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# Texas Architect

NUMBER 5 VOL 26 SEPT/OCT 1976

## Nature on the Drawing Board



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*Texas Architect* is published six times yearly by the Texas Society of Architects, 800 Perry Brooks Building, 121 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701. Subscription price is \$5.00 per year for addresses within the continental United States, excepting Hawaii and Alaska.

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# The Guts to Say No

The current state of the allied design professions, including architecture, landscape architecture, and engineering, is aptly described by the old saw about the weather: "Everyone is talking about it, but no one is doing anything about it."

"It" in this case is the steady and frightening deterioration of our environment — the continued gluttonous waste of our fuel resources, the poisoning of our water and air, the wreckage of our lands with bulldozers, chainsaws, and asphalt machines. There is no want of data to prove beyond doubt that we have pushed our environment to the point of imminent danger.

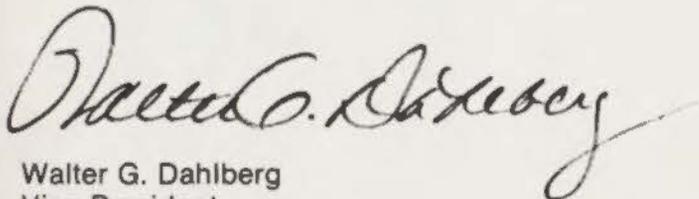
I exaggerate, of course, when I say that *nothing* is being done. Certain individuals, government agencies, and professional associations have made a variety of attempts to confront the crisis with seminars, contributions to public planning efforts, and legislation aimed at improving both our built and our natural habitats.

But for those of us in the design professions, it should be clear that such isolated, haphazard gestures are not enough. Most of us agree, I think, that we are faced with an eco-crisis whose solution depends to a considerable extent on the ability of the design fields to mount a bold, concerted, integrated response in the direction of rational planning. The days of the Lone Ranger Design Firm, putting up office towers and industrial parks without regard to the nuances of the local ecosystem, or without consulting the people to be affected by such construction — those days, most of us acknowledge, ought to be long gone.

Trouble is, having paid lip service to these new challenges and obligations, most of us continue to do what we have been doing all along. We remain locked in our respective professional enclaves, struggling for clients, still scarcely talking to each other, much less joining ranks in the comprehensive, scientific planning efforts required to salvage the environment. And we still seem ultimately willing to do whatever the client, the party with the money, wants us to do.

There, in my opinion, is the rub. It is we designers who have or should have the knowledge to build new environments no longer destructive of our land and resources. Gifted with this knowledge, we have an ethical responsibility to insist that our work not contribute to further deterioration of the environment. Not only, therefore, must we learn to collaborate in dramatic new ways, but when faced with a demand to execute a job we know will inflict damage on our society — through abuse of the site or superficial planning or undue consumption of fuel — we must have the guts to say no.

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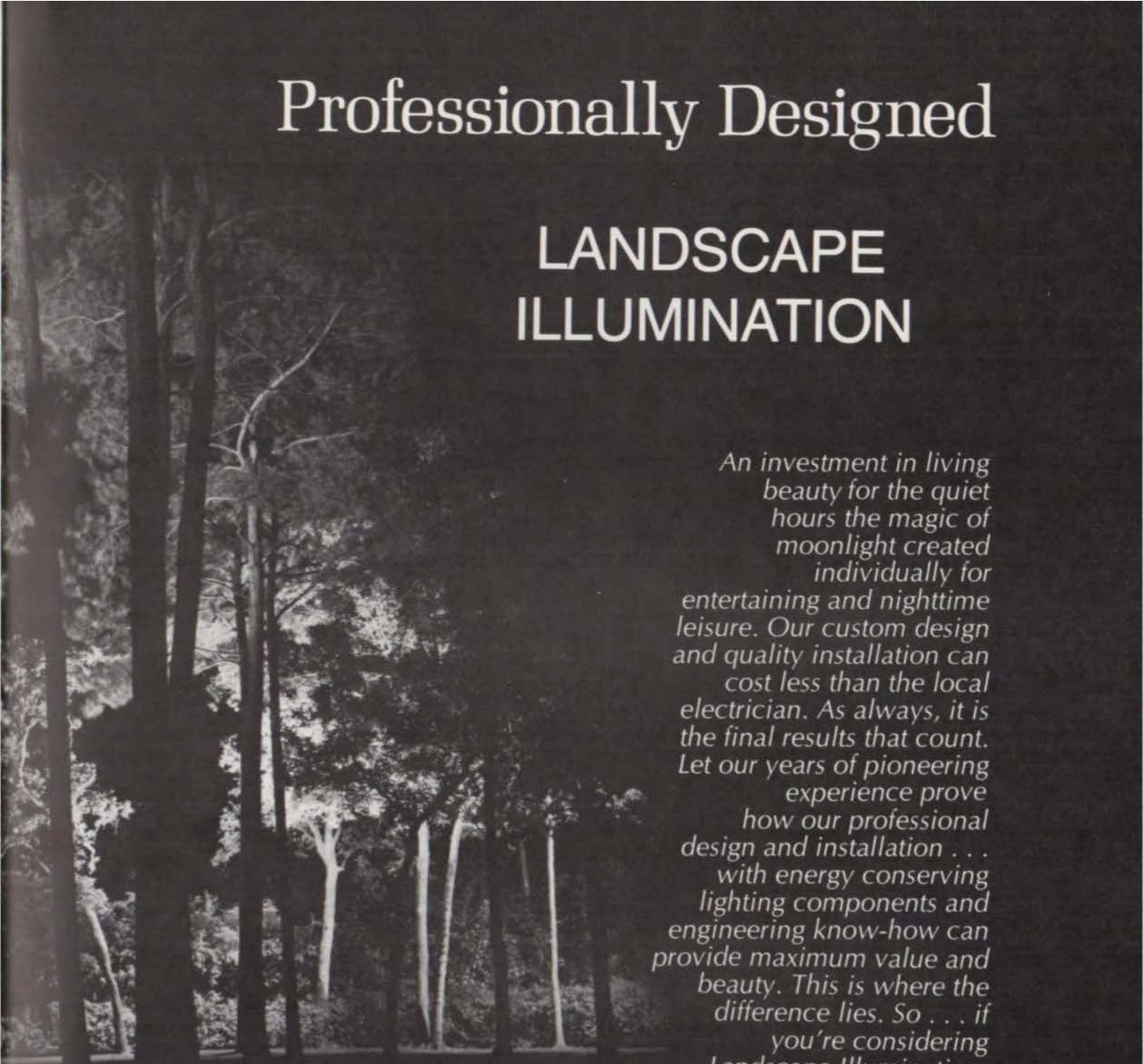
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# A landscape architect is . . .

By Larry DeMartino

Some occupations in this society don't require a lot of explanation. Take medicine. You ask a fellow what he does, he says "I'm a doctor", you nod. Same with a lawyer, a baker, a cop, x-ray technician, secretary, etc. But what do you do when the subject says "I'm, a landscape architect"? What's the image there? Sun-burned laborer with a trowel in his hand tapping bricks into place round a flowerbed? Kindly bespectacled chap selling you a bag of peat moss?

Throughout my career as a professional landscape architect, I have sought a tidy definition of what I do for a living. I vaguely recall one definition from my student days, drummed into my head by a confident professor who had learned it at Harvard some twenty years before. His definition had to do with the arrangement of spatial objects in a pleasing fashion. In that and in subsequent courses I learned that the landscape architect's realm was the outdoors and that the materials with which he most often worked were natural and living. More enlightened professors suggested that the landscape architect went much further in shaping and creating outdoor space, rather like architects fashion interior space. Some went so far as to suggest that this included a human or societal function. Withal, I got a good design education at that school but never a workable, comprehensive definition of landscape architecture.

## The Wilting Ficus Incident

I have since learned to my recurring dyspepsia that the image of a landscape architect in the minds of the public is hardly in keeping with the history of the profession or the education and licensing requirements of most states. This often reveals itself at cocktail parties or similar social functions when, upon being introduced as a landscape architect, I am invariably asked questions about ailing plants. I remember one instance involving a *Ficus benjamina* that was yellowing and dropping leaves all over the living room carpet: the host wondered what he should do about it. I pretended not to hear and simply smiled. The fellow asked again,



however, so I suggested that he vacuum up the leaves. It wasn't that I didn't know, but that his question implied a preconceived idea of what a landscape architect is and does (i.e. a plant doctor). His notion, like that of my aging college professor, was at best hopelessly limiting. (At the time this incident occurred, I was on the professional staff of a newly created public benefit corporation charged with the planning, design and construction of facilities worth \$300 million on the 35 campuses of the State University of New York.)

Looking back on it now, I admit to a degree of snobbery, and I wish I had said to give the poor plant more light and less water. I could then have started talking about Frederick Law Olmsted, who had designed nearby Central Park with his partner Calvert Vaux back in 1857. I could also have explained that he had coined the term *landscape architect*, founded the profession and its professional organization, the American Society of Landscape Architects (in 1899), as well as the first university program in landscape architectural education at Harvard University. Had Olmsted known what to do about an ailing *Ficus* it would have been incidental to his greatness as a landscape architect — in a professional career that spanned over forty years, his influence manifested itself in cities and in

rural landscapes from New York to California.

Landscape architecture has changed enormously since the time of Olmsted. Even in my own time the changes have been virtually revolutionary. Social and economic developments as well as the need for a new and comprehensive ecological awareness have compelled the profession to alter its focus. Many students in landscape architecture now find themselves part of a school of environmental design or a school of social science. At one time most were part of a school of agriculture organized as an offshoot of a department of horticulture.

In 1964, architect and historian Bruno Zevi asked a leading question: "Do you feel that the time has come to establish a distinction between garden design and landscape design?" I don't know whether that distinction will ever be made, or whether it is even a valid one. I do know that landscape architecture is a design-oriented profession whose special providence is natural materials. I see the landscape architect as one who gives physical form to a whole range of projects from the individual garden and site plan to a new town, a system of green belts, or a multi-county regional design.

## College Training

College training in landscape architecture has changed radically over the last 10 years. Landscape architects were perhaps the first to recognize ecology as the essential foundation for all environmental arts and sciences. Today there is more emphasis on the fundamentals of ecology, botany and micro-climatology. Trends in the education of landscape architects have led to new studies in the management and protection of the natural environment. As with architecture and planning programs, there is a heightened social concern in the context of community participation programs and advocacy planning. There are even new approaches in design aimed at handling the abundance of information with which landscape architects must deal, including computerized design simulation and the search for a better way of making and assessing decisions. One looks forward to the day when these students enter

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**“Amidst these squabbles over turf and prerogative, our cities continue to decay, our open lands and other resources wasted by unplanned, unrestrained growth.”**

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traditional practice, invigorating it with new concepts, fresh talents and enthusiasm.

