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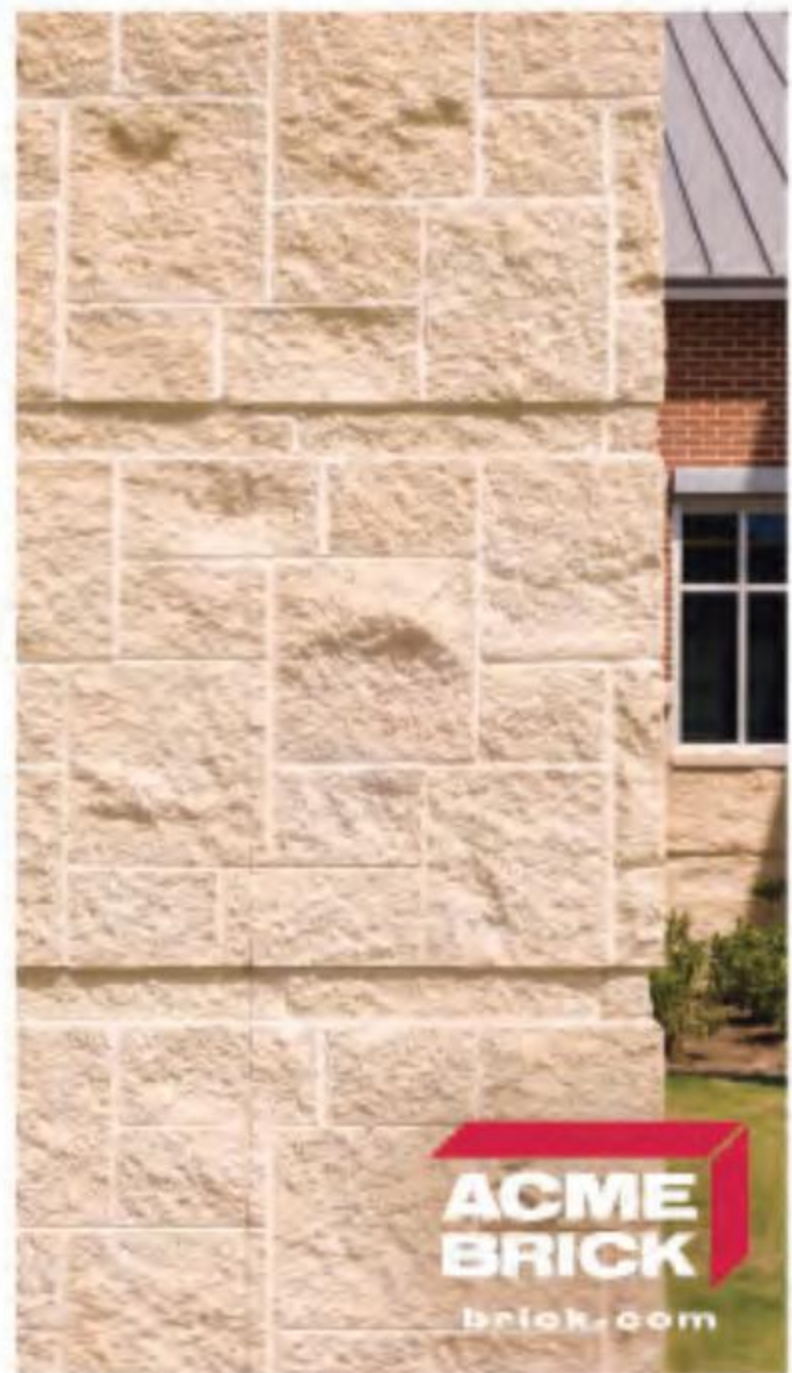
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COVER: A six-month plan by Dallas Contemporary to dress up blank walls in West Dallas has stretched to nearly four years of public appreciation of art by famed, yet enigmatic, street artist Shepard Fairey. Read about it on page 12.
PHOTO: Liane Swanson

Features

Paradox and the Architect: Who Are We? What Do We Do? And Why Are We So Darned Attractive? 14

A noted architect/blogger, Bob Borson, AIA addresses some of the assumptions—some false, some true—about architects and their way of life.

Bland Beige Blocks and the Paradox of Fair Park 16

Fair Park has been very much in the news recently. Here's an in-depth look at its origins and how we have dealt with it since.

The Big Hair Houses: Our Typical Suburban Residential Development Has Little To Do With North Texas 21

Does our residential architecture reflect the spirit of the times in which the homes were built?

The Top Ten Paradoxes in Architecture 26

Three seasoned architects mull over what they see as the biggest paradoxes about the profession.



MICHAEL CAGLE, ASSOC. AIA

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MICHAEL CAGLE, ASSOC. AIA

Departments

Web Exclusives 6

Enjoy extended interviews and other extras.

President's Message 9

How does architecture manage to capture senses of past, present, and future at the same time?

Editor's Note 11

Paradox is universal—from an archeological dig in Turkey to this issue of *Columns*.

Public Arts | Shepard Fairey Murals 13

How "temporary" street art has managed to help define the character of West Dallas.

In Context 25, 48

What is it? Where is it? Do you know for sure?

2016 Tour of Homes 28

A sneak peek at the selections in this year's AIA Dallas Tour of Homes.

Profile | Mark Lamster 36

A visit with Dallas' architecture critic, including how he sees Dallas as a city of paradoxes.

Lost & Found | Williams, Dewitt & Neutra's Avion Village 40

A World War II-era Grand Prairie development came together thanks to three architects, including Richard Neutra.

Profile | Gary Cunningham, FAIA 42

Up close and personal with one of Dallas' most noted architects.

Critique 45

- *Thirty Houses 1960 – 2012: Selected Residential Works of Architect Frank Welch*, various authors
- *Twenty Over Eighty: Conversations on a Lifetime in Architecture and Design*, by Aileen Kwun and Bryn Smith

Index to Advertisers 47

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Web Exclusives



Street Scene

After reading the Public Arts feature, go online to see more photos of Shepard Fairey's riveting art.

www.aiadallas.org/columns/fairey



Welcome to the Neighborhood

As a continuation of the Lost & Found feature, discover more about Avion Village through additional photos online.

www.aiadallas.org/columns/avion



Eye of the Beholder

If you enjoyed meeting architecture critic Mark Lamster in our interview, then go online to enjoy some of his photographs of the content and contexts that make up the architecture all around us.

www.aiadallas.org/columns/lamsterphotos



Life's Work ... Continued

View more photos and drawings by this award-winning, distinctively Dallas architect, Gary Cunningham, FAIA, the subject of a Profile feature.

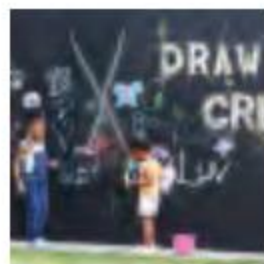
www.aiadallas.org/columns/cunningham



Ten Architects, Ten Years

Watch the architects featured on the 10th Annual AIA Dallas Tour of Homes share their inspiration, design process, and favorite details in this video interview series.

www.aiadallas.org/columns/tenarchitects



A Children's Playground in Fair Park?

Learn more about the AIA Dallas Emerging Leaders Program's 2016 class project: the conceptual design for a children's playground within Fair Park. The pro bono design services were provided with the intent to inspire a vision for how Fair Park can engage the community.

www.aiadallas.org/columns/sparkpark



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The mission of *Columns* is to explore community, culture, and lives through the impact of architecture.

About Columns

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The publication offers educated and thought-provoking opinions to stimulate new ideas and advance architecture.

It also provides commentary on architecture and design within the communities in the greater North Texas region. Send editorial inquiries to columns@aiadallas.org.

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Contributors



BOB BORSON, AIA

Bob Borson, AIA
Paradox and the Architect

A gifted storyteller communicating the role and value of architecture to a new audience, Bob uses the experiences acquired over a 25-year career to inform his popular blog site, lifeofanarchitect.com. Texas Society of Architects recognized Bob's singular contributions to the advancement of architecture through the media by bestowing upon him its John G. Flowers Award in 2015, calling him "a true 21st century spokesman for our field."



Jim Parsons and David Bush
Bland Beige Blocks and the Paradox of Fair Park

Jim, a native of Baytown, puts a passion for the state's history and architecture to work as director of special projects and walking tours chairman for Preservation Houston. A freelance writer, editor, and photographer, he has written about and photographed cities across the United States.

David was born and raised in New Orleans, where he developed his interest in historic architecture. He holds a master's degree in historic preservation from Middle Tennessee State University and has worked professionally in preservation since 1990. He has spent most of his career with Galveston Historical Foundation and Preservation Houston.

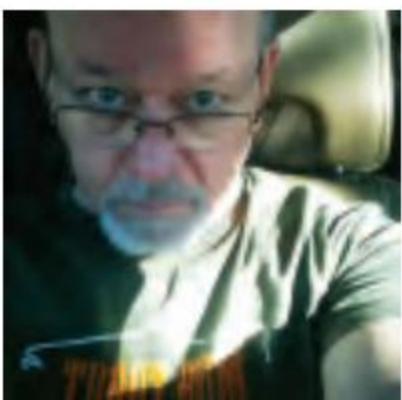
Jim and David have written and photographed three books on architecture in Texas: *Houston Deco*, *Hill Country Deco*, and *Fair Park Deco*. They are at work on a fourth book, *Dallas-Fort Worth Deco*, to be published in fall 2017 by TCU Press.



EMILE MEYRAT

Julien Meyrat, AIA
The Big Hair Houses

Julien is a senior designer on mixed-use projects at Gensler. Born in Paris, France, he has also lived in Singapore, Louisiana, and Germany. He majored in political science at Southwestern University in Georgetown before committing himself to architecture at the University of Texas at Austin. After that, he went to work in Denver and at Skidmore Owings & Merrill in Chicago before practicing in Dallas. Outside the office, Julien spends time with his three children, who serve as his most enjoyable companions wherever they travel.



David Messersmith, FAIA
The Top Ten Paradoxes in Architecture

David has been an architect for over 35 years, both as a sole practitioner and in larger firms. As president of the Texas Society of Architects in 1994, he created more than a few Top Ten Lists. Now he teaches the "Professional Practice" course in the School of Architecture at UT Arlington's College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs (CAPP). If *Columns* readers have some other paradoxes of architecture that they would like to share, feel free to send them to David at messer@uta.edu.

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Mia Ovcina, AIA — Public Arts
Cindy Smith, AIA — In Context
Lorie Hahl — Gallery

Nate Eudaly, Hon. AIA Dallas — Profiles
David Preziosi — Lost & Found
Lisa Lamkin, AIA — Critiques



President's Message | The Paradox of Architecture

The paradox of architecture is its ability to embody all three conditions—past, present, and future—simultaneously. Architecture remembers the past, is a witness to the present, and anticipates the future.

John Lin, architect and professor at the University of Hong Kong

The profound quote above provides great perspective for this issue of *Columns*. We are AIA Dallas—architects engaging, inspiring, and educating the local community to impart this paradox of architecture and its influence on contextualism, historic preservation, urban design, resilience, and sustainability, among others. But what is really fascinating is that the “simultaneous embodiment of past, present, and future” is a paradox in itself as architects respond to other influences such as clients, budgets, timing ... and their own views.

This issue of *Columns* reflects on several of these paradoxes of architecture, and the paradoxes within our own city. As we, as architects, embark on the next project, or continue working on a current one, we must ask ourselves how to best “remember the past, witness the present, and anticipate the future.”

