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Rice Design Alliance • Houston, Texas 77251-1892 The Architecture and Design Review of Houston 24 • Spring 1990 $4.00

Cite

The Architecture and Design Review of Houston

A Publication of the Rice Design Alliance

24: Spring 1990

Cover: *View from upper stands, the Houston Astrodome, 1990, Lloyd and Morgan and Wilson, Morris, Crain, and Anderson, architects, 1960-65. Photo by Paul Hester*

InCite

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Printing Wetmore & Company

The Rice Design Alliance, established in 1973, is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture and design.

 Publication of this issue of *Cite* is supported in part by grants from the Brown Foundation, the Cultural Arts Council of Houston, and the Houston Chapter, American Institute of Architects.

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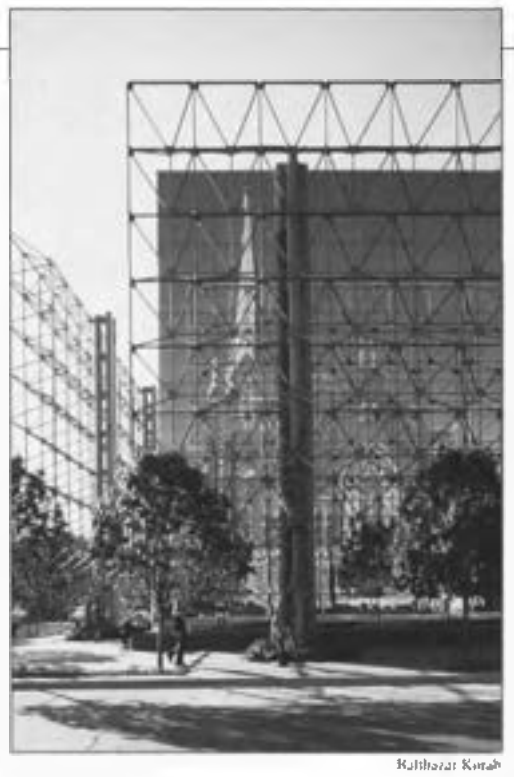
Paul Kennon
1934-1990



Balthazar Korab

Indiana Bell Switching Center, Columbus, Indiana, Paul Kennon with Caudill Rowlett Scott, architect, 1978.

When Paul Kennon was appointed dean of the School of Architecture at Rice University in 1989, he was returning to an institution he had served from 1964 to 1967 as associate professor and then associate director. Architectural education was one of his two great passions, and he really never stopped teaching until he died suddenly on 8 January at the age of 55.

During his 22-year absence from Rice, while he led design studios at Caudill Rowlett Scott (now CRSS) in Houston and Los Angeles, eventually becoming its president, Kennon lectured frequently and served as critic at dozens of architecture schools, including Rice. In 1984 he was William F. and Charlotte Shepherd Davenport Visiting Professor in Architectural Design at Yale University. Dynamic, vigorous, enthusiastic, tireless, he sought and inspired excellence. His commitment to high achievement was nurtured by a few key people in his life. In the early 1950s he played football under coach Bear Bryant at Texas A&M College, where he received his degree in architecture. From there he went to the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan – then as now one of the premier American design schools – on an Eliel Saarinen Memorial Fellowship. For an only son born in Kentwood, Louisiana, who studied architecture in rural Texas, the move to Cranbrook was the influence that decisively shaped the rest of his life.

Kennon was profoundly influenced by Eero Saarinen, the Finnish-born architect who redefined American modernism in the 1950s and who hired him upon graduation from Cranbrook. From Saarinen, Kennon learned an approach to architectural design that fused modern technology with social purpose. He inherited Saarinen's way of organizing space and form, and worked on such landmark projects as Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C.

Balthazar Korab

Herman Miller manufacturing plant, Holland, Michigan, Paul Kennon with Caudill Rowlett Scott, architect, 1978.

He also learned to plan the large, complex facilities that defined international architectural practice in the 1970s and 1980s and for which CRS, under his leadership, was renowned. Through Saarinen as well he met J. Irwin Miller, chairman of the board of Cummins Engine Company in Columbus, Indiana, who would become his patron. Today, in the open-air museum of contemporary architecture that Miller has made of Columbus, there is more of Kennon's work than that of any other recent architect.

The other enduring influence on Kennon was William Wayne Caudill, a founder of CRS and director of the School of Architecture at Rice, who brought him to Houston in 1964 and then to CRS. Through Caudill, the exponent of an interactive method of programming and designing buildings and a gold medalist of the American Institute of Architects, Kennon continued the search for user-responsive design solutions. Like Caudill he was a populist at heart, influenced by his roots in Louisiana and his work in Chile as a Ford Foundation resident adviser in the early 1960s. With Caudill he wrote *Architecture and You* (Whitney Library of Design, 1978). He shared Caudill's high professional standards, commitment to quality, dedication to the firm, and devotion to a partnership between the profession and education. It was this partnership that preoccupied Kennon's all too brief tenure as dean at Rice.

Design was his other great passion. He brought intense, hands-on involvement to the projects under his direction. The results were one-of-a-kind buildings, in the manner of both Saarinen and Caudill. They responded to specific conditions of place, people, and spirit. Devoid of a distinguishing "signature" style, they embraced technology in the service of humanity.

Kennon's was "idea" architecture. Compelling if not always fashionable, his best built work – the small buildings in Columbus, Indiana; the series of multipurpose inflated structures housing university sports programs; corporate facilities for IBM; factories for Herman Miller and Cummins Engine – were innovative responses to issues of change, energy conservation, productivity, flexibility, adaptability, the workplace, and human values. His work was recognized by more than 100 design awards. He was proudest of his two AIA Honor Awards, a citation from *Progressive Architecture*, and his nomination last year for the Pritzker Prize in Architecture. Kennon is survived by his wife, Helen; his sons, Keith and Kevin; and his mother and adoptive father, Gladys and Taylor O'Hearn. A memorial fund has been established at the Rice University School of Architecture.

Randle Pollock

Gala Events

1989 **The Rice Design Alliance presented its third annual gala in a downtown bank lobby once occupied by InterFirst Bank. The "Rive Gauche" theme celebrated the bicentennial of the French Revolution and the end of Houston's economic reversal of several years back. The good times rolled on Saturday, 4 November, in the lobby of the 1100 Louisiana Building. Organized by chairman William E. Boswell and cochairmen Frank F. Douglas and Adele Howell, the evening raised over $35,000 to fund RDA programs. President Edith L. Archer presented the RDA's first annual Award for Design Excellence to developer Gerald D. Hines for his commitment to design excellence in buildings that have reshaped the face of Houston.**

The Rice Design Alliance thanks the underwriters, contributors, and tireless volunteers who made the evening such an outstanding event.

1990 **Mark your calendars for the 1990 Rice Design Alliance gala, to be held Saturday evening, 3 November, honoring George Mitchell, developer of The Woodlands and a leader in the renaissance of historic Galveston. For further information or to volunteer to help, please call the RDA office at 524-6297.**

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Phyllis Hand

RDA President Edith L. Archer presents Gerald D. Hines with the first annual RDA Award for Design Excellence.

Big **Cité** Beat

☛ Bush league: Native beaters hunting a site for the **George Bush Presidential Library** settled on Hermann Park briefly this winter before it became clear that no one else was game. Speculation now centers on the fringes of the Rice University campus.

☛ Musey rooms: **Venturi Rauch and Scott Brown** has been retained to prepare a master plan for the expansion of the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**. The firm is also engaged in preliminary design of the **Children's Museum of Houston**, to be built near Hermann Park.

☛ Hands solo: **John Burgee**, sans P. J., has devised a forest of water columns for a new fountain on the former site of the **Shamrock Hilton Hotel**. The plaza will be paved in real stone, not sham; the water will run clear, not green.

☛ Short haul: **Metro** is back on track with plans for a two-line, 22-mile transit starter system that covers much of the same ground the previous connector did, plus the University of Houston and the Fourth Ward, where **Andres Duany** and **Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk** are said to be preparing plans for the **Founder's Park** redevelopment project, sponsored by American General Corporation and Cullen Center.

☛ Tall tale: Oilman/developer **George Mitchell** has acquired the downtown block that was to have been the site of **Helmut Jahn**'s 82-story **Southwest Tower** (*Cite*, Spring-Summer 1984), the design of which was later downsized and built in Philadelphia. At last report, Jahn is still on the case, preparing an entirely new scheme.

☛ *Cite*like: The Houston chapter of the American Institute of Architects presented ***Cite*** with a Citation (what else?) of Honor at its annual meeting last month. Also honored were chapter stalwarts **Hermon Lloyd, Harvin C. Moore, S. I. Morris, George Pierce, Sally Walsh**, and **Willie Peña**; educator/architect **Nonya Grenader**; historian par excellence **Stephen Fox**; artist **Jim Love**; furniture craftsman **Bill Hight**; and up-and-coming architect **Natalye Appel**. Design awards went to **Cisneros Underhill; Gensler and Associates/Architects**; the **Office of Architecture + Design**; and **TeamHOU**.

☛ Decline and fall: Revealed in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (April 1986), under the heading "Landscape of Decline": "**West University Place**, in Harris County, was established in 1917 as a community of wealthy country homes around Rice University. Its population fell from 17,074 in 1950 to 12,010 in 1980." Could this be the same neo-Georgian bastion of Yuppiedom on 50-foot lots that *Cite* visited in Winter 1986 (pp. 14-16)?

☛ Market price: Construction of the first phase of **Market Square Park** will begin this summer. Four-fifths of the $675,000 budget is now in hand, including grants from the Brown, Wortham, Menil, Fondren, Hamman, and Cockrell foundations.

☛ Preservation Houston style: Having fiddled while the 1857 **Pillot Building** succumbed to a terminal case of deferred maintenance, the Harris County commissioners have now caused it to be rebuilt better than old, except for an ornamental series of columns attached to its first-floor front that were retained from the original.


Paul Hester

The 1990 1857 Pillot Building.

© 1990 Paul Hester, Houston

Bushwhackers

Through the good offices of Councilwoman Christin Hartung, the city of Houston recently adopted a Percent for Trees program to provide landscaping for all city-funded construction projects. Even so, no tree is safe from the Houston chainsaw massacre until the city reroutes its terminally un*Cite*ly overhead utility lines.

Dallas Historical Society

Transit of Venus I

Carlo Ciampaglia's murals for the Transportation Building at the state fairgrounds, long out of sight to Dallasites, were detected under multiple layers of paint several years ago. Efforts are now under way to pay for restoration of all 24 panels, beginning with the intergalactic streaking of *Future Transportation*. Those inclined to abet reexposure may contact Natalie H. Lee, Chairman, Murals Restoration Committee, Friends of Fair Park, P.O. Box 26248, Dallas 75226.

Transit of Venus II

TeamHou's scheme for the first phase of Houston's Sesquicentennial Park (profiled in *Architecture*, April 1990, pp. 56-57, and reviewed by David Dillon, 11 March 1990 in the *Dallas Morning News*) may have been designed Venutian blind, but its most prominent element, an octagonal pavilion overlooking Buffalo Bayou, bears a disarming resemblance to the so-called Temple of Venus at Baiae as engraved after Clérisseau by Cunega, by Jove.

Robert Fury

Fort Lauderdale Historical Society

Shotgun Shells

Property is turning over in the Fourth Ward as plans proceed for Founder's Park – which, as often is the case in real estate nomenclature, is not a park at all but a 600-acre mixed-use program of gentrification devised for the long-blighted neighborhood. For this year's Houston International Festival, Jack Massing and Michael Galbreth, d/b/a Art Guise, Inc., proposed to relocate three pre-1905 shotgun houses to nearby Buffalo Bayou's banks and stand them upside down. Even though the technics had been pioneered in Florida's Sunrise Golf Village (1960), the Houston Parks Department, caught off balance, turned thumbs down. An alternative site is now being negotiated with a private landowner. The title of the piece, a motto from John Ruskin inscribed in City Hall, remains the same: *As We Build Our City Let Us Think That We Are Building Forever.*

© 1990 Paul Hester, Houston

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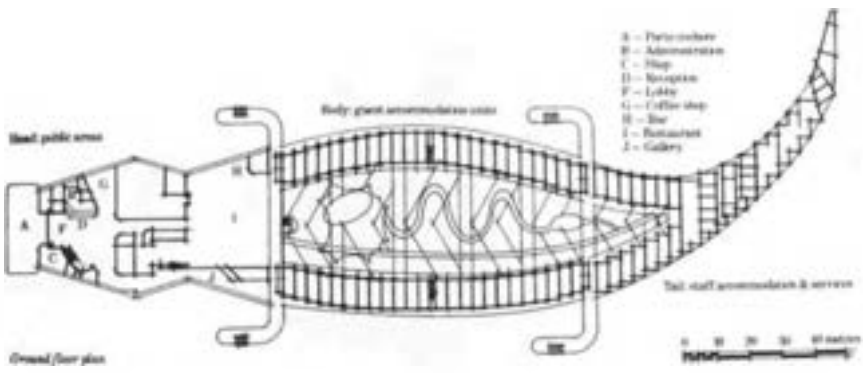
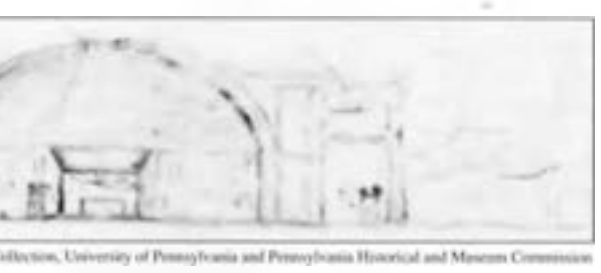
Little Egypt

Sensibilities turned asp backwards when Houston's sole surviving contribution to the Nile Style, Magic Island, was viperized as an affront to civic grace by the Orange Show, the city's justly celebrated but evidently none too indulgent folk-art environment. Magic Island had always struck us as somewhat tame, even innocuously underachieving, when compared to Gary Panter's conception for "Pee-wee's Playhouse" (visible each Saturday morning on CBS) or Red Grooms's reprise of Grauman's Egyptian Theater reincarnated as Tut's Fever, the screening room of the American Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, Queens.





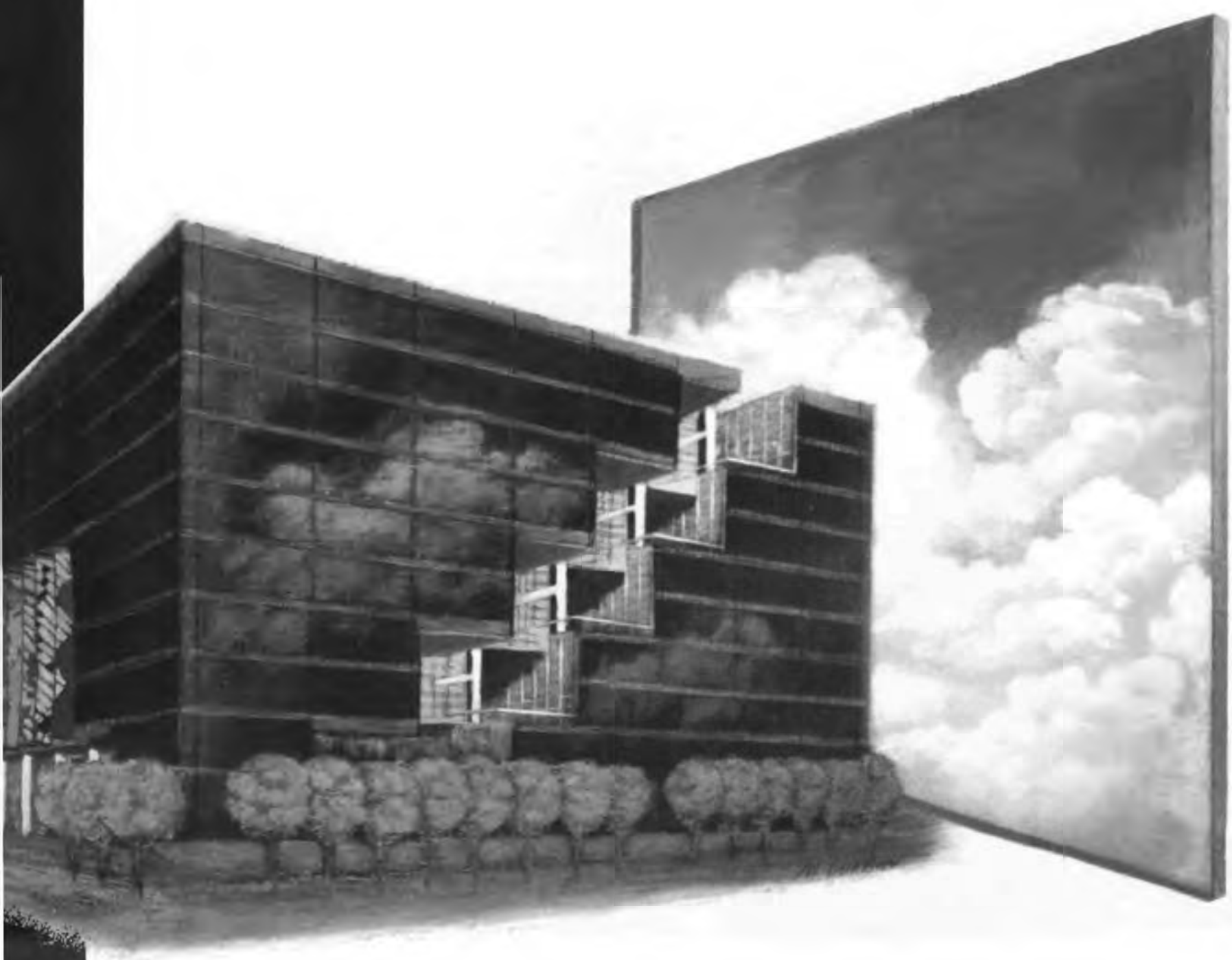
Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Kahn Do

This sketch of the rotunda of Kahn's project for the Menil Collection, Houston (1973-74), is on view as part of the exhibition *The Art Museums of Louis I. Kahn*, at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, through 17 June. The exhibition is documented with a catalogue by Patricia Loud (Duke University Press, 1989).

Crocodile Done Deed

While the general architectural press tests the waters with Michael Graves's Disney World dolphin and swan hotels, *Cite* offers snapshots of cinemarchitecture *más macho* from down under. The Four Seasons Hotel in Kakadu National Park, Jabiru Territory, Australia (Wilkins, Klemm & Morrison, architects), is actually a rescaled version (without tears) of Saul Steinberg's 1966 Florida epiphany, which shows the word M-O-T-E-L riding on the back of an alligator holding a flamingo in its mouth (*Saul Steinberg*, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1978, p. 244).



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Rodeo carnival, Astrodome, 1990.

DIAMOND IN THE ROUND

The Astrodome Turns 25

When its turnstiles opened for business in the spring of 1965, the Astrodome seemed like a shrine to all those Texas jokes founded on outrageous hyperbole and insufferable boasting. Hearing its promoters tell it, the Dome was like nothing else on earth; to find suitable comparisons you had to travel to the ancient world, recalling the great (or most colossal) monuments from antiquity.

Bruce C. Webb

"Not since the seven wonders of the world has man allowed his imagination to soar, to conceive and to construct such wonder," trumpeted the official press pamphlet, which then went on to equate the Astrodome with the Tomb of Mausolus, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, and the Colossus of Rhodes. A commemorative booklet sold to the public on opening day put it in the form of a more complicated metaphor, calling the Dome "the Taj Mahal of all stadia." Anxious letter writers to the local papers, inquiring how the Dome fared when compared with, say, the Colosseum or Piazza San Pietro in Rome (or some other large structure, past or present, in another city), were reassured, usually by the use of the reader's example as a kind of measuring stick to explain just how much space would be left over if it were placed inside the Dome.

Almost overnight, a barely imaginable part of the country took on recognizable form as the Dome quickly became the nation's number three man-made tourist attraction behind the Golden Gate Bridge and Mount Rushmore National Memorial, according to a U.S. Department of Commerce poll of travel agents. And unlike some of its rivals – Walt Disney World (number six) and the Gateway Arch in St. Louis (number seven) – the Dome was a practical idea. Forty-eight thousand people could sit inside on comfortable, theater-style seats to watch a baseball game. In a little less than three hours, a simple realignment of the lower stands (which rotate 35 degrees on motorized steel rails) could reset the stadium for 53,000 football fans. There would also be rodeos, concerts, religious rallies (Billy Graham's ten-day crusade in 1965 attracted a flock of 380,194), demolition derbies, motocross events, tractor pulls, soccer games, circuses, tennis matches (Billy Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs in "The Battle of the Sexes" in 1973), daredevil exhibitions, prizefights, political rallies, bullfights, basketball games (though not bridge or chess matches), and two feature-length movies – Robert Altman's *Brewster McCloud* (an Icarus-under-glass fable) and *The Bad News Bears in Breaking Training* (the world Little League championship, with fences pulled way in). And all of them taking place in a nearly perfect thermal environment. In the spirit of the air-conditioning mania of the sixties, when places were being defined in terms of the amount of chilled air pumped into them on a hot day, the Astrodome was the biggest place in town. It also was a curiously appropriate symbol of the city of Houston and its location in the steamy, semitropical Gulf Coast. In the words of Jim Murray, a sports writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, the Dome was a "monument to the unliveability of East Texas." But maybe Texas's climate wasn't an error in the Grand Scheme of Creation; it was just a bigger challenge to human ingenuity.

