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Rice Design Alliance
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The Architecture and Design Review of Houston

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Cite

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InCite

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Margaret Helen Morris 1960-1987

Margaret Helen Morris, secretary of the Rice Design Alliance, died at her home on 27 July 1987. Although Miss Morris's association with the Rice Design Alliance was brief, she had become essential to its operation. She carried out her responsibilities with diligence, discretion, and a warm, witty humor. She took a special interest in the publication of *Cite*, assisting in the preparation of manuscripts and soliciting advertising. The Rice Design Alliance will sorely miss Margaret Morris.

Big Cité **Beat**

Cite alive–still–at 5. This nineteenth issue marks the fifth anniversary of *Cite*, the Rice Design Alliance's review of architecture and design in Houston.

☛ Hot Off the Press: Lumen Books has published ***For An Architecture of Reality*** by Austin architect **Michael Benedikt**, **Mary Carolyn Hollers George** is putting finishing touches on the first volume of her long-awaited book on **O'Neil Ford**, and the **Fort Worth Chapter of the American Institute of Architects** is poised to bring out **Judith Singer**'s Cowtown Moderne: both of the latter are to be published by Texas A&M University Press. UT-Austin's **Center for the Study of American Architecture** has produced the third issue of *Center*, on ***New Regionalism***, edited by Lawrence W. Speck and Wayne Attoe.

☛ Brain Drain: The **Houston Brain-Drain** has turned into an outgoing tidal wave. Kissing Houston good-bye this spring and summer were architect and *Cite* contributor **Jan O'Brien** and hubby **Craig Hartman** (posted to SOM/DC), architect **Alan Hirschfield** (to practice with Toronto architect Julian Jacobs and teach at the University of Toronto), legendary art maven **Esther de Vécsey** (Pacific Institute of Religion, Berkeley), photographer **Jacques de Selliers** (home to Brussels), landscape architect **Frances F. Chamberlain** (UT-Austin), architect and *Cite* contributor **Andrew Bartle** (New York), artist **Laura Foster** and architect hubby **Ben Nicholson** (Chicago), architect **William Taylor** (SCI-Arch, Santa Monica), historian **Mark Schneider**, and architect **Michael Underhill** (to become chairman of architecture at Iowa State University). Hasta luego.

☛ To replace ***Texas Homes***, the ten-year-old Dallas-based monthly that was closed down in May along with its companion publication, ten-year-old ***Houston City Magazine*** (just as it was beginning to get good), ***Texas Monthly*** will introduce ***Domain*** in December. This will be a quarterly supplement to *Texas Monthly*, available only to subscribers, concentrating on design, art, travel, and food. Editor **Catherine Chadwick** promises that it will be "art-driven" and high-style.

☛ Young Architects: *Progressive Architecture* devoted its July issue to 16 up-and-coming talents, including Texans **Alamo Architects** (San Antonio), **Craig Wakefield Grund** (Austin), **Carlos Jiménez** (Houston), **Joe Mashburn** (College Station), and sometime-Houstonian **Neal I. Payton** (Washington D.C.). The work of Texas architects **Howard Barnstone**, **Hal Box**, **Lawrence W. Speck**, and **William F. Stern** is prominently featured in the recently published book American Houses by Philip Langdon (Steward Tabori & Chang, 1987).

☛ The Decorative Center of Houston and *Houston Home and Garden* magazine have announced the first annual **Wendy Haskell Meyer Student Design Competition**. The competition is open to all Houston- area interior design and architectural students. The Huntingdon condominium complex has agreed to be the 1987 underwriter, providing floorplans and design criteria. Final submission deadline for completed projects is 4 December 1987, with an awards ceremony scheduled for 21 January 1988 at The Decorative Center. For further information or written materials, call Siri Roark at The Decorative Center, 713/961-9292.

☛ The **American Institute of Architects** presented its annual 25 Year Award to the **Bavinger House** in Norman, Oklahoma by **Bruce Goff**, childhood home of Houston architect **Bill Bavinger**. AIA members elected **Benjamin E. Brewer, Jr.** first vice president of the institute at their June convention. Closer to home, the **Alley Theatre** named its Arena Stage in honor of longtime supporter **Hugo V. Neuhaus, Jr.**, shortly before his death on 21 July. **Frank Lloyd Wright**'s only Houston building, the 1955 Thaxton House at 12020 Tall Oaks in Bunker Hill Village, has been colonialized. **Texas A&M University** has established the multi-disciplinary **Center for Historic Resources**, with Gordon Echols as director and Joan Rabins as assistant.

☛ The Houston skyline will come alive during the **Landmarks on Parade** procession celebrating the opening of the George R. Brown Convention Center on 26 September at 8 PM on the center's grounds. The parade, which will include more than 1,500 parading high school band members and 300 flag-bearers, will feature 28 marching landmarks designed by architects from local firms, including **Lloyd Jones Fillpot and Associates, Inc.**, **Morris Architects**, **CBM Engineers**, **Walter P. Moore & Associates** with **W.S. Bellows Construction**, **3D/International**, and the **SWA Group**. The landmarks include buildings (Hermann Hospital, Jones Hall, Lovett Hall, City Hall, the Astrodome), skylines (City Post Oak, Houston Center), monuments (San Jacinto Monument), and events (Rendez-Vous Houston, Houston freeways), and will be worn by actors from Checkmate Theatricals. Many of the marching landmarks will be joined by costumed employees who work at the

(Continued on page 4)

Cite**lines**

Look Both Ways

Bob Bailey Studios Inc.

Bob Bailey Studios Inc.

Houston Municipal Air Terminal (Joseph Finger, architect) as it appeared shortly after its opening in 1940. The Air Terminal was Houston's port of entry until a new terminal, now called Hobby Airport, was built in 1954.

In a forward-looking celebration the City of Houston Department of Aviation has dedicated a new runway at Houston Intercontinental Airport and produced a design for a new Terminal D. Yet equally as impressive is the Aviation Department's look back to its genesis. The department will mark a half-century of service by preserving the Houston Municipal Airport Terminal (1937-1940). The city's first municipal airport, on the site now known as William P. Hobby Airport, was served by the four-story Modernistic terminal building designed by Houston architect Joseph Finger.

In this its fiftieth year, the Houston Municipal Airport Terminal will enjoy a $200,000 exterior restoration. The exterior will be restored to near-original appearance (original colors are khaki tan and gray, not the current white and coral-pink scheme). The control tower, which was added soon after the building's completion, will be retained. The International Terminal, a one-story extension of the building which gives the current structure an L-shape, will be modified. A portion of this addition will be demolished, separating the extension from the original terminal. Work inside the building will be limited to cleaning, safety lighting, and stabilization of decaying ceiling plaster.

Barry Moore Architects, Inc. is reviewing contract documents for the project. The restoration will accomplish more than arresting deterioration, which is in itself a laudable goal. Preservation of the exterior of the building will leave only the task of interior rehabilitation when a new use for the long-abandoned building is selected. Meanwhile, the terminal will attract the attention it deserves as a significant piece of Houston's architectural heritage.

The restoration plans were reviewed by the City of Houston Archeological and Historical Commission. Commissioner V. Nia Dorian-Becnel praised the Aviation Department for taking the initiative in securing the building, rather than continuing to allow the historic building to deteriorate.

Mike Davis

big cité beats

(Continued from page 3)

featured facility or company. Several of the structures will have audio capabilities and internal lighting.

Rice students adorn the Merry Prankster bus, March 1967.

☛ J.H. Bryan and unnamed co-conspirators are seeking to rescue **Ken Kesey's Merry Prankster bus**, which lies a-mouldering (and a-rusting) on Kesey's farm in Pleasant Hill, Oregon. The bus, with its destination marquee reading "Further," crisscrossed America during the '60s, with Neal Cassady sometimes at the wheel, stopping in Houston to visit writer Larry McMurtry, then at Rice. The would-be preservationists hope to have the bus restored and moved to the Smithsonian Institution.

☛ Architect and University of Houston associate professor **Peter J. Zweig** took an honorable mention in the West Hollywood Civic Center Competition.

☛ A $3 million grant from the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation will fund the new **Sasakawa International Center for Space Architecture** at the University of Houston. Under the direction of architecture professor **Larry Bell**, the center will work on projects supporting the peaceful use of space and space technology.

Fall Architecture Events

Rice Design Alliance
P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77251-1892, 713/524-6297
7-8 Nov – Annual Home Tour: Broadacres. Homes in this tree-lined neighborhood along North and South boulevards will be open to RDA members only.
Fall Lecture Series – "Lessons From Space." A four-part lecture series addressing man's environment in outer space, including space stations, the moon, the planets, and beyond.
For reservations and information about both events, telephone the Rice Design Alliance.

Farish Gallery
M.D. Anderson Hall, Rice University, 713/527-4870
24 Aug-11 Oct – Exhibition:"Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Building." Models, drawings, furniture, and photographs organized by the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University. Introduced with a lecture **2 Sept** by Jonathan Lipman, 7:30 PM, Brown Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; reception 8:30 PM Farish Gallery.

School of Architecture, Rice University
713/527-4870
14 Sept-16 Nov – Fall Evening Lecture Series, at 8 PM in Sewall Hall, Room 301, Rice University campus; admission free.
21 Sept – Taft Architects, "Recent Work."
28 Sept – Peter Papademetriou, "On Becoming a Modern Architect: Eero Saarinen's Evolution."
30 Sept – Xavier Navarro, "Paintings and Buildings."
5 Oct – Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, "Critical Classicism."
8 Oct – Judith Wolin, "Mnemotopia."
19 Oct – Carollee Pelos and Jean-Louis Bourgeois, "Magnificant Mud."
26 Oct – Michael Sorkin, "Postures of Criticism."
2 Nov – Alex Krieger, "On Boston: Past Futures and Recent Prospects."
9 Nov – Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, "Recent Work."
16 Nov – Mary McLeod, "The Politics of Le Corbusier."
21 Oct – Lecture by Robert Irwin, a leading Southern California artist and Craig Francis Cullinan Visiting Professor in Fine Arts, Architecture, and Urban Planning for 1987-1988, "The Nature of Abstract Art," 7 PM, Sewall Hall, Room 301, Rice University campus; admission free.

College of Architecture, University of Houston
713/749-1187
23 Sept-11 Nov – Fall Lecture Series, Wednesdays at 2:30 PM unless otherwise specified, College of Architecture Auditorium, University of Houston campus; admission free.
23 Sept – Ronald C. Filson, "Boston Artist Housing and Other Projects."
30 Sept – Judy Urrutia, "Process and Content."
14 Oct – Andrew Perez, "The Work of Andrew Perez and Associates."
28 Oct – Robert Renfro, "Current Work."
6 Nov, Friday – Kenneth Frampton.
11 Nov – Simone Swan, "Hassan Fathy."

Greater Houston Preservation Alliance
16 Sept – Guided walking tour of the Main Street/Market Square Historic District; tours usually scheduled the third Wednesday of every month; group tours available upon request. Fee is $1; meet at noon at the corner of Preston and Milam. For more information, call Barthel Truxillo at 713/861-6236.
29-30 Oct – Public conference, "Main Street/Market Square Historic District: Developing a Revitalization Strategy." Co-sponsored by the RDA, DiverseWorks, Houston Archeological and Historical Commission, Houston Chapter/AIA, and CSI. For registration information, call the GHPA at 713/236-5000.

Houston Chapter, American Institute of Architects
20 Greenway Plaza, Suite 246, Houston, Texas 77046-2002, 713/622-2081
Beginning **20 Sept**, every third Sunday of the month – Guided walking tours.
28 Sept – Annual Design Awards Reception, 6:30 PM at Stages Theater; $10 AIA members, $15 nonmembers
23 Oct – Urban Design Symposium. Registration begins at 7:30 AM; fee includes lunch.
13-15 Nov – Texas Society of Architects Annual Convention, George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, Texas. Call the AIA, Houston Chapter office for more information.
13-15 Nov – "Reclaiming Downtown Houston," design charette sponsored by the **Young Architects Forum**. Architecture schools in Texas are invited to send a team of students and faculty/young professional advisors to participate in a design charette to be held during the T.S.A. annual convention. The purpose of the charette is to focus attention on a marginal area of downtown

Houston as part of a city-wide effort to re-define and recover its oldest urban fabric. Related speakers and discussions will be held throughout the fall at meetings of the Young Architects Forum. For information, contact Natalye Appel, 713/227-3803, or the Houston Chapter, AIA, 713/622-2081.

Waterfront Festival
24 October – Historic Allen's Landing, sponsored by the Buffalo Bayou Coalition, Central Houston, Inc., and American Express. 8 AM-12 noon, Splash for Trash, a clean-up along both banks of the bayou from Louisiana to San Jacinto in conjunction with the Sierra Club's *wildlife habitat demonstration*. 12 noon, reinactment of the Allen brothers' landing by the Texas Historic Army in historic garb. Other special events planned at the University of Houston/Downtown campus, including an exhibition entitled "Buffalo Bayou: Past, Present, Future."

Department of Architecture, Texas A&M University
409/845-7851
23 Sept-2 Dec – Fall lecture series. All lectures held at 7 PM in the College of Architecture, Room 105; free.
23 Sept – Carlos Jiménez, "Recent Work."
7 Oct – Victor Dover, "Image Transformation."
14 Oct – Neil Denari, "Recent Work."
21 Oct – Jean-Louis Bourgeois and Carollee Pelos, "Spectacular Vernacular: Adobe Architecture in West Africa and Southwest Asia."
28 Oct - Michael Sorkin
4 Nov – Elizabeth Diller, "Recent Work."
11 Nov – Andres Duany, "Recent Work."
2 Dec – Lars Lerup, "Planned Assault."
22-24 Oct – Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Southwest regional meeting. Call 409/845-1015 for more information.
8-9 Oct – Computer Media '87, first annual symposium on design information management; registration fee $75 until 28 Sept, $100 thereafter. For more information call Fred Seals, 409/845-5691.

School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin
512/471-1922
12-16 Oct – Edwin A. Schneider Centennial Lectures in Technology. Mon, Wed, Fri at 4 PM, Jessen Auditorium.
23 Oct – Jean-Louis Bourgeois and Carollee Pelos, "Spectacular Vernacular: Adobe Architecture in West Africa and Southwest Asia," 4 PM, Jessen Auditorium.
28 Oct – George Andrews, "Mayan Architecture," 4 PM, Jessen Auditorium.
13 Nov-11 Dec – Exhibition: "New Trends in Modern Architecture." Battle Hall Library Reading Room; 512/471-1844 for information.
22 Jan-4 March – Exhibition: "Ornamental Architecture Reborn: A New Terra-Cotta Vocabulary." Battle Hall Library Reading Room.

The Evils of Archi-Speak

It was hearing the phrase "Iterational Inspection" applied as architectural theory that triggered the overload. I was overcome. I am better now.

My personal archi-speak crisis reads like the tempting of a timid soul into the netherworld of the occult or drugs or urban design. I dabbled at archi-speak in the beginning. You know, "We are replacing buildings of a livable, pedestrian scale with auto-accessed monoliths which spring like spores from the creeping web of freeways." Or: "The vocabulary with which this architect is speaking seems aesthetically lacking." Or, the telltale: "That City Beautiful Movement wasn't a half-bad idea." All too quickly I found myself saying these things – with no remorse.

Eventually, all of the clinical signs of complete dependency upon archi-speak became evident. Chief among them, the dreaded anthropomorphic reference. The colossus had come to life. Buildings became beings. They spoke to me. Blank walls were obviously a stone-cold shoulder thrust out at me. Structures were solicitous. They were warm and friendly. Their scale was inviting. They were thoughtful of me as a pedestrian. Some buildings enticed me with voluptuous shapes. Some tricked me with smiling façades which lured me into schizophrenic interiors.

Buildings had their own problems, too. Some couldn't decide to whom they wished to address their statement. Others were obviously uncomfortable with their personal style or were subjected to ridicule because of their flamboyance.

I found myself among the glassy-eyed who stood around staring at office buildings, waiting to be spoken to. My coffee-table architecture book habit was wrecking my financial security and my slide collection was dreaded near and far.

Not that I ever resisted, but I still believe I might have been OK if modernism had stood its ground. *From Bauhaus to Our House* might have saved me. The final blow was postmodernism. I got my first taste of it in graduate school when I accidently walked into the wrong lecture hall. In a torrent of archi-speak the lecturer was warning the impressionable young architects-to-be of the dangers of jumbled piles of historical references splashed with polychrome. The chastity of Pennzoil Place was at stake, he said. A slide of Michael Graves's Portland Building flashed on the screen. A pretty box tied with a po-mo bow.

I was hooked. Lecture series after overpriced collector's book after slide carousel. The lethal combination of living buildings (many were now lauded as "smart" and "interactive") with a seemingly endless repartee of historical reference was pleasure to the point of pain.

And then it happened: the Southern California House Style is alive and well in the welds of a Houston museum's gray façade; Greene and Greene was just a fluke and not noteworthy; the skeleton of a fish can inspire a law school building; emerging architects have rediscovered the concept of Iterational Inspection. Pop Psychology meets Po-Mo Architecture. I.M. Pei are you OK?

Overload.

I am recovering now – stable. I'm on speaking terms with my skyline. Privately, I want to reach out to my architect friends and ask what they see on the conceptual horizon – but I fear the archi-answer.

