

# Texas Architect



# Intrinsic Value On Campus

## Brick Mends Tradition with Collegiate Inspiration

An abandoned school bus in the ravine of an old phosphate mine hinted at the challenge transforming this site. Now, a vibrant college campus of cleanly detailed Acme Brick honors traditional buildings with modern forms. Abstract from a distance, these structures reflect up close the warm, tactile feel of brick. Acme's familiar role in collegiate architecture sets the tone for campus build-out. Brick creates a sense of place and offers appealing views, gracing interiors as a seamless continuation of the exterior design. Trust reliable Acme Brick for inspiration when digging deep for innovative solutions.

*"Our challenge was to show an appreciation for history, while elevating the collegiate experience on a campus intended to encourage student engagement and collaboration. Located on a former phosphate mine, the project was carved out of the hillside and the buildings arranged to create visual connections. Originally conceived as one building, our team separated the program into three individual buildings to create a campus atmosphere. The unifying exterior*

*material was Acme Brick's Peabody blend. The lines between exterior and interior spaces were blurred by utilizing brick as an interior finish, mimicking the rhythm of exterior fenestration. Brick has an engaging tactile quality with a true permanence inherent in the material. Our vision is that this brick palette be used and reimagined for each building on campus to unify the campus as it expands in the future."*

*—JC Elder, LEED AP BD+C,  
Architect | Associate*

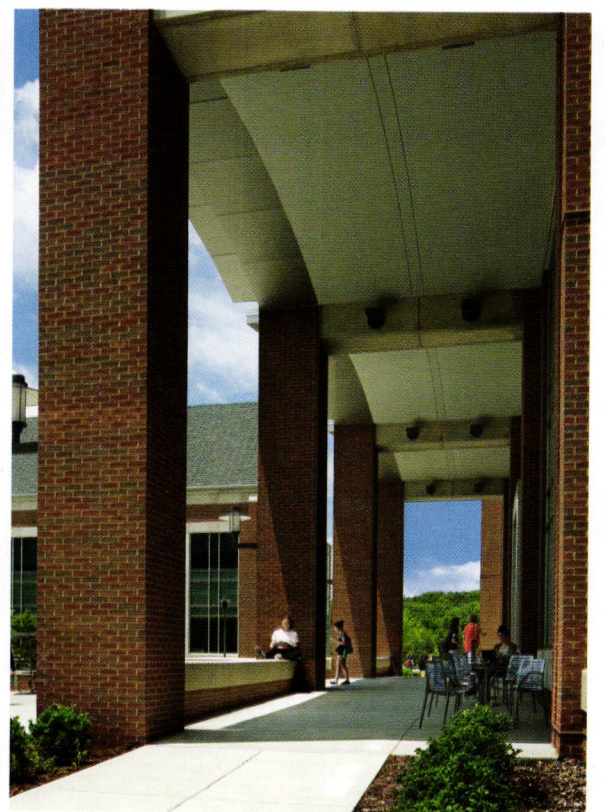


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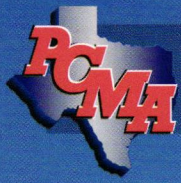
Columbia State Community College, Williamson Campus Franklin TN

architect Bauer Askew Architecture, Nashville TN  
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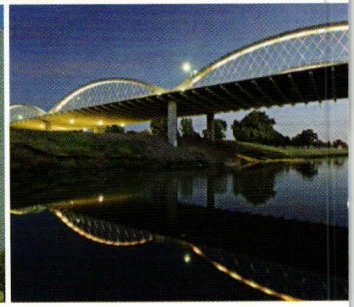
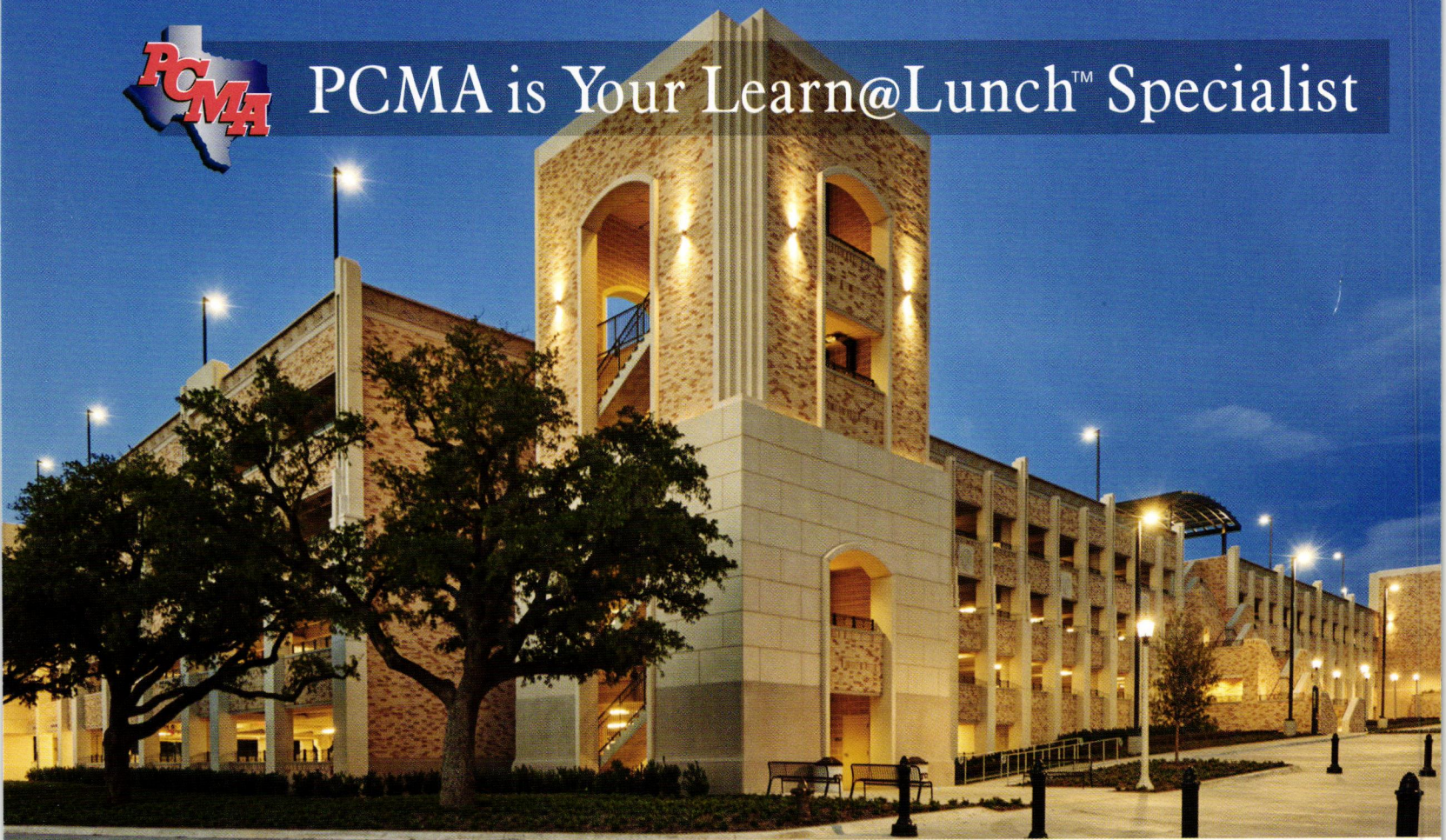
Acme Brick Peabody Blend modular brick



Rion Rizzo, Creative Sources Photography, Atlanta



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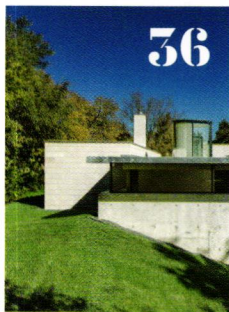
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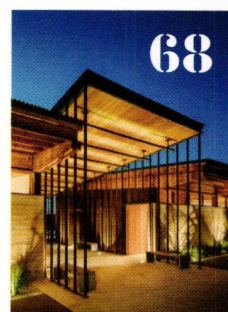
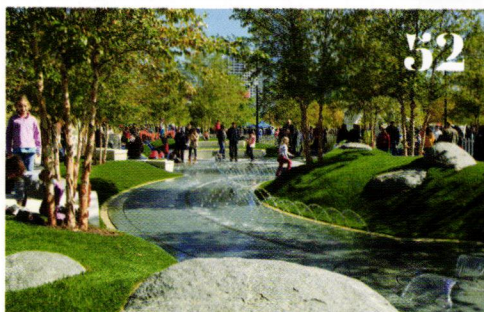
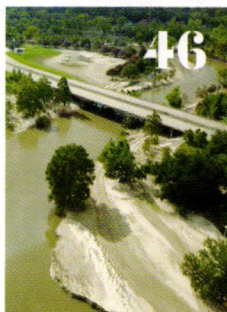
▣ [txamagazine.org](http://txamagazine.org)  
Jeff Ryan, AIA, remembers Robert Venturi, FAIA; more on disaster recovery and resiliency responses; videos of TxA's 2018 Design Award winners; and a new short film on the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems.

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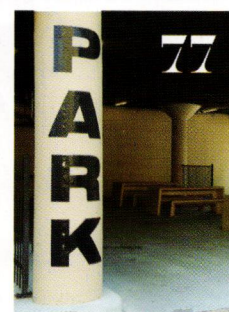
### Open House



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### On the Cover

An aerial view of Manheim Texas Hobby, a 165-acre car auction lot in Houston. The company recently added 15.25 acres to its facility, paved in a permeable system that will absorb stormwater as it falls (p. 84).

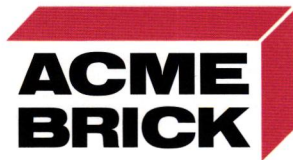


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*Pier 2, a conceptual project meant to prefigure the apartment of the future, is crammed with techno-green gadgetry.*



## Scooby-Doo, What Are You!

by Aaron Seward

In the last issue, I ended this column by suggesting that more diversity, promiscuity, and surprise in architecture might improve its outcomes. A week after shipping the magazine to the printer, I was sent a project that was very promiscuously diverse indeed, and yet I was surprised to find that it challenged my previous assertion.

The project, called Pier 2, was designed by the Montevideo office of Dallas-headquartered Humphreys & Partners Architects. It's a conceptual design that was presented at the 2018 International Builders' Show in Orlando. The convention's organizers had asked Humphreys, which specializes in multi-family and mixed-use development, to come up with a scheme for an "apartment of the future." Pier 2 was their answer.

At first, Pier 2 — which is depicted in glisteningly rich cocktail-hour renderings — has a certain appeal. It comprises two towers of modular units rising from a glassy retail podium and connected by two mid-level horizontal platforms, one a pool and recreation area, the other a vertical

takeoff and landing (VTOL) airport. With its additive language of shifted boxes, which open up a variety of indoor/outdoor spaces for tenants, it evinces a kinship to Moshe Safdie's Habitat 67 — a reliable crowd pleaser.

Keep looking, however, and troubles emerge. The building sits on a constructed island off the tip of Lower Manhattan, surrounded by a yacht marina, which, strangely for New York's climate, features palm trees. The impression is that the building and its attendant pleasure craft just sailed up and docked. Is this an invading force, or a tourist cruise ship? Either way, it's blocking the view of the Statue of Liberty. It also routes vehicular traffic through Battery Park to give the building a circular drive beneath its marquee entrance, effectively destroying one of Manhattan's great public spaces.

According to the press materials, the project is packed with "every amenity a futuristic apartment dweller needs to thrive." At the base, there is automated parking, autonomous vehicles, full-service bike stations, and an Amazon Go store, while the recreational areas overlooking the harbor feature "special facial recognition technology for more engaging interactive displays and connectedness." The

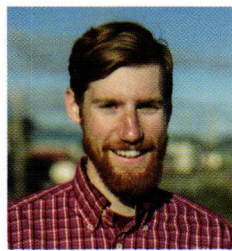
lower portions of the towers house co-working and co-living spaces, while the mid-portions, above the recreation deck (which is outfitted with horizontal elevators) houses rental apartments — all supported by home automation devices. Above the VTOL drone platform are luxury condos, which are served by an "on-demand landing pad" that runs on tracks up and down the elevation. A video accompanying the presentation shows a man flying home from work. The landing pad slides down the tower, unfolds, and the VTOL aircraft touches down. The man steps out, suit jacket slung over his shoulder, and is greeted by his wife — a stunning blond — and their robot, whose screen-face flashes "Welcome!"

Pier 2 is larded with sustainability features. Its array of on-site energy making and storing technology is all-inclusive: energy generating sidewalks, photovoltaic glass, solar panels, tidal power, and wind turbines produce electricity stored in Tesla Powerwalls. There's also vertical farming "for food production without pesticides," and green walls that "add a distinctive natural element and help to clean the air while

*Continued on page 6*



**Jen Weaver, AIA** is an architect and developer whose firm, Weaver Buildings, designs sustainable medium density projects in Austin and LA. She participates in ULI's FutureBuild Committee and is a member of USGBC. In this issue, she reports on Houston's post-Hurricane Harvey resiliency response (p. 46).



**Gabe Colombo** graduated from UT Austin's urban studies and Plan II Honors programs in 2017. Afterward, he spent a year doing radio journalism in Nome, Alaska, and now intends to begin pursuing a Master of Architecture degree in fall 2019. Read his study of Texas public spaces on page 52.



**Jen Wong** is director of the Materials Lab at UT Austin, where she conducts and supports material investigation in design, oversees programming and communication, and curates an extensive material collection. For Groundwork, she explores the possibilities of unfired earth building materials and their growing popularity in Central Texas (p. 68)



**Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA** is the manager of research and innovation at Overland Partners. She serves on the TEDx San Antonio Programming Committee and is a member of the TxA Publication Committee. See her take on new urbanist master plans for Tyler and Laredo on page 60.



*Vehicular traffic is routed through Battery Park to create a circular drive that serves Pier 2's marquee entrance, where Lamborghinis and autonomous cars share space beneath fluttering American flags.*

*Continued from page 5*

providing wildlife habitats and increase (sic) real estate values.”

It's a lot of stuff. After taking it all in and looking at the renderings again, the building resembles nothing so much to me as one of those monster sandwiches that Shaggy and Scooby-Doo would make. Instead of a whole loaf of bread, ham, ketchup, mustard, cheese, lettuce, sardines, marshmallow, fudge, and an olive on top, it's a program stack of trendy real estate options smeared with the full range of sustainable and technological condiments.

If you didn't just laugh, shame on you. But the analogy is more than just a gag. For those unfamiliar, the plot of every Scooby-Doo episode was more or less the same: A gang of four teenagers — Fred, Daphne, Velma, and Shaggy, plus their anthropomorphic Great Dane, Scooby-Doo — would drive around in the Mystery Machine investigating local legends. This usually landed them in a creepy old hotel or an abandoned amusement park, and they almost always discovered a disguised white guy perpetrator hoping to exploit the legend for personal gain, such as in a land grab or NIMBY action.