We live in a remarkable time in Dallas. We live, work, and play in a world-class city with iconic architecture and vibrant economic development. Paradoxically, here we are, at the center of the fourth largest metropolitan area in the U.S., yet we have congestion, violence, scarcity of resources, deforestation, and poverty at unprecedented levels. Our new footprints need to be more thoughtful than in the past; our future merits not only a thoughtful approach, but a more sensible reflection on our past—especially on those projects and those areas that have been in development for several decades, such as the Trinity Corridor, Fair Park, Deep Ellum and the city’s southern sector.

Should we continue on the same detrimental path? Or can we envision or instill a vision that—when seen through the lens of the paradox of architecture—showcases the Dallas that we, as architects and citizens, want and can be proud of for generations to come?

I ask that you consider the paradox of architecture and the paradoxes related to architects and architecture in this issue. **YOUR WORK—OUR WORK—HAS A LASTING IMPACT. ■**

Zaida Basora, FAIA
AIA Dallas President



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Editor's Note

As I write this, I'm taking an afternoon break from teaching graduate students at an archaeological site in southwestern Turkey. I've spent the last two decades of summers at the Greco-Roman city of Aphrodisias debating and discussing with students a number of different architectural doctrines, often on an hourly basis. Earlier today, the Vitruvian doctrine of firmness, commodity, and delight came up, and this led to an enlightening debate that I realized paralleled many of the paradoxes our contributors were discussing for this issue.

The students and I were sharing viewpoints on correct approaches to crafting buildings in antiquity and were wondering what structural adequacy (firmness), functional adequacy (commodity), and beauty (delight) all meant and how they informed each other. We were discussing impression vs. reality, performance vs. intent, creativity vs. cost, pragmatics vs. aesthetics, craft vs. technology, and decoration vs. design. Interestingly, similar paradoxes came up in conversations a half a world away and a few months earlier in Dallas, as the *Columns* volunteers prepared the concepts for this issue.

The editorial team and the contributors crafted a collection of contemporary architectural paradoxes that will, I hope, generate discussions, arguments, debates, and most importantly, critical thinking. One of our greatest underutilized assets in Dallas is discussed in the "Texanic" (my new favorite word) inspired paradox of Fair Park. This uniquely contrasts with Julien Meyrat's article on the "Big Hair" paradox of suburban residential development in North Texas. Bob Borson and David Messersmith both bring the discussion into the practice with their contributions of paradoxes in the profession and false perceptions of the architect. And no, I am not wearing all black here on the dig!

As we finish out the year with our final issue for 2016, I do want to extend a special thanks to the *Columns* Committee team who volunteer their time to make this such an incredible publication.

Look for some exciting new evolutions within *Columns* during 2017—including a forthcoming re-design! ■

Harry Mark, FAIA
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Public Arts | Shepard Fairey Murals

By Mia Ovcina, AIA



LIANE SWANSON



LIANE SWANSON

At the beginning of 2012, the street artist Shepard Fairey and his team installed a series of murals throughout West Dallas. The project was sponsored by the Dallas Contemporary and was concentrated in the then-burgeoning Trinity Groves, where derelict buildings were readily available. Like most of Fairey's commissioned works, the five murals maintain the artist's graphic sensibilities, but have a less combative theme of "peace and harmony."

Given the temporal nature of street art, the volatile real estate market in West Dallas, and the counterculture theme that all of Fairey's work carries, the project was never expected to have much longevity. Indeed, the Contemporary only asked owners of the buildings where the murals would be painted to ensure the art would stay intact for six months.

Instead, an unexpected thing happened. Nearly four years later, in a tremendously revitalized West Dallas and a completely

different political climate, four of the five works remain. Particularly intriguing is how these murals have been added on to and surrounded by street art from local artists such as Sour Grapes. Some have been incorporated into new businesses that have embraced them, such as the piece at 331 Singleton Blvd., which became the backdrop for Off-Site Kitchen's signage.

While this would be an offense in the more traditional art world, it aligns perfectly with Fairey's sensibilities. A career street artist, he has always dealt with cultural subversion and appropriation, borrowing visual elements from other sources to create thought-provoking, omnipresent artwork. Fairey is perhaps best known for his 2008 Barack Obama "HOPE" poster, which was a work of appropriation itself. The portrait, borrowed from an AP press photo, eventually led to a copyright lawsuit, but it also brought him a new level of fame.

His longest running project—the Andre the Giant themed "Obey" campaign—has had a decades-long tangent, starting out as a counterculture skater sticker whose coolness he was able to translate into a global marketing phenomenon, with branded paraphernalia sold everywhere from museums to Urban Outfitters. The irony of the "Obey" slogan is often lost on the consumer, and the project continues to perpetuate itself as a bastion of "cool." In this way, all of Fairey's work is intended to be pervasive and manipulative, appropriating and invading mainstream culture with its irresistible edginess, while at the same time testing the limit of our commercialized culture.

The "Obey" slogan and secondary themes are present in the Dallas murals, although far more nuanced, and it is perhaps these subversive qualities that have helped them survive. Their seductive promise of cultural relevance fits the old West Dallas vibe, and despite the fast changing neighborhood dynamic, developers are eager to preserve this. ■

Mia Ovcina, AIA is an architect with DSGN Associates.

STREET SCENE

See more photos of Fairey's riveting art. www.aiadallas.org/columns/fairey

PARADOX AND THE ARCHITECT

WHO ARE WE? WHAT DO WE DO? AND WHY ARE WE SO DARNED ATTRACTIVE?

By Bob Borson, AIA

I am an architect, therefore I ... what? Architects are an extremely misunderstood group of people; I know this because I write a blog about being an architect, and my email inbox tells me every single day that the general public really has no idea who we are, what we do, or why we do it.

When I started writing content for my website www.lifeofanarchitect.com, I didn't have some social platform that needed my voice, and I certainly didn't have an editorial calendar. I just wrote about whatever I wanted to as long as it was related to being an architect (whatever that means). Fast forward six years, 766 published articles, and 35 million page views later, and I have learned a lot about our profession and what John and Jane Q. Public think about architects.

They've got most of it wrong.

One of the most common emails I receive reads like this: "I am 9 years old and want to be an architect. Can you tell me how much money you make?"

One of the most widely accepted perceptions is that architects are loaded. Other than doctors, lawyers, and professional athletes, the general public seems to think that we are at the top of the payroll food chain. The reality for most is something a little different. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, an architect's mean salary in 2014 was \$80,490. That's otherwise known as "not too shabby," but it's hardly the sort of money that causes 9-year-olds to lie in their beds dreaming about all the money they'll make once they become architects.

How Do I Live?

Years ago, my wife asked me the question, "Do all architects lead glamorous lives?" That was followed shortly by "What are you doing wrong?" She's not alone in her thinking because if society believes Hollywood, it seems like every other movie or TV show has an architect as the lead character. They always seem to be honest, hardworking, introspective, and extremely financially successful. Oh, and according to my wife, most are fairly sexy.

A few actors who played architects in movies are Paul Newman, Gary Cooper, Keanu Reeves, Michael Keaton, Tom Hanks, Liam Neeson—and that list can go on and on. It seems that almost every big actor has played an architect once, and yet none of these characters have a lifestyle anything like mine. Tom Hanks lived on a houseboat on Lake Washington in *Sleepless in Seattle*. Have you priced one of those out lately?

On several occasions, my wife has shared with me that if she tells anyone that her husband is an architect, that person raises an eyebrow and assumes we are rich and have a house like, well, you know, Tom Hanks.

Just for the record, we don't.



What Do I Do?

What about how we spend our time? Doesn't everybody graduate from architecture school and start instantly designing art museums and single-family housing?

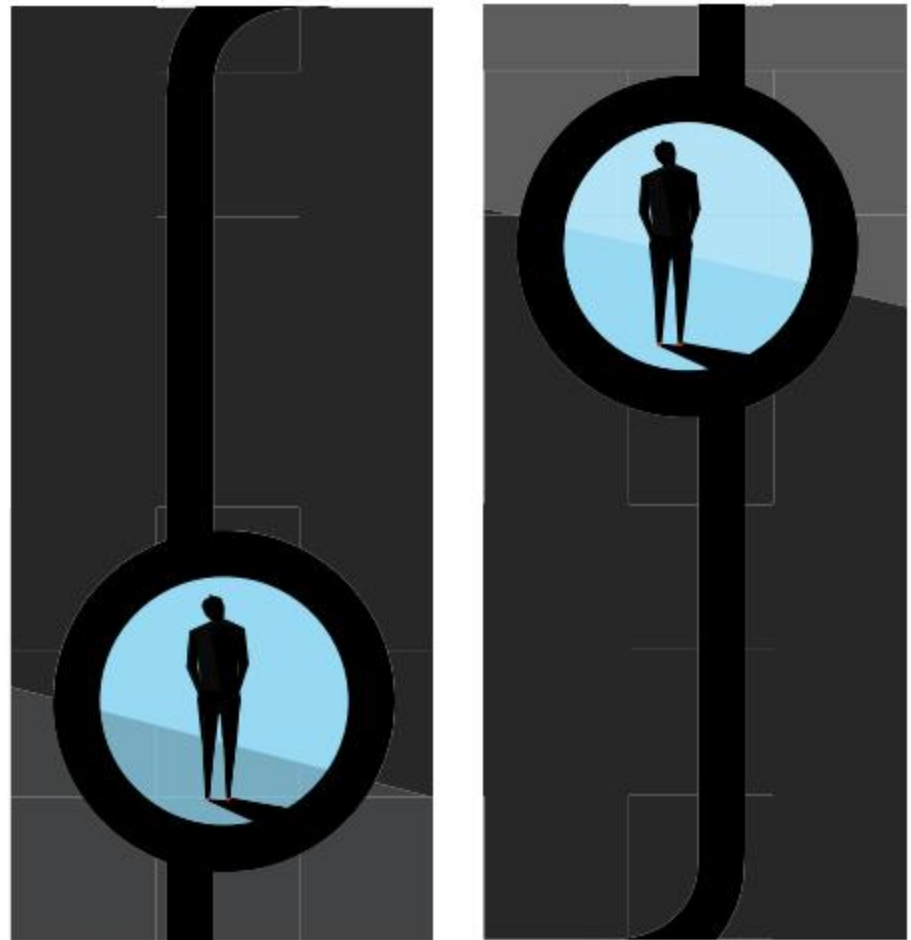
If you are a fan of social media, which I am, you have to acknowledge that architects don't dispel any myths about what we do based on the imagery we send out to the masses for consumption. My own Instagram feed is a menagerie of sketches, job site images from projects located around the country, and travel photos of interesting buildings from exotic locations. While every bit of it is true, I will admit that it is sensationalized. Who wants to see real life pictures of hardware schedules and toilet partition wall details (other than your mom and the people who sell hardware and toilet wall panels)?

If I sat down with college-age architecture students, maybe even recently graduated architecture students, and told them what I do most days, they would think I have it pretty good. I get to design interesting houses that have respectable budgets, while working with clients that are almost always interesting. When I do my job properly, they tend to think that the experience is transcendental and I'm awesome because their lives are forever changed through the power of architecture.

Who wouldn't want that? You get to do a job you like, your clients respect your opinion, *and* you go home at the end of the day getting to point to something real and say, "I did that." You know, it is cool—and I love what I do for a living. However, there is a side to what I do that nobody outside the profession understands—and it takes up the majority of my time. I just don't talk about it much because ... it's kind of boring.

