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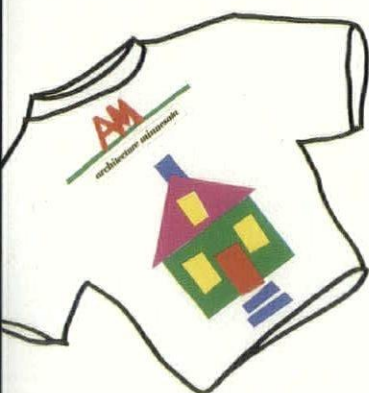
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Cover: The playful, childlike quality of fine artist Alex Boies's work makes for an inspiring AM cover this issue, but don't let the cover gather dust after you've read the magazine. Tell your friends about AM by buying a 100 percent cotton T-shirt featuring this month's cover illustration. The Ts come in large and extra large and are available for \$10 at Odegard Books and the AM offices, both at International Market Square. For more information on how to get your T-shirt NOW! call 338-6763.

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AM

sketches

About the cover

When we decided that our cover for the September/October issue should be something unexpected and colorful to express this issue's theme of play in design, we knew there was only one person for us—Alex Boies. Alex's illustrations epitomize the playful and childlike, and they're popping up in some of the most unexpected places: as an outdoor mural on a theater on E Block in downtown Minneapolis, and even as the paint job of an MTC bus.

Alex says color has always been a part of her life and she lists Hockney and Matisse as influences. She got into fine art through the back door. For 7 years she worked for Close Associates as an office manager before getting an interior-design certificate. She holds three art degrees, and though she largely has worked in one-dimensional illustration, she is branching out into three-dimensional work, hoping to do large-scale public sculptures. Among her clients are Dayton's, Esprit, Hallmark, Carmichael/Lynch, Benjamin Thompson & Associates and most recently a Japanese comic-book publisher that will help promote her T-shirts. But Alex says her heart is always with architects—and just to prove her point she married one, Merle Hansen, this past July 4 at the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden.

T-shirts of the cover are available for \$10 at the Minnesota Society of Architects office and Odegard Books, both at International Market Square.



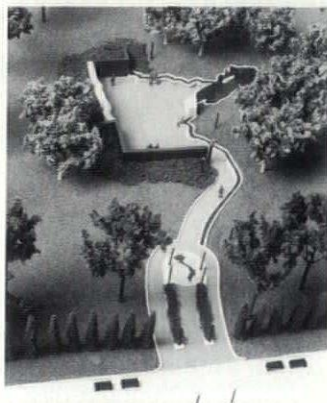
JUDY OLAUSEN

Vietnam memorial

A granite plaza in the shape of Minnesota was selected from 218 submissions in a national competition for a public memorial to honor Minnesotans killed in the Vietnam War. To be located on the Capital grounds in St. Paul northwest of the Veterans Service Building, *Lakefront D.M.Z.*, designed by artists Nina Ackerberg, Jake Castillo and Stanton Sears and architect Rich Laffin, features 9-foot stone walls and several shallow bodies of water representing the Red, St. Croix and Mississippi rivers and Lake Superior.

In the submission, a walkway leads past a granite inlay of Vietnam toward an open plaza, defined on its southern border by a 9-foot, gray-green wall with the names of the 1,030 Minnesota casu-

alties, along with the 42 still missing. Designed as a place for solemnity, the plaza, which many jurors praised for its strong sense of place, also celebrates homecoming. Scattered throughout the plaza's floor will be 2-inch black-granite tiles marking the hometowns of those killed or missing. Indigenous Minnesota trees and bushes will surround the plaza. The state is contributing \$300,000 toward the \$1.2 million plaza, which is expected to be completed in September 1991. The competition was sponsored by the Capital Area Architectural and Planning Board and the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Inc. FORECAST Public Artworks managed the competition.



Word for Word

[ar·ki·tekt] Because the need for shelter is so fundamental to human life, it comes as no surprise to learn that the word *architect* has ancient roots. It appears first in Greek as *arkhitekton*, meaning chief or principal builder/craftsman. The *American Heritage Dictionary* suggests that the word combines two earlier Indo-European roots: *arkhein* (to begin, rule, command) and *teks* (to weave; to fabricate, especially with an ax; also to make wicker or wattle). These roots can be traced in other common words, such as *archbishop*, *archetype* and *monarch*, which incorporate the root *arkhein* to suggest leadership. Such words as *textile*, *context* and *technology* allude to the weaver's craft that was at the core of ancient wattle-and-daub construction. In this earliest building technique, saplings were woven then fortified with mud to form weather-tight walls.

Together these roots shed some interesting light on architectural history. The tradition of the architect as the crafter of buildings reached its peak with the architect-masons of the Gothic cathedrals, who had mastered both the skills of design and hands-on construction. Today, architects share the design role with a variety of engineers and a growing array of specialists; construction is left to others. In our increasingly complex world, a more intricate weaving of skills is required to fashion the fabric of architecture.

Bill Beyer

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Megamall takes shape

Nobody believed it would ever happen when proposals were first made five years ago to build the largest enclosed mall in the United States in Bloomington, Minn. Today construction cranes are churning up ground on the old Metropolitan Stadium site, and the steel frame is taking shape. The Fashion Mall of America indeed is coming, and when it opens in fall 1992, the 4.2 million-square-foot retail gi-

ant will have four major department stores, four junior department stores, more than 400 specialty stores, 1,000 hotel rooms and numerous restaurants and nightclubs.

The developers, Melvin Simon & Associates of Indianapolis and Triple Five Corporation of Canada, are banking on a hefty tourist trade to feed into the \$630 million mall. To that end, the mall will contain a number of tourist attractions, such as the 7-acre Camp Snoopy theme park and a 1.2 million-gallon aquarium called Undersea World America. And if that's not enough, the mall will also offer Golf Mountain, a high-tech miniature golf course, a sports-and-recreation area, 18 movie screens, as well as international retailers. The four main retail wings that encircle the mall will be designed as distinct neighborhoods. The high-tech, eclectic look of East Village, for example, is designed to appeal to the younger, trendier shopper. Throughout the mall, skylights, scrubs, trees and even an indoor stream will provide a diverse atmosphere.

Endangered species

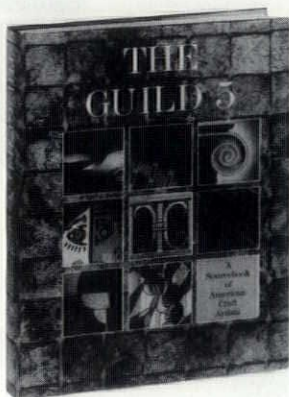
A big question mark has surrounded the future of the Minneapolis Armory for quite some time now. Hennepin County, which now owns complete rights to the property, wants to raze the classic WPA structure to make room for a county jail. The city, however, sees value in saving the building and perhaps using it for a downtown youth center for such activities as sporting events, dances and concerts. The Minneapolis Park Board, which would like a downtown activity center, certainly endorses this proposal. If the city can persuade Hennepin County to opt for an alternative site (one near the airport has been suggested) the building could be saved. But demolition cranes could move in within a year, and Minneapolis will have lost another landmark in the name of progress.



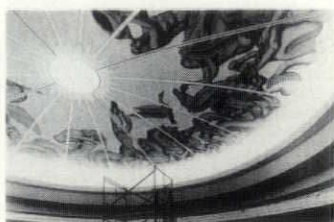
A crafty guide

The fifth edition of *The Guild 5*, an insider's guide to contemporary craft work, features 416 American artists in more than 1,000 full-color photographs. The glossy book enables the design professional or collector to review the portfolios of craftspeople around the country. The artists' names,

addresses and telephone numbers are included. *The Guild 5*, published by Kraus Sikes Inc., New York, can be ordered by calling (508) 546-9590.



A gussied-up Dayton's



With the likes of Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman-Marcus encroaching on the Minneapolis retail scene, Dayton's has launched an aggressive campaign to upgrade and expand its department stores by building new facilities at several locations. The first of the new Dayton's to open this August is at Southdale, which is undergoing an entire mall overhaul. And though the exterior of this 4-level, 370,000-square-foot store looks ominously like something that dropped from Planet X, the interior is a display of high-fashion chic. Hand-painted domes above the elevator/escalator systems, designed by Evergreen of New York, are richly detailed in cream, cocoa and copper tones with gold leaf and silver. One dome depicts Neptune rising from the sea and the other Apollo racing against the setting sun. A glass oculus caps each dome. The 400-foot-long main aisle reflects art-deco influences with graduated dropped ceilings.

The New York firm of Slomanson, Smith and Barresi Architects oversaw the exterior architecture. Tucci, Segrete and Rosen, Interior Consultants of New York, worked with the store's design department on the interiors. Bentz/Thompson/Rietow directed the architectural, electrical and mechanical work.

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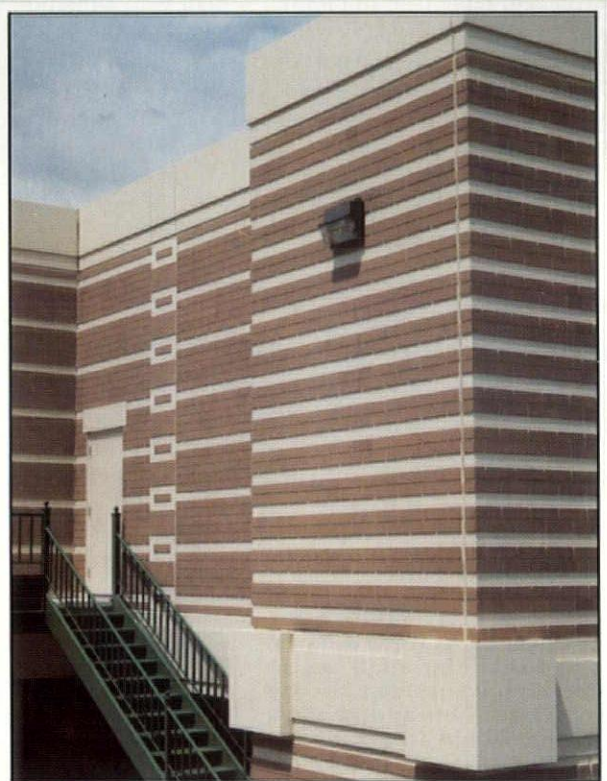


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previews

**Tours of the Purcell-Cutts House
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One of Minneapolis's finest examples of Prairie School architecture is open to the public beginning Sept. 8 following extensive restoration by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Designed in 1913 by Willam Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie, contemporaries of Frank Lloyd Wright and major proponents of Prairie School architecture, the Purcell-Cutts House in Kenwood is a study in Prairie School at its best, with its emphasis on unity of design, materials, site and floor plan.

The house is open to the public every weekend in September and on selected Saturdays thereafter. Admission is free but reservations are required and available through the Visitor Information Center, 870-3131.

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To make reservations, call "History Tours" at 426-3238 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

**Architecture: The Global
Perspective**

**Wednesday-Friday,
Oct. 31-Nov. 2**

**Minneapolis Convention
Center**

**Exhibits are free and open to
the public; for program admis-
sion call 338-6763**

How architecture can address the environmental and social challenges of the planet's future is the focus of this year's 56th annual MSAIA convention and

products exposition. Among the speakers to discuss such issues as urban design, integrating global concerns into the practice of architecture and an economic-development plan for Minnesota are architecture critic Michael Sorkin (Oct. 31), New York architect William McDonough (Nov. 1) and Pacific Institute futurist Michael Fitzgerald (Nov. 2).

Also on hand are more than 250 regional and national exhibitors displaying products ranging from the fine arts and furniture to the latest in computer software and building materials. Highlights this year include a silent auction featuring, among other items, furniture, artwork and design services. And an exhibition showcases artwork by area architects.

For a schedule of events contact the MSAIA office at 338-6763.



*Architect William McDonough lectures
Nov. 1 at the Minneapolis Convention
Center.*

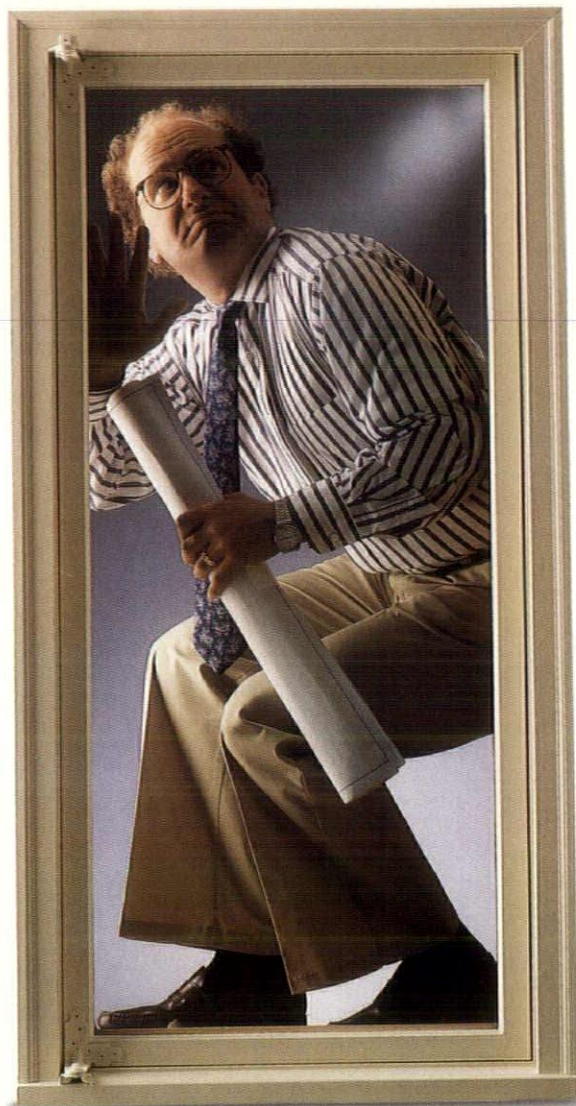
**Architecture for the City
Through Sept. 23
Landmark Center galleries
Minnesota Museum of Art
Free and open to the public**

The architecture firm Kohn Pederson Fox, given the 1990 "Firm of the Year" award by the American Institute of Architects, is the subject of this Minnesota

Museum of Art retrospective. Among the projects documented is the new St. Paul Companies headquarters, located just north of Landmark Center.

For information call 292-4355.

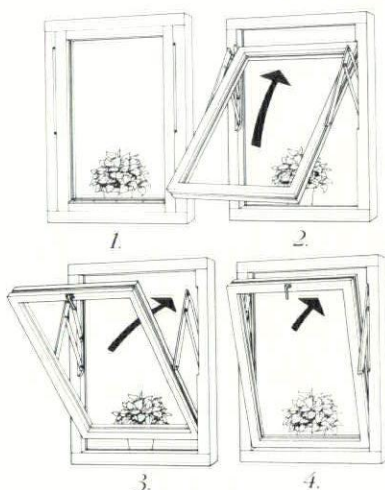
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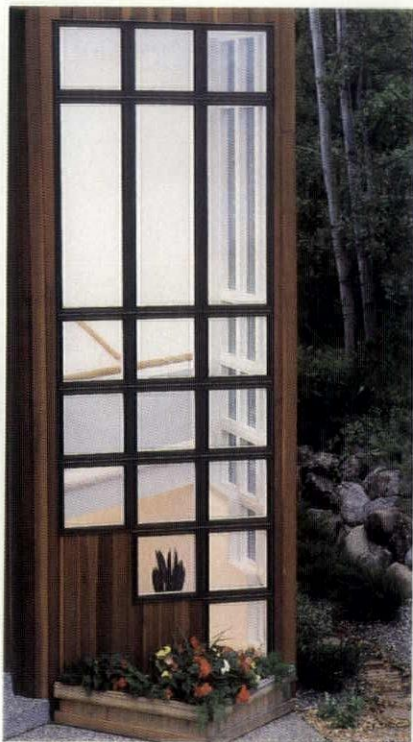
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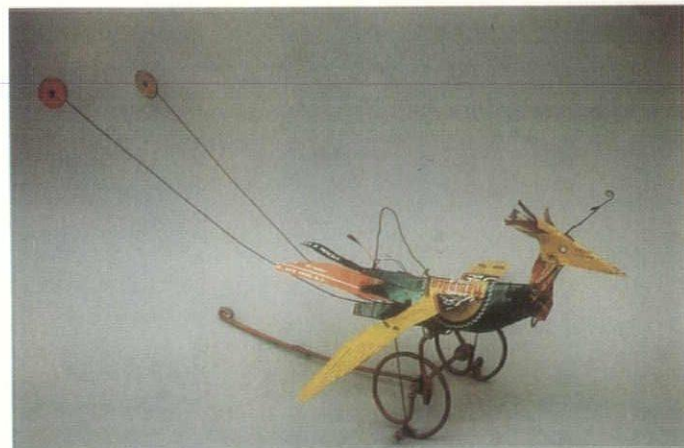
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objects of design

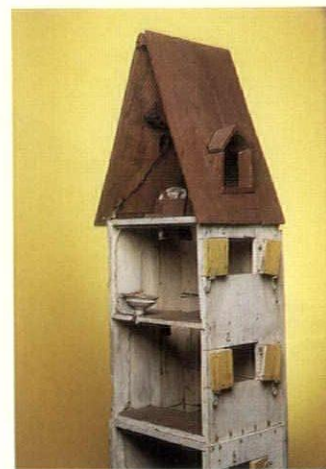
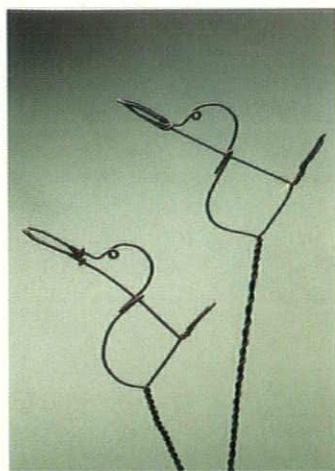
From trash to treasures

To breathe easier when he had a bad cold, Alexander Calder once suspended a piece of camphor under his nose with a wire that also looped around his ears. Such good-natured ingenuity marks all of his creations, whether they be monumental sculptures of painted steel or delicate necklaces of hammered brass. "Above all...art should be happy," he was fond of saying, and this childlike exuberance characterizes the objects shown here, which were recently on exhibit at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Sandra L. Lipshultz



"If you can substitute an old piece of junk and make it serve as well as something more costly," Calder wrote to his sister, "you win." For *Bird on Wheels* (above), he used discarded beer and coffee cans, and for his playful cigarette holders (below left), bits of wire. His large serving fork (center) is of silver, and a 1945 dollhouse (below right) for his daughters was made from old wooden crates and includes a doorbell, elevator, flush toilet and electric lights.



