Cite

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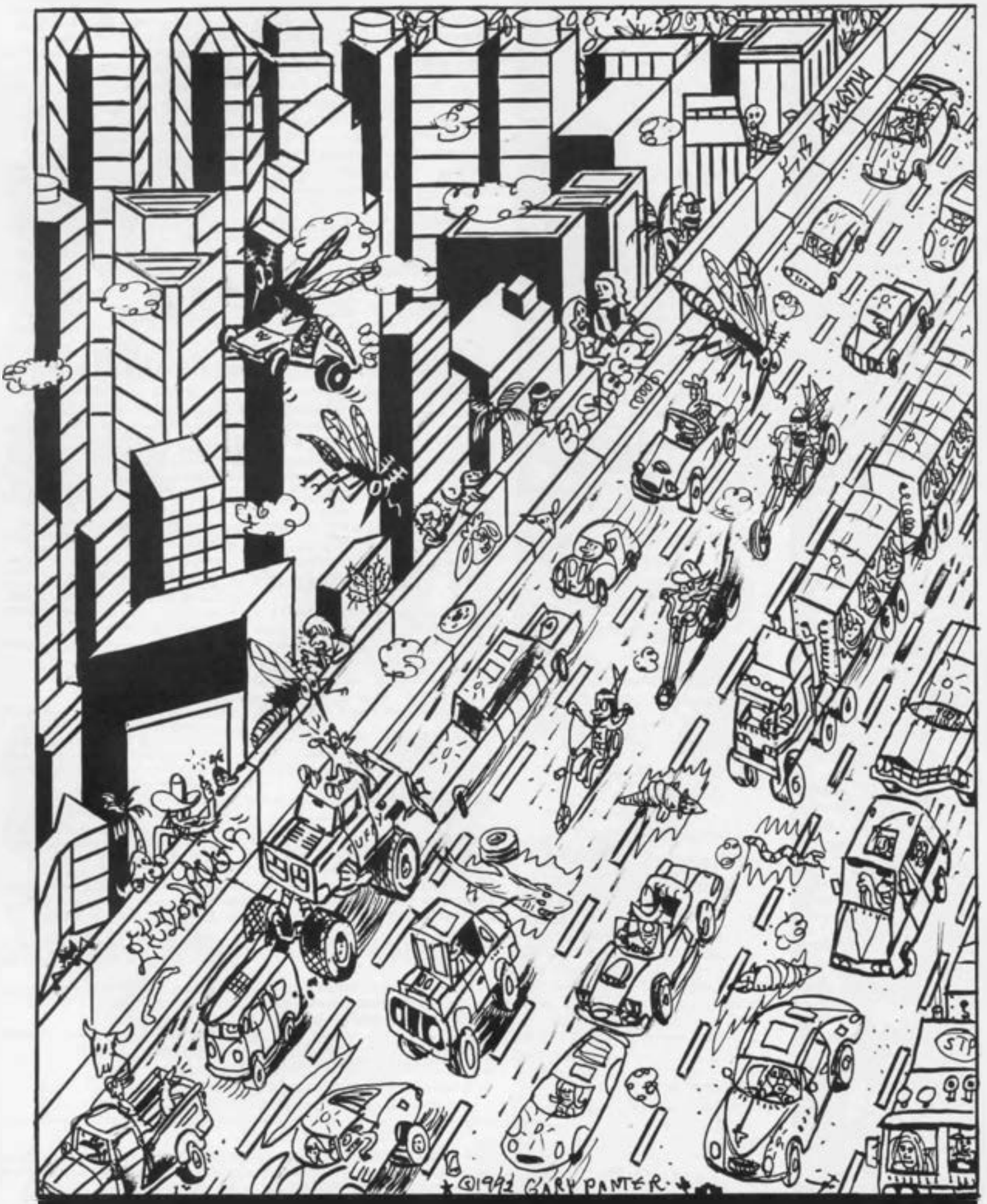

WEST LOOP STORY: HOUSTON'S WIDEST FREEWAY NEVER

Texas Rangers Stadium Competition • Working at Home • Atlanta's World of Coca-Cola Pavilion

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THE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN REVIEW OF HOUSTON

A PUBLICATION OF THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

28: SPRING 1992

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

O. Jack Mitchell

1931–1992

Tommy LaVergne

IN Houston, a city where urban values and potentials are more latent than not, Jack Mitchell was a persistent and uncompromising optimist. Born and raised in Little Rock, he completed architectural studies in 1954 at Washington University in St. Louis, then headed by the architect and regionally attentive historian Buford Pickens. There he became acquainted with the riverside urbanity that Theodore Dreiser, arriving from Chicago little more than half a century before, had admired in "the great city of St. Louis" with its then "newly manufactured exclusiveness," which, by the mid-20th century, had not only matured but begun to betray evidence of a slow, if also instructive, decline. He remained in St. Louis after graduation to work for Gyo Obata at Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum before leaving to accept a faculty appointment in architecture at Texas A&M University. There he taught from 1957 to 1959, spending the summer of 1958 visiting European cities on a Harland Bartholomew fellowship.

Jack left A&M to pursue graduate studies in architecture and urban design at the University of Pennsylvania, earning dual master's degrees in 1961. On the School of Fine Arts faculty at that time were dean G. Holmes Perkins, whose interest in civic design was well established in the curriculum; Louis I. Kahn, who was in the process of completing the Richards Medical Research and Biology Building at Penn; and Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, who had assumed junior faculty posts. Penn offered, for the split decade that encapsulated Jack's tuition there, as stimulating a program in architecture and urbanism as any in America – one in which, as Scott Brown recalls, even "West Coast cities, particularly Los Angeles, were objects of interest rather than scorn," although Jack appreciated as well the exceptional, if also not entirely untroubled, urban availabilities of Philadelphia.

After Penn, Jack returned to Little Rock, where as partner in charge of design at Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson from 1961 to 1966 he took a leading role in the design of the Central Arkansas Milk Producers Association office building, Little Rock (1961); the Oak Grove Junior-Senior High School, Pulaski County (1962); the University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville (1963); the Southern State College dormitories, Magnolia (1963); a 375-unit low-income public housing complex in Hot Springs (1965); and the Arkansas Louisiana Gas Company Building, Little Rock (1966). The dormitories and the Milk Producers Association won regional AIA design awards and were published in *Architectural Record;* the housing complex received a HUD merit award and was published, as was the Arkansas Louisiana Gas Company, in *Progressive Architecture.*

In 1966, Jack came to Rice as an associate professor at the invitation of director William W. Caudill to establish a master's program in urban design. In 1969 he was promoted to the rank of full professor and chaired the joint Rice–University of Houston committee that secured Ford Foundation funding to establish the Southwest Center for Urban Research as an "urban observatory." In 1971, with the appointment of David Crane as dean (who had taught planning and urban design at Penn while Jack was there), the School of Architecture expanded its efforts in community development, design, and outreach, pursuits for which Jack's talents and interests were ideally suited. In 1974, he was appointed director of the school in further support of Crane's initiatives. These included the newly formed Rice Center for Community Design and Research and the Rice Design Alliance, both of which Jack helped to organize and on whose boards he served. In 1978, when Crane returned to private practice, Jack succeeded him as dean and continued in that capacity for the next 12 years. He was made a fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1979. He served as president of the Associated Collegiate Schools of Architecture in 1983 and as a member of the National Architectural Accrediting Board from 1987 to 1990.

As dean of architecture at Rice, Jack was responsible for strengthening the school's graduate programs. He also expanded its involvement in community affairs, particularly through the agency of the Rice Design Alliance (which with his encouragement and participation launched the publication of *Cite* in 1982) and through the exhibitions program of the Farish Gallery (the operation of which he inaugurated in 1981 and sustained thereafter). He was instrumental in bringing cultural geographer J. B. Jackson, historian of architecture and urban form Spiro Kostof, and experimental artist Robert Irwin to Rice for successive appointments as Cullinan Professor of Art, Architecture, and Urban Planning. He assured the engagement of James Stirling and Michael Wilford as architects for the expansion and renovation of the School of Architecture – the firm's first project to be built in the United States and one that, by virtue of its contextual empathy and discretion, was commended by Colin Rowe as an exemplary piece of civic design. This, Rowe noted, "in Houston . . . is particularly crucial and rare and therefore one must salute what has been done at Rice and those persons (not only Stirling and Wilford) who are responsible."

Jack's principal concern as an urbanist focused on cities like Houston, which as a consequence of their newness lack instances of special appeal such as he discerned in Charleston and Savannah, San Antonio and New Orleans, Barcelona and Mexico City, and even Miami and Los Angeles. He was especially appreciative of the town-making strategies of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, whose approach and sensibility he found particularly applicable to Houston in the case of the Founders Park–Fourth Ward area adjoining downtown. He was also keenly aware of Hermann Park's potential to become the most pleasurable civic place in Houston, as suggested in plans for its rehabilitation by Charles Moore and the Urban Innovations Group at UCLA, which he helped to bring about. As chairman of the board of the South Main Center Association in 1987 and as a founding member of the Friends of Hermann Park in 1991, Jack was committed to seeking a more effective institutional framework for the stewardship and advancement of the park.

In 1985–86, Jack helped to organize, and served on the jury for, the Houston Sesquicentennial Park Competition, the first such competition in the city's history. He also served as professional adviser to the Duncan (City Hall) Plaza redevelopment competition for New Orleans in 1981, which was won by Robert Irwin's scheme to enclose the space as an aviary and conservatory. At Rice, he served as a member of the committee that helped, beginning in 1983, to select and site the Michael Heizer sculptures installed in the court of the engineering group as the gift of Alice Pratt Brown, resulting in what is perhaps the most successful matching of public art to open space in Houston. With the help of four of his graduate students, Jack also recently concluded a study of the Rice campus for the building committee of the Board of Governors to resolve parking and public-space issues in a manner consistent with the spirit of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson's General Plan.

Jack's astute yet convivial leadership was a singular asset to the university and to Houston – an enviable blend of vision and diplomacy, intelligence and collegiality. He was a staunch friend and able counselor to the Rice Design Alliance and a peerless advocate of civic values in the built environment.

Drexel Turner

Zoning in the Fast Lane

Those who thought that zoning in Houston might be kinder, gentler, saner, and savvier than most other places may have to guess again. The original charge was to create a plan "unique" to Houston – mindful of the diversity that characterizes many of the city's best-functioning neighborhoods. But the proposals currently being considered by the planning and zoning commission, in the unrealistic expectation of producing a draft plan by July, may be in fact counterproductive. Among other things, serious consideration is being given to the exclusion, in the name of domestic sanctity, of such dubious neighborhood "nuisances" as parks, mother-in-law apartments, community centers, corner grocery stores, small in-home daycare arrangements, and other innocuous cottage industries. ■ As a latecomer to zoning, Houston should learn from the experiences of other cities. Proposals now before the commission run the risk of encumbering the city with an inflexible code that would discourage mixed uses and densities while reinforcing economic stratification – ameliorated only by an unwieldy conditional-use process. The initial recommendations made to the commission by its consultants advocated a neighborhood-specific "matrix" approach to zoning conducive to integrated uses. But this more complex, custom-tailored approach seems to have been given short shrift of late, and recent committee discussions have focused almost exclusively on lockstep, boilerplate regulations. ■ Experience shows that zoning works best when it is but one of several mechanisms (including comprehensive planning) used to support an urban vision that accommodates diversity and the everyday needs of neighborhood life. An overly rigid blanket approach to zoning would lead to a simplistic compartmentalization of the city, indulging suburban ideals at the expense of urban possibilities. The planning and zoning commission should take the time it needs to do its work sensibly and sensitively rather than use the July deadline as an excuse to bring forth an unresponsive pro forma zoning document that would merely perpetuate an obsessively tidy version of the present. Zoning should be a tool for the creative ordering of the future, even if it means waiting a little longer. ■

Banco de España, Jaén, 1983–88, Rafael Moneo, architect.

RDA Events

Contemporary Spanish Architecture

The Rice Design Alliance will commemorate the Columbus Quincentennial with its fall 1992 lecture series, *Contemporary Spanish Architecture*, featuring four of the country's leading architects.

23 September
Luis Fernández Galiano, editor and publisher of *Arquitectura Viva* and *A & V Monographs* and chair of theory, projects, and history at the School of Architecture of the University of Madrid, will introduce the series. His recent book, *El Fuego y la Memoria*, examines the philosophical relationships between architecture and energy.

7 October
Rafael Moneo, José Luís Sert Professor and former chairman of the Department of Architecture, Harvard University, practices in Madrid. Recent projects include the National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida, the Atocha train station in Madrid, the Miró Foundation in Mallorca, and the International Airport in Seville. Moneo was recently awarded the commission for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

14 October
Elias Torres-Tur and his partner, José Antonio Martínez Lapeña, practice in Barcelona. Their projects include the conversion of an 18th-century church into a concert hall, exhibition space, and chapel; an apartment remodeling on the island of Ibiza; and an urban park in Barcelona. Torres-Tur has been a visiting lecturer at Harvard and UCLA.

21 October
Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra practices in Seville, where he has won numerous awards for his designs for apartment buildings. He is the architect of the Colegio de Arquitectos of Andalucía and the Navigation Pavilion at the world exposition that opened this spring in Seville.

28 October
José Luis Mateo, former editor of *Quaderns d'Architectura i Urbanisme*, teaches at the School of Architecture at the University of Barcelona. He practices in Barcelona. Recent projects include the renovation of an old textile factory into a swimming pool and sports center, and the Sports Campus of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

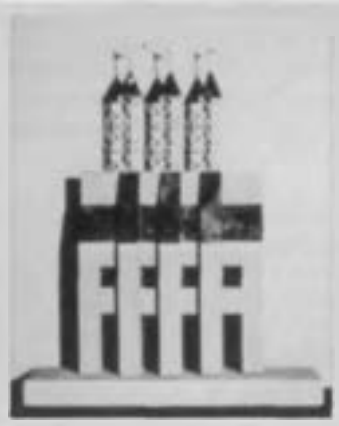
For more information call 713-524-6297.

SAVE THIS DATE!

The fifth annual RDA gala will be held on

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14.

The evening will include dinner, dancing, a silent auction, and a great time.



City Slickers

Reinventing the Center City

22 June, 5:30 p.m.– 7:30 p.m.

A discussion of inner-city redevelopment cosponsored by the RDA and the Rice Institute for Policy Analysis. Participating mayors are J. E. "Bud" Clark, Portland, and Joseph P. Riley, Jr., Charleston. William F. Stern will moderate. Rice Faculty Club, Rice University. $10 paid reservations required. Space limited. For information, call 524-6297.

Postcards From the Edge

Machines for Living

Russian architect Alexander Shulyakovsky's post-revolutionary proposal for emergency housing in the former Soviet Union would convert tanks into ultra-efficiency *machines à habiter.* Presented as a poster page in a glossy publication of amazing designs with which the Russian delegation blitzed the recent International Design for Extreme Environments Assembly (IDEEA) at the University of Houston, Shulyakovsky's track house comes in several models: a two-bedroom in the Russian T-72; a big two-bedroom in the 122mm self-propelled howitzer; and a one-bedroom in the small infantry support tank.

Jim Tarbet

End of the Trail

Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen's *Monument to the Last Horse* – a project of the Chinati Foundation – is at peace at last in Marfa, Texas, having spent last summer curbside on Madison Avenue in front of the Seagram Building. Marfa's arc-type is a dead ringer for the real thing: Louie, the oldest horse in the 1st Cavalry, shot in 1932 when the unit left Marfa's Fort D. A. Russell to be mechanized – and no small hoofer, judging from the footwear.

Phil Schermeister

Rubble Rouser

What may in fact be Houston's BEST-known building has taken a fall for real. SITE's Indeterminate Façade building at 10765 Kingspoint – a faultless wonder realized in 1975 as the first of a series of playful storefronts for Best Products, the now-crumbling Richmond, Virginia, catalogue store chain – has been closed and offered for sale as part of Best's retrenchment program. Its jagged edge now scarcely visible from I-45, the I.F.'s future seems iffy in the extreme, failing a last-minute offer from the Society for Commercial Archaeology or its Gulf Coast equivalent.

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Meander Thrall

The little patch of cactus the urban cowboy calls the trail along the Rillito River in Tucson is part of a now-standard 50-foot right-of-way purchased by the Pima County Department of Transportation and the Pima County Flood Control District to send slivers down the spines of the county's mostly conceptual waterways.

BigCiteBeat

☛ Houston City Council's point man for zoning and consummate urban strategist, **Jim Greenwood,** received in May the **American Planning Association**'s 1992 Distinguished Leadership Award for elected officials for his efforts to bring comprehensive planning and zoning to Houston.

☛ The **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,** has chosen **Rafael Moneo** as architect for its expansion east of Main Street. Moneo, who practices in Madrid, designed the National Museum of Roman Art in Merida and the Davis Art Museum at Wellesley College, now nearing completion. Also shortlisted were **Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates; Norman Foster;** and **Tadao Ando.** The proposed 150,000-square-foot complex will house the museum's collections of photography, 20th-century art, and decorative arts.

☛ **Lake/Flato Architects** of San Antonio has been selected to prepare a plan for the campus of the **Laguna Gloria Art Museum,** Austin.

☛ **Congregation Beth Israel** has retained San Francisco architect **Daniel Solomon** to design a memorial chapel and master plan for its cemetery.

☛ Still lacking a preservation ordinance, Houston recently lost two 19th-century landmarks – the **Kennedy Corner** and **Baker buildings** adjoining Market Square. Also biting the dust was **O'Neil Ford** and **Richard Colley**'s 1955 building for **Texas Instruments** at the corner of Buffalo Speedway and Richmond Avenue.

☛ The Spanish colonial revival **Star Engraving Building** on Allen Parkway is about to lose its major tenants, **Stages** and the **Children's Museum**, and will be folded into a condominium project.

☛ On view through July at the **Julia Ideson Building** of the **Houston Public Library** downtown are photographs from the Houston Metropolitan Research Center collected in the process of researching the recently published ***Houston's Forgotten Heritage*** (see *Cite,* Fall 1991).

Snow Biz

Denial is where you find it. Astro-sno, untold tons of melt-at-your-feet white slush spun off by the world's largest frozen margarita machine, helped to lighten up if not totally chill out AstroWorld's never-in-season Christmas observance, though it paled in comparison to Bert Long's similarly anticlimatic Technicolor ice sculptures, installed in front of the Contemporary Arts Museum in mid-January. Order your CiteGeist Christmas cards early this year.

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Roundabout

Tanking Up Hermann Park

HERMANN PARK is home to a zoo, a golf course, statues of famous men, an outdoor theater, and, as of early last year, a brand-new, somewhat camouflaged, two-million-gallon water tank. The tank, part of the city's South End Pumping Station, sits on a prominent site between the Warwick Towers and the Museum of Natural Science. The site is so prominent, in fact, that the museum has long considered it a logical spot for expansion. So, you might inquire, what is a woolly-mammoth-size water tank doing in Hermann Park? We wondered too.

Peter Dobrolski, manager of the water production division of the city's public utilities department, is something of an expert on the history of the South End Pumping Station. According to Dobrolski, the giant 30-foot-high tank was completed in early 1991 as the latest replacement for a series of tanks dating to 1939. The South End tank is certainly not the largest in Houston – that honor goes to a 15-million-gallon underground tank at public utilities department headquarters – but, sitting next to the Museum of Natural History, it is still a big gulp for the eyes to swallow.

The South End Pumping Station is itself a historic landmark and thus deserves its prominent site, Dobrolski argues. The pump house, a tan brick structure with a green terra-cotta tile roof, was built in 1916, shortly after George H. Hermann donated the land to the city for use as a public park. The station pumps water from four wells located throughout the park into the adjacent tank, which is an emergency water source for the Texas Medical Center. While historical preservationists' arguments have not been persuasive enough to save many downtown buildings, Dobrolski hopes they will prevail in any decision about the South End Pumping Station. But couldn't they have rebuilt the decidedly ahistoric water tank somewhere else, instead of leaving it at the head of the park? Well, no, says Dobrolski: "The tank being near the Medical Center and so on, we didn't want to relocate it. And you just can't relocate a well; they cost about a million dollars to drill."

Architect Norman Hoover, whose firm, Hoover & Furr, has been involved in the expansion of the museum since 1987 (see *Cite*, Fall 1990), has few kind words for the ill-placed two million gallons of water. "I was surprised when they took the old tank down and rebuilt it, as was everybody at the museum," he says. The architects had previously discussed a number of alternatives with the public utilities department, including placing the tank underground and covering it with a parking garage. For one reason or another, however, the city said no to all of the firm's schemes.

What the city tried instead was a little camouflage. The walls of the tank were painted a warm beige to match the stone on the museum. The roof was painted a dark green, so that it would resemble a patch of grass to upper-floor residents of the nearby Warwick Towers – or at least to those with bad eyesight. A wooden fence replaced an earlier chain-link enclosure, and token bits of shrubbery appeared around the tank's base. Dobrolski is proud of the unusual lengths to which the city went to beautify the site: "It's very expensive to do that kind of work; but it's such a high-profile site for the city and for us, it was important for us to look good."

Still, the tank's critics have a different view. "It's sort of like hiding the elephant in the strawberry patch," says Hoover. Charlie Brookshire, a project manager at Hoover & Furr, wishes that the firm "could have had some design input on the beautification effort, but no one asked us." And when all is said and done, there is still a two-million-gallon water tank sitting on prime park real estate. But the museum is not giving up. Hoover hopes eventually to envelop the water tank with buildings. His firm is in the final design stages of a parking garage to be built on the north side, and future museum expansion is planned for the west and south sides of the tank.

Following the credo "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade," the museum might consider employing the tank as an educational tool. The garage plan is already developing along those lines. According to Hoover, "In the garage, there is a central cooling plant that has some ice storage, and we've put a window in it where you can look into the space as a teaching exhibit." Are there any plans to turn the tank into a lesson in water supply? "Not that I know of," says Hoover. "Frankly, we'd prefer to convert it into a nonentity." Meanwhile, the museum might want to consider flood insurance.

Michael J. Kuchta

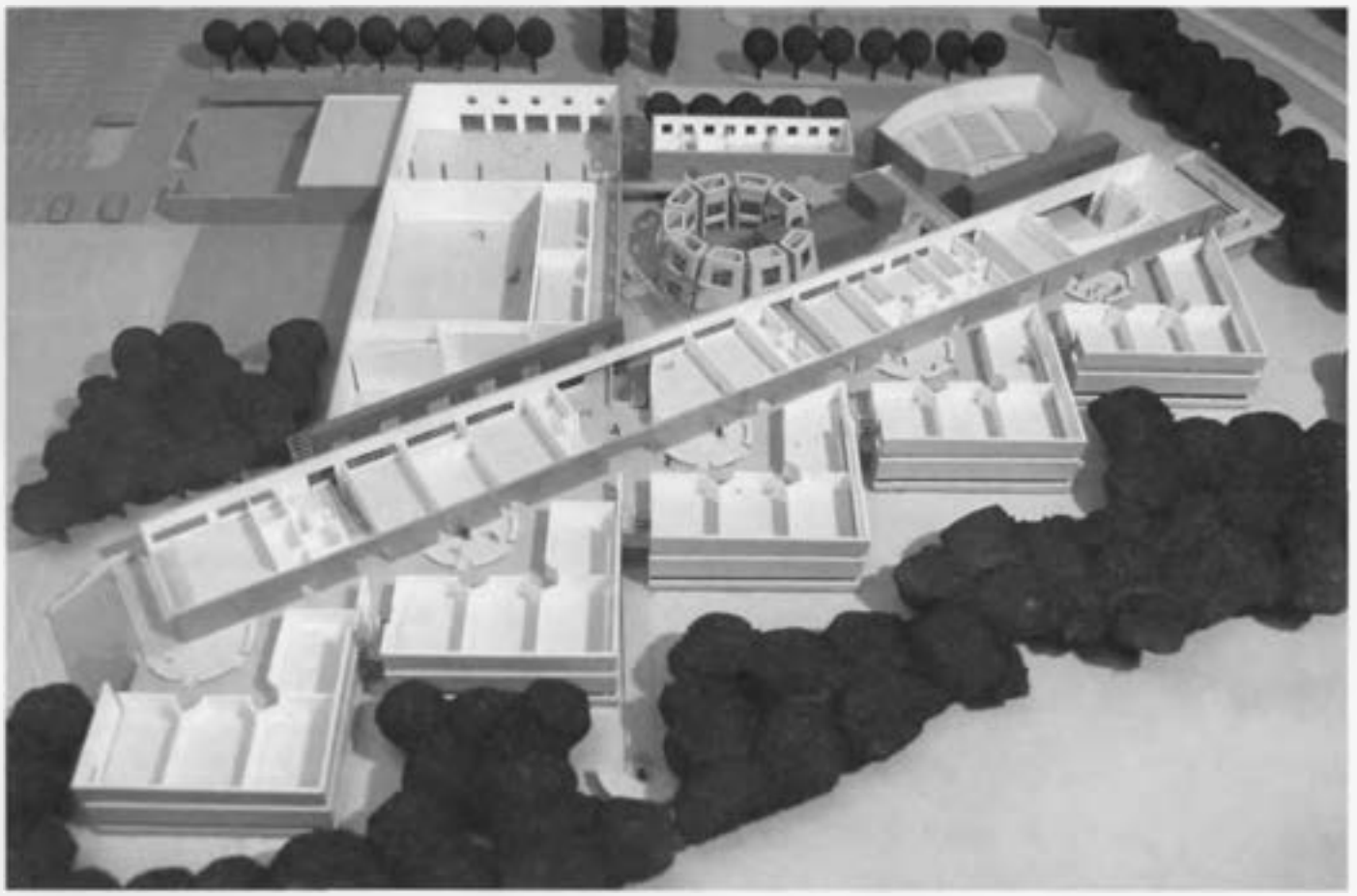
© Paul Hester 1992

Find the water tank in this picture.

