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THE ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN REVIEW OF HOUSTON

A PUBLICATION OF THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

76 FALL 2008

Cite (ISSN: 8755-0415) is published quarterly by the Rice Design Alliance, Rice University, Anderson Hall, Room 149, 6100 Main Street, Houston, Texas 77005-1892.

Individual Subscriptions:
U.S. and its possessions: $25 for one year, $40 for two years.
Foreign: $50 for one year, $80 for two years.

Cite is indexed in the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals.

The opinions expressed in *Cite* do not necessarily represent the views of the board of directors of the Rice Design Alliance. Publication of this issue is supported in part by grants from the Susan Vaughan Foundation, the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, and the Texas Commission for the Arts.

The Rice Design Alliance, established in 1972, is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture and design.
website: rda.rice.edu

FSC Mixed Sources

COVER: "Nimby" by Kevin Curry is a structure fashioned from like debris. Photographed by Eric Hester.

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CHRISTA FORSTER is a writer and performing artist in Houston. Recent work has been published in *Sculpture Magazine* and performed at Diverseworks and the Axiom.

TROY GOODEN has nearly 15 years experience working within several of Houston's community-based art organizations, including most recently MOCAH. Gooden currently works as Civic Art and Design Project Manager with Houston Arts Alliance.

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SANDY SHEEHY wrote "A Line in the Sand" in the Spring 2008 issue of *Cite*. She is a member of the Galveston Historical Foundation and a regular volunteer for Dickens on the Strand and the Historic Homes Tour, which featured her condo in 2007.

CHRISTOF SPIELER is director of technology and innovation at Morris Architects and a lecturer at the Rice School of Architecture. He writes about transportation at ctchouston.org/blogs/christof.

Picnic: A Soirée by the Park
2008 RDA GALA

Photography by Eric Hester

The Rice Design Alliance celebrated Discovery Green, Houston's new park in the heart of downtown Houston, and those who made it happen at its annual benefit gala on November 15.

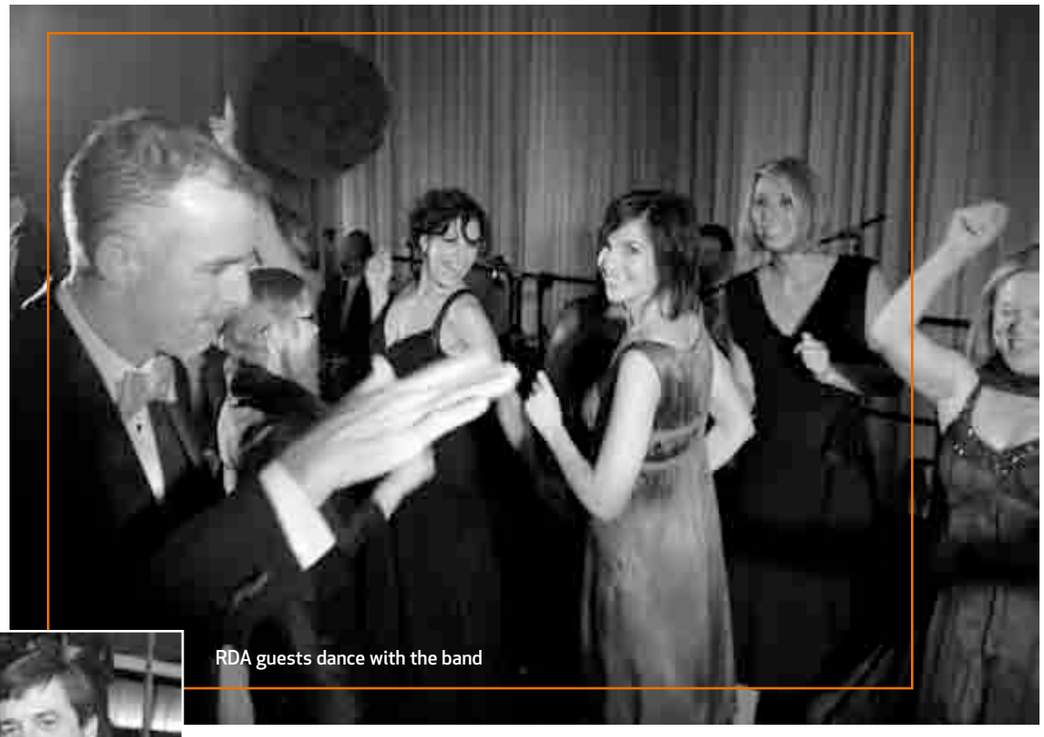
The 22nd RDA gala was held at the Hilton Americas-Houston hotel where the Gensler team of Marilyn Archer, Yishio Kuo, Michelle Hatton, and Edward Folse with designer Rebekah Johnson of Bergner and Johnson Design transformed the Lanier Ballroom into a sophisticated park-like setting, a modern twist on Versailles. A wide promenade led to the stage, alongside which major underwriters and their guests were seated at long picnic-style tables. Eight-foot tall topiary trees lined the promenade and tablecloths in shades of blue and green swept over the space, mimicking the green space and water features of Discovery Green. The Discovery Park Conservancy and Guy Hagstette, president of Discovery Green, were congratulated for their leadership and management of this fabulous, convivial public space that has enhanced the quality of life in Houston.

Gala Chairs Charlotte and Larry Whaley and Honorary Chair Y. Ping Sun joined RDA President Chuck Gremillion in greeting the twelve hundred guests as they made their way to the amazing auction that featured 144 unique designer items and 51 works of art, curated by auction chairs Adrienne Johnson and Liz Anders and their talented committee. The auction brought in $75,000.

Underwriting chair Kimberly Hickson and her committee beat their 2007 record-breaking effort, raising $575,000 for RDA programs and *Cite*.

Discovery Green park designers Mary Margaret Jones of Hargreaves Associates, Lauren Griffith of Lauren Griffith Associates, and Larry Speck of PageSoutherlandPage were on hand to be congratulated for the design of the 12-acre urban park and its buildings, including The Grove and The Lake House. Also receiving accolades were Ray Messer of Walter P Moore, whose company engineered the park, and park contractors Thad and Tricia Miner of Miner Dederick Construction and Marshall Lightman of Gilbane.

Dancers soon replaced those strolling on the promenade as Austin band Rotel and the Hot Tomatoes wowed the crowd with their music and showmanship. Late into the evening gala guests were having as much fun as a walk in the park.



RDA guests dance with the band

Janna and Chuck Gremillion

Y. Ping Sun

Guy Hagstette, Doug Lawing, and Jerry Jeanmard

Larry Speck

Yishio Kuo and Michelle Hatton

RDA Staff with RDA President Chuck Gremillion in the driver's seat of the Art Cart.


Liz Anders and
Adrienne Johnson


Kimberly Hickson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Fiona McGettigan and Mike Wall

2008 RDA GALA Picnic: A Soirée by the Park

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RDA HOMETOWN TOURS
In February 2009, RDA will travel to **Marfa** to visit the historic Trans-Pecos area of Texas. While the Marfa trip is sold out (February 5 - 8), interested RDA members have the opportunity to travel to **New York City** in June to see the new, amazing architecture in and around the Big Apple (June 3 - 7). More information on both trips can be found on rda.rice.edu or by calling 713.348.4876.

ALL PHOTOS: ERIC HESTER

LETTERS

In reading my Summer 2008 *Cite*, at first, I was highly amused at the article by Roger Connah on Beachtown. I did thoroughly enjoy his poetic, romantic description of Clifton Beach. And just when we thought that 19th-century literary styles were dead! As a homeowner I was agreeing about the over-zealous, over-burdened pattern book. However, I found myself dismayed to find such a venomous attack on both Beachtown and Hitchcock.

Mr. Connah bemoans the loss of access to the beach by the community at large. In truth, along the approximately 1.5 miles of road from the high rise buildings to, but not including, East Beach Park there are now seven passages to the beach. All include ample, free parking and a comfortable path to the beach. Only one, because it is not ADA accessible, is locked. Beachtown itself has parking and two dune crossovers for any and all. In fact, we have enough parking and a large enough crossover to accommodate the many community weddings that are held here.

Beachtown survives Ike with little damage.

His showing a picture of hanging columns on a house under construction and his diatribe against the "Turquoise Lumber" was misleading at best. Did he think our readers are ignorant enough to come to the conclusion that this is the final resting place of these columns? Did he assume that we Texans (with fingers too fat to use a Blackberry) wouldn't know that the glaringly turquoise lumber would be covered?

Carolyn Edgar
Sugarland, Texas

LET US HEAR FROM YOU
Cite welcomes and encourages readers to send letters, including critical ones, to citemail@rice.edu.

CORRECTION
We regret that an error was made in "Sustainable Campuses: The Greening of Rice and the University of Houston," *Cite 76, Summer 2008*. The correct building name for the new LEED Gold dormitory at Rice University is the Charles and Anne Duncan Residential College.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
Cite welcomes the submission of article ideas, detailed pitches, and written articles. Authors of published pieces are paid for their work. Send submissions and questions to citemail@rice.edu.

Offcite:

New **Blog** Complements *Cite*

The Rice Design Alliance and the *Cite* editorial committee have launched a blog called Offcite.org. This new online presence will feature the voices found in the print magazine with authoritative and thoughtful posts, architectural news roundups, photo essay outtakes, and podcasts. If bulldozers threaten a historic building, if a new transit plan is announced, the blog will provide a forum for reflection, analysis, and action. Visit Offcite.org now.

As part of an overarching effort, the RDA and *Cite* will roll out more new websites in the coming months to bring calendars, lectures, multimedia, and other information to advance architecture and design.

Giant heap of Ike debris and draft map showing where building permits will be issued.

Timely Coverage

→ **THE POLITICS OF REBUILDING GALVESTON**
The Galveston planning commission has issued a draft map designating which areas can be rebuilt. Who makes these calls and by what criteria?

→ **ARCHITECTURE AND THE HOUSTON ECONOMY**
Lehman Brothers, Circuit, City, and Linens N Things go under. Is Houston an exception to the shrinking national economy? What is the impact on architecture and design firms?

→ **STUDENTS BUILD PUBLIC ART**
Videos of the students behind the MOCAH installation at Buckboard Park complement the coverage in this issue's Hindcite.

NEWS

DELANGE CONFERENCE : RDA BAYOU CHARRETTE : 99K EXHIBITION : 99K GROUNDBREAKING

DELANGE CONFERENCE

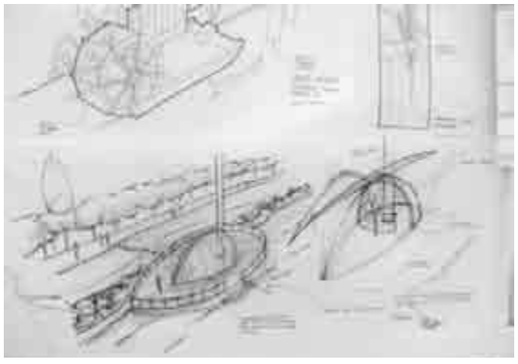
For the first time in history, more than half of the world's population now lives in urban areas. At this defining moment in the history of cities, the seventh annual De Lange Conference at Rice University (March 2-4, 2009) will ask many of the world's leading thinkers and practitioners of innovative urban solutions to engage in a dialogue on the concept of sustainable and humane cities. Specifically, this conference will pose the following questions: What does our urban future promise? How can urbanization provide answers to the ecological, social, and economic issues of the 21st century? To register go to delange.rice.edu.

ACTIVATING THE BAYOU RDA CHARRETTE

With its hike and bike trails, lush landscaping, exciting public art, and imaginative lunar lighting scheme, Buffalo Bayou is being transformed into an active and vibrant waterfront destination in downtown Houston. Routine flooding, however, restricts other entertainment from further activating this valuable public space. But does it have to? For its 2008 Design Charrette, Rice Design Alliance joined with Buffalo Bayou Partnership to investigate how Houston's design community can "stir things up" along Buffalo Bayou. Potential activation sites included the bayou's 10-mile trail system, the Allen Parkway "dog park," Sabine Promenade, and Sesquicentennial Park.

Forty-five participants worked tirelessly from 8 am to 4 pm on designing a system for the activation of Buffalo Bayou. Entries ranged from the elaborate to the simple, with thoughtful, creative ideas in each. The designs were viewed by the jury, comprised of Bob Eury, President of Central Houston, Inc.; Alan Krathaus, Principal of Core Design Studio; Kevin Shanley, President and CEO of SWA Group; and Lorie Westrick, Board Member of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership and Principal with Rey de la Reza Architects met on Monday, August 4th to determine a winning design.

The entry submitted by SHW Group (Luis Ayala, Ashad B. Satchu, Edward Blanco, Russell Morse, Dan Whalen, Britney Pool, Luis Fernandez, Edgar Gallegos, Frank Kelly, Derek Porche, and Scott Smith) was awarded the prize for Best in Show. Two Honorable Mentions were given, one to the team from TBG Partners (Kaleb Franklin, Pete Simpson, Yan Long, Blake Coleman, and Yan Wang), and the other to a team from Asakura Robinson and Rey de la Reza Architects (Keiji Asakura, Georganna Collins, Barbara Novella, Rey de la Reza, and Yogesh Arote). The Most Feet on the Bayou award went to Margaret McNickle and The Art Car Meets Bayou Water Craft award went to Alejandro Iriarte.



Drawings from the winning charrette entry by SHW group.

Mayor Bill White speaks at the 99K groundbreaking.

99K groundbreaking.

99K EXHIBITION

An exhibition of 66 selected entries to the 99K House Competition was held at the Architecture Center Houston from September 3 to October 30. Houston Mayor Bill White spoke to a packed hall about coupling innovative design with city-wide initiatives for affordable housing. The shoulder-to-shoulder crowd included local builders, Community Development Corporation leaders, and the architects and designers behind the showcased projects and ideas.

A catalog was published to accompany this exhibition and includes illustrations of the 66 designs as well as contact information for the architects and designers of these designs. The catalog sells for $9.99 and is available from RDA, AIA Houston, Brazos Bookstore, and bookstores at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Contemporary Arts Museum, and the Menil Collection.

The City of Houston through the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA) provided a lot at 4015 Jewel Street in Houston's Fifth Ward, which was among the 3,000 tax delinquent properties slated for redevelopment in the four neighborhood city initiative known as Project Hope.

The 99K Competition, announced in October 2007, called for a single-family house with up to 1,400 SF, including three bedrooms and one-and-a-half to two bathrooms, to be built for $99,000 or less. The competition challenged designers and architects to design a sustainable house, with special consideration given to affordability, longevity, energy savings benefits, and appropriateness for the hot, humid climate of Houston.

The exhibition will travel throughout the US.

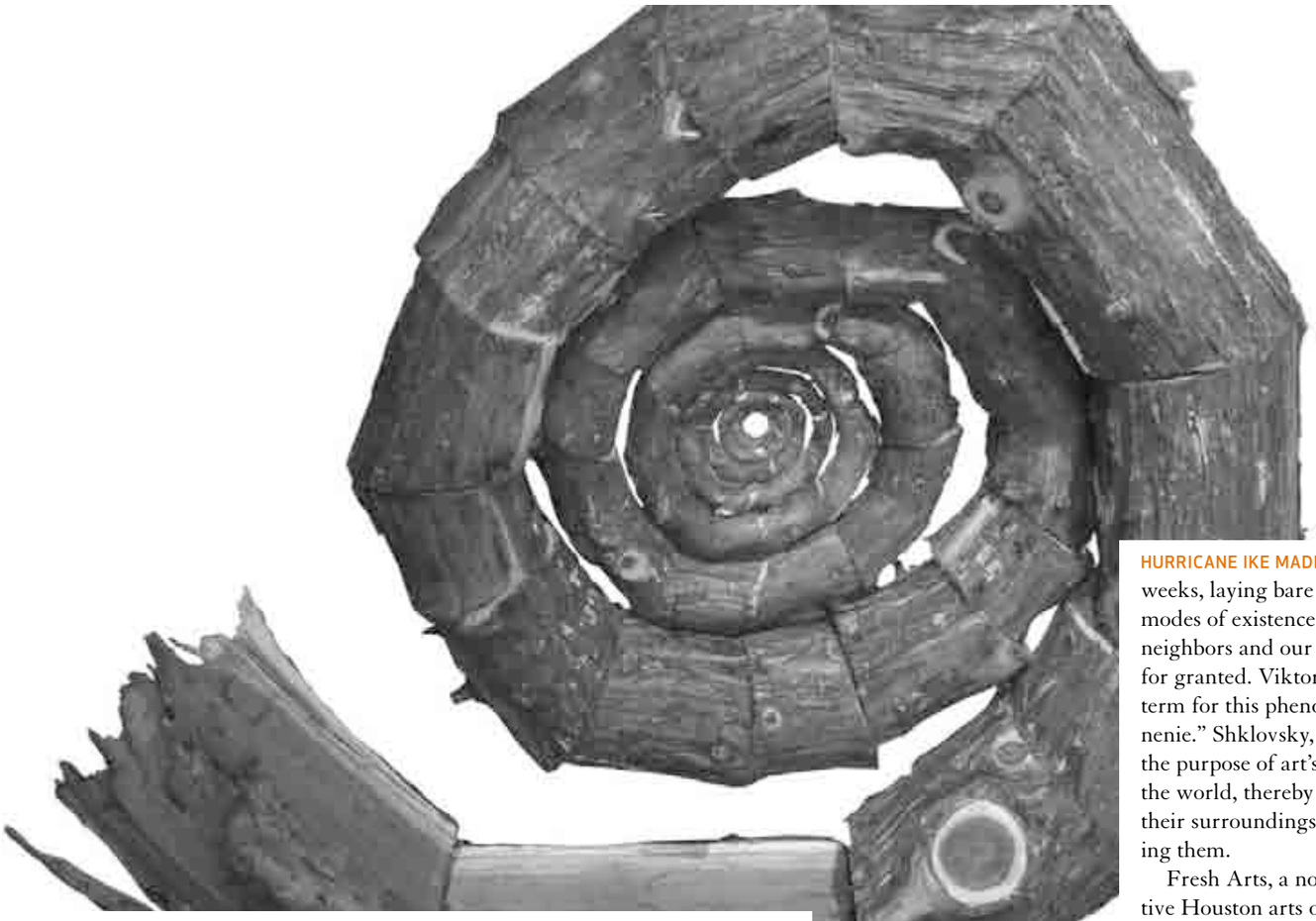
99K GROUNDBREAKING: NEW KID COMING TO THE BLOCK

On October 31, around noon on a clear-sky day, Houston Mayor Bill White spoke at the Fifth Ward site where the winning design by Hybrid/ORA of the 99K House Competition will be built. He expressed his excitement for the completion of this prototype and the continued building and sale of other affordable houses on the many lots available through the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA) and Houston Hope programs.