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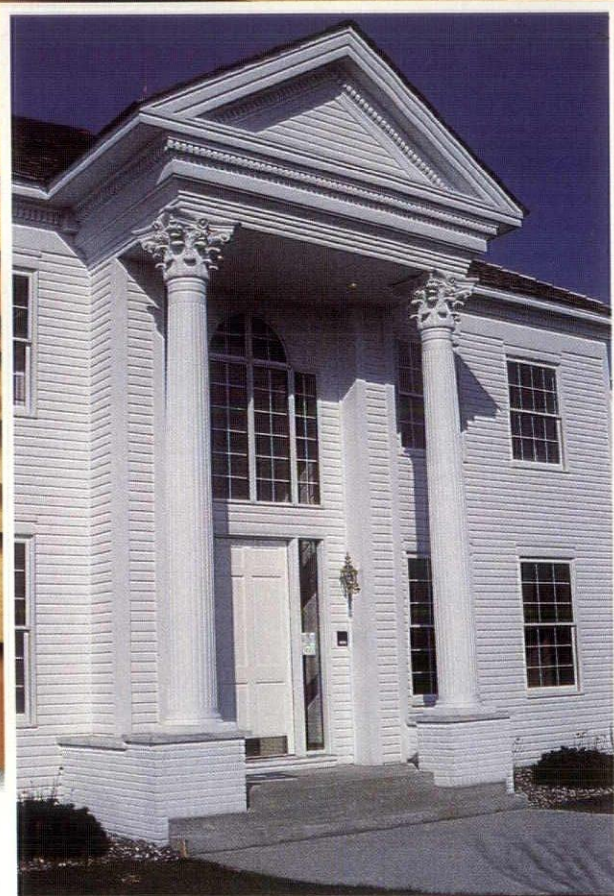
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A lifelong devotee of circuses and zoos, Calder drew and sculpted animals throughout his career. Birds, like the vivacious crow here with its bright crest of feathers, appeared frequently in his work. Perhaps such magical creatures as this led the artist to boast, "My fan mail is enormous: everybody is under 6."

E



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up close

Gary Mahaffey

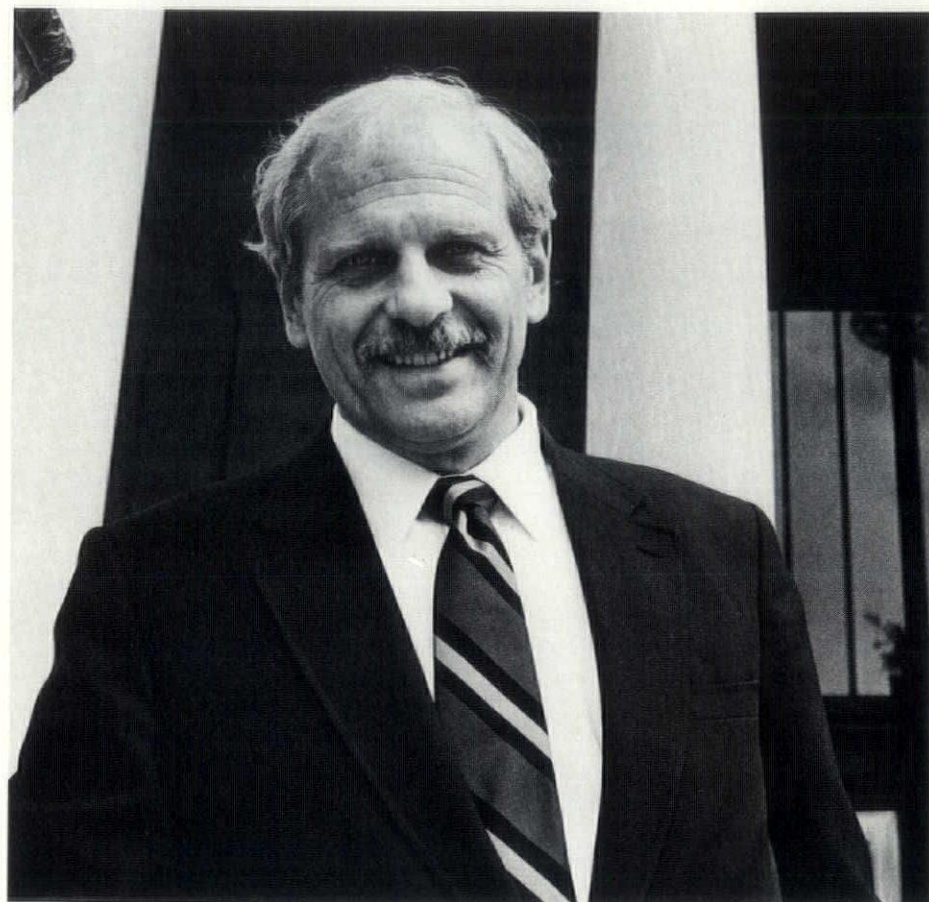
By Bruce N. Wright

"Philosophically, I prefer to build rather than tear down," says Gary Mahaffey, principal with the Leonard Parker Associates. This tenet has guided Mahaffey throughout his 28-year career. Taking shape on the Capital Mall in St. Paul is one of the firm's latest projects to test this philosophy. The Minnesota Judicial Center addition is a modern building that draws architectural cues from its classical predecessor. The result is a distinguished building that melds old and new.

With so many compelling reasons today to be pessimistic about the future of our environment, it may seem out of place, if not refreshingly beguiling, that Mahaffey is an optimist. A thorough knowledge of the building process coupled with a positive outlook on the world has brought Mahaffey to a leadership role in the Leonard Parker Associates and in professional circles as the 1990 president of the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects.

Mahaffey's can-do attitude and innate problem-solving abilities have served him well over the years. He has several dozen important buildings to his credit and can claim no small part in bringing the firm to national prominence.

A soft-spoken, sandy-haired gentleman, Mahaffey's easy manner betrays his southeastern Minnesota heritage. Born in 1940 in the small farming town of St. Charles near Rochester, Minn., Mahaffey took naturally to working with materials and putting things together. "My father was a carpenter and was always building things," he says. "He built our house. I guess I've always felt comfortable around construc-



Gary Mahaffey, principal with the Leonard Parker Associates and 1990 president of the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects.

tion sites."

Mahaffey also worked summers during college for a lumber yard in St. Charles as part of a construction crew remodeling barns and farm buildings. The transition to architecture would seem to have been an easy one, except it didn't happen that directly. According to Mahaffey, becoming an architect was a fluke. "I was actually enrolled in mechanical engineering at the University of Minnesota," he says. "In freshman-English class you always had to write a paper. I chose to write about Frank Lloyd Wright and organic architecture. That was spring quarter, so next fall I found myself enrolled in architecture school."

Mahaffey looks back on his education with a critical eye. "I regard my education as being somewhat narrowed by the thinking of the times," he recalls. Modernism was in full swing at the time, and Mahaffey feels that it was very disconnected from its historical roots. "It's the standard tactic of any political movement," he says. "Clear the ground of any past and rebuild it in your own image. Frank Lloyd Wright, for example, never talked about history and certainly never discussed historical references [in his work]."

After graduation he returned to Rochester to work for a firm that did residential and municipal build-

Continued on page 62

GEORGE HEINRICH

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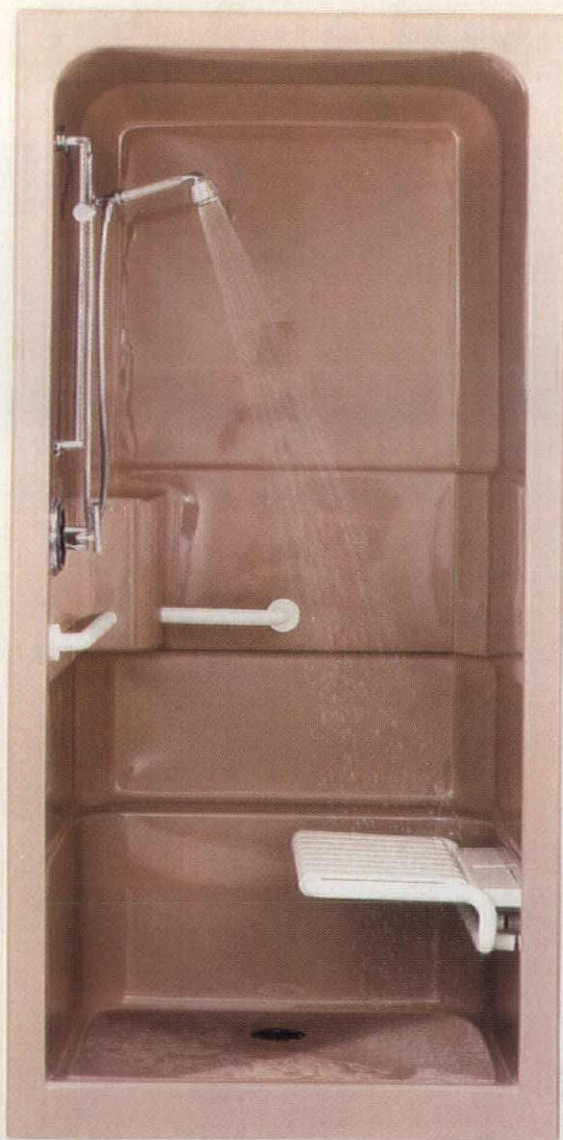
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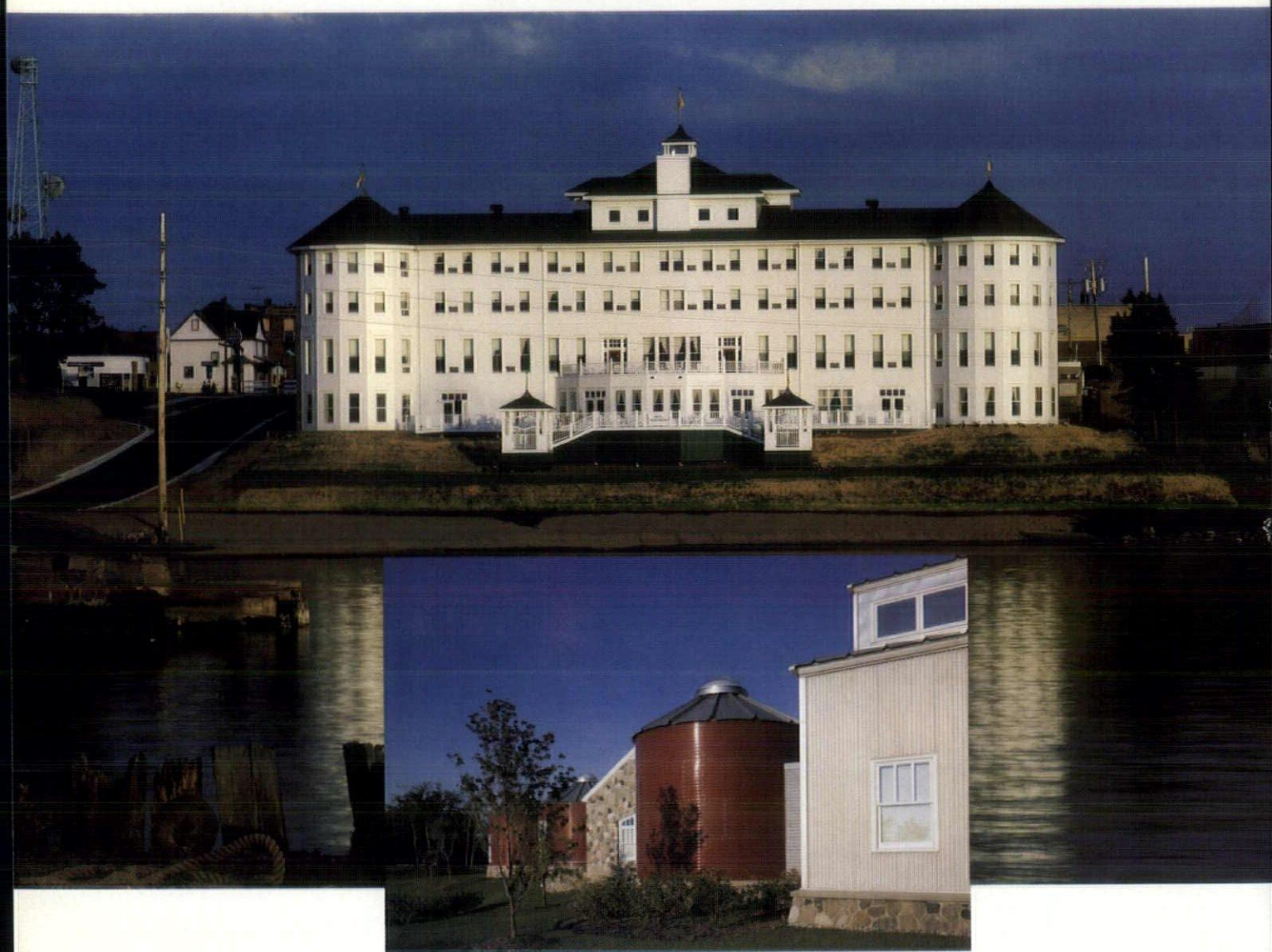


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For an architecture of democracy

Royal mudslinging aside, does Prince Charles have a point about architecture?

By Robert Gerloff

The royal squabble between Prince Charles and architects erupted on May 30, 1984, when Prince Charles stepped up to the microphone at the Royal Institute of British Architects' 150th anniversary gala and lashed into architects for, among other sins, "consistently ignoring the feelings and wishes of the mass of ordinary people."

Since then, to the delight of British tabloids, Prince Charles and architects have indulged in an invigorating exchange of insults. Prince Charles compared the proposed National Gallery addition to "a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend," declared his delight at "throwing a proverbial royal brick through the inviting plate glass of pompous professional pride" and accused modern architects of doing more damage to London than the Luftwaffe, which "when it knocked down our buildings, didn't replace them with anything more offensive than rubble."

Architects responded with a verbal violence that make his insults seem downright civilized. They called Prince Charles a "Nazi" who wants "picturesque mediocre slime"; they called him reactionary, paternalistic, undemocratic and a facile royal dilettante; they grouped him with "lunatics and criminals"; they accused him of being "like Stalin," of "destroying years of work by qualified professionals who are trying to do the best they can" and of promoting a kitschy,



Some of the Twin Cities' best civic buildings were selected through open competitions, such as the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, designed by McKim, Mead & White.

GARY MORTENSEN/MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

make-believe, Disneyland pastiche.

Good heavens.

What is Prince Charles saying to make architects, usually quiet and reasonable people, erupt with such violence? If you read his speeches or his book, *A Vision of Britain*, you'll find Prince Charles is saying, in terms far more polite than the tabloid headlines would have you believe, just how deep the schism between architects and the public has grown. Further, he says that the way to heal this schism is not for architects to have more professional control, but for architects to listen to the public and take their concerns seriously, for, as Charles says, "architects...do not necessarily have the monopoly of knowing best about taste, style and planning." I believe that architects, indignant that their skills and good intentions even are being questioned, find this demand to give the "ordinary bloke" a greater say, to make architecture more democratic, to surrender professional control, fundamentally

threatening.

Unfortunately, Prince Charles seems to have found the answer in the classical style, and what could have been a fascinating debate about how to make architecture more democratic has degenerated into a squabble over which style is "correct," modernism or classicism, based on the absurd claim by both camps that their style is inherently democratic.

With Charles off on his classicist tangent, architects have heaved a sigh of relief and leapt into the style wars with rhetoric blazing. There is nothing less threatening than a nice, comfortable squabble over style. Meanwhile, the ordinary bloke, in whose name the debate rages, is after his 15 seconds of fame back where he's always been: ignored.

I want to declare a truce in the style wars and return to the schism between architects and the public,

Continued on page 68

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**FINLANDIA HALL
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Imagine your reaction if you learned that your project's only possible building site was on top of an old abandoned copper mine. That was the dilemma architect Tim Casai faced when designing Suomi College's new student dormitory.

"The mine's old documents told us there were shafts at certain levels," said Casai. "We took soil borings to determine which ones would give us trouble and then flooded those shafts with concrete to stabilize the site."

And if this subterranean problem wasn't enough, there was another real challenge aboveground. "This area gets between 200 and 300 inches of snow a year," said Casai.

So he designed a high-pitched, standing-seam metal roof to prevent snow from accumulating, he used brick to protect the students from winter, and he specified Andersen® windows. Said Casai, "Their vinyl exteriors gave us the durability needed in this climate, they're also energy efficient, and their wood interiors provide a warm, comforting environment.

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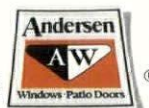
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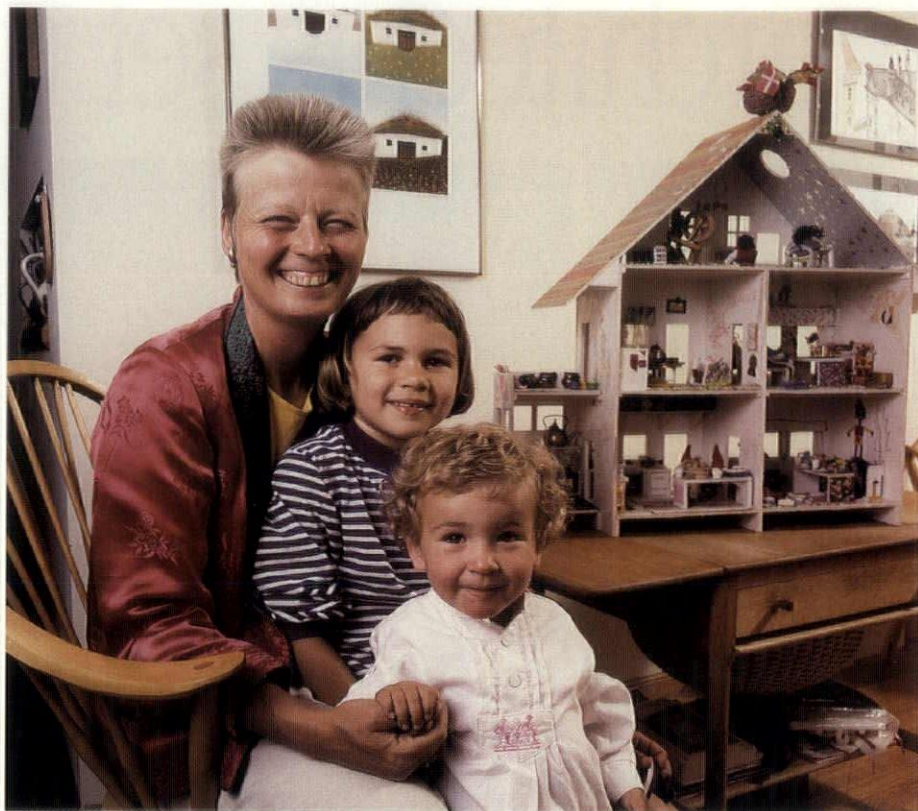
a place of one's own

Three years ago, Minneapolis architect Bodil Vaupel got a call from her daughter Anna's preschool. There had been an outbreak of chicken pox, and they warned that all the children might have to be quarantined in their homes for two weeks. The thought of an intensely curious 3-year-old under round-the-clock house arrest for a couple of weeks sent Bodil into something of a panic. "We had to have a project to keep our minds off things and not go crazy," she recalls, laughing. "I just love building models and little things so I said, 'Well, let's build a doll house.'"

From the start, the Vaupel doll house wasn't destined to resemble its gussied-up, store-bought cousins, those finely turned Victorianas you'll find in most doll-house outlets. Theirs is a stripped-down, 3-story house under the siege of perpetual remodeling, a work in progress, an experimental lab where Anna, now 6, and her 2-year-old sister, Sofie, master motor skills, stretch their imaginations, learn about recycling, document family events, "play out" emotional conflicts, explore the rudiments of design and construction, and develop a ready self-reliance. "The main idea was not to create an architectural gem," Bodil points out. "We were going to play with it, add to it, change it, color it, glue and paste and pin and use our imaginations to decide what to do next."

This is not to say that the house doesn't take some detours into the realm of the ready-made. Husband Jim Vaupel returned from a trip to China with a tiny cloisonne tea set. The girls ordered pots and pans from a catalogue and bought fireplace utensils from a shop in Mexico, handmade dolls from a store in England.

