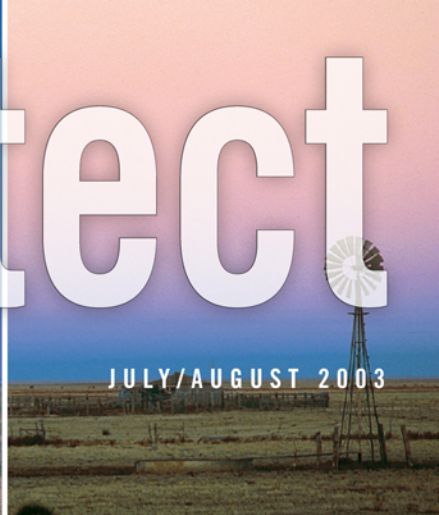


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If you have ideas for "News" call us at (512) 478-7386, fax to (512) 478-0528, or e-mail ssharpe@texasarchitect.org.

September/October 2003 spotlights the winners of the annual TSA Design Awards competition. The issue will feature projects chosen by this year's jury – Michael J. McCall, AIA, of San Francisco; Maryann Thompson, AIA, of Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Dan Rockhill of Lawrence, Kansas – among 271 entries.

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An Architect for Texas

After 20 years, *TA* contributing editor Moorhead continues to document the state of architecture

AN AUSPICIOUS MILESTONE earlier this year marked just how far *Texas Architect* has come in its 53 years of documenting the state's built environment and informing the profession about who's responsible for it. From *TA*'s early days as an association newsletter and through its successful transition in the early 1970s into a professional journal, the magazine has championed the best work and inspired all architects toward even greater achievements. Sometimes publishing project photos communicates the appropriate message. Other times the task of conveying a project's strengths or its shortcomings falls on a writer. Fortunately for *TA*'s readers, several good architect/writers contribute to these pages on a regular basis.

TA's masthead lists two groups of individuals who provide guidance and ideas to the magazine staff—and sometimes, best of all from the editor's point of view, they write news stories and feature articles. The two groups are the TSA Publications Committee (or in the staff's affectionate diminutive, Pub Com) and *TA*'s roster of contributing editors. While committee members must be TSA members, contributing editors are not necessarily members nor architects and are invited by the editor to join the *TA* stable of writers. Not surprisingly, the editor may anoint a Pub Com member after he has served time on the committee. While the Pub Com has existed since the first *TA* was published in 1951, the roster of contributing editors did not appear on the masthead until 1979. Looking through back issues is an interesting journey peopled with TSA's leading thinkers and provocateurs—David Woodcock, David Braden, Clovis Heimsath, Larry Good, and Peter Papademetriou among them.

Twenty years ago Gerald Moorhead's name first appeared on the Pub Com list, the same year his byline debuted. His essay, "The Future Begins in the Past," was an appeal to his colleagues to reject intellectual dogma, along with the simplistic labels that are meant to fix great works within the confines of art history. "As is the case with most 'periods' of art history," he wrote two decades ago, "the application of a label restricts, narrows and seeks to simplify understanding. However, the perception of life at any time is a continuum, a conscious present with a memory of the past and a hope for the future."

Moorhead's thoughtful musings on the state of the profession, his succinctly interpretive reviews

of books, and his reasoned critiques of current projects have become a mainstay in these pages. He imbues his writing with a broad knowledge of history and travel, around Texas and around the world, often with his wife Yolita Schmidt.

"None have brought more intelligence and fire to the magazine than Gerald Moorhead," Joel Barna recently recalled. As editor of *TA* from 1986 through 1995, Barna worked closely with Moorhead when the latter sat on the Pub Com, and in 1988 Barna asked him to become a contributing editor. Luckily for Barna and *TA*'s readership, Moorhead agreed. "Issue after issue," Barna said. "Gerald gave us stories illuminating contemporary projects, the history of built form and urbanism throughout Texas, the possibilities of planning and informed action in his beloved Houston, even the impact of movies on architecture (and vice versa)."

Another long-standing *TA* contributing editor (since 1986) is architectural historian Stephen Fox, who also weighed in recently when requested to consider Moorhead's twentieth anniversary. "Gerald Moorhead is one of the chief reasons there is architectural culture in Texas," Fox wrote. "I have worked with Gerald on and off since the late 1980s. This has made me aware of the time, miles, and resources he devotes to other people's archi-

ture. The material rewards are evanescent; it's about emotional satisfaction. By ensuring its documentation and dissemination, Gerald provides cultural grounding to architecture in Texas."

Fox noted that Moorhead has 62 entries under his name in the *Avery Index to Architectural Records*. In addition to *Texas Architect*, Moorhead has written for *Architectural Record*, *Architecture*, *Progressive Architecture*, and *Cite: The Architecture and Design Review of Houston*. In praise of that magnitude of effort, Fox wrote, "The word that describes this kind of commitment is diligence—work done with love."

Moorhead continues his diligent work. While he maintains a full-time position as a senior associate with Ray Bailey Architects, he still contributes to *Texas Architect* and regularly attends Pub Com meetings. In addition, for the past three years he has spent organizing *The Buildings of Texas*, a mammoth book project that is documenting the most significant examples of the state's built environment. The volume is expected to be published in 2004 by the Society of Architectural Historians. As well as managing the eight regional contributors, Moorhead is taking all the photographs for what will become an encyclopedic guidebook to architecture in Texas.

STEPHEN SHARPE

TA contributing editor Gerald Moorhead, FAIA





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Landscape Designer Deserves Credit

Reading “Reclaimed Traditions” in the May/June edition (p. 38) was like taking a virtual walk through our synagogue at Congregation Agudas Achim. Earl Swisher felt the same things we often feel when entering on Shabbat. As a member of the landscape committee, I especially appreciated his response to our plants and landscape design.

My only pause was that no acknowledgement was



Brad Goldberg’s landscape design creates welcoming outdoor spaces at Congregation Agudas Achim, a synagogue in Austin designed by Lake/Flato Architects. Photo by Hester+Hardway.

given to Brad Goldberg, who designed our landscape and built our fountains (which refer to Miriam’s Well which followed the Israelites throughout our wanderings in the desert). Mr. Goldberg, from Dallas, is an internationally known landscape designer and sculptor. He was able to combine respect for both our tradition and our building within the ecological as well as monetary imperatives of our lives in Austin.

Thanks so much for the article. It was thrilling to read it.

Stan Friedman, Ph.D.
Austin

New Trinity Proposal Doesn’t Add Up

After reading the article in the May/June edition of *Texas Architect* (“Tale of Two Trinity River Plans,” p. 12), I began to wonder if there is a “new math” now in use by architects and urban planners. Your article states that “the 1999 Master Implementation Plan (MIP) was decryed by the critics as too much highway and not enough river resulting in an unclear vision.” Your article further states that the Krieger/TDA team suggested replacing a portion of the eight-lane tollway with a four-lane parkway.

However, the Krieger Plan actually proposes to replace the eight-lane portion of tollway with six-lanes, and the six-lane portion of tollway through downtown with 14 lanes (consisting of a four-lane parkway, a four-to-six lane collector distributor road on top of the levee on the east side of the river, and a four-lane road on top of the levee on the west side). Back when I was in grade school I was taught that 14 is greater than six.

By the way, the collector distributor road on the east side of the river, lauded by Mr. Krieger as a “corniche road,” has since been abandoned because the geometrics make it totally unusable. As for the proposed four-lane road on the west levee, it goes from nowhere to nowhere, it is not funded, it affects the flood-control facilities, and it is so costly that the future of that road is questionable. The future of the four-lane parkway is also questionable because it will not carry sufficient traffic to be funded as part of the regional system.

The lake plan proposed by Mr. Hargreaves reduces the size of the 1999 MIP’s proposed off-channel lake from 235 acres to two off-channel 70-acre lakes and another on-channel 70 acres of mud flats. The two off-channel lakes would be at two different levels.

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The lower lake will be subject to flooding by the river an average of 60 days per year, making it a maintenance nightmare. The mud flats will accumulate silt and debris, so the recreational value of the mud flats and the middle lake is very questionable. The Hargreaves plan also proposes to pump 50 million gallons of sewage effluent from the treatment plant to the upper lake to create a waterfall. The construction cost and the operation and maintenance cost of such a proposal are not affordable, and the wasted energy of such a proposal is definitely not in keeping with sustainable planning.

The 1999 MIP centered the lake in the floodway, allowing for the originally proposed 800-foot-span Calatrava arch bridge to span the water. The Hargreaves plan shifts the lake to the downtown side of the river and the river to the Oak Cliff side. Because of the highway's geometrics it is doubtful that the bridges can be shifted eastward. The latest Calatrava concept uses a 1,280-foot-long cable-stayed bridge with a center pylon somewhere in the middle of the river. Off-centering the lake will force the bridge to be partially over water and partially over land, definitely eliminating the effect of the bridge reflecting over the water.

José Novoa, P.E.
Chairman, Halff Associates, Inc.
Dallas

CORRECTION In last issue's Portfolio section one of the projects was misnamed. The project on p. 45 should have been identified as Park Cities Medical Plaza.

We want to hear from you!

TA encourages feedback from its readers. Send your letters to Stephen Sharpe at ssharpe@texasarchitect.org or 816 Congress Avenue, Suite 970, Austin, Texas 78701. Letters may be edited for clarity and length. Include your name, address, and a daytime telephone number.



Unveiled in early June, architect/engineer Santiago Calatrava's design for a bridge across the Trinity River near downtown Dallas is remarkably different from his earlier double-arched concept. Officials say funds are earmarked for the \$73 million span, expected to be completed in 2008. Photo courtesy of the Trinity River Corridor Project.

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**Koolhaas Still Committed to Arts Complex
As Dallas Voters Pass Critical Bond Issue**

D A L L A S Rumors have proved unsubstantiated that Rem Koolhaas is backing out of his contract to design the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts' multiform theater. A spokesman for the cerebral Dutch architect's Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) recently confirmed that Koolhaas remains committed to the \$50 million theater project, as well as collaborating on the master plan of the \$250 million downtown arts complex, despite the departure of the OMA partner in charge of the job.

That news followed a brief period in April when news articles appeared to substantiate rumors that Koolhaas was closing OMA's Manhattan shop and would work solely out of the firm's Rotterdam studio. Financial problems were to blame, so the rumor went, largely due to cancellation of several major OMA commissions — among them a \$200 million expansion of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and a \$400 million complex for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art — by clients suddenly uneasy in the wake of current economic forecasts. However, in response to published reports questioning his loyalty to the Dallas project, Koolhaas told *The Dallas Morning News'* David Dillon in May that OMA New York was still in business, and would continue to operate with 12 employees “for the foreseeable future.”

Dan Wood was the OMA partner in charge of the project until he announced in April that he was leaving the firm to open his own studio. Wood, who has forged strong ties to the Dallas arts community, will be replaced on the Dallas project by Joshua Ramus, director of OMA's American practice sector. Though his name may be unknown to some Dallas arts patrons, he is not new to the multiform theater job. “Joshua Ramus has been also representing OMA from the initial interview and has been working hand in hand with Rem throughout this whole planning phase,” Lisa Limoges of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts Foundation said recently.

Reached by phone at OMA New York in mid-June, Ramus dismissed the rumors. “Our practice is healthy and thriving and the news articles were not true representations of the office project load and present commitments,” he said, adding, “The project is being worked simultaneously in two offices, with Rem who has a team in the Rotterdam Office that is complemented with a similar team in the New York Office.” As for his own work schedule, Ramus said, “I spend a week in the Rotterdam office a month and Rem spends a week in New York

working together on all of our projects. We are a truly collaborative practice.”

The timing of the Wood's announcement — which coincided with a *Morning News* report in which Wood alluded to Koolhaas' preparing to close OMA New York — was significant, occurring just days before Dallasites voted on a \$555 million bond issue, a package that included \$20 million earmarked for the performing arts complex. An overwhelming turnout at the polls on May 3 approved the entire package by a three-to-one margin.

The successful passage of the arts funding provides the proposed arts complex a much-needed psychological boost. In December 2001 the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts Foundation selected OMA to design the multiform theater and Foster and Partners of London to design the larger Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House. In addition, the two firms were commissioned to work jointly on a master plan for the performing arts complex. The foundation also hired two Texas firms as architects of record for the projects—Houston-based Kendall/Heaton Associates for the opera house and Hillier of Dallas for the multiform theater.

Tentatively scheduled to be completed in early 2009, the performing arts complex is the largest cultural project in the city's history. The multiform theater will accommodate thrust, proscenium, and arena stages, and will seat between 600 and 700 theatergoers depending on the stage configuration. The adjacent opera house will seat 2,200. Construction on both projects is expected to start next year. The complex will provide performance space for the Dallas Opera, the Dallas Theater Center, the Dallas Black Dance Theatre, the Texas Ballet Theater, and many other performing arts organizations.

The Foster/OMA design team's proposed master plan was scheduled to be released to the public in mid-May, but has been postponed until September. The delay is due to “more of an internal process” rather than the changing of personnel by OMA, said the arts foundation's Limoges. The master plan is expected to integrate the new Booker T. Washington School for the Performing Arts into the complex, as well as a site for a future third venue, a smaller hall for community theater and music events. (The successful May bond package included \$2.2 million for design of that theater.) Despite the four-month delay in the release of the master plan, Limoges said the project's timeline will not be affected. “We are on track with our schedule,” she said in mid-June.

NESTOR INFANZÓN

Courthouse to Reflect Rugged Landscape

E L P A S O While federal officials continue to deliberate over where to build a U.S. courthouse in downtown Austin, design work is progressing on the seven-story, concrete-and-copper El Paso federal courthouse that is expected to enhance this border city's skyline and help alleviate an overburdened federal justice system. The design, by Antoine Predock, FAIA, of Albuquerque, was approved last year.

Ground breaking is tentatively slated for 2005 with completion of construction set two years later, although the schedule is contingent on allocation of funds in the 2004 federal budget. Local officials estimate the courthouse will cost around \$55 million to build. BPLW Architects & Engineers of Albuquerque is executive architect.

Predock describes the design – two structures linked by a “gateway” – as a metaphorical reference to the geographic “El Paso del Norte” carved through the nearby Franklin Mountains by the Rio Grande. The courthouse's lobby serves as a processional passage connecting the project's “copper nugget” and the larger courthouse proper. Walking up the courthouse steps, visitors will enter the courthouse's upper lobby to a vantage point for views of the Sierra Juarez Mountains, the Franklin Mountains, and the downtown skyline. According to the firm's vision statement, the complex will resemble a landscape similar to that seen from the upper lobby: “In silhouette, the new federal courthouse for El Paso becomes a rugged southwest landscape in abstraction, while expressing a social diagram of American egalitarian ideals.”

At the top of the main building will be the copper-clad Special Proceedings Courtroom which will open directly onto a rooftop terrace, a ceremonial space for swearing in newly naturalized U.S. citizens.

Predock has sited two large outdoor spaces on the ground level. One is a shaded *zócalo*, or plaza, set under a canopy of mesquite trees. The second is an enclosed *plazuela*, or courtyard, reserved for courthouse staff and visitors that can be accessed without a return through security checks.

The site of the courthouse is adjacent to the existing 1935 Beaux Arts-style federal courthouse

at the edge of downtown. In contrast to the older and relatively smaller courthouse, the new facility will include approximately 232,000 square feet with 60 secured parking spaces and 11 courtrooms. Local officials have planned for 10 years to replace the existing courthouse which is considered to have outlived its usefulness due to space constraints and security deficiencies.

STEPHEN SHARPE

A rendering of the monumental new El Paso Federal Courthouse; courtesy Antoine Predock Architect.



Gatzke Named UTA Architecture Dean

A R L I N G T O N The University of Texas at Arlington recently appointed Donald Frank Gatzke, AIA, dean of its School of Architecture, ending



a 10-month search. Gatzke currently serves as architecture dean at Tulane University and is principal of a New Orleans-based architecture firm. He will begin his transition to UTA this fall

with the assistance of interim dean Richard L. Dodge, and will assume his new responsibilities in January.

During his years at Tulane, Gatzke spearheaded the establishment of a master's of preservation curriculum and development of the architecture school's strategic plan. Gatzke also initiated a \$15 million capital campaign for facility renovation and an operating endowment for the school.