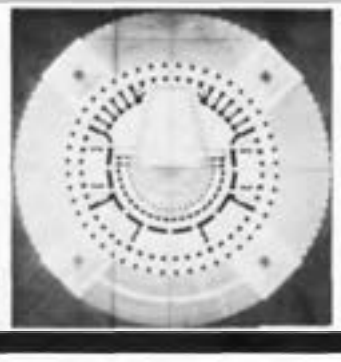
The Dome was like some chimerical island plopped down in a vast field on the far south edge of the city, offering a tantalizing glimpse of the brave new world Houstonians were creating for themselves. Although a downtown site had been investigated, it was bypassed in favor of the open prairie (leaving to New Orleans the distinction of being the first American city to install such an extraterrestrial presence alongside downtown). In that first year, the most spirited contest enacted there was a war of lexical attrition between visiting sports scribes from around the country trying to outdo one another in lavishing figures of speech. There was also some journalistic debunking by out-of-town writers who'd had their fill of hearing about the Dome. Jim Murray continued to be unimpressed, even by the sheer engineering of the Dome: "Hoisting a roof is a theoretical problem well within the reach of the average Purdue sophomore. But Texans being Texans, the problem was keeping it all from blowing away until they had it all tacked down. They told everyone in town to shut up for a day or two until this was accomplished."

For a city seeking to plant itself in the national consciousness, nothing seems to work so well as acquiring a major-league sports team. A city's participation in professional sports portrays something about the city as a social formation in much the same way a picture postcard of the city's monuments or most splendid views represents the city as a place. Reported on national television and radio and covered on a daily basis in the newspapers, a sports team – how it deports itself, what it calls itself, where it plays its games, the peculiarities of its fans – presents a distilled picture of the city it represents to the world. In extreme situations – consider Green Bay, Wisconsin – a sports team may be the *only* thing most people associate with a city.

It is probably one of the great American myths that there is anything even approaching fealty between a sports team and its city. But at some point in their development, most cities seem to feel an acute need for professional sports and set out to do something about it. How else to explain the way Jacksonville, Florida, collectively prostrated itself at the feet of Houston Oilers owner Bud Adams in a bidding war with the Houston Sports Association, the prize being a perennially mediocre NFL franchise? But a city seeking a franchise faces a chicken-and-egg dilemma: the baseball establishment says, "Get a first-class stadium and we'll talk about a team"; the city says, "Give us a team and then we'll build a stadium." Take the case of St. Petersburg, Florida, which is putting the finishing touches on a new, tilted-dome stadium with no tenant but with which the city hopes to lure a major-league baseball team down from

Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Etienne-Louis Boullée, project for the Paris Opéra, 1781, perspective and general plan.



Astrodome, 1960-65, general plan, Lloyd and Morgan and Wilson, Morris, Crain, and Anderson, architects.

Houston Astros baseball club logo, Adie Marks, Gulf State Advertising, December 1964.

the north; or San Antonio, which is engaged in an equally speculative maneuver involving the construction of a domed stadium on its east side.

Houston in the late 1950s was feeling similarly deprived and in need of the reassuring presence of a professional baseball team. When the city made its pitch to the National League's board of directors in 1960, a model of a proposed covered stadium was brought along to propitiate those skeptics who questioned the feasibility of playing in the mosquito-infested heat and humidity of a rainy Gulf Coast summer. When the National League awarded Houston one of two expansion franchises for the 1962 season – the other going to the New York Metropolitans, who were to occupy the Polo Grounds until Shea Stadium could be built – the Houston Sports Association devised a $22 million, tax-supported bond issue, hastily erecting a temporary 33,000-seat stadium next to a rapidly expanding hole in the ground where the Domed Stadium would be built. The name settled on for the new franchise was the Colt .45s, and the team was framed in a Texas-style mixture of Wild West mythology and gun fetishism. Parking-lot attendants at Colt Stadium, attired in orange ten-gallon hats, blue neckerchiefs, and white overalls, directed cars into one of several parking sections, each marked with a sign proclaiming it "Wyatt Earp" or "Matt Dillon" territory, or the domain of some other legendary hero of the television Wild West. Ushers in modish cowgirl outfits were called "Triggerettes," and there was a "Six Shooters Club" for kids. The "Fast Draw Club," a bar designed to look like the Long Branch Saloon of the "Gunsmoke" series, was a members-only club for adults, since Houston's laws at the time forbade serving liquor by the drink except in clubs.

Set against the relatively serene character of baseball's traditional venues, all this manufactured hoopla captured national attention. But it wasn't ultimately the kind of image you wanted to have working for you when you were trying to build the 21st-century city ahead of schedule.

In the days before cities could set public relations firms to work on their image problems, Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote that "all towns should be made capable of purification by fire or decay within each half century." It's an idea that would appear strange to modern Houstonians, who seek to purify their city by building instead. What the Houston Sports Association and its visionary leader, former mayor and county judge Roy Hofheinz, had in mind was to build a sports stadium so novel and so audacious it would make people forget there ever was an old Houston. (The old Houston had partaken of baseball in Buffalo Stadium, a 12,000-seat outpost of the St. Louis Cardinals on the east side of town.) Hofheinz's sources were practical ones: he formulated the idea for a covered stadium from his experience trying to get an enclosed shopping mall built in 1959 on a site at Weslayan and Bissonnet, coupled with his recollections of a visit to the Colosseum in Rome, which he later discovered had had a *velarium*, or canopy, that could be erected over the arena to shade and protect it from the elements. A further catalytic ingredient was a series of fruitful meetings with R. Buckminster Fuller, the protean inventor of the geodesic dome. Hofheinz with his impossible dream and Fuller with his bag of impossible solutions were probably made for each other, according to Edgar Ray in his biography of Hofheinz, *The Grand Huckster*.[1] Fuller, who once asserted the cost effectiveness of covering a sizable portion of New York City with one of his domes, convinced Hofheinz that it was possible to cover a space of any size and control the climate inside, provided you didn't run out of money. That was the kind of challenge that appealed to Hofheinz.

During construction of the Dome, Houston was also refashioning its image from "Bayou City" to "Space City," drawing on the recent relocation of the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center to nearby Clear Lake City and the city's association with the Great Society adventure in outer space (even the police department had adopted an orbiting cosmos for its uniform patch, and the local counterculture newspaper appeared under a *Space City* masthead). Hofheinz, not to be included out, decided to capitalize on this new image by changing the name of Houston's team to the Astros. The stadium, still officially the Harris County Domed Stadium, became known as the Astrodome. (In discarding the old Colt .45 appellation, the Houston Sports Association also rid itself of a sticky problem with the Colt Firearms Company over royalties from profits made on the novelties sold at the stadium that used the name.) When fans arrived at the Domed Stadium for opening day in April 1965, they were treated to a whole new scenario: the female ushers were now "Spacettes" and outfitted in gold lamé miniskirts and blue space boots. "Blast Off Girls" worked the counter at the "Countdown Cafe," and the groundskeepers, wearing specially designed astronaut suits and bubble helmets, were called "Earthmen."

The landscape inside the Dome was a circus world, fusing elements of shopping-center kitsch with modern rationalism. Around the playing field, tiers of seats in five vivid colors terraced up from field level to upper deck under a lattice-and-Lucite sky. In the topmost reaches of the stadium Hofheinz had his designers create a girdle of private Sky Boxes for the elite expense-account crowd. The boxes were like private party rooms in a fantasy hotel, with a ball game going on outside the window some ten stories below. Each was equipped with bathroom, bar, and television, furnished and decorated in a different motif, and given a name such as "Captain's Cabin," "Imperial Orient," "Spanish Galleon," or "Egyptian Autumn." Out in center field was the famous scoreboard, a 60-by-300-foot mural of electronic pyrotechnics that celebrated the home team's occasional successes and rudely taunted the opposition. Before a computerized Diamondvision scoreboard was installed in 1983, the Astrodome scoreboard was surprisingly low tech: like the apparitions created by the Wizard of Oz, many of the displays were produced by a man sitting inside the scoreboard, back-projecting slides (or silhouettes of his own clapping hands) onto a perforated screen to create the illusion that they were produced by exotic electronic technology. But the effect was like combining real, live baseball with the responsive persona of an electronic pinball machine: an Astros homer would set off a chain reaction of lighted displays that included charging bulls, fireworks over a lighted Dome, a gun-toting cowboy, and a waving Lone Star flag.

There was usually so much going on in the vast space that it was easy to forget about the Dome itself. Being in the Dome was a condition sensed first by the skin, the thermal delight of leaving an overheated day for the near-perfect conditions inside: 74 degrees, with a slight breeze blowing out of the air-conditioning ducts. The sensation that you were actually inside was momentary; then it slipped just outside of consciousness, returning when, for example, the pall of cigarette smoke that built up inside before the city banned smoking would gather in the upper reaches, then slowly descend, creating atmospheric conditions like Pittsburgh in the 1940s. Or when a well-hit high fly ball would direct the spectators' view upward and set them to wondering if it would hit the lattice framework or that frightening little bridge that crawled along the inner surface of the Dome, connecting to the gondola high above the center of the field.

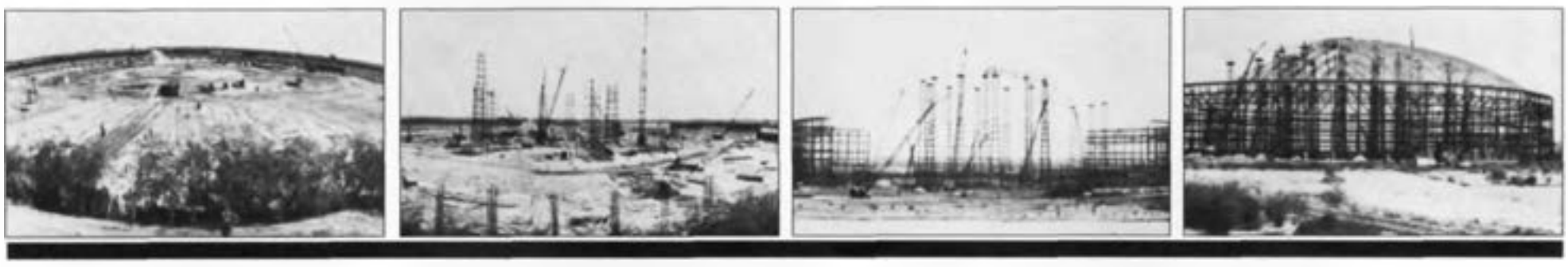
It was also called to mind during that agonizing first year when it became apparent that putting the Dome up was a simpler engineering feat than solving some of the problems it created. The Dome design settled on a lamella frame with diamond-shaped bracing, within which 4,596 Lucite skylights were inserted to admit the sunlight needed to nourish the grass on the field. The builders of the Dome might have done well to consult that 18th-century designer of hyperrealities, Etienne Boullée, rather than their engineering manuals. Boullée wrote: "When light enters a temple directly, art is pitted against nature. . . . the light is reflected in those places where it falls directly and hurts the eyes."[2] The skylights in the Dome acted like lenses, making the sunlight dazzle the ballplayers when they were tracking down fly balls. Undaunted, Hofheinz had the skylights painted out. But without sunlight, the grass on the field died, a problem solved first by painting the brown stubble green. Then they discovered Astroturf.

God only knows what the Monsanto Chemical Company was doing when it concocted this plastic grass – the tactile equivalent of scratch-and-sniff food books or freeze-dried ice cream. Coming like carpet in 15-foot rolls that zipped together to cover the ground, it looked from a distance like a too-perfect, retouched fashion photograph. Up close it had all the pastoral charm of a green Brillo pad – or "concrete with fringe," as it became known to the National Football League players who pitted flesh and bone against its unyielding, prickly surfaces. Carpeting the Astrodome completed the work of creating the artificial world. Soon the stuff was as ubiquitous as kudzu, and every ballpark looked like a billiard table.

Baseball has always lacked the neo-gladiatorial festivity of football, with its

Interior, Astrodome during construction, April 1964.

Courtesy of the Houston Sports Association



May 1963. July 1963. August 1963. September 1963.

Courtesy of the Houston Sports Association

Ground blazing, 3 January 1962. Roy Hofheinz appears in second row, with hat and glasses; R. E. "Bob" Smith is at right, in light suit.

Paul Hester, Houston

Vision-obstructed seats with compensatory monitor.

nearly nonstop action and a supporting cast of cheerleaders, marching bands, and precision clone-ette drill teams to fill in the empty spots. For all the historical appeal and strategic maneuverings of the game, baseball is a comparatively austere spectator sport, riddled with in-between time, pauses, and endless waiting for something to happen. While a football team is always playing against both the other team and the clock, baseball creates its own time existentially, precisely the kind of game to exist in the temporal limbo of the Dome. To bring it into the television-shortened attention spans of the 1960s and to attract a following for the new and painfully marginal franchise, Hofheinz reconstituted the stadium as a kind of theme park, with the ball game as simply one of its attractions.

But like a fairground after the carnival has gone, the Dome today has lost some of the color of the early years, the victim of changing attitudes and economic pressures. An expansion in 1987 increased the capacity of the stadium by 10,000 seats as a concession to the Houston Oilers football team, then threatening to move to a more capacious stadium with greater revenue-producing potential in Jacksonville. The new seats perfected the arena configuration by filling in the 300-foot gap formerly occupied by the electronic scoreboard and television screen in center field – preempting the cyclopean eye that had invested the green-carpeted Dome with the ambience of an enormous living room. Promises of a new, more spectacular, higher-tech replacement, which included hints of laser displays designed by film impresario George Lucas, have so far proved unfulfilled.

History will probably remember the Dome for another, more insidious achievement: it is a kind of idealized typological harbinger of the modern, multipurpose stadium, roofed or not. It represented a milestone not only in the denaturing of two national sports (to say nothing of the rodeo), but also in the standardization of sports stadiums and a purification of the idiosyncrasies that had distinguished one baseball park from another. Traditional baseball parks were formed by shoehorning the field and stands into a preexisting urban context, with the result that each had its own circumstantial and nearly always asymmetrical configuration. Unlike football, which is played on a field of prescribed dimensions, baseball is played on a field with a strictly regulated infield and an outfield of no fixed dimensions. Of the baseball parks built between 1909 and 1923, only one was perfectly symmetrical, and no two were alike.[3] Students of the game have always been attentive to the subtleties of selecting a lineup and strategies for playing each field. Setting the Astrodome in the center of a wide-open prairie allowed the designers to realize a Platonically multipurpose stadium. But in catering to several tenants, its economies of shape yielded a universal configuration expressive of neither the *genius loci* nor the genius baseball. Today nearly every stadium subscribes to more or less the same doughnut configuration, creating a situation about which baseball player Richie Hebner confessed: "When I stand at home plate in Philadelphia, I don't honestly know if I'm in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis, or Philly. They all look alike." For spectators the multipurpose ring stadium involves compromises that reduce the immediacy of experience found in single-purpose stadiums, baseball as well as football.

Television has shifted the emphasis of spectator sports from stadium crowds to a vicarious, electronically fed audience. Baseball, with its natural intervals, fits neatly into the commercial scheduling pattern. But football has had to invent artificial gaps – the two-minute warning, commercial time-outs – that interrupt the natural flow of the game and can only be understood in terms of the way television measures time. Spectators often find themselves missing more by seeing the game live than by watching it on television, particularly with the advent of multiple camera angles, instant replays, and interpretive commentaries: hence the odd sight of fans lugging portable television sets into the stadium. Presently more than 500 television monitors are permanently mounted throughout the Astrodome, some of them installed to compensate for impaired sightlines. Television's domination has made the game into a media event staged for the home viewer, and Nielsen ratings count for more than the gate. Perhaps the Astrodome is closest to the final iteration of the stadium, which may well be the non-place realm of the television studio. (Ironically, Channel 13's studios are housed in a pint-sized version of the Astrodome.)

But if the symmetrical, multipurpose, lookalike stadium-in-the-round has become the rule in the latter part of the 20th century, the Dome was still at one point a true and authentic symbol of Houston, portraying in its form and enterprise three of the things for which Houston was becoming known: audacity and entrepreneurship, a suburban concept of space, and air conditioning. The entrepreneurship was purely a matter of private and individual, rather than civic, will, reinforcing the belief that a good businessman was worth a hundred city politicians when it came to getting something done. The sense of space was not the Renaissance idea of space, considered architecturally integral with buildings. Rather it was space in the exploded, suburban sense of separating things from one another. Beginning on the outside, the Dome sits like a giant oil storage tank, estranged from whatever context it might have had by acres of concentric parking lanes, and tenuously linked with the various satellite enterprises of its domain: exhibit halls, amusement park, hotel. Unlike Boullée's schematic design of 1781 for an ideal opera house surrounded by a circle of heroically scaled columns holding up an exterior ambulatory, the Dome on the outside is pure marketplace technology, presenting the blind face of a shopping center punctuated by giant mechanical air chillers and diminutive entrance pavilions. In a reversal of Leo Marx's "machine in the garden" characterization of early-20th-century domestic architecture, the Dome reserves its paradisiacal pleasures for the inside, using its engineered container to create not architectural space but its suburban equivalent: air.

It was the air conditioning that had everyone talking – 6,600 tons of it. It was a part of that magnificent Houston vision before the energy crises, when it seemed that the whole city, or at least as much of the city as anyone cared about, would be set under glass and air-conditioned. Even when the place wasn't closed in like the Galleria, the Dome's street version, cold air could still be blown around, as it was on the lines of people waiting to get on the rides at the AstroWorld amusement park next door.

Roland Barthes in his essay on the Eiffel Tower claims the tower to be the absolute embodiment of a monument. "In order to satisfy the oneiric function by which it becomes a monument," Barthes writes, "the tower has to escape reason. . . . [It] must become totally and utterly useless."[4] By Barthes's definition the Dome fails entirely to become a monument: its entire *raison d'être* is to be *for* something. But one might claim for it a special case of momentary monumentality, fulfilling the obligations of irrationality and uselessness for a short time before the original, practical claims of its makers appear fulfilled and the sense of the monumental passes over to a sense of normality. One no longer sees it as extraordinary. One of the more distressing features of life in the latter part of the 20th century is a penchant for disguising extraordinary realities by investing them with fictional contents, leading to the conclusion that most of life is a sham. In the case of the Dome, the inelegance of its "architecture" leads one to conclude that its designers must have considered it to be nearly invisible, or at best merely a circumstance judged solely on the basis of what it did rather than what it looked like. But for a short time there is an overwhelming feeling of the sheer extravagance of effort it takes to make a place that somehow dwarfs the sense of its contents. It appears as a pure phenomenon. As David Brinkley ventured on the evening news when the Dome first opened, "Baseball here is almost incidental." You can still recover the feeling from time to time, especially if you go out there when there's nothing going on and sit in one of the seats, contemplating the vast, perfect emptiness. When the architectural history class at the University of Houston created a series of full-size drawings of a number of classical buildings, the Dome was the obvious – perhaps the only – place in the city in which to hang them, thus bringing into the Dome the "architecture" it otherwise lacks.

If the monumental work is able to transcend its function, it also invites specula-

tion about what else it might have been. While the Dome was still being designed, Hofheinz hit on the idea of making the place double as the world's largest fall-out shelter – perhaps fulfilling one of Barthes's criteria through a uselessness of intentions. Hofheinz's motives were more a matter of opportunism than anything else, an attempt to gather eight million federal dollars into his project through the even-then-vestigial Civil Defense program. The idea prompted the digging of an oversized basement level before it was quashed, apparently by functionaries in the Kennedy administration seeking to put LBJ in his place.[5] Judge Hofheinz, who built a luxury apartment for himself that included a barber and beauty shop, a medieval chapel, and a circus room behind the right-field wall, prompted University of Houston student David Bucek to create a design that relined the Dome as a mixed-use development for allergy sufferers, answering the question of what to do with the Dome when the fans stop coming to watch another season of the local also-rans.

The Dome presented itself on opening day in 1965 as an object of self-induced adoration, manifolded through expansive figures of speech. Twenty-five years have made it a more comfortable object. Perhaps still a renegade building, it nonetheless fits comfortably into the Houston scheme. Coming as close to being a symbolic, public place as Houston can manage, it draws the transportable center of the city southward.