#### **Legislative Insult**

Now for a sore point: the abovementioned advances in the profession of landscape architecture stand in harsh contrast to the “status” of the profession as judged by its treatment at the hands of the Texas state legislature. In 1969 — following a years-long struggle to persuade the legislature to pass a landscape architects registration law that would protect the public and the profession from inferior performance by unqualified commercial interests — a compromise law was enacted so devoid of substance that it is literally worse than no law at all.

The weakness of the law derives primarily from the fact that it is a “title” law (unhappily comparable to the law governing the registration and licensing of Texas architects): it imposes registration only upon those practitioners who publicly identify themselves as “landscape architects.” What this means is that anyone with a shovel in his hand, regardless of education and experience, is sanctioned by the state to *practice* landscape architecture on any scale whatever, so long as he does not *entitle* himself accordingly.

The legislature, then, in failing to define and regulate the *practice* of landscape architecture, has afforded Texas one of the weakest registration statutes in the country. A *practice* law, such as that employed in New York (where I was originally licensed), clearly defines what a landscape architect *does*, not what he *calls himself*, and enforces the definition with a rigorous examination, educational prerequisites and a required apprenticeship. This toothy canon, designed to protect the public from substandard work, is further strengthened by its implicit requirement that a landscape architect *must observe a sense of responsibility to the public, to clients and to the environment itself* — ethics, in other words.

#### **Confronting the Larger Scale**

The New York statute simply codifies an aspect of professional landscape architecture which many of us have

already recognized: if we in the field are to perform a basic social function worthy of being called professional, we must embrace a larger scale and scope than the competent design of gardens (frankly my favorite design work). We must tackle the grittier problems of flood plains in the cities, of urban sprawl and downtown decay. We must deal with the regeneration of worn-out, derelict lands ravaged by abuse and neglect. We must work to reconcile man's use and misuse of his landscape, that both may continue their respective life cycles and upward evolution. Finally, we must deal with the conservation of our great natural preserves, forests, deserts, wetlands. And we cannot do this alone.

#### **Collaboration Imperative**

The complexities of today's problems demand an interdisciplinary approach. Specialization within professions and disciplines has made collaboration a necessity of 20th century life. Collaboration in the natural and physical sciences has put men on the moon, has carried medicine to its current strong and advanced state. Yet there remain among design professionals divisive questions as to who does what under whose control. Meanwhile, amidst these squabbles over turf and prerogatives, our cities continue to decay, our open lands and other resources wasted by unplanned, unrestrained growth.

Designers have long blamed politicians and developers for this. Yet in those instances when we have been called upon for a remedy, our actions and responses have not always proved valid or even responsible. Too often when individual architects, engineers and landscape architects sign contracts for their services, they commit themselves to other roles outside their fields of expertise on the assumption that the competence to design a building, a highway, or a landscape somehow brings with it other competencies. Similarly, in those situations where ‘design teams’ are put together, the architect often does one thing, the engineer another and the landscape architect still another. More often than not, this results in “design solutions” which are unrelated even to each other,

much less to the world around them.

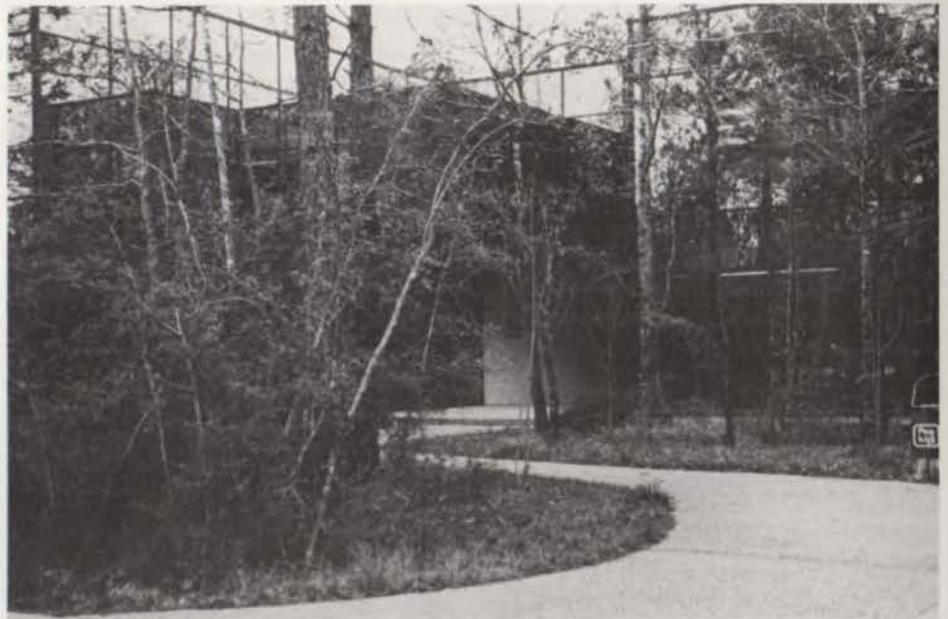
#### **Burying Ego**

If the design professions are to deal with the most pressing problems of our environment, there must be a truce aimed at achieving truly collaborative effects. This will not be easily accomplished. In a competitive society anonymity is suicidal — hence the need for stylized works which are identifiable and photogenic. But we must bury our egos and our desire to make our own statements in favor of achieving competent and appropriate solutions. We must come to the understanding that our common ground is the total spatial environment and that only the process of open collaboration can produce results of a quality of which we can all be proud.

---

*Larry DeMartino is a landscape architect in private practice in San Antonio. He has served as a consultant to architects, engineers, market consultants, environmental consultants and even other landscape architects. His most recent work includes a feasibility study for Town Lake in Dallas and a flood plain management plan for Fivemile Creek, also in Dallas. Both of the projects were executed in collaboration with Albert H. Halff Associates, Inc., Engineers. Mr. DeMartino has also designed several gardens in south-central Texas and in upstate New York.*

*Entrance to Woodlands administration building; mixture of short-leaf and Ponderosa pine, deciduous yaupon, bayberry, water oak, dogwood, and assorted grasses.*



# Making a Statement with Native Plants

By Jill Senior



*Jill Senior is a horticulturist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in a cooperative program with the UT/Austin Rare Plant Studies Center. A graduate of UT/Austin, she is presently completing a master's degree at Texas A&M.*

With the recent surge of interest in conservation and environmental preservation, Texans and other Americans are beginning to realize the potential design applications of one of our country's most valuable resources: our native plants. For many years indigenous American plants have been overlooked as worthy horticultural members of our cultivated landscape, but that attitude is changing — due in part to the interest European horticulturists have traditionally shown in our plants. The use of local indigenous plants offers many advantages over exotic species in landscape design, wildlife protection, reforestation and habitat reclamation; yet their use has been limited to relatively few species. (Instead, we have continually emphasized imported species, which by now have become standards in design.) The desirability of native plants goes far beyond mere substitution of one type of plant material for another; using and protecting the diversity of plants belonging to the local ecosystem can be crucial to species conservation and genetic strength while providing relief from the formal, man-made environment which is omnipresent in our world.

Exotic plants were originally introduced from other regions and continents either for their showy characteristics or for other outstanding features. Though not inherently more beautiful than native species, exotics have persisted in the nursery trade to the exclusion of many native species, largely for economic reasons. Cuttings, seeds and other propagules, as well as methods of cultivation, are readily available to the grower, while similar materials for indigenous plants have not been sufficiently developed, despite the fact that in most cases, native plants are not more difficult to propagate or incorporate into the nursery trade, as evidenced by those few native plants now commonly in use, e.g. pecan, redbud, sycamore, yucca, dogwood and others.

## Exotic Hassles

There is no reason not to develop cultivation techniques for still more species of native plants, and numerous reasons for doing so. Indigenous plants tend to require less maintenance than introduced exotic species, which often require fertilizers and soil amendments to prepare the site, in addition to such special attention as pruning and frequent watering. Maintenance costs will become



increasingly important as the price of petrochemicals rises for fuels, fertilizers and pesticides. Another factor to consider is the dwindling supply of water in many parts of west, northwest, and south Texas. Exotic plants often require extraordinary protection against natural threats in their "adopted" environment, including drought, cold spells, changes in relative humidity, local insects and pathogens. Native plants on the other hand, through years of natural selection, have adapted to and are tolerant of the peculiarities of local conditions.

#### Native Kinships

Using indigenous plants in their natural correlations (e.g. understory plants growing beneath taller trees which provide shade and stabilize the soil) creates a natural landscape which is part of and enhances the building or site design while requiring a minimum of maintenance. Such natural combinations form landscapes which are not static but which change through natural selection; the "pioneer" species (those comparatively short-lived, heat-and sun-tolerant species) provide shade and cover for the slower-growing, long-lived species (oaks, cypresses and other shade trees). Indeed, the concept of a naturally evolving land-

scape is perhaps fundamental to the incorporation of wild plants in cultivation — native species placed in a common, static, contrived design which does not relate to the region or site amount to a mere substitution of plant material. The designer who understands this will design a hedge or windbreak which not only responds to the site via topography, orientation, etc. but also participates in the preservation of native plant communities. This reclamation of native habitats provides an interesting relief from the formal, permanent landscapes so familiar in the wide expanses we see of Saint Augustine grass and the clipped hedges of wax ligustrum, both of which are artificial in their arrangement and require greater maintenance.