According to Dana Dunn, UTA's vice president for academic affairs and chair of the search committee, “Dean Gatzke's experience profile is a perfect fit with the needs of the University of Texas at Arlington's School of Architecture. His strong administration track record and accreditation

experience, along with his commitment to building and enhancing relationships between UTA's design disciplines and the larger community, are particularly valuable.”

The UTA dean position has been open since Martha LaGess was fired August 20, 2002 by Provost George Wright after she refused his request for her resignation. Citing concerns about her leadership style, some faculty members reportedly asked Wright to not extend LaGess' contract.

Claiming gender discrimination, LaGess, who remains a tenured professor at UTA, has filed suit in Tarrant County District Court and seeks to be reinstated. UTA officials have denied her claims.

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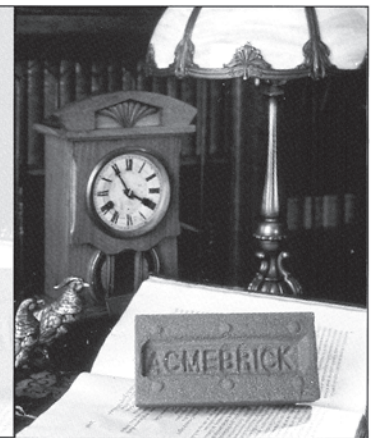
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AIA Austin Awards 12 Projects

A U S T I N In the AIA Austin chapter's design awards competition, the jury recognized 12 projects from a group of 85 entries, bestowing two Honor Awards, four Citations of Honor, and six Merit Awards. The chapter strives through its annual competition to commend outstanding architectural projects by members and to promote public interest in architectural excellence.

Jury members were Wendell Burnette, principal of Wendell Burnette Architects of Phoenix; S. Claire Conroy, editor of *Residential Architect* of Washington, DC; and Mark Wellen, AIA, principal of Rhotenberry Wellen Architects of Midland.

Honor Awards went to:

- **Lake Austin Boat Dock** by Miró Rivera Architects—Located at the base of a heavily wooded bluff on Lake Austin, this unique and functional structure flows with the curves of the shoreline. The dock is both light and dynamic in design, mirroring the floating quality of a boat and using materials to construct the canopy inspired by sailboats.

- **Goodwill Retail Prototype** by Team Haas Architects—The Lake Austin Boulevard location of the popular thrift store chain was dramatically transformed, as an example of how new locations will change the upscale customer's perception of Goodwill as a department store for the down-and-out. The architects applied a kit of parts to the outdated building, including window displays, new graphics, and galvanized steel canopies.

Citations of Honor went to:

- **Wabash Parking Garage** by Page Southerland Page—The design for this parking garage reveals simple elegance and a strong image through the combined use of concrete, lightweight steel, glass, and copper. The materials build not only a structure, but also a visual work of craft, like the milky laminated glass panels that function as guardrails and provide natural light to the garage.

- **Chihuly Bridge of Glass** by Andersson-Wise Architects—Providing a link between Tacoma's waterfront and historical district, this 500-foot long pedestrian bridge was in collaboration with glass artist Dale Chihuly. The open-air pavilions composed of concrete and steel house Chihuly's art, and they provide an aesthetic contrast to the fragile glass sculptures the pavilions contain.

- **Ramp House** by M.J. Neal Architects—Designed to give an expansive feeling to a narrow, locked-in lot, this urban-suburban hybrid home boasts features that play with limited space. A reflecting pool bounces light off the exterior structure into an entry garden, while a roof-deck provides an open-air



IMAGES COURTESY AIA AUSTIN

Lake Austin Boat Dock



Chihuly Bridge of Glass



Goodwill Retail Prototype



Ramp House



Wabash Parking Garage



Grove House

retreat and views of downtown Austin. An ipe wood ramp creates vertical circulation inside the house and a library between the two runs.

- **Grove House** by Tom Hurt Design Office—This energetic house was structured to create privacy for the owner and storage for his vintage cars. The three-story dissolved cube with interwoven levels is entered through the carport, moving up vertically toward treetop living spaces. Cantilevering from and nestled into the structure, decks connect the living spaces to outdoor views.

Merit Awards went to St. Edward's University Trustee Hall by Andersson-Wise Architects; Avenue F Studio by KRDB; Shoehorn Design by Emily Little Architects; Austin Convention Center Expansion by Page Southerland Page; Warren Skaaren Environmental Learning Center at Westcave Preserve by Robert Jackson Architects; and EM Franklin Office Building by Heimsath Architects.

LAUREN TISCHLER

Austin Building Reaches New Heights

A U S T I N In June construction crews topped out the capital city's newest – and by far the tallest – skyscraper, the 33-story (515 feet) Frost Bank Tower that stands more than 200 feet above the State Capitol just seven blocks away. The \$142 million office building, scheduled for completion in November, is the first skyscraper to be built downtown along Congress Avenue since the mid-1980s.

“The site is extraordinary,” the project's lead designer Turan Duda, AIA, said in a recent telephone interview. “Finding a site this prominent on Congress Avenue in itself is exceptional.” Duda, a principal of Duda/Paine Architects in Durham, North Carolina, said the design is intended to blend in with the historical context of downtown despite the building's colossal appearance. While noting that the tower will have a “recognizable and memorable form” on the cityscape, Duda said he used buff-colored pre-cast elements and local limestone to visually unify the skyscraper with its older and smaller neighbors. “It's a modern composition of elements that pick up suggested references of scale to surrounding buildings,” Duda said. HKS of Dallas is the architect of record.

Frost Bank Tower is one of several high-profile commercial and residential buildings now under construction in Austin's central business district. The client, Atlanta-based Cousins Properties, forged ahead with the monumental project as doom-and-gloom predictions dampened Austin's zeal for business expansion. At the time of ground breaking in early 2002, citywide office vacancy rates

had recently plummeted to around 15 percent. Those rates have continued to plunge. According to *Colliers International Office Market Report*, downtown vacancy rates in the first quarter of this year held steady at 21.3 percent.

Still, even in the face of a very competitive market, *Colliers* described Frost Bank Tower as “the biggest leasing success story in Austin” and reported that 50 percent of the space was leased as of March. Among the future tenants, several of them large law firms, is Frost Bank which signed on to lease 52,000 square feet. Following that announcement in March, Cousins changed the name of the building from Congress at Fourth to Frost Bank Tower.

Jeff Paine, AIA, also a principal of Duda/Paine, said the firm's design “respects the important view corridor towards the State Capitol and adds a new and complementary symbol to the skyline.”

Paine said the client was meeting with the architects in the Duda/Paine office on Sept. 11, 2001 when terrorists attacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Center's twin towers. The two architects praised their client's decision to continue the project, albeit with additional security measures. “I perceive Cousins' decision to go ahead with this tower as a clear statement of optimism about the future,” Duda said.

STEPHEN SHARPE

Frost Bank Tower stands high above its nearest sky-scraping neighbors: Bank of America Center (25 floors) on the left and 301 Congress (22 floors) on the right; rendering by Command: Digital.



RENDERING BY COMMAND: DIGITAL

MFAH Celebrates American Modern

“American Modern: 1920s and 30s Design” at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston celebrates the innovations embodied in American architecture, furnishings, transportation, and utilitarian products during a vital creative period when a new aesthetic developed and pervaded all aspects of American life. Call (713) 639-7540 or visit mfah.org for information. THROUGH JULY 20

RDA Seeks Sustainability Ideas

The Rice Design Alliance invites architects and amateur designers to consider new ideas in sustainable residential living. HOUSE TOWN: Launching the Energy-Wise Dwelling for Houston is a juried competition focused on establishing new standards for the residential building industry. A \$20 entry fee per person (\$15 for RDA members) will cover drawing materials, a box lunch, and refreshments. The competition will run from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is open to individuals or teams of up to five members. Visit rice.edu/projects/rda or call (713) 348-4876 for information and entry forms. AUGUST 9

Menil Explores Hejduk's Late Works

From the mid-1970s until his death in 2000, American architect John Hejduk abstained from conventional design practices and instead favored interdisciplinary, theoretical methods. The result was an art simultaneously utilitarian and idealistic. The exhibition “Sanctuaries: The Last Works of John Hejduk” at the Menil Collection explores his inventive projects – centered around basic geometrical forms, elemental biomorphism, and allegorical dimensions – and how they were influenced by narrative painting and choreography. THROUGH AUGUST 31

Photographic Cityscapes at Amon Carter

Featuring more than 90 photographs, “City Lights” at the Amon Carter Museum reveals various ways twentieth-century American photographers responded to increasing urbanization. Photographic styles on display range from early soft focus, romantic depictions of cityscapes to intimate portrayals of city life. Also featured are the modernist works of Berenice Abbott, who documented the changing architecture of New York City in the 1930s. THROUGH NOVEMBER 2

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by WILLIAM RIOS, AIA

South Texas Goes Native

Landscape designers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley turn to region's early natural history to reclaim plant life ravaged by a century of settlement and development



With landscaping projects such as this work along Colonel Rowe Boulevard in McAllen, TxDOT contributes to a regional movement among landscape designers that favors use of native and well adapted non-native plants. Photo by William Rios, AIA.

THE NATIVE PLANT LIFE of the Lower Rio Grande Valley has undergone dramatic change over the last 100 years. A century of settlement has profoundly affected the area's natural history. Clearing of brushlands for agricultural and industrial development has all but destroyed the natural landscape, while overgrazing by livestock has allowed non-native vegetation (such as mesquite and mountain juniper) to encroach on the region. Today, some landscape designers are helping to restore the Valley's traditional plant life with the application of both native and well-adapted plants.

Chief among the benefits of native species is that they use little water, says Mike Heep, a nursery owner and biology instructor at the University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg. "After they're planted, native plants initially need some water, but afterwards they develop extensive root systems and don't need so much water after the first year," he says, adding that there's another benefit. "Native plants provide food, cover, and nesting for migrating birds and wildlife." Heep also notes the common misconception that native plants do not lend themselves to "structured" landscapes. "Many people equate native plants with 'wild'-looking landscape but they can be put into a formal or structured landscape," he explains. "Anywhere you use a non-native, a native can be used in its place. In fact, there are natives for just about any growth form, shape, or texture."

The most conspicuous user of structured landscapes in the Valley, as elsewhere in the state, is the Texas Department of Transportation. As TxDOT's landscape architect for the Pharr District, Stephen Walker is charged with the design of landscape architecture along the Valley's highway system. Because water is notoriously scarce in the Valley, Walker says, TxDOT requires highway plantings – or "softscape" in the idiom of the state – to be native or well adapted to the area. One of Walker's favorites is the Texas Sabal Palm (*Sabal texana*) because it requires little water and can withstand the area's occasional hard freezes. "We plant them at a two-to-one ratio with other palms," says Walker. "Palms are a benefit in this area since they're a very vertical plant and you can get them into small spaces." That is especially useful along highways and interchanges where vehicular views are more critical than the pedestrian scale. Other native plants used by Walker include Cameron County Ash (*Fraxinus berlandieriana*) Mexican Olive (*Cordia boissieri*), Texas Mountain Laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*), Texas Persimmon (*Diospyros texana*), and Cenizo (*Leucophyllum candidum*),

as well as several native cacti. Some of the well-adapted non-natives he specifies are the Washingtonia Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*), Oleander (*Nerium oleander*), Esperanza (*Tecoma stans*), and Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea spectabilis*).

Blending landscape greenery with more permanent structural elements, such as highway overpasses, requires a team effort, Walker says. Working in collaboration with TxDOT engineers, Walker designs landscapes that incorporate both "softscape" and "hardscape" (planters, pavers, concrete relief details, etc.) to be cost effective while also culturally sensitive. "It's a celebration of Texas," Walker says. "It's also a celebration of the border area and the entrance into Texas from Mexico." Decorative symbols embedded in "hardscape" elements further illustrate cultural themes, such as a stylized Texas map and the "Lone Star" motif found in paver patterns and column details along overpasses and interchanges throughout the Valley. Other concrete details, some depicting fish and wildlife, are created by fastening large rubber form liners with the detail impression into the heavy steel forms used to fashion concrete beams and retaining wall panels. Because the form liners are re-usable, Walker can design large murals along expressways through the repetition of only a few details. After Walker completes a mural design, TxDOT engineers work out the technical application.

In the private sector, landscape architect and contractor Lann Sawyer addresses the blending of landscape architecture and structure through his own palette of plants and materials. "To me the landscape should not hide the structure," explains Sawyer. "It should help to tie it into the cityscape." Sawyer's designs favor curves and shapes over grids and straight lines. Also, he avoids trees and plants that are high-maintenance and require an inordinate amount of watering and trimming. Therefore, Sawyer utilizes a combination of natives and non-natives to address the "softscape" aspect of the design. One of his favorite trees for shade is the native Cedar Elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) because its root structure is vertical and therefore poses little risk of damage to sidewalks, pavers, or other sitework. Sawyer prefers to use the native La Coma (*Bumelia celastrina*) as an alternative for Live Oaks when possible. The tree is a deep-rooted evergreen with a small canopy that fits neatly into the urban streetscape. Sawyer sometimes incorporates berry-producing trees such as the non-native though well-adapted Barbados Cherry (*Malpighia*

"South Texas" continued on page 44

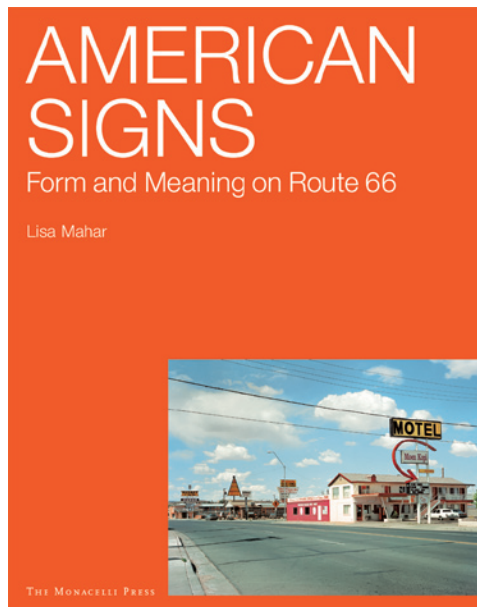
Signs of the Times

American Signs: Form and Meaning on Route 66

Lisa Mahar

New York (Monacelli Press), 2002

272 pages with illustrations



IMAGES COURTESY MONACELLI PRESS

IN HER RICHLY ILLUSTRATED and extensively documented *American Signs: Form and Meaning on Route 66*, Lisa Mahar follows the development of the motel sign along Route 66 from 1938 when the Chicago-to-Los Angeles highway was fully paved to the 1970s when it was bypassed by the nation's new interstate system. The book is divided into five sections, representing five distinct periods of sign making. Each section focuses on both the process of making signage in that era and the forms of the resulting signs.

American Signs is a designer's dream of illustrations with integrated explanatory text, and is as graphically appealing as the signs it studies. (Mahar, co-founder of the New York-based architecture and design firm MAP, designed the book with Ashley Sargent.) The information is presented visually—some examples go as far as dissecting specific signs with circles and squares, while Mahar's analysis of one sign's color scheme is explained using a line drawing and a paint-by-number-style key. Illustrations (both photographs and postcards) are reproduced mostly in black and white with explanatory data printed in red. The author explains that "the black-and-white reproductions allow for a more direct focus on aspects such as form and style; color images, especially

large groups of them, often provide too much visual information."

Why motel signs and why Route 66? The creation of Route 66 under the Federal Aid Road Act of 1921 was a boon for what would become the motor-hotel industry. As the new highway carved a path beyond the nation's large cities, motels sprang up along the way to accommodate road-weary travelers. The accompanying signage, Mahar contends, served to "orient people in unfamiliar landscapes, functioning not only as physical markers but as cultural, political, and economic ones as well." Inspired by Paul Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (1925), in which the Expressionist painter analyzed vernacular designs in order to "reveal larger truths," Mahar seeks to show that motel signs did not just appear out of thin air. Rather, she writes, their forms and ideas were "influenced by, and sometimes the product of, many different disciplines from advertising, industrial and graphic design to architecture and urban planning." Signs along that quintessential American road became something of a barometer recording over time the changes in the public's acceptance of design trends.