Whether it's the Oilers or the Astros, the rodeo or the Rolling Stones, they're playing in the big urban room. Or the Guru Maharaj Ji, who once played the Dome and tried to raise its roof with collective meditation, without result. He put it in a more spiritual metaphor: "The Astrodome is like God. You have to experience them both first hand." ■

Notes

1 Edgar W. Ray, *The Grand Huckster* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1980). Ray's book is the most extensive study of the building of the Dome and was an invaluable source for this article.

2 Etienne-Louis Boullée, "Architecture, Essay on Art," in Helen Rousenau, *Boullée and Visionary Architecture* (London: Academy Press, 1967), p. 94.

3 Philip Bess, *City Baseball Magic: Plain Talk and Uncommon Sense About Cities and Baseball Parks* (Minneapolis Review of Baseball, 1989), p. 5. This little publication offers an incisive critique of the modern baseball stadium and a glowing eulogy for the traditional urban ball park. In the final chapter the author proposes a new design for Armour Field, a new ball park for the Chicago White Sox that seeks to re-create the intimacy and ambience of the early generation of urban ball parks.

4 Roland Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), p. 5.

5 Ray, *The Grand Huckster*, p. 273.

Shaggy Rug Story

The Greening of the Astrodome

Harold Israel

Sweeping changes at the last moment, 18 April 1966.

Building lay-up (top) and building layouts (below), Ben Nicholson and Mark Schneider with students of the University of Houston College of Architecture, 1986.

Photographs courtesy of University of Houston Architecture Slide Collection

Certainly no one could accuse the Astrodome's sponsors and designers of thinking small. They knew that building the world's first indoor stadium large enough for baseball and football was a venture that, if successful, would make its mark on both sports. Yet I wonder if even the most self-confident of these people (the leading candidate for that honor being Judge Roy Hofheinz himself) ever dreamed that this structure would become the most influential stadium of its century, and perhaps even of all time. The simple fact is that the Astrodome altered the way America's most popular outdoor sports would be played; it did so dramatically, perhaps irrevocably, and entirely through miscalculation.

The Astrodome's main significance lies not in its volume, span, air-conditioning prowess, or immense skylight, but in its plastic floor covering. Astroturf is the end result of a succession of architecturally created problems, and is itself an expedient rather than a true solution. The Dome was meant to be a great conservatory, with several acres of God's green grass growing under its clear Lucite roof. Its hothouse (or more accurately, coolhouse) ecology was diligently calculated, and, since the Dome's Tifway 419 Bermuda grass was bred at Texas A&M specifically for indoor use, there was no doubt that photosynthesis would occur to the required degree. What no one studied was the optical qualities of the roof structure and the visual needs of fielders faced with the task of accurately tracking a white ball less than three inches in diameter at distances as great as 400 feet and speeds as high as 120 miles per hour.

Faced with such a demanding task, ballplayers found that they could not consistently follow the ball's flight against the contrasty and visually busy backdrop of the Astrodome roof. The structural system for this revolutionary building was highly conventional and perhaps even retrograde: heavy radial ribs of steel formed eight main segments that were in turn subdivided structurally by girts and purlins, then by the mullions and muntins for the 4,596 Lucite panels. The resulting pattern was not homogeneous but rather marked by light and dark areas that made fielding conditions impossible. Writing years later, journalist Lowell Reidenbaugh referred to this oversight as a "glaring fault."

Ironically, a more suitable structural system had been demonstrated seven years earlier just 250 miles away in Baton Rouge, where Buckminster Fuller had implemented his lightweight geodesic dome system at the Union Tank Car Company repair shops. In addition to saving money and materials, its uniform pattern of thin tubing would almost surely have allowed normal fielding.

But in the non-Dymaxion world of the Astrodome, it was too late for basic structural thinking. Gray paint was applied to the Lucite to lower the light levels and thus the contrast between panels and structure. Fielders had better success with high flies, but the reduced solar levels were not enough to keep the grass healthy. Once again the answer was paint – this time green pigment sprayed on the brown sod. When it was clear that the grass was dying, the Astros were prepared to play their second season, like the most deprived of sandlotters, on an all-dirt field.

Before this unappealing action was taken, however, Judge Hofheinz heard of an experimental synthetic "grass" that might be used as a carpet for his now-shabby palace floor. The Monsanto Chemical Company installed roughly 100,000 square feet of its evergreen flooring and named it in the Dome's honor. Thus was Astroturf baptised under crisis conditions. Being synthetic, it could not die; being integrally colored, it stayed green. It needed no water, and since it did not engage in transpiration, it reduced the dehumidification demands on the air-conditioning system.

It would be nice to say that this miracle material ended the woes of indoor baseball in Houston, but it merely substituted new ones and eventually spread them throughout much of the sporting universe. Stadiums that did not otherwise need it installed Astroturf or 3M's Tartan Turf to simplify maintenance or to promote the faster game that the speedy surface allowed. When used outdoors, it proved a fine solar heating device, producing field temperatures as high as 130 degrees. Because it was not as resilient as grass, it increased player fatigue and wear on leg joints. Because it did not give way like grass, it increased the frequency and severity of knee injuries associated with twisting and sudden stops. And, of course, there was a major element of aesthetic offensiveness to fans and players brought up on the real thing. Outfielder Dick Allen summed up all these objections by declaring, "If a horse won't eat it, I don't want to play on it." Alas, such sentiments have carried little weight with decision makers in sports, and artificial turf has become entrenched. The new Toronto Skydome, for example, has an openable roof that would allow real grass to grow, but it uses plastic nonetheless.

Beyond Astroturf, the Dome's design had other implications for Houston baseball and football. Its round shape was an awkward compromise between ideal seating patterns for the two very different games, and, although movable seating sections rectified the problem for patrons in the first few rows, most of the seats remained too far from the action of either sport.

For baseball, the Dome's dimensions were generous enough to make hitting difficult. The painted roof produced dark day games. And by keeping temperatures in the low 70s, the efficient air-conditioning system cut down on the distance that fly balls carried. In combination, these three factors created the best pitching and worst hitting environment in the major leagues, suppressing scoring by 11 percent and home runs by 38 percent from expected levels over the Dome's first 24 seasons. While one may argue that this produced a subtler brand of play, the fact remains that most fans consider low-offense ball games boring. Furthermore, the performance distortions created by the park have made it difficult to appreciate the accomplishments of Astros batters, or to compare their productivity to that of competitors playing in more conventional home parks. In recent years the outfield dimensions have been shortened a bit, but the Dome still remains a pitcher's park.

Conceived as an engineering marvel, the Astrodome is a mechanical artifact rather than a complete work of architecture. It sits isolated in its vast parking lot like a grounded UFO, encapsulating an unquestioning faith in technology as both means and end, and in the primacy of self-sufficient objects over any relationship to context or culture.

John Pastier

Second Baptist Church, CTJ&D Architects, 1986.

Architecture Beyond Redemption

HOUSTON'S SUPER CHURCHES

Richard Ingersoll

Second Baptist Church.

First Baptist Church, S. I. Morris Associates, architects, 1975.

Three recent church buildings in Houston are so conspicuously less than divine that they force one to reconsider the sacred origins of architecture. If any building was treated as "architecture" in most American communities, it was the church. Even the most world-weary and frugal Protestants, such as the early Puritans or the 19th-century Shakers, built their meeting houses and churches with supreme aesthetic attention, albeit according to austerely functionalist, self-effacing criteria. Houston's new super churches are a different type of expression of faith, one that adds to the program for the house of prayer the leavening realities of high-speed travel, television, and mass marketing. Super churches neither look like churches nor are they intended solely for churchgoing. Their prayer halls, which they prefer to call "sanctuaries," are built for thousands rather than hundreds of faithful and are engrossed by offices, media rooms, social centers, classrooms, gymnasia, restaurants, and bookstores, which together provide a theocratic alternative to ordinarily secular pursuits. These sprawling new churches reveal programs as complex as those of medieval monasteries, and, despite their technological worldliness, constitute a retreat from the secular world.

The churches in question – First Baptist Church at the intersection of the Katy Freeway and Loop 610, Second Baptist Church at Voss and Woodway, and Lakewood Church at 7417 East Houston Road near the North Wayside exit of Loop 610 East – owe their gigantism to an expanded definition of community. With the inarrestable triumph of both the automobile and television, the shared interests and services of a community are no longer spatially bound. The despatialized super churches are surrounded by vast parking lots and isolated in the landscape, linked to their congregation by the freeway rather than by local streets; they are to the neighborhood church what the shopping mall is to the corner store. In their reliance on video as an integral part of worship, the super churches conform to the hyper-real culture of the late 20th century, for which simulations are truer than reality. The legitimating function of television would seem to enhance the veracity of the sermons delivered in these churches – like an electronic Holy Spirit descending on a scattered mass audience. Of the three, Pastor John Osteen's Lakewood Church is the most ostentatious TV ministry, simultaneously broadcasting closeups of the service to the audience in the church on a huge video screen suspended over the stage and to the audience at home on several nationwide networks. The effect of having the large screen inside the church – an innovation embraced by Robert Schuller in the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California (Johnson/Burgee Architects, 1979) – is spectacular: one experiences the service from both near and far, somewhat like witnessing an unveiled Wizard of Oz. The other two super churches are likewise outfitted with sophisticated video control rooms, mobile cameras, and theatrical lighting but confine their in-house broadcasts to video monitors in corridor areas outside the sanctuary. The service at Second Baptist is broadcast on three cable networks to a weekly audience said to number 70,000, while video and audio cassettes of memorable services are available in its bookstore.

The super churches seem to be growth industries as much as ministries of spiritual salvation, which may explain why their buildings are typologically closer to commercial structures than to churches. A significant part of the Sunday service is devoted to welcoming and pinning down newcomers, issuing lapel

Photographs by Paul Hester

First Baptist Church of Houston

7401
Katy Freeway

Second Baptist Church of Houston

6400
Woodway Drive

buttons so the congregation can identify them, and getting them to commit to a mailing list. In his sermons pastor Ed Young of Second Baptist congratulates the old-timers of his congregation for sacrificing their parking places close to the church (shuttle buses run from the outer parking lots) to the new catechumens. Both Second Baptist and Lakewood Church have ambitious billboard campaigns featuring the smiling faces of their respective pastors: Ed Young welcomes you to the "Fellowship of Excitement," while John Osteen tries to lure you to the "Oasis of Love." Amid the blur of commercial effluvium on Houston's freeways, these pious solicitations could be confused with equally aggressive advertisements for considerably more profane enterprises.

First Baptist and Second Baptist, both located in the city's affluent western region (approximately six and eight miles, respectively, from downtown), are in obvious competition for members and new converts; the former maintains a solid lead in long-term membership, the latter attracts the more upwardly mobile. While there was one black person in the choir of First Baptist and several in the audience, no color darker than suntan was visible at Second Baptist when I visited. Lakewood Church is in a remote area on the decidedly less than affluent northeast side, about eight miles from downtown, where some streets have yet to be hooked up with city services. The Lakewood congregation is ethnically mixed (a significant portion of the audience wears Spanish-language headphones) and economically poor-to-middling, to judge from the make and condition of the cars in the parking lot and the way servicegoers dress. Theologically, Lakewood differs appreciably from the two others, offering a free-wheeling Pentecostalism replete with speaking in tongues, laying on of hands, and the promise of miracles. The theatrics and social tolerance of Lakewood make it radical compared to the more conventional services and congregations of the other two churches.

Osteen's church boasts Texas' largest "sanctuary," a 123,000-square-foot air-conditioned box. The freespanning space-frame roof, tucked behind the kind of mansards used to hide ventilation equipment on fast-food outlets, covers several acres. The brown brick exterior envelope is remorselessly utilitarian, with not a single gesture toward religious iconography except the dubious series of lancet windows on the east elevation. The interior is like a sports arena, with a maximum capacity of about 8,250 spectators; as more people pour into the church, floor-to-ceiling drapes are pulled back to reveal successive standing areas that expand the total capacity to 10,000. The indifference to recognizable church architecture makes Lakewood Church closest to the revival tents of the 19th century. In contrast to the building's unself-conscious warehouse appearance, the trappings of the stage area seem to be derived from a completely incongruous idiom, the glitzy decor of TV game shows; and the suspense of wondering what the pastor's wife, Dodie, will do next is indeed more entertaining than "Wheel of Fortune."As a warmup for her husband's weekly sermon, Mrs. Osteen struts across the stage with a microphone, telling stories of horrible diseases that faith has cured, calling on infirm or distraught people in the audience to come forward and have the devil cast out of them, and vigorously talking in tongues (one wonders how this is translated in the headphone versions). The stage background is decorated with huge American flags and a depiction of the solar system, and musicians (who play an eclectic blend of soul and old-fashioned hymns) are situated in an orchestra pit behind the stage. Aside from the new church (designed by Michael Keene, 1987), the other facilities of Lakewood resemble a military boot camp, and can in no way compare with the wealthier super churches.

Lakewood Church, Michael Keene, architect, 1987.

Lakewood Church.

First Baptist and Second Baptist both follow the conservative teachings of evangelical "born-again" Christianity. Baptism is the major sacrament, celebrated at the beginning of each church's Sunday service in a spotlit, full-immersion font located high above the podium and choir. In both churches the pastor and his assistants sit on the podium in Hepplewhite-style armchairs, looking almost as if they were at home, watching the whole thing on television. The facilities programs of the two churches are nearly identical, although Second Baptist invariably has larger and conspicuously more expensive versions. Both grew from previous churches that relocated after the building of the freeways and have in recent years undergone a second growth. First Baptist, led by Pastor John Bisagno, has a membership of 22,500, one of the largest congregations in the country. It was moved to a tan brick structure designed by S. I. Morris Associates on its present freeway site in 1975. The church seats 3,335 and has a choir that holds close to 400; the pastor mentions in his sermons his dream of adding balconies to the auditorium (and thus catching up with Second Baptist). A curious practice at both churches is the custom of applauding after special musical numbers, a convention that seems to have filtered down from television shows. Pastor Bisagno is a sincerely jolly man who during the course of the service has new babies brought to him, has young couples who are trying to have children come forward, and mentions the grievously ill by name so people can pray for them. There is high audience participation and always lots of movement in the auditorium, which in plan is a quarter segment of a circle. The firm of Denny Ray Wines has recently added a six-story office building housing Sunday school classrooms (10,000 people attend weekly) and a three-level commissary; the restaurant on the ground floor is called the Garden of Eatin'. Beside this is a gymnasium structure known as the Christian Life Center that boasts two basketball courts, a jogging track, a fitness room, a sauna, a whirlpool, four racquetball courts, Ping-pong tables, a crafts studio, and a four-lane bowling alley, providing a serious if still golfless alternative to the country club. Leftover space between the buildings has been landscaped into a small garden with a winding path, known as "The Oasis." First Baptist is so crowded on Sundays that many members are forced to watch the service on video monitors outside the sanctuary, but the biggest problem – as elsewhere in Houston – is adequate parking, and the church is considering building a parking garage.

If one were not able to read, it would be nearly impossible to identify the sober, featureless volumes of First Baptist as a church. Like early Christians adapting their churches to the administrative typology of the basilica, these Christians of the age of information have adapted their buildings to the office typology of big business. First Baptist is neither any worse nor any better than a standard speculative office building. The Puritans and Shakers, while consciously rejecting architectural worldliness, made an art of their humble minimalism, but this will never be suspected of First Baptist. It is a tribute to the congregation that it does not require architecture to lift spirits or identity itself – but how unfortunate this attitude is for the rest of the city.

Ed Young's Second Baptist has fewer members (15,000) but larger, more conspicuously "architectural" facilities – including a new church that retains some of the traditional iconography of church architecture. Still, it would be hard to claim that the extra expense and more overt ecclesiastical citations are un-

Lakewood Church

7417
East Houston Road

problematic. Second Baptist's complex sprawls over 42 acres, like a shopping mall. When the congregation moved to its present site outside the Loop, its first new structure (1967) was a neo-Georgian church with a basilica plan, interior barrel vault, and Gibbsian steeple, designed by Harold Calhoun of Wirtz, Calhoun, Tungate & Jackson. Arcaded courtyards were provided as links between the various buildings of this earlier phase, but unfortunately this sensible strategy for growth was subsequently abandoned. In 1986, Second Baptist added an enormous octagonal "worship center" capped with a disproportionately small dome that is an unintentional parody of the Dome of the Rock. Also designed by Calhoun's office, it has double tiers of balconies and seats 6,000. The raised podium is placed directly in the center of the octagon, and from the ceiling above hangs a sinister-looking octagonal tabernacle containing the sound amplifiers. Anyone who has been inside medieval central-plan baptistries will understand the inherent acoustical problem, which in this case is multiplied many times; neither the pastor, nor his 300-member choir, nor the "world's largest singing Christmas tree" can be heard without the aid of microphones, a shortcoming that takes some of the live "excitement" out of the fellowship. Other features, such as the innovative communion trays that hold dozens of thimble-size plastic wine cups, each with a quarter-inch of bread on its rim – communion for thousands in just a few minutes – also reduce the sense of direct participation, and there is noticeably less milling around here than at First Baptist. Pastor Young, who vaguely resembles Pat Boone, is much more the focus of the service. The pride, and greatest expense, of Second Baptist is the pair of three-story stained-glass windows, views of which are partially obstructed by the pseudo-Assyrian columns holding up the perimeter of the roof. The southwest window depicts the Creation (with Texas bluebonnets prominently present in Paradise) and the Fall; the northeast window is devoted to the Second Coming as described in the Revelation of John. The entry lobby for the school and offices has a triple-height, mirror-lined atrium with fountain that seems more appropriate for a hotel than a religious institution. The sports area, called the Family Life Center, just slightly edges out First Baptist with a jogging track, two basketball courts, an eight-lane bowling alley, four handball courts, an aerobics center, billiards and Ping-pong tables, a whirlpool, a sauna, a steam room, and a crafts studio. Its private grade school has 900 students and is much in demand. The Family Life Center is decorated with the same colored neon lights that one might find in discothèques. The playful naming of the Second Edition bookstore and Second Helping restaurant is reminiscent of Avis Rent-A-Car's "We're Number Two" advertising. Such obvious derivations of commercial culture give one second thoughts about whether the purpose of all this is to prepare for the Second Coming or to up the ante on First Baptist.

It is difficult to associate the architectural poverty of these churches with humility or to excuse their urbanistic omissions as by-products of spiritual detachment. Like the buildings of so many other commercial and institutional enterprises in Houston, from corporations to shopping malls, hospitals, and universities, they have obscured and neglected the public face of their mission. The members of these super churches are asked to accept the Bible with blind faith, a suspension of disbelief that might be even more advisable when considering their own buildings. ■

Lakewood Church.

Freeway Baptist Church, 149 Winkler Drive, Edward Koerber, architect, 1972.

SIGNS OF FAITH

In 1890, Louis Sullivan advised the readers of the *Chicago Tribune* that "the church spire in the city is a thing of the past." Three decades later, H. L. Mencken could write in characteristic good faith that "otherworldliness is of the very essence of ecclesiastical architecture. The moment it is lost we have the dreadful 'plants' that barbaric Baptists and Methodists erect in the Pellagra and Goitre Belts. . . . When men really begin to build churches like the Bush Terminal there will be no religion any more, but only Rotary."

Church architecture has grown discernibly less churchlike in this century. Frank Lloyd Wright, in delineating his design for the Unity Church and Parish House (Oak Park, Illinois, 1906), felt obliged to sort out its secular and templar halves with a handwritten postscript. The ambiguous office-factory rationalism of Alberto Sartoris's unbuilt Notre Dame du Phare for Fribourg, Switzerland (1931), that graces the cover of Kenneth Frampton's *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (Thames & Hudson, 1980) requires a similar parenthetical explanation: "(church and religious center)." Nor is self-revelation a predictable virtue of later modernist indulgences. The ecclesiastical correlation of Le Corbusier's great hat-roofed pilgrimage chapel at Ronchamp (1950-55) has mystified admiring observers from James Stirling ("an unnatural configuration of natural elements such as the granite rings at Stonehenge") to Stanislaus von Moos ("both more and less than a church"). The Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson's Chartres-order with plumbing, is a purposefully noncommital Alpine airplane hangar packaged *in vitreo* for evangelist Robert Schuller, though as Frances FitzGerald notes, "it melds perfectly with the prosperous glass-sheathed office buildings of Anaheim, California," while preempting Richard Neutra's comparatively mild-mannered drive-in church (1962) for the same congregation.

