumes" (kitchen bays and corresponding loft balconies) jutting from behind the linear units.

"They're large units," says Arquitectonica's Bob Tolmach, of the $290,000 condominiums. "But instead of having a large living room and a large dining room . . . there's one large space: a combination exterior terrace [through a glazed wall], living room, dining room."

The kitchen-loft module in the corner and end units is a "rotated volume" emphasizing visual and physical separation as a "house within a house." Philip Johnson treated the private and utility areas of his 1949 New Canaan, Connecticut, Miesian glass house in a similar fashion. But here in Houston, 1984, unable to be surrounded by walls of glass in the middle of Memorial Park, the utility modules are rotated a few degrees from the main axis to assert their presence.

The L-plan unit lacks maneuvering room for a rotated kitchen, though the characteristic loft rides on top and overlooks the dining room and outside patio. An oblique, free-standing fireplace hearth in the second level living room serves to break uniformity here, as do the "free-form" exterior walls at each street facade.

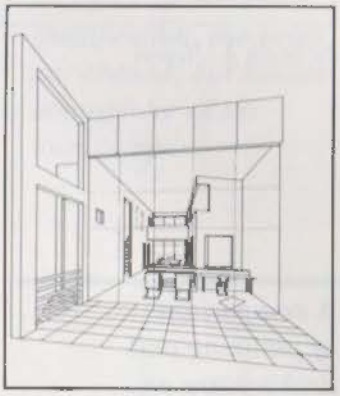
The immediate context, aside for the touted view of Memorial Park, is a transitional pre-World War II neighborhood of modest residences. Townhouse projects abound, drastically altering the scale and density of the environs. Noting that all the Taggart units are either sold or under contract, architect Tolmach justifies the architectural concept. "It's far outperformed [in sales] the other projects in the neighborhood, which are all sort of traditional." ▬▬

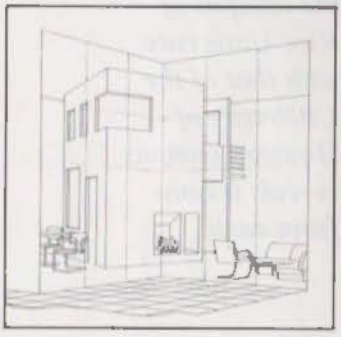
Ground level, second level and loft floor plans of linear units.

Small open lofts provide views over living spaces.

PROJECT: *Taggart Townhouses, corner of Taggart and Coppage, Houston.*
ARCHITECT: *Arquitectonica, Houston.*
CLIENT: *Jerry Maba.*
CONSULTANT: *George Cunningham Assoc., Houston (structural).*
CONTRACTOR: *Neartown Builders, Houston.*

"Noting that all the Taggart units are either sold or under contract, architect Bob Tolmach, Jr. justifies the architectural concept."





Perspectives of two different units showing the "house within a house."

The square-plan corner unit presents a square facade, with balcony cutouts, on both street elevations.

Austin freelance writer Jim Steely is a graduate student in architectural preservation and history at UT Austin.

TWO CAMPUSES: LESSONS FROM RICE AND UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

By Mark A. Hewitt

A comparison of planning and architecture on the campus of Rice University with that of the University of Houston campus reveals lessons from each.

In the new book *Campus: An American Planning Tradition (MIT Press)*, historian Paul Venable Turner analyzes the basic traits of campus design in the U.S. from the colonial period to the present day, concluding that this country's unique contribution to the making of places for higher education was the concept of an "academical village," that is, "the conception of colleges and universities as communities in themselves—in effect, as cities in microcosm." For over two centuries, America's academic communities have served as bold utopias—experimental environments not only for scholars but for architects and planners. Though European models, particularly the British "monastic quadrangle," were influential (most notably at the turn of this century), Turner argues that American colleges uniquely have tended to open themselves up to the world, especially the world of nature—to step into the wilderness as explorers and pioneers did in the colonization of the continent. America's college campuses have both mirrored and modeled our environment, particularly our cities.

The city of Houston has nurtured and been nurtured by several universities during its rapid period of growth in this century, but the campuses of Rice University and the University of Houston stand out as especially significant to the city today. Rice University—its serene and secluded live-oak filled campus planned by Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson in 1910—now seems an oasis amidst the development of the Texas Medical Center and the dense high-rise corridor from downtown to the Galleria on the Southwest Freeway. Rice, and the residential and park areas in its orbit, face many of the growing pains of the city at large. The University has recognized that it must more carefully monitor its internal growth and has taken steps to do so in commissioning a new master plan by Cesar Pelli and Associates, of New Haven, which was unveiled in September, 1983.

The University of Houston, a larger and more complex public institution with a concomitantly larger presence in the city (three campuses, over 30,000 students at the main University Park venue alone), has also commissioned a new master plan, of far greater scope, by 3D/International with Barton Aschman Associates as traffic and parking consultants. A preliminary version of the document, presented to the Board of Regents in March of this year, has yet to meet final approval, but, if implemented, will have far-reaching consequences for both the campus and its surrounding environment. Moreover, both universities have several important new buildings in design, under construction or nearing completion, structures that will set the tone for development in the near term. The contrasting attitudes toward campus design and architecture presented in these two plans, as well as the existing character of the university communities themselves, are significant for the overall city as it faces continued growth in the '80s and '90s.

It is easy to view the two campuses as caricatures. The U of H may be the epitome of the vast urban melting-pot campus, catering to the needs of its primarily commuter student body through a vast system of parking lots and interior link roads, its buildings, megalithic monuments to the state bureaucracy and the trappings of local architectural patronage. Rice, seen in equally pejorative terms, appears the model of a prim, officious, carefully-manicured ivory-tower academy, its architectural style monitored down to the width of the masonry joints, its students as bland and cut-from-the-same-mold as the St. Joe brick used in every building (from Lovett Hall to the Power Plant). One U of H faculty member, accustomed to the vitality of places like Harvard Square and the steps of Low Library, sees a lifeless beauty at Rice and defends (though not without qualification) the gritty, car-choked, but livelier, atmosphere of his own campus.

But the positive qualities of these universities, both as communities and as architectural ensembles, far outweigh the negative ones. They are major amenities in a city that is lacking in good public architecture and landscape. The Rice campus ranks as one of the nation's most beautiful, due in great part to the strength

of its original Beaux-Arts plan and unique architectural idiom, preserved over 70 years in the face of many changes in architectural fashion and ideology. Rice, Hermann Park, Shadyside, and the live-oak-lined perimeter boulevards around them form a distinct genius loci, an academic park/cultural district well worth stewarding and developing in the coming years. The main campus of the University of Houston forms an equally significant sector in the eastern portion of the city. Its planners see it as the anchor for future development of the surrounding community and an institution whose physical image must keep pace with the rapid and dramatic improvement in the quality of its programs. State highway planners see the surrounding area as a critical junction in a new road system linking Interstate 45 and Texas 35 and Houston Parks Department officials see its possible connection to and enhancement of the existing Braes Bayou system of parks. The architectural potential of the campus, though marred by piecemeal planning and some poor buildings, is by no means small. After renaming the campus "University Park," planners hope to realize that potential with a new program of building, landscaping, road planning and other improvements during the coming decades.

The approaches toward future growth and planning taken by Rice and the U of H in many ways reflect the particular problems each faces, and there are cases in which each institution has demonstrated a kind of myopia toward its most difficult architectural and planning dilemmas.

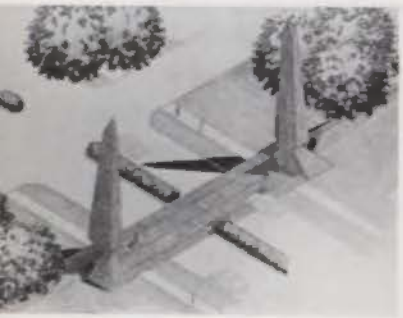
NO LITTLE PLANS

Ted Montz, U of H Executive Director of Facilities Planning, predicts a dramatic change in both the quality of the environment in and around the campus and the public's image of the university if the projected $250 million master plan development for the University of Houston's central campus is implemented. Although the plan calls for an extensive building program—more than 25 new structures totalling approximately one million gross square feet—its most sweeping changes will be in access road, parking, and circulation systems. Working with the city and Parks Department and State Highway Department planners, the university devised a scheme to create a new loop road around the expanded University Park area, using Elgin, Wheeler, Scott and a relocated Calhoun as new boundaries. Montz says the expanded campus will keep autos out of the core and create a more pedestrian-oriented setting. "A 10-minute walking zone exists within that boundary. This dictates that all academic facilities with classrooms should be within this core; parking areas will be located outside."