"Signs" continued on page 49

A layout from *American Signs* shows Mahar's dissection of a sign's contemporary influences.

3.2 - FORMAL ETYMOLOGY
The Hacienda Holiday Motel sign in Oklahoma City is an example of how far signmakers went to create original compositions for their clients. Fearing that they might lose control over the design process to an emerging class of professional designers, signmakers looked for inspiration in other disciplines, especially art and science.

The use of abstract symbols common in art of the period, such as this detail from Joan Miró's *Woman in Front of the Sun* (1950), made signs appear up-to-date.

Script lettering was used to convey uniqueness and add visual drama to the sign.

Forms and structures were often angled to create more dynamic, and therefore noticeable, compositions, as seen in this late 1950s building.

Bold, stylized arrows were common additions to signs during this period. Artists such as Paul Klee also found them enticing.

Abstracted figurative elements were also found in the design world, as seen in this mid-1950s engraved bowl designed by Ingeborg Lundin.

Irregular shapes were non-traditional and therefore appropriate forms for signmakers looking to create original signs. Artists also made use of them, as in this 1959 mobile, "Big Red," by Alexander Calder.

Asymmetrical compositions, as in this plate design by Florence Warmeright, conveyed individuality and uniqueness.

THE



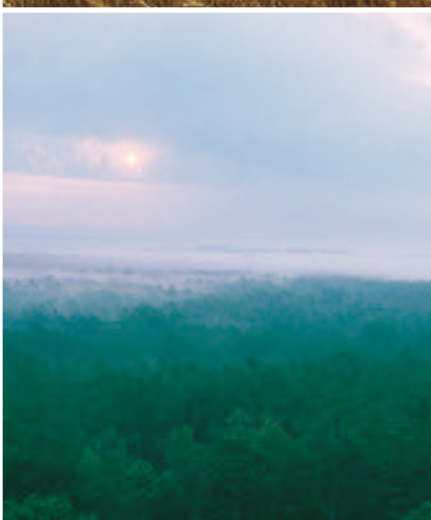
REAL





Texas Facts • The state's area consists of 261,914 square miles of land and 5,363 square miles of water, roughly seven percent of the nation's total water and land area. • The geographic center of Texas is about 15 miles northeast of Brady in northern McCulloch County. • Altitudes range from sea level at the Gulf of Mexico to 8,749 feet at the top of Guadalupe Peak in the Guadalupe Mountains. • The record high temperature (120° F) was set in 1936 at Seymour. • The mean annual precipitation varies from 59.20 inches at Orange to 7.82 inches at El Paso. • More than 5,000 species of flowering plants are native to Texas.

Sources: The 2002-2003 *Texas Almanac* and *The Handbook of Texas Online*



TEXAS

Dramatic topography of local canyons
inspires a TxDOT visitor center on I-40
to rise from Panhandle's high plains



by DARWIN HARRISON, ASSOC. AIA

DOWN TO EARTH



PROJECT Texas Travel Information Center, Amarillo
CLIENT Texas Department of Transportation Travel Division
ARCHITECT Richter Architects
CONTRACTOR Plains Builders, Inc.
CONSULTANTS Jaster-Quintanilla (civil and structural);
 Callins, Haggard & Associates (MEP); Doug Wade, ASLA
 (landscape)
PHOTOGRAPHERS David Richter, FAIA; inset photo by Jack Lewis,
 courtesy TxDOT Travel Division

WHILE HIKING in Palo Duro Canyon southwest of Amarillo, architects David and Elizabeth Chu Richter found themselves enveloped by 240 million years' worth of inspiration for their next project. Awestruck by the vivid colors of the escarpment cliffs surrounding them, the Richters realized then that the state Travel Information Center (TIC) they just recently had been hired to design would be an inversion of the steep canyon walls—banded layers of maroon, brown, red, orange, yellow, and grey brick rising from the flatness of the Panhandle's high plains.

The husband-and-wife team collected bags of dirt from the canyon, and during an initial meeting with the client spread them out on the tabletop. These were to be the colors for the TIC project, Elizabeth Chu Richter, AIA, announced. Milton Meharg, director of the Texas Department

of Transportation's travel services section, says he knew at that point that the Richters were headed toward a successful design, one that would "reflect the regional flavor of the area."

Officially opened in May, the new TIC along Interstate 40 on the eastern outskirts of Amarillo is part of a network of TxDOT information centers designated to acquaint motorists with Texas and all things Texan. Statewide figures for annual visits among all 12 TICs within the network tops three million travelers, some seeking information about the Lone Star State and some just wanting a respite from the road. The program for each TIC is simple. A main building contains a lobby filled with printed materials for state parks, historical landmarks, and summaries of cultural and recreational events. There's also an area to watch video presentations and an information desk staffed by professional travel counselors. Of course, vital restroom and vending areas are available for the weary traveler. Outside, covered picnic tables and exterior access restrooms are operational around the clock.

The newest TIC contains a 9,265-square-foot building sited on 14.9 acres with large parking areas and ample space for travelers to stretch their legs. To capture the feel of the parched West Texas topography, the architects created a dry

(opposite page) The building's seven colors of brick recall nearby Palo Duro Canyon. **(above)** TIC staffers report that dogs sometimes bark at the steel sculptures of grazing longhorns.

(top) Travelers cross over a man-made creek bed to enter the facility. (bottom) The architects carried the dramatic brick pattern into the lobby interior.

creek bed near the building's entrance. Completing the Panhandle tableau are steel sculptures of longhorn cattle, a reference to the importance of ranching and agriculture to the region. Besides the basic program requirements, Elizabeth Chu Richter says, the travel center is intended to be "a cultural ambassador, capturing the spunk and vigor of the West."

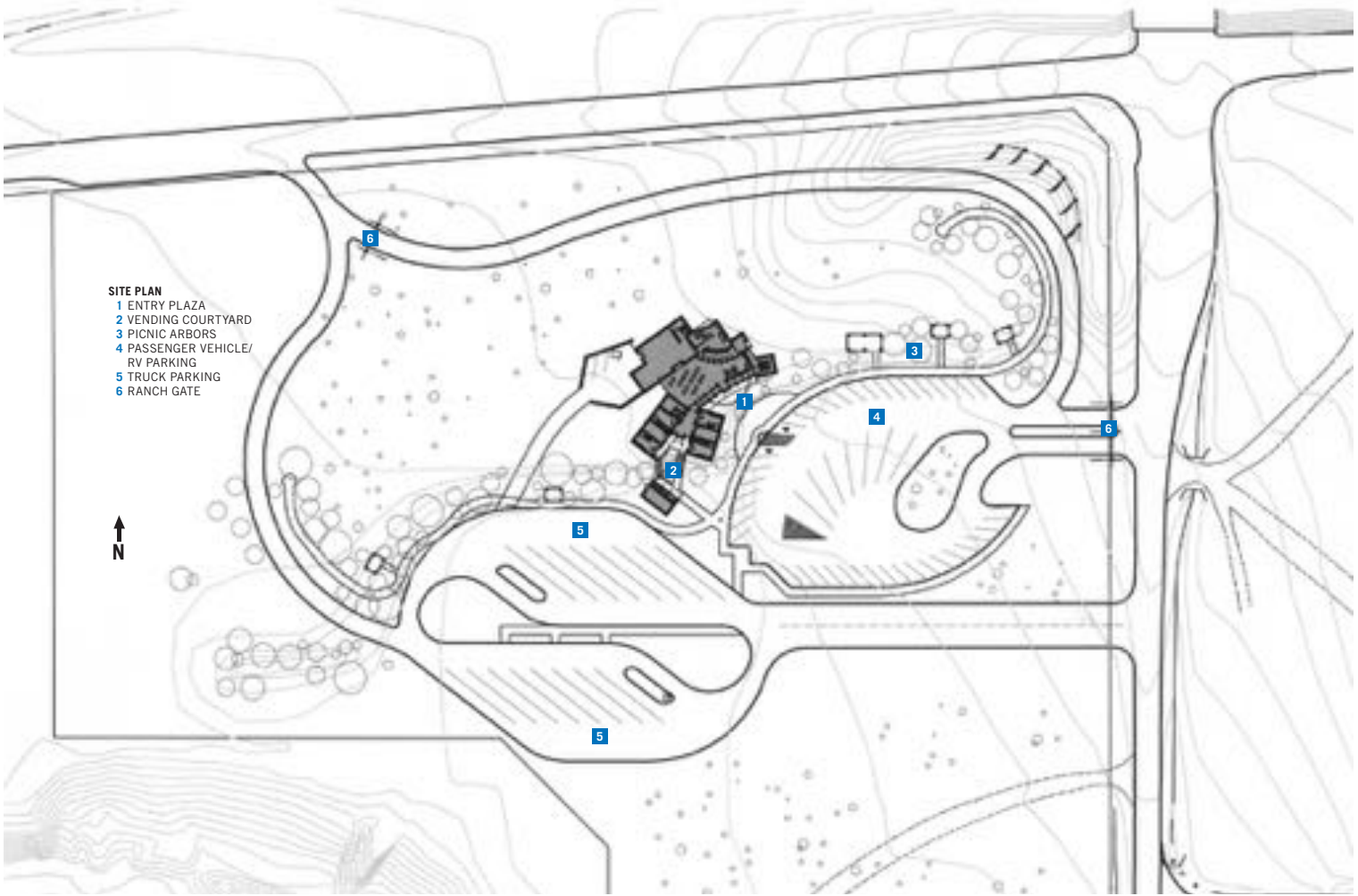
Starting with bags of dirt was easy. However, the Richters' rather low-tech idea required high-tech means to bring to reality. David Richter, FAIA, says the design team relied on computers to complete extensive materials analysis and to experiment with countless pattern studies before arriving at the sophisticated and eye-popping composition of seven shades. (The national brick industry has honored the project with a 2003 Brick in Architecture Award.) He says the objective was to create a material stratification reminiscent of the soil layers seen in the nearby canyons, but the building's brick strata also recalls the familiar highway sight of hills cut through for roadbeds—topographical cross sections seen at eye-level from the window of a speeding car.

Personnel staffing the I-40 TIC unanimously express their pleasure with the new center, echoing the assessment of Doris Howdeshell, director of TxDOT's Travel Division: "In every aspect of its planning, design, and construction, this facility is designed to provide a warm Texas welcome." Staffers say the new center has made their jobs easier and describe how travelers immediately seem at ease when they enter. Visitors, too, are pleased with the facility. Perusal of a sign-in book finds appraisals ranging from "brilliant" to "creative" to "wonderful." **T**

Darwin Harrison, Assoc. AIA, teaches architecture at Texas Tech University and is a project manager for Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates.

RESOURCES SITE, STREET, AND MALL FURNISHINGS: DUMOR; UNIT MASONRY ASSEMBLIES: Acme Brick; METAL DECKING: Nucor, Vulcraft Group; PIPE AND TUBE RAILING: Glenco; GLUE-LAMINATED TIMBER: C&C Designs; ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK: American Millwork; WATERPROOFING AND DAMPPROOFING: Quik-Tape; ROOF AND WALL PANELS: Una-Clad; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: Ceco; WOOD AND PLASTIC DOORS AND FRAMES: AMPCO; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: Horton Automatics; VINYL WINDOWS: Gerkin; GLASS: Insulite Glass; TILE: Daltile; ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS: Armstrong; ACOUSTICAL WALL TREATMENTS: Tectum; PAINTS: Benjamin Moore





- FLOOR PLAN**
- 1 DRY CREEK BED
 - 2 ENTRY PLAZA
 - 3 OUTSIDE VENDING
 - 4 EXHIBIT SPACE
 - 5 MEN
 - 6 WOMEN
 - 7 MEDIA
 - 8 OFFICE
 - 9 STORAGE
 - 10 LOADING DOCK



Enlivened by varied forms and colors,

a new education complex in El Paso

plants seeds of wonder in kids' minds

by ED SOLTERO, AIA



A PLACE OF DISCOVERY





PROJECT John E. Uxer Head Start Complex, El Paso
CLIENT Region 19 Head Start
ARCHITECT Alvidrez Associates
CONTRACTOR Vistacon, Inc., Blair-Hall Co. (Dinosaur Time Zone)
CONSULTANTS Gutierrez/Borrowski & Associates (landscape);
 Roe Engineering (civil); Henry K. Ng & Associates (structural);
 Fluid Systems (mechanical); Gonzalo Aguilar (electrical); RBM
 Engineering (MEP-Dinosaur Time Zone)
PHOTOGRAPHER Fred Golden

SELDOM DOES ARCHITECTURE for children reflect a sensitive approach to scale, color, context, and the overall interactive experience. In the case of children’s museums and educational facilities, the contents and/or exhibits typically compensate for sterile environments. The John E. Uxer Head Start Complex in El Paso by Alvidrez Associates has successfully melded all of the requisite elements into a project which is not only responsive to the needs of children, but addresses regional contextual issues as well, albeit via a different approach—that of an interaction with light. Located in the northeast section of the city, the facility faces the nearby craggy faces of the Franklin Mountains to the west and is illuminated by the less intense light of the rising sun.

Programmatic components include classrooms, administrative areas, a small library, an “Intelli-zeum” (a science museum), indoor and outdoor gathering spaces, and an outdoor amphitheater. The 30,660-square-foot facility is organized along two major axes: the east/west axis houses the classrooms and administrative areas, while the north/south axis includes the building’s *raison d’etre*, namely, the science museum and its interactive exhibits. Visiting children and passing motorists alike are tantalized by a split-second glimpse of the bright cobalt blue and yellow hues

of the museum wing, which unfortunately sits behind and seems somewhat incongruous with the subdued entry facade running east to west. A palette of stucco and concrete masonry creates the syncopated composition of the museum wing’s exterior elevations.

Small, diversely oriented openings were carefully orchestrated in direct response to the desert setting and at a scale sensitive to children. The playful pattern of light cast from these windows is very much in tune with the mission of discovery presented by the educational complex. Directly above the openings, the architect mimicked the windows with *faux* openings colored a deep yellow in deference to the sun. The sun’s role was further acknowledged through the use of opaque and louvered canopies as a means of modulating the building surfaces with both solid and striped shadows, echoing the canyons and recesses of the nearby mountains. Rather than responding to context with a specific use of materials – in this case stone or the use of massive walls – the architect responded to the abundant West Texas sunlight. The juxtaposition of varied forms and colors creates a festive ambiance enlivened by the dynamic interplay of light.

The architect applied the same thoughtfulness and sensitivity to exterior gathering spaces. The amphitheater, the main outdoor congregating space, is sheltered from the hot rays of the sun by an angular, tensile fabric canopy that seems prepared for takeoff into the nearby mountains. Behind the concrete stage, one of the walls enclosing a handicap-accessible ramp is painted a deep yellow reminiscent of a Dan Flavin installation. This vivid composition is set against the backdrop of a highly articulated and playful section of the museum wing known as the “Dinosaur Time Zone.”

(this page) The administrative wing presents a subdued facade. (opposite page) In contrast, the angular form of the amphitheater canopy and the adjacent museum’s highly articulated facade create a playful ambiance perfect for children.