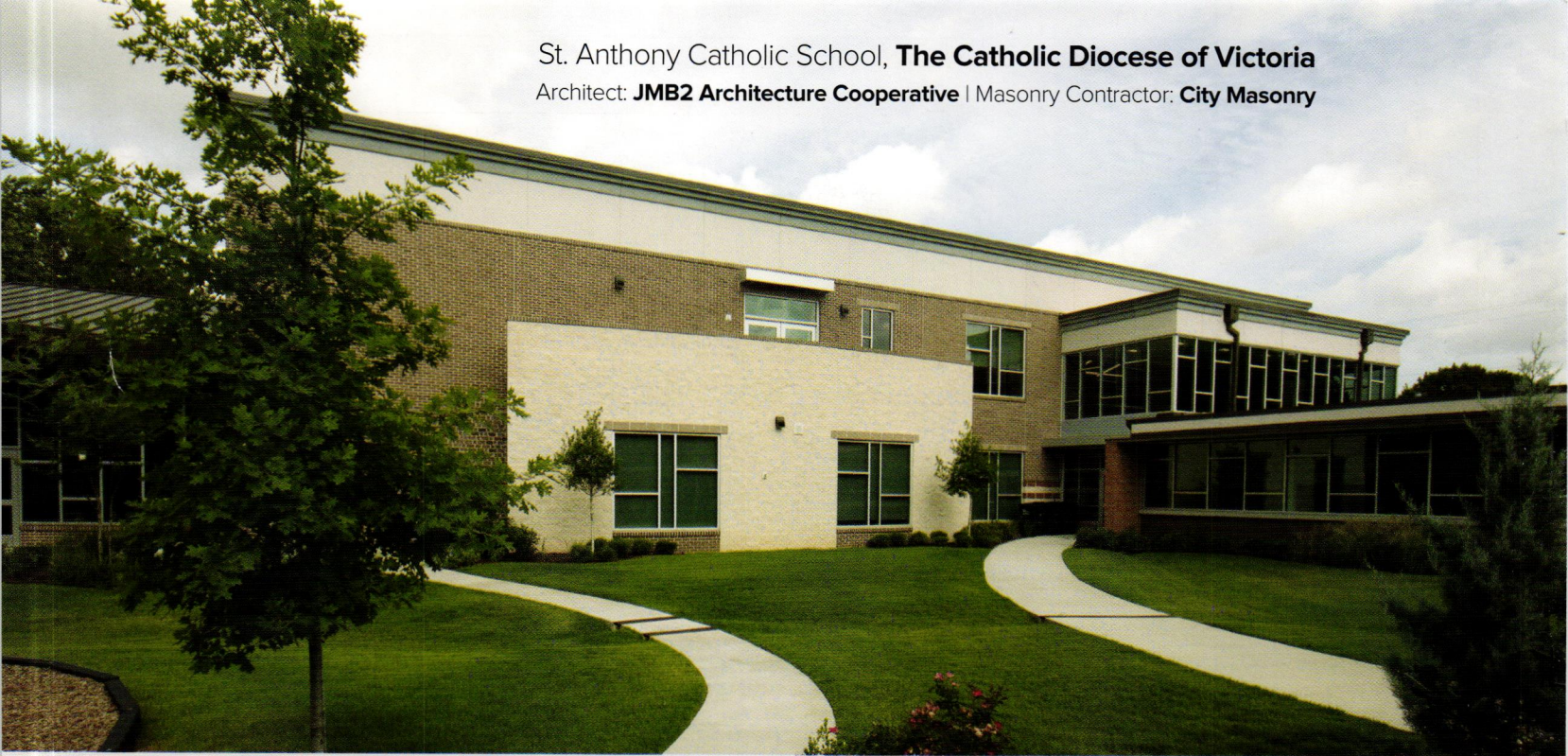
Pier 2 is that masked perpetrator, but rather than being scary, it's seductive. It wears a cloak of techno-green. It's “100 percent sustainable.” It looks cool and has a deft business strategy: the amenities and leasing options are diverse enough to appeal to the couch-surfing start-up wannabe skimming their roommate's toothpaste and the billionaire who bypasses the hoi polloi and rides a VTOL drone from penthouse to yacht.

But pull off the mask and you find it clinging like a leech onto Lower Manhattan, walling off a cherished public park and turning its back on the city's vibrant urbanism. You see that it embraces artificial intelligence and automation of home and transport wholesale, acting as a shill for big tech companies whose motivations are increasingly being revealed as nothing less than sinister.

I don't mean to be too harsh on the architects who put Pier 2 together. After all, it's a conceptual proposal, supposedly about the future (though most of its components are already with us today). There are many things to like about the project. The most troubling aspect to my eyes is not the specific elements that they employed, but the lack of critical assessment and handling of these elements they displayed in assembling (piling?) this Monster Sandwich. It's a clear case in which promiscuous diversity surprises in a way that's down-right spooky.







## STRIKING EXPANSION

**A new school complex, designed with three striking styles of Boral™ architectural concrete masonry units, will serve as a model for future schools built by The Catholic Diocese of Victoria. The new addition at St. Anthony Catholic School in Columbus is being called “a yard stick for any school facility that follows.”**

The process of designing the two story structure mirrored the Four Cs the facility is meant to encourage: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.

Matt Brown of Sugar Land 's JMB2 Architecture Cooperative designed the project to blend in with the original 1956 campus located in the small, traditional, oak-tree lined community. He wanted the expansion to “lend a sense of traditional style but be transitional to link the two buildings together.”

Reducing up-front costs as well as maintenance and energy costs were also important considerations.

For all of these reasons, concrete masonry units from Boral Concrete Products were the right fit for the expansion.

City Masonry selected three finishes of water-repelling CMUs for the project. For a finished appearance they chose Ground Face and Polished Series units.

They also incorporated three contrasting shades of Split Face units: Terra Cotta and the lighter Palamino and White Limestone into the new structure.

The school's neighbor, Drymalla Construction, managed the site.

### **HOBBIT WALL:**

A whimsical “Hobbit Wall” facing the Reading Grove and Prayer Garden, is faced with a unique brick veneer.



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Waterloo Park - Great Lawn  
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Waterloo Park - S Bridge  
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*Among the plan's proposals are shared transit corridors with options for light-rail, bus, automotive, and bicycle mobility, as well as improved pedestrian infrastructure.*

## San Antonio's New Comprehensive Plan Re-Envisions a Denser, Walkable City

San Antonio is the second most populous city in Texas, with almost 1.5 million people. By 2050, that number could reach three million. In the face of this growth, a band of political and planning mavericks has launched San Antonio Tomorrow, a comprehensive plan that seeks to promote strategically located dense, walkable development without displacing existing populations.

Nationally, San Antonio is ranked as the seventh largest city. Its operating budget is \$2.7 billion, and it is aiming to disburse these funds through an “equity lens” that will allocate funds, not equally among the 10 districts, but where the needs are greater and have been historically ignored. Bexar County commissioners also approved a \$1.78 billion fiscal year 2018 budget earmarked for public safety, roads, and technology upgrades.

Mayor Ron Nirenberg, elected into office June 2017 and a former District Eight councilman, has been criticized and lauded for being overly ambitious, bold, progressive, and a change agent for the city, as celebrations for its tricentennial are underway and leaders prepare for imminent development and population growth amidst: aging infrastructure, urban sprawl, flooding preparedness, gentrification woes, affordable housing needs, socioeconomic disparities from redlining, racially motivated unrest, gender politics, and turbulent state and national politics. He was a

tri-chair of the city's SA Tomorrow Steering Committee and was key in the development of this citizen-driven blueprint.

“A democracy must never fear or obstruct the participation of its citizens,” he wrote via email. “Local governments must continue to answer the bell for residents throughout America. As the politics in state houses and in D.C. continue to turn away from the needs of an increasing number of citizens, it is up to local communities to keep our country strong while demanding better leadership at the polls.”

This first year will be an easier swing; it's the years following, when local leaders will have to prove their mettle as federal and state legislation and budget cuts trickle down. They will face harder challenges to shore up city programs and budgets in light of financial gaps affecting daily quality of life and implementation of long-range planning. What leaders want to avoid is a decrease in quality of life with increased costs of living and housing, increased commutes, and more traffic congestion — problems endemic to many postwar American motor cities.

The initial SA Tomorrow effort resulted in three concurrent and complementary plans — Comprehensive, Sustainability and Multimodal Transportation — focused on land use, urban design, and city policies. The plans frame various economic and environmental matters as a roadmap to coordinate resources and programs as leaders make decisions impacting investment and services. It builds upon priorities from the

SA2020 visioning, which has morphed into a nonprofit measuring community indicators.

Since the approval of the draft plans by City Council in 2016, MIG, a national planning and design firm headquartered in California, has completed an online version of the comprehensive plan and is developing the first phase of 30 sub-area plans with the city's planning department.

Bridgett White, the city's planning director, and Rudy Niño, assistant director and project manager, spoke about the planning process and components of the comprehensive plan, including two development types (building blocks and place types) and nine plan elements: the growth/form of the city; transportation and connectivity; housing; jobs; community health; public safety; natural resources; historic preservation; and military community.

White and Niño discussed the process of this initiative as a healthy debate comprised of many perspectives from various stakeholders as the city navigates how to capitalize on the growth and infrastructure investments.

“We know there is going to be growth,” White says. “The question is, How can we focus that growth with the regional centers, the premium corridors, housing, amenities — and protect and preserve existing neighborhoods? It's about finding the balance.”

Jay Renkens, a principal at MIG, describes the firm's approach to understanding San Antonio's growth characteristics: “We love the history and culture of San Antonio, as well as the polycentric

nature of its employment centers. San Antonio is a leader in trail-oriented development and a perfect location for innovation and creativity.”

The comprehensive plan is an umbrella effort with a big picture vision for regional centers, corridors, and neighborhoods. It has yielded a “series of documents that will guide future city planning decisions and ensure that they reflect the character, needs, values, and desires of the San Antonio community and, once implemented, will result in a more vibrant, healthy, inclusive, and sustainable city,” Renkens says.

Some of these identified centers of gravity where density and life is happening extend from downtown and inside Loop 410 (including midtown, the former Brooks Air Force Base, and Port San Antonio, where Lackland Air Force Base is located) to areas between loops 410 and 1604 (medical center, airport, UTSA, and Texas A&M San Antonio). Extraterritorial jurisdictions were also scrutinized in the growth patterns.

Working groups were established to focus on goals and strategies for components of the comprehensive plan, and a community engagement campaign was activated through neighborhood workshops, open houses, online surveys, social media, and press releases. MIG also guided the city to develop *sacommplan.com*. First-phase sub-plan reveals have rolled out in 2018 and will continue in 2019. How these plans will be implemented is another complex matter city council needs to hash out.

“The future growth of San Antonio is intended to build on the polycentric nature of its existing employment centers,” Renkens says. “The intent is to make those existing centers more vibrant places to live, work, and play that are highly walkable and bikable, as well as connected by transit.”

As part of these centers, building blocks are intended to organize and guide San Antonio’s future investments through neighborhoods, cor-

ridors, urban centers, and regional centers. Place types are amenity-based developments in three classifications: multimodal mixed use; trails/open space; and adaptive reuse.

Renkens further elaborated: “All place types were defined with an eye toward how they transition appropriately to existing single-family neighborhoods that may be nearby. The city considered land use, scale, and massing to ensure that each of the place types will be developed in a manner that is harmonious and complementary with existing and future neighborhoods.”

By studying these community building-blocks, patterns of growth, and connective infrastructure paths, planners and leaders can evaluate the economic drivers acting upon the urban and suburban, while also recognizing the strong social forces acting upon the city — including divisive immigration and sanctuary city laws — that are simultaneously beneficial, parasitic, and mutualistic. Because of these laws, Texas is ground zero for the nation’s immigration debate.

Council member Roberto Treviño, AIA, whose District 1 includes downtown and the River Walk, is an architect, businessman, and policymaker. He is focused on how to build upon existing programs, rebuilding trust between the community with local governance, and on how to garner collaboration within city departments and the community to convey complex messages about what San Antonio could be amid complex rezoning issues in the central business district.

“The city is shaped by each person and parcel that creates it,” he says. “Here in District 1, we experience a wide diversity of both of these things, and as a council office we look to build on this. It is critical that we are able to adapt and grow. Throughout District 1, we have seen that history has caused layers of issues in regards to zoning that impede this. We have initiated five large area rezonings to correct the zoning

parcel by parcel and help set a foundation for moving forward.”

The rezoning to reclassify residential, commercial, and industrial parcels will allow for the appropriate growth of nodes, corridors, transit, appraisals, and taxes.

“It’s all tied together with the issues of planning,” Treviño says. “Peel it back, and you see the heart of this and why cities need to embrace a plan. Cities are built and made. They don’t happen by accident. You must start with a good design and demand strategies of thoughtful design that are layered and connecting.”

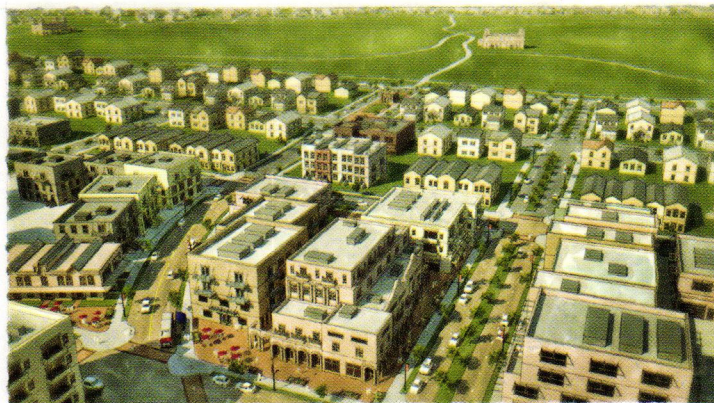
Florence Tang, Assoc. AIA, is a journalist and project manager in Houston.

## Book Review

### Peri-Colonialism

**Modern Architecture in Mexico City: History, Representation, and the Shaping of a Capital**  
by Kathryn E. O’Rourke  
University of Pittsburgh Press, \$49.95

Dr. Kathryn O’Rourke is an alumnus of my own alma mater, Wellesley College. At Wellesley, Professor James Oles introduced each of us to the rich history of Mexico’s art and architecture through vivid seminars. With a Ph.D. in art history from the University of Pennsylvania, and as an associate professor at Trinity College in San Antonio, O’Rourke has carried forward this dedication to the study of Mexico’s modern built environment. In her first book, “Modern Architecture in Mexico City: History, Representation, and the Shaping of a Capital,” O’Rourke chronicles both the history and historiography of Mexico City’s architectural identity, from its colonial past through mid-century Modernism. Many coffee table books with compelling graphics and photographs of Mexico City have appeared in recent years, as the capital has seen a resurgence of popularity in the design world. Often, they have captured more of the visual excitement, without the cultural thinking behind it. “Modern Architecture” takes an academically rigorous approach to understanding the history and psychology of Mexico City’s architectural development.



