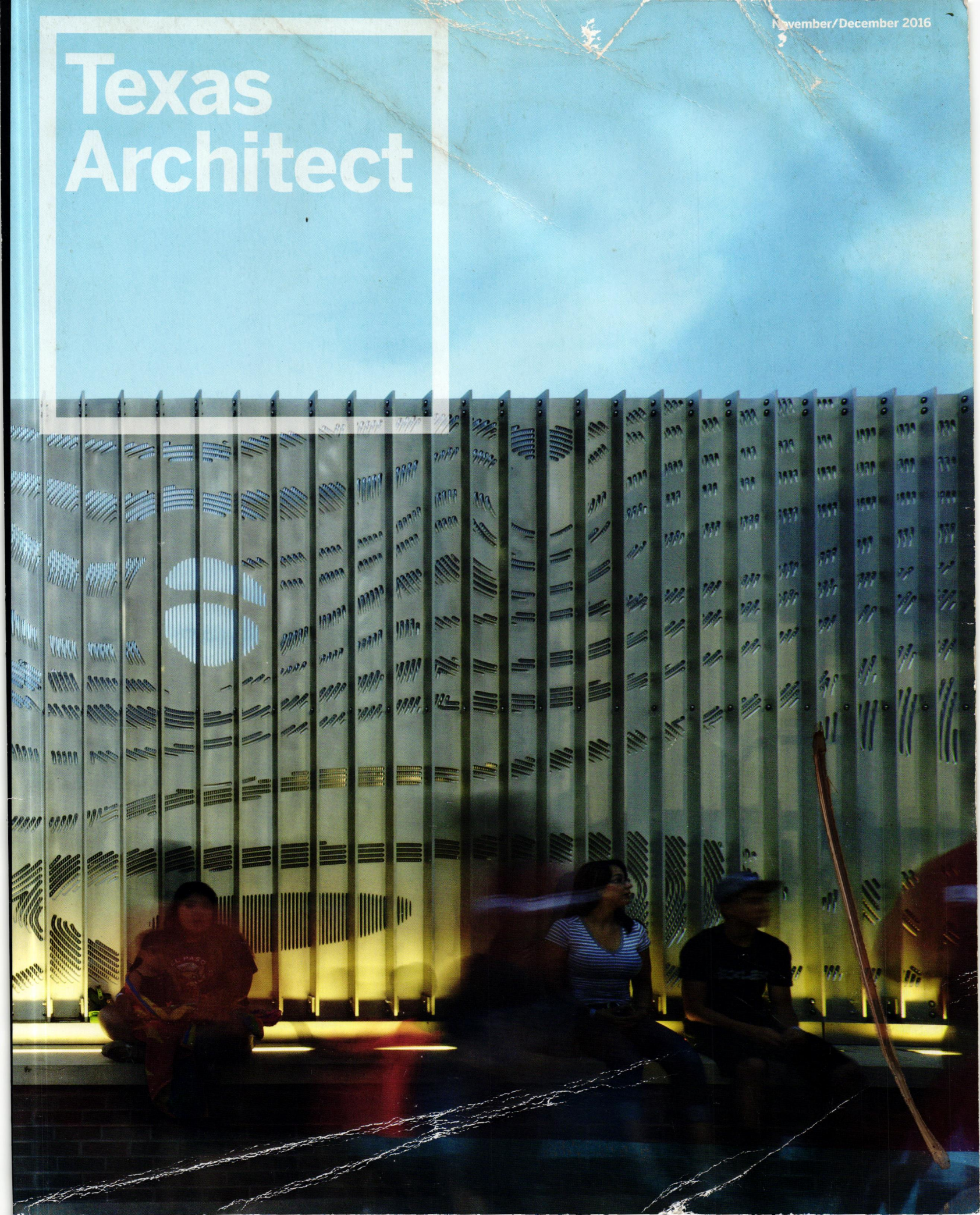


Texas Architect



First Christian Church, Breckenridge, Texas August, 1926



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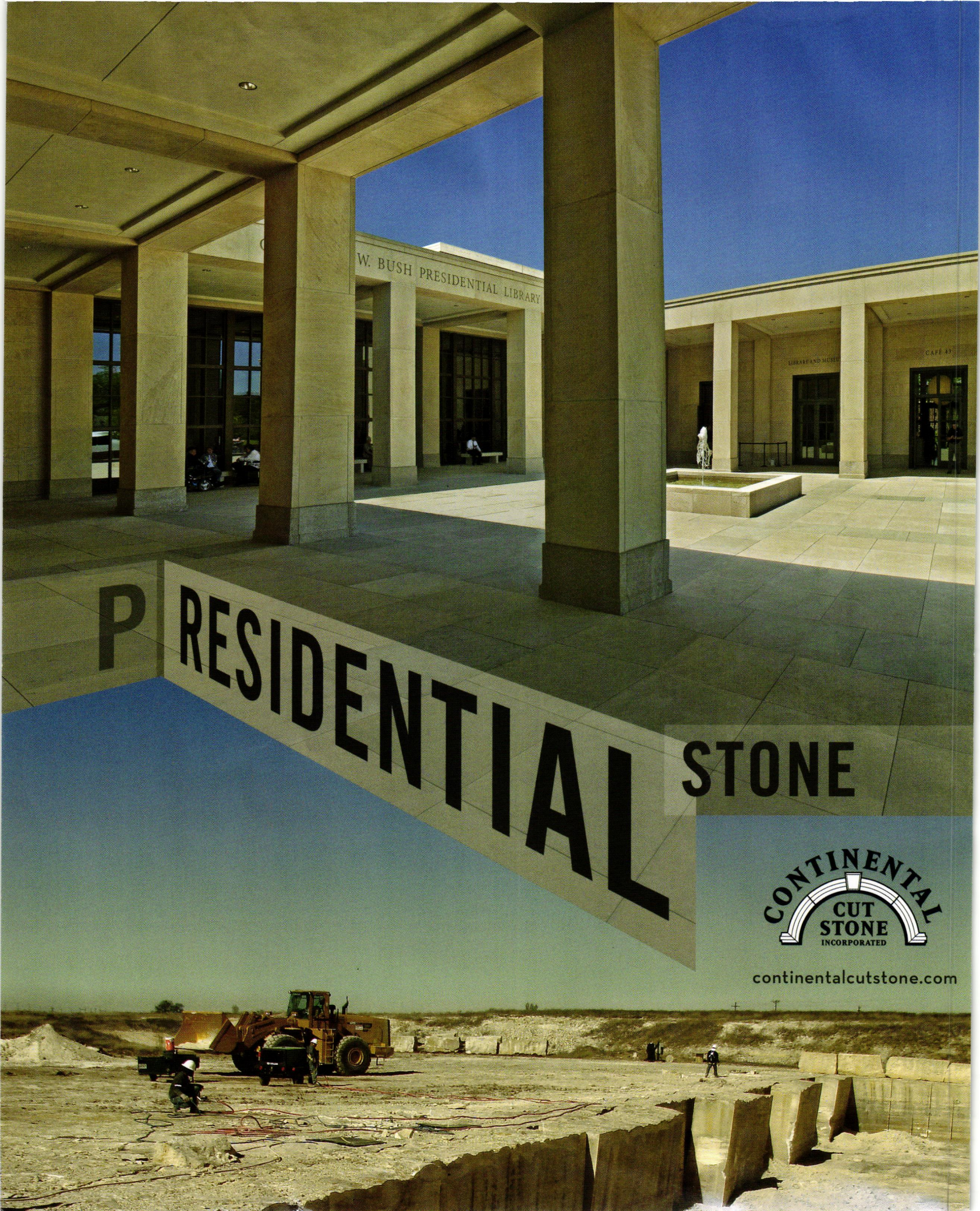
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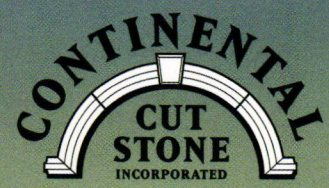


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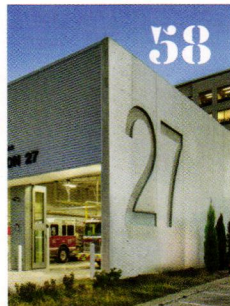
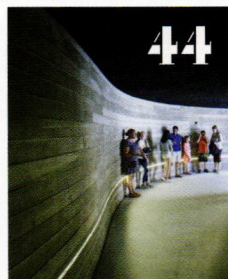
▣ txamagazine.org
Architectural historian Stephen Fox outlines the tour he gave of McAllen at this year's LRGVAIA conference. Plus: A developing controversy over the probable misattribution of a building on a Central Texas ranch to Frank Lloyd Wright.

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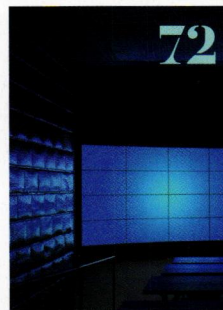
On the Cover

"Not Whole Fence," an art installation by Ball-Nogues Studio at the Populous-designed Southwest University Park in El Paso. Photo By Marty Snortum.

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Aaron Seward
Editor

aaron@texasarchitects.org

Pentagram Austin
Art Direction

Elizabeth Hackler
Assistant Publisher

elizabeth@texasarchitects.org

Monica Mendez

Managing Editor and Circulation Manager
monica@texasarchitects.org

Katherine Hoyt

Assistant Editor and Copy Editor

Contributing Editors

Stephen Fox, Houston; **Eurico R. Francisco, AIA**, University Park; **W. Mark Gunderson, AIA**, Fort Worth; **J. Brantley Hightower, AIA**, San Antonio; **Greg Ibañez, FAIA**, Fort Worth; **Max Levy, FAIA**, Dallas; **Michael Malone, AIA**, Dallas; **Bryce A. Weigand, FAIA**, Dallas; **Ben Wong**, Austin

Mitchell Kleinschmidt

Sales Manager
mitchell@emconsultinginc.com
800 572 0011

Alyssa Morris

Web Editor and Communications Specialist
alyssa@texasarchitects.org

James T. Perry

Executive Vice President and CEO

Texas Architects Publications Committee

Audrey Maxwell, AIA, Dallas (chair); **Jamie Flatt, Assoc. AIA**, Houston; **Jesse Hager, AIA**, Houston; **Andrew Hawkins, AIA**, College Station; **Craig Kinney, AIA**, San Angelo; **Murray Legge, FAIA**, Austin; **Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA**, Austin; **Bart Shaw, AIA**, Fort Worth; **Ronnie Self, Houston**; **Ron Stelmarski, AIA**, Dallas

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Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA, gains admittance to the Franklin Mountain House in El Paso. It faces its neighborhood, which has no sidewalks or any other community infrastructure, with a blind stone wall.

Borderlines

by Aaron Seward

The view from the pool terrace was breathtaking, a sweeping vista that took in Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico — all Chihuahuan Desert, as far as the eye was concerned. At its center, but far below our elevation, was Mount Cristo Rey, which seemed to be no place at all. The limestone statue of Christ the King at its peak — which attracted pilgrims from both sides of the national border, and bandits — turned his hands down in benediction on all sinners who approached.

It was Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA, who got us into the Franklin Mountain House, and onto its pool terrace. He met the architects, Hazelbaker Rush, while writing about the project for the magazine (*TA*, May/June 2016). They had connected him with the owners, who were only too glad to invite the entirety of the TxA Publication Committee over for sundowners and to tour the house, which impressed on the

level of design as well as craftsmanship. As far as any of us knew, it was the only example of recently completed, Class-A contemporary architecture in El Paso. The neighborhood itself, in spite of its gorgeous site high on the slope of the Franklin Mountains, left much to be desired. Developed primarily with oversized, stucco McMansions, it had no sidewalks; no infrastructure whatsoever for the fostering of community; no public space. The neighbors, the owners confided, were not very friendly, so maybe its not a bad thing that the house turns a blind, stone wall to the development, opening itself up instead to the park preserve to the southeast and the vista.

Downtown El Paso was another matter entirely. Having missed the brunt of the post-war boom that transformed cities like Houston and Dallas into epitomes of urban sprawl, it still has an intact urban core, complete with most of its early 20th century building stock. The city is now reinvesting in its public spaces (page 36) and is even putting in a trolley

system. While the inner city still has some way to go before it could properly be called “reinvigorated,” it’s showing real urban ambition. A trap music festival in San Jacinto Plaza while we were there gave an impression of the sort of lively buzz that could exist in the district throughout the week, if all of its dormant buildings were refurbished and filled.

A week later, I found myself on another part of the border, driving across a flat savannah of *resacas* and mesquite thickets as I traveled from Brownsville to South Padre Island for the Lower Rio Grande Valley AIA’s Building Community Conference. If El Paso is an urban comer, South Padre doesn’t even have that word in its vocabulary. The most built-up part of the Texas Gulf Coast, this agglomeration of hotels and beach condos — each an island unto itself, almost none of which existed before the 1970s — offers little in the way of architectural interest or civic connectivity.

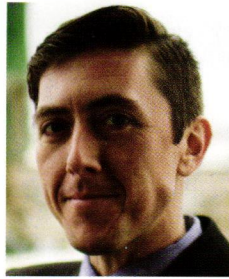
Glimmers of both, however, were to be found in other parts of the Valley. An architectural tour of McAllen led by historian Stephen Fox revealed a wealth of early- and mid-20th century residences by such Texas luminaries as O’Neil Ford, FAIA; Kenneth Bentsen, FAIA; and Richard Colley, AIA, that exhibited creative responses to the geography and climate. We even saw a promising contemporary house by young local firm Orange Made. When I told firm co-founder Erick Diaz, Assoc. AIA, how pleased I was to see such work being done in the Valley, he said, “We’re trying!” (For a full write-up of the tour, go to txamagazine.org.) On another night, I attended an artwalk in downtown Harlingen — a sliver of urban fabric with a lot of charm, and a community set on keeping it alive.

These were by far the exceptions among the examples of the Valley’s built environment we saw, which, especially in its current wave of development, is overwhelmingly banal and suburban. One local architect put the problem to me succinctly: “Most of our clients tell us they don’t want design in their projects. They point to a building and say, ‘give me that.’ We have to sneak design into our buildings.”

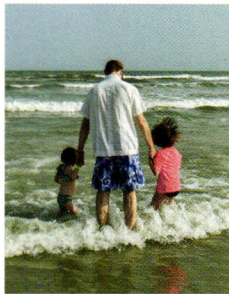
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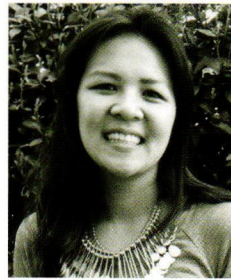
Jesse Hager, AIA is an architect with CONTENT Architecture in Houston. He serves as a board director of AIA Houston and member of the TxA Publication Committee. He is also an adjunct faculty member of the University of Houston. He covered the opening of the Susie Morris Lounge at Rice by DS+R on page 11.



Patrick Michels is an Austin-based reporter and staff writer at the Texas Observer, where he covers crime and education. He is also a regular contributor to *TA*. Read his profile on affordable housing advocate John Henneberger on page 83.



Brantley Hightower, AIA is an architect and author living in San Antonio. He also produces a monthly podcast about the built environment called “The Works.” A chance conversation with a friend, Michael Kriegshauser, led him to produce an episode about the architecture of Whataburger. A condensed version of that story is appears on page 96.



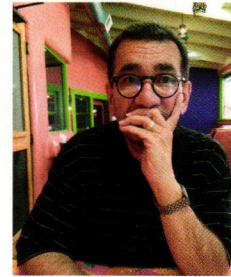
Florence Tang, Assoc. AIA is a Houston-based journalist and an architectural designer at studioMET. She is a board member and program chair of the Rice Design Alliance and is active in the AIA Houston chapter. She graduated with a M.Arch from Rice and received her B.A. from Trinity University in San Antonio. See her article about Houston’s Buffalo Bayou Park on page 44.



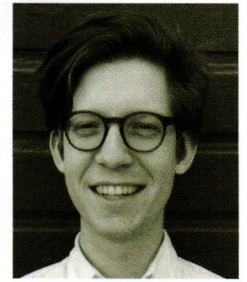
Ryan Flener works with Baldrige Architects in Austin. He engages the built environment on a critical level and finds beauty in the honest and unexpected, and often finds himself submerged in musical endeavors with The Town Planners, and architectural and graphic design research under The Planning Agency. Read his article on Dallas Fire Station 27 by Perkins+Will on page 58.



Audrey Maxwell, AIA is a principal at Malone Maxwell Borson Architects in Dallas and chair of TxA’s Publication Committee. Read her article on Elliott + Associate’s ImageNet renovation on page 72.



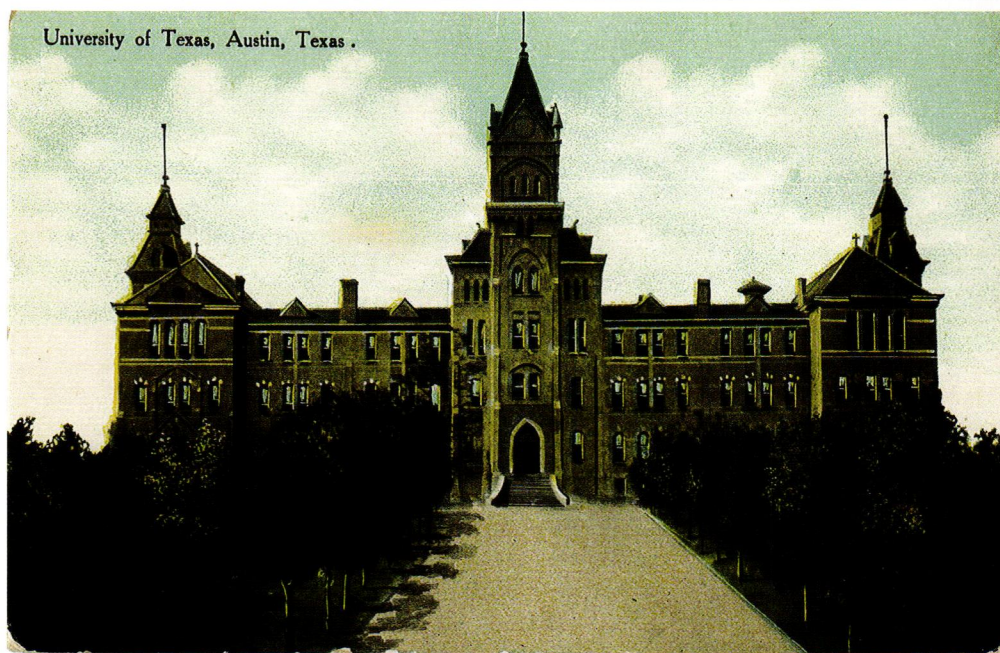
Nestor Infanzon, FAIA is a principal and owner of NINE-DEGREES, an architectural design firm in El Paso and New Mexico. A part time writer, teacher, and photographer, he spends most of his time working on projects for the various academic institutions in the region. A past contributing editor for *TA*, he continues to marvel at the simple aspect of living in the Chihuahuan Desert in a fast growing binational city. He is currently working on a book on the mid-century architects that helped shape El Paso architecture in the 1960s. Read his article on recent developments in that city on page 36.



Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA is a designer with Baldrige Architects in Austin and a regular contributor to *TA*. For this issue, he sat down with Mell Lawrence, FAIA, to ponder the Heron Creek Restrooms (page 64).



Ben Koush, AIA is an architect and writer in Houston. In this issue, he writes about the Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (page 52).



University of Texas, Austin, Texas .

The Old Main building, the first permanent structure on The University of Texas at Austin campus, was completed in 1899, 16 years after classes first began. A Victorian Gothic masterpiece in yellow brick, the building housed several different academic facilities. The first subject to be moved out of the palatial Old Main was chemistry, as the fumes from the labs and dangerous chemicals were a cause for concern. A chemistry building was built next door and was soon followed by an engineering building. The engineering building still stands today, with the distinction of being the oldest building on campus. As the campus began to grow up around Old Main, it soon became clear that the facility was not to last. Due to structural problems, the building's auditorium was condemned in 1914. The whole building was torn down piece by piece, until eventually it was razed entirely in 1935. The Tower, which was finished in 1937, replaced Old Main as the symbol at the heart of UT Austin.

This is the card I spoke to you about. I hope you can use it and someone else might like to see it. God Bless.

Robert Bumann
Bradenton, Fla.

The following comment was left on txamagazine.org in response to the article "Texas Architect Through Its Covers."

In 1959, I was at Texas Tech College of Architecture. I do not remember the first time I was introduced to *Texas Architect*, but feel sure it was at Tech. This prompted a few of us to make a pilgrimage to Austin for board meetings, the annual meeting, etc., meeting architects and students from other universities. Little did we know, many of the people we met would become leaders of the Society, locally and at the state level.

I served on the TxA board for a number of years, first as a chapter rep and later as an officer of the board. These were the most valuable years of my career. Upon opening my office in the early 1970s, I found out how valuable those early contacts I made with other architects around the state were. Every major decision I made regarding the establishment of my firm was confirmed or changed by architects I had met through TxA/AIA. Needless to say, I required every employee to join the local chapter, encouraging extending to state.

As the years went by, Suzanne and I enjoyed the annual meetings, state and national, visiting with these colleagues, watching their families grow, with the good, the bad, and the ugly due to the ups and downs of the practice of architecture. But no matter how bad the practice became, the good outweighed it, to the point of the lows never coming to mind in thinking about my years of practice.


James R. Wooten, FAIA
Fort Worth

The following comment was left on txamagazine.org in response to the article "The Vanishing Sanger-Harris Mosaics," which appeared in the September/October 2016 issue of TA.

My father in law, Manlio D. Cavallini, and I were just talking about this project a few days ago. He and his brother, Publio Cavallini (now deceased), were heavily involved in this project. They furnished and assembled all of the mosaics to form the design by Dallas architect Thomas Stanley. This was the largest mosaic project they had ever worked on. Publio Cavallini, under Trafton Tile Co., then supervised the installation of this project. It was so coincidental reading your article, I just had to share this story with you. My father-in-law will be attending the conference with us in November, booth number 503. Please stop by and say hi!

Debra Cavallini
San Antonio

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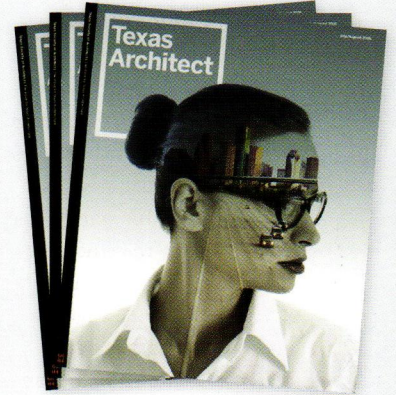
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Rice University Opens DS+R-Designed SI and Susie Morris Lounge

Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) has finally landed at Rice University. Like the flying saucer it vaguely resembles, the new student lounge at the Rice School of Architecture, dubbed the “raceboard” by its designers, is highly specific yet virtually siteless. Installed around a beautiful oak tree, this semi-monocoque fiberglass-and-foam bench lightly touches the ground at only four steel points, and gives the sense it would float away if not pinned to the site by the tree. The tree was the point of inspiration for the designer, who acted pro bono: Charles Renfro, AIA, of New York-based firm DS+R fondly remembered how the James Stirling addition to the architecture school established a courtyard around this stately tree, that remained under utilized by the students during his time at Rice. He hopes to change this with the SI and Susie Morris Lounge.

Renfro, a native of Baytown, started his studies in the Shepherd School of Music before transferring to architecture. One can only imagine the excitement, then disappointment, that ensued when DS+R was hired to design the new music building, only to be replaced by a traditionalist firm shortly into the commission. An official statement was released to *Texas Architect*:

DS+R successfully completed the programming and planning stage of Rice University’s new music building. During this phase of the project, the University decided to pursue a traditional design in keeping with its central academic group of buildings. For its subsequent schematic and design stages of the new building, DS+R determined that other firms would be better qualified to satisfy this requirement. The University and DS+R parted ways amicably and hope to work together again on a future project. Allan Greenberg Architect has been engaged for the subsequent design phases of the new music building.

The Morris Lounge isn’t meant to be a consolation prize; the commission was independent and shepherded by the inimitable Dean Sarah Whiting, Assoc. AIA. Renfro states that the piece is about a “beautiful kinship” between form and function, as he would similarly characterize the firm’s oeuvre. Undoubtedly it speaks to recent innovations in fabrication and construction, which were handled in collaboration with Atta in New York before on-site assembly. The form is compelling, sexy, and unforgiving, more assertive than the effete label given by Renfro on the day of its unveiling.

The bench is meant to encourage an entire class of 24 to congregate — though clearly they would not all be in conversation, as some would be upright and others in repose. Accommodating sitting and lounging positions, the bench welcomes a multiplicity of centrifugal bodies with backs to the oak that it encircles. Reclining, the occupant is cradled in the quietest corner of the courtyard, the sky passing above the very present RSA, a reminder of the Greek origin of the word “school,” transliterated *schole*, which means leisure. The nature of the piece seems to have mostly to do with individual occupation and diverging views, and it is not conducive to lectures. Renfro himself stated that it is really for people to find their “own space, own thought, and own direction” in the courtyard. He went on to say that people are “not quite sure how to use it — yet.” He tentatively offers that perhaps DS+R’s heretofore-chilly reception in Texas is exacerbated by suspicions that the firm might tend to challenge the status quo and pursue an idea over poetics. But if DS+R’s approach has been difficult for Houston so far, it may soon find a welcoming elsewhere in the state.

Jesse Hager, AIA, is a principal of CONTENT Architecture in Houston.



DS+R principal Charles Renfro, AIA, and Rice President David Leebron enjoy a moment of repose at the opening ceremony of the SI and Susie Morris Lounge.

The new visitor center (bottom right) will tuck respectfully into a grove of trees just downhill from the existing monument.



Richter Architects Unveils Visitor Center for Manila American Cemetery

The Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) in the Philippines is building a new visitor center designed by Richter Architects of Corpus Christi. The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts has approved the design, though a completion date had not been set at press time.

MACM is the United States' largest graveyard for its soldiers who fell in World War II. Occupying 152 acres on a plateau near the center of Manila, the former site of Fort William McKinley, it is the final resting place of 17,201 souls — American military and allied Filipino scouts — most of whom lost their lives in operations in New Guinea and the Philippines. The headstones are arrayed in 11 plots laid out in a semi-circular plan and interspersed with a wide variety of tropical plantings. At the center of the circle is a white masonry chapel adorned with sculptures. In front of this building, on a wide terrace, are two hemicycles containing 25 mosaic maps that depict the achievements of the American

armed forces in the Pacific, China, India, and Burma. Within the hemicycles are Trani limestone piers inscribed with the names of the 36,285 Americans who went missing in this theater of the war.

“When you visit the site it is just so stunning,” says Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA. “When you go there and you see all the marble crosses that are lined in that semi-circular configuration, and you walk down the path, you’re overwhelmed by the magnitude of loss and you start thinking about who were these people and what they gave up.”