Sunlight in West Texas

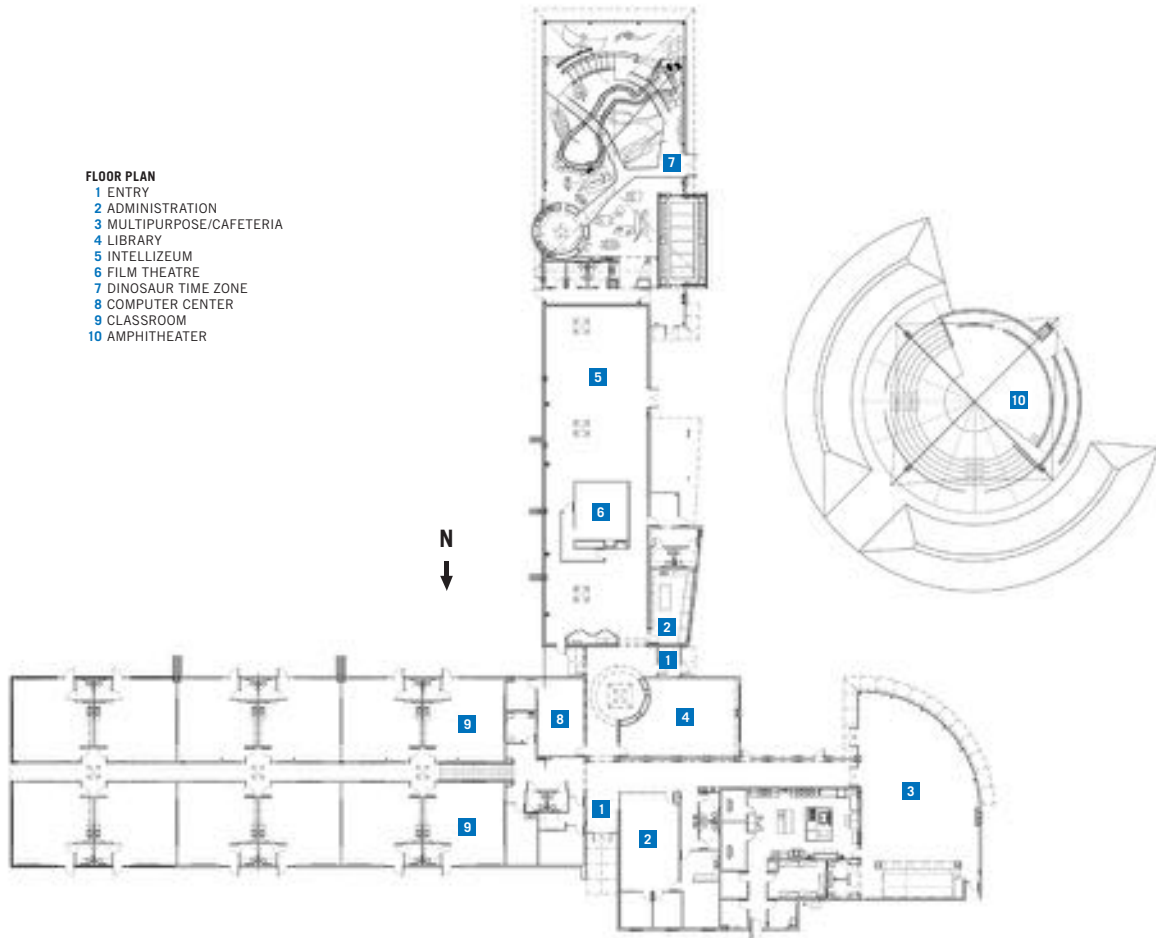
Perhaps one of the most coveted of Texas’ assets is the diverse quality and intensity of sunlight found in its different regions. El Paso, situated at the state’s farthest western tip, benefits most of all from the abundant sunshine. The unequalled characteristics of the area’s natural light – a combination of its high altitude (3,500 feet at the banks of the Rio Grande) and the atmospheric conditions of its Chihuahuan Desert locale – demand that the best of its architecture respond sensitively with surface applications. Effective use of color is essential to maximize the effect of such brilliant sunlight. In fact, to quote Frank Welch, FAIA, who has 40-plus years of experience with the singular properties of sunshine in the western half of the state: “In West Texas, you have to color architecture brightly for it to sit properly in the landscape.”

Hence, the Uxer Head Start project’s lively caravan of colored forms probably would not appear as powerful in Beaumont or Tyler or anywhere else in the state as it does at the extreme edge of West Texas. It is certainly refreshing to view an architect’s alternate response to context by establishing a dialogue with exterior light rather than simply through the use of materials. As shown above, the choice of a deep yellow along the amphitheater’s handicap-accessible ramp accentuates the unique qualities of sunshine over El Paso.



FLOOR PLAN

- 1 ENTRY
- 2 ADMINISTRATION
- 3 MULTIPURPOSE/CAFETERIA
- 4 LIBRARY
- 5 INTELLIZEUM
- 6 FILM THEATRE
- 7 DINOSAUR TIME ZONE
- 8 COMPUTER CENTER
- 9 CLASSROOM
- 10 AMPHITHEATER





Many of the facility's interiors are designed to arouse children's curiosity and draw them into the interactive experience.



Undoubtedly, such theatrics were meant to elicit a great amount of curiosity among young visitors about the contents inside.

Blanca Enriquez, director of the Head Start complex, envisioned a state-of-the-art learning environment for economically disadvantaged children, replete with learning stations and interactive exhibits. Her abiding desire to nurture youthful minds moved her to request that the architect collaborate on exhibits about space exploration, broadcast news, medicine, polar habitats, and jungle wildlife. Enriquez collaborated with the architect and exhibit designers Exhibit Concepts of Vandalia, Ohio, to accomplish this task by creating imaginary environments that feature various means of discovery perfectly suited for kids—scaled dinosaurs complete with sound, an interactive lab with microscopes, a waterfall and pond with live fish, an archeological dig with dinosaur bones, human anatomical diagrams, and—the hands-down favorite—a volcano with flashing lights to simulate an eruption. The simple palette of interior materials includes painted gypsum

board walls, exposed painted steel structure, and both colored and stained concrete floors. An array of brightly colored interior walls, tactile materials, and small-scale furnishings thoughtfully address the children's height and sensory perceptions. Despite the intensity of the interior composition, it nevertheless does not overwhelm the museum's exterior but instead evokes the same sense of amazement.

Although the project could have benefited greatly from the articulation of the simple exterior materials and additional manipulation of scale in some areas, further enhancing the playful gymnastics of sunlight, in the end it is true to its mission—to plant the seeds of wonder in fertile, young minds. **T**

Ed Soltero, AIA, is a contributing editor of *Texas Architect*.

RESOURCES STONE: Texas Quarries; METAL ROOFING: VIC West Steel; WOOD WINDOWS: Marvin Windows; METAL CEILING: WF Norman; WOOD FLOORING: San Pedro; ALUMINIUM CORNICE: Campbellsville Industries; RETAINING WALL: Classic Paving

While responding well
to the children's needs,
the complex addresses
its regional context via
the interaction of light.



RUSTIC UPSTART

A new city hall in
a historic downtown
presented a risk —
to respect its elders
without competing
for people's attention

by **STEPHEN SHARPE**

PROJECT Granbury City Hall, Granbury

CLIENT City of Granbury

ARCHITECT Randall Scott Architects

CONTRACTOR Ed A. Wilson Construction

CONSULTANTS Larson & Pedigo Architects (exterior design),
Talley Associates (landscape); Reed Wells Benson (MEP);
Charles Gojer & Associates (structural)

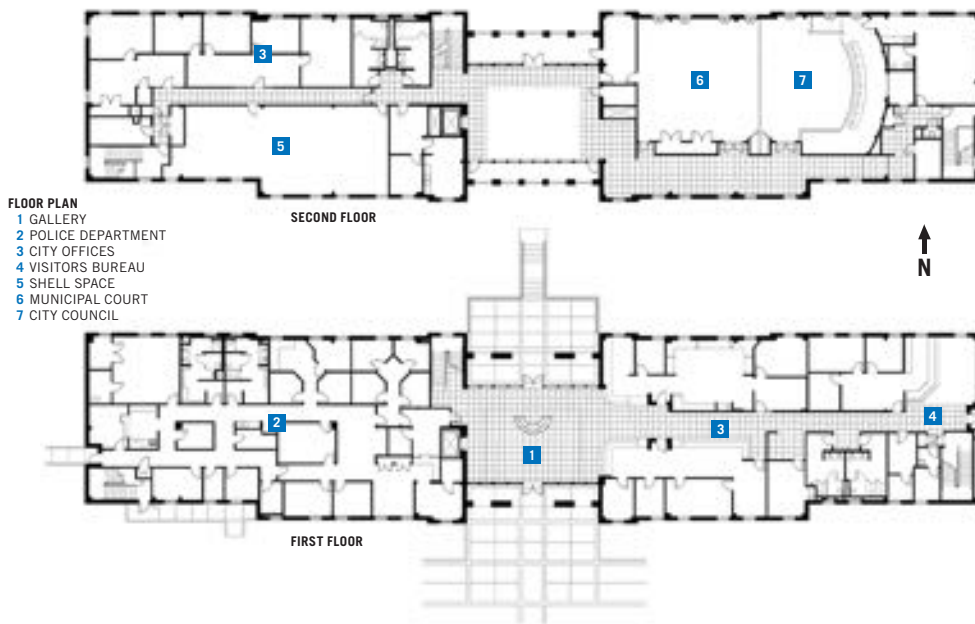
PHOTOGRAPHER Carolyn Brown

COMMISSIONED TO DESIGN the Granbury City Hall, architect Randall Scott, AIA, working in collaboration with Paul Pedigo, AIA, faced a risky undertaking. How to ensure that the new facility fit within the historic context of downtown — in particular, the recently restored Hood County Courthouse — while creating a building that would not compete against those revered nineteenth-century edifices? Further complicating the matter, the architects would have to site the project within a narrow corridor between Lambert's Branch Creek and an old furniture store that temporarily housed municipal offices. "That was quite a challenge from a design standpoint," Scott says, "because it just left us a sliver along the creek channel."

The solution was a long, linear design broken up into a series of two-level "storefronts" set back

210 feet from the street. Its exterior of rough-hewn limestone visually connects the city hall with the downtown's rusticated limestone facades half a block away, but there's a sophistication in its detailing that belies its twenty-first century provenance. The layout of the double-height lobby — called the "gallery" because its second-level opens to the central space on all four sides — is decidedly modern, with a generous 1,200 square feet bounded by two long walls comprised almost completely of glass. Looking north out the secondary entrance, the view consists of the verdant creekside (destined to be developed as a city park). Due to the deep setback from the street, and now that the old furniture store has been razed, the south-facing main entry frames a park-like outdoor gathering place ideally suited for festivals and other civic events.

The \$4 million, 27,500-square-foot municipal complex is the collaborative work of two Dallas firms that have teamed together on previous projects. As architect of record, Randall Scott Architects was responsible for site and building planning, as well as design of the interior spaces. Larson & Pedigo Architects, a partnership with extensive experience in historic preservation, assisted with the exterior design. "We looked at



the buildings on the square,” Pedigo says. “The county courthouse was a definite influence. And the opera house.” The latter is the Granbury Opera House from 1886 and the former is the downtown’s focal point, the courthouse W.C. Dodson designed in 1888 in a Second Empire style with Romanesque elements. Both structures are exemplary in their use of the locally quarried limestone. The tricky aspect of the city hall project was to reference the older buildings but not in a way that would steal the spotlight. “The city’s desire was for a modern building with historic overtones,” Scott notes. “They didn’t want it to compete with the courthouse.”

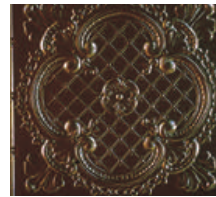
While obviously influenced by the courthouse’s articulated cornices and arched windows, the new city hall differs in some key characteristics. One is the choice of Austin limestone which gives the city hall a whiter appearance when compared to the more yellowish tint of the local variety. Scott says the Granbury stone’s relative brittleness made it unsuitable for the desired 10 x 24-inch blocks. Also, the new project’s distinctly horizontal, 272-foot-long silhouette contrasts sharply with the accentuated verticality of the monumental three-story courthouse, which Dodson crowned with a triple-tiered clock tower. To prevent the city hall from overwhelming people with a monolithic linear presence, Pedigo says, the design team divided its central part into separate units—an idea derived from the county courthouse—and stepped back the building’s entrance. Flanking the entry are two “sentinel towers” that protrude slightly from the main plane of the facade. “It’s kind of a welcoming gesture and it clearly shows the entry,” Pedigo says. “We wanted to make the whole front as inviting as we could.”

The interior layout demonstrates an updated vision of how a small town’s municipal services can be organized for ease of use by its citizens. “The owner was emphatic that the public would be able to find the things that they need to get to,” Scott says, describing how the main city offices open onto the building’s richly appointed central gallery. Curved, limestone-dressed counters allow easy access to city staff, while the gallery serves as a communal waiting room where impromptu interaction is encouraged among city officials and the taxpaying public. The same limestone used on the exterior is the dominant feature of the gallery. “We decided to bring the stone inside to bring that ‘Granbury rustic’ look into the building,” Scott says. Once inside, the visitor’s eye is soon drawn upward to the pressed tin ceiling and downward to the inlaid mesquite floor. On both levels doors and windows along the two long sides of the gallery are trimmed in cherry, as is the handrail atop the metal railing that runs along the inside perimeter of the gallery’s second level.

Mayor David Southern and Granbury’s city council members faced criticism from some taxpayers who questioned the need for a new city hall so meticulously designed to respond to the downtown’s historical character, especially at a cost of \$4 million. However, Scott says, “Once it was all said and done, they all embraced it.”

Stephen Sharpe is editor of *Texas Architect*.

RESOURCES STONE: Texas Quarries; METAL ROOFING: VIC West Steel; WOOD WINDOWS: Marvin Windows; METAL CEILING: WF Norman; WOOD FLOORING: San Pedro; ALUMINIUM CORNICE: Campbellsville Industries; RETAINING WALL: Classic Paving



(from top) Details inside the new city hall include cherry handrails, pressed tin ceilings, and inlaid mesquite floors. Limestone adorns the gallery. American cherry sets a distinguished tone in the city council chamber. (opposite page) Articulated cornices and arched windows reference the nearby historic Hood County Courthouse.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

by ARTHUR ANDERSSON, AIA



At the University of Texas at Austin, a new classroom building updates campus design traditions as defined by Gilbert and Cret



PROJECT Sarah M. and Charles E. Seay Psychology, Child Development, and Family Relationships Building, Austin

CLIENT The University of Texas System Office of Facilities, Planning, and Construction (OFFPC)

DESIGN ARCHITECT Cesar Pelli & Associates

PRIME ARCHITECT Page Southerland Page

CONTRACTOR McCarthy Building Companies

CONSULTANTS Leo A. Daly (FF&E); Page Southerland Page (MEP, civil, interior); Jaster-Quintanilla (structural); GPR Planners (laboratory planners); JEAcoustics (acoustics); Project Cost Resources (cost estimating); The Landscape Collaborative (landscape) Balmori Associates (landscape design)

PHOTOGRAPHERS Hester+Hardaway, Michael Wilson (where noted), James M. Innes (where noted)



FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS, Cesar Pelli and partners have worked in some cases to define and in other cases redefine particular built environments. The Pacific Design Center (a.k.a. “Blue Whale”) was an early project of Pelli’s that was an instrumental first step in Southern California’s architectural renaissance. The building’s sophisticated azure-blue exterior envelope and provocative profile were inspired at the time (1975) and remain a prominent image within the complex fabric of Los Angeles’ Melrose Avenue. Other noted works – from the masterplan and office buildings for Battery Park in lower Manhattan to the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – represent an *oeuvre* of destination buildings conceived with rigorous attention to detail, elegant engineering, and a studied sense of proportion.