Mike Davis

FIGHT FOR CITE

The Rice Design Alliance held its first gala benefit, Fight for Cite, on Saturday, 27 June, at the Houston Boxing Association, 5470 Newcastle at Glenmont. Josephine Abercrombie, HBA owner and vice-chairman of Rice University's Board of Governors, was the honorary chairman. John P. Stainback, development director of Barker Interests and Decoma Venture, and Babette Fraser Warren were co-chairmen. The event was a tremendous success, raising over $22,000 for RDA and *Cite* magazine.

The black-tie evening began with cocktails and tours of the state-of-the-art training facility. Ouisie's Table, with Jim Jamail and Sons Food Market, provided a superb dinner for the 300 guests. Several three-round demonstration boxing matches were put on by HBA boxers. A three-round "white-collar" match followed, with New York oilman, Jim Sterling, versus Houston architect, Tom Harris. Dancing in the ring to music provided by deejays Robert Morris and Scott Cluthe lasted until midnight.

Two round-trip, first-class tickets to Tahiti were donated by Continental Airlines for the door prize. Wilson Business Products was the winner. Sandra Strong, contract sales manager for Wilson's, accepted the prize and will be visiting the island next year.

The Rice Design Alliance would like to thank all of the people who worked so hard to make the evening a success.

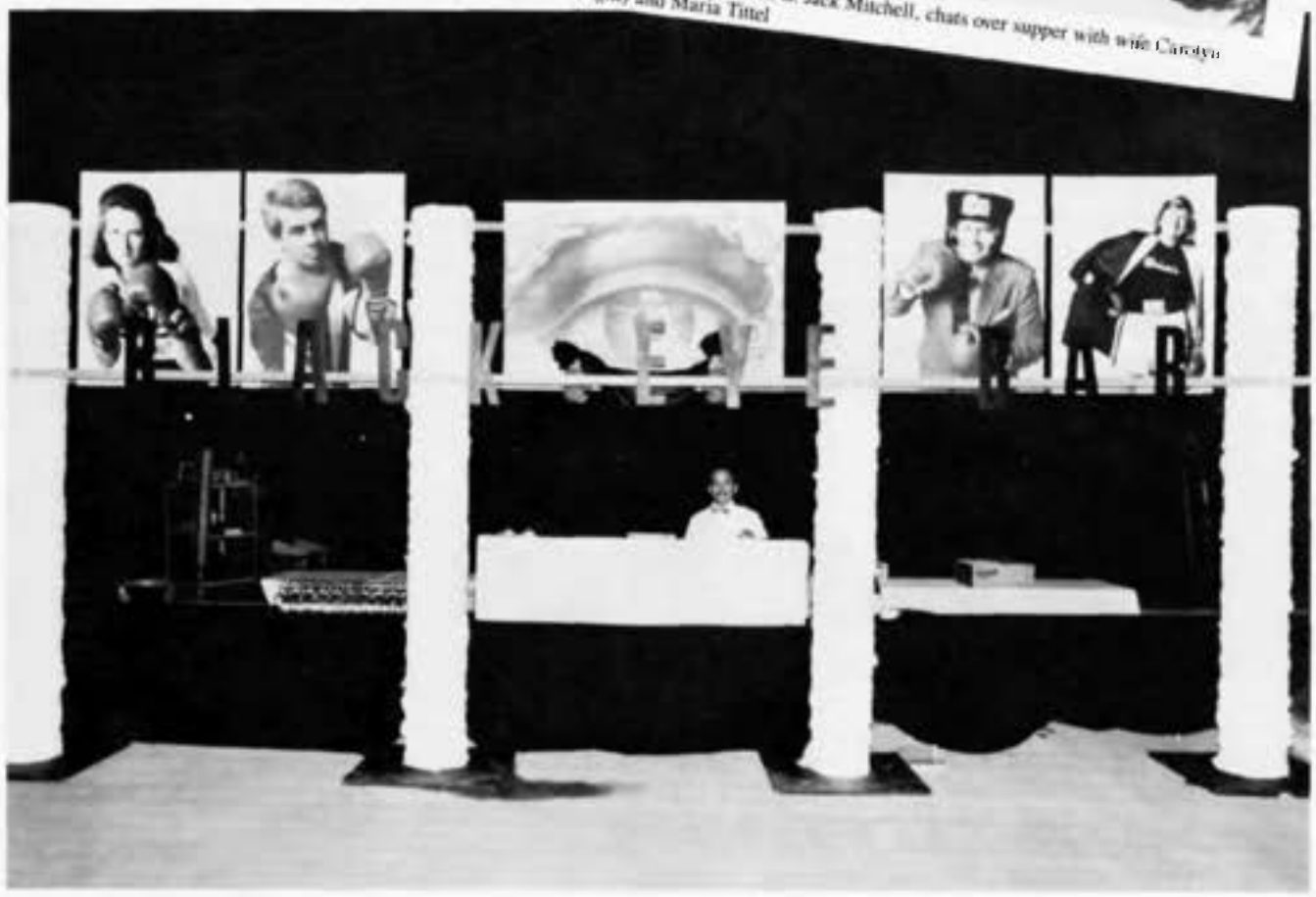
Josephine Abercrombie, Fight for Cite honorary chairman, with Victorian boxing squirrels presented by the RDA

Architect Danny Samuels visits with RDA president, Elizabeth Glassman. Austin architect Carrie Shoemake in background

From left to right: Architects Kurt Aichler, Robert L. Civitello and Josiah R. Baker designed the environment with Bill Boswell of 3D/International

Rice Architecture Dean O. Jack Mitchell, chats over supper with wife Carolyn *(right)* and Maria Tittel

Ellis Vener



The Black-Eye Bar

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Restauranteur Elouise Cooper

Linda Sylvan, managing editor of *Cite*, with Stephen Fox, fellow, the Anchorage Foundation of Texas

White-collar boxers Tom Harris *(left)* and "Gentleman Jim" Sterling with referee R. Mike Wilson

Babette Fraser Warren *(left)* and John P. Stainback, Fight For Cite co-chairmen, with RDA executive director, Barbara Cochran

New York architect Charles Rudolph dances with *Houston Post* art critic Susan Chadwick

Peter Boesel and friend look on while Ron Pephens tries out the speedbag

Dancing in the ring: *(left to right)* Dr. Woody Ferris, fundraiser Carolyn Farb, architect Jim Furr with wife Jo, and landscape architect Sheila Condon with friend

Photographs by Peter Yenne

In a Children's Garden

A pergola and planter partitions the backyard playground for the children sheltered by the Houston Area Women's Center. Spencer W. Parsons, architect

On a quiet Houston street, an ordinary looking house offers refuge to women fleeing their homes and the men who have beaten and abused them. They leave with their children and very little else.

Craig Oettinger, a volunteer at this shelter run by the Houston Area Women's Center, decided that the children there needed an arena of their own. Acting as initiator and coordinator, he contacted architect Spencer W. Parsons, and together the two men transformed a small, under-used yard into an outdoor room that combines the features of a creative playground and an urban garden. The space, which is used by as many as 20 children at once, is a 15-by-55-foot shoe box. The small size of the project was no indication of the complexity of the ideas the men brought to bear on its design. Safety was a primary concern, so the garden needed to be constructed to encourage activities that would not endanger the children.

Parsons sought a broader reference for his project. He says, "I was reminded throughout the effort of a statement by Marianne Moore regarding the responsibility of modern poets, '. . .they should invent imaginary gardens with real toads in them.' What he designed was a garden for children with real playthings in it.

Selecting materials and forms belonging to the lexicon of gardens – pine bark, wood decking, different patterns of wooden trellises, a pergola, trees, flowering ivy, wooden benches, and potted plants – the architect chose three elements as the focus of different sections: a swing in the decked area, a climbing tower in the section for older children, and an arbor to separate them.

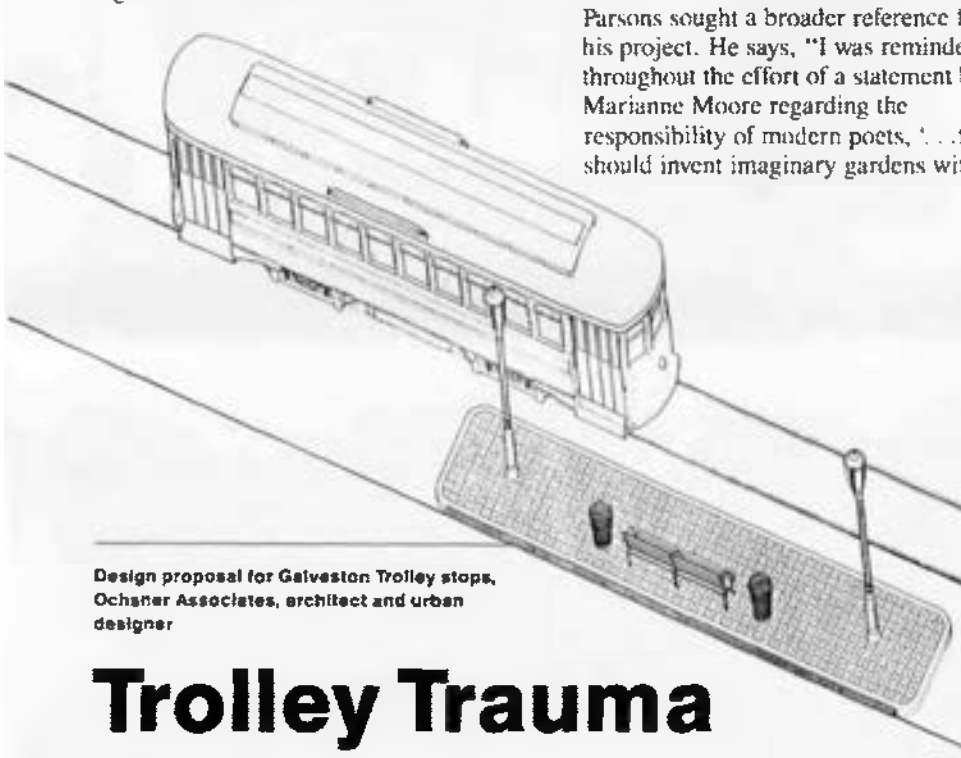
Perimeter walls were raised to the 8-foot maximum height allowed by city code. At one end of the fence, a grid image of a building, with turrets at either end and a half-moon and star for the sky, is a substitute for the niche or wall sculpture in enclosed, formal gardens of the past. Here, L-shaped corner benches offer "sociable" seating for adults. The deck-covered half of the playground contains a swing, a seesaw, and a sandbox, but in a telescoped area. The swing, suspended from a simple pipe frame, is in the center, its space demarcated by a large circular cutout in the deck. The sandbox, a square area where children may sit on the wood deck and dangle their feet over its edge, disappears when its cover is in place.

Off the deck, children have more to explore. On a ground covered with pine bark stands a gridded cube containing various levels and rails, a slide, and a firefighter's pole. The details of its handrails refer to the circle in the decked area. The sides made of wooden slats offer a climb up to a platform. Against the back wall rests a ladder-like climbing toy. Using the last possible corner, Parsons slipped in a clubhouse against the fence. Its lattice ceiling slopes from 6 to 4-1/2 feet, offering the young residents a private room.

The centerpiece for the yard is a pergola which differentiates the play areas. Constructed of 5-inch-diameter steel columns covered with high-gloss paint, this "screen" redefines an old and revered piece of garden furnishing and introduces an element of garden history.

Parsons describes the client, Craig Oettinger, as his "partner and alter ego." "Much of what is there is due to his enlightened understanding if it was not his own idea," says Parsons. Oettinger was impressed by the architect's response to the particular needs of the shelter's young residents. Both wanted a bright spot for kids caught in a horrible moment in their lives. In times of social chaos, altered institutions, and changing families, Voltaire's advice seems to be appropriate. "Tis well said," replied Candide, "but we must cultivate our gardens."

Linda Popkin



Design proposal for Galveston Trolley stops, Ochsner Associates, architect and urban designer

Trolley Trauma

It may be the fact that more than $10 million is being spent to pamper tourists and not to patch potholes that has made the Galveston Trolley Project the subject of local controversy. The argument does not center as much upon the technology, alignment, or impact of the proposed system as it does upon politics. Whatever the reason, this tourist project has sparked a chain reaction of voter initiatives.

The Police Officers Association was the first to act. Members gathered signatures on a petition calling for a referendum limiting the Galveston City Council's power to create mass transit systems (i.e., the trolley). The voters approved the referendum, but city council had already let the contracts for the trolley. Legal opinions said that because the trolley system was begun before the referendum, no voter approval was required. Council proceeded with the trolley construction. In response, We the People, a grass-roots organization formed around the trolley issue, gathered signatures on another petition forcing an election to recall the mayor and certain members of city council. This initiative failed and the elected officials who let contracts for the trolley project remain in office to watch over construction.

While the local political battles rage, tracks are being laid for the trolley. Four steel-wheeled, self-propelled, turn-of-the-century-looking vehicles will serve a 4.5-mile route connecting the Strand, downtown, with the Seawall and Moody Convention Center. Tracks are being placed flush with the pavement along 25th Street (Rosenberg Avenue) as well as along the Strand, Post Office Street, and Mechanic Street. A loop formed by Avenue P, 21st Street, Seawall Boulevard, and 25th Street will serve the beachfront. Tracks will be placed on the inland side of Seawall Boulevard. Stops are planned at two- or three-block intervals with terminals located at the Center for Transportation and Commerce in the Sante Fe Building and at the Moody Convention Center. When completed in April 1988, a trip from the Strand to the Seawall will take about 15 minutes and cost 40 cents.

The Galveston Trolley was one of three transit recommendations proposed in the *Galveston Transportation Study* of 1979. The trolley was proposed as a way of linking the Strand with the beachfront. The study also recommended that rubber-tire trams be placed in service along the Seawall and that Houston-Galveston passenger-train service be reintroduced. The trolley would link both these modes of travel and could be coordinated with Island Transit, Galveston's bus system. This approach, it was said, would provide the best linking of tourist attractions possible outside of a theme park. Each of these transit projects has subsequently been successfully pursued.

According to Barry M. Goodman Associates, consultants coordinating the transit project, the total estimated capital cost of the trolley is $10.7 million. Grants to cover costs of constructing the system and acquiring equipment have been received from federal and state sources. Local utility companies have made donations for utility relocations. Supporting grants covering operating costs for the first three years were committed by the Moody Foundation and George P. Mitchell. Annual operating costs are estimated to be approximately $600,000.

A concern of trolley opponents, aside from what they charge is a lack of citizen control of the project, is identifying who will bear the operating deficit after the first three years. Fare-box revenues, at 40 cents, are projected to cover half the operating costs, leaving an operating deficit of approximately $300,000 per year. The City of Galveston Park Board of Trustees, which will own and operate the trolley once it is built, projects no operating deficit and even projects a profit of $100,000 in the first year of operation. Planning consultants did suggest alternative revenue sources should the trolley not prove to be a profit-making venture. The Mayor of Galveston, Jan Coggeshall, has continually pledged that no city funds will go into the project.

In the meantime, construction advances. Complaints of merchants adjacent to the tracks and construction scheduling along the Seawall are the most loudly voiced complaints. Unfortunately, there appears to be a lack of coordination of urban design projects which the trolley could have linked. Trolley tracks are being installed through the unsuccessful Central Plaza pedestrian mall on Post Office Street in downtown Galveston. No design plan is in place for the mall despite the fact that rail construction is in progress. Any public discussion of the benefits of the trolley encouraging the desired development proposed for 25th Street and Broadway in the Broadway urban design project has gone undocumented. Further, the trolley has a direct impact upon the Seawall. Unfortunately, the design plan for the Seawall never really gelled, leaving nothing for the trolley to enhance.

Public mass transit is a traumatic issue for Texas voters. The political debate that the trolley project has generated has obscured the relevant issues. Whether or not Galvestonians believe that the trolley will promote tourism and reduce local traffic congestion by taking tourists' cars off the streets can only be answered after the trolley begins operation.

Mike Davis

Houston in the '80s
In Search of Public Places

Peter C. Papademetriou

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Aerial view of downtown Houston shows the relationship between the central business district and the Brown Convention Center (upper right) and the Wortham Theater Center (upper left).

Houston approaches the last decade of the century with a diminished rate of economic growth. For a city that has seen a consistent pattern of cyclical boom and expansion in the century-and-a-half of its emergence, the sober reality of this sesquicentennial is that we face the immediate future with a new set of rules. Alleviating this novel uncertainty about a future that has not proved as reliable as we once complacently imagined it to be are several buildings that recently have been added to the urban landscape, and have, in our present crisis, given reassuring credence to the idea that though Houston may be down, it is not out. Yet, elation in the face of adversity is only part of what needs to be addressed, as we make the transition from the more recent days of "Houston Proud" to a broader vision for the future.

The central issue is how our buildings contribute to something beyond themselves, how they make places special. The projects in question suggest that they belong to citizens-at-large, "the public." But in so doing, they assume a responsibility to provide settings for public life, to enrich the places they occupy within the urban landscape, to be extra-ordinary.

These new public buildings are the George R. Brown Convention Center, El Mercado del Sol, the Gus S. Wortham Theater Center, and The Menil Collection. They represent different attitudes about commerce and culture, and, for purposes of this discussion, are less important as works of architecture than for the extent to which they contribute to a larger sense of place.

