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REVIEW OF HOUSTON

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THE ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN REVIEW OF HOUSTON

A PUBLICATION OF THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

74 SPRING 2008

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

COVER: Workers apply gold leaf to the recess above the narthex at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston. Photographed by Paul Hester.

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TOUR

RDA ANNUAL ARCHITECTURE TOUR
The Splendid Houses of John F. Staub
Saturday and Sunday, March 29 and 30
1 - 6 p.m. each day.
713.348.4876 or **rda.rice.edu**

LECTURES

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,
Brown Auditorium
7 p.m.
713.348.4876 or **rda.rice.edu**

SANFORD KWINTER
Far From Equilibrium: Essays on Technology and Design Culture
A program by the MFA,H Bookstore
Wednesday, April 2

GWENDOLYN WRIGHT
New York City
Co-sponsored by RDA and Houston Mod
Wednesday, April 9

THOM MAYNE, MORPHOSIS
Santa Monica, CA
The 2008 Sally Walsh Lecture Program
Co-sponsored by RDA and AIA Houston
Wednesday, April 16

BOOK SIGNING

WM. T. CANNADAY
The Things They've Done
A book about the careers of selected graduates of the Rice University School of Architecture
Thursday, April 10
5-7 p.m.
Farish Gallery, M.D. Anderson Hall, Rice University

EXHIBITION

DESIGNED BY ARCHITECTS: METALWORK
From the Margo Grant Walsh Collection
March 15 - August 3
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

NEWS

RDA BAY AREA STUDY TOUR

RDA members toured San Francisco in February, visiting new architecture by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Stanley Saitowitz/Natoma Architects, Leddy Maytum Stacy, Morphosis, and Herzog & de Meuron as well as Bay Area landmarks by Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan, and Willis Polk.

COMPETITION

99K HOUSE COMPETITION

Rice Design Alliance and AIA Houston announce finalists.

IN FEBRUARY, FIVE FINALISTS WERE SELECTED FROM 182 entrants proposing a sustainable, affordable house that addresses the needs of a low-income family in the Gulf Coast region. Each will receive a $5,000 award and the competition will move forward to Stage II.

The following entrants were chosen from a field representing 29 U.S states and 16 countries: Stephanie Eugster, Houston TX; Paul Stovesand and Rebecca Cox, Chicago IL; Kirby Mears, Walter Murphy, Kyle Humphries, Jamie Miller, and Gina Lyons with Murphy Mears Architects, Houston TX; Robert Humble, Joel Egan, Ben Spencer, Owen Richards, Tom Mulica, and Kate Cudney, with Hybrid / ORA, Seattle, Washington; and Gail Peter Borden and Brian D. Andrews, with Borden Partnership, Los Angeles, CA.

In Stage II the five teams approved for continuation will have an opportunity to refine their projects and must complete a set of comprehensive construction documents. The Jury will review these resubmissions for pricing by a Houston-area home-building expert allied with the competition organizers. The Jury will select the winner based on bids and adaptability to reproduction as well as design. The winner will receive an additional $5,000 stipend. The City of Houston through the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA) initiative has donated a site for the house located at 4015 Jewel Street in Houston's historic Fifth Ward, a residential area northeast of downtown. Once constructed, the winning house will be sold or auctioned to a low-income family.

Five jurors, representing expertise in design, sustainability, construction of affordable housing, and Houston's Fifth Ward, selected the finalists and will also judge Stage II of the competition:

Bryan Bell, Jr., Founder and Executive Director, Design Corps, Raleigh NC; Richard Farias, Executive Director, Tejano Community Center, Houston TX; David Lake, FAIA, Principal, Lake | Flato Architects, San Antonio TX; Michael Pyatok, FAIA, Principal, Pyatok Architects, Inc., Oakland CA; and Rocio Romero, Owner and Principal, Rocio Romero, LLC, Perryville MO.

Bryan Bell weighed in on the process: "Sustainability is not just about protecting our

TOP: **Kirby Mears, Walter Murphy, Kyle Humphries, Jamie Miller, and Gina Lyons with Murphy Mears Architects, Houston TX**
BOTTOM: **Paul Stovesand and Rebecca Cox, Chicago IL**

Robert Humble, Joel Egan, Ben Spencer, Owen Richards, Tom Mulica, and Kate Cudney, with Hybrid / ORA, Seattle, WA

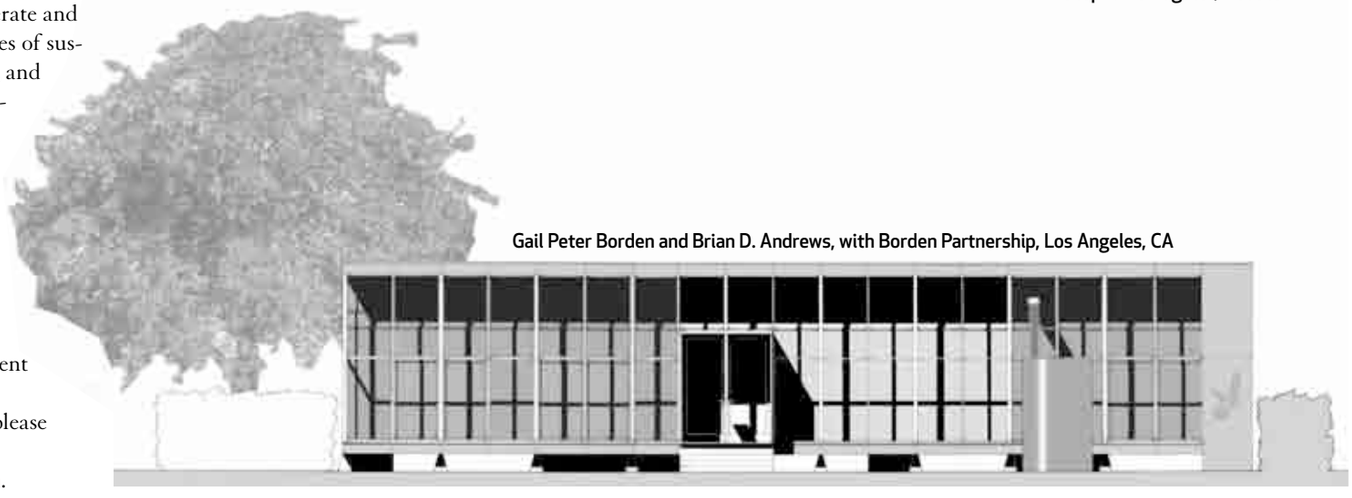
fragile environment, but includes the financial sustainability of home owners and the stability of neighborhoods. This competition asked designers across the world to use their great creativity to address critical social, economic, and environmental challenges faced by many here and across the Gulf Coast."

The 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. Designers and architects were challenged to design a sustainable, affordable house, with special consideration given to affordability, longevity, energy savings benefits, and appropriateness for Houston's hot, humid climate. The competition objectives are to broaden awareness of green building strategies applicable to affordable housing, generate and publicize buildable examples of sustainable, affordable houses, and construct an exemplary sustainable, affordable house prototype.

Sponsored by the Rice Design Alliance and AIA Houston, the competition was supported, in part, by generous grants from Houston Endowment Inc. and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information, please go to the competition Web site, the99khouse.com.

Stephanie Eugster, Houston TX



Gail Peter Borden and Brian D. Andrews, with Borden Partnership, Los Angeles, CA

ALL RENDERINGS COURTESY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE FIRMS

Central Library soon after opening in 1926.

PRESERVATION

THE LIBRARIAN RETURNS

Rehabilitating Houston's beloved Julia Ideson building.

THE 1901 DISCOVERY OF OIL AT SPINDLETOP AND THE opening of Houston's port resulted in the trebling of the city's population between 1900 and 1920. Consequently, by the early 1920s conditions at the 1904 Carnegie Library were "almost intolerable . . . where everyone gets in the way of everyone else," reported librarian Julia Ideson to the local press. With support from Mayor A. E. Amerman and other city leaders, Ideson led the charge to construct a new central library. By 1925 the library was under construction and a new Civic Center, designed by the Kansas City landscape architects Hare and Hare, had been proposed, its building keyed to the Spanish-style architecture of the central library.

Designed by the Boston architectural firm Cram & Ferguson, the Central Library, renamed the Julia Ideson Building in 1955 to honor the city's first librarian, served as the Central Branch the Houston Public Library until 1976. In 1978-79 it was sensitively rehabilitated by S. I. Morris Associates for the Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC), housing the public library's collection of archives, photographs, architectural drawings, rare books, and manuscripts. New glass-and-steel partitions were inserted for closed stacks and archival storage. Morris' work, following established preservation standards, was gentle to the historic fabric of the building and is easily removed.

In 2006, the Julia Ideson Library Preservation Partners (JILPP), an independent nonprofit corporation that Houston Mayor Bill White asked to take on the job, began fundraising to expand and rehabilitate the library for continued use by the HMRC and to showcase the building's ornate interior spaces through exhibitions and event rentals such as receptions and weddings. The project—a new wing closely following the footprint of Cram's original and the restoration of compromised rooms and spaces—is led by architects Barry Moore and Paul Homeyer of Gensler. It will include a state-of-the-art, climate-controlled archival storage area and a new public research and reading room. The design of the wing will be differentiated from the historic portion of the building, following professional historic preservation standards. The restoration phase of the project will include reopening one of the original second-story loggias and constructing an outdoor reading garden (an idea conceived by the original architects but never carried out), as well as restoring one of the two original second-floor reading rooms currently filled with three levels of steel book stacks as an exhibition hall. Plans for the building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, will follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and seek a silver LEED certification. Most of the building will simply be preserved, as many of the original reading and stack rooms and associated furniture, fixtures, and finishes remain intact and unaltered. A paint analysis of the interior decorative plaster elements—coffering, cornice, and friezes with roundels of the great libraries of the world—will be conducted.

As a testament to the rediscovered love of this city landmark, the library's current director, Dr. Rhea Brown Lawson, has requested that her office be relocated to Julia Ideson's namesake, where it was housed during the first 50 years of the building's life.