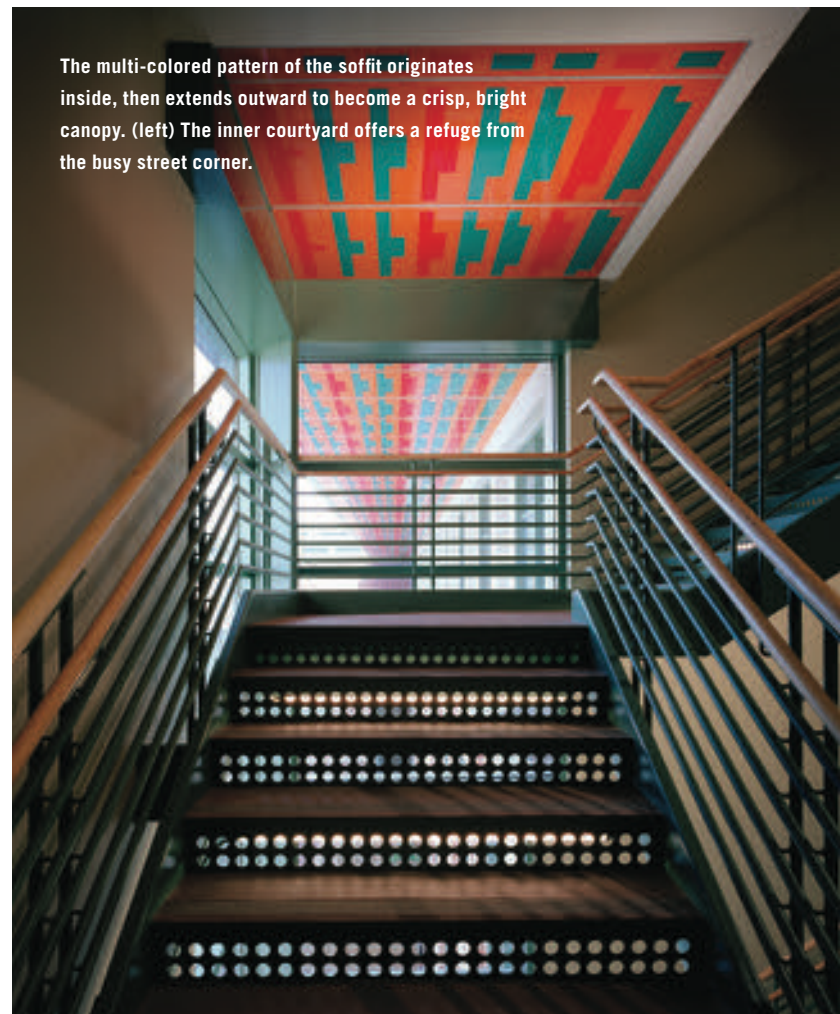
With his partner Fred Clark, Pelli’s firm has designed several projects within college and university campus environments as well. Until recently, the most important university work in Texas was Herring Hall (1984) and Ley Student Center (1986) at Rice University, both consistent within the Moorish imagery of that campus. More recently, in 1995 the firm was selected to devise a master plan for the University of Texas at Austin that examined how this campus works today and how the institution may grow over the next several decades. The architects, in collaboration with the university, carefully studied the history and evolution of the Austin campus. Pelli’s team developed guidelines that speak to the desired characteristics of buildings, open spaces, program, and density suited to remaking a core campus that will be vibrant, safe, and efficient for students and teachers.



The commission to design the Seay Psychology and Child Development & Family Relationships building sited on Dean Keeton Boulevard presented Pelli’s firm both a program and site that allowed a real-world test of the master plan guidelines. Inevitably, now that the Seay project is completed, questions arise as to how well it and future new buildings on campus respond to those guidelines. The master plan analysis articulates the desire to conceive new buildings distinctly constructed to reflect our time, yet establishes a strategy for how an architect can work within the contextual and historic legacy of the original campus. How do the guidelines translate into projects that are respectful of the older structures without falling into mundane historicism? As important, how can a new structure made with current methods of production have the textural qualities of a 70-year-old hand-crafted building?

The work on the project began with in-depth analysis of the material, dimensional, and historical make-up of the context, in this case the existing Cass Gilbert, Herbert Greene, and Paul Cret buildings. Simultaneously, the design team sought to understand the essential plan relationships within the large and complex program outlined. From this came a strategy for how the building might fit on the site. Four linear components, each of a scale reminiscent of the traditional quadrangle buildings nearby, are arranged to form a large courtyard space with a perimeter edge along busy Dean Keeton Boulevard on the north edge of campus. The success of the scheme is revealed inside the courtyard, as the building’s shape makes a large north-facing outdoor room protected from both the intense Texas sunshine and the intense street traffic. Landscape architect Diana Balmori of New York designed a quiet and lush courtyard that will no doubt become one of the most popular spaces on that side of campus. Three vertical circulation towers marking each of the interior corners of the space are positioned to allow views out of the building as the natural light from the courtyard bathes the space inside. This simple organizational gesture seems so natural and the connections to the

(opposite page) Sited prominently on the northern edge of campus, the Seay building is a synthesis of historical context and modern programming. **(this page)** Natural light from ample window openings is modulated by deep eaves; top and middle photo by Michael Wilson, bottom photo by James M. Innes.



The multi-colored pattern of the soffit originates inside, then extends outward to become a crisp, bright canopy. (left) The inner courtyard offers a refuge from the busy street corner.

Landscape and architecture combine into an environment that will no doubt become a popular campus destination.

outside so deliberate that one imagines the stair spaces to be both inside and outside rooms.

As making connections to outdoor spaces is important for buildings within the Central Texas climate, so too is a grasp of the strength and solidity of the buildings on the UT campus. What is evident with the Seay building are the walls and how natural light plays across the face of them. With only a few inches of thickness—less than the depth of a common brick—the architects have managed to compose elevations that have the kind of richness and sense of materiality as, for example, Gilbert’s masterful Battle Hall. The intaglio of brick on this new structure is more modern, however. It is an exercise in pattern rather than indicative of the necessity of structure. The sense is that the brick is held tight to the building; wrapped in tension rather than compression. Large windows consistently spaced along the facade on all floors reinforce the reality that we seldom now see true load-bearing masonry and that brick as a material can be used as much for its textural and symbolic content as for its structural character. These walls

succeed in accomplishing what was promised in the masterplan, speaking of the traditions of the campus but with a fresh voice.

The walls rise to a multi-colored soffit, extending eight-plus feet out from the building and creating both a sharp shadow line and bright splash of color. The tradition of ornamentally complex and brightly colored soffits is one of the most endearing architectural traditions on the Austin campus. These compositions make a beautiful edge to the sky on several of the original buildings and do the good work of keeping the hot summer sun off of much of their wall surface. With the traditional soffit as a starting point, the architects developed a pattern and color scheme that is very compelling. As the soffit conditions on the older projects are reminiscent of the Italian paintings of J.C. Shepherd and G.A. Jellicoe, beautifully composed images of richly ornamental architecture, Pelli and Clark crafted a design that has the boldness of a Jasper Johns print. In fact, the fabrication of the soffit for the Seay building came from the traditions of printmaking, as the bright color and



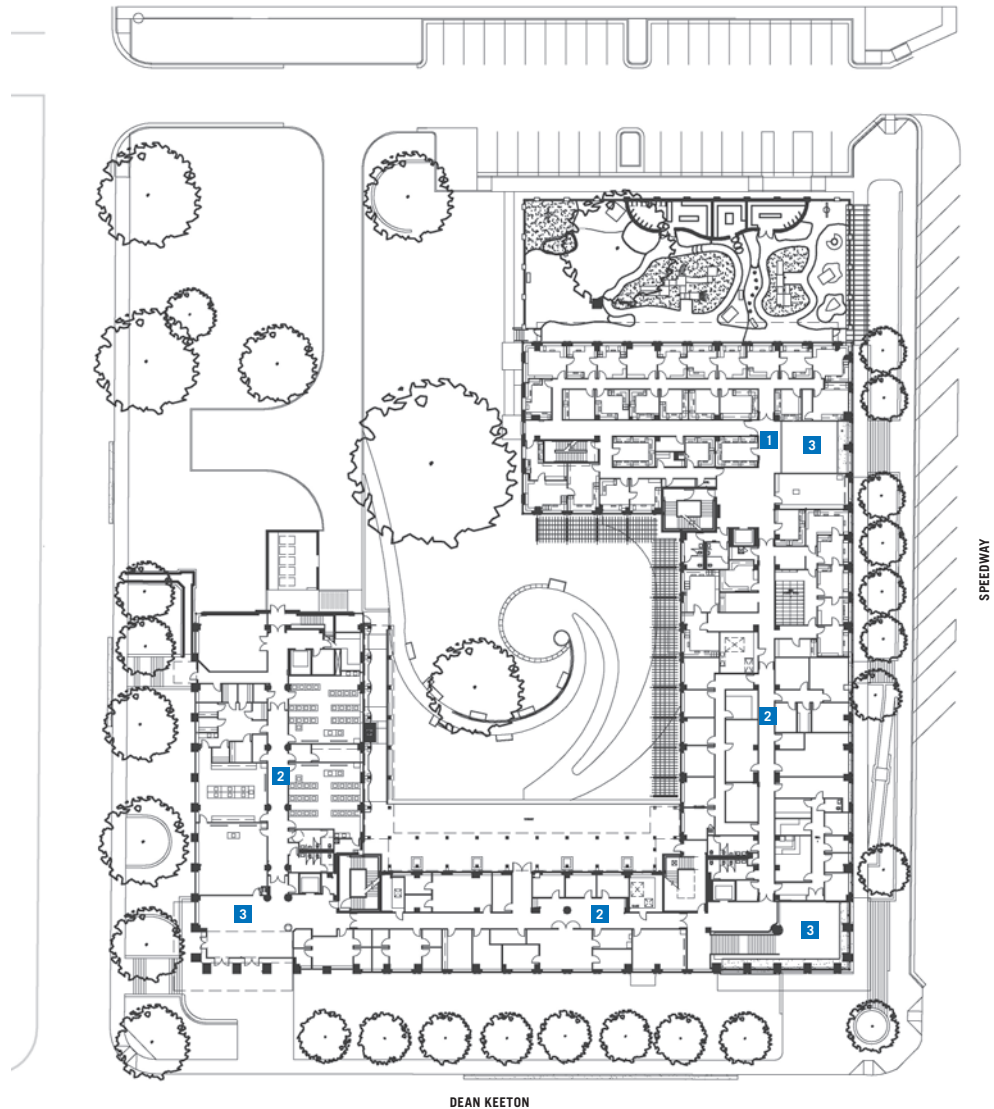
Gilbert's Hand Still Recognizable

In 1910, when Cass Gilbert became university architect for the University of Texas, the campus consisted of an odd assemblage of eight very differently styled buildings. With his design for the university's new library, Gilbert established a precedent that has held sway on campus even to this day. Battle Hall, which he described as "modified Spanish Renaissance," synthesized the timeless verities of the European Beaux-Arts with architectural refinements well suited to the climate and atmosphere of Texas.

The new Seay project is an obvious extension of Gilbert's Battle Hall (above), although with modern touches that firmly fix the new building within its own unique context.

Further evidence of Gilbert's influence – as well as that of Paul Cret, Gilbert's successor as university architect – on today's UT campus is recognizable in Pelli & Associates' 1996 master plan for the university. Pelli and Clarke crafted the campus master plan's principles as follows:

- to return the core campus to pedestrians and keep vehicular traffic to the edges of campus;
- to use the architectural language of Paul Cret's original work as the point of departure for the design of new structures;
- to establish a community of landscaped open spaces, working in concert with buildings to extend and reknit the campus;
- to add substantially to on-campus housing, thus creating a more complete academic community;
- to establish new centers of student activity, reinforcing housing and academic uses to enhance a full on-campus life;
- to concentrate future construction in the core campus rather than on the fringes; and
- to enhance public perception of and access to the campus through strengthened identity and wayfinding (signage) programs.



FLOOR PLAN
 1 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
 AND FAMILY SCIENCES
 2 PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
 3 ENTRY LOBBY



patterns were silk-screened onto porcelain panels. The result is a crisp, bright canopy that is nearly close enough on the upper level for a visitor to touch with an outstretched hand.

With modern technique and materials, the Seay building adds to the established architectural language of the UT campus. This richly tactile structure and adjoining outdoor space embrace the tenets of successful campus work. There is an agenda with this building that goes beyond the program. It is a desire to combine landscape and architecture into an environment capable of becoming a destination. **■**

Arthur Andersson, AIA, is a principal of Andersson-Wise Architects in Austin.

RESOURCES LIGHTING: Lithonia Lighting; LIGHT FIXTURES: Finelite; MOTORIZED ROLLER SHADES: MechoShade Systems; BRICK: Acme; CMU: Featherlite; ROOFING (CLAY TILE): Ludowici-Celadon; ACOUSTIC SYSTEM: Acoustic Systems, Inc.; PLASTER: TEIFS Wall Systems; LOUVER HID STEP LIGHT: Lightech; WALL LIGHTS: Elliptipar; PAINTS: Sherwin-Williams; ACOUSTICAL CEILING: Armstrong; ALUMINUM CEILING SUSPENSION SYSTEMS: Fry Reglet; CURTAINWALL: EFCO (BGR Specialties), Dietrich Industries; BUILDING INSULATION: Johns Manville; GYPSUM BOARD: James Hardie Gypsum; GYPSUM PANELS: USG; DOORS: VT Industries; WINDOWS: EFCO (BGR Specialties); ROOFING: Tamko Roofing Products; TACKBOARD AND WALLBOARD MATERIAL: PolyVision; VCT: Armstrong; CARPET: Prince Street; TILE: MAPEI; FINISHING CONCRETE: Capitol Aggregates; LAMINATES: Wilsonart; SHEET MEMBRANE WATERPROOFING: Emseal Joint Systems, Mirfafi Moisture Protection, Vulkem, Tremco; LIMESTONE: Texas Quarries; MASONRY/CMU ACCESSORIES: Hohmann & Barnard; OFFICE FURNITURE: Steelcase; OFFICE SEATING: Herman Miller



Thoughtful planning and inexpensive materials
create a place in the Central Texas woodlands
for campers needing special accommodations

by LAWRENCE CONNALLY, AIA

A CAMP FOR ALL



The arts and crafts barn shows the influence of local ranch buildings. (left) Interior spaces are simple and utilitarian. (opposite page) The 11,000-sf pavilion is the camp's fresh-air venue.



PROJECT Camp For All, Washington County
CLIENT Camp For All Foundation
ARCHITECT Curry Boudreaux Architects
CONTRACTOR Brookstone Corporation
CONSULTANTS TBG Partners (landscape); Wan Engineering (structural); Smith Seckman Reid (MEP); Pledger Kalkomey (civil); Linda Cummings (lighting); Rolf Jensen & Associates (code consultant)
PHOTOGRAPHER Jud Haggard



TEN YEARS AGO two Houston physicians who cared for children with special needs and a parent who lost a child to cancer set up a foundation with the goal of creating a place where Houston's special needs population could escape the city for a respite in the countryside.

The criteria for site selection dictated that the future Camp For All (CFA) had to be within 100 miles of Houston and close to a freeway for relatively easy access, plus the location had to provide campers with a discernable physical and climatic departure from hot and humid Houston. The site also would have to be conducive to horseback riding, swimming, and archery, with areas for an amphitheater, basketball and volleyball courts, and a lake for water-related activities. The Central Texas landscape with its rolling hills and its cooler, drier climate effectively met the camp's



requirements. Recognizing the value of engaging design professionals very early in the planning process, CFA Executive Director Vicki LaRue hired Peter Boudreaux (already a CFA volunteer) of Curry Boudreaux Architects in Houston and landscape architect Tom Afflerbach of TBG Partners in Austin to help select the most appropriate site. In 1997, the group chose a 206-acre parcel 10 miles west of Brenham with two lakes, rolling hills, and areas heavily wooded with a mixture of native oaks.

Part of Boudreaux's due diligence during the design process involved learning more about the people who would use the camp buildings and researching the local building heritage. After meeting with several special needs groups (whose members suffer from asthma, kidney problems, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and other diseases and afflictions resulting in varying degrees of physical limitations), Boudreaux realized that above all the camp facilities had to be flexible.

Stylistic inspiration for the camp derives from the agrarian metal-and-wood structures built by German and Czech immigrants who settled Washington County in the mid-1800s. The firm's response to this historical precedent resulted in the traditional and straightforward use of crimp-metal roofs, corrugated- and pressed-metal

siding, and painted and unpainted wood with an emphasis on generous fenestration.

The first 22 buildings were built in 1998, followed by five more in 2000 and another three this year. The first three phases of the four-phase master plan account for an aggregate 100,000-square-foot camp consisting of the main lodge, a pavilion, an amphitheater, an equestrian center, a barn for arts and crafts, a small animals barn, and 22 residential buildings arranged in several clusters. Construction begins later this year for a chapel, part of the remaining fourth phase. Even without its final phase, the CFA is the largest and most accessible camp of its kind in the Southwest.