They are significant as parts of existing areas of the city. Each had the potential to enrich its context, which might mean altering it in very different ways. Any final evaluation must center on enhancement of their micro-landscape, and, conceptually, each project also contained within it the possibility of forging a long-term relationship to Houston at large. The conception is in part programmatic, having to do with the uses served by each building; in part contextual, having to do with its location and the ways in which it addresses the place it occupies; and in part representational, in terms of how it expresses values in a perceptible way.

There could be no greater contrast among these projects than between the Brown Convention Center and El Mercado. Brown clearly embodies the "Big Bang" approach, while El Mercado has in part been hailed for its ostensibly preservationist approach (see "El Mercado del Sol," *Cite*, Fall 1985).

George R. Brown Convention Center

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The business of conventions is a major industry for many metropolitan areas. The 19-year-old Albert Thomas Convention Center, across from Jones Hall downtown, has become increasingly obsolete and uncompetitive; Houston's East End has been a neglected area in terms of development over the past three decades, with most new growth downtown occurring west of Main Street. Its principal identity, city-wide, came from the small complex of Asian restaurants and shops immediately east of the Eastex Freeway, in what was once Houston's Chinatown, but which has in more recent years become home to a surge of Vietnamese and is now being billed as "Vinatown."

The optimistic period of the early 1970s was marked by the most dramatic corporate "land grab" in downtown's real estate history, the famous day in 1970 when representatives of Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation simultaneously (as the story goes) acquired over 30 city blocks of real estate and set in motion what was initially conceived as a great "mega-structure," Houston Center. This master plan of development, by William Pereira and Associates, was to result in a single building platform that would span all existing streets, and was given evidence in its first building, 2 Houston Center. Without getting into the controversy generated by the type of street life this might have created, it is sufficient to note that Houston Center took form slowly, and far more conventionally, than was initially projected, and that the East End remained a funky mix of uses, only slowly eroded by gradual demolition and at-grade parking lots for lower-echelon office workers who didn't mind walking six blocks and remained aloof from Metro's bus system.

The idea of a major new convention center to reactivate the East End emerged in the early 1980s. Chicago's McCormick Place and the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York were models that reinforced an image of what to do, and how to do it. Their locations on fringe sites seemed analogous to the relationship of the East End to downtown. Since there was no "neighborhood" to be displaced, the site's only constituency consisted of Asian merchants who would clearly benefit economically by the construction of a convention center in what was virtually their backyard.

A major portion of the six-block, 11-acre site of the Brown Convention Center was a gift of the Houston Center partners, Texas Eastern and Cadillac Fairview, whose accountants undoubtedly saw the potential of moving numbers in lieu of actual development. Such a project reinforced, as well as benefited from, existing Texas Eastern development in Houston Center, which includes The Park

in Houston Center, a retail mall-in-town that could sorely use an infusion of affluent transients looking for places to shop and eat.

The convention center, designed by a joint venture of Golemon and Rolfe, John S. Chase, Molina and Associates, Haywood Jordan McCowan, and Moseley Associates, is a state-of-the-art project, clearly organized for flexibility in interior arrangements that permits not only customizing for specific groups, but simultaneous accommodation of multiple groups. The initial phase provides some 475,000 square feet of space and there are plans for two subsequent phases, which will extrude the present building on either side to an eventual size equal to Javits and McCormick. Some 95 percent of the shows in the present Astrohall, next to the Astrodome, Houston's *other* convention center, can be in Brown, while only 20 percent of the shows in Brown could be in the Astrohall. Whereas the latter is county-owned but privately operated, Brown will be both city-owned and operated.

Convention centers are built to tremendous scale and require near-diagrammatic clarity of organization. The scale derives not only from physical attributes (Brown is 450-by-900 feet in dimension, can house 60,000 people, has significant energy demands, and features rooms that are the equivalent of three stories in height), but from tremendous traffic surges of people, vehicles, and goods. This demand for clarity results in buildings zoned into successive layers, from the frontal approaches, to public lobbies, vertical movement, and entries to exhibit areas, the large halls, and rear service areas that abut the Eastex Freeway. Its greatest impact in physical terms is on the scale of the surrounding urban fabric.

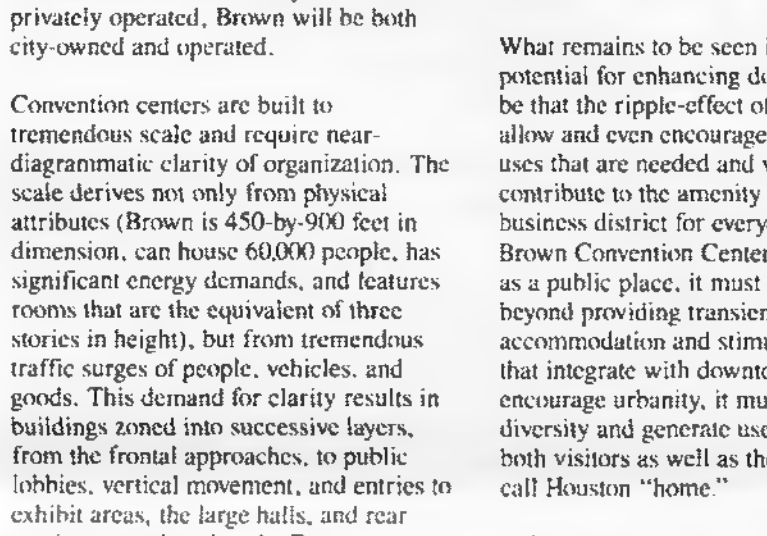
For example, the requirement for some 3,000 at-grade parking spaces and the approaches for dropping passengers from buses and other vehicles create a spatial swath that intensifies the separation between the center and the rest of downtown. In addition, the integrity of the city grid, a dominant feature of the central city that distinguishes it from other sections, has been ruptured in the realignment and combination of Jackson and Chenevert streets into a new street serving only the center. The curvilinear geometry of Convention Center Boulevard is both an anomaly and a reminder that such projects as the center are unrelenting in their interventions.

The urbanistic attitude embodied in the Brown Convention Center is that of 1950s and '60s-era "urban renewal," which acquired, because of the significant dislocations it entailed, the appellation "urban removal." The effect of this attitude at Brown is to distance the center physically and psychologically from downtown. There is talk of a hotel to be built near the center, and the entire downtown area is optimistically seen as a zone of attractions for convention-goers; this includes the most immediate areas, such as The Park in Houston Center and Vinatown, as well as El Mercado del Sol.

Yet the Brown Convention Center's scale is not pedestrian, and its uses will be transitory. The near-concussive effect on the surrounding area of imposing such a large building and its related infrastructure has resulted in a re-formation of the urban context. Subtle adjustment to circumstantial conditions are not what convention centers are about.

What remains to be seen is the center's potential for enhancing downtown. It may be that the ripple-effect of the center will allow and even encourage the in-fill of uses that are needed and which can contribute to the amenity of the central business district for everyday users. If the Brown Convention Center is to function as a public place, it must enlarge its role beyond providing transient short-term accommodation and stimulate activities that integrate with downtown. If it is to encourage urbanity, it must capitalize on diversity and generate uses that attract both visitors as well as those who would call Houston "home."

A footnote to the issue of public policy in the making of public places involves the future of the Albert Thomas Convention Center, now superseded by the opening of the Brown Convention Center. Several alternative uses have been suggested, from overflow office space for the City of Houston to the Harris County Heritage Society's Museum of Texas History and Technology. It is imperative that the city have an idea of how this building might be occupied in order to sustain the uses of Jones Plaza; the image of a padlocked building works against the idea of a public place.



West elevation from downtown, George R. Brown Convention Center, 1987. A superblock of new landscaping and surface parking separates the Brown Convention Center from the central business district.

Contrasting scales on the east side of downtown: Chinatown shop with the Brown Convention Center in background

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El Mercado del Sol

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It is exactly an inability to clarify and rationalize "good" intentions that characterized the inception of El Mercado del Sol, and which now places its future in doubt. The idea of combining a group of warehouse structures into a collective commercial space without resorting to the suburban shopping-mall model was a positive step. The interest in serving a low- and moderate-income Hispanic community with the additional potential for attracting a broader market was noble. It was appropriate that funds from the City of Houston were committed to its creation.

In a sense, however, El Mercado is as big an intervention in its context as is the Brown Convention Center. Although pre-existing buildings were rehabilitated and new amenities, such as a public park, are proposed, the actual relationship of the project to its neighborhood is tenuous. The effort was not indigenous to the community (economically, this was an unlikely possibility), and the question of its market orientation was never resolved. Economic pressures now make any ideological commitment murky. Since its opening in the summer of 1985 the history of El Mercado has been complicated by questions of identity: Is it a community-based enterprise; should it include "other" businesses; or ought it become a "theme" center, a kind of Mexican Astroworld, where outsiders feel they *can* drink the water? El Mercado has been in receivership for nearly a year, and the FSLIC recently announced plans to close the building and told the 50 shopkeepers that they would have to move out by the end of September. At this writing, a joint venture of Equity Fund Advisors and Abercrombie Interests is continuing negotiations to buy the property. Rumors are that the plan is to bring in "regular" tenants (although one might argue that Hispanic tenants are "regular" in Hispanic neighborhoods), a move which is obviously necessitated by financial conditions but undoubtedly will set El Mercado further apart from its local context.

Perhaps the failure to construct the proposed public park was one factor that inhibited the project in the community. It is clear that the question is now less one of inducing inner-city retail development than of exploiting "local color" (however spurious) in a desperate effort to salvage the project economically. There has always been wishful talk of El Mercado becoming an "attraction" for the Brown Convention Center, and the existing Metro link to downtown has proved to be a viable way to bring people to El Mercado. This smacks of gentrification at the expense of an already under-served community.

For El Mercado del Sol to be a public place, it will have to address viable formulas that business interests can support *and* be a "good neighbor." Its value cannot be one-sided, that is, it cannot draw upon the "charm" of a place without contributing to that place's improvement. The essence of an authentic cultural mixture is sensitivity and balance, which is both social and economic.

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Atrium, El Mercado del Sol, adaptive re-use of warehouses on the city's east side, 1985. PDR Architects

Gus S. Wortham Theater Center

The Wortham Theater Center's opening in May was one of the most visible of recent, big screaming deals. Its complex history (see "A Report on the Wortham Theater Center, *Cite*, Winter 1984) began almost a decade ago with the establishment of the Lyric Theater Foundation, and after a series of architectural hiccups in the early 1980s, it gradually developed into the now-completed building (Morris*Aubry Architects, architects). The actual opening was produced with all the glitz of Houston's good old days, a kind of consoling bash that recalled moments such as the opening of the Shamrock Hotel in 1949.

The consolidation of service elements on the Preston Avenue side and of all performance spaces on the block bounded by Buffalo Bayou, Preston, Smith Street, and Prairie Avenue resulted in a difficult architectural problem. Adding to this were patterns of one-way traffic movement, and the bisecting of the site by Prairie Avenue; the latter condition forced a somewhat aerobatic solution that recognized the need for a public entrance related to Jones Plaza, getting over Prairie Avenue, providing a joint lobby for both the Alice and George Brown Theater (home of Houston Grand Opera) and the Lillie and Roy Cullen Theater (home of the Houston Ballet), whose locations were determined by the relationship between stage, service, truck access, and seating design, and the provision of a lobby space that felt grand.

The critical issue to which these conditions can be reduced is the Wortham Center's participation in the concept of a "cultural center," embodied in the formally grouped series of buildings ringed around Jones Plaza. In the case of the Wortham Center the distance between this plaza and the front door is substantial: the connection feels diagrammatic, even umbilical. Yet some three-quarters of the users enter from the plaza rather than the tunnel connected to the below-grade parking. This provides a body of people whose procession to and from events could activate the entire area.

However, the raised platform of Jones Plaza has always been an anti-agora because of the physical obstruction it interposes between the buildings that surround it. The Wortham Theater Center is too remote to reinforce this grouping. Compounding this is the failure of its architectural massing and detail to register a progression of scales, admittedly a difficult problem. The "givens" of the site have aggravated the separation of the building from a more public domain. Its residual loyalty to the concept of the cultural center distracted attention away from the contemplated Sesquicentennial Park along Buffalo Bayou. Here the building might have cut its losses and faced the future; it might have been less concerned with the formalistic, "cultural center" concept of monumentality and more concerned with connecting to a public space that might actually be used, thereby reinforcing the potential for its use and winning a larger public constituency by association.

Gus S. Wortham Theater Center, 1987, Morris*Aubry, architects. Lobby spanning Prairie Avenue joins public entrance foyer and escalators with the theaters.

Northeast corner, Wortham Theater Center, looking across the site for the new Buffalo Bayou Park towards downtown. The future of the Albert Thomas Convention Center in the background is yet to be decided.

The Menil Collection

Despite all the famous names attached to these projects, names that became a part of Houston after 1945 in terms of conspicuous philanthropy, it is The Menil Collection complex that seems to come closest to the making of a public place. Its network of land parcels is twice that of the Brown Convention Center, although it does not need to accommodate the great crush of parking and people. The principal building is no shrimp either, at 402 feet by 142 feet. Yet, it is in the basic strategy of intervention that The Menil Collection addresses the issue of public life.

Great care was exercised in assembling the parcels for the project, which include a loose confederation of small institutions under the Menil wing. Part of the strategy involved the retention, and refinement, of the existing Montrose-area neighborhood. Its physical character as a bungalow environment was enhanced not only by keeping actual houses, but also by discreetly eliminating later buildings that were incompatible, articulating a collective identity by a uniformity of building treatment, and allowing diversity to emerge in the innate differences between individual buildings. In terms of affecting the site with the introduction of the new institution, Dominique de Menil attempted to implement her own sense of a non-monumental or anti-monumental presence. In part this was simply a question of decentralizing functions into some of the existing bungalows and proposing new elements that would echo, but not mimic, the existing scale.

The new museum for The Menil Collection museum (Renzo Piano and Richard Fitzgerald and Partners, architects; see "A Clapboard Treasure House," *Cite*, August 1982) stands in sharp contrast to (currently) more fashionable stylistic gestures of the Wortham Theater Center and the high-tech heroics of the Brown Convention Center. It is, in fact, *conservative* within the spirit of classical modern architecture. But this conservatism extends to the easy way in which it engages its surroundings, and becomes not a set-piece but just one among a series of elements. These include not only the re-formed bungalows, but also the old Weingarten's on Richmond, refitted as additional exhibition space (Richmond Hall, Anthony E. Frederick, architect), the discreet insertion of parking to minimize its impact, the provision of open spaces as buffers and connectors, and a delicately articulated set of relationships and links to the neighborhood.

What this project proposes is a rethinking of the nature of the public place. The Menil Collection does not play to an audience; it simply *is*, and the possible uses of its created environment range from highly directed individual scholarship to chance engagement. There is not, *in other words*, a single-minded vision that determines its character; its diversity is implicit, not an imposed "variety" to be consumed.

Finally, The Menil Collection suggests a challenge to the idea of what a "monument" might be. The German word *denkmal* may be closest in meaning, combining as it does the notion of thinking with the idea of time. It is from the idea of continuity, the concept of recollection, and the embodiment of those qualities that are enduring and reflect collective commitment to an environment of lasting value that public places emerge and take on social and cultural meanings.

We have completed large projects under gloomy circumstances. But there are still necessary connections to be made between what was and a future that integrates an urban environment of complementary diversity. ■

Mirage raises questions about the city. I, too, came to Houston from a foreign country, and reading *Mirage* took me back to my arrival from France in 1959.

South Main Drive-In Theatre on Main Street at Willowband, 1954

Inside the Houston Mirage

Elizabeth McBride

In Wolde-Ghiroghis Ayele's *Mirage*, the first volume published by Phillip Lopate's new Hothouse Press (1986), a black Ethiopian architecture student offers a brilliant, impressionistic view of cities in general and Houston and Mexico City in particular. For Ayele, any city is a Darwinian test – "One is constantly alert. Any slack in this vigilance can lead to severe consequences." Ayele notes the extreme isolation the city dweller suffers, quoting Valery, who claims, "The inhabitant of the great urban centers reverts to a state of savagery. . .of isolation." But although it is that isolation which grieves Ayele, it is also precisely what – in Houston at least – he seeks.

Ayele views the city with a cool, almost existential detachment born of his newness and foreignness here as well as his architectural training. But in spite of its distance, there is an excitement to this writing, an enticing feel or viewpoint of another culture never fully explained, yet somehow more pleasing than agitating.

Ayele records impressions and anecdotes with a wry intelligent voice, making quick stabs into the life of the city to turn up telling details. He is baffled, for example, by the fact that a building is being washed, finding such an activity strange, a waste. Another writer might qualify that viewpoint, but Ayele wisely allows himself an idiosyncratic bias, neglecting that balance which might, like a statistic, average things. And it's the bias, here, that we value. The work has authority because so many of his impressions seem true and because we savor the power of the individual voice.

At first Houston seems monolithic to Ayele, an odd expanse of concrete and glass, of late-night silence.

Ayele roams this desolate landscape by car, or more often by bus, knowing by heart the routes from downtown to the University of Houston, from the University of Houston to Hermann Park.

Gradually, through a series of disconnected adventures, he increases his contact, his explorations originating not only from his newness but from the needs of a single black male, drawn by that which is immediately visible.