The American Battle Monuments Commission, which oversees MACM, hired Richter Architects from a short list of three invited firms, on the strength of its proposal. Richter has completed a number of other visitor centers, including several for TxDOT and the Texas Historical Commission, and designed the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg. The Commission wanted a space to more explicitly tell the story of America’s involvement in the Pacific theater of World War II in general, and in the Battle for the Philippines in particular.

Richter’s proposal is minimal and respectful of the context. Sited in a grove of trees just down the slope from the memorial, its low profile does not obstruct the view. Flat slab concrete floors and roofs and steel framing keep the structure as transparent and unobtrusive as possible.

Expanses of glass connect the interior with the surrounding landscape, and elements of limestone on the facade reference the existing monument and gravestones. The 8,000-sf building includes exhibition space, a 50-seat theater, an office and reception area, and support functions.

“There are lots of subliminal messages conveyed by the cemetery,” says David Richter, FAIA. “It’s such a contrapposto to the urban environment around it. The visitors center is trying to put more explicit messages out there in addition to these subliminal messages so that somebody can walk away with a really clear sense of historical context.”

The exhibition design is part of Richter’s contract, and the firm has teamed with D|G Studio of Houston, which it worked with on the Museum of the Pacific War.

Aaron Seward is editor of *Texas Architect*.

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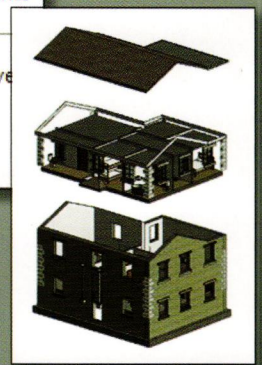
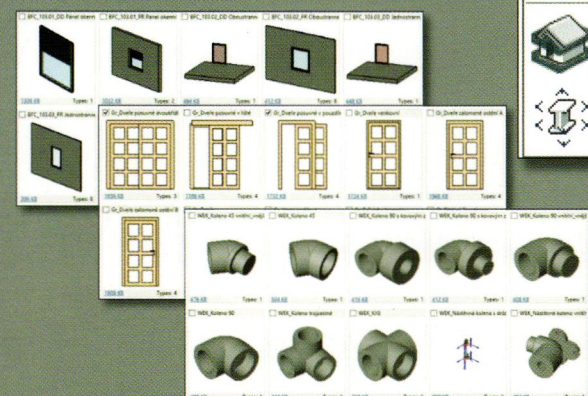
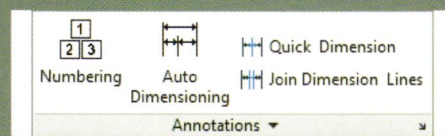
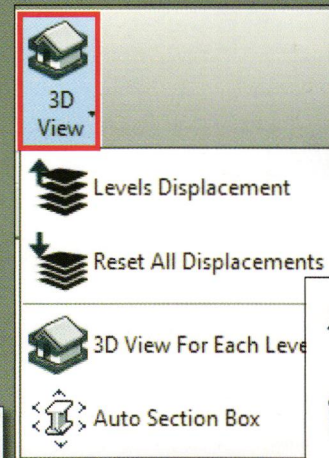
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Legge Lewis Legge Designs an Uplifting Observation Park for San Diego

San Diego, California, is one of the few cities in the United States that has an international airport at its urban core. When the city released an RFQ looking to create a small park at the end of one runway, close to downtown, Legge Lewis Legge rose to the challenge. The park, which sits at the confluence of different modes of public transportation, is a balance of architecture and public art installation.

Situated a block and a half from a trolley car station, the half-acre park serves as a gateway to the airport. “The park is the entry portal if you’re coming by public transit, so it becomes this interesting multi-modal experience where you’re coming by train and seeing planes take off and catching the bus to the airport,” describes Murray Legge, FAIA.

Legge Lewis Legge, an interdisciplinary collaborative based in Austin and New York City that focuses on art and architecture, responded to the shape of the site in developing its design: The observation deck took the form of a wing rising above the ground. Since

airports are usually surrounded by fences and barbed wire, there is often a physical barrier to watching the planes take off and land. By lifting the observation deck, those obstacles are removed. “On a practical level, it gets you off the ground to see the planes, but in the piece itself, we wanted to create this heightened spatial experience of lifting off the ground,” Legge says. The design was inspired by the sensation of lift-off, that first moment when an airplane is charging down the runway and the wheels leave the ground. Legge approached the design as an earthworks project.

One of the primary components is a cantilevered concrete arm that tapers to a blade-like edge. Hovering over the sidewalk, it lifts visitors high into the air. This presented some engineering challenges, as it is located on an old fill site. “The engineering team came up with this ingenious solution to create a back slab held by the earth,” Legge says. “There is a kind of contrast in the project between the concrete overhang of the structure and the earthbound landscape components.”

Thornton Tomasetti provided structural engineering services, and Atkins is the civil

engineer. Landscape architect Patricia Trauth, from Rick Engineering, filled in the site with native coastal plantings. BSE Engineering developed a lighting scheme that washes the park’s surfaces as opposed to shining in visitors’ eyes, keeping the view of the jets on their landing and takeoff runs clear at night.

The design was inspired by the San Diego environment as much as by the nature of flight. Since the city is a surfing town, there are subtle allusions to hydrodynamics in the earthwork forms.

By making an effort to incorporate its airport into the urban fabric, San Diego is taking a step that few cities have. According to Legge, “It’s really progressive on the part of this airport authority to think of the space around the airport as this exhilarating space.” The city is taking advantage of people’s inherent interest in the awe and wonder of flight and creating a park for people to have those experiences. The park, opening in summer 2017, is just one part of a master plan to create more of a connection between the city and the airport, integrating transportation seamlessly into San Diego’s core.

Alyssa Morris is web editor of *Texas Architect*.



The observation deck rises from the ground in a swooping gesture, lifting people above the fences and barbed wire that obscure the view of the airport.

Q&A with Nick Srnicek

Nick Srnicek is a UK-based theorist and co-author, with Alex Williams, of the book “Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work” (Verso 2015). The book is at once a critique of recent leftist movements, such as Occupy Wall Street, and an imagining of a near future in which robots do almost all jobs, the changes this will force on the labor market, and the ways in which the economy and culture could adapt to ensure not just a functioning society, but an ideal one that offers more opportunities for individual happiness than does our current condition.

The architecture world has picked up on many of these ideas, and as a result, the Texas A&M School of Architecture invited Srnicek to lecture on September 19, making A&M the first American university to host the theorist. *Texas Architect* Editor Aaron Seward interviewed Srnicek before the event about some of his ideas and how they relate to architecture.

Aaron Seward: Do you have an elevator speech of the theme of your book?

Nick Srnicek: The first half is a critique of the way in which leftist movements have been acting for the past 20 years. Why — despite millions of people coming out for things like Occupy — have they not been able to make any massive changes? The second half of the book then says: Right now we’re in a situation where there’s a mass wave of automation that’s about to hit; it’s going to upset the labor market; it might not lead to mass unemployment, but it is going to cause a lot of people changing jobs. So how do you respond to that in a way that doesn’t just say we don’t want robots, but instead says: Well, how do we actually make use of these changes in a way that helps everybody? So that’s the aim of the book: to say, well, here’s what we can do, here’s the demands, and here’s the strategy for actually attaining it.

And the demands are from leftist social ideas?

They’re sort of leftist, but I think a lot of people can get on board with them whether or not they’re leftist. One is a demand for full automation, getting rid of the jobs right now that are cheap to do, having them automated. The second demand is for a reduced working

week as a way to spread the work around more equitably. The third demand is a universal basic income — so, providing everyone with basic means to live, where they don’t have to rely upon a job in order to survive. And the fourth [demand involves] moving away from the work ethic toward something else. So, [diminishing] the centrality of work to our identity, to who we think we are, to the ways in which we meet people and socialize, [might reduce] the sense that the only thing that’s valuable in life is a job — if you’re not working at a particular job then you’re useless, you’re a bum — moving away from that cultural sentiment.

Do you think that technology is going to be a means of effecting a cultural change that ideology itself has never been able to accomplish?

No, I think technology is going to force certain changes on people and the way in which we respond is entirely up in the air. It could be done in that way, which is more progressive and allows everybody to come on board. It could also be a way in which the fewer people who are still in work hate the people who aren’t working even more. So the same technological changes could lead to completely different outcomes. This is why it has to be a critical

project, and this is why we have to be thinking about it now rather than 10 to 20 years down the line when it’s too late.

In a world where almost everything is automated, there’s a lower demand for a workforce, yet we have an increasing population. As you say, we have to break down our cultural dependence on work to give ourselves identity and self worth, but what do people do?

Part of my response to this is always to say people want to do something, they want to have some sort of project in their life. I think just channeling that into jobs is a really poor way to express that desire. So people stocking shelves in a grocery store is not a very good way to satisfy that desire to work. I think most people would find something that they want to do. There’s a really interesting example in Spain where a civil servant basically [expletive] off for six years, wasn’t doing any work whatsoever and was still getting paid, but what he was doing was actually going back and educating himself. He was reading Hegel and all this philosophy, Spinoza and stuff, and becoming a philosophical expert in his spare time. That seems to me to be one of the options, [that] people have the capacity to go and do their hobby and go and get educated.



PHOTO BY JOHN PETERS, TAMU

They can stay at home and take care of a family, whether it be young children or elderly parents; they could start a new business; they can do all sorts of things, and I think just giving people a basic amount of money where they can survive allows them more free time to have that choice. It's not going to be luxurious; it's not going to be you on holidays all the time, but it is enough that you don't have to worry about working a job.

This is where architecture, I think, comes in. You have to design a world that's affordable, that can provide decent housing for people who aren't spending gobs of money on custom homes.

I don't know how 3-D printing has been taken up in the architecture world, but it seems to me there have been some interesting developments there in terms of the provision of cheap housing, and housing that can be rapidly built. I don't think it's there at the moment, but the idea is there to be able to do that sort of thing.

The architectural design field has been enabled more and more by technology — design technology as well as fabrication technology — and the link between design and fabrication has become almost seamless. But design itself is still something that people do. In this new world, as you imagine it, some people will still be doing imaginative jobs, like architecture, right?

It's not a world without work. The title includes "A World Without Work" — it's a bit polemical — but obviously people will still be doing work. A lot of creative work is not well done by algorithms. Machines can't do that sort of stuff, so we still have a role for humans there. We also have a role for humans in situations that involve a lot of social context, social cues that can't be picked up by machines. So care work is a major one here, work that requires a lot of emotional labor. This involves a lot of healthcare work, a lot of social care work. That stuff, you're still going to need people to do it. The idea is that people don't have to work 40 hours a week; they don't have to work five days a week. As a first step, our suggestion is moving to a three-day weekend. This has not only physical and mental health benefits; it also has environmental benefits. People are commuting back and forth to work one less day a week; they're not turning on office lights and things like this. So the amount of energy consumption that can be saved by taking off one day a week is

quite immense. But they will still be working 15 hours a week, 20 hours a week. So work doesn't disappear completely.

How do your ideas tie in with general accelerationist philosophy?

Accelerationism is, I would say, the idea that the way in which we want to solve the problems of capitalism is not to destroy capitalism, but instead to build upon the best elements of capitalism. It's a traditional Marxist idea. Marx thought capitalism did immensely great things. He thought it had increased the productive power of humankind to an unprecedented degree, and that's exactly what we think as well. We think that capitalism has enabled us to build machines that need very few humans to produce a whole lot of stuff. So we have all this productive power; the question is, do we destroy capitalism entirely, or do we use these material bases to build something else? So accelerationism is that idea that we go through capitalism rather than try to revert to something different. That means it sees the positive elements of technology. It also recognizes that the way things are headed is not looking very good, to the average person. We're in favor of an emphasis on systemic structural thinking about where we're headed, which at least among the left has been forgotten recently. [On the left,] you've got a whole lot of people talking about individual elements of our current condition, but not really connecting them all together.

Do you see this new world as one in which there is more centralized government control?

One of the nice things about the post-work world is it's an argument for giving people more free time to choose exactly what they want to do individually, rather than having a government or a company telling you what to do. So there's a libertarian aspect, in that sense, giving people more individual freedom. It does rely, though, on a government providing basic needs to exist, so basic income is the biggest example of this. It needs to be provided by something like a central government that's able to tax the wealthiest people and redistribute that money amongst everybody else. I see the central government as a platform to enable individuals to flourish and have freedom.

How do you effect a change in which the wealthiest people give up their power?

That's the million dollar question. Part of the answer has to be that it's a long-term project. In

the book, one of the chapters is on how neoliberalism arose, this resurgence of free-market thinking in the 1970s and onwards. You can trace it back to the 1930s, when a small group of people was discussing how to get free-market thinking back in when you're surrounded by Keynesians and social democracy. They spent four decades building up an entire ideological infrastructure: long-term ideas, big utopian thinking, and also piecemeal policy proposals for what exactly should be done by government if they wanted to implement this stuff. Their idea was to change the common [perception by] people in government, the ruling classes, the managing classes: change what they thought government was for and how the state should be ruled. That was a long-term project, and I think the left has to do a similar thing, to really get people to rethink what is work for, what is an income for, what is the government for, and what is freedom, as well? I think one of the parts I'm proud about in the book is that leftists don't normally talk about freedom. It's normally a concern of the right to advocate and defend freedom. But the sort of freedom that gets defended by the right is a sort of formal freedom, where you're formally free to run for the president of the United States, you're formally free to buy whatever you want, but in actuality most people can't buy a mansion, most people can't become president of the United States because they just don't have the money. So there's this distinction between a formal freedom, where you're legally allowed to do something, but then the concrete freedom to actually do something. The right emphasizes the formal one, and the left should be emphasizing the concrete, real freedom of giving people the means to be able to do these sorts of things — not necessarily buy a mansion, but recognize that wealth inequality and income inequality are issues of freedom.

Do you see national borders disappearing?

We talk about borders being a way to deal with the problem of unemployment. If robots are going to cause more unemployment, or more under-employment, it's likely that we'll get harsher and harsher borders; we'll get more and more xenophobia. So borders figure as the negative response to the problems that we're pointing out. Our preference would be for open borders, which it turns out mainstream economists actually really like as well, so it's not a radical idea at all; it's politically radical, but economically mainstream.

Calendar

NOVEMBER

Thursday 3

CONFERENCE

Through Saturday 5

Convergence: Texas Society of Architects 77th Annual Convention and Design Expo, "Convergence"

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center

San Antonio

texasarchitects.org

Friday 4

EXHIBITION OPENING

Reclaimed by Nature

Blue Star Contemporary
116 Blue Star

San Antonio

bluestarart.org

LECTURE

Camilla Mileto & Fernando Vegas, Mileto & Vegas Arquitectos, Valencia
5:00 p.m.

UT Austin School of Architecture

Goldsmith Hall

Austin

soa.utexas.edu

Saturday 5

EXHIBITION OPENING

Horizon Lines

Amon Carter Museum of American Art
3501 Camp Bowie Blvd.

Fort Worth

cartermuseum.org

Monday 7

LECTURES

Daniel Abramson: Obsolescence
5:30 p.m.

Rice School of Architecture

Anderson Hall

Houston

arch.rice.edu

Perry Kulper

5:45 p.m.

Preston Green Auditorium
Langford Architecture Center

Texas A&M

College Station

one.arch.tamu.edu

Wednesday 9

LECTURE

Margaret Griffin: Back to Basics? or Hybrid Forms
11:00 a.m.

UT Austin School of Architecture

Goldsmith Auditorium

Austin

soa.utexas.edu

EVENT

13th Annual Topping Out Networking Event & Awards Program
Dallas Arboretum, Rosine Hall

Dallas

aiafw.org

Monday 14

LECTURE

Georgeen Theodore
5:45 p.m.

Preston Green Auditorium

Langford Architecture Center

Texas A&M

College Station

one.arch.tamu.edu

Tuesday 15

CONFERENCE

Through Friday 18
Past Forward: A Conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

George R. Brown Convention Center

Houston

aiahouston.org

Friday 18

EXHIBITION OPENING

Holy Barbarians: Beat Culture on the West Coast
Menil Collection

1533 Sul Ross Street

Houston

menil.org

Saturday 19

EXHIBITION OPENING

FOCUS: Lorna Simpson
The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

3200 Darnell Street

Fort Worth

themodern.org

Tuesday 22

EXHIBITION OPENING

Monika Sosnowska:

Habitat

The Contemporary Austin
700 Congress Avenue

Austin

thecontemporaryaustin.org

Monday 28

EXHIBITION CLOSING

Candela's Shells

UT Austin School of Architecture

Goldsmith Auditorium

Austin

soa.utexas.edu

DECEMBER

Thursday 8

EXHIBITION OPENING

University of Houston ID+ Exhibition

Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design

Houston

aiahouston.org

EVENT

AIA Dallas Holiday Party & Chapter Awards

aiaDallas.org

FEATURED



Sightings: Michael Dean
Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas
nashersculpturecenter.org

THROUGH FEBRUARY 5

London artist Michael Dean will create new works specific to the Nasher site in his signature sculptural style. Focused on themes of communication and writing, his sculptures are often installed on top of self-published texts composed of gibberish. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in the United States.



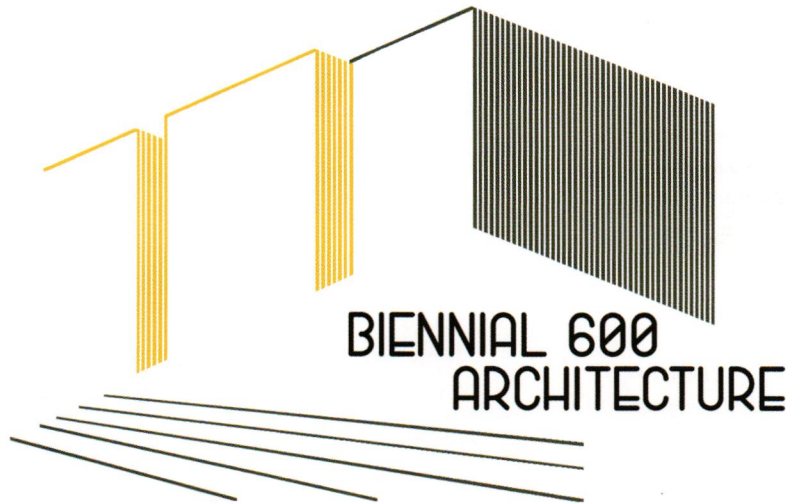
Dorothy Hood: The Color of Being/EI Color del Ser
Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi

artmuseumofsouthtexas.org

THROUGH JANUARY 8

The Art Museum of South Texas mounts the first retrospective of the work of Dorothy Hood, a major 20th century American modernist born in Texas. Her work is in the permanent collection of more than 30 museums. Hood's large-scale, abstract paintings are vibrant and influenced by the many years she spent living in Mexico among artists like Frida Kahlo. ■

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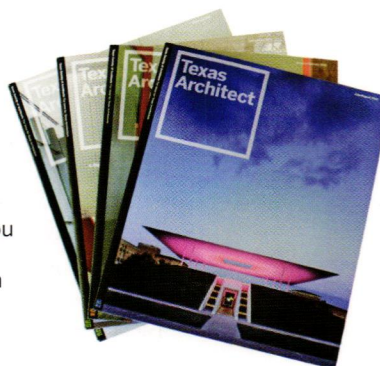
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Products

by Rita Catinella Orrell

Office spaces can be a lot more interactive these days thanks to a range of new products including height-adjustable table systems, upholstered rocking stools, and furnishings intended to be rearranged like pieces on a stage set.



Hack
Vitra
vitra.com

Designed by Konstantin Grcic, the Hack table system is intended for high-tech companies that require easily reconfigurable spaces. Offered in a raw oriented strand board finish, each Hack unit can fold up into a flat “box” in just a few steps, making it easy to dismantle, transport, or store. The height-adjustable feature offers standing, sitting, and lounge options controlled with a recessed grip or crank. In its lowest position, Hack can even be outfitted with cushions for use as a sofa.



Rockwell Unscripted
Knoll
knoll.com

Based on David Rockwell’s experience designing award-winning hospitality, entertainment, and public spaces, Rockwell Unscripted is a collection of 30 furnishings in six categories that allow designers to envision the office as a stage set that can be arranged in endless configurations. Unscripted features an array of freestanding, architecturally savvy basic forms that can be positioned in various ways. The group includes walls, screens, steps, tables, seating, modular storage elements, and accessories that can create experiences ranging from amphitheaters for presentations to quiet retreats.



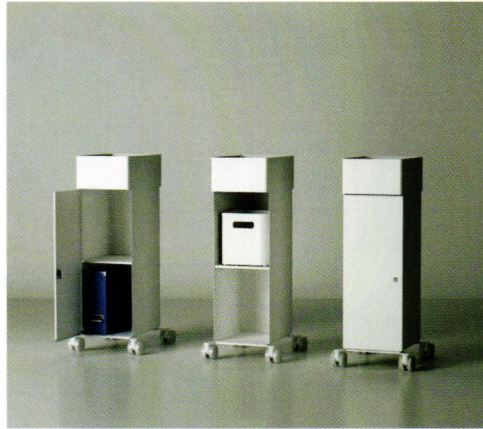
Graph Conference Chair
Wilkhahn
wilkhahn.us

Graph is a height-adjustable conference chair designed by the Stuttgart-based design firm Jehs+Laub for Wilkhahn. Graph’s striking, sculptural shape was inspired by the idea of cutting through a seat shell horizontally and vertically and then reassembling it in a different way. Despite its slender shape, the steel seat and backrest frames feature wave springs, padding, and additional cushioning. The chairs are upholstered with leather or high-quality textiles from the manufacturer’s fabric collection.



Steelcase
Brody WorkLounge Enhancements
steelcase.com

In the Brody WorkLounge from Steelcase, embedded technologies like an occupancy sensor provide feedback for designers and facility managers while indicating to other employees that the space is occupied. Other features include a heated seat and back — ideal for the Number One office complaint — and optional privacy or extension screens. Brody WorkLounge units can be coupled to create a variety of configurations, and they come in a range of finishes and textiles. Made primarily of wood, fabric, and steel, the unit measures 42-in. wide by 60-in. long.



Magnuson
HOLD Storage
magnusongroup.com

HOLD Workspace and Collaborative Carts are a family of three contemporary side table/storage carts for personal workspaces, conference rooms, retail, healthcare, hospitality, and other spaces. Designed by Valencia-based Estudio Enblanc, the carts are made in Spain and come, with or without casters, in three sizes. They can be used for temporary storage and personal items or as an alternative to a mobile caddy beneath a desk. The painted steel carts have a rectangular open-box frame with one or two fixed shelves and a methacrylate top.



BuzziSpace
BuzziBalance
buzzi.space

A solution for creative hubs in offices, hospitality, or homes, BuzziBalance is a family of multifunctional furniture for work, well-being, play, and collaboration. Designed by the Austrian-based 13&9 Design, BuzziBalance includes a solid oak rocking board for users to stand and balance upon, or an upholstered rocking pouf to help stimulate the mind and body during a creative session. The rocking board comes with the option of adding an acoustical seating element upholstered in any BuzziFabric material.



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2016 Studio Awards

The Texas Society of Architects Studio Awards Program recognizes real or theoretical unbuilt projects that demonstrate excellence in design. Submissions from students and practitioners are judged on equal footing, and projects of all types are considered together. Each year, the jury sifts through the entries looking for standouts that embody strong ideas critical to contemporary practice, resolve them thoroughly, and present them clearly.

The 2016 Studio Awards jurors met on Wednesday, August 17, at the New York City office of Diller Scofidio + Renfro to deliberate 45 entries representing a wide swath of project types — everything from boathouses to prison complexes. The jury comprised three DS+R architects:



Charles Renfro

AIA, principal
DS+R, Rice School of
Architecture alumnus,
native of Baytown



Brian Tabolt

associate DS+R, assis-
tant professor adjunct at
Cooper Union, visiting
critic at Syracuse NYC,
and a 2009-10 Peter
Reyner Banham Fellow



Sean Gallagher

senior associate,
director of sustain-
able design DS+R,
and faculty Columbia
University Graduate
School of Architec-
ture, Planning and
Preservation

A Word from Charles Renfro:

It was a pleasure and honor to jury the Texas Society of Architects Studio Awards. As a Texan and Rice alumnus, I keep close tabs on the work being done in the state and have been pleased to see the Texas architectural scene emerging on the world stage. I also remember, growing up in the 1970s in Houston, the absurd ambition of many of the projects that surrounded me. The Astrodome — an air-conditioned stadium. How amazing! Its neighbor, AstroWorld — an air-conditioned amusement park. Who woulda thought?!

These may not be the most environmentally or urbanistically sensitive projects, but they made the mythology of Texas real. While we have paused to understand how our work fits into the ecology of our cities and our world, I encourage architects in Texas (a distinction I include myself in) to keep the myth of Texas alive. There are few places in the world that can claim as much diversity, education, capital, land, ambition, and pride as Texas. This stew should give rise to some of the most compelling architecture and urbanism of the 21st century. The following projects are examples of such an ambition. Congratulations to the winners.

Studio Awards

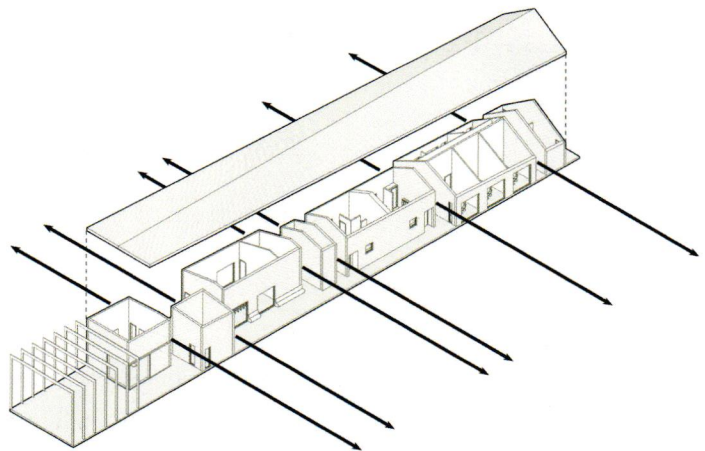
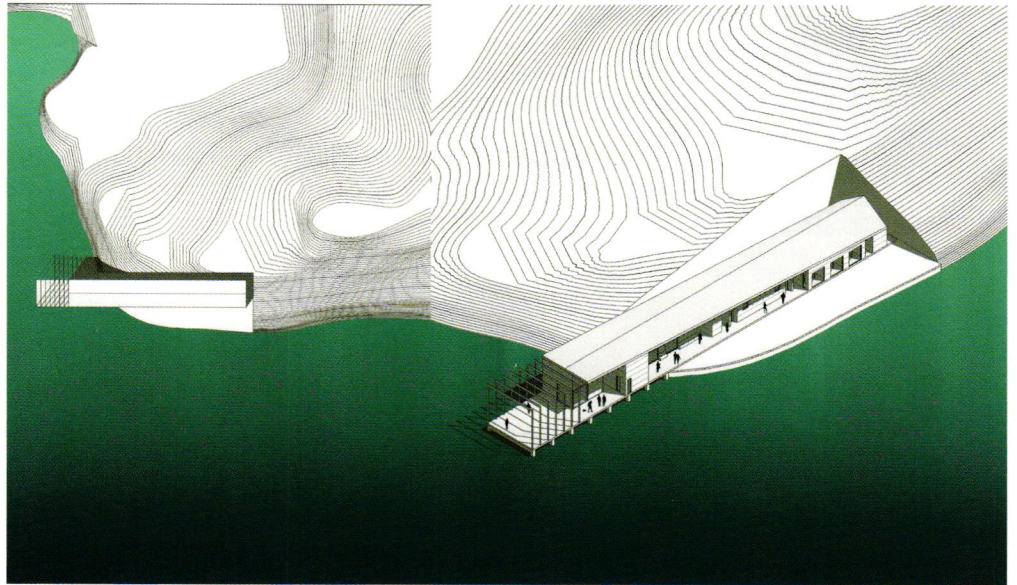
Element House, Walden Pond, MA

Ricardo A. Munoz, Page, UT Arlington CAPPA

From the Jury:

The house is a simple, elegant solution that takes advantage of its position alongside and into the water — it gently opens its roof toward the view in a gesture that captures the glory of the site.