How Do I Look?

Let's talk about how architects are supposed to look, because there is definitely a stereotypical look that is assigned to architects: black clothing and heavy rimmed glasses. These stereotypes strike pretty close to home for me because I do like to wear a lot of black clothing (mostly because I have white hair and I'm slightly overweight). The black hides a few of those extra pounds and with my hair color I would look like a ghost without the contrast of wearing black. I also wear dark-rimmed glasses. (Why do visually impaired architects feel compelled to wear



FRANCES YLLANA

large, structurally pronounced eyewear?).

It is widely believed that architects should dress in all black, maybe a little white, and on laundry day, monochromatic tones are acceptable as long as you are not going out in public. To complete the look, if your hair isn't black, white, or silver, you should consider getting it colored. This is the look and if you have it, people will never ask you what you do for a living. *They'll know.*

There is evidence to support the idea that wearing dominant glasses can help you "brand" your face by making you stand out and be more memorable. Sometimes the eyewear can become so ingrained into your look that this becomes the way you are defined. Use Le Corbusier as an example. Is it possible to think of him without those glasses? Philip Johnson even had his signature spectacles made, based on those worn by Le Corbusier.

I consider architects to be rational, radial thinkers. In the simplest of terms, despite having programming and building codes to contend with, our solutions are still judged on aesthetics. As a result, we approach a problem with no set solution and start working and compressing towards the center to find a balance between the function and the form. Take a little here, give a little there, back and forth, over and over, until the balance that we seek has been found. Do architects take the same approach to selecting their eyewear and clothing?

I'm Not Who You Think I Am

As architects, it's our responsibility to set the record straight. We are not all wealthy, style-conscious, ego-driven intellectuals. We are regular people with regular jobs and regular families and we occasionally get to design something truly grand.

And when we stand on the street and look up at the physical building that is the monument to the vision we put on paper, we smile at what we've achieved. And that's what being an architect is all about. ■

Bob Borson, AIA is a principal with Malone Maxwell Borson Architects.

BLAND BEIGE BLOCKS AND THE PARADOX OF FAIR PARK

By Jim Parsons and David Bush



JIM PARSONS AND DAVID BUSH

[The Texas Centennial celebration] will be Texanic in ideals, continental in proportions, and international in scope.

Cullen Thomas, president,
Texas Centennial Commission, June 2, 1935

When the president of the Texas Centennial Commission appeared before a congressional committee in 1935 to explain why the federal government should commit \$3 million to help the Lone Star State commemorate the 100th anniversary of its independence from Mexico, he predicted that “Texanic”—a

word invented to describe the centennial celebration—would soon join “gigantic” and “titanic” in the dictionary. Though Texanic never found its way into everyday English, there’s no better way to describe the impression made by the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas.

Part of the exposition’s impact was architectural: The fairgrounds at Fair Park represented the height of modernity, with monumental exhibit halls lining carefully landscaped esplanades and walks. And in contrast to the imposing but impermanent nature of most world’s fairs, much of that original fabric still exists. Sixty percent of the Dallas exposition’s facilities were designed and built to serve as the permanent home of the State



LEFT: Tower Building Reception room with original 1936 Herman Miller furniture. **BELOW:** Architect George Dahl stands in first row, far right, in this photo of architects who worked on the design of the buildings for the Texas Centennial at Fair Park.

in the mid-1930s was quite another story. Major oil discoveries had helped buoy the state's fortunes, but cotton, the mainstay of the Texas economy, was hard-hit by the Great Depression. By 1934, state officials had set their sights on a great centennial celebration as a statewide economic boost. "[A centennial exposition] would have the effect of creating a general forward-looking spirit through the state," the Texas Centennial Commission speculated that summer. "It would be more stimulating than anything we can think of, and this effect would be immediate."

The commission opened bids for a central exposition to be held in 1936. Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and San Antonio submitted proposals, but Dallas' pledge of nearly \$10 million—\$3.5 million from municipal bonds, \$2 million from private bonds, and the use and expansion of the city-owned fairgrounds, valued at \$4 million—easily bested the others and Dallas was named the exposition's host.

The Texas Centennial Exposition was set to open June 6, 1936, but work was not authorized to begin until June 1935, leaving just 12 months for a complete overhaul of the 185-acre site that included remodeling a dozen existing buildings, designing and constructing more than 50 new structures, installing underground utilities, and landscaping the grounds. The total price tag for remaking Fair Park was estimated at \$25 million.

A Classic and Yet Contemporary Style

Responsibility for completing the Texanic task rested on the shoulders of George Dahl, a 41-year-old Dallas architect who had traveled to six expositions across the United States and Europe. As centennial architect and technical director, Dahl was either directly or indirectly involved in every aspect of the exposition's design "from the largest towering building to the smallest hot dog or peanut stand," as one newspaper put it. Given the scope of the project and the tight schedule, Dahl recruited a staff of 130 architects, designers, engineers, and artists, many of whom had worked at previous expositions, especially the 1933 Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago.

Dahl had a clear vision for the fairgrounds. The architectural style would be "classic modern," with a site plan firmly rooted in the Beaux-Arts tradition. "The treatment should be carried along the lines of good contemporary architecture, but still influenced by good classical design," Dahl wrote, adding that he expected "a

Fair of Texas, and today, Fair Park is a National Historic Landmark containing the largest surviving collection of Art Deco exhibition art and architecture from America's golden age of world's fairs. (Though promoters in 1936 constantly trumpeted it as a world's fair, the Centennial Exposition had neither foreign exhibitors nor representation from any foreign government. It was a world's fair in spirit and scale, but in reality the exposition was an extravagant state fair.)

A more far-reaching effect of the Centennial Exposition was introducing the rest of the United States to a highly romanticized version of Texas, complete with wide-open spaces, dashing cowboys, and endless fields of bluebonnets. The reality of Texas

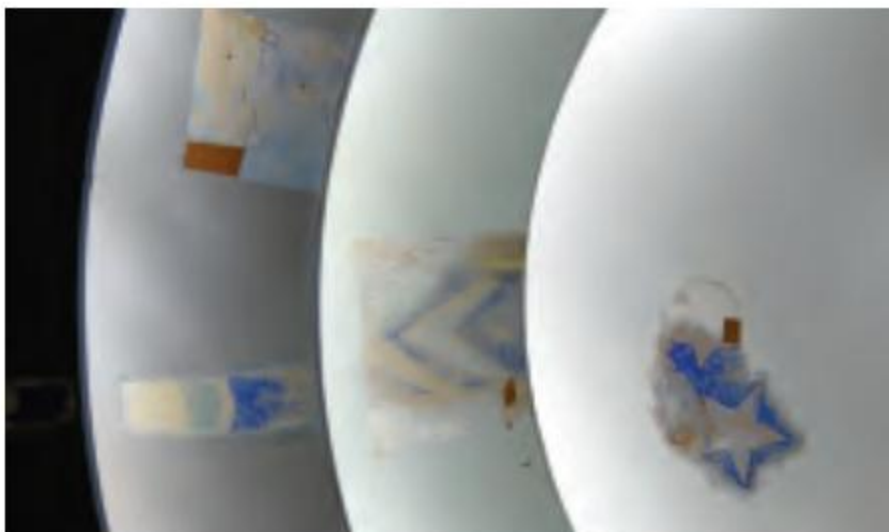


COURTESY DALLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TOP RIGHT: Repairs and painting of the Buck Winn-designed relief at the Parry Avenue Gate in 2009 was completed as part of the restoration of the entrance gate and pylon structures to coincide with the completion of the DART station. **TOP LEFT:** The Tower Building was designed by Donald Nelson and was known as the Federal Building during the Centennial. The 175-foot tower was the tallest structure at the Centennial. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Restoration work on the Tower Building rotunda ceiling showed portions of the original ceiling mural.



JIM PARSONS AND DAVID BUSH



JIM PARSONS AND DAVID BUSH

great deal of glamour [sic], but still a monumental and dignified effect." Despite the classical roots, Fair Park's designers meant for their buildings to be seen as completely up-to-date. "This architecture is no revival," staff architect Ralph Bryan said. "Years from now the critics will probably have named it, but for the time being it can only be called contemporary."

Fair Park's name has always been somewhat misleading: The site was always an exposition ground, not grassy parkland with playgrounds and recreation fields. In the 1935-36 reconstruction, the fairgrounds were carefully planned and built so that the landscape, art, and architecture worked together to create a sophisticated urban gathering place.

The show began at Fair Park's main entrance, the Parry Avenue gate, which led visitors into to the Grand Plaza and Esplanade of State, the quarter-mile central axis of the exposition site. Dahl remodeled existing exhibit halls on either side of the esplanade into the exposition's two largest buildings, which face each other across a 700-foot reflecting pool. Six massive porticoes—three along the front of each building—feature murals and statuary. The murals by Carlo Ciampaglia and Pierre Bourdelle depicted transportation and industry. The statuary by Lawrence Tenney Stevens and Raoul Josset symbolized the six nations that have had sovereignty over Texas.

Today, the exposition site is a National Historic Landmark containing the largest surviving collection of Art Deco exhibition art and architecture from America's golden age of world's fairs.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The National Cash Register Building was designed by Walter Dorwin Teague of New York and was demolished after the Centennial. The cash register displayed the daily attendance, updated hourly, based on turnstile activity tracked by a company representative.



FACL INC.

The State of Texas Building anchors the eastern end of the esplanade. Built with \$1.2 million from the state legislature, the massive structure was meant to house a permanent museum of Texas history. Standing in the Hall of State, the building's principal interior space, comparisons to Westminster Abbey don't seem misplaced. The room contains two enormous murals by Eugene Savage and the immense, gold leaf-covered *Great Medallion of Texas* under a four-story ceiling supported by soaring limestone

columns. Almost immediately, the entire building came to be known as the Hall of State.

Surprisingly, George Dahl did not create the exposition's most significant

landmark. A group of Dallas architects lobbied state officials for the commission, but were unable to agree upon an acceptable design. At the last minute, young Houston architect Donald Barthelme was called in to finalize the plans. His building, with interiors by Adams & Adams of San Antonio, remains one of the most outstanding Art Deco structures in the United States.

The State of Texas Building fronts the Court of Honor, a cross axis which leads at its north end to the agrarian area, a group of buildings dedicated to foods, poultry, and livestock. The agricultural component, a holdover from the state fair, was a point of pride for the exposition's organizers: "Other world's fairs have stressed science, the arts, or other major phases of progress, but



COURTESY DALLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

the first world's fair of the Southwest ... will offer livestock and agriculture, two enterprises on which that section of America was built, as principal features," exposition publicists wrote.

At the south end of the Court of Honor is the Federal Concourse and the U.S. government's pavilion. The Federal (now Tower) Building was created by Donald Nelson, an architect from Chicago's Century of Progress and Dahl's chief designer. The building stands at the geographic center of the 1936 fairgrounds and contains the exposition's tallest structure, a 179-foot tower topped by a stylized, gilded eagle designed by Raoul Josset. At the foot of the tower is the entrance to a significant historic interior: the star-spangled reception room, where fair officials welcomed President Franklin Roosevelt. The room still contains its original Herman Miller furnishings under a stepped, backlit ceiling.

Flanking the Federal Concourse was the impressive Ford Motor Company Building. The creation of Detroit architect Albert Kahn and famed industrial designer Walter Dorwin

Teague, the Ford Building was constructed for \$2.2 million. Although it was the exposition's most expensive building, the Ford pavilion was considered temporary and was demolished after the fair's second season.