Although Ayele usually remains detached, under his analytical eye lurks a passion for detail. Ayele is emotionally joined to the city in a series of eccentric events, but most intensely through the OST drag races. Black citizens crowd and mill at MacGregor Park, the streets jammed with cars, "the music undeniably hot and the crowd even hotter. . .," coquettish girls posing and flirting "openly from atop their Corvettes."

Once the traffic reaches a peak so it becomes literally impossible to move, then and only then has the desired condition been reached. [Finally,] *as evening approaches the races begin. Old Spanish Trail is converted into a madman's racetrack.*

Ayele values his observer role, interrupted when he reluctantly gives a ride to an angry hitchhiker because the man is Ethiopian too, far from home. This is a telling event. The rider talks all the time, venting his feelings in a "torrent of furor," which leaves Ayele flabbergasted. "If this incident had occurred in New York, or Washington, D.C., or any European capital, it might not have been quite as unsettling. But in Houston it comes as a rude awakening. This far away I want to be left alone: to sleep, or dream, or both."

Mirage raises questions about the city. I, too, came to Houston from a foreign country, and reading *Mirage* took me back to my arrival from France in 1959.

Having wandered all my life with my parents, I had a passionate need to settle. Nothing could shake my affection for Houston, my first home, not the heat that left automobile steering wheels excruciating to touch, not the air-conditioning that made me sick, not the crazy foolish use of fuel, requiring sweaters indoors in summer, cotton in winter. Not even the toads I stepped on, walking barefoot at night. Not even the cockroaches.

I remember the city in images bright and clear as a black-and-white film. In the late fifties, downtown Houston buzzed with motion, the Saturday destination of proper middle-class girls who rode the bus or drove in from the suburbs to shop at Foley's. You could get *anything* at the downtown Foley's. From sunglasses to lawnmowers. And I can still taste the cinnamon rolls in the Sakowitz tearoom, smell the chocolates in Neiman's, see the rows of somber, folded men's ties in Battelstein's.

Salespeople knew their merchandise, and they were polite. Good humor extended to the streets, where people smiled right out. Used to the cautious French, I was amazed at how the light caught in the smiles of strangers, that hard Houston sun suddenly softened. Now the light glints from the pointy glassy sides of famous buildings that can never match that famous Houston welcome. Houston taught me to love the light; it even made me love the heat. I can remember clearly the moment I decided: *From this day on, I will love this heat!*

Nighttime was magic. The lines at Loew's State, the Majestic, seemed to stretch for miles. Girls in soft sweaters and pleated skirts leaned on their dates' shoulders, or in narrow sheath dresses – my favorite a white sleeveless sharkskin with gold buttons. Heels went up and up until, in line for *The Graduate*, I barely was able to stand.

In four years of college, I never saw any drugs. The drinking age was 21 and we weren't embarrassed to end a date at 2K's for ice cream. And 2K's, in the Post Oak shopping center, was about as far out as Houston extended. When folk singing hit Houston, the place to be was The Purple Onion. Later still, we perched in the trees in a coffee house on Westheimer, feeling continental. I saw the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show and my first mini-skirt on the mezzanine in the Rice library. At Rice, Saturday night was the only date night, all other nights reserved for *the grind*. A co-ed giving up grades to satisfy *angst* resorted on Sundays to cruising the Liberal Arts Reading Room – where studying was pretense. In the Science Reading Room it was serious business.

When I arrived in Houston, cattle still grazed by the drive-in where Willowbend crossed South Main. Having learned to neck at the army posts where my father was stationed, I knew nothing of drive-ins. And having lived in Europe where the driving age was 18, I knew nothing of driving. When I was still in high school, my uncle taught me to drive on the sleepy streets of Bellaire, along newly built Hillcroft and lower Voss, and out South Main on Sunday mornings when there was no traffic. Imagine – South Main

New car parade, Main Street, 1959

Prince's Drive-In Restaurant, popular landing spot for cruisers in the '50s

without any traffic! When I could handle the wheel he set me free – to cruise Prince's and Bill Williams' like the rest of the high school girls, hoping to steal a glimpse of a college guy. Loving the streets, loving my freedom, I drove the city with my windows down and my doors unlocked at all hours, never afraid.

But part of my freedom and lack of fear came from my assumption, then unconscious, that as a white girl I was safe – that I'd *better* be safe – when I drove through the *barrios* or the ghettos. I should have known that. I had lived all over the world, but I was southern, my mother and father almost professionally southern. And although in the South I knew, the rural South we always returned to, where whites were almost as poor as blacks, whites could drink from the water fountain and use the bathroom at the filling station.

In Houston in 1960 the only blacks I met worked as domestics for my aunt or poured concrete for my uncle. Not even at Rice were there any blacks.

Houston changed. A boy I fell in love with became a member of CORE, an organizer, a draft avoider, a figure of danger. And having begun, the changes continued – Rice was integrated, and the public schools. The University of Houston became an international gathering place. Black people could walk freely into a restaurant, black children could play in the schoolyard across my street.

Since 1957 the difference is striking. In that year, the black artist John Biggers was not admitted into The Museum of Fine Arts show of his own work. If painting well is the best revenge, Biggers got his on Martin Luther King's birthday this year when his work was mounted in a brilliant display at the Transco Tower. Still, the triumph will not be complete until the children playing in the schoolyard across my street can *live* on this street.

That brings me to neighborhoods. In mine, a community of white middle-class families located in Southgate, bounded by University and Holcombe boulevards, Greenbriar and Travis streets, I experience a specific sense of neighborhood which, for Ayele, might not be possible. Block to block, Southgate varies. On my sedate block, older neighbors who've watched my children grow up are now reluctant to open their doors at night. On another, evenings blaze with dinner parties, and the street is littered with big wheels, skateboards, rolling baseballs, and young mothers brave enough in this feminist world to care for their own children. But we're all drawn together by common concerns – in ice cream socials, wine-tasting parties, garden walks, book clubs, and civic club meetings.

Admittedly, mine is a privileged life, but my experience tells me that the fact of a neighborhood is established not merely by money but by common interests, usually children. It is probably Ayele's freedom to roam – like mine when I first arrived – that determines the city he knows.

What I know is that I love this city. I love the particulars which someone born here and bored by it all might scorn, and which newcomers to Houston might never uncover.

But most of all, I love the familiarity. For over a quarter century now, I have watched this city building, at least everything west of the loop, and I have watched it slumping back on itself. In spite of everyone's efforts, as we give in to the outer stretches, the center decays, becoming more stingy by day, more silent by night. Strangely enough, those impressive buildings we build refuse to save us. One example: the present Alley Theatre has never matched the electric excitement of the old productions on Berry Avenue. One exception: the downtown Houston Public Library, the most inviting public space in Houston.

Of course, we expect to find in a city different worlds; it is no surprise that I live in one Houston and Wolde Ayele in another. We are liquids layered in a test tube, our different densities holding us separate. Ayele points out that "One can hardly experience the same sense of civic pride and involvement from one's car as from waiting in lines to board buses and traveling on the subways." But even the public transportation, he says, the one thing we have in common, has offered little contact. I concur – in six days on the subways in New York I talked to more people than when riding the bus in Houston for a full year. Yet we need to meet, if not as familiar equals, as accomplices in the same drama.

What holds us apart is not just race, class, the way we dress. It's a matrix, the way the layers we occupy intersect with our individual requirements. I know Houston and I am known, am recognized – and sometimes even I can feel crowded, and long to disappear. At times I accomplish that by driving different streets, visiting different places of business, cultural encounters being well-named, taking place so often across a counter.

If we can manipulate our wanderings to keep us separate, can we manipulate them so we can come together? Traditionally, cities have celebrated in fairs, in games, in parades, in the rituals of marriage and death, in the fine formal air of cathedrals. Classes *had* to touch because in spite of conflict they were dependent on each other.

Now events bring us together for significant moments – the concerts in the park, the Jarre light show – and then dismiss us.

Ayele suggests that what we need are boulevards, that Houston will remain a backdrop until we set a stage "whence the play begins." In a sense, *Mirage* begins that drama by choosing small events and presenting them against the backdrop of an essentially empty city.

Right now, planners are carving out a new park in Market Square, one which could draw people or, like the new Cullen Sculpture Garden, repel them. People who will never drive downtown to sit on a bench might be drawn to a grandstand or gazebo, with music and laughter, the feel of a Houston crowd. For it is not true, as Ayele claims, that "the collective mass lacks human characteristics." Think of the difference: New Orleans and Houston, Houston and San Antonio, and savor the separate flavors.

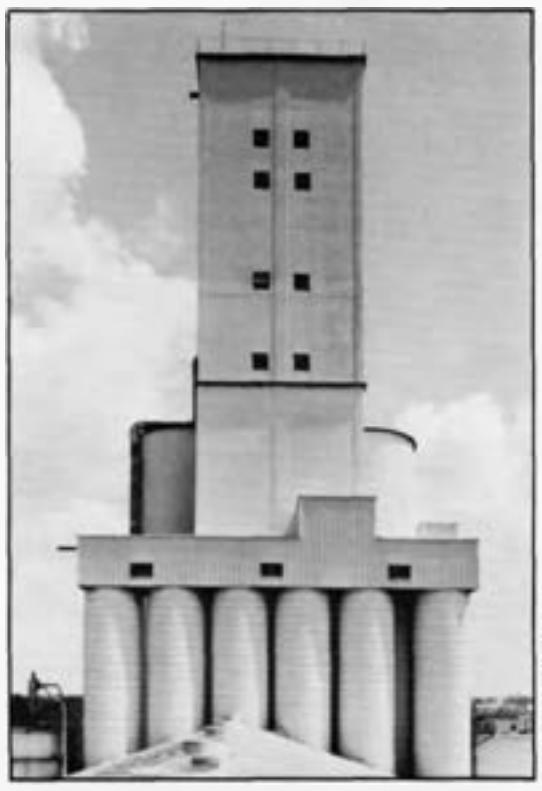
It is the strength of *Mirage* that it can draw from the reader an intense and thoughtful response, one that continues into the future. Ayele calls Houston "A city yet unsure of itself, tempting all those who live here to define it according to their own terms. That is the part of the glory of Houston," he says, which is also "unnervingly elusive."

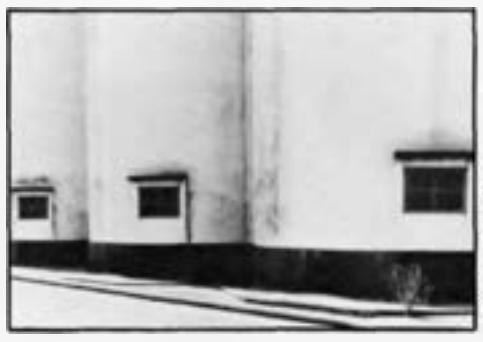
When I could handle the wheel he set me free – to cruise Prince's and Bill Williams' like the rest of the high school girls, hoping to steal a glimpse of a college guy.

What I hope is that Ayele's book might initiate a different kind of thinking about the city – something less academic than deciding if buildings are postmodern or mere copy.

The most cogent question is how can we grasp this city in all its disappointments and beauty? What we need to know is what is working? What is missing? What can we do to shake us up in our various densities so we may cross the lines that divide us? ■

The author's daughter in '50s-style dress, corner of Main and Preston, 1987





OUR EGYPT
THE ARI RICE ELEVATORS

Drexel Turner

Photography by Paul Hester and Ellis Vener

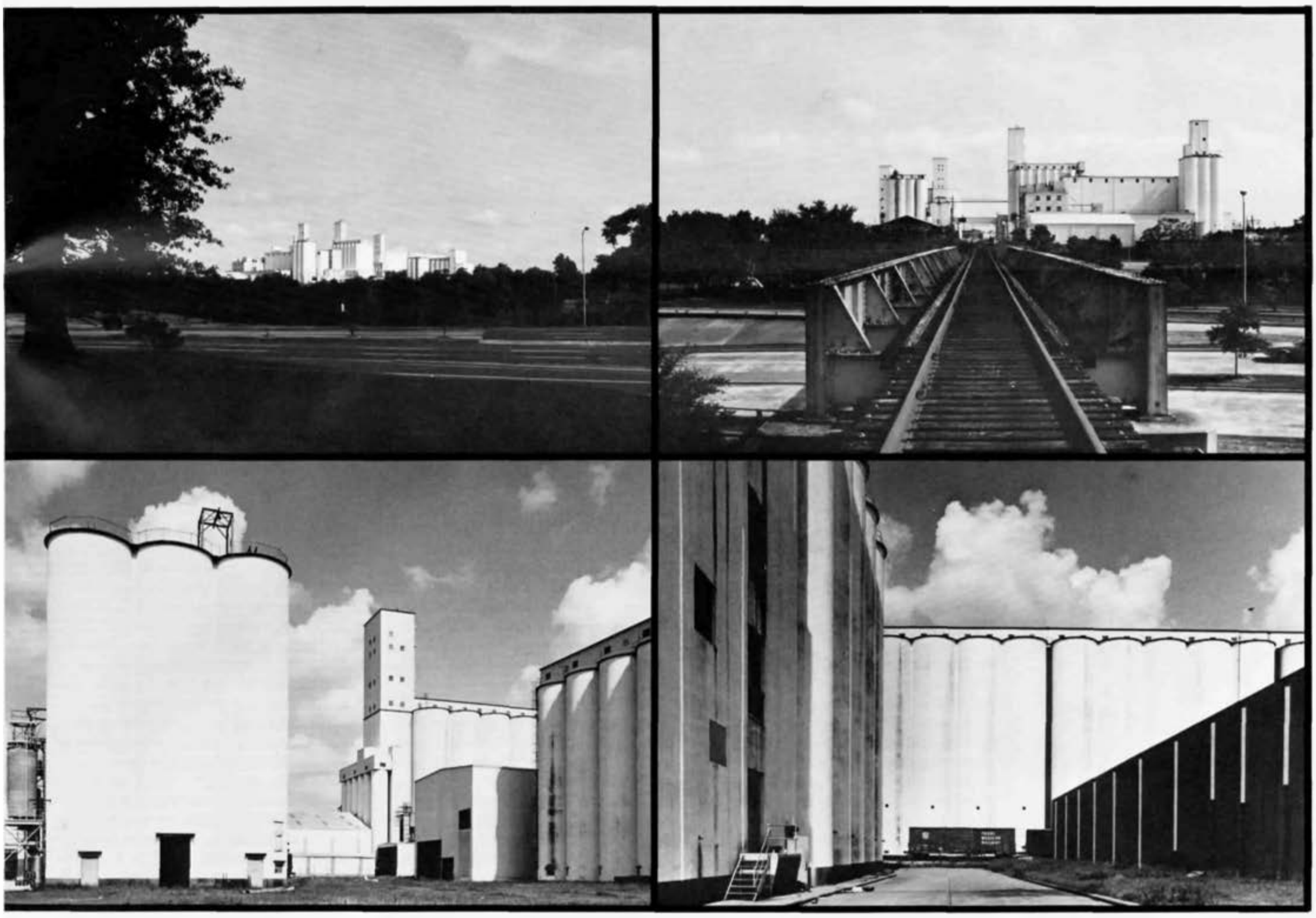
The tubular Karnak of rice elevators that looks across Washington and Glenwood cemeteries toward downtown Houston seems to have somehow always been there. Although the site itself has been devoted to rice milling since 1895, the present redoubt of concrete silos that occupies the bluff alongside Buffalo Bayou began to take shape only in the late 1950s and early 1960s as part of the Blue Ribbon Rice Mills, and was added to as recently as the late 1970s. In outward appearance these structures look little different from the grain elevators that began to be built in the early decades of this century, which accounts for an appreciable semblance of temporal ambiguity by Houston standards.

The vast, cliff-like expanses of concrete, variously scalloped and chamfered, that rise from the site are the result of a monolithic, slip-form system of reinforced concrete construction utilized by the Barton-Chalmers Corporation of Hutchison, Kansas since the 1920s. Last year the complex was relieved of most of its inner machinery as American Rice, Inc., the owner since 1975, shifted its rice milling and storage operations to Freeport. The Houston plant is now used only to store milo maize and will be sold once a buyer can be found. For the time being, though, the buildings that remain continue to afford a pleasantly incongruous prospect, a serene white colossus detached from the jousting corporate name towers of downtown.

As a type, the grain elevators of turn-of-the-century America were appreciated by observers as different as Loos, Sant'Elia, Le Corbusier, Mendelsohn, Gropius, and Sheeler for their purity of form and unself-conscious, pharonic monumentality. These "available icons," as Reyner Banham has called them, were also capable of thrilling scenographic effect, as in Buffalo, unfolding along a meandering riverfront that Banham describes at length in *A Concrete Atlantis*. In his view, they:

"...deserve a better fate than to be left to the industrial archaeologists...they deserve far more respect and honor than they commonly receive in America, for-

Ellis Vener



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as much as the work of a Richardson or a Wright–they represent the triumph of what is American in American building art...And insofar as these supposedly non-architectural industrial buildings may have helped to fix the forms and usages of what we now call "The International Style," which has so far been the dominant style of 20th-century architecture, Americans owe them the same degree of respect they award other native arts that have affected the rest of the world, such as the Hollywood film, dance theater and jazz."