The following individuals stepped forward to participate with the Mayor in the groundbreaking ceremony: Dan Hassebroek, President of the Houston Architecture Foundation; Nonya Grenader, Co-Chair of the 99K Competition; Barrie Scardino, Executive Director of AIA Houston and Co-Chair of the 99K Competition; Linda Sylvan, Executive Director of the Rice Design Alliance; Brian Malarkey, President of AIA Houston; Chuck Gremillion, President of the Rice Design Alliance; Reginald Adams, President of LARA; Gary Beck, Eco-Holdings Inc., structural engineer for the 99K House design; Peter Brown, City Council Member; and David Harvey, D.E. Harvey Builders, contractor for the building of the 99K House.

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, D. E. Harvey Builders, Inc. is donating its services as general contractor of the project. Other subcontractors are donating their services, including engineering expertise from Haynes Whaley Associates and Eco-Holdings Structural Engineers. The winning house will be sold or auctioned to a low-income family through the Tejano Community Center.

KATHRYN FOSDICK



ART

MADE FROM IKE: Out of Destruction, Creation

A review

HURRICANE IKE MADE HOUSTON STRANGE FOR SEVERAL weeks, laying bare for Houstonians our unconscious modes of existence, including our isolation from neighbors and our talent for taking resources totally for granted. Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984) coined a term for this phenomenon of making strange: "ostranenie." Shklovsky, a Russian Formalist, argued that the purpose of art's artfulness was to defamiliarize the world, thereby forcing viewers to perceive truly their surroundings again instead of numbly recognizing them.

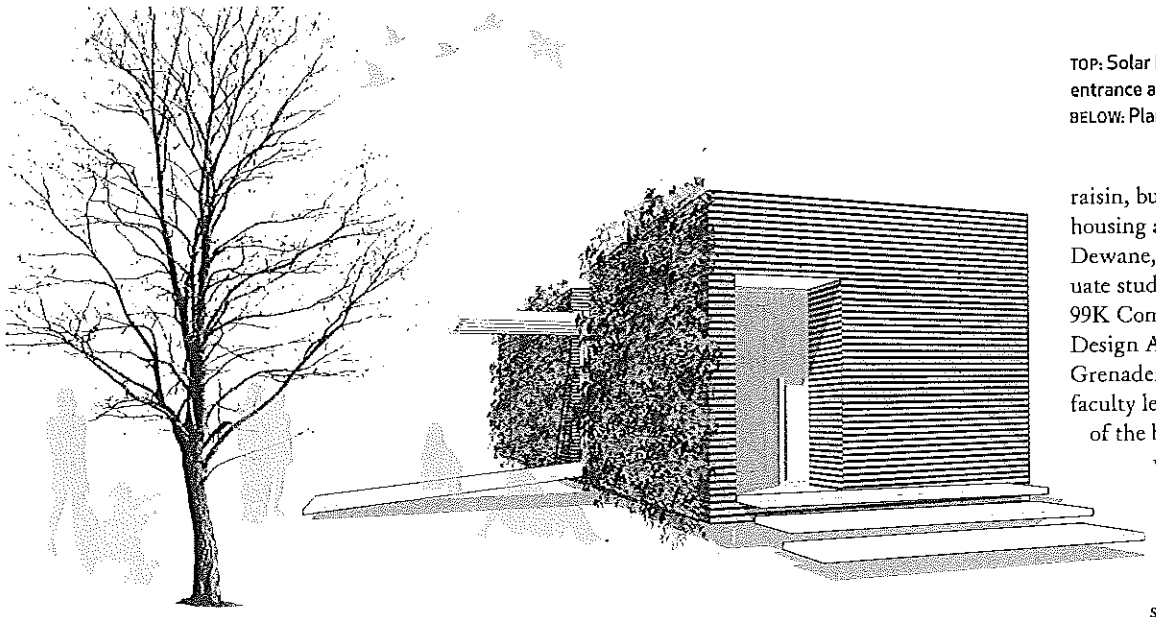
Fresh Arts, a nonprofit collaboration of 25 distinctive Houston arts organizations, responded promptly to Ike's "ostranenie" with their contest "Made From Ike: Out of Destruction, Creation." Thirty-four local artists submitted works made from storm debris—felled trees, snapped-off signs, roof shingles, etc. Artists competed for $2,000 in cash prizes, and all entries were auctioned off on October 24 at Caroline Collective, a new co-working space in Houston's museum district www.carolinecollective.cc. Silent auction proceeds benefited the Americans for the Arts Emergency Relief fund and the William Graham Artist Emergency fund.

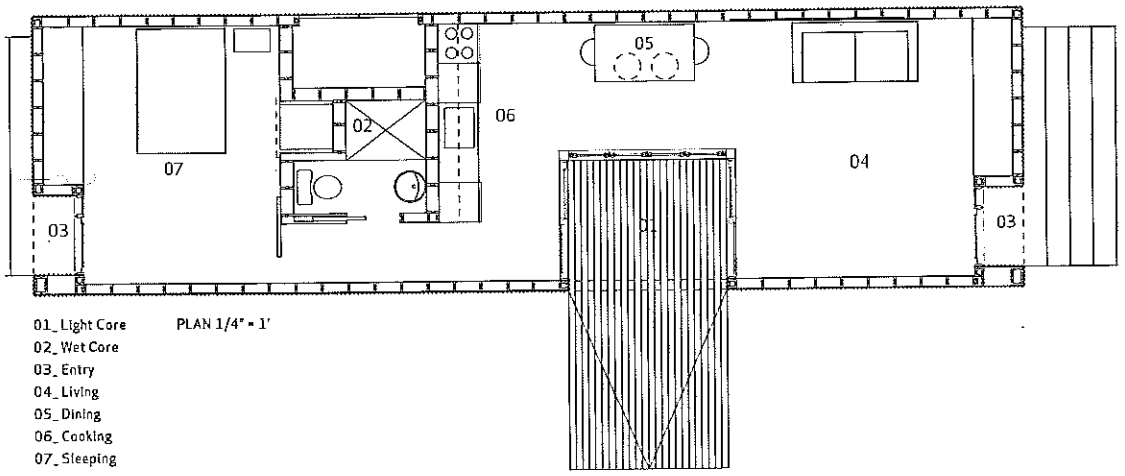
FROM TOP: **Dan Havel's "Cedar Spiral," Nicholas Auger's "Bicycle Freedom," and Kevin Curry's "Nimby."**

Artist Dan Havel won first place and $1,000 for "Cedar Spiral." Havel, along with his long-time collaborator Dean Ruck, have been making things strange in Houston for over a decade with works like their 1995 meditative "O House" in Houston's old West End, and most recently "Inversion," their 2005 project that literally turned two houses on the corner of Montrose and Willard St. inside out. "Nimby" received second place; Kevin Curry's architectural structure fashioned from discarded fence boards, posts, and rails "address[es] the fragility of safety and comfort." Nicholas Auger, a 21-year old art student at the University of Houston, won third place for his installation "Bicycle Freedom," which hung from Graustark Bridge over 59 for three days, compelling gridlocked motorists to dare and imagine freedom from the ever-dominant oil industry.

-Christa Forster

FROM TOP: DAN HAVEL, NICHOLAS AUGER, AND ERIC HESTER





TOP: Solar Decathlon house, rendered view of the entrance and light core.
BELOW: Plan.

INNOVATION

ON BUDGET OFF GRID

Solar Power Made Affordable

WITH GLOBAL WARMING AND ENERGY SECURITY TOPPING the headlines, and the extended power outage following Hurricane Ike, local interest in solar-powered homes is ripe. But can it be done affordably in Houston's climate?

Students at the Rice School of Architecture have worked on just that question for three years in preparation for the Department of Energy's 2009 Solar Decathlon. Held once every two years, the decathlon is an international student design competition that challenges teams to build a functional and beautiful house run entirely off of solar power. The Rice team was one of 20 selected out of 40 proposals and the only Texas school represented.

"We wanted to do a project rooted in the community. We could have built a morphogenetic blob wrapped in a solar skin that soaked up the sun like a raisin, but what we did is look at affordable housing and prefabrication," said David Dewane, a second-year Rice architecture graduate student. The concept was inspired by the 99K Competition sponsored by the Rice Design Alliance and AIA Houston. Nonya Grenader and Danny Marc Samuels serve as faculty leads. The goal is to keep the total cost of the building itself to $99,000 and $140,000 with the panels and hot-water system.

Though many universities budget regular funds for faculty-driven proposals for the solar decathlon, the Rice team got started through the initiative of students collaborating across the architecture and engineering schools. As a freshman, Roque Sanchez launched the Solar Decathlon Club, which morphed into for-credit classes. Now a Civil Engineering senior and student lead, he speaks passionately about a "wet core" that packages systems needed for cooking, plumbing, and air-conditioning into a tiny 8x10 foot space at the center of the home. It would ultimately be made in a factory and dropped into the relatively easy to construct frame.

The "light core," which is an unconditioned extension of the living space shaded by a cantilevered awning topped by a custom-designed solar water heater, is like a porch but attempts to go further in blurring the boundaries of the inside and outside spaces. "Other than Summer," Dewane noted, "Houston's climate is often pleasant and lends itself to exterior living."

Additional energy saving strategies include good insulation, dimmer lights, and separate thermostats that enable occupants to condition only the rooms they are occupying. To keep costs low, the team is also considering bare bones approaches such as line drying clothes.

The Department of Energy provides a $100,000 grant for non-material related costs, and the team is currently seeking support for their remaining expenses. They have to transport the built home to Washington, D.C. where they will undergo three weeks of performance testing and student-led public tours at the "Solar Village" on the National Mall from October 9 to 18, 2009.

Although over 125,000 people viewed the 2007 competition, many decathlon projects do not become real homes. "We are working with Project Row Houses to find a client," Sanchez said. The team will present a scheme dubbed "Ze-Row: Zero Energy Rowhouse" to place the building in the Third Ward.

-Raj Mankad

HOPE + DESIGN

Architects, builders, and the city develop affordable housing

-From the preface of the *99K House Competition Catalog*

IN A 1938 *ARCHITECTURAL FORUM* ARTICLE FRANK LLOYD Wright observed, "Not withstanding all efforts to improve the product, the American small house is still a pressing, needy, hungry, confused, issue." He was developing his Usonian houses in response to the challenges of affordability and material shortages following the Depression. Seventy years later, the urgent need for innovative and affordable housing remains. The *2008 State of the Nations Housing Report* noted that the numbers of severely burdened households are on the rise, while housing assistance programs have decreased. In this atmosphere, where so many households are paying more than half of their income for housing, the Rice Design Alliance (RDA) and AIA Houston challenged architects and designers to imagine an affordable, sustainable house for a specific Houston site in an open, international competition. The *99K House Competition* sought ideas and strategies for a small house under 1,400 square feet that could be constructed for less than one hundred thousand dollars using ecologically responsible building techniques and products.

Though affordable housing has been the focus of Community Development Corporations, nonprofit groups, and other service organizations, the American Dream of owning a house remains elusive to most in low-income groups. In Houston, new houses with the most affordable price tags are built in distant suburbs, while close-in neighborhoods languish. There is an obvious irony to this situation of sprawl—as gasoline and energy prices rise, the resulting cost of commuting great distances results in an additional burden for many homeowners. At the same time, older neighborhoods, which offer diversity as well as existing infrastructure, schools, and community centers, are being depleted and abandoned.

The City of Houston through LARA (Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority) and Mayor Bill White's Houston Hope initiative have developed incentives to discourage flight from established neighborhoods by making abandoned property available at reasonable cost to builders interested in providing quality housing in these older areas. Eligible homebuyers can receive up to $30,000 in down payment assistance through the City's Housing Assistance Program, allowing them to invest in their futures by building equity in their homes and community. As Mayor White noted at the 2007 opening of the first Houston Hope house, "The thousands of delinquent properties in Houston rob families of a great opportunity to live their dream of home ownership in some of Houston's historic neighborhoods. Project Houston Hope gives a new generation of Houstonians a real opportunity." The many vacant and available infill lots are seen as a chance to both stabilize and energize these areas in need of revitalization.

Early in the planning phase of the 99K House Competition, RDA and AIA Houston decided to make every effort to construct the winning design. With this in mind, a two-stage format was developed in which finalists were asked to prepare construction documents for pricing by a third-party contractor. We approached the City of Houston to join with us by endorsing the competition and donating a construction site. With the encouragement of Mayor White, LARA donated a 50- x 100-foot lot at 4015 Jewel Street in the historic Fifth Ward, behind Scott Elementary and a block from Tuffley Park and Community Center. The 99K House Competition program incorporated LARA/ Houston Hope guidelines, including the required three-bedroom house with a selling price of $99,000 or less. Though an Energy Star rating and the stipulation of one house per lot were included in the requirements, the 99K organizers encouraged a broader definition of sustainability and suggested planning flexibility for future application of the design to different lot sizes and locations throughout the Gulf Coast region.

The catalog documents sixty-six of the entries and lists the architects and designers. It is available for $9.99 through the Rice Design Alliance or AIA Houston.

The number of entries—we hoped for 99 and got 184—and the high quality of the designs astounded us. Proposals were submitted by local, national, and international architects and designers. A distinguished national jury chose five finalists for the second jury review that focused on construction feasibility and cost analysis of the designs. The winner, "CORE: A Compact, Adaptable House," submitted by the Seattle team of Hybrid/ORA, was admired by the jury as a project that reflected flexibility and respect for the budget, while offering sustainability to a variety of users over time. This compact, elegant design shows that an affordable house can also be beautiful architecture.

Though there is one winner, all of the designs offer unique solutions. Some are more contextual, while others are in contrast to the existing neighborhood. Some give careful consideration to budget constraints, while others are packed with ideas that render them clearly over budget. Some use simple passive energy concepts, while others looked for more advanced notions of sustainability. Many found a middle ground, using available materials in innovative ways, finding economy by employing efficient planning techniques, and suggesting that sustainability has both ecological and economic implications. Though only one house is planned for construction, true economy will come from building multiples of one design, and many of the proposed houses are worthy candidates. A catalog documenting sixty-six of the entries and a contact list for architects and designers is available through the Rice Design Alliance or AIA Houston.

In 1938 Wright envisioned a housing type that would expand the possibilities of small, affordable dwellings. As current houses grow ever larger and use greater resources, many architects continue to look for ways to downsize and improve sustainability. We hope that the results of the 99K House Competition serve not only as a book of ideas, but also a reminder that revitalizing an existing neighborhood through well-designed, affordable, and sustainable housing is a way to begin.

- Nonya Grenader and Barrie Scardino

RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE AND AIA HOUSTON

Dignity Village, Portland, Oregon.

Building the American Dream: *The Politics of Housing*

by Susan Rogers

fear and uncertainty have gripped the nation as the market rises and falls in the wake of the mortgage mess. It is becoming clear that the cost of the housing crisis will be measured not in billions but in trillions. Numbers most of us can't comprehend.

A persistent anomaly, and once defined as the boomiest and bustiest of cities, Houston so far stands apart in this crisis. The economy continues to exhibit elasticity—buoyed by (the diminishing) windfall profits of the energy industry—and the low cost of living. However, our housing problems are real and a drive through Houston's most neglected neighborhoods illustrates this clearly. The cost of rental housing has increased nearly 30 percent in the last eight years, foreclosures in Harris County are averaging over 1,000 a month, and one in five households (totaling nearly 300,000 households) in the Houston region cannot afford fair market rent on a two-bedroom apartment. Initiatives in Houston such as the 99K House Competition and the joint program of Houston Hope and the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority are boosting the tireless efforts of our nonprofit community housing organizations to provide affordable housing in the city. Yet however laudable their

efforts, the scale is simply not proportionate to the need, especially given the larger framework of a failed national housing policy that provides no support. Thousands of families in Houston and more throughout the country will find that while they were looking the other way, the social safety net was pulled out from beneath them. Talk of the Great Depression and a new New Deal has become commonplace as we look backward to understand how we might move forward. A bit of history.

Clearly, housing matters: shelter is a fundamental human need. Yet from the late 19th-century (an era typified by the evils of the highly profitable tenement) to today, the question of affordable and decent housing for all Americans—as defined by our national housing policy—has been blown around in the tumultuous winds of societal and political change. The responsibility for building the American Dream, at least for those with little means, has long shifted back and forth between the private and the public sector. Today, in the midst of what may be the last throes of the "ownership society," the housing question is again coming sharply and painfully into focus. Modern era "Hoovervilles," such as Dignity Village in Portland, are springing up across the country, the foreclosure rate is higher than it has been since the Great Depression, affordable housing is being lost in record numbers, home ownership is in decline, and the largest federal bailout in history—largely blamed on the mortgage mess—is in progress.

The question of housing, both as a problem and as something out of reach for millions, is historically a relatively recent phenomenon. In the last 100 years, three periods of crisis highlight our nation's shifting priorities, our collective pursuits, and our private greed in achieving the American Dream, a home of one's own. At the end of the 19th century, the housing problem was one of supply not meeting demand: cities were bursting at the seams, and their populations were greatly expanding. It did not take long for the builder of this time to discover that, as Lewis Mumford wrote in *The City in History,* "maximum profits came, not from providing first class accommodations for those who could well afford them at a handsome fee, but from crowded slum accommodations." This greed brought to cities the squalor of the tenement house, so aptly illustrated by Jacob Riis, and the slums it both bred and was born in. While reformers begged the government to take action, housing at least for a time would remain a purely private pursuit, with regulation only slightly taming the excesses of the tenement house. Capitalism was young, and the market was firmly in command.