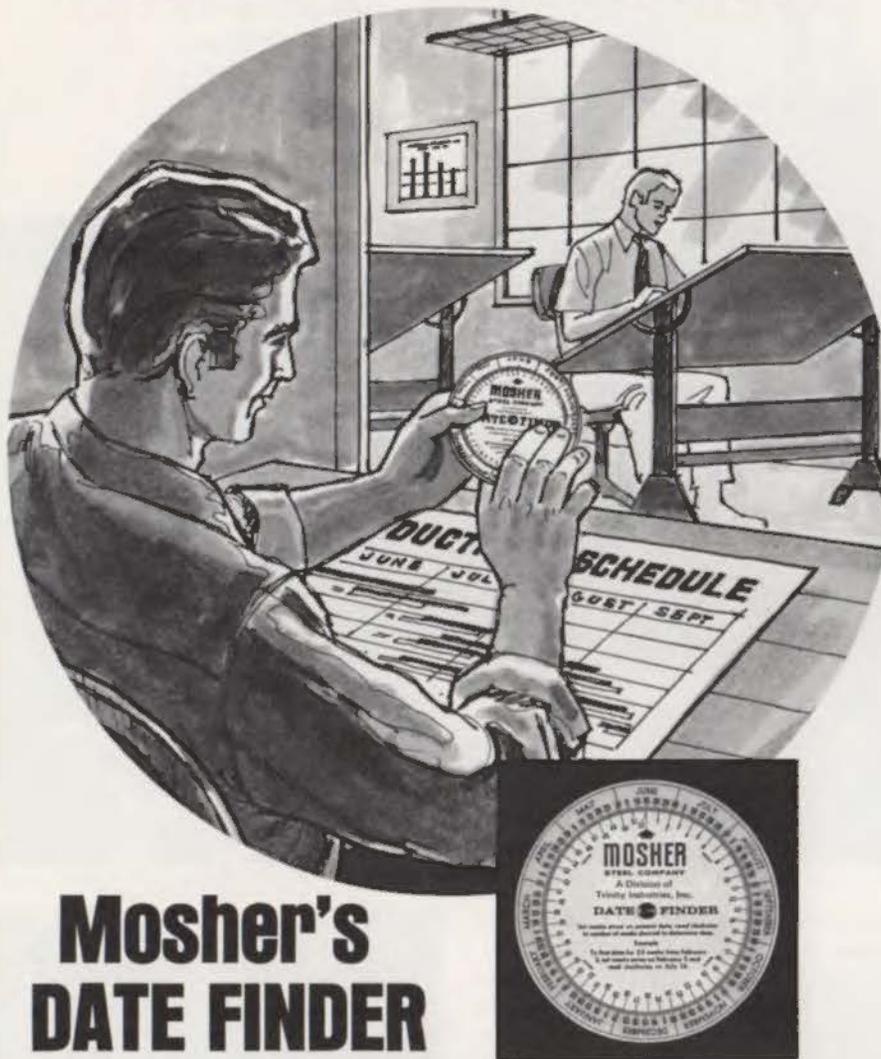
#### Native Versatility

In order to maximize the landscape advantages offered by native plants, the designer must be familiar with those plants which require shade or moist conditions as against those plants which are tolerant of harsher sites. Because wild plants have adapted to many adverse and unpredictable conditions, they are better suited than exotics to irregular or problematic landscape design problems such as slopes (e.g. bear grass, yucca, dewberry



*ABOVE LEFT: native nolina grass covering rocky slope. ABOVE: enclosed courtyard planted with side oats grama and buffalo grass, Turk's cap, Mexican buckeye, rough-leaf viburnum. CLOSE-UP: Texas mountain laurel.*

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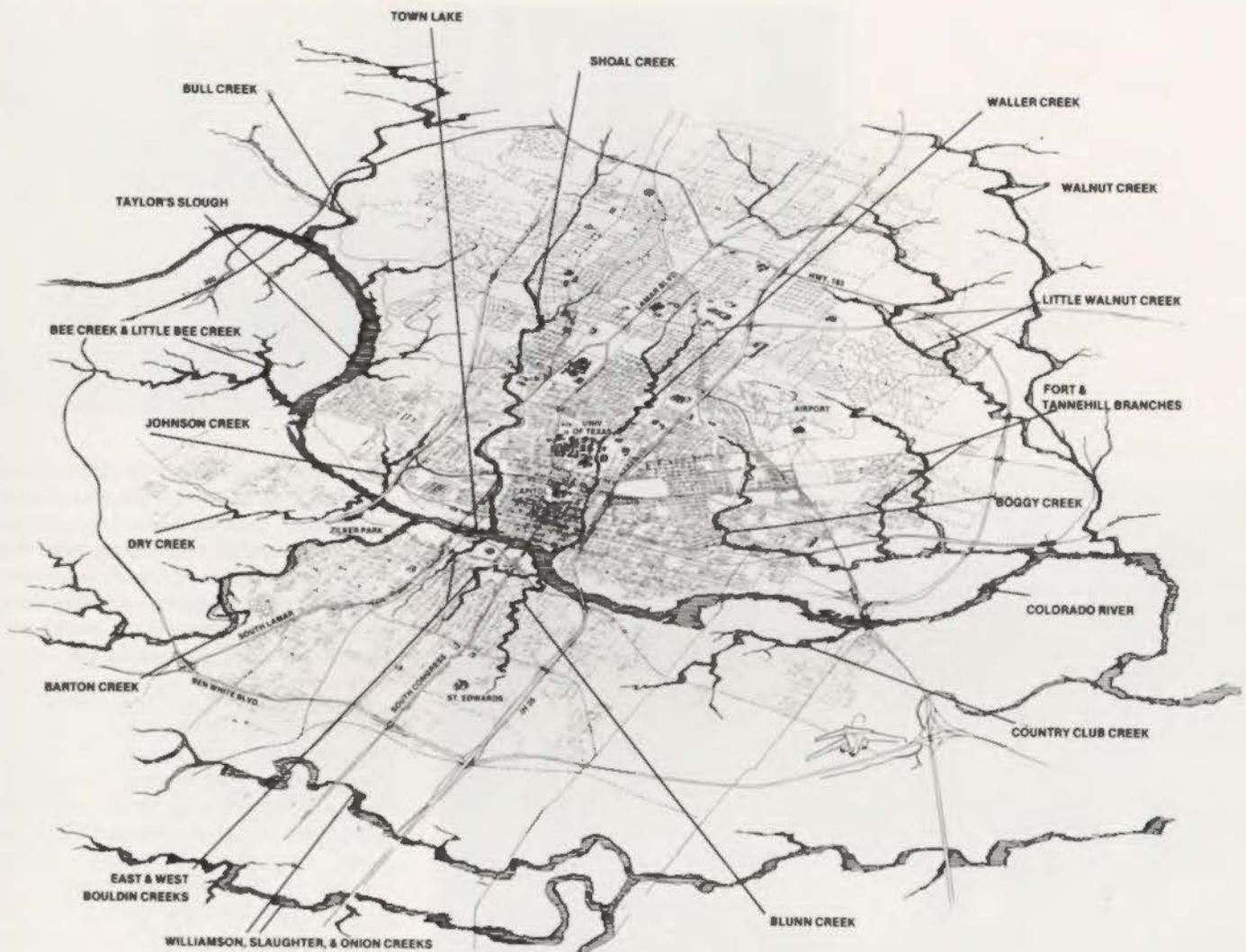
OTHER PLANTS: Dallas, San Antonio

and Mexican silk tassel), hot, dry and open rocky sites with poor soil, (e.g. acacia, agarita, Mexican persimmon) or wet, poorly drained or floodplain sites (e.g. corkwood, mayhaw, tupelo). Native plants are most successful, of course, when used in situations which closely approximate their natural habitat. For this reason, it is important to consider the provenance or propagule source of the plant to be used. For example, redbuds from Tennessee cannot be expected to flower as well in central Texas as do hill country redbuds, and bald cypress striplings from east Texas swamps may not do as well along central Texas riverways or lawns as do trees grown from local bald cypress seeds.

### Regional Identity

It follows, then, that the deployment of native plants in landscape design is a way to make a statement about the region. Exotic plants are unable to reflect the local character of a region because they are introduced, their relationship to the region and to other plants contrived. Using native plants is also a way of protecting certain rare species. Many endemic and rare shrubs grow only in small, restricted areas and have a very precarious existence. These plants should be protected in their natural sites and their numbers increased by incorporating them in commercial and public landscapes. Other native plants which are not as rare may also be protected in this way.

The challenge of bringing a greater quantity and variety of native plants into municipal, private and environmental use must be approached from several angles. Architects, public planners and private individuals should begin requesting native species from their commercial nurseries, suggesting thereby that the cultivation and sale of native plants could be made economically feasible and desirable. Pressed by such an interest on the part of clients and colleagues, public and private planners can be swayed in favor of native plants over exotics in landscape design. A positive cycle is thus established: as native plants become more widely used, their familiarity to the public will increase and still more people will request them. This would be vastly to the good, for the use of native plants in landscape design offers myriad economic, environmental and aesthetic advantages over exotic species.



## Dream Scheme for Austin Creeks

By Sinclair Black

Imagine being able to move freely throughout a city within a network of scenic natural corridors, removed from the congestion, pollution and danger of city streets. Children go to school without being threatened by traffic. Adults walk or bike to work on tree-lined paths along flowing streams. Families reach mid-city cultural events, libraries, shopping centers, adjoining neighborhoods and even the open countryside — all via beautiful nature trails.

Such a dream may in fact be coming true in Austin today because of ambitious yet realistic efforts to develop the city's abundant creeks and waterways into a system of linear parks. The plan envisions a city of greenbelts marked by continuous open space along the 18 creeks of Austin, ex-

tending out from Town Lake at the center of the city, through the suburbs, into the developing fringe and out to the countryside. The concept accordingly is based on four different categories of potential for the rivers, creeks, and tributaries involved: (1) *the urban center*, where the presence of water and its potential as an amenity will encourage revitalization of the core areas near the creeks; (2) *suburban areas*, where the creeks not only give structure and identity to the otherwise homogeneous neighborhoods but may well be the only way to increase people's access to open space in the future; (3) *areas of future growth*, wherein the creek corridors constitute a powerful planning tool enabling the city to shape municipal development in a positive, deliberate

manner as it occurs; (4) *beyond the city*, where the creek corridors can ensure a natural highroad to the open countryside.

### Public Support

The need to maximize the potential of Austin's natural waterway system has long been recognized, but it was not until 1973 that the National Endowment for the Arts provided the catalyst for a formal plan by approving a grant to the UT Austin School of Architecture. Students and faculty developed the plan and presented it to more than 30 civic clubs, garden clubs and environmental groups over a 15-month period between June 1973 and September 1974. This public exposure led to the plan's adoption by the city's Horizons Committee as "Austin's Gift to the Nation" for 1976. The program later was

### Trail in Pease Park

Photo by Norm Altman



### Downtown Waller Creek

Sketch by Kent McMillan



### Lou Neff Point, Town Lake



sanctioned by the city council and by the state and national Bicentennial commissions.

Arguments for implementing the plan are convincing:

**Social Contact** — From the viewpoint of the individual, a continuous system of trails provides ready escape from the hard-edged, man-made environment to a natural setting with different challenges and rewards. It provides a refreshing setting for social contact, where neighbor can meet neighbor on both pleasant and neutral ground.

**Recreation** — Linear parks obviously are accessible to more people than traditional parks because the edge of contact between the park and the neighborhood is much greater. (If all Austin creeks were included in such a system, the number of people within five minutes' walking distance of open space would be doubled.) This is significant in view of dramatic increases in the demand for outdoor recreation areas.

**Energy** — The energy crisis has been a deterrent to recreational travel, further

intensifying the demand for local parks. And the tendency is for cities to become more dense, putting a premium on open space. The two problems compound each other. As utility costs rise and competition for tax dollars increases, utilizing flood plains to meet recreational needs will become more and more attractive.

**Flood Protection** — Flood damage is a serious threat in many areas of the city. The problems are caused directly by development within the path of a potential flood and indirectly by runoff water from other zones of a given watershed. New national flood plain legislation, recently adopted by the Austin city council, will drastically limit development in the flood plain, eliminating construction altogether in the more critical portions of the flood plain. The result will be the availability of an undeveloped corridor of land along each creek.