The three most prominent (also the most formal and symmetrical) buildings are centrally located and orthogonally related to each other, thus providing the strongest axial composition at the camp. The largest of the “big three” is the 24,000-square-foot main lodge that is the heart of the camp. It includes a large kitchen

and a dining area that seats 350 able-bodied diners or 300 diners in wheelchairs, a gathering hall that can be linked to the dining area by an elevated common stage with large pocket doors, an administration area, and a health center with treatment and support areas along with an education den. The architects tempered the potentially monolithic scale of the T-shaped lodge by adding “storefront” facades with pressed metal siding to contrast with the wood siding and corrugated metal used on the rest of the structure. The dining hall is the camp’s grandest interior space featuring a vaulted ceiling with overhead natural light from its room-long, ridge-mounted light monitor, decoratively painted trusses, exposed galvanized iron ductwork, and economical, architect-designed valance/track light fixtures. The interior walls in the hall, similar to the rest of the lodge, are clad in bleached plywood wainscot for a warm cabin-like appearance. Unlike traditional camps where these activities are separated, the lodge’s multiple uses

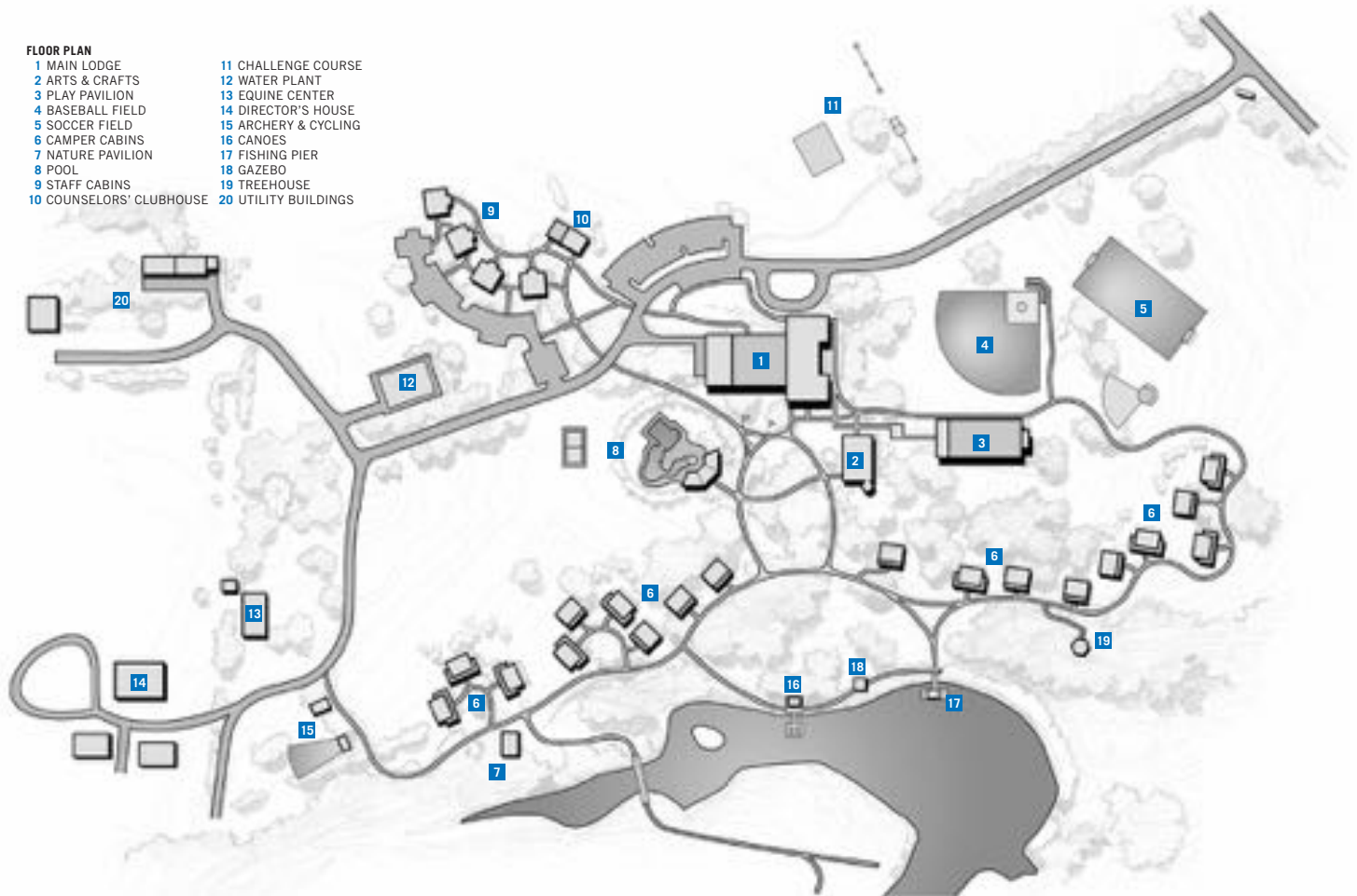
allow flexibility when inclement weather cancels campers’ outdoor activities.

Next of the “big three” is the 11,000-square-foot play pavilion that serves as the gym, alternate dining area, skating area, and dance hall. Located between the arts and crafts barn and the amphitheater, its fresh-air venue provides welcome shade with its roof enclosure and a wind break with its solid south wall that houses the canteen that functions as a satellite kitchen for casual covered porch-like dining. Similar to the lodge, the pavilion’s grand space is vaulted, exposing its five-bay metal structure and six dormers that provide overhead natural light.

Smallest of the “big three” is the arts and crafts barn. Built in an iconic manner and painted traditional “barn red,” it sits in the middle of the sidewalk between the lodge and the pavilion. The most agrarian-like structure in the camp, the barn looks like it could have been an adaptive reuse of an original ranch building if it were not so new.

FLOOR PLAN

- 1 MAIN LODGE
- 2 ARTS & CRAFTS
- 3 PLAY PAVILION
- 4 BASEBALL FIELD
- 5 SOCCER FIELD
- 6 CAMPER CABINS
- 7 NATURE PAVILION
- 8 POOL
- 9 STAFF CABINS
- 10 COUNSELORS’ CLUBHOUSE
- 11 CHALLENGE COURSE
- 12 WATER PLANT
- 13 EQUINE CENTER
- 14 DIRECTOR’S HOUSE
- 15 ARCHERY & CYCLING
- 16 CANOES
- 17 FISHING PIER
- 18 GAZEBO
- 19 TREEHOUSE
- 20 UTILITY BUILDINGS





The camp has four counselors' clubhouses. Configured as two-bedroom suites, the units can also house campers and their families.

Stylistically, the most conventional buildings are the residential units that are casually laid out in radial and orthogonal clusters. For wheelchair convenience, the most important criterion was that none of the units could be more than 1,000 feet from the lodge. Two kinds of units are arranged in their own respective clusters: 18 cabins that accommodate 14 campers, and four that house 10 residents and are designed as two-bedroom suites with a common area in the middle. The latter was conceived for on-site staff, but is flexible enough to be used by campers and their families.

While the camp's buildings individually meet their client's needs in a non-institutional and unpretentious neo-vernacular, CFA's real charm is how the buildings relate to each other. Also refreshing is the absence of cars—they are sequestered in an arcing parking lot across the road from the lodge and offset to its circular drive. The buildings' bucolic interstitial spaces take advantage of the site's topography, existing trees, and views. In one of those spaces a residential cluster is pin-wheeled around the camp's largest oak tree, an arrangement that conveys the symbiotic relationship between the natural and built environments. The residential units are continuously connected to the "big three" by meandering six-foot-wide concrete

sidewalks. TBG's Afflerbach, working with LaRue and Boudreaux, carefully arranged the buildings so no sidewalk would exceed the ADA-mandated five-percent maximum slope. According to LaRue, the greatest design achievement was providing accessibility to the buildings and activity areas site so seamlessly that visitors have few clues that CFA is a place for children with special needs. The real benefit of their achievement is that unlike the "real world," the campers are not constantly reminded that they require any special accommodations at all—a conscionable goal for architects to aspire to regardless of building type. ■

Lawrence Connolly, AIA, is a contributing editor of *Texas Architect*.

RESOURCES CONCRETE PAVEMENT: Jimmie Hahn; FOUNTAINS, POOLS, AND WATER DISPLAYS: SCS Interactive; MASONRY UNITS: D'Hanis Brick; WOOD TRUSES: Alpine Engineering Systems; GLUE-LAMINATED TIMBER: Kopper; ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK: Evans Cabinets; PLASTIC AND SOLID POLYMER FABRICATIONS: Wilsonart, Avonite; WATERPROOFING AND DAMPPROOFING: ProtectoWrap; WATER REPELLENTS: Chem Rex, Sonneborn; SIDING: W.F. Norman, James Hardie; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: CECO Doors; WOOD AND PLASTIC DOORS AND FRAMES: Premdor; METAL WINDOWS: Kaiserhoff; VINYL WINDOWS: Kaiserhoff; GLASS: Binswanger Mirror; TILE: Daltile; METAL CEILINGS: W.F. Norman; WOOD CEILINGS: Louisiana Pacific; PAINTS: Pittsburgh Paint

So smoothly is accessibility
integrated into the design
that visitors have few clues
CFA is a camp created for
children with special needs.

A colorful expansion
evokes the blending
of cultures separated
by a common border.

by MICHAEL D. HOVAR, AIA



CONNECTING NORTH AND SOUTH



PROJECT International Museum of Art and Science, McAllen
CLIENT International Museum of Art and Science
ARCHITECT Lake/Flato Architects
CONTRACTOR D. Wilson Construction
CONSULTANTS Jaster-Quintanilla (structural); HMG & Associates (MEP); Fabian, Nelson & Medina (civil); Raba Kistner (geotechnical); Fisher Marantz Stone (lighting); Rolf Jensen & Associates (life safety); Introspec (specifications); Accessibility Design Associates (accessibility)
PHOTOGRAPHER Paul Schoenfield, AIA

A RECENTLY COMPLETED EXPANSION of the International Museum of Art and Science (iMAS) in McAllen dramatically changes the experience of visiting this 28-year-old institution. In sharp contrast to the original structure's starkly white facade, the new L-shaped addition coaxes visitors – with

playful articulation of openings and expressive use of exterior color – to discover what's inside.

The original structure (previously known as the McAllen International Museum) as designed by Zeb Rike, AIA, (now emeritus) sat stoically on the land facing south toward the city. With a sparsely articulated face, Rike's building was a tilt-wall monolith more closely connected to the International Style than the "international" confluence of Texas and Mexican culture that is the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Primarily a depository of artifacts, it served its community well for nearly 30 years. But as the community evolved, so did the museum's mission. With increased population pressures on the border region, the museum sensed its responsibility to serve the entire population, not just those who lived north of the

Rio Grande. With a new mission came a new name and a new image, and the need for an expanded and updated facility.

More “funhouse” than “warehouse,” the new addition by Lake/Flato Architects of San Antonio attempts to reflect, in its image, the two cultures simultaneously united and divided by the Rio Grande and be worthy of the “international” moniker in more than just a stylistic sense. The project succeeds in addressing the museum’s new mission and its new name in a way never imagined by its predecessor. While the original museum spoke of security and gave no outward hint to what was housed inside, the new addition reaches into the landscape and flirts with the visitor, inciting interest to ponder what lies within.

Despite the fact that the proposed entry pavilion and landscaping are not yet finished, once inside it becomes evident that the new addition is much more than an updated tectonic reiteration of the old structure. While both are primarily assembled from concrete tilt-wall panels, the new addition both highlights and blends the differences between itself and the old structure just like South Texas blends yet accentuates cultural differences between the United States and Mexico.

To achieve its goal, the new addition engulfs the original building on its two public sides and presents a new public face through the expressive use of color that liberates the handmade and unique quality of each new tilt-wall panel. Although the

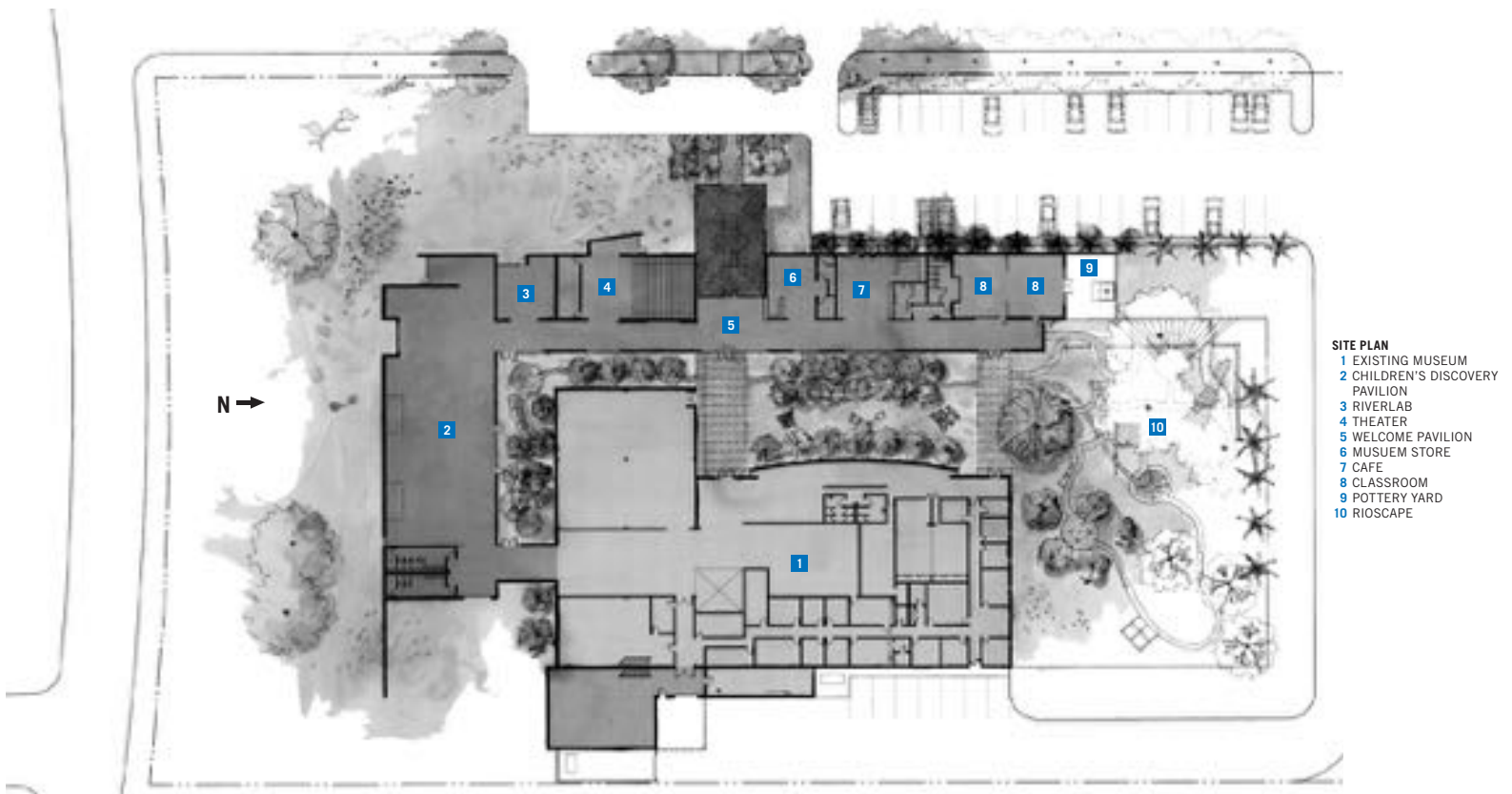
original facades remain essentially intact, they are now only visible after entering the complex. Once inside, the experience of these facades has been dramatically changed. What once clearly defined a volume, by virtue of the new addition has been dematerialized into a series of edges. While volume dominated the original structure, the dominant post-addition characteristic has become void – the open space of the courtyard – creating the cultural connection missing in the original structure. Here Lake/Flato plays off the architectural metaphors of our two South Texas cultures—building as the expressive object versus building as the inward-focused sanctuary. The result is a thin, L-shaped courtyard that forms a canyon populated by sculptural creations of stone and plantings. The overall effect is simultaneously tranquil and stimulating. With the existing building serving as a backdrop (foil), the new addition provides the view and access points into the courtyard.