But for the most part, the house



GEORGE HEINRICH



and its furnishings are constructed with ordinary materials—foam core, fennel seeds, chile beans, pipe cleaners and sequins—that have been imaginatively put to new uses. Pinwheel noodles become stove-top burners, pushpins stand in for knobs, and spaghetti substitutes for railings. Baguettes are made from baked Play-Doh rubbed with cin-

namon for a golden glow; with a little paint a lentil in another dab of Play-Doh becomes a mock fried egg. The beautiful paper that once wrapped a gift of chopsticks from a Chinese guest now covers a little table and bench. Brightly colored cloth conceals bits of Styrofoam for miniature books. Best of all is the idea Anna had to use one-half of a plastic egg-shell-shaped pantyhose container as a clear skylight bubble. It's taught her to "not just throw things out wildly and to be more careful about her environment," Bodil points out.

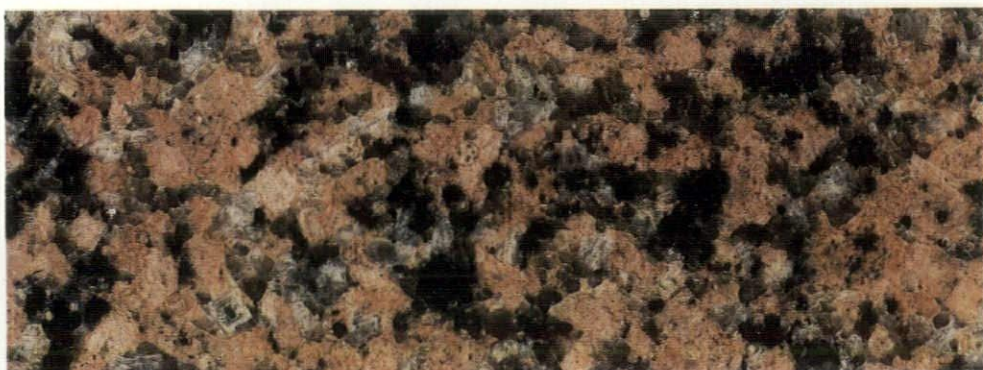
"It's also given Anna [who wants to be an architect when she grows up] an incredible feeling for being able to do things herself," she adds. "To take nothing and make something out of it is really an intriguing thing for children. It's plain magic."

A.F.

The reputation of an architect is set in stone.



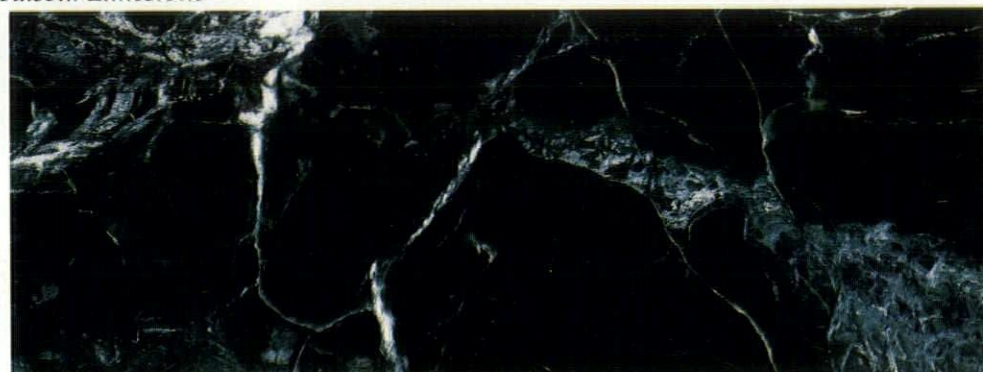
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editorial

To play, to dream, perchance to pretend I recently came across an article in the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* that urged those in the building industry to sit up and take note of the influence kids can have on their parents' home-purchasing decisions. According to the headline, "When a house's design makes a child say 'Wow!' today's parents listen carefully."

Have you ever wondered what the world would be like if kids were given a greater say in its design?

According to the article, the kind of place that knocks the socks off a kid incorporates a few key features, such as the Swiss Family Robinson Syndrome: "Children generally would rather live in a tree than a house," i.e., give them a ladder that leads to a loft bedroom. Then there's the Peter Rabbit Syndrome: "Most kids prefer snug, tightly enclosed spaces. Small rooms are good, particularly when they have strange ceiling pitches and odd, 'secret' spaces. Dormers are perfect for kids." Add to these the Alice in Wonderland Syndrome—"any space that is unique will probably attract children"—and you have a design recipe that is sure to please the peanut butter-and-jelly crowd.

Keep this modest wish list in mind the next time you visit a typical suburban tract house, or better yet, a playground, and you'll discover how wide of the mark our spaces for children really are. Not only are many play areas ugly—the ones built in sun-baked fields alongside the highway look like scrap-metal yards—but they don't provide the basis for transformation and improvisation that lie at the heart of play. What you see is what you get. A tubular-steel frame with swings attached doesn't lend itself to imaginative re-creation as a fort, a space ship or a race car. Nor does it encourage creative interaction among kids. More often than not, our children are stuck with these fossilized play forms when all they ask for is something with a little more flexibility, mystery and mischief.

Why haven't we done a better job of designing spaces for kids? Do we put building playgrounds on par with buying things like sneakers, hesitating to invest our resources in good design because kids "grow out" of things so quickly? Or is it because we place so little value on the importance of play?

I would argue that the interaction children have with the built world should be of the highest quality, since kids are, by nature, a "captivated" audience. As children we're inherently engaged by architecture, and often it is the source of some of our most highly charged experiences. Imagine the *Wizard of Oz* without Dorothy's Kansas cottage hurtling through space, without the Emerald City shimmering on the horizon, without the warren of tunnels in the wicked witch's castle?

I for one am surprised by how many childhood places I can recall in great detail—and my working-class neighborhood in Milwaukee was no great shakes when it came to architecture. To this day I can close my eyes and inch my way along the cold stone walls of my childhood church to its dark niches, where ornate gold reliquaries bearing the bone fragments of tortured saints were brilliantly spotlighted behind small glass windows. I remember a very expressive homeowner we called Mrs. Pink, who had enough wrought iron on her house to sink an ore boat, all of it painted the same shade of girlish rose to match her hair and the fur of her standard-sized poodle. I don't think there was a teen-ager when I was growing up who hadn't driven down a suburban road along Lake Michigan during the full moon to catch a peek at the "witch's house." What held us spellbound was an inky-green house encrusted with wooden gingerbread, strange, elongated human forms in the yard and a fence patterned with faces cut in silhouette. In retrospect it was probably the work of an exuberant chain-saw sculptor. But for us back then it was a place poised on the edge of a cold, inland sea, rife with haunting possibility.

Unlike adults, who too often assess architecture on the basis of what *looks* good, children judge it on its capacity to engage the senses and tap emotion. When we value the essence of what kids want from architecture—places that can be deeply inhabited—we affirm our own need to live in a world that celebrates our intense attachment to it with repositories for mystery, imagination, memory and desire.

Adelheid Fischer

Making the grade

ATS&R advances a 1950s' elementary school to the head of its class

The bland face of educational buildings is changing. Gone are the days when burgeoning school districts slapped up shoe-box style schools to accommodate the baby boom. Today's schools are shedding the institutional look by incorporating lively design statements with state-of-the-art facilities, in which computer-terminal rooms are as integral to the building as gymnasiums.

Gage Elementary School in Rochester, Minn., is a prime example. Built in the 1950s, Gage was a utilitarian brick box dropped in a corn field. As the district continued to expand, the school found itself pressed for space and hired Armstrong, Torseth, Skold and Rydeen of Minneapolis to triple the building's size to 95,000 square feet for 850 students.

"Today's schools have gotten much bigger and encompass more programs, such as computer courses, handicapped access and special education," says Craig Hinrichs of ATS&R. And schools' expanding programs have made designing new facilities a greater challenge than ever before.

Working with a citizens' design-review committee and a special committee of district principals, Hinrichs listened to their concerns that the expanded facility avoid the "stereotypical" look of school buildings. "It's important to influence children with good architecture and promote positive attitudes toward learning," he says.

Hinrichs designed an addition that splashes color where there was none before. A new central "core" facility containing the media center, two new gyms, music and art rooms and administrative offices is flanked by the original brick classroom building and by a new classroom building. The exterior of the core, sheathed in textured precast concrete, dramatically departs from its 1950s' predecessor. A pyramid with a glass oculus marks the entrance, which is further highlighted by an architectural frieze, a visual element that pulls away from the main entrance. Columns and exposed steel beams are painted bright primary colors.



RALPH BERLOVITZ

ATS&R designed a colorful addition to a 1950s' shoe-box-style school in Rochester, Minn. Children gather under a glass oculus in a commons area, which is used for readings, choir practice or casual gatherings.

The colors that mark the exterior carry inside as well. A central corridor serves as the main street, in which the exposed beams, ducts and acoustical panels (used to buffer the din of children tramping down hallways) are painted red, blue and yellow. Just off the main entrance is a multipurpose commons area, a place for children to gather along tiered platforms under the oculus for choir practice, readings or socializing. Red, blue and beige panels under the oculus filter light onto the floor in a kaleidoscope of patterns.

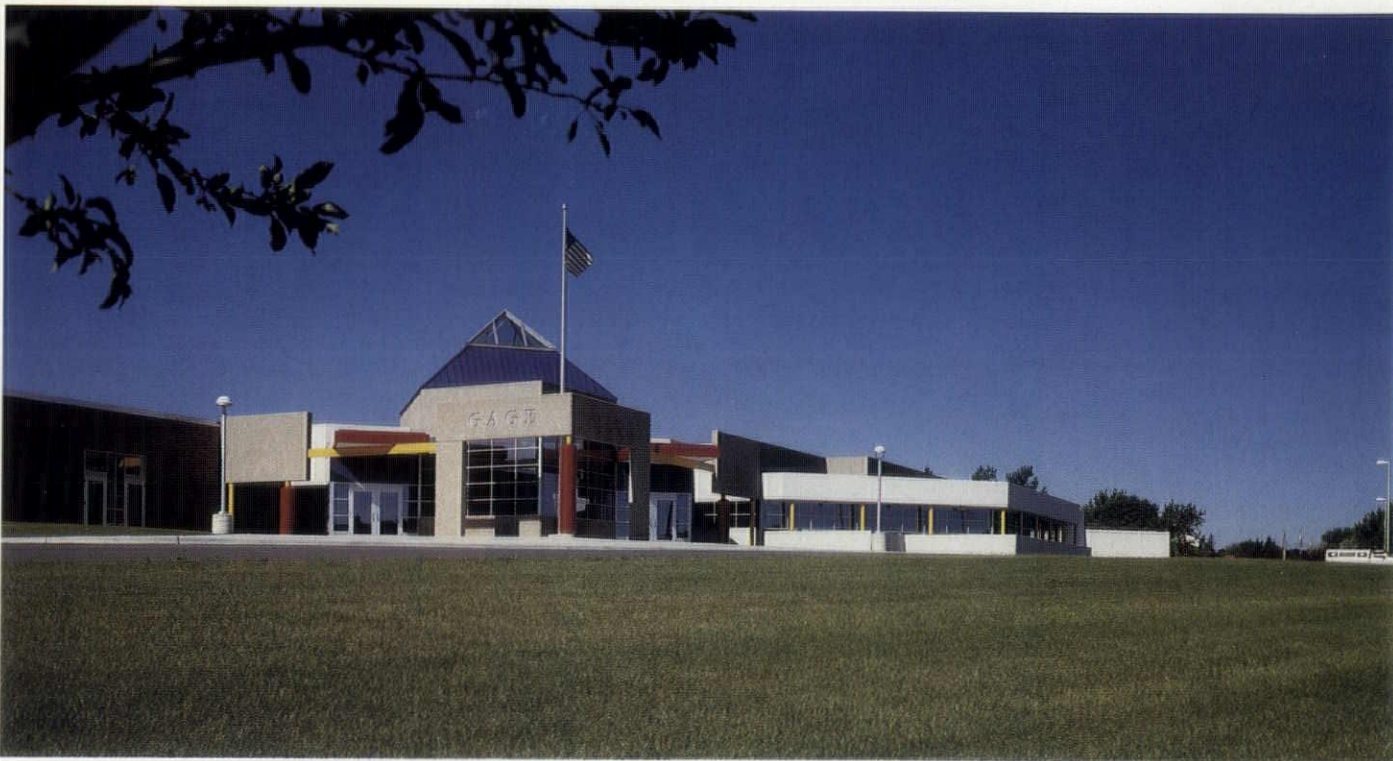
Since its completion last year, Gage Elementary has won several design awards, including a Certificate of Excellence from the Association of School Business Officials, which said the building was "just fun" and commented on the "creative sense of entry" and "wonderful use of primary colors."

A little color in all the right places can go a long way, and with Gage Elementary, ATS&R has painted a new picture of what a school can be.

E.K.



Colorful acoustical panels enliven the main corridor or "street." Outdoor light fixtures are brought inside to continue the street motif. Primary colors and a glass oculus mark the new main entrance (below).



Rooms with a view

Setter, Leach & Lindstrom gives young people a front-row seat in nature's classroom

So engulfed are they by trees that from the air the buildings at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center look as if they've been dropped fully formed by helicopter onto a plateau in the dense carpet of northern-Minnesota's forests. Depending on the altitude of your position on the center's 1,200 acres, you can overlook a pair of idyllic inland lakes or spy the blue lip of Lake Superior on the horizon to the south. Go west and you'll meet with the Baptism River, one of the North Shore's most rugged; trek north and you'll come across a tamer Sawmill Creek.

Not a bad setting for a kid taking a class in wildlife wood carving or photography, dog sledding or rock climbing, wolf ecology or Native

American culture. This is just a sampling of the offerings for young people ages 8–18, classes based, according to the center's brochure, on stimulating "students' love for intellectual pursuit by their direct observation of and participation in the outdoors."

So in developing their scheme for the center's "family" of buildings (the first phase, now complete, includes a dormitory, classroom building, dining hall, administrative center and energy center), the Minneapolis firm Setter, Leach & Lindstrom made sure that architecture took a back seat to nature. But instead of looking to an organic design or a north-woods vernacular, says project architect Jeff Wilwerding, "we were looking for a build-

ing image that was compatible but wouldn't disappear into the woods."

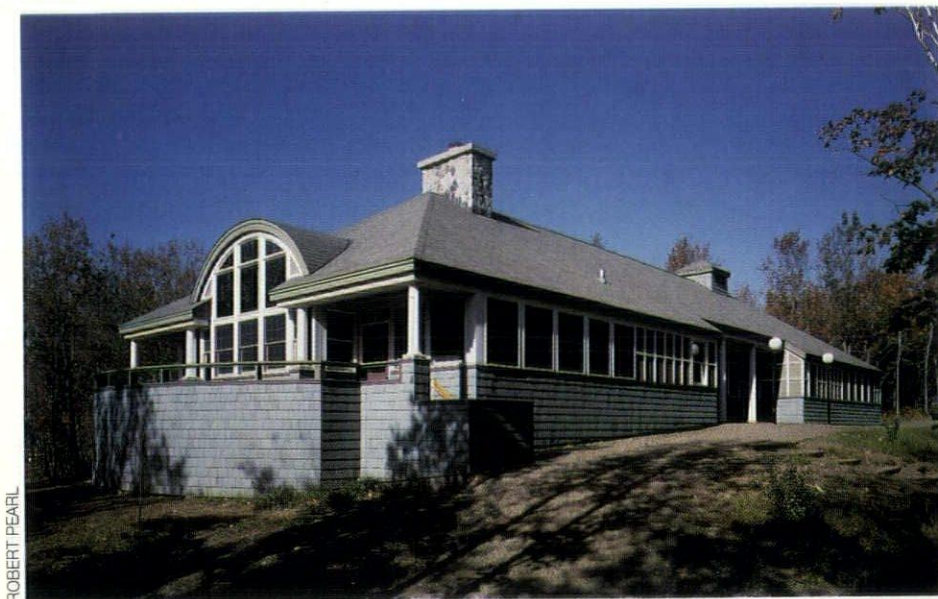
What emerged was a circular courtyard of gracious, hidden forms that modestly defers to the heart-stopping display of nature that envelops it. The quiet assertion of architecture as the humanmade intermediary between users and nature is evidenced in the choice of materials and design elements. Throughout each building massive floor-to-ceiling hearths recall the granite substrata on which the buildings stand. The rocks were taken from leftover debris after portions of the site were blasted to make way for a road. Complementing this rusticity are naturally finished pine ceilings in the buildings' gathering spaces.

But contrasting details—Doric columns, white window trim, Palladianesque windows and a gray batten-strip exterior—lend a lightness to the architecture, a seaside-cottage flavor, recalling not its location in the forest depths but its proximity to the shores of Lake Superior.

Only occasionally does the architecture rise up out of the trees, announcing itself in special features or "beacons" on the buildings' principal facades. The administration building's generous Palladianesque window faces the southeast to capture early-morning sunlight. Oriented to the southwest, the dormitory, on the other hand, makes a play for the day's last rays with a dramatic clipped corner of stacked windows.

By playing to details as powerful as the movement of light through the buildings, the design, Wilwerding says, always reminds students that "the only really special place is outside."

A.F.

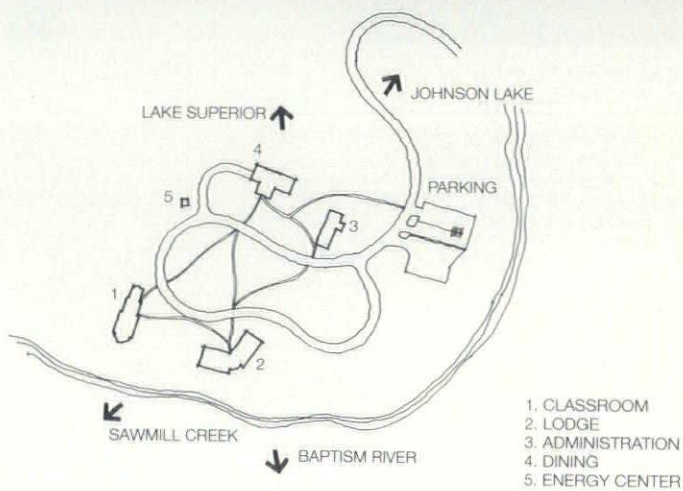


ROBERT PEARL

A Palladianesque window on the administrative building at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in Finland, Minn., faces southeast to flood offices with early-morning light.



The campus of buildings at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center modestly bows to the spectacular landscape that surrounds it, from inland lakes and Lake Superior to the south and the Baptism River on its western perimeter to a dense forest on its northern edge.





The environmental learning center offers classes about nature that range from wildlife wood carving and wolf ecology to rock climbing. Here, students learn the basics by scaling a simulated-rock wall before tackling the real thing outdoors.



With its simplicity and lightness, the center's classroom building (top) recalls not its location in the forest depths but its proximity to Lake Superior. Occasionally, the understated architecture rises up out of the trees to greet visitors with such dramatic features as this clipped corner of stacked windows (left) on the dormitory building.

Designs in good citizenship

Monticello builds a sense of community
by building a playground



GEORGE HEINRICH

The community-built Monticello playground, designed by Robert Leathers Associates, has become Minnesota's model for handicapped accessibility by incorporating such features as ramped walkways (opposite), which lead to elevated sand tables, transfer platforms on slides and play features at wheelchair height.

It isn't easy to get a playground designed by Robert Leathers' upstate New York firm—no matter how well-heeled your community is. Ask Cheryl Fuller, Judy Sloneker and Marilyn Henningson in Monticello, Minn., one of only seven Minnesota communities to own one.

For the better part of two years the trio spearheaded a community-wide campaign to build a Leathers' playground next to the grade school on the outskirts of town. During that time they schlepped slide projectors to meetings all over the community, from the Lions Club and VFW to the Baseball Association, seeking donations of time, money, tools, casseroles and child-care services. They visited playgrounds and talked with handicapped-accessibility specialists around the country to find out how to make their playground Minnesota's model for disabled kids. They even got the kids—from elementary to senior high—to raise \$6,000 in pennies.