Elementary Analysis

Taft Architects' Houston Independent School District–Rice University Lab School

ONE of the Houston Independent School District's most notable "Project Renewal" architectural undertakings is the construction of a new public school on North Braeswood Boulevard, just west of Kirby Drive. The school will relieve overcrowding in elementary and middle schools in the neighborhoods of near southwest Houston. It will also function as a laboratory to develop innovative teaching practices, the result of a collaborative effort between HISD and the Center for Education of Rice University's Department of Education. The first public school to be constructed in this area of Houston since the baby boom days of the 1950s, the building is also an inspiring work of civic architecture and the first opportunity its designers, Taft Architects, have had to design a public building in Houston since the completion of their Metropolitan YWCA complex in 1979.

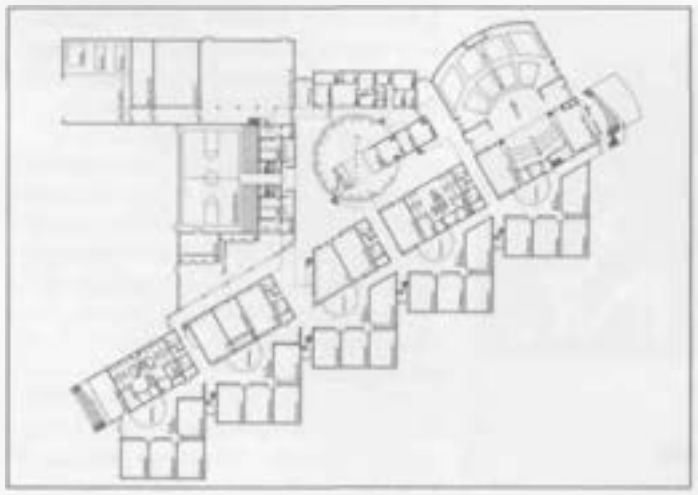


Model looking east.

Like the YWCA, the as-yet-unnamed school will occupy a highly visible but relatively small site along one of the city's bayou parkways. The school is designed to accommodate 1,200 students, of whom 400 will be visitors, transported class by class to take advantage of the new school's special facilities. Therefore the ten-acre site has to make room for the buses that will daily move one-third of the students from and to their home schools. The site also contains a significant natural feature whose preservation is desired, a wooded ravine that stretches along the west edge of the property. The requirements for separating out, yet providing easy access between, the school's various parts for resident and visiting students, who will range from kindergarten through eighth grade, presented a special challenge to the architects.

A layered arrangement of public spaces, specialized instructional spaces, and classrooms satisfies functional requirements and responds cleverly to the site's limits. Two-story-high classroom bays follow the line of the wooded ravine in a diagonal array. The resulting clusters of classrooms open to collective spaces, which in turn connect with specialized facilities (music, computer, and science laboratories and art studio spaces), toilets,

Site plan (east up).



First-floor plan.

Entrance.

and administrative offices for the three subdivisions of the school (kindergarten through second grade, third through fifth grade, and sixth through eighth grade). These specialized facilities are collected in a two-story bar that follows the diagonal alignment of the classroom bays. The principal public spaces of the school – those requiring public access for off-hours use (central administration, gymnasium, and cafeteria) – are configured in a right-angled relationship to the diagonal bar, enclosing a double-volume entrance lobby and a two-story-high circular library. Defined by inward-leaning screen walls, the library has the playful appearance of a building-within-a-building. At the apex of the inverted right triangle that results from the plan diagram is the auditorium. Its distinctive shape is expressed externally. Plans call for a pair of monumental bleachers at either end of the diagonal bar that can be used as outdoor classrooms.

With didactic clarity, Taft Architects distinguish externally the volumetric organization of the school. They underscore these distinctions with variations in window arrangements and in the color and patterning of the brick facings that promise to make the school a lively presence on North Braeswood.

The intelligence, wit, and skill that Taft Architects have demonstrated in their design will probably be called on to face further challenges. The budget is a modest $67.34 per square foot ($11.25 million for 167,000 square feet of area). One architect with experience working on HISD projects predicts that if bids come in above estimates, cost-cutting could well rob the design of many of its distinctive features.

A second challenge involves the way the school will be used: whether its principal purpose is to relieve overcrowding in nearby schools or to serve as a teaching laboratory for the entire district. A parent active in HISD affairs has observed that Taft's design is predicated on the latter premise. If the former prevails, the building may be liable to criticism for not being adaptable to less specialized requirements. Both challenges underscore the reasons that public school architecture in Houston is so uninspired. One hopes that Taft Architects' design will surmount these challenges and fulfill its promise as a center for improvement in public education as well as a demonstration of the wisdom of enlightened architectural patronage. Construction is to be completed in late 1993.

Stephen Fox

Bayou Degradable

Up Against the Corps Again

Sims Bayou entering Glenbrook Park north of I-45.

THE voters of Los Angeles have recently elected to deconcretize the Los Angeles River, and, in Florida, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is about to put the kinks back into the Kissimmee River south of Orlando at a cost of $368 million (having removed them only 20 years before). But in Houston, Sims Bayou, whose 19.3 miles drain much of south Harris County as well as parts of Fort Bend County – and which constitutes a significant scenic and community resource for the varied neighborhoods through which it passes – will soon be straightened and widened on the basis of plans made by the Corps of Engineers between 1978 and 1982. The Corps's traditional approach was upheld by the Harris County Commissioners Court in December 1991 as preferable to an alternative plan proposed by the Sims Bayou Coalition (SBC). The alternative plan was prepared by the technical committee of the SBC and emphasized detention ponds. The committee is made up of five Houston engineers.

The SBC report, issued in October 1991, recommended 27,500 acre-feet of detention, requiring approximately 1,800 acres of ponds with an average depth of 15 feet; acquisition of additional flood-prone acreage in the middle and upper reaches of the bayou; complementary channel improvements including clearing debris and raising bridges and crossings; and a planting program for erosion control. The Corps of Engineers' evaluation of the alternative plan, released in November, concluded that the Corps project provided uniform flood protection from a 25-year flood at a cost of $280 million compared to nonuniform protection for the SBC plan, which would provide varying protection from 2-year to 100-year floods at a cost between $460 and $850 million and impose significant delays in implementation. According to Don Allen, project manager of the Sims Bayou project for the Corps's Galveston district, the greater cost projected for the SBC plan is due to the lack of natural detention in the areas surrounding the bayou; "The cost of excavation and disposal of the soil for manmade detention is very high compared to the authorized project."

In response, William G. Crosier, who headed the technical committee that produced the SBC's alternative plan, asserted that the difference in cost arose because the Corps pegged its projections on a period of no more than five years before implementation for its own project, but as many as 21 years for the SBC's version. He also maintained that construction for the SBC plan could reasonably begin in 1994, not 2001 as the Corps evaluation assumed. In addition, the SBC plan would provide comparable protection to the Corps plan at a cost of only $30 million more while protecting upper portions of the bayou first, an area that would be denied relief for six to seven years under the Corps plan.

At present, the Corps and the Harris County Flood Control District are proceeding with acquisition of right-of-way and detailed design for construction of the Corps project as authorized by the Harris County Commissioners Court, while the SBC is considering what options remain to stop the project or substantially mitigate its undesirable aspects. According to Art Storey, executive director of the Harris County Flood Control District, the district in general "is pursuing projects with much heavier reliance on detention to balance the need for flood protection and preservation of our natural environment. However, Sims Bayou is already out of balance, with 27,000 structures and 60,000 people living in the flood plain. We must be good stewards of this land, but not at an increase cost of human misery."

From the point of view of Evelyn Merz, president of the Sims Bayou Coalition, "the current project is moving forward due to an unwillingness to rethink old methods. It is now time for the coalition to spend less time on engineering analysis and to concentrate on political action." Three decades ago a similar strategy prevailed in the case of Buffalo Bayou, when opposition mounted by Terry Hershey and others resulted in then congressman George Bush asking the House Subcommittee on Appropriations not to fund a similar channelization project. Hershey recalls that an incredulous panel member asked Bush, "Congressman, do I understand you are asking us not to spend money in your district?" To which the reply came: "Yes, sir, this is a terrible thing to do to a river." Bush did ask that money be spent for a restudy. This bought sufficient time to educate and organize citizens, who protested until the project was deauthorized.

Mary Ellen Whitworth

Sally Walsh

1926–1992

INTERIOR designer Sally Walsh died 12 January 1992 after years of battling a blood disorder so rare that, as she acknowledged wryly, doctors at M. D. Anderson Hospital sometimes exhibited her to out-of-town colleagues. It is hard to overestimate Walsh's stature among her peers. Her brilliance, integrity, and devotion to modernity struck everyone who knew her with awe and respect.

Born in Inspiration, Arizona, Walsh attended a series of far-flung elementary schools set up by her father's employer, Anaconda Mining Camps; she completed high school in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. At 19 she was recruited by Hans Knoll to work in the Chicago headquarters of Knoll Associates. "I'm going to hire you because you have a perfectly blank mind," Knoll declared with typical hauteur. During six years as Knoll's assistant, Walsh remembered, she "typed, walked the sheep dog, waited on customers in the showroom, . . . called on architectural firms in five states, cut thousands of perfect rectangles out of fabrics and pasted them on plans, flew to Manila to find out why Knoll furniture was arriving in Japan with spool legs, designed spaces, . . . decorated the Christmas tree with cookies flown in from Germany, and cried when [she] displeased . . . Hans."

In the mid-1950s Walsh moved to Houston with her husband, Bill, a defense lawyer who became a protégé of Percy Foreman. Her first Houston job was at Suniland. After 18 months she started Evans-Walsh, a pioneer "good design" shop, with architect Jack Evans. Four years afterward she went to Wilson Stationery & Printing. During her tenure there she designed an innovative installation for an exhibition of Rodin's sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts. In 1972 she joined S. I. Morris Associates as partner in charge of interior design, where she remained until 1978. When her health began to worsen, she took an office by herself atop the Gulf Building and accepted only a few projects that especially appealed to her. In 1986 *Interior Design* magazine elected Walsh to its Hall of Fame – the first Texan so honored.

Walsh estimated the big commercial installations she directed at "100 plus." Among these: Schlumberger's Manhattan offices, the Houston Athletic Club, Lehman Brothers' offices in Allen Center, First City Bank, the new main building of the Houston Public Library, offices for Transco, and the University of Houston College of Architecture. She loved, and specified tirelessly, Marcel Breuer's "Cesca" chair, Hans Eichenberger's T-legged library table, and Mies van der Rohe's leather-and-chromed-steel icons. She also experimented with designs of her own, including a variation of Breuer's 1927 Standard Möbel Thonet desk for Braniff International; chairs adapted from Citroën bucket seats for the Lehman Brothers brokerage; and an armless sofa of exceptional simplicity and comfort.

Despite Walsh's zeal for modern furniture, she always required comfort and practicality from it. In the early seventies, for the Transco offices, she approached Breuer to see if he'd sanction a new edition of "Cesca" with a seat cushion instead of stiff caning, and he assented. She often expressed dismay at the skyrocketing prices of her Knoll favorites, because she believed handsome, well-crafted pieces should lie within everybody's reach. Once, she recalled, "I went to Sears [in Chicago] . . . and told an executive that . . . middle-class America and young America must have good design made accessible to them on the time-payment plan. I asked him to put [a] small selection of original designs on a plan of this type." The man informed Walsh that Sears profited from bulk fertilizers, not Miesian aesthetics. Then he showed her the door.

Having heard of Walsh's visit to Sears, I phoned her late in 1979 and inquired if she would be willing to recommend to the readers of *Houston Home & Garden* a group of low-priced, sturdily built, well-designed contemporary living-room furniture, and she said yes. Within the month she had picked, among other pieces, Charles Eames's compact sofa, Stendig's molded Italian "Handkerchief" coffee table, and Walter von Nessen's swing-arm floor lamp, in production since 1927. The total retail cost of Walsh's living-room group was an impressively moderate $3,250. Rob Muir photographed Walsh's "Affordable Classics," as they were headlined, for our May 1980 issue, and she herself convinced Wilson Stationery & Printing to market them from their showroom floor for a full year.

Almost single-handedly Walsh persuaded influential, conservative Houstonians that 20th-century design was valid and important, and she was justifiably proud of this feat. At the end of her last résumé she wrote: "When I walk through Houston buildings today and find good contemporary design, whether or not I had a hand in it, I find myself taking credit . . . because on this specific turf it flourished with my help." She added, "When I came to Houston, the Bank of the Southwest and M. D. Anderson Hospital were the only Knoll Planning Unit projects extant – and between them there was a sea of 'Esperson Building green' – today that sea is clear, and to me, wonderful white."

Gary McKay

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Walsh House.

Sally was guileless. With her, truth was truth. She didn't tolerate lies, excuses, or dodges, and she always let you know that, too. If she caught you doing something she believed was shoddy, all of a sudden you wished to God you'd never met her. She was opinionated and stubborn – but she understood that about herself, and every now and then she'd back down from a position she'd taken. Gulf asked her to design traditional rooms for their offices in 2 Houston Center. First she said flatly, "I don't do traditional." Then she gave in. "But if we do traditional," she told me, "we do it right." So she got permission for us to go to Monticello and take measurements and profiles of architectural details that we then painstakingly reproduced. That's the kind of designer she was.

Raymond Brochstein

Rob Muir, courtesy *Houston Home & Garden* Magazine

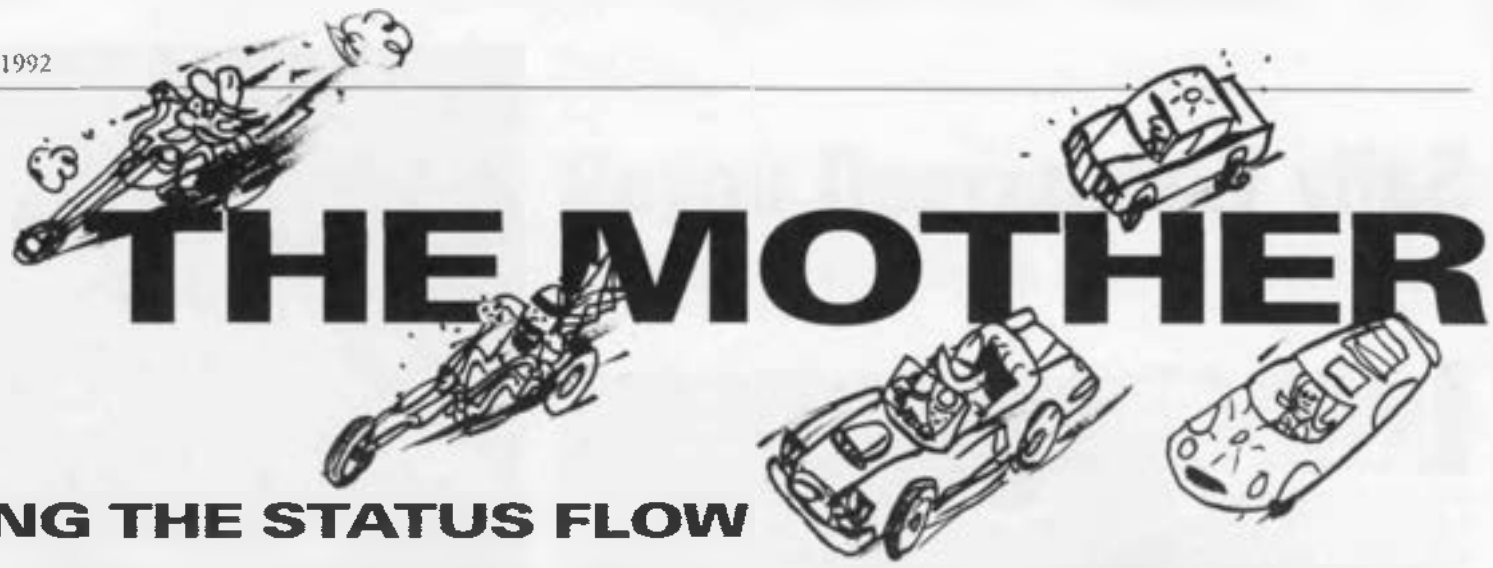
"Affordable Classics," 1980.

Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Rodin installation, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1968.

Braniff offices, DFW Airport.

Joel Warren Barna



THE MOTHER

MAINTAINING THE STATUS FLOW ON HOUSTON'S WEST LOOP

THE "Uptown" section of the West Loop, a 4.1-mile-long stretch of Loop 610 between Interstate 10 and U.S. 59 that is the heart of post-downtown, perpetually smog-bound Houston (and until recently was destined to become the widest freeway in the world) has always enjoyed a certain apartness among Houston's major traffic arteries. The other freeways may be ordinary land-despoiling paths of commerce, taking farmers to market, connecting the port to its hinterlands, collecting workers for their trudge to the still-shimmering office towers downtown or the incendiary chemistry mills along the ship channel, and speeding harried salarymen to and from the airports. But by the standards of this choicest vignette of the West Loop, Houston's other freeways have always been levelers of humankind, the domain of off-price malls, budget motels, and used-car lots, where billboards broadcast the forbidden impulses of the city's autonomic nervous system, flashing images of whiskey and cigarettes, psychiatric hospitals for women and children, and vasectomies for men.

Not so the West Loop, the flagship of Houston's head-over-wheels embrace of the automobile age. By a happy coincidence of its birth – an engineering decision that reportedly ratified a deal cut in Houston City Council in the 1950s to benefit R. E. "Bob" Smith, then a major financial backer of Mayor Roy Hofheinz – the West Loop passes through the western end of Memorial Park, ensuring its safe transit south through Smith's holdings, close to and paralleling Post Oak Boulevard.[1] The West Loop is relatively free of billboards and therefore is more purely itself – a connector, like the other Houston freeways, but insulated by them into a field of activity without poles.

Metaphorically, the West Loop is not electrical path but Brownian motion. This shows in the difference between its traffic patterns and those of other freeways. Other freeways are congested at peak hours or when there are wrecks or floods or roadwork to contend with. The West Loop, by comparison, evolved past that point in the mid-eighties, when, for a while, it was the busiest stretch of freeway in the nation, with an average daily traffic count of 231,000 vehicles. The latest published daily average, for 1990, is a mere 224,000, making the West Loop still the busiest freeway in the city but only the second busiest in the state, after a stretch of the LBJ Freeway in north Dallas (227,000 vehicles per day for 1990). The Nilotic inundations of the West Loop's traffic stream have been almost unbelievably stimulating, turning the freeway's frontage roads and the commercial zones visible from its overpasses into a valley of giants ruled by Philip Johnson and John Burgee's beacon-topped Transco Tower, in company with lesser marvels by Johnson, Cesar Pelli, and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and the enfilade of the Woodway Canyon. "Uptown" Houston, as this aggregation is now called as a public relations convention in preference to the earlier designation Magic Circle, is the eighth-largest business district in the United States and is expected to double in worker population over the next 20 years.

Harper Leiper Studios Inc

West Loop looking north from U.S. 59.

Best of all, the West Loop joins what is perhaps the most exquisitely symbolic pairing in the American landscape. On the west side, shielded by scraggly pines within a gated sports-and-health center for stressed-out executives (which recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection), is the hotel room that serves as the primary private residence of the President of the United States, at least for tax and voting purposes. On the east stands the Houston headquarters of the Resolution Trust Corporation, a $500 billion workout center for the real estate lending industry, created to ensure that profits stay private and losses are duly socialized.

All the development in the corridor was predictable, but little of it was, in fact, comprehended in the 1950s, when Loop 610 was planned. Back then, the Loop was intended simply as a bypass route to relieve congestion downtown and on the city's thoroughfares through the end of the century. But, as Peter C. Papademetriou explains in his authoritative *Transportation and Urban Development in Houston, 1830–1980*, the Texas Highway Department's decision to develop the Loop and the new freeways of the 1950s and 1960s with parallel frontage roads embodied "a philosophy that it was less costly to build more roadway than [to] buy out access rights."[2] This all but guaranteed that the Loop would also function "as a local street, or a collector street, conceptually at the opposite end of the traffic spectrum [from a freeway loop]." This potential was nowhere more heroically realized than on the West Loop, in part because of the spectacular highrise building spree that acquired a self-fulfilling momentum with the development by Gerald D. Hines Interests of the Galleria complex, thereby exploiting the market demographics inherent in the charmed geographic area that the West Loop passes by.

To the east of the West Loop, below and beyond Memorial Park, is River Oaks, while to the west lie Tanglewood and the incorporated Memorial villages. The neighborhoods west of the freeway have a peculiar unity: in them, low-scaled fifties and sixties ranch houses are set behind open drainage ditches. A remnant of the not-so-distant agricultural past, these ditches link the region visually as much with Bordersville and West Columbia as with River Oaks. Even so, these neighborhoods are in the top tier of Houston's elite residential areas, and all predate the West Loop. It was the proximity of these top-dollar demographic swatches, in fact, that made the Galleria, precociously conceived as specialty retail on a quasi-European theme, Houston's special contribution to high-speed consumer-urbanism.

Stands of old trees and the topographical variations afforded by Buffalo Bayou (its waters laced at the Loop only with effluent from the nascent communities of the pine forests and prairies to the west) were among the chief attractions abetting the creation of these enclaves, insulated, like a piney dream of southeastern Connecticut, from the unpleasantness to be found in working-class neighborhoods. This preservation of a semblance of primeval identity was embraced by area residents as a matter of both principle and interest, and they strove to keep the bayou free from such unwelcome intrusions as continuous north-south roads. As a result, until 1989 not a single north-south street crossed the bayou to link I-10 and U.S. 59 between Shepherd Drive and Voss/Hillcroft. An impregnable green curtain meandering along the bayou across the western half of the city secured the social position of a relative handful of houses. Consequently, all the area's local north-south traffic, not just that coming from outside the West Loop corridor or generated by Uptown growth, was pushed onto the West Loop. Ergo, non-peak-hour congestion where the green curtain parted.

INTERESTINGLY, the routing of the freeway through Memorial Park actually helped preserve the development options for privately held land to the west. Plans for a second breach, the 1989 extension of Chimney Rock across the bayou to join Memorial Drive with I-10, resulted in an acrimonious process that, as former Houston Planning Commission chairman Burdette Keeland notes, took from the 1940s to the 1980s to effect (*Cite*, Fall 1990, p. 24). The maintenance of the bayou barrier was a strategically brilliant social and political achievement, in view of Houston's zoning-free, no-lands-barred pattern of development. For as anyone who has bought a house in a subdivision or even merely studied ads for residential real estate knows, all new suburban houses, from the Houston Heights in the 1890s and Montrose in the 1910s to Kingwood and First Colony today, were sold with an implicit promise: "Move out here, live in tamed but otherwise unspoiled nature, and you will be a happier, more fulfilled person. In addition, you will be spared, forever, from the churning real estate market that afflicts the rest of the city. Your neighborhood won't turn into a slum, and it won't skyrocket up

OF ALL FREEWAYS

in value so much that speculators will drive you out to build a mall or an office park."

And as anyone who has lived in Houston more than half a boom-bust cycle knows, in a city that thrives on the unabated churning of the real estate market, the sellers of most subdivisions have no intention of honoring any such promise, which evaporates like a sulphurous Clinton Drive fog as soon as the developer's investment is recovered and control of his municipal utility district is sold out to the home buyers. From that point on, the dynamism of the market takes over, and the subdivision's value begins to fall or rise, almost never standing still. As Houston's long-deferred experiment with zoning begins to counteract the relentless neighborhood displacements occasioned by this unbridled speculation, the example of the neighborhoods to either side of the West Loop holds certain lessons.

Of all the participants in the great real estate casino that Houston has been since the Allen brothers began selling lots, only the residents of the Buffalo Bayou barrier have managed to achieve stasis for more than a year or two. Unfortunately, the lesson of the bayouside communities is that the only thing that actually worked was sufficient spare cash to create economic and political buffer zones. Now it appears that, zoning or no zoning, the buffer zone that held for the past 40 years will not be enough. Because the West Loop has in effect redefined the city's physical center and become its central artery, the bayouside communities have become, in essence, part of a new inner city. If Billy Joe Don needs to get from FM 1960 to Pearland, he doesn't much care that the residents of Tanglewood wish to maintain what remains of its traditional connection with Memorial Park. All he knows is that the West Loop is bumper-to-bumper.

The political power of Tanglewood and its neighbor communities remains enormous, but it has been perceptibly eroded over the 1980s, with changes in the Houston City Council that emphasized (and may soon eliminate altogether) at-large representation in an effort to increase minority-group membership. Most of all, the residents of the barrier have to contend with the patchwork emergence of the "Uptown" business district, which has established itself as a formidable economic generator and political force, and which is beginning to tire of the rustic-domestic pretensions of its neighbors. It is in this context that the plan to expand the West Loop became a big – often literally screaming – deal. The Texas Department of Transportation (a 1991 renaming of what, since the 1970s, had been called the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation) sees itself as responsible to the through-traffic commuter and has been planning to expand the West Loop for over a decade to alleviate congestion and to deal with actual and projected growth in traffic. From the start, the department has sought to achieve this expansion by double-decking the West Loop, like the portion of I-35 that runs to the east and north of downtown Austin. The state's intentions have been reflected as a matter of course in its long-range planning and also in studies released by Metro, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and other local planning bodies over the years.

The first public controversy over the plan arose in 1989, when highway officials released a double-decking scheme for public comment. This much must be said for the scheme: it had a certain physical grandeur. Two elevated lanes in each direction would have started on the Southwest Freeway near South Rice, risen above the 610–59 interchange to a height of about 100 feet, run some 50 feet above the outer lanes of the West Loop, crossed over the top of the 610–10 interchange, and extended along I-10 eastward to T. C. Jester Boulevard and westward to Antoine. At the same time, the current width of the West Loop would have been expanded by two lanes in each direction, increasing the total number of lanes (not counting frontage roads) from 8 to 12. And the area's access ramps would have been reconfigured to make entering and leaving the freeway less difficult and hazardous.