The courtyard itself is a rather dynamic space that changes in character as one moves along its length. Museum curator Vernon G. Weckbacher explains that the metaphor of the river was used to unite the length of the courtyard with the existing RioScape Discovery Park. With distinct textural and material differences on its north and south faces (again evocative of the two cultures

(Clockwise from lower left on opposite page) Stylistic differences between the original building to the left and new addition to the right are most obvious from the courtyard. Stained concrete panels form the walls of the new structure. Large openings illuminate the Welcome Pavilion.



“Connecting” continued on page 45



continued from page 20

punicifolia) that provides a habitat for native and migrating wildlife.

Sawyer's approach to "hardscape" is to assimilate natural patterns and include materials that reflect the culture and aesthetic of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. For this he often turns to Mexican brick for use as a paver, choosing a dense brick with a red-brown color similar to the Saltillo tile common to the region's historic architecture. He also uses chopped limestone masonry as a paver, landscape curb, or as a veneer for planters and retaining walls. Almost white, its color is reminiscent of the *sillares*, or limestone blocks, used to build *casas de sillar* in South Texas in the 1800s.

By turning to the Valley's rich and unique history for evidence of how the natural landscape can be restored, Sawyer's efforts result in a creative re-building of the Valley's traditional ecosystem. Equally as important is how contemporary landscape architects and designers celebrate the region's culture and character through their work.

William Rios, AIA, teaches drafting classes at South Texas Community College in McAllen.

continued from page 43

and their relationship), the courtyard gradually widens and changes character. It begins as a tranquil, protected and lushly planted sanctuary between the existing galleries and new Discovery Pavilion on the south and gradually evolves into a more sparsely appointed open plain as it moves toward RioScape at the northern end of the site. Local landscape architect Lann Sawyer provided the architect with technical assistance to create the courtyard's remarkable features.

Besides its aesthetic successes, the addition maintains its sense of purpose and does not lose sight of its functional responsibilities. According to iMAS Executive Director Lewis Savoie, the predominate materials — stained concrete floors and tilt-wall panels, exposed hot-dipped galvanized structural members and sun screens, perforated steel ceiling panel, and massive sliding wooden door assemblies — are standing up very well to the rigors of a "hands-on" setting visited by 600-700 children a day. Savoie describes the architect's use of natural light as "wonderful" and says the layout has proven to be extremely flexible and adept at handling any number of simultaneous events.

This building is loaded with regional tectonic metaphors as well as allusions to the dominant cultures that exist in the Valley. While some local public reaction has not been positive — particularly in regards to the dramatic exterior color scheme — Savoie sees his facility as being expressive of the region and poised to respond to the diverse cultural needs of its inhabitants. ■

Michael D. Hovar, AIA, is a principal of Architecto Mida in McAllen.

RESOURCES UNIT PAVERS: Alamo Concrete Pavers; ACOUSTICAL METAL DECKING: Consolidated Systems; ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK: McNichols; METAL GRATING SUNSCREENS: McNichols; ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK: Brownsville Architectural Millwork; LAMINATES: Wilsonart; WALL PANELS: Galvalume; SIDINGS: Arauco Ply; MEMBRANE ROOFING: Johns Manville; METAL ROOFING: Galvalume, MBCI; FASCIA AND SOFFIT PANELS: Galvalume; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: Deansteel, MBCI; CUSTOM ROLLING DOORS: Brownsville Architectural Millwork; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: Vistawall; TILE: Daltile; ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS: Armstrong; CARPET TILE: Interface; PAINTS: Sherwin-Williams; CONCRETE STAIN: L.M. Scofield; MOTORIZED WINDOWSHADES: MechoShade Systems

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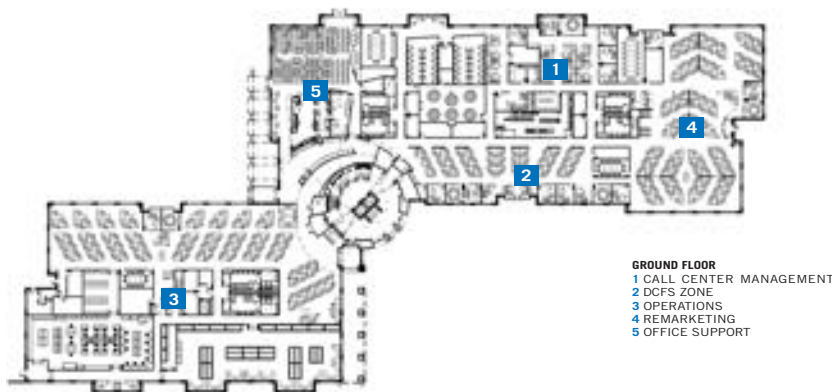
Daimler Chrysler Financial Services



PROJECT Daimler Chrysler Financial Services, Westlake
CLIENTS Hillwood Properties and Daimler Chrysler
ARCHITECT BOKA Powell
CONTRACTOR Austin Commercial
CONSULTANTS Carter & Burgess (civil); Walter P. Moore (structural); Schmidt & Stacy (MEP); SMR (landscape)
PHOTOGRAPHERS John W. Davis, top photo by Debra Hale

Daimler Chrysler Financial Services, completed in 2002, challenged BOKA Powell of Dallas to create a massive space that would complement its surrounding environment without simply fading into it. The client, Hillwood Properties, wanted the 130,000-square-foot office building to establish an iconographic identity befitting its location in the Circle T Ranch, a 2,500-acre planned community under development on the prairielands northeast of Fort Worth. While taking into consideration Hillwood's aspirations, BOKA Powell also needed to respect the City of Westlake's facade and massing code constraints. The architect's solution is the "village" assemblage of the facades (top). To make the center appear unique in the sea of tilt-wall concrete buildings in the DFW area, BOKA Powell added to its own tilt-wall design a limestone veneer, sloping standing-seam roofs, and metal brackets at the eaves. These features also add that touch of Texas that Hillwood sought. The natural stone, along with exposed steel beams, flow from the exterior design to the interior to create a sense of unity (middle left). The rotunda, finished in a mixture of textures, is centered around a modular, wood-paneled elevator tower (lower right). Natural light floods the rotunda through a skylight and clerestory windows that wrap the circumference. Throughout the building an interior "streetscape" theme, which plays off the company's automotive focus, is established through interpretive awnings, exaggerated building elevations, and signage. In the work area, brightly colored walls and large-scale carpet patterns help to resolve the vastness and monotony of the paneled workstations within the large, open office space (bottom left). The company café, finished in earthier colors and materials, and the trellis-covered patio serve as retreats from the busy office space.

NICO D'AUTERIVE



RESOURCES CONCRETE FLOOR COATINGS: Bomanite of North Texas; PREFABRICATED WOOD PANELING: Marlite; SIMULATED/MANUFACTURED STONE: Coronado Products; METAL DECKING AND JOISTS: Vulcraft; STRUCTURAL STEEL: Ennis Steel; EXTERIOR INSULATION AND FINISH SYSTEMS: Senergy; ROOF AND WALL PANELS: Petersen Aluminum; METAL ROOFING: Petersen Aluminum; WOOD AND PLASTIC DOORS AND FRAMES: VT Industries; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: Kawneer; METAL WINDOWS: Kawneer; GLAZED CURTAINWALL: Kawneer; ALUMINUM DOOR FRAMES: Atlas Architectural Metals; TILE: Dal-tile; ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS: Armstrong; PAINTS: ICI Dulux; HIGH-PERFORMANCE COATINGS: Thorocoat; CARPET: Milliken; FURNITURE: Knoll

International Business Park



PROJECT International Business Park, Phases 5-9, Carrollton
CLIENTS The Billingsley Company
ARCHITECT Morrison Seifert Murphy
CONTRACTOR Rogers-O'Brien Construction Company
CONSULTANTS Spiars Engineering (civil); Datum Engineering (structural); BEI/Basharkhah Engineering (MEP); Mesa Design Group (landscape)
PHOTOGRAPHER Charles Davis Smith, AIA

Designed to incorporate traditional office facilities with an appreciation of art and the environment, the International Business Park (top) unfolds over a 40-acre site. The 650,000-square-foot development is an ongoing project that boasts five office buildings with adjacent surface parking. Since construction began in 1998, four of the five buildings have been completed. The composition of these two- and three-story buildings consists of tilt-up concrete and cast-in-place concrete construction. The office park design utilizes natural light through large glazed openings, producing an airy atmosphere that connects the spaces within the buildings to the outside grounds. This balance between interior and exterior space is further echoed through the visual corridors, landscaped drives, and gardens that unite the structures of the business park. Gardens (middle left), both intimate and large-scale, stretch between each structure to create public gathering areas enhanced with environmental sculpture. Art galleries inside the lobbies (middle right) augment the traditional role of the interior spaces. The use of space in the design of the International Business Park emphasizes the importance of building-to-building relationships in a large suburban office environment.



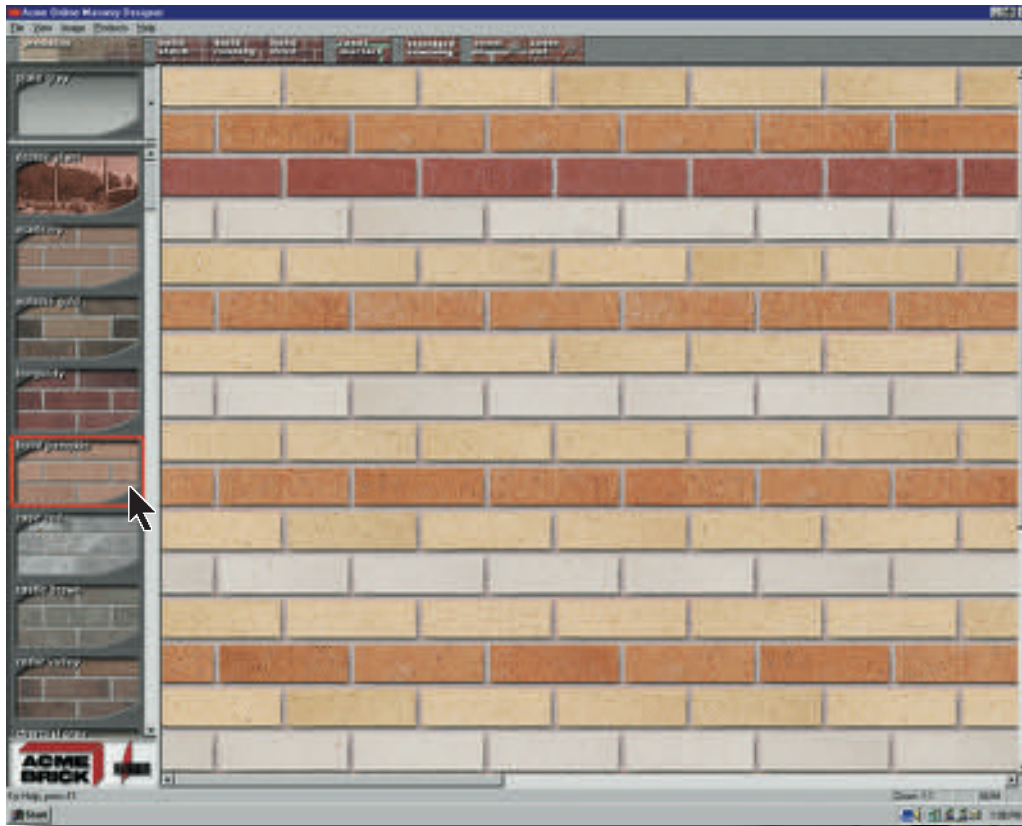
LAUREN TISCHLER

RESOURCES ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK: Central Harwoods; LAMINATES: Wilsonart; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: Steelcraft; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: Vistawall, Blumcraft of Pittsburgh; GLASS: Viracon; GLAZED CURTAINWALL: Vistawall; STRUCTURED GLASS CURTAINWALL: Vistawall; TILE: Walker Zanger, Daltile; SUSPENDED CEILINGS: USG; WALL COVERINGS: National Wall Covering; PAINTS: Pratt & Lambert, Sherwin-Williams; HIGH-PERFORMANCE COATINGS: Spatual Stunnie



FLOOR PLAN
 1 PHASE 5
 2 PHASE 6
 3 PHASE 7
 4 PHASE 8
 5 PHASE 9

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Fort Worth Convention Center Expansion
architect Carter & Burgess, Fort Worth
design architect HOK, Dallas
general contractor Walker General Contractors, Fort Worth
masonry contractor ROC, Dallas

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continued from page 21

That's quite a lot of analysis for what these days are mostly towering metal poles with a bit of illuminated plastic on top. However, today's typical motel sign has a rich past.

Mahar begins her history of Route 66's motel signage in 1938, when the lodging industry began "making the unfamiliar familiar" to a nation newly on the move. During that first period (1938–1947) signs were simple shapes, mostly based on the square, with hand-painted lettering. These high-

way signs visually echoed their counterparts in the increasingly congested downtowns.

The second period (1945–1960) evidenced a shift toward signs depicting regional themes, such as the Wild West and the Southwest. These symbols, ranging from the cowboy boot to the cactus, became more and more stylized, eventually freeing the product from any local context. During that period, even the buildings themselves began to reflect a regional motif—motels in the shape of tepees or in the style of adobe pueblos accompanied by signage that both mirrored and molded the public's image of the "West."

The post-war economic boom sparked a transition during the third period (1950–1957) when national contexts, as opposed to localized flair, influenced motel signs. The ascendancy of Madison Avenue during this period also fueled a stronger desire for brand recognition and resulted in the growth of motel chains whose corporate owners demanded signage to be readily identifiable regardless of region. By contrast, smaller hotels began to introduce novel graphic schemes to compete with the expanding franchises. The era's self-expressionist movement led some of the most engaging signs — consisting of abstract shapes, asymmetrical designs, and dynamic text — to catch the eye of the passing motorist.

Modular sign components, though first introduced in the previous phase, really took off during the fourth period (1957–1965) with the advent of plastic as a material for commercial signage. Large chains were then able to produce several identical signs simultaneously, saving money while increasing their brand recognition. Regional chains and local motels also took advantage of the new technology, but were at first playful with their modular designs. In response to racial tensions, the growth of colonial and medieval imagery in the early '60s

was meant to assure potential clients that the business advertised was, as one 1963 article stated, "a place where they and their children could rest among people of their own class."

The fifth period (1961–1970s) in Mahar's historical survey illustrates the new interstate highways' overtaking Route 66. In order for businesses along the route to remain viable, she notes, motels had to increase their visibility to the higher-speed traffic. Signs became taller—but with passage of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, they also became simpler. Type became the dominant decorative element, and the motel names became increasingly generic. During the late '60s the typical independent motel's sign began to include only the function (motel) whereas the chains began to include only the name (for instance, Holiday Inn). With the increasing dependence and almost exclusive use of modular sign components during this period, the styles of motel signs harkened back to the signs of the '40s in their simplicity, but were not intentional copies of their previous incarnations.

What does all this have to do with architecture? Commercial signage directly reflected contemporary movements in art and architecture, almost an instantaneous reflection of current architectural trends because signs were manufactured more easily, more quickly, and more cheaply than buildings. By studying the forms of signage we can follow the progression of styles and their influence on, as well as acceptance by, the general public.

Whether you pick up this book for its insights into America's highway heyday or just for its bold graphics and kitschy coffee-table quality, *American Signs* will interest both the serious art historian and the casual pop-culture enthusiast.

Adam Fortner is art director of *Texas Architect*.



(above) The Triangle Motel sign in Amarillo reflects the form of earlier downtown signs in its simple inverted-T shape. Streamline and Art Deco trends are apparent in its rounded top and stepped sides. (below) Stylistic evolution over a decade begins with simple forms that increasingly become more complex.



Simple Geometry

by CANAN YETMEN

Brick gives a Las Colinas spec office building the classical treatment



Classical elements articulated in brick add visual interest to the facade.

PROJECT Las Colinas Highlands
CLIENTS MacFarlan Real Estate Services
ARCHITECT Corgan Associates
CONTRACTOR Turner Construction
CONSULTANTS PBS&J (civil); L.A. Fuess Partners (structural);
 Blum Engineering (MEP); SMR, Inc. (landscape)
PHOTOGRAPHER Charles Davis Smith, AIA

MASONRY AND CONCRETE are used in a variety of applications in everything from homes to schools to office buildings. While many advances have been made in fabrication, application, and installation, they are consistently relied upon for their durability, aesthetics, and economy. Although sometimes overshadowed by the more glamorous options of steel and glass, masonry and concrete can readily and beautifully accomplish a wide range of structural and design goals—from recalling a historic look to integrating seamlessly into modern sensibilities.