*Planners considered how their recommendations would interact with existing communities and cultural assets, such as the San Antonio Missions depicted here.*



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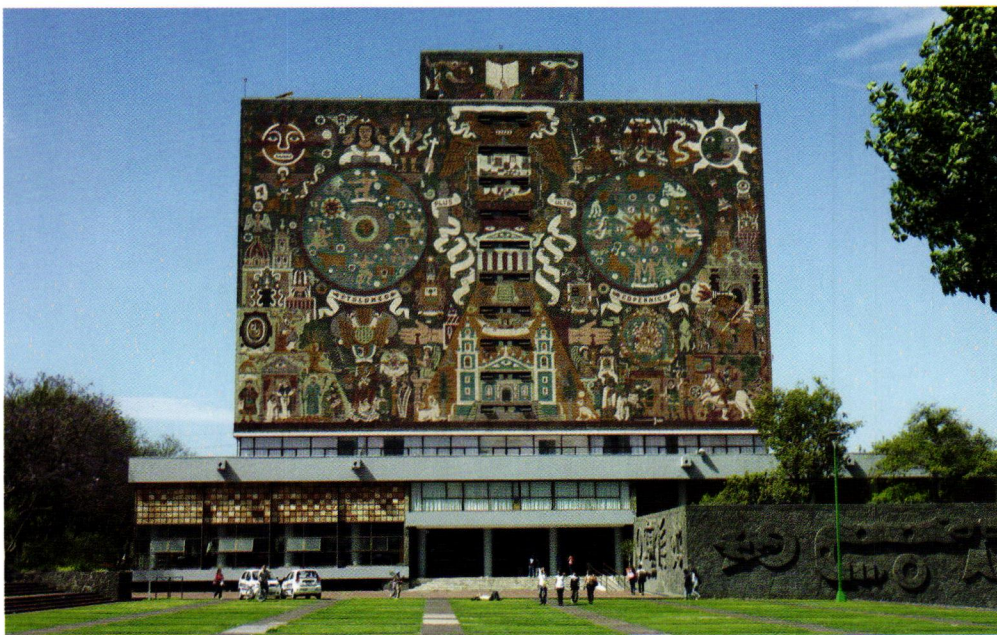
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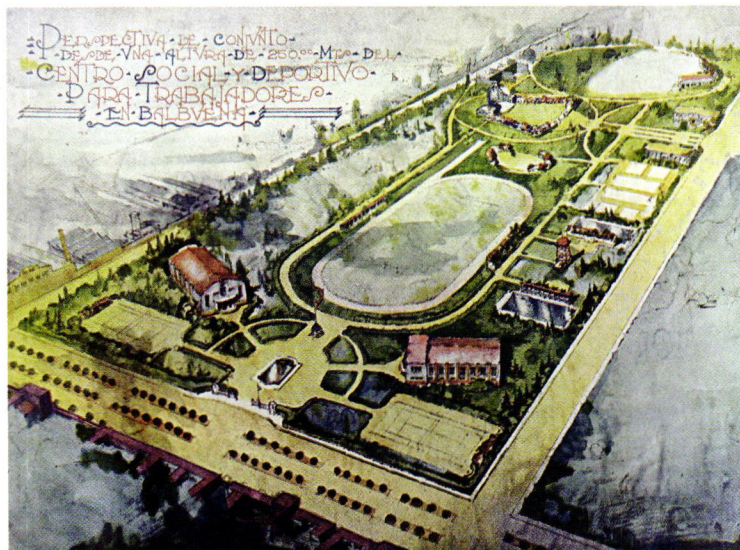


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**Top** *The Biblioteca Central, designed by Juan O’Gorman on the UNAM campus. Mosaic clads the entire building. The south facade illustrates Mexico’s pre-Hispanic and colonial pasts.*

**Right** *Juan Segura’s 1929 Centro Social y Deportivo de Trabajadores. It included a gymnasium, playing fields, a pool, and outdoor theater dedicated to promoting reformist ambitions for Mexico City’s working class.*



It synthesizes historical and contemporary architectural commentary.

While other books evaluate modernism as it is defined by European practices, O’Rourke emphasizes a framework that contextualizes Mexican modernism with Mexican architectural history and visual culture since colonialism: As opposed to focusing on similarities to European modernism, O’Rourke explores the Mexican desire to outwardly express national qualities. She stresses that the modern Mexican focus on facades and ornamentation relates to the colonial Churrigueresque architectural narrative, and notes that even the most functionalist Mexican architects referred to and lectured on Mexican colonial architecture. As opposed to modernism as break from the past, O’Rourke argues that

modern Mexico City architecture was driven by a “hemispheric awareness of difference” from Europe. Mexico’s establishment as a nation-state occurred after that of Germany or England, and, as a result, colonial Mexican architecture did not attract attention until the early 20th century.

O’Rourke chronologically surveys 20th-century artists, politicians, writers, and designers in Mexico City as they recognized and reacted to the collision between an industrializing and globalizing economy and a colonial urban framework. What happens when a population sees and comprehends the contrasts between their city’s past and its present? O’Rourke refers to this moment in early-20th-century Mexico as the “invention of Mexican Architecture.” In 1901, an architect, an urban planner/historian, and

a photographer — Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, Sylvester Baxter, and Henry Greenwood Peabody, all from the United States — published an English-language book, “Spanish Colonial Architecture in Mexico.” Peabody’s photos depicted the overlay of commercial 19th-century signage advertising coffee and ice cream on the House of the Count of Santiago. Baxter’s writing identified the flowing indigenous hand in the ornament and craft of Spanish colonial facades. In the United States today, to identify indigenous Mexicans as “by no means savages, but belong[ing] to a race that had advanced to a certain degree of civilization” might be read as racism. O’Rourke includes many such citations in her first chapter, in order to introduce the admiring, if not patronizing, tone of Baxter’s literature. Nonetheless, Baxter propelled Mexican scholars to generate their own body of work that recognized the nationalist connection and artistic value of colonial Mexican history.

Subsequently, in 1904, Mexican Finance Minister José Yves Limantour employed Guillermo Kahlo to document all buildings owned by the federal government, which included colonial Mexican churches and Mexico City palaces seized in the 1857 War of Reform that was fought to limit the financial power of the Catholic Church. Photographer Antonio Cortés chronicled Mexican churches in the book he coauthored with Genaro García, “La arquitectura en México: Iglesias.” In 1913, architect of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Federico Mariscal, gave talks at the Universidad Popular Mexicana on colonial architecture. These lectures elucidated Baxter’s thesis that colonial architecture was a national art of Mexico, and that architecture represented social and cultural characteristics of society.

From her first chapter, O’Rourke recognizes the impact of colonial history on the intellectual development of modern Mexico City architects. This approach provides a bold, honest analysis of her primary sources. There is a frank acknowledgment of Mexico City’s colonial past, and it is used as a tool by which to advance architecture and national representation on the global stage. In other critiques that address the roots of Latin American modernist movements and South Asian modernism, popular 21st-century scholarship rejects the idea that the cultural and architectural production of colonial movements positively influenced or were embraced by national architects. Post-colonial architecture theorists like Gwendolyn

Wright (2002) and Lawrence Vale (1992) describe the desire for modernism to ascribe a break from the colonial past, and question whether this is possible or merely a narrative sought to disguise control. O'Rourke informs the reader of Mexico's alternative approach to post-colonial architecture.

In the chapter "Fit and Trim: Pictorial Histories at the Venustiano Carranza Recreation and Athletic Center for Workers," O'Rourke identifies a monumental 1929 public recreation center and park for Mexico City laborers designed by architect Juan Segura. In her words, the purpose of the Carranza Center was "simultaneously to promote individual welfare and to serve as a vast stage on which local, national, and international audiences would see evidence of social progress."

Having studied modern Mexican art and architecture for the last five years, prior to reading "Modern Architecture in Mexico City," I had only glazed over mention of Segura's modern gymnasium complex. The shortcoming of many narratives of architectural history is that they focus on the formal evolution of architecture without exploring the evolution of the theatrics it conducts. O'Rourke provides a vivid description of the photography and literal choreography at the opening. As in other chapters, after she presents a formal analysis and description of the building's design, she delves deeper into the corollary spectacle of the indigenous Mexican worker, the prevalence of pre-Hispanic rituals organized by European-origin Mexicans, and the manipulation of race and social class that involved cooperation between government officials and designers.

O'Rourke's chronographic book achieves not only an analysis of the formation of Mexico's architectural history, but an alternative perspective on the legacy of Spanish colonialization and racial stratification in mid-century and contemporary Mexico.

Hannah Ahlblad is a graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture.

### Austin Gets Its First Composite Cross-Laminated Timber Structure

The site on East 6th Street just one block east of Interstate 35 is one of many patches of dirt undergoing rapid development in Austin today. Once occupied by an unpaved auto lot and an

automotive garage, nearly half a city block is in the midst of a transformation that will bring five stories and 130,000 sf of creative office space, ground floor retail, and underground parking to a neighborhood increasingly defined by similar mixed-use, urban projects.

This particular building, however, is unique. Developed by Endeavor Real Estate with Dennis McDaniel and Richard Kooris and designed by a joint venture between the local offices of Delineate Studio and Thoughtbarn, the mixed-use midrise has the privilege of being Austin's first hybrid structure that uses CLT — or cross-laminated timber — as a primary structural element.

Large prefabricated solid engineered wood panels, sourced from Structurlam in Canada, compose the structural decking in the otherwise steel-framed structure. Offering an attractive and lightweight thermally and seismically high-performing alternative to a traditionally

framed building, the CLT modules and steel frame also drastically reduced the number of columns required within each floor plate, compared to an all timber structure. According to Bart Whatley, AIA, of Delineate Studio, this advantage, enabling vast, uninterrupted tenant space, helped dictate the use of the assembly early in the project's conception.

"It was a huge programmatic item, from the beginning," Whatley says. "The development team had a particular vision from the start that the whole team got behind. It's always been a values-driven project. The honest and sustainable use of materials combined with the openness and warmth of wood will make this project stand out."

While the developer hopes the payoff will be obvious in the long run, the adoption of a building technique so new to Austin didn't come without its challenges, especially when it came to code compliance. Classified as a IIIA

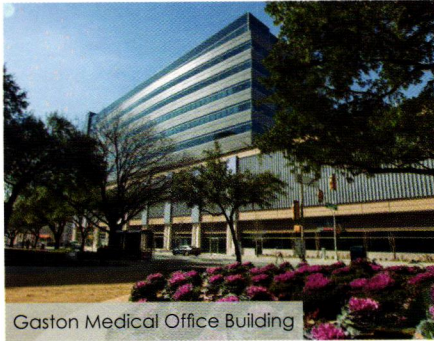


**Above** The exposed CLT decking provides a variety of warm, expansive creative spaces largely uninterrupted by structural elements.

**Left** The facade is clad with oxidized Corten panels and glazed ground floor retail suites that engage a generous pedestrian walkway.



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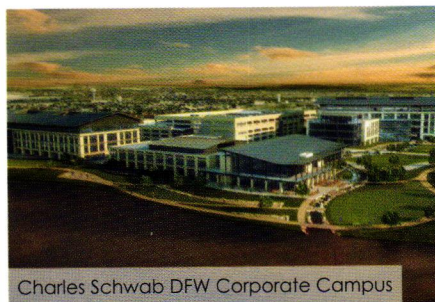


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*Corgan's Houston station proposal, "Nexus," comprises a central transportation spine made of adaptable modular components connected to a network of transit and pedestrian arteries that surround the site.*



construction type, the entire structure needed a one-hour fire rating. Meeting that benchmark is no problem for CLT, as it performs just like any other heavy timber element would. As it burns, a sacrificial layer of char about an inch thick develops, insulating and protecting the assembly from further degradation. Proving that to code officials typically requires an acceptable UL rating — a rating the product lacked, despite having been in widespread use in Europe and Australia for decades.

To pass code, the design team enlisted the help of fire-engineers from Arup to mathematically calculate the assembly's fire rating, working to educate city officials. This added cost and time to the project's budget and schedule, but ultimately paved the way for the integration of CLT in future projects in Austin.

As the project nears completion, Whately is optimistic about the design's eventual contribution to the fabric of the ever-changing neighborhood and city as a whole. "The ground floor is designed to relate well to the adjacent streetscape. The lobby is designed to accommodate a large bi-fold door that pivots upward to allow for a seamless connection with pedestrian traffic. We're expecting a lively urban experience with a coffee kiosk, patio, and public engagement."

The development expects to open its doors by the beginning of 2019.

Christopher Ferguson, Assoc. AIA, is an architect at Clickspring Design and co-founder of DO.GROUP.

### Texas Bullet Train Moves Forward, Triggering New Round of Station Proposals

Since we last reported on the Texas Central Partners (TCP) student rail station design competition (*TA* March/April 2017), several major milestones have been met in the multi-faceted process of bringing a high-speed train to Texas.

In August 2017, TCP announced that Fluor Enterprises and The Lane Construction Corporation had been added to the project, pooling their expertise in civil infrastructure to refine and update the rail line's construction and sequencing; provide scheduling, cost estimates and procurement; and engage in other design and engineering activities. In December 2017, after nearly four years of work, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the project, outlining for the first time a preferred route between Dallas and Houston, with a midway stop in the Brazos Valley. The FRA's analysis also reviewed the train's potential impact on the environment and how best to manage it to protect private property and farmland, natural resources, energy demands, and other conditions along the 240-mile route. In February of this year, TCP unveiled one of the most highly-anticipated details: the locations of the railway passenger stations in Dallas and Houston. TCP's most recent addition was announced in May, when the company appointed global engineering firm Bechtel as project manager. This latest

step moves the plans significantly closer to the construction and implementation phase.

If all goes according to schedule, the TCP rail project will be the first operational high-speed commuter train in North America. The roughly \$15-billion enterprise is expected to finalize funding by mid-2019, and construction is slated to be complete in 2024, giving the project a 10-year timeline that beats out the 14-year construction timeline of the only other bullet train currently in progress in North America: the California High Speed Rail Authority. The TCP venture is entirely funded by private investors, another key detail that sets it apart from the government-subsidized California high-speed rail. Once completed, the Dallas-Houston bullet train could set a precedent for other high-speed rail projects around the United States and North America, which could potentially generate billions of dollars in economic benefits to the cities involved.

The TCP high-speed train will have three stops: Dallas, Bryan, and Houston. The Dallas station will be located near the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center in the Cedars neighborhood, near the Interstate 30 and Interstate 35 interchange. The Houston station is set to be built in an area northwest of the city, on the 45-acre Northwest Mall site near the Interstate 610 and US 290 interchange.

With the line on the map drawn and the station locations chosen, unrequested station proposals have begun to emerge. Corgan held an internal design competition for the Houston station, which resulted in nine submissions from



The architects behind Corgan's design — Cameron Richards, Kendall Clarke, AIA, and Erik Larsen, AIA — worked to create a sense of place for the transit hub. The eastern edge of the site includes a series of retail and working spaces, including a hotel, museum, innovation lab, and corporate campus. A planned neighborhood adjacent to the station encourages a large population base within walking distance, with residential units varying from two to four stories.

nearly 50 people across all of the firm's offices. The winning submission, titled "Nexus," envisions an adaptable transportation spine created from modular vertebrae, with a network of transit and pedestrian arteries that connect to existing roads and a surrounding ecosystem of retail, working, residential, and recreational spaces.