In Houston, new signs of faith can be divined on sheds both decorated and un. One particularly praiseworthy example, the Freeway (now Hopewell) Baptist Church, offers a completely integrated building sign, in contrast to the ad-on scrollwork of its Torah-topped soul-mate, the First Hebrew Christian Church (Los Angeles, 1905, since departed). Here the Book manages not to replace the building, as Victor Hugo had feared in *Notre Dame de Paris*, but is reborn in a neo-baroque epiphany of *architecture parlante*. More down to earth is the Lewis Baltz–like retreat from the temptations of postmodernism witnessed in the architectonic though not, despite the impression conveyed by a neighboring sign, liturgical minimalism of the Chinese Bible Church. Sparing most worldly expense, this starter church occupies a shoebox catacomb aboveground in the concrete pastures of an industrial park near the West Belt. Righteous as these are, who knows what lies beyond?

Drexel Turner

Chinese Bible Church, 9630 Clarewood, Suite A-12, Beltway Service Center.

Honor Thy Neighbor

A Zoning Starter Kit For Houston

John Mixon

Before 1916, no American city was zoned. By 1925, more than 500 cities were zoned; by 1968, more than 9,000 local governments exercised zoning powers, including 97 percent of all cities with a population greater than 5,000. Today the only major city without zoning is Houston. Although such pillars of the Houston community as J. S. Cullinan, Will C. Hogg (both developers of landmark residential enclaves), and Jesse H. Jones (the city's most accomplished investment builder of his day) favored zoning as a desirable accoutrement of rational urban growth and a safeguard for investment, zoning referenda failed the popular vote test in 1948 and again in 1962. But land-use zoning is suddenly a hot topic in Houston. What has caused the once-taboo subject to be discussed, and even approved, by developers as well as homeowners?

The most deeply rooted support for conventional zoning comes from Houston homeowners who have grown tired of offensive commercial and industrial uses intruding into residential neighborhoods. In Harrisburg and parts of the Heights, bars operating in converted residences create a late-night annoyance in otherwise quiet and attractive neighborhoods. Liquor-licensing authorities simply shrug when residents protest a location next to residential areas. They note that without zoning, the neighbors have no legal grounds for complaint about private owners' use of their own land. Throughout the city's older sections, mini-warehouses, lube shops, sexually oriented businesses, and convenience stores sprout up without regard for their devastating impact on fragile residential property. Poorly designed apartment complexes have the same effect in Montrose and Heights neighborhoods. The hardest-hit areas are residential neighborhoods that were never protected by private deed restrictions or whose restrictions have lapsed. But even deed restrictions do not always protect neighborhoods.

For years, Houstonians accepted the notion that deed restrictions precluded any need for zoning. Restrictions are certainly useful, and even essential, for protecting subdivisions outside city limits, because Texas counties have no general zoning power. Private restrictions also seem to work in the middle of large, homogeneous neighborhoods such as River Oaks and Southampton Place. But even such highly restricted areas have no protection at their fringes, as attested by the presence of raucous fraternity houses next to the exclusive residential area on South MacGregor Way and a highly visible lube shop and mini-warehouse complex at the Southampton area's northwest corner. The desirability of elite housing areas even increases the incidence of land-use problems at their fringes: office and condominium towers nestle up against them to trade on their lustre, at the same time destroying the character that makes the location valuable.

The oil boom did make it look as if unzoned Houston had found an answer in perpetual growth. Older sections seemed hardly worth saving when compared with the new buildings that were bound to replace them. Deed restrictions could not stop boom growth from invading, and even replacing, restricted neighborhoods. Much of Greenway Plaza sits on land that was residentially restricted. How, then, was it converted to office tower use? The developer simply bought the entire subdivision, at which point the restrictions became irrelevant. Restrictions are enforceable only by lot owners in the restricted subdivision; if one person owns the entire tract, no one can sue to enforce. The former owners in the purchased subdivision, of course, moved on. The "buy the subdivision" ploy was so seductive that in the early 1980s another developer lined up all the homeowners in a large section of Meyerland, and only the bursting of the city's real estate bubble kept the sale from going through. The residents of Lamar Terrace, just west of the Galleria, were not so lucky. Developers turned the subdivision into an instant slum in order to pressure recalcitrant residents to forget renewing the restrictions and sell cheap. When the bubble burst, the developers vanished; Lamar Terrace remains a slum, albeit a restricted one. Had either of these project prospered, it would have led to new commercial development sure to devalue the remaining and adjacent sections that did not sell.

Deed restrictions at their best are not very efficient. If an individual or a subdivision's civic association has to sue to prevent a violation, the legal costs can be substantial. For this reason, the West MacGregor Protective Association did not pursue legal action against the University of Houston chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity, which inhabits a house on South MacGregor designed by John F. Staub for the uncle of Secretary of State James A. Baker III. The fraternity's national organization was willing to wage a legal battle that West MacGregor could not afford. Therefore, the civic association acquiesced in the violation. Even if suit is brought, success is not at all certain. For example, if lot owners fail to sue when they first learn of the violation, the violator can claim the defense of *laches* (the plaintiff waited too long to sue). Or if the subdivision has allowed a substantial number of violations in the past, the violator can claim that conditions have so changed that the court should hold the restrictions unenforceable. The last straw for private enforcement came during 1989, when violators and offensive next-door commercial operators adopted a strategy of bringing retaliatory suits against civic association officers for interfering with their businesses. Although the suits may eventually fail, they have had an understandably chilling effect on active enforcement. The city of Houston provides some support for deed restriction enforcement through permit denial and bearing the cost of some enforcement suits, but its efforts are incomplete and erratic. Zoning, by comparison, can be enforced efficiently by municipal court citations and suits by the city to enjoin violations.

For middle-income Houstonians seeking protected residential neighborhoods, only two sure courses are presently available: move out to a new "planned and restricted community" 20 to 30 commuting miles from downtown, or buy into one of the smaller incorporated municipalities that dot parts of the Houston map. Most of these small suburban cities followed the urban trend of the past half-century and adopted conventional zoning laws. The phenomenal success of new housing development in West University Place, Southside Place, Bellaire, and the Memorial Villages now makes it clear that more inner-city dwellers than these cities can accommodate want the security that comes from reliable land-use controls.

A less visible source of support for zoning has emerged among respected members of the Houston development community, including Gerald D. Hines, Jerry J. Moore, and local officials of the Trammell Crow Company. More than community concern lies behind the endorsement of these upscale developers; they have taken note that the local stock of resplendent office buildings stands underleased, even at bargain-basement prices, while corporate tenants move to other locations with a more stable image. Lack of zoning may seldom be mentioned directly when the city's courtship fails and yet another corporate client locates in a zoned city. But the urban hodgepodge of broken neighborhoods and incongruous juxtapositions that assails the visitor riding in from the airport cannot be ignored. Spurred by visual shock and the notoriety of the city's lack of zoning, the visiting executive is bound to wonder just where the company's employees would live if the decision is made to relocate. The corporate president might be able to buy in a highly restricted area, but lower-paid managers and office workers would be forced to settle in distant subdivisions. Few would be likely to choose one of Houston's uncertain inner-city neighborhoods; the gentrification that has been so evident in other cities is largely precluded by unsightly and noisy intrusions. Who among us will take the risk of fixing up a sound house in a fragile residential neighborhood when tomorrow may produce a bar or a welding shop next door?

Even with the shortcomings of the city's unzoned condition apparent, the prospect of change was still not an acceptable Houston conversation topic in late 1989. Two office-seekers, Herman Lauhoff (who ran two years earlier for city council) and Rosie Walker (who ran in 1989 for mayor), had tried valiantly to reach concerned voters, but as minor players they were ignored by the media. Neither major candidate in 1989 had a kind word to say about zoning. The topic was clearly placed on the city's agenda only when an elected official, city councilman Jim Greenwood, started asking residential-area audiences how many favored zoning. A surprising 90 percent response convinced him that the city was ignoring an emerging groundswell of popular support for conventional land-use zoning. The show of hands confirmed what pollsters had established as early as 1982 – that at least 60 percent of Houstonians favored land-use zoning.[1] About this time, with the legislature in session, Houston state senator Gene Green offered an amendment to H.B. 3160 (which authorized creation of a municipal management district for downtown Houston) that would enable Houston to adopt a modified and limited land-use zoning system called "neighborhood zoning."

Neighborhood zoning was based on several assumptions: (1) Houston in 1989 was not ready for full-scale, comprehensive zoning; (2) even if the city were to opt for regular citywide comprehensive

Heidi Flynn

Morse at Fairview, Montrose area.

The most deeply rooted support for conventional zoning comes from Houston homeowners who have grown tired of offensive commercial and industrial uses intruding into residential neighborhoods.

zoning, the sheer task of classifying the incorporated area of almost 600 square miles would take an enormous amount of time, money, and effort by city officials, contract planners, and citizen volunteers; (3) most visible problems that lack of zoning has produced are in neighborhoods, and neighborhood residents might organize enough political power to overcome anticipated opposition from developers; (4) the success of West University Place and other incorporated municipalities could be duplicated in eager subdivisions that wanted to devise plans and regulations for themselves to keep out offensive uses; and (5) meaningful zoning could take place in areas of five square miles, even though the rest of the city was not zoned. A five-square-mile area of moderate urban density can accommodate as many as 30,000 people – more than the average zoned American city.

Neighborhood zoning as contemplated for Houston probably cannot be accomplished without legislative action because the state's zoning enabling act requires zoning to be "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." The term "comprehensive" certainly anticipates that planning will be citywide in scope, and might require that zoning be citywide as well – an interpretation that would certainly be argued in court. Even though the act authorizes small-scale "neighborhood zoning areas" in zoned cities, it does no more than provide neighborhoods with a strong advisory role when a city's zoning commission considers amending a neighborhood's particular regulations. It is not at all clear that the act's comprehensive plan requirement means that a city must zone all the land within its political boundaries. But because a court might so hold, a safer course for "neighborhood zoning" was to have a friendly state legislature specifically authorize unzoned cities such as Houston to adopt land-use regulations in designated neighborhood areas without having to zone the entire city. A five-square-mile minimum was selected because a too-small neighborhood zoning area might be declared an arbitrary and unequal exercise of governmental power, and therefore unconstitutional. Actual boundaries would have to be carefully drawn so the particular neighborhood zoning area and the entire program would pass the constitutional test of rationality. Neighborhood zoning power would not be delegated to the neighborhood zoning advisory council members, because state law requires that the legislative power of the city be exercised by duly elected officials; so the city of Houston's mayor and council would make the final decision on whether to create neighborhood zoning areas and how to plan and zone them. And, although the neighborhood council would represent the zoned neighborhood, it would similarly not have formal and final power over the planning process, for the enabling act requires that the citywide zoning commission make final recommendation of a zoning plan and ordinance to the mayor and council and review all proposed amendments. Nevertheless, the neighborhood zoning advisory council, made up of people from the neighborhood and appointed by the mayor and council, would undoubtedly influence the land-use plans and regulations that would apply in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood zoning, thus envisioned, could even have some advantages over citywide zoning in Houston. Its neighborhood focus could create and reinforce a healthy community identification for people who live in this sprawling city. While today many Houstonians feel isolated and powerless in their housing situation, a formal planning task that focused on their particular neighborhood could give local residents a sense of control over their environment; zoning regulations would give them actual power to protect their houses from mini-warehouses, chicken-packing plants, bars, and sex shops. Moreover, the planning produced by volunteer efforts of neighborhood residents might be more sensitively devised than if the city simply hired consultants to impose a land-use plan from above.

The neighborhood zoning amendment caught city officials by surprise. Wanting more time to study it, they withheld support, and the amendment died in the 1989 session. Just as news of the neighborhood zoning alternative was spreading, Councilman Greenwood proposed that Houston adopt full-scale comprehensive zoning with maximum neighborhood involvement. He formed a committee that includes members of the business and development community, representatives from the city planning commission, community representatives, lawyers, and academicians. Soon thereafter the news media discovered the zoning issue. Early this year the city planning commission held a meeting, after which a surprising number of civic leaders and real estate developers voiced support for land-use zoning in Houston.

Where this leaves neighborhood zoning is not clear. Houston appears to be at the threshold of some sort of serious zoning action. Neighborhood zoning and comprehensive zoning are not mutually exclusive, and one could argue that the city should proceed on both fronts at once. Comprehensive zoning cannot be accomplished quickly, and neighborhoods that want immediate protection would benefit from an ordinance that imposed regulations in their area more quickly. Neighborhood land-use planning would not go to waste, because local zoning efforts could easily be absorbed into a subsequent comprehensive zoning system. These considerations suggest that the two proposals are heading in the same direction, and side-by-side implementation may make sense. But there are arguments that suggest adoption of conventional comprehensive zoning instead of the local variety.

Comprehensive zoning is the proven form; any effort to adopt neighborhood zoning is sure to draw lawsuits contesting its legality. Greenwood correctly points out that neighborhoods can participate actively in land-use planning even if the city adopts the comprehensive approach. Under Greenwood's plan, the neighborhood advisory councils authorized by the existing legislation would be intimately involved in formulating a land-use map and the district regulations that apply to their neighborhoods. Further, if the city undertakes comprehensive zoning, it could implement zoning one sector, or neighborhood, at a time. The city could, for example, without amending existing legislation, adopt a time-phased comprehensive zoning program that would apply immediately in those sectors and neighborhoods where consensus prevails, while delaying implementation in areas that require more study. Regardless of the outcome, both concepts are sure to get a full discussion in the city's new era of *glasnost*.

Heidi Flynn

Indiana Street, Montrose area.

Zoning is not a cure-all for urban ills. It can't reinstate the old South End, Montrose, or the Heights as cohesive residential neighborhoods. Nor can it unscramble the city's chaotic pattern of development overall. But, even at this late date, a partial, neighborhood-based zoning initiative can offer some security for individuals and developers willing to reclaim some of the wasteland that lies between downtown and Montrose, and it can allow the still-viable residential neighborhood to ward off the threat of yet another used-car lot at its periphery. ■

Notes

1 Archie Henderson, "Land Use Controls in Houston: What Protection for Owners of Restricted Property?" *South Texas Law Review* 29 (1987), p. 143, n. 74.

Mystic Signs
A Conversation With Aldo Rossi

Carlos Jimenez

Carlos Jimenez

Over the last three decades, Aldo Rossi – theorist, builder, teacher, and this year's Pritzker Prize winner – has emerged as a preeminent figure in the intellectual and cultural development of European architecture. A simple and gentle man, he has a passion for architecture that bridges both art and profession with the rigor of reason and the melancholy of a poet. The new decade finds him building on a global circuit, crossing cultural boundaries and new thresholds of scale and complexity. The magnitude of this work has not deterred him from pursuing an architecture of constant inquiry, nor has it diminished his interest in designing small objects such as a watch, a chair, or a coffeepot. The last has become a recognizable emissary of its creator and a "miniature architecture" in itself. For Rossi, the creation of "monuments" is endemic to architecture, and their role within the city as narrators of human existence.

Since the publication in 1966 of *The Architecture of the City*, Rossi has continued to elaborate its thesis of collective memory through his architecture. As if pursued by the innumerable memories that he himself has rescued, he persistently reminds us of architecture's need to remember. Yet Rossi's remembrances remain well apart from the facile simulations that have populated recent architecture, deriving instead from a personal awareness of the significance of history and its logic. At the same time, his work reenacts the mysterious journey whereby architecture transforms absence into presence, emanating emotions and shadows.

Rossi's architecture aims to synthesize the catalogue of the city through a purist vision that dissolves into a world simultaneously traversed by reality and dreams. *Il Teatro del Mondo*, one of Rossi's most celebrated works, is a haunting example. Though an ephemeral protagonist in the life of Venice, this small floating theater evoked a mythical past along its course and so came to be fixed in the memory of the city. Another work, the Ossuary at the Modena cemetery, is both monument and meeting place, a repository of revolving memories. Its unrelenting, perforated cubical mass is internally transformed by mementoes of both the living and the dead. These two works affirm the eventuality of rituals and the power to astonish in architecture. Rossi's forms and spaces spring afresh from memory, "fearful with mystic signs, like actors in an ancient play."[1]

CJ Your path in architecture has had "a degree of unforeseeability"; yet in retrospect it has followed an almost natural progression since the publication of *The Architecture of the City* in 1966.

AR There is certainly some truth in this. When I was a child, I remember, I had some kind of plan for the development of my studies. Then when my university career began I came to realize that the most important thing was culture, and the need to study the history of architecture in order to become an architect. And, of course, to write. I didn't care that for some years I was told I was a writer, that I wasn't an architect, that I wasn't this or that. I developed an interest in the academic culture and its possibilities for discussion with other people and for personal discovery. I guess I could have built or done something else; I did not. I wrote. This period in my life coincides with *The Architecture of the City*, which I wrote when I was about 28 and published four years later. This book is like the closure of a whole world of study on a single problem: the search for the city. After this period comes my experience at Casabella, my teaching at Milan and Zurich, the many trips to foreign cultures, and my American experience. When I was about 50 years old my *Scientific Autobiography* was published, as closure once again to another period of my life. Then, to be an architect. I think some of it is also "*la forza del destino*," which is very strong; but one can change it, give it a turn.

CJ A decade ago your work was primarily in Italy and consisted of but few buildings. Today you have projects in the United States, Japan, Germany, and France. How has this surge of activity affected your research and working relationships?

AR In between I was also working in large international competitions; these were very important to me. Now my work is divided into my Italian projects and international projects. I am currently working on two large projects in Milan: the Congress Palace (an exhibition complex) and the Sports Palace, which will accommodate 25,000 to 30,000 people – it's enormous. I have quite a lot of work in Japan, and as of a few days ago, some in England – Canary Wharf, I believe. I have never worked in England before.

In Germany I am working on a museum that came about as a competition for German architects primarily, and about 220 eventually participated. But five foreign architects were also invited: Stirling, Venturi I think, and two others. I won first prize, a very happy occasion for me, though a puzzle to German journalists, who thought that a museum of German history should be done by a German architect. This is not an art museum; it is a museum of German history. In Berlin I have built some housing for the I.B.A. [International Building Exposition]. I have a project in Spain – a market in Barcelona. It is very difficult, this work in many countries, and it leaves me physically exhausted at times.

It also changes the vision of things. I remember when I built my first project, the Gallaratese quarter in Milan; I did it as if I had done a hundred of them. The engineers used to tell me, "One cannot work with young architects; they worry too much about this or that." The strength of architecture must be independent of its realization. At the same time, I think I have a stronger experience with architecture now, and a certain ease about it too. And, of course, I have a very good group of collaborators. I can work in Japan because I have a fantastic studio of young Japanese architects who support me all the time: in the United States, Morris Adjmi; in Italy, longtime colleagues.

CJ In writings and discussions of your work, you often make reference to personal and collective "fragments." How do you define "fragments," and how do they figure in your thinking?

AR I don't know if you have seen it, but I have done a drawing titled "Fragments" for an American art magazine [*Artforum*, May 1987]. In this drawing I tried to convey the fact that it is not possible to have a global vision since we only understand parts, pieces of culture, parts of cities. "Fragments" is like a midway point between a kind of theological vision and the urban realities of our cities. I believe that today we live in a world that cannot be repaired, a world of psychological and human fragments. This is something very modern and at the same time very ancient.

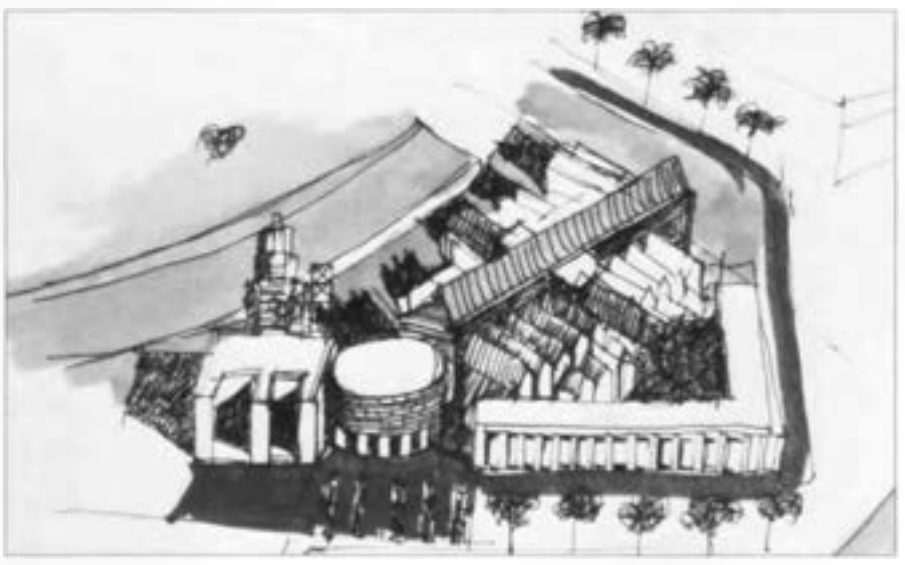
"Fragments" is also a reflection of my journeys, like questions one finds in a distant land. I am here talking with you, you are my friend, I feel fine, but three years have passed since I last saw you. These are also fragments. They have meaning because we are able to connect them. I always say that our true invention as architects is to determine how to con-

Antonio Martinelli

Interior of theater, Casa Aurora (GFT Headquarters), Turin, Italy, Aldo Rossi with Luigi Uva, Gianni Braghieri, Franco Marchesotti, and Max Scheurer, architects, 1984-87.