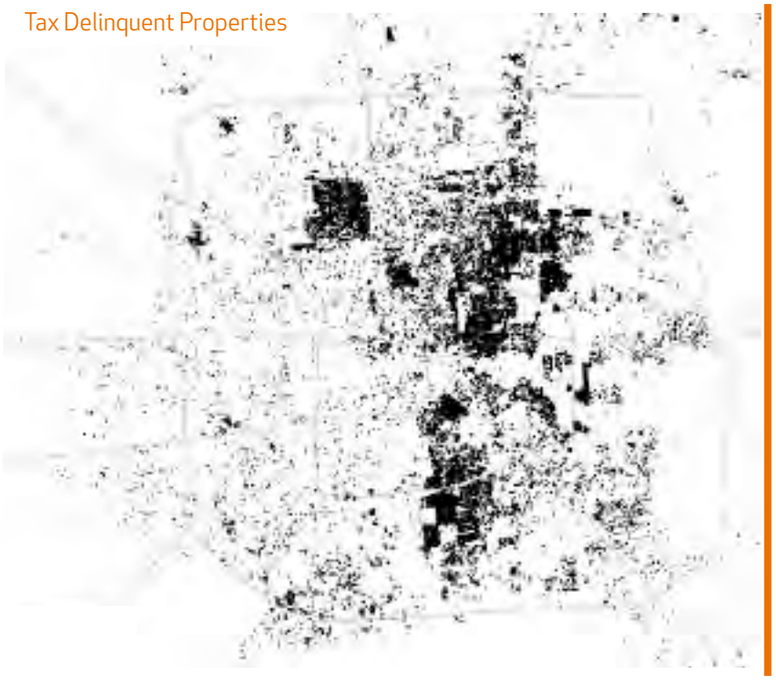
> "*Hoovervilles,*" or shantytowns housing the dispossessed named in honor of President Herbert Hoover after 1929, blanketed open spaces and parks in cities across the nation as thousands of people lost their homes, their life savings, and their livelihoods.

The second crisis was spurred by the economic catastrophe of the Great Depression, which shook the very foundation of the American Dream. "Hoovervilles," or shantytowns housing the dispossessed named in honor of President Herbert Hoover after 1929, blanketed open spaces and parks in cities across the nation as thousands of people lost their homes, their life savings, and their livelihoods. The misery created in the wake of the financial collapse forced policy makers in Washington to consider, albeit only cautiously, public intervention in the housing market. It would take the sweeping policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal to chart a course for federal housing relief, but even then the concrete production of housing took a backseat to programs focused on saving the faltering construction industry and providing relief to homeowners and mortgage lenders through the 30-year federally insured mortgage. However, among the policies passed during this era was the 1937 Wagner-Steagall Act, which for the first time in U.S. history made housing a public concern and the construction of public housing a federal priority. While the 19th-century progressive reformers had stood alone in their call for government intervention in housing, by the late 1930s the American people supported the basic tenets of a federally funded public housing program to house the poor.

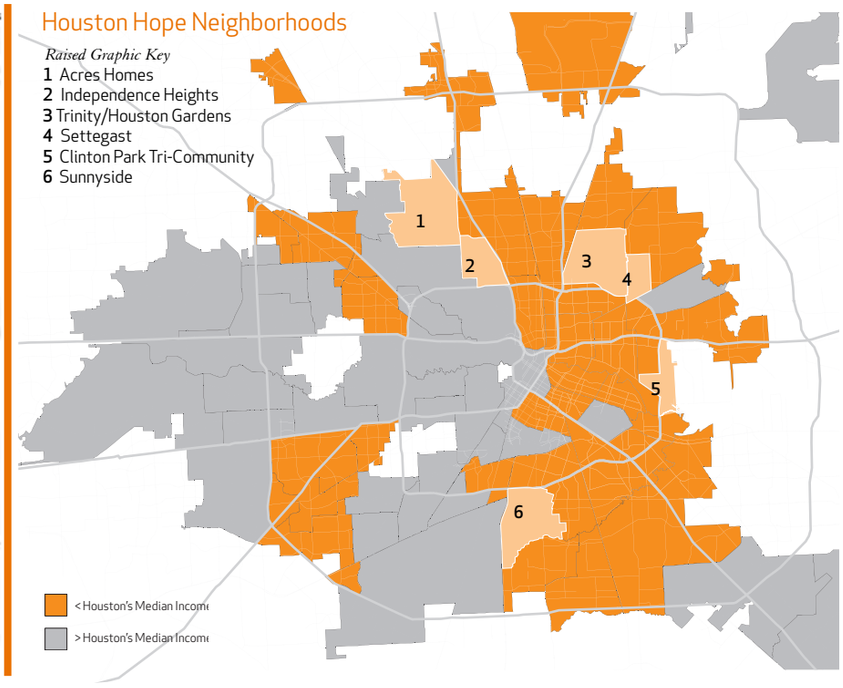
Just over a decade later, the federal government's role in the direct production of public housing was further expanded in response to the severe housing shortage that faced the nation after World War II. The 1949 Housing Act established the goal of "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family" and included the provision to construct 810,000 units of public housing. The middle of the 20th century was a time of optimism,

LINDA C. SAMUELS

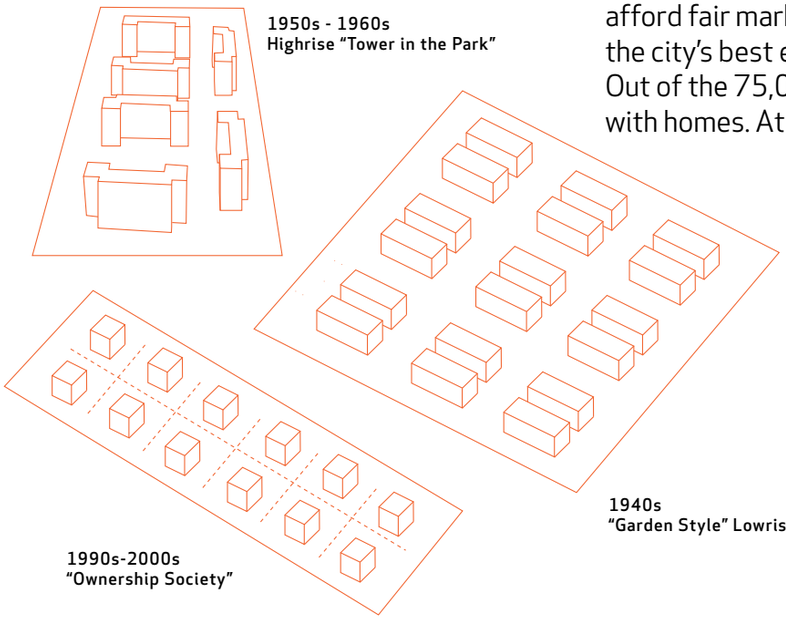
Tax Delinquent Properties



Houston Hope Neighborhoods



One in five households (totaling nearly 300,000) in the Houston region cannot afford fair market rent on a two-bedroom apartment. LARA and Project Hope are the city's best efforts to fill the void left by the market and failed federal programs. Out of the 75,000 tax delinquent properties available, LARA will develop 3,000 with homes. At best, the program will meet one percent of the total need.



For many, both ownership and rent are out of reach.

$852 - Fair Market Rent (FMR) in Harris County

$16.38 - Wage required to afford FMR*

$10.23 - Average Wage from the six highlighted neighborhoods

**From "Out of Reach 2007-08," Low Income Housing Coalition, www.nlihc.org. Housing wage refers to the amount a person working full time must earn to afford the fair-market rent on a two-bedroom unit without paying more than 30 percent of his or her income in rent*

economic expansion, and collective resolve. The social safety net was greatly expanded, and new programs sought not only to end the housing problem but (by the 1960s) to end poverty and ensure equal rights as well.

In time societal priorities shifted again, and the goals of ending poverty and providing a decent home for everyone were largely abandoned and forgotten. New political winds began blowing as thousands fled cities for the suburbs and took up bowling alone. The social spending of the New Deal and the Great Society was called into question as despair, crime, and destitution expanded in cities and more notably in federally funded high-rise public housing projects that became the symbol of all that was wrong with government intervention. As a result, by 1972 President Richard Nixon placed a moratorium on the construction of new public housing and turned instead to the private market with housing choice vouchers and incentives. A year later the failing Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis was demolished and with it the hope of social housing. By the 1980s the War on Poverty was replaced by the War on Drugs (and two decades later by the War on Terror), as the nation's commitment and public support for the social safety net quietly unraveled.

Today, the 20th-century quest to eliminate the housing problem has largely faded from collective memory. In fact, in New York City the tenement experience has been neatly repackaged as history—for $17 you can take a tour of immigrant living conditions at the Tenement Museum on the Lower East Side. In Chicago—where municipalities have adopted wholesale a program initiated in 1993 to replace public housing projects with mixed-income communities through public-private partnerships—bulldozers have razed nearly all of the most infamous high-rise public housing projects including Robert Taylor Homes, Cabrini-Green, Henry Horner, and Stateway Gardens. Ironically, it is here that a proposal for a national public housing museum is being put forward; according to Blair Kamin of the *Chicago Tribune,* "the museum will keep memories alive . . . [and allow us] to learn from the past and build better communities in the future." The museum proposal includes exhibition space portraying the experience of living in public housing, a restaurant, and a gift shop. Just imagine snow globes with models of Cabrini-Green.

Over the last decade, the remnants of a national housing policy that provided shelter for the poor has been nearly completely dismantled and

SUSAN ROGERS

replaced with a single goal: home ownership. In fact, if we have a national housing policy it is to target federal spending at the private market and the individual homeowner, channeling public subsidies not into actual construction but into down payment assistance programs and other financial help for first-time home buyers and others to purchase privately produced housing. National policy also maintains the "untouchable" mortgage interest deduction, which primarily benefits the wealthy, and leaves two-thirds of the poor (the number who qualify for public assistance but do not receive it) to rely on the free market to generate trickle-down housing through the construction of middle and upper middle income housing.

The failure of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac is an indicator of the failure of our current housing policy, focused nearly exclusively on homeownership and at any cost. For example, in 2005 the total projected annual subsidy to homeowners through the mortgage interest deduction (many of these homeowners making over $100,000) was $139 billion, while the budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide shelter for those without means was $31.5 billion.[1] Eighteen million households are paying more than half their incomes for housing, only one of three who qualify for housing assistance receive it, and it is estimated that between 2 million and 3.5 million people will be homeless over the course of a year, a number that is expected to rise as more people lose their homes.[2] Foreclosures have skyrocketed to the highest levels since 1974, when record keeping began. In 2007 alone more than 2 million homes were foreclosed on in the U.S., more than four times the average number of foreclosures in the four years prior—impacting roughly 5 million men, women, and children—and it is expected that the next two years will not bring relief.[3] Public and affordable housing is also disappearing because of lack of funding and neglect. For example, HUD's annual budget has been reduced by over $50 billion in the last 30 years, the Housing Choice Voucher program serves 150,000 fewer families today than it did four years ago, it is estimated that more than 200,000 affordable housing units are lost each year through demolition, and 170,000 public housing units have met their fate with the bulldozer.

As our current housing crisis comes more clearly into focus, we will find that the social safety net, which 50 years ago might have caught families who were losing their homes, is no longer there. Hold onto your bootstraps.

Notes

1 Pamela J. Jackson, "Fundamental Tax Reform: Options for the Mortgage Interest Deduction," August 8, 2005, available at http://digital.library.unt.edu/govdocs/crs/permalink/meta-crs-7300:1

2 Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University Report, "State of the Nation's Housing, 2008," available at http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/son/index.htm

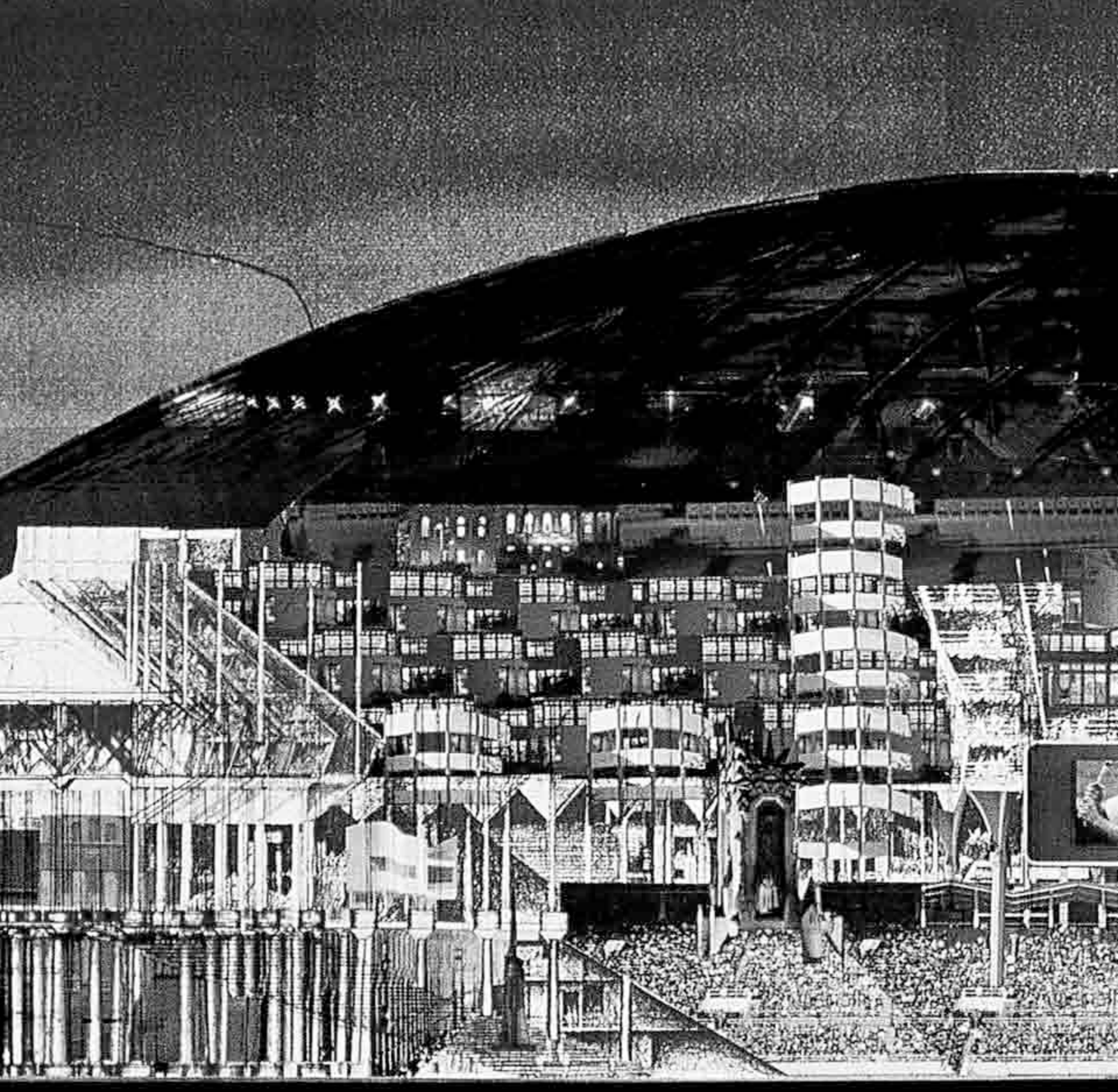
3 Les Christie, "Foreclosures Up 75% in 2007," January 29, 2008, available at http://money.cnn.com/2008/01/29/real_estate/foreclosure_filings_2007/, November 2008

LINDA C. SAMUELS

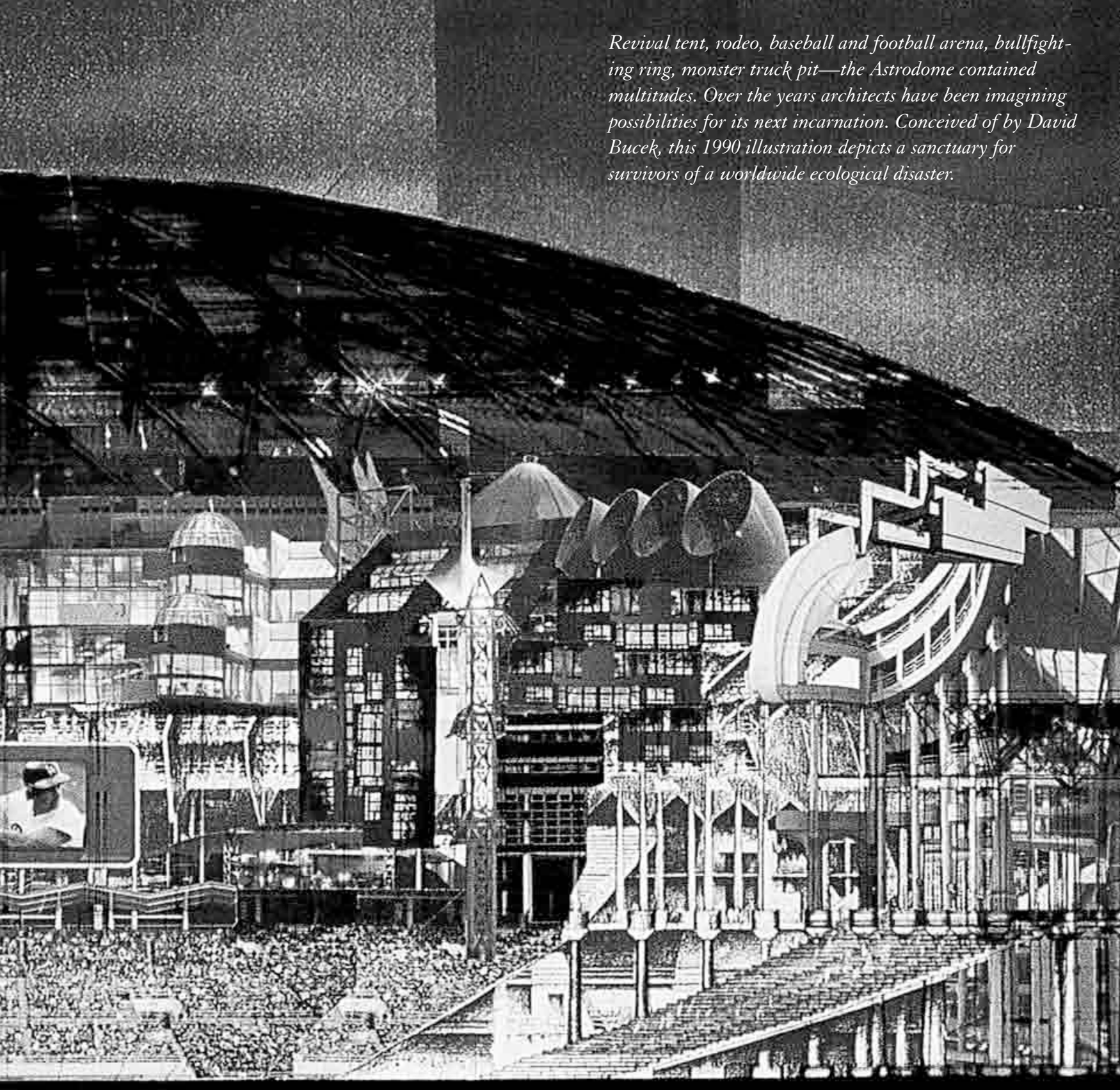
Hand-crank clothes dryer.