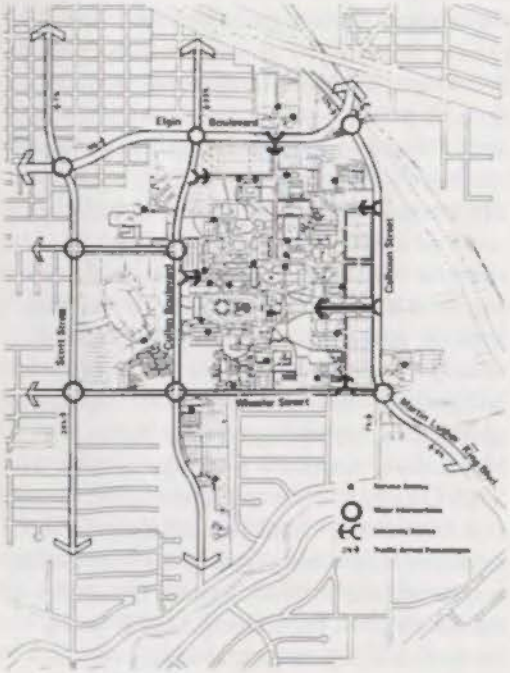
Penetration by autos and service vehicles will be through four or more access roads terminating in cul-de-sacs. Two of these will utilize the path of Cullen Boulevard, which now bisects the campus. It will be closed to through traffic. Once this new vehicular system is implemented, the implicit assumption is that the university can set about creating a true park-like setting—but there are some obvious flaws in that assumption. At present the landscaped areas of the campus, while often pleasant in themselves, cannot compete with the blunt, overwhelming object qualities of most of the buildings, which offer no scale modulation. Their placement and orientation in space is haphazard, undercutting any sense of local centers in the campus, centers which might have been provided for had the original 1934 plan been used more faithfully as an armature. The qualities of "park" present in the campus now are dangerously similar to those of the Rocket Park and "campus," NASA's Johnson Space Center. Anyone who has ever traversed those grounds on a hot day will agree that they are not to be emulated. Fine landscaping alone will not correct the mistakes made in the 1950s and '60s.

A second and equally important element of the new plan is the creation of a "gateway" to the campus. Visitors to the university are at present ushered into its precinct through a chaotic fringe environment of freeway residual areas, fast-food joints and decaying residential areas. Montz (a 1954 Rice architecture graduate) knows the importance of creating a positive image—Rice's now disused live-oak allee is one of the most impressive tableaux in Houston—and has set about to produce a counterpart at U of H, not from Main Street but from the university's most important access road, the I-45 freeway. "This new entrance will probably have a greater visual impact than anything the university has done before," Montz says. Architects for the project are the SWA Group, a landscape/architecture/planning firm with distinguished credentials and a reputation for innovation. Their proposal includes both landscape and architectural elements—a mammoth grass berm forms a buffer to the highway and a monumental double row of oaks provides a corridor down Cullen Boulevard. But the design's most controversial feature is the gate itself, a gigantic split obelisk made of two types of granite. Because scale

One U of H faculty member, accustomed to the vitality of places like Harvard Square and the steps of Low Library, sees a lifeless beauty at Rice and defends, though now without qualification, the gritty, car-choked, but livelier, atmosphere of his own campus.



TOP: Rendering of U of H School of Architecture, now under construction. Architects: John Burgee Architects with Philip Johnson, and Morris/Aubry Architects; ABOVE: Proposed new gateway for U of H, a 68-foot-tall split obelisk by SWA Group; ABOVE, RIGHT: Model for the new U of H College of Business Administration, by The White Budd Van Ness Partnership, now under construction; RIGHT: Vehicular circulation scheme, from the U of H master plan, by 3D/International.



was a major issue—the gateway must be seen from the freeway at 70 miles per hour, 1/2 mile away—extensive mock-ups were used to size the obelisk. At 68 feet, it's Texas tall, all right, but it will still have trouble competing with the high readers and peripheral freeway clutter. The use of an archetypal form in a Post-Modern permutation (split), while it recalls Venturi and Rauch's brilliant and daring pylons for Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, is here misplaced and the power of the original symbol undercut. Half an obelisk is much less than half as dignified.

Other specific proposals in the several-hundred-page plan include provision for critically needed housing beyond the boundaries of the loop road, recommended locations for new buildings to strengthen the now-weak activity clusters, and a new pedestrian walkway system. As a whole, it represents a solid, pragmatic attempt to mold the university's future growth. It faces the large problem of the automobile squarely and realistically, and deals with the crucial issue of "image." Moreover, university officials and planners here begin to look at the larger picture of the campus and the city, as they must. But what is missing is a true aesthetic vision that will guide and inspire architects in the coming decades—the kind of vision Cram gave to Houston in 1910.

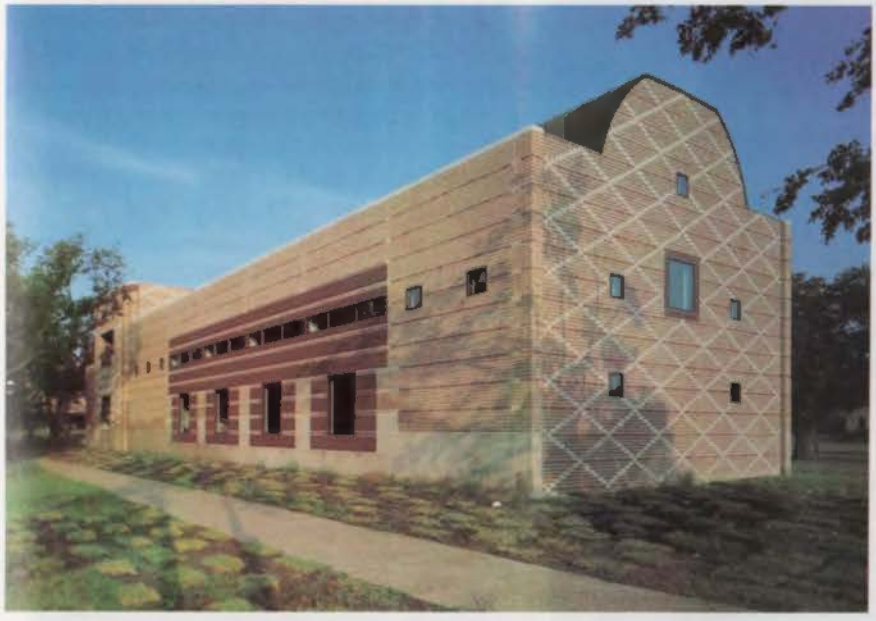
THE FOREST AND THE TREES

Cesar Pelli (the Argentine-born architect recently retired as Dean of the Yale School of Architecture), loves Rice's trees—so much so that he gingerly placed his new Jones School of Business Administration building to avoid moving more than a few precious live oaks. . He also clearly admires and respects Ralph Adams Cram and his original plan for the university. His own new plan is thin. It is an aesthetic plan. It says, essentially: "Make new buildings as Cram would have made them (in 1984); plant new trees in patterns that extend and enhance existing ones; plan new open spaces and building configurations with an understanding of the Beaux-Arts principles behind the original campus layout." It then demonstrates, in specific terms, how this can be done, using a few simple, pretty drawings.