Antonio Martinelli

Funerary chapel, Giussano, Italy, Aldo Rossi with Chris Stead, architects, 1980-87.



Far left: Hotel Il Palazzo, Fukuoka, Japan, Aldo Rossi with Morris Adjmi, architects, 1987-90. Drawing by Aldo Rossi, 1987.

Left: German Historical Museum, Berlin (project), Aldo Rossi, architect, 1987-89. Drawing by Aldo Rossi, 1988.

nect all these fragments together. In my *Scientific Autobiography* I mention that I like museums of natural history, where you can see the reconstruction of extinct animals. Each bone, a fragment without significance, is reconstructed into the significance of form. There is no precise method of composing these fragments in any other way; it is futile to attempt otherwise.

Fragments are also like quotations. If one makes an Ionic capital it is just an Ionic capital, but if one makes a fragment of an Ionic capital one enunciates another reality. For instance, I recently completed a funerary chapel and tomb in Giussano. On its south elevation there is a cornice that has been broken into pieces to create a symbol of life interrupted by death, and of life itself as a fragment. Secondly, it is a fragment that also represents the impossibility of returning to a classical vision.

CJ The Casa Aurora office building in Turin, one of your latest buildings, is a very satisfying work. It merges both traditional and modern elements to create a significant "collective" presence in this industrial city, with a complexity and richness that set it apart from much of your previous work.

AR First, if one talks of, for instance, the Galaratese project or the school at Broni, one must know that in Italy – as is the case in most of Europe – when one builds for a municipal government or the state, there is no money but always a series of political difficulties. These facts become important determinants for such projects. But in the Casa Aurora I was able to do anything I wanted. My client, a financial group that manages labels such as Armani, Valentino, and others, gave me full freedom from the beginning. For example, the three towers that demarcate the building were totally closed in my initial sketches. But the engineers and administrators kept saying to me, "Of course, you can do anything you want – but windows, windows on the towers." Well, one day the president of the company, a very intelligent and religious man, visited my house, and there he saw both my early sketches and some new ones with windows on the towers. Then he said to me, "I like these towers without windows, the force of blank towers; please, no windows on them."

In terms of its construction, this building is perfectly crafted. There are not that many details but more my particular love of detail, and a mental complexity about them. For instance, there is a strange quotation, a cornice by Bramante inserted between the stone and the brick. It is so subtly executed that few seem to have noticed it. There are other quotations incorporated as well, like the grand arcades that are found in downtown Turin. This building is, foremost, *of* Turin; it coincides with the city's industrial and ancestral history.

CJ Lately you have been working on a waterfront hotel and restaurant complex in Fukuoka, Japan; here you seem to have made an effort to cross boundaries and establish a set of reciprocal relations between your own culture and the Japanese ethos.

AR The project has been full of intense moments. Now that is finished and I have more work there, I am beginning, gradually, to understand the uniqueness of the Japanese. Anything that one can get to know in Japan is magnificent; I particularly like the old houses. My clients would say to me, "It is important that there are many hotels along the canal, but it is more important that we build the monument of all hotels; we must therefore have the best stone and marble." The main façade is composed of large steel lintels and red Persian travertine cladding. It shimmers amid the canal's landscape. The Japanese loved the idea of the monument (a very Italian notion in itself). For them a monument is both a spiritual and material refuge.

CJ Though they are different in location and scale, there seems to be a similarity as intimate monuments between your project in Venice, *Il Teatro del Mondo*, and the Galveston arch. How do you view the arch in relation to Galveston and its history?

AR In Galveston, I was concerned with the idea of Texas independent of Galveston: the Texas of films like *Giant*, and its seemingly endless landscape. As a city gate, the arch stands between the vastness of the ocean and the landscape beyond. Then there is also the idea of the main street and its linear theater of people passing and gathering; the arch was intended to incorporate viewing stands from which to watch this theater revolve. Galveston itself is like a theater to me. Once it was a rich city by the sea. The lighthouses are like obelisks, a memory of a former city, the memory of the sea.

CJ Your design for the School of Architecture at Miami University presents a very strong identity. It suggests a campus within a campus.

AR The project offers an opportunity to indirectly educate its inhabitants through architecture itself. I was influenced by Jefferson and his "academic village" as a symbol of how two cultures, in this case the European and American, encountered each other. With this in mind, I thought of this school as a place where three cultures could encounter each other: the European, the Anglo-Saxon, and the Latin, as most of the students are Latin or of Latin descent. I have been told that Miami views itself as the Venice of the Americas, an authentic fantasy perhaps. I looked for this Venice but I only saw the palm trees.

CJ Drawings play an important role in your architecture, presaging feelings that the architecture will eventually render within the city of your imagination. How do you distinguish between your drawings and your architecture?

AR I make a distinction between two kinds of drawings. There are drawings that are like the generative nucleus of architecture; they are also the most beautiful ones. They could be a sketch or no more than a line. Even when a drawing is just a line, it must have its formal autonomy. If the drawing is bad, it always will be bad. Then there are drawings I do as a means to study my new and former buildings in relation to each other. There is a phrase by, I believe, Cervantes that goes, "If you want to find something new you must do the same things"; one must always do the same things in order to find the new. At times I love to draw for the pleasure of drawing. Unfortunately, I don't have much time to do this now. There is that precious moment when one draws, unique and different, like the experience of life itself.

CJ Often when your work is discussed or written about, certain painters like de Chirico and Morandi come to mind. The affinities are there – the dialogue of light and shadow, the pure rendition of volumes, the mysterious shadow of a moment in a particular space or time. Are there filmmakers with whom you share certain affinities as well?

AR I think that there is an equivocal relationship that most critics find between my work and de Chirico. Certainly there is a de Chirico–like element in my drawings, but I always find it strange that critics fixated on an immediate association with de Chirico. Because the truth is that my great influence and love is with Sironi and with Morandi. In fact, what Morandi does with his precise bottles and still lifes is part of what I aim to do in my architecture. I love the world of Sironi, his urban landscapes, the large black chimneys against white skies. His work is most important to me. Curiously, when some critics accuse me of fascism, this comes not because of de Chirico but from Sironi.

In terms of film and my work, the analogies are more between certain films and their specific landscapes; Visconti's *Obsession* is an example. I don't know if you know this, but my early interests were in film, and its influence on my perception is not a direct one but a very profound one. Filmmakers – I like them all. Now for certain aspects of surrealism, Buñuel is to me the great master. For the translation of Italian life into cinema with a different type of surrealism, I would say Fellini. I like the Italy of Passolini and the way his films inhabit and depict the suburbs. There are so many new ones today, films and filmmakers. I believe the cinema at this moment does not have a particular felicity.

CJ As lecturer, teacher, and now practitioner, you have been in contact with the American architectural scene for some years. What are your thoughts regarding the current state of architecture in this country?

AR There is a strength in the United States that comes from its vastness, which in turn creates a much stronger force of contradictions than is found in Europe. So it is difficult to have a comprehensive opinion about the state of architecture in this country. I can tell more through the students. American students are much more open than European students. It is always interesting to teach here; in Europe students already know everything beforehand.

I am often asked what I think of the American city, and I have to ask myself, What is an American city? New York – a magnificent city that reaches toward Europe? Los Angeles – a whole new city? I believe that if there is an American city, its future is here, in cities such as Houston or those in southern California – a city articulated in a different manner, where the nonsensical polemics of modern and postmodern are not important. What is important in these cities is the creation of their "monuments," their points of reference – the force of destiny once again. ■

Notes

1 Arthur Rimbaud, "Le Bateau Ivre."

Maritime arch, Galveston (1987-90) with tower and acropolis for the School of Architecture, University of Miami (1986-), Aldo Rossi with Morris Adjmi, architects. Drawing by Aldo Rossi, 1987. The maritime arch, erected for Mardi Gras 1990, can be seen on the Strand at 25th Street in Galveston.

Mr. Brown Keeps His Dreamhouse

No one ever accused Lou Kahn of encouraging his clients to think small. His project for Rice University (1969) yielded an arts and architecture building nearly 1,000 feet long, its awesomeness overshadowed only by his proposal to invest the adjoining acreage with a performing arts center that would have sufficed for a small city.[1] As Marshall Meyers, his project architect for both the Yale Center for British Art (1969-77) and the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth (1966-72), recalled: "Many times he designed a building that was too big. Yale was too big. He didn't think about size. His very first design for the Kimbell was six hundred feet on a side, and the director, Richard Brown, started comparing it to the scale of the Grand Canyon. It occupied almost three-quarters of the site."[2] So it is not without a touch of irony that many of Kahn's admirers were moved to protest the recently proposed but since abandoned project for the expansion of the Kimbell prepared by Mitchell Giurgola Associates, acting on the instructions of Edmund Pillsbury. As director of the Kimbell since 1980 and a previous tenant of Kahn's while director of the Yale Center for British Art (1976-80), and before that curator at the Yale University Art Gallery (1972-76), Pillsbury, no less than Romaldo Giurgola, realized the delicacy of the situation and sought to preserve the integrity of Kahn's landmark.

No one can know what Kahn himself would have wished, though this scarcely inhibited speculation. Giurgola asserted that his proposed wings followed Kahn's all-but-expressed intentions for just such a contingency.[3] But Giurgola's set-back enfilade of Kahn-like vaults, held apart from the flanks of the original by "unseamly" circulation notches, dispelled the three-bay tautness of the original, producing a five-bay-plus front that Paul Goldberger characterized as "stretch limousine architecture."[4] The more prudent and conservative course, that of leaving well enough alone, was reached only after a winter of vocal discontent. As it so happened, the public laundering of the Kimbell's new clothes also mirrored the attitude of the Kimbell's first director and client of record, Richard Brown, conveyed in a letter of July 1967 reacting to the size and scale of Kahn's initial designs. It is reproduced here along with a diagram Brown prepared in November 1968 that compared the 450-foot-long front of Kahn's scheme of the moment with the 600-foot length of Eero Saarinen's Dulles Airport.[5] The diagram was signed "Richard the Chicken Hearted." Ultimately, Kahn was persuaded to take less for an answer. The front of the Kimbell as built measures 318 feet, which Giurgola's expansion would have increased to a Dulles-like 558 feet.

Brown's fear of flying at the Kimbell was by most accounts influenced by his appreciation of the congenial surroundings of the Frick Collection, where he began his professional career as a researcher. According to Meyers: "He wanted the building to be like a large house, like a villa he would say, not like the Louvre, not a palace. He had worked many years earlier at the Frick in New York and that was his model: neither residential in scale nor palatial, but somewhere in between. You should feel the presence of the building but not be overwhelmed by it. He reiterated this many times and made it sink in."[6] As director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1961-65), Brown had been frustrated in his attempt to secure Mies van der Rohe as architect of its new building on Wilshire Boulevard. But for the Kimbell, he felt that Mies was unlikely to alter his own canonically determined procedure to accommodate "a totally new situation with a different climate and light."[7] Brown had also come to view Louis Kahn as "the architect whose style is germinal to the second half of the twentieth century, just as Mies was the best architect of the first half."[8] Although other architects were considered, he succeeded in awarding the commission to Kahn, who he believed "would approach the problem like Adam"[9] and whose neo-Roman tendencies were not inconsistent with Velma Kimbell's expressed hope that the building would be "of classical design."[10]

Kahn's "noble palazzo," as Brown later called it,[11] was intended to conform to the director's requirement that it be "a building of such an organic integrity [that it] cannot be built in stages, with allowances and adjustments being made for future wings, extensions or added floor levels. The form of the building should be so complete in its beauty that additions would spoil that form; and all of the requisite functional facilities should be articulated as components of that form so that, from the outset, the museum will be able to operate as a complete and vital institution."[12] Brown's active and intelligent collaboration in the actual design of the Kimbell is again confirmed in Meyers's recollections, though Brown, speaking for the record, was always solicitous of Kahn's authorship. The definitive, almost hermetic, ideal Brown prescribed is not above question, and indeed Kahn would have been entitled and perhaps even disposed to reconsider the finality of their mutual arrangement some 20 years later. But in his absence, Brown remains a persuasive and cautionary critic. As Kahn himself reflected in private conversation several months before he died: "Much must be given to Rick Brown."[13] And so it has.

Drexel Turner

Notes

1 Stephen Fox, *The General Plan of the William M Rice Institute and Its Architectural Development*, Architecture at Rice no. 28 (1980), pp. 80-82.
2 "Louis I. Kahn: Yale Center for British Art," in *Processes in Architecture: A Documentation of Six Examples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Hayden Gallery, MIT, 1979), p. 37.
3 Kimbell Art Museum, news release, 25 July 1989, p. 4: "'It was almost as if Kahn had left "design intent" instructions for how the Museum could be expanded at some later date.'"
4 Paul Goldberger, *New York Times*, 24 December 1989, 2:33.
5 Brown to Kahn, 12 July 1967 and 5 November 1968, Correspondence, Dr. R. Brown, March 1966 through December 1970, Box LIK 37, Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. These were brought to my attention by Patrick Peters, assistant professor at the University of Houston College of Architecture. Brown's correspondence is also noted in Patricia C. Loud, *The Art Museums of Louis I. Kahn* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), pp. 111-13, 131, 162, 164.
6 "Louis I. Kahn: Conception and Meaning," *Architecture and Urbanism*, extra ed., November 1983, p. 225.
7 "Interview with Richard F. Brown," *Art in America*, September/October 1972, p. 44.
8 Peter Plagens, "Louis Kahn's New Museum in Fort Worth," *Artforum*, February 1968, p. 19.
9 "Interview with Richard F. Brown," p. 44.
10 Leonard Sanders, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 9 November 1964.
11 Brown to Kahn, 15 March 1971, Kahn Collection (see note 5 above).
12 Richard F. Brown, "Kimbell Art Museum: Pre-Architectural Program, 1 June 1966," in Richard Saul Wurman, ed., *In Pursuit of Quality: The Kimbell Art Museum* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), p. 319.
13 Louis I. Kahn in conversation with Richard Saul Wurman, October 1973, in *What Will Be Has Always Been: The Words of Louis Kahn* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), p. 236.

The Kimbell Art Foundation, Fort Worth Texas

Suite 400, Fort Worth Club Building
July 12, 1967

JUL 13 1967

Mr. Louis I. Kahn
1301 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Lou:

After perhaps too much simmering on the museum plans, and after innumerable discussions from time to time with Board members, singly or in groups, and after deliberate "meetings" of my steamrings with other staff members, and after trying to find some concise way of setting down in brief outline form the results of my simmerings, I find that I can only simply sit down and write a letter and hope the thoughts make sense and come out in some kind of order.

First, nobody wants to push or rush anything, but I have noted an increasing uneasiness on the part of important Board members about not seeing any progress. I have convinced them that things will be infinitely better in the long run if, at this stage, we keep everything as flexible and as wide open as possible so that more thought can be applied to topics before we are committed to crystallization which might not be ideal. This they buy, in fact, but I don't want to reach a point where we might lose their full confidence. Knowing how all responsible people operate when they must be responsible as a group, I want to avoid a point where everyone and his grandmother begins to suggest solutions themselves when they don't have the requisite background to solve the problems confronted.

Second, I think it is still perfectly true to say that the basic principle of design and conception of the building, as presented to her, is wholly and completely liked. More than that, it is found exciting and in absolute harmony with what we are envisioning, and how we expect to function in it. In other words, we are "A-O.K."

The only aspect of the conception to which the word "apprehensive" might be applied is the SIZE! Four-hundred feet square is a hell of a big square, and it might seem, in the setting, the city, and in relation to neighboring institutions, etc., just plain overwhelming. Within that big square you wind up with an awful

Telephone [redacted] Area Code Number
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The Kimbell Art Foundation
Mr. Louis I. Kahn — July 12, 1967 — Page 2

lot of cubic space that must be heated, air-conditioned, illuminated, etc., and acres of floor and wall surface that must be cleaned, waxed, mopped, resurfaced upon occasion, etc., etc.; all of which costs money and labor to do, and I want as much money as possible saved from maintenance so I can buy more and more art as the years roll by, not just keep up the house. And I want the labor primarily applied to putting the museum's program on.

Related to the size question is the trickier one of SCALE. (I don't know whether other people separate size and scale, or whether anyone will know what I mean by doing so, but I will try to elucidate.) The Grand Canyon is vast and its scale is eagerly right because its most effective nature is to be awesomely huge; size and scale are a balance, a harmony, for desired effect. The Rococo church of Wies is tiny because it sits in a little valley where nature is "manicured" down to the point where it is the well clipped and cultivated details that count, because the magical and religious feeling when it was built was one in which the subtle small refinements were what communicated; and because everything on it and in it was carved, painted or molded so that delicacy of detail is a primary means of achieving aesthetic integrity -- a completeness and a unity of a feeling. (I can see now that I should have used High Renaissance and Baroque St. Peter's instead of the Grand Canyon. Oh, well!) The Grand Canyon or St. Peter's are meant to be awe-full, whereas the ravishing saints and pink-tailed cherubim in Wies were supposed to make that gothic and country old Bavarian, while sneaking through Sunday service, feel so secure and intimate with God and the universe as does a warm bath behind a door bolted against any possible intrusion. The average size picture on the walls of the KAM will be about 2 1/2 feet in one direction and 3 or 4 feet in the other. Some of them (e.g. 14th or 15th century Italian panels) are all of 12 inches in the largest dimension. In addition, most of the best pictures out of the original private collection made by the Kimbells are very "genteel", "polite" representations of fair ladies, tender little children and singularly pure young men. And people today (i.e., the museum visitor) are generally only about 5 1/2 feet high, and they have a tropism for intimacy of space rather than magnificence.

All that to say that I'm worried about how a little old lady from Abilene is going to feel looking at our 15 inch Giovanni di Paolo on a wall 15 feet vertical, with a vault above that which goes up to 30 feet.

To really get in between the bull's horns, I now want to say that we need every inch of square footage of floor space currently allocatable to galleries, auditorium, offices, etc. (Dilemma!)

But, how about this? If the vertical gallery walls are reduced to 12 feet, proportion and scale of the other dimensions must shrink too, no? This could make scale more directed to the lady from Abilene and Giovanni di Paolo. Then, to reduce size and cubic space, without reducing square footage of those spaces where we need it most for our function: 1. reduce sizes of large enclosed courtyards a bit, 2. shove a lot more into the ground level west of the parking space, putting offices, library, etc., etc. around the larger courtyard at lower level, 3. reduce the width of the central

The Kimbell Art Foundation
Mr. Louis I. Kahn — July 12, 1967 — Page 3

circulation artery, the "galleria", considerably. (My latter feature has been worrying me considerably, it sure is "imperial" as it stands now: 60 x 400 feet! Whew!!!! It would give a first impression, to anyone entering the museum from either direction, the feeling of a pretty empty museum. Finding the kinds of art objects that could go into a space like that is pretty nigh impossible these days, since Pergamon Altars as Sister Gates are not coming out anymore. The idea of this space, its location, the way it would function, etc. I still love; but I'm scared by the size and the scale.

All of the above has to do also with style. We want the direct, simple, pure shell of structural validity and integrity, which is inherently there already. But somehow we also must achieve the warmth and charm I spoke of in the program. We can't do it with painted balusters, Victorian plaster and paint, Byzantine tile or Gothic superfrills. The size-scale question, if adjusted successfully, will help. Then materials and their treatment: color and texture. Most of the objects on exhibit in the building will be of the kind that look just great in an 18th century French chateau of subtle sophisticated elegance and richness; we can't do that! But, within the integrity of this building the same feeling should prevail.

Further thought about the "one floor level" mania of mine: Shifts in level would be just fine if they occur between gallery floor and a courtyard or light well or exterior façade. But I still hold to the principle that the floor of the main level, inside, and where the gallery circulation is, must be without a single step, rise, drop, down, threshold, bump or gimmick.