Banham's sentiment, even if a little extravagant, is not misplaced, nor for that matter, unshared. Whatever their ancestral connection to brave new worlds of European architectural imagining, the ARI rice elevators have commanded a measure of local affection for some years now, and in 1970 received an Environmental Improvement Award conferred jointly by the Houston Municipal Art Commission and the Houston Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. That so substantial and extensive a complex can be so soon discarded is perhaps, like the buildings themselves, a peculiarly American aberration. Banham himself favors a passionately pure approach to their preservation, fearing the onset of "prettifying rehabilitators," an apprehension that coincides with the conversion of one group of silos, in Akron, Ohio to a hotel. Yet without some extraordinary intervention, it is difficult to conceive how such structures, particularly whole complexes of them, can be preserved except as ruins, given the general dependence of the American preservation movement on the *deus ex machina* of adaptive reuse. Inasmuch as the cost of their demolition in advance of the sale of the property is considered prohibitive, the ARI rice elevators are due to remain in our midst for at least a short while longer, though perhaps just long enough to receive the rites of the recording archaeologists.

Light Rail and the Future of Houston

Alan M. Field

From New York to London to Tokyo, nearly every great city depends on some form of rail transportation to move substantial portions of its population to and from work. No one in Mexico City or Paris would take seriously the idea of relying entirely on buses and automobiles to move millions through dense urban areas. In Japan, the world's largest automobile producer, where I spent seven years as a magazine correspondent, almost no city dweller owns an automobile. Subways, railroads, and light-rail lines are just too convenient. Besides, there's no place to park.

> Public transit is an essential service that is the hallmark of a great city, not a luxury to be compromised when highway congestion temporarily improves.

But Houston is a city of a very different sort. Even more dispersed and fragmented than Los Angeles, Houston is the quintessential conglomeration of freeways and shopping malls. The automobile created the Houston we know, not just by moving people to and from work, but by determining the style and substance of economic growth and social life. Here, people don't just commute in cars, they live, shop, dine, and entertain themselves almost only where cars allow them to do so. In this city of self-reliant, independent drivers, those few who don't own cars are a disadvantaged minority, usually poor, often black or Hispanic.

Yet Houstonians consistently rate traffic and mobility as the single biggest problem facing their city. Getting to and from work, at least at rush hour, often takes on the quality of an absurd form of modern torture. It's something of a paradox, therefore, that intense debate rages over the Metropolitan Transit Authority's latest plan to relieve the freeway mess.

Four years after the MTA was soundly defeated in its bid to build a heavy rail system, the Metro board of directors is considering bringing to the voters a far less ambitious – but no less controversial – scheme to build a light rail system. Far less costly than heavy rail, such a system would involve rail cars powered by overhead wires, with their own rights-of-way easily passed over by automobiles at intersections. (Unlike heavy rail, it will require few grade separations.)

For all the uproar about its light rail proposal, the System Connector Plan that Metro may bring to a vote is a modest one by international standards. It consists of 18.2 miles of light rail and other Phase II and III improvements (see map). Metro is not aiming to transform Houston into Chicago or Tokyo or West Berlin; it only hopes to supplement bus routes with light rail, and additional Transitways (high-speed freeway lanes) taking pressure off overworked freeways between major employment centers. Anything more ambitious would be nonsensical in a metropolitan area of 1,940 square miles – nearly half the size of Lebanon.

Even if the plan works to perfection, the overwhelming majority of Houstonians will continue to drive to work and to the malls and strip centers where they purchase food, clothing, and recreation. "We have no grandiose ideas about eliminating the automobile," says Alan F. Kiepper, Metro's general manager. "This is not a rail system but a bus system. The 1,900 miles of surface bus lines will continue to be the chief means of public transit. They are our first priority. Only 1 percent of the roadways would be light rail, but that 1 percent is critical." At rush hour, four light-rail cars run by one operator can transport the equivalent of 12 fully loaded buses.

The ultimate cost of Phase II improvements would be about $950 million – including $570 million for light rail. That sounds like a lot, but it adds up to less than one B-1 bomber.

Despite the modesty of its proposal, Metro faces a diverse coalition of opposition forces determined to depict the program as an overambitious waste of public funds. Metro's opposition argues that the agency is squandering public funds, running up a daily deficit of $400,000 while it provides only 3 percent of the daily volume of commuting trips.

Opponents claim the new plans would actually cost well over $1 billion, not $950 million. That's a staggering sum they say would drag down Houston's economic prospects. As a result, the argument runs, Metro would be forced to cut bus routes and services as the deficits mounted.

To bolster such charges, opponents cite the experience of Miami and Detroit, where enormous cost overruns and overly optimistic projections about new rail schemes eventually forced authorities to cut bus service. "We now pay $200 per year per family for Metro services," complains Jon McEwen of the Greater Houston Tax Coalition. If the light rail plan were approved, McEwen says, "Metro will spend $6,500 per person over the next 23 years," or almost $3,000 a head each year. Besides, argues self-appointed Metro critic and vocal opponent Barry Klein, "even the poor can afford an automobile" in Houston.

Another way opponents aim to stop Metro is to head it off at the pass by slicing in half the 1 percent sales tax taxpayers granted the agency in the 1978 referendum. The Texas legislature recently passed a bill that allows, during the next two-year period, a referendum on the issue if a mere 42,000 voters support such a petition.

Such a rollback would make public approval of the light rail plan (in another vote, possibly on the same ballot) a moot point. Halving the sales tax would deprive Metro of half its $160 million dollars in 1987 tax revenues, and force Metro to cut drastically its current levels of service. Already the mere threat of a referendum on the sales tax has endangered Metro's chances of floating about $500 to $600 million in bonds it would need to fund Phase II, if it is approved.

Clearly, Metro's chances are imperiled by

As *Cite* goes to press, the Metro Board of Directors has decided to postpone a public referendum on the transit plan.

Left and right: **Metro's bus maintenance facility at 5700 Eastex Freeway (US Highway 59)**

the economic recession that still grips Houston. Many Houstonians who don't use public transit are facing financial difficulties they never anticipated during better times. Metro is a convenient symbol for many who want to vent their financial frustrations. Although transportation was clearly the most significant local issue when Metro began its work eight years ago, jobs and economic development have now replaced it in the minds of many commuters.

A similar concern grips the state government in Austin, which recently had to pass a large tax increase to alleviate a huge budget deficit. State legislators are concerned that Metro is not accountable to the state government for the way in which it spends its public funds, even though it was the state that authorized Metro's charter in 1978.

Opposition leaders no longer pay serious attention to the compelling economic arguments Metro uses to support its plans. "The word 'rail' evinces very strong passions among some people in Houston," Metro's Kiepper argues. "Some people go into orbit. They say it costs too much. But our analysis clearly shows that by making this light rail, we can substantially reduce our operating costs in the future. In time, this will overcome initial capital costs."

Virtually every major urban transit system in the world runs up substantial deficits, Metro's supporters maintain. That includes the Japanese systems, which benefit from the enormous density of the cities they serve. Public transit is an essential service that is the hallmark of a great city, not a luxury to be compromised when highway congestion temporarily improves. Metro is a public agency that is not in business to make money, but to build an infrastructure every great city needs. And, Metro must serve not only commuters, but also those seemingly disenfranchised "transit dependents."

Moreover, civic leaders, actively courting business to move to Houston, still battle the widespread perception that the city's traffic is among the worst in the world. That perception, says one Metro staffer, is a significant reason Atlanta, with its more sophisticated transit system, won the Democrats' next national convention. That was a major blow to Houston's economic development efforts.

Ironically, even though the recession has eased freeway congestion a bit, this could well be the best of all possible times to expand with an eye to the long-term future. The Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) is poised to give Metro several hundred million dollars to build much of the new system – but probably only if the 1 percent tax base remains intact. Next year's UMTA budget calls for a 58 percent cut in funds, so this could be Houston's best chance to attract federal grants.

The recession also means that land and construction costs are more reasonable than they've been for years – or will be, when the city rebounds. "Private construction is at a low ebb and the community needs economic stimulation," Kiepper maintains. "It is the absolute perfect time to make public investments in infrastructure for the next spurt of growth. Everyone knows Houston will rebound on the growth track."

In five years, land and labor will be far costlier and the federal funds may not be there at all. By that time, Houston's freeways could well be as snarled as they were during the early 1980s. Besides, Phase II would generate an estimated 60,000 people/years of employment. Those people who view tax relief as the simplest route to economic revival don't understand the economic impact of Keynesian pump priming.

It's strange that an agency that has done so much, so fast, to improve service, has done so little, so slowly, to win the public trust. In the six years since Alan Kiepper became head of Metro, the MTA has used its tax base to turn one of the world's worst bus systems into, by all accounts and standards, one of the best. Even Kiepper's critics agree with him when he recalls that in 1982, "public transport was absolutely the pits. It was the most profligate, least reliable, dirtiest, most uncomfortable." Yet only a few years later, in the fall of 1985, the Houston system was judged "outstanding" by the American Public Transit Association.

That verdict, and later praise from the APTA, was based on undeniable progress in the key statistical indicators by which public transit systems are evaluated. Among the most significant:

- Average miles between unscheduled road service improved from a terrible 513 in 1981 to 11,500 in May 1987. The standard for a good system is 2,250 miles.

- The number of accidents per 100,000 miles has declined from 9.2 in 1981 to only 2.4 in 1987. The standard for a good system is about 5.5. In May 1987, APTA judged Metro the safest major transit system in the United States.

- On-time performance (not more than five minutes late, but *not* early) improved from 39 percent on-time (and 23 percent early) in 1981 to 97.6 percent in 1987, one of the highest figures in the nation.

- Cost-per-revenue mile declined by over 30 percent in the past five years, and 10 percent alone in the last year.

In the six years since Alan Kiepper became head of Metro, the MTA has used its tax base to turn one of the world's worst bus systems into, by all accounts and standards, one of the best.

Although Metro continues to serve a small minority of Houston's population, its passenger base has expanded more rapidly than that of any city in the United States – from only 47 million passenger trips in 1982 to about 74 million this year. Kiepper acknowledges that only 3 percent of all Houston trips take place in a Metro bus, but he argues that between 6 to 8 percent of all work trips take place on a bus as well as about 20 percent of all work trips to downtown. That has helped relieve traffic congestion on major thoroughfares, but it won't be enough during the next economic recovery. Metro hopes that the new improvements will enable it eventually to capture about 16 percent of all work trips, much of that from expanded Transitways.

Lamentably, all such projections are merely computerized guesses, easily punctured by critics who cite the errors in some of Metro's earlier projections. "The opposition wants proof there will be enough ridership in the next 20 years," laments an industrialist who supports Metro. "But no one can predict ridership because no one can predict the future." If one thing is certain, he insists, it's that "Houston can't be a great city without a great transportation system."

The two sides in this debate not only disagree on the facts, but on fundamental values. What the opposition values most are lower taxes, lower expenditures, and smaller operating deficits.

But at Metro headquarters, board members recognize that far larger issues are at stake. One of these is what board members, at their June meeting, called "encouraging orderly economic growth." Houston's highly irrational, unplanned development has put an enormous strain on government by forcing the extension of costly water, sewer, police, and other services over a vast area that is often sparsely populated. "There's lots of skip

(Continued on page 21)

Light Rail System Connector Plan

The proposed plan would connect Houston's business and institutional centers with 18.2 miles of light rail. The plan includes transit centers and improvements to the existing bus system.

Howard Barnstone, 1962

Howard Barnstone

1923 - 1987

Stephen Fox

One sometimes has the feeling that at least half of the people who live in Houston got here by accident. The pattern recurs: a chance visit, an unanticipated invitation to remain on what seems to be a short-term basis, and then opportunities arise, connections are made, and without ever quite making the commitment to stay, it becomes "us" and "our" rather than "they" and "their." This was a story that Howard Barnstone, who died on 29 April at the age of 64, loved to tell. It was the summer of 1948. Having completed two years of architectural study at Yale, preceded by two years' service in the U.S. Navy, two years before that at Yale College, and two earlier years at Amherst College, he had come to Houston, the young graduate and registered architect (you could take the Connecticut licensing exam in those days without serving an apprenticeship as long as you had a professional degree), to visit a distant relative. One afternoon this aunt drove him out to the University of Houston so that he might look around the architecture department, begun the year before as a division of the College of Engineering. He met and conversed with one of the faculty members, W. H. Linnstaedter, who concluded their chat by proposing that Barnstone teach at Houston. Barnstone accepted, thinking it might be amusing to spend a couple of years in Texas before he returned to Maine, the state where he was born and where he intended to start a practice. The past eight years of his life had been divided into two-year segments; two years in Houston would round out the decade.

Barnstone never made it back to Maine. He soon had a host of promising students at the University of Houston – Burdette Keeland, William R. Jenkins, Kenneth Bentsen, Harwood Taylor – and his first job, a small house in Beaumont. During the spring semester of that academic year the American Institute of Architects held its annual convention in Houston. Frank Lloyd Wright came to accept the institute's Gold Medal, and to bestow his opinions, the most memorable being his pronouncements on the Shamrock Hotel, which had its fabled opening the week after the AIA convention. It was that spring as well that two other new Houstonians, the French immigrants Dominique Schlumberger and Jean de Menil, embarked on an architectural project that was to prove pivotal in Barnstone's life: commissioning Philip Johnson, then director of the department of architecture at The Museum of Modern Art, to design their house in Briarwood. Although it may well seem that light years separated the Shamrock Hotel and the Menil House, it was in the space between them that the history of modern Houston was to be made, a history with which Barnstone's life was intertwined.

Howard Barnstone once remarked that the Menil House was a source of almost obsessive fascination to him and his students during its construction in 1949 and 1950. They would haunt the building site after hours to inspect its progress, drawn there out of reverence for the first built example of modern architecture many of them had ever seen. The north side of the Menil House was all wall, the south side all glass, the roof awesomely flat and edged by that fabulous Miesian fascia, not merely a construction detail but an icon of modernity. Yet despite its impact, Barnstone initially resisted in his own architecture the influence of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, whose work was the source of Philip Johnson's inspiration. That first house in Beaumont, the Hartman House (1949), and its successors, the Herbert Blum House in Beaumont (1952), the Bloxsom House in Houston (1952), and even Barnstone's earliest houses with Preston M. Bolton, his partner from 1952 until 1961, the Hardison and Rottersmann houses (1953 and 1954), were "contemporary" rather than "modern" in design, to employ the critical distinction of the period. But Hugo V. Neuhaus, Jr.'s recommendation that Mr. and Mrs. de Menil retain Barnstone to correct some problems they were experiencing with air-conditioning ducts and the awesomely flat roof brought Barnstone into irresistible contact with the Johnson house. "I learned more in six months about detailing and waterproofing and, by osmosis, proportions than from four years of graduate studies in architecture at Yale," Barnstone later remarked of the experience.[1] He succumbed to the impact of Mies, hesitantly at first, in his and Bolton's house for his cousin Evelyn Rosenthal (1954) and then unabashedly in their Lawrence Blum House in Beaumont (1954), the first of the canonical series of Bolton and Barnstone houses: Gordon (1955), Moustier (1956), Farfel (1957), Hosen (1957), Smithers (1958), Owsley (1961), Cook (1959), Winterbotham (1960), and Challinor (1961).

These houses were conceived as structural cages, with the frames (almost always of steel, although on occasion of wood) expressed externally. They exhibited geometric precision and, in the contrast of their delicately modulated framing members and interstitial wall panels (of brick – or wood weatherboarding – and glass), a sure sense of proportion. Ostensibly "Miesian," they betrayed a debt not only to Philip Johnson (most evident in the Farfel, Smithers, and Cook houses) but to Charles Eames's Case Study House in Santa Monica (1949), of which the Gordon House, with its double-volume living and dining room, was an elaborated, more conventionally formal rendition. Colin Rowe's suggestion of a

Maher House, 1964, Howard Barnstone and Partners, architects

Rosenthal House, 1954, Bolton and Barnstone, architects

Winterbotham House, 1960, Bolton and Barnstone, architects

Palladian permutation proved especially appealing to Barnstone, who used the term to characterize the Moustier, Owsley, Winterbotham, and Challinor houses.

Yet identification of influences can be misleading if it causes one to overlook the most startling aspect of Bolton and Barnstone's work: the wide range of their often idiosyncratic adaptation of conventional domestic programs to the requirements of the regular Miesian container. Their internal planning diagrams were exceedingly quirky, possessing none of the measure and clarity of Philip Johnson's domestic plans, although their aim was the same: to create those high, static, limpid volumes that seemed, paradoxically, to expand to infinity, thanks to the hypnotic effect of walls of glass. In Bolton and Barnstone's houses, these spaces were likely to be experienced along with much more compact enclosures, sometimes rather constricted in feeling, but more often intimate, a sensation that Barnstone became adept at producing.

Mark A. Hewitt has written about this episode in Houston's architectural history ("Neoclassicism and Modern Architecture – Houston Style," *Cite*, Fall 1984), and more recently it has been acknowledged in critiques of Renzo Piano and Richard Fitzgerald and Partners' Menil Collection museum, most insistently by Reyner Banham, who positioned Houston alongside Chicago and Los Angeles as a place where a distinctive local school of steel-framed modern architecture developed in the 1950s.[2] What is most intriguing about this episode – and especially Barnstone's part in it – is how it differed from the IIT school of Chicago and the Case Study school of Los Angeles. The idea of *baukunst*, whether as a theoretically conceived discipline (Chicago) or an ingenious pragmatic (Los Angeles), seems to have been far less compelling in Barnstone's case than the cultivated humanist project of Mr. and Mrs. de Menil, which promoted a "spiritual" (rather than critical materialist) awareness of modernism. Modern art and architecture, by virtue of the nature of their challenge to the provincialism and illiberality of the Houston establishment, acquired a sign status; it was not protest that they registered, but superiority.