**Economy** — The economic implications of greenbelts are significant. Historically, neighborhoods with abundant open space have demonstrated a better than average stability of property values; land immediately adjacent to parks generally is worth more than comparable property away from open space. As for downtown areas, the creeks may prove to be an important catalyst for private investment once a public commitment is made.

**Preservation** — Creek areas harbor a concentration of animal habitats and plant life, some of which are becoming rare as natural areas are developed. The Audubon Society has identified 53 critically sensitive ecological zones in Austin, most of which involve creeks. A familiar example is the Wild Basin area of Bee Creek, one of the few remaining habitats for the rare golden-cheeked warbler. Preservation of this and other

*Sketch illustrating character of future development*

Sketch from Lower Waller Creek Development Plan



critical natural areas will provide outdoor laboratories for science classes, many within easy access of Austin schools.

**Urban Structure** — Open space corridors can positively shape the urban environment by serving as buffers between incompatible land uses, as barriers for noise and pollution, and as screens or filters for unwanted views. They can serve as the connection between adjacent uses — the common ground, for example, where children from both sides of a creek play together. They offer a means of extending existing public space such as school grounds. And, when streets are built near or through a corridor, the beauty of the drive can be enhanced.

The Austin plan for its creeks is an interesting case study in large-scale urban design. As with any public program of this magnitude, popular support and politics — not the actual merits of the plan — control the program's destiny. Although Austin has appropriated money and altered priorities on behalf of the plan, the acceptance and commitment required by such a plan is still forthcoming. If the completed dream is to come true for Austin, its creeks must be thought of as a comprehensive system and an integral component of the urban structure, with a status equal to that of streets and freeways. In Austin, as in every Texas city, it must be understood that we can no longer afford the luxury of a missed opportunity.

---

*Sinclair Black is an associate professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to a limited private practice, he is a member of the Austin Bicentennial Commission and technical advisor to the Horizons Committee, which was largely responsible for adoption of the Austin creeks plan.*

Waller Creek at 32nd Street

Photo by Norm Alston



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## Starting with Waller Creek

The City of Austin has begun to implement its creeks and open space plan with a major study, now complete, of the downtown Waller Creek corridor, which extends from 10th Street south to Town Lake, winding through an older, mostly commercial section of Austin much deteriorated over the last couple of decades.

The plan represents, among other things, a unique, broad-based collaboration. It includes the input of architectural students, area residents and merchants, members of the Austin Planning Commission, the Horizons Committee, and representatives both of the Park Board and the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC), upon whom falls the responsibility for executing the plan. The final study was conducted and presented to the city by a joint-venture team of design professionals; Taniguchi, Shefelman, Vacker and Minter, Architects; Myrick-Newman-Dahlberg, Landscape Architects; Freese and Nichols, Professional Engineers. An outstanding feature of the work of these professionals is their incorporation into the plan of very specific "design guidelines" pertaining to motifs, construction materials and specifications, bridge facades, etc. — to assure future design consistency regardless of changes in the planning team, city departments, and citizens' advisory groups.

The plan has been carefully contrived for a three-phase implementation. The first, which includes acquisition and surveying of land, as well as a revamping of zoning statutes, will culminate in the construction of hike and bike trails connecting with a trail already in existence around Town Lake. Phase Two will emphasize the development of residential construction adjacent to the creek corridor. Phase Three will include the development of mixed-use facilities (residential and commercial), intense reduction of auto traffic, historic renovations, and completion of landscaping.

Each of these phases was conceived with strict regard for the major goals of the Austin open space plan in general, among the most important of which are controlled growth, revitalization of downtown core areas, increased public access to open space, flood control, reduced motor traffic, and improved environmental quality.

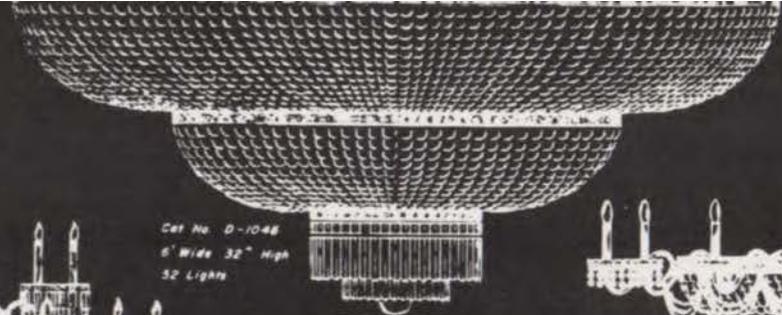
While it may be the year 2000 before the Waller Creek Development Plan has reached full fruition, Phase One is due to commence as early as March of next year, with funds for that purpose already earmarked in the budget of the Parks and Recreation Department. It is worth noting, finally, that at least one Austin property owner — Reddy Ice Corporation — has expressed a far-sighted confidence in the Waller Creek plan by donating land to the project. Such a gesture reflects not only a measure of civic pride but an understanding that development of the Waller Creek corridor will ultimately produce benefits for everyone, from apartment dweller to private entrepreneur, far outweighing the investment which must now be made.

Texas Architect

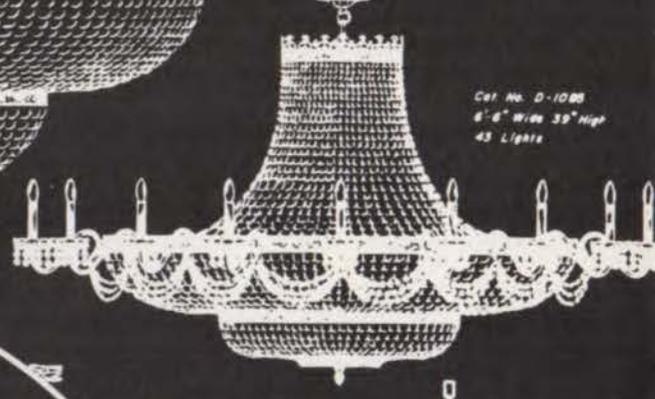
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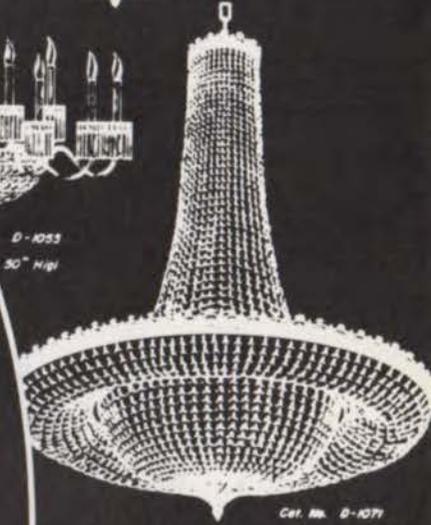
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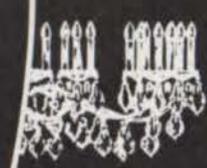
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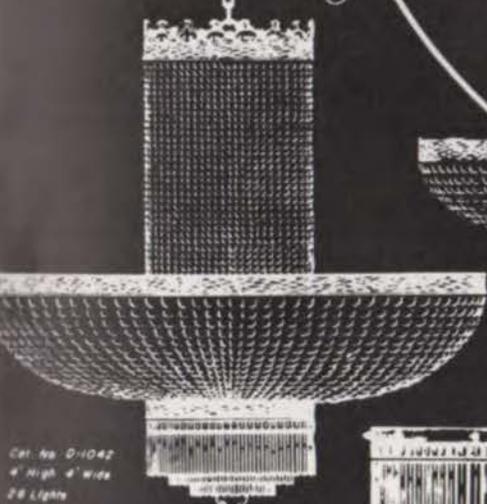


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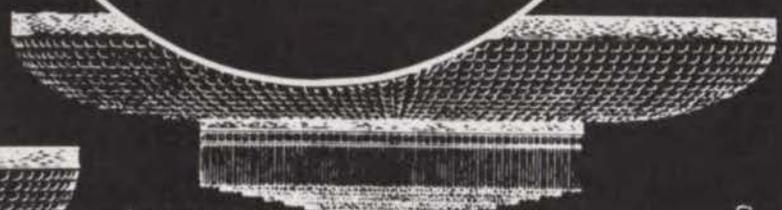
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Cat. No. D-1073  
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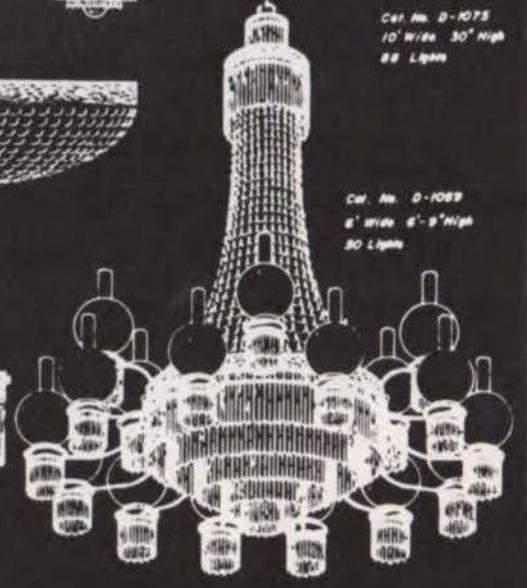
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Honor Award  
Texas  
Architecture  
1975



*Park pavilion.*



*Log sculpture monument.*



*ABOVE: observation deck and pier. BELOW: arbor connects halves of pavilion.*



*David Alexander*



*Robert Murray*

Architect: Alexander/Murray Associates,  
Houston  
Structural Engineer: Wayne H. Clouse & As-  
sociates, Houston  
Mechanical Engineer: Rivoire & Associates,  
Houston  
Contractor: Melvin L. Ross, Pasadena



# MICHAEL MONCRIEF PARK

## AN OUTDOOR PLACE FOR PEOPLE

In response to rising demand for outdoor recreation, Harris County purchased a beautiful plot of land near Channelview — 3.4 acres complete with tall pines, spreading oaks and frontage on a lake. But it still wasn't a *park*. So the Houston architectural firm of Alexander/Murray Associates was commissioned to refine this chunk of raw natural beauty into an outdoor place for people.

The architects' first priority was to "leave the site as undisturbed as possible, yet provide functional recreation and group activity facilities throughout." A lighted walkway begins at a small parking lot near the entrance and winds through the park, connecting two major items — a log-sculpture monument and an open-air pavilion for group functions.

The monument, fashioned from assorted vertical timbers, honors Michael Moncrief, a young man who helped clear the site when it was purchased for a park, and who died in an auto accident shortly thereafter. The L-shaped, open-air pavilion encloses a paved gathering area with a fire pit in the center for scout ceremonies, wiener roasts or other group activities. Simply constructed with concrete columns and job-built wood trusses, the structure provides shelter without obstructing sight lines through the park. Its barn metal roof sheds pine needles that fall from surrounding trees.