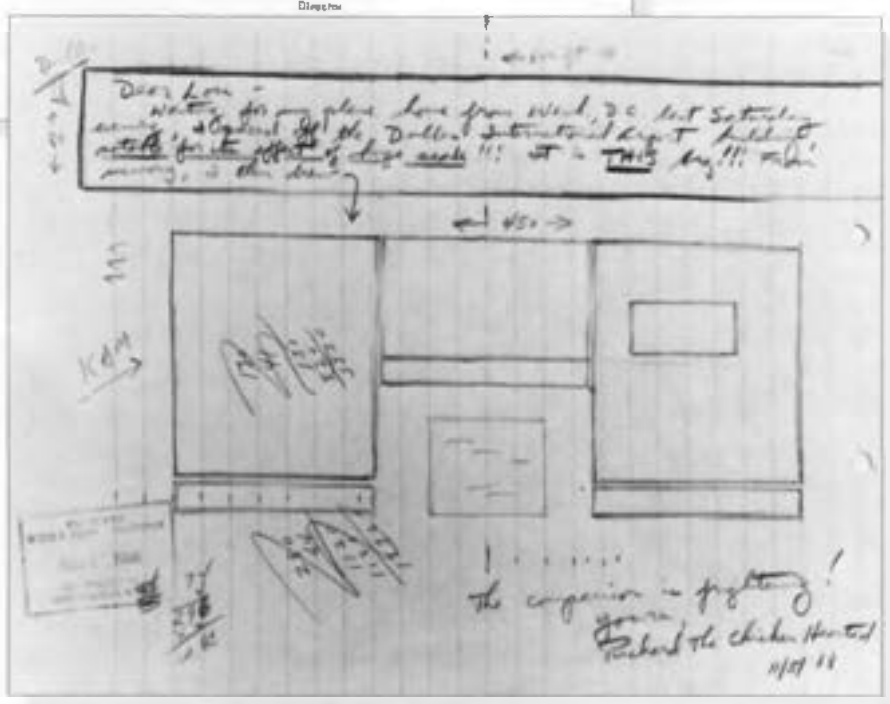
As the narrow strip skylight and the long utility core beneath: this is still a brilliant solution if we can find the right shape for the cores and the right relationship to the vault so that it helps the effects I've been talking about above. Do you really think we should do a scale mock-up? Ugh! But maybe we would have to in order to know.

I have lots of other ideas, but the above questions, I think, should get solved first. Then maybe things which, if brought up now, would muddy the waters, afterward might easily fall into place.

All best regards, and let me know when we can get together for a real big powwow and start really rolling.

Sincerely,

Richard F. Brown
Director

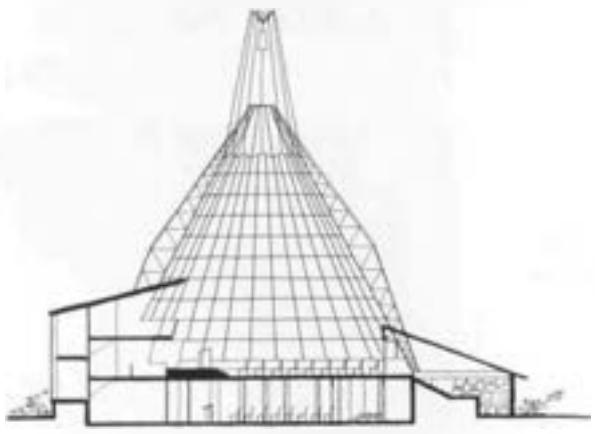


Far left: Richard F. Brown with model of penultimate design for the Kimbell Art Museum, October-November 1968.

Left: Richard F. Brown to Louis I. Kahn, 12 July 1967.

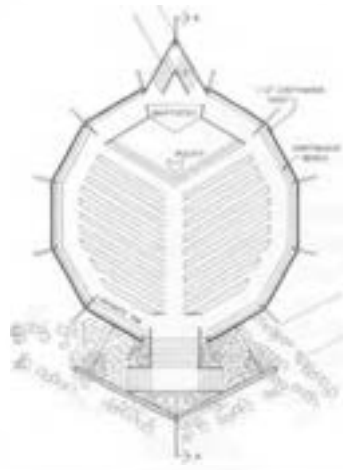
Below: Richard F. Brown to Louis I. Kahn, 5 November 1968.

Photographs courtesy Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

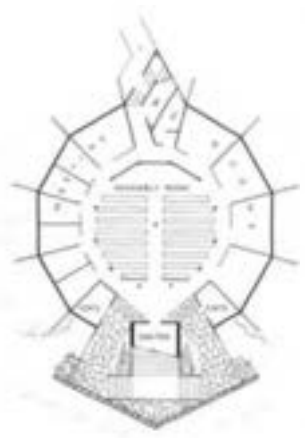


Architectural Forum 101 (December 1954)

Hopewell Baptist Church: section, first floor plan, and basement plan.



First floor plan.



Basement plan.

Pipe Dream

Bruce Goff's Ad Hoc Oil-Patch Tepee Church

In Edmond, Oklahoma, the Hopewell Baptist Church (1948-50), one of Bruce Goff's few church designs to be built, has fallen on hard times and faces an uncertain future. The church, which dispensed with its Baptist affiliation several years ago, is nondenominational now and goes by the generic name of the Church at Edmond, cross referenced as the West Edmond Fellowship. But it continues to be known locally as the Tepee, an appellation deriving from its distinctive conical profile, which resembles an Indian wigwam.

Goff intended the church's form to recall Oklahoma's Native American culture, an evocation of history deftly married to the imagery of the West Edmond oilfields by his characteristically inventive use of found materials. He was teaching at the University of Oklahoma in Norman when he was approached in 1947 by a group of Edmond oilfield workers for advice in building a church. They had little money but plenty of donated oil pipe, and some were skilled at welding. So Goff produced a design simple enough for the members, who scoured the region for additional materials, to build themselves. As his longtime associate Bart Prince observes: "Goff was interested in giving them something that had a sense of aspiration to it."

The church rises from a dodecagonal (12-sided) base to a height of 80 feet at the tip of its bell tower. Its primary connection to the surrounding oilfield is found in its 12 ribs – exposed exterior trusses constructed of welded sections of thick, round drill stem infilled with a lighter network of thin line pipe – named for the 12 apostles. Goff also used the corrugated metal siding common on oilfield shacks both inside and out. The improvisation carried over into light fixtures fashioned from fluted aluminum cake pans.[1]

Merrill Blair helped build the church and still lives nearby. He worked then as a farmer, and recalls that the congregation was made up of oilfield workers and farmers who spent long hours at the end of their regular workdays to build the new church. Their wives brought meals in the evenings. He labored as a welder's helper: "I'd carry pipe up to them and hold it. You can't see but ten percent of the welding that's in it. That thing is built like a bird cage in between the finish walls and the roof deck." The local stone used for the foundation and entrance was quarried near Calumet by the congregation, as Blair relates: "We went out there with bars and pigs and what have you, and we broke those rocks out by hand and we hauled them ourselves, brought them into the church and laid them."

The church received widespread notice upon completion in 1950, not only for its novel appearance, but also for its extraordinarily low cost of about $20,000. It was published in *Architectural Forum*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Aluminum Bulletin*, the *Daily Oklahoman*, and as far away as the *Chicago Sun-Times*.[2] Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver later illustrated it as part of an appreciation of Goff's method in their book, *Adhocism*.[3] Yet its gestation was not without controversy. Reverend John Ward, who has served as pastor for the last 11 years and whose father and grandfather were both deacons of the church, attests: "I understand from my grandpa that [the design] nearly split the church. That shape of building – you didn't see that kind of church in those days, especially in rural Oklahoma. But it's very definitely a landmark. I think that if [after] people go to work, we took that thing down, they wouldn't know how to find their way home."

Today the tepee church is altered. The original shingles were rust red, tying the conical form to the Oklahoma soil as if it were a great mound of earth. The supports were painted silver, which must have given the structure a much lighter appearance. Now the color scheme is reversed: the oil-pipe trusses are painted dark red and stand in stark relief against the sky, and light gray shingles cover the exterior. Much of the corrugated metal siding has been painted, and portions of the interior have been covered by flimsy wood paneling. The original wood siding on the interior remains, its surface sandblasted to emphasize the grain. Goff referred to this as "etching wood," a technique he first employed during World War II when he remodeled an officers' club in Dutch Harbor.[4] Now many of the panels are buckled and rotted by moisture. Evidence of termites and rodents is apparent, and several dead birds were scattered on the floor of the sanctuary when I visited. The original oil-pipe pews and the hanging light fixtures made with cake pans have disappeared. But the soaring, skylit volume of the interior still impresses.

The church's survival is far from assured. A recent story in the *Sunday Oklahoman* suggested that the building was in imminent danger of demolition.[5] Ironically, the discovery that asbestos insulation had been sprayed throughout the interior in the 1970s has forced a temporary stay of execution, since it precludes casual and inexpensive demolition. But the church's hold on the congregation is clearly waning, partly because of compromises that resulted from the limitations of its original modest budget, compounded over the past five years by a reluctance to invest in necessary maintenance.

Insulation inside the church was originally limited to Styrofoam blocks embedded in

Barbara Koerble

The tepee church today with new sanctuary at right.

Philip Welch

Entry front shortly after completion, 1950.

Philip Welch

Interior, 1950.

Barbara Koerble

the walls, later augmented with asbestos. The church was equipped with a gas-fueled heating system; gas was so plentiful in the 1940s that the church got it for free. The funnellike interior, while splendidly dramatic, hardly fosters energy efficiency: any heat introduced through the forced-air system simply rises to the top of the 50-foot nave. Heating and cooling costs have consequently exhibited a skyward tendency of their own. David De Long of the University of Pennsylvania, who prepared the catalogue raisonné of Goff's work, also cites as problematic the somewhat crude construction by untrained, mostly unsupervised workers, and unresolved details induced by the complicated geometry.[6] Nearby development and road improvements changed drainage patterns, which led to flooding from rainwater runoff once the original doors with their seals were replaced. Only recently has the site been regraded in an effort to control the problem – a particularly nettlesome one during the summer of 1989, when the church flooded four times.

The last straw was the failure of the church's air-conditioning condenser unit, which prompted the congregation to abandon Goff's church last August for a still unfinished metal building next to it. This multipurpose prefabricated gymnasium, built at a cost of $100,000 thus far, serves as a facility for worship, a nursery school, meals, and recreation. But the Vitruvian root of the congregation's disaffection is perhaps more a matter of delight than of firmness or commodity. Merrill Blair recalls that from time to time in the early days the church would leak, "but we always repaired it, that was something that could be handled." In his view, much of the collective memory of the tepee was lost in 1973, when the congregation splintered over "personality conflicts." Five of the six church deacons, including himself and nearly 50 other members, left the church. Those who left were those who had built it, "the ones who loved it," he says.

Barbara Koerble

Detail of outside-mounted cake-pan light.

Today, since the West Edmond oilfields have played out, the oil riggers who built the tepee church have mostly moved on. Other early members of the congregation have grown old or passed away. One of them, Lila Stennett, died just last year in her seventies. A pillow she sat on, embroidered with her name, still lies in one of the wooden pews, left behind when the congregation abandoned the church. The memories of the church builders have no place in the new meeting hall next door, filled with young, bustling couples and their children.

As John Ward acknowledges, "Probably the sentiment [to save the church] is coming more from the community than anywhere else, because it is a landmark." He estimates that 95 percent of his young congregation is new to the church and has no attachment to the teepee. Even so, he maintains that "nobody is really bent on tearing the thing down, but the frustration of having to deal with the problems with it was what was getting to everybody. One of our interests in the thing is just to get the tepee on the outside looking well so that it doesn't just destroy the looks of everything else around here." Others are less tolerant. Beulah Strickland, a parishioner who describes how she was healed in the church in 1985 of a compressed fracture of the spine, says: "It'd take several small fortunes to fix it. I'm one of those people who see no sense in throwing good money after bad. I know it's history and all that, but if somebody would just take it off that would be wonderful. Maybe some nice tornado [will come] and just lift it off."

At least one promising development for saving the church is the involvement of Oklahoma City architect Gary McCowan, who has experience with restoration projects, including Frank Lloyd Wright's Millard House in Pasadena and Inness House in Los Angeles. McCowan was also the local associate for two of Goff's unbuilt houses in North Carolina, and he worked in Bart Prince's office on the construction drawings for Goff's Joe Price Pavilion at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. McCowan has offered to donate his time to prepare drawings of the church in its present state so that accurate cost estimates for repairs and asbestos removal or encapsulation can be obtained, a first step in seeking matching restoration funds from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. But McCowan's offer has yet to spark the congregation's enthusiasm, and he admits, "It's very hard to pursue a project if you feel the people you are trying to pursue it for are not really interested in it anyway."[7] As a matter of immediate priority, McCowan has recommended basic measures to stabilize the exterior and control flooding.

The church's plight also has come to the attention of the Friends of Kebyar – an international organization of Goff aficionados – who, according to Jean Eckenfels, editor of its newsletter, would be disposed to serve as an umbrella organization for fundraising purposes. Among preservationists, few would disagree that the church is worth saving and that time is running out. In the opinion of David De Long: "Hopewell Baptist is a very important record of how Goff approached the design of churches. It's also an important record of how he was able, for practically no money, to design a building that could be handmade by the local people and that would be a symbol for them. I think it is of strong sociological and historic importance." With a little help, it might yet be remade by hand. ■

Notes

1 "Drill Pipe, Faith and Hard Work." *Architectural Forum* 101 (December 1954), pp. 122-23.
2 See the bibliography in David G. De Long, *Bruce Goff: Toward Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1988). The tepee church is illustrated and discussed on pp. 98-99.
3 Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver, *Adhocism* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), p. 86.
4 Ibid., p. 85.
5 Mary Jo Nelson, "Days Numbered for 'Wigwam,'" *Sunday Oklahoman*, 8 October 1989, pp. 1, 2.
6 De Long, p. 99.
7 McCowan and I met with John Ward at the church in Edmond on April 8, 1990.

I thank Dennis Stacy of Dallas for calling my attention to the plight of the tepee church.

Recent Arrival

International Airlines Building, IAH

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Detail of side elevation, International Airlines Building, Mario Bolullo with Harry Golemon Architects, 1987-90.

The architecture of Texas airports is about as memorable as the experience of flying today's Greyhounds of the sky. Compared to the train stations of a former era, most airports are curiously anonymous points of arrival and departure, more like overgrown bus stations than civic gateways, with the exception of Eero Saarinen's terminals at John F. Kennedy and Dulles International airports. The new International Airlines Building at Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH), which opens in May, is a modest effort at self-improvement. Viewed as an excursion in international regionalism, its vast front awning recalls the like-minded visor of the Stazione Termini in Rome (Montuori and Calini, 1947). At IAH, the wall-to-wall snap-brim awning prefaces a generic series of white-enamel-clad, appliance-like concourses and lobbies that depart from, and lighten up, the prevailing architectural scheme of the airport. Designed by Mario Bolullo with Harry Golemon Architects (in a joint venture with the office of Pierce Goodwin Alexander & Linville and in association with James L. Marshall Associates and Molina and Associates, Inc.), the new arrival is a somewhat restrained extrapolation of the similarly applianceIike demeanor of Bolullo's George R. Brown Convention Center (*Cite*, Spring-Summer 1988, p. 6).

The 440,000-square-foot terminal represents both an increase in the number of international gates at IAH (from 8 to 12) and a complete consolidation and upgrading of the Federal Inspection Services facilities that monitor them. The building is located at the far eastern end of the ABC enfilade of previous terminals and is, in fact, attached directly to Terminal C, with a connector that also houses three gates. As an addition to Terminal C, the new building is sited in a way that breaks somewhat with the master plan for the airport. The previous terminals are situated between the two parallel roads running east and west. Although the terminals are bounded to the north and south by the roads, pedestrian bridges extend over the roads to the gate concourses adjoining the aircraft apron. The International Airlines Building is set immediately adjacent to the apron, above and parallel to the north service road, to better accommodate wide-body aircraft; the area between the roads will be used for the new terminal's large surface parking lot. A tunnel provides direct access into the terminal, and a subway stop below the lot links it to the other terminals.

The building responds to the program in a direct and clear-headed way. Of primary importance is the twofold organization of sequential spaces and checkpoints that receive and control both arriving and departing passengers. The design of customs facilities must meet stringent federal regulations with regard to security and control of contraband. The Federal Inspection Services therefore played a central, if anonymous, role in organizing the building and occupy a sizable portion of it.

The superscaled *brise-soleil* that marks the front of the building serves as a porte-cochère and shades the main ticket lobby, which lies beyond a multistory glass curtain wall. It signals the main entrance and also confers a sense of autonomy on the terminal. Beyond the main lobby, incoming and outgoing passengers are kept apart on separate floors. Those departing pass from the lobby through an inspection point and ascend to a departure level with immediately adjoining gates. The departure level is a secure (i.e., controlled-access) but open and continuous waiting room, with concessions and duty-free shops located in freestanding pavilions below an expansive ceiling. Arriving passengers are led from their airplanes onto a different floor, passing through a system of secure corridors down to the baggage claim area. Then they move through customs and exit into the main lobby on the south side of the terminal.

Future expansion of the terminal has been anticipated in both the architectural and structural design, which will accommodate the addition of another floor. Future plans also include the possible use of "mobile lounges" like those at Dulles. Bolullo's sprightly array of streamlined aluminum panels, glass, exposed structure, and brightly colored or polished materials, mounted not altogether comfortably on a precast beige aggregate base as a concession to the neighboring Terminal C, will alleviate at least some of the anxiety of its customs-bound patrons. Moreover, the rhetoric of gleaming efficiency and reliability will make a reassuring connection for those destined for the convention center downtown.

Joe McGrath

RHYME AND REGION

Herring Coe's Houston City Hall Reliefs

David Baker

Perhaps the most engaging features of Houston's modernistic City Hall are the iconographic reliefs by Herring Coe that embellish its entrances and band the parapets of each of its three set-back tiers. Designed by Joseph Finger in 1937, City Hall was built with funds provided by the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works and completed in 1939. Soon after, a panel of "leading citizens" surveyed by *Architectural Record* selected it as the city's most outstanding building.[1] It stands today as an accomplished example of Works Progress Administration–sponsored architecture and a source of civic pride.

City Hall's only outward concession to regional or local identity, aside from its abundant use of Texas fossilated limestone, is to be found in motives incorporated in Coe's reliefs. Although the building was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, the iconographic program devised by Coe in consultation with the architect remained undocumented until the sculptor was contacted at his home in Beaumont last fall.

Coe's ornamental scheme uses Finger's three-stage stepped massing to illustrate simultaneously a hierarchy and a geography of activities representative of Houston and its environs. The lowest tier, also the most expansive in plan, represents agriculture, associated with the periphery of the city; the second portrays industry, closer to the center; and the highest and centermost depicts the concerns of city government, at the heart of the metropolis. Over portals and windows at ground level is a series of allegorical figures illustrating societal and historical themes.

Protruding "medallions" carry the first level's agricultural adornment, a serial garland depicting cultivators of corn, cotton, rice, garden vegetables, and fruit. Recessed plaques form an interrupted "frieze" at the second level, where a "men at work" series illustrates the railroad, oil refining, cotton processing, lumber milling, shipping, cattle ranching, and factory machinery industries. The endeavors of city government that surmount the third tier are enacted by figures representing safety, shelter, education, recreation, and health.

Back at ground level, the horse tamers on the lintels above the principal entrances (east and west) represent "men uniting to control the forces of nature." Above, in square panels that bracket the words "City Hall," are figures representing liberty (a man holding a torch, crouched to fit the frame, with an eagle in the background) and equality (a woman with flowing hair holding an equilateral triangle). Flanking the horse tamers in separate plaques are precepts of government: allegiance (a man with his hand on a book, with the American flag in the background) and knowledge (a woman with a torch against a background of clouds). Relief figures emerge obliquely from the corners of engaged pilasters aligned with the projecting portal surrounds of the main entrance: a man with a sword, personifying power, and a woman with a scales, embodying justice. Two fluted semicircular pedestals to either side of the portals were reserved for statues of John and Augustus Allen, the founders of Houston, but these were never commissioned. Small plaques of men representing the present capabilities and future strength of Houston flank the side entrances. The blind attic of City Hall is studded with Texas bobcat heads, prescribed by Finger and modeled by Coe from a specimen in the Beaumont Zoo.

Herring Coe was born in Beaumont in 1907 and graduated in 1926 from South Park College (now Lamar University), where he studied electrical engineering. He worked briefly at the Magnolia Oil Company refinery, where he began to pursue sculpture as a hobby. After taking a job with a cemetery monument company to learn carving techniques, he moved to Houston in 1928 and worked (along with sculptor William McVey) for the Pyramid Stone Company, an architectural ornament enterprise that failed in 1929. Coe returned to Beaumont that year and supported himself as a sculptor, producing reliefs for the First National Bank of Beaumont (Stone and Pitts, 1936) that came to Finger's attention and led to the commission for the Houston City Hall in 1937.

The previous year, Coe had been chosen by the Texas Centennial Commission to produce a monument to Dick Dowling at the site of the Battle of Sabine Pass (1863). In 1937 he also won a competition for a cenotaph to the victims of the New London (Texas) Consolidated School explosion, a project that was postponed while he devised the 27 City Hall sculptures.

For the City Hall reliefs, Coe first prepared sketches that he sent to Raoul Josset in Dallas for comment (Josset had produced allegorical sculptures to commemorate the Texas Centennial in 1936 for the state fairgrounds). He next produced clay models in Beaumont, then shipped them to Austin to be carved in the same fossilated Texas limestone used for the rest of City Hall.