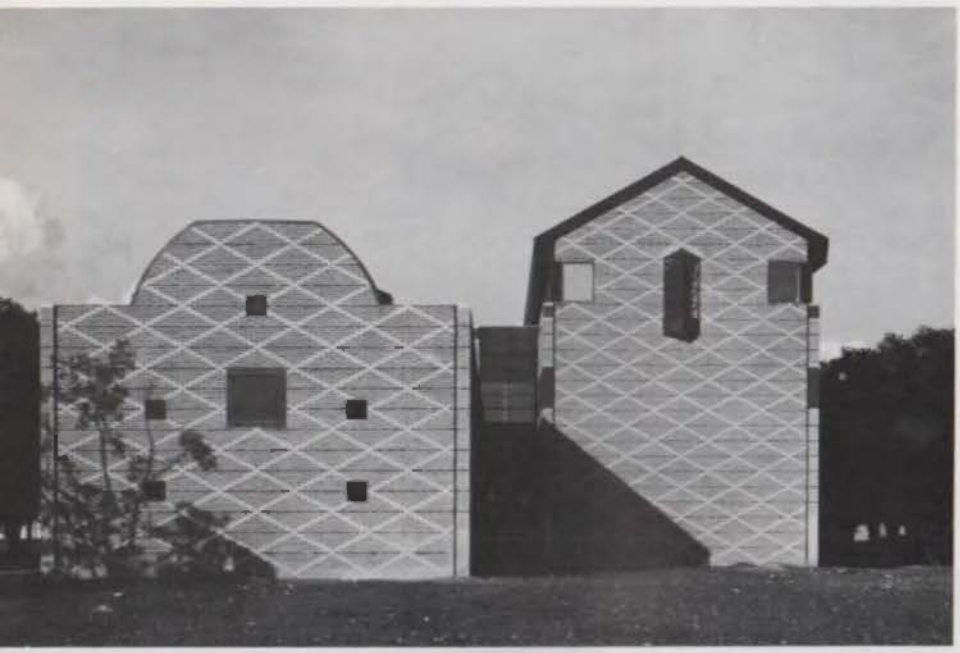
Pelli and his associates have been astute students of Cram and his principles. Pelli's master plan offers important lessons to architects and planners who face the task of directing the growth of universities in a way that is sensitive to design issues. But the fine-grain, aesthetic concerns the Rice Board of Governors asked

Pelli's master plan for Rice; cross-hatching indicates proposed structures.

Photographs by Paul Hester



TOP: New Rice master plan, by Cesar Pelli & Associates. ABOVE, LEFT: Library wing of Pelli's Herring Hall; long facade faces north; ABOVE: One of two similar entries on south elevation using a decorative mix of steel, glass, stone and brick; LEFT: Courtyard arcade supported by green steel columns half-clad in brick and stone.



Photographs by Paul Hester

TOP: West elevation, showing vaulted library wing connected by glass slot to gabled classroom/office wing; ABOVE: Brick pattern of long (south) facade changes to diaper pattern on east facade; projecting triangular window marks the end of a corridor; RIGHT: not-yet-finished library interior.

Pelli to consider needed to be balanced by proposals addressing large-scale, pressing problems like vehicular access, parking, signage, lighting, housing, and connection to the surrounding community. Pelli's plan largely ignores these problems, with the justification that his clients, the Rice Development Office and Board, did not wish to have them addressed. But they are issues that will have a direct, and perhaps catastrophic, impact on the integrity of the Cram/Pelli plan. Moreover, Rice's highly informal internal data-gathering and planning system left plenty of stones unturned and fed the architects some questionable information. Library expansion was ignored, and the Dean of the Shepherd School of Music, in desperate need of a new building, was not even consulted during the planning process.

Rice's internal road system, and its complex series of entrances, is inscrutable to the first-time visitor and often frustrating to regular users. On-campus parking will this year reach crisis proportions. The convenient, interior lots are already full and few faculty, staff and students want to confront even a 10-minute walk from parking lot to office or classroom, no matter how lovely the arcaded path or the campus vistas. This is Houston, after all, not Princeton. Rice's answer to the paucity of graduate student housing near the campus was to purchase the (some would say historic) Tidelands Motel on Main Street. This measure is perhaps adequate for the short term, but where will students, staff and faculty live as rents and house prices in fashionable surrounding neighborhoods skyrocket in the coming years? These are problems the U of H master plan, to its credit, attempts to address. They are not addressed by the Rice plan. Is it too obvious to remark that these two very different institutions might learn from each other by sharing solutions to similar problems?

NEW ARCHITECTURE: THE PAST IS PROLOGUE

A visit to the Rice and U of H campuses this fall will yield some surprises to those who haven't been in Houston in a few years. Both places are abuzz with construction, and there will be more to come during the next two years, especially at U of H. Both schools will soon unveil new buildings by internationally distinguished designers. Campus architecture is flourishing here, but it has a new, and paradoxically old-fashioned, character.

In addition to the SWA Group's schizoid gateway, the U of H will have another prop-

ylaeum, Philip Johnson's Ledoux-inspired College of Architecture Building, now under construction. It remains to be seen whether this near-replica of the 18th-century project for a House of Education at Chaux will set the trend for new building on the campus—as Johnson believes it will—or become an anomaly. So far, both the architecture school and the architects have weathered the controversy surrounding the building's design, and may very well benefit from all the hoopla in the press.

Also under construction near the current main entrance to the campus off Calhoun is a new $10.9-million, 110,000-square-foot building for the College of Business Administration by The White Budd Van Ness Partnership, Architects. In addition, the university has announced plans for a $25 million expansion in academic facilities for the Hilton hotel management school and five other academic, administration and support buildings will be under construction during the next few years, not including the expansion of housing for married students, graduate students and staff. But while the U of H is building rapidly, it is not necessarily building well.

The university's policy toward design control and review (words that strike fear into the hearts of architects) has been *laissez faire*, asking only for compatibility with existing buildings in massing and color. This policy has worked successfully in some universities (Yale is an oft-cited example) where "high-art" architects of national stature were hired to design most major buildings. But the policy of non-interference at U of H has produced design of only fair-to-middling quality.

Houston is now full of innovative, nationally-recognized architects (some of whom, unfortunately, teach at the university, making it impossible for them to receive commissions). With its extensive new building program, the university has the opportunity to reinforce its new image by hiring better designers. Its alternative would be to adopt a stricter—but perhaps crippling—set of design controls. As Montz says, "I admire a homogeneous quality in a campus, but it's boring if carried too far." The State University of New York at Purchase, planned during the 1970s by Edward Larrabee Barnes as a model campus with buildings designed by name architects, shows the potential lifelessness of such an approach.

Rice is renowned for the homogeneous quality of its campus buildings, but its insistence on the use of a fairly limited set of materials has not always resulted in distinguished or even commodious buildings—witness the brutally scaled high-rise and mid-rise dormitories of Lovett and Sid Richardson Colleges. Highly specific design controls, especially with stylistic parameters attached, often act to inhibit or even strangle architects. But there is something in the strangeness of the idiom Cram invented for Rice that seems to have inspired several generations of architects working on the campus to produce buildings that, while often only decent in the spectrum of architectural design, work together to produce a richness and vitality equaling more than the sum of the parts. A brick pattern in one building, a window design in another, a tile frieze or an arcade—all combine to offer visitors a taste of the "Rice style," and that taste is unmistakable.

James Stirling and Michael Wilford, in their celebrated addition to Anderson Hall of 1981, discovered the Rice aesthetic and produced a building that was revolutionary for its combination of conceptual strength and almost self-effacing modesty. Cesar Pelli discovered it too, in his much less modest Herring Hall (home of the Jones School of Business Administration), which opened in August. Pelli's new building continues a trend in campus architecture begun by such architects as Stirling and Wilford, and especially Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown (first at Purchase, then at Penn State and Oberlin, recently at Princeton's Gordon Wu Hall) that insists on typological and even stylistic continuity between new and old buildings, accepting such parameters as foils for innovative design.

At Herring Hall, Pelli borrows heavily—from Cram in the simple, linear configuration of the buiding with two "tail" appendages; from Stirling in the clever melding of high-tech and traditional materials and elements; from Venturi in the use of decorative brick and tile patterns both inside and out; and even from himself in the characteristic extrusion of the library section "cut" to form the western end of the building. What results from this complex assimilation is a building of real excellence. The only weaknesses in the design are the result of overindulgence—too much playing with patterns; overuse of the dark, raspberry glazed brick; and the desire to point up dichotomies between traditional and modern design and construction. The glass slots between the main wing and library; the clumsy and poorly proportioned red fasciae at the gable ends of the main wing, floating uncomfortably above wrap-around strip windows; the courtyard columns that are half steel-clad and half clad in brick and limestone—all are overly clever and ultimately weak gestures that divert

Both universities will soon unveil new buildings by internationally distinguished designers. Campus architecture is flourishing here, but it has a new, and paradoxically old-fashioned, character.