Dignity Village is a permanent "tent city" with tiny home sites marked off with paint; each small structure is elevated on short columns to allow air circulation. Squash, beans, and purple violas in small planters catch the sunlight. Here home dwellers are taking housing into their own hands. Dignity Village includes 60 homes of approximately 10x15 feet made largely from donated and salvaged materials. Located on an old parking lot donated by the City of Portland, it is comprised of homes and several shared facilities—a community room, showers and toilets, recycling and trash area, small storage building for the on-going yard sale, elevated gardening beds, and gatehouse. Each house has a wall-mounted propane heater, paid for by the funds of the larger Village corporation, the governing organization of residents that also pays for hot water, garbage pick up, and liability insurance.

Dignity Dogs stands.



The Astro



Revival tent, rodeo, baseball and football arena, bullfighting ring, monster truck pit—the Astrodome contained multitudes. Over the years architects have been imagining possibilities for its next incarnation. Conceived of by David Bucek, this 1990 illustration depicts a sanctuary for survivors of a worldwide ecological disaster.

odome

The glory days, the decline, the future

By **Madeleine McDermott Hamm**

In 1999, as the Houston Astros were packing up their gear and preparing to exit the Astrodome for the new downtown baseball-only ballpark, team owner Drayton McLane received a prophetic phone call from an architect in Rome.

"He wanted to bring a production crew to Houston to film the Astrodome," McLane recalls. "And he said, 'Don't let them tear down the Astrodome.'"

Now, nine years later, preservationists and Houstonians with memories of the Astrodome's glory years fear that the mostly abandoned, minimally maintained domed stadium's days are numbered. Some say the iconic status of the Astrodome and its identification with the city are fading. But when an online petition to "Save Our Astrodome" was publicized earlier this year, it attracted almost 3,000 signatures, many accompanied by passionate comments. Moreover, Harris County Judge Ed Emmett insists, "No one at the county level wants to tear down the Astrodome."

After the Astros moved downtown to Minute Maid Park (originally Enron Field), Reliant Stadium was erected next door to the Dome, opening in 2002 for the Texans' football games. Today the Astrodome stands silent and dark.

Even the venerable Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo turned its back on the Astrodome, preferring Reliant's greater seating capacity of 71,500 versus the Dome's 62,400. In recent years the Dome has functioned as The Hideout, a cowboy dance hall, during the Rodeo's three-week run—hardly enough to justify the annual cost of its upkeep.

Judge Emmett says the county spends about $3 million a year on minimum maintenance of the Astrodome (now officially called Reliant Astrodome as part of the Reliant Park complex). Some estimate the figure closer to $5 million. Whatever the bottom line, the results equal neglect.

"The Dome is in bad shape and getting worse," Emmett states flatly.

The Italian architect who called McLane in 1999 compared the Astrodome to the Roman Colosseum, an elliptical-shaped amphitheater built in 75-89 A.D.

In fact, according to the 1966 edition of *Astrodome* magazine, Judge Roy Hofheinz, who conceived the idea of building a multipurpose domed stadium in

In its first year, the Astrodome attracted more than 4.5 million people. Visitors from as far away as Japan and Italy paid for guided tours of the amazing new stadium.

KENNON EVETT

The Astrodome set the standard for the multiuse round stadiums that would be built in the 1970s and later—some, like the New Orleans Superdome (1975), with a permanent roof.

Houston, was initially inspired in the 1950s by his discovery that the Colosseum had a *velarium*, or canopy, that was pulled over the amphitheater during inclement weather. He consulted Buckminster Fuller, inventor of the geodesic dome, who convinced him it was possible to cover any size space—if you had enough money. The dream morphed into a covered stadium, the key to bringing Major League Baseball to Houston. For the opening of the Dome, the young team's name was changed from the Colt 45s to the Houston Astros, paying homage to the arrival of NASA in the Houston area, and the Astrodome label was born.

Galactic skybox circa 1965.

When the Astrodome opened on April 9, 1965, it grabbed headlines everywhere as the first indoor stadium complete with air conditioning. Hofheinz dubbed it "the eighth wonder of the world." The span of 642 feet more than doubled that of any previous enclosure, while the center of the skylight roof floats 213 feet—or 18 stories—above the playing field, creating a breathtaking interior space. The party-time atmosphere made it "the place to be," baseball fan or not. There were restaurants, swanky private clubs, skybox suites—another Hofheinz first—with fanciful décor, ushers called Spacettes in gold lamé uniforms and grounds crews dressed as spacemen, theater-type seats (no hard bleacher benches), and, of course, air conditioning.

At a University of Houston College of Architecture symposium celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Astrodome, I. A. Naman, designer of the Dome's 6,600-ton air-conditioning system, remembered the skeptics who said it would not work. The promised temperature was 72 degrees, so they first set the thermostat at 72. "Then we reset it at 68 degrees to make sure it was cool," he explained. "That first night, the ladies who came all dressed up—after all, this was a big social event—well, they nearly froze. So, the next night they came in their furs. No one ever questioned if we could cool that place again."

In its first year, the Astrodome attracted more than 4.5 million people. Visitors from as far away as Japan and Italy paid for guided tours of the amazing new stadium. Blockbuster events that year, besides baseball, included the Billy Graham Crusade, University of Houston Cougars football, a concert by Judy Garland and The Supremes, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, polo matches, the Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Circus, and bullfights. The Houston Oilers played football in the Dome from 1968 until 1996. No matter what the event, the groundbreaking Astrodome itself remained the star attraction.

The Astrodome set the standard for the multiuse round stadiums that would be built in the 1970s and later—some, like the New Orleans Superdome (1975), with a permanent roof.

But times—and tastes—change.

In 1992 the Baltimore Orioles opened Oriole Park at Camden Yards, a more intimate downtown baseball-only stadium designed to look like the early 20th-century ballparks, a nostalgic approach in marked contrast to the futuristic ideals behind the Astrodome. "Camden Yards led the way for the new, cutting-edge stadiums designed for a specific sport—baseball, football, soccer—and the public loves them," McLane says.

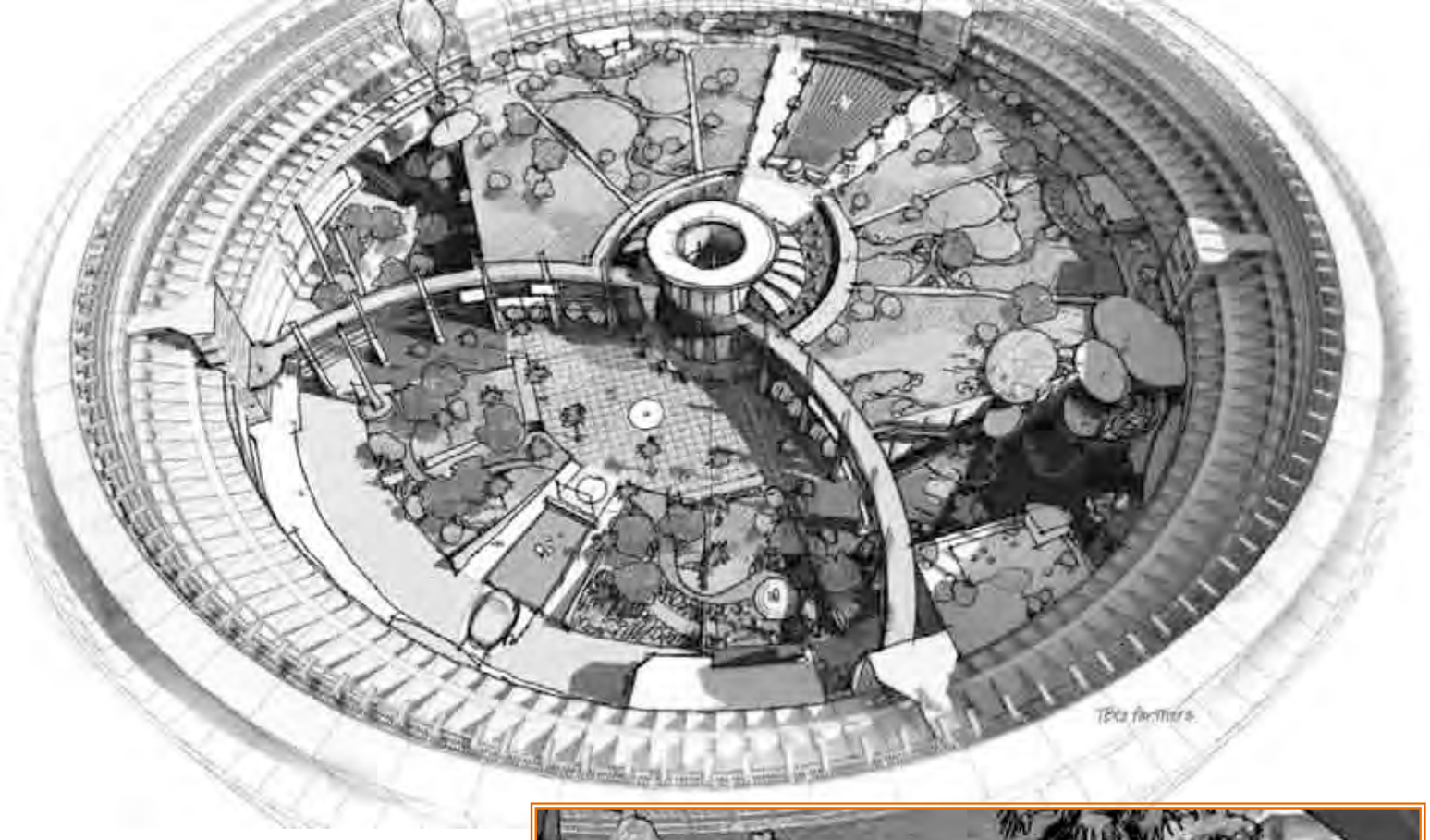
Many of the multiuse stadiums have since crumbled under the wrecking ball. Seattle's $67 million Kingdome was only 24 years old when it was demolished in 2000, replaced the previous year by Safeco Field and its retractable roof. The ability to open and close the roof stands out as a key feature of many of the newer stadiums, including Minute Maid Park, Reliant Stadium, and the Dallas Cowboys' striking new stadium slated to open next year. While most cities with gleaming new sports palaces have torn down or blown up their previous facilities, the one that started the indoor stadium trend—the original—still stands.

The fate of the Astrodome is in the hands of the Harris County Commissioners Court. The county owns and operates the Dome. It was built with taxpayer dollars and has often served public functions. It was the setting for the Republican Convention that nominated Houston's George Herbert Walker Bush for President. Three years ago the nation watched as the Dome sheltered thousands of Hurricane Katrina evacuees cared for by Houston volunteers, and the Astrodome became the symbol of Houston's generosity.

A year ago, the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance (GHPA) placed the Astrodome on its Endangered Landmarks list and began the "Save Our Astrodome" campaign, but the building poses a growing financial burden as long as it sits idle, slowly deteriorating and generating no income.

The GHPA explains on its website that the Astrodome is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and any privately funded rehabilitation project approved by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and National Park Service (NPS) could be eligible for federal preservation tax credits. The THC insists any proposal must respect the Dome's historic identity and retain its original exterior appearance.

Five years ago, Harris County requested proposals suggesting a new use for the Dome. Ideas ranging from an entertainment venue to a ski slope were considered until the Astrodome Redevelopment Corporation (ARC) received approval to move forward with its 1,300-room convention hotel proposal. Plans for the privately funded hotel, approved by the THC and NPS,



The concept by TBG Partners for the Astrodome Redevelopment Corporation mixes a 1,300-room hotel with restaurants, retail, and an indoor hot-air balloon.

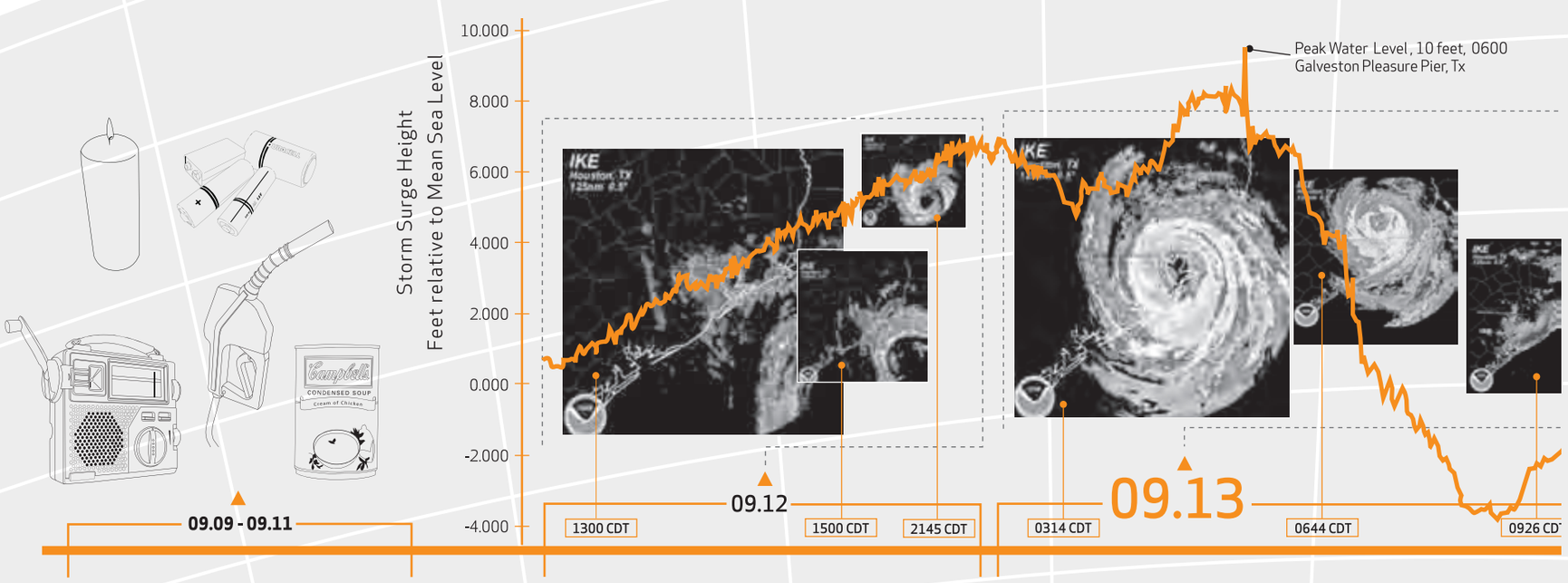
COURTESY OF THE ASTRODOME REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

soon ran into various roadblocks, including strong doubts expressed by Judge Emmett, and objections from the Rodeo and the Texans ball club, major Reliant Park tenants. A final lease has not been signed. The extensive renovations would cost an estimated $500 million. ARC President Scott Hanson remains optimistic and is convinced the upscale hotel with its parklike atmosphere, restaurants, and even a hot-air balloon ride under the curved skylights would be a giant attraction for Houston. As one supporter says, "Who wouldn't want to spend the night in the Astrodome?"

Yet, there are those who question whether it is preservation at all to radically change the Astrodome's use, likening the hotel proposal to converting the Colosseum into a shopping mall. By saving a publicly owned structure through private funding, they argue, the nature of the civic space will change. Adaptive reuse, however, is usually the key to saving buildings that have outlived their original intent, though it has rarely, if ever, been done on such a grand scale. Finally, any plan must include private funding, as the county leaders insist there will be no public dollars spent on any project.

Another proposal presented this summer would create Astrodome Studios, transforming the forlorn stadium into a major soundstage and movie production studio. The company behind this idea, Greater Houston Global Management Group, predicts that Astrodome Studios could help revitalize Texas's film and video industry. The facility would also include two museums—one for the Astrodome's history and one for the state's filmmaking and broadcast history.

GHPA Executive Director Ramona Davis believes this is a pivotal preservation battle for Houston. "When the Dome was built in the '60s, Houston was bristling with new ideas, things no one had done before. Where's that spirit now? We must inject new life into our Astrodome," she says.



ADVISORIES: an account of Ik

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

0900 CDT Hurricane Advisory 33A: Ike is 952 miles East-Southeast of Houston. Sunny outside. A feeling of relief seeing the projected tracks of Ike, still over Cuba, making landfall well away from us, close to Corpus Christi.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

1300 Hurricane Advisory 38A. Ike is 740 miles East-Southeast of Houston. Its course shifts dramatically; models have it aiming for Houston. Eight tracks, each a different color, slice across the Gulf of Mexico.

2200 Hurricane Advisory 40. Ike is 630 miles East-Southeast of Houston. Decide to stay.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11

0400 Hurricane Advisory 41. Ike is 572 miles East-Southeast of Houston. The need to sleep is overwhelmed by the obsession to track the storm as it crawls across the Gulf.

1100 Hurricane Advisory 42. Ike is 519 miles East-Southeast of Houston. Shop for food, water, canned goods, candles. At stations still selling gas, the long lines resemble the paths of the hurricane heading toward us.

1600 Hurricane Advisory 43. Ike is 448 miles Southeast of Houston. Television coverage is incessant. Forecasters predict a direct hit on Galveston for early Saturday morning as a Category 2. The National Weather Service warns coastal areas from Matagorda to Galveston: Persons not heeding evacuation orders in single-family one- or two-story homes may face certain death. Many residences of average construction directly on the coast will be destroyed.

2200 Hurricane Advisory 44. Ike is 387 miles Southeast of Houston. Drinks at a neighborhood bar with friends. A breeze. Strangers friendly, chatty. Nerves.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 12

1000 Hurricane Advisory 46. Ike is 245 miles Southeast of Houston. The air smells of the beach 50 miles away. A last look at the city. No traffic down Memorial, along Texas Avenue, past Harrisburg, all the way to Brady's Island. A stiff wind, little bullets of rain, and white caps in the Turning Basin. News that Bolivar Ferry stopped and the roads out of the peninsula flooded.