People were so fired up that for the five-day marathon last May in which volunteers built the playground, 18 skilled construction supervisors signed up each day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. to oversee groups of volunteers. The Boy Scouts and police and sheriff reserves camped out to guard the site. The National Guard supplied tents, and the city trucked in picnic tables. Each day volunteers fed 500 people and had so much leftover food that they gave the surplus to area food shelves. When they needed last-minute donations, such as sod and black fill early on Sunday morning, Fuller and Henningson just rifled through the phone book. So involved was the community that "if you needed something, you just got on the phone and before long a truck would drive up," Henningson says.

Over the past 25 years Robert Leathers, the architect *Time* magazine dubbed the "Johnny Appleseed of the Swing Set," has developed a detailed system on how to build this sense of community through design. Monticello, surprisingly enough, is fairly typical. First, there's design day, in which an architect from



Leathers' firm meets with the town's children to brainstorm ideas. Throughout the day the designer works on the scheme in an area where kids can drop by to watch. And even though there are some constants from community to community—the telltale silhouette of a Leathers' playground looks like a medieval townscape and kids usually ask for things like monster caves, black holes, tornado slides, trains, jails, tightropes and race cars—each playground is different.

The firm then issues guidelines on how to mobilize the resources of the community, suggestions so detailed that they even profile the type of personality well-suited to the various committee-head positions. Then there's the building blitz in which the townspeople come out in droves to construct the complex structure. As a follow-up, the firm even pro-

vides a checklist on maintaining the playground.

But what makes the Monticello project unique is its unusually strong concern for handicapped accessibility. Monticello's schools draw special-needs kids from five districts. But Henningson and Fuller say the playground's focus on serving disabled audiences would have happened regardless. "It's an all-children's park. It should be for everybody," Fuller says. "How could you make a playground for just half the children?"

Much of the play area is ramped and includes 17 features at wheelchair height. The race car, for example, has a steering wheel that any kid can comfortably maneuver. A cubbyhole under the hood makes for easy wheelchair clearance while providing a hiding space for able-bodied kids. And a handicapped area with elevated sand tables, transfer platforms that help disabled kids to open-air slides and climbing bars and rings is constructed so that disabled kids have eye contact with children in other areas. Interspersed is equipment for a range of abilities so that handicapped areas aren't segregated.

But the accessibility design is invisible. You're more apt to notice that every inch of this 17,000-square-foot playground has been lovingly sanded to remove sharp edges and splinters. Ask any kid for a tour, and you're proudly shown the monster cave, where paintings of mythical beasts by some of the Monticello children are tucked away in a maze of crawl spaces. Or they'll steer you to the black hole where children descend through a stack of truck tires to a tire swing below. And they're visibly delighted when you falter a bit in the Monticello "earthquake zone," a hinged passageway that throws first-time users a little off balance.

What you see in these kids is a remarkable sense of pride and ownership. Says Henningson: "Kids come here with grandparents and say, 'I built that.' The kids really feel it's theirs. It just didn't show up out of a catalogue."

A.F.

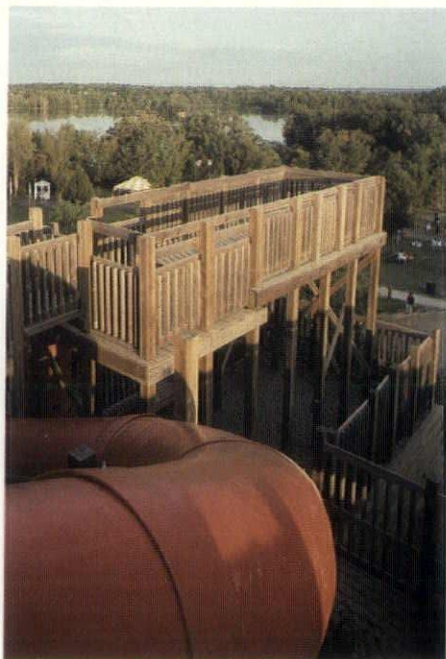
Learning by the seat of your pants

Kids find a jungle gym to match their imaginations at Hennepin County regional parks



GEORGE HEINRICH

The Chutes and Ladders play area at Hyland Lake Park Reserve in Bloomington is designed to promote the physical and emotional development of kids by offering a variety of challenging play opportunities, such as chute slides (right), ripraps, platform mazes and rope ladders.



Chutes and Ladders holds more than a few thrills for older kids, such as a spectacular vista of Hyland Lake from the play area's towering lookout platform (left) or a speedy ride down a 50-foot chute slide (lower right).

At 8 a.m. on a quiet midweek morning in June, the Chutes and Ladders play area at Hyland Lake Park Reserve in Bloomington looks like a sleepy Italian hill town in the sun, its dense clusters of serendipitous forms spilling from a steep cliff overlooking Hyland Lake.

But at this playground things are never quiet for long. Within the hour a handful of kids with seemingly unlimited energy kicks off the day by scrambling to the top before riding express—via a 50-foot chute slide—right back down to the bottom. Soon they're joined by school-bus-loads of others, who break into riotous shrieking once the bus turns the corner and brings the play area into full view. Before long the place is crawling with kids.

Built in 1986, Chutes and Ladders is among the most recent of the five creative play areas designed by the Suburban Hennepin Regional Park District. It all began in 1977 when the park district built its first play area at Baker Park Reserve on Lake Independence. Although Baker offered such recreational pastimes as swimming and volleyball, there wasn't enough to keep the 10-and-under crowd occupied for long periods of time, says Don King, chief landscape architect. So over the years the district's

landscape-architecture team began to develop and refine a series of complex structures that provide kids with hours of absorbing play.

What makes these play areas so successful, says Chutes and Ladders designer Don DeVeau, is that they satisfy a kid's need to be on the go. If children want to explore Chutes and Ladders by the seat of their pants, for example, there are open-air spiral slides, chutes or sliding poles. To get to them, they can crawl through swaying culverts, climb a riprap and rope ladders or work their way through a maze of enclosed, ascending platforms, the highest of which towers 40 feet, giving kids a view that stretches to the cliffs of the Minnesota River Valley dozens of miles away.

But getting to the top isn't the point. Younger kids who find the ascent too much of an emotional and physical challenge aren't left out in the cold. The lower tiers of the 5-level structure are just as skewered with multiple routes of slides, mazes and tunnels as the upper ones to keep nimble limbs—and imaginations—on the move. The design doesn't duplicate real-life objects, King says, so that what serves as a pretend rocket ship one day can substitute for a stage coach the next.

Best of all, adults aren't left out of the design scheme either. They can keep a watchful eye from an area at the base of the structure graciously equipped with benches and tables. Next door, the under-5 set (Chutes and Ladders is geared to kids ages 5-12) cavorts in a sand pit complete with lever-operated diggers and a ramped, scaled-down version of the big-kids' design that is handicapped accessible.

Though the other play areas in-

corporate these basic themes, each specializes in its own distinctive recreational features. Elm Creek Park Reserve, the largest, offers a 100-foot cable ride. French Regional Park, just opened in summer 1990, has cornered the market on cargo-net structures while providing elevated sand pits for wheelchair-bound kids. And Lake Rebecca Park Reserve has a 20-foot spiral rope ladder that leads to whopping-big spiral slide.

Common to each of the structures is a single guiding philosophy: to present children with play opportunities that "allow them to explore physical and mental challenges within themselves," DeVeau says.

But learning is one of the best-kept secrets in this design. Ask the kids who have just shot out of a 50-foot chute slide. They'll tell you it's just plain fun.

A.F.



Playing house

New exhibits at St. Paul's Children's Museum teach kids about the nuts and bolts of residential design



GEORGE HEINRICH

Imagine a battalion of kids let loose in a gym chock-full of pinball machines, and you get a sense for the noise level of the Children's Museum in full swing. This is one place where the rule "look but don't touch" doesn't apply—and the kids know it. Wannabe bus drivers on an imaginary speedway growl like engines as they spin the steering wheel of a mock bus. Future conductors toot and chug behind the engine of a kid-sized train. Budding crane operators make just about as much noise as the real machine on a construction site.

Every once in a while, above the din of bells, whistles, shrieking, clamor and clatter, you hear the sound of a doorbell ringing. It means that someone's just gone through the front door of the museum's "house"—not your ordinary house, mind you. But this is not your ordinary museum. A 1985 MSAIA Honor Awardee codesigned by Meyer, Scherer and Rockcastle and Winsor/Faricy Architects, the Children's Museum in St. Paul's Energy Park has continued its tradition of fine design by hosting intriguing architectural exhibitions for kids.

It all begins at the museum's entrance. Behind the sunny country-cottage facade of the "About the House" exhibit is a hands-on sequence of rooms in which portions of the skin have been peeled away to teach kids about the underlying structural and circulatory systems that keep even the most simple houses functioning. Like everything else in this museum, the house is a close second to the real thing kids see every day.

In the first room children are introduced to architectural design and planning. Architects, they learn from an instructional panel, "organize information about who will live in the house, what their interests are and how they spend their time." On view are real-life floor plans, and silk-screened around a doorway are blueprint markings to show kids how abstract diagrams on paper are translated into actual construction. Colored



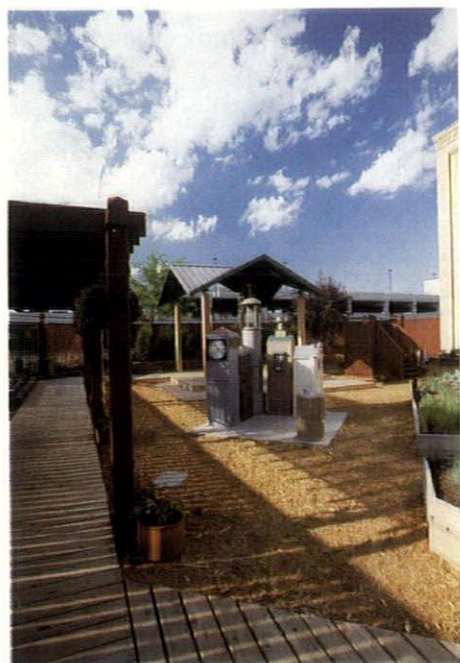
Behind the friendly mock exterior of the Children's Museum's "About the House" exhibit, kids learn about a building's underlying structural and circulatory systems. For example, the exhibit's kitchen (opposite) takes an x-ray approach to architecture with such devices as Plexiglas-sheathed cutouts in the wall that reveal the rudiments of construction or colored plastic cables that demonstrate the path of electricity when switches are turned on.

Plexiglas pieces give kids a chance to devise their own schemes. Or to teach them about the basics of siting buildings, another exercise asks them to situate the model of a house on a landscape for such conditions as privacy, shade, a big yard or a view.

The magic continues in the next room where Plexiglas-sheathed cutouts in the wall reveal the rudiments of construction, from the layering of Fiberglas insulation, vapor barriers and Sheetrock to the jigsaw fit of studs and windows.

Next door, this x-ray approach to architecture is continued in a kitchen where kids learn about electrical systems, for example, by flicking on the power for fans and garbage disposals and watching the electricity's path through colored plastic cables.

Last but not least is the living room that talks to kids about the personal expressions of home



Newly opened at the rear of the Children's Museum is an enclosed garden that introduces youngsters to the elements of landscape design, from pergolas and fountains to plant materials.

decorating. For those kids who want to try their hands at interior design there are dollhouse-sized rooms equipped with movable furnishings from various periods.

The museum's latest addition—an exterior garden built last spring—gives kids a chance to learn about landscape design as well as architecture. To get to the garden located at the back of the facility you pass through what feels like a hidden passageway, a nighttime diorama of a house's exterior faced with backlit windows and brick walls. To complete the scene are trompe l'oeil paintings of garden vistas and a real tree trunk replete with a tree house and a canopy of fake leaves. Once outside, a barn-red fence shields the garden from the parking lot, giving the space an aura of secrecy, so that you feel as if you've stumbled on a magical, hidden place. And magic it is. The raised vegetable, flower and grain beds are mulched with cocoa-bean shells so that your first whiff is of chocolate.

The stage set for this theater of learning—Adirondack chairs, pergolas, raised flower beds, a look-out tower, a weather station and a fountain terminating in a goldfish pool—engages kids on multiple levels. Visitors can chart such things as wind velocity, humidity and temperature at a weather station. Kids learn about plant materials and letters of the alphabet in an ABC garden, where plants in raised beds are arranged alphabetically. Or they can meander to the sensorium garden to rub the leaves of herbs and scented geraniums. The flower boxes on the windows even have wooden flaps that kids can lift to watch the rooting of plants. For more active youngsters there's a fountain that is powered by pushing a turnstile.

If there's a lesson to be learned in these exhibits, it's summed up by the weather station's liquid-crystal display clock. Powered by the energy in two ordinary potatoes, it just goes to show kids there's nothing humdrum about even the most ordinary things. A.F.

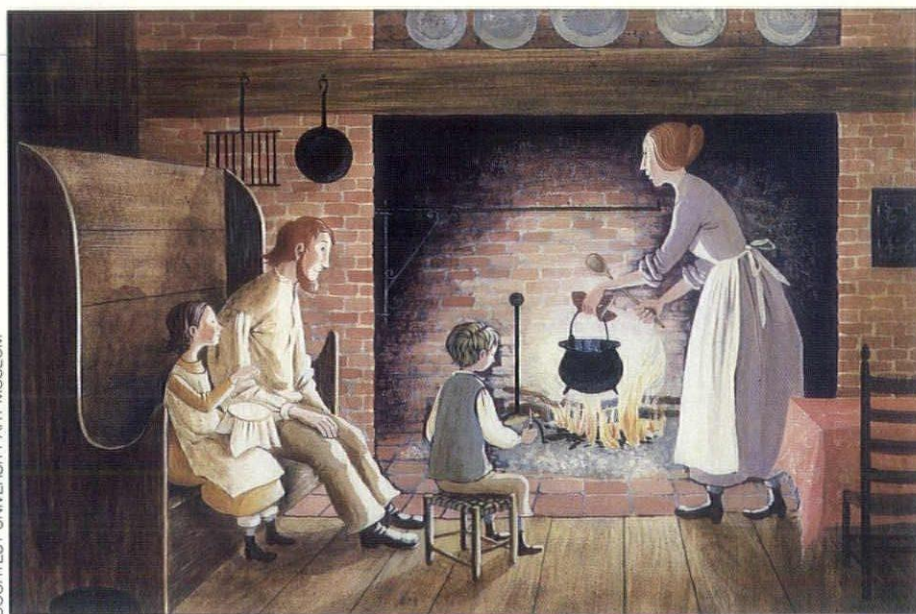


The Children's Museum in St. Paul's Energy Park teaches kids about architecture not only through its exhibits. Originally a brick blacksmith's shop built in 1885, the building was used for nearly a century as a train shed before Meyer, Scherer and Rockcastle and Winsor/Faricy Architects renovated the structure, winning a 1985 MSAIA Honor Award in the process.

Building on imagination

Architectural imagery in children's books

COURTESY UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM



Every child's imagination holds at least one far-off city, a castle or two, and perhaps a cozy house with a door, two simple windows and a chimney. But unlike the concrete, steel and wooden buildings in our everyday lives, images of architecture in children's minds are often shaped by yearnings for adventure, mystery, security and sometimes by fears of the unknown or uncontrollable. Make-believe images of cities, castles and houses evolve as children experiment with architecture through drawings, building-block constructions or boxes and blankets in messy bedrooms.

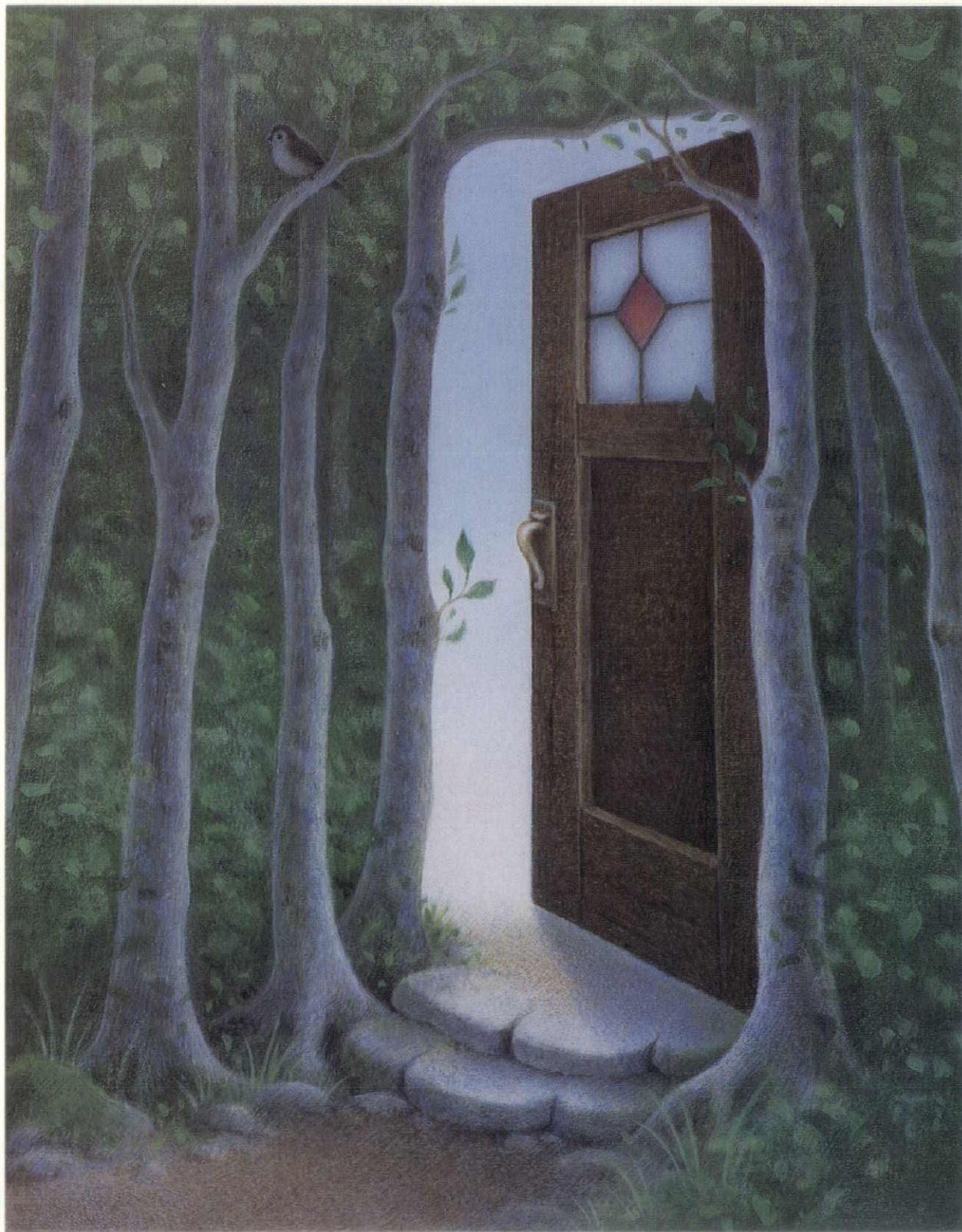
Children's ideas of architecture are built not only on imagination but also from their experiences with the familiar buildings of their own environments—the homes, cities and towns in which they live. Imaginary and actual notions of architecture are reflected in illustrations for children's picture books. Many of the most recognized children's-book illustrators have used architectural images to emotionally engage their readers, sometimes accentuating the impact of architectural forms by manipulating the sizes and proportions of buildings and by creating fantastic places as well as comforting domestic scenes....