The walkway ends at the top of a steep slope to the lake. Here the problem was how to make accessible the rugged beauty of the setting — stands of cypress, with their stubby "knees," dotting a lake lined with driftwood. The solution was to pro-

ject a wood observation deck out from the slope which, shaded by surrounding trees, provides a pleasant spot from which to experience the lake setting. A wood stair beside the deck winds down the slope over the driftwood and underbrush to a pier which juts into the lake among large cypress trees.

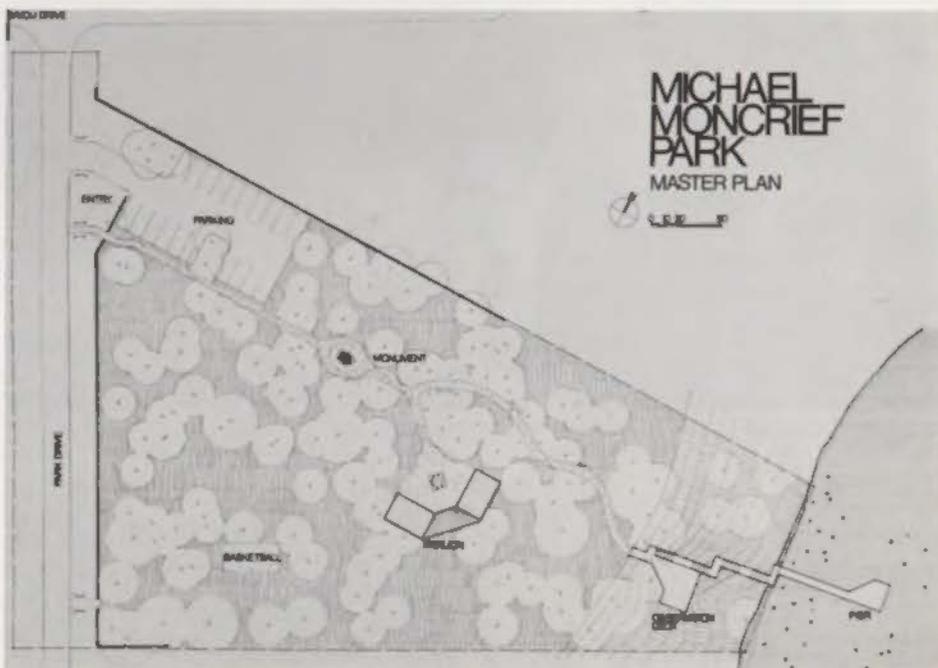
The pier has become a favorite fishing spot for neighborhood youngsters, who can be seen climbing on the decks and railings, running up the stairs, jockeying for positions on the pier — all caught up in having fun outdoors. It's the sort of thing that happens when a plot of land becomes a park. —LPF



*Opening at entry frames monument inside.*



*Park entrance.*





Honor Award  
Texas  
Architecture  
1975

# Tree House On the Ground



The Raymond Brochsteins liked the idea of living in their own little forest — a heavily wooded acre in west Houston. But it seemed almost a shame to disrupt the natural setting with a new house. So the architects, Brochstein himself, along with Anderson Todd and William Cannady, designed a kind of "tree house" — that is, a structure which respects the trees.

The long, white box of a house, slipped unobtrusively into the stand of tall timbers, affords no visual competition with its surroundings. Rather, it complements the trees by serving as a neutral backdrop to their textures and shadows. And in lieu of carving out a grass lawn, the uninterrupted forest was allowed to merge with a wooden deck running the length of the house. The trees, then, viewed through a

wall of sliding glass doors adjacent to the deck, become very much a part of the setting from within. The pleasing "nature" effect is enhanced by southwest orientation, which allows sunlight to filter through deciduous trees in winter but reduces exposure to harsh sunrays in summer.

Bounded by the wall of glass doors is the "grand hall" — the central organizing element of the house which connects other rooms spatially and visually. The 75-foot-long two-story space has the flexibility of scale to comfortably accommodate the Brochstein family of four or larger groups of up to 100 people. Projecting into the "grand hall" is the main stair, which defines a skylighted solarium where large plants can be arranged as a divider or moved outside to expand the space for larger functions. Upstairs are the three sleeping areas and a large, private roof deck adjoining the master bedroom.

The smooth, white, 100-foot facade is articulated by white P.V.C. plastic drainpipes and a built-in greenhouse. In view of Brochstein's professional specialty — interiors utilizing highly refined woodwork — the selection of stark white stucco and sheetrock finishes may seem unlikely. But the absence of exposed wood inside and out helps to achieve for Brochstein a comfortable differentiation between "office" and "home." And, after all, he's never too far from the trees. — LPF



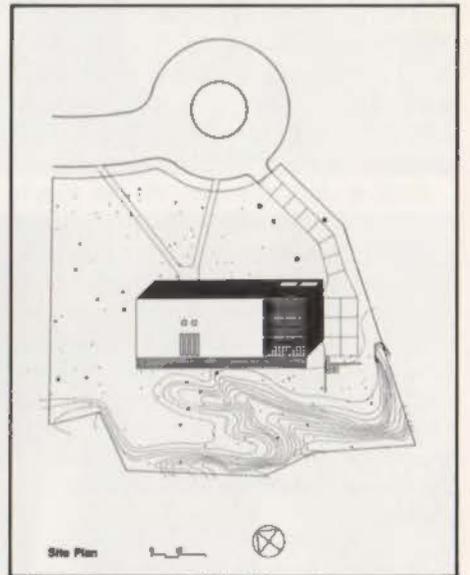
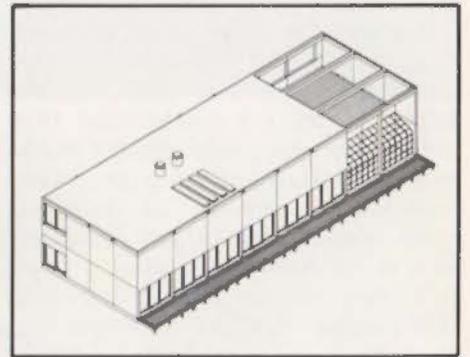
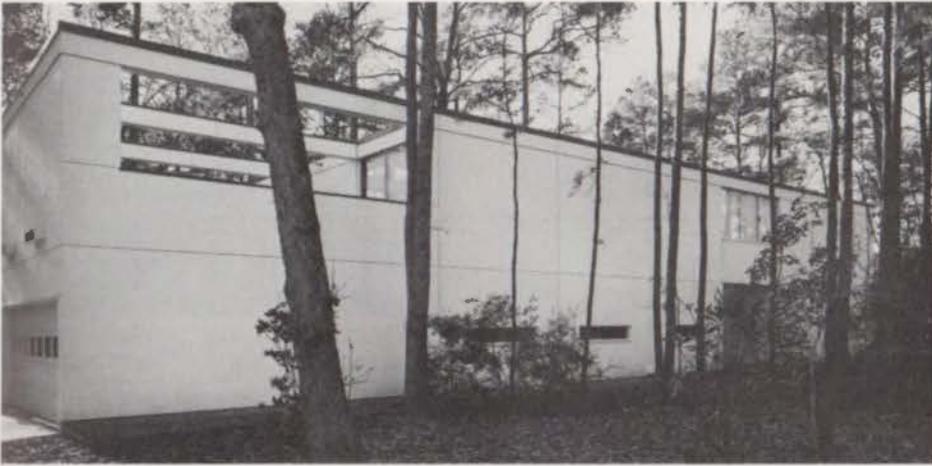
*William T. Cannady, Anderson Todd, Raymond Brochstein*

Architect: Brochstein, Todd & Cannady Associated Architects, Houston

Engineer: Krahl & Gaddy Structural Engineers, Houston

Contractor: Homer Leonard Builders, Houston

Landscape Architect: Carlisle Becker, Logan, Utah



# Peaceable Kingdom Barn

## Technology Romanticized

The Peaceable Kingdom (PK), a community of young artists and craftsmen who grow their own food and try to live the uncomplicated life in the rolling hills near Washington-on-the-Brazos, needed a new shed to protect their weatherbeaten trucks, tractors, and assorted other farm vehicles, as well as to provide much-needed workshop and living space. They approached friends at Taft Architects (then Architects Incacoots & Associates) with the problem of designing a large, flexible, economical structure that would utilize natural light and ventilation, that would not be an eyesore on the landscape, and that they could construct themselves. Furthermore, it had to be built from a large pile of plywood, 2x10's, and 4x6's that had formerly been the stage of the Watkins Glen (NY) rock concert (attendance 500,000), brought to Houston for another concert and sold as surplus.

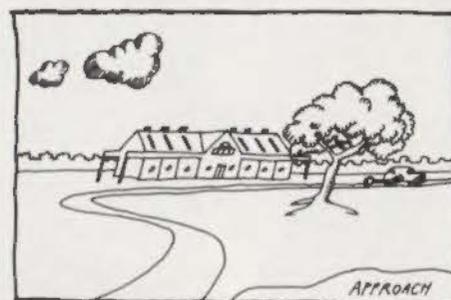
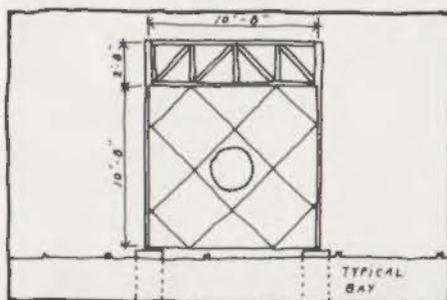
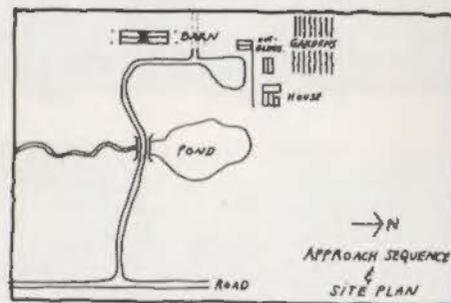
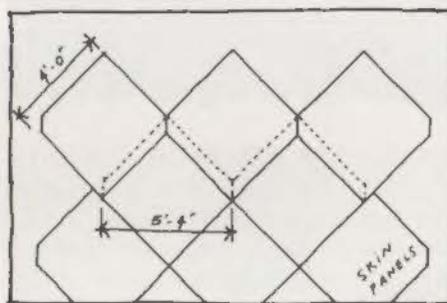
Starting with the idea of the simple Texas pole barn, and employing various elements from the agricultural vernacular, a design was quickly developed on the back of an envelope. The solution provides for three parking bays on either side of a central repair space, with a garage apartment tucked into the transept of the roof above. Rolling barn doors would allow the bays to be completely opened to the landscape for activities other than parking.