While TCP and local officials in Dallas and Houston have worked together to realize their goal of choosing station locations in historically- and economically-underserved urban areas, the Northwest Mall site in Houston has been widely criticized. In 2016, TCP appointed LEK Consulting to conduct a study exploring the opportunity for a high-speed train in Texas. LEK's study incorporated research from the City of Houston 2000 Land Use & Demographic Profile, showing that Houston's population base is growing north and west of the central business district, which provides some rationale for the northwest site choice. However, one long-term regional goal of the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County is to contain urban sprawl. The new passenger station will likely add to the sprawl of Houston, creating a new peripheral node in this decentralized city. And as the impact of Hurricane Harvey still remains fresh in the minds of Houstonians, TCP and its developers and contractors must remember that Houston is a very flood-prone region. Increasing the urban sprawl of Houston will only add to the total acres that the Harris County Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must defend.

James Adams, AIA, senior associate at Corgan, says the challenges of the Houston site are what attracted the firm's internal competition. "We saw an opportunity to connect this blank slate to the rest of Houston," Adams says.

"There was a focus on avoiding the 'airport effect,' where there is a bubble of faux-human neighborhoods around a transportation site. We wanted to create a sense of place through connections between the ridership and the elements of a thriving human neighborhood: the restaurants, farmers' markets, retail, schools, and multifamily residential units."

The Corgan design competition was not done in conjunction with, or at the request of, TCP. However, a statement released by the company states that Corgan's work "recognizes the Houston passenger station as an economic catalyst for prosperity and transit-oriented development."

Mackie Kellen is a rhetoric student at The University of Texas at Austin and an editorial intern at *TA*.

## Larry Doll, AIA, 1948 – 2018

Handsome, passionate, and as smart as a whip, my friend and colleague Larry Doll died too young. He was 69. Being treated for lung cancer — which he almost had beat — he died of a heart attack at his home in the Brown Building in downtown Austin on July 21, 2018, with his wife of 47 years, Laura, at his side.

Larry had been teaching architecture at UT Austin since 1975, the same year Michael Garrison, Larry Speck, and I were hired by then-dean Charles (Chuck) Burnette, soon to be followed by Hal Box. It was under Hal Box that Larry became the associate dean for undergraduate programs. He also started the school's European Study Abroad program (more about which below) and its Summer Academy program. He served

on at least a dozen university-level committees in addition to at least twice as many School of Architecture committees (faculty search, lectures and exhibitions, curriculum, executive — you name it). Larry was a committed faculty member and great ambassador for UT.

Larry taught seminars, drawing, and design studio for 43 years. That's a long time to teach. But he never tired of it, as his hundreds of students now working in Texas and around the world will attest. Larry was uniquely able to raise questions that no one else thought to ask about what makes a building "tick." He knew a lot of the answers, too, but rarely just told them to you. His studio exercises were deceptively simple. For example, he would ask students to make a two-dimensional shape (I forget the criteria, exactly), then ask them to create the three-dimensional object of which that shape was the shadow. Or he would have students start with a four-inch cube, which, sliced once and shifted in the X, then Y, then Z dimensions, yielded an infinite variety of architectonic forms. The lesson? Simple operations can yield complex results. When teaching higher-level studios, his programs were compassionate and multifaceted. A site that he used frequently was under the MoPac flyovers just north of Lady Bird Lake in Austin. There, he would assign the design of a recuperative shelter for injured birds of prey, or a home for runaway children, or a police training shooting range. Yes: These programs are laden with attitude, and put in an overlooked, problematic setting more sublime than beautiful. Did this "say something" about Larry? Yes, but he also assigned residential live-work towers in downtown, and houses, and much else, besides. He loved cities and saw the potential everywhere for unique solutions. At his own student reviews,



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 Scholarship Golf  
 Tournament

**T**he 38th Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament hosted by AIA Wichita Falls was held September 14 at The Champions Course at Weeks Park. The event saw record turnout and raised funds towards two scholarships for students from the Wichita Falls area who are pursuing a degree and career in Architecture.

The Texas Architectural Foundation (TAF) was established in 1952 to make possible deserving students' dreams of an architectural education, and to enhance the quality of the academic experience at Texas universities. Read more online at [txamagazine.org](http://txamagazine.org).

## Of Note

**Right** Larry making his famous margaritas for “Marfa Modern” author Helen Thompson and photographer Casey Dunn during the photo shoot at his Marfa home.

**Facing** The Houston Children’s Museum designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates and Jackson & Ryan. When it opened in 1993, Paul Goldberger wrote in *The New York Times*, “There may be no better building anywhere to explain just what it is that Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown have been doing all these years.”



Larry was reserved and protective. At other teachers’ reviews, he was incisive, surprising, funny, and sometimes explosive — especially when I was there. And he always had a better fountain pen than I had.

This hardly begins to describe Larry’s presence around the school. He also taught classes on modern architecture since 1945. This was a subject Larry knew uniquely well, having invented and led the school’s European Study Abroad program for 30 years without a break. Each fall, he would spend 12 weeks taking as many as 20 students all over the continent to view the best and latest work of prominent firms, visiting their offices, and older landmarks, too. He would lecture and draw nonstop; his students would draw, too, coming back with a treasure trove of experiences as well as precedents they could draw on for a lifetime. Larry had it down. He knew his modern art, and he walked faster than humanly possible.

Few people followed Larry’s research as I did. In the early years of our friendship, it’s what we shared most passionately over lunch, coffee, dinner, just walking, or co-teaching:

the idea that architecture could be approached formally and rationally. Larry called his studies *morphologies*, and he produced some of the most wonderful analyses of the logical foundations of iconic works by Le Corbusier, Wright, Aalto, and others. It was like seeing their DNA laid out, not in a helical string, but as a matrix of overlaid and usually very simple ideas, which Larry knew how to tease out and then draw. Every now and again, one sees his methods used in practice, as I did recently at a lecture by Tatiana Bilbao. And of course his research informed his own teaching and practice richly. Larry filled dozens of notebooks with abstract line drawings, many watercolored. One such was published as a book called “Drawing on Uncertainty” (2009, available on Amazon and at the Center for American Architecture and Design at UT). It’s only a matter of time, I believe, before we see a gallery exhibit of his larger watercolors.

Larry also practiced architecture as a sole practitioner (although he associated on and off with Sinclair Black, James Coote, Richard Dodge, and Ed Wallace). Several of his houses

are in the Austin area; one is in Fort Davis, and one is in Maryland. Larry’s houses are all wonderfully clear at a diagrammatic level and yet utterly comfortable and livable, just-right in every dimension, simply detailed, lit from every direction, and friendly to their neighbors. Together with his and Laura’s house in Austin, the house he was most proud of was their house in Marfa. Built of local adobe block leavened with cement and tied with concrete bond beams, this house and guest house (“casita”) was actually designed digitally, as Larry would tell anyone who would listen, using Boolean operations in Form-Z. Subtle features abound. For example, all windows (in handmade steel) go to the polished concrete floor, but their header heights are at six feet, which is rather low. The effect is marvelous. Marfa is a place of big skies, but to enter Larry and Laura’s house is to enter an old, cool, high- and dark-ceilinged fort. One looks out and down to the grasses, which now themselves seem protected. Cabinetry is plywood, and the furniture is comfortable, and yet one feels ensconced in a place of great strength and orderliness.

The house in Marfa defies definitions of elegance, at least those definitions that depend on standard, modernist moves. I'd say it flirts with ugliness. But I'd also say it speaks well of Larry's courage as a designer: to let logic, use, climate, comfort, and durability produce what they must. It is we who should redefine what counts as "beautiful" in architecture. New beauty is always surprising. It brings you around. Larry always did that, too. Teacher, artist, architect, magician, logician, connoisseur, and bon vivant, he will be missed.

Michael Benedikt holds the Hal Box Chair in Urbanism at the School of Architecture at UT Austin.

### Robert Venturi, FAIA, 1925 – 2018

"The cause was complications of Alzheimer's disease," said his son, James Venturi, an urban planner ... "

So began the very unwelcome news item that appeared in The New York Times obituary for Robert Venturi — news that all of us who were fortunate enough to have been working with him at the zenith of his career and fame knew we'd read one day but find hard to absorb.

According to the Times, he was listening to Beethoven sonatas in his last moments — which seems completely consistent with his deep love of classical music. Music, it's said, is the last thing we give up.

I was startled to see the Times' picture of Bob standing, arms crossed and confident, in front of the model of the never-built Philadelphia Orchestra Hall — a project that fell victim to the collateral damage of the 1987 stock market crash. It was one of his most cherished projects, and it lay at the intersection of all his interests, the cultural life of his beloved Philadelphia, and the opportunities that came with his fully matured career. I was lucky enough to work with him on that project, and I have the scars on my thumbs from the model-making exercise to prove it.

The office motto was "Princeton uber alles," which meant that he'd drop everything for his alma mater, when the phone rang. His long association with its president, William G. Bowen, whom he referred to as "my Medici," or sometimes as "my pope," has a parallel for Texans in O'Neil Ford's relationship with Trinity's President, James W. Laurie. In both cases, a long and productive relationship yielded architecture that far exceeded the mere programs of any project. For both architects, their campus work led to much wider recognition and fueled their careers.

The most perfect description of Venturi's work, I've always thought, was Paul Goldberger's assertion that Venturi designed with "a kind of 20th-century mannerism that soars over the heads of most laymen." Bob frequently lamented, "My obituary will read that I was the father of Postmodernism" — a title that always made him cringe — but then, well over the heads of most laymen, you know. And, of course, the headline in my local paper read, "Venturi inspired Postmodernism."

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Venturi and his partner Denise Scott Brown were struggling with the consequences of too much opportunity: The office grew from 60, at my arrival in 1987, to more than 120 by the time I left, a little shy of four years later. It had something of the air of an Ivy League frat house: It was overwhelmingly male and young. There was no shortage of messy vitality, and with it an air of very slightly contained chaos. We were working on projects on three continents, and the time differences between them and us meant that the office was open, more or less, around the clock. Venturi was 62 when I started working with him, and he was on and off planes as much as he was in the office.

The three-story office, in a 19th-century commercial building in Philadelphia's then-untrendy Manayunk — a blue-collar canalside neighborhood — was his refuge, especially on Sundays, when the phones were quieter, and when he could think without much distraction. He'd save favorite projects for that carefully defended time — and, if you were working with him, you'd enjoy him being funny, and, frankly, showing off. Bob had some favorite drawing stunts that were meant to impress, and they did: He could draw perfect circles *free-hand*, which could be proved by putting a compass on them.

Bob's instantly recognizable fat pen sketches were just as perfect: A scale laid over them would always prove that the dimensions he wanted were there in the drawing. It was a reminder to all of us that Bob was really complete — as an architect, as a theorist, as a teacher, and, at the time, as a driven man who was preoccupied with the knowledge that late-career success gave him only so much time to see his work realized.

After the arrival of the news from Philadelphia, I have to admit that he was right.

Michael Guarino, AIA, leads UT San Antonio's semester program in Urbino, Italy.





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# CONGRATULATES

## 2018 Texas Society of Architects Design Award Winners

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Austin Community College Highland Campus

**Michael Hsu Office of Architecture  
+ BOKA Powell**

Lamar Union

You are an inspiration to us all.  
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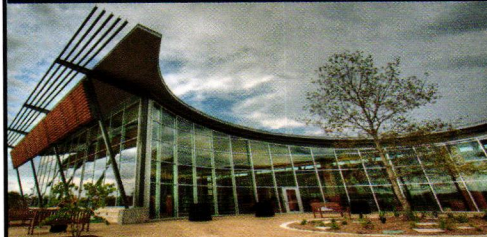
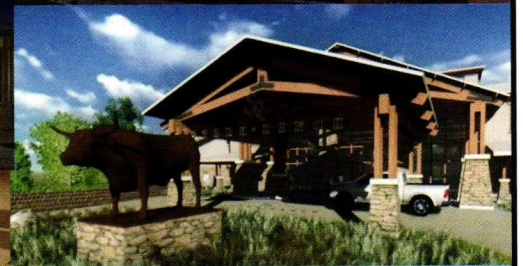
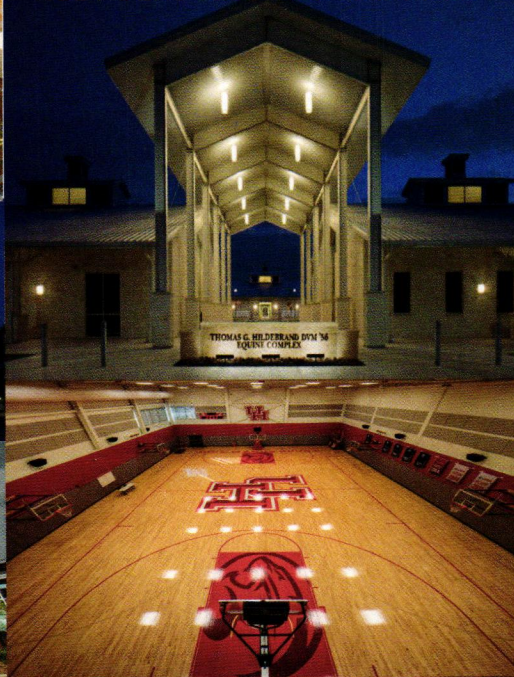


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## NOVEMBER

### Monday 5

#### EVENT

Austin Design Week  
[austindesignweek.org](http://austindesignweek.org)

#### LECTURE

UT Austin School of Architecture Lecture Series: Greg Lynn  
 Jessen Auditorium  
[soa.utexas.edu](http://soa.utexas.edu)

### Wednesday 7

#### LECTURE / EXHIBITION OPENING

UT Austin School of Architecture Lecture Series: John Szot  
 Goldsmith Hall 3.120  
[soa.utexas.edu](http://soa.utexas.edu)

### Thursday 8

#### CONVENTION

TxA 79th Annual Conference and Design Expo  
**Fort Worth**  
[texasarchitects.org](http://texasarchitects.org)

### Friday 9

#### EXHIBITION OPENING

A Century of Design from the Emil Frei Studio Archives  
 University of Dallas  
 Haggerty Gallery  
 1845 E. Northgate Dr.  
**Irving**  
[udallas.edu](http://udallas.edu)

### Saturday 10

#### EVENT

Luminaria Contemporary Arts Festival Hemisfair  
**San Antonio**  
[luminariasa.org](http://luminariasa.org)

### Sunday 11

#### EXHIBITION CLOSING

Morgan Ashcom: What the Living Carry  
 Houston Center for Photography  
 1441 W. Alabama  
**Houston**  
[hcponline.org](http://hcponline.org)

### Wednesday 14

#### FILM SCREENING

The Contemporary Austin Rooftop Architecture & Design Film Series: Hacer Mucho Con Poco (Do More With Less)  
 Jones Center  
 700 Congress Ave.  
**Austin**  
[thecontemporaryaustin.org](http://thecontemporaryaustin.org)

### Saturday 17

#### EVENT

Nasher Sculpture Center 360 Speaker Series: Bosco Sodi  
 2001 Flora St.  
**Dallas**  
[nashersculpturecenter.org](http://nashersculpturecenter.org)

### Monday 26

#### EXHIBITION CLOSING

Paula Crown: The Architecture of Memory  
 Dallas Contemporary  
 161 Glass St.  
**Dallas**  
[dallascontemporary.org](http://dallascontemporary.org)

### Tuesday 27

#### EVENT

Mark Lamster in Conversation with Rick Brettell  
 Dallas Museum of Art  
 1717 N. Harwood  
**Dallas**  
[dma.org](http://dma.org)

### Thursday 29

#### TALK

Jack Risley  
 Jones Center, The Contemporary Austin  
 700 Congress Ave.  
**Austin**  
[thecontemporaryaustin.org](http://thecontemporaryaustin.org)

## DECEMBER

### Saturday 8

#### EVENTS

Architect's Black Friday  
 AIA San Antonio  
 1344 S. Flores St.  
**San Antonio**  
[aiasa.org](http://aiasa.org)

#### Annual Gingerbread Build Off

AIA Houston  
 900 Herman Square  
**Houston**  
[aiahouston.org](http://aiahouston.org)

### Saturday 22

#### EXHIBITION CLOSING

Matthew Ritchie: The Demon in the Diagram  
 Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University  
 6100 Main St.  
**Houston**  
[moody.rice.edu](http://moody.rice.edu)

#### EXHIBITION CLOSING

Leo Villareal: Particle Chamber  
 Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University  
 6100 Main St.  
**Houston**  
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## SPOTLIGHT



The Nature of Arp  
 Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas  
 THROUGH January 6, 2019

"The Nature of Arp" invites a look into the career and achievements of Jean (Hans) Arp, one of the most multifaceted artists of the modern era. A founder of the international Dada movement during World War I, Arp's use of chance, spontaneity, fragmentation, and collaboration as artistic processes helped establish an oeuvre of organic, curving forms that have since influenced generations of artists. Featuring more than 80 objects, including sculptures, reliefs, collages, drawings, textiles, and books, the exhibit will present a compelling new look at Arp's experimental approach to creation as he worked at the forefront of abstraction.