Beyond the Federal Concourse is the Civic Center, a collection of buildings erected for the exposition and designed to serve as a permanent cultural center for Dallas and the surrounding region. The city spent more than \$3.5 million on the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas Museum of Natural History, an aquarium, and an amphitheater modeled after the Hollywood Bowl. In contrast to the classical layout of the exposition buildings, the Civic Center facilities are arranged informally around a man-made lagoon.

From Decline to Rebirth

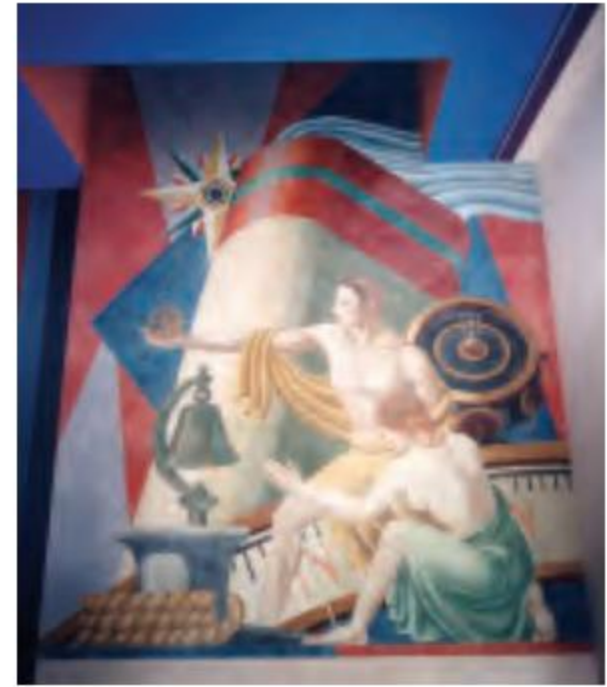
The Civic Center also included one of the entrances to the Midway. As at world's fairs, the Midway was the most popular

LEFT: A conservator removes overpaint on the *Navigation* mural at the Centennial Building in 2001.



FACL INC.

RIGHT: The *Navigation*, shown after the completed restoration, is one of 11 Fair Park murals that have been uncovered and conserved.



DALLAS PARK & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

and profitable part of the exposition, with exotic—and racy—attractions like the Streets of Paris, which offered French-themed shops, cafes, and floor shows as well as a private club in a scaled-down version of the ocean liner *Normandie*. The Midway represented the Centennial Exposition at its most transient. Most of the major concessions—including the Streets of Paris, Midget City, and Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not Odditorium—were demolished after the fair's second season.

Other buildings also came down after the exposition ended, including the Teague-designed Texaco and National Cash Register pavilions. As those temporary structures were demolished, several of the permanent buildings developed flaws, perhaps a result of the rushed construction schedule. Exposition archives at the Dallas Historical Society include files full of letters from fair officials demanding that recalcitrant contractors repair leaking roofs, cracking stucco, and buckling asphalt.

Even the Hall of State faced an uncertain future. When the City of Dallas balked at the expense of taking possession of the building after the exposition, officials in Austin threatened to convert the structure into a state office building and send the art and furnishings to the San Jacinto Monument in Houston. The standoff was finally resolved when the Dallas Historical Society agreed to manage the property.

As the years passed, the Civic Center's museums and the Hall of State remained open year-round, but exhibit halls were usually mothballed for all but a few weeks of hyperactivity during the state fair. Apart from the demolished temporary structures, Fair Park's biggest loss came in 1942 when fire destroyed its largest exhibit building, the former Hall of Varied Industries, along with its murals and reliefs. A smaller exhibit hall was built on the site after World War II, but it would be 40 years before the building's esplanade façade was restored to approximate its 1936 appearance.

Maintenance expenses and changing tastes have always been challenges at Fair Park. Rather than keeping up the 1936 artwork, state fair officials decided to paint over original murals and reliefs, turning principal exhibit buildings into bland beige blocks. Elsewhere, reliefs were sandblasted, original landscaping was removed, and statuary crumbled or disappeared altogether.

Because the vast majority of visitors came during one month in the fall when the state fair's attractions rendered the exposition buildings all but invisible, the Texas Centennial Exposition became a fading memory.

That began to change in 1986 when concerned citizens formed the Friends of Fair Park to preserve the art and architecture of the 1936 exposition, encourage thoughtful planning for the park's future, and promote year-round use of the grounds. The Friends' cooperative effort with the City of Dallas—supported by Dallas voters who approved millions of dollars in municipal bonds—has had amazing results. Original murals have been uncovered and restored, sculpture has been re-created, and the Esplanade of State has undergone a thorough rehabilitation. The work continues today under the administration of the City of Dallas Park and Recreation Department.

Though a great deal of work has been done to restore and increase awareness of Fair Park, much is left to do. In 2014, a

mayoral task force estimated that \$478 million was needed to repair the site. Despite hosting hundreds of events each year in addition to the state fair, the park can feel virtually deserted on many

days. And even though Fair Park's remarkable art and architecture draws national and international attention, there are those in Dallas who call for its demolition.

It's worth the effort and expense to restore, repair and revitalize Fair Park. The park is an irreplaceable civic asset for Dallas—a unique gathering and exhibition space that should be a point of pride for the city, as its builders intended. Fair Park is no longer a sea of bland beige blocks; rather, it is a landmark where visitors can once again enjoy the truly Texanic experience that was the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition. ■

Jim Parsons and David Bush have written and photographed three books on architecture in Texas: *Houston Deco*, *Hill Country Deco*, and *Fair Park Deco*. They are at work on a fourth book, *Dallas-Fort Worth Deco*, to be published in fall 2017 by TCU Press.

The Friends' cooperative effort with the City of Dallas, supported by Dallas voters who approved millions of dollars in municipal bonds, has had amazing results.

THE BIG HAIR HOUSES

OUR TYPICAL SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH NORTH TEXAS

By Julien Meyrat, AIA



MICHAEL CAGLE, ASSOC. AIA

Much like Chicago and Los Angeles a century before, the Dallas-Fort Worth region is at the epicenter of massive commercial and demographic expansion. The region's pro-business environment and its entrepreneurial culture has made famous those innovative risk-takers who pioneered advances in technology, creating global companies known for professional and financial services, telecommunications, transportation, and energy. Given its current success, the Dallas area is an example of what the contemporary aspirational city in America should look like.

From afar, it seems to live up to that expectation: A modern downtown skyline defined by shimmering curtain wall, colorful lights, and breathtaking structures by Pritzker Prize-winning architects. But when looking closer into the way people of the region live, a contrary picture emerges: multi-gabled pitched roofs, double-height entry arches, Palladian windows with fake shutters, and brick veneer with ornamental quoins at the

corners. Shouldn't our neighborhoods reflect the forward-looking technological culture that defines the livelihood of the people who work here? Why this paradox?

Like many other cities in America's South and West, the DFW metroplex experienced massive urban and suburban expansion the decades following World War II. This growth was accommodated in large part by auto-centric infrastructure and exclusionary zoning that prevented density and mixed use. The suburban neighborhood typology as we know it took shape, consisting of boundless acres of subdivisions with houses almost equally spaced within their own lots, often designed from a limited set of plans and built quickly with wood framing and concrete slab-on-grade foundations.

Sidewalks increasingly disappeared as streets were intended for cars, not for pedestrians. Community amenities such as schools and parks—situated as objects on a landscape instead of



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ABOVE: Responding to the challenge of providing practical housing options in the 1920s, Weissenhof Estate participants J.J.P. Oud (top) and Hans Scharoun (bottom) designed homes that dramatically reimagined what a home could look like, incorporating abundant daylight and the latest mechanical systems.

defining urban spaces in-between—became accessible almost exclusively by car. As a result, much of the suburban fabric suffers from an imposing uniformity.

After a half-century of this kind of development, what are the results? Subdivisions continue to grow larger, but lots have continued to shrink as a means of increasing the monetary yield of the land. At the same time, average households have increased their appetites for an appearance of grandeur and ever more space, leading to homes becoming much taller in proportion, with two-story-entries, voluminous living space with high ceilings and lots of windows, some far beyond reach. Once spacious private backyards are now patches of grass, just large enough for water- and energy-guzzling swimming pools. Houses of today show a decidedly two-dimensional architectural treatment, employing nicer finish materials of brick and limestone at the front, while the sides and back of the house are clad in cheap siding. Their often fussy, asymmetrical massings of multiple roof gables, turrets, and arched windows betray a mish-mash of English & French Victorian styles. Yet those considerations are secondary, says Ryan Miller, director of planning and zoning for the city of Rockwall, a fast-growing suburb east of Dallas.

"If you ask many of our residents what influenced their move to Rockwall, you will find that things like schools, proximity, and amenities rank high on their list," he said. "Many people choose their community before they choose their home."

The architectural amalgam of vertically monumental proportions characterizes this popular North Texas residential style. At times called "Big Hair" or "Giraffe homes," the style is authentic to some contemporary people's image of what a home should look like—yet it transcends any impulse to be authentic to the spirit of the times.

"Architecture is rooted in deeply treasured meanings that are difficult to dismiss, even at this point in the 21st century. For



CINDY SMITH, AIA

example, how the gabled roof is both a sign and a symbol of shelter and home," said Kevin Sloan, Hon. AIA Dallas, ASLA. "Like it or not, many of these meanings endure. Even a child understands that in a refrigerator drawing of a house."

Does the style command any authenticity with regards to the local climate? As it happens, Dallas lies on the same latitude as Cairo, a city defined the world over by extreme heat and blinding daylight. Historically, Texans adapted by incorporating porches, dog-runs, thick masonry walls, and low-slung roof profiles to combat the sun. The current "Big Hair" style ignores this heritage, along with most basic site considerations, such as the path of the sun, prevailing breezes, or any cues in the landscape that could enhance a home's energy performance.

Rather than performance, the North Texas residential style is evidence of fulfilling mere wants and desires of a consumer-driven market that places value on superficial features. As architects know well, most housing stock today is not the result of an exclusive relationship between the owner, a site, the architect, and the builder; rather each of those parties contributes separately towards a commodity product that balances a list of consumer wants with affordability. Capital institutions and lenders favor the residential developments where all things are easily quantifiable for a predictable rate of return. Given these factors, housing in the U.S. and in the DFW region is largely defined by large, highly capitalized homebuilders that provide a readily available consumer product, marketed much in the same way as cars—basic components (engine, chassis, body) complemented with an assortment of options.

Like other types of consumer goods, branding is important, and homebuilders promote a brand to differentiate their products from those of their competitors. Since these homes are intended for the mass market, where price is the primary driver, a brand name is far more effective than the name of the person



LEFT: Typical suburban houses in Texas borrow from English and French Victorian styles with little regard to their context.

responsible for the home or community's design.

"This is interesting to note that car manufacturers use pre-set plans developed by internal designers so they can market and deliver a consistent product at a reasonable price," said John Egnatis, CEO of Grenadier Homes, a Dallas-based homebuilder. "A chain or fast-food restaurant operates similarly. Production builders operate the same way with pre-designed plans by in-house architects so they can market and deliver at a reasonable price. However, you find more sophisticated design and materials usage when a luxury custom builder teams up with a custom home architect, much the same way a high-end chef teams up with or owns a high-end restaurant."