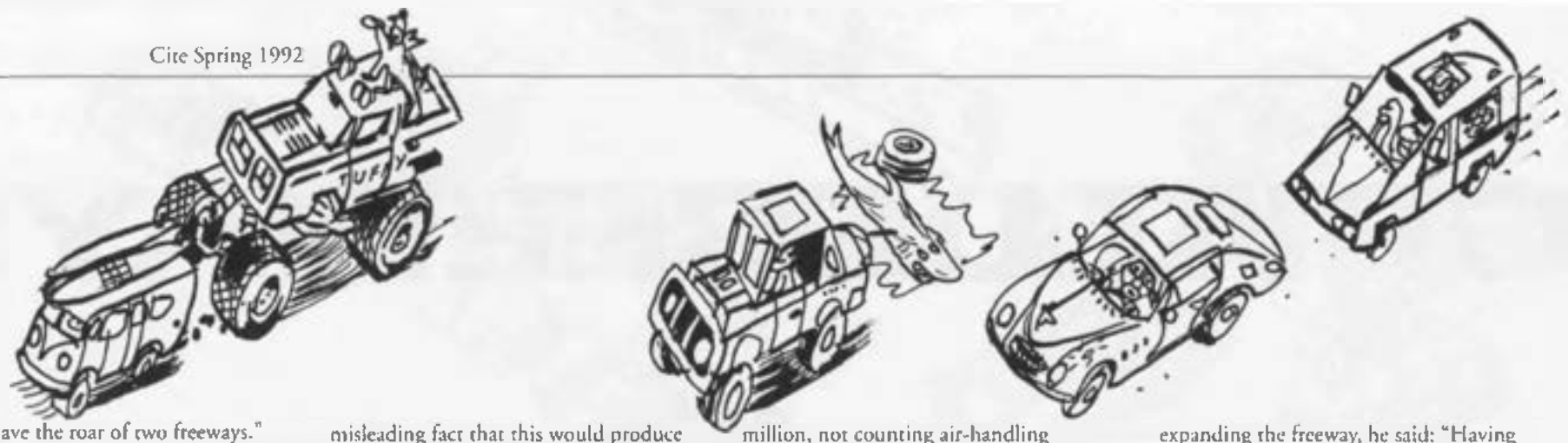
ENGINEERS at the highway department estimated that the designed capacity of the West Loop would increase from the then current 200,000 average daily trips to 275,000; this capacity, they said, would be reached in 2010. The specific purpose of the double-decked lanes would be to reroute long-distance traffic, taking it out of what one engineer called "the turbulence in the corridor that is caused by all the entering and exiting vehicles."

Hedging their bets, officials said that the proposal for elevated lanes was only one of three options under consideration. They were also studying widening the West Loop at its current grade level and sinking the roadway below grade. But both alternatives to double-decking had big problems, they said. Widening the freeway at grade would have demanded that state officials acquire an additional 40 feet of right-of-way on each side of the freeway, and this was complicated by the fact that several large structures would stand just over 20 feet from the freeway frontage roads. The cost of acquiring the buildings and land would have added perhaps $100 million to the $80 million needed for the freeway improvements. Sinking the roadway would have taken even more land, to account for the thickness of retaining walls. And it would have been complicated by the proximity of Buffalo Bayou, which has a tendency to overflow into low-lying areas during heavy rains.

Local residents argued against the highway department's plan. Mike Globe, president of the Afton Oaks Neighborhood Association, said: "Elevated lanes would introduce additional noise into what is already a very noisy area, and it would be visually degrading to what is now an attractive portion of Houston. The scope of the type of structure they are talking about is such that it removes any human scale from the area." By proposing a least-cost engineering solution for West Loop traffic, Globe maintained, officials risked exacting a greater cost from the neighborhoods and work centers that would be damaged. "A neighborhood without zoning like ours is extremely fragile; it only takes a little to tip the scales toward urban decay, and we

Courtesy Texas Department of Transportation

Visual simulation of 24-lane widening of the West Loop, looking south from San Felipe.



already have the roar of two freeways." Don Olson, director of the city's parks and recreation department, also condemned the double-decking proposal, saying the noise it would generate would threaten Memorial Park. "From the standpoint of the city, we own some highly scenic park land that has already been cut into by the West Loop and by Memorial Drive, and that already has significant noise problems," Olson noted in a 1990 interview. "We don't want to lose any more land to highway projects. And we want to see the mobility problems of the area solved in a comprehensive way that has the least impact on the park, instead of having them dealt with piecemeal." Olson said he was concerned about any solution "that will just push more traffic through the corridor, making the relief valves more congested" – and leading inexorably to calls to widen Memorial Drive. But it was opposition from Uptown Houston and individual commercial-property owners in the area that killed the double-decking plan. John Breeding, director of the Uptown Houston Association, said in an interview in early 1990, just before highway officials abandoned double-decking, that "an elevated expressway is inconsistent with an urban situation like this" and urged highway department planners to design a sunken roadway.

THE matter moved out of public discussion in early 1990, and a West Loop Task Force was constituted, with two representatives of the highway department (including then highway commissioner Wayne Duddlesten of Houston), five representatives of Post Oak business interests, and representatives from Metro, the city of Houston Parks Board (including Don Olson) and Planning Department, the Greater Houston Partnership, and the Citizens Environmental Coalition. Late in 1990, both Duddlesten and Olson were quoted in press accounts as saying that widening the freeway at grade level looked like the best compromise, even though it meant some loss of park land, which Olson put at 1.5 acres.

Again, there was little reaction to this testing of the waters. Then came the public presentation in late November at the Doubletree Hotel, at which department officials hoped to release details and answer questions about their quietly negotiated compromise: a $280 million, 24-lane wonder that would require three acres of Memorial Park and provide five lanes in either direction for express traffic, four in either direction for local freeway traffic, and three on either side for frontage, so as to accommodate not 275,000 vehicles daily but 350,000.

The department officials did not want to emphasize what they saw as the true but misleading fact that this would produce the world's widest single freeway; after all, it was only an addition to what was already a 14-lane project. They came armed with computer-generated views of the new freeway, showing how it could incorporate landscaping in its medians, and they were ready to talk about some new sound-absorbing structures they would use to cut noise. Instead, they found themselves confronted by an angry crowd of between 500 and 600 people, including city council members Jim Greenwood and Sheila Jackson Lee and a well-coordinated series of parks advocates, neighborhood representatives, and emissaries from citywide environmental groups. All expressed outrage at the scale of the project, its violation of the park, and its obvious intent to stimulate automobile traffic through the corridor. The project would turn Houston "into one big shoulder to Loop 610," said Greenwood, who suggested that the department turn instead to comprehensive planning to expand other traffic routes and alternative mobility measures. Lee was quoted as saying, "This expansion goes right in the face of the city's efforts to comply with the Clean Air Act."

In December the Houston City Council voted 13-0 (with two members absent) to oppose the 24-lane expansion plan. Outgoing mayor Kathy Whitmire spoke against the plan, even though officials of her administration had been involved in the task force negotiations and had proceeded with her apparent blessing. Incoming mayor Bob Lanier waffled on the matter, saying that the highway department's plan should proceed if it was the right thing to do. Of those involved in the negotiations, only the Uptown Houston representatives held firm. In an interview in early 1992, John Breeding of Uptown Houston said that his group had given up the sunken-freeway option, convinced by highway department officials that it would be too costly and technically too difficult: "The widening option would bring the freeway within a few feet of some buildings, but at ground level. We feel that is a lot more acceptable than at the third or fourth floor." Breeding also vowed that, if the compromise plan unraveled, his group would oppose any attempt to reintroduce the elevated-express-lane option. "There are groups that have fought freeway proposals for thirty years and finally won, and we are prepared to go to similar lengths if necessary," Breeding said.

With the compromise apparently undone, highway department officials again dropped back. The 24-lane proposal was only one of 12 options they were studying, they said. They were still plotting out everything from "no-build" ($50 million) to closing the West Loop's entrance lanes to local traffic ($450 million) to variations of a sunken freeway ($500 to $800 million, not counting air-handling equipment, water pumps, and generators).

WHILE highway officials ran their numbers, the focus again shifted. In a manner typical throughout modern Texas, private interests began to develop the comprehensive vision that public entities had failed to achieve. Uptown Houston, which as a group knows that expansion of mobility represents the difference between its own growth projections and stagnation, has had consultants working on plans for incorporating some form of public transit into a reworked street network for the business center. What form that transit will take keeps changing. Until last fall, it looked like it would be monorail. With the election of Bob Lanier, that changed to light rail on existing railroad lines, and in February it shifted to a regional bus plan. By then John Breeding said he believed that rail transit in Houston was dead, and that an all-bus system would be the choice of the future. With that realization, he hoped to ensure that the future expansion of the West Loop would at least be coordinated with the plans emerging for increasing mobility in Uptown. "There's no way you can justify having 24 lanes of concrete out there," he said. What he anticipated at that point was forgoing one lane in either direction of both the express and local highway lanes in favor of a single lane for high-occupancy or "fixed-guideway" vehicles – buses, or even trains.

Neighborhood activists were still hoping to kill every expansion option but the sunken freeway. Dr. Robert Silverman, representing one resident coalition, felt that the 1990 amendments to the federal Clean Air Act, which require city and regional planners to find ways to cut automobile emissions, would help block the expansion. He also was of the opinion that the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (signed into law by President Bush in Arlington the day that General Motors announced it was planning to cut 70,000 jobs from its work force), which requires that future highway-construction projects not contribute unnecessarily to expanding the demand for automobile use, might make it possible to kill the project altogether. Moreover, according to Silverman, with the Houston City Council on record opposing the project, state officials would be compelled to bring forth a locally acceptable solution.

Not so, according to Don Garrison of the Texas Department of Transportation. "Legally, under the new federal funding bill, it's between the state and the feds," says Garrison. He added that his office had kept both the Environmental Protection Agency and federal highway administration officials abreast of plans from the start. Clean-air requirements would be met by expanding the freeway, he said: "Having cars in stop-and-go traffic produces a lot of pollutants. If you can get them moving faster, you actually reduce the amount of pollutants in the area, which satisfies the EPA. Same thing with noise: get the traffic moving faster and it decreases." Silverman and other neighborhood activists vowed to test Garrison's assertions in court and through the political process and to do their best to knock the freeway-expansion plan off the tracks.

Whether elevated, at grade, sunken, or even not at all, the expansion of the West Loop seems to have settled back down into the realm of technicalities. By April its future appeared seriously, if not fatally, imperiled, as Silverman had predicted by the impending application of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, the effect of which even in Houston was to shift substantial appropriations originally intended for highways to mass transportation. Milton Dietert, district engineer for the Houston district of the Texas Department of Transportation, was reported in April as hoping simply "to do small projects such as the Westheimer entrance ramp, and leave the loop widening headaches for the next century."[1]

But whatever its fate, the 24-lane "compromise" that had emerged under the guidance of business leaders with the power to forge a working political consensus in the vacuum left by city and state officials signaled a shift in the city's political geography of far greater significance than the size or arrangement of the freeway itself. The West Loop, which in a sense came into being as a guardian of the neighborhoods through which it passed, had at last become an indistinguishable extension of Uptown, the business center it had done so much to make possible. In the process, the West Loop had been socially leveled, and was now, like the other freeways of Houston, just another massive culvert of cars. Let Houston zone itself blue in the face, but if economic motives could override the Buffalo Bayou barrier, no force for neighborhood stability could be depended on to count for anything, anywhere, any longer inside the Beltway. ■

1 Mel Young, "Loop Freeway Gets Tough Punch," *Houston Chronicle*, 23 December 1954.

2 Peter C. Papademetriou, *Transportation and Urban Development in Houston, 1830–1980* (Houston: Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, 1982), p. 85.

3 Karen Weintraub, "Mass Transit Gets a Leg Up at Expense of Area Highways," *Houston Post*, 13 April 1984.

Peter Brown

Working at home is a prevalent, if in most places little advertised, aspect of everyday life. In Houston, as these photographs show, home-based industry is more openly accommodated in the absence of zoning.

WORKING AT HOME

J. B. Jackson

WHEN should we keep the place where we work separate from the place where we live? It depends very much on the kind of work. In the city, factories and heavy traffic make certain areas all but uninhabitable, and we protect residential neighborhoods from contact with industry by means of zoning. But in a small town or a village the problem is more complicated: we want to preserve the green, quiet atmosphere of our residential streets, yet we are reluctant to exclude families who depend on a home enterprise. I have neighbors who work in town all day and whose houses and front lawns are models of small-town domesticity. But I also have neighbors who operate a laundromat, and others who live above their machine shop. Their front yards are disheveled parking lots. Still, I enjoy doing business with them. They are near at hand and they are friendly.

What is at stake in this and similar instances is not so much a matter of aesthetics or property values as it is of how we define the home and its role in the community. That is a definition hard to come by. I thought I might find the answer in a publication called *Home: A Place in the World*.[1] It consisted of the proceedings of a conference held in 1990 that was attended by a number of social scientists, historians, architecture critics, and other authorities. In the words of the editor, the conference was designed to "explore the ideology of home, its meaning as a central idea, as well as the crises engendered by its loss in homelessness and exile, and by the experience of loss suffered in alienation." An impressive agenda!

In fact, the book opened my eyes to the complexity of a subject that I had thought I understood. What the speakers discussed, often with eloquence and learning, was the *idea* of home, home as an individual, sometimes solitary experience. The notion of being at home, for instance, was defined as "a mental or moral condition," and Georg Simmel was quoted to the effect that "home is an aspect of life and at the same time a special way of forming, reflecting and interrelating with the totality of life." I learned that home could be likened to a set of Emersonian conceptual concentric circles.

I also noted, to my surprise, that house or shelter actually had very little to do with home. There were disparaging references to the current use (or misuse) of "home" as the equivalent of "residence" – "the linguistic waste product of the real estate industry." Certainly the joys of returning to the homestead have often been exaggerated, but I was struck by the fascination that the concept of homelessness seemed to hold: no fewer than four speakers expatiated on what was termed "a somber and significant domain," and one speaker declared that the real alternative to homelessness was "not shelter but solidarity."

This outspoken hostility to the house as one aspect of home was puzzling. Some of it was clearly inspired by an urge to astonish, to shock; but I began to understand the attitude after reading in one of the papers a reference to home as a withdrawal into the safekeeping of our dwelling. "The cloister and the cell as home, places of meditation, and work are reflected in secular modernity by the idea of the writer's home . . . to which one retires from the outside world or family, bed, and board of the rest of his house."

So the cat was at last out of the bag! Despite all the discourse about alienation and exile and the grandeur of homelessness (especially for the writer and thinker), home proved to be little more than an academic version of the middle-class American house, dedicated to privacy, leisure, and remoteness from the workaday world.

"Western culture," Yi-Fu Tuan has written, "encourages an intense awareness of self and, compared with other cultures, an exaggerated belief in the power and value of the individual. . . . This isolated, critical and self-conscious individual is a cultural artifact. We may well wonder at its history. Children, we know, do not feel or think thus, nor do nonliterate and tradition-bound peoples, nor did Europeans in earlier times."[2]

He noted that in the evolution of the European house, "more and more rooms were added that enabled the householder and his family to withdraw from specialized activities and to be alone if they should so wish. The house itself stood apart from its neighbors."[3] He mentioned the various ways in which the middle-class or academic householder withdrew from the public sphere: by a complete rejection of gainful employment in the home, by a sentimental cult of closeness to nature, and finally by a clearcut, unmistakable separation of the residence (in the suburbs or in exurbia or in the condominiumized wilderness) from the office or factory or classroom. I find that the notices of houses for rent in the columns of the classifieds in the *New York Review of Books* and the *Nation* give a wonderfully concise description of the ideal home of the professional or academic citizen: "Charming secluded environmentally friendly house: three bedrooms, three-car garage, swimming pool, solar energy, extensive library, breathtaking views of unspoiled rural landscape. Ideal for sabbatical hideaway or nature contacts. No smokers need apply; no pets, no children."

There is much comfort in the thought that this decadence is confined to a very small class, and that now, as in the past, the vast majority of Americans are committed to a different definition of the home. As one of the speakers at the conference observed, "Most historians have tended to generalize for the whole society on the basis of the middle-class experience. The process by which working-class families eventually adopted the new domestic lifestyle has not been documented. . . . For working-class families the home was not merely a private refuge; it was a resource that could be used for generating extra income."

The academic and professional middle class want their houses to be as inconspicuous as possible: to avoid being ostentatious, and to blend with the natural environment. But for the rest of us, the house is there to be seen. It shows that we are permanent members of the community – village, neighborhood, parish, school district, subdivision. In the words of a philosopher: "Property makes a man visible and accessible. I cannot see a man's mind or his character. But when I see what he has chosen and what he does with it, I know what he likes, and quite a good deal about his principles."

WHAT the average contemporary American dwelling tells us about the family is whether it is rich or poor and how much it values public opinion. The house tells us nothing about how the family makes its money, and reticence on that score is one of the benefits of our emphasis on privacy. But until three or four centuries ago in Europe, the size and exterior features of the house told us the social status of the family *and* how it contributed to the community; and that was because in those times home and place of work were one and the same. This was even true of the house or castle of the nobleman: by law he was allowed to adorn it with castellations and a moat and a dungeon to indicate that he had juridical powers and was committed to defending the community. The number of bays in the house of the yeoman indicated the number of acres he farmed and what he paid in taxes; in the case of certain ancient homesteads, a seven-foot fence showed that the owner had the right to maintain the king's peace among his servants and in his family, without police interference. The lowliest of houses was the one-bay cottage with less than enough land to farm. The cotter supported himself and his family by working for others and by what we now call cottage industries: the production of everyday items such as tools, pots, harness, even food that the other villagers could buy.

Thus almost every house in a medieval village fostered participation in the life of the community as a place of work or where certain services were performed. No less universal was the emphasis on visibility and accessibility. The cottage was open to the buying public and to the authorities; the nobleman's house had its hall for public assembly and its court for trials. It could be said that community flourished at the expense of privacy, not to preserve it. In towns where space was limited, the absence of privacy was notorious. A family and its hired help often lived and worked in one room, and much of their activity spilled over into the street, where they displayed their wares. If a house impeded the flow of traffic or was the scene of too much rowdiness and noise, it could be moved or destroyed.

The community organized around work and public service functioned most smoothly in rural villages, where farmers, already accustomed to producing for their daily needs, set up home industries and made money selling to the villagers; for many, indeed, farm work was a secondary source of income. In *The Colonial Craftsman*,[4] Carl Bridenbaugh reports that many colonial villages, especially in New England, rapidly evolved their own group of basic home manufactures and crafts, located within or next to the dwelling; part-time farmers produced wagons, tools, and utensils, tanned leather, made hats and shoes and furniture, and even produced food – "to the great convenience," in the words of an 18th-century commentator, "and advantage of the neighborhood." What we forget in our admiration of the colonial village is that it long retained those medieval controls on the size and location of houses, the limitations on privacy, and collective work obligations.

This arrangement came to an end with the industrialization of many crafts in the latter half of the 18th century, first in the towns, then in the countryside. Thomas Hubka's book *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn*[5] is a remarkable study of the way many New England farmers sought to keep alive the traditional relationship between home industries and the community, only to succumb to market-oriented one-crop agriculture. But in terms of the house, the divorce from community control and from the workplace came much earlier. Yi-Fu Tuan gives instances of it in the 14th century.[6] Philippe Ariès says it was in the 16th century that the house of the merchant and prosperous farmer began to be designed as a private autonomous domain dedicated to the joys of family life.[7] Only in the 19th century, however, did the average American family discover privacy in the home. The monotony and shabbiness of many company towns and tenement buildings and early subdivisions should not deceive us. Each house was a private refuge; references to community and work are remote and invisible.

This is by no means the end of the story. Architectural historians, concentrating almost exclusively on the evolution of the middle-class house, avoid discussing changes in the wage-earner's house over the last 50 years, and social historians discuss the place of work largely in terms of the factory or mine or corporate farm. The ancient tradition of working at home as a secondary source of income is either ignored or dismissed as a kind of tinkering (made fashionable as a topic by Lévi-Strauss's discussion of *bricolage*.[8]) Someday a student will discover the American tradition of home industry as it expressed itself first in woodworking – a craft that 19th-century European travelers much admired – and then in the mid-19th century in our mechanical skills. It was on the farm that these were first manifest, and to this day the farmer is still an inventor of labor-saving devices and ways of using power. But the urban worker, lacking space at home and the expensive tools necessary for mechanical work, only really found his outlet with the popularization in the 1930s of the low-cost family automobile, closely followed by the popularization of the truck (and other commercial models) for family-oriented work. Possession of these expensive and useful objects involved not only repairs and maintenance but improvements and experimentation, and a new money-making career evolved – always centered on the house – of hauling and distributing and collecting, and of transporting passengers, usually on a small, local scale. Although the house itself was left inviolate by this new home industry, the front lawn, the backyard, and the margin of the street were all taken over, to the dismay of neighbors. Further developments ensued: after World War II almost every low-cost house had an attached garage – spacious, equipped with light and power, easily accessible, and very visible. It provided space for work and for keeping tools, and its open door and driveway encouraged neighbors to come by and offer advice. Furthermore, it liberated the house itself from the dirt and confusion of the workplace and the occasional appearance on the kitchen table of oil filters and orange rags. The garage, in short, restored something like the old order of things: work in one part of the house, privacy in another.

ONE of the less celebrated accomplishments of technology was the production, beginning (I believe) in the 1950s, of power tools for the home. Power tools in industry and in construction were already common, but their availability in stores or for rent gave a remarkable boost to every garage industry and private craftsman. When we take the trouble to explore a blue-collar neighborhood, we are struck first of all by the immense number of garage industries focused on the automobile. They transcend all zoning regulations, all preservation programs, and all ethnic barriers (except in the most regimented of planned neighborhoods) and bring with them a scattering of used-car lots and auto junkyards and gas stations, not to mention traffic. But other, less spectacular home industries are in fact more numerous.

If these have any common denominator it is that they do chores and provide services that the modern family has neither the time nor talent to cope with. Even the most modest household, even the smallest trailer, contains a clutter of gadgets, most of them

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electronic and all of them prone to malfunctioning, from the electric carving knife to the electric trash compactor and the electric blanket. Invariably, they get out of whack after the guarantee has expired. What to do?

A man on Maple Street will take care of your problem when he gets home from work. You will find him in his garage. In another garage, on another emergency occasion, you will find a man who can mend furniture or put your power mower in shape, and elsewhere, in the house this time, a woman who bakes and decorates birthday cakes, or sells medicinal herbs or who is a part-time babysitter or instructor in classical guitar; and a man and his son who can repair computers and work on your car radio. All of these helpers request payment in cash to avoid income tax complications.

How do you find them? They never advertise; they are not in the Yellow Pages; and when you do locate them, they are likely to be away. It is essential that you be familiar with the neighborhood; it is essential that you know the work hours and can recognize the craftsman's car outside his or her favorite leisuretime resort – bingo parlor, laundromat, church. To take advantage of this array of industries and services, you have to be a member of the community of long standing.

There are two obvious reasons why these home enterprises flourish: they are convenient for their customers, and they are profitable for their owners. Our towns and cities have expanded enormously, thanks largely to the great increase in car ownership. As a result, it is a great undertaking to go into the central city to service and repair facilities. The modern mall, according to conventional wisdom, is the successor to Main Street, but in fact the mall has no room in its lavishly landscaped precincts for one-man enterprises. Who has ever seen a shoemaker or an upholsterer or a place where a toaster can be fixed in a mall? Garage industries are small, they are nearby, they are visible and accessible. Their background of domesticity – children and dogs and a vegetable garden, the smell of supper being prepared – makes the encounter a face-to-face social occasion. How can you complain if the job is less than professional and takes three days? We are all neighbors and are likely to meet soon again, at church or at the supermarket.

For the craftsman himself, the rewards are no less substantial. He is able to use the mechanical or industrial skills acquired in his full-time job to make extra money at home. He makes friends and plays a role in the local business world. If he is unusually skillful or inventive, he will be discovered by a wider clientele.

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I have used the word community often and, I'm afraid, loosely. I was interested in establishing, very roughly, the boundaries of a kind of working-class neighborhood where everyone is mobile, has limited leisure time and has a limited income; a community whose everyday domestic needs can be satisfied by the people who live nearby, and in which each household contributes to the smooth flow of existence. A community of this sort does not derive from any utopian dream or any compact. In many instances it comes into being imperceptibly and naturally, and seems to work surprisingly well. I attribute that, at least in part, to the way in which people in the community define and use their house or home.

Many years ago I suggested that the low-income house, whether owned or rented, whether a trailer or a bungalow, could be likened in its effect on those who lived in it to a transformer. "The property of transformers," I wrote, "is that they neither increase nor decrease the energy in question, but merely change its form. . . . [The house] filters the crudities of nature, the lawlessness of society, and produces an atmosphere of temporary well-being, where vigor can be renewed for contact with the outside."[7] That definition emphasized the privacy of the house, the interior as a refuge, and I still believe that this can be an important aspect. But the family itself, to say nothing of the public, judges the house as it relates to its surroundings, natural as well as social. We see the house as a sign not only of membership in the community, but of interaction with the community. So I am now inclined to believe that a better metaphor for the average house is an extended hand. It is the hand we raise to indicate our presence, the hand that protects and holds what is its own. Like the hand, the house creates its own small world. It is the visible expression of our identity and our intentions: it is the hand that reaches out to establish and confirm relationships. Without it, we are never complete social beings. ■

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2 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Segmented Worlds and Self: Group Life and Individual Consciousness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 139.

3 Ibid., p. 168.

4 Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman* (New York: NYU Press, 1950).

5 Thomas Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England* (Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 1984).

6 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Segmented Worlds*, pp. 66–67.

7 Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 392–93.

8 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 16–36.