In 1939, having completed the New London cenotaph, Coe, acting on the suggestion of William McVey, entered the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where he studied with Carl Milles through 1940. Coe served with the Seabees of the U.S. Navy during World War II and contracted malaria on Guadalcanal. Stationed thereafter at Camp Parks in California, he produced sculptural pieces for the post chapel, designed by Bruce Goff (1944). After the war he returned to Beaumont, where he executed reliefs for the entrance to the Houston Zoo (Irving Klein, architect, 1952) and Fondren Library at Rice University (Staub and Rather, 1947-49). In 1960, as part of the Civil War Centennial observance, he produced a colossal statue for the Vicksburg National Cemetery. Coe's reliefs for the Houston Zoo, placed in storage when the entrance to the zoo was altered, have recently been installed on the Brown Education Building (Ray Bailey, architect, 1988). ■

Notes

1 "Houston Citizens Vote on Recent Buildings," *Architectural Record* 86, no. 5 (Nov. 1939), p. 14.


















Photographs by Paul Hester

**City Hall, top to bottom.
Attic: Texas bobcats flanking neon clock.
Endeavors of city government: safety, shelter, education, recreation, health.
Industries of Houston, first row: railroads, oil refining, cotton processing; second row: lumber milling, shipping, cattle ranching, factory machinery. Agriculture: corn, cotton, rice, garden vegetables, fruit.**

**East entrance, left to right:
power, allegiance, liberty, equality, justice, knowledge. Central panel: "men uniting to control the forces of nature." Beneath windows: pedestals for statues of John and Augustus Allen.**

Waddell House, 2404 Caroline, ca. 1901 (demolished), with design no. 2 from George F. Barber's *Modern Dwellings* (1901).

Cotton House, 1018 Travis, 1882 (demolished), with "View of F. Egge's Cottage" from *Palliser's Model Homes* (1878).

From Mail House To Your House

Choosing a dream house from the pages of a mail-order catalogue is no longer common, but from 1880 to 1930 catalogues and journals offering house plans to the public flourished in America. More numerous than the catalogues that sold building materials precut and ready to assemble (Sears, Roebuck & Company was one of many companies that produced ready-cut houses), the catalogues of mail-order plans were widely marketed to prospective homeowners as well as carpenters, developers, and contractors. The catalogues' popularity helped spread design ideas and architectural styles across the country. Not only middle-class houses and workers' bungalows but also some of the more distinctive and impressive houses of the period were drawn from their pages.

Catalogue Sources of Houston Domestic Architecture 1880-1930

Dillingham House, 1214 Rusk, 1889 (demolished), with design no. 485 from *Shoppell's Modern Houses* (1887).

A number of Houston houses, some demolished but some still surviving, were built from catalogue designs. The Cotton House at 1018 Travis (1882) was based on a design published by George and Charles Palliser in 1878 in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The Pallisers were the first producers of mail-order house plans to meet with success on a large scale. George Palliser published his first catalogue in 1876, and his brother Charles joined the firm by 1878. Two more catalogues were published in 1878, and Palliser publications continued to appear until 1906. The Cotton House is not an exact replication of the Palliser design, but enough details correspond to indicate that the catalogue was the design source. Nevertheless, Houston architect George Dickey listed the house as an example of his own work.

Dickey also claimed credit for the 1889 Dillingham House, 1214 Rusk, which is clearly based on a design published in 1887 by Robert W. Shoppell, an early competitor of the Palliser brothers. Shoppell, based in New York and with a background in publishing rather than architecture, published several catalogues of house plans in the 1880s and also produced the first mail-order architectural periodical, *Shoppell's Modern Houses*. He credited the designs he published to a group of architects called the Cooperative Building Plan Association.

Although it is surprising to find an architect such as Dickey borrowing designs from mail-order catalogues – such a practice runs counter to our conception of an architect's creative role – we do not know how Dickey actually used the catalogues in his practice. The Pallisers and Shoppell advertised widely to the general public, so clients may have brought the catalogues to Dickey and requested that he adapt specific designs for them. It is also possible that Dickey kept a selection of catalogues in his office to help clients decide on the type of house they would like. However the catalogues may have been used, Dickey's long and productive career in Houston indicates that he did not have to depend on them.

The popularity of the Palliser and Shoppell catalogues inspired competitors, some of whom met with considerable success. George Franklin Barber was a self-trained architect who grew up in the Midwest and practiced primarily in Knoxville, Tennessee. In Knoxville he published at least nine catalogues of house plans between 1888 and 1907 and a periodical, *American Homes*, from 1895 to 1901. Barber's publications were probably the most popular sources for mail-order house plans in Texas during those years. His catalogues presented a full range of houses, from grand mansions to modest cottages, in a variety of styles. The designs indicate that he was conversant with both professional architectural trends and popular, vernacular preferences in domestic architecture. For example, his 1902-1903 catalogue *Art in Architecture* contains designs for houses in the colonial revival style, which was appearing in professional architectural journals at the time, and in the Queen Anne style, which the *Architectural Record* of 1902 referred to as a style of "freakish and meaningless eccentricities"[1] but which was nevertheless popular with the general public. The same catalogue includes design number 580, entitled "Rustic," which, with its broad, overhanging eaves and horizontal emphasis, presents the basic elements of what would become known as the American bungalow, still in the process of development, primarily in the Los Angeles area, during this period.

Barber's 1891 catalogue, entitled *The Cottage Souvenir Number Two*, was evidently owned by the developers of the Houston Heights and either used by them or made available to purchasers of lots. Of nine houses presented in woodcuts surrounding a map on a promotional brochure for the development, six are based on designs from *The Cottage Souvenir Number Two*. In fact, some of the woodcuts were probably drawn from the plates in Barber's catalogue rather than the actual houses, for vegetation and shadows duplicate those found in Barber's illustrations. Two of the Barber houses on the brochure are still standing, the Milroy House at 1102 Heights Boulevard and the Mansfield House at 1802 Harvard.

There is also a small cluster of houses based on Barber designs on Hawthorne Street. Barber's proto-bungalow, design number 580, was built at 303 Hawthorne circa 1905. The house next door, 219 Hawthorne, as well as the one across the street, 304 Hawthorne, are also derived from Barber designs, suggesting use of the Barber catalogue by a small-scale developer.

Much grander Houston houses were also based on Barber designs. The Hackney House, at 2210 Main Street, was derived from design number 1 in the 1901 edition of Barber's *Modern Dwellings*, and the Waddell House, at 2404 Caroline Street, was based on design number 2 of the same catalogue. Both of these designs were featured in the October 1901 issue of Barber's periodical, *American Homes*, where the design used in the Hackney House was described as "one of the most elegant house designs we have ever had the pleasure to present our readers," and the design used for the Waddell House

Margaret Culbertson

Photographs this page courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

429 Bayland, ca. 1910, with design no. 397 from Henry Wilson's *Bungalow Book* (1908, 1910).

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as one that "would make a delightful home in any of the Southern States."[2] The scale and complexity of these houses confirm the use and influence of house plan catalogues among the prosperous and upwardly mobile during this period, even in Houston, where architects were relatively plentiful.

By 1906 a new housing type, the American bungalow, had become established in California as a popular, economical form of middle-class housing; mail-order bungalow catalogues, or "bungalow books," helped spread the new style across the country. Bungalows were ideally suited for the Houston climate, with broad overhanging eaves, wide porches, and no basements. Houston's population was mushrooming, and bungalow books provided developers and individuals with easily accessible, inexpensive plans for moderately priced houses in the latest styles. Bungalows sprouted by the dozens in Montrose, the Heights, Norhill, Woodland Heights, and Eastwood, many undoubtedly based on designs in the bungalow books.

Henry L. Wilson, who called himself "the Bungalow Man," enthusiastically endorsed the bungalow as an ideal house type in five editions of his *Bungalow Book*. His well-produced catalogues contained approximately 75 house designs per volume, together with advice concerning decoration and furnishing, as well as historical and descriptive essays about bungalows. Wilson even published his own magazine, *The Bungalow Magazine*, in 1909 and 1910 as an additional means of promoting his favorite house style and selling his plans. The house at 429 Bayland in Woodland Heights matches plan number 397 in the 1908 and 1910 editions of Wilson's *Bungalow Book*. With two full stories it does not precisely fit the definition of a bungalow, but it includes many of the bungalow's stylistic and decorative elements, including wide eaves, decorative beams under the gable, and shingle siding. The double dormers of the Denton W. Cooley House, 737 Heights Boulevard (now demolished), may have been influenced by design number 400 in the 1908 edition of Wilson's *Bungalow Book*, and the Gus G. Heyne House, 4002 Austin, was also close to a Wilson design.

An interesting airplane bungalow in Eastwood at 4400 McKinney is closely related to design number 717 in *Beautiful Homes*, a catalogue produced by the Dallas firm Ye Planry in 1914. This particular catalogue was heavily promoted in the trade publication *Gulf Coast Lumberman* for use by retail lumber yards. By offering a variety of design choices and inexpensive plans in bungalow books and other catalogues, the retail lumber trade hoped to encourage consumers to select house plans and buy building materials in the same lumber yard.

E. W. Stillwell was another publisher of bungalow books whose work met with acceptance in Houston. Based in Los Angeles, he produced several catalogues that concentrated on bungalow design between the years 1907 and 1926, including *West Coast Bungalows*, *Representative California Homes*, and *Little Bungalows*. Like other bungalow books, Stillwell's included testimonial letters from satisfied customers across the country. One dated January 16, 1914, is from a J. L. Jones of Houston, Texas, who wrote: "I am more than pleased with the house. . . . the foreman told me the plans worked out better than any ordered plans he had ever handled. I have two more houses to build and would like to order more plans from you."[3] J. L. Jones was probably the owner of John L. Jones Furniture Company on Travis Street; the locations of the houses he built have not been determined. However, a house based on Stillwell's R-951, in *Representative California Homes*, was built for J. J. Bruce at 3215 Morrison Street in Woodland Heights around 1911. Two more houses with the same design were also built in Houston, one in the 1400 block of Wrightwood, also in Woodland Heights, and another at 4524 Rusk, in Eastwood.

Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

Hackney House, 2210 Main, 1902 (demolished), with design no. 1 from Barber's *Modern Dwellings* (1901).

The repetition of the same plan in both Eastwood and Woodland Heights is not surprising, since both areas were developed by the William A. Wilson Company, but not all of the houses in these neighborhoods can be traced to Stillwell catalogues. In the Woodland Heights/Norhill area, catalogues from Stillwell, Henry A. Wilson, L. F. Garlinghouse, the Southern Pine Association, and Sears, Roebuck were evidently used. Certainly numerous catalogues, as well as original designs or designs copied from books and magazines, must have been utilized as the Houston bungalow neighborhoods burgeoned.

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"Proto-bungalow" at 303 Hawthorne, ca. 1905, with design no. 580 – the "Rustic" – from Barber's *Art in Architecture* (1902-1903).

Who actually designed the plans published in the bungalow books? Only a few publications credit the architect or designer, and sometimes drawings or photographs of the same house appear in the catalogues of completely different firms. E. W. Stillwell was an exception in admitting that not all of the houses pictured in his books had been designed in his office. The introduction to several of his books states: "We have combed the country for the very best designs and have increased the variety of our offerings by including some of these with our own. For those designs not originated by us we have made new, and we believe, better interior floor plans."[4] Probably other bungalow book producers followed similar practices.

In spite of occasional repetitions, the range of design choices offered to the potential homebuilder through bungalow books and other mail-order catalogues was far greater than that available through most developers today. The pleasure we can find in the architectural richness of our surviving older neighborhoods is partly due to the pioneering efforts of small architectural firms marketing their designs through mail-order catalogues in the late 19th century, and to the anonymous draftsmen employed by bungalow book entrepreneurs during the first two decades of the 20th century. ■

Notes

1 "The Contemporary Suburban Residence," *Architectural Record* 11, no. 3 (Jan. 1902), p. 79.
2 Barber, George F. "Three to Choose From," *American Homes* 13, no. 4 (Oct. 1901), pp. 209-10.
3 E. W. Stillwell, *West Coast Bungalows* (Los Angeles, ca. 1919), p. [2].
4 "A Personal Talk About the Stillwell Service," ibid., p. [1].

Special thanks go to Ellen Beasley for providing the original impetus for my involvement in this research. Some of the information in this article is included in a report we coauthored in 1986 for the Texas Society of Architects, *The Use of Published House Plans for Domestic Architecture in Texas, 1890-1930*.

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Milroy House, 1102 Heights Boulevard, 1898, with design no. 30 from Barber's *Cottage Souvenir Number Two* (1891).

Citeations

Courtesy MOCA and California Polytechnic, Pomona

Rear patio, Case Study House no. 18, Craig Ellwood, architect, 1956-58.

A Long Good-bye

Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses
Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art and Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989, 256 pp., illus., $50

Reviewed by Stephen Fox

Blueprints for Modern Living is the catalogue of an exhibition on the Case Study Houses, a program invented by John Entenza while he was publisher and editor of the Los Angeles magazine *Arts & Architecture*. In 1945 Entenza announced that *Arts & Architecture* would sponsor the construction of nine houses designed for medium-income families. His desire was to promote modern architecture to prospective buyers and builders of new houses in southern California. Although only five of the original nine were built, Entenza's concept was so appealing that the Case Study Houses program was perpetuated. Eventually 36 projects were announced, of which 26 houses and one apartment complex were built. The last project was completed in 1966, four years after Entenza sold the magazine. Several of the houses attracted international attention, especially the house of Ray and Charles Eames (number 8, of 1949) and six steel-framed houses that were not part of the original program, built between 1950 and 1960 to the designs of Raphael Soriano, Craig Ellwood, and Pierre Koenig. These houses conferred upon the entire program a kind of mythical status that kept the memory of the Case Study Houses alive and compelled the retrieval and reassessment that this publication documents. A survey of the catalogue's eight essays indicates that the efforts of many of the essayists to reconstruct a historical context within which to interpret and evaluate the program are problematic, because of confusion over what constitutes the historical context.

Esther McCoy and Reyner Banham contributed essays that are as much personal memoir as historical analysis. Scholarly obligations are not ignored, but it is the "I was there" tone that animates both essays. Miss McCoy's piece is an expanded version of her introduction to the 1977 reissue of the 1962 monograph *Case Study Houses 1945-1962*. It provides an overview of the origin of the program, its vicissitudes, and the architects, designs, and buildings that it involved. Banham contrasts the orientations and attitudes of the most influential Case Study architects (Eames, Soriano, Ellwood, and Koenig) with those of the Team X generation in Great Britain and the long-term influence of the Californians, culminating in Renzo Piano's Menil Collection museum.

Thomas S. Hines and Elizabeth A. T. Smith provide the most satisfactory historical essays. Hines outlines the modern antecedents to the Case Study Houses, those houses built in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s in Los Angeles and surrounding communities by Schindler, Neutra, Harris, Ain, and Soriano, emphasizing especially Neutra's role as pioneer, promoter, and mentor (Neutra and his one-time pupil Soriano both designed Case Study houses). Miss Smith provides an illuminating account of the vanguard cultural milieu of Los Angeles in the 1940s and 1950s, which Entenza championed through *Arts & Architecture*.

Kevin Starr's essay on the urban development of Los Angeles in the 1930s and 1940s is not merely unsatisfactory, it is irresponsible. His fatuous rhetorical style fails to conceal the poverty of his research and his lack of interpretive insight. Starr diverges from his rap long enough to suggest that the evolution of the aircraft industry in southern California in the 1940s exercised a persuasive fascination on a number of the Case Study architects. But he fails to pursue this notion and instead lapses back into hype, leaving his crucial subject virtually unaddressed.

Three other essays – by Helen Searing on demonstration dwellings of modern design, Thomas Hine on post–World War II mass housing in the United States, and Dolores Hayden on what might be described as the ideology of the Case Study Houses program – strive to put into place essential parts of the program's historical context. Yet none succeeds entirely. Searing and Hine both tend to address the Case Study Houses obliquely. The program is not at the center of either discussion and thus seems peripheral to the "contexts" in which each situates it. Hayden's, the most provocative of the essays, challenges the program's assumptions and thus those of most of the early houses: its middle-class bias, its retarded conception of domestic life, its rigid aesthetic prescriptiveness, and its misunderstanding of institutionalized housing production for the middle-class market. She does not, however, encompass recent, more general critical considerations of this period. Jackson Lears, in particular, describes the devil's pact under which modern culture flourished in the United States during the Cold War period, its critical tendencies diverted from social issues to questions of technique, style, and taste, thus rendering it acceptable to elite patronage.[1] The narrow conception of social obligation embodied in the Case Study Houses program distanced the program from the concerns of Neutra and Ain among the earlier generation of Los Angeles modernists. Technique and, by the late 1950s, unabashed formalism subsumed the modest social aspirations with which the program was begun. This touches directly on the ambiguous, equivocal nature of the Case Study Houses program. It failed to provide an alternative model for mass housing but succeeded as architectural production of a high order. The essays in this catalogue were to have provided the historical context in which this paradox developed, but too much evidence is either lacking or not entirely relevant. Basic data are not presented. One has no clear idea of the mechanics of the program and how they changed over time. Similar efforts that successfully brought innovative modern design to the middle-class housing market are not examined, despite the fact that such builders as Joseph Eichler did deliver entire communities of modern houses within the institutional system. And Eichler and his architects, Jones & Emmons, were responsible for a Case Study project.

The architectural-historical context of the Case Study period is neglected. Even the obvious – describing the three basic chronological and stylistic phases of the program (California modern, the Case Study style, and neoformalism) – is only alluded to, never made explicit. Parallels that might relate the Los Angeles scene to that of other centers of architectural activity in the U.S. are not drawn (for instance, that Entenza used *Arts & Architecture* and the Case Study program to promote architects he admired much as Philip Johnson used – and still uses – the Museum of Modern Art to do so). The essays display little curiosity about American architects who produced modern houses comparable in aims and techniques to the Case Study houses outside Los Angeles (such Texans as John York of Harlingen and Milton Ryan of San Antonio among them, to say nothing of the Phoenix architect Alfred N. Beadle, who was himself a Case Study architect). Such omissions make the Case Study houses seem more isolated and exceptional than they were, without clarifying what it was that indeed made them distinct. One has little sense that the Case Study houses were continuous with the work of their respective architects, which also was extensively covered in *Arts & Architecture*.

Despite the commendable ambition with which the subject was approached, the essays in *Blueprints for Modern Living* serve more as points of departure for the formulation of critical questions than a repository of authoritative interpretations. The catalogue is an important document, however, beautifully laid out and produced under the guidance of *Cite*'s former designer, Lorraine Wild. Under Elizabeth A. T. Smith's curatorial direction, it recovers an important episode in the development of modern architecture in the United States, although one that awaits grounding in its historical situation. ■

Notes

1 Jackson Lears, "A Matter of Taste: Corporate Cultural Hegemony in a Mass-Consumption Society," in Lary Mays, ed., *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 38-57.

Double Vision

High Plains/Plain Views
Farish Gallery
12 January – 18 February 1990

Reviewed by Lynn M. Herbert

In 1986, John Brinckerhoff Jackson came to Rice as the second Craig Francis Cullinan Visiting Professor. A cultural geographer, Jackson lectured on the history of the vernacular house; while at Rice he met Peter Brown, a photographer with similar interests. The two men decided to collaborate on a book project: Jackson would supply the words, Brown would supply the photographs. As often happens with collaborative efforts, the friendship grew along with the project.

That summer Brown visited Jackson at his home in New Mexico. Brown had been photographing in Arizona, Nevada, and California and showed Jackson his work, which illustrated the mobile homes and other elements of the vernacular landscape that Jackson had discussed at Rice. The two men decided to shift their focus eastward to the southern high plains of Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

In the fall, Jackson, in his eighties, and Brown, in his thirties, hit the road together and drove through the high plains of Texas and New Mexico. As they approached a town, Jackson, like a Sherlock Holmes of the vernacular landscape, would paint for Brown a historical portrait of the town before they even got out of the car, basing it on clues such as the placement of railroads, Main Street, and interstate highways; the condition of grain silos; and the architectural styles still in evidence. Jackson would chat with the townspeople about the evolution of the town, and Brown would take pictures. Sometimes Jackson would ask Brown to photograph a certain building or aspect of the town. Then, back in the car, the two would set off once more to make the journey from countryside to town.

Since their travels together, each man has nurtured the other's work: rough texts by Jackson have inspired Brown to look for different aspects of the landscape, and photographs by Brown have led Jackson to additional topics. The collaborative book, titled *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*, is due to be published in the spring of 1991. This exhibition was a preview of Brown's contribution to the book.