1600 Hurricane Advisory 47. Ike is 183 miles South-Southeast of Houston. Waves roll over the 17-foot Galveston seawall. News of Ike's first Houston casualty. Ten year-old Joel Smith is struck by a branch as he helps his father cut down a tree in their garden. (The storm eventually claims 61 lives in the U.S., 20 in Texas.)

2200 Hurricane Advisory 48. Ike is 100 miles South-Southeast of Houston. Rain will continue for nearly 24-hours. The sky flashes from different directions. Not lightning, but transformers exploding. Moments later, power goes out for a week.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

0000 Hurricane Advisory 48A. Ike is 80 miles South-Southeast of Houston. The house shudders. Water rises halfway up the front yard. The churning sky is right out of King Lear or the muck in a witch's cauldron.

0200 Hurricane Advisory 48B. Ike is 56 miles South-Southeast of Houston. Wind gusts in the metro area range from 70 to 105 mph. Awful noise. At ten minutes past the hour, Ike makes landfall at Galveston.

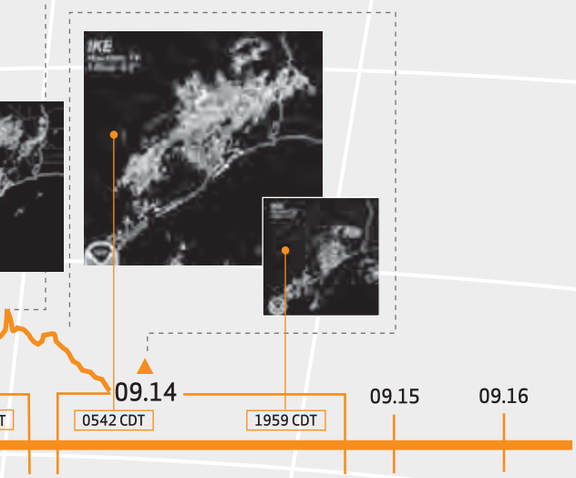
0400 Hurricane Advisory 49. Ike is 23 miles East-by-South of downtown Houston. The last streetlight goes. A fellow later writes in his blog: "this may have been the last time the Woodlands had power in September…"

0600 Hurricane Advisory 49A. Ike is 29 miles North-Northeast of Houston. The wind no longer slashes and howls. In the muddy light we see debris float down the street—branches, garbage cans. Neighbors stand on their porches away from the water's reach, calling out stories heard on battery-operated radios: coffins forced out of the ground by the surging flood; the streets downtown are starry with broken glass from the windows blown out.

1000 Hurricane Advisory 50. Ike is downgraded to a tropical storm 86 miles north of Houston. Winds at 60 mph continue to dissipate. After the waters subside, take a walk past the neighborhood's broken trees and downed power lines. Dangling traffic signals recall big tropical fruit. A gas station's metal awning lies in a torqued heap that could be mistaken for a John Chamberlain installation: "Shell."

1900 Hurricane Advisory 51A. Ike is 247 miles North-by-East. A feast because food will soon spoil in powerless refrigerators. Later we're told that some parts of the city grilled baby lamb chops, Kobe steaks, and venison sausage. In others, whatever. Still, dinner by candlelight everywhere.

DRAWINGS: THIPCHAT ARTHASARNPRASIT; RADAR IMAGES: NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE



KE's path

BY ANTONIO JOCSON

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

0400 Hurricane Advisory 53, the last advisory from the National Hurricane Center. Ike is downgraded to a Tropical Depression 489 miles Northeast-by-North of Houston. Can't sleep.

2000 Drive down 59 to the Beltway. No lights save that of other headlights from the few other cars on the road. Most buildings of the Galleria and downtown are dark. Against the night sky, their coagulated, black silhouettes resemble a strange mountain plonked down in the dead center of the city.

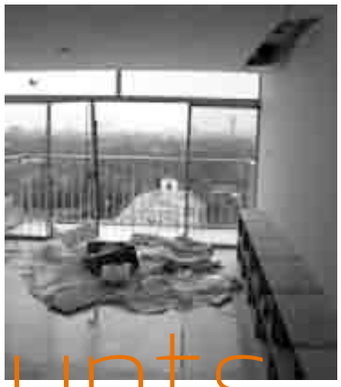
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

2000 Read Moby Dick by candlelight, perhaps the same light by which the book would have been read at night when it was first published in 1851. We're back in the 19th century. Go to sleep to something on the iPod.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

0900 1.5 million people, or 66 percent of CenterPoint's customers, most of Houston, are still without electricity. Tomorrow, some friends will leave town for the hill country to escape the heat of the days ahead. When they return the following Sunday, only 36 percent of the city will be without power, but it will not include them. On October 2, 2008, 18 days after Ike smashes through the city, CenterPoint will conclude its emergency operations, having restored power to all but 4,600 of its customers. Power returns to most parts of the Inner Loop by Thursday, October 18, however. All of 59 is lit up orange by the sodium vapor lamps, and it's rush hour again all of a sudden.

TOP LEFT: TOM COLBERT; TOP RIGHT JOE MASHBURN; MIDDLE: UNKNOWN



FAR LEFT:
Architecture Building, University of Houston.
LEFT:
Mashburn Home, Parc IV.

The Accounts

Tom Colbert

Ronnie Self called to tell me that his office in the College of Architecture building was flooded. I headed there with sheets of plastic in a vain attempt to keep our books dry. A quarter of the copper roofing was piled up in the front yard like a Frank Gehry installation. Large pieces hung from the eaves as if they would fall any time. The suspended ceiling in my office had collapsed, falling onto the saturated carpet like thirty-pound spit balls. Looking through a vision panel into the darkened Visual Resources Center, I saw that everything was wet as though a fire brigade had gone wild in there. Water dripped from ceilings through the west wing of the building on all floors and trickled down the atrium stairs. It was already apparent that mold was going to be a serious problem. A few students who didn't have any safer place to go were rousing themselves from a night spent sleeping in the auditorium.

Emailed photo from Rice Hotel.

Joe Mashburn

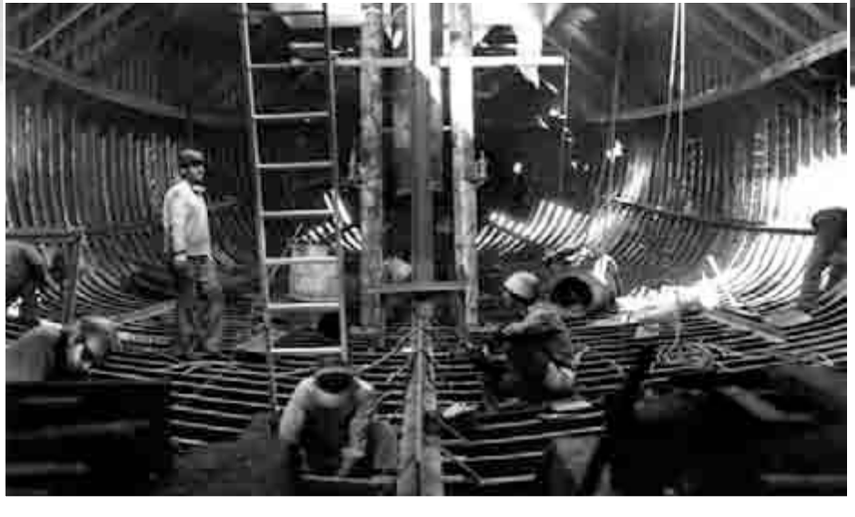
We had just completed remodeling our 750 s.f. unit on the 12th floor of Parc IV. We called it our little "sky hut." Looking west toward the loop and the Galleria, blue-green bursts of exploding transformers marked Ike's arrival. We lay down on the mattress we had moved to the dining room floor and awoke to what sounded like a running faucet. Water was pouring onto the kitchen range from the ceiling vent—a roof cap had blown off. We scrambled for a bucket and realized water was also being blown in between the sliding glass doors in the living room. Julia rushed over from the kitchen with tape to secure the writhing poly over the books. Like a movie, the wind sound suddenly amplified. Julia stepped back a few paces as the sliding glass door flew open like a swinging door, first bowing in, and then hinging wildly in its frame. I screamed her name as the second door hinged in and glass shattered, sending chards of un-tempered plate twenty feet into the apartment.

She said she was OK in my arms and pointed to the wiggling crack splitting the length of the ceiling from the unit's entry to the glass wall— the air pressure was raising the five-eighths inch hung sheetrock ceiling off the walls. Ceiling parts flew down. She grabbed her purse and I grabbed the dog as we ran to the corridor and attempted to shut the door. It was impossible against the wind. We searched for the fire stair door in the dark.

Feeling our way down the flights of stairs, light flickered from under one of the doors. We opened the door to find Anna Mod, who lives in the building, in the corridor on her mattress. She offered a flashlight, and dog in arms, we made our way down the stairs to the lobby. As we opened the fire stair door on the ground level we were met with many voices with flashlight beams offering help. I realized that I had no shirt and no shoes.

Scott Ziegler

Our office got hit really hard. We are in the Chase Tower. The South facade received extraordinary winds. Probably winds in excess of 200 mph. The building was designed and tested for the code, 110 mph, but I was told by the structural engineer the testing was pushed to 200 mph. There was a photograph sent to me from someone who was in the Rice Hotel showing a waterspout between the Chase Tower and Center spewing debris. It looks like a whirling dervish in one photograph. It sucked the windows out. We lost all the glass on the South facade. The building was closed for six days. The building management had done their partial cleanup, a masterful job of ensuring what you could call life safety, with the plywood up where the windows were. It looked like a tornado had hit the office, which it had. There was mud, a slurry, spread on the core wall and computer screens. The ceiling was sagging. Interestingly, the building never lost electricity.



SETTING A COURSE
An early success of the Galveston Historical Foundation was their restoration of the 1877 tall ship Elissa, purchased in Piraeus, Greece and brought back to Galveston. LEFT: The hull in its Greek shipyard. ABOVE: Model posing to provide scale for artist restoring the bow.

Soul Searching

In the wake of Hurricane Ike, the Galveston Historical Foundation is challenged to understand the very nature of its existence.

by Sandy Sheehy

I NEVER KNEW THAT MY FURNITURE COULD FLOAT, ESPECIALLY NOT MY THREE-CUSHIONED COUCH WITH ITS HEAVY WOODEN ARMS, THE ONE THAT I NEEDED HELP TO BUDGE. BUT THERE IT WAS, DOING A LEISURELY WATER BALLET WITH TWO ARMCHAIRS, A LOVESEAT, AND A MID-19TH-CENTURY STEAMER TRUNK.

My ground-floor loft in the 1874-vintage Sherman Building, half a block south of Galveston's historic Strand, had taken on almost seven feet of water during the night as the eye of Hurricane Ike passed directly overhead, pushing the bay a mile up onto the island and clear across Broadway, in some places all the way to the seawall. With sustained winds of 110 miles per hour, Ike had ranked as a high Category 2 on the Saffir-Simpson scale, but at 492 miles wide, it had packed the destructive storm surge of a Category 4.

When the water level was down to three feet and the banshee winds of the eye wall had given way to a brisk breeze and light rain, I ventured down from my shelter in the corridor between my upstairs neighbors' apartments to take stock. I eased my way around the building in thigh-deep water—actually more a café-au-lait slurry of bay bottom mud laced with rainbows of diesel from the ruptured gas tanks of boats lifted from the harbor two-and-a-half blocks away and slammed into buildings, light posts, and parking lots, where they rested at dizzying angles. Remarkably, the 12-foot-tall mahogany doors opening from my loft onto the street were intact, as were their glass panels, through which I viewed the Dance of the Furniture. My walls had held as well. My next-door neighbors were less lucky. Through doors thrown wide, waves had swept their furniture into the walls, where soggy insulation now bulged between bent steel studs.

Throughout the Strand Historic District, fellow residents and merchants faced similar devastation, as did owners of the imposing buildings that housed shipping firms, the cotton exchange, warehouses, and retail stores back in the 19th century when the Strand was hailed as the Wall Street of the Southwest. Galveston-born oilman George Mitchell and his family later invested millions of dollars in buying and renovating these buildings, along with urban pioneers such as Sally Wallace, Bill Fullen, Meyer Reiswerg, and Robert Lynch, each taking on individual structures. In the weeks following Ike, insurance adjusters toting notebook computers combed this district, estimating the cost of repairs in the tens of millions. Where horse-drawn carriages had ferried tourists a few weeks earlier, teams of mold remediation workers in white hazmat "bunny suits" wrestled with yellow generator-powered drying tubes.

When a few of the island's cafés and restaurants reopened, most conversations focused on who was coming back to the Strand (and the rest of town) and who wasn't. Comparisons were made to the pivotal disaster 108 years earlier. After the 1900 storm, the last hurricane to inundate the island, the Strand had slid into decline. By the 1960s the district had become a skid row, with dingy bars and strip joints interspersed among ships' chandleries, produce warehouses, and other businesses serving the port. Unless you were in the maritime trade, you didn't venture north of Market Street, especially at night.

As part of the social and intellectual ferment of the late 1960s, Galvestonians began taking a new look at the Strand and the residential neighborhoods abutting downtown. In 1966 Houston architect Howard Barnstone and French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson opened eyes with *The Galveston That Was* (Texas A&M University Press), a book of photographs depicting in melancholy black and white the once grand houses and commercial buildings. Two years later the Galveston Junior League purchased the First National Bank Building at 22nd and Strand and its next-door neighbor, the Truehardt-Adriance Building with its distinctive polychrome brick façade, intending to restore them.

"Sally Wallace and others saw preservation as a way to hold the community together," explained architectural historian Stephen Fox, adjunct professor at Rice University. "George Mitchell also had an idea of what the Strand could be—an economic idea. In New Orleans, Charleston, and Savannah, the preservation movement caused communities to both redefine their identities and see the economic benefit of doing that."

One local group spearheaded this effort: the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF). Growing out of the Galveston Historical Society, founded in 1871 to preserve historically significant papers and documents, it had changed its name and mission when it incorporated in 1954, quickly taking on the challenge of rescuing the 1839 Samuel May Williams House from demolition. By the 1970s it had become a cadre of committed individuals with distinctive visions. Evangeline Wharton, who was appointed to the Texas Historical Commission, took it upon herself to have all the historical plaques redesigned. Peter Brink, Paulie Gaido, and Robert Lynch decided that Galveston needed a genuine tall

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GHF

ship (as opposed to the replicas favored by other seaports). Their worldwide search took them to Piraeus, Greece, where they purchased the rusting hulk of the 1877 barque Elissa and brought her back to Galveston.

GHF also engaged in lower-key preservation activism. It set up a revolving fund to purchase endangered homes and commercial properties and hold them until buyers came forward who would restore them. It bought or entered into management agreements for such properties such as Ashton Villa, from whose balcony the Emancipation Proclamation had been read, and the Garten Verein, a German-American social club. It maintained the gaslights, benches, and signage in the Strand Historic District. It operated a salvage warehouse to recycle windows, shutters, columns, and other elements from demolished buildings and held demonstration classes on restoring historic homes.

Over time, however, GHF evolved from a scrappy, nationally known urban recovery group into a comfortably funded events promotion and property management organization. It became to Galveston what the top-tier cultural charities—the opera, the ballet—were to Houston, and in the process respectability replaced feistiness. This reflected a larger trend: by the close of the 20th-century, preservation had become mainstream, lacking the sense of crisis that had informed the 1970s. The change was also a consequence of Galveston's own nature. The novelist Edna Ferber called the city "a fly encased in amber," and once the initiatives undertaken by GHF and individual residents took hold, the community revealed itself as a ready-made tourist attraction.

"Galveston was the only city in Texas that still existed in a manner that allowed you to tell what it was like in the 19th century," Fox noted. It shared with Charleston and Savannah a distinctive coastal character: raised houses, compactness, palm trees, and prominent middle and late Victorian architecture. Its central business district was intact, although some building owners seeking a modern look had covered the elaborate neoclassical ironwork with glass or brushed concrete facades. Many of the neighborhood corner stores and bars were shuttered, but they stood.

These qualities allowed GHF to bring in outside money to support its efforts on the island. Dickens on the Strand, the foundation's annual Victorian-themed holiday festival held the first weekend in December, began in 1974 as a potluck costume party where members celebrated their preservation victories. Opened to the public the following year, it expanded to a full-weekend street fair in 1983 and became a major fundraiser. In 2007 it drew a crowd of 34,000 and netted over $250,000. The foundation's other big moneymaker, the Historic Homes Tour held the first two weekends in May, netted $100,000 last spring. For an organization with a pre-Ike annual budget of $3 million, the support these events bring in is crucial.

THE PRICE OF PRESERVATION
The GHF's annual Victorian-themed holiday festival, Dickens on the Strand, is its major fundraiser.

PEOPLE WITH FOND MEMORIES OF THE OLD GALVESTON HISTORICAL FOUNDATION BEGAN TO WONDER WHETHER IT WOULD CONTINUE PRIMARILY AS A SELF-PERPETUATING INSTITUTION OF THE TOURIST INDUSTRY, OR RETURN TO ITS ROOTS FIGHTING FOR AN ENDANGERED BUILT ENVIRONMENT ONE BUILDING AT A TIME, OR TRANSFORM INTO SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER.

The fundraisers also had their price. People with fond memories of the old Galveston Historical Foundation began to wonder whether it would continue primarily as a self-perpetuating institution of the tourist industry, or return to its roots fighting for an endangered built environment one building at a time, or transform into something else altogether.

Then Hurricane Ike hit. Shortly after, to the surprise of both locals and regular visitors, GHF announced that Dickens on the Strand would take place as scheduled on December 6 and 7. With most stores on the Strand yet to recover, the event resembled its earlier incarnations when it drew crowds to what was then a skid row. Three entertainment stages and 70 vendors were scheduled, and GHF offered returning Strand-area merchants free booths. "We made the decision the day after the storm, mainly for the community, to provide hope for people," explained Clay Wade, GHF director of events. Also true was that the expected revenues were badly needed for the restoration of the ten historic structures the foundation either owned or managed. Damage ranged from downed tree limbs at the Menard House to four feet of water in the ballroom of Ashton Villa. Remediation alone has cost $3 million. That did not include the expense of rebuilding or of saving whatever 19th-century artifacts could be salvaged. Each of the buildings carried maximum insurance, but that didn't begin to cover just the remediation tab.