9 J. B. Jackson, "The Westward-Moving House," in Ervin H. Zube, ed., *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J. B. Jackson* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), p. 36.

The Competition for Squeeze Play

Barbara Koerble

SEVENTEEN architects hoped that Arlington, Texas, would become their field of dreams when the owners of the Texas Rangers gathered during the last week of August 1991 to view a four-day marathon of design proposals for their new baseball park. While this architectural sporting event did not quite compare with Nolan Ryan pitching his 5,000th strikeout, it nevertheless caused a minor media sensation in the Dallas–Fort Worth metroplex, attracting television coverage on several channels and front-page stories in the local papers. Some of the participants have since questioned whether the event was indeed "sporting." In hindsight, they might acknowledge that they contributed to the advancement of a growing national spectator sport – the Pay-Less Architectural Competition. In the Texas League version, the 17 architects vying for the commission not only provided hours of entertainment for the team's owners, they did so at their own expense. The Rangers' management also introduced an interesting variation of the ground rules by inviting several smaller firms to play in the big leagues, along with heavy-hitting superstars and sports specialist firms doubling as pinch hitters.

The Rangers' program reflected a growing sentiment against domed multipurpose stadia with symmetrical playing fields and artificial turf.[1] The Rangers wanted a "new" approach, yet one rooted in baseball tradition and Texas history: an open-air, natural-grass ballpark designed to have intimacy and character. The winning entry, submitted by David M. Schwarz of Washington, D.C., evoked with historicist aplomb old-fashioned urban ballparks, although sited in an Olmstedian landscape. Schwarz is the design architect in a team selected by the Rangers that also includes HNTB of Kansas City as sports architect and HKS of Dallas as production architect.

David M. Schwarz, Rangers Stadium complex, partial site plan, 1991.

As Tom Schieffer, president of the Rangers, related after sitting through 34 hours of presentations, "It was the most extraordinary week that I can ever remember. . . . You were literally enthralled with almost every one of them. These people were so good and they were so creative that it was just exciting to be able to sit there and listen to them and to see how they developed a concept."

What really made the week extraordinary was the incredible lengths to which most of the competing firms went in order to win the commission. Almost all of the firms submitting "proposals" spent an intensive two-month design period preparing for the Rangers' consideration as many as 36 boards (HOK) and models of varying size and complexity, including one complete with flashing lights and crowd noises (HNTB). Estimates of expenses incurred by the individual firms ranged from $40,000 up to $400,000.

In the past, ballpark commissions have usually been offered only to sports facility specialists. In this case, the field was expanded to include such well-established "novices" as Michael Graves, Hammond Beeby & Babka, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, Kohn Pedersen Fox, Charles Moore, Antoine Predock, RTKL Associates, and Sasaki Associates, in addition to the veteran sports facility firms of Ellerbe Becket, HOK, and HNTB. Among the smaller firms involved were Cunningham Architects of Dallas, Growald Architects of Fort Worth, Keating Mann Jernigan Rottet of Los Angeles, Lake/Flato Architects of San Antonio, David M. Schwarz, and Lawrence W. Speck/Page Southerland Page of Austin. Many of the architects who entered, as well as those who declined to (among them Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates; Robert A. M. Stern; Frank Gehry; and Taft Architects), deplored the exploitative nature of the Rangers' request for proposal (RFP) process that, deliberately lacking submission guidelines, quickly escalated into a costly pseudo-competition, even though no honorariums were offered and no professional jury officiated. Clearly, in a sluggish economy architects were willing to gamble against long odds for a chance to win a major commission. It was also apparent that the sports franchise owners were equally eager to capitalize on the publicity value of top-name firms, particularly since the stylistic grab bag of the initial list included many architects whose work was at variance with the traditionalist agenda of the Rangers' management.

The event that propelled the Rangers into the stadium-building business in the first place was the sale of Eddie Chiles's 53 percent share of the Rangers to an investment team headed by George W. Bush, the President's son, and Edward "Rusty" Rose III in March 1989. One of Chiles's parting remarks was that Arlington Stadium was not fit for a major-league team. (Not that anyone had ever accused the Rangers of fielding a major-league team.) But putting the stage coach before the horses, the Rangers' new management made the issue of a new stadium of paramount concern.

The problems with the present Arlington Stadium date back to September 1971, when then Arlington mayor Tom Vandergriff persuaded the losing Washington Senators franchise to move to Arlington. Turnpike Stadium had been built in 1967 by Tarrant County for its minor-league team at the corner of Copeland Road and Interstate 30. When the Senators came to town, bleacher seating was hastily added to the small stadium. Other additions followed, giving the stadium an even more makeshift appearance. Vandergriff, in one of his more adroit political moves, managed to bypass local voter approval for funding stadium improvements by pushing special bills through the Texas Legislature.[2]

The result was that Arlington Stadium, the fourth smallest among the 26 major-league baseball parks, fielded 19,000 low-priced outfield seats among its 43,508 seats. Consequently, the owners claimed that the stadium produced less revenue than any other major-league stadium, including Fenway Park, which only seats 34,383. Among the pluses of Arlington Stadium are its intimate outdoor atmosphere, good sight lines, and natural grass turf, but it also comes burdened with narrow corridors, poor access, and inadequate women's restrooms. "I believe in a cozy feeling, kind of what we have out there now, but with better economics," stated Bush with genetically revealing precision. At the outset Bush made it clear that if a new stadium was built, he preferred an open-air facility with a grass field and more close-in reserved seats.[3] Rumors persisted, however, that the Rangers were considering a domed stadium because the Texas heat prevents day games during the summer.

Since the new managing partners lived in Dallas, speculation was rampant that a Dallas site for a new stadium was immi-

the Texas Rangers Stadium

David M. Schwarz, Rangers Stadium, Arlington, Texas. Postcompetition model, 1992.

nent. But Arlington mayor Richard Greene pushed the idea of renovating Arlington Stadium as the lowest-cost option for keeping the Rangers in town. An engineering study commissioned by the city proposed adding 17,000 premium reserved seats to the existing facility by extending the upper deck. However, the upper deck was not considered to be premium seating by the Rangers' management, because the seats were too high and too far back. Arlington's upper deck begins where the lower one ends, rather than extending over a portion of the lower deck. Before his eventual accession to the Rangers' demands for a new ballpark, Greene, with the assistance of Fort Worth architect Terry Harden, made two unsuccessful renovation proposals for the old stadium.[4]

Of no small significance to the Rangers' angling for a new stadium was their effort to capitalize on the rivalry between Dallas and Arlington, both in hot pursuit of the franchise. Comments by Rangers owners reported in the press seemed calculated to raise the anxiety level in Arlington and encouraged other cities to bid for the franchise. For months, the local press divulged various site proposals that included not only Arlington and Dallas but other "mid-city" sites in Plano and Irving as well. No fewer than eight sites were considered by the Rangers, who compared their 18-month search to that of the Milwaukee Brewers. The Brewers, however, studied 50 sites within a similar time frame before they opted to move 150 yards from their old stadium.

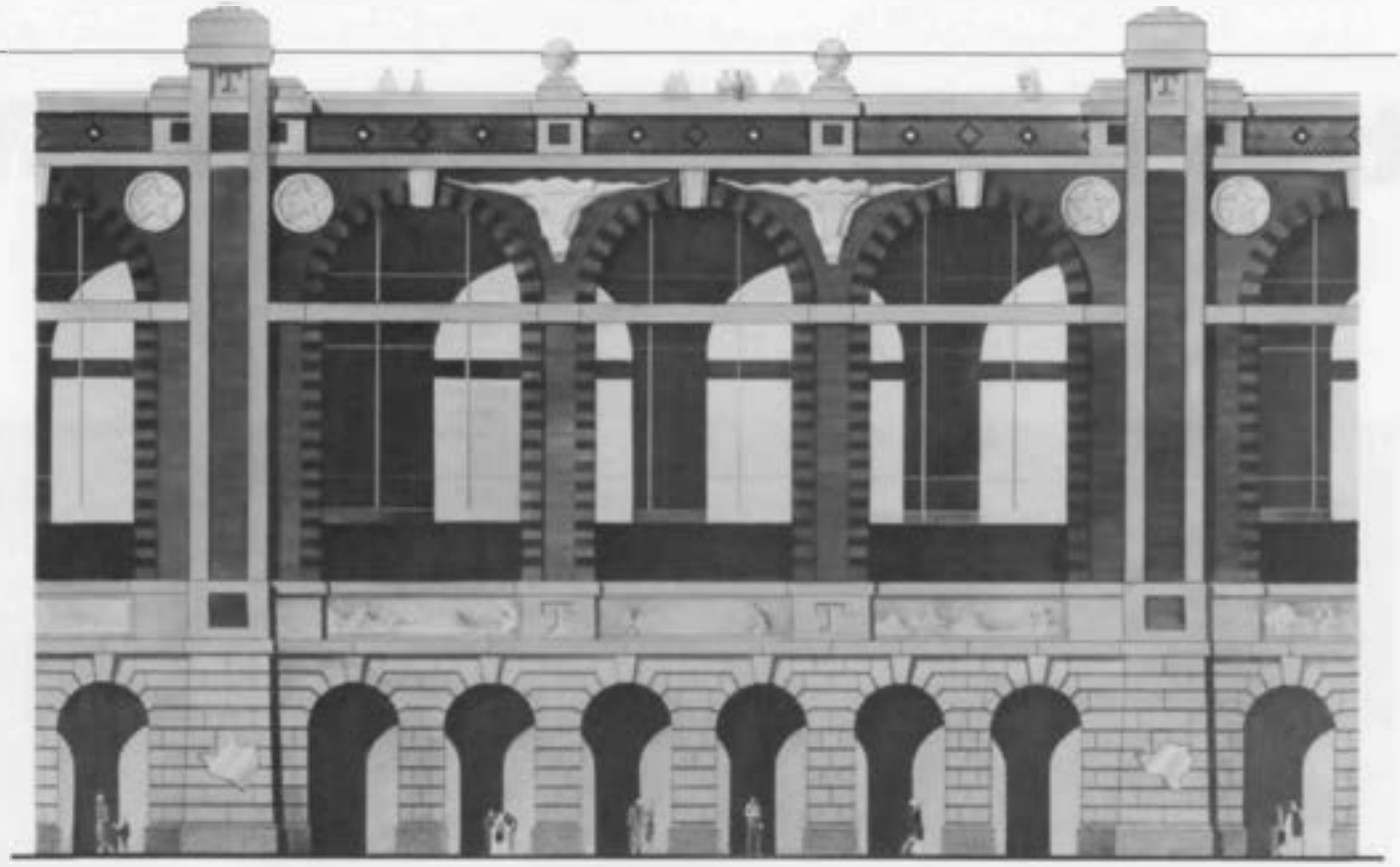
Fort Worth city leaders chose not to bid for the franchise, apparently deciding it was enough to have the Rangers in their backyard while avoiding the expense of building a stadium. A persistent budget shortfall in Fort Worth no doubt contributed to this attitude, but the headlines generated by a potential showdown with longtime rival Dallas were not to be missed. Mayor Greene obligingly provided denunciations of the "unbridled selfishness and arrogance of Dallas," which he asserted had "set back regional cooperation by 20 years."[5] Cognizant of its large subscriber base in Arlington, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* supported the city's Tarrant County "neighbor" to the east: "Because those who lust after *our* Texas Rangers stubbornly refuse to acknowledge the wisdom of leaving the team in Arlington, the forces for common sense throughout Tarrant County must double their efforts to repel the would-be kidnappers."[6]

Star-Telegram columnists were not to be outdone in the invective hurled at Dallas mayor Annette Strauss's Evil Empire: "Once again that ratty pile of gridlocked concrete, ugly green glass and quiche east of Texas 360 is drooling over the Texas Rangers. Some Dullest City Council blowhards have told their flunkies to work up another scheme to steal the team from Arlington."[7]

Dallas city leaders were interested in building a stadium downtown because of its potential for revitalizing the downtown core, deserted weekends and evenings. While city officials and editorial writers in Dallas were immediately supportive of various schemes and sites for a stadium in Dallas, especially one near the Farmers' Market, one columnist could not resist a comparison with Dallas's grandiose aspirations for the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center and the Rangers' equally grandiose expectations: "If we can build a 2,000-seat symphony center for $81.5 million, there's nothing to keep us from building a 60,000-seat ballpark for $2.4 billion that's every bit as nice. . . . [It] will be a pure baseball *chamber*."[8] However, one year later, no one was laughing as the search dragged on, and the Rangers' management took increasing heat for their delaying tactics and for pitting city against city. The tone of editorials and columns began to suggest that the Rangers were losing support on all fronts.

FOR months, the Rangers stalled by saying they were "analyzing" the results of a Gallup survey of their season ticket holders. Tempers really flared when it was revealed that one of the questions – "Which city do you most associate with the Texas Rangers?" – did not list Arlington as a possible choice, only Dallas and Fort Worth. Following President Mike Stone's explosive session with the press over this gaffe, the stage was set for Tom Schieffer's arrival and Stone's eventual dismissal. Schieffer was initially brought in as managing partner in charge of stadium development, but within a few months he became club president. Schieffer's ascendancy with the Rangers was attributed to his political skills and connections, honed during a youthful stint as a state legislator in the Texas House. However, there were some who remembered that his legislative career had been less than distinguished, qualifying for *Texas Monthly*'s ten worst legislators list in 1975 and only narrowly avoiding a repeat performance in 1977. His most notorious attempt at legislation was his sponsorship of a presidential primary bill all too transparently abetting the favorite-son candidacy of U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen.[9] Schieffer took to his new position with the Rangers with gusto, embarking on a whirlwind tour of other ballparks, hiring a consultant to guide the architect selection process, and fine-tuning the program.

When it came to finally selecting the site, several factors tipped the scales in Arlington's favor, including the potential loss of fan support if the stadium was moved too far west or east. Despite the stadium's shortcomings and the team's similarly lackluster performance, the Rangers had enjoyed good attendance in Arlington, reaching a high of 2.2 million in 1989 even though, along with Seattle and Cleveland, the team had never won a pennant or finished higher than second in its division in 20 seasons of play. Among the perceived drawbacks of the downtown Dallas site were the prospects of big-city crime and traffic congestion.[10] Indeed, the city of Arlington had already spent $443,000 to improve the freeway interchange at I-30 and U.S. 187 and further proposed to pick up $23 million out of



Horns aplenty: David M. Schwarz, competition elevation.

$62 million in additional road improvements around the new stadium, with the Texas Department of Transportation funding the rest. Ultimately, even though the Rangers played a waiting game, Arlington was the only city to tender a definitive proposal for stadium construction and transportation improvements. In the end, Mayor Greene prevailed by simply offering the Rangers everything they wanted.

One of the most dreamlike aspects of Schieffer's request for proposals was the expectation that Arlington's new ballpark would become its "center of community life" – especially since Arlington has never experienced even the most rudimentary sort of city center and was pieced together from commercial strips stretching along its arterial streets described as a "drive-through Yellow Pages" by one writer.[11] Although a handful of civic buildings are to be found in Arlington, they are diffused and inconsequential, as is the campus at the University of Texas at Arlington, split in two by a major thoroughfare that is depressed and spanned by pedestrian bridges to enhance its drive-through efficiency. Arlington was perhaps somewhat better equipped to become the entertainment center of the Metroplex or, as the program enthused, "the entertainment and tourist destination for the Southwest." Directly north of the stadium site is Wet 'n Wild, a summertime water park; to the east is Six Flags Over Texas, with numerous daredevil rides. The program intended that the ballpark should become the focus of a year-round attraction, not just a seasonal one.

There is nothing like the threat of the home team leaving to elicit an outpouring of publicly subsidized incentives to maintain the status quo, although the trade-offs in such cases are often of debatable value.[12] But Arlington does depend heavily on tourist revenue, so the threat of losing the team loomed large. To lock in the services of the Rangers for the next 40 years, the town ultimately anted up $135 million through a half-cent sales tax, approved by a two-to-one margin in a record turnout of Arlington voters on 19 January 1991. Five million dollars' worth of road improvements is being subsidized by Tarrant County and the city of Arlington. Of the $170 million price tag, the Rangers will contribute only $35 million, to come from the sale of luxury boxes, but the team has also promised to build a master-planned complex that will include a river walk, outdoor amphitheater, Little League park, learning center, and hall of fame, interspersed with shops and restaurants. These ancillary amenities were a key factor in helping to win popular support.

One thing that Arlington leaders did not require of the Rangers in return for the public subsidy of $135 million was any control over the appearance of the stadium or the development of the rest of the site. According to the RFP, the Rangers had full architectural and construction control over the entire project. City representatives could be invited as guests to the architect selection or design development proceedings, but they were not required participants. Neither were the Rangers compelled to solicit and respond to public wishes, although they have held several "fans' forums." A stadium authority comprising four Arlington City Council members and three Arlington residents was appointed by the city council to make recommendations to council regarding the project, but, unlike Baltimore's stadium authority, none of the members had prior experience in such matters.

In considering the many proposals submitted for the stadium, one might ask what exactly captured the interest of 17 architectural firms from around the country. Was it because the opportunity to design a baseball stadium comes along so rarely for most architects that they did it for the fun of it? Or are big commissions now so scarce that they felt compelled to try? The baseball mystique evidently came into play. As former baseball player Norman Pfeiffer related, "It's gone full circle from when I was in Little League to designing this and now my son is in Little League and I'm coaching."[13] Schieffer recalled that every architect began his presentation with some personal anecdote about baseball.

And by expanding their sights beyond sports-specialist firms, the Rangers signaled a willingness to give "rookies" of exceptional promise an opportunity to raise the level of their game. As Scheiffer put it: "The designer we want for this facility is the one who is willing to go the extra mile and take some risks. This design could make a national reputation for a young firm." Schieffer's plan was to assemble a hand-picked design team, according to Ron Turner of Ellerbe Becker. "They didn't want alliances. They wanted to pick and choose and put people in slots."

What would be identified in the press as a "design contest" was in fact not a competition that conformed in any way to the American Institute of Architects' guidelines. Even though no stipends were offered to firms on a "short list" of 26, 17 of the firms invited chose to participate, in spite of the fact that the firms recognized that the RFP contained what various participants described as a "hidden agenda" or a "smokescreen" for a competition. "It was not intended to be a competition, but it certainly was a competition in the sense that Webster defines it," observed Janet Marie Smith, consultant to the Baltimore Orioles, who also acted as a consultant for the Rangers during the architect selection process. Why, then, did so many architects choose to participate? Dan Swearingen of Osborn Engineering observed, "The architectural profession is really hungry right now." In spite of this, and the fact that his firm has a 100-year history of ballpark design, including Yankee Stadium, Tiger Stadium, and Fenway Park, this time they opted not to compete because the risks were too great. Charles Young of Hammond Beeby & Babka noted: "Everybody knew it was a crap shoot. . . . I'm sure a lot of people were disappointed. We've heard rumors and griping about being used. It's part of the game. There's not a lot of work out there – you've got to compete. . . . If you don't enter, you don't win." While some of the larger firms took it in stride, others experienced at competing for commissions, such as Bill Pedersen, were shocked at the outlays made by many of the firms: "It was a ridiculous amount of time and energy expended with so little direction to go on."

Another frequently voiced concern was that the Rangers were simply interested in getting a lot of free ideas, a tactic that one consultant who was pumped for free information characterized as "strip-mining the profession." Lending some justification to this fear, George Bush responded, "Yes, sure," when asked whether the Rangers might incorporate some aspects of other competitors' proposals into the final design.

Why was the process structured so opportunistically? Many of the participating architects acknowledged that the client may not have known better, but that the Rangers' architectural consultant, Michael Pittas, should have. Pittas is a former head of the Design Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts and an honorary member of the AIA. At the NEA he had been an unstinting advocate of design competitions and set up a special category of grants for that purpose, asserting that while competitions made no difference in quality of design, they did in fact promise "Opportunity, Equity, Fairness" for an era "in which architects find themselves being exploited in private competition, . . . producing design work – schematic, almost full-job development drawings – in order to procure a commission."[14] Even though Schieffer was primarily responsible for drafting the RFP, Pittas was presumably well aware of the professional protocols that apply. Pittas acknowledged the hardball ethic of the Rangers' process: "When

Frontierland: Moore/Andersson Architects (Charl

Creekwalk: Lake/Flato Architects (David Lake and Ted Flato), competition rendering.

there is a limited amount of work, I think the competitive process works quite well. . . . There is no question in my mind that the participants acted competitively." He noted that even though it was not specifically requested in the RFP, both he and the client expected that the architects would go beyond a simple proposal, although he added, "I think we were all quite amazed at the quantity and quality of work from the majority of architects." While the means of presentation was left up to the individual firms, it was noted in the RFP that there would be space available to display models, wall space for rolled drawings, easels for presentation boards, and overhead and slide projectors, implying that some or all of these might be used for presentations.

Many of the participants wondered why the list of invitees was not winnowed down through a submittal process to a more manageable size. Norman Pfeiffer represented Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, a seasoned firm that has weathered many competitions. While Pfeiffer complimented the overall organization and professionalism of the event, he observed that the field of competing firms was "unusually large . . . in my experience. Usually that kind of presentational effort is done with maybe six firms that have been selected from a larger group through the submittal process rather than the interview process." As Schieffer explained to the architects during their site visit: "I'm a layman. I don't know much about architecture. I was not comfortable with choosing an architect based on a sales presentation. I wanted to see what creativity they brought to the table as opposed to them telling me what creativity they brought to the table. That's why we have invited you to come."

PITTAS was primarily responsible for coming up with names on the list of invitees, particularly those of the major firms. The nonjury for the noncompetition was composed primarily of the owners, managing partners Bush and Rose, and president Tom Schieffer. While several architects were present during the presentations, all were being paid as consultants by the owner and were not charged as impartial jurors. Indeed, the representatives of HKS hired as consultants were themselves seeking the position of managing architects for the project. Pittas was in a better position than the architects to know the level of sophistication of his clients and their design proclivities. As the client proved to be far more interested in a traditionalist approach, why was an architect like Frank Gehry asked, except for the value of his name recognition? Pittas, questioned as to Robert Venturi's decision not to participate, responded, "Yes, but we had Michael Graves, Kohn Pedersen Fox, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, Richard Keating, Tony Predock . . . ," ticking off the names as if they were interchangeable.

The omission of a stipend was purely a financial decision by the owner. Schieffer indicated that an honorarium for the architects was considered; a fee of $5,000 each would have added up to a lot of expense for the Rangers, he said, for the $170 million project but would have proved "not much" help to the architects. Stipends might, however, have helped the Rangers moderate their passion for "creativity" by trimming the list of invitees.

ries W. Moore and Arthur Andersson), competition model.

Some participants commented on the ambiguity of the RFP, although others thought it was very clear. The lack of specificity about submittal materials seriously disturbed many participants, especially when it became obvious during the interview that Tom Schieffer had specific expectations. Schieffer noted that some firms chose to develop certain areas of the program – parking, the river walk, retail – more extensively than the stadium design itself. Selecting one area for further development was actually suggested in the RFP: "Invitees may if they desire choose one of these items for detailed development to show a particularly creative solution to a problem." As John Gosling of RTKL recalled, Schieffer also advised firms during the site visit to "design to their strengths," i.e., work up a master plan if that was what they were particularly interested in. Yet Schieffer would later complain that some architects did not define the stadium clearly and that they did not provide elevations. "It was surprising to me that the ballpark itself was something that a lot of people didn't focus on, or didn't define it as well. And I think that there are a couple of reasons for that. The first is that the ballpark is just very difficult to do. It is a geometric problem that is difficult to deal with. And secondly, I think that there was some reluctance on the part of some of the architects to give us a look as to what the façade of the ballpark would be for fear that it would not be what we wanted or what we liked." Schieffer had, after all, admonished the architects during the site visit, "You ought to be very conscious of an exterior of the building and not just do it from the inside out, but take it from the outside in." He later said that to select a design without an idea of what the ballpark would look like would have been "a big leap of faith on our part."

Schwarz's rendering of the stadium exterior, complete with longhorn heads, relief panels of the Rangers, and baseball lamps, apparently was instrumental in winning him the commission. "When that façade went up on the screen, I said, 'That's it!'" Schieffer said.[15] He remembered that "David Schwarz was very forthright in what he said and what he had drawn. I thought he was willing to take risks to do that. I thought the design was very good, and it captured, I thought, what we were trying to say with making it a part of Texas. He was willing to stand out there and say, 'This is what I think it looks like.' And I thought that counted for a lot."[16]

Several of the invited firms were not willing to take the risk of dealing with the Texas Rangers, at least not in the manner outlined in the Rangers' RFP. However successful the effort to pull in many of the most valuable players of the architectural world proved, it is regrettable but understandable that the architectural firm most identified today with the synthesis and expression of popular culture, Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, chose not to bite. This was not for lack of interest, according to Stephanie Hodell, the firm's marketing director: "This was a building type we were dying to get our hands on." But, as Hodell explained, the firm recognized that the request for proposal was in reality a request for a competition entry: "If you want a competition and you want

Hole-istic: Michael Graves, competition rendering.

William Taylo

spectacular ideas, you should be willing to pay for it. . . . In a competition like this, what the developer walks away with is a lot of free ideas. This is a situation that is endemic to the profession. We've seen more competitions like this as the market has gotten tighter. We just feel that we can't continue to get work this way. . . . Everyone is wondering these days where to draw the line." Robert Venturi wrote a letter to Tom Schieffer outlining his objections to the process:

"We feel that the level of unpaid services requested is unfair and the process, as now constituted, will prove to be counter productive. The request for design concepts at this early stage will not, we believe, lead to the creative ideas you desire; and to accede to your request would be to go against some norms we have set ourselves, as architects, regarding careful analysis of the problem with the client.