In spite of the difficulty for architects to perpetuate their own brand, there is an opportunity for them to bring their skills as creative problem-solvers on larger scale. Though it admittedly feels fulfilling for architects to put their personal touches on dwellings, it makes it difficult to significantly impact how everyday people acquire and live in their homes. For our profession to change the way our neighborhoods look, we need to adapt and work within the rules of the consumer-driven housing market to better address the needs of the middle-class.

Sloan suggests: "It could be useful and potentially productive for architectural practice to understand and accept how development financing, mortgage companies, home-building industries, and construction trades have synchronized. Any attempt to modify a builder home with design conceits that are outside industry norms is going to disrupt the process and make the building more expensive and time-consuming to realize."

Architects who have a deeply felt concern for more carefully considered housing for the middle class must find ways to integrate themselves into the commercial homebuilder system that controls much of the single-family housing options throughout North Texas. Homebuilder companies are not

averse to input from architects, and some actually welcome it, so long as it promises a profitable outcome and offers solutions that are workable and affordable.

Egnatis admits that the homebuilder business model tends to prioritize high-volume production. "This model may change, because better design can create more value, which in turn allows for more affordability through innovation in how we live," he said. "An example may be a carport that is very artistically designed and that may double as an outdoor play area for the kids and provide a shaded place at the front to the home when not occupied by the car. This would be less expensive and more attractive than a two-car garage and have a dual purpose. We need more creative thinking in the field."

The best way of bringing about progressive residential design and neighborhood planning is by creating a built alternative that is inviting, coherent, comprehensive, and compelling. Fortunately, this has been done before.

In 1927, new and forward-looking ideas about dwellings were on public display, and in three months more than 500,000 visitors came to discover the Weissenhof Estate in Stuttgart, Germany. Organized by young Mies Van der Rohe, leading avant-garde architects of Europe such as Walter Gropius, Hans Scharoun, and Le Corbusier introduced people to an alternative in residential living that promoted abundant daylight and optimized functionality and ease of construction, with all 21 homes built in only five months.

We need a contemporary equivalent, one that responds to the sophisticated consumer mindset that encapsulates our 21st century culture. Miller believes that the look and feel of our neighborhoods will only change if people are presented firsthand with alternatives: "In my estimation, the main obstacle in developing a residential subdivision that incorporates modern design, sustainable landscaping, and diverse architecture is the lack of a viable example in this region," he said. "It has been my experience that developers and lenders have typically taken the 'If it's not broke, don't fix it' approach to residential subdivisions. This means that as long as traditional housing models continue to sell at increasingly higher prices, there is no incentive for a developer or builder to spend the money required to redesign their product."

A prototype neighborhood must instill a need in buyers that they didn't before realize, but soon learn that they can't live without. A concept is needed that is similar to what Apple did for the mobile phone and what Tesla has been doing for cars. Both of those companies understand the importance of making a product that is not exclusive, but accessible to everyone.

An innovative subdivision must go beyond mere drawings or animations and be built to allow people to interact with it, to imagine living in a home that embodies the collective values of art, functionality, and sustainability shared by today's architects. Such a model community performs the same purpose as a test-drive, allowing someone to actually experience a product. It is through this direct engagement that higher quality, more responsive residential options will become available in our region. ■

Julien Meyrat, AIA is a senior designer at Gensler.

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Can you identify this North Texas structure?

See page 48 for the answer.



THE TOP TEN PARADOXES IN ARCHITECTURE

By David Messersmith, FAIA

One day recently, over beverages, a couple of long-time colleagues and I began to speculate about paradoxes in architecture. Eventually, the examples began to flow like the beverages. This "Top Ten List" is therefore dedicated to my colleagues Jan Blackmon, FAIA and Bill Smith, FAIA.

The design process—Big ideas rely on small details.

Did you ever stop to consider what a paradox the design process is? It demands attention to a big idea as well as the details. Architects have long known that truly successful design must recognize two seemingly divergent but connected criteria. Steven Holl says, "Architecture revolves around the idea and the phenomenon of the experience of that idea." Yet Ludwig Mies van der Rohe himself said, "God is in the details!" **The Big, the Small; the Idea, the Details; the Macro, the Micro.** Seemingly opposite elements that are dependent on each other. This is the essence of paradox.

Experience will get you work, without which, you can't gain experience.

I'm not sure if this is a paradox or what we Baby Boomers refer to as a Catch 22—a circular argument. This is a challenging anomaly faced by any firm wanting to expand into a new market where they have little experience. Of course there are ways to overcome the circular dilemma: strategic hires, partnering, and stacking a design team with experienced consultants. But these strategies cannot ease the anxiety of an architect who paradoxically complains: **"How am I supposed to become experienced if I can't get hired!"**

Contracts are full of provisions for events you hope never occur.

Our friends in the legal profession and the insurance business should be right at home with this paradox, as they live it every day. Legal agreements, in addition to defining expectations, also must anticipate the unexpected. They must balance the incongruity of allowing the architect to create a daring design while simultaneously minimizing risk. Perhaps it's an even greater paradox that in order to practice our profession—so focused on art, design, and public service—**we have to be cognizant of risk, liability, and the standard of reasonable care** when all we really want to do is create rewarding places for human habitation.

"Creativity is what I'm looking for—with a limited budget and on a short schedule."

This is the paradoxical refrain from many of our clients. Architecture is valued for its innovation and creativity, and yet innovation and creativity are sometimes the first casualties of limited budgets and tight schedules. To be sure, great architecture is often achieved on small budgets; for this we should be thankful and confer design awards. But too often, owners—our clients—pay lip service to good design only until they find out what it costs or how long it takes. **Creativity is our most prized asset and, paradoxically, often the first thing to be compromised.**

Theory rules the academy; practicality presides over practice.

In architecture school, we can't wait to graduate and focus on the real world of the profession; then when we've been in practice for a while, we yearn for just one commission with a budget adequate enough and an owner savvy enough to allow some real design freedom. Put another way, in architecture school, theory prevails; in practice, theory must be married to practicality. The real paradox here is that it takes both the academy and the profession, working together, to mold the complete architect. And yet, these two drivers of our professional development are so often at odds with each other. Some practitioners disparage the "ivory tower" mentality of the academy, and some academics decry practitioners who "sell out" in pursuit of business success over design. Why? **It's a paradox because both the academy and the profession are necessary to develop as a fully contributing architect.**

Those who are served eventually become servants.

How does this apply to architecture? Indulge me, please, in a bit of shameless AIA promotion. It has long been observed that individuals join associations and other groups in order to "be served"—to gain whatever benefits or privileges are offered by the group. **At some point, the individual's focus begins to change toward the idea of "being active"—volunteering for committees or leading initiatives.** Eventually, if the individual remains committed to the organization, his or her attitude shifts again, this time toward "giving back." The individual is no longer the one who is served, but has become, instead, a servant. My favorite advice to young professionals is this: When someone asks you to do something in AIA, say "Yes!" Do this long enough, and eventually you will become the one doing the asking—a transformational paradox if ever there was one.

A dream becomes a legacy.

I'm talking about firms here. Starting a firm is very different than perpetuating one. When a new firm is created, the partners are excited about being able to do their own design, manage their projects, and be close to their clients. **But if a firm is successful, eventually those founding partners may come to the realization that they must become leaders, delegators, and mentors.** Even more paradoxically, they must find, hire, and nurture their own successors—men and women who share their dreams and are committed to perpetuating a legacy.

The wealthy architect.

I suppose this is more of an oxymoron than a paradox, but it fits the definition of "a statement that seems impossible because it contains two opposite facts." One of the great anomalies of our profession is that architects are among the most respected of professionals—right up there with doctors and the clergy—and yet our compensation levels are on a par with mid-level managers and social workers. My personal belief is that this is a function of both what we do and how we do it. Many professions are valued because they deal with that which is tangible, empirical, measureable. Firmness, commodity, and delight (Vitruvius' *paradoxia*) are much more subjective judgments, particularly for the general public. Fortunately, there are ongoing efforts to measure the empirical results of what we do: evidence-based design, post-occupancy evaluations, LEED standards. **Maybe the paradox of respectability vs. compensation will begin to disappear as we develop more and better ways to quantify the results, and therefore the value of good design.**

To seek a mentor is to become one.

Like some of the other paradoxes in this list, this little axiom might apply to many other walks of life. However, I believe the drive to mentor and be mentored is as great in our profession as in any, and greater than in most. Maybe this is a result of our artistic and societal values. **We, as a learned and passionate profession, are highly motivated to learn from our elders as well as to pass on our values to younger generations.** By the way, a corollary to this paradox is yet another conundrum: You look up to your professional mentors for an entire career, yet when you achieve a certain level of gravitas yourself, you probably won't feel nearly as wise as those who mentored you. I speak from experience.

"Green architecture."

This term from the lexicon of sustainability is an example of paradox by the juxtaposition of two seemingly contradictory terms—"green," implying that which grows naturally, and "architecture," signifying that which is man-made. Here we see one of the most useful functions of paradox as a literary construct—its ability to make us think, to force us to consider an adjective and a noun that would not normally be used together. It is also memorable, and therefore serves the purpose of perpetuating and defining an ideology. **Sustainability is an ethical ideology of the architecture profession which is described by a paradoxical juxtaposition of words.**

"Less is more."

No list of architectural paradoxes would be complete without this little gem of incongruity, again courtesy of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. It's a paradoxical contradiction in the purest sense—a statement that may be true, but seems impossible to understand because it contains two opposite characteristics. This maxim is internalized by every architecture student who ever pulled an all-nighter—or at least it was until the Post Modernists came along, represented by their own enigmatic and paradoxical Robert Venturi who declared, "Less is a bore!" Nevertheless, **the practice of doing more with less is both a goal and a necessity for most architects.**

Maybe you noticed a fitting paradox in this very list—it has 11 items. Perfect irony for one who used to create "Top Tens" regularly. What's even more interesting is the propensity of architects to speak (and think) paradoxically! The ultimate irony of writing this article is that I have begun to discover architectural contradictions everywhere. I found inspiration from architectural icons like Philip Johnson: "Architecture is the art of how to waste space."

I also recalled paradoxical wisdom from some of my own mentors like Theodore Maffitt Jr., FAIA: "You'll never get any apples if you don't go out on a limb." That might not seem strictly paradoxical until you realize Ted was comparing picking apples to being a successful architect. ■

David Messersmith, FAIA has been an architect for over 35 years, both as a sole practitioner and in larger firms.



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Dallas

AIA **2016** DALLAS TOUR OF HOMES

Celebrating 10 Years with 10 Homes

Dallas' only citywide home tour, the 10th Annual AIA Dallas Tour of Homes, returns on Saturday and Sunday, October 29-30. The two-day, open-to-the-public tour showcases the work of some of the city's most talented architects, simultaneously highlighting some of the most innovative and outstanding residential design in the area. Curated exclusively by local architects, this year's tour and Premiere Party will feature 10 homes in neighborhoods across Dallas, including the Urban Reserve, Preston Hollow, Eagle Ford, Wilshire Heights, and Bluffview.

"After thoughtful review and deliberation 10 homes were selected for their architectural excellence and innovative concepts," said Tour of Homes committee co-chair Laura Baggett, AIA. "This 10th anniversary gives us the opportunity to remember the first homes on the tour and reaffirm the tour's mission of underscoring the important role that the architect plays in residential design."

Columns is pleased to present a sneak peek of the featured homes. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.hometourdallas.com.