Even in years without hurricanes, these house museums were money pits. Popular from the 1950s through the 1970s, historic structures preserved as examples of life in earlier eras had lost their appeal as attractions. Keeping them secured, maintained, insured, and staffed for the benefit of a declining trickle of visitors tied up money that could otherwise have been used to buy and hold threatened properties like the Jean Lafitte Hotel. The extraordinary damage caused by Ike not only prompted the move to maintain Dickens on the Strand but also effectively forced GHF to speed up its rethinking of its role. Director Dwayne Jones said, "We've preserved these buildings, but they should be used as something other than attractions once attendance has fallen off." Wouldn't it be better, his thinking goes, for these museums to be used as offices, shops, or even residences, with a proviso that they be occasionally open for tours?

The flood-conscious design of several of these Victorian structures could be a plus for tenants relocating after Ike. Galveston's distinctive architecture helped most of the island's 19th-century houses

escape the worst of the storm surge. Their ground floors, which serve the same function as attics, flooded, ruining everything from old magazines to holiday decorations, but their elevated living areas took on at most only a foot or two of water. Convinced of their value, the GHF went into newly heroic action.

Even before homeowners were officially allowed to return full time to the island on September 24, GHF was handing out brochures from the National Trust for Historic Preservation outlining what should and shouldn't be done when repairing a hurricane-damaged historic home. "There is always a danger after disasters that people will seek the quick and wrong solution by demolishing still valuable structures," Peter Brink, now senior vice president for programs at the National Trust, wrote in the Galveston County Daily News. This onetime GHF director had made a "bittersweet" return to the island to view the storm damage. "I'm glad that Galvestonians seem focused on rehabilitation and returning to their properties."

In August 2007, Jane Chance, Professor of English at Rice University, bought a home built in 1878 by a nephew of Sam Houston. "Since I first set eyes on Galveston in 1973, I've dreamed about buying a Victorian house here and fixing it up," she recalled. Approaching retirement, Chance, whose house took on four and a half feet of water during Ike, wondered if she would be able to manage the financial and emotional cost of remaining on a hurricane-prone barrier island. But the help GHF soon provided to her fellow East End residents after Ike gave her hope. Partnering with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, GHF brought in 60 volunteer restoration architects and engineers to assess the damage from Ike and recommend repairs. It provided advice on everything from spraying to kill mold to dealing with insurance adjusters.

Although adjusters might recommend tearing out irreplaceable longleaf pine floors and ripping off decorative moldings to prevent the spread of mildew, even the Federal Emergency Management Agency cautioned against it. Especially in raised houses, floors can be dried. "There's a real disjoint between the preservation movement and all the people licensed for mold remediation," explained Jones. "They focus on moisture removal. We focus on the historic fabric."

"I fully, absolutely support the GHF," Chance declared. "It's a marvelous, well-run organization. They remind us what a treasure it is to have a community of buildings that are consistent in period. We can't let these historic buildings fall into decrepitude."

Ike has galvanized GHF to a new awareness of its responsibility to preserve the present for the sake of the future. That means building, and rebuilding, in accordance not just with aesthetics and daily function, or to maximize natural setting and minimize energy cost, but with an awareness that a barrier island is a dynamic environment. That means organizations such as the Galveston Historical Foundation must be dynamic as well.

PHOTOS COURTESY COURTESY OF GHF

TAKEN AT THE FLOOD
An inventory of Ike's toll on Galveston.

Five Galveston neighborhoods are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Of these, Denver Court, situated a couple of blocks behind the seawall between 43rd and 52nd Streets, saw little damage. Several blocks closer to the harbor, the mid-20th century Spanish Revival and Renaissance houses of Cedar Lawn had moderate flooding. South of Broadway and benefiting from Victorian elevated design, most of the buildings in the Silk Stocking Residential Historic District did well. Some of the smaller houses in the East End Historic District, especially pre-Civil War structures already in dicey condition, suffered severely from Ike. One was lifted off its foundation and deposited in the alley. But most of the district's structures could be brought back.

"We were lucky," said J. Bangle, a picture framer who lives at 24th and Avenue L, two blocks south of Broadway. Because the storm surge came from the bay, rather than the Gulf, he lost a framing saw and 300 feet of framing stock, but his furniture and belongings were untouched.

In all, Hurricane Ike damaged 70 percent of the buildings on Galveston Island. The Strand aside, much of that damage was to houses that are only beginning to be considered historic treasures, such as post-World War II ranch houses and more recent examples of elegant design suited to location. In the last third of the 20th century, in the desirable neighborhoods tracing the harbor and the meandering arms of Galveston Bay, people could afford top architects like Tom Price and Lawrence Oliver. These structures took the brunt of the bay-side surge. Docks crashed through plate glass windows and demolished whole walls. At one house the water lifted a central air conditioning unit off its base and hurled it through the bedroom and into the swimming pool beyond, taking the bed with it.

WAREHOUSING HISTORY
The GHF maintains a salvage warehouse to recycle windows, shutters, columns, and other elements from demolished buildings.

In neighborhoods like Bayou Shores and Harborview, yellow tags marked houses that city inspectors determined needed to be elevated to meet current flood plain codes if they were to be repaired. Others sported signs declaring, "For Sale by Owner – As Is." Residential and commercial buildings in historic districts that were grandfathered in as exempt from elevation requirements ironically would have been easier to raise. "Slab-on-grade houses are going to have a hard time," said Galveston Historical Foundation Director Dwayne Jones. "Maybe they should never have been built on an island in a flood plain in the first place: you can't raise them, whereas you can raise pier-on-beam homes."

Representatives of the Texas Historical Commission came to Galveston during the first week in October and determined that Golf Crest, which had suffered considerable damage from Ike, qualified for the National Register of Historic Places, but that the other postwar neighborhoods didn't because they were less cohesive examples of their period. When the dried mud finally settles, the demolition of numerous middle and late 20th-century structures will be the true and most lasting architectural loss from Hurricane Ike.

- Sandy Sheehy

Modern architecture has infiltrated the Rice campus and surfaced at its very center. The new Raymond and Susan Brochstein Pavilion by architects Thomas Phifer and Partners is a remarkable building by virtue of its location,

inspirations

simplicity, transparency, and color. At 6,000 square feet it is among the smaller buildings on the campus, yet it may be the most striking. Although it clearly breaks with Rice's strict architectural code, it appears liberating rather than jarring. Within the context, it was a bold move by the university and by the architect.

Brochstein Pavilion at Rice University

by Ronnie Self

In a way, the pavilion could not be simpler. It is square in plan and rectangular in both elevation and section. The horizontal roof plane dominates the composition: conceptually the entire structure is a simple trellis composed of steel beams and aluminum rods supported by thin steel columns. The ensemble has perhaps more to do with the campus's landscape than its buildings and it acts as a sort of architectural folly in a vast garden. Seen as a folly it is exempt from formal or stylistic requirements that other buildings must fulfill. As a folly its functional program is practically inexistent.

The pavilion is one large, column-free, glass enclosed room. The all glass building in Houston's sun-beaten climate is made reasonable by the roof canopy that blocks 65 percent of the sun, its high performance glass, the thermal break mullions, and an increased amount of insulation in the roof cavity. The interior space is structured by 11 seven-foot bays in both directions and surrounded by an exterior arcade of five bays on each side—interestingly, all prime numbers. Inside, the ceiling is white, perforated metal with integrated sprinkler heads and recessed fluorescent lights. Natural light from skylights also filters through. The floor is black-stained concrete with a continuous metal air-supply grill at the perimeter, which also makes the transition between the floor and the glass façade. A rectangular core that houses restrooms, storage, and mechanical (a small basement is also devoted to mechanical) is placed off center in the room and defines two areas: a larger space to the north punctuated by a circular, freestanding bar, highlighted by incandescent spotlights, where food and drinks are sold, and a smaller space to the south with several video / television screens placed against the wall of the core. Both areas are furnished with chairs, armchairs, and tables. It is space for space's sake, generally spare, and seemingly influenced by Phifer's current explorations for his design of the North Carolina Museum of Art.

A striking aspect of the pavilion is that it is all white. Richard Meier, with whom Phifer collaborated for over a decade, often says that his buildings are white so as not to distract from the formal composition. Even though Phifer's building is a pure geometric shape, it tends toward the formless because of its transparency and the immaterial

Brochstein Pavilion,
Thomas Phifer and Partners, 2008.

quality of the roof canopy. Visually, it may have more in common with the work of the Japanese architectural firm SANAA (Sejima and Nishizawa and Associates), such as their recent, highly refined Glass Pavilion for the Toledo Museum of Art. For SANAA, monochromatic white and the lack of a dominate finish allow for the parts or pieces of their generally minimal buildings to become recognizable, rather than disappearing into larger forms. Phifer and SANAA share a conceptual approach as well. Both strive for simplicity, clarity, lightness, and precision. A connection to the surroundings and a strong relation between inside and outside are essential. For both, architecture is not a theoretical pursuit but should focus on people and their activities. Buildings should be places of interaction. They should be unselfconscious and joyful. SANAA's goal is simply to create a sense of liberty and freedom in their buildings, and Phifer likewise mentions a democracy of spirit.

Pragmatic elements such as the glass canopies over the entry doors, the curved, perforated metal light scoops over the skylights, and the exterior lights tethered to the facades provide a decorative component within a general quest for an economy of means.

The pavilion is at the same time a destination and a crossroads. Its square plan and overall uniformity promote a non-hierarchical relationship to the immediate surroundings and make the building equally approachable from all directions. The two actual entrances are aligned in the center of the east and west facades. Viewed at a campus scale, the placement of the project on the main east/west axis would seemingly block it; however, the entire pavilion functions as a sort of portal to be passed through

ABOVE AND TOP RIGHT: **Views from Fondren Library along the east-west axis of the university.**
RIGHT: **Coffee bar and seating.**

somewhat like the main portal of the campus through Lovett Hall. Other doors on all sides of the building allow the Pavilion to be opened to the outside in good weather.

Seen from the west, the building takes on another role and appears as a new, thick, glass facade for the generally opaque Fondren Library behind. At night it appears as a lantern. Despite its obvious differences with the surrounding buildings, the project seems at ease in its context. It is the right puzzle piece, if with a different picture.

Landscaping by The Office of James Burnett Landscape Architecture plays an important role in making the building fit in. The landscape architecture scheme negotiates with the formality of the campus while humanizing it. There are no extravagant gestures and the plant palette is restrained. Burnett focused primarily on the space between the pavilion and Fondren Library to the east where he planted a grid of Drake Elms 14 feet apart and centered on the structural bays of the building. The tight placement of relatively mature trees has immediately provided a dense canopy and a deep shade that makes this outdoor room inviting and even pleasant on the hottest of Houston days. The shade from the trees compensates for the peculiarity of the pavilion's roof overhang, which is designed to filter light the same way live oaks do along Rice walkways but do not provide adequate protection from the sun in summer (or protection from rain). The outdoor space is actually divided into two identical courts, one on each side of the main axis, and each has a 52-foot-long by 4-foot-wide fountain as a centerpiece. The fountains are troughs in black stone which provides a counterpoint to the whiteness of the pavilion. The presence of water and the murmur of the fountains contribute to the cooling effect. The ground surface in decomposed granite gives a public garden connotation. The tables and chairs that furnish the space can be changed and rearranged by the users, and for Burnett, the iris that surround the courts add looseness to the composition. The space teeters between the formal and the informal.

In contrast to the enclosed outdoor space to the east, the view opens to the north and south, and

Despite its obvious differences with the surrounding buildings, the project seems at ease in its context. It is the right puzzle piece, if with a different picture.

Client:
Rice University

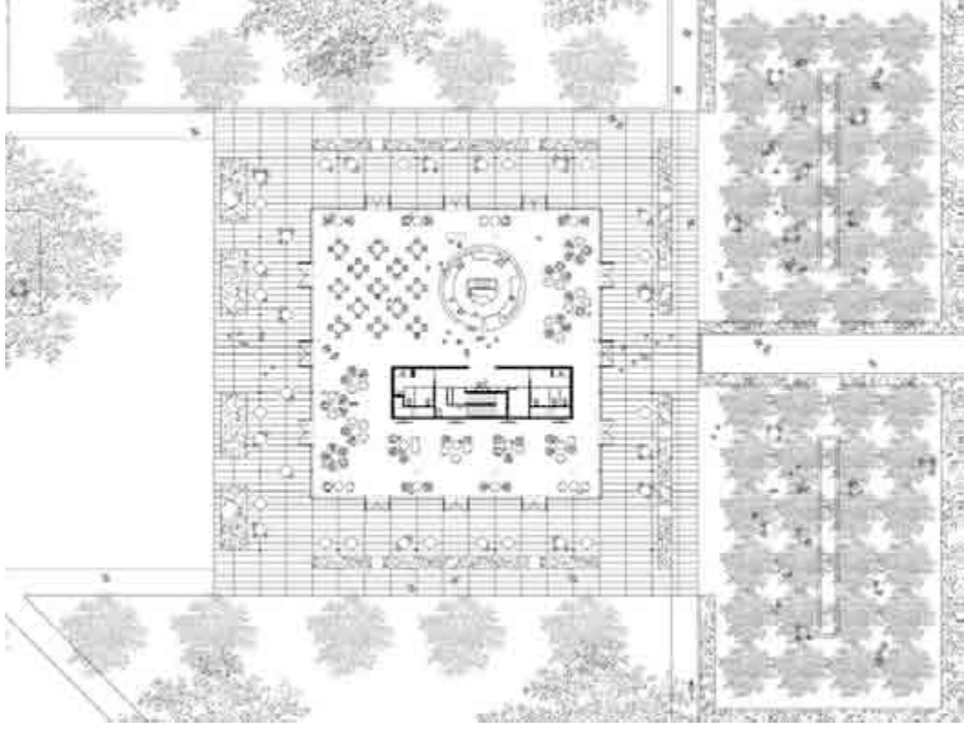
Project Manager:
Ana Ramirez, Larry Vossler

Architects:
Thomas Phifer and Partners

Engineers:
Haynes Whaley Associates (structural)
Altieri Sebor Wieber, LLC (MEP)

Construction Contractor:
Linbeck Group

TOP: LARRY MIGGENS; TOP LEFT AND BELOW: THOMAS PHIFER AND PARTNERS



Brochstein Pavilion Plan.

especially to the west over the sloped lawn. Here Burnett's project generally feathers into the existing landscape. Horsetail reeds under the roof overhang will eventually be pruned to a uniform height, when they should be geometrical and virtually architectural. They provide a slight separation between people seated just outside the pavilion and passersby.

What the Brochstein Pavilion is actually supposed to be remains agreeably ambiguous. A student union? Simply a place to study? As pleasant as the space may be, the social functions the building are only beginning to develop. It focuses campus life inward and seems to accentuate the monastic quality of the campus, though it could serve as a modern-day forum, a covered piazza, a village square for impromptu meetings and exchange. Located at the center of Rice, it is a sort of retroactive navel that should both channel and symbolize campus life.

An unintended consequence of the project, however, is that the landscape of the main quad, for example, now appears harsh in comparison. Likewise, in relation to this new, crisp pavilion, the architectural approach adopted for the campus over the last several decades seems lackluster. As odd as it may be at the beginning of the 21st century, modern architecture seems to have been vindicated through this project. Transparency and lightness are shown to be valid architectural pursuits, as are a permeable relation between inside and outside and even the expression of rational structure.

Phifer generally aspires to a transformation and an actualization of modern architecture while working within its continuum. He also aspires to timeless building through simplicity. On his web site he reveals images of his own "inspirations" that range from Gothic cathedrals to high-tech objects, from Japanese pavilions to cast iron exhibition halls, from minimal art to high modernism… This varied yet coherent selection of working references explains perhaps how Phifer managed to successfully place a modern building in a more traditional context. At least in an architect's mind's eye, Phifer's project is part of another architectural tradition that is well over a century old. His building is heir to Paul Scheerbart's *Glass Architecture* dream from 1914 and to Le Corbusier's *Poem of the Right Angle* from the early 1950s and most certainly to many other dreams and traditions of modern and contemporary architecture. Currently, Houston architecture rarely participates in a bold transformation of modern architecture, even though that should practically be its birthright. Houston was founded only 15 years before the Crystal Palace was constructed. Rice University opened 23 years after the completion of the Eiffel Tower and only 17 years before the Barcelona Pavilion. The Brochstein Pavilion is among the most exciting and modern buildings to be realized in Houston in recent memory. Hopefully, the building and its approach will have an influence and even inspire others.

Everyone Loves Raymond

by Barry Moore

Rice has never had a gathering place where students, faculty, administration, and the community could meet. Autry House, adjoining Palmer Church on Main Street, tried to serve that purpose from 1920 to 1948, but there was not much community around. The Roost, in the basement of Fondren Library (1948-58) was unwelcomely buried in the basement. Sammy's in the Rice Memorial Center has been infinitely more pleasant but mostly students go there.

Raymond Brochstein, a Rice graduate (BS Arch '56), Chairman of Brochsteins Inc., trustee emeritus, and benefactor, has attended the Rice Buildings and Grounds Committee meetings for a long time and carefully followed the planning ideas developed over the years to create a commons – the Pelli Plan with it's Sallyport-sized opening through Fondren to reestablish the east-west axis, the idea of a cyber cafe inside Fondren, and the Michael Graves proposal for a new structure west of Fondren .

Raymond, however, is quick to place the credit elsewhere for building the pavilion. "This never would have happened without President David Leebron. He was concerned because the campus looks dead at times, especially west of Fondren. It's nice to have a facility sort of like a lantern, a beacon, light and active."

Brochstein had known pavilion architect Tom Phifer since his visit to the campus in 2005 for an informational interview, along with other well known, talented designers. At the time, nothing on the Rice building agenda seemed right—until the priority of the president to build the pavilion became known.

Raymond and his wife Susan had recently traveled to Paris and visited the Tuileries Garden and returned with a fresh appreciation for the lines of trees, crushed granite surfaces, and movable tables and chairs. Translated into the pavilion site, one can imagine accommodating outdoor concerts and movies at the west end of the building.