"In our experience, the relationship between the client, the architect, the program and the budget is a very personal one. The great design solutions you are searching for develop out of that relationship, through an extensive analysis of issues, a direct collaboration with client-users, and a give and take between all parties. Designs shot from the hip without direct client-user participation are not merely superficial; they are usually not really innovative and they don't meet the client's true needs. A doctor can't operate on you before examining you, we can't, in good conscience, provide answers before knowing the questions."[17]

Three peaks: Hammond Beeby & Babka, competition renderings.

Taft Architects and Robert A. M. Stern & Associates also declined to enter, for similar reasons. Pittas said that Stern's office was "well into it" before withdrawing; however, a spokesman for Stern's office disputed that, saying the firm had withdrawn following the site visit when it became clear there would be no jury and no stipend. A spokesman for Frank Gehry's office stated that he had been interested but had declined due to other commitments.

Gary "Corky" Cunningham, a Dallas architect who heads a small office, was the only one of the 17 who participated who chose not to develop a visual design proposal. Instead, he simply brought an outline of his thoughts about the project to discuss with the committee during his allotted time. Realistically, did he think this approach stood a chance against reams of renderings and elaborate models? Cunningham said perhaps, if the owners were interested in "more than picking a pretty building" and wished to initiate a dialogue with an architect to discuss "all those things that have to be expressed before you can draw a line." Cunningham believed the owners "wanted a fantasy atmosphere." For him, the potential of the site was in the response to the creek and trees, "the small things that make a place."

One of several contradictions in the design program stemmed from the flat, relatively undifferentiated and undeveloped suburban character of the 210-acre site, blanketed by the asphalt parking lots that surround the present stadium and softened only by the desultory meandering of Johnson Creek and an occasional clump of trees. The older ballparks that served as models for Schieffer's concept had been built in dense, circumstantially constrained neighborhoods, the idiosyncrasies of each site producing a unique form. Bill Johnson of Ellerbe Becket recalled that his firm's approach was to invent constraints for the site, which the stadium would then be made to appear to accommodate. This approach had been suggested in the program itself: "In the old parks, field configuration was dictated by the size of the city block. At this site we have the luxury of moving streets to make it appear as if they dictated field configuration."

Many competitors applied an orthogonal grid to the site, composed of parking "blocks" defined by trees. Keating Mann Jernigan Rottet acknowledged the highly commercial architectural character of Arlington by adopting a drive-in prototype. Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer employed a gridiron plan, but sought to energize it with a linear pedestrian mall set on a diagonal. Both RTKL and Sasaki Associates prepared site plans of Beaux-Arts formality, creating broad malls with the stadium as a focal point of the axes. Others softened the gridiron with organically shaped parks and lakes. Michael Graves's compartmented plan was as tautly organized as a computer chip.

In contrast, Antoine Predock took an anti-urban stance, seeking a more poetic synthesis of building and place. Altering the site's flat topography, Predock buried his stadium within a hill covered with wildflowers, distancing it from any urban connection to explore his own highly personalized typology of sacred mountain forms and ritualized procession. Lake/Flato's plan also exhibited an organic tendency, responding to the openness of the North Texas plains with foul lines radiating like spokes from the playing field into the surrounding landscaped parking areas to form tree-lined walkways and a public common. Larry Speck also sought to create activity-related linkages in his plan, extending biking and jogging trails beyond the site to connect with a pre-existing network of city parks. David Schwarz used an Olmstedian landscape vocabulary with meandering walkways and an emphasis on pedestrian amenities and activity areas, while pushing parking off site to adjacent blocks to the south and east. Lake/Flato's radially spoked layout was the only plan to include a section of underground parking, which was hidden from view under the common area. Predock deliberately placed parking far away from the stadium, in effect compelling the spectators to walk up the hill and smell the flowers as part of their ritual Rangers baseball experience. Ellerbe Becket designed a parking lot that seemed to appeal to Schieffer, who cited it in several interviews: shaped like the state of Texas, it had markers designating the location of several Texas cities, so that fans could remember what city they had parked near rather than a lot number.

Moore/Andersson Architects presented the most radical reinterpretation of the traditional stadium form in their fanciful interpretation of a Wild West theme, shaping frontier-inspired buildings into star points containing the stadium seating. This fantasia on Frontierland was undoubtedly a response to Arlington's theme park context, which includes not only Wet 'n Wild and Six Flags on I-30 but the multi-minareted, Moorish Palace of Wax and Ripley's Believe It or Not east of the city alongside a now-defunct amusement center that still sports a marooned pirate galleon.

MICHAEL Pittas had advised Schieffer to "let his prejudices show" in his program statements, and Schieffer did, after a fashion, but with enough ambiguity to confuse at least some of the participants. How new, how old did the Rangers want the stadium to look? The program volunteered simply that "baseball is fascinated with its past. . . . Such fascination with history and a resistance to change in the game suggests an architectural solution that evokes feelings of the past – a structure that suggest [sic] baseball has been a part of America and Arlington for many, many years. Yet the structure should not be a duplicate of another park. . . . We want a fresh, creative design that suggests history, but does not repeat it."

Some competitors, such as Charles Moore, interpreted a "fresh and creative design" to mean that the very form of a baseball stadium could be reinterpreted, while others read the allusion to "history" to suggest a recovery of baseball's earlier innings. The program did not specify that the building should evoke Texas history, yet in interviews following the competition, this was what Tom Schieffer said he was looking for, and he had in fact made pointed references to Texas history during the initial site visit by the architects on June 10. During this presentation, which was

Sails force: Martin Growald, competition rendering.

videotaped, he suggested that the architects look at the King William district in San Antonio and German farmhouses in Fredericksburg if they wanted to give a "Western look" to their projects, adding also that "I like traditional architecture, if anyone can define what that is."

Another clue appeared in the program's description of the exterior of the ballpark. Selection of stone, masonry, concrete, or steel was left to the architect, with the admonishment that "great care should be given to the exterior of the ballpark structure. It should be warm and inviting. . . . the viewer should see a building in which baseball is played – not a sterile, cold structure that looks as if it just landed from the moon." The reference to a "sterile, cold" lunar landing structure no doubt was intended to indicate that the Rangers were not interested in the doughnut-shaped generic sports complexes of the 1960s, plopped onto suburban sites and surrounded by seas of parking.

Schieffer apparently felt that ambiguity would bring out the best ideas: "We didn't want to stifle the creative process, so we didn't tell them a whole lot. And that's exactly what we got, creativity." Martin Growald took an internationalist approach, using the Eiffel Tower as a point of departure for his filigreed exposed-steel structure surmounted by wind sails and an artificial sun to produce what he promised would be a "spectacle unlike anything on the face of the earth." John Gosling of RTKL lamented that his firm had selected the "wrong suit of clothes" – art deco – in which to dress the stadium. Apparently any affinity with Dallas's Fair Park was malapropos; and in any case, as Schieffer later explained to Gosling, the Rangers did not consider art deco particularly Texan.

Other firms were more adept at suiting up. Schwarz's well-honed technique of collaging snatches of historical motifs probably was the most significant factor in his success. An extreme example of this is his Penn Theater building in Washington, D.C., which sports three completely different façades: one neo-deco, one International Style, one neo-Victorian.[18] Schwarz takes offense at being labeled a postmod-ernist, and instead offers his own appellation, "neo-eclectic." Schwarz also hedged his bets by presenting not one but two alternatives as elevations. Bobby Booth of HKS, who sat in on the presentations, related that Schwarz showed the committee both an art deco elevation rendering and the longhorn-studded, arcaded version. Schwarz then added suspense to his presentation by declaring that he had decided that only one was appropriate for the Rangers. The response to Schwarz's presentation had thus far been very positive, because it so thoroughly covered all aspects of the program. Booth felt that Schwarz might have bobbled the commission had he chosen the art deco theme, but he astutely "picked" the façade with the overtly Texan flavor.

Several of the Texas firms managed to evoke regional motives less ostentatiously. Lake/Flato drew directly from the Texas Hill Country vernacular, quoting the vocabulary of industrial sheds and limestone construction they had used for their Carraro House near San Marcos. Larry Speck also indulged his own interest in vernacular form and materials, selecting brick for both its historical association with the building type and its prevalence in North Texas.

Others either ignored or did not try to second-guess the program's stylistic preferences. Bill Johnson of Ellerbe Becket did not believe that the RFP suggested a historicist approach, but says that his firm's approach would have been modern regardless. Predock rejected what he termed the "nostalgia-based design approach" of the program for a more abstract image that was landscape-inspired. Graves employed his own distinctive "sui generis" vocabulary to produce an arcaded stadium that, schematically, was not too dissimilar from Schwarz's project.

Particularly imaginative approaches were taken by some architects to respond to climatic conditions, producing sail-like sun shields in both Ellerbe Becket's and Martin Growald's proposals; a diaphanous, elaborate shading structure in Speck's; air-cooling earth tubes in Lake/Flato's; and topiary screens in Kohn Pedersen Fox's. But, in the end, the team owners were uncomfortable with the more adventurous entries. The Rangers wanted a "monument to baseball," as George M. Bush explained. Schwarz gave them a commercially reassuring sampling of motifs stretched across a façade of rusticated pink granite and brick, surmounted by baseball-shaped lamps, and emblazoned with longhorn steer heads, Lone Stars, Texas state outlines, and friezes of baseball and western themes.

Disappointment inevitably follows such events, but the way the Rangers' "non-competition" was conducted was questioned in much the same terms by many of the competitors. Suspicions were frequently voiced that Schwarz had enjoyed an inside track. He does, in fact, maintain a small office in the same City Center tower that houses Schieffer's offices, which had been set up to facilitate work on such projects as Sundance West, financed by Edward Bass (who had studied architecture at Yale while Schwarz was also a student there), and the Cook–Fort Worth Children's Hospital, a development spearheaded by Cook Hospital Board president Robert Bass. Allegations of a "Bass connection" propelling Schwarz to victory were denied by Schieffer, who says that the Basses have no financial connection with the Rangers, but he noted that a good recommendation from Robert Bass did not hurt Schwarz. Schieffer did acknowledge that he had seen no built work by any of the participants other than Schwarz that he knew of, save for an office building in Washington by Kohn Pedersen Fox. He commented glowingly about Schwarz's creativity in creating a turreted, castlelike parking garage for the Children's Hospital, along with other details of the building. The parking garage is perhaps not the pinnacle of Schwarz's output, but a firsthand look at it made a strong and useful impression on Schieffer. So much so that even prior to the competition, Dan Swearingen recalls that Schieffer cited Schwarz as being the kind of creative talent he was looking for. Bobby Booth of HKS, who sat in on the "jury," said that he believed Schwarz was the clear winner because of his careful attention to every aspect of the written program, from seasonal color to air circulation. Certainly, Schwarz's facility for eclectic synthesis seems well matched to the Rangers' expressed desire for a stadium drawn from all the best bits of every other stadium in the country.

THE definitive design for the stadium, revealed in a model presented at a February 1992 news conference, features an asymmetrical configuration of the seating bowl and several quirks in the field design to make play more exciting. A right-field power alley has a ten-foot section that is four feet shorter to foster home runs. There will be variations in the height of outfield fences, from 15 feet in left field to 8 feet in center and right fields. Schwarz explains that care is being taken to create an intimate viewing experience within the *(continued on page 32)*

Moundabout: Antoine Predock, competition model.

Planned Effervescence

Atlanta's World of Coca-Cola Pavilion

KARAL ANN MARLING

Anthony Frederick

Canned videos.

ATLANTA has yearnings to be a world-class city. Its successful bid for the 1996 Summer Olympics, topping off the Cinderella sensation of the 1991 World Series, puts it in the running for at least two more weeks of international fame. Meanwhile, there are – or were, until August 1990 – serious impediments to Atlanta's becoming an all-American city, too, something more than a regional business center or an appendage to an airport. The city had no landmarks, no symbols, no tourist magnets to speak of, unless you counted its tree-lined streets. Atlanta used to be mighty proud of its foliage. All the promotional brochures mentioned the abundance of trees, along with the 23-story lobby-atrium of John Portman's Hyatt Regency Hotel and the Allman Brothers. Nature and culture.

A survey taken among prospective visitors by the state tourism bureau a few years back listed Tara (from *Gone With the Wind*), the Underground (a retail and entertainment complex tucked under the railroad viaducts constructed in the 1920s to ease downtown traffic congestion), and something having to do with Coke as prime tourist attractions. But Tara existed only in the imagination of Margaret Mitchell, Underground Atlanta was temporarily defunct, and the last visible symbol of Coca-Cola's contribution to the economy of Atlanta and the genesis of the New South – a giant neon "spectacular" affixed to a nondescript building in Margaret Mitchell Square in 1948 – had winked out forever on New Year's Eve 1980.

Thousands gathered that night to say goodbye to the old red sign in what had been Atlanta's own Times Square, thanks to the elegant pinwheel of light – the place where friends met for lunch, where out-of-towners were directed to turn to get to the capitol. The sign was the city's most important landmark. But neon was too old-fashioned and tacky for a hustling, bustling city of 23-story hotel lobbies that was pining for municipal stardom. So the Coca-Cola sign came down. The bits and pieces that were left after the wrecking crew had finished were encased in blocks of Lucite and sold as souvenirs.

The fact that somebody had turned a profit on the deal is not out of character for Atlanta. A Minnesota Twins fan in town for the third game of the 1991 World Series was appalled to find that "you win in Atlanta and you sing 'Taking Care of Business.'" Business (or "binis") is the heart and soul of Atlanta and has been since the 1880s, when the town threw off its agrarian past (except for all those trees) and created the modern, entrepreneurial New South on the ruins of its real-life Taras. Coca-Cola was invented by druggist John S. Pemberton in 1886 as a nerve tonic and general pick-me-up for Georgians still shaken by the fall of the Confederacy. At Jacobs' Pharmacy in downtown Atlanta, a soda jerk mistakenly mixed the greenish Pemberton syrup with carbonated water, and a soft drink was born. It was wildly successful and became the South's first national and international consumer product. Coke was, in other words, just about everything Atlanta aspired to be: up-to-date, famous, profitable. "Coca-Cola," wrote Marshall McLuhan, "is known to more people than any other man-made [thing], including the Eiffel Tower."

Atlanta sorely needed an Eiffel Tower in the 1980s – a Times Square, a big neon Coke sign. But throughout the decade the city's best-known corporation, the owner of the best-known trademark in the world, was all but invisible in the symbolic life of the community. As it turned out, the Coca-Cola Company's iconographic withdrawal lasted only as long as it took to design and fabricate the best electric Coke sign ever built – a revolving neon circle, 23 feet in diameter, bearing the familiar brand names and encased in a latticework globe programmed to spin in the opposite direction at one-and-a-half revolutions per minute. The hegemony of multinational cola, the glitzy splendor of modern Atlanta: Coke's extravagant gesture said it all.

The piece had also been planned with the corporate history of Coca-Cola and its advertising firmly in mind. In scale and complexity, the new sign rivaled the legendary electric billboard that had hung above New York's Times Square, at the intersection of Broadway and Seventh Avenue, since 1920. Its use of an animated pinwheel pattern behind the script of the Coca-Cola logo alluded to the beloved old sign in Margaret Mitchell Square. Set in motion on 7 May 1990, with a speech by the mayor and all due civic solemnities, the new 13-ton, 830-square-foot colossus also came attached to a ready-made Atlanta tourist mecca called the World of Coca-Cola.

THE new Coca-Cola "pavilion" (so called in the official corporate lingo) opened to the public in August. It occupied a onetime parking lot along Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, with the revitalized Underground Atlanta to the west and the dome of the Georgia capitol to the east. Shoehorned in between the after-hours fizz of the nightclub district and the massive neoclassical dignity of government, the ambiguities of the site reflected some of the contradictions inherent in the very idea of a World of Coca-Cola. On the one hand, this was intended to be a major-league, 45,000-square-foot museum, displaying more than 1,200 items of rare Coke memorabilia and tracing the history of the company's rise to global prominence. The nature of the product, however, meant that the usual objets d'art on view in conventional museums were doomed to be in short supply: the story of Coca-Cola called for ads, real soda fountains, vending machines, radio jingles, and TV sets. So, while the Coca-Cola saga was serious business, especially to Atlantans, the pop-cultural artifacts necessary to sustain the narrative were of the type usually dismissed out of hand as Madison Avenue kitsch – or worse.

Nor were there workable models for such an enterprise within American business culture. Some companies, including Coca-Cola's Atlanta offices, had set up small displays of product-related material in their lobbies or waiting rooms as a kind of corporate decor. The bottling plant in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, claimed (and still claims) to house the largest private collection of Coke paraphernalia in the world, accessible to the public at $1 a head. When such quasi-museums were more than a distraction for salesmen cooling their heels in the lobby, however, they tended to be waiting areas for visitors beginning a plant tour. And by 1978, according to Jane and Michael Stern's compendium of roadside amazements, the days of the factory tour were already numbered.

Apart from a couple of sawmills and quarries, and the Ohio assembly line where the Etch-A-Sketch toy was put together, only the food industry still routinely admitted the curious to see how beer, candy bars, cheese, pretzels, sausages, pepper sauce, cereal, frozen cheesecake, and maple syrup were manufactured. Fears of industrial espionage and ruinous lawsuits filed by non-employees claiming injury on the premises led most big firms to rethink company policy on tours in the 1970s, despite the public relations benefits attached. General Mills abandoned the practice after the 1978 season, for example, although the tour of the Betty Crocker Test Kitchens had become a Minneapolis institution. Other businesses opted to replicate what the factory did for a postindustrial audience weaned on theme parks.

A case in point is Chocolate World in Hershey, Pennsylvania, dating from the mid-seventies. The plant itself, on Chocolate Avenue (where the street lights look like Hershey's Kisses), no longer welcomes guests. But the nearby visitors' center simulates the process of making candy in an amusement-park-style ride beginning on an African cacao plantation, complete with jungle sound effects. There is even an interlude called "You Be the Cocoa Bean" in which the tourist is roasted and toasted in a hot, red tunnel in a make-believe chocolate plant. The finale is, of course, the gift mall, full of Kisses and apparel decorated with them. Cranberry World in Plymouth, Massachusetts, inaugurated in 1977, has no ride but does demonstrate the ins and outs of growing, harvesting, and

Anthony Frederick

Sign of Good Taste: Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback & Associates, architects, Coca-Cola Pavilion, Atlanta, 1990.

Anthony Frederick

The Pause That Refreshes.

Anthony Frederick

Liquid assets.

processing cranberries in a series of dioramas, cut-aways, and model bogs. The bogs surround a bilevel structure the Ocean Spray cooperative describes as a pavilion, built both to give something tangible back to the community and "to enhance the understanding of the cranberry."

What Hershey and Ocean Spray understood was the fascination of moving parts and processes: discarding the manifest inconveniences of the genuine article, they kept some of the kinetic energy of the factory, the syncopated sound and motion that had mesmerized onlookers since the dawn of the industrial age. Working machinery had been a high point of American fairs and expositions since the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, at which all manner of goods, from woven carpeting to souvenir bookmarks, were cranked out as a form of entertainment, celebrating the bounty of piston and gear. Wandering through the world's fairs of the late 19th century, Henry Adams was tempted to trace the decline of Western civilization to the rise of the mighty Corliss engine, but promoters noted that the largest crowds inevitably gathered around exhibits from which a finished product, borne aloft by a welter of clanking mechanical doodads, emerged triumphant. Thus at Chicago's Century of Progress of 1933, the New York World's Fair of 1939, and the 1958 Exposition Universelle in Brussels, Coca-Cola set up as promotional displays actual plants that filled and sealed the famous "Georgia green" bottles to be sold to fairgoers. Despite occasional deviations – the futuristic Coca-Cola building at the 1964 World's Fair in New York housed a "Global Holiday" exhibit re-creating exotic spots around the world (each with its own distinctive scent) where Coke could be found – the model factory, or off-site factory tour, became the norm for local trade fairs and international expositions alike.

By labeling its new World of Coca-Cola building a pavilion, the corporation deliberately invoked the spirit of the fair: fun, razzle-dazzle, a breezy contemporaneity, and high-powered p.r. in the form of an ersatz factory. One of the first interior features commissioned for the Atlanta pavilion, in fact, was a kinetic display titled "Bottling Fantasy" (constructed in part by Coke's own engineering department) – an industrial conveyor that mimicked the bottling process without the fuss and muss of actually making a single ounce of what the 75th Coca-Cola slogan, coined in 1969, called "The Real Thing." But the lineage of The World of Coca-Cola, rooted in neon "spectaculars," working factories, and fairs, also raised questions of decorum, given the civic prominence of the site. Although the company probably had the economic clout in Atlanta to dangle a neon Coke sign over the front door of the capitol if it so chose, the ultimate $15 million architectural solution proved just respectful enough to reassure legislators, just stuffy enough to elevate Coca-Cola above the level of mere soft drink flackery, and just touristy enough to lure the crowds.

Designed by the local firm of Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback & Associates, the pavilion serves Coca-Cola best through its visual civility, which reinforces a symbiotic relationship between Atlanta and the drink that used to be styled "the holy water of the American South." The new sign, for instance, hangs inside a hollow rectangle that effectively shields it from the view of the government center, while beaming an appropriate promise of pleasure and leisure ("The Pause That Refreshes") straight at Underground Atlanta. The back side of the building consists of four linked rectangles: the empty one, which serves as the entry portico, and three others variously faced in limestone or stucco. It looks museumlike and sober, a neoclassical exercise to appeal to the up-to-date postmodern boardroom. The front, however, is all neon, electrographically enhanced neo-Platonism and semiotic gamesmanship: a red, green, and yellow color scheme alludes to old Coke crates; a series of punched window openings suggests the configuration of the take-home carton; a big red cylinder (a Coke can, perhaps?) marks the door; and a corner of the façade is supported not by a column but, like the company itself, by a

Coke bottle – an 18-foot cubified Coke bottle, made up of lighted slabs of thick green glass in homage to the distinctive hobbleskirt bottle patented in 1915 (the prototype rests inside, on the third floor).

The entablature that tops the third-floor level of the museum blocks, tying them into a coherent whole, illustrates the subtlety with which the competing claims of local heritage and corporate hype have been reconciled in the design. Like a classical frieze, the entablature is sculpted with the raised script of the old Coca-Cola logo. By day, this bit of self-congratulatory signage is shadowed and all but invisible, especially on the Washington Street side, facing the capitol. By night, when Underground Atlanta comes alive, the letters are dramatically backlighted and visible for blocks around. Hot music. Cold drinks. "Things go better with Coke!"

From the outside, despite its touches of Madison Avenue pizzazz, the building conveys a sense of cubic mass and enclosure. But inside it is a true pavilion – light and airy, a series of open catwalks and rooms suspended in a vast space contained within the four segments. Furthermore, the quadripartite division of the exterior is nowhere apparent. Beginning on the top floor, from which the self-guided tour gradually descends toward the mother of all gift shops at ground level, the visitor passes through a series of variously sized galleries, theaters, and viewing areas (that is, a sequence of windowless enclosures) connected by light-filled ramps and skywalks affording glimpses of the outside world. The effect is quick, episodic, and profoundly contemporary, something like watching a TV program punctuated by commercials just long enough to allow a fast dash to the refrigerator for a Coke.

Jean Lagarrigue, *House of Glass*, 1975.

Aldo Rossi, composition from *Il Libro Azzuro*, 1981.

The architecture presumes a short attention span on the part of the MTV generation and relieves the tedium of learning about the genesis of the original formula or the evolution of the bottle by alternating short "bites" of enclosure and information with movement through empty connecting spaces defined by light and by the refreshing absence of didactic content.

This is an interesting reversal of the strategy lately adopted by the Disney theme parks in the holding areas for too-popular rides such as Star Tours. There, impatient tourists are placated by short, intense bursts of dramatic entertainment (enacted by audioanimatronic robots) separated by periods of quick physical movement up or down ramps through less interesting scenic environments. The difference, of course, is that the Star Tours layout presumes the real interest to lie in the story, whereas, with the exception of a couple of stunning interactive displays, the exhibits in the World of Coca-Cola are less interesting than the fun of

Boris Artzybashoff, *World & Friend*, *Time*, May 1950.

dashing from one experience to the next. That is certainly true of the earliest material, on the third floor, including Pemberton's formula book and patent application, the first Coca-Cola calendar (1891), the original bottling contract, and the model for the 1915 bottle Raymond Loewy once called "the most perfectly designed package" in the world. All these items and more are crammed into glass display cases lining the walls of a cramped, dark room. Within the cases, the artifacts are explained by mounted photo blowups and texts forming dense, planar clusters. In the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum in Rochester, New York, where this same technique is used for displaying cultural artifacts of the industrial age, the didactic panels are much larger, much better lit, and generally placed in unglazed, freestanding arrangements that approach the condition of sculpture. In Atlanta, everything has been flattened and shrunken, resulting in a museum so conceptualized, miniaturized, and sadly diminished that key items, such as the talismanic bottle, are all but lost in the murk.

To be fair to Staples & Charles Ltd. of Washington D.C., Coke's exhibition designers, a high percentage of the memorabilia in the corporate archives was two-dimensional, small in scale and all the same color, hardly the stuff of boffo show-biz displays. And when I took my tour of the upper reaches of the building, the "Bottling Fantasy" was temporarily boarded up for repairs, while a reportedly hilarious introductory film on the history of humankind's quest for the perfect beverage, starring comedian Dom DeLuise, was nowhere in evidence. That left the patent, the contract, the formula, the bottle, and lots of dense text as the principal attractions, along with a video of Coke factories around Washington, D.C., Coke's exhibition the video of Coke factories around the world (surprise, they're all pretty much the same!) shown on a television set inexplicably located behind a structural pillar. Put back the noise and the color framing the artifacts, and corporate history may be a little easier to swallow.

Stanley Kubrick, *Dr. Strangelove*, 1964.