–Anna Mod

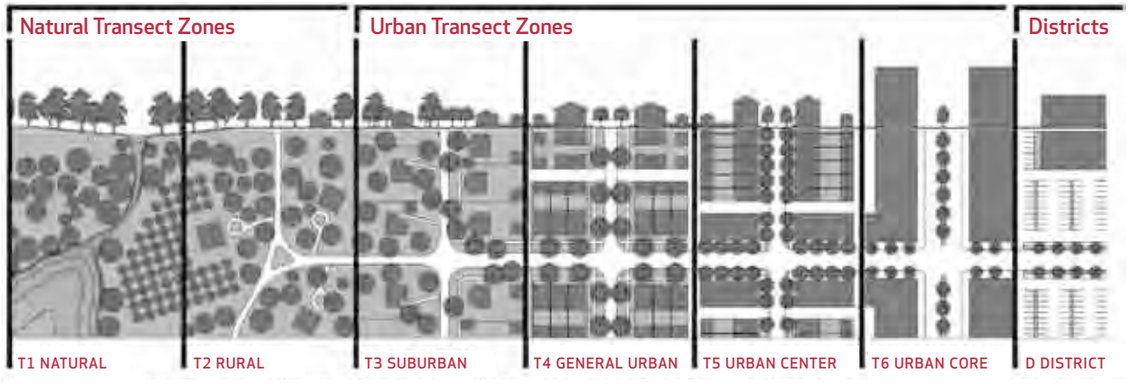
COURTESY HOUSTON METROPOLITAN RESEARCH CENTER, HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL?

Form-Based Development Code in Houston.

A PREDICTION: WITHIN THREE TO FIVE YEARS, IT'S LIKELY the city of Houston will implement form-based development code for building projects in high-capacity transit corridors. This will allow and encourage urban-style development at many scales while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods. Form-based code does not necessarily prohibit or require any particular use of land, as zoning does. Instead, it makes judgments about form issues, such as setbacks, curb cuts, building heights, building density, and many other elements.

The Form-Based Code Institute has a draft definition of its initiative: a method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form primarily, with a lesser focus on land use, through city or county regulations. Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. Houston is moving toward the use of such a code because of the emergence of about 55 transit-oriented station areas along the new Metro light rail system that begins service in 2012, as well as the civic friction caused by projects such as the Ashby highrise.



The transect is a geographical cross-section that reveals a sequence of environments. It's used to identify a set of habitats that vary by their urban character. This range provides a rational basis for organizing buildings, lots, land use, open space, streets, all elements of the human habitat. Form-based coding describes the desired volume of buildings and their interaction with public space.

The city's Urban Corridors project, focused on the coming rail corridors, will propose standards for transit-oriented development and will use form-based code to guide such development. The report and recommendations of this initiative are nearly complete and are certain to spark lively debate as they bring new language and ideas to the civic table. A knowledgeable land-use attorney has said that using form-based code is within the law.

SmartCode Version 9.0 is the most mature model of form-based code. Created by New Urbanist architects and planners Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk of Miami, it gives towns and cities a complete code of ordinances that can be customized to local conditions and values. SmartCode is based on the Transect of New Urbanism diagram, describing several urban-form "zones" and portraying how they may relate to each other in cities. It brings order to such issues as scale and mobility, defining parts of the toolkit to create a certain kind of place, understood in context with other places. SmartCode Central (smartcodecentral.org) says this about itself: "The SmartCode is the only unified transect-based code available for all scales of planning, from the region to the community to the block and building. As a form-based code, it keeps towns compact and rural lands open, while reforming the destructive sprawl-producing patterns of separated-use zoning."

Additionally, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has funded a process to produce a version with the working title of Smart Growth Model Code. Team member Jim Charlier, of Charlier Associates in Boulder, Colorado, says: "The Smart Growth Model Code is an effort to develop a resource usable by any local government in the country, regardless of what type of land development code/zoning/subdivision regulation they have in place and regardless of how large/small or sophisticated they are. The Code will embrace the three main approaches to local land use regulation: traditional zoning, performance-based zoning (based on goal-oriented criteria rather than use and now in the form of LEED-ND, which sets a green standard for neighborhood design); and form-based codes, of which the SmartCode is one example.

Actually, Houston already has a form-based development code. Chapter 42 of the city's Code of Ordinances contains a set of rules governing "urban" development and another set for "suburban" development. Unfortunately, the definitions of those two conditions are based on geography, not form. "Urban" is defined as "the area included within and bounded by Interstate Highway 610." Suburban is defined as everything outside the Loop. This means the second-ring suburb of Afton Oaks is urban, and the Uptown/Galleria area, which has more jobs than downtown San Diego, plus 30,000 residents, is suburban. The regulations for each area are suburban in nature, requiring setbacks for commercial buildings, excessive parking, and other stipulations that prohibit "urban" development. By those standards, the 529-unit Post Midtown Square project, completed in 2001, was basically illegal, and the Houston Planning Commission had to issue variances to allow the creation of the best recent urban project in the city. Others are coming, but all required variances.

It is easy to argue that Chapter 42's definitions and rules fuel nearly all development friction in the city. Because the two sets of codes don't differentiate between urban and suburban as different forms, rather than different geographic areas, residential neighborhoods are constantly under siege by undifferentiated residential density and commercial surprises.

It would be productive to begin a fundamental fix to Chapter 42 that produces reasonable definitions of urban and suburban, followed by a major overhaul of the regulations themselves. Form-based regulations that allow and require urban solutions, where appropriate, and preserve and maintain suburban solutions, where appropriate, will evolve within a decade. Certainly, as Houston begins to pursue a General Plan for the city's future, this type of regulation will play a major role.

–David Crossley

COURTESY DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK

Student Chapel, University of St. Thomas, Glenn Heim, designer, 1966.

EPHEMERAL space

The Seminarian and Student Chapels at the University of St. Thomas.

by Helen Fosdick in collaboration with Glenn Heim

In the mid-60s artist, designer, and builder Glenn Heim created two small, exquisite chapels on the University of St. Thomas campus. After graduating from the Cleveland Art Institute's industrial design program in 1962, Heim joined the Basilian Fathers, the Catholic order that established the university in 1947.

HICKEY-ROBERTSON

They subsequently sent him to Houston as a scholastic to obtain a degree in philosophy prior to entering seminary. Heim and ten other pre-seminarians lived in a house on the corner of Mt. Vernon and Sul Ross streets, and it was in a room there in the summer of 1964, with the approval of the fathers and the help of two fellow scholastics, Donald Rigamonti and Dennis Andrews, that the Seminarian Chapel was built. At the time Heim was very much influenced by Le Corbusier, and especially his chapel at Ronchamps. It was with this inspiration that the first of his St. Thomas chapels was constructed in a small space measuring approximately 20 by 25 feet.

Heim designed all the elements of the Seminarian chapel and fabricated most of them himself. The cost, of necessity, was minimal. The original structural elements of the single room were very simple, with natural light coming from a single window facing west. Heim began by restructuring the chapel with various curved walls. A ceiling canopy was constructed to give intimacy to the tabernacle and altar areas. The area over the tabernacle was painted a deep cadmium red, and with the walls and the floor a light neutral tone, constituted the only real color in the chapel. The wall facing the entrance door had three four-by-eight-foot panels floating approximately six inches from its face. One of the three panels angled into the curved wall near the lectern; the other two were parallel to the wall. A horizontal line of natural cedar fragments bisected the panel at approximately eye level. A texture of natural wallboard compound was applied to the panels, and thin lines were inscribed perpendicular to the cedar strips to counter the horizontal movement and lend a warmer white in contrast to the rest of the walls.

Mrs. de Menil had one suggestion: replace the individual cane chairs and attached kneelers with the simpler concept of benches.

The altar was constructed of plywood with wallboard compound applied as a coating to give texture, then tinted grey to lend a faux-stone appearance. While home on leave in Iowa, Heim and his father fabricated the tabernacle of plate steel. Later Heim cut a design in the face of the tabernacle with a welding torch; his intention was a representation of the Paraclete. The remaining metal work for the lectern, cross, and seating he either welded himself or sent to a welding shop. Rigamonti and Andrews assisted on all the drywall, painting, and electrical work, as well as the unfinished cedar table and benches.

Along with philosophy and theology studies at St. Thomas, Heim enrolled in art history classes where he met Howard Barnstone, who was teaching a class, and Dominique de Menil, who had taken over the direction of the department following the death of Jermayne MacAgy in 1964. Heim invited them to see the Seminarian Chapel and while they were enthusiastic and positive about the design, Mrs. de Menil had one suggestion: replace the individual cane chairs and attached kneelers with the simpler concept of benches. Heim found unfinished cedar at a local lumberyard and followed her advice. The bench design was subsequently used in both the Student and Rothko Chapels.

Due to renovations taking place on the St. Thomas campus in 1965, the Basilian Fathers decided to move the original Student Chapel, located in the Link-Lee Mansion, to a garage-like building on Yoakum between Barnard and Sul Ross that had been used as a small student lounge. With Mrs. de Menil's encouragement, the Basilians asked Heim to design the new Student Chapel, and Howard Barnstone became his mentor and advisor on the project. It was to be a temporary space, as Philip Johnson's campus plan for the university already included the design of what was to become the Rothko Chapel.

The Seminarian Chapel existed only a few years until the scholastic program was moved from St. Thomas to two Basilian colleges in Canada, whereas the Student Chapel

A. DE MENIL

ABOVE: **Student Chapel.**
OPPOSITE PAGE AND LEFT: **Seminarian Chapel, Glenn Heim, designer, 1964.**

was to exist for 32 years, until the opening of Johnson's Chapel of St. Basil in 1997.

The Student Chapel was constructed in a relatively small space of approximately 30 by 32 feet. Heim made sketches and detailed drawings that, as with those of the earlier chapel, have unfortunately been lost. He also made full-scale mock-ups with cardboard of the furniture and fixtures; and the wall, ceiling, and floor curves were plotted with masking tape. Heim designed the steel tabernacle, candleholders, cross, lectern, and celebrant seating, which were fabricated by artist Jim Love. Fellow scholastics helped him complete the remainder of the construction: the wood stands, the altar, benches, drywall, and painting. A contractor installed the glass behind the altar. Once again, Mrs. de Menil had a suggestion, which was to scale down the size of the altar that Heim had proposed in the mock-up. She mentioned to him her love for the Chapel of Saint-Séverin in Paris with its small-scale altar. "Of course she was right," states Heim today. "I changed the scale of the altar and later she sent me to Paris to see Saint-Séverin for myself."

The Menil support and encouragement given to Heim were in the same spirit of their future endeavors enabling extraordinary art and architecture in Houston. The Menil's generous contributions to the chapel project also included the 18th-century Spanish corpus on the central cross, the 14th-century French polychrome stone statue of the Virgin and Child, and a small 14th-century illumination of St. Michael that hung in the chapel narthex. For Glenn Heim, the experience of envisioning and building these two chapels was seminal: In them, he recognized his stronger vocation as an artist and designer and ended his seminary studies. After many years based in New York City, he now resides in western Massachusetts where he continues his work on art and design projects. Mrs. de Menil considered the Student Chapel a treasure and attended Mass there until it closed, which greatly saddened her. It was a remarkable experience to witness Mass with the large glass windows behind the altar and celebrants looking out onto a green garden of grass, bushes, and trees. The feeling of the room was ever quiet and soothing, the epitome of sacred space.