Ed Ruscha: Archaeology and Romance  
 Harry Ransom Center, UT Austin  
 THROUGH January 6, 2019

Featuring more than 150 objects, "Ed Ruscha: Archaeology and Romance" provides visitors with a look into the artist's creative process spanning the time frame between 1963 and 1978, in which he produced 16 books. Through a collection of handwritten notes, lists, sketches, snapshots, and paste-up layouts, the exhibition examines Ruscha's fascination with the architecture and landscapes of the American West, as well as how the themes in his books have inspired later works in other media. ■



MARTEL  
WINDOWS & DOORS

MURRAY LEGGE ARCHITECTURE

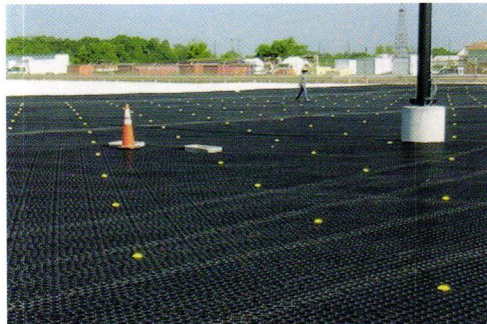
GRIFFIN SCHOOL





by Rita Catinella Orrell

**This roundup of landscape products includes permeable pavers to help better manage stormwater in flood-prone Houston, and a custom woven wire mesh green wall created for the lobby of an eco-luxe hotel in Brooklyn.**



### TrueGrid Permeable Pavers

TrueGrid  
[truegridpaver.com](http://truegridpaver.com)

Manheim, the largest U.S. network of physical and digital wholesale vehicle auctions, recently completed a two-year, \$6 million plus investment for the Manheim Texas Hobby site in Houston. A TrueGrid permeable paving system specified in a recently added 15.25-acre parking lot helped provide a cost-efficient and eco-friendly alternative to concrete and asphalt. Made from 100% post-consumer recycled HDPE, the pavers remain cooler on traditional surfaces and dramatically reduce the urban heat island effect. Ideal for flood-prone Houston, the permeable pavers help stormwater drain instantly while leaving no runoff, naturally filtering harmful hydrocarbons and pollutants, and eliminating the need for a retention pond.



### FencePost Planter Series

Kornegay Design, A  
 Landscape Forms  
 Company  
[kornegaydesign.com](http://kornegaydesign.com)

The patterns created to make the molds for Kornegay Design's FencePost Series of planters were formed from reclaimed cedar fence rails and then sandblasted to reveal the wood's textured surfaces. A delicate cut at the base of each FencePost planter is intended to lift the planters and add a bit of drama. FencePost landscape containers are made of high-strength 6000+ PSI concrete, come in three sizes, and are available in endless color options. The short planter measures 30-in-high with a bottom diameter of 15.5-in; the tall planter measures 42-in-high with a bottom diameter of 18-in, and the tub planter measures 24-in-high with a bottom diameter of 31-in.



### Connect 2.0 Shelter

Landscape Forms  
[landscapeforms.com](http://landscapeforms.com)

Created in partnership with BMW Group Designworks, Landscape Forms' Connect 2.0 shelter is a minimalist aluminum structure that uses on- or off-the-grid layered LED lighting for illumination. The ADA-compliant shelter is available in two sizes and with multiple tempered glass and open panel configurations. The shelter offers tempered glass, honeycomb aluminum panel, and aluminum louvered roof options that can address site requirements and climate conditions.



## Custom Woven Mesh Green Wall

Banker Wire  
[bankerwire.com](http://bankerwire.com)

Banker Wire, a leading manufacturer of woven and welded wire mesh for architectural and industrial applications, offers custom solutions that can be used for hospitality landscape interiors. Banker Wire's woven wire mesh I-21 pattern, powder-coated in black, was used to create a woven fixture screen and welded hanging baskets for vegetation in the lobby of the newly opened 1 Hotel Brooklyn Bridge in Brooklyn's DUMBO neighborhood. New York City landscape design firm Harrison Green developed the initial green wall concept and approached living wall manufacturer and installer AgroSci to create the 25-ft installation in line with 1 Hotel's eco-theme. AgroSci chose the intercrimp motif, commonly seen in urban-inspired window guards and fire escapes, to give the impression that plants were "reclaiming" the location.



## Pixel Collection

Maglin  
[maglin.com](http://maglin.com)

Inspired by the concept of a pixel, the Pixel Collection of modular site furnishings can be adapted for a range of public spaces, including parks, courtyards, and campuses, to pop-up street venues and urban microgardens. Intended to increase social interaction, the collection includes an interchangeable series of blocks and tops that can be used to create everything from large-scale platform seating to lounge chairs, garden planters, tables, and more. The easy-to-install collection is available in a range of sizes, colors, styles, and materials.



## Arini

HessAmerica  
[hessamerica.com](http://hessamerica.com)

With a distinctive, truncated teardrop-shaped housing and shroud made of die-cast aluminum, the Arini flood and accent lighting fixture is suited to public spaces, including stadiums, convention centers, fairgrounds, theme parks, public squares, and promenades. Arini provides illumination through six high-power LEDs in warm or neutral color temperatures. Five light distributions include spot, medium, wide, and elliptical beams in horizontal and vertical orientations. The luminaire may be specified with an optional illuminated accent on the rear of the housing for colored LED highlighting or way-marking in single color or RGBW. Ranging in height from 17 ft to 33 ft, the fixture's aluminum or steel poles are available in straight, angled, and curved styles and may accommodate several luminaires depending on height and wind loading.



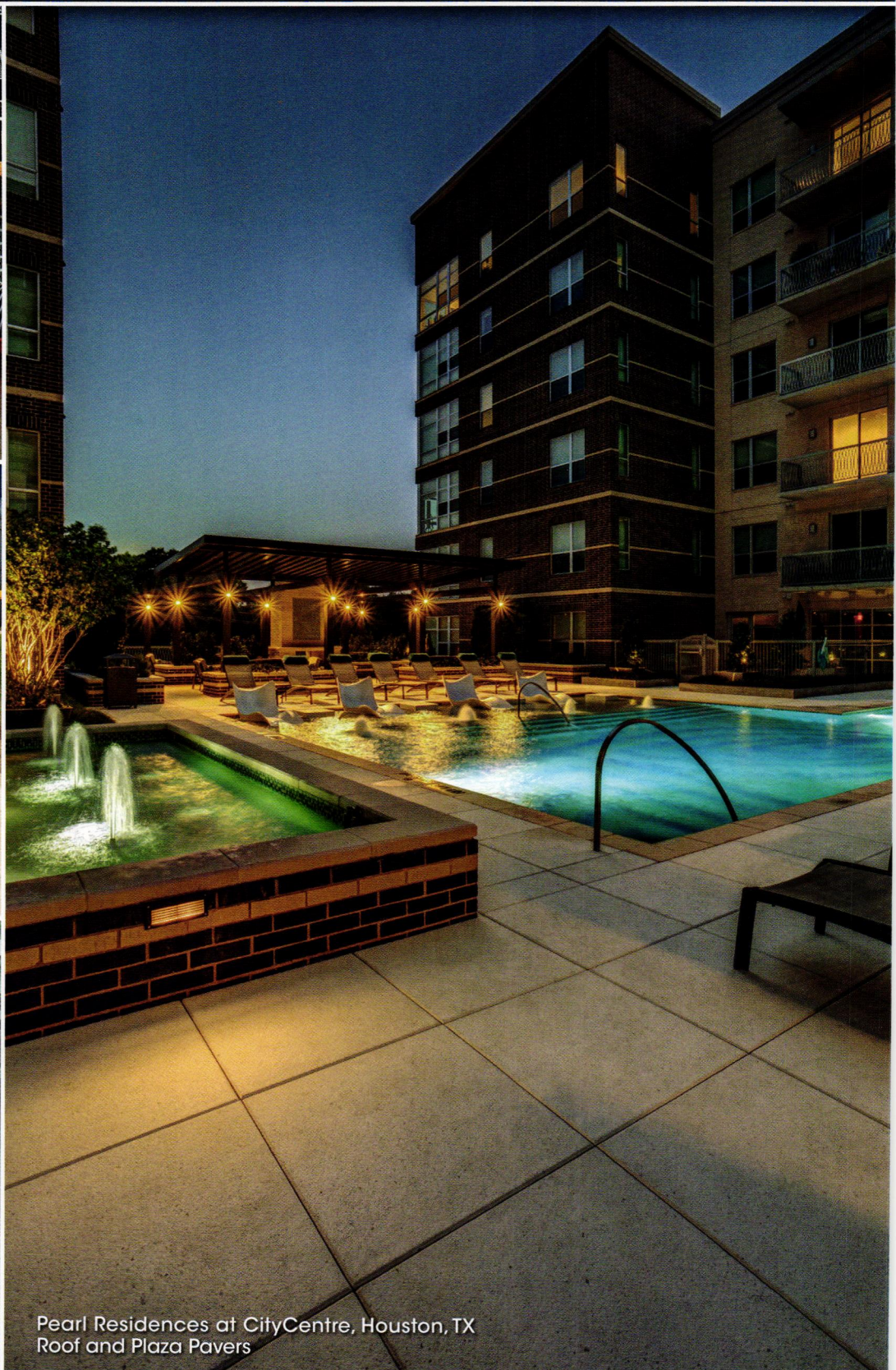
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## 2018 Studio Awards

The Texas Society of Architects Studio Awards recognize real or theoretical 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 — entries that resolve these ideas thoroughly and present them clearly.

The 2018 Studio Awards jurors met on Friday, July 20, at the Los Angeles office of Johnston Marklee to deliberate 59 entries that ran the gamut from art installations and small pavilions to city towers and regional infrastructure.

### The Jury



**Wonne Ickx**  
PRODUCTORA

“I think there’s an interest in architecture with conventional systems and materials that is trying to redefine it in a different configuration. There’s a whole set of conventional systems that we know, but it’s all integrated into a smart system that establishes something new based on pre-existing structures or conditions or materials. In the academic projects we saw, there was an effort to get the knowledge from outside the classroom and read the context, read the existing situations, with attention. We saw students having to work together on collective projects, which is interesting and different from many of the architecture studios that we know.”



**Anna Neimark**  
First Office

“In all the projects, the architects were dealing with materials; they were dealing with context, issues of preservation, urbanism — and they were asking very powerful questions about changing the industrial landscape towards a kind of social park with environmental interests. None of the projects that we looked at were just architecture for the sake of architecture — architecture that exists in a vacuum — but, rather, they were all looking at the context and very current problems of today. They were not utopian, but there was something sobering and real about all of this work, which is wonderful.”



**Sharon Johnston, FAIA**  
Johnston Marklee

“One of the things we talked about during the discussion was the way in which this body of work reflects something about the region of Texas. We saw some exciting rethinking of certain historic relics of past industrial practices; we saw architects working at many different scales; and we saw an important part of the future of the practice, where young, small practices are innovating with materials and practitioners are coming together and bringing expertise together. This very diverse collection of scales of work highlights the importance of precision design, precision thinking, and excellence in design.”