Element House derives its organization from an evolution of Thoreau's cabin to a modern place of shelter. The gable structure represents the historical memory of built structures on the site, while the rectangular frames on the opposite end of the project represent the unknown future structures that could occupy these grounds. The materiality of the structure also recalls the simple materials used in the famous cabin that occupied these woods. Visitors will come to Walden to experience nature firsthand, as Thoreau did, and to find what simplicity and solitude can teach. The program is distributed among a series of small structures, encouraging the visitor to experience the outdoors when walking from space to space. These structures share a single continuous roof that, along with the walls of the small structures, caps the narrow spaces in between them, framing views of the woods or the water. Windows in the enclosed spaces also provide living portraits of the surroundings, calling to mind beautiful landscape paintings. The serenity and stillness of Walden provide real yet ever-changing vignettes through these large windows that will linger in visitors' minds long afterwards.



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Studio Awards

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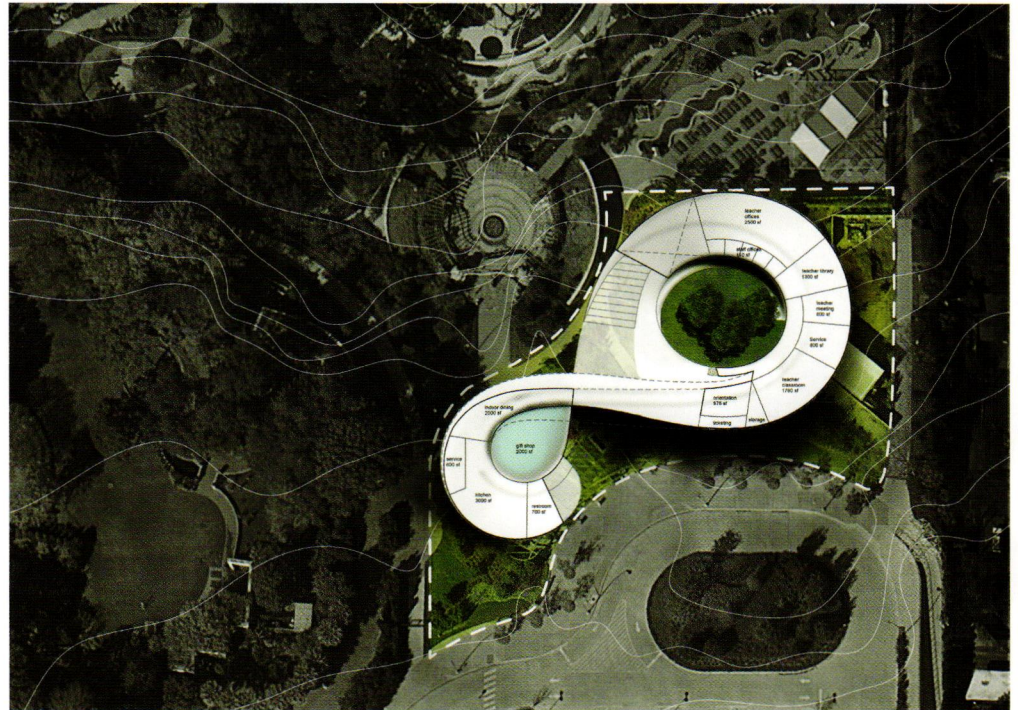
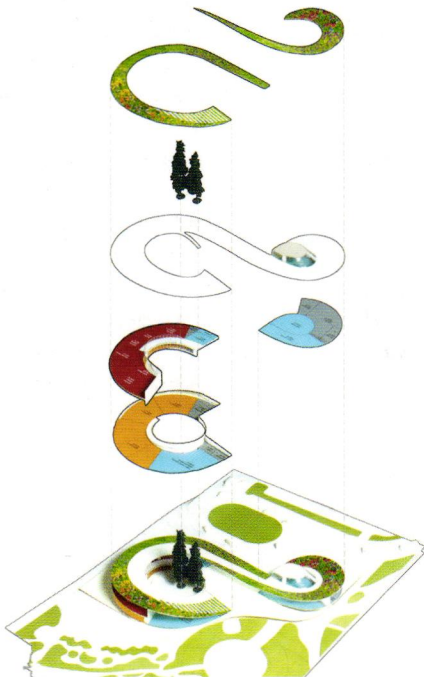
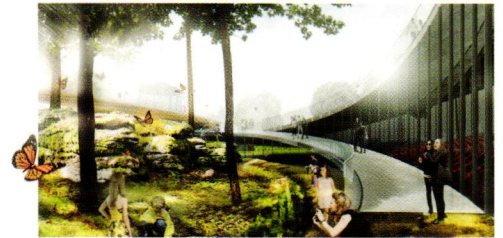
Perkins+Will, Dallas

From the Jury:

It is made out of the park, but is not afraid to be a bold piece of architecture. It lets the cyclical seasonality of nature determine its figure-eight form in an elegant overlay of program and site.

Acting as a clear gateway to the Arboretum, the Garden Education Center is a space all visitors pass through. This proposal is visibly noninvasive as it burrows into the ground or mounds up into the air without dominating the site. The loop form offers an interesting perspective: Anyone that walks a full loop will have traversed a full 360 degrees and been delivered an informative panorama of the entire site. The essence of the concept is that the cycles of life and the cycles of learning are bound together as mind meets nature in a poetic and memorable way.

Looking at the cycle of nature (the seasons) and the cycle of life (from a child visitor to an elder showing a grandchild the Arboretum), and considering the core mission of the GEC to inspire learning, the architects felt the building should clearly manifest cycles: cycles not simply in a building, but also as an experience, a place, and a destination. To this end, they proposed a figure-eight loop form that acts as a “scaffold” for any number of activities. Rising to two stories in some areas, the design is conceived as a single level wrapped around nature. Highlighting the binary relationship between the natural and the manmade, the structure supports both scientific and observational learning. There could be a weather station above the gift shop; water may be collected in a spiraling trough; a shade structure could add to the comfort of the rooftop gardens. One scenario the architects imagine is a child walking along the loop, gathering climate information, harvesting a vegetable, and entering into a classroom lab, only to return to the loop and plant a new seed.





Oujda Stadium, Oujda Morocco

WW Architecture, Houston

From the Jury:

The stadium doesn't try to mimic the adjacent mountains, but operates in opposition to them like great minimalist land art. The gap between the upper and lower seating banks brings the landscape into the stadium in a sublime way, not overpowering the play on the field but somehow underscoring its primal beauty.

This is my soccer club. The stadium is where I will go to see my team, alongside tens of thousands of my compatriots.

The stadium is a matter of immense scale and extreme intimacy. These scales are not tamed here; they are combined to exploit their differences.

Infrastructure — roads, parking, and the control over the grounds — is integrated into a new network of micro landscapes, walkways, and places to sit, meet, play, gather, and walk.

The new Grand Stade d'Oujda will play many roles. It will be home to the Mouloudia Soccer Club. Its grounds will form a vibrant new public space, both during games and when the stadium is not in use. Its luminous ring will be an important symbol for the Rif region in northeastern Morocco, for those going to the stadium as well as for passersby making their way to and from Oujda.

The stadium is first and foremost a sequence of perceptions: a hovering object, a ring lightly tethered to the landscape, a series of tailored entry points, an elevated promenade pressed between the upper and lower bowls of seating, and, finally, a single room holding a teeming crowd of soccer fans.

A shimmering form set into an evanescent horizon. A room for 45,000 people: 90,000 eyes focused on one foot meeting a ball. In the middle of a vast landscape.





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Confluence Park, San Antonio

Lake|Flato, San Antonio

From the Jury:

The fluid shapes of these pavilions have been with us since the height of postwar Modernism, but they are unexpected in a public park. Parks are places that should be architecturally aspirational to introduce great design to a broad swath of the population.

Confluence Park provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the ecology of the South Texas region, demonstrate the value of natural resources, and foster environmental stewardship and education in a traditionally underserved area adjoining the San Antonio River.

With education as its core purpose, Confluence Park is an intricate teaching tool that will inspire our community to become more involved with the river and practice sustainable habits while gaining a greater understanding of Texas ecotypes. At every corner, visitors will find an opportunity to learn through observation, engagement, and active participation. Play areas are designed for learning and exploration. A photovoltaic array provides 100 percent of the energy use for the project on a yearly basis. A site-wide water catchment system collects rainwater and feeds it into an underground water storage tank. The BHP Billiton Pavilion provides shade and shelter while simultaneously helping visitors understand both the cycle of water at Confluence Park and how this cycle relates directly to the San Antonio River Watershed. The pavilion speaks of the confluence of water systems and is oriented to point directly toward the junction of the San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek.

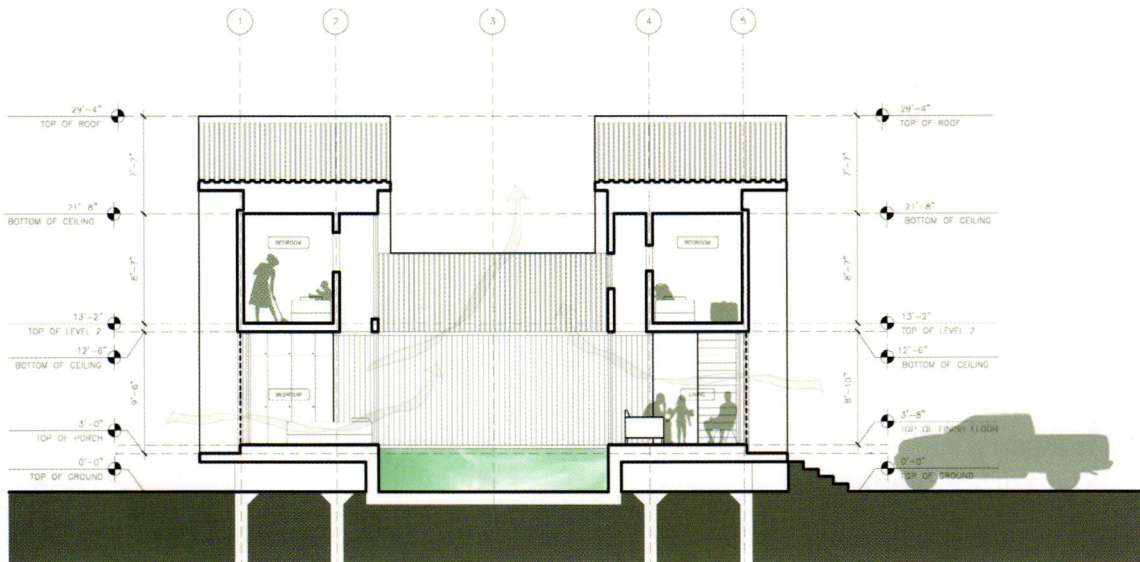
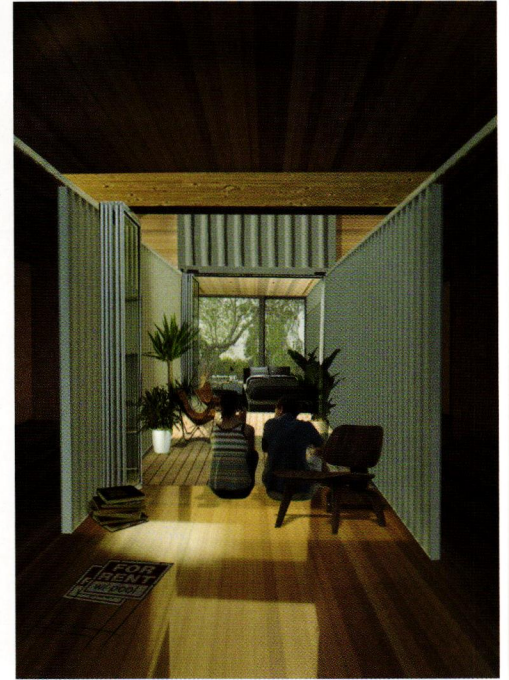


SITE PLAN



Programmatic elements and educational features include opportunities to experience and learn more about five ecotypes that occur in the region: the Grassland ecotype, the Trans Pecos / Chihuahuan Desert ecotype; the Texas Oak Conservatory ecotype; the Texas Live Oak Savannah; and the San Antonio River Improvement Project (SARIP) ecotype — the species of plants to be used along the river as part of the San Antonio River Authority's ongoing restoration project.

Studio Awards



This O House, Houston

Zui Lig Ng, University of Houston

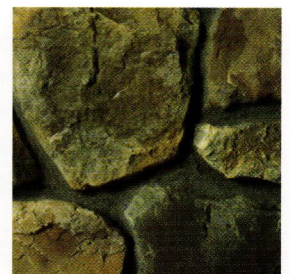
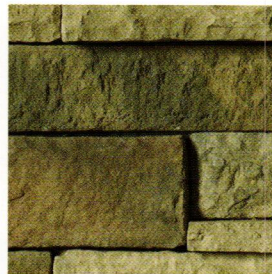
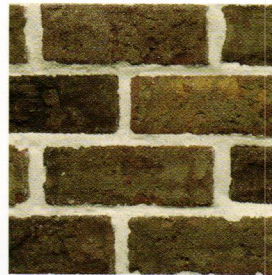
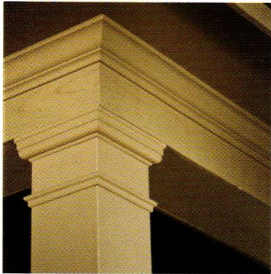
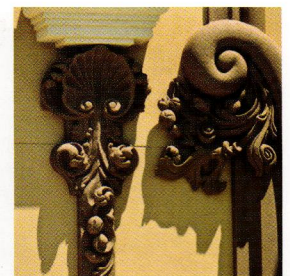
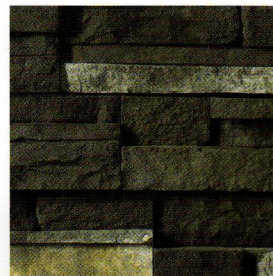
From the Jury:

We all love a dogtrot house and find the endless riffs on its simple parti exciting. This one, made with discarded shipping containers from Houston's ship channel, weaves together history and contemporary conditions, bringing new life to both container and typology.

This O House proposes an affordable and sustainable design alternative to current gated

townhouse developments in Houston's Third Ward. It also seeks to address the increasing student housing and parking needs of two major universities in the neighborhood. First of all, the three-bedroom, two-bathroom house uses retired shipping containers, build-it-yourself options, low energy bills, and partial rental opportunities to lower the cost and promote a more sustainable model of homeownership. The partial-rent-out option helps provide much-needed accommodations to university students and faculty. This hybridized living arrangement

revitalizes the neighborhood. Secondly, the 1,000-sf house also sustains the identity of the neighborhood, as it incorporates a porch, a typology that has encouraged interaction within the community for generations. While this semiprivate outdoor space promotes community involvement, an internal courtyard provides a private social space for residents. Finally, This O House strives to be environmentally friendly. Passive ventilation, recycled building materials, and energy-efficient building systems keep electricity consumption at a minimum.



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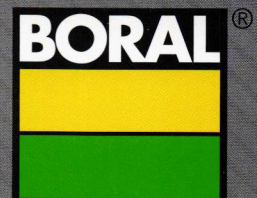
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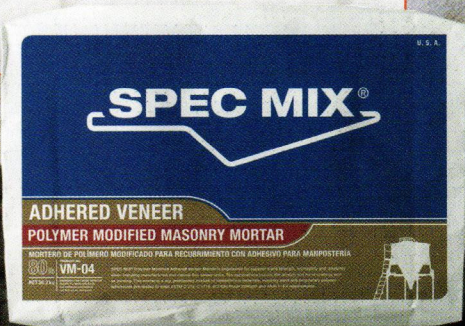
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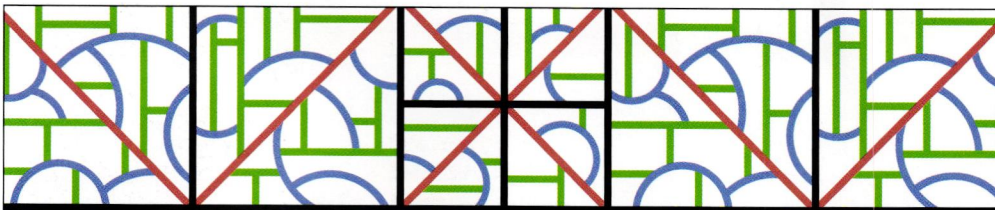
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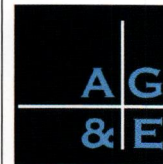
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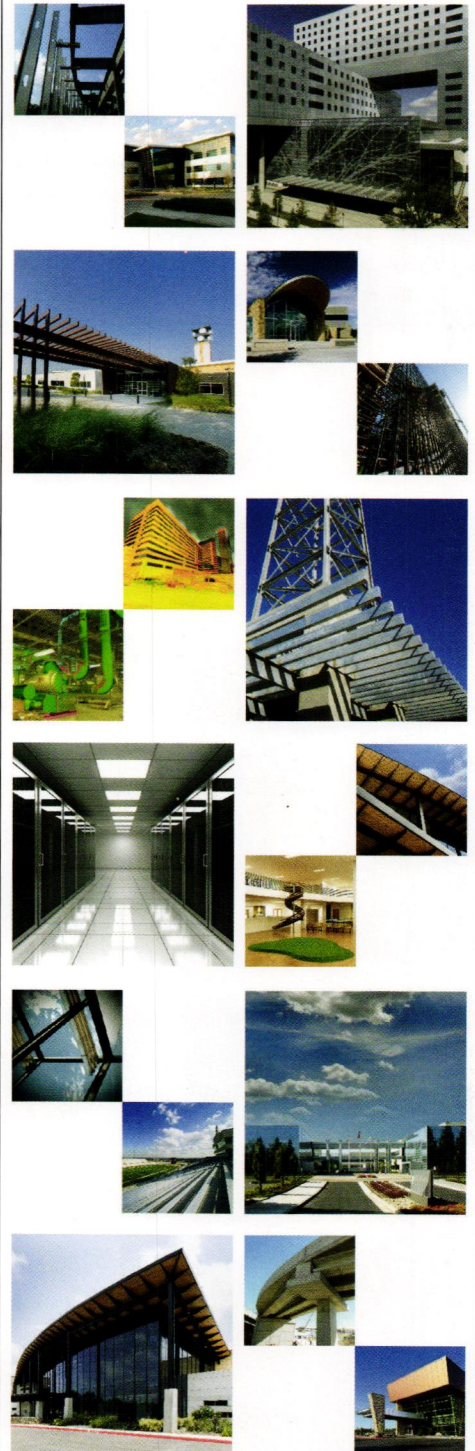
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In January 1950, Philip Johnson showed up unannounced at a dinner held by the Houston chapter of the AIA. At that time, Johnson was head of the department of architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and had recently completed the groundbreaking Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut. His appearance in Houston was recorded in the first-ever issue of *Texas Architect* (January/February 1950). “Freedom of the Houston architect to build as he pleases was commended highly by Philip Johnson,” the article begins. It continues with a quote:

“‘Houston is marvelous and inspiring,’ Johnson said. ‘Where else can a man walk three blocks from a skyscraper to a museum and fall into a mud hole?’”

The irony in Johnson’s statement is clear, and what it says about public space in Texas cities (those mud-hole-rife three blocks between the skyscraper and the museum) can be easily extrapolated to today. By and large, there is a cultural and institutional reluctance to invest in the public realm, rendering the spaces between our buildings — that essential glue in the urban fabric — not just mud-holed and weed-choked, but often downright hostile to human passage or habitation.

The stories in this feature section on public architecture are notable exceptions to that general rule. We hear about significant municipal investment in creating walkable urbanism in El Paso, and the truly inspiring public-private partnership that has turned Houston’s Buffalo Bayou Park into one of the city’s top greenspaces. We also look into three publicly oriented building projects — a theater and art space in Houston, a fire station in Dallas, and a public restroom in Austin — that exhibit the value design can bring to our experience of the cities we call home.

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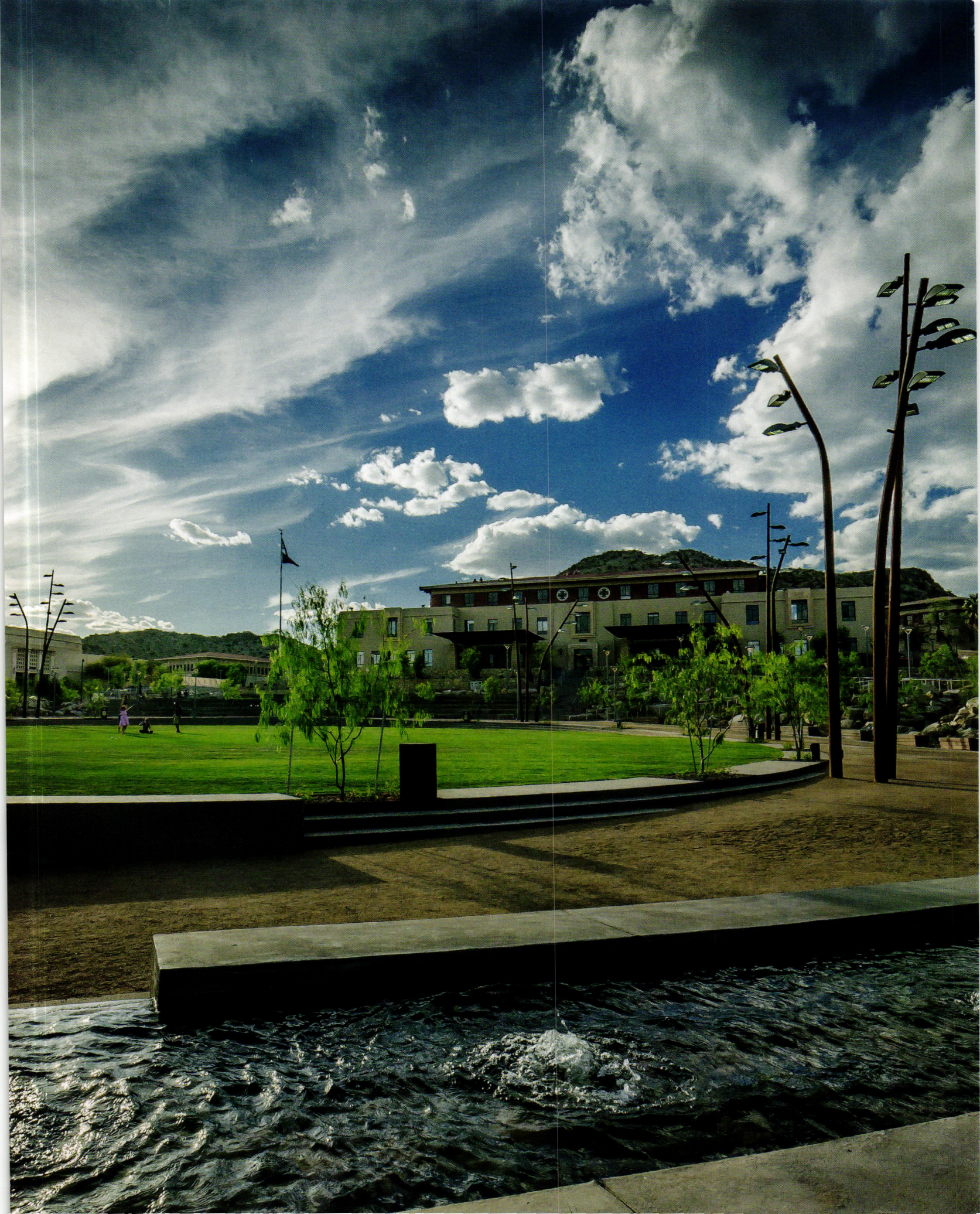
Heron Creek Restroom
Mell Lawrence Architects
Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA

Western Walk

THE CITY OF EL PASO QUALITY OF LIFE BOND PROGRAM, PASSED IN 2012, HAS INSTIGATED A NUMBER OF PUBLIC PROJECTS THAT ARE TRANSFORMING TEXAS' WESTERNMOST CITY INTO A VITAL, URBAN-SCALED ZONE, RICH WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK, RECREATION, AND CULTURE.

by Nestor Infanzon, FAIA, with Phyllis Sheridan Infanzon, AIA

Photographer Paulo Peres, AIA



Previous Centennial Plaza, designed by Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, is at the core of The University of Texas at El Paso campus.

This page San Jacinto Plaza in downtown El Paso was designed by SWA Group. The landscape, lawn spaces, canopies, sculptures, and street cafe provide spaces for the public in the center of the city.



El Paso: The United States' 19th largest city and Texas' sixth largest. Nationally recognized as the safest city in the United States for the past four years running and one of only a handful of truly binational cities in the world, El Paso del Norte occupies the corner farthest west in the Lone Star State. El Paso is a distinctive city with a unique heritage, a diverse architectural history, and a challenging yet evolving urban planning model.

For a lot of folks outside of Texas, it comes as a surprise that El Paso is closer to such western cities as Phoenix and San Diego than to Texas' main population centers — Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio. El Paso sits in the midst of the vast Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem and is surrounded by mountains, wildlife, and long stretches of open, undeveloped land. This region of more than 2.7 million inhabitants constitutes one of the largest bilingual/binational workforces in the Western Hemisphere.

Established in 1659 by Fray García de San Francisco, El Paso became a key destination along the central pathway of the “Camino Real,” or Kings Highway connecting Mexico City to Santa Fe, and beyond to other Spanish territories. It was during the United States' territorial expansion toward the Pacific coast that El Paso served as a major transit center for traders and New World migrants. Currently, the population hovers at around 700,000 American citizens. Along with its Mexican neighbor Ciudad Juárez, truly a twin sister city, from which it is separated by the width of the Rio Grande, the population rises to almost 3 million.

Mid-20th century El Paso grew and thrived like many large American cities. More recently, again as in most of the U.S., El Paso's citizens have suffered financial hardships and material fluctuations. The economic downturn along with escalating challenges with the illegal drug trade, caused many professionals to leave, albeit temporarily: There appears to be no substitute for El Paso, if recent return migration is any indication. Talented individuals who have experience with other urban lifestyles, opportunities, and amenities, have returned, infusing their city with a new sense of purpose and vision.