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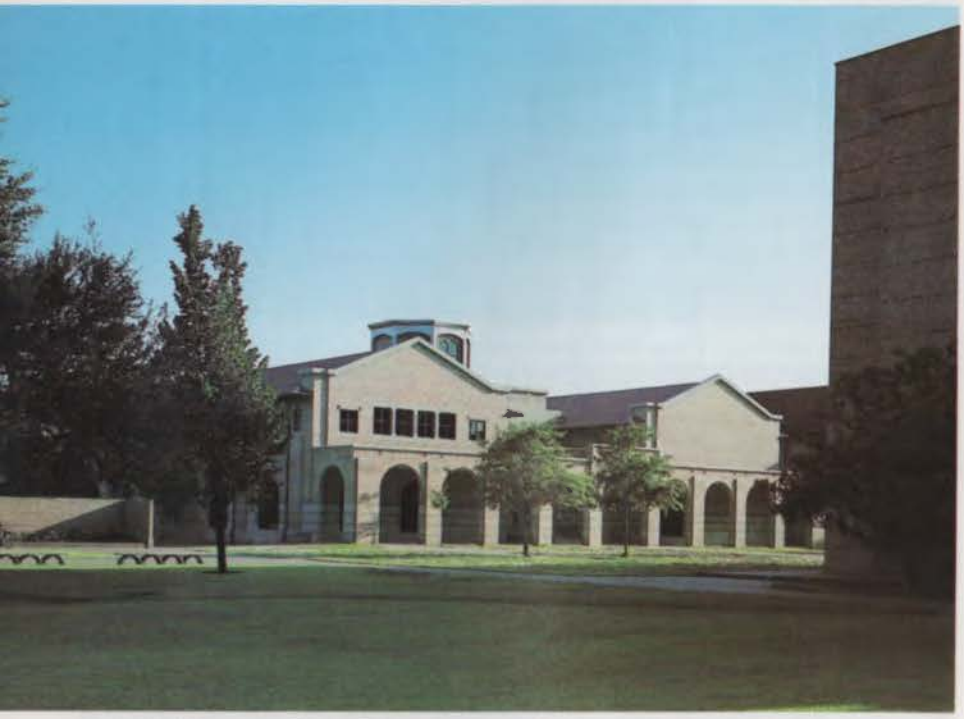
Photographs by Paul Hester



Seeley Mudd Computer Science Library, by Charles Tapley Associates. South elevation (above) and west elevation (below).

attention from the building's fine massing, proportions, and sculptural richness.

Pelli has given Rice a fine new building and an excellent, if incomplete, master plan, and will soon have the opportunity to contribute again to the architectural ensemble on the west end of the campus with an addition to the Rice Memorial Center. Two other new buildings, the recently completed Seeley Mudd Computer Science Laboratory by Charles Tapley Associates, and a new building for the Department of Mechanical Engineering, now under construction on the engineering quadrangle, by Calhoun, Tungate, Jackson & Dill, are less architecturally distinguished, but contribute positively to the character of the campus, showing the value of Rice's strict insistence on stylistic compatibility. The Tapley building, a modification of one designed for another site, points up the need for comprehensive master planning. Unfortunately, it was designed before the Pelli plan was undertaken. In future years, the university will look toward the construction of such major additions to the campus as a new building for the Shepherd School of Music, new science buildings, and graduate student housing. In Herring Hall, it will have inspiring precedents to follow.

Houston's two major "academical villages" clearly face major challenges in planning for the coming decades, challenges that have been only partially addressed in their two ambitious master plans. The Rice and University of Houston campuses are places of different character—one (in Cram's words) "half monastery and half college," the other an accessible, democratic "people's" university. But each clearly has architectural lessons to teach, and lessons to learn. ▬

Mark A. Hewitt is an assistant professor of architecture at Rice University and a frequent contributor to CITE, the Architecture and Design Review of Houston.

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NEUTRA'S LEGACY

By Stephen Fox

The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern, by Arthur Drexler and Thomas S. Hines, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1982, 114 pages, $10, paperback, 187 illustrations.

William D. Morgan

Lovell House, Los Angeles, 1927–29.

The Architecture of Richard Neutra, the catalogue prepared by the Museum of Modern Art to accompany the exhibition of the same name, contains a short, annotated chronology of the life and career of the Austrian-born Los Angeles architect compiled by Thomas S. Hines. It is followed with an essay on Neutra's work by Arthur Drexler, the museum's director of architecture and design, and the curator, with Hines, of the exhibition. Concluding the catalogue are brief illustrated profiles of the 20 buildings displayed in the exhibition on view at the University of Houston's Blaffer Gallery through Nov. 4.

Drexler's essay is discursive but erudite. It addresses Neutra's debt to Frank Lloyd Wright, for whom he worked briefly after coming to the United States in 1923. It considers Neutra's drawings of the 1910s and early 1920s, which reveal, moreso than his later buildings, the impact of early 20th Century Vienna. It distills the constituent elements of Neutra's architectural aesthetic—the articulation of frame construction; the horizontal extenuation of parapet, spandrel; the strip windows, and the bracing planar wall—and relates them, very perceptively, to the compositional elements of traditional Japanese domestic structures.

Yet there is throughout a certain ambivalence. Drexler does not hesitate to acknowledge the importance of some of Neutra's buildings: the Lovell (Health) House of 1929 is described as "indispensable to the iconology of modern architecture," and advanced as a progenitor of Wright's Fallingwater. But lapses are detected in Neutra's resort to illusionism, his apparent lack of interest in vertically composed spaces, and his functional but unsubtle plans. What is implied is that Neutra's work lacked not so much finesse of consistency as depth and substance.

What seems to lie at the heart of Drexler's equivocal assessment was Neutra's failure to measure up to the standard of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Like Mies, Neutra reformulated his style during the 1940s, the transition from International to California Modernism that the exhibition's title portends. But unlike Mies's "neoclassical" architecture, Neutra's remained domestic in scale; "urbane" but "essentially anti-urban," as Drexler observes. Philip Johnson and the Museum of Modern Art were instrumental in posing the crisis of monumentality in the late 1940s as a critical vehicle to promote Mies. Neutra's work gives little evidence of having been moved by this crisis, and this, Drexler, while not denying Neutra's work of the 1940s and 1950s its due, cannot accept. His criticism, however, is muted and carefully balanced with praiseworthy remarks; the comparison with Mies is never made explicit, endowing the seemingly casual essay with a certain, unexpected tension. Only in the extended and rather puzzling apologia for the museum's failure to commission Neutra to design one of its exhibition houses is there a hint that at a critical point in his career Neutra was judged and found wanting by the conservators of modernist taste.

Yet the catalogue photographs of Neutra's buildings tell a somewhat different story. As Suzanne Stephens has observed, these images are crucial to understanding Neutra's work, especially his romantic conviction that rational building could provide for unmediated access to nature. The contrast of precisionist objects and dramatic landscapes is a recurring image in these photographs, many of them made by Julius Shulman, whose career was encouraged by Neutra.

Julius Shulman

Nesbitt House, Los Angeles, 1942.

The houses built in the 1940s and after feature large expanses of glass uninterrupted by mullions and often butt-jointed at corners. These induce, even in images, a tremendous sense of projection, a corporeal exhilaration that is achieved by directing views across a range of contrasting ecologies which culminate in fog-shrouded mountains, again recalling Japan. It is this powerful, almost surreal, experience which Neutra's architecture made possible that Drexler does not consider, a sensation that one is apt to feel just as strongly in Mies's best buildings. It is here that the profundity and substance of Neutra's architecture is to be experienced, rather than in a contemplation of the artifacts themselves.