TOP: HICKEY-ROBERTSON; BOTTOM: A. DE MENIL

SPIRITUAL summit

Lakewood Church recasts the role of sacred architecture.

by Brian Lonsway

My tour guide for Lakewood Church asked me to meet her where the old ticket booth used to be.

An odd landmark for a religious institution, perhaps, but Lakewood identifies as much with its roots as a former basketball arena as with its reincarnation, completed in the summer of 2005 by Morris Architects. The ticket booth, the church's last unrenovated area, is but one reminder that the building was formerly The Summit (aka Compaq Center, from 1976, designed by Kenneth Bentsen Associates with Lloyd Jones Associates), home of the Houston Rockets basketball team. As with any Christian rebirth, one's former affiliations are not completely eliminated, but merely displaced.

COURTESY LAKEWOOD CHURCH

At Lakewood Church, a carefully nurtured nostalgia pervades one's experience. The arena has been born again, but strategically, because memories of The Summit rank high in the minds of Houstonians. The church's newest home reveals its mission as a media enterprise, using spatial media—including architecture, architectural memory, and broadcast technologies—to craft an engaging experience and to bolster attendance. Lakewood presents a popular, recognizable image of its sporting past to broaden its public appeal. Furthermore, it should come as no surprise that the building embraces the spatial logics of the film and themed-environment industries, as Pastor Joel Osteen has been immersed in the televisual end of the ministry since his term spent at Oral Roberts University in 1981. Beginning in 1982, he developed and ran a television-based ministry for his father and the church's late founder, the Reverend John Osteen, driving Lakewood Church to become as intensely media-savvy as possible. The result is a hybrid church/stadium/broadcast studio that forms an important cultural contribution to religious architecture.

Attendees are often reminded in services, on broadcasts, via media productions and brochures of the popular, local roots of Lakewood's present home. Stories circulate about Pastor Osteen and his wife and co-pastor Victoria's first date at The Summit to see a basketball game, about Joel's parents Dodie and John's decades-old conversation about holding church meetings there, and about the church's oft-repeated opening-day message: "Now the place where champions were crowned in the world of sports will crown champions in the arena of life." It is clear that the Osteens are embracing both a highly popular sports team and a well-known architectural landmark as tactics to advance the church's mission. Such a novel experience helps fulfill Lakewood's evangelical mission to attract as many "seekers" (as non-believers are called) as possible. The mnemonic experience of the building's secular and "unsaved" past contributes greatly to the popularity of the church, especially among a younger crowd that readily identifies with the center's history of sports and rock-and-roll. It is a novelty to attend church services on the floor where the Rockets once played. And if the association with basketball is not enough, Lakewood, like many other recently designed megachurches, has its own Christian rock club and internet café for teens, as well as a dance and assembly hall for tweens. (A 2000 *Faith Communities Today* study showed a strong correlation between the use of electric instruments and increased church growth.) You can play basketball on the original Rockets floor, which Lakewood has reinstalled for use by the more sporting of the church's attendees. There is a kid-themed babysitting service for the staff's children that turns into a Sunday school and day care for families during services.The provision of so-called youth ministries is one of Lakewood's important missions. If the church can provide an everyday environment for young people, it is believed that its membership will grow rapidly, as kids are known to invite friends to share in their experiences. The intention is for these would-be seekers to eventually become transformed by their time at the *L7* (short for Life.Seven days a week) rock club and the internet café ministries or even the somewhat inexplicable slime showers that appear in the "Mission Control" area of *KidsLife*. Bruce Barry, founder of the Florida-based Wacky World design group, which themed these areas of Lakewood, states: "My objective is simple: to create fun, exciting environments that fire kids up to come to church and bring their unsaved friends and families." The kid-themed areas, while distributed throughout the building, command their own prominent entrance, encouraging one to partake of the church's play areas without entering the church itself. Lakewood also offers diverse ministries for adults, married couples, and singles, for the visual arts and music, and for consultation with GodsMoneyMan, a Financial Biblical Coach (FBC). Outreach missions like these seek to bring more people into the church and to "regularize" its function beyond weekly services.

The mnemonic experience of the building's secular and "unsaved" past contributes greatly to the popularity of the church.

While most descriptions of Lakewood Church highlight its massive size (600,000 square feet), its rapid growth (self-reporting about 9,000 new members each year between 2003 and 2006), its number of attendees (about 46,000 each week), and the cost of renovation ($95 million), little attention is given to its sought-after "everydayness," the church's (somewhat ironic) desire to be seen as nothing out of the ordinary. This notion requires some crafting, especially for a place of such magnitude. Lakewood's strategy is to focus on the everyday experience of its adherents, providing not only services but also a familiar architectural environment that doesn't push religion. With hybridization comes the banal architecture comfortably equated with the airport and the shopping mall. One's experience of Lakewood has all of the *je ne sais quoi* of the dropped-ceilinged, new-carpet-smelling, fluorescent-lit, corridor-dominated environment with which we are all too familiar. Gone are intimations of the biblical details of St. Peter's or the imposing scale of Hagia Sophia. Present instead is the pedestrian bigness of the Mall of America. Significantly, the lead architect for the renovation of Lakewood's home, Pete Ed Garrett (now a principal of Studio Red Architects of Houston), admits that mega-church architecture is not about pushing the envelope. But a traditional architectural critique, where the building is the object of study, is not the right frame of reference for Lakewood. The architecture of the building itself is less important than the architecture of the experience held within it.

In 1999, economists Joseph Pine and James Gilmore published *The Experience Economy* to promote what they claimed would be the next big profit-making economic trend: making everyday consumer interactions "experiential." Joel Osteen

BRIAN LONSWAY; DRAWING COURTESY MORRIS ARCHITECTS

Client:
Lakewood Church

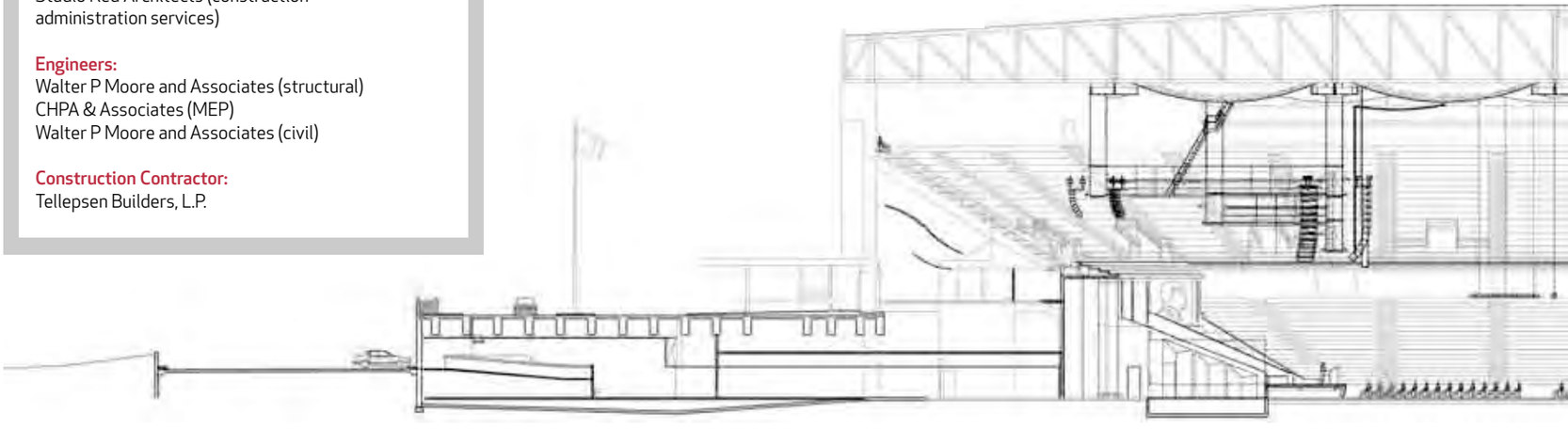
Project Manager:
Irvine Team

Architects:
Morris Architects (designer and architect of record)
Clarence Shaw Architect (associate architect)
Studio Red Architects (construction administration services)

Engineers:
Walter P Moore and Associates (structural)
CHPA & Associates (MEP)
Walter P Moore and Associates (civil)

Construction Contractor:
Tellepsen Builders, L.P.

LAKEWOOD CHURCH SECTION



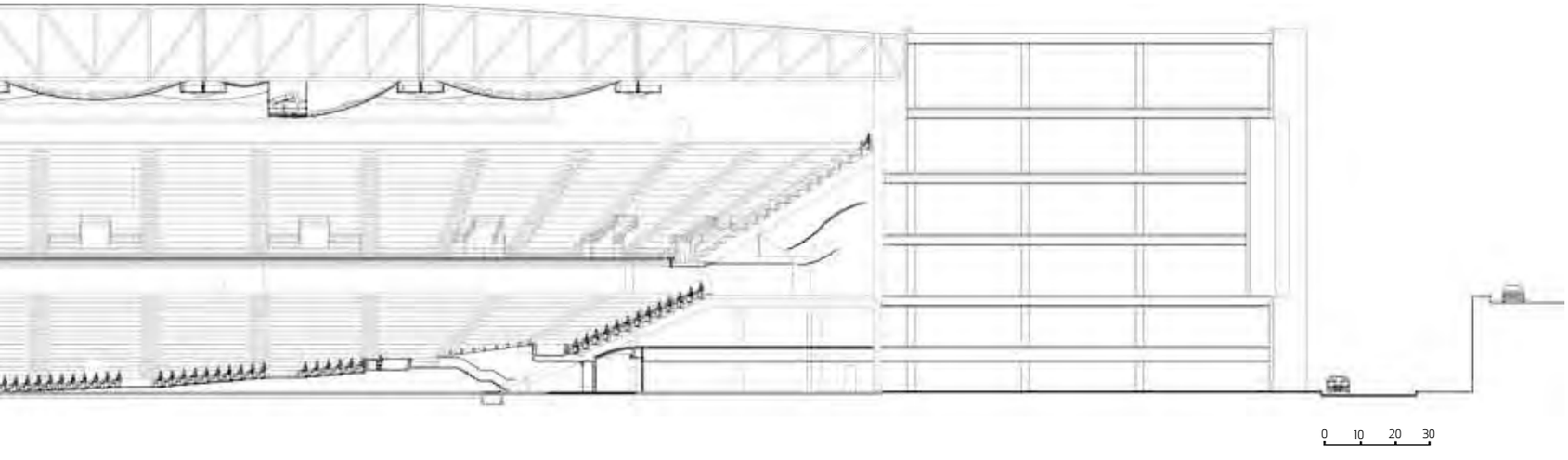
Compaq Center, formerly The Summit, 1976, Kenneth Bentsen Associates with Lloyd Jones Associates.