This newfound vitality led El Paso's leadership to pass the City of El Paso's 2012 Quality of Life Bond Program, intended to bring many needed improvements to the city. On November 6, 2012, El Paso voters approved \$470 million worth of improvements for parks, libraries, museums, downtown amenities, El Paso International Airport, and the El Paso Zoo. These funds included money for a new multi purpose performing arts center (\$180 million); the master plan for a new eastside regional park and New Eastside Regional Recreational Center and Natatorium (\$48 million); a new downtown park, San Jacinto Plaza (\$5.3 million); multiple improvement projects at the El Paso Zoo, including a new Chihuahuan Desert Habitat; a new baseball stadium for minor league team “Chihuahuas”; and a sports arena for downtown. When added to the private sector improvements and projects for U.S. Army base Fort Bliss, Texas Tech University, and The University of Texas at El Paso, it amounts to a regional transformation.

The changes began early in March 2010, when the City of El Paso commissioned Dover, Kohl & Partners to create a detailed comprehensive plan for the city, referred to as “Plan El Paso.” City Manager Joyce Wilson led the effort to establish a mandatory “Smart Code” ordinance mandating, among other things, that all new projects comply with guidelines delineated by smart growth ideas established by the Congress of New Urbanism. It was an effort by the city to create density, promote walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use pedestrian-oriented projects, reduce dependence on automobiles, and develop more green open spaces throughout the region.

During the same period, Texas Tech Health Science Center became a singular entity apart from the Texas Tech University Lubbock Campus. The newly instituted Paul J. Foster School of Medicine matriculated its first class, and the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) was preparing to celebrate its centennial. These efforts, combined with Fort Bliss' multi-billion dollar expansion program for housing, hospital, and educational facilities, created a distinctive environment for growth and for projects that embraced quality of life and urban strategies. The following projects stand out as El Paso transforms itself.

San Jacinto Plaza

The renovation of San Jacinto Plaza is one of the key park projects that has helped change the character of central El Paso. Located in the heart of downtown, the plaza has been a focal point of the city since 1869. Originally, it was called City Square, or Plaza Central. The initial concept responded to the north-south axial layout of the original city, which has evolved over the past century. Initially, a central circular element with radiating walkways integrated with downtown El Paso; San Jacinto Plaza was conceived as a typical, simple town square with a circle in the center containing a water feature, a pond-like element, and a gazebo shelter. Alligators arrived at the plaza in the late 1880s, contributed from various sources (though they had been spotted along the Rio Grande River in small numbers all along). The alligators stayed as an attraction until the mid-1960s, when they were relocated to the El Paso Zoo for safety — their own. As local folklore has it, residents were uncertain if alligators could survive El Paso's often chilly winters, so on particularly cold nights, townspeople would move the alligators inside downtown saloons and return them to the plaza's pond in early morning.

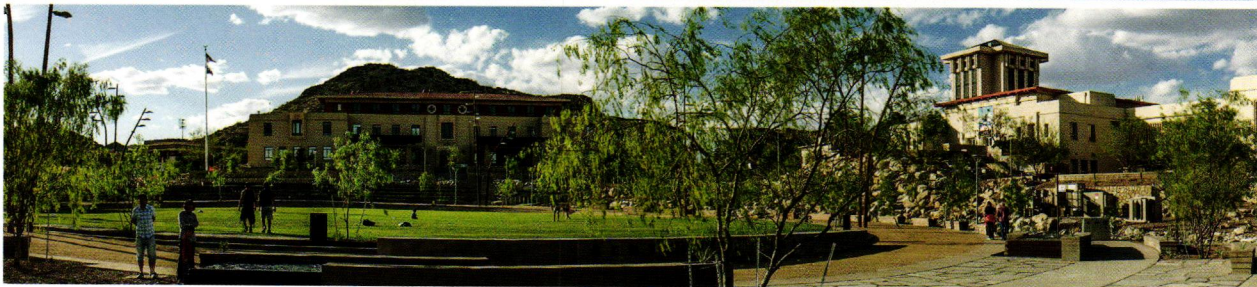
As the city embarked on its quality-of-life program early in March of 2011, a consortium of developers and downtown business leaders began the process of hiring a nationally recognized landscape design firm to develop a new plaza, one that would embrace its past and would also point toward the future of El Paso. The search culminated in the selection of landscape architecture, planning, and urban design firm SWA Group to lead the efforts.

The initial phase of the new San Jacinto Plaza project started in 2012, expanding the original site, adding new sidewalks, and reconstructing irrigation and utility services. In 2014, Phase Two of the project began, which included the redesign and construction of the new plaza. The new design builds on the original, keeping the center as the key visual component of the space. Original pond and gazebo features have been replaced by a new circular fountain surrounded by a concrete baluster, and a distinctive float- ing perforated metal roof that shades an alligator sculpture.

The fountain has an unusual alligator tile floor pattern and an ornamental railing that aims to recall design features of the historical plaza. A series of crisscrossing orthogonal, free-formed, and diagonal patterns connect sidewalks to city streets and allow for reclaiming as much open greenspace as possible. The new sidewalks are canvases for rich patterns of colors and textures that move from simple color changes to more complex regional Native American motifs. The integration of the sidewalks allowed the design to capture and create a series of contained open spaces that are either landscaped as native desert arroyos or used as public amenities with built-in games. The resulting space and amenities serve the citizens throughout the day with ping-pong tables, chess tables, a horseshoe field, a street cafe, and a water feature that functions both as a fountain and splash pool. The fountain/pool provides relief to El Paso youngsters during the dry, hot summer months.

Right *Before and after photos of the UTEP campus.*

Facing *Southwest University Park, home of the El Paso Chihuahuas, the city's Triple-A baseball team.*



As you enter San Jacinto Plaza, articulated concrete walls frame some of the sidewalks and contained spaces. These walls are designed with various colors, finishes, and exposed aggregates intended to recall the distinctive geological sedimentary strata and patina of the neighboring Franklin Mountain range. They also serve as backdrops to numerous plaques and recognitions the plaza has collected over the past half-century. The plaza is planted with a wide variety of native Chihuahuan Desert plants and trees that begin to illustrate the gorgeous diversity found within the boundaries of El Paso del Norte. Inside the plaza, the design team recreated a desert arroyo, allowing visitors to be exposed to the region's unique relationship between earth and water. Inside the plaza, one finds oneself crossing bridges between spaces in the way of the early pioneers, who had to cross between El Paso and Juárez by means of arroyos and the Rio Grande River. The design also incorporates the restored (and now better-protected from the elements) rendition of the much-loved alligator sculpture *Los Lagartos*, created by local artist Luis Jiménez to adorn the plaza in 1995.

UTEP Centennial Plaza

The transformation of the UTEP campus is probably one of the most life-changing projects the region has recently undertaken. The project has impacted not only the life of every campus visitor and every student currently enrolled at UTEP, it affects every generation of UTEP students to come, as well. UTEP was on track to celebrate its centennial year as one of the region's most significant academic institutions and as the UT System's first campus outside the City of Austin. Inaugurated in 1914 with a class of 14 students as the Texas School of Mines and Metallurgy, the institution has since grown to more than 24,000 students. Diana Natalicio, who has served as president of the school for over a quarter of a century and has presided over its steady growth, provided the vision that led to the recent transformation project. UTEP's campus was built in the foothills of the Franklin Mountains and gently grew at this junction between mountains, arroyos, and city. Over the years, El Paso and the campus grew, and ultimately several major roads serving the West El Paso community bisected the campus. This interlocking grid of streets and the increased vehicular traffic caused problems for students as they plotted courses between buildings during the school year.

Over the past decade, Natalicio formulated a vision for a car-free campus core. The campus is gifted with a unique collection of Bhutanese-styled buildings that create a great brand for the university: UTEP is one of only a few universities that have such a distinctive architectural character. Situated among hills, mountains, and arroyos, the campus landscape was nevertheless replete with hard surfaces, paved roads, parking spaces, invasive plants and trees, and non-student vehicular traffic. It was also home to a major arroyo that cuts through the campus and serves as a major watershed from the Franklin Mountains to the Rio Grande.

The buildings are not only historically significant; they are also peculiarly adapted to the site. The core of the campus, built between 1916 and 1960, follows the architectural inspiration of Henry Trost, recognized as one of the region's leading architects and founder of the local architectural firm Trost & Trost. The Bhutanese building style came about as the result of advice by the wife of the first president of the university. After reading about the cities in Bhutan, she declared that the site and surroundings for the new campus reminded her of the images she had seen in a 1914 National Geographic article about the Kingdom of Bhutan, "Castles in the Air." Her advice had a strong influence on the architectural style for her husband and the architects as they began to design the campus on its present location.

In 2008, Natalicio's vision started to become a reality. Plans were implemented to gradually remove cars from the campus core and create a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment. In early 2011, a request for qualifications was advertised to transform UTEP. Ten Eyck Landscape Architects (TELA) and Lake|Flato were selected to develop a master plan, which was referred to as the Campus Transformation Plan. It consisted of eight distinctive projects that created a vehicle-free core, and significant landscape efforts to build a garden-like campus to foreground the Bhutanese buildings. In June of 2012, TELA began conceptual design for the central core, intending to be finished by August of 2014 for UTEP's centennial celebration.

The Transformation Plan had several key design concepts that drove planning and eventually the construction of the projects. The vision for the campus included a purely pedestrian campus core; the use of native Chihuahuan Desert plants in all landscaping in order to better manage water; the rediscovery of the system of arroyos that was present on the campus prior to the major road construction; the creation of

numerous venues for students to gather and learn; and the establishment of a gardenlike foreground for the buildings designed using sustainable guidelines and concepts.

The first phase of the project included removing vehicular roadways from three distinctive areas of the core: the Centennial Plaza, the area in front of the Old Main building, and the Leech Grove. During the 24-month construction period, all major electrical, communication, gas, and water utilities were replaced, some of which dated back as far as 1916. Roads, parking lots, and concrete sidewalks were removed and replaced with lawns, permeable granite walkways, decomposed granite walkways, and arroyos (*acequias* — irrigation channels) that were rebuilt in order to create a more natural habitat. Most invasive trees and plant species were replaced with over 600 new mesquites, acacias, mountain laurels, and oaks that are drought-resistant and native to the Chihuahuan Desert. Detention ponds and *acequias* were created to channel the runoff from the mountain, letting UTEP students experience how water flows on the campus during the rainy season. The restoration of the Lhakhang — a historical artifact and a gift from the Kingdom of Bhutan to the people of the U.S. — now sits high above the plaza. The Lhakhang was first exhibited in Washington D.C. during the 42nd annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 2008. It was then dismantled and rebuilt on UTEP's campus by Bhutanese monks.

Chihuahua Baseball Stadium, or Southwest University Park

One of the most interesting urban design decisions El Paso undertook in the past five years was to place their minor league baseball stadium in the middle of downtown. This decision exemplifies El Paso city leaders' desire to create a new catalyst for redevelopment of downtown's western edge.

The decision had plenty of antagonists who fought the idea all the way to a public referendum. In the end, the concept was overwhelmingly embraced by a majority of citizens, and the vote passed. Southwest University Park, home of the El Paso Chihuahuas, a minor league baseball team affiliated with the San Diego Padres, sits adjacent to the arts district, the El Paso Convention Center, and the historic district on the west side of downtown. This area for years was perceived as a transitional zone occupied by warehouses, some residential properties, and a fleeting collection of restaurants, businesses, and specialty stores.

The most significant structure in the neighborhood is the El Paso Union Depot, which was built in 1905 by famous Chicago architect Daniel Hudson Burnham, FAIA, and has been the epicenter of much development in an area filled with turn-of-the-century brick and steel warehouse architecture reminiscent of the late 1800s.

The new baseball park, designed by Populous, serves as a fulcrum that connects several areas of downtown into a more cohesive larger district. On one of the corners of the park, the new stadium is accentuated by an open lawn where game-watchers can sit on grass, enjoying picnics while watching the game. At the opposite corner, the ballpark is anchored by a four-story structure that includes a restaurant/bar that accommodates those who would rather enjoy the game over a drink or a meal. The southern side of the ballpark serves as a boundary to the east-west rail lines that connect El Paso to the rest of the country. The main entrance is located on the west side. Anchored by a richly articulated tower, it leads you into a grand concourse that houses an open corridor filled with local restaurants, retail stores, and open areas for visitors to enjoy the game and hang out with their friends. Since the opening of the ballpark, this area has begun to experience a renaissance







Play and shade structures at the middle of the zoo provide a place for families to enjoy the outdoors.

in activities, with new restaurants, plans for more residential units, and offices starting to pop up. As part of the continued growth, El Paso is developing a new 60,000-plus-sf arena to help develop the area as a sport and conference area. A new soccer stadium may also be built in the area on the Mexican side of the border, thus creating a truly international complex in this truly international city.

Architecturally, the baseball stadium is a simple structure: a playing field surrounded by a series of two- and three-story brick boxes, steel bridges, and canopies with heavily articulated steel frames that recall a historically expressive era. A path of retail stores and food vendors occupies the concourse level, which is easily accessible from both access points and to the convention center plaza as well. This path leads to all of the ballpark seating, stadium suites, and exits. At the center of the project (behind home plate), the park's third level houses the club and skyboxes. During home games, the club serves as a gathering spot for citizens and Chihuahua fans. A sculptural, stainless steel fence designed by Ball-Nogues Studio demarcates the outfield at the park's northernmost point, providing "knotholes" for passersby on the street to catch a glimpse of the action inside.

El Paso Zoo Expansion

The El Paso Zoo is another institution that benefited from the 2012 bond program. Under this program, the zoo has embarked on a series of projects that have begun to reshape not just the zoo proper but also the community where it sits and how the community experiences the zoo. Starting in 2012, the City of El Paso and the zoo leaders hired WDM Architects of Wichita, Kansas, to develop a new comprehensive plan for the facility. The zoo received bond funding to complete and renovate multiple existing venues, including a new Asian Gateway and the aforementioned Chihuahuan Desert Exhibit, which focuses on native plants and the Mexican gray wolf. This \$10 million collection of signature projects will help replace and renovate approximately 20 percent of the zoo's exhibits. Both projects were high on the priority list of the recently completed Zoo Master Plan. A new Wildlife Amphitheater is under construction, as is a multifunctional pavilion at the African Savannah, and the new Chihuahuan Desert Exhibit is being designed. At this time, the projects slated for the zoo are under construction and development, and it is too soon to evaluate their impact to the Zoo.

Indeed, El Paso is a city in the midst of a transformative time. Beyond the above-mentioned projects, there are the new University Medical Center and Children's Hospital by KMD with MNK Architects; the new Medical Center of the Americas Foundation Cardwell Collaborative building, a research incubator by PhiloWilke Partnership; and the multi-million-dollar El Paso Housing Authority's redesign of all their properties to meet the new city planning standards. Lastly, we must not forget our border sister, Juárez, with her mind on such vital upcoming projects as the privately funded Catholic-church-within-a-community-center, El Punto, by Herzog & de Meuron, and Fernando Romero's revolutionary hexagonal border city vision for Santa Teresa. These projects set the tone for an evolving city that is committed to being an urban example for livable cities old and new, far beyond its region.

Nestor Infanzon, FAIA, is principal of Veritas Works in El Paso.

Phyllis Sheridan Infanzon, AIA, is a senior associate at PhiloWilke Partnership, also in El Paso.





Reborn on the Bayou

AFTER A FIVE-YEAR REVITALIZATION EFFORT, HOUSTON'S BUFFALO BAYOU PARK HAS TAKEN ITS PLACE AMONG THE CITY'S TOP PUBLIC GREEN SPACES. BRIDGES, HIKE AND BIKE TRAILS, AND PUBLIC PAVILIONS COMBINE WITH NATIVE PLANTINGS, PASSIVE FLOOD CONTROL MEASURES, AND GOOD OLD URBAN GRIT IN A WONDERFUL SYNTHESIS OF NATURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

by Florence Tang, Assoc. AIA

Project Buffalo Bayou Park

Client Buffalo Bayou Partnership

Architect Page

Landscape Architect SWA Group

Design Team Page: Lawrence W. Speck, FAIA; Melanie Starman Bash, AIA; Randolph L. Hurst; Tami Merrick, AIA; SWA Group: Kevin Shanley, Scott McCready, Tim Peterson, Michael Robinson, Jiyoung Nam, Josh Lock

Photographers Pavilions: Albert Vecerka / ESTO; Cistern: Katya Horner
Slight Clutter Photography; Park: Jonnu Singleton, SWA Group



Previous *Buffalo Bayou Park, with the Houston skyline and Michael Graves' Federal Courthouse building in the background.*

This page *New bridges create more crossings over the waterway (above). Waterworks Lawn sits atop the Cistern (right).*

Facing *The Lost Lake Visitor Center by Page occupies a ridge above a re-established lake, where new gardens were added.*





The stretch of Buffalo Bayou from Shepherd Drive to Sabine Street is an urban core park that embodies the wonderful weirdness of Houston along its last bit of riparian wilderness. Here, homelessness, cemeteries, mosquito-eating bats, mansions, public housing, and trails and bridges with skyline views intersect and intertwine with cars on Allen Parkway, kayakers paddling on the water, a brass starburst dandelion, the Houston Police Officer's Memorial, and Henry Moore's "Large Spindle Piece." Nearby, Michael Graves' Federal Reserve Bank sits like a quiet baron overlooking the Gulf Coast landscape. The site's iconic history melds with the future of Houston's green renaissance, where nature and the built environment are being stitched together to become an integral part of the city's urban design and vitality.

Where Water and Downtown Meet

Nonprofit organization Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP), which was founded in 1986, has spearheaded the revitalization of the park. With landscape design provided by SWA Group and buildings by Page, this section of the once-forsaken bayou has been transformed into a destination that encompasses linear green space, flood control, urban development, multi-modal access with hike and bike trails, a dog park, pedestrian bridges, boat landings, trail lights, native species, and a series of public pavilions programmed for a variety of uses.

Public park though it may be, Buffalo Bayou Park was also funded by private donations. The Kinder Foundation gave \$30 million, and BBP raised \$23 million more from other private donors. The Harris County Flood Control District chipped in \$5 million. The Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone is providing \$2 million in annual funding for maintenance.

Anne Olson, president of BBP, has overseen beautification, redevelopment, and revitalization along the historic bayou for two decades. She helmed the fundraising and awareness campaigns. "I have seen over 20 years that parks have become more valued by private funders and by government," she says. "Public-private partnerships are at the heart of large park and green space projects in Houston — Buffalo Bayou Park, Hermann Park, Memorial Park, Emancipation Park, and the Bayou Greenways project. When private donors invest large amounts of funding in these projects, they want to see the parks maintained at a high level. In our case, the Kinder Foundation's gift was contingent on BBP maintaining and operating the park and the city providing continual funding for the park maintenance."

Over time, Olson has seen that government has also taken a stronger interest in public park projects. "Mayor Annise Parker was extremely supportive of Buffalo Bayou Park and other green space projects throughout our city," she says. "Our current mayor, Sylvester Turner, also appears committed to park projects, especially smaller neighborhood parks."

Boots on the Ground

"The city grew up around Buffalo Bayou," says Kevin Shanley, principal in charge at SWA. The semi-retired landscape architect spoke from Oregon about the city's pre-rail days. "It played a critical role in the historic growth of the city and has gone through storied transitions like many of the urban rivers throughout the world. It was an important piece of transportation where salted beef and bales of cotton were shipped to foreign ports. Why is downtown at an odd angle to the rest of the city? It's because Main Street was laid out perpendicular to the banks of the bayou at Allen's Landing."

From its origin in the Katy Prairie, Buffalo Bayou meanders through the city, into the Ship Channel and Galveston Bay, and spills into the Gulf of Mexico. Fed by controlled releases from Addicks and Barker reservoirs, it is also fueled by runoff from streets and parking lots, as well as tributaries White Oak Bayou, Greens Bayou, and Brays Bayou.

“It’s an incredible network of waterways, like veins on a leaf spread across these Gulf Coast plains in channels and streams,” Shanley continues. “A river has an intimate and inseparable relationship with its flood plain.” Historically, the prevailing philosophy was to make the bayous carry more water to solve the conditions of urban growth, especially in the middle of the 20th century. The Houston area’s flat topography, impermeable clay soils, and tremendous rainfalls are the perfect recipe for flash flooding. To combat this, many of the city’s bayous were turned into concrete drainage channels, much in the manner of the Los Angeles River. “These beautiful creeks and bayous were straitjacketed in concrete channels to move water faster,” Shanley says. “Rivers have a different metro-nome than us. They tick in the hundreds of years timeline, not seconds.”

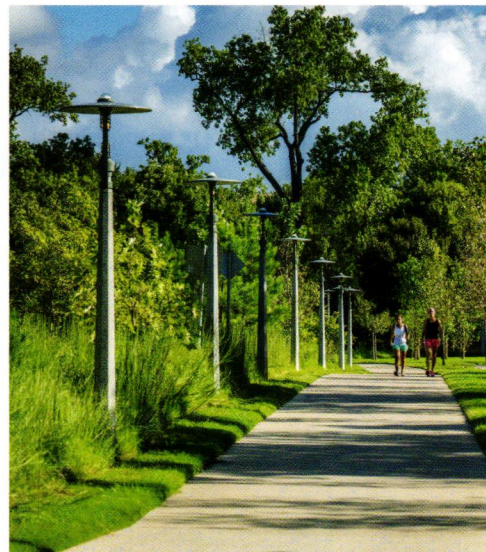
Over time, development, planning, and government leaders started thinking differently about Houston’s bayous, which for some time had been viewed as ugly, snake-infested places to dump old refrigerators. In the 1960s, preservation and protection movements started by Terry Hershey emerged to convince others of better control measures than straightening, smoothing, and deepening the bayous. With urban growth came buildings, streets, parking lots, and roofs — impervious surfaces that shed water all at once. New policies promoted by Hershey and others recommended retaining the water and slowly releasing it back into the landscape. As stormwater management policies developed, so did an awareness of the bayou as a resource, and cleanup efforts ensued. “Nature has a way of coming back, and you don’t appreciate it until you walk it and see it,” Shanley says.

Shanley continued to describe aspects of the bayou’s dynamic equilibrium, alluvial morphology, water quality, and erosion as rivers and bayous evolve. When Houston hosted the Super Bowl in 2004, the Sabine Promenade improvements helped people see what could be made of its iconic watershed. Shanley hand-sketched a 12-ft-long plan for Buffalo Bayou Partnership to get others to rally around the idea. Fast forward a few years and a series of meetings later to when the Kinder Foundation, who had appreciated how the Sabine Promenade unfolded, made their unprecedented gift for the park, citing it had to happen in five years, needed a master plan, and would need to be maintained and operated.

Shanley, who had lived on Turkey Gully, a stream that feeds White Oak Bayou, had been studying the bayou for years and understood its naturally wild moments along with its highly cultivated aspects. A transplant to Houston, he grew up on the West Coast in a little town with a little stream where his appreciation for hiking, biking, the outdoors, and water was cultivated. He says: “There is a real need to get out and walk a site. I call it ‘boots on the ground.’ No matter how flat and boring you think it is, there is always something to discover. Houston is anything but flat and boring.”

At the Mercy of Water

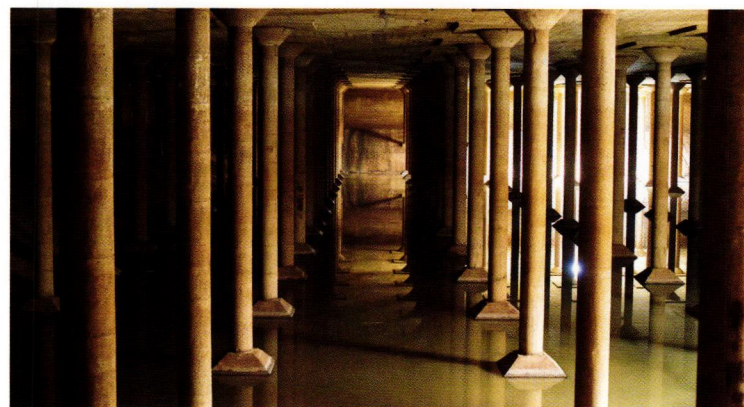
Larry Speck, FAIA, senior principal at Page, explained that the design approach for the complementary buildings of the park encompassed three tenets: First, the buildings needed a cohesive vocabulary translatable from small pavilions for solitary runners and walkers to medium pavilions for 50-people reunions, and to large structures for public gatherings,

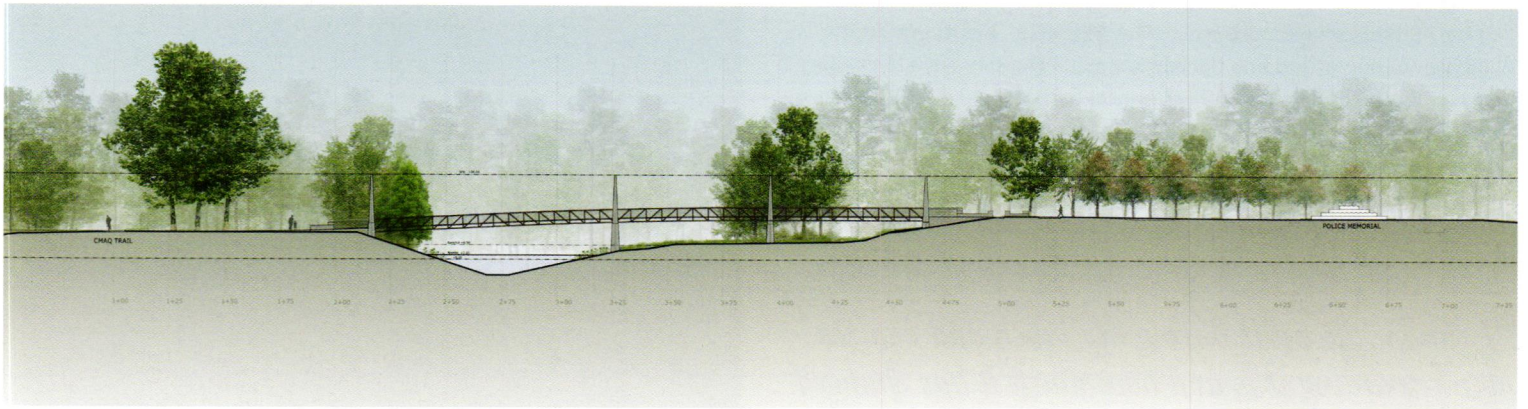


Left “Lunar Cycle Lighting,” created by artist Stephen Korns and L’Observatoire International.

Below The Cistern, a concrete holding tank roughly the size of one-and-a-half football fields, has been repurposed into a public space programmed for an art and sound installation.

Bottom Aerial view of Allen Parkway and Buffalo Bayou.





musical performances, or yoga classes. Secondly, the architecture needed to address the powerful effects of water on the site. Thirdly, all the buildings needed to offer an extension of the park experience. The language Page developed includes board-formed concrete, deep shade trellises of steel that filter sunlight, a robust presence of hefty concrete piers, the elevation of slabs off the ground and above the flood line, and a blurring between indoors and outdoors.