Walt Disney built his parks on the "weenie" model. He located the castle at the end of Main Street, he said, as a kind of visual reward, or "weenie," to move the sightseer pleasurably along toward the center of his Magic Kingdom. The World of Coca-Cola seems to work along the same lines when all its constituent parts are functioning. Great and serious moments in company annals are introduced and then topped off by bubbling doses of pure enjoyment, ranging from the DeLuise burlesque to a real, old-fashioned, working soda fountain, the largest high-definition TV screen in the United States, a Star Tours–style soda fountain of tomorrow that shoots jets of Coke 20 feet in the air, and Club Coca-Cola, where free samples of soft drinks popular in other countries are dispensed. In the old-time drugstore, alas, the customers can't drink the soda jerk's concoctions, but they can play a jukebox stocked with excerpts from old radio commercials and promotional songs (the best of the lot a 1909 ditty titled "When the Do-do Bird Is Singing in the Coca-Cola Tree"). The international soft-drink samples – a cloying, flower-scented beverage from Japan, and Beverly, a bitter,

Walker Evans, *Coal Miner's House, Scotts Run, West Virginia*, 1935.

Farm Service Administration Collection, Library of Congress

Tom Wesselmann, *Still Life #34*, 1966.

medicinal brew from Italy, assault the taste buds with special vehemence – are just awful enough to prove that Coke may actually be "the sublimated essence of all that America stands for," as Kansas editor William Allen White, another enduring American institution, proposed in 1938.

In between these big, high-tech gulps of multimedia fizz come little sips of Coca-Colacized history, dispensed from tall red-and-white cans disguising interactive video displays that document five-year snippets of the past, from 1886 through 1990. Step inside a can, touch a screen, and pick a time. See film clips showing women going to work (1920? 1945?), great inventions,

Wang Guangyi, *Great Criticism*, 1990.

or the nation at war (1945 again? sometime in the sixties? 1991?). These "Take 5" videos – a pause for history – are the means by which the encapsulated narrative unfolding thorough the various Coke signs and ads and coolers in the display cases is supposed to intersect with real time and great national events. But it doesn't actually happen that way. Micro- and macrohistory fail to mesh, in part because the diffuse internationalism of the exhibits makes it difficult to identify specific items with familiar historical landmarks, in part because most of the juiciest moments in the Coca-Cola saga have been omitted in the name of corporate decorum.

A 1950 cover of *Time* magazine showed a perspiring globe gulping down a Coke. The accompanying story stressed the postwar ubiquity of Coca-Cola: a Coke stand in front of the Sphinx, a Coke truck parked in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Coke delivery vans zipping past the Eiffel Tower and the Houses of Parliament. The green bottle with the Spenserian script, *Time* concluded, "is . . . simpler, sharper evidence than the Marshall Plan or a Voice of America broadcast that the U.S. has gone into the world to stay." So closely was the product identified with Americanism that European Communists had taken to denouncing the drink as "vile, imperialistic and poisonous," a symptom of creeping "Coca-colonialism." Although Coca-Cola's presence on the international scene was by no means new – its foreign division was founded in 1926 – the firm's determination to supply GIs overseas at stateside prices meant that new bottling plants had been built in the several theaters of operation during World War II. So, when peace came, Coke was the first American company prepared to do business as usual. It is this global aspect of its corporate life that Coke chooses to highlight in the World of Coca-Cola – not the anti-Coke sentiments rampant in the 1950s, to be sure, but a kind of bland, upbeat one-worldism best expressed in the 1971 "Hilltop" commercial that produced the hit song "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" (the subject of a video presentation near the exit from the historical exhibits).

Yet Coke remained rooted in the American experience. Boys from Georgia and New Jersey and Wyoming had all gone off to fight for Mom, apple pie, the girl next door, and Coca-Cola. Around the world, Coke had rightly come to stand for Americanism: by virtue of its sweetness, its success, even its sinister dominance of global markets, Coke was a reflection of the national character, an icon of America, an emanation from the native soul. This all-American, sometimes vulgar, quasi-folkloric aspect of Coca-Cola is precisely what is missing from the sanitized precincts of the Atlanta pavilion. What about those traces of cocaine in the original formula? Why did Southerners persist in calling it "dope" through the 1920s? Any truth to those persistent teen-age reports on the hallucinogenic properties of an aspirin dissolved in a frosty Coke? Were they totally deluded, those several generations of kids who made Coca-Cola the collegiate contraceptive of choice?

And then there are the movies, full of telling Coca-Cola melodrama. The steamy Carroll Baker of *Baby Doll* (1956) sips the stuff for breakfast and complains that her husband has left her without a spare bottle in the house. The ebullient Jimmy Cagney of *One, Two, Three* (1961) plays a bottler up to his eyelashes in Atlanta honeychiles and Berlin

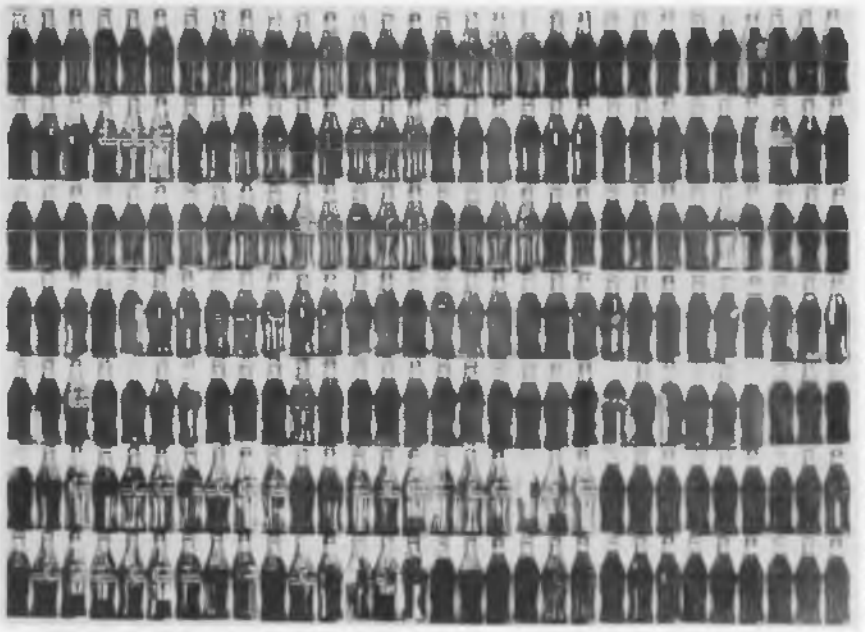
Howard Finster, *The Endless Circle*, 1990.

Collection Rena and Eduardo Rubles

Robert Rauschenberg, *Coca-Cola Plan*, 1958.

© Robert Rauschenberg/VAGA, New York 1992

Cold War intrigue. The bewildered Bushman of *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1984) tries to figure out what a sacred Coke bottle apparently fallen from heaven is really for. Finally, there's Peter Sellers, desperate to avert World War III, ordering



© 1992 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/ARS, N.Y.

a truculent Keenan Wynn to shoot a Coke machine for change to call the White House in *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). "O.K.," Wynn finally says. "I'll get the money for you, but if you don't get the President of the United States on the phone, you know what's going to happen?" "What?" asks Sellers. "You're going to have to answer to the Coca-Cola Company!"

In comparison with exotic Coke signs deployed in markets from Athens to Zanzibar, this kind of sexy, funny, home-grown hagiography seems not to matter much to the Coca-Cola Company – with two signal exceptions. One is the Santa Claus display, featuring the original designs for Haddon Sundblom's famous Christmas ads. The array of artwork makes it clear that Coke in the 1930s and 1940s actually perfected Thomas Nast's delineation of the American conception of Santa as the tall, jovial antonym of Clement Moore's Germanic elf. Moreover, unlike the Jolly Green Giant or Charlie the Tuna, Sundblom's Santa easily made the transition from commercial symbol to benign seasonal icon, without necessarily shedding all connections with the product that spawned him. Coke and Christmastime enjoyed their strange, symbiotic relationship for decades.

Coca-Cola also acknowledges its uneasy relationship to the world of 1960s pop art by spotlighting a quotation from Andy Warhol on a wall adjacent to the area in which great Coke TV spots play in an endless repetitive loop, not unlike a vintage Warhol film. "You know the President drinks Coke," according to Warhol. "Liz Taylor drinks Coca-Cola, and just think, you can drink Coke, too. A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke. . . . All of the Cokes are the same and all the Cokes are good." Except, of course, the short-lived New Coke. But that 1985 fiasco (along with any hint of the ferocious economic energies unleashed in the "cola wars" that led to the ill-fated reformulation of that product's classic essence) has no place in the smiling World of Coca-Cola. Coke calls itself "The Real Thing," and vulgar realism, like Pepsi, has no place in a museum of global entrepreneurship that puts a slow, sweet spin on the triumph of an all-American company and the ashes-to-affluence city from which it sprang. ■

Marisol Escobar, *Love*, 1962.

© Marisol Escobar/VAGA, New York 1992

Slouching Towards Byzantium

Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson (Ralph Adams Cram), Administration Building (Lovett Hall), Rice Institute, 1909–12. Academic Court elevation.

DREXEL TURNER

Actual representation of history has in modern times been checked by a difficulty, mean indeed, but steadfast: that of unmanageable costume; nevertheless, by a sufficiently bold imaginative treatment, and frank use of symbols, all such obstacles may be vanquished.

John Ruskin

Ours is not an era for expressive form and architectural space, but for flat manifestations of symbolism in the landscape.

Robert Venturi

EVEN after 80 years of academic accretion, the chief appeal of the Rice University campus is still vested in the inventive eclecticism of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson's 1912 Administration Building (now Lovett Hall) and a slim supporting cast of like-minded, if much plainer, buildings assembled under Cram's guidance just before World War I.[1] That this fragmentary initial production, bound together by strategic plantations of live oaks, might still suggest to so practiced an observer as Colin Rowe that the campus resides in spirit "not too *very* far from Ravenna" is almost exclusively the result of Ralph Adams Cram's pleasurable Lombardic-Venetian-Byzantine fusion.[2] But the illusion dissi-pates almost as soon as one passes through the arched opening of the Administration Building into the Academic Court and surveys not the distant exoticism of Bertram Goodhue's vast, mosquelike auditorium (originally proposed as the focal point of a quarter-mile-long mall)[3] but, at much closer range, the bulky, unelaborated mass of the Fondren Library of 1947–49, incapable of sustaining either Cram's evocative program or the abrupt departure it occasions from his general plan.

Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson (Bertram G. Goodhue), auditorium (project), Rice Institute, 1909. Academic Court elevation.

Yearbook of the Architectural League of New York, 1911

This lapsed aspect of the Rice campus can be attributed in part to the absence of any more explicit guidance for future building than that provided by the footprints of the general plan and the example of Cram's initial buildings, devised, in his own words, to produce "magnificence . . . at moderate cost."[4] It also stems from the failure of the general plan to anticipate the eventual role of the library as a dominant and central feature of the campus. For despite the architects' Burnhamesque overestimation of the university's prospects, spread wishfully across more than 300 acres in 36 buildings, the library was relegated to a narrow, classroomlike footprint at the extreme west end of the axis facing an equivalent outline designated as a museum. These both adjoined, at right angles, Goodhue's sumptuous, if overreaching, domed auditorium, an object that within the hyperbole of the general plan might more providently have been reconciled to the needs of a library.

By 1927, when Cram began to consider the prospect of a library for Rice as imminent, the university's building program had, by his own admission, already been recast "in more modest terms" by virtue of the institution's circumscribed endowment and charter-imposed commitment to free tuition.[5] At the same time, the facility and enthusiasm that had characterized the firm's initial efforts at Rice seem to have diminished too. In response to a still indeterminate program, Cram and his partner Alexander Hoyle (who had collaborated in the design of the first buildings at Rice) resorted to a reworking of the loggia-front scheme of their neo-Georgian Williams College Library of 1920, applied to a blockier, deeper building mass than that suggested by the general plan. Although characterized by the firm as "the merest approximation of what you might want,"[6] it accurately forecast the height, breadth, and depth of Staub & Rather's Fondren Library of 20 years later. Further planning was evidently suspended until 1941, when, following an informal visit by Lovett to the architects' Boston office, the firm dispatched an H-shaped diagram for a library that was to have been located on the cross-axial site occupied by the new biosciences building in 1991. While the firm's correspondence mentions "numerous [other] studies for the proposed library building"[7] prepared by Cram at the time, none are to be found in the university archives and, in any event, the project was preempted by the Second World War. Cram did, however, succeed in applying much the same vocabulary used at Rice to the design of the Edward L. Doheny, Jr., Memorial Library at the University of Southern California (with Samuel E. Lunden, 1932) – a building that nevertheless falls short of the standard set by Lovett Hall.

University libraries, by virtue of their considerable size and consequent unwieldiness, have almost invariably proved a stumbling block in American campus planning, their sheer bulk approximated only by gymnasiums, which are more readily consigned to peripheral sites. This cumbersome necessity has yielded such awkward accommodations as Robert Mills's rearward extrusion (1851–53) of Thomas Jefferson's library rotunda at the University of Virginia (1822–26) and Horace Trumbauer's lumpish Roman temple (1913–15), deposited amid the Georgian and post-Georgian accumulation of Harvard Yard. Even the more shapely, premeditated installation of Charles McKim's Roman-domed Low Library

About Face at the Rice Library

© Paul Hester, 1992

Staub & Rather. Fondren Library, Rice Institute, 1947–49. Academic Court elevation.

(1893–95) as the centerpiece of his uptown campus for Columbia University seems somewhat forced, despite the "thickening of classic shades" detected by Henry James on Morningside Heights.[8] Aside from Jefferson's half-scale adaptation of the Roman Pantheon at Virginia and Frank Furness's rogue castle-greenhouse at the University of Pennsylvania (1888–90), no other American university library has reached an anthologizable state of grace, and even these two have long since been outgrown as principal campus libraries.

THE *éminence grise* behind the Rice library as it eventually came to be realized was not Cram (who died in 1942) nor his frequent Houston associate, William Ward Watkin (who had come to Rice in 1910 as the firm's supervising architect and stayed on to head the program in architecture), but John E. Burchard, an architect and chairman of the libraries at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who was engaged in 1945 as a consultant to the university. In siting the library, Burchard considered the convenience of a central location a sine qua non and, despite Watkin's objection and the prescription of the general plan, also alluded to "a general agreement that it should be on [rather than to one side of] the long . . . axis passing through the sallyport and the founder's statue." The coordinates of the entrance to the library were fixed on axis at "the temporary crosswalk back of the founder's statue a hundred yards," as an "intermediate solution" between the latitude favored by the general plan and what Burchard reported as the sense of "the most pragmatic members of the faculty . . . that it should be just behind the founder's statue." With its threshold planted 750 feet west of the Administration Building, or half the distance contemplated in the general plan, Burchard commended the placement of the library-to-be as both "central to Rice for some time to come, and possibly permanently," and capable of ensuring a "vista . . . still grand and more than adequate."[9]

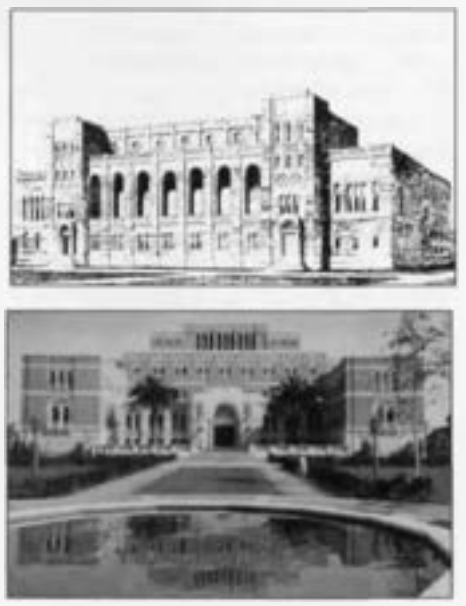
As to the building itself, Burchard, a modernist of conventional prejudices, stipulated that "no a priori conceptions of symmetry [should] lead to warping the functioning of the plan. . . . symmetry can serve but one useful purpose and that is aesthetic, . . . and the fact that the building is to be on a center line of the campus should not lead the architect to an arbitrary assumption that a symmetrical building is necessary or even desirable."[10]

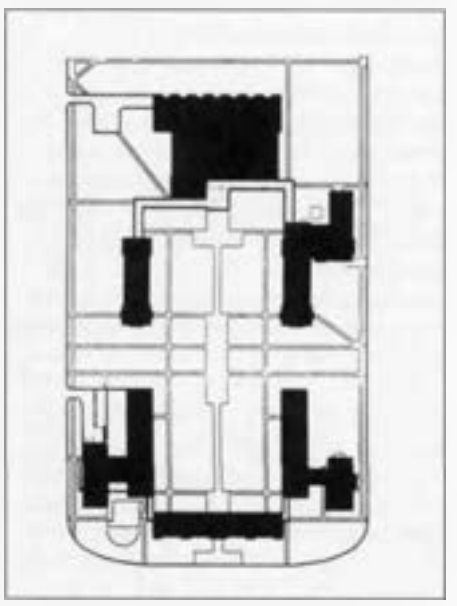
Burchard's "open-ended" biases continued with respect to style, counseling that while "the prevailing architecture of Rice . . . is derived from the Mediterranean and is beautiful in its location, . . . it is not the only architecture which can be beautiful in this location, and it is not necessarily true that if multiplied in the many buildings which are to be built it will remain beautiful. The Library building in a way marks the crossroads for the future Rice. If the style of the present buildings is closely perpetuated, it will doubtless be more difficult to depart from it in the future. As a generalization, American universities are plagued by the perpetuation of a specific, old, and usually European style as is to be found in varying exposition at Harvard, Chicago, and . . . Princeton . . . This is not a plea that the Library at Rice be ultra-modern but it is a plea that the design of the building proceed in an uninhibited atmosphere. . . . The building must, regardless of its style, be appropriate to the environment."[11]

Raising the specter of stylistically induced contamination working its way from the outside in, Burchard also cautioned that "no picture architecture of any period should be allowed to intrude itself on the smooth operation of the Library inside, since such a solution is merely a concession of weakness. It is clearly not essential to the achievement of purpose that a monumental style be adopted. Indeed, no non-structural columns, cornices, or any other pure embellishment should be tolerated if they will in any way either force the building budget to relinquish important elements of the program, or sacrifice to the . . . users . . . any important light or view, or impair the future flexibility of any space."[12]

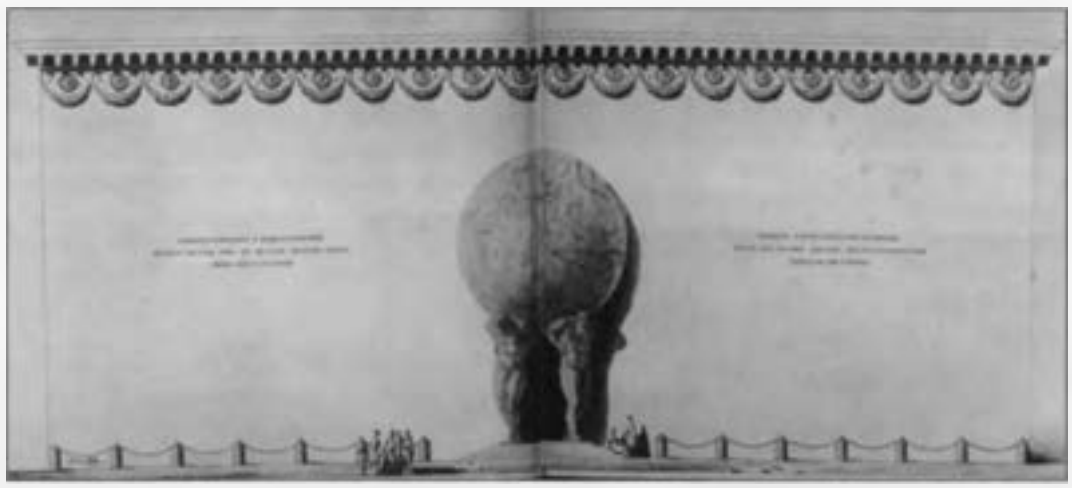
The structure that ensued was arguably the wrong building in the right place: reticent yet overbearing, serviceable but hardly "uninhibited," with its plan uncomfortably "warped" to produce an asymmetrical result. By even the most measured assessment, Fondren Library seems "ponderous,"[13] its chief virtues limited to accessibility and the clublike interiors of its twin leather-paneled, cork-floored main reading rooms, where large, arcade-shaded windows gave excellent views of Lovett Hall.

The initial 135,000-square-foot increment of Fondren, realized with Buchard's help, has since been expanded by a blank, ill-joined 100,000-square-foot rear addition (Staub, Rather & Howze, 1965–68), whose only, if inadvertent, Byzantine affiliation is possibly the fifth-century Fildami cistern near Istanbul. A second expansion may now be imminent to accommodate needs identified recently in a study prepared by Nancy McAdams, an architect and librarian at the University of Texas.[14] This prospective new growth also offers a practical excuse to extricate the middle ground of the campus from its *hex libris* by refashioning the library – most particularly its front – as a credible architectural complement to Lovett Hall. The timing may also be propitious in view of architecture's recently recovered, if still uneven, capacity to reengage the past on sympathetic and representational terms. At face value, such a reworking might aspire to what Robert Venturi has described in Jasper Johns's treatment of the American flag, where the artist seeks "to represent it literally, but also to modify its context, its medium, and its scale, thereby making it





Top left: *Cram and Ferguson, Rice Institute Library (project), 1927.* Bottom left: *Cram and Ferguson (and Samuel E. Lunden), Doheny Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles (1932).* Right: *Plan of Academic Court, Rice University, 1992. Fondren Library at top, Lovett Hall at bottom.*



Top: *Etienne-Louis Boullée, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (third project), 1788. Main elevation.*

Bottom left: *Raymond Hood, Daily News Building, New York, 1930. Entrance.* Center left: *Louis Sullivan, Merchants' National Bank, Grinnell, Iowa, 1914.* Center right: *Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown, Gordon Wu Hall, Princeton University, 1980–82. Entrance.* Right: *Le Corbusier, sectional sketch, 1911, of the Mosque of Suleiman, Istanbul (Mimar Sinan, 1550–57).*

familiar and strange at the same time and heightening our sensibilities toward it."[15]

At Rice, the iconographic basis is more diffuse and less familiar than that treated by Johns, for as Cram enumerated, Lovett Hall represents a combination of "a dozen different sources knit together as well as was possible" to create a "measurably new style . . . built on a classical basis." Drawing in this instance from his own well-itemized travels in "southern France and Italy, Dalmatia, the Peloponnesus, Byzantium, Anatolia, Syria, Sicily, Spain" and from untold monographs at hand, Cram sought to invest "richness, variety and a certain splendor of effect" in a building form "as rectilinear as the prairie area on which it was built."[16] That this armature might correspond both to Nicholas Hawksmoor's austere, classically conceived project for King's College, Cambridge (1712–13), and to the prayer hall (and onetime university quarters) of the Mosque of al-Azhar, Cairo (1131–49), also suggests the ease with which it was then possible to regard the Byzantine as simply "the re-orientalization of classic art, the linking of . . . Roman building to a new decoration, vividly alive and inventive, frank, bright and full of colour, and yet as rational in its choice and application as the construction."[17]

The problem of reconstituting the library as a more satisfactory consort to Lovett Hall is also conditioned by the need to trespass as little as possible on the already abbreviated precinct of the Academic Court, perhaps advancing the upper front a bay or so, but no farther than the openings of the north section of the arcade. In such a case, the principal maneuvering would be confined to the large, all-but-flat surface that could be achieved by filling out the present building to make it symmetrical. A similar strategy obtains in what may be the most astonishing proposal for the remodeling of a library ever – Etienne-Louis Boullée's third project for the Bibliothèque Nationale (1788), conceived as a less costly alternative to the construction of a new building on another site, yet entirely capable of "giving to the Library called the King's Library the advantages appropriate to such a building."[18]

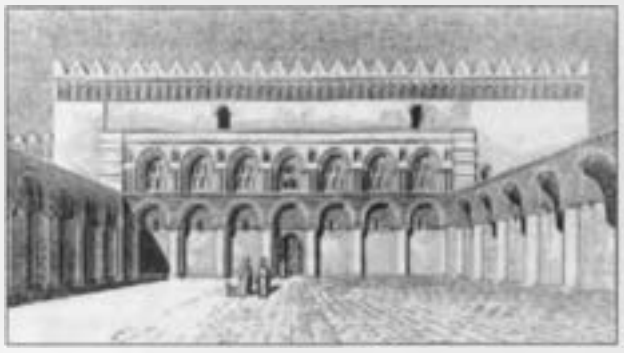
In its best-known version, the new face Boullée proposed to erect was a sparsely embellished, flat, windowless expanse, entered at its center through a large elaborated portal flanked by twin Atlases upholding a large globe incised with autumnal constellations, signaling the harvest of knowledge. Thus adorned, the portal led to a great skylit, barrel-vaulted basilica, 300 feet deep by 90 feet across, formed in a courtyard between two appendages of the Palais Mazarin in emulation of Raphael's setting of *The School of Athens*.[19] The compositional emphasis of Boullée's remarkable door ensemble, set against a windowless and virtually plain field, is also evident in Louis Sullivan's Merchants National Bank, Grinnell, Iowa (1914). Similarly elaborate door ensembles appear as dominant motives on the more liberally fenestrated fronts of Raymond Hood's Daily News Building, New York (1930), and, flanked by sculptural figures, on Cram's Doheny Library at USC. The appropriateness of a second emphatic portal centered in the academic court at Rice is problematic, however, unless the portal could be rendered in some formally and symbolically distinctive variation, perhaps adapting Le Corbusier's cross-sectional notation of the dome of the Mosque of Suleiman, Istanbul (Mimar Sinan, 1550–57), to evoke the prospect of Goodhue's unbuilt auditorium.