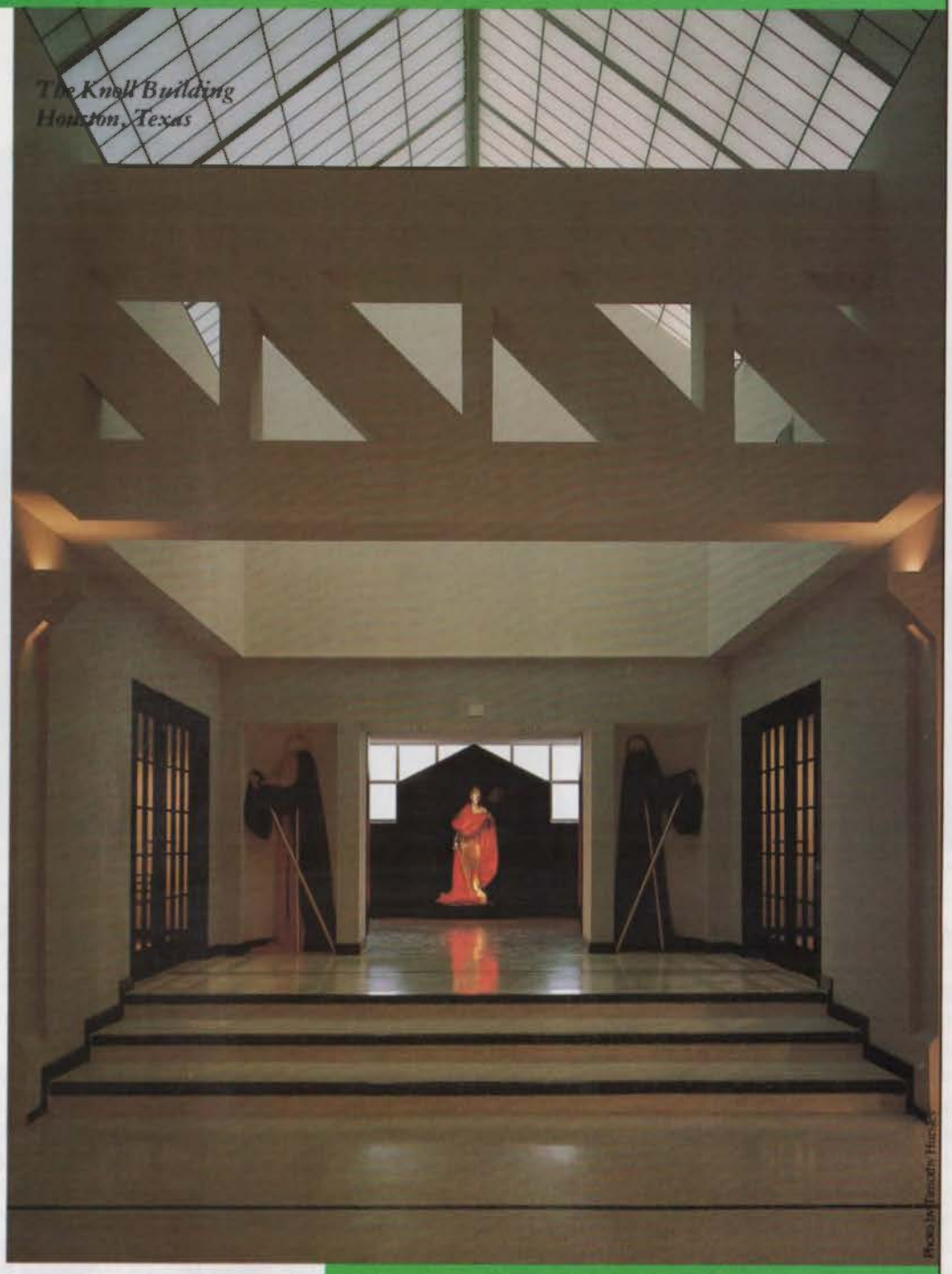
Hines's chronology mentions, but the exhibition does not contain, Neutra's two Texas projects: the Kraigher House in Brownsville of 1937 (Neutra's first American building outside California) and Avion Village in Grand Prairie of 1940–41, a 300-unit Federal Works Agency defense housing project for which Roscoe P. DeWitt was architect of record and Neutra and David R. Williams consulting architects. In his biography, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, Hines quotes from a letter that Dione Neutra wrote in 1940 describing a tour of Texas on which she and her husband were escorted by the "young, charming architect O'Neil Ford," "In each town, a group of architects assembled around Richard, who seemed to be a light in the darkness. All try to build 'modern.' This cannot be done without compromise. It was only in Texas that I came to realize the great influence that Richard had had on the architecture profession in this country."

The California Modern tendency dominated progressive architecture in Texas from the late 1940s through the middle 1950s, as can be seen in a survey of buildings designed by Milton A. Ryan, John G. York and Alan Y. Taniguchi among others. The Austin architect Charles T. Granger worked for Neutra between 1936 and 1938, and many of the buildings that Fehr and Granger produced in the early 1950s attested to this apprenticeship. Harwell H. Harris, who raised the School of Architecture at the University of Texas to national distinction during his tenure there as director from 1951 to 1955, was one of Neutra's first proteges. Neutra himself continued to visit Texas to lecture. In 1952 he was the principal speaker at the TSA's annual meeting in El Paso.

The beautifully reproduced images of Neutra's buildings in *The Architecture of Richard Neutra* still radiate the excitement, adventurousness, and *elan* which so captivated young architects in the 1930s and 1940s. And they impress upon us the role that Richard J. Neutra performed in disclosing the modernist vision to Texans in the second quarter of the 20th Century. ▬

(Stephen Fox is a Fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas and lives in Houston.)

QUALITY



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NEWS, *continued from page 36*

tributed a detailed pedestrian study to the Cambridge report, conceived an extensive system of "pedestrian-oriented" streets feeding into the "pedestrian-dominant" Houston Street/Alamo Plaza spine, and at least one street closing three new plazas on sites now covered by surface parking. Two of the new plazas, conceived as backdrops for new development, would link the River Walk and the street grid in an effort to extend the River Walk's success topside. Arrow also proposed a system of benches, bus shelters, trees, water features, street-spanning gateways, and light standards with banners and information kiosks.

The cost—and effectiveness—of a pedestrian system can vary enormously depending on the number of blocks to be covered, the size and quality of the "kit of parts," and investment in special features such as fountains, public art and performance spaces. In the few limited areas where San Antonio has attempted to create a new pedestrian environment, the city's record has varied from superb, in the case of Ford, Powell & Carson's delightful Paseo del Alamo water garden, to supine, in the case of the Alamo Plaza contraflow bus lane and related pedestrian amenities—such as a miraculous paving tile that is highly slippery when wet, yet so porous that it forever shows the traces of every liquid that has ever been spilled on it.

The downtown business community appears to be committed to doing this project right, however. Sizable investments in the new construction and adaptive reuse are threatened by the poor quality of the pedestrian environment, and most business leaders now seem aware that the public space leading to their front doors will have to be spectacular if tenants and shoppers are to be lured away from the suburbs. While bitter opposition is certain to rise against some details of bus routing and traffic diversion, at least there is agreement on the principle that good aesthetics is good business.

—Mike Greenberg

RIZZOLI OPENS STORE IN DALLAS MALL

Rizzoli International Bookstores, the New York booksellers known for their extensive architectural book collections, has opened a 4,500 sq. ft. store in Dallas' Northpark Center.

The company's luxuriously decorated

Rizzoli, Dallas

Fifth Avenue store has been heralded in New York not only for its exclusive handling of art, architecture and design books but also for its chic clientele. Rizzoli has successfully marketed what publishers and book dealers consider "hard-to-sell" design books by appealing to a specific target audience—"the more highly educated, more sophisticated, better traveled" readers that possess "a flair for the international and the avant-garde."

Architectural books section

In 1982, the AIA honored the Fifth Avenue store "for the importance it has attached to the publication, display and sales of architectural books and periodicals and for the cultivated atmosphere in which it communicates architectural ideas to the public."

In addition to this store, others are in SoHo (New York), Chicago, Boston and Costa Mesa, California. Rizzoli also plans to open a Houston store in the near future.

Rizzoli Dallas invited the public for its grand opening party on Sept. 20. For more information, call store managers David Butler or Chris Grimes at (214) 739-6633.

AUSTIN CHAPTER ANNOUCES DESIGN COMPETITION WINNERS

Four projects were chosen as winners in the 1984 Austin AIA Chapter Design Awards. The jury consisted of Clovis Heimsath, FAIA, Fayetteville; William T. Cannady, FAIA, Houston; Frank Welch, FAIA, Midland; and Stan Haas, Dallas.

Honor Award:

- Private Library; Lawrence Speck Associates.

Merit Awards:

- Little Italy Restaurant; The Architects Office Corp.
- Preservation Square Townhomes; The Architects Office Corp.
- Park Ten Townhomes; The Architects Office Corp.