In order to provide lateral stability in the absence of fixed walls, the structure was designed as a rigid frame. Deep trusses fix the columns at the top, as well as carry the door system and infill second-floor loads. The forty-six trusses, jig assembled, define a 10'8" modular cubic matrix.

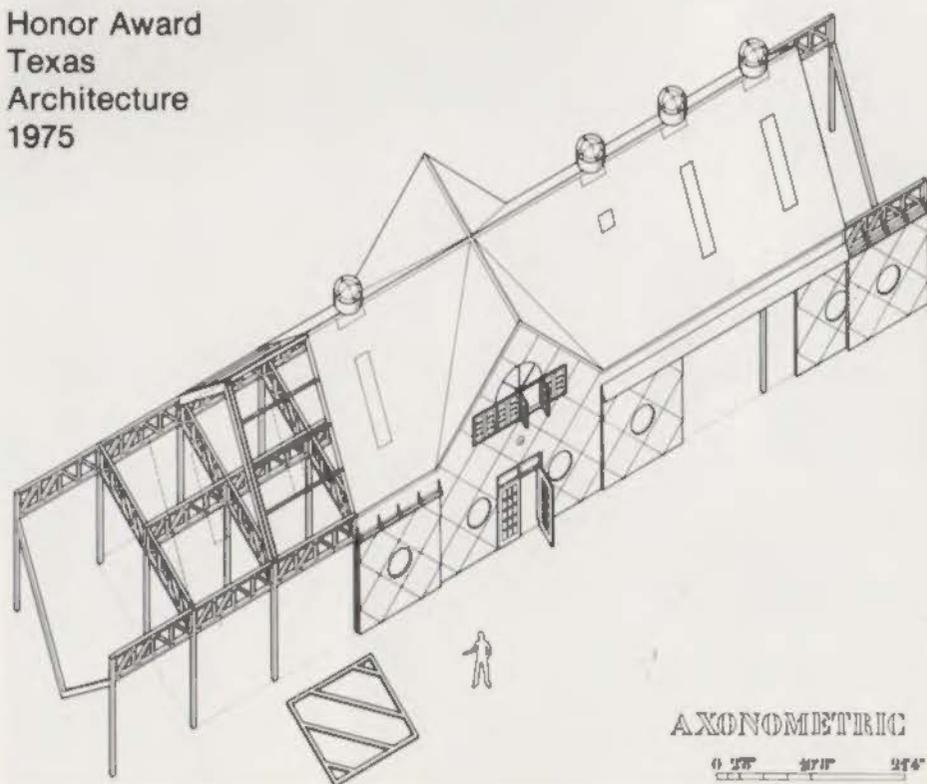
A unique system was developed to utilize the plywood stock. Sheets were cut into 4'x4' squares, their opposite corners cut off, then laid up diagonally as oversize shingles. The diagonal geometry of the sheathing system resolved itself neatly into



Sketches by Danny Samuels



Honor Award  
Texas  
Architecture  
1975



the orthogonal field of the structural system. This structure/skin resolution for the typical bay ultimately determined most of the geometric character of the entire building. The barn is, in effect, an extrusion of the typical bay.

A rather conspicuous object to the PK visitor, the barn was carefully sited and designed to present a frontal facade to the entry approach sequence. After a long axial progression — through the gates, across the pond, up the hill — the approach is finally deflected by the facade of the barn toward the group of farm buildings at the crest of the hill.

Construction of the shed was part of the on-going educational program sponsored by the PK School. In that month-long session, guest and resident teachers conducted classes in such subjects as herbal cookery, batik, silkscreening, blues (conducted by neighbor Mance Lipscomb), and, of course, construction of a large shed. Architect Danny Samuels and PK Construction Coordinator Artie Kahn worked with inexperienced students to lay foundations and assemble prefabricated components, and the month culminated in a spectacular barn raising, wedding ceremony and square dance. Further work continued on weekends for much of the next year; in all, construction took about 40 working days. Project cost was approximately \$4,000, or \$2 per sq. ft.

Last spring, when the barn needed to be painted, the PK, in collaboration with the architects, sponsored a coloring contest to solicit original ideas. More than a hundred entries were received from around the country. A committee of residents selected a design by Pat Johnson Lister, of Bryan, that utilizes American Indian motifs as architectural embellishment. A graduated color tonality tends to moderate the bulk of the building; progressively lighter tones create a transition from the ground to the sky. In effect, the landscape "passes through" the barn.

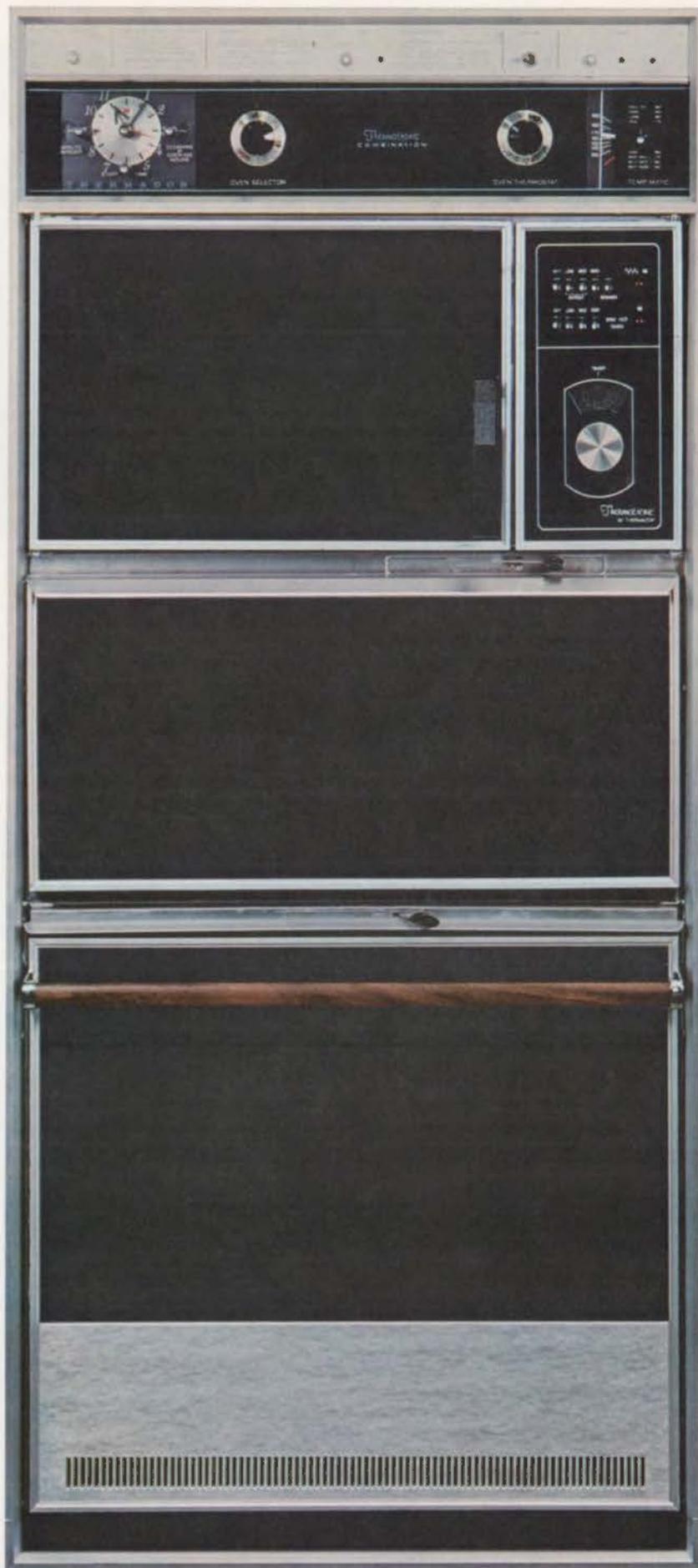
A Mayday painting party attracted visitors from far and wide, who drank a dump truck full of cold beer. Nonetheless, Tom Sawyer-style, everyone lent a hand, and in one day, the barn was totally transformed. At nightfall the doors were rolled open, and a succession of bands entertained as revelers danced in the road until they fell down. —**Danny Samuels**



Photos by Danny Samuels



From left: Partners Danny Samuels, Robert Timme and John Casbarian and Associate Partner Peter Papademitriou.



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# Endangered Species



## Conduct Unbecoming A Superstate

By Ray Reece

There is much talk these days of Texas as the Superstate of the 1970's and 80's, the rising star of all the 50 states of the Union. With New York, Boston, Philadelphia and other traditional northeastern centers of wealth and culture declining in prestige and population, Dallas and Houston are being seriously discussed as replacements. National corporations are moving their headquarters from Madison Avenue and Wall Street to Loop 610, Westheimer Boulevard, and Stemmons Freeway. *New York Times* reporters are grinding out dispatches extolling the splendors, architectural and otherwise, of the sprawling new Texas megacities. People and money are flowing into the state faster than they can be accommodated. And every six months or so, another book is published trying to come to grips with the phenomenon.

For better or for worse, Texas has assumed the trappings of a national mecca, the richest state in the richest country in the world, with a future in commerce, agriculture, and the arts limited only by the breadth of its own self-image, its own ability to bear out the promise recently conferred upon it. That is why the crisis of

Old Red down in Galveston is so ironic and potentially disgraceful.

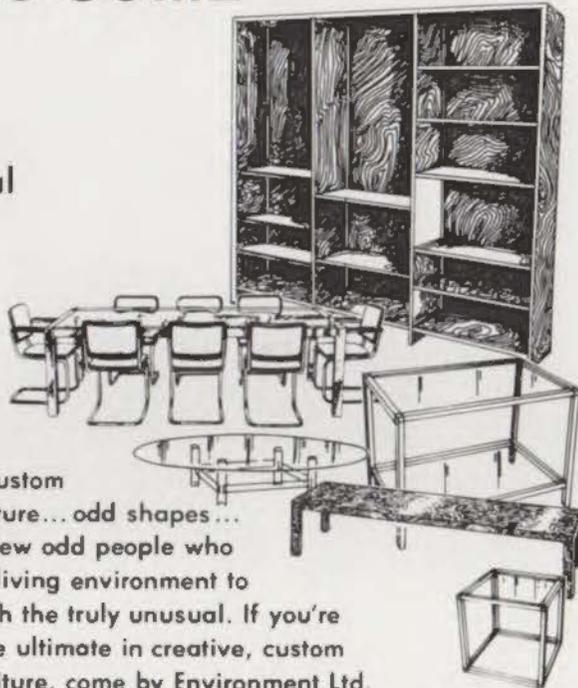
### Nicholas Clayton Masterpiece

Old Red is the traditional nickname for the stately Ashbel Smith Building on the campus of the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). It was designed by Nicholas J. Clayton, Texas' famous "pioneer" architect, and constructed in 1890 as the main building of the new state medical school. (In fact, it is the largest Clayton structure remaining in Galveston.) It is the sole surviving medical school building west of the Mississippi constructed before 1900, and the only edifice of its kind on the National Register of Historic Places. It was originally a key element in Galveston's historic Strand area, now gaining a global reputation for the scope and quality of its architectural renovations.