“We wanted to develop a cohesive vocabulary for all the buildings, but also offer a response for the flood-prone site,” Speck says. “It’s meant to be a drainage way. The solution had to be tough and withstand the abuse of torrential water with hundreds of pounds of tree trunks floating down.”

When the Cistern at Buffalo Bayou Park (a subterranean, concrete drinking-water reservoir built in 1926) was decommissioned in the early 2000s due to an irreparable leak, discussions about its use surfaced even while the city looked for a demolition contractor. Lisa Gray, writing in the *Houston Chronicle*, described the cavernous, columned space as “stunningly, startlingly beautiful: an industrial cross between a cavern and a cathedral.” Could it be parking? Or maybe mulch storage? “Can we preserve an amazing artifact, and how can we program it in a meaningful way?” Speck muses. It was Shanley who named it the “Cistern,” and a program was developed for the space that included an art and sound installation.

Melanie Starman Bash, AIA, senior associate at Page, was the project architect and manager. Once Speck handed the butter paper and pencil

sketches to her, she led the development of the drawings all the way to construction documents. “Larry is very good about letting us find ways to make his design happen,” she says. “He trusts us to make his vision happen.”

It was a complex project to develop, as fundraising was concurrent with the work and planning yielded various deliverables based on how much could be raised. Schemes with and without restaurants were submitted for permitting; the Cistern repurposing didn’t follow the rules of classification and occupation for the city; and parking was a challenge.

While the Kinder Foundation funds had been earmarked for the landscape design, the funds for the buildings were an unknown in the equation. “It was a very start-and-stop process with lots of variables and changes,” Bash says. “And permitting was an extreme challenge since this is in the flood plain, so flood control issues were very difficult to navigate.” That’s not to speak of the surprises during site work, and that along the way, the city required proof that what was drawn was built. It was also challenging, Bash says, to construct buildings with flat roof lines that look light and airy but house deep mechanical walls, several detailed layers of wood and steel, and 4-ft-by-3-ft reinforced concrete columns.

Nonetheless, Bash persevered and understood the immensity of the project’s ability to transform the city. “Opening day was amazing, to go out and see people using the park. Even before it officially opened, there was a definite buzz and excitement surrounding the project. I run on the trails during my lunch and am very much rewarded by seeing people enjoy all of the different elements that this new destination has to offer.

You have to respect the environment around you and realize you are at the mercy of water. You have to think carefully about the construction and choose materials that can stand up to that much water.”

The Happiness Project

Scott McCready, the design team lead from SWA, strolled through the park pointing out its natural nooks and crannies: the redbuds, sycamores, Mexican plum trees, soil depths, slopes, grasses, cylindrical lamp posts, and interventions where nature meets design and engineering. He described the complexities of the site as a “cauldron of forces,” beyond being a major natural drainage channel through the central business district. How can landscape design revitalize a historic waterway to elevate social interactions and increase cultural and business value for the city’s identity? He pointed to various stretches of the park and drew loops around bridges with his finger on a way finding marker near The Water Works building. “As the trails go west, it’s progressively more bucolic, and after Shepherd, it’s wholly wild bayou and goes into private lots,” he said.

One of those private lots is where Guy Hagstette, FAIA, grew up swinging on rope swings into the bayou waters. Hagstette was the project manager for the Buffalo Bayou Park project for BBP, and from his office on Travis Street near Market Square in downtown Houston, he chronologically recounted how the park project came to be.

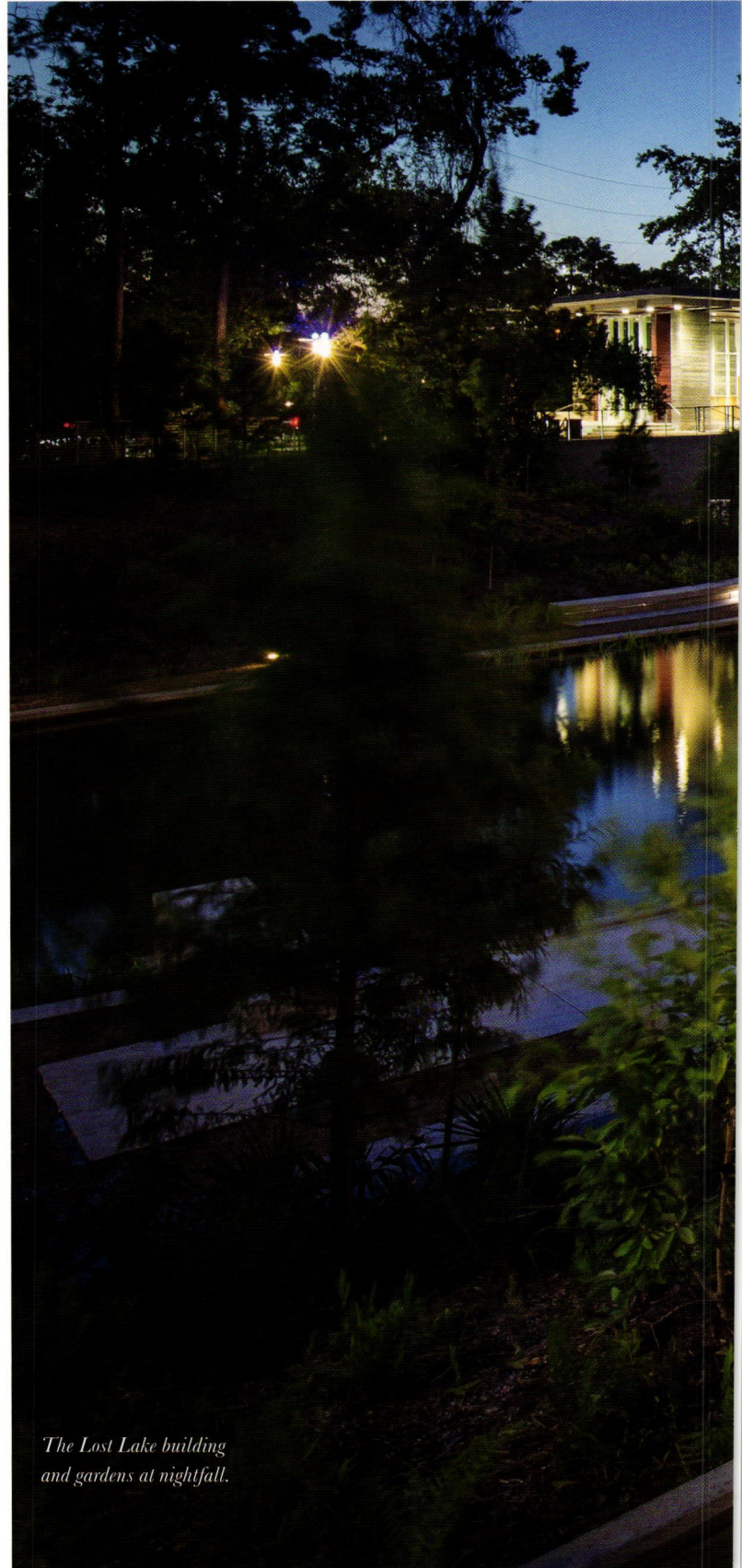
The park unfolded in multiple phases: It was the bridges, then the trails, followed by the landscape and site lighting, and it had multiple projects layered on top of one another with various entities holding

“I run on the trails during my lunch and can see how rewarding it is and how much it has changed. You have to respect the environment around you and realize you are at the mercy of water. You have to think carefully about the construction and choose materials that can stand up to that much water.”

their own jurisdictions. Calling himself a “parkitect,” Hagstette has been known as a green space preacher. He brought his experiences with Sesquicentennial Park and Discovery Green to the table. Says Hagstette: “Buffalo Bayou Park was an opportunity to change how you see the city. There were lots of moving parts, and it was a challenge to nail down all the pieces, from the review processes to involving all the stakeholders and government funders, and satisfying all the requirements.”

When he was a high school senior, his English teacher gave the class a last assignment: “What makes you happy?” After pondering over the answer, he made a film about the bayou and captured moving images of its banks, vegetation, wilderness, and sky from the vantage point of floating along in a canoe. “Watching the landscape mature with its trees, wild flowers, and plants, it is raw and natural, and I hope we learn from that,” Hagstette says. “We can and did go forever ignoring our parks and environmental issues. But when Houston decides to do something, it does not mess around.”

Florence Tang, Assoc. AIA, is a design professional and journalist based in Houston.



The Lost Lake building and gardens at nightfall.





Public Performance

THE MIDTOWN ARTS & THEATER CENTER HOUSTON MAY BE THE ONLY VENUE IN THE COUNTRY CREATED SPECIFICALLY TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE PERFORMANCE AND GALLERY SPACE TO A SHIFTING ARRAY OF SMALL ARTS GROUPS. THE DESIGN BY LAKE|FLATO AND STUDIO RED WELCOMES THE PUBLIC WITH AN OPEN-AIR LOBBY CONNECTED TO A PLAZA AND PUBLIC TRANSIT.

by **Ben Koush, AIA**

Project Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston

Client Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston

Architects Lake|Flato, Studio RED Architects

Design Team Lake|Flato: Ryan Jones, AIA; Ted Flato, FAIA; Erica Goranson; Kerry Phillips, AIA; Studio Red: Bill Neuhaus, FAIA; Pete Ed Garrett, AIA; Jared Wood, AIA; Liz Ann Cordill, AIA; Chris Castaneda; Kathy Seal

Photographers Luis Ayala; Theater interiors: Judd Haggard

Houston's newest theater, the MATCH (Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston), which opened in October 2015, is distinguished by its unusual mission: to serve as an affordable hub for a diverse and changing group of small to medium-sized organizations that might have inadequate or no performance spaces of their own. According to its director, Chuck Still, the MATCH is quite possibly the only institution in the country that supports such a program, something they discovered when they tried to find similar facilities to study during the planning stages.

There have been publicly subsidized theaters in Houston since at least 1910, when the city paid for the construction of the City Auditorium, built on the site of what is now the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts (1966). However, these have been planned for the richest and best-politically-connected performing arts organizations in the city — the symphony, opera, and ballet — or for well-attended popular productions — musicals, wrestling events, rodeos, and circuses. Smaller groups have been left to their own devices. The Alley Theatre, for example, started in a small, back-alley building in 1947 before moving up in the art world. Eventually, the Alley built its own major downtown theater (1968), which was designed by well-known New York City architect Ulrich Franzen, FAIA.

Today, perhaps, upward mobility in the art world is harder to achieve, and many established arts groups that have been around for quite some time are still forced to cope with inadequate spaces in out-of-the-way locations. In 2003, a group of four organizations — including Diverseworks, Suchu Dance, Aurora Picture Show, and Infernal Bridegroom Productions — banded together to create the Independent Arts Collaborative (IAC), a nonprofit organization whose mission was to figure out how to build a comprehensive performance venue. The facility would not only be for the use of its constituent members, but for anyone else in Houston needing a centrally located, reasonably priced, and professional performance or gallery space. In 2008, IAC hired Jill Jewett, who had just finished a term as Mayor Bill White's assistant for cultural affairs, as a programming and fundraising consultant. In addition, Emily Todd, then the Menil Collection's deputy director, agreed to serve as president of IAC's board of directors, which was then being assembled.

The first big test for the group came in spring 2011, when they were given the first chance to purchase a square block in Midtown bounded by Main, Holman, Travis, and Francis streets. The site was previously the parking lot for the Houston Permitting Center, which had moved to

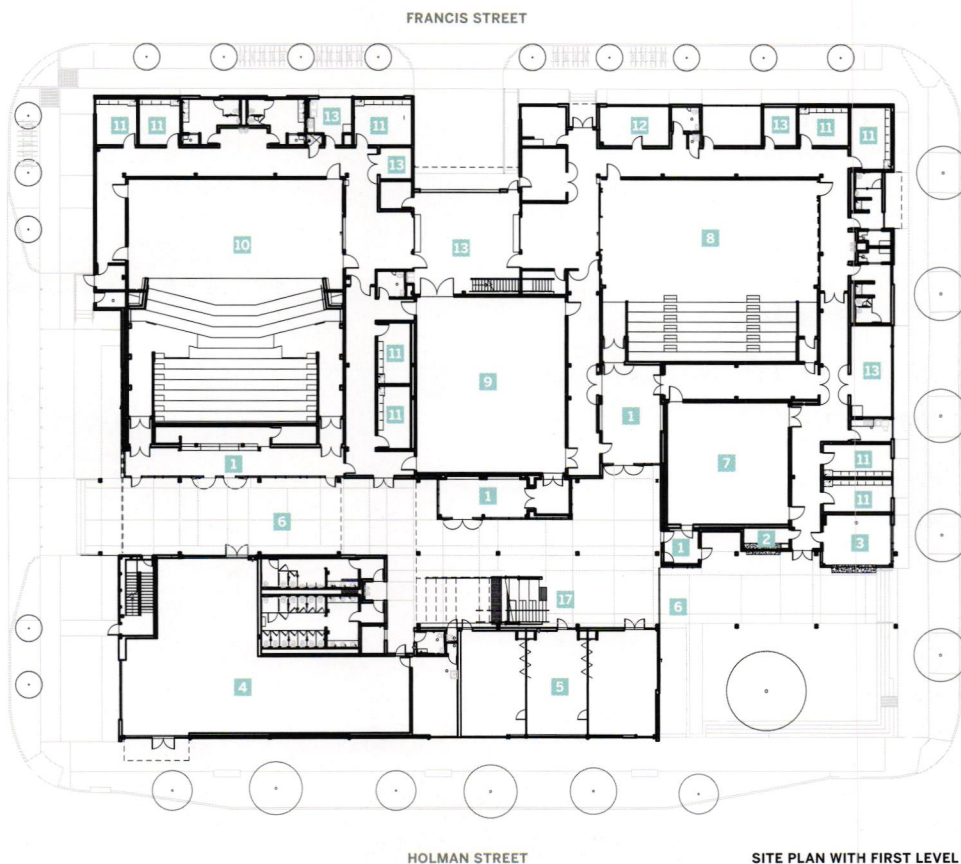
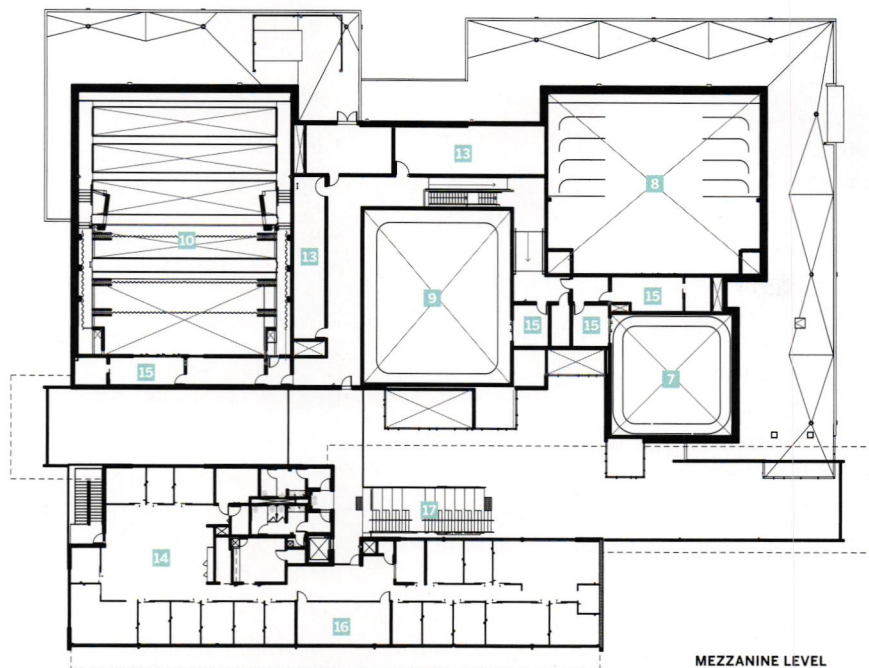
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a new location. After some scrambling, IAC was able to cobble together the funds for a \$250,000 down payment on the \$2.5 million lot in the short amount of time the city gave them before offering it to hungry developers. As is typical in these kinds of projects, many people were involved. In this case, IAC got a boost from developer Bob Schultz, who earlier opened the nearby Continental Club in 1999, and who was concurrently developing the two blocks directly south as The Mid Main — a mid-rise, mixed-use apartment complex with some architectural



Previous *The MATCH opens toward the Main Street light rail line with a public plaza and cafe. The exterior elevations are clad in a variety of different types of corrugated metal.*

Facing *The light and airy outdoor lobby is both economical and surprisingly comfortable in hot weather.*



- SITE PLAN & LEVELS**
- 1 LOBBY
 - 2 TICKETING
 - 3 CAFE
 - 4 GALLERY
 - 5 REHEARSAL
 - 6 OPEN AIR BREEZEWAY
 - 7 FLEX THEATER A
 - 8 THEATER B
 - 9 FLEX THEATER C
 - 10 THEATER D
 - 11 DRESSING
 - 12 OFFICE
 - 13 STORAGE
 - 14 OPEN OFFICE
 - 15 CONTROL BOOTH
 - 16 MEETING ROOM
 - 17 RISER STAIRS

Top *The largest theater comes with just a bit of architecture in the form of blue-painted, patterned concrete block walls.*

Bottom *The black box theaters are minimally appointed background spaces that defer to the artistic performances.*



and urban planning pretensions, designed by Rogers Partners of New York. Schultz agreed to guarantee the rest of the loan for the property and helped IAC to work out a parking deal and broker a 380 agreement with the city to get \$6 million in tax breaks over 15 years once the theater project was complete.

Once the site was secured, IAC, which around this time had renamed itself MATCH, began to address the architectural component of the project. The collaborative established a program (first published in the local press at 85,000 to 90,000 sf and later pared down to 60,000 sf); a construction budget it believed it could meet (\$25 million, which did not change); and a streamlined list of potential architects (an interesting mix of Val Glitsch, FAIA, and Perkins+Will, Gensler and WW Architecture, Lake|Flato and Studio RED, Morris Architects, Leslie Elkins Architecture, and Jackson Ryan and Kieran Timberlake). Lake|Flato, Studio RED Architects, Val Glitsch, and Perkins+Will were called back for a second round of interviews, from which Lake|Flato and Studio RED were ultimately selected in late 2011.

Bill Neuhaus, FAIA, a partner at Studio RED (which designed the new Houston Permitting Center and helped alert MATCH to the potential of the old parking lot) is known in Houston for his interest in non-profit, public projects. He says he was intrigued by this project because of its urban design implications. He hoped that, located as it was — close to a light rail stop on Main Street in one of the few sections, outside downtown and the Texas Medical Center, where there is a pocket of pedestrian activity — the new theater could benefit from and help foster a lively urban node. Perhaps even more than for Neuhaus' focus on urban issues, Studio RED is recognized for its theater projects, among them the recent \$46.5 million remodel of the Alley Theatre, which this author has criticized in other publications for not attending to the subtleties of the original design. Lake|Flato is quite simply the best-known Texas architectural practice after the legendary O'Neil Ford, FAIA.

Neuhaus, Pete Ed Garrett, AIA, (another Studio RED partner), and Ted Flato, FAIA, came up with the building's main urban gesture: a snaking, open-air lobby on which all the theaters open, running from Main Street to Travis Street. This served the triple purpose of physically opening the building to the neighborhood, allowing patrons of different shows to commingle, and reducing construction and air-conditioning costs. Many sidewalk critics pooh-poohed the open-air lobby, saying Houstonians accustomed to constant, subarctic air-conditioning would not stand for it. But with its vented upper roof, big ceiling fans, and strategic dumping of excess cold air from the theaters, the lobby after its first summer seems to be a successful design solution that responds to, rather than ignores, Houston's Gulf Coast climate in a lively and imaginative way.

The building's main point of entry is at the corner of Main and Holman streets, facing toward the light rail stop. Here, the architects created a small plaza with a strategically located café with outdoor-only seating (that was just about to open when I visited the building in early September 2016). The architects diagrammatically translated the rest of the program into a block of four individual theaters along the north side of the lobby. Dubbed the "Matchboxes," they range in size from 1,300 to 4,800 sf and seat from 70 to 329 people. The architects located a two-story block containing a rehearsal space, gallery space, and upstairs offices along the south side. (The performance spaces are subsidized to keep their rents affordable by funds from Houston First, the quasi-public organization that runs the convention center and several

performing arts venues, including Jones Hall, Wortham Theater, and the Miller Outdoor Theater.) Once the schematic design was set, the architectural team divided the remaining work among themselves, giving the theater design to Studio RED and design of the building's public spaces and exterior elevations to Lake|Flato.

The theater interiors and surprisingly generous outdoor lobby are appealing for their extremely simple and straightforward design, urged along no doubt by the tight budget. The theaters are entered through small, glass-enclosed foyers with white walls that mitigate noise from the main lobby and act as air locks. Inside, the Matchboxes are all business. The two black box theaters have black floors, walls, and ceilings, with a drop-down grid for attaching lighting. The smaller of the two fixed-seat theaters is similarly utilitarian. The only bit of décor is on the back and side walls of the largest fixed-seat theater, which are clad with concrete blocks cast with a diamond pattern and painted dark blue.

The exteriors are, unfortunately, not as successfully resolved. Here, "architecture" seems to get in the way of the program, which is so elegantly expressed in the budget-restricted but clever plan and the quiet, restrained interior spaces. The street-facing elevations are clad in a busy collage of different kinds of corrugated metal paneling, described on the MATCH website as being of the "Twenty-First Century stylized warehouse manner." Visually, this breaks up the mass of the building and makes it seem smaller than it is, which is problematic because of the hulking masses of the apartments rising right next to it. Although the MATCH is not a particularly small building, with its jumbled facades, it

But with its vented upper roof, big ceiling fans, and strategic dumping of excess cold air from the theaters, the lobby after its first summer seems to be a successful design solution that responds to, rather than ignores, Houston's Gulf Coast climate in a lively and imaginative way.

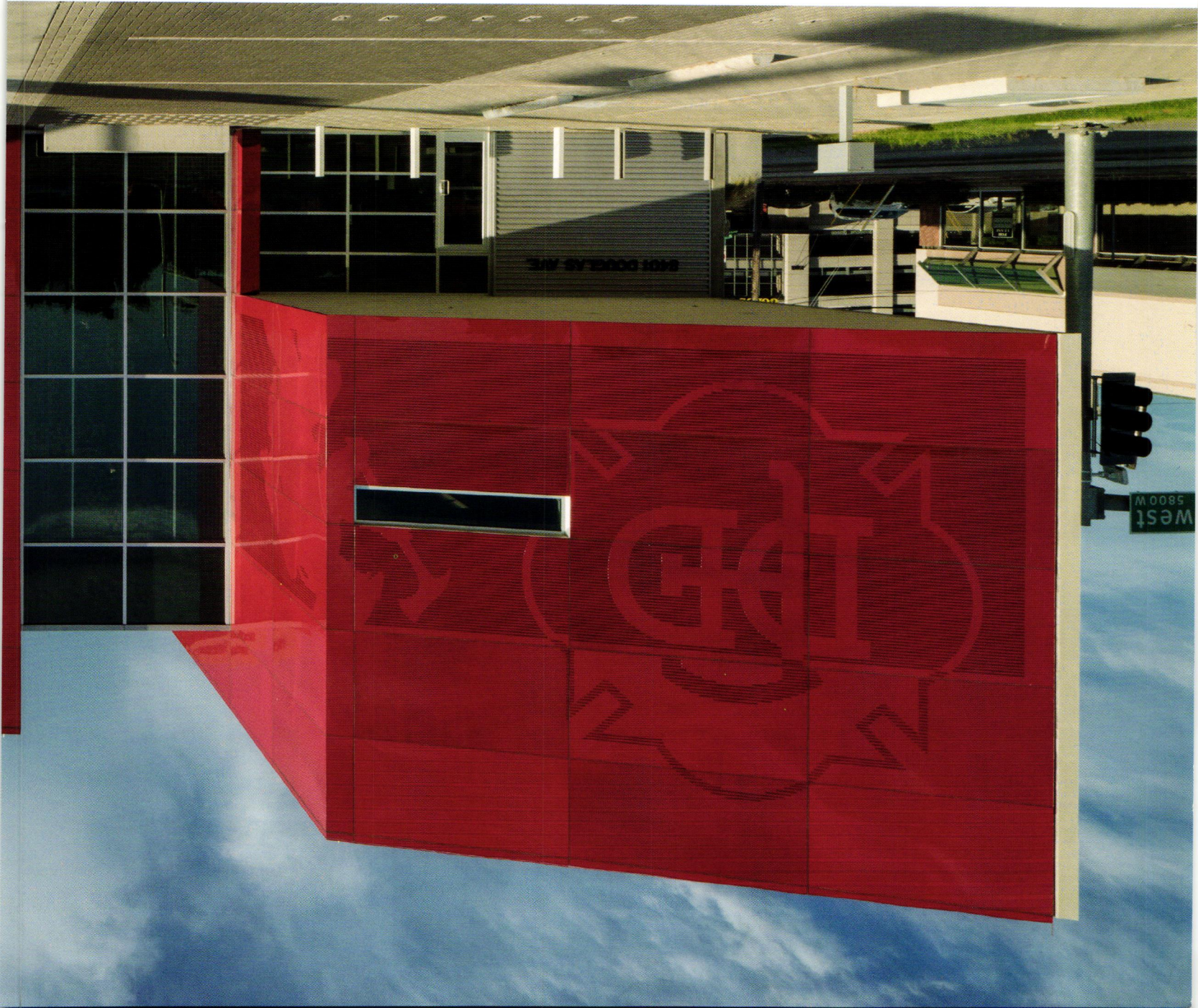
seems downright dinky next to such neighbors. This is not to say that the choice of cladding — corrugated metal — is the problem, but rather its agitated deployment. In Houston, this material has been associated with buildings for the arts since it was used on the storied Rice Media Center and Museum, quickly nicknamed the Art Barn, which was built on the campus of Rice University in 1969. Sponsored by the French-American art-collecting couple, Dominique and John de Menil, the Art Barn was their base of operations for years before they opened their renowned museum building, designed by Renzo Piano (1987).

As another Houston arts writer told me, "Don't worry about how it looks; think about how it works." And this may really be the important part. Here, with the newly inaugurated MATCH, a ragtag band of Houston art groups has persevered in what at first seemed like an unattainable quest. This facility, so prominently located on Main Street, is the result of a dozen years of hard work. The MATCH is now so popular that it cannot host all the programs requested of it and will, in all likelihood, become a prototype for similar institutions in other cities looking to emulate its enviable success.

Ben Koush, AIA, is an architect and writer based in Houston.

DALLAS' FIRE STATION 27 IS DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE SPEEDY DEPLOYMENT OF EMERGENCY RESPONDERS, BUT IT SERVES THE PUBLIC IN MORE WAYS THAN THAT. THE BUILDING'S GLOSSY RED CLADDING, EXPOSED CONCRETE WALLS, AND STRIKING FORM OFFER A RELIEVING CONTRAST TO THE UNREMARKABLE BUILT SURROUNDS OF ITS NORTH DALLAS NEIGHBORHOOD.