Private library, Austin

Little Italy, Austin

Greg Hursley

Preservation Square Townhouses

Greg Hursley

Park Ten Townhouses

DALLAS JUSTICE CENTER CITED BY AIA AS "STATE OF ART"

A National jury composed of experts in the field of criminal justice architecture selected the Lew Sterrett Justice Center in Dallas County as one of the nation's "state of the art" facilities. Architects for the project were Justice Center Architects, a five-firm joint venture composed of: Moffatt D. Adams; Dahl/Braden/PTM; JPJ Architects; Smith & Warder; and Wright-Rich & Associates.

The Sterrett Center was included in the annual Exhibition of Architecture for Justice at the Congress of Correction meeting held in San Antonio, Aug. 19–23.

Sterrett Justice Center, Dallas

The Center, one of the first jails to comply with the then-new Texas State Jail Standards, was subject to public controversy during its five years of design and construction. Most of the jail's detractors were reluctant to comply with orders of the Federal Court for more humane amenities and its ensuing costs. Critics called the jail "the Convict Hilton" because of its multimillion-dollar price tag.

"The center was pushed on Dallas County because of federal court orders," Braden said. "People have criticized the center for being too costly, saying that we coddled prisoners. There were a lot of false rumors that went with it."

The juried competition was sponsored by the AIA and the American Correctional Association.

MASONRY INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES HOUSTON-GALVESTON DESIGN WINNERS

The Masonry Institute of Houston-Galveston has announced the winners of the biannual Nicholas Clayton Awards for excellence in design with masonry. The jury consisted of San Francisco-area architects: Paul B. Barnhart of Kaplan, MacLaughlin, Diaz; Les L. Melburg of Nichols & Melberg; and Charles Stewart of ARX Architecture.

Excellence in Design:

- Five Post Oak Park, Houston; Morris/Aubry Architects.
- Grogan's Park Center, Woodlands; Architects Alliance.
- Parish Hall for St. John the Divine Episcopal Church, Houston; Ray Bailey Architect.
- Seeley G. Mudd Computer Science Laboratory, Houston; Charles Tapley Associates. *(See page 66.)*

Five Post Oak, Houston

Grogan's Park Center, Woodlands

Parish Hall, Houston

ROBERT G. MATHER DEAD IN AUSTIN AT AGE OF 63

Robert G. Mather, professor of architecture and planning at UT Austin since 1958, died in Austin July 7 after a brief illness.

Mather was born in Plainfield, Ill., and earned an architecture degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology. He had long been active on committees concerned with problems arising from Austin's rapid growth. He was acting chairman of the Austin Tomorrow Ongoing Committee, which monitors the city master plan for growth, and also held leadership positions on committees related to downtown revitalization, renewable energy resources and land-use planning as a component of energy management.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Urban Pathfinder Coalition, c/o We Care Austin, 4620 Crestway Drive, Austin, Texas 78731.

NEWS, *continued on page 83*

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TEXAS ARCHITECTS WIN TWELVE GOLD NUGGET AWARDS

Texas architects won 12 Gold Nuggett Awards in the annual building design competition sponsored by the Pacific Coast Builders Conference and *Builder* magazine. A record 658 entries were received from 14 western states to be eligible for prizes in the 33 categories.

EDI Architects/Planners, Houston, won five residential design awards:

- Grand Award for the Best Condominium Unit, The Retreat, Houston.
- Merit Award for Medium-Density Residential Community, The Retreat, Houston.
- Merit Award for Best Manufactured Home, Westglen, Houston.
- Merit Award for Best Single-Family Home (2,201 to 3,000 sq. ft.), House in Governor's Place, Houston.
- Merit Award for Best Condominiums (1,701 to 2,200 sq. ft.), Forest Lake Townhomes, The Woodlands.

Rob Miller

The Retreat, Houston

Kaufman/Meeks, Houston, won two awards:

- Merit Award for Best Single-Family Detached Home (over 3000 sq. ft.), 502 Flaghoist, Houston.
- Merit Award for Best Single-Family Detached Home (1601–2200 sq. ft.), Bear Creek, Houston.

SWA Group, Houston, won two awards for land planning:

- Merit Award for Best Recreational Facility, Sweetwater Country Club, Sugarland, designed by Charles Moore.
- Merit Award for Best Apartment Project (over three stories), Lions' Head Apartments, Sugarland, designed by Cole Smith & Associates.

Rob Muir

502 Flaghoist, Houston.

Tom Fox

Sweetwater Country Club, Sugarland.

Charles R. Womack, Dallas, won two awards:

- Merit Award for Best High-Density Residential Community, Parkway Quarter Condominiums, Dallas.
- Merit Award for Best High-Density Residential Community, Bryan Place Condominiums, Dallas.

John Rogers

Bryan Place Condominiums, Dallas.

House Reh Associates, Houston, won one award:

- Merit Award for Best Apartment Project (over three stories), Oakhampton Place, San Antonio.

IN PROGRESS

Rob Muir

Heritage Plaza, Houston

HERITAGE PLAZA, HOUSTON, BY M. NASR & PARTNERS

Undaunted by the 20 percent downtown office vacancy rate, developers Wortham & Van Liew have announced a 1.2 million sq. ft. office building, Heritage Plaza.

"We have confidence in both the city of Houston and the economy," R. W. Wortham, III said, "and believe that the real estate demand will again be strong in 1986–1987."

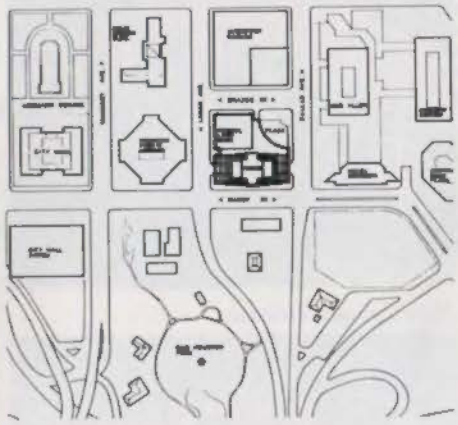
The one-block site contains the 1917 Federal Land Bank building, which Wortham & Van Liew plan to reuse sans parking garage. One of Houston's most exceptional historic buildings, the Land Bank will be preserved intact on the site which adjoins Sam Houston Park and the main public library.

M. Nasr & Partners have designed the 53-story building with context in mind. The side of the building facing the park is monumental in scale while the downtown face is more pedestrian-oriented and incorporates an arc-shaped plaza serving both the Land Bank and the new tower.

Carrying out the theme of the striking limestone facade of the Land Bank, Nasr has designed the base of the tower with horizontal bands of flamed granite. The granite bands' joints have deeply articu-

lated reveals creating distinct horizontal shadows.

At the center of the park-side elevation, a portal announces the entrance below and the location of a 12th-floor sky lobby. The base the stair steps symmetrically down from this portal to the existing Land Bank. The building's shaft is divided into seven equal vertical panels on the park side, a device which should break down the building's horizontal dimension.



Site Plan

At the "capital" of Heritage Plaza, glass panels terminate in stair-stepping fashion into a granite-clad exposed building skeleton. The latticework design hides mechanical equipment while responding to the decorative elements of the Land Bank. Completion is scheduled for late 1986.

CORPUS CHRISTI CITY HALL, BY TAFT ARCHITECTS AND KIPP, RICHTER & ASSOCIATES

Taft Architects and Kipp, Richter & Associates unveiled in mid-August a model for Corpus Christi's new city hall. The $12 million project will have a cross axial organization with four entrances leading into a central rotunda. Most of the major public functions of the 350,000 sq. ft. facility, including the city council chambers, will be located on the ground floor, while less public offices will occupy the second to fifth floors. The sixth floor will house such staff amenities as an exercise room and a a cafeteria.

The architects have chosen a massing

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Corpus Christi City Hall

reminiscent of the Texas courthouse vernacular and historic downtown buildings. Exterior materials are buff brick with contrasting neutral grey stucco and bands of blue tile. Construction will commence in early January.

ARLINGTON COURT TOWNHOUSES, HOUSTON, BY WILLIAM F. STERN & ASSOCIATES

Arlington Court Townhouses is an 18-unit townhouse project planned for Houston's Heights Historic District. The one-acre site adjoins a neighborhood made up of well-preserved wood cottages and bungalows dating from the early 20th Century. Each two-bedroom townhome contains 1600 sq. ft. with a combination of private and shared outdoor living spaces. William F. Stern & Associates oriented the individual houses toward a public courtyard with vehicular access off Arlington St. and an alley. The front door to the court acts as a gatehouse through which visitors or residents enter before proceeding to the individual homes. On axis with the gatehouse is a large 65-foot long pool.