Lakewood Church, 2005, Morris Architects.

As the mega-church moves further from the symbolism, language, and structures of traditional Christianity, it must embrace some alternate means to compel attendance.

may never have read their book but his architectural venture parallels its propositions. The authors' theories are grounded in the cinematic, performative, and thematic design models prototyped by Disney in its theme parks. Although they don't explicitly address the context of religion, Pine and Gilmore set out to show how staging, performance, and commercial theatrics can bolster an organization's long-term profits by creating strong brand identifications. Such mantras as "The customer is the product," and "You are a performer. Your work is theatre. Now act accordingly," pepper the book. They argue that producing experience can transform the customer into a loyal adherent to the mission of the company. As the mega-church moves further from the symbolism, language, and structures of traditional Christianity, it must embrace some alternate means to compel attendance, broaden its appeal, and reach out to new demographic markets. The experience of Lakewood is meant to be as everyday as it can be, both in the sense of evoking an everyday familiarity and in becoming a part of everyday life. It accomplishes this by carefully crafting its popular media image as the inheritor of a Houston landmark, both on television and within the architecture of the church. Continuing what might appear to be a secularization of the faith, Pastor Osteen subscribes to the position, increasingly common among mega-church leaders, that people will come to his services only if they are made to feel at ease and embraced by positive messages in an atmosphere free of talk about sin, repentance, and damnation. Lakewood is meant to be free from the classic

COURTESY LAKEWOOD CHURCH



"threats" of evangelical, pentecostal, and fundamentalist Christianity, including those performed by imposing architecture. So much for the sublime. And with the strength of a media-savvy pastor—whose production suites are on par with any national cable syndicate—and his 210-person full-time staff, the mission to craft an intimate and quotidian experience for the country's largest church is, well, a slam dunk.

It is useful to examine another great church of the media age: Philip Johnson and John Burgee's 1978 Crystal Cathedral for the Reverend Robert H. Schuller in Garden Grove, California. In many respects, the rise of the mega-church and Schuller's kind of televangelism occurred simultaneously, but often in tension. This was likely due to the conflicting tendencies of broadcast media and the structures of a defined geographic location. The very basis of televangelism was to extend a ministry beyond the architectural confines of a church building. But this conflict has always remained present and is importantly marked by Johnson and Burgee's church. A significant precedent for Lakewood, the Crystal Cathedral attempted to lend permanence and grandeur to Schuller's "Hour of Power" broadcast. It did so with some success, contributing to the rebranding of Schuller's ministry as the Crystal Cathedral Ministries and serving as a model for its various graphic productions. But the building did little to transform the role of Schuller's ministry in its local or global communities. These transformations occurred primarily via the televisual function of the church. The building, although quite secularized, maintained the cultural function of a traditional church, even being formalized with a subsequent steeple and carillon tower by Johnson to clarify the building's program. The structure was simply too stuck in its own monumentality to dissipate into a culture-seeking everyday religion. A different form of architecture, less rooted in the symbolic history of church iconography, is required to effect the kinds of everyday spiritual transformations *in situ* that TV apparently does much more easily.

Lakewood accomplishes what the Crystal Cathedral could not: the creation of a hybrid media architecture that exists as much in the popular media consciousness as it does in physical form.

Entrance to the Lakewood sanctuary.

As much as Lakewood borrows from the Crystal Cathedral, it is influenced more by the latter's Anaheim neighbor, Disneyland. Although not explicitly Disneyesque, Lakewood represents the contemporary hybridization of popular media and architecture that Disney introduced, and that the authors of *The Experience Economy* have formalized. Lakewood accomplishes what the Crystal Cathedral could not: the creation of a hybrid media-architecture that exists as much in the popular media consciousness as it does in physical form. For Lakewood does not exist as a building alone; it is as much former-home-of-the-Houston-Rockets, or where-I-saw-David-Bowie, or that-church-on-U.S. 59 as it is Lakewood Church. The experience of the place is only partially gained from being there physically. This is where Lakewood is most like Disneyland. Disney broke ground with its theme parks by honing an architectural mechanism for the controlled crafting of experience. Blatant theming is part of this strategy, but so are two other more important aspects: brand identification and making architecture videographic. Brand identification seeks to promote products through TV show tie-ins, public event sponsorships, and explicit engagements with everyday social environments (think Celebration, Florida). Imposing the technical requirements of video broadcasting on architecture introduces the geometric, textural, and environmental requirements of video camera technologies on traditional design logics. Disney succeeds by strategically using media culture to become an everyday brand and by reconfiguring architecture to more readily participate in it. In both regards, Disney and its successors have worked to establish a loyal customer base through fluid integration with people's everyday lives, the same evangelical mission of the newest breed of mega-church pastors, including Joel Osteen.

Architect Pete Ed Garrett describes the design of Lakewood Church as embodying the kind of disciplinary convergences more typically found in Las Vegas or Los Angeles. In addition to Garrett and his staff, the design team consisted of Bill Klages, a lighting designer with experience working on the Grammy Awards show and the Republican

BRIAN LONSWAY

Baptismal area.

National Conventions; René Lagler, the Academy Awards' production designer; and David Reilly, graphic designer for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Considering Garrett's experience designing myriad performance spaces (and even a Terminator ride film for Universal Studios in Florida), this group understood the complexities of simultaneously creating intimacy for 16,000 worshippers and providing a controlled media environment for the focused broadcast of Osteen's sermons. The teams "play with psychology," in Garrett's words, by manipulating visual and acoustic "sightlines," crafting a stage with a depth that appears different on TV than in person, and masking the masses of worshippers from the video camera's frame by buffering the stage with variable-flow waterfalls—all techniques straight out of a Disney Imagineering handbook. This is where the behind-the-scenes experience of Lakewood is everything but everyday. The vast arrays of video servers, production and recording suites, lighting boards, video-safe materials, colors, and textures, and TV-conscious geometries represent an impressive catalog of high-tech instruments to control a media image. This control is maintained in order to give a video editor the best, most flexible material to work with. In an attempt to make Joel Osteen's message resonate with today's television viewers, these advanced systems support the slickest, yet most straightforward, teleministry around. Here, high-tech architecture in support of a down-home message is able to compete aesthetically with the videography of television's *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* series. As Disney has proven, and as authors Pine and Gilmore continually assert, it is only through a careful and critical approach to the production of experience that an organization broadens its appeal and transforms its customers. Remember: "The customer is the product."

Lakewood's religious experience does, in fact, seek to make its customer, or congregant, the product: a believer. And with broad appeals to the world's population through its mediatized architecture, it seeks an ever-increasing customer base that may one day exceed the physical limits of its current home. In an August 2005 *Texas Monthly* interview, Osteen boldly claimed: "I am convinced that in twenty years we'll look up and realize that the Compaq Center isn't big enough to hold everyone. Hopefully, someone will want to build another stadium by then and Reliant will be available." Reliant Stadium seats over 69,000, and conveniently comes with a convention center and indoor arena, not to mention the Astrodome next door. Anyone up for renovating an abandoned, 16,000-seat Christian multiplex?

TOP: BRIAN LONSWAY; BOTTOM: COURTESY LAKEWOOD CHURCH

FLEA MARKET FIND$

Investigating Houston's thriving underground economy.

by Marianne Do

*$400 Paintings*Tattoos and Body Piercings*Massages*Haircuts*Passport Photos*Contact Lenses*Quinceañeras*Wrestling Matches*Rap Shows*Roller Coasters…*

This seemingly arbitrary list is a small glimpse into the unusual findings at Houston's indoor flea markets. Generally, they are perceived as shady places to buy shoddy, illegitimate merchandise. The reality, however, is one of the city's most fascinating subcultures. While a first impression of the flea markets may render them unremarkable, it doesn't take long to discover that they are not only loaded with unexpected things to buy and do, but all vary exceptionally, one from the next.

To separate themselves from other avenues of retail, indoor flea markets have gone beyond simply advertising their merchandise as a way to get people's attention. The International Common Market, off of U.S. 59 and Little York, is one of Houston's busiest indoor flea markets. Jewelry is its dominant consumer product, but in order to attract a broader group of people, the building's entrance vestibule is lent out to various organizations on a rotating weekly basis. Frequent occupants range from clinics offering free blood sugar tests, to banks with special promotions, to Mormons handing out religious tracts.

Another marketplace, the Armadillo Flea Market Mall on Airtex Drive in North Houston, boasts on its Web site that it is "Better than a flea market, more than a mall." Aside from having a food court and Wi-Fi internet access, it has hosted automobile shows, holiday toy drives, Dynamo soccer clinics, and more. An especially unique recurring attraction there is Lucha Libre, a Mexican wrestling establishment made popular by its participants' flamboyant face masks and ballet-rivaling choreography. Other flea markets across the city similarly play host to temporary attractions. The Trading Fair II, a few exits east of the old Astroworld on the South Loop, has a 6,000-person capacity arena on its second floor—though one would never know it from the predominant fluorescent-lit hallways and dark booths throughout. The arena has held gun shows, as well as concerts by radio regulars like Paul Wall, Slim Thug, Yolanda Adams, Mike Jones, and Queen Latifah.

Along with having traveling carnivals occasionally fill the parking lot, the Pasadena Indoor Flea Market is investing in more permanent fixtures. The site hosted a Montgomery Ward department store before its current incarnation, and now there are plans to add a restaurant, as well as develop the previously unused second floor into a series of rental storage units. The most unexpected part of this flea market, however, is a ballroom that has its own entrance and parking lot area. With a shiny hardwood dance floor, tables draped in burgundy cloth, and a fabric draped ceiling throughout, it's easy to forget that the room is just a few doors away from a series of closed-up half-empty booths with merchandise in haphazard piles for anyone to view.

These booths are a familiar sight among all of the flea markets. No real effort is made to disguise the transitory state of the stores. But instead of seeming dirty, there is a benign sense of carelessness, like being invited into a friend's messy home. It is a reminder of the loose nature of the flea market. Vendors are usually not required by the managers to show up at particular times; instead, they govern their own schedules. At a few of the flea markets, individual booths are in charge of their own advertising. Some bear handmade paint and poster board signs; others have their own special clipart-laden coupons on heavy paper handed out to passersby. Hanging merchandise dangles freely into the walkways.

The vendors themselves come from various walks of life. For some, the flea market business is a way to segue into retirement from nine-to-five weekday jobs. For others, the business has carried them to pay off college loans and support families. High school students often pick up jobs at the flea markets in order to gain business experience and learn how to deal with people, as well as avoid the usual teenage fate of working the McDonald's drive-thru.

My own experience at the indoor flea markets was soured when I got kicked out of the first one I visited because my camera and notebook aroused suspicion. My fear then was that the stereotypical view held, that all flea markets were unfriendly places with something to hide. Instead they have proved to be places of constant surprise. As vendors change, shows come and go, and new projects develop, the flea markets have found their own distinct quirks that keep people coming back weekend after weekend.