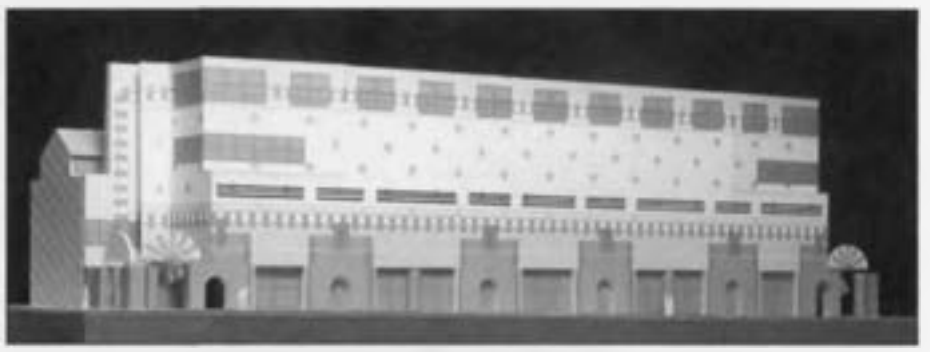
Apart from Boullée's extra-mural expedient, a similarly emboldened treatment of a virtually unfenestrated building is evident in the decorative panels and banded appliqué that consume Piranesi's composition from the *Parere su l'Architettura* (after 1767) in token of his enthusiam for "prudently combining the Graecan, the Tuscan, and the Egyptian together."[20] This unsettling assemblage of signlike excerpts positioned on, around, and within a twin-towered easel-frieze suggests a formally ordered outdoor equivalent of Sir John Soane's eclectic compilation of architectural fragments in the crypt-tribune of his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London (1813). Beside the ostentation of Piranesi's monumental collage or the emblematic effusion of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Istanbul (c. 536–50), the embroiderylike pattern of the upper expanses of the Doges' Palace, Venice (c. 1344–65, 1423–38), roped at the corners with corkscrew moldings and topped with an Italo-Islamic fringe, seems almost subdued. The Doges' Palace (unlike its archaeologically reconstructed Islamic precursor, the palace at Ukhaidir, 764–78) corresponds with thematic resonance to Robert Venturi's "Plea for Pattern All Over Architecture,"[21] as does the harlequin crosshatching of Goodhue's High Potential Laboratory Building at the California Institute of Technology (1923) and the more aggressive folkloric mural wrapped all around the stack tower of Juan O'Gorman's library for the Autonomous University of Mexico (1953).

Of related interest in view of the slight depth that might be gained for manipulation in refronting Fondren is the compaction implied by Le Corbusier's sideways perspective sketch of the Mosque of Suleiman. This vignette suggests a layering of arcade against small windows set within large windows, interposed between two towers more slender but more appreciable than the blocky ones that anchored Cram's loggia-front library scheme of 1927. A similar impression of planar interchange at close quarters is cultivated in Charles Holden's astute premodernist design for the shallow principal elevation of the Central Reference Library, Bristol (1905–1906), which renders a maximum of effect from tightly compressed step-back staging, vertically elaborated central window bays, staunch *risalits*, and windows penetrating piers. The various schemes produced by Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown for the

Top left: *Giovanni Battista Piranesi, composition from* Patere su l'Architettura, *after 1767.* Top right: *Early-12th-century representation of Holy Apostles Church, Istanbul.*

Bottom: *Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown, competition project, 1985, for the renovation of the Ponte dell'Accademia, Venice.*

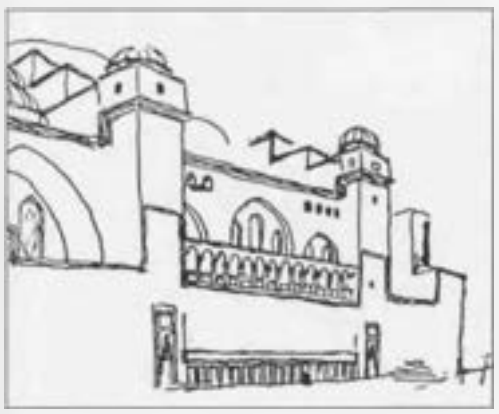




Top left: *Doges' Palace, Venice, ca. 1344–65, 1423–28. Piazzetta elevation.* Top right: *Charles Holden, Central Reference Library, Bristol, England, 1905–1906.*

Bottom left: *Palace of Ukhaidir, Iraq, Court of Honor, 764–78 (reconstruction from K. A. Creswell, 1940).* Bottom center: *Bertram Goodhue, High Potential Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, 1923.* Bottom right: *Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin (project), 1983. Façade study model.*

long, extremely slender, and ultimately little-fenestrated façade of the unbuilt Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin (1983), employ something of Holden's sensibility crossed with that of a hyper-stretched Villa Schwob (Le Corbusier, 1916). The narrow four-story corpus of the museum, devised to be grafted onto a much larger office block, precapitulates the library problem at Rice, except for the laid-back *gravitas* ultimately approved for its limestone façade as a backdrop for a changing marquee of oversize banners. At Rice, such reserve might give way to the more vivid sorts of decoration applied by Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown to the programmatically uneventful fronts of Wu Hall (1980–82) and the Thomas Laboratory (1983–86) at Princeton; the Seattle Art Museum (1984–91), with its "peasant skirt" arcade; and the proposed reconstruction of the Accademia Bridge, Venice (1984), carried across with eye-dazzling Cosmati-work.



Le Corbusier, perspective sketch, 1911, of the Mosque of Suleiman, Istanbul (Mimar Sinan, 1550–57).

The problem of Fondren Library is most conspicuously associated with its front, but extends around the rest of the perimeter and inside as well. In considering the obstacle the library presents to the processional convenience of the campus, Louis I. Kahn in 1970 suggested inserting a reconnective tunnel through the center of the building at ground level, a procedure also recommended by Cesar Pelli in a subsequent reworking of the campus plan (1983).[22] Some modest remodeling of the library's interior was in fact undertaken several years ago, producing a squat rondpoint where the circulation desk once stood and a wholesale sheetrocking, mahoganizing, and carpeting of the reading rooms and public spaces, although it refrained from addressing the center-line or vertical possibilities of the situation. Any extravagant penetration of the library front-to-back on the model of Boullée's *School of Athens* court is precluded for want of a sufficiently generous slot, but the beginnings of a more collegiately scaled channel nevertheless can be found in the double-height section through the foyer and former circulation room. This channel might not only be extended but could connect, farther back, to a more imposing space on the order of Kahn's four-eyed centrum at Exeter or Furness's hearthlike main reading room at Penn. Such a space might also present the basis for a new treatment (and, if necessary, modest expansion) of the rear elevation. In general, the interior of the library could benefit from a coloristic infusion of Ravenna and Istanbul to atone for Cram's fiscally induced asceticism inside Lovett Hall and other campus buildings.

The Rice style and its basis have always been something of an acquired taste. To Henry Adams's immaculate sensibility, "all trading cities had always shown traders' taste, and, to the stern purist of religious faith, no art was thinner than Venetian Gothic. All trader's taste smelt of *bric-à-brac*."[23] Even presumably appreciative contemporary accounts of the first Rice buildings also betrayed a certain wariness. The anonymous but extensively illustrated exposition of the new campus in the *American Architect and Building News* referred to Cram's stylistic excursion as "a somewhat unusual but nonetheless satisfactory motive of design . . . that doubtless will be compelled to submit to the stress of much criticism as has every innovation in art."[24] Montgomery Schuyler, in signaling the Administration Building as "the one distinctively 'architecturesque' building thus far erected" to the readers of the *Brickbuilder*, was guarded too, venturing by way of preface "that all beholders will . . . agree upon two points, . . . that it is a highly interesting building [and] not at all 'the regular thing' in collegiate architecture." He also emphasized the functionally expressive attributes of its composition, just as, much later, Cram still felt it necessary to insist that his "deed without a name"[26] had "grown from within outward . . . instead of from a predetermined exterior."[27]

But however determined or predetermined, Cram's Administration Building succeeds in fixing the image of Rice as vividly and indelibly as any trading city might wish. The bric-à-brac of a similarly potent and sophisticated companion to Lovett Hall might prove equally unsettling at first, but it is a Rice tradition worth reviving across the face of Fondren Library. ■

1 Cram's work at Rice is documented in Stephen Fox, *The General Plan of the William M. Rice Institute and Its Architectural Development*, Architecture at Rice Monograph no. 29 (Houston, 1980).

2 Colin Rowe, "James Stirling: A Highly Personal and Very Disjointed Memoir," in Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford, eds., *James Stirling: Buildings and Projects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 24.

3 The original planning contemplated an unobstructed mall half a mile in length. William Ward Watkin, "Architectural Traditions Appearing in the Earlier Buildings of the Rice Institute," *[Houston Engineers Club] Slide Rule*, July 1953, pp. 6, 10.

4 Ralph Adams Cram, *My Life in Architecture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1936), p. 127.

5 Ibid., p. 127.

6 Fox, *General Plan*, p. 67.

7 Ibid., pp. 77, 91.

8 Henry James, *The American Scene* (1907; reprint ed., Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1968), p. 142.

9 John E. Burchard, *Report to the Trustees of Rice Institute on the Proposed New Library Building*, 1 January 1946, p. 11.

10 The reflexive distaste for symmetry that characterized Burchard's consideration of the library was sufficiently prevalent to prompt a less dogmatic librarian-architect, Talbot Hamlin of the Avery Library, Columbia University, to counsel, "We have become so thoroughly imbued with the idea that organic forms based essentially on natural functions are asymmetrical that we are often blinded to the equally valid truth that some problems are formal in their very nature." Hamlin, *Forms and Functions of 20th Century Architecture*, Vol. 2, *The Principles of Composition* (New York: Columbia, 1952), p. 571. Burchard's candid opinion of the campus architecture is reflected in his later misapprehension of "Cram and Ferguson's pitiful variation upon Spanish Renaissance at Rice Institute in Houston" Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social and*

Cultural History (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), p. 382. Rowe's counterassessment is more solicitous of Cram's "quasi-*Liberty* performance, simultaneously located both in Texas and the former Exarchate of Ravenna," asking: "But, intrinsically, was it any the worse for that? From the 1930s onwards, as the social consciousness and attendant *Zeitgeist* obsessions became activated, certainly a lot of people thought so; but . . . so far as the fabric of Rice is concerned, it is not abundantly clear that their contributions were other than destructive." Rowe, "James Stirling," p. 24.

11 Burchard, *Report to the Trustees*, pp. 31, 32.

12 Ibid., p. 32.

13 Stephen Fox, *Houston Architectural Guide* (Houston: American Institute of Architects, Houston Chapter, 1990), p. 121. See also "Fondren Library," *Architectural Record* 107 (June 1950), pp. 138–42.

14 McAdams Planning Consultants, Inc., "Library Facilities Planning Study for Rice University," Houston, Texas, January 1992. The study recommends that "planning for new library space at Rice should follow . . . a . . . twenty year time target" and considers "the need for additional library space . . . genuine." It suggests that studies of Fondren be undertaken to "establish its potential for expansion [and] identify . . . site constraints [that would include] massing studies of Fondren and surrounding structures to establish acceptable height and area limits." It also advocates evaluating "the various service options for a new library building . . . [and making] an officially documented 'reservation' for a library site on the proposed west quad for use in the indefinite future" (p. 20).

15 Robert Venturi, "Four Houses for *Gran Bazaar* (January-February 1982)," collected in Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, *A View From the Campidoglio: Selected Essays, 1953–1984* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 101.

16 Cram, *My Life*, pp. 126–27. Cram's eclecticism at Rice is prefigured in an account of a visit to Palermo at age 25: "Here was indeed a new thing in architecture! Roman columns, pointed arches, Byzantine mosaics, Arab inlays of marble and coloured glass, Renaissance altars and tombs, and all knit together in a perfectly harmonious and organic synthesis. After this showing, it was impossible . . . to become a purist in point of style" (p. 61). He was also appreciative of the creative regionalism of Carrère and Hasting's Ponce de León and Alcazár hotels in San Augustine, Florida (1888) for their "exuberant romanticism, . . . new picturesqueness, . . . free and easy charm" (p. 35), assembled with an imagination not usually found in the firm's work and partially explained by the involvement of Bernard Maybeck.

17 W. R. Lethaby and Harold Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople* (London: Macmillan, 1894), p. 199. Something like Cram's regenerative "historical" rationale for the Rice style (*My Life*, pp. 125-26) can be found in Reginald Blomfield's essay "Byzantium or Lombardy," collected in *Studies in Architecture* (London: Macmillan, 1905), pp. 17, 18.

18 Etienne-Louis Boullée, "Architecture: Essai sur l'Art," translated by Helen Rosenau, ed., *Boullée and Visionary Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1976), p. 104.

19 Henri Labrouste succeeded in filling in the courtyard with his remodeling of the Bibliotheque Nationale (1862–68).

20 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Diverse Maniere d'Adornare i Cammini* (1769), p. 32, quoted in John Wilton-Ely, *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 80.

21 Venturi, "Diversity, Relevance, and Representation in Historicism, or Plus ça Change . . . plus A Plea for Pattern All Over Architecture with a Postscript on my Mother's House," *Architectural Record*, June 1982, collected in *A View From the Campidoglio*, pp. 108–19.

22 Cesar Pelli and Associates, "William Marsh Rice: University Master Plan for Growth," September 1983, p. 35. Staub, Rather & Howze's initial proposal for the library extension also depicted a prominent west entrance on axis. *Sallyport*, Summer 1965, p. 7.

23 Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918; reprint ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 340.

24 "William M. Rice Institute, Houston, Texas," *American Architect* 102 (11 December 1912), pp. 207–208.

25 Montgomery Schuyler [Franz Winkler, pseud.], "The Administration Building of the Rice Institute, Houston, Texas," *Brickbuilder* 21 (December 1912), pp. 322–24.

26 Cram, "Recent University Architecture in the United States," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 3rd series, vol. 19 (25 May 1912), pp. 502–503.

27 Cram, *My Life*, p. 127.

E - Z

Margaret Culbertson

Permatex-covered lawn umbrella and glider by Troy Sunshade Company.

PORCH swings are pleasant, and rocking chairs are relaxing, but for me the pinnacle of porch seating is the cushioned glider of the 1930s. I encountered the perfect glider on the cool brick floor of a screened room, referred to as "the breezeway," attached to my grandparents' house in the country outside of Waxahachie. The breezeway was oriented to the prevailing wind and was bordered on two sides by a trellised walkway covered with honeysuckle, which made it the coolest space in the whole countryside. However, at the height of a Texas summer, before air conditioners became common in rural areas, even the coolest space was not exactly comfortable unless you were reclining on a cushioned glider. The slightest push of your big toe could produce both a breeze and the blessed, smooth, gliding motion that gave this inspired but unassuming piece of furniture its name.

Front porch glider with mosquito netting, Magnolia Grove subdivision, Houston, Texas.

For those familiar with this term only in reference to a kind of aircraft, a glider is a porch seat suspended from an underframe by means of short chains or metal straps that allow it to swing smoothly back and forth. It should not be confused with a porch swing, which is suspended from the ceiling. Porch swings came into use long before gliders, as did cushioned or padded variants that were referred to as "hammocks." However, these were suspended from the ceiling and consequently could not be moved easily, used in a garden or terrace setting, or adapted to grouped seating for outdoor socializing. Gliders can do all these things and at the same time allow a gentle movement that neither disturbs social conversation nor induces motion sickness.

The desire for both movement and comfort in a free-standing, movable piece of outdoor furniture that culminated in the invention of the glider produced a host of other delightful, if not totally successful, creations. Among them were the "Comfort

GLIDER

Swing Chair" advertised in the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1898, and many variations on a cushioned couch suspended from an overframe similar to the frame of a small swing set. The swinging couches bore a variety of names. An article in the May 1915 issue of Gustav Stickley's *Craftsman* presented one model as a "swinging hammock," another as a "swinging davenport," and a third as a "hammock with canvas-covered sea-grass mattress." A "bassinet hammock" was also pictured that would allow babies to enjoy the same outdoor swinging sensation as adults. The swinging couches were no doubt very pleasant, but the supporting framework was large and could not blend readily with other porch or sun room furniture.

In 1925 the Troy Sunshade Company advertised its new "flote-divan" as a "comfort idea never before applied to indoor furniture – a davenport with *motion*." The rocking mechanism, which utilized a curved-track base, was different from the suspension frames eventually used in gliders, but the result must have been the same. The advertisements promised a "silent floating effect," but the flote-divan nevertheless floated into obscurity as the glider gained popularity.

Early versions of gliders had begun to appear in the *U.S. Patent Gazette* by 1917. These proto-gliders were listed under such names as "couch-hammock," "hammock," "swinging davenport," "porch davenport," and, in the best Patent Office descriptive nomenclature, "article of furniture." The pioneering manufacturers involved in these early patents included the National Spring Bed, Rome Metallic Bedstead, Englander Spring Bed, and Enterprise Bed companies.

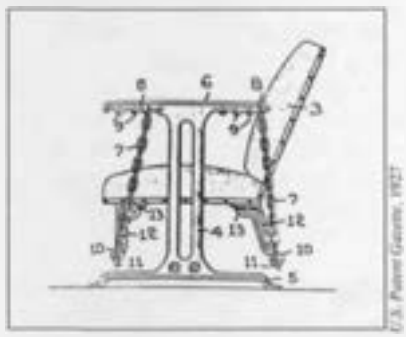
The use of the term "glider" for this new type of seating furniture first appeared around 1930. Other forms of the verb *glide*, which does perfectly describe the distinctive smooth, swinging motion of a glider, can be found several years earlier.

Collection Emily Paley, The Gershwins (Atheneum, 1973)

Upholstered roof-top glider modeled by George *(left)* and Ira Gershwin.

A glider presented in a 1925 patent was called a "glide hammock"; another, featured in a 1929 Rome furniture catalogue, was listed as a "gliding davenport"; and *Holland's Magazine* pictured one in 1930 that it described as a "gliding swing." However, "glider" is used in a 1930 patent and a 1930 advertisement in *House and Garden*. The encyclopedic 1931 Sears catalogue presented three models of the new form of seating, all labeled as "gliders." Further evidence of the term's acceptance can be found in periodicals and newspapers of the 1930s and its appearance in the 1939 edition of Webster's dictionary.

Since they were made by bed and mattress manufacturers, it is not surprising that the early cushioned gliders were so comfortable. They had coil springs beneath and sometimes in the cushions, and many models could be opened to make double beds for summer sleeping. These gliders



U.S. Patent Gazette, 1917

Jerome T. Atkinson, "swinging davenport," 1925.

were heavy-duty pieces of furniture designed for serious, extensive outdoor living. My uncle read *Gone With the Wind* on my grandparents' glider during the summer of 1938, a feat that would be inconceivable on a wooden porch swing or the later cushionless wood or metal gliders.

In spite of its outstanding features, the cushioned glider of the 1930s is a rarity today. Variations continued to be available through the Sears catalogue until 1964, but the frames of the postwar models were more often aluminum than sturdy steel. Changing American ways of life no longer accommodated or demanded the particular features of the cushioned glider. Maintenance had always been a problem. Cushions mildewed; springs rusted. Television began to lure more and more people inside, off their porches, as did the chilling novelty of air conditioning. Gliders are still manufactured and sold today, but they are wooden, metal, or plastic and lack cushions. Wooden gliders first appeared in the Sears catalogue in 1937, and all-metal cushionless gliders appeared in 1942. Though they lack the comfort of cushions and springs, both types are still serviceable for short periods of time. Aesthetically, the advent of the all-metal glider provided back and seat surfaces ideal for an astounding variety of punched and molded patterns – stars, basketweaves, rosettes, and

Country Life in America May 1931

French edition of "resilient tempered steel finished in rustproof lacquer of any desired color."

bull's-eyes. The perforations in the patterns helped to keep the metal surfaces from becoming too hot and sticky; in the words of the spring 1954 Sears catalogue, they permitted the "circulation of cool, refreshing, balmy breezes."

Today, wooden gliders can be purchased at discount stores, lumber yards, and, of course, Sears. Custom models are produced by craftsmen, including the Houston firm Just-a-Swingen. Astute homeowners are searching out old gliders at garage sales and refurbishing them as part of the neo-down-to-earth revival. Although they have at times been considered a middle- or lower-middle-class phenomenon, gliders transcended all social and aesthetic boundaries. In the 1930s, *Country Life in America* featured wonderfully designed models; during the same period, George and Ira Gershwin, at the height of their success, were caught by the camera in front of a classic cushioned glider. Gliders reached the pinnacle of architectural endorsement when Frank Lloyd Wright acquired two for the terraces of Taliesen West.

Just about any glider can be wonderful, and I have tested many myself. But this summer I revisited the glider of my youth in its new home in San Antonio, and it is still the paragon of gliders – porch perfection personified. ■

Hyde collection College of Architecture, University of Houston

Garden room from sunset terrace, Taliesen West, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1941.

The Competition for Rangers Stadium

(continued from page 21)

ballpark, which will seat 48,100 fans, an increase of 4,600 over the old stadium. According to Schwarz, sight lines will be much shorter in comparison to the new Comisky Park in Chicago, and half of the seating will be closer than in the new Camden Yards Stadium in Baltimore. Upper-deck seating will be 20 feet closer than the new Comisky's but five feet higher than Baltimore's. The Rangers' program did not require the elimination of all supporting columns, so the upper deck is actually cantilevered from columns placed four rows from the rear of the lower deck. Compared to the present Arlington Stadium, the upper deck will be 20 feet closer to the field, and the lower-deck seats will be drawn tightly to the foul lines, with the first row of seats positioned nine feet closer to home plate. Beyond first and third bases, the lower-deck seats are nudged in toward center field.

Care is also being taken to ensure greater profitability for the owners, with 7,700 fewer outfield seats, a reduction from 19,000 in the present stadium to 11,291 in the new. Rangers Stadium will have 120 luxury suites in two rows, 30 more than the new Comisky Park and 48 more than Baltimore's Camden Yards. The architect claims that the lower suite level will be closer to the action than in any of the other major-league stadiums. The 31½-degree slope of the upper deck is second only to Chicago's Wrigley Field, which at 30 degrees has the lowest slope in the major league stadiums.

Some lessons have been learned from recent stadiums, as evidenced by the internal placement of access ramps required by the Rangers' program. Unlike the new Comisky Park, where exterior ramps interrupt the façade, the Rangers' stadium will have access ramps, triangular in plan, inserted within the exterior walls and structural decks. The surface of the Rangers' playing field will be depressed 22 feet below street level, so fans will enter at midlevel and walk either up or down to their seats. Fans with disabilities have access to all sections. Center-field seating will feature a combination of raked lawn seating and bleachers, as requested by fans. Right-field seating benefits from a strong crank in plan, so spectators look back at the field of play. The lower bowl ends at the right-field foul line, while the left-field lower deck wraps around to the middle of the deep left side. Center field contains a triangular grassy court where fans can picnic under the surveillance of the oversize playing-card likenesses of the Rangers' star players – a slender pantheon inspired by the billboard-size image of Nolan Ryan that adorns the exterior of the present stadium, beneath which fans like to pose for photos.

Development on adjacent property is a potential problem with the Rangers' present approach. George Bush's view is that the ballpark will simply be a "catalyst" and development will spring across the street. Pushing parking onto adjacent blocks will certainly reduce the potential for retail activities in those areas, and Schwarz's competition proposal that parking could be screened by retail does not appear in the most recent schemes. The seasonal nature of both the ballpark and the adjacent entertainment parks may represent a serious impediment to gaining the confidence of business owners, yet no marketing studies have been undertaken by the Rangers or the city of Arlington.

The question still to be answered is whether the project that the competing firms labored to develop as a full-fledged city entertainment center will ever be realized in its entirety. The contract between the Rangers and the city of Arlington anticipates, but does not guarantee, that any of the ancillary amenities such as the river walk, Little League park, amphitheater, learning center, or restaurants and shops will ever be built. Only the road improvements, which are being financed with $5 million in county funds, and a city-owned linear park are mandated by the agreement, but Mayor Richard Greene has said that the city could refuse to sell the bonds if the planned complex does not contain the additional features. Although the city-appointed board of the Arlington Stadium Authority is responsible for authorizing the sale of the bonds, the contract gives full architectural and construction control to the Rangers, so city oversight of the construction budget may be problematic. The sales tax proposition guarantees that the sale of bonds cannot exceed $135 million. If the costs exceed $170 million, the Rangers will theoretically have to scale the project back or make good any cost overruns themselves. One casualty already is the Rangers' Hall of Fame, originally to be a separate structure but now incorporated into the stadium itself.

SCHIEFFER expects that the stadium can be built for $100 million, not including parking and site acquisition. He also expects that the development of the river walk and other amenities can be accomplished economically, and that some of the retail facilities will be constructed as shells to be finished out by tenants. One hundred million dollars is substantially less than the $135 million spent on Chicago's Comisky Park, which was clad in precast concrete panels rather than expensive granite. Baltimore's stadium cost $105 million, but reportedly the owners are not happy with the brick exterior. Other costs to consider include parking for 16,000 cars; figured at $1,000 to $2,000 per space, this alone will account for $16 million to $32 million, and more if parking lots are extensively landscaped, as Schwarz proposes. Schieffer is obviously banking that the locally depressed economy will create a favorable bidding climate among contractors, and that the stadium can be built for less than those in other parts of the country. The construction process is being fast-tracked, which can save dollars in inflationary increases but can lead to cost overruns later in the game if miscalculations made in early planning necessitate design revisions and change orders.

If the Rangers have difficulty keeping the project within budget, they have several options: (1) reduce the overall size and seating capacity of the stadium; (2) downgrade interior and exterior finishes; (3) cut back on peripheral amenities and landscaping; or (4) fund cost overruns themselves. The option of reducing the cost of exterior finish materials could seriously affect the character of Schwarz's design if the large expanses of pink granite and intensive detailing of longhorn heads, Ranger mural reliefs, baseball light fixtures, and Texas stars were excised, which Schwarz contends is unlikely. "I wouldn't have taken the job if I thought that would happen," he says. "I believe that Tom Schieffer will keep his promise to the city of Arlington."