Picture books invite children to experience the merging of imaginary worlds and real spaces. All of these experiences—conjuring images of cities and castles, seeing a special house in a picture book and building from imagination—teach children about the architecture of buildings and places. Children's books inspire notions of what buildings can be, based not on their materials and functions but on their impact on children's ideas. From there, architecture in the child's mind needs only to be drawn and blueprinted, and the total scope of architecture—from imagination to reality—is complete.

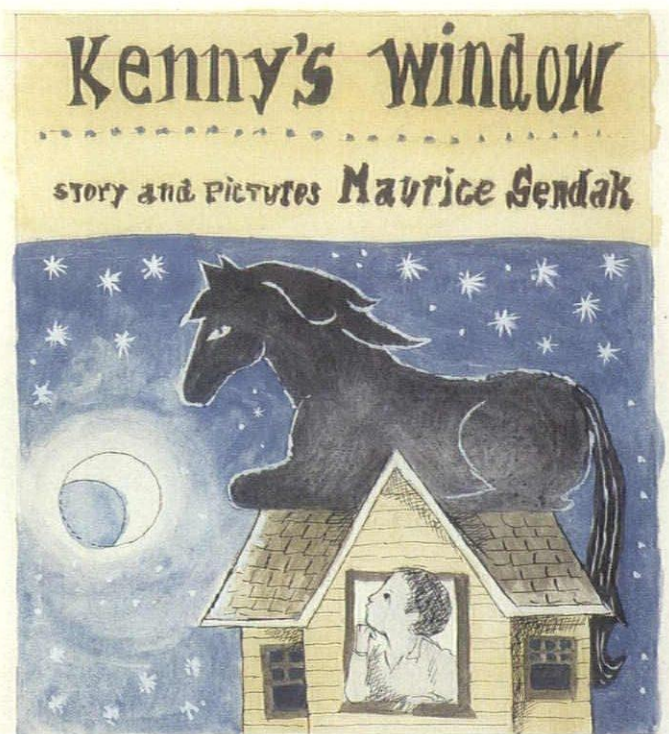
Kate Roberts and James Roe

In the historical tale Ox-Cart Man by Donald Hall, illustrator Barbara Cooney's carefully researched and detailed interiors teach young readers about life in mid-19th-century New Hampshire houses.

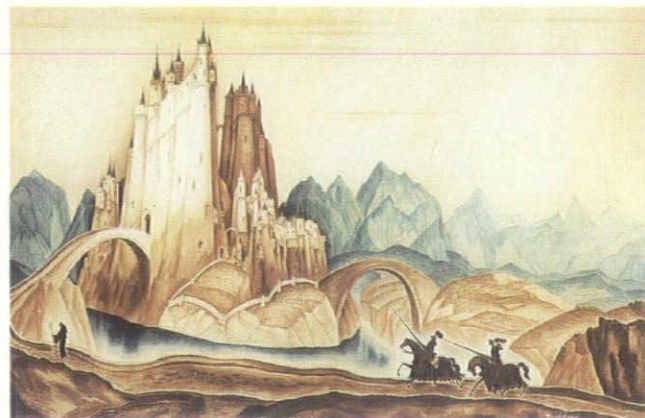
Kate Roberts and James Roe are guest curators of "Building on Imagination," an exhibition of architectural imagery in children's books organized by the University Art Museum at the University of Minnesota. The text is reprinted, in part, from an essay accompanying the show, on view at the University Art Museum Sept. 24–Nov. 18.



Barbara Berger's 1984 book *Grandfather Twilight* opens with this mysterious door in the woods that invites children into the magical world of Grandfather Twilight, a kindly figure who sets the moon in the sky at the end of each day.



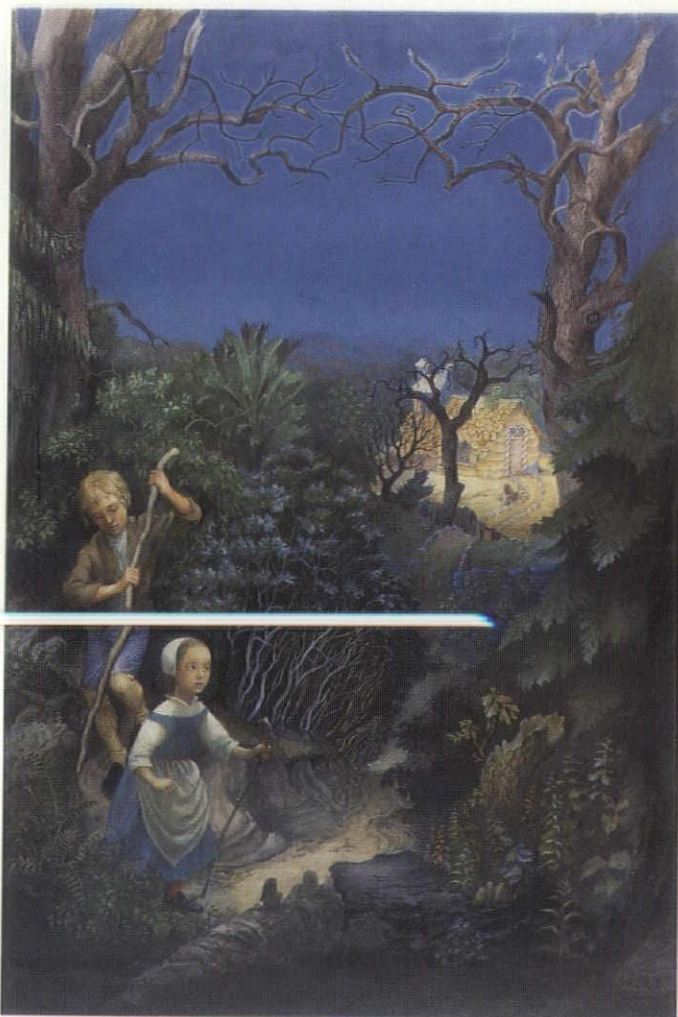
Maurice Sendak uses the window in his 1956 book *Kenny's Window* as a metaphorical opening between real and imaginary worlds, a mythical rupture through which a young boy converses with fantastic characters who help him make sense of the real world inside his house.



Gustaf Tenggren heightens the sense of adventure in his 1962 illustration for *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table* by exaggerating the scale and skewing the perspective of King Arthur's castle.



By anthropomorphizing its facade, Virginia Lee Burton encourages her readers to identify with a little house that becomes threatened by urban growth in her 1942 book *The Little House*.



A glowing cottage of candy arches and pancake shingles tempts the frightened Hansel and Gretel lost in a deep, dark woods in Paul Zelinsky's 1984 illustration for this classic fairy tale.

Hot dog!

Refectory continues Lake Harriet tradition of whimsical architecture



CHRISTIAN KORAB/BALTHAZAR KORAB LTD.

Milo Thompson of Bentz/Thompson/Rietow designed a shingle-style refectory that complements his 1986 band shell. He picks up on the band shell's turrets in a symphony of cones that marks the refectory's different functions. A central cone caps a pavilion that opens to the lake on one side (above) and the park on the other.

Concession stands are usually utilitarian structures that rarely contribute to the playful, carefree character of parks. They seldom inspire more than a yearning for foot-long hot dogs. But the new refectory at Lake Harriet in Minneapolis reaffirms that parks are meant for fun.

Designed by Milo Thompson of Bentz/Thompson/Rietow of Minneapolis, the turreted, shingle-style concession stand is part of an overall Lake Harriet master plan that included the construction of a new band shell several years earlier. The band shell has become a Twin Cities' landmark that has snatched up numerous design awards, including most recently an Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1989.

For the band shell, Thompson drew his inspiration from the nearby shingle-style biffies, designed by Harry Jones to accompany his pagoda-style band shell designed in 1891. Working with a 33-person citizens' committee, Thompson designed a whimsically romantic structure featuring a hipped roof with four corner turrets and a large glass wall overlooking the lake.

And while the inspiration for the band shell came from a precedent set by Harry Jones nearly 100 years ago, the inspiration for the concession stand, Thompson admits, came from the band shell itself. Thompson again reconvened with a citizens' committee (this time a slightly smaller group) to discuss design concepts for the concession stand. Three basic themes (two resembling a modified version of the band shell) were narrowed down to the final structure.

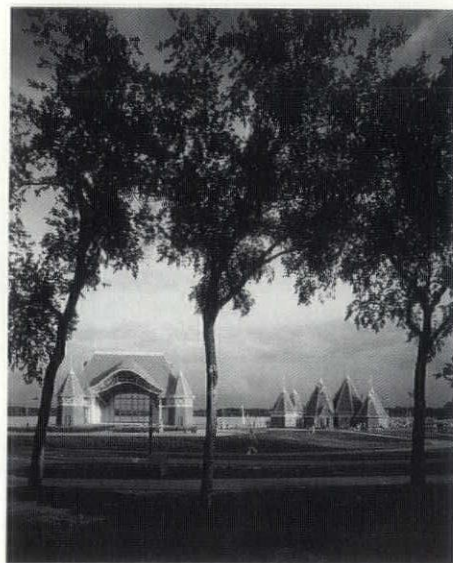
Just down a short footpath from



The new refectory (above) stands on the northeast shore of Lake Harriet, easily accessible for concertgoers, bikers, joggers and boaters. Just a stone's throw from the band shell (below), the concession stand is a lively complement to its predecessor.

its predecessor, the concession stand is an explosion of shingled turrets. "The turrets are really a collection of separate buildings that are clustered together to create interesting forms," Thompson says. Turrets mark the toilets, while others demarcate the kitchen and concession windows. Bisecting the building is a soaring central turret to mark a pavilion—"the front porch of the refectory"—that opens up to the lake on one side and the landscaping and band shell on the other. Parkgoers can use the refectory to escape summer downpours or to defrost on winter afternoons when removable walls enclose the building for a warming house.

With the completion of the refectory, Lake Harriet is quickly becoming one of the most magical parks in the Twin Cities, in which whimsical, romantic architecture brings a bit of Disney to Minneapolis. *E.K.*



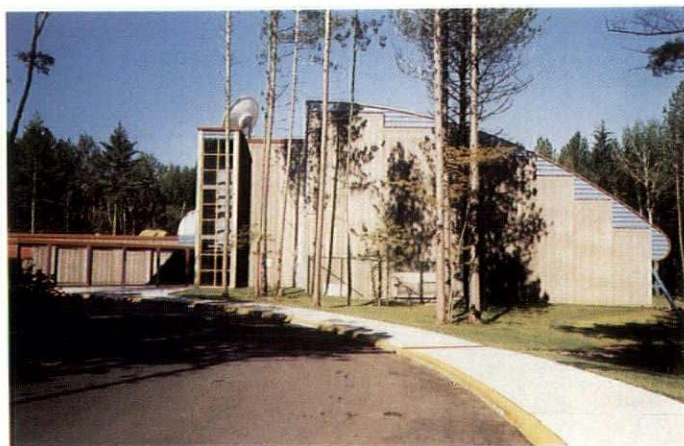
Bingo!

An Indian reservation places its bets on winning design

COURTESY ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES



The Fortune Bay Bingo Hall, designed by Architectural Resources, uses color and form to express Indian philosophy and aesthetics. The curving structure (right), a reference to the circle as a symbol of the continuity of life, is built into a heavily wooded forest in which trees were carefully maintained. The red canopy and blue siding follow the Indian palette for bright primary colors.



Architecture sometimes can be a study in ethnic cultures, and the Fortune Bay Bingo Casino at Lake Vermilion is one such example. In designing the facility for the Bois Forte Indian Reservation north of Virginia, Minn., Architectural Resources of Duluth drew on the history of Indian culture and philosophy to develop a facility of eclectic shapes, textures and colors. The firm, which had worked previously with Indian reservations, translated its experience and knowledge of Indian society and aesthetics into a building that reflects Native American sensibility for color and forms while providing a dynamic architectural image for the region's many tourists.

The Fortune Bay Bingo Casino was developed by the Bois Forte Reservation Committee, the economic-development arm of the reservation which saw the potential for revenue through gambling. The committee hired Architectural Resources to develop a master plan for a recreational complex to include a marina, hotel/convention center, interpretive center, horse racetrack and bingo hall on a 300-acre, heavily wooded tract along Everett's Bay on Lake Vermilion.

Completed in 1986, the bingo hall slips unobtrusively into a red-pine forest, a setting so rustic that roads had to be paved and wells dug to provide basic amenities. "We were careful to maintain as many trees as possible to respect the Indian concern for the preservation of wilderness," says Earl Thedens of Architectural Resources.

The preservation of wilderness also translates into architecture that interprets nature. "The circle is an organic form that reflects the Indian view of the universe and nature, that life is continuous as we come from the earth and return to it," Thedens continues.

To that end, Architectural Resources incorporated the circle wherever possible. The main hall is a quarter-circle structure approximately 2 1/2 stories high and sheathed in a highly textured river-rock precast concrete, earth tones

that blend smoothly with the forest. The curvilinear roof line is punctuated by a saw-tooth pattern in contrasting blue metal panels. Variations of the circle are seen throughout, on the front-door windows, in screens along the side of the building and in a quarter-circle skylight over a mezzanine level that connects the bingo hall with a single-level

bingo hall, a large screen in front hooks up with Canterbury Downs for off-track betting.

Fortune Bay Bingo Casino is forward-looking architecture that heeds the past. By capitalizing on Indian heritage, Architectural Resources has created a unique blending of colorful elements for a chance game of bingo. *E.K.*



JERRY PETERSON PHOTOGRAPHY

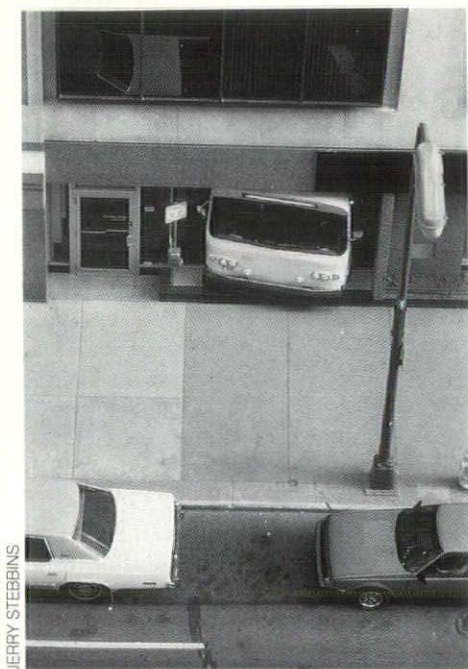
el mechanical building.

And while the circle reflects Indian spirituality, the palette follows Indian aesthetics of bright, primary colors. Red metal trim outlines the roof and contrasts with blue metal panels along the side of the building as a red, flat-roofed canopy supported by purple trusses and columns leads to the red front door. Past the entrance, the main hall is punctuated by a dramatically curved, wooden ceiling. Exposed ducts are painted mauve, blue and purple, and the backs of the chairs (700 permanent, 100 movable) are patterned after Indian beadwork. Though the facility is primarily a

A curving Douglas-fir ceiling highlights the main hall. The screen in front hooks up with Canterbury Downs for off-track betting. Throughout, color enlivens the room, as in the brightly painted exposed ducts or the backs of the chairs, whose pattern is based on an Indian beadwork design.

Busing it

Shea Architects gives MTC a lift



JERRY STEBBINS

To increase public visibility in downtown Minneapolis, MTC built a striking new storefront by incorporating familiar elements of the transportation industry. Marking the storefront is the complete front end of a bus (above), which is attached to the window. Below, bus seats and black floor mats continue the transportation theme inside.

With all the downtown parking ramps opening onto the sidewalk, one could easily mistake the front of the MTC Transit Store on Marquette Avenue in Minneapolis for a bus pulling out. In fact, that's just what's happening. Designed by Shea Architects of Minneapolis, it is a bit of mimetic architecture that will have a few heads duckin' for cover.

When MTC asked Shea to design a new store, the transit company was in the process of introducing its latest buses, upgrading its image to increase visibility and aggressively pursuing new ridership. A store in a prime section of downtown Minneapolis was part of its efforts to better reach the public.

Shea Architects' design approach was straightforward enough. "We wanted to make the store's services self-evident to the passersby on the street," David Shea says. What can be more self-evident for a transit store than a bus itself?

The architects constructed sections of a bus—front panel with headlights, seats, handrails, floor mats—and incorporated them into the design. The bus's front end is at-

tached to the outside of the display window, with the driver's seat and steering wheel intact on the inside.

Employees have noted that the storefront indeed is an attention-grabber. Some passersby do a double-take to determine that the bus is not the real thing, while others jokingly have acted out dramas, falling on the sidewalk or jumping out of the way.

Inside, the architects continued the transportation theme by placing bus seats at the center of the store. "The purpose was to get people to focus on the services offered by using familiar materials," Shea says. Black rubber mats, which line every bus floor, lead customers directly to the service counters, faced with the orange, red and white MTC logo.

For Shea, the project was a happy collaboration between architect, client and graphic designer to create architecture that is a successful marketing tool. MTC has reported dramatic sales increases since opening the new store. No doubt using its own bus as a visual element has paid off. After all, a bus plowing onto a sidewalk is hard to miss. *E.K.*





The bus has proved to be a real attention-grabber. Store employees have noted that passersby sometimes play in front of the store, pretending to get hit by the bus.

Memories at play

Can design recover the spirit of play and put imagination to work?

By Bill Stumpf with Susan Packard

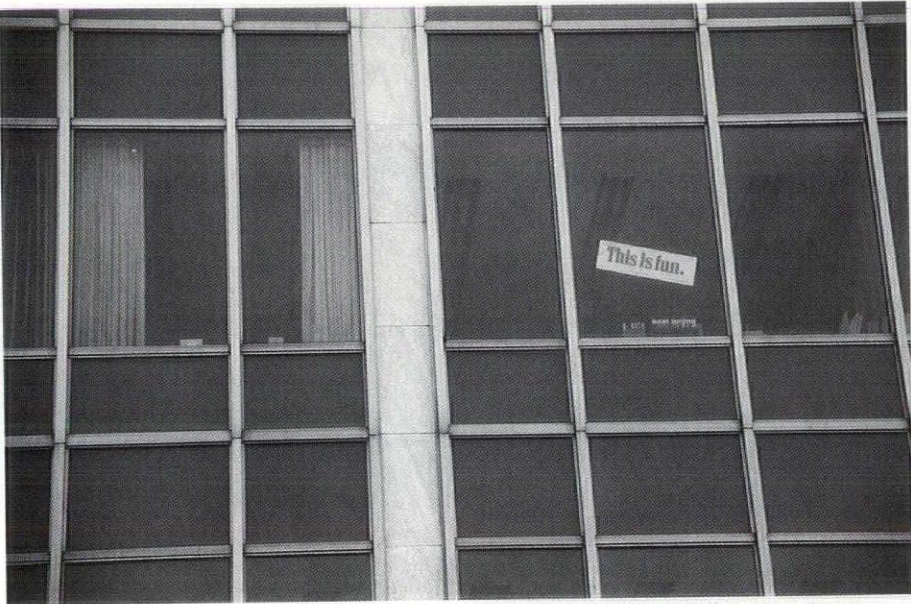
The rationalization of work has all but banished the play element from the work place.

—Christopher Lasch

As late-20th-century adults who must cope with the unrelenting pressures of information networking, job discontinuity, two-income householding and daycaring, we discount play's importance in our daily existence and romanticize it as some childhood pleasure lost. Worse, we tend to regard leisure and work as opposite ends of a pole. We work, then play; we play, then work, not realizing it's possible to do both at the same time. Even the word *playing* is associated with goofing off; the words *playboy* and *playgirl* imply social irresponsibility and a cavalier attitude toward work and commitment.