MARIANNE DO

A LINE IN THE SAND

Conflict over plans for the largest remaining tract on Galveston's West End raises an issue: Do we assume an implicit social contract when we buy a home?

by **Sandy Sheehy**
photography **John Glowczwski**

Prior to the mid 1970s, Galvestonians thought of the western two-thirds of their 27-mile-long island as "the country." If you had a little extra money and you liked to hunt or fish, you bought a lot on the bay side and built a camp–a simple frame structure on stilts, with one main room and a couple of little bedrooms, plus a dock and maybe a duck blind. If you preferred splashing in the surf, you purchased a plot in one of the modest subdivisions on the beach and erected something similar, minus the dock or blind and plus a porch and deck.

Galveston native Jack Torregrossa's grandfather bought his family's camp on Sportsman Road in 1925. Until a few years ago, it was the focus of family life on weekends. "For years, it was obligatory that you were down there on Sundays," Torregrossa said. "It didn't matter what else you had to do."

Then, starting in the 1980s, the strip of land, 50 yards wide at most, between West Galveston Bay and a marsh where shy clapper rails hid in the sawgrass, began to attract full-time residents. The local lawyers and business owners who buy camps now knock them down and erect 4,000-square-foot houses.

"I wish I could bring my grandfather back and show him what's happened," Torregrossa mused. "He wouldn't have believed it even in his wildest dreams. But he always said, 'You can't stop change.'"

Over on the beach side and along the bay farther west, the change started in the 1970s, when independent oilman George Mitchell, one of the island's richest native sons, began Galveston's first master-planned community, Pirates' Beach & Cove. From the beginning, it was to Houston what the Hamptons were to New York City: a weekend retreat a little over an hour from the upscale precincts of River Oaks and Tanglewood. Legendary plaintiff's lawyer Joe Jamail built a house there. Late Enron chief Ken Lay built two. By the 2000 census, the West End's 77554 zip code contained 7,374 households but only 8,056 permanent residents. Except for Spring Break and the three peak summer vacation months, most of the houses stood empty during the week.

During the past two decades, cow pastures have given way increasingly to pricey vacation homes, all the way to the island's western extreme, San Luis Pass. Despite the threat of storm surges and beach erosion, the houses have gotten bigger and more expensive. The Houston Association of Realtors website currently lists 25 houses in 77554 priced above $1 million, several larger than 5,000 square feet.
As the early homebuyers have eased into retirement and the University of Texas Medical Branch, anchored on the island's East End, has recruited faculty from cities where a 25-minute commute seems short, many more people are making these resort communities their permanent addresses.

"How do you not live by the water if you can?" asked UTMB rheumatologist Terry McNearney, who bought her home in Pirates' Beach in 1996 and serves on the board of the property owners' association. "I looked near the university; I looked at some of the subdivisions closer in; but I realized that here I could walk on the beach. I could see the stars."
In addition to the written contract of sale, people tend to assume unconsciously that there's a social contract in force when they buy a house: For instance, the now-safe neighborhood will remain safe. If there's more development, it will look and feel like what's here now.

DURING THE PAST TWO DECADES, COW PASTURES HAVE GIVEN WAY INCREASINGLY TO PRICEY VACATION HOMES, ALL THE WAY TO THE ISLAND'S WESTERN EXTREME, DESPITE THE THREAT OF STORM SURGES AND BEACH EROSION.

MARQUETTE LAND INVESTORS' PROPOSAL FOR THE PRESERVE AT WEST BEACH, MAY 2007

Single Family Lots	1,064
Attached Single Family Units	1,104
Tall Building / Mid-Rise Condo Units	1,329
Common Area / Parklands	58.01 Acres
Preserve Area	360.79 Acres
Golf Course / Fairway	203.95 Acres
Commercial Property	6.08 Acres
Total Residential Units	3,497
Total Site Area	1,058.26 Acres
Gross Site Density	3.3 D.U./Acres
Total Open Space	418.80 Acres - 39.57%

When McNearney and other West End residents, whether full or part time, bought their homes, they purchased a way of life: This is a single-family resort community. Residents are laid-back but considerate. There's an annual Easter egg hunt and a Fourth of July parade. Neighbors get together for Six-ish, a Friday tradition (timed to accommodate weekend residents) of gathering at someone's house for BYOB drinks, appetizers, and conversation.

Lately, that conversation has often turned to a controversial topic. As the real estate boom crested in 2006, Chicago-based Marquette Land Investors, utilizing a combination of private syndication and debt, paid the Chapoton family $33 million for their ranch. The 25-year-old company hitherto had focused on moderate-scale commercial, mixed-use, and residential projects in the Midwest, venturing no farther from home than Dearborn, Michigan. But Marquette was stepping out into new territory, planning to transform 1,053 acres of the former Chapoton Ranch, extending in a dogleg from 8 Mile Road to 11 Mile Road and from the beaches of the Gulf of Mexico to the marshy islands of Galveston Bay, into a resort development featuring 4,000 single-family homes and condos, a marina, an 18-hole designer golf course and a 15-story hotel.

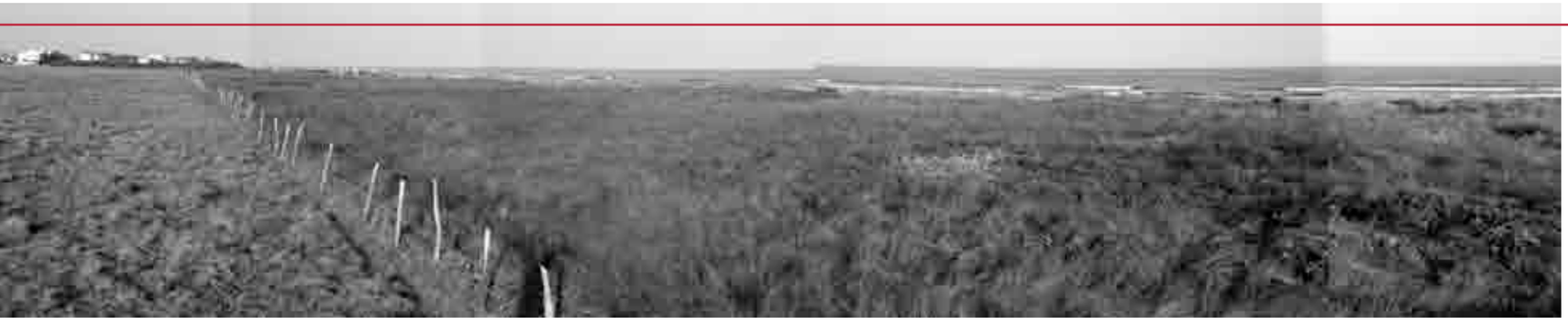
In addition to its diverse blend of wetlands, upland, and pasture environments, the Chapoton tract is rich in history and lore. The site of at least one Karankawa village, it includes the grove of oaks where pirate Jean Lafitte is rumored to have buried a third of his treasure. (Archeologists and treasure hunters have found ample evidence of the former, but none of the latter.) It was also home to the Nottingham lace factory, which operated only eight months, from May 1893 until January 3, 1894, when a nationwide depression dried up demand for luxury goods.

Considering that Marquette Land Investments has a total 8,000 acres under its control and gross annual revenues of $85 million, the Preserve at West Beach, as it has called the Galveston project, represents a hefty portion of its portfolio. The company uses the Preserve as the only example posted on its website under a tab flagged "Opportunistic Land."

"From time to time the acquisitions team comes across land opportunities in remarkable locations where the company is willing to take additional risk because there exists an opportunity for greater returns," the Web site states boldly. "Recently the MLI team completed the rezoning and entitlements for a 1,000-acre tract on Galveston Island in the State of Texas. The MLI team worked with many of the regulatory agencies (i.e. U.S. Fish & Wildlife), environmental groups, and several municipal representatives to address environmental concerns as well as taking into account concerns from neighbors and the City in the creation of the special ocean front development. The result is the Preserve at West Beach, where over half the property was set aside as open space resulting in a 4,000-unit approval including Hotel/Resort, high-rise condominium, mid-rise condominium, golf course, [and] ocean front lots as well as some small boutique style retail."

"Rezoning" is the most significant word in the above paragraph. As the name Marquette Land

TO SOME GALVESTONIANS,



Investors implies, the company is acting as a packager of the property. It won't be building the houses, condos, and hotel itself. Instead, it is seeking developers to take on each of nine parcels. To attract them, MLI wanted to offer the enticement of the least restrictive category of zoning: "recreational use," rather than the prior "single family." The company won that concession officially at a meeting of the Galveston City Council last November 29. Billed as an opportunity for Marquette and its supporters to present their case to the council and for opponents to present theirs, the meeting officially started at 3 p.m. and didn't end until almost 12 hours later. It packed the council chambers and two overflow rooms.

Bill Broussard, a Galveston attorney and member of the Beach to Bay Preserve, an association of West End homeowners opposed to the project, told the council: "When we bought our property, when we engaged with you, we formed a social bond of trust with City Hall that said, 'We have what we paid for.'"

Bob Moore, a 75-year-old environmental attorney, urged the council in the strongest terms not to sign the zoning-change agreement. Later, he explained that the Chapoton Ranch had enormous archeological, historical, and spiritual significance. Cutting across it, and standing in the path of Marquette's proposed marina, is a 15-foot-high ridge, the highest natural point on the island. This, Moore said, was the site of the seasonal village where indigenous Karankawas brought shipwrecked Spanish conquistador Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca in 1528 and nursed him back to health, demonstrating compassion and altruism. Native American skeletons had been discovered here, along with flutes made from whooping crane femurs and carved with symbols suggesting belief in an afterlife.

"This place is absolutely sacred," Moore said. "It's a spiritual context. The grass and birds and water all help us experience the wonder of it."

Beach to Bay Preserve had collected 1,329 signatures for the November 29 meeting, but it was clear that the City Council was there to approve, rather than to gather input. Marquette partner Darren Sloniger presented a PowerPoint presentation featuring brown pelicans and views across marshes at sunset. Limited to statements of five minutes apiece, members of Beach to Bay compared the Chapoton tract to the Mona Lisa; described the destructive impact of more boats, more cars, and more people on the wetlands essential to both wildlife and the shrimp industry; and argued that dense development would destroy the West End's appeal as an ecotourism destination. But as members of the city council, including West End representative Dianna Puccetti, read prepared statements, it was clear they had made up their minds well in advance of the meeting. Feeling discounted and numb with fatigue, members of the Beach to Bay contingent vowed to replace the mayor and council members in the coming election. (However, Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas is running unopposed.)