For his part, the architect described his concept to the Buildings and Grounds Committee as a "light structure in a 19th-century English garden."

Brochstein notes the synergy between Phifer and James Burnett, the landscape architect: "They clicked. Burnett outdid himself. Together they turned this into a people place." He adds, "You can design for a result you want, but results are not always predictable."

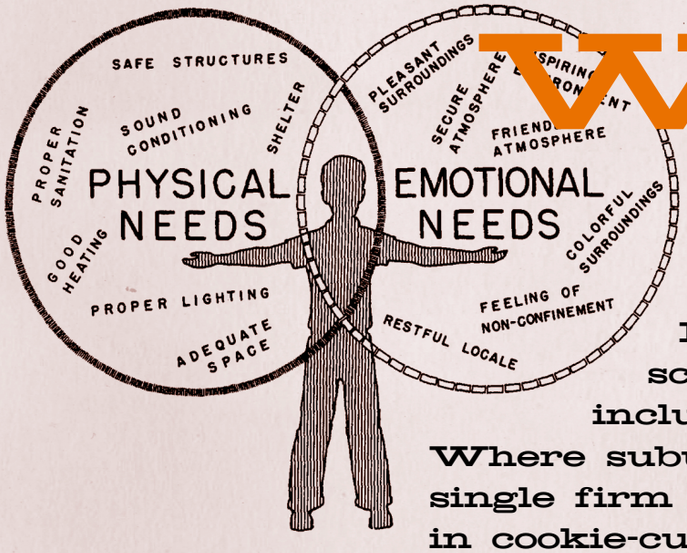
Asked for his analysis of the pavilion, Brochstein does not hesitate: "This is in some ways 'non-architecture'. It is a strong architectural statement, but once you go inside, the architecture goes away." But his most insightful comment concerns this new building's relationship to Fondren Library. "The west end of Fondren is the worst. Now it couldn't be a more perfect backdrop. How often do you find something so bad that turns out so good?"

The Brochsteins are delighted that the Brochstein Pavilion has become a public destination on what was a dead part of the campus and an exciting mid-point on the axis from the Sallyport to the Shepherd School.

PLAN: THOMAS PHIFER AND PARTNERS

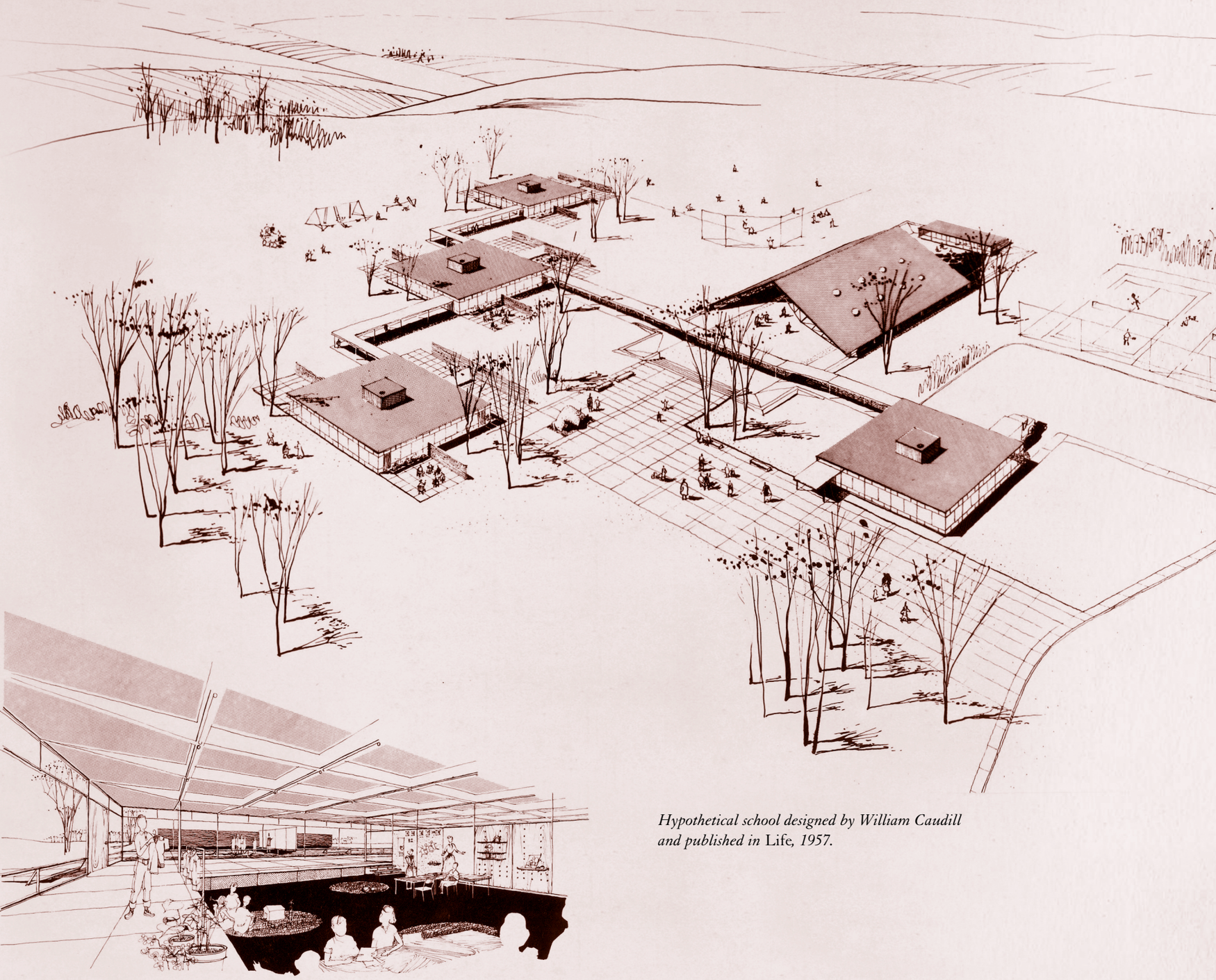
Boom Times for Texas School Design

a report by
tom mckittrick



With over $13 billion in bond funds newly available to school districts across the state after recent elections, school construction should soon be booming all across Texas. Houston Independent School District (HISD) approved 24 new schools alone, which does not include the replacement of old schools. Where suburban districts often turn to a single firm to build all their schools, resulting in cookie-cutter buildings that resemble warehouses, with windowless classrooms and long cinder-block hallways, HISD hires different architectural firms for each school. Their quality varies dramatically.

DIAGRAM: TOWARD BETTER SCHOOL DESIGN, CRS CENTER ARCHIVE



Hypothetical school designed by William Caudill and published in Life, *1957.*

In a similar fashion, approaches to school design over the past century took drastically different directions, and new developments are emerging even now. Making sense of the choices—open plans, clusters for team teaching, fast track design and construction, sustainability in building, information technology, small schools, schools within a school, and security measures, to name a few—can be daunting. Those involved in school leadership, design, and construction need an understanding of both how students learn and what has worked in Texas before if their conceptions of scholastic environments, teaching methodologies, and design practices are to remain in sync. Texas was once known for its innovative school design, so a little history might help today's administrators and architects achieve the best schools possible.

In 1941, while a young lecturer in architecture at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (now Texas A&M), William Caudill wrote a bulletin called *Space for Teaching*. The book, which references the teaching courtyards in Eliel and Eero Saarinen's Crow Island School, was a precursor for later textbooks on the programming process in school design. Noting the emergence of the "baby boom" as men returned home from their WWII military service and started families, Caudill—a principal architect with the company he helped found, Caudill Rowlett Scott (CRS)—wrote another book in 1954 called *Toward Better School Design*. Both books brought a modernist critique to school design, advocating for schools that were more cost-effective and progressive than the monumental structures built before the war. He also designed a hypothetical school for *Life* in 1957, which was introduced with this futuristic description:

> *If Caudill et al. built their school, there would be no more set schedules for classes, no separate grades for different age groups, no barriers between subjects. Nor would there be any definite dividing line between the school and the home. Their ideal campus is in the shape of an octopus whose tentacles stretch out from the Center into the residential areas, providing pupils and adults alike with "tennis courts, baseball, football, soccer fields, skating rinks, as well as bird sanctuaries, botanical gardens and nature-study groves."*

DRRAWING: LIFE MAGAZINE, CRS CENTER ARCHIVE

Liestman Elementary, Alief ISD, Bruce Wallace, MRW Architects, 1979. The library includes a strory telling loft accessed by a ramp, beneath which are reading alcoves of various sizes.

The national exposure that the article brought to CRS soon led to a profusion of school design projects for the small College Station-based firm, albeit ones that were more traditional than the hypothetical school in *Life*. Several members of the firm were accomplished aviators and could fly the company plane into towns across Texas and Oklahoma to realize school commissions. This long-distance practice led to what CRS called the "squatters" method, a technique now commonly employed by architects across the country. It consisted of developing project information, such as program and site data, then setting up an office in a hotel room near the school district office for a two- or three-day charrette in which the architects and their clients worked out design alternatives. On the final day or evening of the charrette, the conceptual design was presented to the public. The balance of the architectural and engineering work was then completed back in College Station.

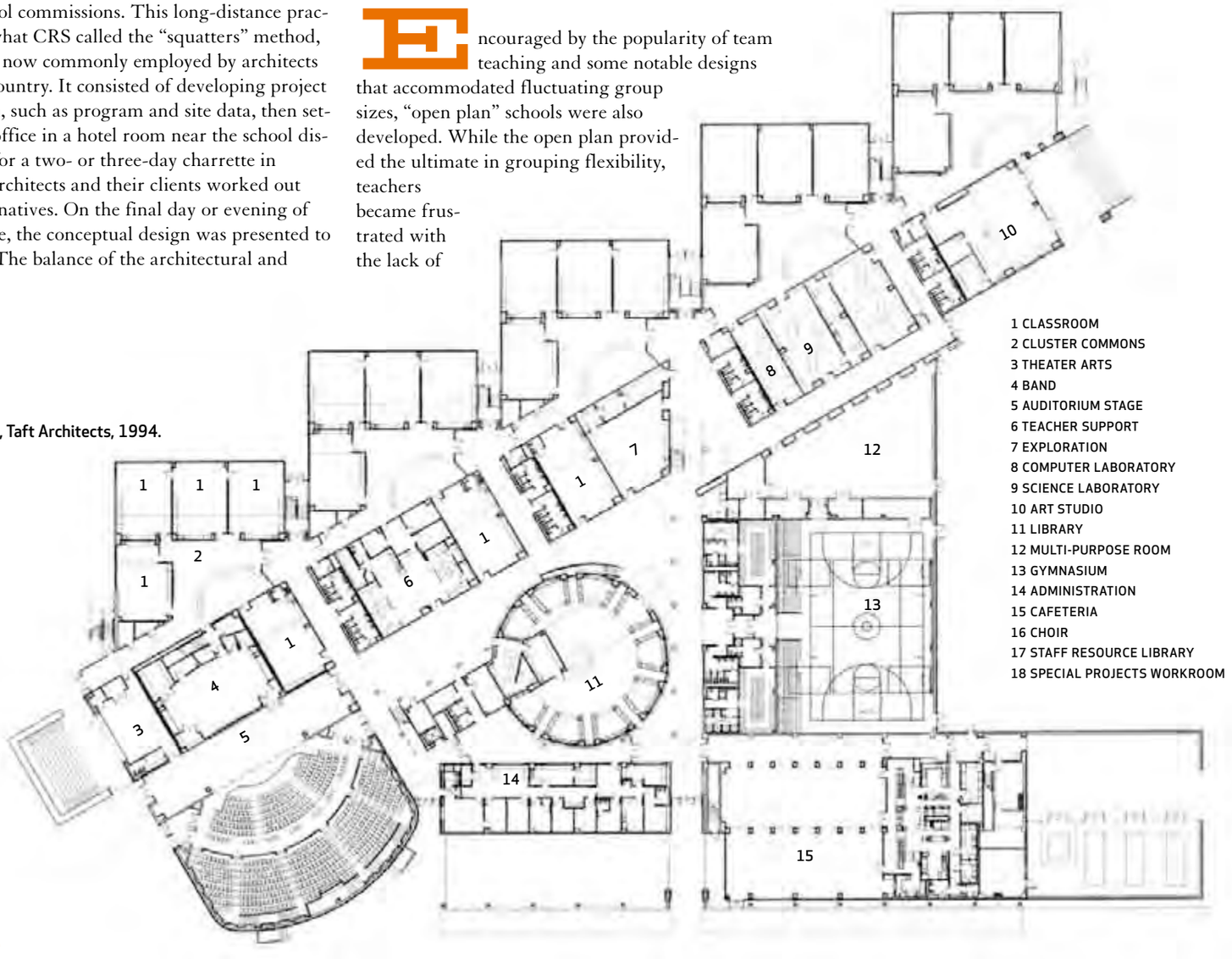
The innovations of the CRS schools coincided with new designs supporting "team teaching," an educational method in which teachers in several disciplines cooperate in developing lesson plans that mutually reinforce the subjects that each delivers to his/her class. The classroom clusters developed for team teaching also allowed teachers to vary the student group size depending on the needs of the children. An example of this school design, with grade-level clusters of classrooms and a central instruction area for large groups, can be seen in the Rice School, 1994, by Taft Architects.

Encouraged by the popularity of team teaching and some notable designs that accommodated fluctuating group sizes, "open plan" schools were also developed. While the open plan provided the ultimate in grouping flexibility, teachers became frustrated with the lack of privacy and the acoustical interference created by using traditional "enclosed classroom" teaching methods in the new open plans. To make matters worse, some impetuous school districts built open plan schools just for their economic benefits, with little thought given to teacher preparation or educational outcomes. The concept soon fell out of fashion.

Another important rethinking of school design, the "community school," made certain facilities available for public use after normal school hours. The J. L. McCullough High School in The Woodlands, 1970, by my own firm, McKittrick Drennan Richardson Wallace Architects, was designed to permit the community to use its library and its day care center. A large auditorium, now the home of the Woodlands Symphony Orchestra, was added later by PBK Architects and is accessible to the public for evening performances.

Following the oil embargo of the early 1970s, energy conservation and day lighting became important concerns in school design. Though the need to

Rice School, Taft Architects, 1994.



FIRST FLOOR

PLAN COURTESY OF TAFT ARCHITECTS. PHOTOS BY RICHARD PAYNE, FAIA.

brain-based learning

Jeff Lackney, PhD, available at www.designshare.com/research/brainbasedlearn98.htm

1. Rich, stimulating environments that have color, texture, and displays created by students

2. Breakout spaces, alcoves, and table groupings for group learning

3. Linked indoor and outdoor spaces to enable exercise

4. Corridors and public places containing symbols of the school's larger purpose

5. Safe places, especially in dangerous urban settings

6. Nooks of different shapes, colors, and lighting

7. Changing displays and an interactive environment

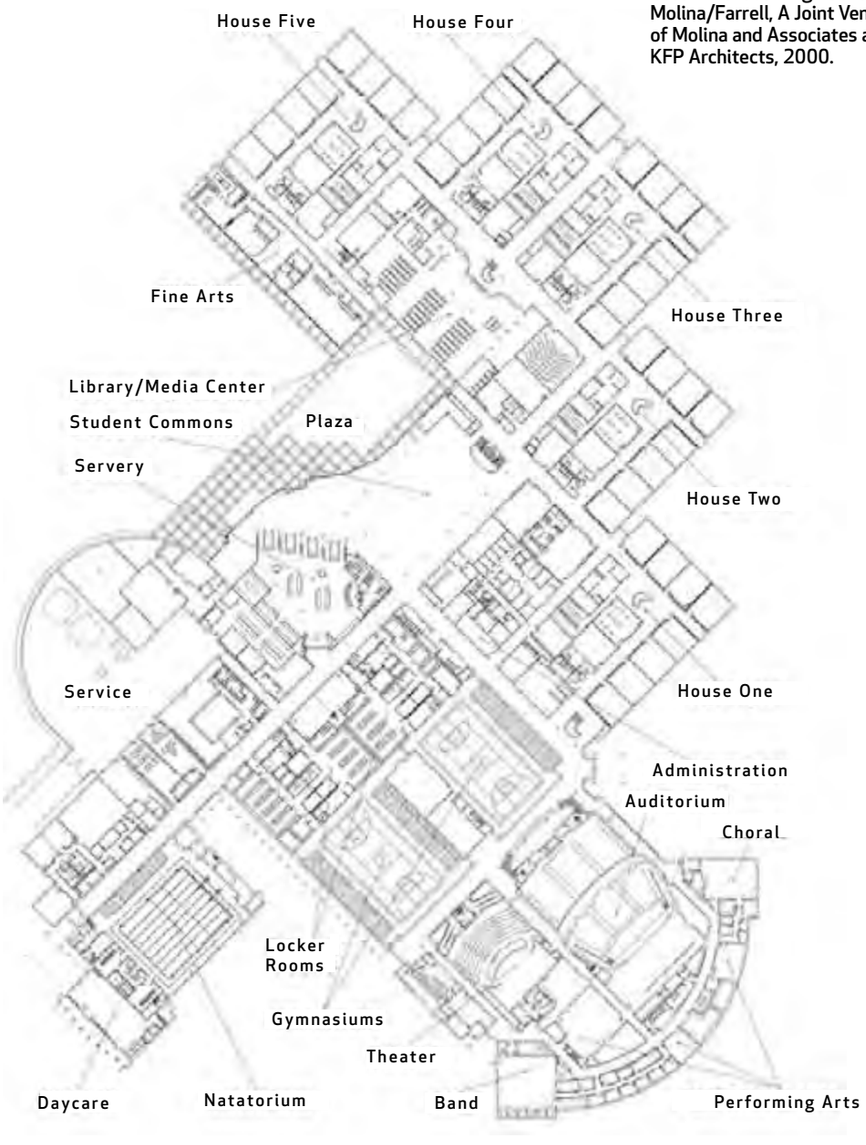
8. Integrated physical settings, such as wet areas for art and science close to computer workspaces

9. Flexible spaces—a common principle in the past that continues to be relevant

10. Passive places for reflection and active places for interpersonal intelligence

11. Personalized spaces—beyond the locker or desk—for self-expression

12. Connection with the community at large and natural environments as primary learning settings



Cesar E. Chavez High School, Molina/Farrell, A Joint Venture of Molina and Associates and KFP Architects, 2000.

conserve energy later lost its urgency, rising energy costs in recent times have convinced many school districts to mandate that all of their new buildings meet basic thresholds of energy efficiency or the more thorough LEED certification. A great example of the early incorporation of principles of sustainability in a school is the Roy Lee Walker Elementary School, 2000, by SHW Architects, located in McKinney, a town north of Dallas. Designed before the LEED process became institutionalized, it includes a water collection system that is an instructional tool for students, a windmill, and photovoltaic panels for producing electricity.