The classical precision, rhythmic proportions, and patrician reserve of the Mies-inspired pavilion made it the optimal modernist building type to represent this attitude. Colin Rowe, in 1957, had discerned in such buildings as the Moustier House a significance quite different than that to be deduced from modern architecture of the 1920s: an aristocratic inclination, a fascination with "correct" forms of architectural conduct.[3] Henry-Russell Hitchcock, who, when in 1959 he admired Bolton and Barnstone's "distinctly personal" development of the "now classic model" in their Gordon House, then proceeded to cite the Greek Revival movement as the last episode in architectural history in which "individuality in the handling of a stringent and widely accepted mode of design counted for so much," implicitly acknowledged the invidious distinction being claimed in Houston: authentic confrontation with the conditions of the present *and* the sanction of history.[4]

The discipline of Mies, even that of the Miesian image, imposed a semblance of consistency on this period, not only in Barnstone's architecture but, as Hewitt discerned, on vanguard architecture in Houston. After 1960 this consistency evaporated. Barnstone wrote of Mies and Wright as "the Academy" and of the inexorability of change: air-conditioning freed architecture from climatic responsibility; the car was the new datum of urban and architectural order.[5]

During the 1960s the two trends most readily visible in the work of Howard Barnstone and Partners (as his practice was known from 1961 to 1966, following the dissolution of Bolton and Barnstone) and of Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry (his partnership from 1966 to 1969 with Eugene Aubry, a former student who began working for him in 1959) were constructional expression and a neo-vernacular. Both can be seen in the work of the architect who supplanted Mies as the new cultural hero of the architectural vanguard, Paul Rudolph. Less obvious were a concerted exploration of spatial variety and intimacy, and the domestication of the automobile.

The Bolton and Barnstone projects completed by Howard Barnstone and Partners exhibited these tendencies. The Wing House (1962), inspired by Philip Johnson's house for Sylvie Schlumberger Boissonas (1956), was loosely configured, strung out along a series of passageways defined by ranks of load-bearing brick piers and articulated wood joinery. The Hogg Memorial Building at the Child Guidance Center (1961) retained the characteristic box-like shape and externalized structural frame of the earlier work, but its bays were in-filled with arched windows outlined with brick surrounds. The Mermel House (1961) was intriguing in its development of programmatically varied shapes configured around a series of distinct garden spaces and a motor court. There, so many of the qualities that would distinguish Barnstone's subsequent work were present: the combination of privacy and intimacy with spatial expansiveness and extensive glazing, the integration of the car, and carefully proportioned yet discreetly anonymous street elevations.

At Howard Barnstone and Partners' Vassar Place Apartments (1965) these attributes informed the design of a small apartment enclave. Barnstone took full advantage of a strategically located and configured site to create a complex sequence of inwardly focused interior and exterior spaces. Barnstone and Aubry's Levin House in Galveston (1968) and Kempner House (1969) were further extensions of this idea, as were Guinan Hall at the University of St. Thomas (1971) and the adjacent Rothko Chapel (1971), in which intimacy, spatial fulfillment, and discreet anonymity were incorporated into a public building to produce an atmosphere of profound solemnity and silence. The Barnhart Bay House at Kemah (1968) and the Bell House (1968) admitted in their allusion to vernacular house types the possibility of influence by historical models. Abandonment of the steel frame in house design in favor of wood stud construction (conditioned by economic considerations) made it possible to inflect buildings to their sites and to shape internal volumes, rather than slot them into an armature of structural bays.

The more evident tendency in the work of the Barnstone office during the 1960s was that of the "New Brutalism," in part because it obtained expression in public buildings rather than houses: Piney Point Elementary School (1964), the Galveston County Publishing Company Building in Galveston (1965), and the Center for the Retarded (1966). These buildings were the opposite of the Miesian houses. Built of reinforced concrete, they emphasized, even exaggerated, particularities of program and construction. Here the big-scaled structural pieces dominated, rather than framed, in-filled bays of concrete block (or brick) and glass. Barnstone later was prone to recount – without amusement – the time that Louis I. Kahn (who had begun teaching at Yale when Barnstone was a student) showed up unannounced at his office to give him a critique of the "brutality" of the Center for the Retarded.

Yet despite its aggressive, forbidding aspect from Allen Parkway, onto which it backs, the Center for the Retarded is not bereft of the sense of delight that animates so much of Barnstone's work. The rear of the complex is visible, but the entrance is hidden, requiring one to follow a circuitous path in order to discover the center. Cars are wended all through the complex, as are pedestrians, in intimate walkways sheltered beneath awesomely scaled concrete pieces.

Howard Barnstone and Partners designed two houses encompassed by the Brutalist tendency. One, for Barnstone's stepmother, Marti Franco, was a concrete-framed, stone-faced tower house, on the beach at Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco. The other, Barnstone's most assured project of the 1960s, was the Maher House in River Oaks (1964). This was of steel-framed construction, and it was epic. The living and dining room were contained in a 55-by-30-foot pavilion, carried one story above grade

R. Greg Hursley, Inc.

Schlumberger Austin Systems Center, 1987, Howard Barnstone and Robert T. Jackson, architects

Alexander Georges

Center for the Retarded, 1966, Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry, architects

Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

De Saligny Condominiums, Austin, 1983, Howard Barnstone and Robert T. Jackson, architects

on brick piers that supported the walls – 18-foot-high steel trusses in-filled with glass. Inside, one was surrounded by space and the canopies of trees growing in profusion along Buffalo Bayou. Barnstone simply described the house as a "p-a-l-a-c-e." But rather than Versailles, it was a modern Escorial. For like the Galveston County Publishing Company Building and the Center for the Retarded, the Maher House possessed an almost privational sense of austerity. It was this attribute that imbued it with authentic grandeur. Where Barnstone tempered austerity, it was not with luxury but with wit. Cars lived with the family. They descended ramps beneath the main entrance, drove through the bedrooms, and came to rest underneath the living and dining room pavilion. In the amply dimensioned reception hall, the door to the powder room was discreetly differentiated from other doors by its material and finish: brushed stainless steel.

Two projects exemplified the delight, spontaneity, and anti-pretentious expediency that were characteristic of Barnstone and Aubry's work. One was the design of executive offices on the forty-fourth floor of 277 Park Avenue in New York for Schlumberger, Ltd. (1966). The other, one of the partnership's last projects, was the corrugated iron-sheathed Art Barn (subsequently known as the Rice Museum, 1969) for Mr. and Mrs. de Menil on the campus of Rice University. The Schlumberger, Ltd. offices were where the Wiggle Wall, as C. Ray Smith called it in *Progressive Architecture*, originated: steel-framed glass partitions circling the core in irregularly angled configurations, generating a sense of spatial buoyancy animated by constantly changing internal vistas, an other-world cobbed together with the most expedient means to yield a sensation of "magic" – one of Barnstone's favorite expressions.

It is melodramatic but not inaccurate to say that 1969 was the end of Howard Barnstone's first life. The year before he had been elected to fellowship in the American Institute of Architects. In 1966 his book, *The Galveston That Was*, with photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Ezra Stoller, was published by Macmillan, the result of four years' work under the sponsorship of John de Menil and James Johnson Sweeney. But these achievements masked a personal crisis of catastrophic proportions. During 1969 Barnstone underwent intensive electroshock therapy, which was customarily prescribed to treat manic-depressive psychosis before it was discovered that the condition resulted from a deficiency of lithium. This psychosis was the tragedy of Barnstone's life. It not only brought about the dissolution of his partnership with Aubry, but the break-up of his marriage, and, professionally and financially, near calamity. A resurgence of this condition in 1985 caused another episode of extreme uncontrolled behavior followed by one-and-one-half years of depression, which Barnstone escaped in the end by taking an overdose of sleeping pills.

In 1970 he was faced with the necessity of starting over again. Electroshock therapy left him dazed, it impaired his memory, and it did not eradicate his manic-depressive condition. Friends supported him with minor commissions – a guest house for Mr. and Mrs. de Menil (1970) and a small office building for Albert B. Fay (1970), both rather tentative, nondescript works. In spite of emotional oscillations that did not entirely abate until correct doses of lithium were determined in the late 1970s, Barnstone resisted the crippling effects of internal turmoil and a widely disseminated reputation for craziness to rebuild his practice. In this he was aided by a succession of talented young assistants (among them, Anthony E. Frederick, Hossein Oskouie, Jim Powers, Theodore B. Gupton, Roger Dobbins, Edward Rogers, and Rudolph Colby) and professional collaborators (Anthony Disunno, Robert T. Jackson, Doug Michels, and Carlos Jiménez). Barnstone had the ability to design through his associates, to mold and shape by instruction, criticism, and humor (sometimes gentle, other times caustic). But in turn his assistants learned from him, absorbing his inclinations, attitudes, and prejudices to the extent that they carried into their own careers as much of Barnstone as Barnstone had extracted from them during their apprenticeships. This makes the attribution of credit for ideas difficult. What is not ambiguous is the consistent look and feel of Barnstone's buildings, their combination of diminutive scale and spatial expansiveness, of proportional grace with wit and charm, however diverse they appear formally.

The built works of the 1970s were not numerous, but they were varied – in location, program, size, and appearance. Marti's, the specialty store for his stepmother in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas (1972), the three, 16-foot-wide Graustark Family Townhouses (1973), alterations and additions to the Herzog House (1974), the Riboud House in Carefree, Arizona (1976), additions to the Robert Barnstone House in Austin (1976), the Encinal condominium apartments in Austin (1979), and the Schlumberger-Doll Research Center in Ridgefield, Connecticut (1980) represented particular responses to existing conditions, developed with ingenuity and tact. Spatial sensation was a common attribute of

these buildings, whether it was achieved by complex configurations or the seductive effect of glazed openings. The graying of Do-ville, Barnstone's surreal chromatic unification of the bungalows and apartment houses assembled by Mr. and Mrs. de Menil in the vicinity of the Rothko Chapel (1974), was a telling example of his instinct for making memorable places. He achieved this not by architectural exhibitionism but by sly subtlety, subverting the conventionality of an ordinary 1920s neighborhood with nothing more than a coat of paint, imposing an obvious visual order that paradoxically revealed the wide range of individual variations present.

Between 1974 and 1979 Barnstone produced another book, *The Architecture of John F. Staub, Houston and the South*, on the work of Houston's pre-eminent eclectic architect. Its publication coincided with Barnstone's decision to declare himself a postmodernist. In arriving at this decision he was influenced by the example of Philip Johnson. It was not the intrinsic merit of Johnson's work that appealed to Barnstone, but his conceptual audacity: Johnson ventured new experiments rather than reworking old formulas. Beginning with alterations to the O'Conor House (1981), Barnstone's postmodern series included the Bramlett House (1982), the De Saligny condominium apartments in Austin (1983, with Robert T. Jackson), the Hoosiere House (1983), and the opulent, Mediterranean style Peterkin House (1983). Barnstone's eclectic detail was not especially satisfactory. It tended to be improvised in design and it was invariably executed in stucco, giving even the most expensive houses a sketchy, makeshift aspect. One had to experience the interiors to be reassured that Barnstone had not sacrificed his abilities in anxious conformance to fashion. Invariably they were "Pompeiian," his term for the sensuous manipulation of relationships between inside and outside, of light, space, planting, and water: high, white, serenely lit rooms, expanding outward through glass to appropriate the out-of-doors, inducing that haptic sensation, as one moved through them, of what he called the "divine float."

The last buildings that Barnstone's office produced indicate that he had begun to draw away from this not too successful foray into eclecticism. It was perhaps through contact with younger Houston architects and locally built works that rejected the allure of postmodern eclecticism that Barnstone reconsidered his own direction. He was intrigued alike by the austere, elemental buildings of Carlos Jiménez and the abstruse, almost mystical complexity of Ben Nicholson's exploratory work. His final building project, the Schlumberger Austin Systems Center in Austin (1987, with Robert T. Jackson), was his homage to Mark Mack and Andrew Batey's Holt House in Corpus Christi. Design development and production of the Austin Systems Center began just before the outbreak of Barnstone's manic episode, which complicated the execution of the design, as is apparent externally. But inside the Schlumberger Wiggle Wall was reintroduced as part of a continuous circuit of indoor and outdoor promenades, counterbalancing in its horizontal and vertical expansiveness the intimacy of individual offices. Both kinds of spaces are contoured to the idiosyncrasies of the site, so that human artifice complements and underscores natural conditions, as it does also with the filtering of skylight into the "Broad Way," Barnstone's name for the internal promenade.

In the course of his 39-year career Howard Barnstone demonstrated an ability to make spaces that seemed peculiarly receptive to human occupation, and buildings that occupied their sites with authority rather than arrogance. Like many American architects trained in the 1940s, he seemed to conceive of himself as the young rebel, contemptuous of orthodoxy, eager to demonstrate the superiority of personal vision to conventional wisdom. He rebelled against the orthodoxy of his youth by engaging the scandalous proposition that architecture came and went in styles. His work seemed to do this. But not at the expense of failing to develop continuity and an internal coherence rooted in the experience of occupying architecture.

Contempt for common sense and received opinion compelled Barnstone to operate at a level of extreme subjectivity. He cultivated an insightful sense of space, light, and proportion, an instinctive feel for place that he could reproduce in buildings. He almost never spoke directly about these abilities, preferring to discuss his work in terms of style, personalities, or social circumstances. "The magic and success of architecture in our time will come from the genius of the architect," a statement made to Nory Miller in an interview published in 1977, was about as close as he came to articulating what, in his experience, was essential for making great buildings.[6] In trusting his own genius, Barnstone defined a personal sensibility (what John Kaliski aptly called his "nutty magic") that was sufficiently profound and intense to involve all who were around him.

Houston without Howard Barnstone seems as inconceivable as Houston without the Shamrock Hotel. Each embodied a provocation too outrageous simply to cease to exist. Yet such a state of affairs has come to pass. It is odd how vulnerable a large city can seem to the death of a single person. Yet Houston, especially Houston architecture, is diminished without Howard Barnstone. He takes from it a spirit of free inquiry, of courageous individuality, and of mischievous delight that were always too rare. He leaves in his place a body of work that perpetuates his vision of how life ought to be lived, a vision that these buildings will enable us to share as long as they remain. ■

Notes

1 Howard Barnstone, "Obit: John de Menil," *Architecture Plus*, 1 (August 1973), p. 71.
2 Reyner Banham, "In the Neighborhood of Art," *Art in America*, 75 (June 1987), p. 126.
3 Colin Rowe, "Neo-'Classicism' and Modern Architecture I," *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1976, pp. 120-134.
4 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "Introduction" to exhibition catalogue, *Ten Years of Houston Architecture*, Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum, 1959.
5 Esther McCoy, "Young Architects in the United States: 1963," *Zodiac 13*, 1964, pp. 167, 186.
6 Nory Miller, "Lone Stars - Howard Barnstone and Karl Kamrath," *Inland Architect*, 21 (July 1977), p. 16.

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Bell House, 1968, Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry, architects

Light Rail and the Future of Houston
(Continued from page 17)

development in Houston [and] scattered growth is extremely expensive," explains Metro's Kiepper. Light rail would increase densities in areas already served by Metro and entice developers to redevelop neglected areas – usually closer to the city center – that are already well-served by essential services.

If Metro wins its battles, Houston, the sprawling, undisciplined adolescent, will gradually emerge a little denser, a little less chaotic, a little less dependent on the automobile and the shopping mall. As more people use trains to commute, the Thai restaurant that now finds itself incongruously positioned between a garage and a dry cleaner's shop, might wind up moving next to other restaurants near a rail station. That ugly empty lot so close to the center of town, now neglected in favor of a property seven miles to the west, might well become the site of a future shopping center, because it's near those restaurants and that railroad station. That, after all, is the way cities like Tokyo and London have developed, as merchants compete for the flood of business within walking distance of rail stations.

But opponents of Metro have been quick to trumpet Metro's every action as devious and misleading. "You cannot trust Metro," says Barry Klein. "They are blinded by their goal. They are shading the truth." Metro's plan would be "highly costly, a drag on the economy," Klein says, not a pump to prime it. Even the new jobs generated by construction would, he says, fall largely into the laps of outsiders.

In June, Klein, McEwen, and other opponents went to Metro's board meeting to complain about the Miami/Atlanta Task Force Report prepared for Metro in 1986 by a group of independent transportation analysts. The report, opponents said, was suppressed because it concluded a few things that Metro didn't want the world to know:

• While it is clear that rail systems "can" result in operating cost savings on a capacity basis (2.2 times bus), neither Miami nor Atlanta has achieved a use level such that operating cost-per-passenger is less than the bus system.

• More significantly, Houston Metro "will probably never realize the cost-per-ride figures of higher density cities like Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, etc." due to Houston's "lower population density and longer average trips per rider."

Klein's critique enrages Paul Bay, Metro's assistant general manager for transit system development. "This was not a hidden document. That's garbage. It was given to the press," says Bay. The Metro official adds that the opposition has widely misinterpreted the report. The most significant conclusion of the document, he says, was that Miami failed to come close to its ridership projections because it bet on "compounded optimism" – high gasoline prices, escalating parking costs, high economic growth, and a high level of feeder buses. No wonder Miami was shocked when only 20,000 people rode its new rail line – not the 200,000 it had projected.