Architectural elements—bay windows, stoops, stair towers and balconies—act as contextual elements connecting the townhomes with older homes of the area. The small, modest units have elongated, operable wood

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45TH ANNUAL MEETING TEXAS SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

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Plus, as an added attraction, the traditional Host Chapter Party this year will be the inaugural event in the fabulous new Houston Design Center.

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

In addition to keynote speaker Dan Germany, Director of Operations for NASA's Space Shuttle program, guest speakers will include: **Jim Kollaer,** marketing, with emphasis on motivation and creative thinking ideas; **P. J. Marshall,** image development and market positioning; **Howard Birnberg,** Small firm financial management and using computers for marketing design services; **Jack Randorff,** architectural acoustics; **Elizabeth Bollinger,** introduction to microcomputers in architecture; **Victoria Corcoran,** employment practices, including hiring, firing, promotions, TEC and equal employment.

Also of special interest will be panel discussions on CAD/D in the small office, exploring the uses of microcomputers for architects, starting your own firm, selection criteria for clients, architectural photography, environmental graphics, the "Clean Houston" program, and an analysis of Design Awards programs. In addition, invaluable practice management workshops will be organized by Jim Lemons and the TSA Practice Management Committee.

windows, large fireplaces and intricately layered interior spaces. Finished in stucco and painted in lavender grey, the exterior forms should add a lively presence to the adjoining streets and courtyard. Completion is scheduled for fall.

Paul Hester

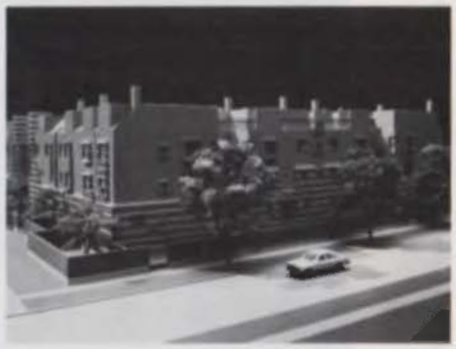
Model, bird's eye view.

Paul Hester

Arlington Street facade.

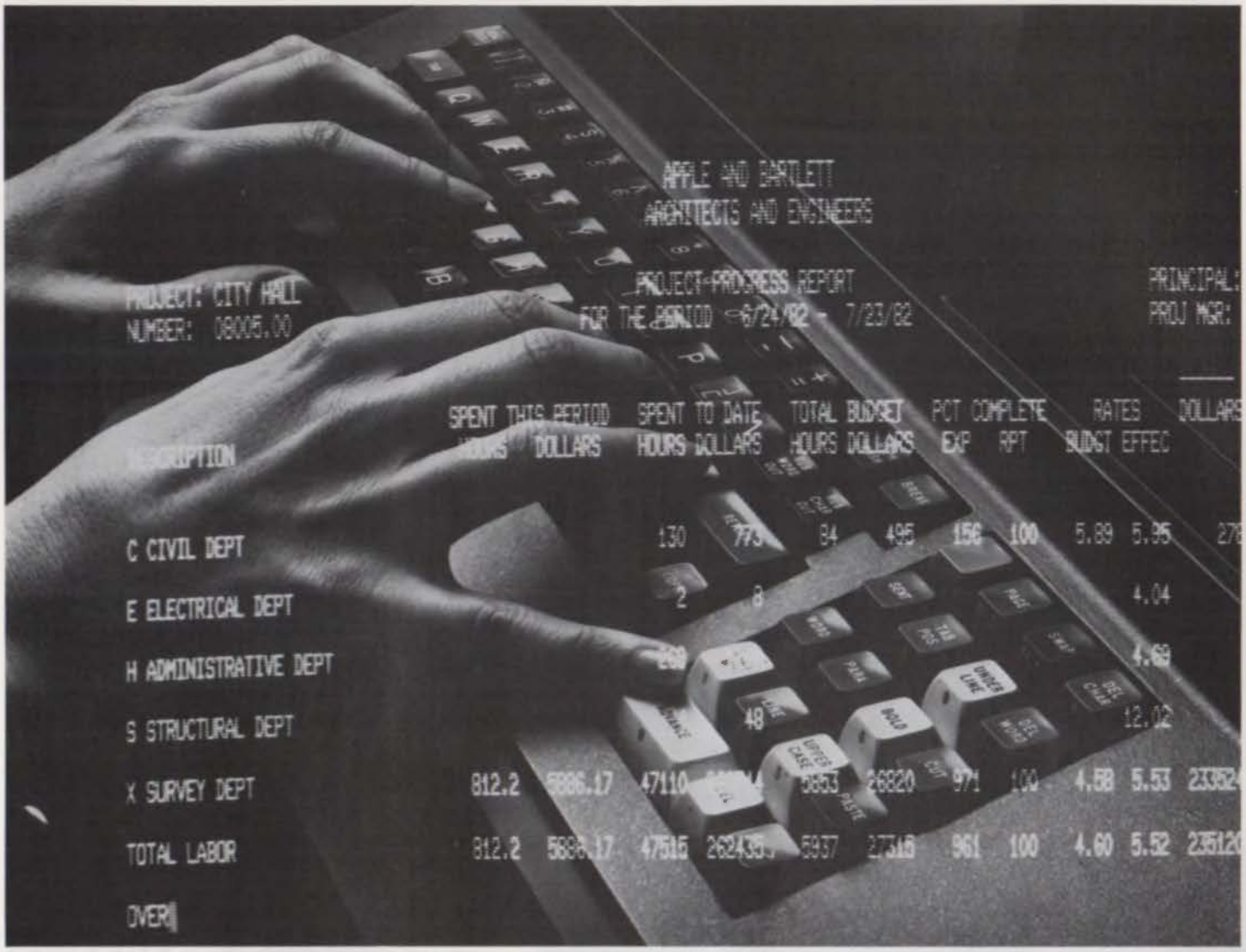
COURT AT MUSEUM'S GATE, HOUSTON, BY COMPENDIUM

The Court at Museum's Gate is a mid-rise luxury condominium to be located near Houston's unofficial cultural center and is in close proximity to the Museum



Court at Museum's Gate.

of Fine Arts, the Contemporary Arts Museum, Hermann Park and the soon-to-be-completed de Menil Museum. Organized around three exterior plazas, the



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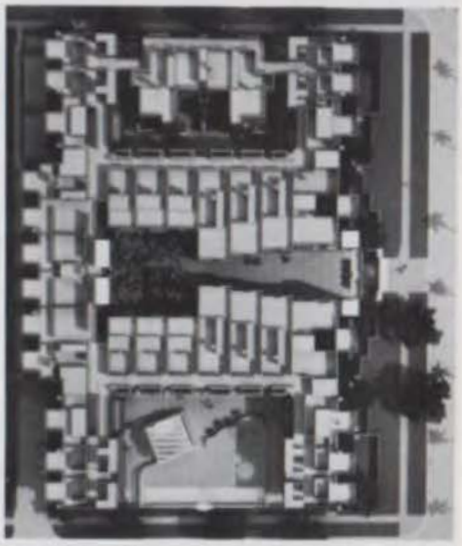
complex will offer a variety of public and private outdoor spaces. First-floor flats will have private courtyards while two- and three-story units have private roof terraces.

Exteriors are red brick with limestone accent bands. Operable windows are clear glass in energy-efficient frames. Glass block is used in areas needing visual privacy. A computer-monitored electronic security system controls entry into the complex.



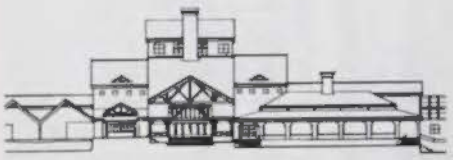
Court Site Plan

SCHOOLS

Architecture professors Drury Blake Alexander and Lawrence W. Speck have been named to endowed academic positions at the **University of Texas at Austin.** Alexander was named to hold the Meadows Foundation Centennial Professorship in Architecture and Speck, a *Texas Architect* contributing editor, was named to hold the Roland Gommell Roessner Centennial Professorship in Architecture. Both are directors of the Southwest Center for the Study of American Architecture.