Playmates

As adults, we've been reduced to having friends, colleagues and peers, but not playmates. Try to remember who your playmates were, and what it was about these childhood relationships that was so wonderful. Playmates were far more interesting to me than parents or teachers or aunts or grandparents or even brothers and sisters, although siblings would do on a rainy afternoon. Playmates had a number of uses: You could share secrets with them; they informed, schemed,



"We tend to regard leisure and work as opposite ends of a pole. We work, then play; we play, then work, not realizing it's possible to do both at the same time."

tricked, confided, conspired; they were pigeons, culprits and punching bags; they were absolutely necessary for having fun and getting into trouble.

You could play with them, which is different from merely knowing them; together, you could conjure up roles as heroes, villains or even animals and objects. You could touch your playmates, punch them and wrestle with them. You could dream up secret languages, expressions, handshakes and dress codes. My best friend and I still greet each other on the telephone and in letters with the words *huzzah, huzzah*, an utterance born out of the joys and fitful frustrations of puberty.

The point is that as children we were naturally predisposed to play. We experienced it as the core of life itself. But work, too, is a necessary and natural part of life. Perhaps our adult lack of playfulness stems

from the disruptive junctures in adolescence when work and labor were poorly integrated into our pattern of daily existence. The disassociations begin with parentally imposed play and pick-up-your-mess or do-your-homework times; or play is withheld as a reward until after work that "has to be done now" is completed. How many of us assume patterns of work enabled through play instead of through fear, intimidation and attempts at self-control motivated by guilt? Oddly, if we could whistle while we worked, the

results would be superior to those obtained through a strident separation of work and play.

Something seems wholly amiss in early education, where play is segregated from classwork. Compare the grayness and seriousness in any third-grade classroom to the color of kindergarten and first- and second-grade classrooms, which are rich in graphic display, rest periods and floor exercises. "Sesame Street," a highly respected and much-loved part of American life, is a lone example of the integration of learning and fun; one wonders if its imaginative tactics shouldn't be commonplace throughout all levels of education.

Imagination

Sociologists are concerned that American children are disconnected from healthy play by technology, which leaves little room for imagination. Highly marketed promotional packages in the form of computer games, fast-food packaging and "action figures" reinforce controlled themes and images: Mutant Ninja Turtles, Barbie Dolls and California Raisins.

Are there children capable of playing imaginatively with a broomstick and toilet plunger? Is hopscotch or stickball ever played these days? Do suburban kids play in self-made tree houses, drive cars made from orange crates or go on snipe hunts? Do kids make houses under a table or turn it upside down to make it into a boat? Maybe these and similar activities are obsolete in view of the preconditioning and training necessary to shoulder the information world. Maybe kids are better off learning from an early age the existential pleasures of feedback, networking and decomposition analysis.

COURTESY SUSAN PACKARD



"Are there children capable of playing imaginatively with a broomstick and toilet plunger?"

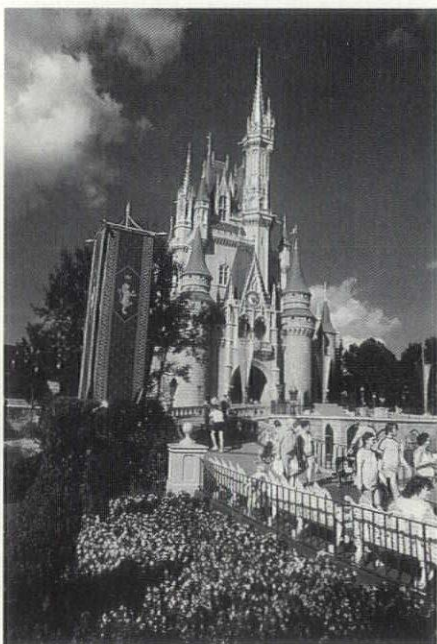
prise adults, not children.

What is it about Disneyworld, disregarding its obsessive "pleasantness" and sanitized environment, that is so intriguing to young and old? For one thing, in Disneyworld, as in English castles or villages in the Swiss Alps or the temples of the Yucatan and Malaysia, we find a playful blending of myth and architecture. And if Disneyworld can achieve this blend, why can't the towns and cities we actually live in? In fact, why don't we live in places more like Disneyworld and visit places that simulate the grimness of our cities? We could call the latter "blight parks" and sate our curiosity about the dark side of life while living on the bright side. Too many Americans find themselves doing just the opposite.

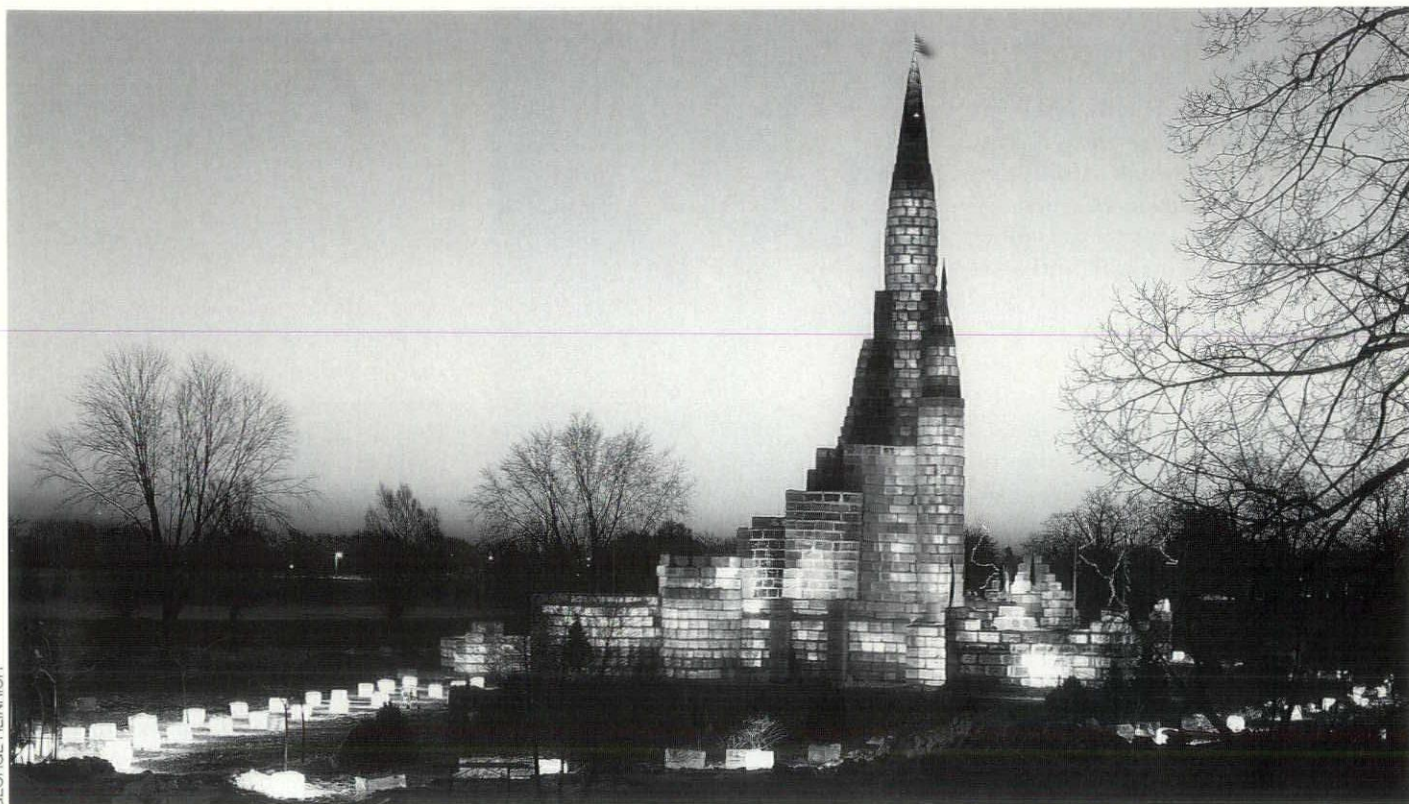
Mythical places

Where in our cities do we see and experience the primordial ties between myth and the built environment? New York at night is awesome, as are most American cityscapes, but what myths do they project? Wealth and power, economics and technology. Rarely do our cityscapes or buildings have real mythical impact, save the Chrysler Building in New York or the gantry towers of the Columbia space rockets. The myths of our cities tend to glorify offices, computers, parking ramps and other such rational images or, worst of all, abstract codes of architectural revisionism.

COURTESY WALT DISNEY COMPANY



"What is it about Disneyworld, disregarding its obsessive 'pleasantness' and sanitized environment, that is so intriguing to young and old?"



"Fantasy architecture" in the Twin Cities: The St. Paul Winter Carnival's 1986 ice palace (above) and the Lake Harriet Band Shell (below).

Gratuitous difficulty

One has to praise the playful architecture of the Lake Harriet Band Shell and the St. Paul Winter Carnival's 1986 ice palace. The exercise of building castles from sand or ice gives us insight into a key feature of play, what Johan Huizinga calls "a sense that finds more satisfaction in gratuitous difficulty than the achievement of a given objective with a minimum of effort."

The Joys of Purposelessness

Ice palaces, wedding cakes or sand castles embody the idea of divine purposelessness. Why would more than a million people hazard subzero weather day and night to visit a monument made of ice? Why would ice cutters be called out of retire-

ment to work endless hours for no pay to build it? Why would architects freely give their time and energies to design it when they knew it was destined to melt away after a couple of weeks? Could it be we are so spiritually numbed by our rational world, devoid of play, that we actually hunger for experiences of myth and fantasy? Are our lives so full of tedium and pressure that we long for the permission the ice palace gave us to play again?

In witnessing and working on a monument to purposelessness, do we experience a catharsis, a respite from the omnipresent purposefulness of our lives? The hard core among us would say, "Yes, but isn't there purpose, however abstractly demonstrated, in the event itself? Doesn't the Winter Carnival promote tourism or other commercial interests, and isn't the ice palace just a tool to support that enterprise?" Sadly, some persist in reducing play and playfulness to such



grim rationality. With cynicisms like "get real," they dismiss the image of the ice palace as soon as they hit their desks on Monday morning.

Or perhaps the palace's architect will say, "Even though I loved designing it, that kind of project is less serious than an office-building commission." This is precisely the problem: As designers we've become so beaten down by the clamor for rationality that we have given up trying to demonstrate how play can be incorporated into daily life.

In this century few architects have understood the connections between playfulness and form. Often, attempts at making these connections have taken the form of metaphorical caricatures which remain bereft of the play of light, space and function that Frank Lloyd Wright, for one, commonly achieved in his buildings. Standing on one of the tiers that spirals around the Guggenheim's center well, one has the sensation of looking over the edge of a cliff into a void. By half hiding the place of entry to a house, Wright made it gratuitously difficult for strangers to intrude. Frank Gehry also comes to mind as a designer capable not only of employing metaphor but also conveying a real sense of spatial playfulness; his buildings can be explored continuously, both visually and physically.

Play Empathy

Others of us will continue to dream about the ice palace and ponder questions like, "Gee, if I could only go to work every day in such a delightful work of architecture, maybe my life wouldn't seem so dull." Or in some severe cases (the author's), we wonder whether we aren't McMurphy from *One Flew over the*



"We wonder whether we aren't McMurphy from *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, an essentially sane and playful man locked in a mental institution, who recognizes that it's crazy people who frenetically control the so-called real world."

Cuckoo's Nest, an essentially sane and playful man locked in a mental institution, who recognizes that it's crazy people who frenetically control the so-called real world.

Our adult lack of empathy about play knows no bounds. I remember asking my 6-year-old nephew, whose hands kept straying to his private parts one Thanksgiving Day a few

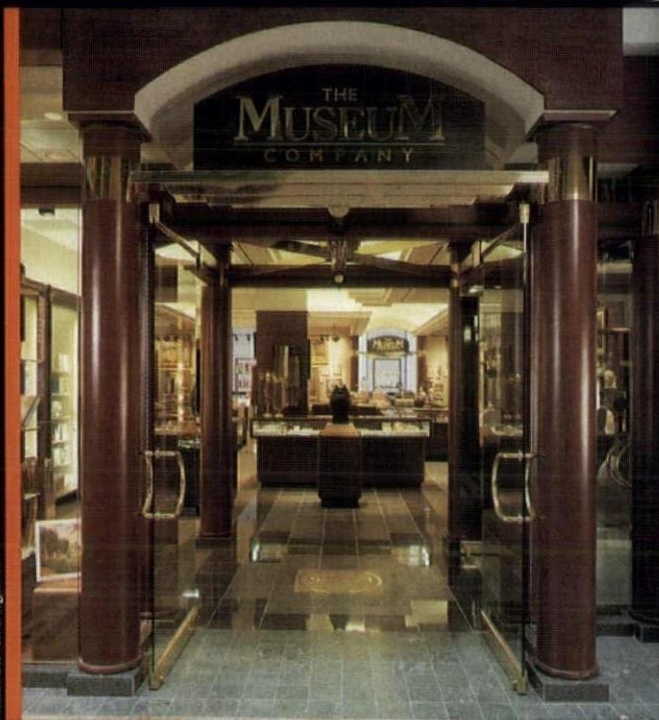
years ago, whether or not he had to go to the bathroom. After I had asked him that one time too many, he declared in exasperation, "No, I don't have to go potty, I'm doing it for fun."

So it is with children and adults. The former possesses an instinctive, innocent relationship with play while the latter can only regard the idea as a memory lost. As adults, we nod and sigh, persuading ourselves to accept our needlessly imposed rigidity.

COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM STILL ARCHIVE

CUSTOM-MADE QUALITY

The Museum Store, Minneapolis, MN
Architects: Heise Reinen MacRae & Associates, Inc.
Photo: Steven Bergerson



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details

Playing with design When he works on a residential commission, Dale Mulfinger of Mulfinger & Susanka Architects says that he likes to “engage the client.” That includes the client’s children, whose participation frequently helps Mulfinger to nurture a sense of playfulness in the design process. He says that children often approach a creative project with unrestrained enthusiasm and imagination, qualities frequently suppressed in adults by formal education.

In 1987, 8-year-old Erica Olson was so inspired by Mulfinger’s early study model of her family’s new Kenwood house that she produced a lively drawing of her own based on a dream she’d had. Mulfinger incorporated Olson’s drawing into the project’s development. Her rendering even introduced a spirit of serendipity to the design process. At one point, the two of them blew square bits of paper onto a colored backdrop, from which Mulfinger adapted a random window pattern for the side elevations of the house.

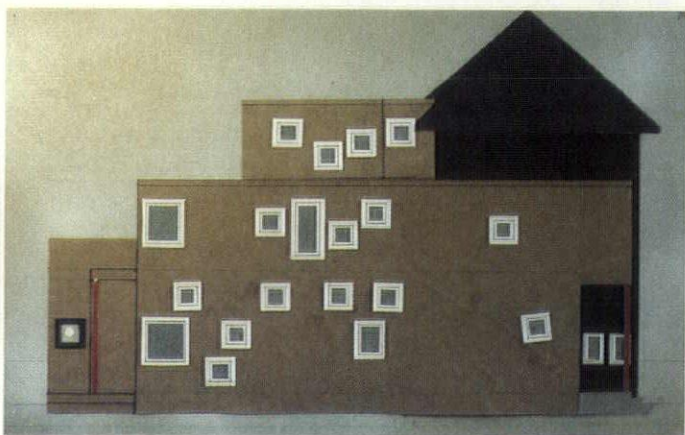
Nurturing a spirit of play is an important concern for Mulfinger in his work as a teacher as well. As a way of relaxing inhibitions in his second-year design classes at the University of Minnesota College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Mulfinger, for example, asks students to choose a site from one of several paintings by Cezanne, Jennifer Bartlett or Edward Hopper and then design a house on an imaginary lot located “just around the corner.” He believes that assignments like this sharpen students’ insight and encourage exploration of less obvious design approaches. By embracing this element of play, students can rediscover a childlike freshness and spontaneity that enrich the final design.

Bill Beyer



COURTESY DALE MULFINGER

Eight-year-old Erica Olson was so inspired by the design process for her family’s new house that she contributed some ideas of her own. The energy of her drawings (below right) was captured in the front of the house (above) designed by architect Dale Mulfinger.



The spirit of play guided the design process when Dale and Erica blew bits of paper onto a colored backdrop and then adapted the random pattern for the window design in the house’s side elevations.



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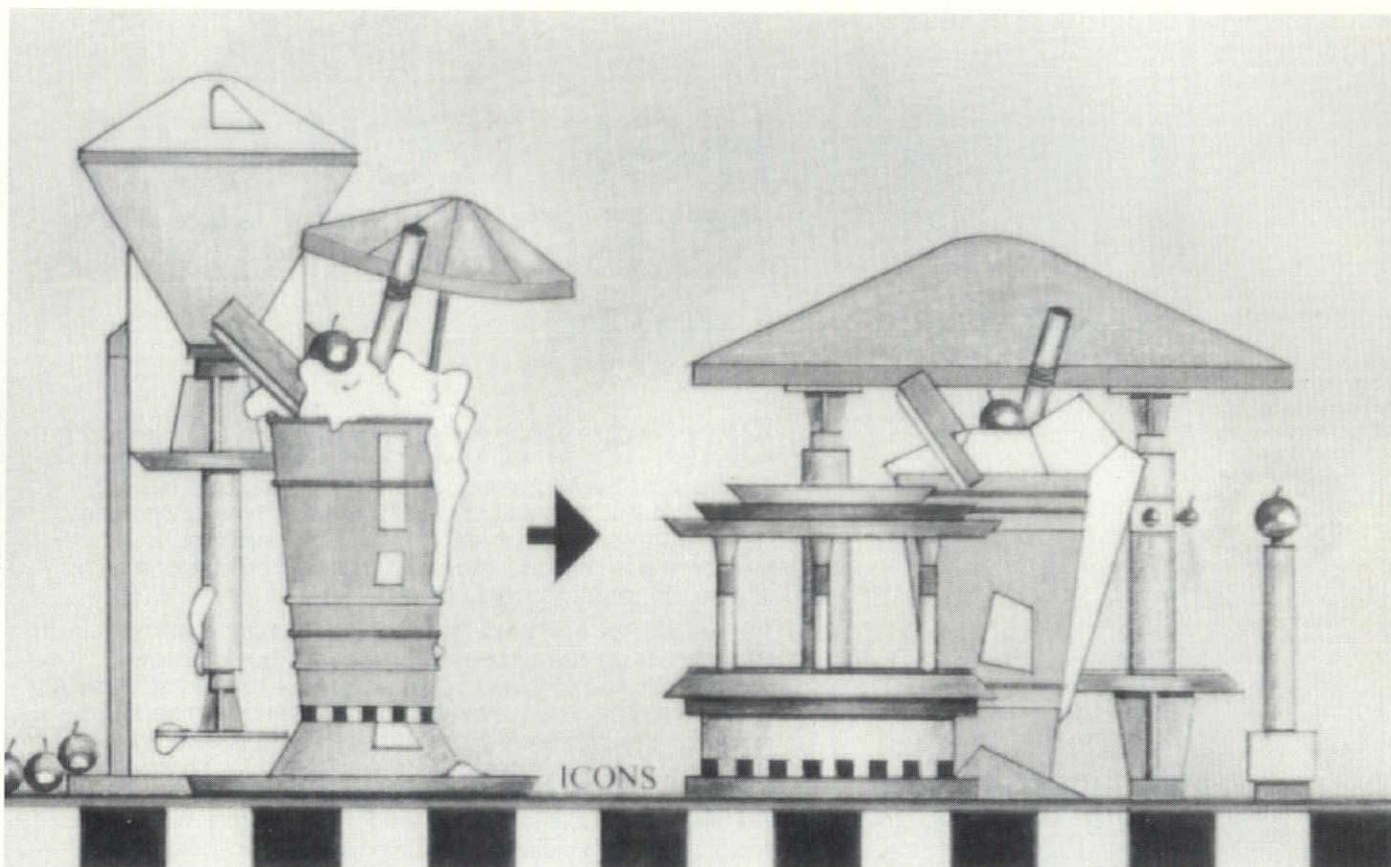
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Ruby's Ice Cream Booth: Jay Isenberg and Ira Keer, 1986

When brothers Tom and Andy Rush applied for a permit to open an ice-cream booth at the Minnesota State Fair, a booth that would serve real ice cream—malts, shakes, sundaes and banana splits rather than the normal vanilla soft-serv—they chose an unusual route. Vendors routinely followed standard bureaucratic procedure, first applying to State Fair officials for a permit and a site assignment before designing the booth.