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Austin

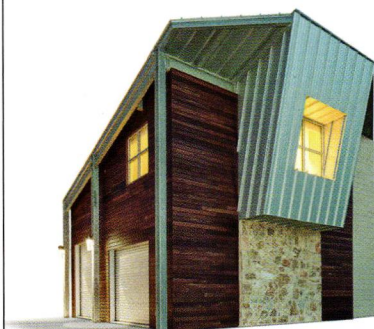
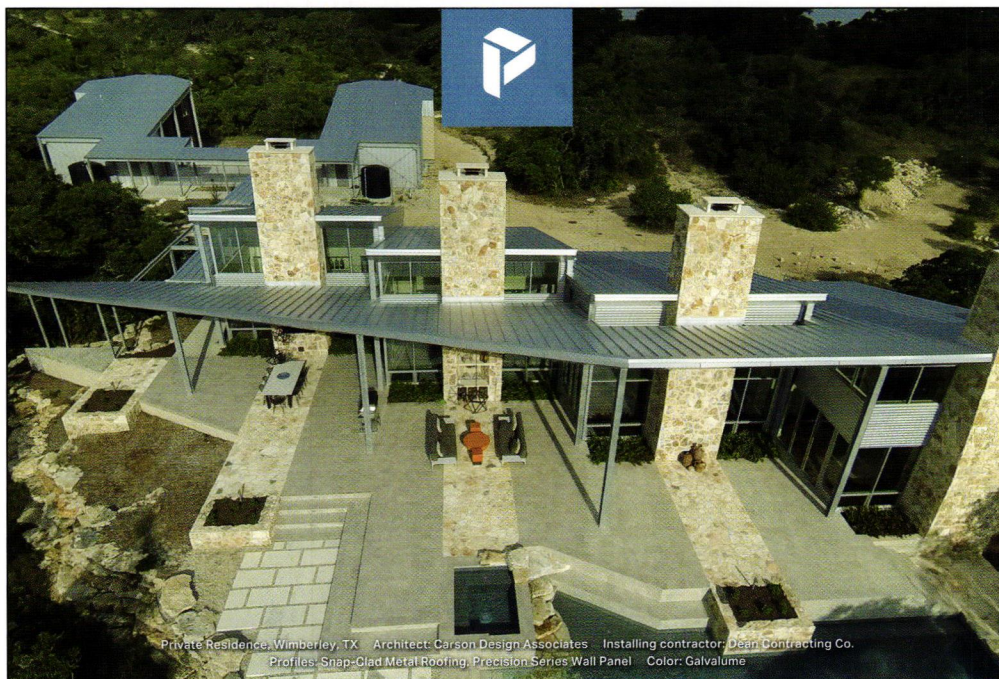
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-Jack Carson, President, Carson Design Associates

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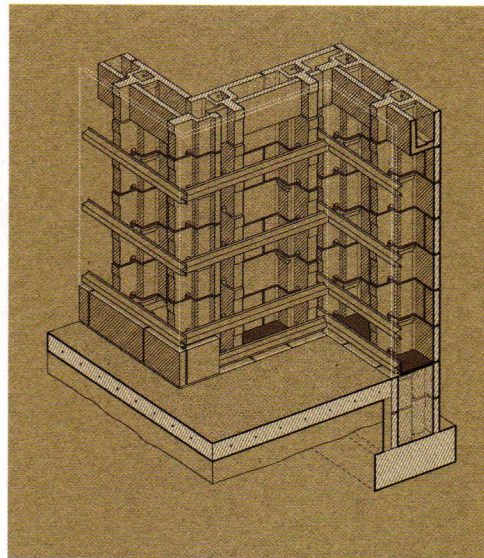
**PAC-CLAD**  
PETERSEN

## MineralBuilt

Gomes + Staub Architects / The University of Texas at Austin

*From the Jury:*

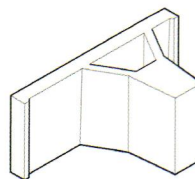
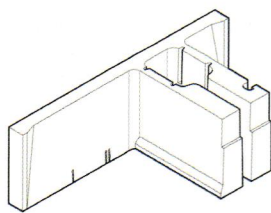
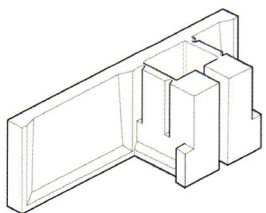
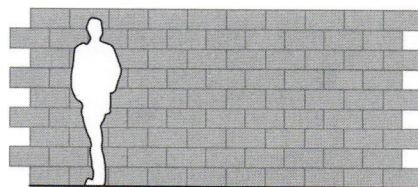
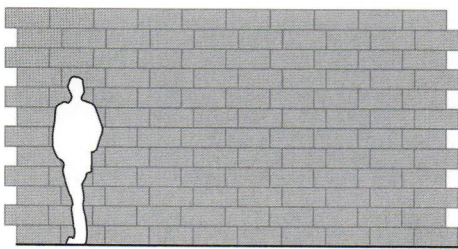
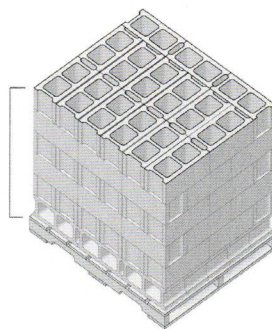
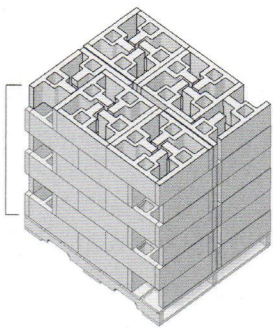
*The open-wall strategy was interesting in that it allowed for the imprint of an individual designer who might specify it, so that it didn't demand a certain kind of image of architecture or other additional components to it. That's how the future of material systems should be — that we shouldn't always have to be legislated by systems, but, rather, that the systems should allow for flexibility.*



The MineralBuilt wall system adapts load-bearing reinforced masonry construction to the speed and budgets of typical low-rise commercial buildings. Rather than building with lesser construction types containing moisture-intolerant or fire-vulnerable materials to reduce costs or accelerate construction, load-bearing masonry can be adapted to contemporary needs. The wall is an “open” system, allowing a variety of insulation, air/water barriers, plumbing, and wiring types to be installed. This means that the assembly can be customized to the climate and building trades of a particular location. Like a double-wythe cavity wall, the MineralBuilt system provides a drained cavity and a continuous water and air barrier. As with stud construction, building system rough-ins and insulation can be scheduled, installed, and inspected independently of the wall construction, accelerating building construction and occupancy.

MineralBuilt wall blocks are produced by conventional block plans already existing in local markets around the United States, and can be produced on standard equipment at a rate 50 percent greater than conventional 8-inch hollow block, while using a third less cement and aggregate. To date, the United States Patent and Trademark Office has issued three patents on the technology.

As a practical, efficient, and site-friendly system of masonry construction, the MineralBuilt wall system provides the robust durability of building with minerals without sacrificing the speed, flexibility, and ease of modern construction methods.



# Studio Awards

## Wildflower Center Outdoor Classroom

Gomes + Staub Architects / The University of Texas at Austin

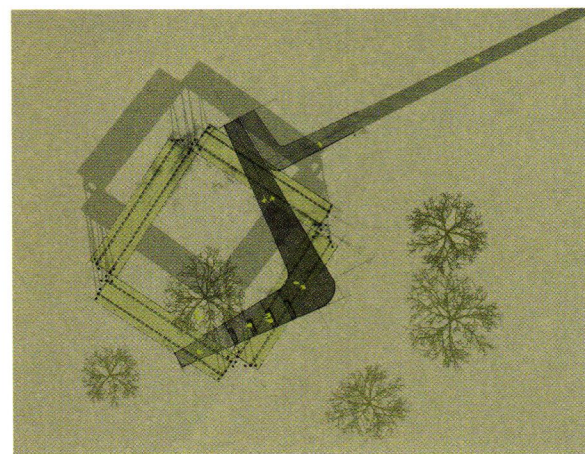
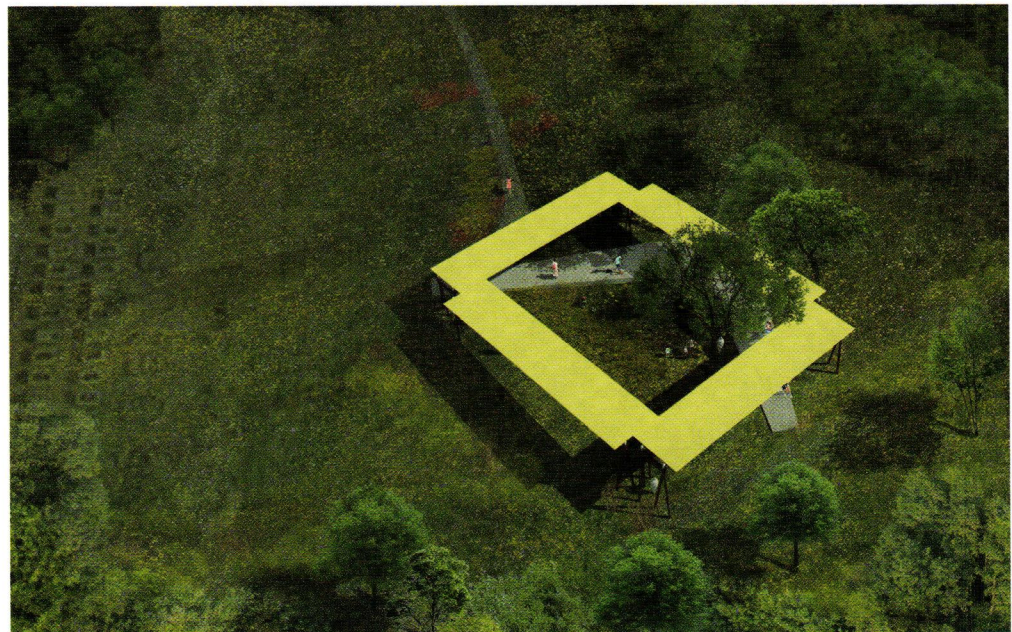
*From the Jury:*

*It's one of these typical projects where it's an absolute reduction of means, absolute minimum of means, but you can still create a sort of marker in a landscape. Especially for a project that deals with wildflowers, something so ethereal and not permanent, it's a very strong way to kind of define a place into the space.*

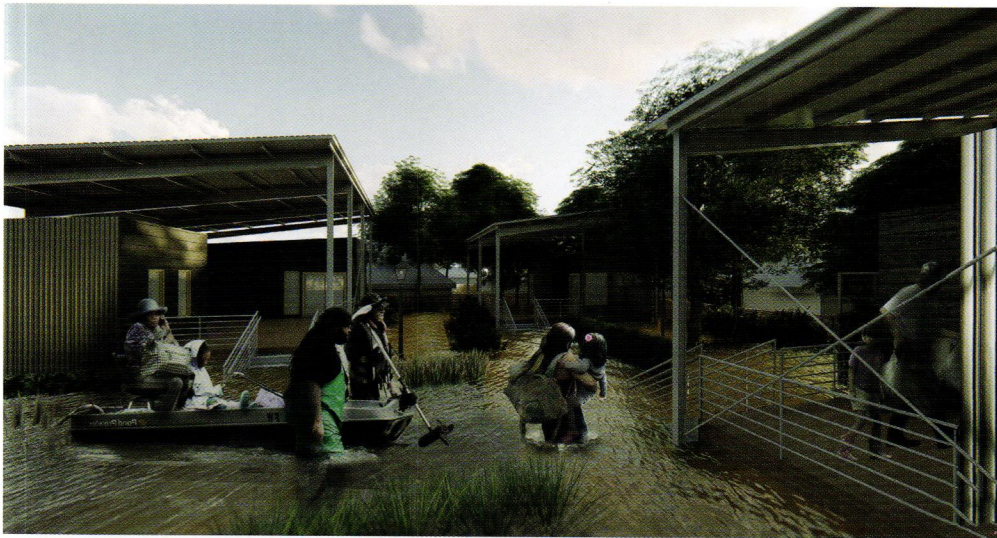
Located on the grounds of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, the Wildflower Center Outdoor Classroom is a shade structure which serves as a landmark and shelter for visitors interested in the ecological research programs of the Center. Because research on the ecosystem impact of prescribed fire regimes involves burn plots surrounding the project site, the structure is designed of non-combustible and low-maintenance materials.

The project envisions a rectangle in the gently sloping landscape, framing an existing tree and linking to existing trails in the area. Four cambered concrete double tees topped with a pollen-colored mineral silicate coating rest over a boomerang of natural stone pavement and benches, providing shade and a place to sit for visitors. Corten steel toothpick struts support the canopy, their profile and shadows playing against the broad surfaces of concrete and stone that frame the ground and sky.

The Outdoor Classroom is a natural expansion of the Wildflower Center's vision to serve the state and nation through education and research programs promoting sustainable landscapes.







## The Fly Flat

Prairie View A&M University School of Architecture

*From the Jury:*

*It's exciting to see a project that thought of not just one house, but a collection or community of houses on a lot. This is also an academic project, so it's important that we see this as not just about the heroic architecture, but as a reflection of a recent trend in architectural education. People are getting a little bit more aware of all these different issues, from social cohesion to disaster management, and they're being integrated again into the schools, and there's an understanding of the changing cycle of how the buildings might function.*

The Independence Heights neighborhood was the first incorporated black municipality in Texas and was subsequently incorporated into Houston. Over time, it has faced the pressures of desegregation, redlining, freeway construction, aging infrastructure, flooding, and gentrification. More recently, the Independence Heights neighborhood sustained significant damage from Hurricane Harvey in August of 2017.

The Prairie View A&M University School of Architecture design studio utilized public interest design within a regenerative framework to address the community's needs. Students were required to interact with the residents of the neighborhood as part of extensive research on the community, its history, and its people in order to catalyze the realization of the neighborhood's potential. The Fly Flat sought to address the need for infill housing while achieving environmental, economic, and social resilience.

The team designed an infill pocket neighborhood with community solar that will be owned by a land trust, while the homes will be privately owned. The project utilizes a modular home design for flexibility and add-on capability, with a double roof system to reduce solar heat gain, support solar panels, and elevate the homes from the flood plain. With the modular design as well as various energy performance packages, the project delivers net zero homes that meet Houston's 50%-80% area median income. Students employed sound building science, energy modeling, and FEMA 499 strategies to achieve energy-efficient, durable, healthy, and storm-resilient homes.

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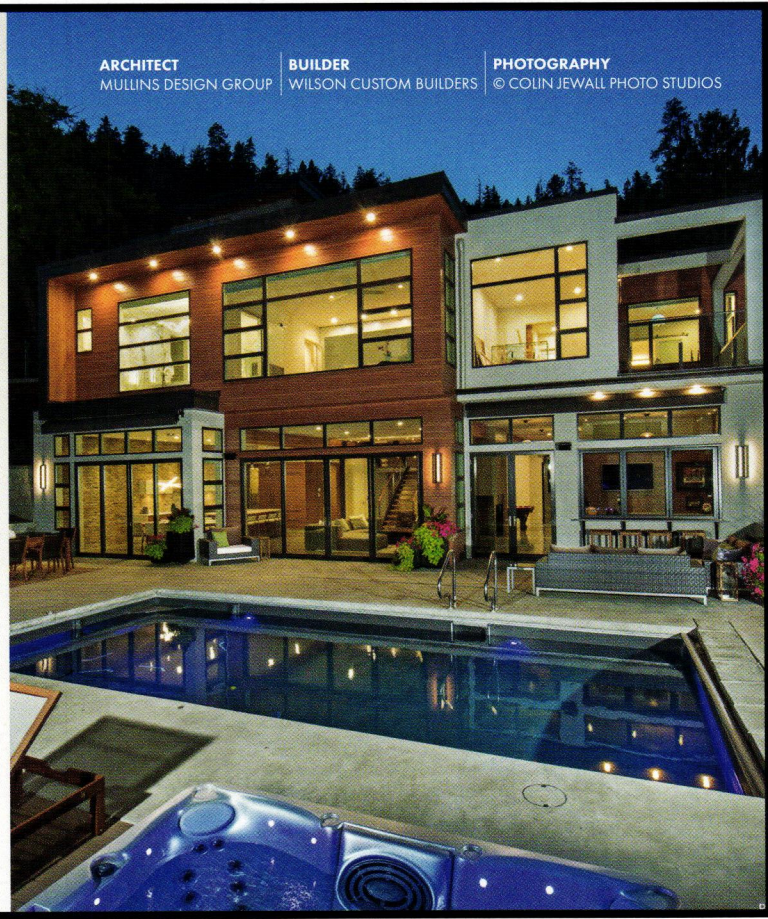
  
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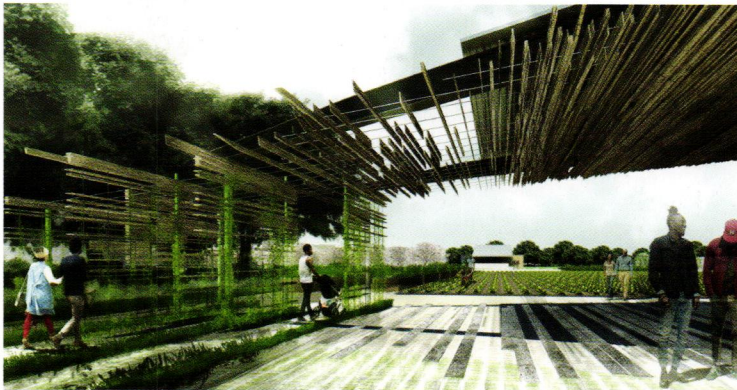
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## South Macon Agriculture Initiative Master Plan