In an editorial the following Sunday, Heber Taylor, editor of the *Galveston County Daily News*, called the council's decision to grant the rezoning "courageous and decisive."

To some Galvestonians, the Marquette project represents the best development bargain the island was likely to cut. More than 650 acres would be green space. Granted, much of that was wetlands and thus off limits for development anyhow, but no one thought the cattle pastures would stay that way. Besides, the City of Galveston was desperate to expand its tax base, which had eroded as middle-income residents had deserted the island for new subdivisions on the mainland offering more square footage for the dollar and schools they perceived as superior.

Martin Baker, senior resident director for Merrill Lynch of Galveston County, is among the West Enders who favor the Marquette project. He even considers the company's lack of experience with anything of its scale a plus. "This is their first land development of any size, so they've had to bring in some pretty good experts," he said.

For the past three decades, Baker and his wife have lived at Pirates'. The three verandahs on his handsome house in a subdivision called Lafitte's Cove face Eckert's Bayou; the side of the house fronts on a nature preserve. President of the Pirates' Property Owners Association, Baker is also a member of the Lafitte's Cove Nature Society. In 2001, he helped draft a comprehensive plan for the West End. At the time, there were still several large parcels of land in agricultural use. The priority was to see that when they were developed, it would be in a way that would preserve rapidly vanishing green space. "We came to a balance of protecting the environment and guiding responsible development," he explained.

Marquette's project fit the comprehensive plan, Baker asserted. Even its most controversial features—the 15-story hotel and the mid-rise condominiums—complied. "They needed high-rise density in order to make the economics work on the beach side," Baker said.

Indeed, high-rise development has venerable

THE MARQUETTE PROJECT REPRESENTS THE BEST DEVELOPMENT BARGAIN THE ISLAND WAS LIKELY TO CUT. MORE THAN 650 ACRES WOULD BE GREEN SPACE.

green credentials. Paolo Soleri, the visionery Arizona architect who coined the term "arcology" for the intersection of architecture and ecology, argued that the most eco-friendly way to house people was in dense high-rises surrounded by untouched natural landscape. As Arcosanti, his prototype community between Phoenix and Sedona, Arizona, demonstrates, residents wouldn't need cars, they'd have easy access to green space and they would leave a minimal footprint on the earth.

But a barrier island, with limited land even for expanding roads and other infrastructure, is different from Arizona's expansive high desert. For many of the people who invested so heavily, emotionally as well as financially, in the chance to live the beach community lifestyle, in harmony with nature and with their neighbors, the idea of adding 4,000 residential units is a direct threat to their quality of life.

"I don't expect that it will stay cow pasture, but what Marquette is doing is over the top," Terry McNearney declared. "I feel like we have a contract with the city that our lives shouldn't get a whole lot worse because some developer wants to come in and make a billion dollars that they're going to cart off the island."

Four-lane FM 3005, the single road running the length of Galveston Island, is already jammed on summer and holiday weekends and beginning to slow with commuters during weekdays. The plan for the Preserve features dense development on both sides of the road at the eastern end of the project, forming an inevitable bottleneck.

Opponents point out that the demand on city services—everything from police protection to water pressure to fight fires—could be overwhelming. The traffic and the noise resulting from another 4,000 households and hundreds of hotel guests could transform the West End from a barefoot beach haven into a bustling suburb. And those high-rises and mid-rises will forever transform the view.

"When I drive home from work and get to the end of 8 Mile Road and see those open fields, it's so peaceful," said Alice Anne O'Donell, a UTMB family practice doctor who bought 10 acres on Eckert's Bayou and transformed it into a small farm with citrus trees, live oaks, and native plants that attract the birds she loves to watch. So far, she's counted 201 species of birds on her land. Although it's only a year old, her 1,500-square-foot house designed by Galveston architect Bob Randall looks like it's been there 50 years. Working with Randall, Chula Ross Sanchez chose the exterior colors by cutting and stripping a branch of the salt cedar that lines the bayou shore.

"I expected the development around me to be what was over there," O'Donell explained, pointing across to the Bakers' house and its neighbors. "And behind me, I expected there to be some houses. But when the Marquette development goes in, I'll look across the foot of the bayou and see that high-rise hotel and solid houses all the way to the beach. All of us who live here will see it all the time. And it won't be so much what we will see as what we won't. We won't see the cows and the mottled ducks and the sandhill cranes."

O'Donell's view of the bay, however, is protected. Bob Moore owns the property to the north, and beyond that is the 31-acre island that Pirates' Beach & Cove's current developer Jeff Blackard donated as the Robert M. "Bob" Moore Wildlife Sanctuary to the Galveston Bay Foundation and the Cabeza de Vaca Center. Established by Moore as a nonprofit in 1996, the center promotes ecumenical understanding, as well as an appreciation of the wetlands as "the cradle of life."

After almost two decades as a production manager for Broadway road shows, Bryan French retired in 2004, married a Galveston marine artist, moved to Pirates' Beach and opened a landscape business. He and his wife, Jane, serve on the Galveston Nature Tourism Council.

"As a habitat for migrating birds, we're sitting on a treasure here," he declared. Ecotourism could bring substantial wealth to the island, but because there are no big players in the field, even when they combine forces, nature tourism entrepreneurs don't have the clout of a Marquette.

"We live in a capitalistic world," French said. "And by and large, it serves society well. But when the rules aren't enforced equally, then society suffers."

If the Army Corps of Engineers would consider the impact on the island as a whole when it granted approvals to developments, French explained, the resultant rulings would protect much of the land. Instead, the Corps considered each development piecemeal, rather than looking at the potential overall impact. How will hundreds more outboards effect the water quality? How will the exhaust of 2,000 more cars and the smoke from 2,000 more barbecue grills impact the air?

With Marquette's opponents preparing to continue the fight by suing the Army Corps of Engineers to block the development based on environmental and archeological concerns, the issues of what constitutes sacred ground, and of the interlocking responsibilities of the public and private sectors, promise to play out for months to come.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Downtown's new co-cathedral takes Houston's pulse.

by **Max Page**
photography **Paul Hester**

I like to say I became interested in architecture by walking up a ramp from the dank underbelly of the stadium and out into the surreal light and primal roar of that emerald jewel, Fenway Park.

But the truth is that it was a different building type that cultivated my love of architecture: churches, and especially, cathedrals. I won't say I found immediate revelation there, and indeed I spent much of the time whining at my father for dragging us to yet another cathedral. But the impact was palpable. My memory is filled with images from Freiburg Cathedral, Cologne Cathedral, St. Peter's in Rome, Notre Dame in Paris—the weight of those columns, the height of those arches, the saturation of color, the echoes across stone floors, the sheer enormity of the human effort needed to create these architectural wonders. I was in awe.

I am a practicing Jew. My father was a refugee from Nazi Germany, and my mother was brought up in an orthodox Jewish household. That should say something about the power of these cathedrals: a power to draw people of all faiths, in admiration, if not in religious agreement.

The Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in downtown Houston, which was dedicated on April 2, is perhaps the strongest statement of a new traditionalism in church design in the United States. It poses one of the perennial questions of architecture: For whom do we build? In answering that question, we're likely to get the answer to another: What does a major public design say about the architectural culture of a city?

Of all buildings, the answer to that first question, for a cathedral, should be quick and succinct: For

Sanctuary, Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Ziegler Cooper Architects, 2008.

ABOVE: **West transept and dome.**
RIGHT: **The sanctuary and sacristy.**

THE CO-CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART IN DOWN POSES ONE OF THE PERENNIAL QUESTIONS OF FOR WHOM DO WE BUILD?

God and for the Roman Catholic faithful. "Christians construct buildings for divine worship," according to the Cathechism of the Catholic Church, and church buildings "signify and make visible the Church living in this place, the dwelling of God with men reconciled and united in Christ." Or, as Duncan Stroik, the editor of *Sacred Architecture*, which speaks for the traditional church design movement, wrote in 2006: "The house of God should beckon us, draw us in, and offer us an image of the eternal and real presence of the Lord."

I would argue instead that the greatest of the Catholic churches were also built to gesture outward, at once defining urban centers, and also impressing the skeptical, the uninterested, and the despised. When I think of Freiburg Cathedral, which I visited numerous times when I lived there at age five (before that inspiring visit to Fenway Park), I think of the great plaza in which it sat—the Münsterplatz—and all the life which it watched over: daily markets, rallies, the endless crisscrossing on the cobblestones. Here, certainly, was the heart of the city, its symbol across the nation. Shouldn't contemporary cathedrals and churches try to be as significant to our cities today?

The Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, though built for the 1.3 million Catholics in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, was the personal project of the now-retired Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza. There was a large design committee, but it was the archbishop's wishes that carried the day. And he had some clear notions of what the co-cathedral was to be. First and foremost, it was not to be anything at all like the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, completed in 2002 to great acclaim. He and other members of the archdiocese had visited Los Angeles and were dismayed by the modernist building of the Spanish architect Rafael Moneo.

The archbishop was firmly in the camp of the traditionalists who have made a spirited attack on modernism over the past several decades. These are not the postmodernists who playfully appropriated historical references or, in the case of such architects as Robert A.M. Stern, actively and earnestly brought

TOWN HOUSTON ARCHITECTURE:

back classical models. No, these traditionalists seek something higher than historical grandeur, a richer urban fabric, or a revitalization of regional building types. They are on a mission, which leads them to venture, in their critiques, beyond the reasonable to the rabid. Among those tending toward the hectoring tone, there is a pervasive sense of victimhood, self-righteousness, and a profound disdain for modernity and modernism.

Take the opening lines of Moyra Doorly's polemic, *No Place for God: The Death of the Transcendental in Catholic Church Architecture* (Ignatius Press, 2007), which, along with Michael S. Rose's *Ugly as Sin* (Sophia Institute Press, 2001), is one of the manifestoes of the neoconservative traditionalists: "The modern age has witnessed the construction of the most banal and uninspiring churches in history….there is hardly a Catholic who can admire (modern) church architecture." The more level-headed Duncan Stroik argued a few years back that churches should draw their adherents in "by employing the time-tested principles of sacred architecture rather than with the profane aesthetic and commercial tricks of shopping centers, country clubs, or multiplexes." One of the many denunciations of modernist church architecture neatly summed up the attitude toward modern churches: "A Vacuum in the Spirit."

What these neoconservatives rebel against as much as the vocabulary of modern architecture is the loosening of hierarchy that also characterizes many late 20th-century churches. The emphasis on celebrating and involving the congregation far more than in the past—dramatically advanced by Vatican II and in large measure reaffirmed by the 2000 "Built of Living Stones" document of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops—hits a sharp nerve among church traditionalists. It smacks of "giving the people what they want" and seems to mark a human self-centeredness that neoconservative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PREVIOUS PAGE: **Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, view looking north from San Jacinto Street.**
LEFT: **Mary Immaculate Conception shrine in the west transept.**
BELOW: **West transept.**

Christians loathe. Traditionalists are trying to recover the order and hierarchy of the church and its religious services, in the face of what they perceive to be, in Doorly's words, "a Relativist universe in which no absolute or objective truth can be said to exist."