45 Seconds





by Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA

Project Dallas Fire Station 27

Client City of Dallas

Architect Perkins+Will

Design Team Ron Stelmarski, AIA; Phil Callison, AIA; Kent Pontious; Ashwin Toney; Meredith Hunt, Assoc. AIA; Tori Wickard, AIA; Gardner Vass; Lauren Love; Matthew Johnson

Photographers Thomas McConnell; James Steinkamp Photography



The serenity of the generic city is achieved by the evacuation of the public realm, as in an emergency fire drill. The urban plane now only accommodates necessary movement, fundamentally the car; highways are a superior version of boulevards and plazas, taking more and more space; their design, seemingly aiming for automotive efficiency, is in fact surprisingly sensual, a utilitarian pretense entering the domain of smooth space. —Rem Koolhaas, “The Generic City,” 1995, The Monacelli Press, p. 1251

So often what we rate as “good” architecture falls somewhere between materially luxurious and technically alternative, on some imaginary dial. We forget that the generic city model that American postwar culture fought so hard to attain is actually worth considering for some architectural purposes. Fire Station 27 is a prime example. Strategically located along Northwest Highway at the Dallas North Tollway, Dallas’ newest fire and rescue station, No. 27, is proof that efficiency, economy, and utility serve as successful guides to designing for America’s car-centric urban culture. And while these rational principles are challenged more and more each day in our growing cities, they continue to be useful when it comes to putting out fires.

In roughly 45 seconds, a four-member fire and rescue team can be out of bed, suited up, safely secured in their apparatus (otherwise known as a firetruck), and en route to any array of unfortunate circumstances that has come about. “All of this is practiced thoroughly,” said Ron Stelmarski, AIA, project designer at Perkins+Will. “Architecturally speaking, it’s about creating a framework that supports this efficiency reliably and

efficiently, and then finding interesting ways to integrate the building with its surrounding community. It’s kind of backwards, but that’s the nature of the building type and the main intent for the design.”

Programmatically speaking, the building begins with the apparatus bay, a sort of mechanical command hub with which all things fire and rescue begin and end. The design provides two “pass-through” lanes — four total apparatus bays — and features high-speed bi-parting doors at the front and

In roughly 45 seconds, a team of four fire & rescue men and women can be out of bed, suited up, safely secured in their apparatus (otherwise known as a firetruck), and en route to any array of unfortunate circumstances that has come about.

overhead doors at the rear. Trucks can pull in from the rear without having to stop traffic on the busy highway. A bar of utility rooms lines the interior.

Each bay is equipped with drop-down hose reels conveying air, water, and electricity, as each apparatus may be literally plugged in between each run in order to recharge. When the siren sounds, the bay doors open, and as the firetruck departs, the hoses detach quickly. Being this type of mechanical hub, the apparatus bay and the vehicles require constant maintenance and cleaning; thus, it is the primary



Previous *The project's main move, to locate the apparatus bay and the firefighters' quarters side-by-side, as opposed to front-to-back, is expressed clearly on the facade.*

Facing *The apparatus bay runs through the building with doors fore and aft, so trucks don't have to back in.*

This page *The building opens to the community. A fitness room hangs over the apparatus bay.*

Fire Station 27 is the first of a new generation of firehouses for a new generation of fire & rescue personnel working in a complex suburban transition.

social space at the station. As if the analogy between man and machine hadn't already been made completely clear, a full-glass fitness room hung above the apparatus bay serves as a reminder, it also acts as a form of skylight for the bay itself.

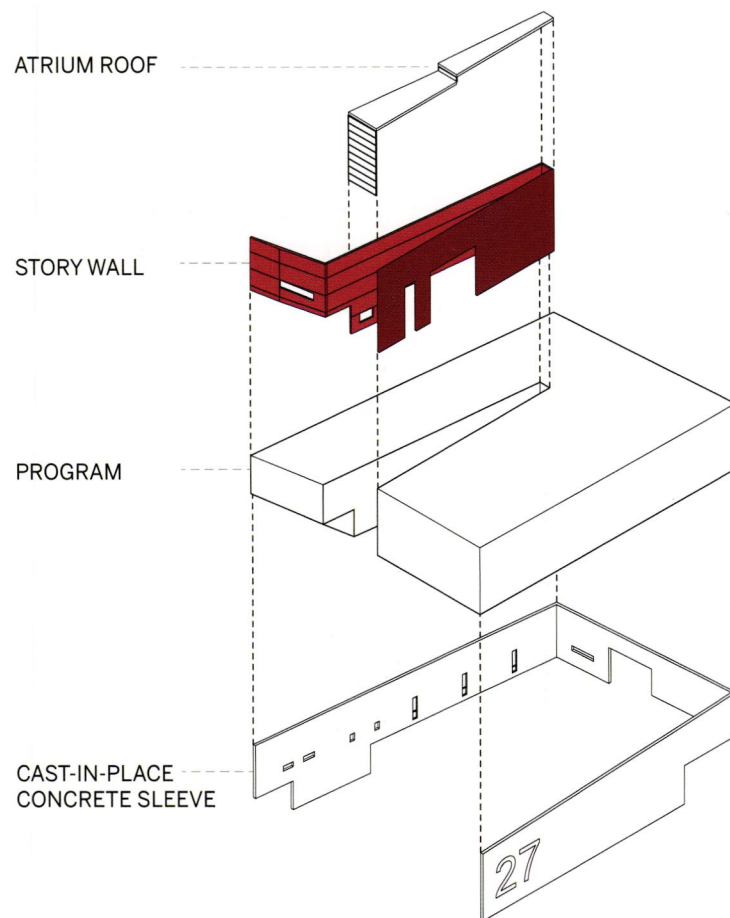
Opposite the apparatus bay lie the more intimate social spaces: a day room, kitchen, break room, and small outdoor patio. Located above on the second level are the partial living quarters — three bunk rooms that can sleep up to 12 personnel at a time, plus offices for the chief, captain, and lieutenant. The finishes are bare, and the scale reminds you more of a college dorm than an apartment or hotel room, yet it's this transient nature of the firehouses that makes them so efficient in a job where seconds really do matter. This transient element separates firehouses from residential and healthcare buildings; firehouses are something far more civic-minded.

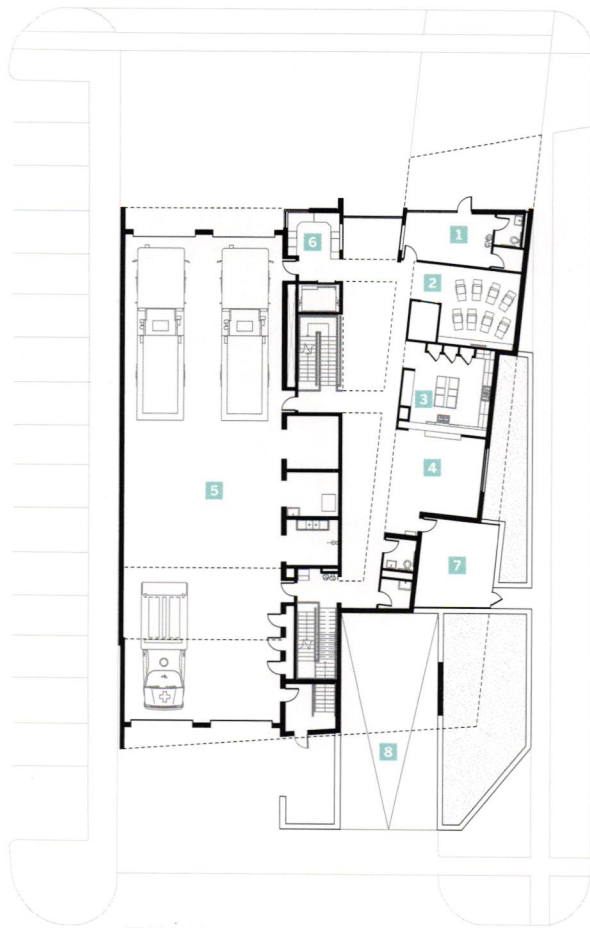
"What we tried to do was take these two main elements of the firehouse (people and machines) and connect them by way of something more public and engaging," says Stelmarski. "By opening to the street, the intent was to bring in some north light and give a glimpse of the station to the community." Indeed, the light in this two-story space is unlike that in any other firehouse you've likely entered. In collaboration with a local aluminum craftsman, the glossy red painted panels provide a delightful media for a graphic history and even a small exhibit at the ground level. Stelmarski continues, "We wanted to set a new standard of quality for the fire department, so that meant elevating everything from the presence on the street to the day-to-day interior experience."

For the passing driver, the building is immediately striking as it abruptly contrasts with the beige world around it. The use of in-situ concrete not only makes the building appear more durable than its neighboring structures, it sends a message of permanence in a context of fleeting disposability. The 16-ft-tall "27" cast into the wall in Helvetica font is a more literal example. The glossy red panels, as a light and playful skin, thus have some balance and grounding on the site.

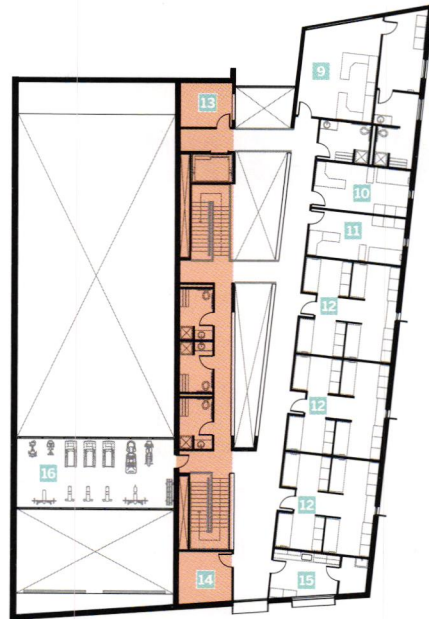
It should be noted that there are no Dalmatians here, no fire poles, and firefighters don't wear their bunker gear around the shop. In fact, there are fewer and fewer fires to attend to, and more and more accidents in need of rapid attention. These men and women don't claim to be heroes, and they don't belong to the country clubs around town. That said, they do their job with pride and have your general welfare in mind. Fire Station 27 is the first of a new generation of firehouses for a new generation of fire and rescue personnel working in a complex suburban transition. And if you take nothing else away from this article: don't text and drive.

Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA, is a designer with Baldrige Architects in Austin.





FIRST FLOOR



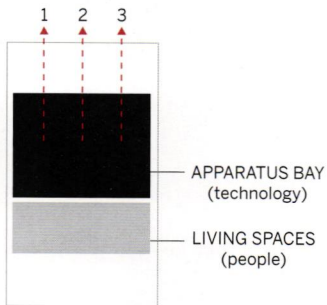
SECOND FLOOR



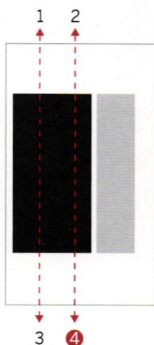
FIRST & SECOND FLOOR PLANS

- 1 LOBBY
- 2 DAYROOM
- 3 KITCHEN
- 4 DINING ROOM
- 5 APPARATUS BAY
- 6 WATCHROOM
- 7 OUTDOOR PATIO
- 8 RAMP TO PARKING
- 9 CHIEF'S OFFICE
- 10 CAPTAIN'S OFFICE
- 11 LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE
- 12 BUNK ROOM
- 13 STUDY
- 14 UTILITY CLOSET
- 15 LAUNDRY
- 16 FITNESS

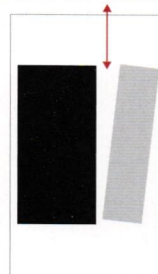
TYPICAL FIRE STATION CONFIGURATON



FIRE STATION 27 PASS-THROUGH CONFIGURATION



CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY + DAYLIGHT



Facing top *The rear of the building showing the "pass-through" apparatus bays.*

Facing bottom *The cast-in-place concrete walls telegraph a reassuring message of permanence to the neighborhood.*

The Lady Bird Seat

SECURITY, VENTILATION, AND DURABILITY COMPOSE THE BOTTOM LINE WHEN IT COMES TO PUBLIC RESTROOM FACILITIES. THE HERON CREEK RESTROOM ON LADY BIRD LAKE GOES BEYOND THOSE BASIC CONCERNS TO DELIVER A CATHEDRAL-LIKE ATMOSPHERE DIRECTED TOWARD THE EXPERIENCE OF LIGHT.

by Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA

Project Heron Creek Restroom, a.k.a. Lady Bird Loo, Austin

Client The Trail Foundation

Architect Mell Lawrence Architects

Design Team Mell Lawrence, FAIA; Hector Martell, AIA; Elizabeth Baird, AIA; Megan Mowry; Emily Weigand

Photographer Whit Preston

On a recent Thursday morning, Mell Lawrence, FAIA, stands in the shade along Lady Bird Lake in Austin and talks about learning from nature. “What is it about this ordered chaos that makes it feel comfortable?” he asks of the dappled light falling on waxy green leaves. We converse as the tide of runners ebbs and flows. Some stop at his nearby Heron Creek Restrooms. The early light of late summer is sharp and highlights the structure’s thin steel edge while the interior disappears into shadow. We walk around to observe from different angles, smartphones out, talking about the importance of light.

The Heron Creek Restrooms are the second park project by Mell Lawrence Architects (MLA). Their Cotillion Park Pavilion in Dallas was finished in 2013, and its steel canopy and mysterious red disc earned the firm an AIA Small Project Award that same year. The Austin restrooms, which won a Design Award this year from AIA Austin, are put to good use by the crowds on the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail. From mid-February to mid-September 2016, a counter under the MoPac bridge recorded 942,000 users on foot and bicycle.

The Trail Foundation (TTF), a nonprofit that acts as the steward of Austin’s lakefront trails, funded the restroom’s construction before gifting it to the City of Austin. Susan Rankin, TTF’s executive director, said







they began by researching park user needs by setting up a trail memory board on site. From that study it was clear that people wanted a space that was “light, airy, safe, and that’s what [Mell] did.” Previously, TTF commissioned restrooms by Miró Rivera Architects and Studio8. TTF also provided \$3 million in funds for the construction of Austin’s Boardwalk, designed by Limbacher & Godfrey Architects. MLA titled this project Lady Bird Loo, but the public nomenclature comes from TTF: The small depression near the project had no official name, but Heron Creek caught on after Rankin repeatedly saw yellow-crowned night herons there on her early morning runs.

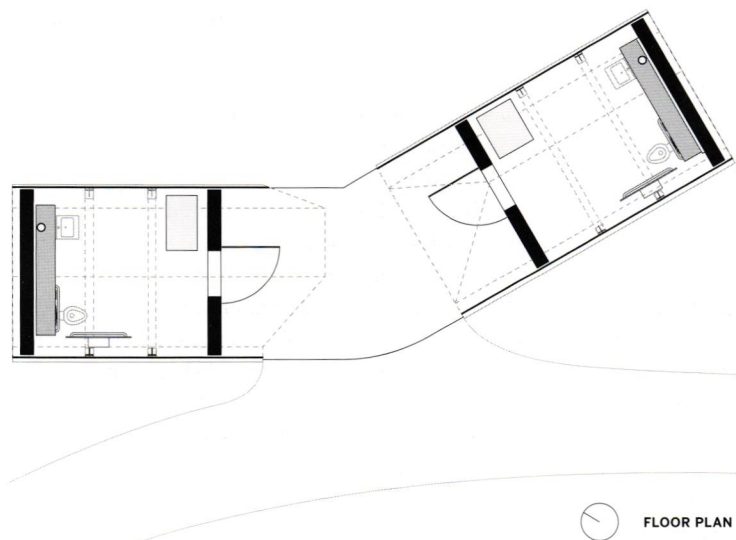
The dyadic restrooms stand in a clearing between the trail and the traffic of Cesar Chavez Street. The forms are nicely spaced off the path, separate enough to suggest privacy but visible enough to be secure (miraculously, the location also worked for the required descent of the wastewater pipe to its sewer connection). From Cesar Chavez, the plate steel forms shrink within the parade of trees, but on foot they perceptually transform into tall, patinated sails that reach up into the tree canopy.

Security and ventilation were the prime design concerns, as was durability: The site is in the flood plain, and the structure requires little maintenance other than the restocking of toilet paper or emptying of trash cans. Lawrence said early schemes explored a single canopy, but over time the design developed into two separate roofs

in dialogue. On both forms, the southern inner edge is creased. The taller western structure maintains its flat top, but the shorter eastern one is sliced so that its tip resolves to a sharp point — perhaps a beak. These simple geometric tweaks give a polyhedral personality to the canopies. The taller one, in the imagination of the architect, is more “motherly,” while the shorter one is “shyer.”

A shared porch between the restrooms opens south towards the trail. The two footprints are identical, with their mirror line oriented toward the entrance to Barton Creek across Lady Bird Lake, seen through an opening in the lakeshore thicket. This alignment, scored in the concrete slab, also approximates the sun’s departure and arrival on the horizon on the solstices. The north and south planar elevations are closed, rudely solid but weightless; the plates hover 5 in. off the ground — a security feature, so that users can see if any feet are idling nearby. The long plates that form the canopy are unfinished steel sheets; their mill scale is flaking off, but the shipping stamp is intact, though during construction, someone, in a spasm of political inspiration, scrubbed off the “Product of Russia” portion of the label.

Viewed from behind, the tall trapezoidal forms lighten to read as thin steel sheets on a frame. Concrete walls, 10 ft tall and loosely board-formed to result in a thick, shadow-casting horizontal joint, are held in from the ends of the steel tent. Air and light pass between. Steel T-sections attach



FLOOR PLAN

Previous *The mysterious weathering steel forms add a certain air to the business of using a public restroom.*

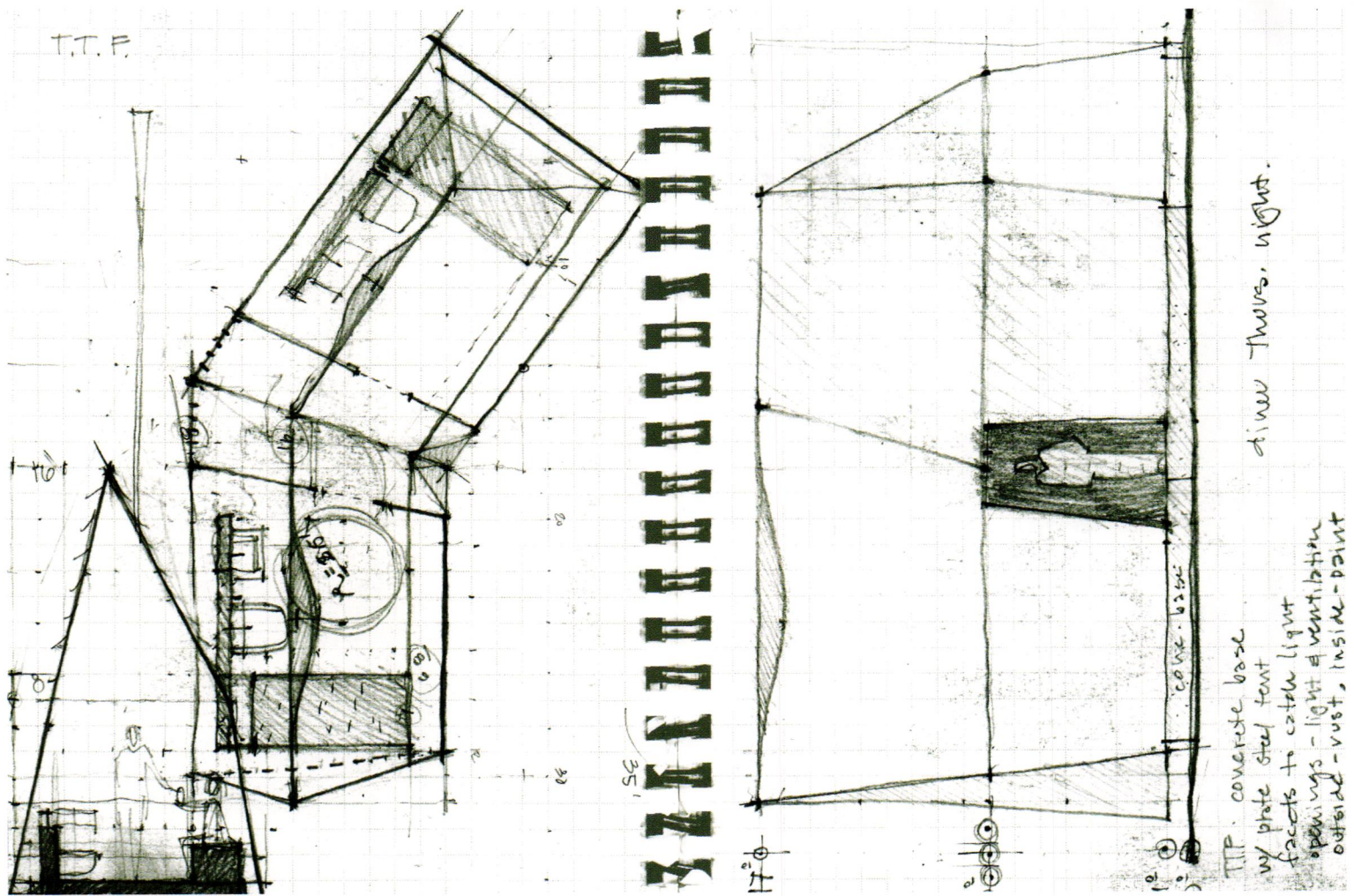
Facing *Each building component is pulled apart, allowing light and air to move between.*

This page *A hackberry limb invades the space.*

Right *Sunlight, changing throughout the day, animates the open-topped restrooms.*

Facing *An early concept sketch.*





to embed plates in the slab. The steel angle corners are welded to the T-section hoops, leaving the angle's two legs to support the plate steel. Local outfit Sarabi Studio aced the steel fabrication and small details. This exploded assembly makes its construction legible. "When you pull things apart," Lawrence says, "you let them each read as individual, and then, the gaps become part of the composition. It allows the light to get in there and change things over time."

One enters a restroom through the thick concrete wall and over a marble threshold, the "one small touch of refinement." To shut the mill finish stainless steel door, you use its custom fabricated, cross-shaped door latch. The act is similar to operating a train brake or a piece of factory machinery. "You throw it and you feel secure," says Lawrence. Inside, the toilet is integrated into the steel storage cabinet, and the plumbing vent extends upward above the concrete wall. There is a concrete plinth, "originally long enough to lie on," but now shortened to a smaller, squarish area on which to put items, dogs, or kids while conducting one's business.

Inside the space, users are treated to the mutable experience of light and shadow created by the roof geometry. The shell covers the plumbing fixtures but is otherwise open, revealing views up to the sky and diagonally out to the other form. A hackberry limb poetically

invades the interior of the western restroom. In fact, the whole shell was designed to catch light in different ways. Looking across, one sees a mix of full and partial shadows, and in the morning, a pleasing shock of direct sunlight spikes through the space.

The drama of the tall walls, the mix of ethereal and earthy materials, and the celestial views out the roofs conspire to call cathedrals to mind, and additional touches reinforce this thought: the cross-shaped latch, the thick walls reminiscent of a tomb, and the reverence for light. Lawrence recalls that an early version of the design called for the ceiling to be a "syrupy ecclesiastical blue, like the Virgin Mary should be in there." As cathedrals do, these restrooms inspire calm through their majesty and their materiality.

Standing back, Lawrence is satisfied with the project's visual results. When asked about what knowledge informed the design, he expounds thoughtfully: "Just how much the sun affects how you perceive every material — how it renders it, how it perceives texture and form, how it changes your perception of that, and how those things work together compositionally as the sun moves around — that's the biggest thing: that the sun is always moving around."

Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA, is an architectural designer at Baldrige Architects in Austin.

Zinc Earns Gold

Mundelein Village Hall, Mundelein, IL
Architect: Wight & Company
General Contractor: Weston Solutions
Installing contractor: Sullivan Roofing
Profiles: Snap-Clad, Snap-On, PAC-750 Soffit, 7.2 Wall Panels
Color: Zinc

Zinc-colored PAC-CLAD is an energy-efficient metal roofing that contributes to Mundelein Village Hall's LEED Gold certification.

SNAP-CLAD

Zinc - Energy Star - Cool Color

CASE STUDY



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Back at my desk, I could think better. Situated about as far as possible from the floor's outer and inner windows, it pressed against the tight brickwork of an elevator shaft. For the part of the day when I was not being lambasted, criticized, or pitied, I labored to the sound of steel chains gently scraping and the pale, wistful moan of the air as it rattled heavy wooden doors set on iron casters whenever those small rooms approached and vanished. It's a sound worn into every memory I have of that time, a song I hear whenever I think of my career. It remains the secret name I have for the hopes, desires, and illusions that animated and identified me for most of my life. — Colin Dodds, "Babel Communications"

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the average American spends 8.9 hours of the workday at work (2014 statistics) — edging sleep, at 7.7 hours, as the largest allotment of time during the 24-hour period, and by far outweighing leisure, eating and drinking, and all other personal quotidian activities. Thus it can be safely assumed that, until robots replace the majority of the workforce (page 16), the environments in which we do our jobs will continue to be as profoundly influential on the quality of life we enjoy as our ability to get a good night's rest — a point admirably driven home by the above passage from a novel about an up-and-coming communications executive in the Tower of Babel.

The projects in this portfolio section on workplace interiors are examples of architecture that takes an active role in influencing the character and nature of experience: One is a showpiece meant to communicate a brand's philosophy and capabilities to potential clients, whereas the other is a rollout of an unconventional office concept meant to make employees happier about coming to work.