But the Rushes wanted to impress the State Fair officials, so they hired their boyhood friend Jay Isenberg of Architecturestudio and his friend Ira Keer of Ellerbe Becket (who together were moonlighting as Archimania) to design a prototypical Ruby's, a design so wonderful it would wow the offi-

cials into approving their permit application.

Isenberg and Keer not only had to design for four generic site possibilities, but make the design inexpensive to build, tough enough to survive Minnesota winters, sturdy enough to resist vandalism—and of course, do all this on a shoestring design budget.

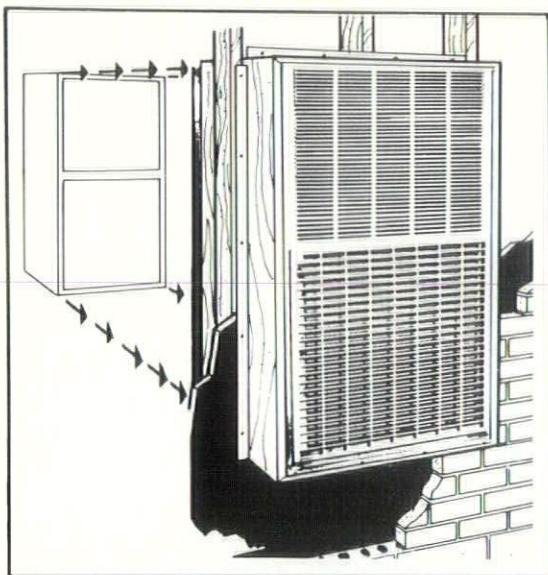
A detail from one of their renderings shows how their design catches the State Fair's spirit, its larger-than-life exaggeration, and the visual cacophony of colors, forms and shapes that makes the State Fair unique. It draws on nostalgic memories of '50s' drive-ins. Even the name Ruby's evokes a pony-tailed, gum-snapping waitress. The ice-cream-sundae shape draws on the roadside tradition of mimetic archi-

tecture, architecture that mimics the form of what it sells, like a hot-dog stand shaped like a hot dog, or an ice-cream stand shaped like a.... You get the idea.

While the drawings were exhibited at the Minnesota Museum of Art in the 1986 "Paperarchitecture" exhibit, and will be published in an upcoming book about the Minnesota State Fair by Karal Ann Marling, State Fair officials were not impressed. Three times now the State Fair has rejected the Rush's application for a permit, and this year they won't try again. Ruby's will remain unbuilt.

Sometimes design alone, no matter how wonderful, just isn't enough.

Robert Gerloff



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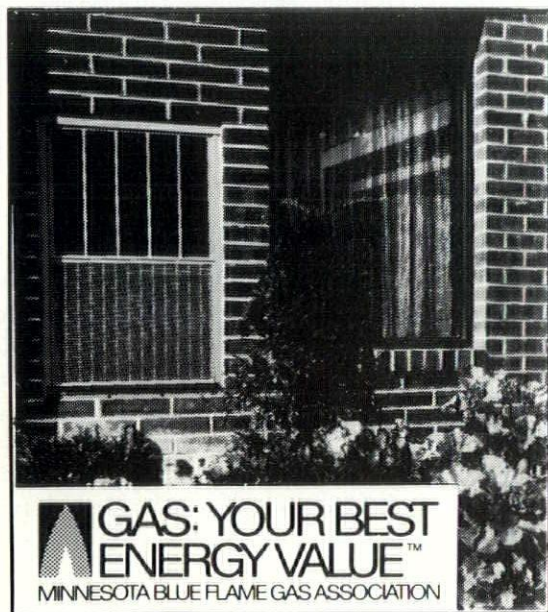
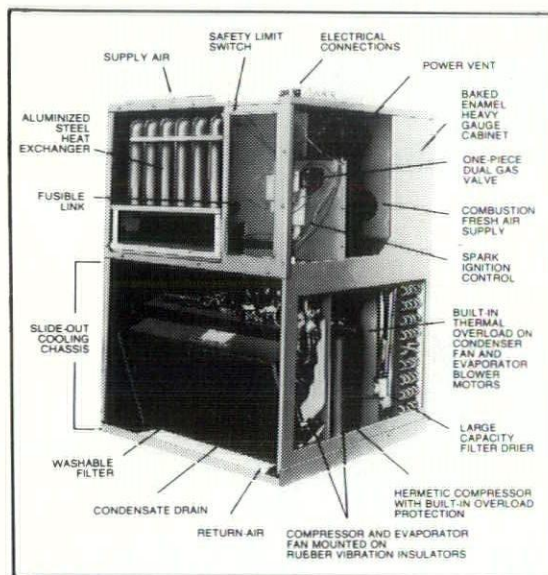
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previews

Continued from page 9

Mirror of Empire: Dutch Marine Art of the 17th Century

Sept. 23–Dec. 30

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

\$3 adults; discount for students and seniors; free to members



Four Ships in High Seas by Cornelis Verbeeck in "Mirror of Empire: Dutch Marine Art of the 17th Century."

Paintings, prints, drawings, maps and sea atlases explore the evolution of Dutch marine art, both as historical and cultural records of 17th-century Holland and as art forms reflecting the values and aspirations of their time.

For more information call the Visitor Information Center at 870-3131.

Building on Imagination: Architectural Imagery in Children's Books

Sept. 24–Nov. 18

University Art Museum

University of Minnesota

Free and open to the public

A gingerbread house that glows in a deep, dark woods. A castle that grows right out of a mountain. A little boy swept away by a flood tours the world's great architecture.

Everyday architecture is not the norm in this exhibition. Drawn primarily from the Kerlan Collection of Children's Literature at the University of Minnesota, "Building on Imagination" explores the role of architectural imagery in children's books. Included are selections from such well-known illustrators as Chris Van Allsburg, Gustaf Tenggren, Clement Hurd, Maurice Sendak and Barbara Berger.

Call the University Art Museum at 624-9876 for further information.

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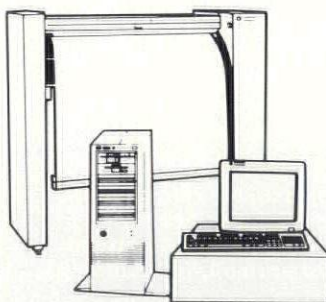
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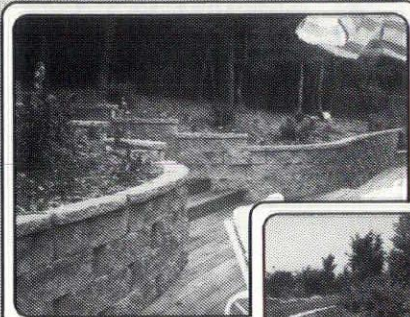
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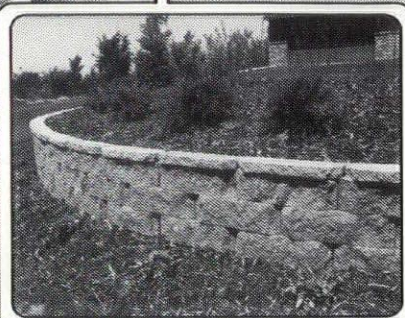
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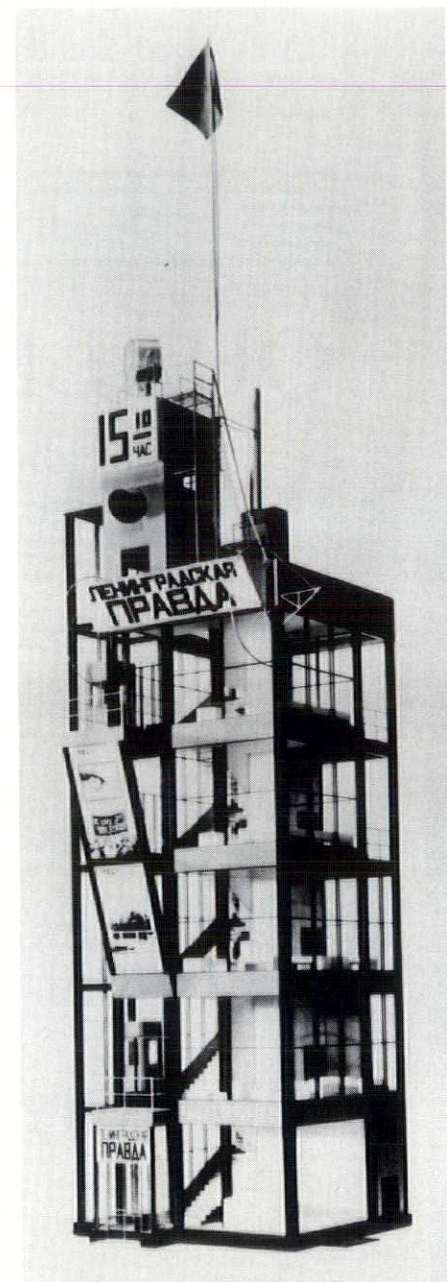
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A maquette for the Leningrad Pravda Tower in
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Banned for decades in Russia,
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and posters to theatrical set designs, furniture, a full-sized glider and orators' platforms, the show tracks the growth of Russian constructivism, a major artistic movement that flourished in the wake of the new Soviet state created by the 1917 Russian Revolution.

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Throughout a career that has spanned more than four decades, Minnesota Ojibwa artist George Morrison has drawn upon the major art movements of his time—cubism, surrealism and abstract expressionism—and blended them with the imagery drawn from nature, particularly the landscape of his native North Shore of Lake Superior. Included in this major retrospective of Morrison's work are wood collages, paintings, prints and pen-and-ink drawings.

The exhibition concludes its tour at the Plains Art Museum in Moorhead, Minn., Sept. 28–Nov. 25.

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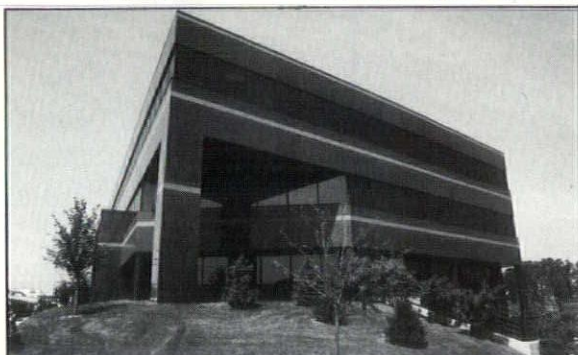
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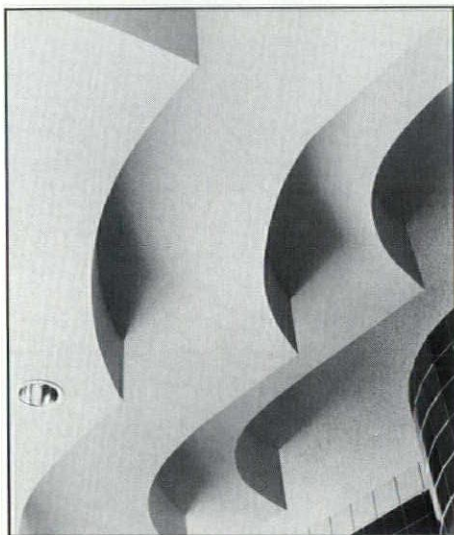
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Continued from page 15

ings and medical clinics. It was a very small practice and did not pose a big enough challenge for the eager young architect who wanted to build. However, an opening in Leonard Parker's firm soon called Mahaffey back up to the cities in 1964. Except for a two-year stint at Yale University from 1969 to 1970, where he received a master's in environmental design, Mahaffey has remained with Parker ever since.

His time at Yale, not uneventful by any standard, coincided with the Kent State slayings and Vietnam War protests across the country. "It was a bad time to be in school," Mahaffey says. "It was exciting to be a part of the progressive thinking at that time, but also frustrating because architectural education took a back seat."

They were indeed troubled times. During Mahaffey's first year at Yale the architecture school building (designed by the quintessential modernist Paul Rudolph) was burned in protest of modernism. Students then were forced to find studio space in the community, working in storefronts and open lots. And, like much of American higher education of that period, the program was not very organized. The good thing about the experience, Mahaffey says, was having the opportunity to interact with teachers such as Serge Chermayeff and Vincent Scully. "Learning from people of such caliber gives you a better perspective on your own work; they set a high standard against which I measure my own architectural efforts," he observes.

During school Mahaffey worked part time for Keven Roche and John Dinkaloo of Roche Dinkaloo, the literal and spiritual heirs of Eero Saarinen's office, who went on to create such modernist landmarks as the Ford Foundation Office and the United Nations Plaza Hotel in New York. And though he did interview with several offices on the East Coast, Mahaffey chose to return to

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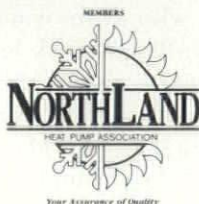
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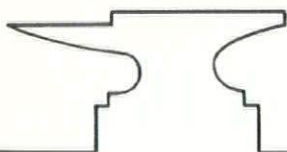


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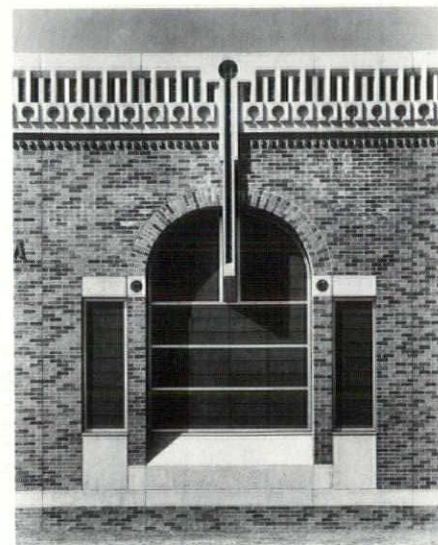


The addition to the Leonard Natatorium at Macalester College (above) combines elements from Prairie School architecture and the Georgian-inspired original building. The classical Palladian-window motif (below) plays off the Prairie-style roof band.

the Twin Cities. Parker's office was about to begin the remodeling and expansion of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts with Japanese architect Kenzo Tange, and Parker promised Mahaffey a major role in that project. Back in the Twin Cities, he immediately plunged into work on the art institute—a great opportunity to prove his ability to manage day-to-day development of design and construction documents.

Mahaffey actually worked with Tange for six weeks in Japan during the schematic design phase to help translate specifications into the English system. It was a particularly challenging assignment because it was the biggest project the office had tackled to date (half a million square feet), and because it was one of the first times a new process called fast track—a building method in which parts of a building are designed and constructed out of a normal construction sequence—had been used on a large institutional project in the Twin Cities. To complicate matters further, there were three user groups and their constituencies—the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the Children's Theatre Company and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design—in addition to the client, the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts.

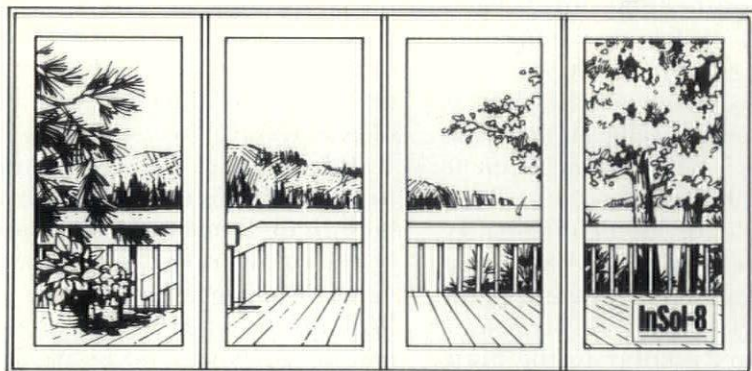
"That's really where I earned my stripes as an architect," says Mahaffey, who at the young age of 31 was handling a work load architects a decade or two older could envy. "It was very stimulating to say the least." The Minneapolis Institute of Arts complex stretched Mahaffey's capabilities and brought him to a top position in the firm. He has continued to play a key role in



the firm ever since.

Of the firm's more recent work, Mahaffey is especially proud of his part in the Leonard Natatorium addition at Macalester College in St. Paul. As principal-in-charge, he oversaw everything from schematic design and design development to the completed building. A deft extension of the college's Georgian-style gymnasium, the Leonard Natatorium responds sensitively to the setting while adding a new language to the architectural "conversation" between campus buildings. It incorporates historical elements from the gymnasium and adapts them to form a new aesthetic reminiscent of Prairie School buildings by Purcell and Elmslie. The new pool uses the arched window and rhythmic pattern of the gymnasium facade, but goes one step further. By playing a classically propor-

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tioned Palladian-window motif against a Prairie-inspired roof band, Mahaffey has produced a unique piece of architecture that contributes to the existing high-quality campus architecture.

As this year's president of the Minnesota Society of Architects, Mahaffey knows that the future of the profession depends on the progressive leadership of its present members. Education is high on his list. Mahaffey sees an urgent need for architectural education to deal with the practical side of architecture, particularly now that the building process has become so expensive and complex. "I'm not sure if this is true in all cases," he says, "but I don't think the schools give [students] enough of the reality of the *practice* of architecture. Even though, as Leonard says, one of the primary purposes of architecture education is to inspire, I think the schools must introduce students to

the 'real world' aspects of the profession."

As a result, among his goals are the continuation and improvement of the internship program, which links newly graduated architecture students with registered architects in the community to assure them a structured, professional education that leads toward licensing.

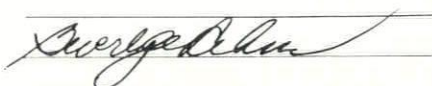

He'd also like to see the chapter work to improve architects' compensation, which he feels is inadequate relative to the compensation of like professionals. In addition, Mahaffey would have the MSAIA work toward improving retirement plans for architects. And he'd like to see a review board similar to the State Designer Selection Board which would assist public-sector clients through the complex process of selecting designers.

As for the future of Minnesota architecture, Mahaffey sees a continuing evolution of "heartland architec-

ture," where good design is mixed with a strong dose of pragmatism. "This is a fantastic city to be living and working in," Mahaffey says. "With the stimulating political and physical setting we have, I can't think of another city that matches the Twin Cities for quality of environment." He points out that much of the fine architecture here can be attributed to Minnesota's tradition of teacher-architects, among them Ralph Rapson, Leonard Parker, Bruce Abrahamson, James Stageberg, John Rauma and more recently Harrison Fraker, who have provided strong leadership in the past. With this in mind, Mahaffey sees the continuing education of architects and the public playing an even greater role toward shaping the future of Minnesota architecture. A fitting response from a man who knows firsthand that building on past knowledge is a virtue.