Archbishop Fiorenza rejected the international competition model that produced Moneo's Los Angeles cathedral as well as Santiago Calatrava's design for Oakland's Cathedral of Christ the Light (which was ultimately abandoned in favor of a design by Craig Hartman of Skidmore Owings and Merrill that is currently under construction). In order to keep the design close to first principles, the archbishop chose to keep the architects close to home. A dozen local and regional architects were invited to interview for the job.

The winning firm, Ziegler Cooper, succeeded not because they were ideologues but because they were opportunists, in the best sense of the term: They understood their client and sought to give him what he wanted, a "traditional" cathedral with, in architect Scott Ziegler's words, a "noble simplicity." The savvy group of partners—Ziegler, Kurt Hull, Chris Petrash, and Rafael Feinstein—visited one of the archbishops's favorite local buildings—the 1928-going-on-1428 Conventual Chapel of the Villa de Matel, in the East End of Houston—and then traveled to Italy to explore dozens of churches and cathedrals. They chose correctly, winning over the archbishop who was taken with their "unpretentious" dome design, the "transcendent space" of the cathedral, and the presence of a campanile, which others had not included. Scott Ziegler's hope was that they would be able to "reinterpret the Romanesque, to make the traditional line more contemporary."

Despite the grand tour of Italian churches, and the eagerness to be "authentic" in borrowing forms for the co-cathedral, Ziegler was committed to building a cathedral that would be "of our time." This was not a team of card-carrying members of the rabid wing of the traditionalist party. Indeed, they were impressed by the Los Angeles cathedral, even as they investigated it to understand what not to propose to Archbishop Fiorenza. In speaking with the team, I found a certain wistfulness in their discussions of the L.A. cathedral. They were struck by the innovative design strategies employed there—the processional entrance from the side, the slowly sloping nave, the grand outdoor ceremonial space—accentuated by

Entrance along Jefferson Street: mahogany doors beneath a sculptured pediment of Carrara marble.

how limited their choices came to be in Houston. Variations from the traditional plan and its reflexive symmetry—down to the crucifix, which could not be off center, as it is in many churches, including the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels—were not to be at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

WHAT THESE NEOCONSERVATIVES REBEL AGAINST AS MUCH AS THE VOCABULARY OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE IS THE LOOSENING OF HIERARCHY CHARACTERIZING MANY LATE 20TH-CENTURY CHURCHES.

The co-cathedral was shaped as much by the messy problems of this world as it was by scriptural interpretations of the house of God. The sins of the flesh and the financial pain they caused were as crucial to the ultimate design as were the dreams of northern Italian Romanesque godliness.

If the building is a more muted cathedral—in height, grandeur, and complexity—it is in large measure due to the co-cathedrals' launch amid the sex abuse revelations rocking the Catholic church world. The Galveston-Houston Archdiocese has seen its share of lawsuits and settlements, although far fewer than other diocese around the country. However, the archbishop (who, the *Houston Chronicle* reports, was himself criticized—and named in at least one recently settled lawsuit—for being negligent in identifying and removing abusive priests), according to some, feared that a lavish building would encourage accusers and that it seemed wrong to build an ostentatious cathedral at the moment that many churches were closing. There would be no gold dome on this building.

Unfortunately for the project, many of the budget cuts occurred after the initial designs and even after construction had begun—what started as a $100 million project, dropped to $60, then $50, then $42 million. The height of the building was reduced several times; below-grade-level vesting and choir practice rooms and an outdoor garden disappeared; a larger choir loft, balconies, and a second tier of seats to the right and left of the altar were eliminated; marble was eliminated above an eight-foot datum on the columns, with painted plaster masking the cut. The grandeur of the building kept getting pared down.

Despite compromises that would have pushed any architects to the edge of their composure, the final work is more dignified, elegant, and lighter than some (including parishioners with whom I spoke) expected. The architects worked hard, even as the height of the building was steadily cut down, to preserve the clear glass clerestory windows, so that the space would need virtually no artificial light. They worked carefully to bounce the light and sound out into the nave. And they managed (through a few tricks of false façades) to keep the appearance of the cathedral's original height. The 73,000 square feet of Indiana limestone adds a cool solidity in contrast with the skyline of reflective glass that defines Houston's skyscrapers.

And yet, it seems that a profound opportunity was missed. This was the first metropolitan cathedral for the newly constituted archdiocese, and only one of a very few cathedrals being built anywhere. The Los Angeles cathedral was the first built in the west for several decades. And now that the co-cathedral is completed, Oakland's Christ the Light is the only current cathedral project in the entire United States.

Houston's co-cathedral could have been a grand public gesture in the long tradition of Catholic architecture. Instead of a building that fills its block

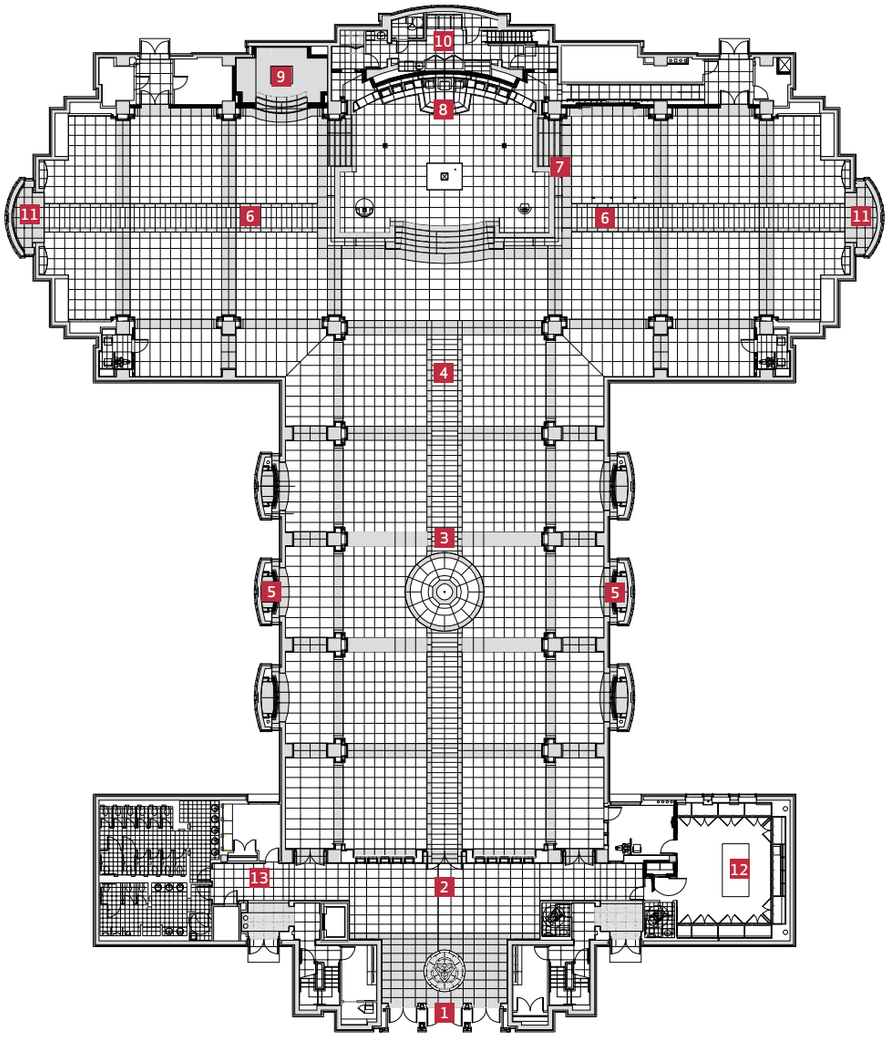
and leaves little room for outdoor public gathering, the architects might have followed Moneo's lead in Los Angeles, carving out a quiet set of public spaces around the Cathedral, for common worship or private prayers.

It could have been a building that truly embraced the 21st century while still honoring Catholic traditions. The archdiocese could have grasped the brilliance of Moneo's Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels—the grandeur of its heavy angled slabs and hulking presence over the freeway, and its humbleness in the outdoor public spaces it creates—and chosen to follow in the city's own traditions of modernism, including landmark works such as Philip Johnson's University of St. Thomas; the Rothko Chapel; and Renzo Piano's Menil Collection. That it wasn't—and wasn't by design—is a troubling statement about Houston's architectural development today and into the future.

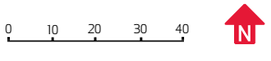
It is funny to hear the neoconservatives condemn the sacred spaces created by modern architects as "banal" or charge that those same architects have created some of the "ugliest churches in history." For of all the churches I saw on what felt like the church pilgrimage across Europe in 1975, one touched me in a manner beyond all the others. Walking up the crest of the hill in Ronchamp, I still remember the sight of Le Corbusier's Notre Dame du Haut, its black concrete cap sitting astride the punctured white slabs. Such a massive structure—or so it seemed to an eight-year-old—and yet so gentle and even humorous. And above all, moving: inside that dark, comforting building streamed rays of colored light through punctured window openings that made me stop and stare in wonder.

No doubt this building belonged—and belongs—in part to me. Private architectural acts should be aimed at the public good and, even more, should broaden and enrich that space we used to call "the commons."