Inner Workings

72

Where the Excitement Lives

ImageNet Carrollton
Renovation

*Elliott + Associates
Architects*

Audrey Maxwell, AIA

78

Unassigned

GLG Austin

Clive Wilkinson Architects

Aaron Seward



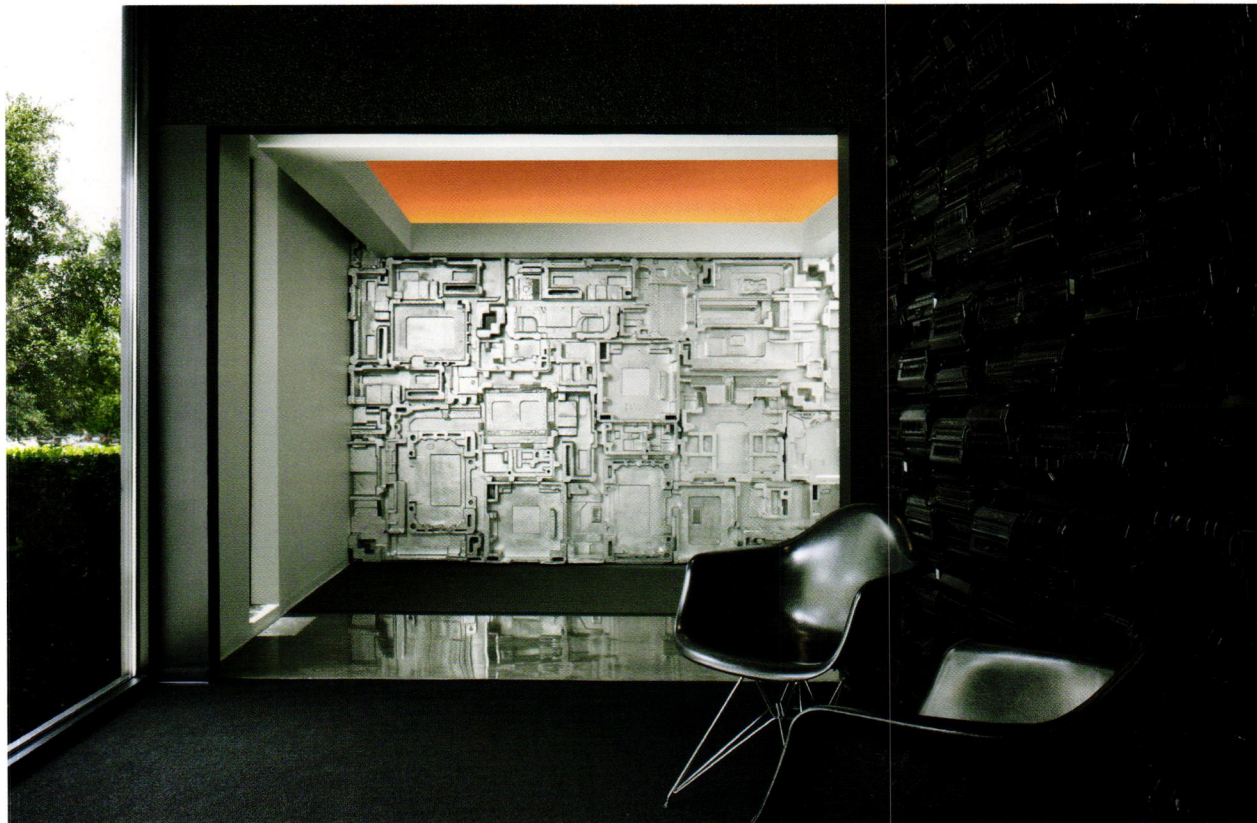
Where the Excitement Lives

The recent renovation of ImageNet's Carrollton facility by Elliott + Associates Architects has transformed a banal, tilt-up warehouse building into an outlandish jewel box, rich with narrative content.

by Audrey Maxwell, AIA

By the 1950s, the typewriter was ubiquitous, so it made good sense for entrepreneur Bobby Roberson to launch a typewriter repair company out of his garage in 1956. Southwest Typewriter Company evolved as technology changed, entering the imaging business two decades later with the introduction of analog copiers. Copiers soon advanced into multi-functional devices in the 1990s. When scanning capabilities were added in the 2000s, ImageNet recognized the potential impact on business processes and began offering electronic document management. Today, the company has diversified further, offering consulting services, integration, and even 3-D printing technology. Their nimbleness, foresight, and willingness to evolve in a field of rapid change has contributed to their success.

ImageNet's bold business approach is evident in their architecture. Rand Elliott, FAIA, of Elliott + Associates Architects (E+A) in Oklahoma City has designed several locations, each one an out-of-the-box solution that has garnered a

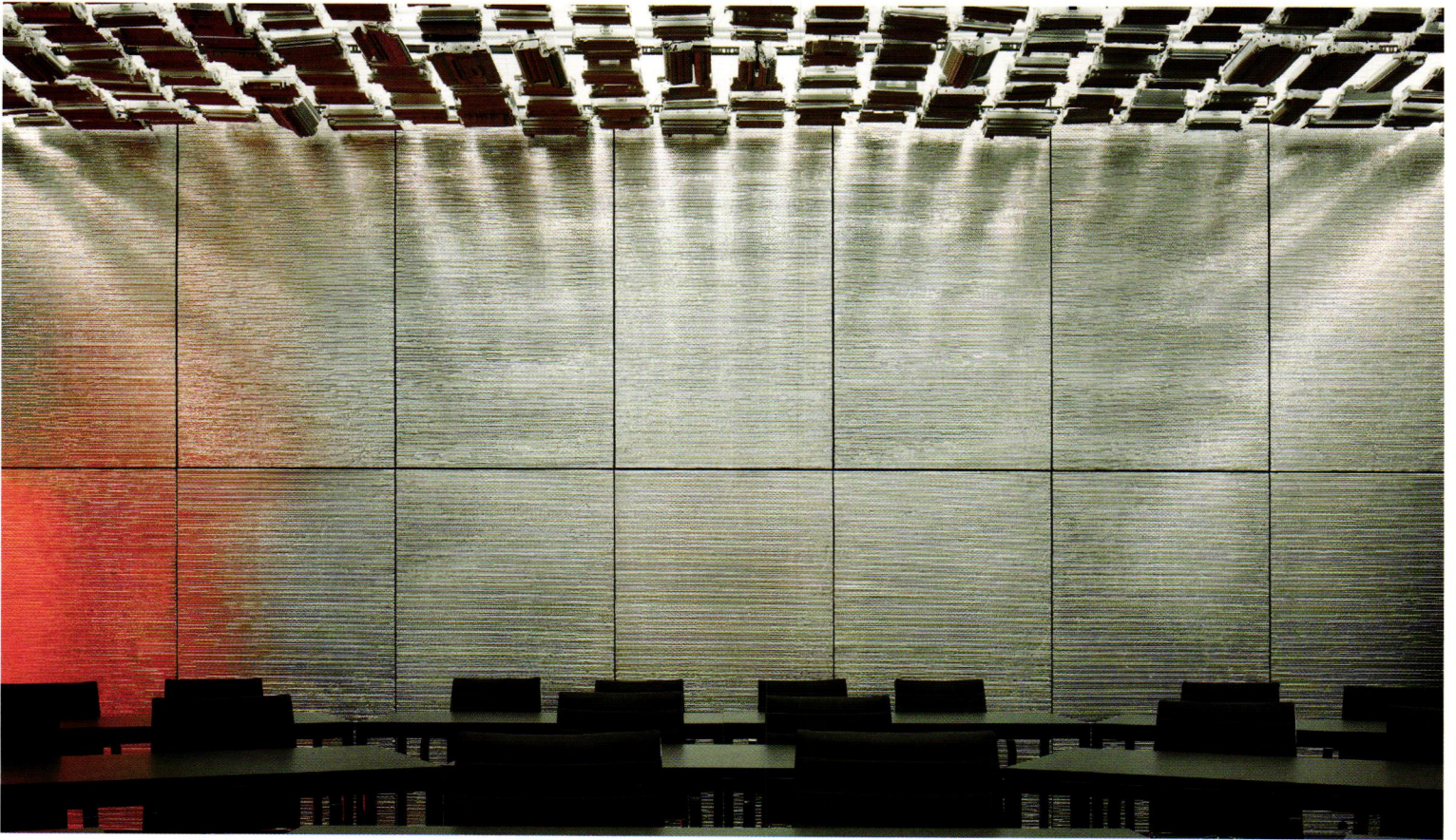


Facing An underutilized delivery dock was transformed into a conference and presentation space.

Top left Tours kick off in the lobby, where a suspended cube poses the question, "What will your solution be?"

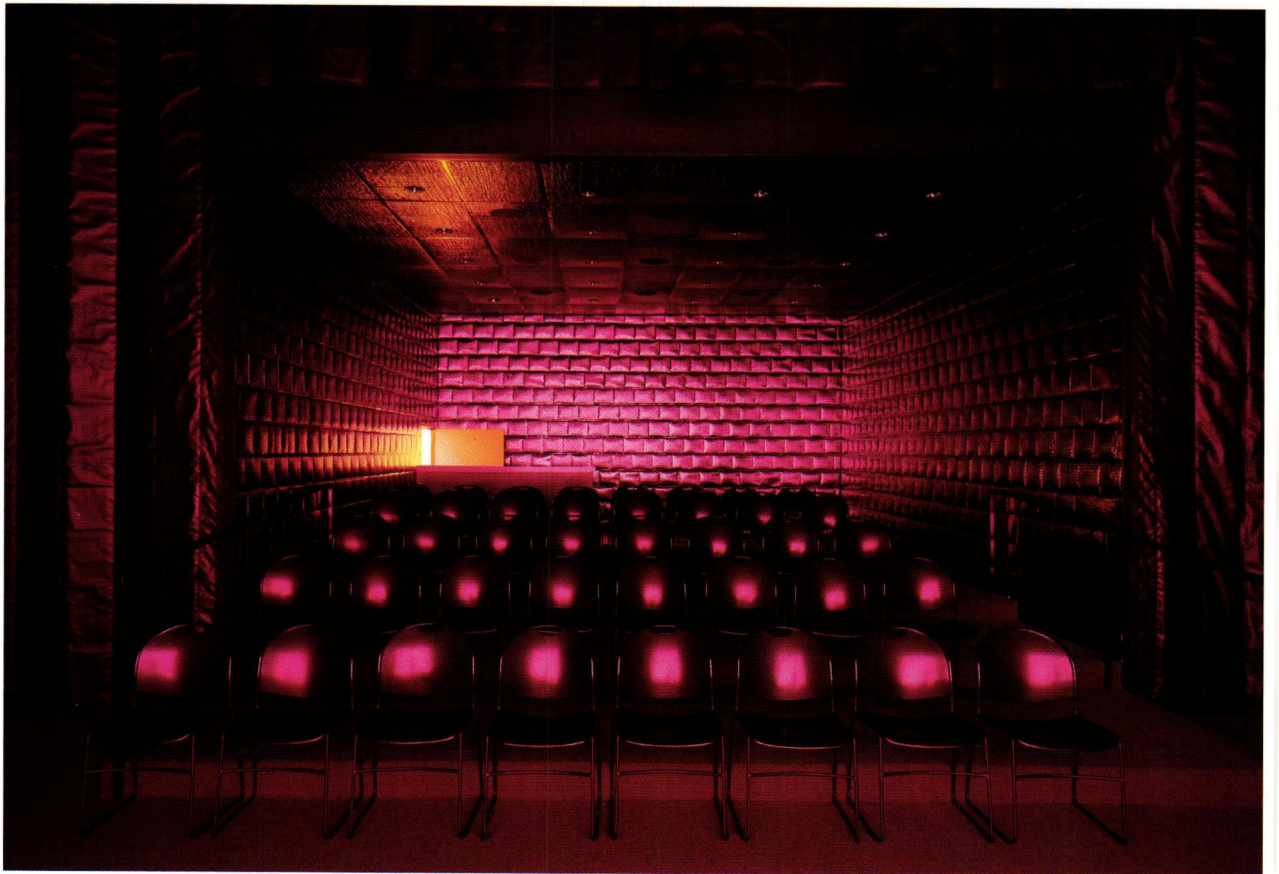
Top right A cloud of repurposed filing cabinets are suspended from the ceiling in the conference space, representing the transition from paper-based systems to digital information storage.

Left Repurposed toner cartridges and painted foam packing materials are collaged into sculptural wall applications, making a statement about the company's sustainability practices.



Top *A ceiling plane of recycled toner cartridges casts shadows on the glistening aluminum bubble wrap wall panels in the training room.*

Bottom *A presentation space is treated like a black box theater, which allows flexibility for frequent technology updates.*



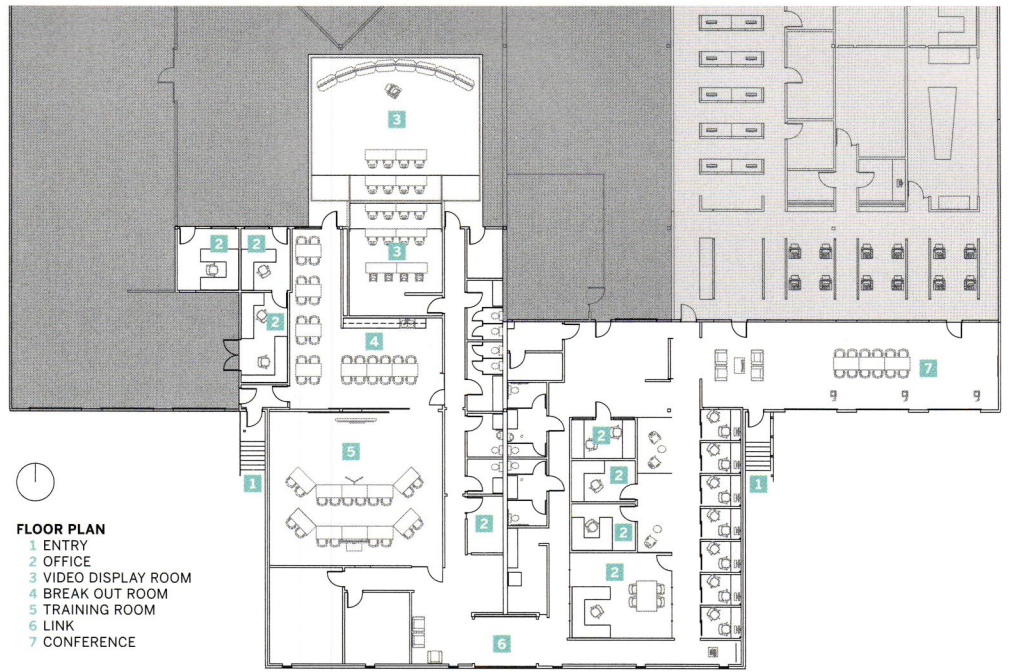


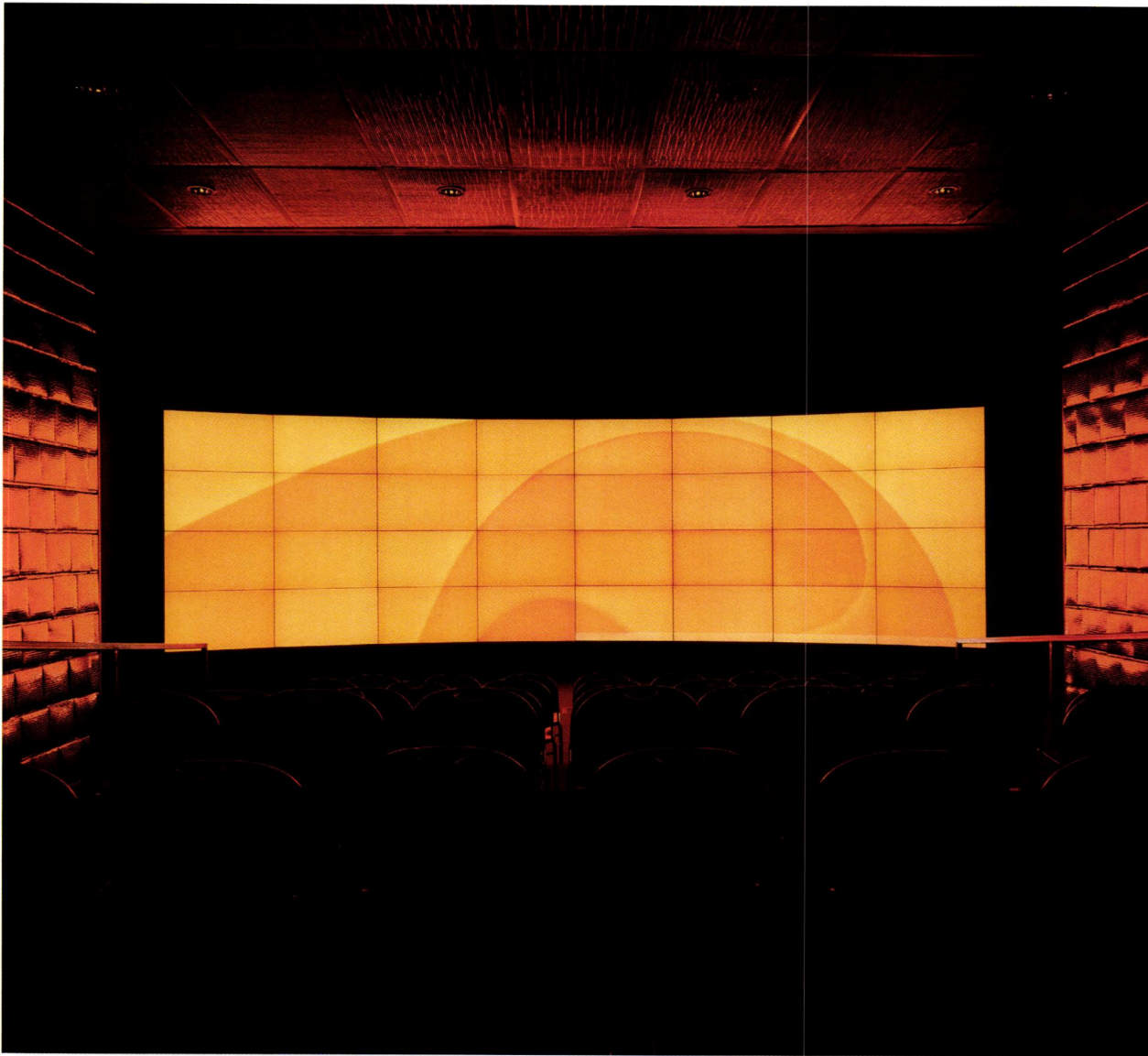
Orange — a new corporate color — covers every surface of the break room.

few raised eyebrows. The Carrollton location, renovated in July 2015, was no exception. The client identified several project goals that became the design inspiration for the project. They wanted to tell their company story, share their philosophies, and demonstrate to potential customers their vast capabilities. How could they break down the complexity of technology into a simple concept people could grasp? In response, E+A devised a design that transformed the existing space, a boring tilt-up warehouse, into a visually compelling exhibit.

Spaces were carefully organized into a choreographed procession for potential customers. Each room tells a part of the ImageNet story. Tours begin in a renovated loading dock that now serves as a meeting and presentation room. The space is spare, with concrete walls and floors exposed, the ceiling left unfinished. Above the conference table, an array of suspended painted filing cabinet carcasses dangles from bar joists, drawers replaced with light fixtures. The installation represents the transition from paper-based systems to digital information storage in “the cloud.” Opposite the cabinets, an illuminated orange cube with a large question mark prompts the question: What is the right solution for you? These are just the first of the follies visitors will encounter as they tour the facility. The exhibits act as prompts for the sales team and provide visual references to help explain complex technology that often can’t be seen or touched.

Repurposed technology waste was used throughout the building. Elliott confided that, early on, the design team went dumpster-diving in the warehouse for inspiration. The owners have





Facing left Simple glass-fronted offices and break-out spaces line the corridor. Blue divider walls display the company's history, mission, and philosophy.

Facing right ImageNet began in 1956 as a typewriter company. Here, the typewriter is presented as a sculpture sitting atop a recycled paper pedestal with a backdrop of repurposed blue plastic wrap.

This page The 32-plasma-screen display in the presentation room allows ImageNet to demonstrate the company's technology to customers in real-time. The space also functions as a social gathering space.

confronted head-on the reality of the enormous amount of waste generated by the technology they sell. The company recycles everything — from cardboard boxes to foam packing materials. It was fitting for the architecture to follow suit. E+A held nothing back. Foam packing materials adorn walls everywhere from the lobby to waiting areas to the break room. Each painted foam piece is like a thumbprint, formed to fit specific equipment. Collaged together, their shapes create a sculptural and tactile presence. Near the waiting area, a partition wallpapered with old toner cartridges sits opposite a large window overlooking the lawn, alluding to natural versus man made forces. Pointing to a glass panel swaddled with blue plastic wrap that serves as backdrop for a 1956 typewriter, Elliott says, “Every time we had an opportunity to use something that was really simple and off the shelf, we did it.” Not only was it good for

the bottom line, it also leveraged everyday objects to illustrate the company's do-good philosophy.

The utilization of these recycled waste materials generated unpredictably sublime environments. The training room fully immerses visitors in the technology waste. Inhabitants are surrounded by walls lined floor-to-ceiling with aluminum bubble wrap. A suspended grid of recycled toner cartridges forms an ethereal ceiling plane overhead, blotting the otherwise shiny wall surfaces with shadows. A pair of 30-ft-wide doors on one wall slides open to reveal an orange glow beyond. Beckoning like a mirage, the room engulfs you in orange, one of the company colors. Every surface is rendered in bright orange — ceiling, walls, floor, furniture — even the kitchen appliances. “Doesn't it feel like orange sherbet?” Elliott remarks with a

smile. The experience is so exotic that visitors forget the drab industrial surroundings.

The architectural solutions are brilliantly simple. E+A employed a straightforward palette of drywall, glass, and concrete, then inserted pops of color and texture with recycled waste products. The quirky exhibits or follies elicit delight, and experienced together, tell a clear and compelling tale about ImageNet. “It's the notion of taking something that isn't precious — a tilt-up concrete horrible building — and recycling it and reusing it in a way where the technology — the innards, if you will — are where the excitement lives,” Elliott explains. The building leaves a memorable impression. It's a surprise — and that, according to Elliott, is exactly the point.

Audrey Maxwell, AIA, is a principal at Malone Maxwell Borson Architects.



Unassigned

Clive Wilkinson Architects designed GLG's new Austin office around the activity-based working concept, where employees are given a laptop, a mobile phone, and no specific place to sit.

by Aaron Seward

Activity-based working (ABW) has been around as an idea since the 1990s, though successful implementations of it have not been deployed until this century, when digital technology reached a point that it could enable the office concept. In short, ABW does away with cubicles and assigned seating of all forms in favor of a more fluid office environment with a variety of spaces tuned to different activities. Workers, equipped with laptops and mobile phones, can pick and choose an environment that best suits the job at hand, whether it is a private phone call, some quiet research, or collaborative brainstorming. The notion is that getting workers out of their silos and moving around the office will increase productivity by fostering the exchange of information, increasing cohesion among teams, and generally making people happier about coming to work.

The new Gerson Lehrman Group (GLG) office in downtown Austin, designed by Clive Wilkinson Architects (CWA), is the first rollout of ABW in Texas. Completed this summer, it is an evolution of a design that CWA completed for GLG's New York City headquarters a few years ago.

CWA, which is based in Los Angeles, has been a proponent of ABW on these shores (the concept originated in California but has thus far been adopted mostly in the Netherlands and other northern European countries). In addition to the GLG projects, CWA completed an ABW office for investment banking firm Macquarie Group in Sydney, Australia, in 2009, and for advertising behemoth Publicis North America in New York City earlier this year. "We have found that ABW is an incredibly successful tool for collaborative businesses



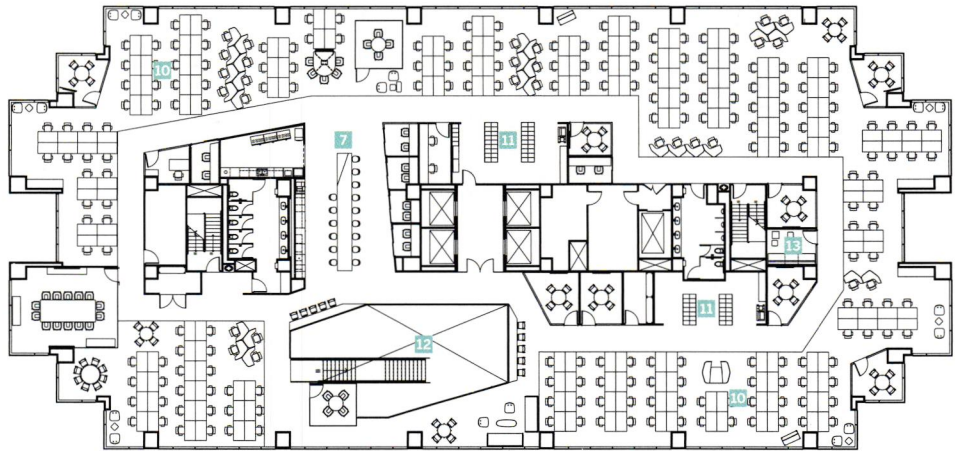
Facing *The architects removed two column bays to connect GLG's two floors. Local post oak was used to form the raised platform, and the expanded metal mesh on the railings was also sourced in Austin.*

This page *The pantry doubles as breakout workspaces for those who prefer a cafe setting. Glass-enclosed booths provide places for private phone calls.*

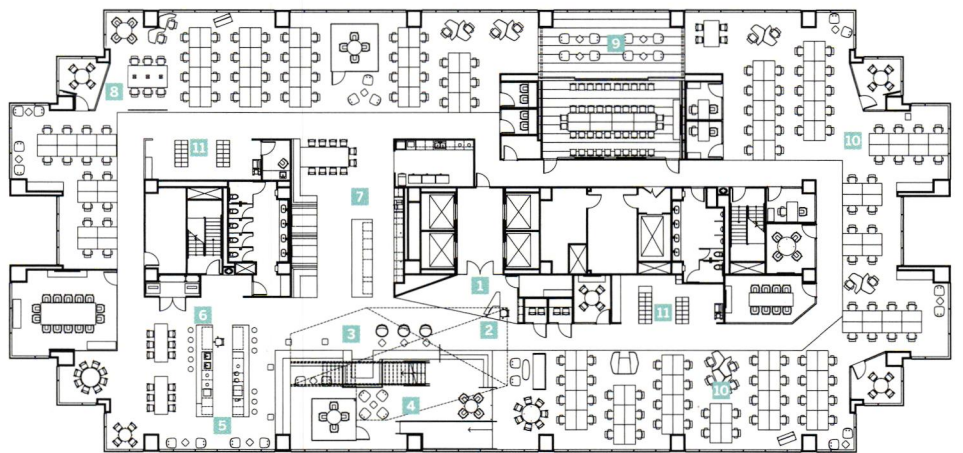


FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH FLOOR PLANS

- 1 MAIN ENTRY
- 2 HOST DESK
- 3 PLAZA
- 4 PLATFORM
- 5 BARISTA BAR
- 6 IT GENIUS BAR
- 7 PANTRY
- 8 LIBRARY
- 9 TRAINING ROOM
- 10 OPEN OFFICE
- 11 ANCHOR POINT
- 12 ATRIUM SLAB CUT
- 13 MEDITATION ROOM



SIXTEENTH FLOOR



FIFTEENTH FLOOR

This page *The architects created a variety of different work areas tuned to different kinds of group and solitary activity.*

Facing *The glass walls enclosing each conference room are composed of two subtly different colors, a variation that pleases the eye.*

needing to support knowledge sharing,” says Caroline Morris, CWa project manager on the GLG project.

GLG, which was founded in New York City in 1998, is a professional learning platform that connects senior business executives to experts who can advise them on strategic or operational issues. “It’s short-term, on-demand business education,” says Richard Socarides, GLG head of public affairs and a former staffer in Bill Clinton’s White House. “Some people call us Match.com for business.” The company has 1,200 employees in 22 offices around the globe, the largest of which are in New York and Austin.

In both offices, CWa created distinct neighborhoods that serve GLG’s different departments (the company has two primary types of employees: software developers and client reps). Each neighborhood contains an “anchor point” with lockers, printing facilities, and central filing — of which there is very little, as the business is mostly digital. Around these nodes are arrayed the different types of work spaces:





communal tables with monitors; breakout tables for small groups; cubbies for quiet research; telephone booths for private phone calls; and conference rooms, some of which are enclosed in colorful glass boxes. (In the Austin office, which is flooded with daylight, subtly different tones of the same color were used in the glass walls for no other reason than the visual delight created by this variation.) In addition to these spaces, there is a central lounge area with residential style furniture, a group pantry with booth seating, and a barista bar.