Ibañez Shaw Architecture



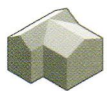
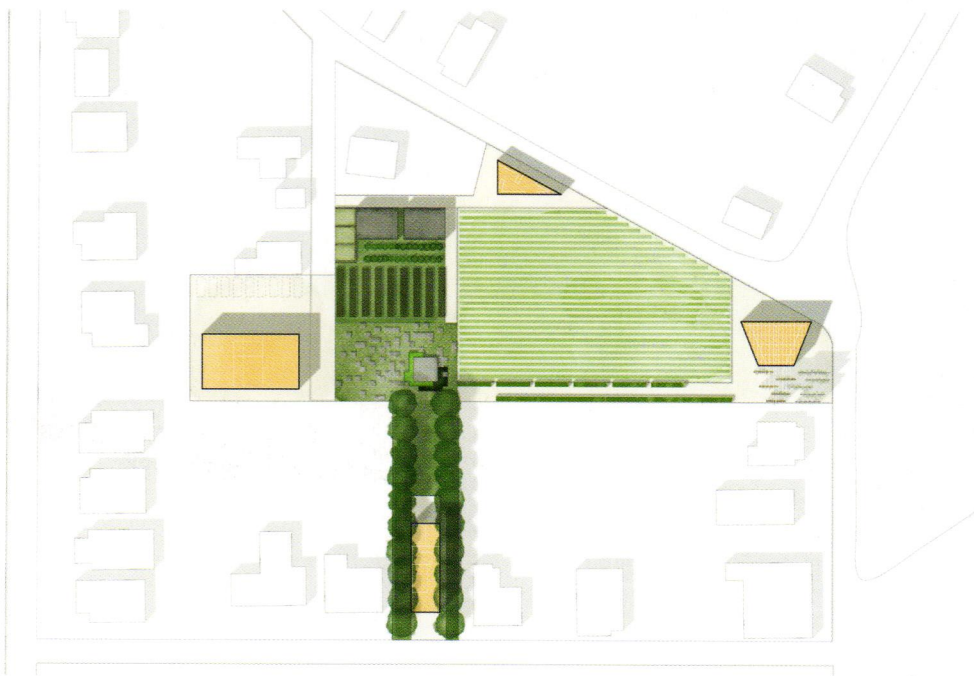
*From the Jury:*

*The pavilion structures and the green space in the center actually contribute to forming the space because they aren't heavy-handed. The project is described as an oasis inside of this food desert, so that seemed like the right approach. As a landscape project, it produces a kind of urban, social, and industrial model for other communities.*

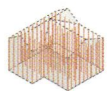
In Macon, Georgia, many of the city's most impoverished people live in the Southside district, an area that includes four of the most highly distressed census tracts in the county. As a community that struggles to gain equal education and economic opportunities, Southside Macon also falls into the category of a food desert, defined by the USDA as a place with no supermarket and no public transportation within a one-mile radius. In Southside Macon, the distance to the nearest supermarket/public transportation is more than four miles. Led by a third-generation Southside resident, the community has galvanized around an effort to combat the blight with green. Forming a community development corporation, they are dedicated to a community farm initiative, transforming underutilized properties into usable farmland.

The first phase of the South Macon Agriculture Initiative Master Plan is to take a contiguous group of properties at Southside's core and create an urban farm campus with a focus on arts, culture, education, and heritage. A production farming plot, community garden beds, greenhouses, and an orchard will bring fresh produce to the Southside residents; they will also serve as gathering and event spaces for the community. The ONE South CDC has recognized a number of blighted, uninhabited properties in Southside Macon, which will be disassembled, salvaged, and repurposed into an open market pavilion structure adjacent to the farming plot.

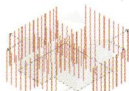
The community-run project created by ONE South is intended to foster economic growth and vitality within neighborhoods of Southside Macon. This will be ground zero for the effort to transform Southside Macon into an oasis in one of Georgia's worst food deserts.



blighted homes



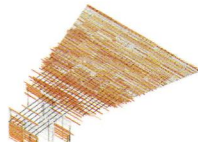
existing framing



disassemble and salvage



market structure



repurpose



market pavilion

# Studio Awards

## Four Hudson Boulevard

Michael Awalt & Deok Kyu Chung, Rice University School of Architecture

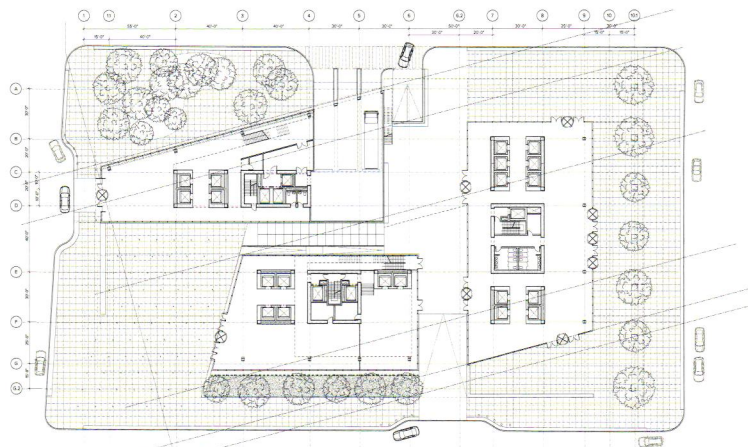
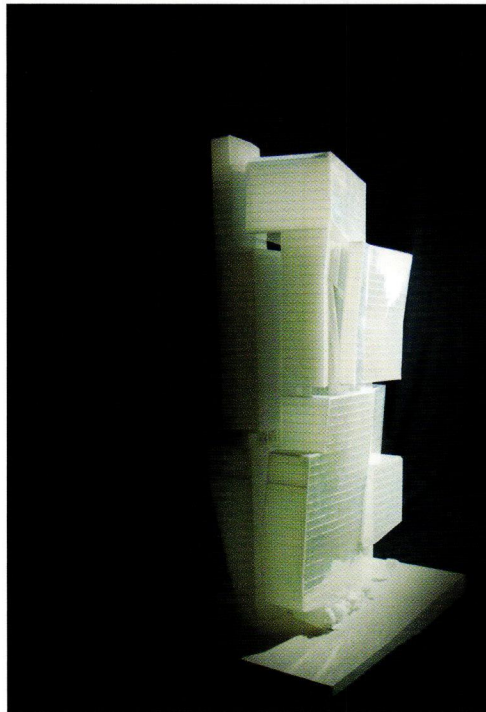
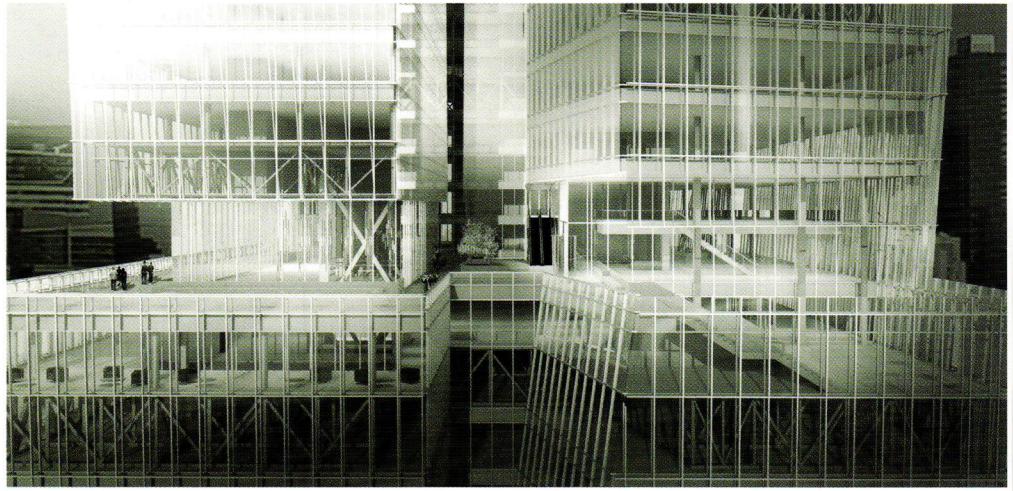
### *From the Jury:*

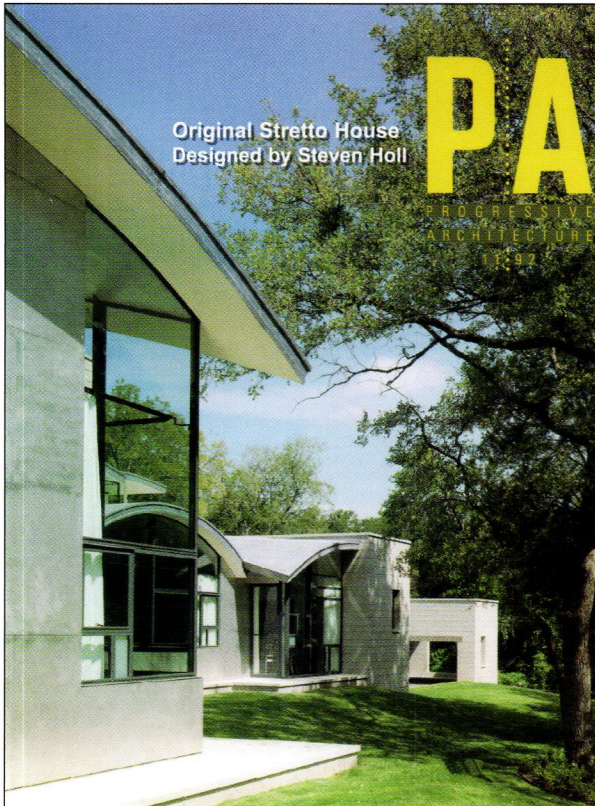
*The project is interesting in that it redefines the tower, not just as a loose element in a city, but as a group of elements that try to create a city in themselves, both horizontally and vertically. Normally, you group towers together in a plan, or you stack functions in sections, and this mixes these two ideas in a new constellation.*

In its current state, the mixed-use tower is a distinct trifle of pedestal, middle, and top, none of which are perceived in the same location at once. Accentuating this condition, the differing programs within are stacked atop one another, with little or no interaction between them. Rather than have the offices, hotel, and residential units stack atop one another, the Four Hudson Boulevard project has the three programs sit above and beside each other. By arranging the programmatic functions this way, new relationships, both spatial and programmatic, arise.

To enhance these new relationships, an aggressive formal strategy was used. The hotel and residential units reside in independent volumes that hug the edges of the primary office volume. Their angular geometry allows for a variety of viewpoints within the volumes, as well as dramatic, yet breathable, exterior spaces among them. Although geometrically independent, these volumes are interconnected structurally. This relationship causes a unique tension between the reading of three individual units, and of one compositional whole.

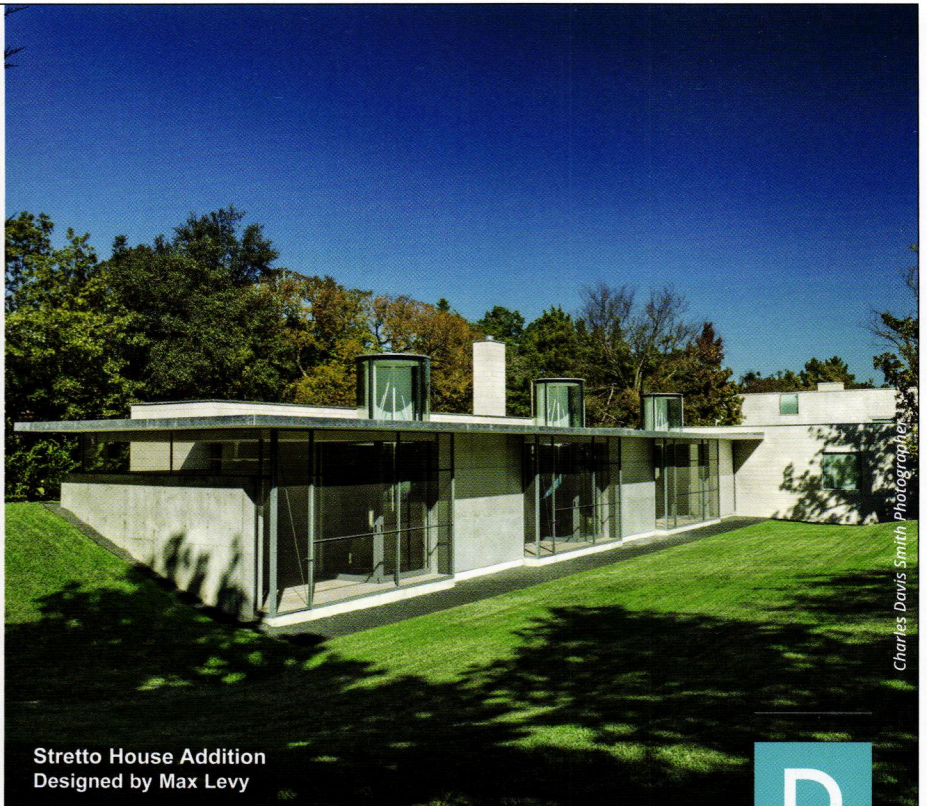
Enveloping the project is a double-skin facade, taking advantage of the project's form to maximize the amount of fresh-air ventilation. The mullion grid of each volume's second skin differs in angle to accentuate the three-versus-one volumetric relationship.





Original Stretto House  
Designed by Steven Holl

**PA**  
PROGRESSIVE  
ARCHITECTURE  
1:92

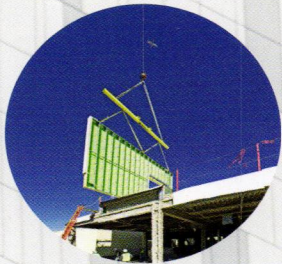


Stretto House Addition  
Designed by Max Levy

Charles Davis Smith Photography



Datum Engineers wants to extend our compliments to Max Levy for his beautifully designed addition to the Stretto House. We are proud to have collaborated with you and Steven Holl on this outstanding project.