Donations to the fund to establish the Harwell Hamilton Harris Fellowship in Architecture are now being accepted by the **University of Texas at Austin**. Harris, who gave up his plan to enter architecture school in order to work for Richard Neutra, moved to Texas in 1951 and became UT Austin's first director of the newly created School of Architecture.

He is still considered one of the most significant Texas architects of the 1950s. The endowment qualifies to receive matching funds under the Regents Teachers and Scholars Program. Gifts and pledges made by Aug. 31, 1985 and paid by Aug. 31, 1987 are eligible to be matched by Available Fund monies.



Tannehill's award-winning design.

Jane Tannehill of **Rice University** has been named second-place winner in the Second Annual Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture/American Wood Council Student Design Competition. For her design of a clubhouse for a Colorado country club, she was awarded $1,000, with an additional $500 going to Rice University. Major funding for the competition was provided by the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation and Kirby Forest Industries.

EVENTS

October 1–5: Artrain, the only mobile museum of its kind in the country, will be in Lubbock to feature examples of "the best quality of contemporary art in Texas." Artrain, consisting of five refurbished railroad cars, will move to Midland-Odessa Oct. 10, and to El Paso Oct. 19. For additional information, contact Helen Tackett, UT News and Information Service, Box Z, University Station, Austin 78712, (512) 471-3151.

October 2: First lecture in the series *Reconsidered Modernism* will be held in conjunction with the exhibition on the architecture of Richard Neutra. The series continues Oct. 16, 23 and 30. For additional information, contact Esther de Vecsey, The Blaffer Gallery, The University of Houston, Houston 77004, (713) 749-1329.

October 3: Romaldo Giurgola lectures at the Rice Design Alliance's *Architects Speak for Themselves* series. Subsequent lectures will be Barbara Littenberg, Oct. 10; Hugh Newell Jacobsen, Oct. 17; and Daniel Solomon, Oct. 24. For additional information, contact Rice Design Alliance, Rice University, PO Box 1892, Houston 77251, (713) 524-6297.

Through October 5: An exhibit of photographs of 19th Century Houston homes, *Houston Residential Architecture—1836–1914* is on display at the Julia Ideson Library, 500 McKinney.

October 12: New works by several Austin artists in a multi-media exhibition will be on display through Nov. 11 at Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.

October 15: Deadline for entries in the annual General Electric Edison Award lighting design competition to recognize innovative projects using GE precision beam, low voltage Precise lamps. Projects are to have been created between Sept. 1, 1983 and Oct. 1, 1984. For additional information, contact General Electric Co., Dept. 3422, Nela Park, Cleveland, OH 44112.

October 24: Deadline for entries in 1985 AIA Honor Awards program. For

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entry requirements or additional information, contact AIA, 1735 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

November 1: Deadline for entries in Second Annual Concrete Block Paver Design Competition, sponsored by the National Concrete Masonry Association. The competition will honor designers for outstanding applications of concrete block pavers used in innovative landscaping projects. For additional information, contact Richard Branham, National Concrete Masonry Association, PO Box 781, Herndon, VA 22070, (703) 435-4900.

November 1–4: Art Expo Texas, an international exposition of paintings, sculpture, tapestries, etchings, lithographs, video and electronic art, photography and posters will be in Dallas' Market Hall. For more information, contact Margie August or Laurel Anderson, The Hart Agency, 300 Turtle Creek Plaza, Suite 215, Dallas 75219, (214) 521-9092.

FIRMS

John Mark Hutchings has been named associate principal of the Dallas firm **James H. Meyer & Associates.**

Albert Gregor has joined **The Parker/Croston Partnership,** Fort Worth, as a senior partner.

The firm **Dailey Wann and Michael,** has moved to 407 E. Sixth St., Suite 200, Austin 78701, (512) 476-4586.

Wadsworth Properties, Houston, has relocated to One Woodway Center, Suite 900, 6363 Woodway, Houston 77057, (713) 789-8099.

The Falick/Klein Partnership, Inc., Houston, has moved to 5847 San Felipe, Suite 1900, Houston, 77057, (713) 782-9000.

F. Conrad Neal, III has established an independent practice under the firm name of **FCN 111,** with offices at 7277 Regency Square Blvd., Suite 117, Houston 77036, (713) 781-4388.

Richard L. Chambers, Jr., and Carl E. Aeschbacher have incorporated under the name **Aeshacher Chambers Architects,** 3422 W. Alabama, Houston 77005, (713) 626-3094.

NEWS, *continued on page 97*


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Hall Architects, Houston, has relocated to Loop Central Three, 4828 Loop Central Drive, Suite 660, Houston 77081, (713) 669-1860.

James M. Ratcliff has been promoted to senior associate of the firm **SHWC, Inc.,** Houston.

Stark West has joined the Dallas-based firm **Foster & Meier Architects, Inc.** as vice president of design.

The San Antonio firm **Brendler/Dove Associates, Inc.** has named as associates Randall C. Thomas, Brian Bristow, Marcia Mattingly and John Hughes.

PRODUCTS

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Stephens station.

New from Knoll Office Automation Resources is the **Stephens Management Station**, featuring a rolling terminal stand, designed by Bill Stephens, which can be rolled aside when not in use, a disk drive hanger frame, mounted under the worksurface to improve access and free workspace, and a printer closet with an acoustic foam silencer. For additional information, contact Knoll, (212) 207-2200.

Index of Advertisers

GOIN' BACK TO HOUSTON

In case you haven't heard, Dallas accommodated the Grand Old Party's National Convention this August. We really got spiffed up—filled the chug (that's Texan for pot) holes, watered the grass, fenced off the Convention Center, cleared out the jails, and gathered up four million private sector dollars for extra security and hors d'oeuvres. It has made me wonder, what is Houston doing to get ready for the Texas Society of Architects annual bash?

The GOP's are not really a lot more numerous than the TSA's, but they are accompanied by this tremendous entourage of 12,000 media people (they are the ones who ate four million dollars worth of hors d'oeuvres)! If architects could just draw a media crowd like that, it would be mind boggling to see what the city of Houston would roll out in the way of red carpet!

Houstonians would be running around all over the place asking these media types, "Well, how do you like Houston?" The response may not be all that appealing. Case in point: Mike Royko, the latter day Dooley of the *Chicago Tribune*, did not exactly shower Big D with compliments. He could hardly wait to get back to the Loop and tell all of Chicago that Dallas wasn't "really a city at all—just a bunch of shopping centers, connected by freeways." Irrespective of the fact that he is basically right (in a physical sense), can you imagine what this guy might write if he visited Houston?

Paul Goldberger, the architectural critic for *The New York Times*, critiqued Dallas' freeway landscape and downtown. While making two mistakes in spelling, giving one wrong credit, and three inaccurate building locations, Paul, typically, was complimentary only of the works of our Eastern stars. I was a little miffed when he told the whole world our Wyndham Hotel looked like a Mennen Speed Stick, called the Anatole the devil of the "so-called Post Modern movement," and gave the Hyatt Regency the "Most Like-the-Emerald-City-in-the-Wizard-of-Oz-Award;" but then I thought, well nobody's perfect—except critics!

I feel sorry for the critics who have not yet critiqued Houston because they ain't seen nothing yet! It is the home of four of Texas' 20 most significant architectural works as shown in TSA's touring Creating Tomorrow's Heritage exhibit: Pennzoil Place, the Tenneco Building, Lovett Hall at Rice University and the Museum of Fine Arts. Among things significant, all were designed by non-Texans, while the works of 1930s Houston architect John Staub must have been too eclectic to be included! No conclusion can be reached except that Houston is Houston—a special place of its own.

Undoubtedly, there have been changes since last we met there. Houston is still brawling but not booming. Rumors abound of an unprecedented economic recession—always a toughie for architects! It is rumored there are soup kitchens in River Oaks serving free vichyssoise. It is not uncommon to be approached in the Downtown area by down-and-out oil persons begging for five dollars to buy a pina colada.

Yet, there is, no doubt, a good time and a broadening of one's mind in seminar form ahead at TSA's Annual Meeting. Subjects to be broached include: "Drawing scale figures to scale" and "How to start an architectural library at home" (first get four one by tens, six feet in length, some bricks, and a copy of *The Fountainhead*).

I can hardly wait—goin' back to Houston, Houston, Houston!

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