One potential "out" for the owners and the architect is their assertion that this is a place that will develop over time, as a 20- to 30-year project. The public may just have to be patient. At this point, Schieffer has certainly performed well for the Rangers in convincing 16 out of 26 architectural firms to invest thousands of dollars in free design and unwitting promotional work for the ball club. Teamed with Mayor Richard Greene and chamber of commerce president Ted Willis, Schieffer successfully lobbied the Arlington City Council, citizens, and county officials to guarantee millions of dollars to build the stadium. Finally, he returned to the legislature to get unanimous approval for the enabling legislation to make the arrangement work. Schieffer's design team concept also seems to have a good chance of success. Schwarz's lack of experience with ballparks is offset by HNTB's participation, and HKS was selected as project manager because of their reputation for successfully fast-tracking multimillion-dollar projects.

The Rangers' owners have set a precedent in the composition of their design team that may well open up sports facilities design to a wider array of architects. While the new ballpark will undoubtedly be appealing to fans, particularly if the intimate scale and public amenities are maintained, its essential conventionality, however pleasantly rendered, leads one to wonder whether a competition was really necessary at all. ■

1 Philip Bess, *City Baseball Magic: Plain Talk and Uncommon Sense About Cities and Baseball Parks* (Minneapolis Review of Baseball, 1989); Philip Bess, "Mallpark," *Inland Architect*, September–October 1991, pp. 32–41; John Pastier, "Rescue Operation," ibid., pp. 42–49; Jerry Adler, "Field of Fancy, Field of Dreams," *Newsweek*, 19 June 1989, pp. 68–69; and Bruce Webb, "Diamond in the Round," *Cite*, Spring 1990, pp. 7–10.

2 Joe Wayne Taylor, "Plunk Your Magic Twanger, Tommy," *Texas Observer*, 27 July 1973, p. 3.

3 Quoted in Belinda Willis, "Dome Home for the Rangers?," *Business Press*, 25 March 1990, p. 22.

4 Harden produced three schemes in all. The first added more upper-deck seating to the existing stadium; a second, supplemented with a large model, essentially created a new stadium in right field; the third created a brand-new $102 million stadium in the center of the site. Harden is now involved in a dispute with Arlington officials as to whether he is entitled to compensation for all of his design work.

5 Quoted by Dave Bryant, "Yes! Move the Team!," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 22 October 1989.

6 "Keep the Rangers: Dallas Interests Covet Arlington's Team," ibid., 28 May 1989.

7 Dave Bryant, "Move the Team?," ibid., 22 October 1989.

8 David Casstevens, "Build a Park Fit for a King and Rangers," *Dallas Morning News*, 4 July 1989.

9 "The Ten Best and the Ten Worst Legislators." *Texas Monthly*, July 1975, p. 65, July 1977, p. 92. The presidential primary bill is discussed in "Winning and Losing With L.B.J.," *Texas Observer*, 14 March 1975, pp. 1, 3.

10 Arlington is certainly not immune from such big-city problems, considering that it is now the seventh-largest city in the state. See Rogers Caldenhead, "Bright Lights, Big Suburb," *Dallas Observer*, 1 August 1991, pp. 14–18. Bush indicated that access was a key issue – Arlington's was good, he believed, and would be excellent once improvements were made. Many of the other sites had the disadvantage of land acquisition costs and lacked infrastructure, which would have been costly to add and would have delayed stadium construction. One of the major advantages of the Arlington site was that the Rangers already owned some of the land on which they have now planned future development. The Rangers have reserved 65 acres north of the stadium for what Schieffer envisions as a high-end-use "Las Colinas type" office complex – "a corporate relocator's dream" – ten minutes from the airport, midway between the coasts, in the central time zone, and with the restaurants of the stadium complex nearby.

11 Joel Warren Barna, "Ballpark With Civic Amenities for Arlington," *Progressive Architecture*, November 1991, p. 27.

12 Post–World War II stadiums have generally been funded with public monies. Philip Bess, in *City Baseball Magic*, cites Goode's study, which indicates that the economic windfall generated by baseball franchises is often overestimated. Opponents of the sales tax proposition in Arlington also cited studies that the projected economic benefits for Arlington were exaggerated.

13 Pfeiffer interviewed by Cheryl Phillips, "The Pitch," *Forth Worth Star-Telegram*, 10 August 1991, sec. 1, p. 18.

14 Barbaralee Diamonstein, interview with Michael Pittas in *American Architecture Now II* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 195.

15 Interviewed by David Dillon, "Hit or Miss?," *Dallas Morning News*, 7 September 1991, p. 10.

16 Schieffer, interview by author, 25 September 1991.

17 Robert Venturi to J. Thomas Schieffer, September 1991.

18 See Andrea Dean, "Contextualism Continues Strong in the Capital," *Architecture*, November 1986, pp. 56–59, in which she describes the work of several of Washington's prominent architectural firms. Schwarz's among them, and points to their shared "Victorian-like tendency to combine traditional elements into new combinations." Schwarz, interviewed by Benjamin Forgey, calls this a "school": "One of the things I intend to trumpet while I have this temporary podium, is that we are a town that has first-class contemporary architecture. Washington produces a radically different kind of neo-eclectic architecture than any other city. There is a current school of Washington architecture of which we are representative." *Washington Post*, 7 September 1991, pp. G1, G5.

Romancing the Park

City Baseball Magic *by Philip Bess. Minneapolis Review of Baseball, 1989. 48 pp., 50 illus., $5.95*

Green Cathedrals *by Philip J. Lowry. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1992. 275 pp., illus. $24.95*

Lost Ballparks *by Laurence S. Ritter. New York: Viking, 1992. 210 pp., illus., $25*

Reviewed by Bruce C. Webb

Baseball is the Rube Goldberg invention of sports, a series of semi-autonomous skill-motions held together by a complex set of rules; a mythic national pastime but a comparatively austere sport riddled with inbetween time, pauses, and endless waiting for something to happen. For the believers, baseball parks are not simply athletic venues but cultic shrines. Hence the mystical tone of Philip J. Lowry's *Green Cathedrals*, an atlas to the sacred geography of the diamond-studded paradise: "The more I have studied ballparks, the more they have begun to resemble mosques, or synagogues, or churches or such similar places of reverent worship. There is a scene of beauty at 21st Street and Lehigh in Philadelphia. Where once there was the Shibe cathedral, also called Connie Mack Stadium, there is now the Deliverance Evangelistic Church. There is a message in this."

Lowry catalogues "271 major league and Negro League ballparks, past and present." What he reveres is not the newer multipurpose stadiums that appeared during the 1960s and 1970s as anonymous concrete expressions of some precise, prototypical programmatic order, but their classic predecessors, each a uniquely romantic personification of the local ingredients of team character, fan loyalty, and city spirit. Lowry's book pays homage to their praiseworthy diversity in an encyclopedic compilation of testimonials, pictures, occupants, neutral uses, capacities, largest and smallest crowds, surfaces, dimensions, fences, former uses, current uses, and anecdotes. Lawrence S. Ritter's more detailed, better-illustrated scrapbook, *Lost Ballparks*, focuses on 22 mostly vintage urban fields, major and minor, that have since made way for shopping centers, university campuses, a senior citizens' center, a hospital, public housing, junior high schools, and parking lots.

AP/Wide World Photos from *Lost Ballparks*

Wrigley Field, Los Angeles, California, late 1940s.

Collection Gordon C. Thiehl, in *Lost Ballparks*

Forbes Field, Pittsburgh, 1909-1971. Main entrance, ca. 1910.

Some idiosyncrasies of the old ballparks can be explained by the curious latitude accorded by the book of rules as to specifications for the playing field. While precisely prescribing the layout for the infield, the rules left the spatial definition of the outfield open to local interpretation. This allowed unusual field configurations to fit the odd scraps of urban land. It wasn't until rule 1.04 was passed in 1958 that a minimum dimension for new stadiums was fixed at 325 feet from home plate to the nearest fence and 400 feet to center field. But even with rule 1.04, nothing said a field had to be symmetrical – or that it could not be configured, for example, to favor a home team with a surplus of left-handed power hitters.

Symmetry and uniformity would seem sportsmanlike precepts for stadium design. But the lookalike character of the super stadiums derived less charitably from the application of principles of systems design and diagrammatic analysis to the requirements of a multipurpose stadium. In *Green Cathedrals*, architect Dale Swearington cogently discusses engineering innovations in reinforced and lightweight concrete that allowed concrete to compare favorably with steel as a building material, enabling a monumental unity of form and structure within a modernist plastic expression. Moving stadiums out into the suburbs neutralized the localizing influences of the city context, freeing form to follow function in diagrammatic buildings that were symmetrical and usually round, with broad cantilevers and no interfering support columns.

What was really being optimized was engineering: the circular shape of most multipurpose super stadiums fits no sport precisely but can be finagled to accommodate them all. For baseball this configuration puts spectators at an increased distance from the infield and leaves many fans under the deep cover of overslung upper decks, screened from the trajectory of a well-hit fly ball. There's much to dislike about these super stadiums. Philip Bess's little book, *City Baseball Magic*, offers an incisive and comprehensive critique in laying out his argument for the design of Armour Field, a hypothetical new ballpark for the Chicago White Sox that sought to restore some of the ambience and character of the older generation of urban parks.

But unless I miss the point, what baseball romantics yearn for is the true idiosyncrasies that made the ballparks of the past so imperfect and so lopsidedly designed to favor the strengths of the home team. Nearly every book on baseball begins with fond remembrances of being taken to the ballpark by an adult and how the experience lingered. I recall going with my father to old Forbes Field in Pittsburgh – a grimy post-Victorian structure that to me resembled nothing so much as a steel mill or railroad station – and having the overwhelming feeling that the whole rickety, riveted steel structure was going to collapse. I made deals with the gods that if I let the other team win, maybe we could get out of there alive. At Forbes Field, I was a boy being initiated into a man's world that smelled of cigars, beer, and the sweat of hunky steelworkers who cussed everything.

Today baseball is a thoroughly sanitized "family entertainment." Maybe it all changed when the Brooklyn Dodgers moved to Los Angeles and the chimerical world of Hollywood, bypassing the cozy Mission-style ambience of LA's own Wrigley Field for the immense, multivalent Coliseum until Chavez Ravine could

be rushed to completion. Perhaps it was when the Astrodome turned the baseball stadium into a kind of post-Barnum theme park out of diversionary necessity. Today baseball players live in a universal non-place realm, the same world inhabited by movie stars who live on the surfaces of electronic screens. They don't belong to Houston or Pittsburgh or anyplace; they go where the money is. Everything about the game seems far off, miniaturized, squeaky clean.

Like many of our institutions, baseball today really is defined by marketing, consumerism, and television. In the third generation of ballparks, the ones Lowry calls regenerated classical parks, the postmodern "look" seems more like a piece of thin, "themed" wrapping paper applied to the outside surfaces of still-too-perfect stadiums. They embody the essence of capitalist architecture in the declining years of the 20th century – designed to look good on television and to hold life inside a high-priced controlled environment of ersatz nostalgia and lots of fringe buying. To restore baseball to its former look would mean resurrecting old spectator styles in places much less wholesome and slightly more illicit. It would also mean deconstructing the surface illusions of these places, creating instead stadiums of considerable irrationality – a kind of John Cage architecture held together by the narrative content of the game itself. ■

Painted Ground

Roberto Burle Marx: The Unnatural Art of the Garden *by William Howard Adams. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1991. 80 pp., 50 color plates, $22.50 paper*

The Gardens of Roberto Burle Marx *by Sima Eliovson; foreword by Roberto Burle Marx. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Sagapress, 1991. 237 pp., 163 color plates, $45*

Reviewed by Eduardo Robles

Roberto Burle Marx, born in São Paulo, Brazil, on 4 August 1909, emerged foremost among the creators of a modern landscape aesthetic in the late 1930s. His work is an example of landscape design as artistic endeavor. A painter, muralist, sculptor, architect, and set designer, he brought to it sources of inspiration based on art, literature, garden history, and music.

Working almost entirely in his native Brazil, Burle Marx's career extended over half a century. From a few projects of traditional design to the refinement of a philosophy based on artistic and ecological concerns, he expressed a personal cosmology that was expanded and refined in each project. Burle Marx's designs could not have existed without Brazil and its natural richness, something he realized during his first visit to Europe when he saw the Dahlan Botanical Garden in Berlin. In this setting, the Brazilian transplants, exuberant even in the far-from-tropical light of a German winter, must have had an enormous impact on him – the beginnings of a vision. In his work, Burle Marx reminds us of a time when the garden was still an important aspect of civilization. He reaches for a clear and strong harmony between nature and man and wants to contain and preserve nature as it is interpreted, not imitated, by the eye and hand of the designer.

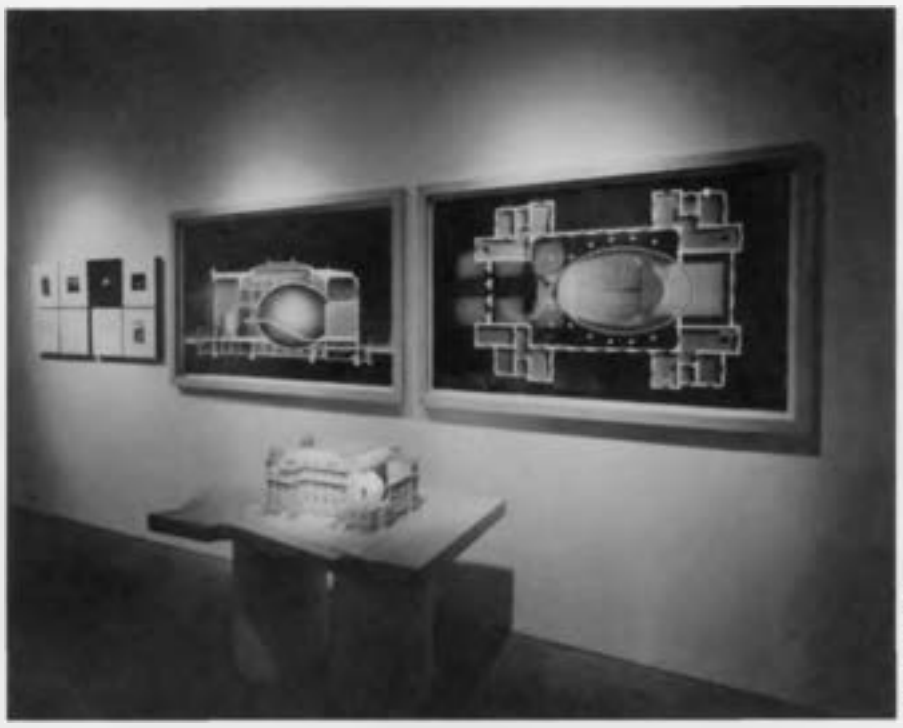
William Howard Adams, landscape historian, lawyer, museum director, and curator of the Burle Marx exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art between 12 April and 23 May 1991, describes Brazilian conditions and the forces that shaped the mind of the master in *Roberto Burle Marx: The Unnatural Art of the Garden.* His brief, beautifully illustrated treatment surveys the historical background of gardens in Brazil and Europe and details Burle Marx's collaborations with architects and their architecture, his teachings, his work as director of parks in the city of Recife, and his sympathy for avant-garde art. Lucid photographs of drawings, paintings, and projects give the reader a glimpse of his ability to incorporate in gardens what he believes is the assertiveness of humanity over and in harmony with the landscape, since for Marx it was in a garden that man first defined and modified the universe. Adams shows us Burle Marx's work – full of emotion and understanding of nature and science, of aggression and reconciliation, of discovery and creation, addressing both the eye and the mind.

The Gardens of Roberto Burle Marx offers a more personal approach to the man cited as "the real creator of the modern garden" by the American Institute of Architects. It is the work of the late Sima Eliovson, a native of South Africa who was a writer, photographer, and lecturer on gardens and garden subjects. She traces Burle Marx's long and prolific career from small garden commissions to the large and spectacular urban landscapes in Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia.

The first part of her book, dedicated to the man and his background, contains

Museum of Modern Art

Roberto Burle Marx, garden plan, Burton Tremaine residence, Santa Barbara, California, 1948.



Richmond Hall installation designed by Tadao Ando.

extensive descriptions laced with an endless list of plants. Although at times a critical view is intended, Eliovson's work is primarily descriptive. There are exhaustive explanations of the man, the philosopher, and the plantsman, as well as a lengthy description of Burle Marx's plant houses, including a list of the favorite plants used in his own garden. Unfortunately, Eliovson's account more often than not lapses into monotony.

Eliovson also provides a useful catalogue of Burle Marx's work in approximately chronological order, with elaborate descriptions of the plants involved. These projects show the variety and versatility of Burle Marx's design: large and small, wide and narrow, flat and perched on steep hills, angled and stepped, highly geometric and highly naturalistic. Eliovson evokes the dialogue between collecting and using plants in serious, solid design. Color photographs and plans carry the bulk of the information; the plans are too few, and the photographs fail to convey the exuberant richness of the gardens. Burle Marx's ability to exploit the immediate with visually powerful and exotic plants and to contrast the single focal point and the landscape beyond are lost in the flatness and monochromy of the photographs. Eliovson does include a helpful glossary of plants mentioned in the text – although it is by no means a complete rendering of Burle Marx's palette – and a complete checklist of his projects.

Roberto Burle Marx is a painter of gardens, a master of bold statements, and a singular influence in garden design in the 20th century. He is a designer who knows and loves plants, who understands their form, color, flowering habits, and individual qualities as well as their needs, who can orchestrate revelation, surprise, and quiet presence. It is helpful to have available in English two books about Burle Marx and his projects that reveal both the private and the public aspects of his exotic and painterly *oeuvre*. ■

The Drawing on the Wall

Tadao Ando
The Menil Collection, Richmond Hall
20 March – 24 May 1992

Reviewed by Carlos Jiménez

Entering the Tadao Ando exhibition at the Menil Collection's Richmond Hall, one immediately confronts two angled walls opposite one another. On the wall to the right, the architect has sketched a longitudinal section of one of his projects, transforming the wall into an actual drawing surface. In a single gesture, the continuous blue-crayon sketch integrates an architectural form and its setting, paralleling Ando's preoccupation with buildings and nature as inseparable elements. The wall to the left displays eight sequential photographs of the altar of one of Ando's best-known works, the Church of Light, Ibaraki, Japan (1987–89). Within this series, each frame reveals the passage of light as it enters and transits the sacred space. Like a ritual sundial, the cross-shaped opening animates the concrete walls and casts a spiritual presence. One need look no further than these two walls to grasp the essence of the architect's work.

This exhibition of 12 self-selected works from the last ten years was organized by the Museum of Modern Art as part of its Gerald D. Hines Interests Architecture Program. Both the New York and Houston installations were designed by Ando, although at Richmond Hall the exhibition has been relieved of the freestanding faux-concrete wall that marred it at MOMA – a strained reference to the architect's favorite material, cast concrete. A catalogue accompanies the exhibition, including an essay by Kenneth Frampton that assesses Ando's "self-consciously cross-cultural position."

Born in Osaka, Japan, in 1941, Ando has achieved an almost mythical prominence as a self-taught architect who developed his craft through a process of observation and travel. Adding to this mystique is his proclivity to initiate projects himself and then find clients patrons to enable their realization. Ando's path of self-discovery has culminated in a clarity of expression seldom seen in contemporary architecture; his spare geometry infuses even an anony-mous detail or a blank concrete wall with the vitality of poetry.

The exhibition lamentably excludes important works such as the Azuma Row House (1975–76) and the Times I and II buildings (1984–86), in Osaka and Kyoto respectively. Located in crowded urban contexts, these projects demonstrate Ando's ingenuity in creating spaces for refuge and sustenance in the midst of everyday chaos. This refined serenity – at once meditative and sensual – is most evident in the three ecclesiastical projects represented in the exhibition: the Chapel on Mount Rokko, Kobe (1985–86), the Church on the Water, Tomamu (1985–88) and the Church of Light. Through material and texture, water and wind, shadow and light, each of the senses finds its correspondence.

Most of the projects are described by site models and by presentation drawings, some as large as 32 feet in length, rendered with seductive virtuosity. Beyond their graphic assurance, the drawings underscore Ando's desire to fuse elements of nature with the tectonics of architecture. This is no better expressed than in the astonishing drawing of the Church on the Water: here the rotation of section, plan, and elevation converges in a seemingly unending line, bracketed by a heavily drawn blue sky and a blackening earth.

The site models are revealing as extensions of the topography on which Ando sculpts his forms. Often a plan's configuration echoes or contrasts to some near or distant contour in the terrain. Each site model appears as an abstract portion of earth lifted from its source. For some architects, the rigor of geometry can imprison the senses, but Ando's reductive geometry is liberating. It often amplifies subtleties of site or serves to extend its reach, as in the case of the Forest of Tombs Museum, Kumamoto (1989–91), and the Chikatsu-Asuka Historical Museum, Minami-Kawachi (1989–91), where conceptual grids enter into and disappear under the water.

Placed at the exhibition's midpoint, six television screens ask visitors to enter a simulated architecture of multiple images. These introduce an element of hype incongruous with the projects. Video installations can work for or against an architect's sensibility. For instance, in Arata Izosaki's retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1991), the use of "high definition" television monitors was well suited to his showmanship. The saturated images transported one into Izosaki's realm of eclectic compositions with an immediacy not felt in either the accompanying drawings or the models. In Ando's case, the videos do facilitate an understanding of movement through his architectural pro-jections, but their slickness distances one from the true meaning of the work. What is most moving about Ando's best work is that which cannot be said – the silent dialogue between the ephemeral and the eternal. At Richmond Hall, their medium of exchange is the memory of a flowing sketch and the haunting beauty of shadow and light. ■

Deflatable Architecture

Bruce C. Webb

Montage by Bruce C. Webb, photo by Paul Hester

WHEN the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company created its North American fleet of flying billboards, it allocated them along a narrow band in the southern United States with an evenhanded sense of symmetry: *Mayflower* to the East Coast (Pompano Beach, Florida); *Enterprise* to the West Coast (Los Angeles); and *America* to the mid-coast (Houston). From the beginning, the giant helium-filled air bags have been a peripatetic lot, roaming the country to promote goodwill for the company that begot them. As a near-perfect embodiment of the corporate symbol, the blimp manages to horn in on nearly every major national event (as measured by the amount of television coverage), providing spectacular bird's-eye shots of football games, parades, and festivals that are symbiotically rewarded by ground shots of the blimp itself and ample mention of the Goodyear name by the broadcasting crews.

Like some aerial throwback to a simpler and more romantic era of flying, the blimp is a delightfully contradictory creation. As described by George Larson in his little blimp book,

"it is huge, yet unsubstantial. It is the very shape of speed, yet it trundles through the air like a skyborne hippo, slowly, vulnerably. The shiny metallic envelope, seemingly a polished monomorphic dart, is in reality a thin membrane, an undulating bladder swollen with the effort of containing the restless gas within. Beneath the great bag, like a remora on a shark, hangs the parasitic car. It dangles like an afterthought, yet it is the blimp's sole resident cargo."[1]

Illustrations of city scenes in the early part of the 20th century began to populate the sky, the final horizon to be claimed for the city, with blimps, biplanes, and gyrocopters. One no longer thought exclusively of flat, cardinal space, but of three-dimensional space instead, and no longer in terms of fixed relationships, but of vectors pulled along indeterminate paths. Floating gently into view at sunset from behind the cluster of downtown buildings, the Houston blimp managed to re-create some of these scenes. At night, with its sides flashing brightly colored pointillistic designs, it was pure science fiction.

Houstonians seemed to claim their blimp the way Parisians claim the Eiffel Tower – a point demonstrated by how often the blimp shows up in architectural renderings of the city. The perfect symbol of the non-place, urban realm, it floated along as a moving center of attention, fulfilling some of that most extraordinary of Roland Barthes's claims, that to be a total monument, a thing must be totally useless.

Unlike its more businesslike flying cousins, which have lost their power to stir the imagination, the blimp seemed like a piece of the ground that had become airborne; like a giant building weighing less than nothing, it was there simply to be seen, incongruously, surreally, entertainingly. Even with the big blue logo on its side, we could scarcely believe that the blimp wasn't public property. It resisted the tendency to explain itself in rational terms of purpose – a noteworthy achievement in a city whose major stadium is domed. And like everything useless or nearly so, it was vulnerable and could only be maintained through love or obligation or sophistry.

Demonstrating the tenuous nature of the relationships between corporations and the cities in which they settle and do business, Goodyear this year is reshuffling the fleet. The *Columbia*, formerly *Mayflower*, will be renamed the *Spirit of Akron* and recalled to the corporate headquarters in Ohio. *America*, renamed *Stars and Stripes*, has left Houston for Miami. The *Eagle*, née *Columbia*, will stay on at its base in Los Angeles.

Goodyear's explanations for lifting the Houston blimp are distressingly practical. "It's a business decision," said local Goodyear spokesman Fred Haymond in the *Houston Chronicle*. "This should in no way be construed as anything negative about Houston." (How could a company that sells automobile tires have any negative thoughts about Houston?) To prove it, Goodyear promises to bring the blimp back on occasion – in August of this year, for example, for the Republican national convention. But such gestures will seem gratuitous to those who remember how the blimp might drop in on a clear day when you were coming out of the zoo, or provide a little entertainment for motorists caught in rush hour on the Southwest Freeway. In those days the blimp was our toy, capable of relieving some of the tension in an overly functionalized city. I recall one spectacular episode when the blimp flew around the Transco Tower at sky lounge level, flashing personal messages to the party crowd inside and bringing two Houston symbols into brief but dramatic conjunction. We should have bought the blimp from Goodyear or, needs be, taken it by force. We need it as an urban symbol, certainly more than Akron does. And much, much more than the company that uses it to sell tires does. ■

1 George Larson, with photographs by George Hall and Baron Wolman, *The Blimp Book* (Mill Valley, Cal.: Square Books, 1977), p. 11.

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