Old Red has been nearly vacant for a number of years, its functions appropriated by newer buildings on the UTMB campus, and soon, if a massive campaign is not engendered on its behalf, it will be demolished, perhaps to make way for a parking lot. (Even before then, according to Peter Brink, Executive Director of the

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Galveston Historical Foundation, Old Red's drama and authenticity are certain to be damaged by "incompatible new construction" presently being designed to "wrap around" the vintage building.)

Not that Old Red, exactly as it stands, hasn't a potentially useful future. On the contrary, it is a structural Rock of Gibraltar, one of the few survivors of the cataclysmic Galveston hurricane of 1900. With this in view, Dr. Truman Blocker, President Emeritus of UTMB and a supporter of Old Red's preservation, has drawn up plans for an Institute for the Medical Humanities to be housed in the facility if and when it is restored.

### A Distinguished Future

The Institute would be a national center for the study of medicine in relation to history, law, philosophy, the arts, other sciences, and religion — the first and only academy of its kind in the United States. In addition to office and classroom space for students, visiting scholars, and faculty of the Institute, the building would comprise a Learning Resources Center, historical collections of the world-famous Moody Medical Library, art collections, and medical exhibits of interest not only to doctors and students but to Galveston residents and visitors in general.

So here is a statuesque, structurally sound landmark of Texas architectural and medical history that could have a long new life as an important center of learning and research — destined to become a parking lot. Why would that happen, do you think? Is it possible to believe that the University of Texas System, which operates UTMB, is too poor to save Old Red?

Estimated renovation costs range from \$2.5 million to \$5 million (the latter is projected by UTMB), one million of which has already been raised — \$130,000 from UTMB alumni and \$875,000 from the UT Board of Regents, a sum they committed in 1973 following a storm of protest by the Galveston Historical Foundation and the Galveston County Historical Survey Committee. That leaves between \$1.5 million and \$4 million required to save and restore the building.

### Super-Rich UT System

The University of Texas System is the second-richest institution of higher learning in the United States — only Harvard is more amply endowed. This year's *operating budget* for the UT System is nearly \$500,000,000 (that's half a billion, friends). UTMB alone had a 1975 budget

of \$87 million, including a payroll of \$60 million (UTMB is Galveston's largest employer, with a work force of more than 5,300 people).

**Too poor to save Old Red?**

Whatever the reason, when UTMB officials asked the 64th Texas Legislature for the funds to restore their endangered landmark, they did not have the support of the UT Board of Regents. Consequently, according to Galveston County Judge Ray Holbrook (a central figure in the struggle to restore Old Red), Texas legislators wouldn't even return his phone calls. "There just was no serious interest from the Board of Regents," said Holbrook.

**"Save Old Red"**

He contends, however, that there is still hope: "If we can go to the 65th Legislature (which convenes in January, 1977) with \$2 million to \$2.5 million in hand, I think there would be great incentive to match the funds." He added that, in addition to the support of Governor Dolph Briscoe and other top state officials, "The key is the Board of Regents — if they'll fight for it, they'll get it done." Holbrook urges,

with the concurrence of State Senator "Babe" Schwartz, that anyone interested write letters of support to the governor, to state senators and representatives, and to the UT Board of Regents. Holbrook's appeal is simple: "Save Old Red."

**Fastest Hammer in the West**

Returning, finally, to the notion that Texas is destined to become the economic and cultural showcase of the United States in the next 20 years — how does one reconcile that prediction with the possible demise of a resource as rich in heritage as the Ashbel Smith Building? Could Boston, New York, and Philadelphia ever have sustained their cultural credentials had they desecrated their historic monuments with the quickness of hammer so often observed in Texas?

It is just such recklessness concerning our traditions and artifacts which raises doubts in many people's minds that Texas has in her the depth of character required of a regional or a national seat of culture. Should Old Red fall, Texas' detractors will be fully justified in cutting another notch in their cynical guns.



Sketch by Denise Britte



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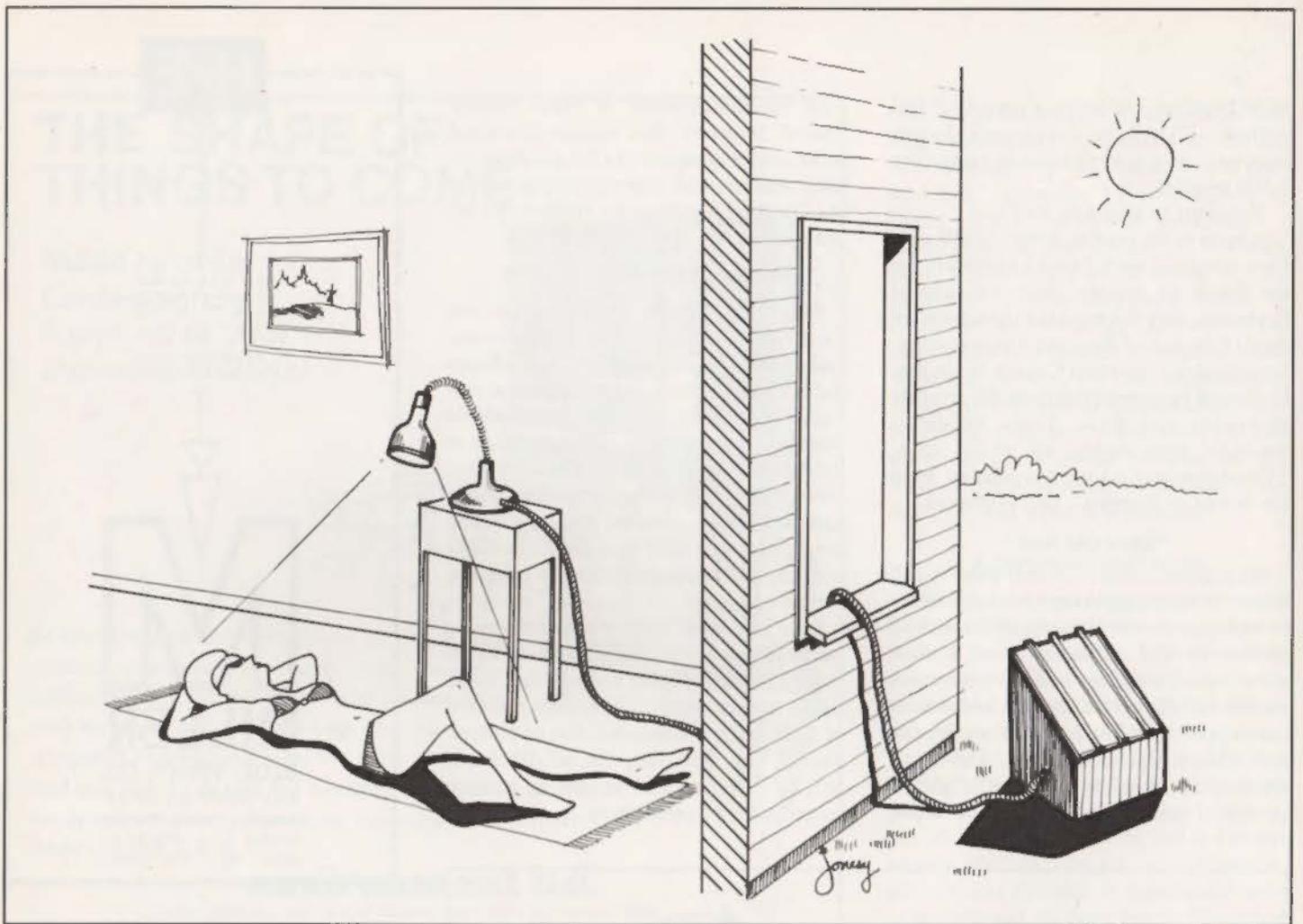
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# In the News



Harold Box

## New UT Dean

President Lorene Rogers of The University of Texas at Austin has announced the appointment of Harold Box as dean of the School of Architecture, effective September 1.

Box, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, was the dean of UT Arlington's School of Architecture and Environmental Design, a position he has held since 1971. He has been on leave from the Dallas firm of Pratt, Box, Henderson and Partners to fill his academic assignment.

A faculty-student committee advised President Rogers on the selection of a dean to succeed Dr. Charles Burnette, who resigned his administrative post last January to devote full time to teaching and research. John Gallery, who had been associate dean of the school, has been serving as acting dean.

The August 18th announcement coincided with Box's 47th birthday. A Texan, he was born August 18, 1929, in Commerce.

The new dean was educated at UT Austin, where he received the Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1950. He worked as a draftsman for San Antonio architect O'Neil Ford in 1948, and as a designer with Fehr & Granger, Austin architects, in 1949-50.

Following graduation, he was in aircraft structural design with Chance Vought Aircraft in Dallas, 1951-52.

After three years in the U.S. Navy, 1952-55, serving as a lieutenant in the Civil Engineer Corps, Box went to Dallas and became a project architect with Broad & Nelson, Architects, 1955-57. After a brief period as an associate with Harrell & Hamilton, Architects, in Dallas, he became a partner in the firm of Pratt, Box & Henderson in 1958.

Box is on the national board of directors of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture 1975-78 and is Southwest regional director of the association for the same period.

He has been active in professional organizations, serving as vice president of the Texas Society of Architects in 1971-72 and two terms as a chapter director. He is a former president and director of the Dallas chapter and currently is national director for the Texas Region of the American Institute of Architects.

## Taylor Elected

TSA Executive Director Des Taylor was elected a member of the executive committee for AIA's Council of Architectural Component Executives (CACE) at the group's annual meeting in Washington, D.C. July 28-30. Texans attending the



Des Taylor

conference included Larry Paul Fuller, TSA Director of Communications; John Lash, TSA Advertising Director/Documents Administrator; Rosemary Schroeder, Dallas Chapter executive secretary; Ruth Fuller, Houston Chapter executive secretary; and Kirsten Nowlin, San Antonio Chapter administrative assistant.

Taylor, in addition to serving as Central States' Director for CACE, has been asked to assist national AIA in the planning of two state legislative seminars scheduled for the fall in Denver and Dallas.

## News of Firms

The San Antonio firm of Marmon & Mok Associates has elected Stephen R. Souter as a partner.

Architects Donald Green, William H. Holland and James B. Boggs have an-

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nounced the formation of a new firm in Corpus Christi, **Total Design Four**, offering services in planning, architecture, consulting and development. Address: Suite 300, 101 North Shoreline, Corpus Christi Savings Building, 78401. Telephone: (512) 884-8811.