Architects working in the Las Colinas office development area in Irving are largely limited to the use of either masonry or architectural concrete by the Las Colinas Association's design guidelines. Las Colinas Highlands, a speculative office building designed by Corgan Architects of Dallas that houses 208,000 square feet of office space, has one further requirement to meet. The economics of designing speculative office space required the architects to create a building that would attract potential, and thus unknown, tenants at an absolute minimum cost to the owner, MacFarlan Real Estate Services. Perhaps these constraints would seem to hamper the design process. However, even within such tight limitations, Corgan proved it is possible to design and build a building that is successful both in architectural and business terms.

Las Colinas Highlands — while contemporary in form — also utilizes recognizably classical elements on its facade. Its volumes — an ellipse that

seems to be bursting out of a rectangular volume — presented opportunities to create contrasts in texture and color to help define each volume. Project architect Christopher S. Johnson says, “The ellipse has never been a huge player in classical architecture. This was practically an invitation to give this form a slightly different vocabulary, relative to the classical base, shaft, and capital treatment of the rectangular bookends. But the texture and subtle color changes inherently available with brick are the characteristics we utilized to achieve consistency in the design.”

The ellipse, which visually provides a four-story entry to the building on its two “long” sides, is visually and physically highlighted. It stands a floor taller than the rectangular volumes, which allows it to complete its full revolution and reinforce the building within a building illusion. Although the elliptical volume lacks the traditional base treatment of the rectangular volumes, it does

effectively serve as the capital for the entire composition as the ellipse revolves around its top.

Brick was the material of choice for the exterior for several reasons—market considerations, review committee parameters, and its flexibility in design applications. To help achieve the goal of maximum rentable office space for the minimum amount of dollars, Corgan opted for a 100-percent poured-in-place concrete structure. By its nature the concrete structure meets the requirements for Type 1 fire-resistive construction, eliminating the expense of additional fireproofing. The structure was built using concrete pan joist construction with post-tension concrete beams (see figure 1). Post tensioning cables inside the beam elements allow for an increase in spans over traditional reinforcing requirements without deepening the structural members. This created more open, useable space inside the building, an attractive prospect for the speculative market. “We have received a lot of positive feedback on this column bay and building core concept from the marketplace. The core elements are completely contained within the shorter, middle column bays, while the longer spans of the post-tension concrete allow

Light and shadow enhance the intersection of forms.

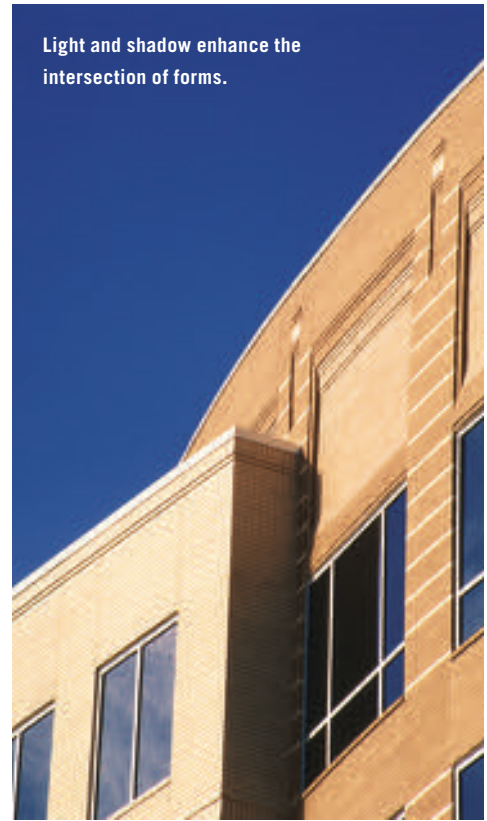
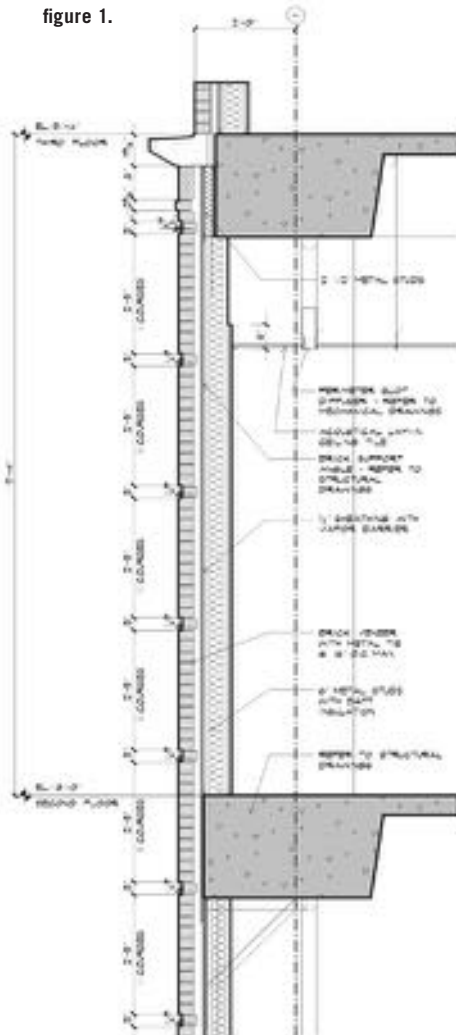


figure 1.



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for column-free layouts of the surrounding office space,” says Johnson.

Brick on the building’s facade allowed Corgan to accomplish two major things: brick figures heavily into the articulation of the classical elements and allows the elliptical form to be constructed in a smooth arc far more gracefully and economically than precast architectural concrete or curtainwall glass would have permitted. To further enhance the curved form, each pilaster is defined by brick banding that draws the eye upward to large inset brick panels above the seventh floor windows. At this point, the pilasters are articulated – the panels are pushed in from the facade several inches – to create shifting shadows that provide further contrast for the crown that runs the length of the volume (see figure 2).

The rectangular volume provides visual balance and further symmetry to the building and also reflects the formal design approach. At ground level the base’s heavy rustication enhances the pedestrian experience. The careful push and pull of the facade at street level takes full advantage of the use of light and shadow. The base terminates at the third floor with a cast stone entablature that marks the point from which the building’s shaft

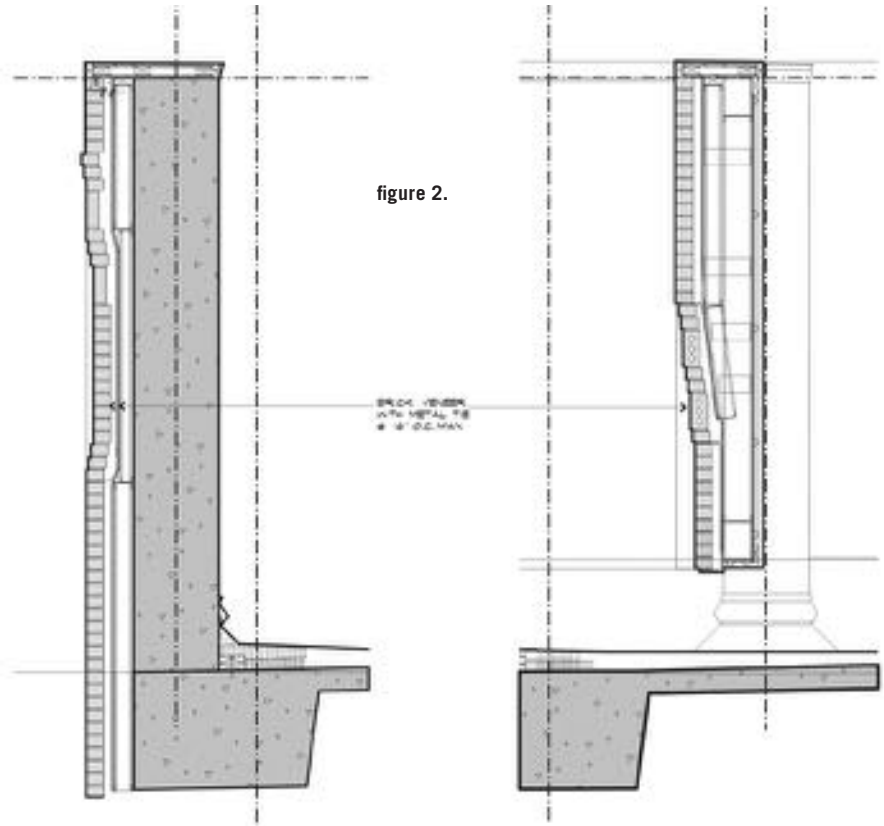


figure 2.

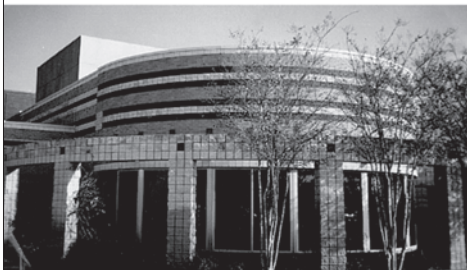
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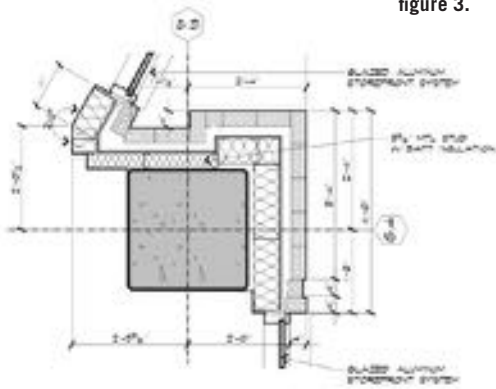
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figure 3.



risers, pushed back four inches from the base. At the top, accent bands of brick above and below the final row of windows create the capitals for the rectangular volumes.

Intersecting the two distinct forms gracefully without interrupting their clarity or compromising the floor plan was a major challenge. "We had to be very careful not to overstate these geometric forms in terms of how they translated to floor plan," explains Johnson. "If they became too pronounced in plan, the interior spaces, particularly at the formal intersections, would be become less useable, and therefore less attractive to the marketplace." The floor plan had to remain simple to be desirable to future tenants, but the rectangular and elliptical volumes should remain recognizable as individual forms. To help resolve this issue the architects called again on the subtle play of light and shadow. A four-inch notch in the rectangular volume's facade at the point of intersection with the elliptical volume creates a shadow that visually obscures the actual intersection and allows the forms to flow seamlessly together while maintaining their distinct character (see figure 3).

The color palette is the final element in creating visual interest in the facade. The rectangular volumes are accentuated by two different shades of light colored brick while the elliptical volume is defined by a third color that establishes it as a separate form. The materials reflect a typical palette for Las Colinas buildings, although expressed in slightly warmer tones. The colors and the clever use of rustication create texture, light, and shadow that shifts throughout the day, demonstrating the versatility of brick in applications that are both economical and artful. ■

Canan Yetmen is principal of CYMK Group in Austin.

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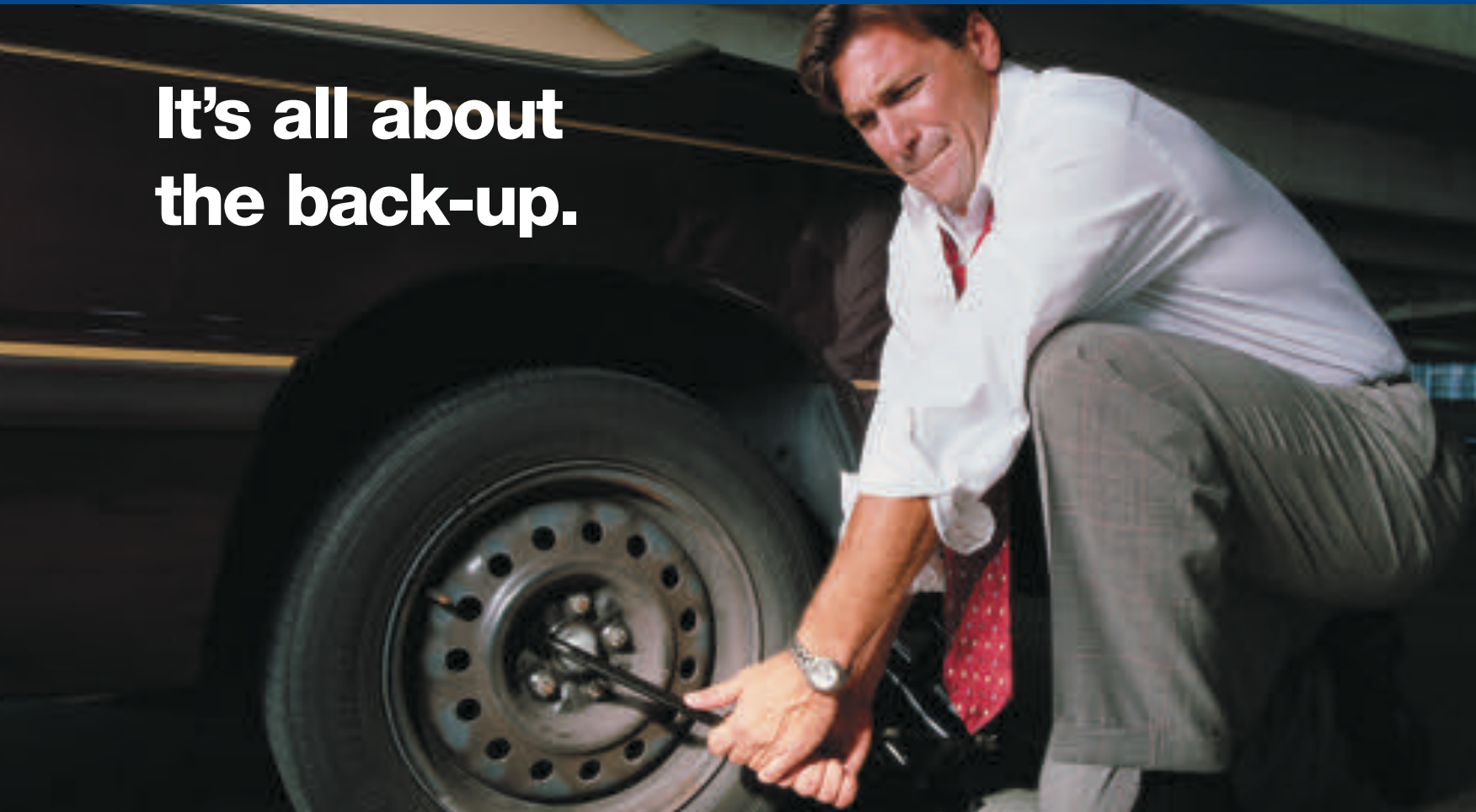
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In 1983, Coburn's dream became a reality when work on the reconstruction started, thanks to donations from community members. The primary benefactor was Chissa Gordon. Structural engineer Frank Neal and Associates also worked for free with Arthur Weinman, AIA. The architect says he took on the project because it was important to the community, as well as to his "friends and friends of the family." Besides, he adds, "If I wanted to be rich I wouldn't be an architect."

Instead of creating the reconstruction in the spitting image of the old fountain, Weinman learned from the past. Weinman made a double-bowl design for the fountain that serves as a "truck trap"—the inner bowl is meant to provide an extra layer of defense against automobile collisions. Also, the reconstruction is made of hard Indiana limestone and Leuders pink granite, which are much sturdier than the original Weatherford sandstone. With time the granite will age to match the 1895 courthouse in color. Weinman feels it is important that the two structures complement one another, though the originals "certainly were not cut from same cloth," he says. "The courthouse is in the style of French Revival based on the State Capitol and the fountain is Gothic Revival style."

Weinman knows that the new fountain (completed in 1999) is a reconstruction, not a pure piece of the past, and feels that this relationship represents how Fort Worth residents view the city's history. "In the process of trying to remember, people have made fantasies," Weinman says. "The fountain is real but it is also a reconstruction, a fantasy."

NICO D'AUTERIVE

Nico D'Auterive is an intern at *Texas Architect*.



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