The installation took viewers on the evolutionary journey from countryside to town by illustrating the current state of agriculture, the roads laid out on the land, the towns, the architecture, and the people. *Henry Beaird Stadium, View, Texas* is a wonderful example of Brown's subtle photographic style mixing perfectly with Jackson's interests. In this photograph there are both Main and Grand streets. Each street, as the signs indicate, is also a county road, an artery connecting town to countryside. The bald brown field is staked out with informally designated spots for the home and visiting teams behind the chain-link backstop. The lone installed utility bench does not suggest large crowds. In the sparse background are a formal building (perhaps a community hall), a home, and a mesa. The photograph has the quietness and sensitivity to light that Brown is so good at capturing, and it is loaded with Jacksonian clues about the evolution of this landscape.

The vision of two men – 50 years apart in age, one a writer and one a photographer – driving through the barren countryside sharing a passion sounds like the opening scene of a future Steven Spielberg film. Failing such a film, we'll have to wait for the book as a permanent record of their collaboration. ■

Peter Brown, *Henry Beaird Stadium, View, Texas*, 1989.

Another Little Piece of the South

Southern Comfort: The Garden District of New Orleans, 1800-1900, *by S. Frederick Starr. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989. 312 pp., 171 illus., $35*

Reviewed by Stephen Fox

S. Frederick Starr has redressed a long-standing want: he has written an architectural history that treats a portion of New Orleans's 19th-century architectural heritage with insight and intelligence. This is a singular achievement. Renowned for its 18th- and 19th-century architectural and urban patrimony, New Orleans has lacked a satisfactory account of much of its heritage. Samuel Wilson, Jr., has written perceptively about the French colonial building traditions of the 18th century, and specialized studies have dealt with specific subjects – Arthur Scully on the Greek Revival architects James and Charles Dakin, for instance. But despite extensive research into primary documents, efforts to publish such research have been inadequate – the result, some New Orleanians suggest, of insufficient local support for serious scholarly publication. Starr, in his account of the Garden District, has overcome this deficiency. And breaking out of the narrow constraints of much American architectural historical scholarship, he deals with buildings in the contexts of politics and war, ethnic rivalries, economic cycles, and domestic manners. Moreover, he writes with such fluency and grace that his book will appeal to general readers as well as academics. This is so critical to building a constituency for serious architectural history in New Orleans that it makes one indulge Starr's besetting sin: he exploits his own rhetorical facility to engage in myth-making when the available facts cannot sustain a good story.

Paradoxically, it is the dead hand of romantic myth that Starr sets out to dislodge in his historical account of the neighborhood. The charming anecdotal histories by Lyle Saxon of the 1920s and Harnett T. Kane of the 1940s still engulf New Orleans in a gardenia-sweet haze of nostalgia to which residents have become habituated; Starr is at pains to clear the air. To that end he pieces together a complex historical mosaic describing the florescence of the Garden District, the uptown neighborhood that emerged at the middle of the 19th century as the preferred residential district of the city's newly rich mercantile elite and retains a large number of imposing houses from the late 1840s through the mid-1870s, the period on which Starr focuses. The tract, composed of former plantation lands, was subdivided and platted in the 1830s but not extensively improved until the early 1850s, when the suburban city of Lafayette, where it lay, was annexed by the city of New Orleans. The largest houses tended to be built by self-made men, cotton factors and importers who quickly made (and lost) substantial fortunes. Many of these men were originally from the Border and Mid-Atlantic states, New England, Great Britain, or Ireland, rather than Louisiana or the South. The architects, like their clients, also were recent immigrants to the South; many had been trained in New York. German immigrants were prominent among the building contractors. Starr seeks to demonstrate the extra-Southern origins of those responsible for what is now popularly apprehended as a quintessential Southern place, a circumstance paralleled in other Gulf port cities, including Galveston and Houston. Starr emphasizes the number of opulent, wrought-iron-bedecked houses in the district that are not even antebellum, but date from what Mark Twain and Dudley Warner caustically designated the Gilded Age, the period of heady economic expansion that began after the Civil War and ended with the Panic of 1873. The Civil War itself occasioned conflicted and ambiguous conduct on the part of the Garden District plutocrats, some of whom left town while others made their peace with the U.S. Army, which occupied New Orleans for most of the war. Only in the 1880s was a "Southern" cultural style formulated, charged in part with retroactively infusing the past with a mythic consistency that it lacked the first time around.

Starr on occasion engages in questionable excursions, in a style that can glide smoothly to insupportable conclusions. One example suffices: he cites language in sets of specifications by Henry Howard and deduces from these that Howard arrogated to himself a far greater degree of professional superiority than did earlier New Orleans architects. This ignores a more down-to-earth interpretation, that Howard merely employed standard contractual language to distinguish work covered by the contract from that which was not. Such instances generally lead Starr to anachronistic rationalizations for actions whose causes have been insuffi-

Robert S. Brantley

Frederick Rodewald House, 1749 Coliseum Street, New Orleans.

Frank Welch, *Steps in Montmartre*, 1953.

ciently researched. The effect is a subtle enhancement of the subject (e.g., the proud, "professional" architect) that ultimately serves to mythologize.

What I missed most in Starr's otherwise far-ranging discourse is attention to the urban character of the Garden District. One rarely gets a sense of the whole as opposed to details; indeed, only two historic photographs of street scenes in the district are included. Thus, although Starr mentions several times that the Garden District contained moderate-income housing, one has little sense of its physical consequences, of how block fronts were composed (the large houses on which he concentrates seem to have been built consistently on corner sites). Yet in an early chapter on the Irish Channel, Starr strongly evokes its mixed urban landscape. He later implies that the shotgun house is a characteristic feature of the Garden District, though again one has little sense of the streetscapes that resulted. Starr notes that the Garden District contained no axial streets or focal squares or parks to which the biggest houses gravitated. However, if one plots out the biggest houses, most line up on four streets in the eastern half of the district. Starr does not address this fact and recognizes no distinctions between sections within the district. He mentions on several occasions the presence of churches in the Garden District without being specific about how they fit in. The same is true of black property owners and tenants. Starr concludes his narrative prematurely, following a discussion of the Garden District houses of New Orleans's foremost late-19th-century architect, Thomas Sully. He gives no indications of the vicissitudes that the neighborhood has experienced in the 20th century. In fact, he fails to explain when the term "Garden District" first gained currency.

Yet even when reservations are registered, *Southern Comfort* compels admiration. Starr's enthusiasm for his topic, his commitment to revealing historical complexities rather than confirming trite myths, and his skill in communicating his findings make this volume very welcome. ■

French Postcards

A Paris Album –
Photographs by Frank D. Welch
Rice Media Center
February 15 – March 30

Reviewed by Lynn M. Herbert

Frank Welch is a successful Texas architect, which might lead one to ask, What is he doing exhibiting photographs? In 1952, Welch went to Paris on a Fulbright fellowship to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Disappointed with the program there, he asked his adviser if he could photograph Paris instead. Welch had just seen Henri Cartier-Bresson's *Images à la Sauvette* and was inspired to try his own hand at photography. Borrowing Cartier-Bresson's concept of the "decisive moment," he bought himself a Leica and began his self-education in the medium. As he remembers, "I was just exploring this glorious city and having a wonderful adventure." He worked intensively for the remaining six months of his fellowship, shooting about 50 rolls of film, and then returned to the United States. Twenty-five years later, architect Welch returned to spend 30 days photographing the City of Light once again.

Welch's vignettes depict the Paris the way we love to see it. No Type A personalities here: people stroll down cobblestoned streets, smooch by the Seine, daydream in the park, play cards on the sidewalk, read *Le Figaro*, and pass time at outdoor bistros. His Paris is peopled by elderly men and women with fascinating faces, chic ladies, amorous couples, and playful children. Yet, while the characters in his play are interesting, it's the sets that steal the show.

Welch's architect's eye has captured the sensuous and varied textures that make Paris unique. The creamy limestone with its subtly rough texture, always cool to the touch, of so many façades; the elaborate wrought-iron work gracing even the humblest alleys; the gravel paths in parks with their comforting crunch underfoot; the peculiarly French wicker and wrought-iron chairs in bistros and parks; the smooth curves of cobblestones; the collages of ancient advertisements layered on walls; the steps worn concave by centuries of feet; and the raucous modernity of the Centre Pompidou – this exhibition offered an opportunity to steep for a while in the almost tactile qualities of a beautiful city. Cheers to Frank Welch for pursuing a passion. ■

Green Spans

Money Matters: A Critical Look
at Bank Architecture
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
4 February – 15 April 1990

Reviewed by Lynn M. Herbert

Money Matters was a multidisciplinary project that explored bank architecture from the vantage points of architecture, photography, aesthetics, and history. The exhibition portion presented the work of 11 photographers from the United States and Canada, and the generously illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition includes substantial critical essays by architectural critic Brendan Gill, sociologist Robert Nisbet, and the exhibition's curator, Anne Tucker, curator of photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Anyone having even the slightest interest in banks (which most of us do, if only out of necessity) was sure to find something to be fascinated by in this project.

An invitation to spend an afternoon looking at 175 photographs of banks might not sound enticing, but expecting the worst, I was pleasantly surprised. Each of the 11 photographers was assigned several banks, given an outline of each bank's historical and architectural significance, and instructed to document each bank's façade. Although many of the resulting photographs are predictably factual and dry, some are decidedly not. Len Jenshel's banks all look so charming that you want to book a weekend getaway in them. His photographs highlight interior and exterior ornamentation, and he always seems to find a point of view framed by palm trees or cascading ivy. James Iska's formidable Greek Revival banks, in which you *know* your money will be safe, are presented in such sharp detail that their monumental weight and enormity are chilling. Perhaps sensing this, Iska includes civic banners, cars, and gaping passersby in his photographs to remind us that we are not looking at something atop Mount Olympus.

George Tice manages to do just the opposite in his photographs: his intricate banks and cityscapes become miniatures, like complex constructions by a maker of architectural models, and the buildings with patterned façades look like the work of a Legomaniac. This unreal quality is artfully presented in his series of the Toronto skyline at sunset, at twilight, at night, and under an overcast sky.

Serge Hambourg, assigned a number of banks in the Beaux-Arts style, highlights

Panasonic Foundation

David Miller, *Escalator to Banking Hall, Philadelphia Saving Fund Society*, 1987.

their quirkiness and unusual details: in one photograph, a real lion (post taxidermist) keeps a watchful eye from a balcony on the banking floor of the Winona National Bank. Robert Bourdeau's small, toned black-and-white prints are reminiscent of Eugène Atget's "empty street" documentation of Paris buildings. David Miller's black-and-white photographs are all unusually crisp. Either he has concocted darkroom chemicals that rid the atmosphere of air pollution, or bank employees were polishing their interiors and exteriors for weeks before he came. And Catherine Wagner gives her banks that recognizably stark yet luminous quality that can also be seen in her series on classrooms.

Anyone with a keen interest in bank architecture undoubtedly had a field day with this exhibition. For the rest of us doubting Thomases, it was a delightful surprise. ■

Matinee Idyls

Palaces of Dreams:
The Movie Theatres of John Eberson, Architect
McNay Art Museum, San Antonio
16 September 1989 – 15 February 1990

Reviewed by Michael E. Wilson

Palaces of Dreams was a treat for those interested in the architecture of entertainment. The exhibition coincided with additional restoration and reopening of one of Eberson's masterpieces, the Majestic Theatre in San Antonio. The McNay Museum and Robert L. B. Tobin sponsored the showing; materials were loaned by Max Protetch Gallery and the University of Pennsylvania. The show was curated by Jane Preddy, a native Texan now living in New York, who is completing a book about Eberson. On display were 22 large ink-on-linen working drawings, 50 panels consisting mainly of original prints of documentary photographs (mounted one or two per panel), and a number of color drawings of details for decorative plaster on proscenium arches, side wall boxes, and door, ceiling, and fountain surrounds.

The European-born Eberson (1875-1954) was educated in Dresden and Vienna. He immigrated to the United States in 1901, practicing architecture in St. Louis, Hamilton, Ohio, and Chicago from 1910 to 1926, then in New York and Connecticut until his death. His son, Drew, became his partner during the 1920s, continuing the firm after 1954.

The work of Eberson was by no means limited to theater designs. His many office buildings, of which Houston's Niels Esperson Building (1925) is an important example, shared the exuberance, quality of color, materials, and detail that he lavished on theaters.

Eberson's strong ties to Texas and Houston were due in large measure to the patronage of Karl Hoblitzelle, owner of the Interstate Amusement Corporation. Hoblitzelle employed him as early as 1915 to design the Majestic (later Paramount) Theatre in Austin, followed in 1921 by the Majestic in Dallas. It was with Houston's now departed Majestic Theatre in 1923 that Eberson introduced the atmospheric ceiling – a smooth surface, painted blue, with twinkling electric stars and moving clouds projected across it to create the illusion of a night sky. It was an instant success and brought Eberson many more lavish commissions.

The handsome 18-page catalogue was well researched, designed, and printed. The exhibition itself, despite good organization, suffered from problems of presentation. Only about two-thirds of the drawings were matted and framed, and wall space in the McNay's Tobin Gallery was insufficient for so many large pieces. The remaining drawings were simply laid into flat cases, sometimes rolled over or up the back of the case. Lighting was uneven, a problem with drawings that had darkened with age. Nonetheless, these were minor defects considering the magnitude of the project and the elegance of the materials on display. ■

Interior, Majestic Theatre, Houston, John Eberson, architect, 1923.

Littleton Dixon Collection, Harris County Heritage Society Photographic Collection

Made to Measure

Architecture and Its Image:
Four Centuries of Architectural Representation. Works from the Collection of the Canadian Centre for Architecture
Dallas Museum of Art
18 February – 22 April 1990

Reviewed by Jay C. Henry

This enormous exhibition of 158 catalogue entries, comprising hundreds of separate book illustrations, drawings, photographs, urban prospects, computer graphics, and occasional models, threatened to exhaust the visitor who tried to look at everything carefully. Fortunately, just as one's energy began to flag, surprises turned up around the next bend.

The exhibition was organized somewhat nebulously into three sections: Architecture in Place and Time, Architecture in Process, and Architecture in Three Dimensions. In each section, images from different periods were juxtaposed without regard for chronology, a method that proved both frustrating and provocative. In a memorable sequence in Architecture in Process, one passed from Robert Venturi to Hans Poelzig, Mies van der Rohe, Filippo Juvarra, Louis Kahn, and John Wellborn Root. Root's early proposals for the Monadnock Building might just as appropriately have been compared with Jules Hardouin-Mansart's drawings for the chapel at the Invalides – also not the executed version. Instead, after Mansart one quickly encountered John Hedjuk's design for the North-East-West-South House, a pairing used also on the catalogue cover.

As the exhibition was assembled from the holdings of a single museum, it necessarily reflected the strengths and weaknesses of the parent collection. Some of the inclusions seemed inconsequential – construction documents for the Palace of Justice in Montreal, for instance – whereas major omissions stood out: no works of Frank Lloyd Wright or Louis Sullivan were included. A smaller and more tightly organized exhibition drawing upon other collections might also have fit into the amorphous gallery space of the Dallas Museum of Art without encroaching on Claes Oldenburg's *Stake Hitch* in the vast and noisy vaulted hall. If these reservations indicate that *Architecture and Its Image* was not a blockbuster, the exhibition was nevertheless well worth a visit. It repaid both careful scrutiny and casual browsing. ■

The Quilted City

Planning for Houston

William F. Stern

To zone or not to zone is no longer the question. Suddenly, in this season of unforeseen change, a growing number of voices are saying that the old way is not good enough, that the time has come to consider an appropriate form of comprehensive planning for Houston. Ironically, those economic forces that were long assumed to oppose any form of comprehensive planning – including zoning – are the same ones suggesting a fresh look at Houston's future. In the preceding decades of rapid growth, zoning was often portrayed as a barrier to growth and development that could better be monitored by market conditions. Moreover, many residential neighborhoods, and even some commercial districts, protected themselves from outside encroachment through deed restrictions. But deed restrictions have limitations; they are often inadequate, are subject to expiration, and are not able to control development beyond the periphery. As property values and the stability of residential communities and commercial development are jeopardized, the climate for comprehensive planning and zoning now becomes favorable, for both the good of the market and the betterment of the city.

Houston can begin its *perestroika* with comprehensive planning by absorbing the lessons and changes of 60 years of zoning practice elsewhere in America. From their beginnings, the fundamental principles of zoning have been the regulation of land use by zones, the establishment of building setbacks from property lines, and the control of building size and bulk calculated as a ratio of building square footage to property size. By the late 20th century, zoning has evolved from a generalized form of regulation and restriction into a much more complex instrument of planning and development incentives, far more sensitive to the character and subtleties that make a city. In concert with historic preservation, community redevelopment, transportation, protection of the environment, and other urban issues, zoning has become part of a more general strategy serving an ever wider agenda shaping the American city.

With the enactment of its 1982 development ordinance, the city of Houston started to move in the direction of purposeful land-use planning. That ordinance established a citywide building setback of 25 feet along major thoroughfares and 10 feet on secondary streets. With the best intentions, its sponsors were trying to give more space to the public realm of the street. More recently, city council passed a comprehensive off-street-parking ordinance to replace its previous ordinance, which was limited only to residential properties. The intention of the new ordinance is to protect neighborhoods adjoining office and institutional complexes, such as the Post Oak area and the Texas Medical Center, from inundation by parked automobiles. There are problems with these ordinances and with those being discussed for the future. In attempting to address such concerns of planning and land use, the planning commission and city council have taken an ad hoc, Band-Aid approach that addresses concerns after they become critical rather than before. Moreover, the ordinances as they are presently being enacted tend to throw a blanket of uniformity over the city, treating the city as a single entity without regard to the differences between one area or neighborhood and another. For instance, while a ten-foot building setback might be appropriate for one part of a given neighborhood, it might not be adequate for another part of the same neighborhood. Similarly, a uniformly mandated supply of parking may operate at cross purposes with efforts to encourage wider use of mass transit or more efficient building densities in designated areas. A city is composed of unequal parts, and any future plan must take this into account. So it would seem logical that the first step be to remove the blanket and make a map that will more nearly resemble a patchwork quilt.

To pose a few questions: Should the ordinance go beyond land use and building setbacks to regulate building size through height and bulk ratios, a typical feature of zoning laws? Will the ordinance be written in such a way as to establish special districts with separate guidelines, such as downtown and neighborhood historic districts, a museum district, a theater district, retail districts – in other words, zones that define the character of the city? And will the many civic and neighborhood associations, such as Downtown Houston, Freedmen's Town Association, Neartown Association, South Main Center Association, and Uptown Houston, be asked to help determine planning regulations for their communities, and will they be involved in plat approval and questions of zoning variances as they arise? Will zoning be used to manage particular kinds of future development, such as the inevitable growth that will occur near Metro rail stations? These questions ultimately lead to another: How do we see ourselves as a city, and what kind of city do we want to be?

This will also be the time to consider those broader objectives of planning that we deem essential to the city's future. Acknowledging, for example, that without designating certain buildings and neighborhoods for preservation, the Houston we care about will not be the same, it is important that the comprehensive plan incorporate landmark and preservation laws for Houston, which is years behind most other cities in America in recognizing that the past preserved makes for a city that attracts people from both within and without. Likewise, if we admire that stretch of Main Street between the Museum of Fine Arts and the Texas Medical Center and agree that this is one of the truly memorable boulevards in the city, then we should find ways to invest other streets with equal grace. The pattern of live oaks lining Main Street, in combination with wide sidewalks and peripheral landscaping, is exactly what gives the street its distinction. The trees act as a protective no less than aesthetic canopy to mitigate Houston's steamy climate. If landscaping, planting of trees, provision for new parks, and improvement of existing parks are all part of Houston's comprehensive plan, maybe in 50 years Houston will realize its full potential as the garden city of Texas. As Houston continues to struggle with plans for rail transit, a way should be determined to make transit part of the comprehensive plan. The density and mix of activities valued in European cities could be encouraged around the new rail stations through the right set of guidelines and incentives. Finally, and perhaps most important, where the city has neglected housing and community redevelopment, a comprehensive plan becomes the perfect way to establish a new commitment to the most fundamental aspect of any settlement. For example, a workable means could be found for salvaging and rehabilitating the Fourth Ward district of Freedmantown and Allen Parkway Village as a viable neartown community. Such examples illustrate the potential of comprehensive planning to deal with the city broadly and particularly, to account for and build on those qualities that distinguish this city from others.

To zone

or not to zone

is no longer

the question.

For years Houston stood alone in the United States as the city that resolutely shunned zoning and the constraints associated with zoning that complicate the making of a city. For decades the status quo was proffered as the best for all, despite evidence to the contrary. But the city has changed significantly in recent years. It is larger, more complex, culturally richer, and socially far more diverse than it was a generation ago. Now a consensus seems to be building that the only way to hold the city together and redress neglected urban problems is through a process of comprehensive planning that incorporates zoning. With a sufficiently sophisticated approach to this process, Houston may succeed in reconstituting itself as a model for the American city of the 21st century. ■