Rather than ignore this supposedly damning report, as the opposition claims, Metro has profited from it, by dramatically scaling down its projections in a way that Miami never did. "If anything, we have gone the other way, from compounded optimism toward compounded pessimism," Bay insists. Metro's current projections for light rail ridership assume ambitious levels of highway construction that would make freeways – the competition – less congested, thus more attractive. They assume gasoline prices that won't increase, although they are already rising. They even assume slow economic growth, which would hurt the demand for Metro's services. Even then, insists Bay, the projections show light rail would save taxpayers money over the long run because it would cost less to operate.

Metro seems to have done its homework. But in an environment of distrust, even widespread disbelief, Metro's greatest challenge this fall won't be to run its bus system, or chart its complex new plans. It will be to win the public trust. ■

In *La Belle* Dallas: The Crescent, 1988, Shepard + Boyd/USA and John Burgee Architects with Philip Johnson, architects

Cite**survey**

Dallas Through the Looking Glass

Malcolm Quantrill

The latest acquisition on view at the Dallas Museum of Art is a townscape, a prospect of a piece of the city as it was or might be, in the French manner. There is something strange in the composition, something not quite surreal, yet still decidedly reminiscent of Magritte. But the confusion of effect is not that of a moonlit building beneath a sunlit sky. Rather it is the change of effect that results from the grouping of images of familiar objects of varying scales, so that the assembly is familiar in bits, but not as a whole. Thus, the townscape has as its focus an urban fragment, a piece of the city, that is itself fragmented. Indeed, we might say *"Ceci n'est pas l'architecture"* not because what we see is only a pictorial representation of that architecture, but because the representation is of bits that do not add up to a whole. Indeed, further study of the composition reveals that what is being represented is not the Parisian *hôtel*, although *hôtel* is certainly implied, but the modern high-rise in that guise. When we note that the artist is none other than Philip Johnson (in association with John Burgee Architects), we recognize this artifice as readily as those of the Belgian surrealist.

Looking north across the city from the Dallas Museum of Art, we can, of course, see several piles less picturesque than The Crescent hotel and office complex. And aside from the fact that this three-part development incorporates more of the Bedford limestone than was used on the Empire State Building, an atmosphere is evoked, if not in the picture frame of the Museum of Art window or close up, then perhaps as you sweep into the complex between the 18-story office tower and the luxurious Crescent Court hotel. For amid the flurry of high-styled women and European cars, we might indeed be somewhere else, in another urban fragment across the Atlantic, and not in Dallas at all.

The limestone is as yet too fresh to give us more than a hint of history, as yet unloved by the hand of nature, and still unchafed by man and machine. Like the lady in the hotel's Beau Nash Restaurant, stiffly attempting to avoid body contact with her plate of linguine, the stonework's margins and chamfers present the appearance of laundered virginity: the body of architecture is somehow veiled in this appearance rather than revealed.

The "cast iron" that is aluminum (and seems fully conscious of its role as Sullivan's "makeweight") weaves a curious web across specially created gaps in the 18th-century illusion. Amid the grandeur of the major stage props, this would appear to be a play for the taste of the masses, a touch of vulgarity, perhaps. But it is too fine on the office tower, too gray and too calculated in its whimsy to amuse the "common man," although in the three-tiered marketplace it achieves the comic relief of Copenhagen's Tivoli. In the palm-decked greenhouse of the Beau Nash, however, we sense its true purpose in the scheme of things. The interiors, like the spaces between the buildings, have a focus in their spatial ordering and their use of materials.

George Holmes, Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery

Architectural model, The Crescent (School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin)

Citeations

creating the feeling that in the Crescent Court hotel you can have an elegant good time. This is nowhere more true than in the Beau Nash brasserie, with its assured balance of lighting, darkness (mahogony), and color. Once inside the hotel – the entry court with its tempietto has too much parking for the right effect – you are, indeed, in another place. But it is the interior design and not the architecture that transforms both place and people. And there are tough jostlings of intention between these two realms, although I fear that much of this vulgar struggle is lost on the usual guest. In the great entrance hall, for instance, the circulation across to the second court is rudely interrupted by the intrusion of the second-floor gallery, like a piece of intimate apparel fallen from its proper place. But the marble floor of this space must be seen to be believed and is a material triumph over mere spatial and architectural adversity.

In the Beau Nash brasserie, the struggle is between the ceiling and the arched windows on both sides, in which the windows are defeated and depressed by the sheer weight of the mahogany beams that might easily have been omitted along the wall spans. But this is a space that is already popular with local residents and therefore always busy and noisy with the enjoyment of its excellent cuisine. Dinner and Sunday brunch bring back memories of the best smaller European restaurants; while breakfast in the greenhouse is ritzy in the true sense.

The elevators are by far the most efficient to be found anywhere. They deliver you into a crescent-shaped corridor, of course, where perspective is canceled out by the illusion of infinite distance. Long stays are not suggested by the layout and furnishings of the rooms, however, which are nevertheless very comfortable if undistinguished. One expects each room to have its French window but this, alas, opens onto a shelf rather than a balcony. Putting a hesitant foot out you soon realize why. The view from the room, unlike those down the corridors, is strictly one-point: you are intended to look across the courtyard and not up and down the crescent. If you break the rules, the illusion is destroyed, because the crescent is open-ended and the urban fragment not a complete entity in itself.

The harsh reality of the urban landscape intrudes beyond the garden wall to the right and the swimming pool to the left.

Returning to the townscape viewed from the museum gallery, I am reminded of the way in which the skylines of both Dallas and Fort Worth are delineated by profiling buildings with light bulbs. This magical transformation of a city's form at night is achieved by a simple and *vulgar* device – the very same one used in the interior of Dallas's N.J. Clayton-designed Santuario de Guadalupe Cathedral to accentuate the arches. In the case of the skyline, distance is the essential component of the illusion. There is no illusion in the Santuario, however; it is impossible to escape its reality. In the case of The Crescent, distance does not aid the illusion: the *hôtel* is frankly too surreal to be believed. But at close quarters the Crescent Court is more accommodating in its interior imagery. This may not be architecture – it avoids being monumental in spite of itself – but it's a great backdrop for fun and games. And it is just possible to be in Dallas and glimpse Paris through Mr. Johnson's looking glass. That is, if you are willing to play at mistaking the image of *la jeune fille* for that of *la belle dame mondiane*. ■

New York 1930 and LA Lost and Found

New York, 1930, Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars
Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins with David Fishman and Raymond W. Gastil, New York, Rizzoli, 1987, 847 pp., $75

LA Lost and Found, An Architectural History of Los Angeles
Sam Hall Kaplan, New York: Crown Hall Publishers Inc., 1987, 224 pp., $27.95

Reviewed by Stephen Fox

At 847 pages *New York 1930*, successor to Stern, Gilmartin, and Massengale's *New York 1900*, is not a quick read. It is a voluminous account of architecture built in New York (principally in Manhattan, but also including the outer boroughs), between 1917 and 1942. This is organized by building and institutional types – public buildings, entertainment and retail buildings, residential buildings, and tall office buildings – and concludes with a short section on urban improvements and the World's Fair of 1939. The book is illustrated with a stunning array of period photographs (some of them a bit muddy in printing) and fewer architectural drawings than one might wish. Although urbanism figures in the subtitle, it is to architecture that the book is dedicated; typological organization virtually ensures that the text becomes a catalogue of buildings.

The cultural trajectory that Stern, Gilmartin, and Mellins trace through buildings is dramatically inclined. It spanned from the end of the Progessive Era, with its "high" concept of civic grandeur, expressed in the nobility of classical architecture, to the raucousness of the Jazz Age and its delight in the sophisticated novelty of art deco (or what Stern, Gilmartin, and Mellins prefer to call Modern Classicism), to the crisis of the Great Depression, which propelled a renewal of engagement with sociological problems and lent the Modern Movement in architecture a certain moral urgency upon its American appearance. Underlying this trajectory the authors discern two gradual but inexorable trends: the dissolution of what they call the "metropolitan ideal" of 1900 before the tendency to suburbanize and domesticate, and the supplanting of the Progressive notion of civic virtue with financial speculation and social engineering.

In the chapters on theater, retail, and exhibition design especially, the authors' compilation of examples enables one to follow clearly the leading developments in taste, techniques, and attitudes that characterized this trajectory. In other chapters, however, these themes emerge less clearly as the authors seemingly race from subtype to subtype and example to example. In citing then-contemporary assessments of building projects, a critical dimension is introduced, along with some unanticipated revelations (for instance: the general opprobrium that Rockefeller Center encountered when first announced). But although it is evident that the authors regret the rejection of Progressive civic and architectural standards in the interwar era, they do not articulate a coherent critical interpretation of this epoch that might bridge between evaluations in the past and evaluation from the perspective of the present.

Houston's favorite New York architects crop up from time to time in the narrative. Alfred C. Bossom is mentioned, although none of his buildings are illustrated; John Eberson's three major contributions to New York's body of movie palaces are recognized; Harrie T. Lindeberg turns up on Beekman Place; and Kenneth Franzheim's 22 East Fortieth Street, a 42-story office tower completed in 1931 for Jesse H. Jones, is illustrated with a Berenice Abbott photograph. The Houston architect William Ward Watkin makes several surprise appearances in his role as an occasional commentator on the course of American architecture in the early 1930s.

22 East Fortieth Street, 1931, Kenneth Franzheim

New York 1930 is not the concise social-historical profile that its title might seem to imply. It is, however, a rich, discursive chronicle of the ways that social and cultural circumstances affected building development and intersected with architectural trends during the 1920s and 1930s.

Any temptation to criticize *New York 1930* for its profusion of detail is checked by a quick flip – and there's no compelling reason to slow down – through *LA Lost and Found* by Sam Hall Kaplan, design critic of the *Los Angeles Times*. Kaplan merely repackages what Gebhard, McCoy, Winter, Banham, Hines, Polyzoides, Chase, and Hess have already written about architecture in the Los Angeles region, stringing it all together with some light-weight and often repetitious anecdotal historical detail. In dealing with periods of LA architectural history that have not been written about, like most of the 19th century, Kaplan's limp grasp on American architectural history becomes apparent. Equally frustrating is his curt dismissal of the current SCI Arch-Santa Monica-Venice school, which he describes as "funky and punk designs" of "strained geometry and perverted materials" satisfying only "an often parochial, preconceived view among critics and peers of a spaced-out, LA architecture scene." What Kaplan doesn't seem to understand is that this work is appreciated not because it "represents" Los Angeles, but because it is ingenious, inventive, and lyrical. Kaplan exhibits as little feeling for the city as its history. One gets no sense of the diversity, texture, or patterns of development that characterize the place or of the multiple architectural cultures, and their sources of patronage, that often have occurred simultaniously in Los Angeles and the many distinct towns that surround it. The book is sustained only by Julius Shulman's architectural photography. There are no architectural drawings.

Architectural histories of American cities are needed. Too much has been lost and too little is remembered, even of buildings and architects that in their own time achieved some degree of critical recognition. *New York 1930* redresses the general lack of knowledge, but it is over-ambitious and unwieldy; the cataloguing of buildings (a commendable enterprise in itself) constantly competes with the accounts of historical developments. *LA Lost and Found* is too superficial and unresearched to communicate an adequate sense of historical particularity. M. Christine Boyer's *Manhattan Manners, Architecture and Style, 1850-1900* (Rizzoli, 1985) provides a more appropriate model for an architectural history of a city (or an epoch in the city's development). It does not include every notable work of architecture built in or proposed for New York in the last half of the 19th century, but it does examine, quite cogently, patterns of development and redevelopment through architecture, supplementing textual information with maps and charts that condense data graphically to support the textual findings.

If urban architectural history is to have a public agenda – informing citizens why cities have developed as they did, identifying important works of architecture, and serving as a catalyst for historic preservation (one of the stated purposes of *LA Lost and Found*) and urban conservation – then greater methodological discipline than is evident, for opposite reasons, in *New York 1930* and *LA Lost and Found* must be brought to bear on the presentation of historical material. ■

The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna

Donald J. Olsen, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986, 341 pp., 150 illus., $35

Reviewed by Diane Y. Ghirardo

One rarely receives a book to review which is both a delight to read and an informative compendium of a wide range of material. But both are true of Donald J. Olsen's *The City as a Work of Art*. By conventional standards of scholarship, Olsen's book is a fine work. But he moves in treacherous waters and risks, I believe, finally succumbing to a riptide.

Olsen examines three cities – London, Paris, Vienna – from the early 19th century to 1914. Not only did they undergo major physical transformations during this period, they also exploded in size and population. Rapid growth ushered in as much poverty as progress, which in turn stirred up long-standing anti-urban antagonisms. Olsen argues that these three capital cities developed in defiance of the Industrial Revolution; indeed, they were much more than industrial centers. Beyond the economic and technological imperatives, they were works of art in which one can read values, systems of thought, and morality.

Olsen explores the obvious interventions in the three cities – Haussman in Paris, Soane and Nash in London, and the Ringstrasse in Vienna – but he also explores the housing, entertainment, and architectural aesthetics characteristic of each in some detail. He quite properly eschews easy explanations for the changing appearances of the cities. The dramatic shift in the standards of beauty which swept England in the early 19th century, for example, have been attributed to industrialization, a shift from aristocratic to bourgeois values, and a willful abandonment of classical values – but Olsen finds each unsatisfactory. He maps out a more complex account of the motor forces of change, their physical realizations, and the responses of citizens in the three capitals.

The discussion of 19th-century architecture is particularly illuminating. As Olsen points out, contemporaries saw only heterogeneity and incoherence, and so have subsequent historians. Although no stylistic unity underlay the three cities, Olsen argues that nationalism – common to all three – may have shaped their respective architectural styles more than anything else. Another common denominator was the belief that architecture was a language of representation and expression, a language which served the public good and private morality. Olsen cautions against a facile reading of that language: was Vienna's Ringstrasse a bourgeois monument, as Carl Schorske argued, or still an aristocratic one, as Arno Meyer concluded? In this most treacherous terrain, Olsen concedes the multiplicity of readings and the tenuousness of interpretations. But not, alas, sufficiently. Would that he had followed his own advice more carefully.

Olsen is willing to assert that Londoners emphasized the house and domesticity more than their neighbors on the continent, which accounts for the relative paucity of grand monuments in London by comparison with the ostentatious opulence of Vienna's buildings. But such an account fails to uncover the problematic critical issues: one could easily see this emphasis on domesticity as yet another stratagem for suppressing women, as other historians have (most recently in Bram Dijkstra's *Idols of Perversity*).

Or one might wonder at Olsen's claim that the equality-minded 20th century is uncomfortable with the 19th century's obvious visual expression of social and economic hierarchies. He asserts that we brand such things as "elitist," and he suggests that although such hierarchies still exist, we are somehow "better" because we choose not to render those differences obvious. If distinctions must be made, I find deception ultimately more treacherous. Such is the case with Houston's own Allen Parkway Village. Were it located on the remote periphery (hence largely invisible), it would be far less troublesome than it is in its present location – eminently visible from River Oaks, the Buffalo Bayou Parkway, and the corporate towers of downtown. Make no mistake: the issue under discussion here is not improving the lot of the poor, but banishing them from sight.

My quarrel with *The City as a Work of Art* rests less with Olsen's treatment of the 19th century – safely past and impervious to change – than with the endorsement this kind of history seems to grant for complacent self-satisfaction toward city building strategies and rationales today that differ little in intent and victims from those of the 19th century. City beautification in the 19th century can be interpreted with equal validity as the concealment of excess and the garbing of greed in gracious gowns. Olsen tells us that the buildings last long beyond the intentions of the builders, as they indeed outlast those of "nasty and brutish" life who never savored their riches. It is not the talk of history to perpetuate these inequalities, but to bring them to our attention. ■

Financing, Designing, and Locating Housing for the Elderly

Presented by the University of Houston Center for Public Policy
Cosponsored by the UH Department of Sociology, Graduate School of Social Work, College of Architecture, Handicapped Student Services, College of Hotel and Restaurant Management; Murray Gilderbloom; Mary-Ann, Jim, and Holly Gilderbloom-Ross; and the Foundation for National Progress, Housing Information Center
University of Houston, Hilton Hotel Conference Center
4 May 1987

Reviewed by Peter Wood

"Rub Vaseline on your glasses, stuff cotton in your ears. Put on a pair of heavy work gloves, a 40-pound backpack and shackles on your ankles. Spend a day that way and you will begin to know what it's like to be old."

For those old enough to remember a time when architects concerned themselves with social responsibility as well as tasteful design, this day-long conference on housing the elderly and disabled brought back memories. The difference: in the '80s, social responsibility can also mean market opportunities.

"Close to a third of the disabled and elderly population makes more than $25,000," conferees were told. "With the depressed economy, it is easy to pick up a good property cheap and convert it for elderly housing. . .The elderly are good tenants: they stay longer, have a lower turnover rate, and will pay more because the marketplace has not been able to provide adequate alternatives."

One might turn cynical and say that this is typical of the crass commercialism of the 1980s. But more appropriately, one might observe that without state or federal support for special populations,

market viability is a critical part of any solution to the problems of housing the elderly and handicapped.