1 - Entry doorway
2 - Narthex
3 - Baptismal Font
4 - Nave
5 - Side Shrines
6 - Transept
7 - Choir
8 - Raised Sanctuary
9 - Chapel of Reservation
10 - Sacristy
11 - Shrine
12 - Vesting Sacristy
13 - Bride's Room



PLAN



Client:
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Architect:
Ziegler Cooper Architects

Contractor:
Linbeck

Engineers:
CBM Engineers, Inc. (structural)
CHP & Associates, Consulting Engineers (MEP)
Walter P Moore and Associates (civil)

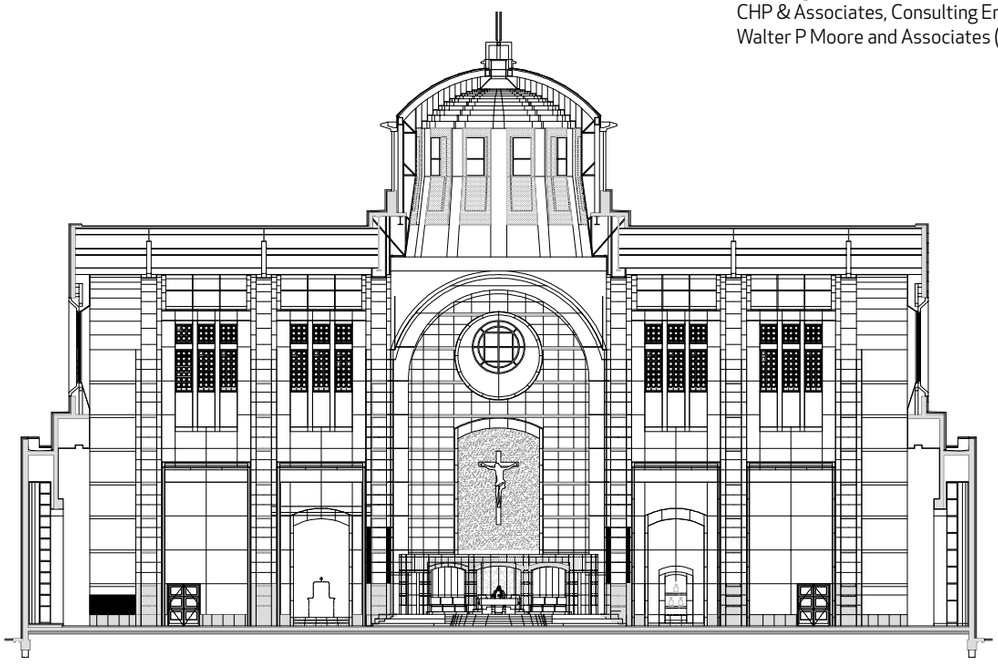
Lighting Consultant:
Lighting Design Alliance

Acoustical Consultant:
Kirkegaard & Associates

Landscape Architect:
SWA Group

Organ Supplier:
Visser & Associates

Corillion Bells:
Verdin



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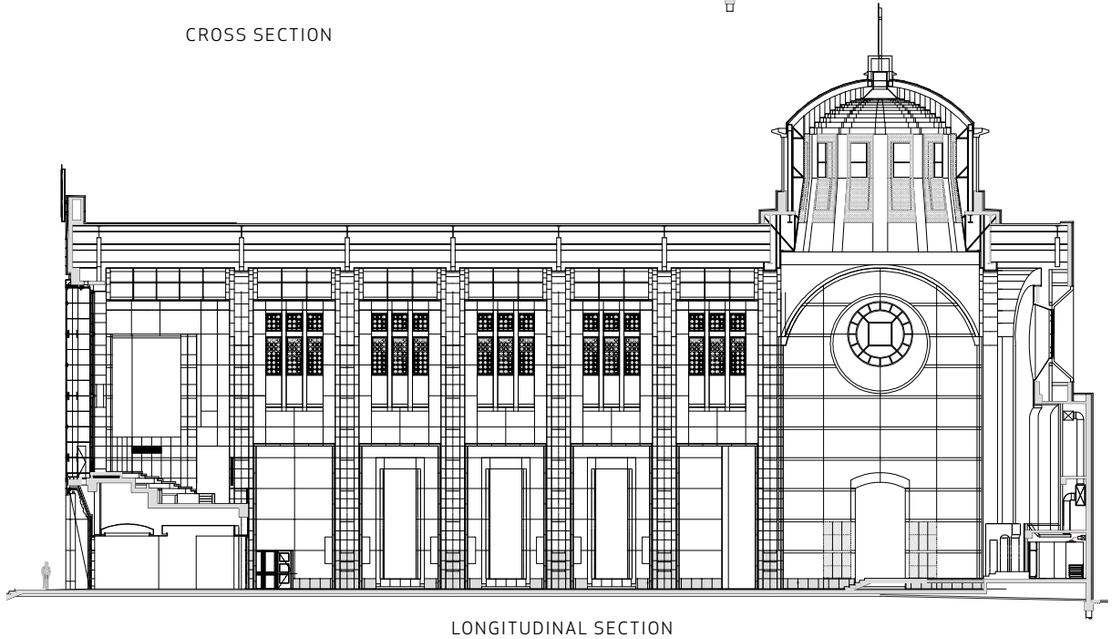

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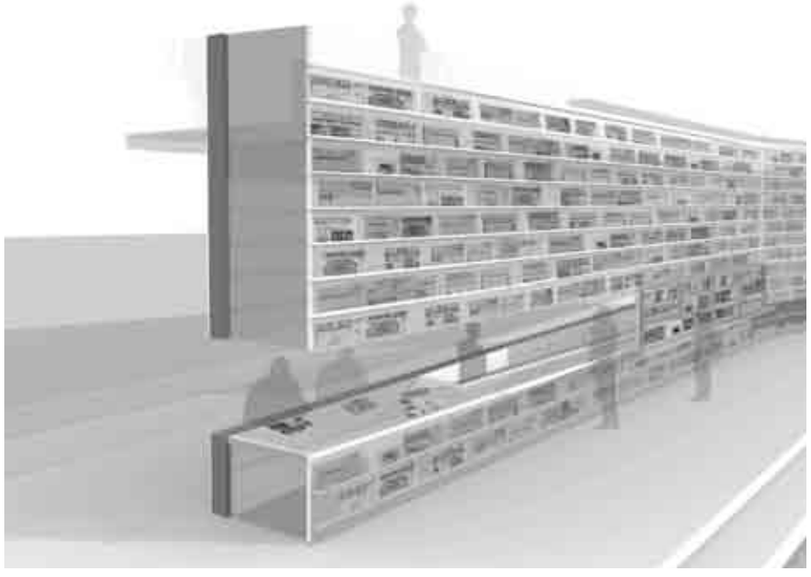

THE NEWSPAPER CAFÉ, JINDONG NEW DISTRICT ARCHITECTURE PARK, JINHUA CITY, CHINA, 2004 - 2006, BY TOSHIKO MORI ARCHITECT

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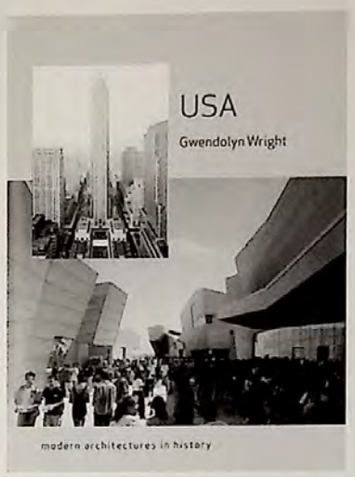
THE WRIGHT STUFF

USA: Modern Architectures in History
(Gwendolyn Wright, London: Reaktion Books, 2008, University of Chicago Press, 320 pp., illus., $29.95, paper.)

by Stephen Fox



MIDDLE: Kentucky Dam, Roland Wank, 1939-44.
BOTTOM: Havens House, Harwell Hamilton Harris, 1939.

REAKTION BOOKS OF LONDON LAUNCHED ITS MODERN Architectures in History series, edited by Vivian Constantinopoulos, in 2005. The third book in this series is *USA*, by Gwendolyn Wright, professor of architecture, planning and preservation at Columbia University and a host of the PBS television series "History Detectives." Wright has produced a survey of modern architecture in the United States from the 1860s to the present that examines modern buildings in the context of American social history. The result is impressive for its breadth and conciseness. The choice of illustrations is superb and the design of the book is crisp and unostentatious.

The book is organized into seven chronological chapters. In the introduction, Wright explains her decision to examine each period (1865-93, 1894-1918, 1919-32, 1933-45, 1946-64, 1965-84, and 1985-present) in terms of spaces for work, living, and public access. This provides her chapters with an unobtrusive structure that facilitates historical comparisons. Wright also explains the distinctions she makes throughout the book between the phenomena modern, modernity, modernization, and modernism, the last being the cultural program that changed the course of art and architecture in the 20th century by challenging the use of historical models and insisting on the generative possibilities of the materials and processes of making.

The first three chapters stress historical trends associated with modernization and the efforts of American architects, engineers, and landscape architects to contend with and learn from these trends, as well as react against their excesses. These decades marked the period during which a few American architects formulated a modernist architecture in response to their interpretations of the promises and contradictions of modernization. Because modernism in architecture remained a minority position during these decades, Wright must contend with the fact that most of the "modern" buildings produced before the 1940s were still based on historical models. In the last four chapters, the series' theme coheres with Wright's commitment to considering modernist buildings, places, and cultural movements in a historical context.

Wright draws on her prior scholarship to ensure that the history of women and minorities are addressed. She integrates the history of the processes of suburbanization and the planning and building practices associated with them into her narrative, rather than sidelining or dismissing such phenomena as sub-architectural. Likewise, she analyzes the history of social housing to make the case that its "failure," like that of modern architecture, was as dependent on national and local political policy as it was on design deficiencies or the moral depravity imputed to its residents. Wright condenses social history into her narrative with, at times, poetic intensity. It is a measure of her skill that she is able to maintain a balance between narrative economy and the dissemination of information. Wright's colloquial style suggests the extent to which she is willing to forego more formal language in order to make historical analysis and exposition attractive to a broad audience, especially university students in architectural, American history, and cultural studies survey courses—a likely constituency for this book.

One of the ways in which Wright expands the field of what gets to be considered historically significant is to move beyond the New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles metropolitan areas in identifying notable buildings and sites. Texas and Houston are beneficiaries of this trend. The Arneson River Theater in San Antonio, O'Neil Ford and Richard S. Colley's Texas Instruments Semiconductor Building in Dallas, Lars Bang's Bendit House in Houston, Donald Barthelme's tragically demolished West Columbia Elementary School in West Columbia, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth by Louis I. Kahn, and the office park at Solana outside Fort Worth, by Legorreta-Mitchell/Giurgola-Peter Walker, are each illustrated. The Gulf Building, the Astrodome, Pennzoil Place, the Menil Collection, Carlos Jiménez's Houston Fine Art Press, and the Rice School of Architecture's Sixteen Houses exhibition are cited in the text.

Gwendolyn Wright's *USA* constructs a model of how cultural histories can be more inclusive without submerging a movement's monuments (the anxiety of cultural conservatives, including modernists). Wright's historical model doesn't pay less attention to architecture. It instead makes a strong case for how buildings and their makers shape change in response to, or in defiance of, historical processes.

readings

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SOLDIER STORY

photograph by Shannon Stoney

The site of the Battle of San Jacinto, where Texas won its independence, is more historically significant than the Alamo. But while San Antonio's hallowed ground features cobblestones and a mission bell, Houston's landmark shares the skyline with the cracking towers and gas flares of petrochemical plants off of the Pasadena Freeway. The site of Mexican dictator Santa Ana's capture is tucked in between a paper mill and a big pile of carbon. Instead of competing with the industrial infrastructure, this commemoration takes advantage of it. A mural of Sam Houston and Texas soldiers graces the side of a huge storage tank in a pragmatic gesture that points to a larger truth: Wars are fought not for glory but for the control of natural resources.

—Christof Spieler

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