The Fort Worth firm of **Kirk, Voich and Gist Architect-Engineer** has appointed Jeffrey Brown as head of its architectural design department. Brown has been with the firm since 1972.

The Houston firm of **S. I. Morris Associates** has elected George L. Maness,

Ronald L. Moore, Robert Morris and Roger Philo as associates in the firm.

Wichita Falls architect Charles Harper has announced that engineer Howard Watson and architect Ralph Perkins have been made associates in the firm of **Charles Harper Associates, Architects, Engineers & Planners**.

**The Blackstone Partnership** in Houston has relocated to Suite 410, 2500 West Loop South, 77027, telephone (713) 623-0330, and has named John H. Ward as an associate in the firm.

The Houston firm of **W. W. Duson As-**

**sociates** has opened a branch office in Room No. 9 of the Duson Building in El Campo.

**Dale E. Selzer Associates, Inc.** has relocated to 1906 Southland Center in Dallas. Telephone: (214) 741-3838.

John M. Rowlett, FAIA, a founder of the Houston-based firm **Caudill Rowlett Scott**, has been presented a gold cubistic sculpture designed to commemorate his "30 years of service and leadership."



Rowlett, left, and Bullock.

Thomas A. Bullock, chairman of the board of **CRS Design Associates, Inc.**, the parent company of **CRS**, made the presentation recently at the corporate offices in Houston.

The Houston-based firm **Diversified Design Disciplines, 3D**, has announced the following appointments: Natalie de Blois, FAIA, as senior project designer of **3D/Neuhaus + Taylor**; Carden L. Jenkins, PE, as chairman of the board and chief executive officer of **3D/Chenault & Brady, Consulting Engineers**; and architect Gilbert W. Thweatt as vice president.

The New York firm of **Emery Roth and Sons** has joined with Houston architect Robert Sobel in the formation of **Robert Sobel/Emery Roth and Sons, Inc.**, at Suite 1410, Post Oak Central, 2000 S. Post Oak Road in Houston. East Coast offices are co-located with **Emery Roth and Sons** at 745 Fifth Avenue in New York.

Austin architect William Clay Grobe has joined the Austin office of **O-Connell, Probst & Zelsman, Inc.**

The Waco firm of **Bush & Dudley Architects-Engineers, Inc.** has been changed to **Dudley and Associates, Inc., Architects**.

The firm of **John Kirksey & Associates** has moved to 6009 Richmond Avenue, No. 200, Houston, 77057. In addition, Rick Anderson has joined the firm as head of the residential division and will be in charge of high density townhouse and con-

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dominium projects currently underway in Houston.

The Houston firm of Pierce-Goodwin-Flanagan has changed its name to **Pierce-Goodwin-Alexander**.

## News of Schools

**Texas A & M** — Dedication of the Ernest Langford Architectural Center at Texas A&M, named in honor of Professor Emeritus Ernest Langford, FAIA, will be conducted Saturday, September 11 at 11 a.m. Following this ceremony, a barbecue will be held preceding a non-conference opener with Virginia Tech at Kyle Field.

All exes and friends are invited to attend the festivities and should forward barbecue and football ticket requests to: Dean, College of Architecture and Environmental Design, Texas A&M University, College Station, 77843. Payment of \$7 should be sent for each football ticket requested.

Raymond D. Reed, Dean of A&M's College of Architecture and Environmental Design, was one of the program participants in a recent seminar on energy con-



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ervation in buildings conducted at the Camp Allen Conference Center in Navasota. The seminar was the first in a series of energy conservation conferences sponsored by the Texas Environmental Coalition, assisted by the Governor's Energy Advisory Committee and the League of Women Voters.

**Texas Tech** — Aspirionics/Ambiente, a group of advanced students in the Division of Architecture at Texas Tech, is seeking support for the second phase of an ongoing project in the northwestern region of South America. The group, with consultants and sponsoring instructors, is studying the Andean and Amazon headwater region for the purpose of "understanding, organizing and refining" human capabilities "to develop the combined Man/environment potentials of the region." The project entails the generative design of a new phase of civilization in the focal area. Analyses and proposals tentatively will be published as the culmination of the second phase, but financial help is needed. Donations may be sent to Aspirionics/Ambiente, Texas Tech Foundation, Lubbock, 79409.

## Appointment

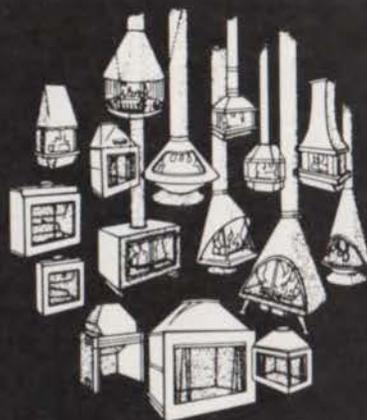
Wichita Falls architect Charles Harper, of Charles Harper Associates, has been appointed to a second term as chairman of the Wichita Falls Planning Board.

## Deaths

Architect **Joseph Julian Patterson** of Fort Worth died June 26 at age 82. Among his best-known works in Fort Worth are St. John's Episcopal Church, the Fort Worth Children's Museum (now the Museum of Science and History) and Tarrant County Convention Center (for which he was associate architect.)

Harlingen architect **Robert Wayne Cline** died July 5 at age 48. A native of San Benito, Cline had been in private practice since 1958 in Panama, Aspen, Austin, Dallas and Harlingen.

Houston architect **John E. Bertini** died August 16 at age 40. Since his graduation from the University of Houston in 1961, Bertini had worked with architect S. I. Morris and was a partner in the firm of S. I. Morris Associates.



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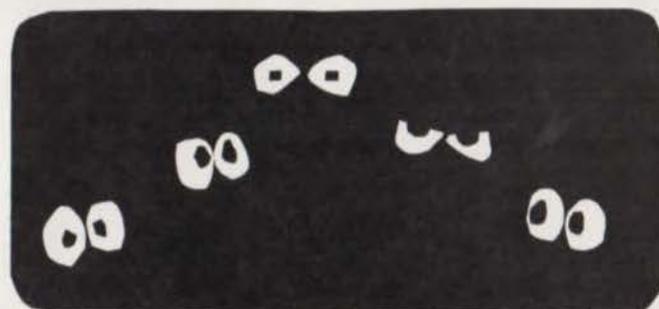
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# Letters

**Editor:** I thoroughly enjoyed reading your May/June issue of the *Texas Architect* on Creativity. It was very refreshing to see an issue devoted to the very basis of our profession and read the various commentaries on its application to architecture. Many of the pertinent issues of creativity, its availability, its use to provide our culture with a new dimension of common sense, prudence and beauty in the built environment, its use to synthesize the old into the new on the basis of mind interacting with matter and mind interacting with mind, and that creativity is easier at the fringes of consciousness or in the unconscious psyche experienced in occasional flashes of inspiration, were covered very skillfully. I was hoping you would also express a practical, reliable means to develop this creativity within all of us, systematically and effortlessly.

We no longer need to rely upon occasional flashes of inspiration or brainstorming from our subconscious. We can expand our awareness, systematically and effortlessly, to experience finer levels of thought, and contact the source of thought, the basis of all of our thinking, activity, achievement and success. It is on this quieter level of the mind that the information received through our senses is deposited, and it is on this level that all of the information deposited interacts to produce new ideas. By expanding our awareness to include this area of the mind in our daily activity, we find that spontaneously all of our thoughts and actions can become more creative. I have found that the Transcendental Meditation technique, introduced to the western world by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, provides a simple natural means for stimulating the creativity inherent within everyone.

John K. Walser  
Architectural Intern  
Houston

**Editor:** You certainly are to be commended on your Bicentennial Issue of *Texas Architect*. This issue is the most outstanding issue I have read. I am sure many other people, as I, certainly enjoyed looking over the many lovely pictures of the past.

Thanks for sharing this publication with us.

Mrs. Willie Blanchard  
Administrative Secretary  
Orange County Courthouse  
Orange

**Editor:** The *Texas Architect* is not only handsomely done, it is filled with interesting and timely information. The above goes for all issues, but in particular the July/August edition.

Also, the quality of ads in the last publication is impressive; there are lots of them, but they are tastefully composed and placed. I hope from time to time you will remind and encourage TSA members to support the advertisers, who help make the *Texas Architect* possible.

(Ms.) Ruth Fuller  
Executive Secretary  
Houston Chapter of AIA  
Houston

**Editor:** I have just received a still-hot-off-the-press copy of the July/August issue of *Texas Architect* and hasten to tell you how very impressed I am by it. Needless to say, Brooks, Barr, Graeber and White is highly complimented by your use of the First Federal Plaza as the cover piece and also appreciate the inclusion of some of our older work within the text. That, however, is incidental to the outstanding work which the editorial staff performed on this Bicentennial Issue. From the fine editorial, through Larry Fuller's explanation of the Texas Picturebook to the profile of Nicholas J. Clayton, the issue firmly holds one's attention. It's delightful; it's historical; it's keep-able.

Thank you for your constant work in behalf of our profession.

Howard R. Barr, FAIA  
President  
Brooks, Barr, Graeber and White  
Austin

**Editor:** In reading your beautiful July/August Bicentennial issue, I noticed that the Longview Lions Bicentennial Amphitheater was not mentioned among Bicentennial projects of the cities of Texas.

The amphitheater, designed and supervised during construction by Gerald Foster, AIA, (a member of the Lions Club) was a joint project of the Longview Lions Club and the City of Longview. It was built under the leadership of Lion President Gus Davis in 1975 as a Bicentennial gift to the citizens of Longview.

The amphitheater is used frequently for everything from weddings to an appearance of the U.S. Army Field Band and Chorus. It is located near a lake on a natural bowl in the city's Teague Park and

can seat in excess of 3500 people.

We are proud of Mr. Foster's original and functional design. The director of the Army Band said the acoustics there are better than those in Kennedy Center.

Mrs. Margaret V. Estes  
The Longview News Co., Inc.  
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*We are pleased to include this photo of Longview's amphitheater, one of the many Bicentennial projects we were unable to include in the last issue. — Editor.*

**Editor:** The Bicentennial issue of *Texas Architect* came out beautifully. Superb photos. Blurb perfect.

Congratulations to the editors and the many others who obviously went all out on this issue.

William W. Caudill, FAIA  
Caudill Rowlett Scott  
Houston

**Editor:** Thank you so very much for the July/August 1976 edition of *Texas Architect*. It is indeed an outstanding Bicentennial issue, and I congratulate each of those who have contributed to it.

I was stirred by the editorial on page three and of course I think the pictorial content of the magazine and the arrangement make the issue one to be carefully preserved. I have not yet read all of the articles, but I simply wanted to let you know as quickly as possible how very attractive this magazine is.

Lloyd Lochridge  
McGinnis Lochridge & Kilgore  
Austin

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