The bottom line is the same as it was 20 years ago. Something needs to be done. Many of the elderly are often spending in excess of 50 percent of their income on housing. And there are few, if any, alternatives other than a nursing home. The problem is multifaceted, including design, access, finance, and legislation, suggesting the need for the involvement of many different professions. This conference, supported by the work of Professor John Gilderbloom and others in the academic community together with the City of Houston and the Metropolitan Transit Authority, was a good start at defining the problems and beginning to look for realistic solutions. ■

Glass Houses for People and Plants

Artist's rendering of the Lucile Halsell Conservatory, San Antonio

Sponsored by the Ewing Halsell Foundation
San Antonio, 15 June 1987

Reviewed by Natalye Appel

At first reading the title of this symposium promised a panel of eminent architects taking a straightforward look at architectural glass in two distinct applications. But moderator David Dillon, architecture critic for *The Dallas Morning News*, had a more ambitious scenario in mind; something as unlike a glass-class as the Halsell Conservatory is unlike a traditional greenhouse. Taking cues from the Halsell's crystalline prisms and cave-like earthen rooms, he focused the symposium instead on architecture's capacity to embody the archetypal models of Arcadia and Utopia – complementary visions of the ideal existence in the garden and in the city of man.

Emilio Ambasz, architect for the new conservatory, spoke first. He began by discussing glass in the context of St. Augustine's Heavenly City, redefining it as a "material of the mind" which has the power to sublimate the reality of a structure to the ideal at its source. Revealing the conceptual origins of his design for the conservatory, he described the project in terms of the dualities inherent in a dialogue between man and nature.

In Ambasz's narrative, a Fern Room, complete with mist and fiberglass rocks, is seen as "a secular temple. . .a place for redemption." A lone tree marking entry to the courtyard "grows unaided as at the beginning of time" (in the Garden of Eden), in contrast to the Palm Room, spiraling towards heaven, representing the antithetical position of the Tower of Babel. These polarities are intertwined in the courtyard, where the geometrical construction of human culture both surrounds and is subsumed by the forces of nature, manifest in the free-form pond and the vines meant to cover the architecture completely. Ambasz concluded with a children's tale, "Fabula Rasa," poetically restating the profound notions in the work.

Cesar Pelli extended the speculation on the sublime, elaborating on his belief that architecture is "that which celebrates life. . .the difference between a flower and a rock." He presented several houses for people and for plants, including the Wintergarden at the World Financial Center in Manhattan. Here, he stated, is "a recognition that we share the world with other species" and a celebration of that coexistence. He suggested that because of this role, to honor something beyond ourselves, the conservatory is becoming the building type that expresses our highest aspiration today, assuming the role of the church in a secular society.

Returning to the subject of the Halsell Conservatory, Edward Larrabee Barnes questioned whether glass could really almost disappear into the realm of the mind. The reading of the sharp geometric prisms in juxtaposition to earthworks depends on the absolute materiality of the skin. A contrast in spatial qualities as well as skin emerged when Barnes's own work was compared to the Halsell. The greenhouse clusters of the Chicago Horticultural Center and the flexible hexagonal modules at the New York Botanical Garden's Plants and Man Building exemplified the modernist idea of universal space, while Ambasz's design uses highly articulated, precisely programmed "rooms" to manifest his ideal.

The final speaker, Alan Y. Taniguchi, concentrated on our active relationship with the natural world. He proposed that while even minimal modification of the environment for one species is not always easy, a house for both people and plants should be sensitive to the many essentials beyond physical necessities for survival and comfort. Agreeing that architecture should give deeper meaning to the experience of communing with nature, he said that this is exactly what separates Philip Johnson's Glass House from any greenhouse: plants are housed in glass because they must have light. For people, this choice is based on intellectual constructs, on aspirations, on ideals.

During the discussion session, the audience attempted to move the panel to more practical concerns with questions on technical issues and commercial applications. Questions about the realities of *atrium* office buildings (Dillon: "Don't say that word!"), the quality of materials (Barnes: "Mirror glass looks like Jell-O."), and even the use of glass within other surfaces (Barnes: "Punched openings are just a nuisance."), revealed how these matters may taint the perception and understanding of glass structures, making it impossible to see them in a more noble light. Nonetheless, the theme of the ideal – from house to garden to city – was the lofty precinct in which each speaker dwelt throughout the symposium. After all, imagining the Halsell Conservatory as Ambasz envisions it – "a series of little theaters of climate and culture with the civilizing effect of cathedrals" – is much more interesting than discussing the specifications. ■

Design Thinking

Peter G. Rowe, Boston, The MIT Press, 1987, 229 pp., illus., $25

Reviewed by Thomas Colbert

In *Design Thinking*, Peter Rowe tells us his intention is "to fashion a generalized portrait of design thinking." He opens the book with three case studies, or "protocols," in which individual designers reveal the precise steps they go through and the specific mental activities which are, for them, involved in approaching particular design projects. The author uses annotated sketches and concept drawings effectively to illustrate detailed, step-by-step discussions of the early stages of the design process.

Unfortunately, this elegant approach to the study of design thinking – actually examining the content of the designer's mind while he is designing – is not followed throughout the book. One wishes it had and that this study had been extended to include at least the first phase of design development, some discussion of program (literal and figurative), and a greater number of protocols. Instead, an intriguing beginning is relegated to the role of "backdrop for later theoretical discussion."

While the first section of the book, called "Designers in Action," is interesting and informative, it does not inform or otherwise engage the rest of the book. Like the next and the last three sections ("Procedural Aspects of Design Thinking," "Normative Positions That Guide Design Thinking," and "Architectural Positions and Their Realms of Inquiry"), it presents several disparate points of view regarding approaches to, and areas of study of, the design process, without firmly developing the links between them. Indeed, what is disappointing about this book is the weak sense of what holds it all together.

On the dust jacket we are promised that the author "treats multiple and often dissimilar theoretical positions. . .as particular manifestations of an underlying structure of inquiry." However, what we are given is not a clear thesis or well-developed narrative structure. Instead, the loosely developed theme "design thinking" is used as a sack into which reports on a wide range of theoretical discourse on design are thrown like groceries.

If we are not given what we are led to expect, we aren't turned away entirely empty-handed either. The many synopses of schools of thought from stucturalism, phenomenolgy, and the Gestalt School, to information processing, problem-solving theory, typologies, and environmental relations, constitute an admirable survey of theoretical thought about design and design-process studies. The fact that *Design Thinking* is not structured or referenced as a survey somewhat diminishes its usefulness in this regard, for it is as a survey or catalogue that I will save this book and occasionally recommend it to others.

One further point must be made. While it is never quite fair to comment on the readability of anything written by an architect, it has to be said that this book earns particularly high marks on the obfuscatory index, and particularly low marks on the somnambulist register. It will be heavy reading for anyone who isn't fully reconciled to the academic use of language. ■

Past and Present Treasures: Sculpture and Gothic Architecture in Europe

Sponsored by the American Institute of Architects
Innova, Houston
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Reviewed by Thomas Colbert

"Detail and Graffiti at Point Alexander III," by Richard Payne

Photographer Richard Payne is well-known to followers of the architectural scene both locally and nationally. Those who don't recognize his name might recognize many of the images he has brought to our attention. Photographs for two books on the work of Philip Johnson and John Burgee, as well as for *Historic Galveston, Landmarks of Texas Architecture*, and numerous contributions to journals and periodicals are testimony to his faultless professionalism.

Commercial work, however, does not necessarily describe a photographer's deepest aesthetic ambitions or abilities. That goal is achieved most fully only when the photographer is released to work for himself – when the choice of subject and technique are his own. It was, therefore, an exceptional occasion when Payne recently showed his latest work for himself.

The exhibition "Past and Present Treasures" was the product of Payne's acceptance of an invitation to stay at The American Center in Paris during the fall and winter of 1986. An apartment and studio were provided, giving him the opportunity to explore Europe at length, and to consider his ambitions in photography. One hundred remarkable pictures from France, Italy, Greece, and England demonstrated the diligence with which he pursued personal photography during this time.

Payne rejected the popular notion that photography is essentially an interpretive art. Like Michaelangelo unearthing figures contained in stone, Payne says he worked "to present and celebrate the beauty and drama which are already there." He also rejected the tawdry, ironic, and shocking subject matter which he regards as the primary canon of vanguard photography. Instead, he chose to photograph "the best things man has built" directly and straightforwardly, and to produce the best crafted prints of which he was capable.

The images fell into three categories: reenactments of Eugene Atget's famous 19th- and early 20th-century photographs of Versailles, images that tell a tale, and architectural shots.

The Atget reenactments took Payne more time to shoot than any of the photographs in the show. He found the exact places where Atget stood and duplicated the angle of view, time of day, and quality of light that Atget recorded. These photographs have an extraordinary sensuousness and presence which, despite Payne's strenuous efforts to be as faithful as possible to his beloved predecessor's style and technique, mysteriously indicate the hand of a more modern artist at work. Differences in detail between shots by the two photographers give a wonderful sense of constancy in a landscape subtly affected by change.

Among the photographs that tell a tale, two stand out. The first is an artfully composed, timeless portrait of a statue along the river Seine, with Paris beyond. It is the sort of photograph one is accustomed to interpreting as representing a timeless condition. But closer inspection reveals that the statue is covered with graffiti. Lovers have left their mark, as well as tourists with names like José, Eric, and Ricardo, reminding us that as with the landscape, all forms of aesthetic delight are subject to perpetual reinvention.

Another story photograph shows an elegantly dressed and perhaps too-poised young woman sunning herself and reading the paper in a Parisian park. The dark silhouette of a man under a tree in the near distance and a brilliant white statue are in the background. The newspaper is a *Herald Tribune* and the lurking Parisian is clearly interested in this American exotic. The statue looks on with bemused humor, a silent reflection of the photographer's view.

But it is the architectural images, clearly and simply composed, which stole the show. Space, light, texture, and context are presented with a refreshing compositional clarity and directness. The sculpted head of a ferocious dog, two lovers in marble, Nôtre Dame, the Acropolis, a decaying pavilion in Brighton – each is brought to life in a manner that bespeaks the character of the object itself.

Radical invention was not apparent in this exhibition. One was never startled or disturbed. The photographs were merely exquisite. Their seductive charm springs from the deceptive simplicity and intensity of Payne's vision. One hopes that the Houston Chapter of the American Institute of Architects will arrange a state tour of the exhibition, and perhaps publish a catalogue, before these superb photographs are lost to private collections. ■

HindCite

Cite at Five

William F. Stern

Five years may not seem like a very long time in the grand scheme of things, but when measured in Houston time, it seems like an entire generation. And in terms of a publication, five years can seem like an eternity. Considering that the life span of volunteer publications is shorter than the average new television sit-com, it is with some satisfaction that we look back over 18 issues of *Cite*, which have brought us from the modest proposal of a few interested people back in 1982 to this present fifth anniversary issue.

Much has happened over these five years. From the present vantage point, it is worth remembering that among the pressing issues facing us in 1982 was the fact that Houston's growth was not yet so much affected by the limitations of an economic downturn as by the limitation of the city's sewage capacity. This meant that the city that was springing up everywhere might actually have to address the extent of its growth and begin to plan for the future. Houston, the sprawling city that had captured America's imagination in a love-hate relationship, was perhaps reaching the point where the question was no longer "how big?" but what kind of city this was to be.

Such were the concerns of a planning committee from the board of directors of the Rice Design Alliance which gathered in late spring of 1982 to lay the groundwork for a new publication that would become the architecture and design review of Houston. This group, comprising *Cite*'s first editorial committee, had varying ideas and approaches, but it was united in the belief that the City of Houston was unique, full of potential, and more than a little audacious, and a critical review might help to make its growth all more understandable. The discussions were marked by an optimistic desire that the publication would reach those who cared about Houston and thus would make a difference in the continued building and re-building of the city.

A strategy for funding what was envisioned to be a modest undertaking was planned through the solicitation of advertising, the raising of subscriptions, and the setting aside of a percentage of RDA membership dues for the publication. The first hurdle was giving the new publication a name. The "Architecture and Design Review of Houston" seemed a bit dry by itself, though that would ultimately become *Cite*'s surname. "Sprawl" was suggested, enjoying some popularity before being rejected as at least as applicable to Los Angeles as Houston. "Radar," an acronym for "Rice Design Alliance Architecture Review," also was turned down. Finally the group settled on *Cite*, a name which reverberated with homonyms: "site" or "sight" or, if you prefer, "cité." The fun was only beginning. Soon there would be departments and columns appearing whose headings played on the new journal's name: *Citelines*, *Citeations*, *CiteSeeing*, *Big Cité Beat*, *Citesurvey*, *HindCite*, *ForeCite*, *UnCitely*, *Re:Cite*, *Out of Cite* and even *OverCite* to cover additions and corrections.

The first issue in August 1982 presented the unlikely image of a City of Houston manhole cover on the front page and the lead article was entitled "Trading Toilets: The Subterranean Zoning of Houston." The article described how the limitation of sewage capacity inside Loop 610, but not including the central business district, was stifling development. But the virtually unlimited capacity outside the loop and within downtown was allowing relentless and uncontrolled development. That issue also included an interview with Cesar Pelli, the architect of Four Leaf Towers, Four Oaks Place, and Herring Hall at Rice University; a review of the recently announced designs by Renzo Piano for The Menil Collection; a planning prescription for downtown; an article entitled "Drafting for Dollars;" and a photo essay on Bay Ridge near La Porte, Texas. That mix of articles – planning, architecture, the urban environment, the city's past, and preservation – established a pattern that *Cite*'s editors have followed for the last five years.

The momentum picked up quickly with the publication of a special issue on the Metropolitan Transit Authority's 1982 plan to build a rail line from southwest Houston to downtown. Referred to by the editorial committee as the "emergency issue," it was produced in two weeks. Of concern to the editors was the impact of an elevated rail over Main Street downtown. While far from being opposed to rail or mass transportation per se, the board of the Rice Design Alliance took issue with Metro over what was viewed as a hastily conceived plan. An editorial recommended tabling the plan largely because of its impact on a historic section of Main Street. The special issue was timed to coincide with an upcoming vote in Houston's City Council, a vote that would defeat the overhead rail proposal. Thus began *Cite*'s ongoing concern with Houston's transportation problems. The Spring 1983 issue contained "Congestive Failure," a report on the Houston Chamber of Commerce's Regional Mobility Plan, and this was followed two years later in the Fall 1985 issue with an article entitled "The METRO Regional Plan 1985," reporting on Metro's plan for major transportation corridors and transit facilities. An article in this Fifth Anniversary Issue describes how far Metro has come from its plans of 1982, with a feature article on the agency's current proposals – a light rail system to supplement what has become one of the nation's best-run bus systems.

By Fall 1983, *Cite* had become a regularly scheduled quarterly publication, with guest editors taking charge of each issue. That issue featured material relating to historic preservation in downtown Houston. In subsequent issues, articles related to a selected theme would be tied together in the "feature well," the center section of *Cite*. Advocacy-oriented topics, such as the sad state of housing in Allen Parkway Village and in the Fourth Ward, were balanced with more descriptive or historically related subject matter as in the Fall 1984 issue, which devoted its feature section to Houston in the 1950s.

The themes have been diverse and not necessarily connected, expressing the interests of the editors and writers at a particular moment. Thus, the phenomenon of the "tall building" in Houston (Spring-Summer 1984) would be followed by an issue featuring architecture and growth

outside Loop 610 (Summer 1985), and architectural theory and ideas (Winter 1985). The Spring 1986 *Cite* featured material on San Antonio's architecture in an issue planned to coincide with the American Institute of Architects' annual convention meeting in that city. Topics from planning in Houston (Fall 1985) to housing in Houston (Spring 1985) to neighborhoods in Houston (Winter 1986) have also provided feature material for *Cite*. The Summer 1986 issue presented a cache of literary articles on Houston by local writers together with a collection of photographs. In addition, there have been reviews of current events on the architectural and city scene as well as reviews of books and gallery exhibitions devoted to architecture, planning, or design. *Cite* has sought out photography exhibitions for review, particularly when they have had a strong architectural or urban-related theme. Articles have always been accompanied by professional photography.

Including the current anniversary issue, *Cite* has been published 18 times over the past five years at a cost of approximately $14,000 per issue with a press run of 11,000 copies. Most issues have run 24 pages; the length of an issue is determined not so much by available subject matter or articles, but by funds from advertising revenues. *Cite* is not self-sustaining but is strongly dependent upon the RDA membership as well as grants from the Cultural Arts Council and the Brown Foundation. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of a group of RDA supporters who put on the Fight for Cite gala in June, the publication is back in the black after missing the Summer 1987 issue due to financial problems.

What is missing from this summary of the last five years is a mention of all the writers, editors, photographers, designers, and staff without whose contributions there would be no *Cite*. It is noteworthy that the majority of the magazine's writing, production, and editing are done on a voluntary basis, with the able assistance of a part-time managing editor, graphic designer, and photographer. On occasion a writer has been given a modest honorarium when *Cite* editors think an invited professional writer or journalist is needed to cover an important story. But perhaps the most revealing observation to be made about *Cite* contributors is their relative youth. Indeed, their average age is probably 35, and in the first years their average age was probably closer to 30. That is where this HindCite will end, with the hope that *Cite* will always be a place of youthful idealism and that its vitality will never stagnate. For that to happen, though, a new generation of contributors must come along. And from the viewpoint of this generation, I hope the next five years are as provocative as the last. ■