School size also became an issue of increasing interest among educators. Studies demonstrated that students enrolled in smaller schools performed better both academically and in extracurricular activities; with a smaller student body, teachers could pay more attention to each student, and students had more opportunities to hold leadership positions in school-related activ-

LEFT: Rice School interior axis. BELOW : West Brazos Junior High School, SHW, 2006, LEED certified.

PLAN COURTESY OF TAFT ARCHITECTS. PHOTOS BY RICHARD PAYNE, FAIA.

Roy Lee Walker Elementary, SHW, 2000.

A room without a view

School design is driven by economics and population growth. Tax increases are scrutinized. Bond issues need to be approved by voters. The lowest cost building will always be one that minimizes exterior walls and openings.

As a result, today's typical Texas school is windowless like a prison or warehouse. The interior classrooms, of course, have no windows. But neither do the exterior ones. Or worse, fake windows are placed in walls for appearances but blocked solid from the inside. Even those features are at risk of cost-cutting. In the end, paint colors and floor tile patterns are the only "value engineering"-proof design elements.

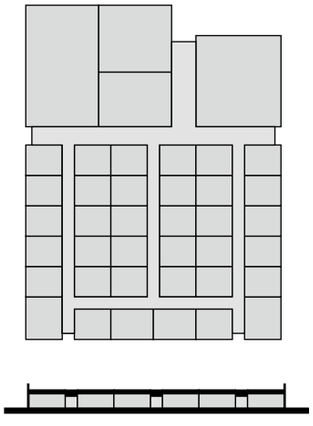
School districts cut costs by hiring one or two architecture firms to design all their schools, which reduces fees and simplifies management. In 2005, the state legislature debated requiring all Texas districts to use one of a set of standard designs, developed statewide without regard to site context, climate, or local wishes.

Some school districts have bucked the trend. Locally, the significant exception is the Houston Independent School District (HISD), which selected 27 different architecture firms to design 28 new and replacement schools in its 2002 bond program, and required them to include windows in all classrooms. Thus, new HISD schools are not only more architecturally diverse than suburban schools, but also very different in plan.

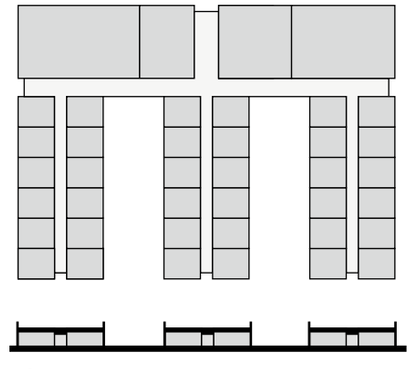
This is no small matter: a 1999 study of 21,000 students found that those whose classrooms had natural light scored 25 percent higher on standardized tests. So it is ironic when you find school districts with a reputation for "good schools" putting their children in windowless boxes.

Ultimately, a school building is not an expense but an investment. The returns come in the form of an educated workforce and an informed citizenry. So what does it say about Texas that many of its schools are built to the minimum possible standards?

-Christof Spieler



Lowest-cost school plan and section.



School with windows plan and section.

Following the oil embargo of the early 1970s, energy conservation and day lighting became important concerns in school design.

ities. The challenge for school design was that one large school is more economical to operate than several small schools. So different approaches were developed to gain some of the advantages of small schools. Large school districts are now building "small learning communities" or "schools within a school." John Farrell and Charles Sundin used this concept in the design of Houston's Cesar Chavez High School, 2000. It consists of five semiautonomous 500-student schools that share a library, an auditorium, arts facilities, gyms and dressing rooms, a natatorium, a day care center, a cafeteria, and sports facilities. Each small learning community of 500 students has a complete administrative staff.

All of these design approaches, of course, have been impacted by the constant revolutions in information technology.

One way to integrate many of the lessons learned over the years in Texas school design is to cultivate a greater understanding of our cognitive functions and how we learn. Spaces that engage, challenge, and arouse our senses encourage "brain-based" learning, which requires greater interaction with the environment than most current facilities allow.

As architects and educators seek to improve the education of our children they must be both knowledgeable about the rich legacy of school design and open to learning about promising advancements. In the foreword to *Toward Better School Design,* Caudill offers this still timely advice about seeking a total philosophical approach: "Solutions are relatively unimportant because they apply only to a few situations. What is important is a methodology to be applied in each planning situation to make every new school a better school." One building design cannot answer all possible needs now and in the future. LEED certification alone does not guarantee good design and education outcomes. Nor does an unthinking adoption of the latest technologies, classroom clusters, or open playgrounds.

Architecture can support education but is no substitute for teachers and administrators diligently seeking the best environments for their students—even if it means challenging the status quo. School boards and key administrators have a special responsibility to see that public education dollars are spent wisely when building and staffing new schools. The selection of architects knowledgeable in school design is a step in that direction.

For more resources pertaining to school design, check out the Caudill Rowlett Scott Center at Texas A&M University and the National Clearing House on Educational Facilities in Alexandria, Virginia.

PLAN COURRTESY OF TAFT ARCHITECTS. PHOTOS BY RICHARD PAYNE, FAIA

SCHOOLS FROM LOG CABINS TO GLASS HOUSES

School (Catherine Burke and Ian Grosvenor, Reaktion Books, 2008, 95 pages; $20.00, paper)

by Barry Moore

THE AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE WILL HAVE SPENT 13,000 hours within public school buildings. Reason enough, state Catherine Burke and Ian Grosvenor, to examine how we have designed our schools in the past and how we might do so in the future.

According to these British historians of education, some things about mass schooling have never changed: it institutionalizes children in spaces specifically designed to hold them; control is inherent in the buildings, furniture, and equipment; and children are generally segregated with their peers according to age and level of development.

The phenomenal population growth in the U.S. and Europe in the latter half of the 19th century brought the realization that "designed" public schools would have to take on the task of education; churches and voluntary private enterprises could no longer meet the demand. Less than 50 percent of American children went to school before 1870. Indeed, in a mostly rural America, schools usually started as one-room affairs, but soon morphed into structures that separated students by age and provided rooms for separate subjects—beginning the practice of form following curriculum. Every classroom setting, then and now, featured a single place of meeting, a teacher, a means of instruction, a means of inscription, an organized form of seating, a shared purpose, and children.

By the 1870s a serious international exchange had developed about what schools should be and what they should teach. E. K. Robson, an architect charged with developing a standard for British schools, set out in the middle of that decade for North America, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, and The Netherlands in search of the "best schools." Educators in the U.S. and Canada were keen on the subject and had already adapted the Prussian model for public schools, with its highly organized system of rooms and functions.

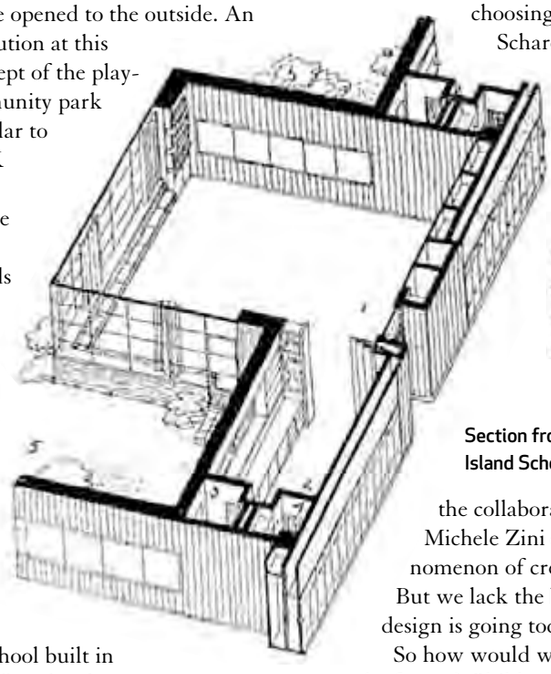
Aspects of Robson's published report continue to influence school architecture, including the importance of kindergarten as developed by Friedrich Froebel in Germany; the separation of spaces by curriculum; the importance of natural light on the students' left so their (right-handed) writing hands would not cast a shadow; the need to raise window sills high enough so students would not be distracted by looking out; natural ventilation and comfortable desks; and a playground as a "moral training ground through shared play." It is not surprising that the first large-scale 19th-century schools became symbols of cultural and civic pride.

The section devoted to the history of the "School of Tomorrow" I found most engaging. Within a generation after Robson, architects and educators knew the model needed some improvement. Before the First World War, open-air schools enjoyed popularity in Holland and the U.K.—as well as New England! That raincoat-and-mittens scenario soon evolved into a more comfortable classroom model with exterior walls that could be opened to the outside. An American contribution at this time was the concept of the playground as a community park open all year, similar to Houston's SPARK Program today.

But it was in the 1930s that the best architectural minds demonstrated the most creativity. Giuseppe Terragni designed his glass house for learning, each classroom with its own terrace. Reyner Banham called the resulting Asilo Sant'Elia nursery school "the best school built in 20th-century Italy." Richard Neutra designed his Corona Avenue School in 1935, with 12-foot sliding glass doors in every classroom. Two years later, William Lescaze built his revolutionary Ansonia High School in Connecticut. And German refugee Walter Gropius teamed with British architect Maxwell Fry in 1939 to design Impington Village College, an elementary school by day and a community center by night, with a floor plan that looks as if it could have been built last year. The authors rightly single out Crow Island School in Winnetka, Illinois, designed in 1940 by Eliel and Eero Saarinen (with a young Lawrence B. Perkins). The most significant feature of the school is its L-shaped classrooms, each with a "wet" arts and science space in the base of the L opening directly to an activity courtyard. Ample windows provide every teaching space with natural light and accesst to natural ventilation. A small auditorium has seating in pews that vary in size to accommodate children of different age groups. With custom designed furnature and sculptures, Crow Island represents a fusion of art and architecture and is proudly maintained by its neighborhood to this day. Children learn history in rooms designed to simulate specific periods of time, such as the Pioneers Room. Brick exterior walls include decorative examples of ceramic crafts.

In the postwar years, the authors note Hans Scharoun's 1962 Geschwister Scholl (School for Girls) in Lunen, Nord Rhein Westphalia, as a particularly strong example of the school as a "learning street." Here the building acts as a conduit to a marketplace of ideas and achievements, a meeting place, a series of nooks and crannies for being alone, and an avenue for choosing activities and materials.

Scharoun's plan reminded me strongly of a community college planned by Donald Barthelme and his team of students in the first Rice Design Fete in the same year.



Section from Crow Island School, 1940.

I wish Burke and Grosvenor had provided more examples illustrating the state of school design today. They give a nod to creative retrofits of aging Robson-type school buildings, the collaborative work that Italian architect Michele Zini does with teachers, and the phenomenon of creating schools-within-schools. But we lack the big picture of where school design is going today.

So how would we describe a desirable school of the future? Children in the U.K. did a good job in 2001: "a beautiful school, a comfortable school, a safe school, a listening school, a flexible school, a relevant school, a respectful school, a school without walls, a school for everybody."

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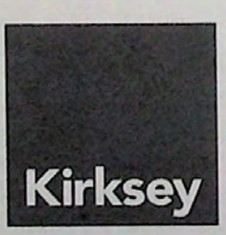

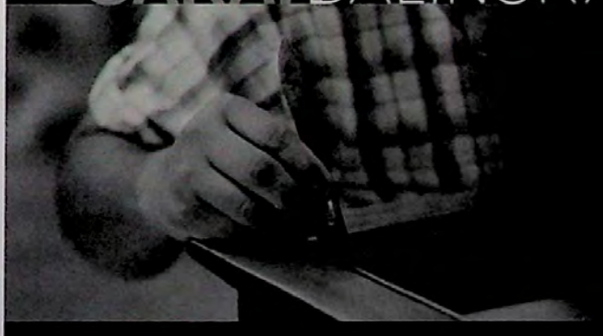

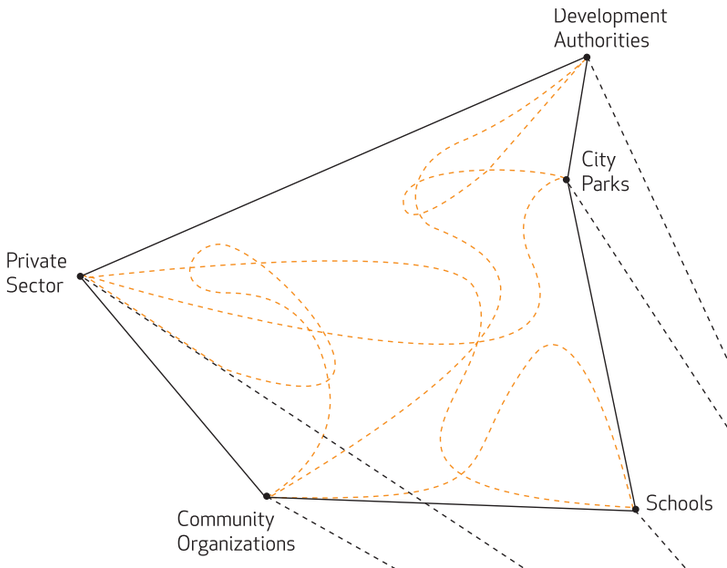

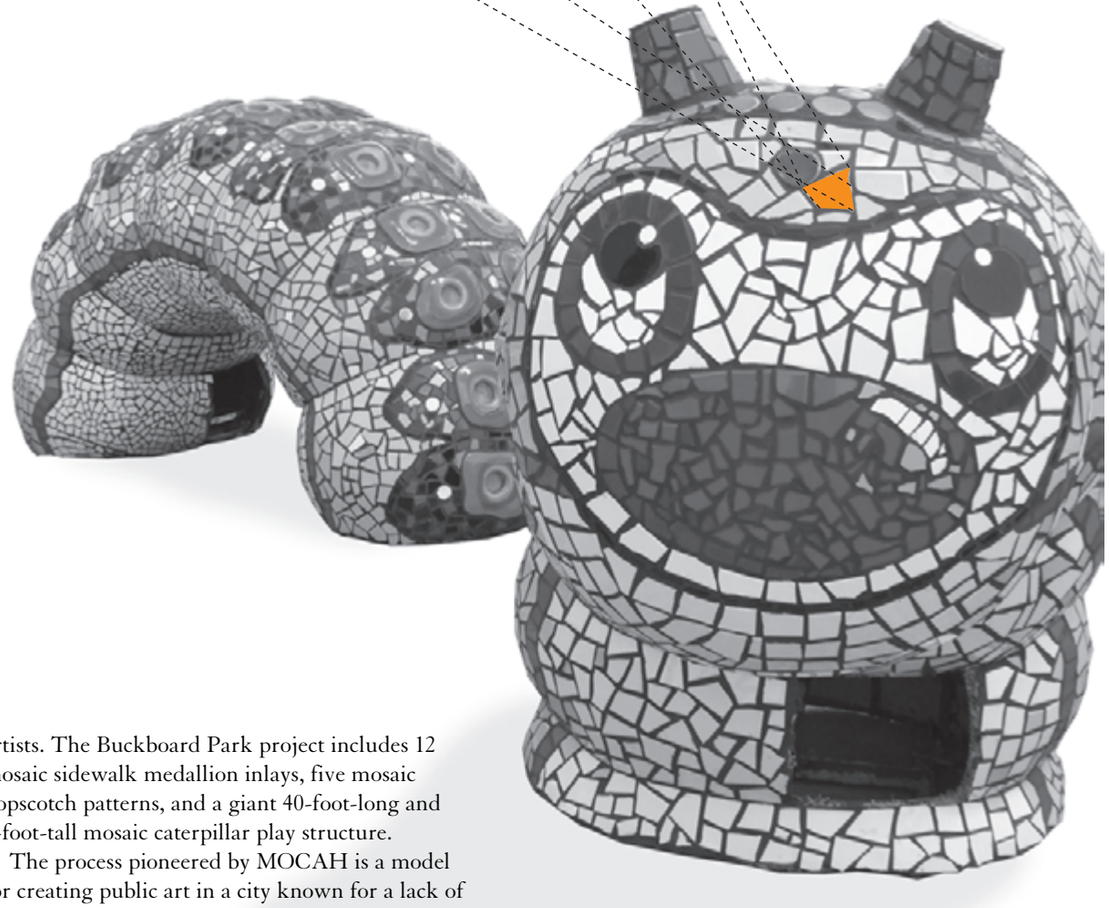

A *Mosaic* of Interests

by Troy Gooden and Reginald Adams

RARELY DOES A SCULPTURAL FORM REFLECT THE POLITICAL reality of creating public art as playfully and effectively as the mosaics made by MOCAH (Museum of Cultural Arts, Houston).

Through public/private partnerships and collaborations involving development authorities, schools, community organizations, and major corporations, MOCAH has engaged more than 11,500 youth, ages eight to eighteen, in the design and production of over 90 murals, sculptures, and other public art projects that have enhanced neighborhoods throughout the city.

This summer young MOCAH artists created public artworks for Buckboard Park in partnership with the Greenspoint Redevelopment Authority. Over a dozen high school students from all over Houston converged in a downtown studio and spent more than 400 hours working alongside professional artists. The Buckboard Park project includes 12 mosaic sidewalk medallion inlays, five mosaic hopscotch patterns, and a giant 40-foot-long and 5-foot-tall mosaic caterpillar play structure.

The process pioneered by MOCAH is a model for creating public art in a city known for a lack of zoning, central planning, and government funding. The art they produce enhances our quality of life. It nurtures self-expression and develops the talents of youth who had limited access to art making.

Throughout Houston, nonprofit arts organizations, public agencies, and private interests are working together to enhance our quality of life. The impact of these partnerships is real and the transformations take place one brush stroke, one ceramic tile, one child, one block, and one community at a time.

SEE OFFCITE.NET TO WATCH MOCAH'S STUDENT ARTISTS SPEAK ABOUT THEIR WORK.

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