VANDERBILT AVENUE

Buchanan Architecture

Architectural Design Team: Russell Buchanan, FAIA and Gary Orsinger, AIA
 General Contractor: Constructive General Contractors
 Structural Design: Stantec

Landscape Design: Aqua Terra Outdoors

Completed: 2015
 Square Footage: 3,700

PHOTOS BY JAMES WILSON



EAST RICKS CIRCLE

Bentley Tibbs Architect

General Contractor: Herman Darden
 Interior Design: Alice Cottrell
 Structural Design: Hightower Engineering
 Landscape Design: Hocker Design Group

MEP Design: Miller Service Company
 Lighting Design: Bill Jansing Lighting Consultants

Completed: 2016
 Square Footage: 8,500



PHOTOS BY CHARLES SMITH, AIA



VANGUARD WAY (I)

A Gruppo Architects

Architectural Design Team: Thad Reeves, AIA, Andrew Nance, AIA, Timothy Ballard, Jon Beck, and Brett Davidson

General Contractor & Interior Design: A Gruppo Architects

Structural Design: Moore Engineering Inc. & Childress Engineering Services

MEP Design: Nopp AC Shop
Sustainability Consultant: Energy IQ

Complete: 2015

Square Footage: 2,500



PHOTOS BY THAD REEVES, AIA



VANGUARD WAY (II)

Marek Architecture

Architectural Design Team: Scott Marek, AIA, and Hieu Le

General Contractor: Constructive Modern LLC

Interior Design: Kelly O'Neal

Structural Design: Childress Engineering Services

Completed: 2015

Square Footage: 2,400



PHOTOS BY HIEU LE



TULIP LANE

Domiteaux + Baggett Architects

Architectural Design Team: Mark Domiteaux, AIA, Laura Baggett, AIA, and Chris Anderson
General Contractor: Robert Hopson Construction Group
Interior Designer: Schlosser Design Group
Structural Design: Bury
Landscape Design: Imperial Landscape

Completed: 2015
Square Footage: 6,200



PHOTOS BY CHARLES SMITH, AIA



WINNWOOD ROAD

5G Studio

Architectural Design Team: Paul Merrill, AIA, Yen Ong, AIA, Lauren Cadieux, Eric Bartlett, and Ratima Suwanrumpha
General Contractor: Robert Hopson Construction Group
Interior Design: Designs by Lynn Rush

Structural Design: Datum Engineers Inc.
Landscape Design: Hocker Design Group
MEP Design: IEG Ltd.
Sustainability Consulting: Energy IQ

Completed: 2015
Square Footage: 4,800



PHOTOS BY JACOB TINDALL



CLOVER LANE

OFFICIAL

Architectural Design Team: Amy Wynne, AIA and Mark Leveno

General Contractor: Constructionologists

Structural Design: Evergreen Structures

Landscape Design: Studio Outside

MEP Design: Sims Engineering

Completed: 2016

Square Footage: 3,300



PHOTOS BY MARK LEVENO



PHOTOS BY CHARLES SMITH, AIA

GUERNSEY LANE

Welch Architecture

Architectural Design Team: Clifford Welch, AIA, Paul Vetter, AIA, Dean Bowman, and Will Erickson

General Contractor: Greg Bender Homes Inc.

Interior Design: Patty Echols Design Services

Structural Design: Element Engineering

Landscape Design: HTA Landscape Architecture

Completed: 2016

Square Footage: 3,828



TAOS ROAD

Mitchell Garman Architects

Architectural Design Team: Kelly Mitchell, AIA and Sean Garman, AIA

General Contractor: Hartman Construction

Structural Design: The Reedy Group

Landscape Design: Martinez & Associates

Furniture & Artwork Selection: Lee Lormand Design

Completed: 2016

Square Footage: 4,700

PHOTOS BY LEE LORMAND

THIS HOME IS EXCLUSIVE TO THE PREMIERE PARTY, WHICH WILL KICK OFF THE 2016 TOUR OF HOMES ON OCTOBER 26. PREMIERE PARTY TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.HOMETOURDALLAS.COM AND INCLUDE ADMISSION TO THE WEEKEND TOUR.



Malone Cliff View

Booziotis & Company Architects

Architectural Design Team: Bill Booziotis, FAIA, Jess Galloway, AIA, Yi Yu, and Fred Peña

General Contractor: Sebastian Construction Group

Interior Design: Suzy Kaye

Structural Design: Datum Engineers Inc.
Landscape Design: Kevin Sloan Studio
MEP Design: Eikon Engineering
Lighting Design: Scott Oldner Lighting Design

Completed: 2014

Square Footage: 8,546



PHOTOS BY CHARLES SMITH, AIA




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Profile | Mark Lamster

Somewhat akin to Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, New York native (and Yankees fan) Mark Lamster might have seemed out of his element when he arrived in "Big Tex" land three years ago to assume dual posts as architectural critic at *The Dallas Morning News* and professor in the architecture school at the University of Texas at Arlington. However, as reflected in his writings, Mark has quickly developed valued insights and prescient direction regarding North Texas, and has become one of the most important voices guiding the conversation about our region.

Mark is the author of several books, and is currently completing work on a biography of the late architect Philip Johnson. He has been honored by the Associated Press for his writing, and *D Magazine* has named him the best critic in Dallas for three consecutive years. He also received the David Dunnigan Media Award from the Greater Dallas Planning Council in 2014. He is spending the 2016-17 academic year on a Loeb Fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Dallas Architecture Forum executive director Nate Eudaly visited with Mark for this profile.

Where did you grow up and what did your parents do?

I was born and raised in Manhattan. My father was a computer engineer and my mother was the dean of a public school in Queens. I attended the New Lincoln School, a progressive private school that closed in the increasingly conservative 1980s.

What did you study in college?

I received my bachelor of arts degree in the writing seminars at Johns Hopkins University. While in school I worked in sports television, and took a job with



LIANE SWANSON

ESPN as a production assistant after college. It was not a happy experience. I decided to return to school and received my master's from Tufts University, studying art and architectural history. I considered pursuing a Ph.D, but decided I wanted to get out of academia, so I took a

job as an editor at the renowned independent publisher of literature and art books, George Braziller. From there I moved on to Princeton Architectural Press, where I was an editor for more than a decade.

What led you to Princeton Architectural Press? What were some of the more interesting projects you did there?

It was a wonderful place to work with lots of creative people and it was really at the forefront of architectural thinking. Beyond that, I pushed the house to look more at graphic design. Among the designers that I covered were Ellen Lupton, Paula Sher, Tibor Kalman, Robert Brownjohn, and Michael Beirut. I also edited books with architects, including John Johansen, Deborah Berke, Preston Scott Cohen, Stan Allen, Lewis Tsurumaki Lewis, and Polshek Partnership. Among my favorite projects was a series of books on landmark works of architecture, photographed by Ezra Stoller.

What is the story behind your writing *Spalding's World Tour* (a book about a worldwide tour by Spalding promoting baseball in 1888)?

Though I've always enjoyed art and architecture, I wanted to write a book that would give me a non-architecture outlet.

What were the main reasons you took the positions with the DMN and UTA?

There are very few opportunities to write for a major newspaper as a critic and there was a great opportunity offered here in Dallas. It was an offer I couldn't refuse.

What has surprised you about Dallas?

I had fairly realistic expectations about the city. It is gratifying to see that people in Dallas are open to new ideas and that so many have a progressive mindset. Being here has made me even more aware of the stark economic disparity that exists in the city.

The Loeb Fellowship is a great opportunity and honor. What do you hope to gain from the time at Harvard?

I am comfortable writing about buildings from a historical focus. When I came to *The Dallas Morning News*, I wanted to write about Dallas as a city with an emphasis on its urban environment. I'm planning to use the fellowship to expand my knowledge of urban planning and policy. I'd like to not only write about the city's flaws, but also address what can be done to fix those flaws.

What do you think Dallas has going for it?

Dallas has great ideas, but there are too many of them. There is lots of money in this city and people who care enough to make needed changes.

What do you consider to be Dallas' biggest challenge?

Dysfunction in how the city is organized, lack of accountability, and a history of events that lead to distrust.

How can the greater Dallas area create a more livable urban environment?

Be willing to invest the funds needed to create good civic infrastructure. Elevate the level of quality we accept from developers. Create a greater pedestrian-friendly environment.

You have written very eloquently about Dallas being a city of paradoxes. What do you see as some of the major paradoxes facing Dallas at this time? [See Mark's September 2014 article "Welcome to Dallas: Paradox

MARK'S FAVORITES

Book: *Austerlitz* by W.G. Sebald. It explores the meaning of architecture through the framework of memory and history.

Movie: *Annie Hall*

Music: Battles, The Beastie Boys, and Bach.

TV shows: "Better Call Saul," "The Wire," and "Taxi."

Favorite foods: Mapo tofu. Look it up.

Ideal vacation: A drive around Monument Valley.

City" in *The Dallas Morning News* at dallasnews.com.]

Well, the prime example is the idea that we are going to build a park between the levees, but then also drive a highway through that space. It's hard to imagine another city doing that right now. And then there's downtown, which is awash in garages and surface lots, but still—according to developers—lacking parking. Or the fact that we have a rapid transit



LIANE SWANSON

system with more track than any other major city, but the ridership is poor. Or that it is both the wealthiest and poorest of cities at once. Dallas often seems caught in a cycle of talking about making a better future, but then the results don't always materialize. That's the central paradox.

What sparks your creativity?

It's important to me to stay engaged culturally. I try to keep up with my reading and visit as many museum and gallery shows as possible.

How do you recharge?

I'm a big NBA fan. The New York Knicks are my team, but I also support the Dallas Mavs, though I think they could use a big design upgrade across the board.

In 15 years will papers still have architecture critics?

I hope so, but it's nothing to take for granted. Critics will only be around as long as their writing is relevant and engaging to readers.

What are new or developing ways that architecture critics can educate and inform the public?

Critics need to embrace and use new media to reach a growing younger audience. This includes Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, radio, podcasts—whatever.

Who are/were your mentors?

Kevin Lippert, the publisher of Princeton Architectural Press, was a great mentor and someone I still admire. He built a company from scratch that I think is really a benefit to the community. And when he could have gone off and made a fortune elsewhere, he stuck to it because that was what he loved.

What did you learned about Phillip Johnson that was "new news" to you from your research for the bio you are writing?

I have learned quite a bit of new information about Johnson, both in his personal and professional lives, but I think my publisher will not be happy about

spilling details before the book is in print.

With which five architects (living or deceased) would you want to share a lively evening of conversation?

Several possibilities. I'd enjoy an evening with Frank Lloyd Wright by himself since no one else would be able to get a word in. I have a friend in Moscow, Alexander Brodsky, with whom I'd also enjoy a long evening of conversation. Lebbeus Woods would be another person for a one-on-one visit. The five I'd have together are Philip Johnson, Eero Saarinen, Marcel Breuer, Stanford White, and Lou Kahn. ■

Nate Eudaly, Hon. AIA Dallas is the executive director of the Dallas Architecture Forum.

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Go online to enjoy a view of Mark's photography of the content and contexts that make up the architecture all around us. www.aiadallas.org/columns/lamsterphotos.

For more on Mark in his own words, visit Instagram and Twitter: @marklamster.

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Lost & Found | Williams, Dewitt & Neutra's Avion Village

By David Preziosi



AVION VILLAGE AND ARTIST IN THE SKY, LLC

In Grand Prairie, there is a most unique housing development designed by three architects who played an important part in World War II efforts. The 300-unit development, Avion Village, opened in 1941 as part of a massive project to build 21,000 units of worker housing in proximity to critical defense industry sites across the country.