“We thought there were two components important to positioning GLG in Austin,” says CWA founder Clive Wilkinson. “One was to acknowledge and adopt the brand values from the New York office, and the other was to respond to the local context in a direct way.”

In Texas, CWA replicated basic layout ideas and furniture systems from New York while referencing, in Wilkinson’s words, “the Austin small cottage porch idea.” A large, raised post oak deck, built by a local carpenter, greets visitors when they enter the office. Other suppliers and craftspeople from Austin were also employed: The guardrails on the stair that rises from the deck to connect the lower floor to the upper — CWA removed two column bays in the office tower to connect GLG’s two stories — are made from expanded metal mesh done by a local fabricator. The LED fixtures that light the double-height space are from Ketra, which is based in Austin, and can be adjusted to any color, an ideal setup for the company, which hosts clients and throws parties in the space.

Another difference between the New York and Austin offices can be found at the barista bar: In Austin, it’s much more in demand. “There was a discussion about why is it that there are no lines in New York, but there are in Austin,” Wilkinson says. “I think Austin people feel comfortable standing around chatting, whereas New Yorkers don’t. It’s a great social mixer having a barista. The workers place orders and stand around and talk to people. It breaks the ice much more than a self-serve pantry would. Plus, it’s really good coffee.”

Aaron Seward is editor of *Texas Architect*.



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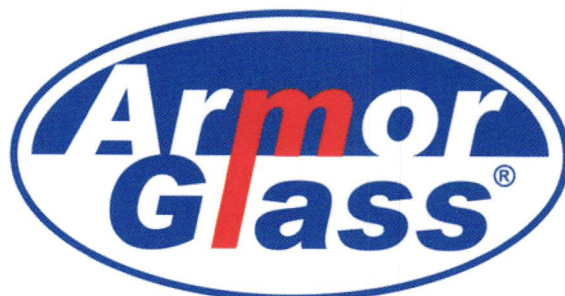
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The Ethical Voice

Fair housing champion and MacArthur Foundation Fellow John Henneberger has been fighting neighborhood segregation for 40 years. He's now bringing his message to a new generation of architects.

by Patrick Michels

Forty years ago, a few young architects in Austin riled a righteous sense of injustice in John Henneberger, and it still drives him today.

Henneberger is a champion of fair housing in Texas, a 2014 MacArthur Foundation Fellow who has lately used his platform to plead his case to a new cohort of young architects, reminding them of their responsibility to help end neighborhood segregation. Through his work with community development corporations and as co-founder of the Texas Low Income Housing Information Service, Henneberger partners with architects to help low-income communities of color fight for fair housing.

Back in 1974, Henneberger was a student at the University of Texas, watching as new development swiftly remade Clarksville, an African-American community in West Austin established by freed slaves. The streets were dirt and the drainage was poor, but Clarksville's vibrant community and its proximity to downtown made it an enticing spot for wealthy new Austinites. Renters were displaced and rising property taxes chased old homeowners away, and while the new residents in big houses were easy to blame, the primary agents of gentrification preceded them.

"The damn first people who came into Clarksville, they were architects who could not see the harm," Henneberger says. "They could never ... understand the impact of building box

Fair housing advocate John Henneberger says architects should be citizens first, keeping in mind their responsibility to society at large.



after box of \$90,000 houses and tearing down affordable rental housing.” They took care to build homes respectful of the neighborhood’s historic style, but tore apart its human fabric in the process. Henneberger helped organize a community development group in Clarksville, which stopped the city’s plans to clear blocks of homes for an east-west expressway, but failed to prevent displacement from rising home prices.

Five years later, the city announced plans to level homes in the Guadalupe neighborhood, east of downtown near the French Legation. Politicians imagined clearing a grand urban park around the legation, demolishing blighted homes and pushing out Hispanic and African-American residents in the process. Guadalupe residents first tried protesting at City Hall, then turned to a young architect in their neighborhood. Tom Hatch, FAIA, lived and worked in an old house a block east of the legation, and had an interest in low-income housing. He had helped design a \$30,000 house to stem the gentrification of Clarksville and was dismayed to learn residents couldn’t even secure loans to build one. Affordable housing, he learned, was no solo job. Hatch enlisted Henneberger to help his neighbors organize. They surveyed residents in homes that

could be targeted for demolition, developed a list of priorities — wheelchair ramps, new roofs, and bathroom repairs — and pitched the city on a new plan. Instead of tearing down Guadalupe, they’d fix up the homes around the legation and keep the community in place. With city funding, the group bought vacant lots and built low-cost rental homes for people in the community.

Since then, Hatch has gone on to make affordable housing a central part of his practice, Hatch + Ulland Owen Architects. “If you’re interested in improving the health of a community,” Hatch says, “tend to the less fortunate, and it’ll be a healthier community.”

What struck Henneberger most about Hatch’s role in Guadalupe was how he put his skills at the community’s disposal.

“The architect helped people get a voice on the future of their lives and their community in a way that they couldn’t have done otherwise,” he says. “It wasn’t that the architect was this magic sole-practitioner problem-solver; it’s just that the architect accepted a role to engage at the table with that community.”

Henneberger hopes that’s an example that can inspire a new generation of civic-minded architects, and over the last two years, he’s been

sharing his vision in speeches to The University of Texas School of Architecture graduates, the National Association of Collegiate Planners Conference, and the Austin chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

An architect is both artist and technician, but Henneberger says there’s a more fundamental role built into the job, too: They are citizens first, responsible for the well-being and equity of the community in which they work. Alongside the builder, banker, and realtor, Henneberger says, only the architect represents the greater society when a new space is planned. “I think the architect has an ethical and a moral mandate to bring those issues to that table and make sure they’re discussed,” he says.

“You’re not going to let them build a building that’s going to fall down because it would be unethical to do, and it would get them in trouble in the long run,” Henneberger says. “I want to suggest that in the same way, it’s unethical, and it’s going to get them into trouble in the long run, for people to be doing things which don’t take down walls of economic and racial inequality.”

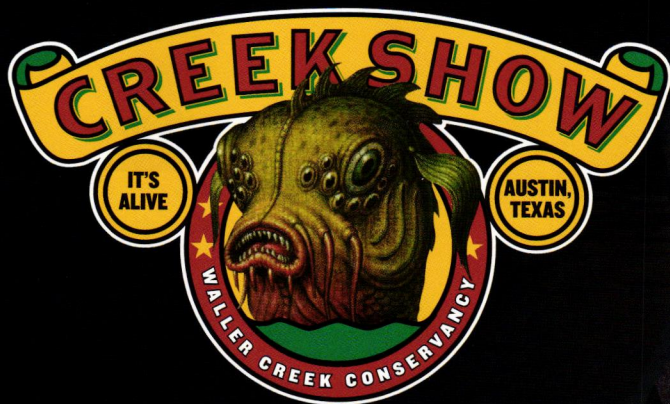
Patrick Michels is a writer based in Austin.



Facing *Homestead Oaks Apartments, a 140-unit affordable housing development in Austin, designed by Hatch + Ulland Owen Architects.*

This page *Franklin Gardens (top) and La Vista de Guadalupe (bottom) — two other Austin affordable housing developments by H+UO.*





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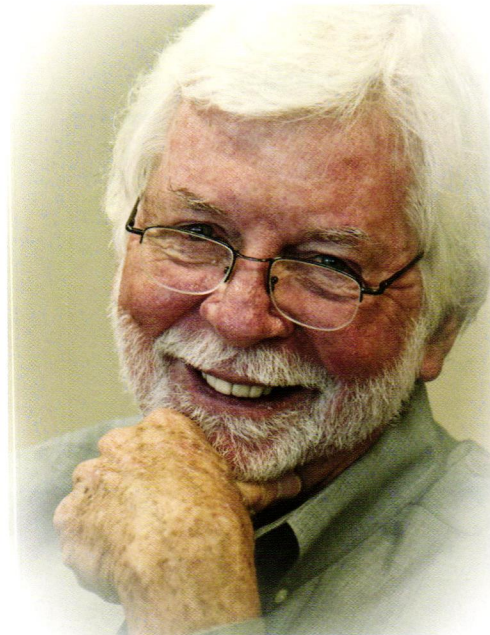
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Jules Buck Jones, Artist

OTA+
Kory Bieg, AIA

WEST SHOP | COOK SHOP
Alisa West, Landscape Designer
Travis Cook, Designer

Texas Society of Architects Honor Awards

The Texas Society of Architects announced the recipients of its 2016 Honor Awards on August 26. Honorees will be recognized at various events during the Society's 77th Annual Convention and Design Expo, to be held in San Antonio on November 3–5, 2016.



Medal for Lifetime Achievement in Honor of Llewellyn W. Pitts, FAIA

Sinclair Black, FAIA, Austin

Professor Sinclair Black's 50-year career in professional practice and architectural education demonstrates a lifetime of courageous accomplishment in urban planning and the built environment. His career has included significant advancement of standards for urban public spaces and innovative master planning. Black has been a visionary in advocating for the importance of natural environments within Austin's urban core, and in the revitalization of the city's downtown streetscapes. Black has also profoundly influenced generations of architects and planners as an educator, and has produced many publications, learned articles, and lectures in support of AIA and the profession. His contributions have left the state richer in its urban fabric and will continue to shape it for years to come.

Regarding the Great Streets Master Plan, for which Black served as project principal, one supporter of his nomination commented, "In 2022, Austinites will look back on a 20-year effort that completely transformed downtown, tip our hats to Sinclair Black, and say, 'Thank you.'"

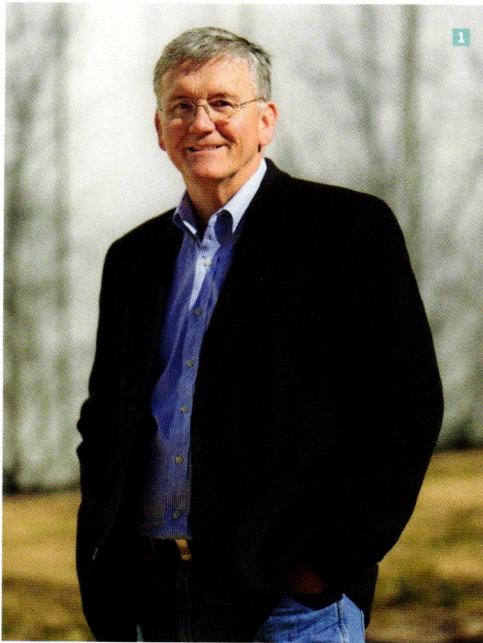
Architecture Firm Award

Miró Rivera Architects, Austin

TxA's 2016 "Firm of the Year" Miró Rivera Architects has established an international reputation for excellence in architectural design and leadership. Through projects such as "Bridge & Guest House," which launched them onto the international stage, the Circuit of the Americas Formula 1 track/performance venue, and Chinmaya Mission, a Hindu temple described as "something of India and something of Texas," the firm has advanced the quality of the built environment and truly raised the bar for AIA and professional practice. Design principals Juan Miró, FAIA, and Miguel Rivera, FAIA, have also made significant contributions to architectural and planning higher education, inspiring a generation of students as educators and mentors.

"I believe it is their compassion — their humane, even loving approach — that has resulted in such great work," noted one colleague, who went on to comment on the firm's contributions in the context of globalization and homogenization of culture: "Their work and their very selves are both global and uniquely local. They are proving that as architects, we have the ability and the power to lead the way to a world that is beautiful, relevant, and flourishing for all." ■

Recognition



Award for Community Service in Honor of James D. Pflugler, FAIA

1 Paul Dennehy, AIA, Fort Worth

Award for Young Professional Achievement in Honor of William W. Caudill, FAIA

2 Jennifer Workman, AIA, Dallas

Associate Member of the Year

3 R. Wilson Hanks, Assoc. AIA, Austin

Mentorship Award

4 AIA Dallas Latinos in Architecture Network, Dallas

Award for Excellence in the Promotion of Architecture through the Media in Honor of John G. Flowers, Hon. AIA

5 The Building Arts Group, San Antonio

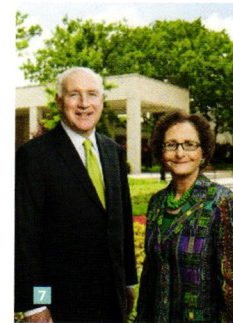
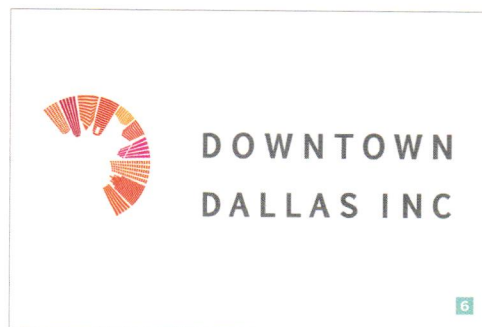
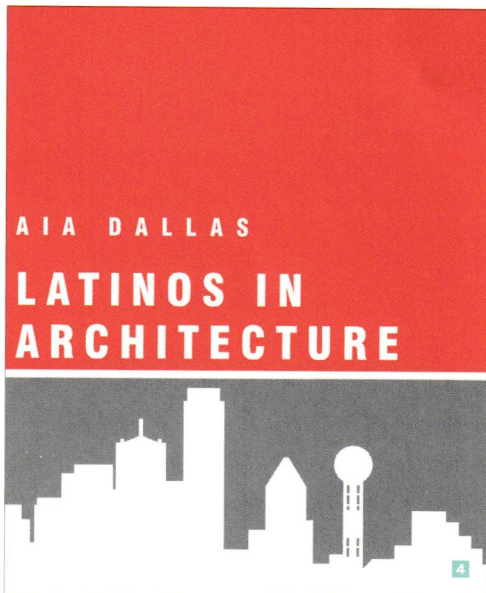
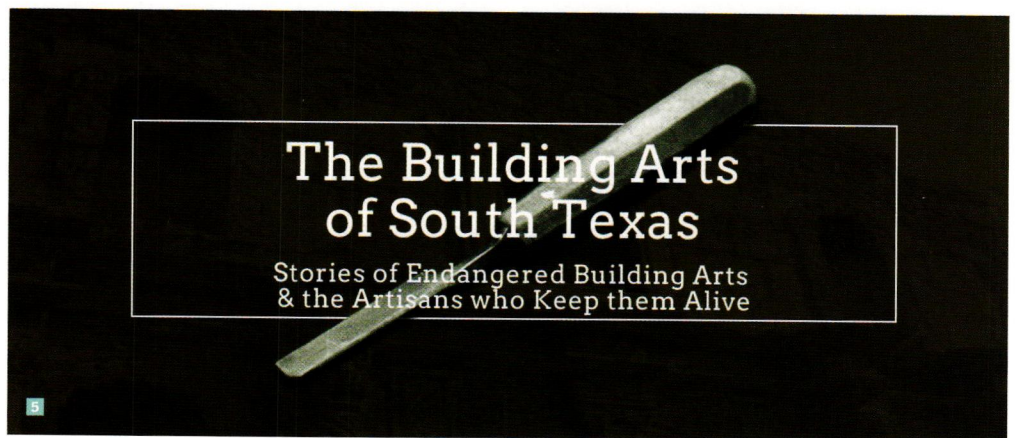
Citation of Honor

6 Downtown Dallas, Inc.

Honorary Membership

7 Nancy A. Nasher & David J. Haemisegger, Dallas

8 Linda Owen, Dallas ■





The American
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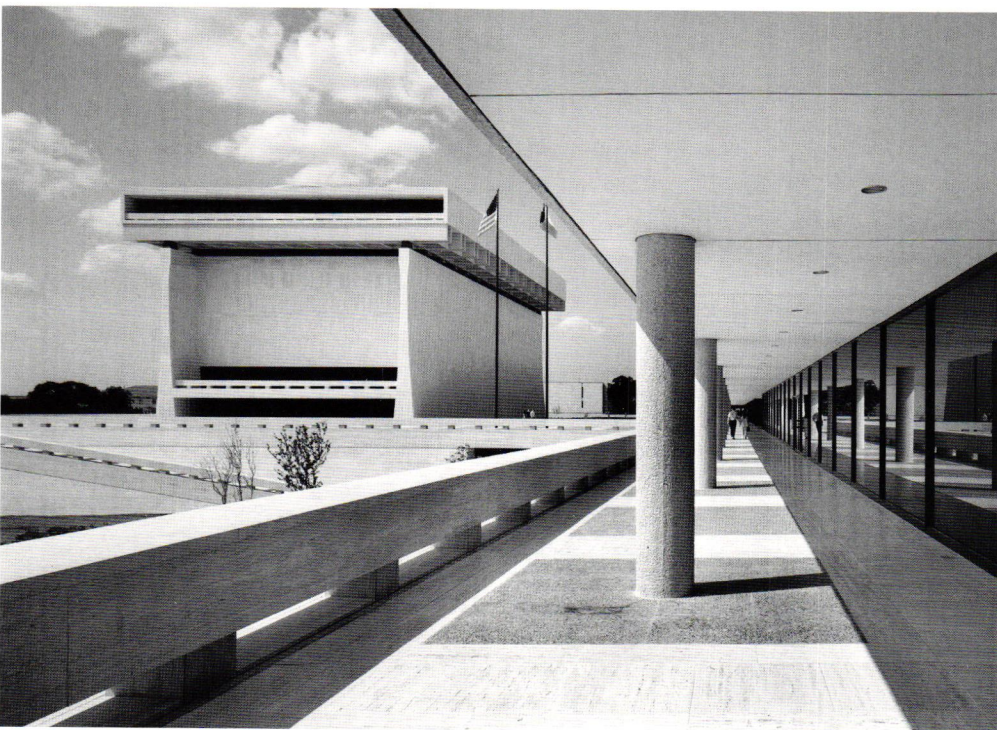
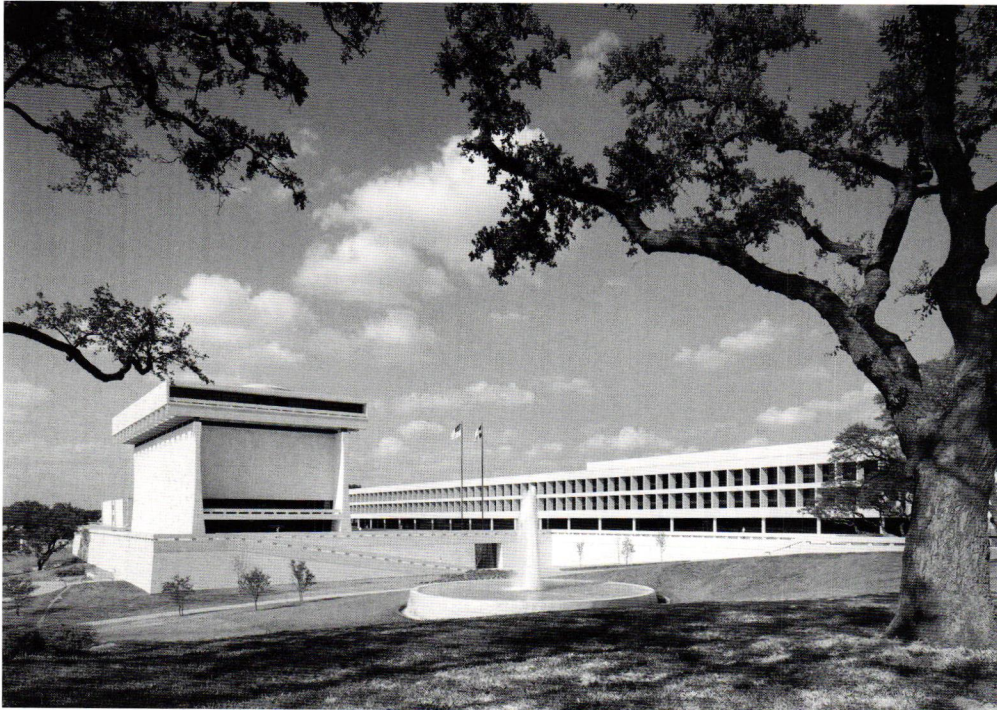
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Joseph Lai, AIA Member since 2012

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Texas Society of Architects 25-Year Award



Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum

The LBJ Presidential Library, located on the campus of The University of Texas at Austin, is an icon of modern architecture. It was designed by Gordon Bunshaft, FAIA, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in 1966 and dedicated in 1971, and features a 10-story monolithic mass placed alone within a large promontory-like plaza.

The east and west walls create supporting planes for a plinth-like cap, which houses the president's office, research spaces, and meeting rooms. The exterior is clad with travertine and presents a stoic and protective presence for the image of the library as a place to hold and protect the papers, documents, and objects from Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency. In an interview for the Chicago Architects Oral History Project, Bunshaft cited the strength of President Johnson, who was then at the pinnacle of his power, as well as the dramatic site, as inspiration for the building's monumental design.

The most notable of the library's interior spaces is the six-story Great Hall. Bunshaft felt strongly that rather than placing the archives in a vault, the public ought to be made aware of the 30 million documents housed within the building. The resulting design features a monumental travertine staircase leading up to a glass box holding the library's papers, which are filed in thousands of red boxes adorned with gold presidential seals, creating a rich pattern.

In 2009, Overland Partners, with ARCHITEXAS, undertook a renovation of the library to resolve issues that had plagued it since its early years, as well as problems that had developed over decades of use and exposure to the elements. Praised for respecting the genius of Bunshaft's work, the firm's main contributions included the installation of a colorful mural and replacement of the original fountains with raised planters, both in honor of the environmental legacy of Lady Bird Johnson.

The 25-Year Award will be presented to SOM during the Second General Session at the Texas Society of Architects' 2016 Convention and Design Expo in San Antonio. ■



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—Michelle Kinney, homeowner

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Contractor Balfour Beatty

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Contractor Bartlett Cocke General Contractors

Consultants CIVIL ENGINEER: Pacheco Koch; STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Jaster Quintanilla; MEP ENGINEER: B&H Engineers; LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: David T. Retsch Design; FIRE STATION PLANNING CONSULTANTS: TCA Architecture-Planning; METAL PANEL ARTIST: Intaglio Composites; COMMISSIONING: Facility Performance Associates

Resources CONCRETE: (Consys Concrete Corp.); POLISHED CONCRETE FLOORING: (Stain & Stamp); MASONRY CMU: Texas Building Products (Father and Son Masonry); STRUCTURAL STEEL FABRICATION: (C&F Steel Company); STRUCTURAL STEEL ERECTION: (K&O Welding); DECORATIVE METAL, METAL STAIRS, STAINLESS STEEL: (Casteel Mfg.); PLASTIC LAMINATE FACED CABINETS: Wilsonart Laminate (Mike Conkle's Custom Cabinets); BITUMINOUS DAMPROOFING: W.R. Meadows (Southwest Construction Services); FLUID APPLIED WATERPROOFING: Carlisle (Southwest Construction Services); SYNTHETIC STUCCO SYSTEM: Parex (Southwest Lath and Plaster); THERMAL INSULATION: Owens Corning, Thermafiber (Barber Specialties); CORRUGATED METAL PANELS: Berridge (Berridge Corporation); MODIFIED BITUMINOUS ROOFING: GAF (Roof by Nicholas); ETCHED SHEET METAL PANELS (FABRICATION ONLY): AIS Metal Fabricator; ETCHED SHEET METAL PANELS (PAINTING AND ETCHING): Intaglio Composites (AIS Metal Fabricator); HOLLOW METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: Curries (Piper Weatherford); WOOD DOORS: VT Industries (Piper Weatherford); FOUR-FOLD DOORS: Door Engineering (ABC Doors of Dallas); OVERHEAD SECTIONAL DOORS: Cloday (ABC Doors of Dallas); STOREFRONT AND CURTAINWALL: Kawneer (Campbell Glass & Mirror); GLAZING: Guardian Sunguard (Campbell Glass & Mirror); GLAZING (STAINED GLASS PUBLIC ARTIST): Rex Kare Studio; GYPSUM BOARD: Georgia Pacific (Barber Specialties); TILING: Knoxite (Mike Barton Tile); ACOUSTICAL PANEL CEILINGS: Armstrong (Barber Specialties); RESILIENT ATHLETIC FLOORING: Mondo Flooring/One Source Commercial Flooring (Z Flooring); WALL PROTECTION: Inpro Corporation, Korogard (Chatham Worth); TOILET ACCESSORIES: Gamco, Bobrick (Chatham Worth); RESIDENTIAL APPLIANCES: Bosch, GE (Manna Distributors); FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT, STAINLESS STEEL COUNTERTOPS, AND MILLWORK: (Edward Don & Company); SOLID SURFACE COUNTERTOPS: Corian (Mike Conkle's Custom Cabinets); QUARTZ COUNTERTOPS: Hanstone (Mike Conkle's Custom Cabinets); ENTRANCE FLOOR GRILLES: Mats (Bartlett Cocke General Contractors); HYDRAULIC PASSENGER ELEVATOR: Thyssen Krupp (Thyssen Krupp); FIRE SUPPRESSION: (Genesis Fire Protection); PLUMBING FIXTURES: American Standard (Barrera Plumbing); SOLAR HOT WATER HEATING SYSTEM: Lochinvar (Barrera Plumbing); PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS: Axium Solar (AI Wright & Associates); CONCRETE PAVERS: Pavestone (Arlington Pavers)

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ImageNet Carrollton Renovation, Carrollton

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Whatabuilding!

by Brantley Hightower, AIA

This Whataburger in Mesquite is one of only a handful remaining in the distinctive A-frame typology. A longer version of this article appeared in Hightower's podcast, "The Works."

After building military bases and oil refineries during the Second World War, Harmon Dobson became a serial entrepreneur. He sold used cars in the United States and mined for diamonds in South America. He bought an airplane and learned to fly so he could visit his various business ventures scattered throughout the hemisphere.

But what Dobson is best known for is founding Whataburger.

The first Whataburger opened in Corpus Christi in 1950, and the chain soon expanded to other locations in Texas and beyond. The first stands were prefabricated steel boxes with small signs on top. They worked fine from a functional standpoint, but in order to make them more visible to passing motorists Dobson needed a better building.

Working with John M. Olsen, AIA, a local Corpus Christi architect, Dobson imagined a tall, vertical structure. It would be strong, built of welded steel and skinned in corrugated metal like the buildings he had built during the war.

Shaped like a giant letter A, its sloping walls would brace the structure against the wind. This "A-frame" would contain the kitchen and air-conditioned seating, with storage located above. It would be set toward the rear of the site with a long shade canopy extending toward the street. It would all be painted in alternating bands of white and international orange — just like hangars and radio towers Dobson saw around the airports he was flying in and out of.

Although Whataburger continued to grow as a franchise, the iconic A-frame design would eventually be phased out, as local codes began to limit the height of fast-food restaurants. Newer Whataburgers still reference the steep gable and bold color scheme of the original design.

A handful of original Whataburger A-frames do still exist. They act as powerful reminders of what a strong vision and good architecture together can do.

Brantley Hightower, AIA, is founder of HiWorks in San Antonio and author of "The Courthouses of Central Texas."