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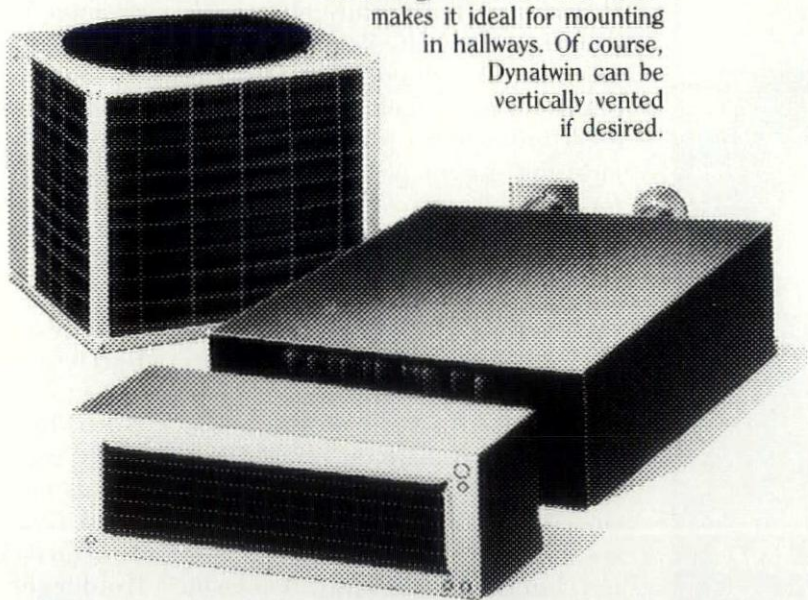


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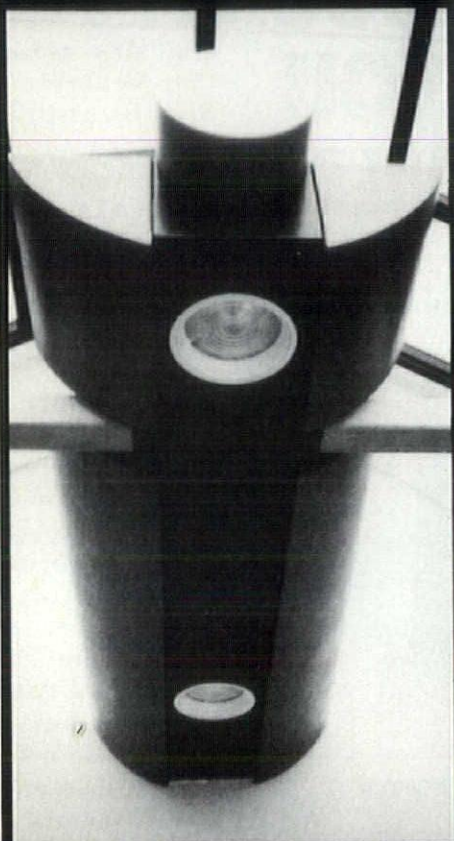
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first person

Continued from page 19

for I believe that architects don't take the schism seriously enough and that only making architecture more democratic will heal the schism.

Because I work in a firm that designs houses in close cooperation with clients, I'm continually exposed to public stereotypes of architects. Clients tell me architects are temperamental artistes, who are unable to design within budget or cooperate with the builder, don't know the pragmatics of construction, and design ugly buildings that are monuments to their egos. And these are clients who have hired an architect! You should hear what people say about architects at the Home Show. It ain't pretty.

Perhaps architects are unaware of the depth of the schism because they are fooled by their glamorous reflection in the media. Frank Gehry is treated like a guru in *Interview*, and such glossies as *Progressive Architecture*, *Metropolitan Home* and *HG* slobber over the latest hot new discoveries. This media coverage, which focuses on the most outrageous projects and the most outrageous personalities, reinforces public stereotypes and forces the schism ever wider.

While the media pamper architects as trendy darlings, the public votes with its dollars. Look at houses, a building type which doesn't legally require an architect's stamp: Less than 5 percent of Minnesota houses are commissioned from an architect by clients for a specific site. Not only does the middle class see architects as an expendable luxury, but even the wealthy, those who could afford the fees, aren't hiring architects either. To the public, architects are irrelevant.

The schism is real, the schism is deep, and the schism is hurting architects, not only financially: It's hurting architects artistically as well. As architect William Roger Greeley writes: "No profession can be successful in ministering to an ap-

athetic people. It must answer a need that is felt. Art does not have a virgin birth. It is not a thing that can be generated independently by the artist and then sold to the surprised and delighted public. The artist must draw his inspiration from a passionate society, must incubate the germ and, with love and labor, bring it to maturity. Then it will be recognized and welcomed by the society which sired it."

There are several concrete steps architects can take to heal the schism and make architecture more democratic. The first is for architects to change their attitude toward the public, to abandon the "us vs. them" thinking, to listen to the public, take their values seriously and to design with a greater humility and openness.

The second step is for architects to initiate a free and open discussion with the public. Architects, once they sell an idea to their client, are remarkably free from the public criticism that dominates most other arts. Movies, records, plays and books won't survive without good reviews. A play that gets blasted—or ignored—by the critics will close. Architecture, in contrast, is shrouded in silence. The few architectural critics who write in the popular press are primarily apologists, explaining architecture to the public, "educating" them to think like architects. Rarely do critics fundamentally question what is built or how design decisions are made. Rarely do critics force architects to listen to the public.

Public discussion, of course, would require architects to listen as well as talk, and talk in straightforward English, not in the private, nonsensical mumblings of the Heidegger wannabes. Architects need to talk *with* the public, not *at* them, for it is architects who need the public, not the public who needs architects.

Free of criticism, free of public discussion, architects have wandered off on private tangents, ignoring the public and designing, as Prince Charles says, "for the approval of fellow architects."

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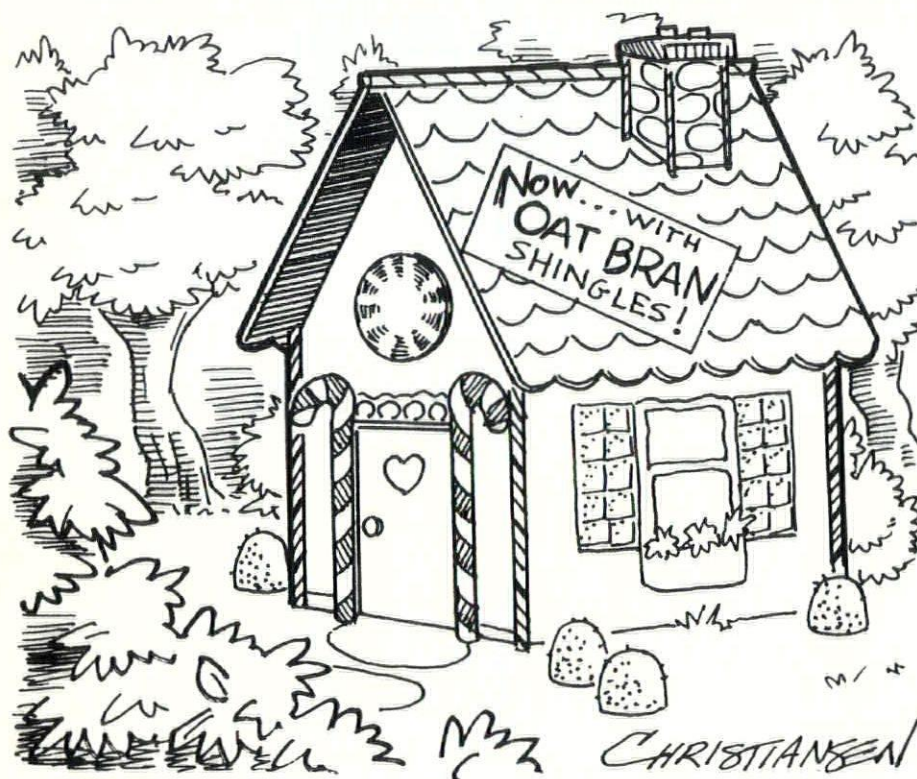
The third step is to select the designs of more buildings through competitions. You can't have democracy without choice. In Finland, the nation with the highest quality architecture in the world, the design of almost every building is selected through an open competition. In America, competitions are the exception rather than the norm, but when they are held, the resulting quality of architecture is high. Here in the Twin Cities some of the best civic designs—Cass Gilbert's Minnesota State Capitol, McKim, Mead & White's Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Hammel Green and Abrahamson's History Center, Leonard Parker Associates' Judicial Center—were selected through competitions. Could the most powerful piece of public architecture in the nation, Maya Ying Lin's somber Vietnam Memorial, have been selected in any way but through an open competition? Would any building committee have hired a 21-year-old undergraduate with no built work?

The recent Chicago Library competition was remarkable in how it engaged the public (whatever you think of the winning design). The models and drawings were on public display, and by comparing and contrasting the different designs, the citizens of Chicago were better able to understand the issues and make a wiser, more informed, choice about the future of their city.

The final step, the ideal, is to have grass-roots architecture, just as we have grass-roots democracy, where citizens actually participate in the process of designing the buildings that affect their lives.

But in the meantime, architects should stop pretending that democratic architecture is simply a question of style, that all problems can be solved by generating new, improved styles. They need to take the schism between themselves and the public seriously, for until it is healed, architects will continue to be irrelevant, and their designs lack power.

I thank Prince Charles for opening this debate. **AM**



Credits

Project: MTC Transit Store

Location: Minneapolis, Minn.
Client: Metropolitan Transit Commission
Architects: Shea Architects, Inc.
Principal-in-charge: Steven Haas
Project manager: Gregory Rothweiler
Contractor: Lund Martin Construction

Project: Gage Elementary

Location: Rochester, Minn.
Client: Independent School District #535, Rochester
Architects: Armstrong, Torseth, Skold and Rydeen, Inc.
Principal-in-charge: James E. Rydeen, AIA
Project architect: Craig Hinrichs
Project team: Thomas Hendrix, Ron Bellows, Ted Cabak
Structural engineers: Clark Engineering, Inc.
Mechanical engineers: Robert Martini (ATS&R)
Electrical engineers: Don Yungner (ATS&R)
Contractor: Alvin E. Benike, Inc.
Interior design: Diane Taylor (ATS&R)
Landscape architect: Andrew K. Matzko (ATS&R)
Photographer: Ralph Berlovitz

Project: Fortune Bay Bingo Casino

Location: Lake Vermilion, St. Louis Co., Minn.
Client: Bois Forte Reservation Business Committee
Architects: Architectural Resources, Inc.
Principal-in-charge: E.A. Jyring, FAIA
Project architect: Architectural Resources (Hibbing office)
Structural engineers: Hurst & Henrichs, Ltd.
Mechanical engineers: Architectural Resources, Inc.
Construction management: E.N.V., Inc.
Interior design: Architectural Resources, Inc.
Landscape architects: Architectural Resources, Inc.
Construction manager: E & V Inc.
Photographer: John Peterson Photography

Project: Lake Harriet Refectory

Location: Minneapolis, Minn.
Client: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
Architects: Frederick Bentz/Milo Thompson/Robert Rietow, Inc.
Principal-in-charge: Milo H. Thompson, FAIA
Project manager: Robert S. Howard, AIA
Project architect: Robert S. Howard
Project designer: Milo H. Thompson
Structural engineers: Bakke, Kopp, Ballou & McFarlin, Inc.
Mechanical engineers: Bakke, Kopp, Ballou & McFarlin, Inc.
Electrical engineers: Bakke, Kopp, Ballou & McFarlin
Contractor: David N. Volkmann Construction, Inc.
Interior design: Bentz/Thompson/Rietow, Inc.
Landscape architect: Sanders and Associates, Inc.
Photographer: Christian Korab/Balthazar Korab Ltd.

Project: Creative Play Area

Location: Hyland Lake Park Reserve, Bloomington, Minn.
Architects: Suburban Hennepin Regional Park District
Contractor: W.H. Cates Construction, Inc.
Photographer: George Heinrich

Project: Pinewood Community Playground

Location: Monticello, Minn.
Client: Pinewood Community Playground Committee
Architects: Robert S. Leathers & Assoc.
Project designer: Rachel Dougan, John Dean, Barry Segal
Construction consultants: Barry Segal, Tom Burton
Photographer: George Heinrich

Project: Wolf's Ridge

Location: Finland, Minn.
Client: Wolf's Ridge ELC
Architects: Setter, Leach & Lindstrom/Edward Schafer Associates, Inc.
Principal-in-charge: Richard Vasatka
Project manager: Edward Frenette
Project architect: Jeff Wilwerding
Project designer: Mark Schatz
Structural engineers: Hurst & Henrichs Ltd.
Mechanical engineers: Jon Ohman & Associates
Electrical engineers: John Skurla
Contractor: Ray Riihiluoma, Inc.
Interior design: Setter, Leach & Lindstrom
Landscape architects: Setter, Leach & Lindstrom
Photographer: Robert Pearl

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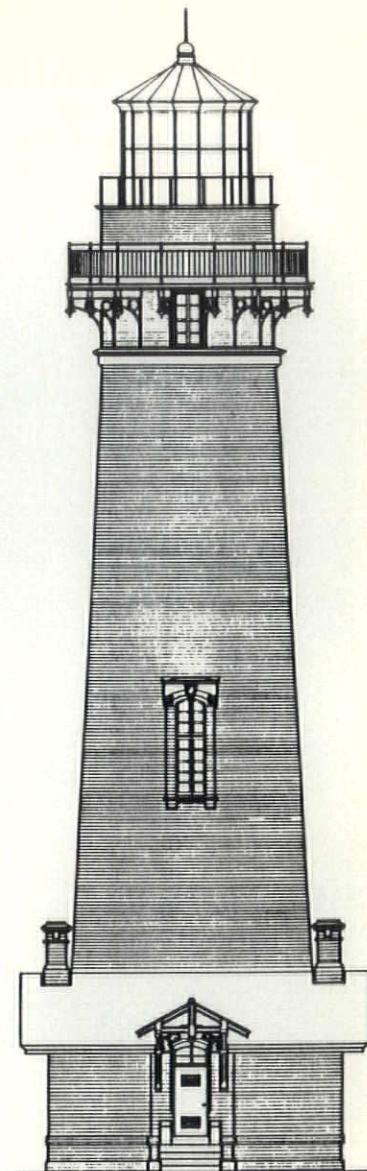
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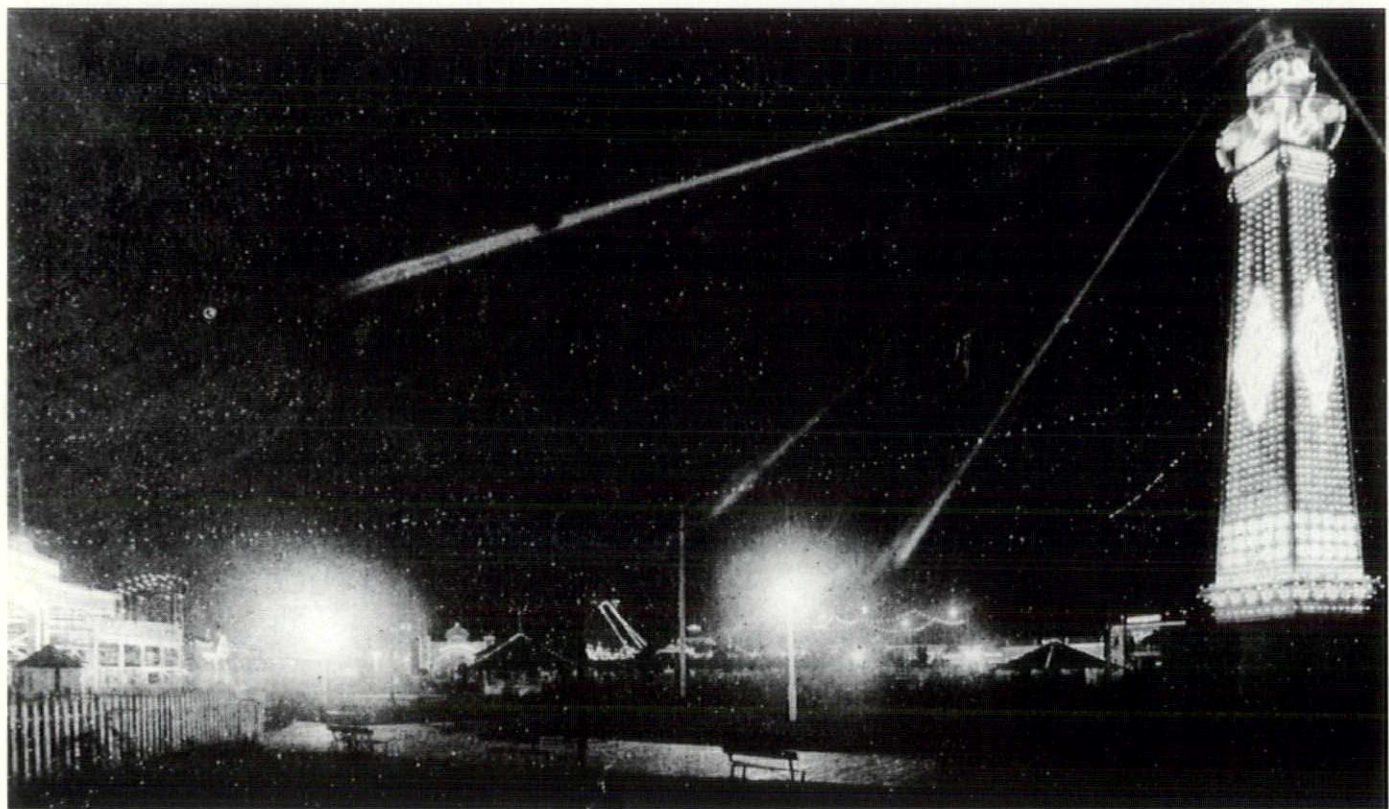
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Wonderland's Beacon Tower, Minneapolis, 1905-1911.

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It would have looked perfect atop a California sea cliff or on a speck of a Maine island, but Wonderland's Beacon Tower instead sat in the heart of south Minneapolis. For 6 years the tower symbolized the electric glamour awaiting Minnesotans at the largest amusement park between Chicago and the West Coast.

Wonderland, built in 1905 by Canadian businessman H.A. Dorsey, occupied land at Lake Street and 31st Avenue South. The designer of the park and its 2-dozen major structures is unknown, although another of Dorsey's properties, the famed White City amusement park in New Haven, Conn., was probably fashioned by the same person.

Fifty thousand visitors poured

into Wonderland during its opening day in May 1905, and they strolled, shrieked and ate amid a peculiar assortment of structures, including an "Old Mill" whose interior featured artificial stalactites and a replica of the Florida Everglades.

From up to 5 miles away, however, Twin Citians could see the glow of the Beacon Tower. Outlined by 4,000 light bulbs and standing 120 feet high, it had a powerful marine projector beacon that nightly raked the Minneapolis sky. Its advertising value to the park far exceeded its original cost of about \$15,000.

Wonderland's customers could climb the tower's 160 steps for a view of the Mississippi River. Even better, the Beacon Tower hosted on

at least one occasion a genuine human-interest drama. On Aug. 5, 1908, Nina Hoke and her groom, A. Krall, stood with a minister on the tiny platform at the top of the tower and took their marriage vows. Down on the ground, as a band struck up the wedding march from *Lohengrin*, a large crowd cheered, and Wonderland's management offered a wedding present of \$100 in gold.

Wonderland's honeymoon, though, didn't last long. After an unprofitable season in 1911, Dorsey sold the park to a developer who razed the tower along with the other structures and built houses on the 10-acre site. The beacon had blazed its last.

Jack El-Hai

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