A lack of affordable housing for factory workers was a major issue as war efforts were ramping up and the situation provided the federal government with an opportunity to experiment in planning and architecture. Prefabrication and mass production building techniques were also used in an effort to lower the cost of quality housing. The Division of Defense

Housing of the Federal Works Agency, which was in charge of the project, commissioned well-known architects to design the housing developments.

For Avion Village, local architect David Williams was asked to head up the effort. He engaged Roscoe Dewitt and Richard Neutra to help. The Grand Prairie site was built to serve the nearby North American Aviation factory. Avion—French for “airplane”—was chosen for the name with Williams stating, “This is in keeping with our plans to make the housing project a park-like development, streamlined like the airplanes on which its tenants will work.”

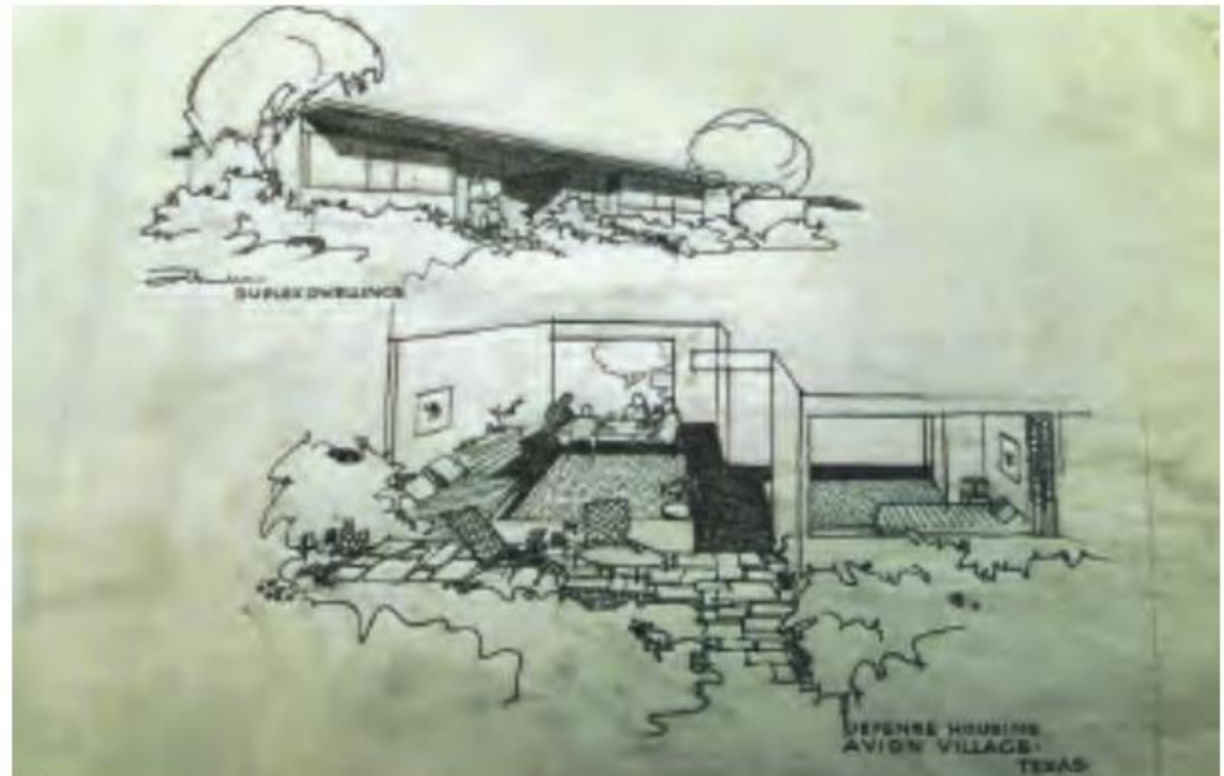
The basis for the development was the Garden City planning concept: residential structures built on small lots that opened

up to large common areas, creating a park-like setting for residents to enjoy. In the case of Avion, the design featured a large central open park area with a ring of residential streets that terminated in cul-de-sacs at the edge of the park area.

The layout of the development also facilitated the exceedingly quick construction of all 300 units in 100 days. The community center was built first so it could serve as the offices for the architect and contractors during the construction. Equipment and materials for fabrication of the building components were located in large circus tents erected in the open park area. Rails were laid from the tents out onto the construction site and push trucks were used to deliver the prefabricated sections of the houses.



LEFT: An aerial photo shows Avion Village's layout as a garden city. **BELOW:** Sketches from the architect show the design concept for the duplexes and how the flat overhanging roofs were intended to shade the large window openings from the Texas sun. The cut-away of the interior shows the openness of the interior and how it relates to the outside. **BOTTOM:** The houses in Avion Village were grouped on small cul-de-sacs with easy access to the central park through a pedestrian greenway. Even though they have been altered with new siding, windows, and carports, the overall form and intent remains.



WILLIAMS, DEWITT & NEUTRA



WILLIAMS, DEWITT & NEUTRA

The housing built for Avion included one-story houses, built mostly as duplexes, and two-story apartments with four units each. Each housing unit contained a living room, dining room, two bedrooms, a bath, and a kitchen. The houses were designed in a simple modern style with flat roofs, wood siding, and devoid of ornamentation. Large windows were employed with large glass doors opening up onto patios to maximize airflow. They were also designed to face a small pedestrian greenway leading to the central park. The rear was only used to access parking and the street in true Garden City fashion. The apartments were all constructed on the development's western edge using the same design features as the houses with the exception

of brick veneer end walls and projecting covered porches for each unit.

To promote the new development, Williams came up with the idea of a "house race" which pitted two teams of workers against each other to see which could construct a prefabricated house the fastest. The press and nearby mayors and townfolk were invited to the race to witness firsthand which team would prevail. The winning team finished in an incredible 57 minutes and 58 seconds and two minutes later a "model" family moved in, cooking in the kitchen while a young lady enjoyed a bath.

In 1948, the federal government sold the development to Avion Village Mutual Housing Corporation, and it continues to

be mutually owned by residents. The design of the houses has been altered over the years with the addition of new siding, replacement of windows and doors, and addition of carports and porches. The original intent of this groundbreaking development, produced by important architects, is still alive, however. Avion Village continues to be a wonderful and affordable place for families to live—75 years later. ■

David Preziosi is the executive director of Preservation Dallas.

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD
Discover more about Avion Village through additional photos.
www.aiadallas.org/columns/avion

Profile | Gary Cunningham, FAIA

Born and raised in Dallas, Gary Cunningham is a highly respected native son. Founder and principal of Cunningham Architects, Gary has steered his firm to win more than 50 design awards. Among them are honors from AIA Dallas, the Texas Society of Architects, the University of Texas at Arlington, the University of Texas at Austin, and the Architectural League of New York. Nate Eudaly, Hon. AIA Dallas recently visited with him for this profile for *Columns* magazine.



KURT GRIESBACH

How and when did you become involved in architecture?

I attended Cistercian Preparatory School in Irving, from the elementary grades through high school, and then went to college at UT-Austin. In high school, I liked art. My dad encouraged me to study architecture. My dad was a manufacturer's representative for plumbing products who called on architects and engineers. At UT-Austin, the set-up was pretty primitive. We had big folding tables, and not much else. Dan Shipley and I hung out a lot with the visiting critics. Some of them were Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, and O'Neil Ford. We had to learn how to think fast, but it was a great environment. Chuck Burnett from Philadelphia (Lou Kahn contingent) was the dean when I was there; he was followed by Hal Box.

What are some of the more interesting projects you have done?

I've been fortunate to get to work on a lot of great projects. One was the Cistercian Chapel. Since I had attended Cistercian, I had already been greatly influenced by the monks, who were very important in the school set-up. I had the same headmaster from fourth grade through my high school graduation. The chapel was completed in 1991 and the 900th anniversary of the founding of the Cistercian Order was celebrated in 1997. The building design is Romanesque, as a historical context to the founding of the order. The Andres family, who had also attended Cistercian, were the contractors on the job.

Addison Conference and Theatre Centre was also a great project with strong community support. City Manager

Ron Whitehead and Jim Duffey from the city council had a great vision for what the theatre should be. They were supportive throughout the design process.

The Temple Emanu-El project is obviously an important project because of Howard Meyer's iconic design and the central place it holds in the lives of so many Dallas families. It has been an extensive process, working with a very involved building committee over the last eight years, but I'm excited about the results. The project is challenging and the client demanding and smart—ingredients that make for a great project.

You are completing 40 years in practice. What are your goals for the next 40?

My goal continues to be to understand

Among projects exhibiting Cunningham's design skills are, clockwise from right, the Cathedral of Hope Interfaith Peace Chapel, Casa Caja private residence, The Powerhouse private residence renovation, and the Cistercian Abbey Chapel.



PHOTOS BY CUNNINGHAM ARCHITECTS

and care for the culture of the client. Every community and every family has its own culture. It is imperative that my team and I learn what that culture is and develop a design that complements and enhances the vision of that culture.

I value clients that push us, but who are fair and open-minded. Frank Aldridge, who was one of my first clients, certainly epitomizes this. Another of my more interesting clients was the Southern Ute Indian tribe. It was very important that I understood their cultural heritage so that our design would be appropriate for them.

I approach my projects with no pre-determined outcomes. After 40 years as an architect and 35 with my own firm, I have the following goals:

- Stay in business
- Put business ethics before profits

- Mentor and work with young people
- Collaborate
- Engage clients who have a passion for life
- Be philanthropic
- Keep going until I die

What are some of the most challenging work situations you have encountered and how did you resolve them?

Occasionally I haven't been the right fit for a client and their project. I've learned to step off the project when needed. My team, especially Tom Dohearty, provides good judgment about the projects we take. At times in the economic cycle a big challenge has been making payroll and balancing the books. I've learned it's important to address problems early on before they become too large to handle.

What does your typical day look like?

Most days are unique, but I would categorize them into two main buckets: client interaction and everything else. I still draw by hand, which furthers my creativity, but I also spend big chunks of the day planning logistics and driving to job sites.

What sparks your creativity?

Seeing new things, interacting with people, and exploring the unknown. There can't be too many cooks in the kitchen. I want to be in there cooking with all of them.

What advice would you give a young person considering a career in architecture?

Simplify! Learn about everything you can. Be a generalist and be smart enough to engage with your client.

BELOW: Cunningham's creative juices flowed freely on the conceptual sketch of the Addison Conference and Theatre Centre.

Who are/were your mentors?

Early in my career, it was the guys at HOK, people like Charles McCameron. My current mentors are the members of my studio team.

How would you define your architectural style?

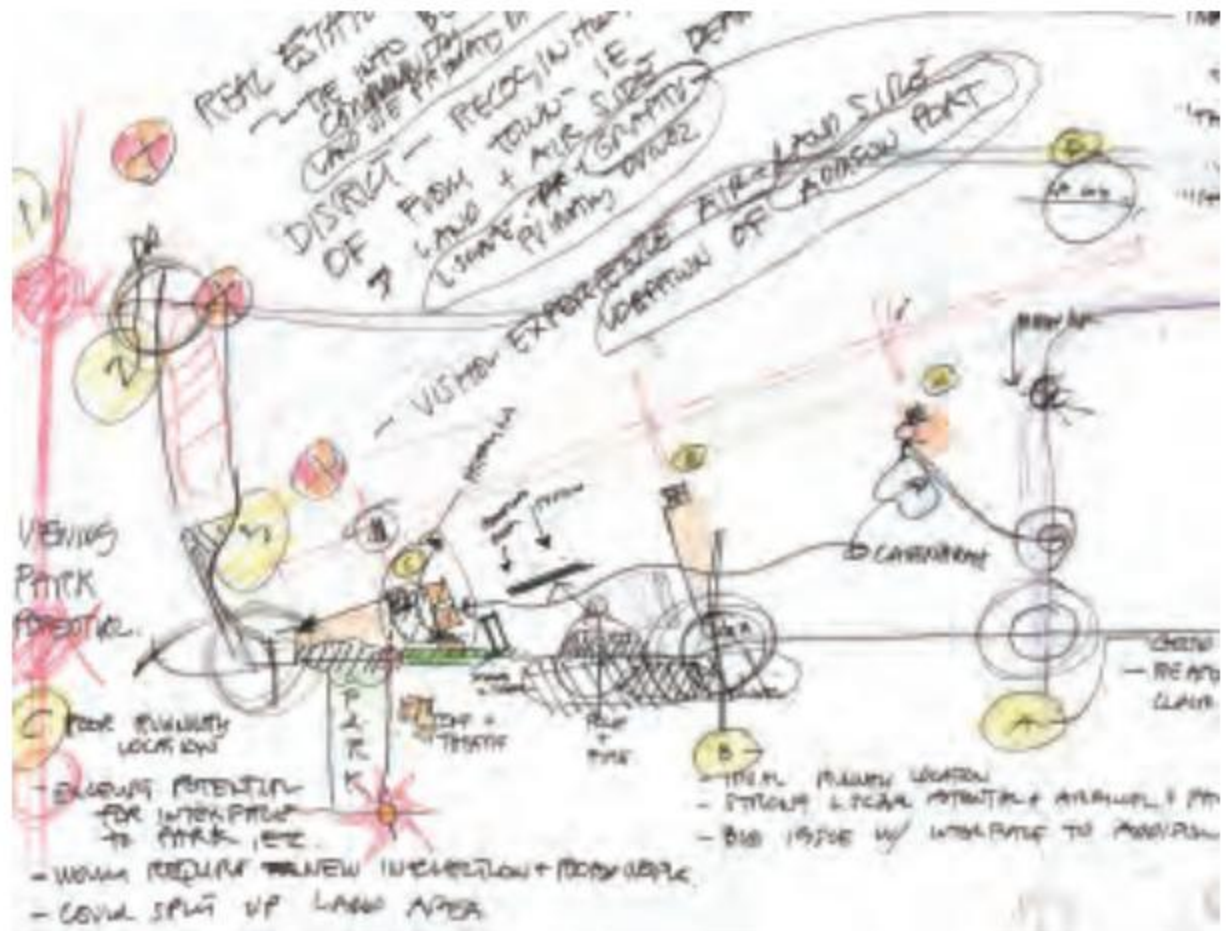
My design is focused on the "purpose" of the project more than on the aesthetics. I strive to understand my client's vision and then create a design that extends that vision.

With which five architects or artists (living or deceased) would you want to share a good bottle of wine?

Michelangelo, Andy Warhol, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, and Frederick Olmsted.

What do you consider the most interesting developments in Dallas since you started practicing?

I started with HOK in 1976 and formed my own practice in 1981. Over this time



CUNNINGHAM ARCHITECTS

period I've seen Dallas support more contemporary design. Patrons such as Deedie Rose and Frank Aldridge have led this charge. There has been a rise in the creative class and a greater usage of landscape architects.

What are the best things Dallas has going for it?

North Texas has a vital arts scene. It has well-respected museums. I've been fortunate to mentor some incredibly talented architects including Russell Buchanan, Sharon Odum, Paul Field, Braxton Werner, Bang Dang, and Rizi Faruqi. All of them were with my studio and now have their own successful practices here in Dallas. They are representative of some of the talented designers we have here in the city.

What do you see as the biggest challenges Dallas faces?

Like most major urban areas, Dallas has quite a few. Some of them are climate change, air pollution, and water conservation. We also have infrastructure challenges—too many highways. We need to develop a 21st century mindset that includes new ways of looking at transportation, including driverless cars and more mass transit.

How can the greater Dallas area create a more livable urban environment?

We should nurture more programs like Better Block and support initiatives that foster these types of concepts. We need a lot of little projects instead of focusing so much on big projects. We should eliminate wholesale demolition and repurpose buildings such as I've been fortunate to do with The Pump House and The Power Station.

This issue of Columns focuses on the theme of "Paradox." What do you think are some of the major paradoxes we encounter in Dallas?

One of the most glaring paradoxes I see about our city is our obsession with the car and its choking impact on culture. The culmination of this is our obsession with placing a highway between the levees on the Trinity River. That's a move that would trash the one chance we have of making an important place of recreation and nature for our city. ■

Nate Eudaly, Hon. AIA Dallas is the executive director of the Dallas Architecture Forum.

MORE FROM GARY

View photos and drawings by this award-winning architect. www.aiadallas.org/columns/cunningham

GARY'S FAVORITES

Books: Humor by the likes of Kurt Vonnegut. I also enjoy reading about the historical Jesus and do my share of skimming controversial science-related books like *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* by Edward Wilson.

Movies: Humor like *Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* by Wes Anderson, Stanley Kubrick movies, bad sci-fi and horror, and of course movies that I can watch with my 11-year-old daughter.

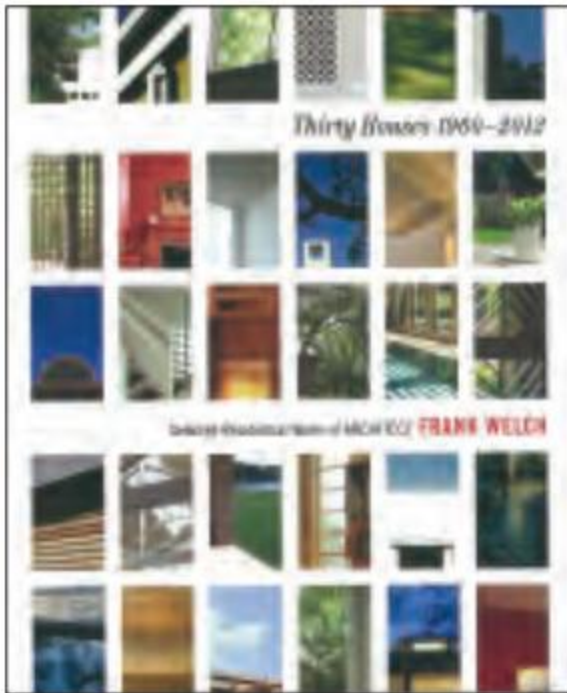
Music: I have a large vinyl record collection and enjoy listening to rock, jazz, and folk artists with recordings from the 1950s on.

TV shows: I try to not watch the news.

Spare time entertainment: I like to travel and hang out with my kids. I go to a variety of places, from Austin and San Antonio to the Yucatan Peninsula and the Galápagos Islands.

Ideal vacation: A National Geographic trip, anywhere they go.

Ways to recharge: Play music, ride my bike.



Thirty Houses 1960 – 2012: Selected Residential Works of Architect Frank Welch

In the foreword to this book, Mark Gunderson, AIA reminds us of the paradox embodied within the best houses: "They hold, or manifest, the timeless in a specific place and time."

Frank Welch, FAIA is most widely recognized for his small limestone shelter "The Birthday" which "was precisely the kind of structure in which the ancient and contemporary coexist: quietly and without tension." Welch contributed this and all residential descriptions in the book.

The 30 impeccable houses explored in this volume (published by Eastland Books) all share a powerful yet quiet modernity—with clear design vision—making not just an object to be admired,

but spaces for the owners to dwell within and make their own.

In the afterword, Mark Wellen, FAIA remarks, "His houses are much like the man himself: approachable, polite, and casually elegant, yet distinctive. They are quietly calming in their sense of place, while embodying the aspirations of the occupants."

Welch's concise descriptions place the work in context and let the houses speak for themselves—both poetically and powerfully. ■

Lisa Lamkin, AIA is a principal with BRW Architects.



Twenty Over Eighty: Conversations on a Lifetime in Architecture and Design

In this intriguing book, we are invited to 20 richly interesting conversations from a diverse list of people—all legends—who represent a sampling of "the vital few" of great and enduring influences, presented democratically in alphabetical order from Ralph Caplan to Beverly Willis.

Ralph Caplan describes the importance of constraints and why he asks design students to write sonnets. "A sonnet ... is nothing but constraints. You can't design anything without them. And it's absolutely essential that you know what they are as soon as possible."

Michael Graves remembers at age eight drawing Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck for his mother's friends. His mom gave him good advice: "Don't be an artist unless you are going to be as good as Picasso ... use drawing in a profession."

The next day he started drawing houses. The rest is history.

Denise Scott Brown, Hon. FAIA shares joyful memories of moving into an International Style house at the age of four, and provides insights in her adult work in collaboration with her partner, Robert Venturi, FAIA. She also gives us very good advice: "What you must do is make the most of it."

Learning from these legends, will you be challenged and inspired? "Here's to the vital few!"

The book by authors Aileen Kwun and Bryn Smith was published by Princeton Architectural Press. ■

Lisa Lamkin, AIA is a principal with BRW Architects.

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In Context | Ronald Kirk Pedestrian Bridge

Continued from page 25



MICHAEL CAGLE, ASSOC. AIA

The Continental Avenue Bridge carried traffic over the Trinity River for 80 years before it was closed to the automobile and reimagined as a Dallas park in 2014.

The opening of the adjacent Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge had made Continental Bridge redundant for carrying motorists between downtown and West Dallas, so its \$12 million conversion began. The traffic lanes were replaced with 39 trellis and shade structures, a playground,

parking for food trucks, a spray fountain, lounge chairs, a bocce court, a life-size chess board, and a meditation labyrinth—all with a panoramic view of downtown and the showier Calatrava-designed bridge beside it.

Transformation of the 2,105-foot-long bridge was funded by an anonymous \$10 million donation to The Trinity Trust in the name of Mary McDermott Cook and an additional \$2 million in city bond money. In May, the historic structure was renamed the Ronald Kirk Pedestrian Bridge in honor of the former Dallas mayor.

The bridge, originally known as the Lamar-McKinney Viaduct, was constructed in 1930, but would not carry traffic for another two years when the eastern approach lanes were finally completed. It was one of four bridges built that decade to relieve traffic congestion on the

Houston Street Viaduct—the only Dallas bridge spanning the Trinity at the time.

The structure, designed by engineer Francis Dey Hughes, is composed of 43 concrete T-beam spans with a center 120-foot steel-plate girder span over the main river channel. The use of steel was considered visionary at the time, allowing flexibility should the Trinity ever become navigable to commercial vessels traveling between Dallas and the Gulf of Mexico. A drawbridge could be added to allow passage of the tall ships that city leaders hoped would eventually travel the waterway.

Although that vision never came to fruition, the Continental Bridge remained an important connection in Dallas for many years. Now it has become notable as a destination in itself, an integral part of a revitalized West Dallas. ■



HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

LEFT: The steel structure under the bridge's center span was novel for its time.

Contributed by Cindy Smith, AIA an architect with Gensler.

A man with short brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses, a light blue dress shirt, a patterned tie, and a grey suit jacket. He has a red and orange pocket square in his jacket. The background is dark.

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