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THE STEVEN HOLL-DESIGNED STRETTO HOUSE, LOCATED IN THE PRESTON HOLLOW NEIGHBORHOOD OF DALLAS, IS AMONG THE MOST CELEBRATED RESIDENTIAL DESIGNS OF THE 20TH CENTURY. IN CRAFTING A NEW ADDITION TO THE CANONICAL STRUCTURE, MAX LEVY ARCHITECT BALANCED RESPECTFUL POSTURING WITH THE NEED TO DELIVER SPACES OF EQUAL POTENCY.

by Michael Malone, FAIA

**Project** Stretto House Addition, Dallas

**Architect** Max Levy Architect

**Design Team** Max Levy, FAIA; Matt Morris; Tom Manganiello

**Photographer** Charles Davis Smith, FAIA

# Open House



In the latter part of the 20th century, a group of architectural patrons built a significant collection of single family homes, many by noted architects, in the Dallas neighborhood of Preston Hollow. Among these are Frank Lloyd Wright's Gillin House (1958), followed by the Beck House (1964) by Philip Johnson, the Whatley House (1984) by Edward Larrabee Barnes, and the Stretto House (1992) by Steven Holl. Stretto is not the least among these. Survey books compiling architecturally innovative residential design usually include Stretto, to the point that it has become a canonical work of Holl's, despite his exhaustive output of breathtaking buildings in the years since. The house was commissioned by the descendants of Harold C. Price, who built the Wright-designed Price Tower in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. This family's degree of connoisseurship, further evidenced by building Holl's visionary structure, was and remains amazing.

The Stretto House is now in the hands of new owners with two young children. Requiring an expansion to accommodate their active family, they approached Max Levy, FAIA, who was Holl's local architect on Stretto. The family's work order included modest modifications to the original. Initially reluctant, Levy was ultimately convinced to take the project. He knew the house intimately and fully understood the potential pitfalls of altering an architectural icon. His watchword was "respect," and his approach deliberate and careful.

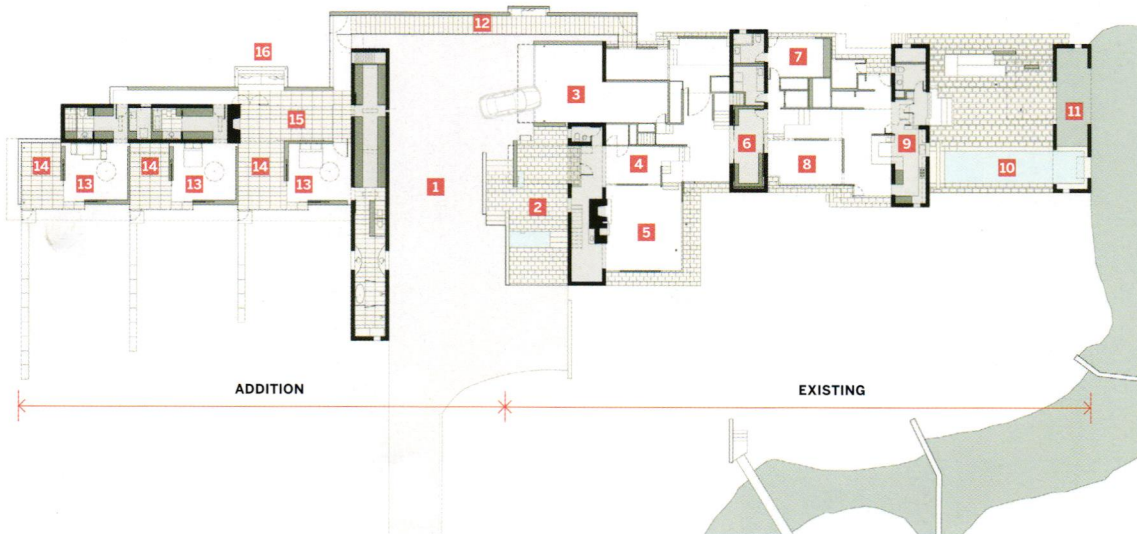
Levy's design eschews the expressive formal vocabulary of Holl's design, but adapts the material palette: burnished concrete block, aluminum panels, lead-coated copper, steel-frame windows. As with the original house, the various building materials have coded roles organizing their use in the new building. The concrete block is in a longer, more linear proportion better

suited to the low-slung roof and prevailing horizontality of the addition. Sanded aluminum panels clad non-service spaces, their dull gray exhibiting a surprising amount of reflectivity and life. Lead-coated copper again is used for the exposed roof edges. Finally, the steel frame windows and doors return, often in the form of a static glazed screen (the glass connector to the original house) or as moving walls (at the screen porches and bedrooms).

Finding ways for his architecture's users to engage the building beyond just inhabiting the space has always been part of Levy's mission. At Stretto, the most overt architectural gesture that animates an otherwise simple form is the presence of enigmatic, cylindrical light monitors that sit atop the flat roof. They are compelling as formal objects and serve as delightful counterparts to the otherwise typical though well-organized composition. There are three of them, glass drums that allow top light to enter each of the bedrooms. To control glare and direct light, they are fitted with a rotating shade. Levy calls these shades "light sails." They can be used to shield specific solar rays at various times of the day and are expressed in the rooms as rotating masts that, when twisted, adjust the shade above. Sliding panels set into tracks in the ceiling with their own detached pole for operation can be slid into place to close the drums off completely when darkness is required. On a sunny day, the spaces are filled with light — an uncanny feeling inside such a substantial structure.

The addition uses the Stretto House as a foyer: You can only enter by passing through the main public spaces of the existing house and an art gallery that is now a transitional passage. Once in the glazed connecting gallery, you experience the site entry sequence in reverse, looking back toward the motor court and the main gate. A bench seat and a bespoke art





**FLOOR PLAN**

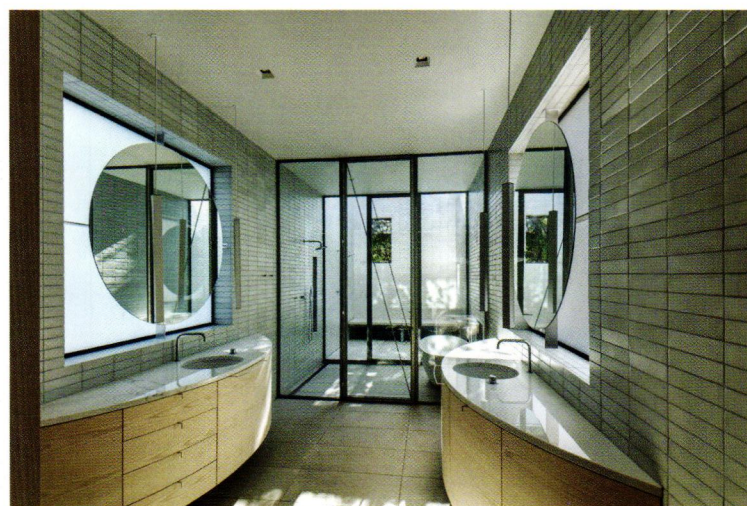
- 1 MOTORCOURT
- 2 TERRACE
- 3 CARPORT
- 4 ENTRY
- 5 LIVING
- 6 LIBRARY
- 7 GUEST BEDROOM
- 8 DINING
- 9 KITCHEN
- 10 POOL
- 11 FLOODED ROOM
- 12 GALLERY LINK
- 13 BEDROOM
- 14 SCREEN PORCH
- 15 COURTYARD
- 16 READING NOOK



**Previous** Viewed on arrival, the original Steven Holl entry porch with its curved roof and entry sequence is intact. Levy's glass connecting corridor forms a backdrop for the motor court and connects the iconic Stretto House to its quieter addition.

**Facing** Tucked into the existing topography, the addition's interior spaces open out to the lawn through a series of screened porches. The light cylinders with their adjustable "sails" on each bedroom and are visible atop the cantilevered roof.

# Open House



piece make moving through this passage eventful and memorable. One animating vignette is a slice of the arching carport roof, visible through the glass as a reminder of how the original house differs from the addition.

Strong plan geometry has always been part of Levy's work. Here, the plan unfolds as a series of interior and exterior spaces opening rhythmically off long passages. The plan doesn't reveal itself until you move through it, entering the various spaces to understand how it flows and is organized. The Stretto House unfolded with a shifting path that moves in a linear fashion though the house. The spaces are taller and more expansive and provide tantalizing views of what's ahead as you move from space to space. Levy has contrasted this with a series of more private and discreet spaces — fitting, in that the addition is primarily composed of bedrooms.

Each bedroom suite has a corresponding exterior room that is at once its counterpart and its "window." Here, Levy uses another Holl device — the diagonal view. The glass walls that open to the porches are actually sliding screens that open up the corners. They are on the diagonally opposite corner of the room from where the space is entered, and command a sweeping view to light and green beyond.

To maintain the same finished floor elevations throughout the addition, the house nestles into the topography. The bedrooms open to the lawn, but the corridor at the rear has only clerestory windows. This enhances the sense of privacy and makes emerging into the bright and open bedrooms more gratifying.

The master bath and closet form a miniature building unto themselves to one side of the motor court. Long and narrow, the closet is fitted with millwork clothing storage that conceals all of its contents, except for small cases that display selected objects like artifacts in a museum. The space is illuminated by crisscrossing beams of light, courtesy of a series of linear skylights set into the roof. At once open and cheerful, the bathroom has the same disarming presence of light that the bedrooms enjoy. The vanities and their mirrors become sculptures in the spaces, all the more appropriate due to their half-round form and placement in front of frosted glass windows. The sense of being outdoors is enhanced by the placement of a private court with its own shower visible through a glass wall at one end of the bathroom.

There is a Kahn-like space at the center of the addition, faced in block and open with glass walls at one long side: Roofless, it is tall and narrow, with a simple fireplace and its impossibly narrow chimney at one end. It serves a functional role, bringing light into the heart of the new building, but it also creates a quiet counterpoint to all the more engaging architecture going on around it. The courtyard is best considered from a built-in seat set into the wall of the corridor. Surrounded by shelves, it's a de facto library. Levy says such areas soften and warm modernism. The space certainly proves that a room without a view can be a very beautiful place, indeed.

Michael Malone, FAIA, is the 2018 chair of the TxA Honors Awards Committee and the Ford Medal Jury.



**Facing left** Screened porches provide each bedroom with a corresponding exterior space. When open on pleasant days, the pocketing sliding glass doors blur the line between interior and exterior spaces. The enigmatic glass cylinders provide top light in each bedroom. Rotated into position by masts, the light sails mitigate glare and direct sun.

**Facing top right** Curved vanity cabinets cantilevered beneath opaque windows lead to the glass-enclosed shower and tub area. Beyond, a further glass wall accesses a private exterior court with its own outdoor shower.

**Facing bottom right** Along the corridor, a banquette surrounded by bookshelves is an inviting place to relax and read. Opening a door in the glass wall accesses the central courtyard, positioned to bring light into the center of the addition. The direct exterior connection is integral to the way the spaces unfold and are used.

**Left** Open to the sky, the visually quiet and contemplative fireplace court is lined with operable glass and screen panels along the sides, expanding the space into the house itself. Finished in CMU, it is a narrowly proportioned, Kahn-like space.

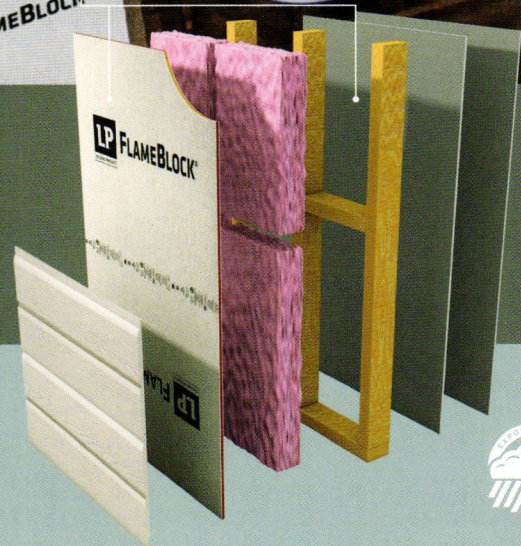
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*Oh! Many a widow, many an orphan cursed  
The building of that fane; and many a father,  
Worn out with toil and slavery, implored  
The poor man's God to sweep it from the earth,  
And spare his children the detested task  
Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning  
The choicest days of life,  
To soothe a dotard's vanity.*  
— Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Queen Mab”

*What the hurrying eye has seen merely from the car it cannot retain, and the vanishing landscape leaves no more traces behind than it bears upon itself.*  
— Theodor Adorno, “Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life”

*I want to ride my llama  
From Peru to Texarkana*  
— Neil Young, “Ride My Llama”

There is a need for revision — not just of how we design and build our domain, but also of how we think about the project to begin with — a re-conception of what *Texas Architect* is here calling “Groundwork,” or the foundation of what gives rise to our cities and their connective tissue. Policies that guide development; design decisions that affect public space; the very materials with which we structure buildings — all must be viewed through a new lens. The current mode of profit-oriented construction, greenwashed as it may be, has produced an environment that is inimical to good life. Rather than asking for efficiency, why are we not asking for happiness?

In this Groundwork feature, *TA* visits Houston one year after Hurricane Harvey to check on the resiliency response, investigates the qualities of two high-profile Texas public spaces, looks at aspirational urbanization plans for two very different cities, and feels out the possibilities of unfired earth building systems.

# Groundwork

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One year after Hurricane Harvey, *TA* checks in on Houston's resiliency response.

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Assoc. AIA*

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## **The Ground-Up**

A fresh look at rammed earth, adobe, and compressed earth block building systems.

*Jen Wong*



*After the Harvey flood water receded, still remained on the banks of the Buffalo Bayou. It was a visual reminder of the need for the North Canal project, which has been on the books for more than 20 years but could not move forward due to lack of financial resources. Now, the project has been submitted to FEMA for funding.*

# After the Flood

ONE YEAR AFTER HURRICANE HARVEY, TA CHECKS IN ON HOUSTON'S RESILIENCY RESPONSE. WE ROUND UP THE FUNDING INCENTIVES AVAILABLE TO MOTIVATE DEVELOPERS TO BUILD RESILIENTLY; CONSIDER CODE CHANGES, POLICY UPDATES, AND INFRASTRUCTURAL UPGRADES; TOUR RENOVATIONS OF THE INUNDATED WORTHAM THEATER; AND PONDER THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTS IN DESIGNING A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE BAYOU CITY.

by Jen Weaver, AIA





**O**n August 26, 2017, Harvey dumped one trillion gallons of water on Harris County across a four-day period. All 22 watersheds within the county reached record levels. The storm set a new bar for the most rainfall from a tropical cyclone ever in the U.S., and was the latest in a series of super storms that have forced us to confront how we build cities in coastal regions. (This was going to press as Hurricane Florence bore down on the Carolinas.)

Lisa Dickson, U.S. resilience lead at Arup, says that we need to reconsider how we conceive system change. She breaks it down like this: 1) resetting the baseline for climate change; 2) focusing on both successes and failures; 3) recognizing value capture and return on investment for faster implementation by private sector players.

In resetting our baseline expectations, a report from MIT concluded that, for now, we can expect a 1-in-100-year flood every 30 years. A formerly labeled 1-in-2000-year storm is now classified as a 1-in-100-year storm. Hurricane Sandy was a 1-in-900-year storm and will likely now be a 1-in-20-year storm. In the past five years, Houston endured three 500-year storm events. Harvey alone cost an estimated \$150 billion in damage, by conservative assessments, with trickledown effects to the Houston economy as a whole.

There are no meaningful metrics to discuss the value lost in a community's health, safety, and welfare after an event like Harvey. During and after the storm, many children missed school — the impact on their education is immeasurable. Nearly 20 percent, or 345,000, housing units in Harris County suffered structural damage. It's estimated that 600,000 businesses suffered large discontinuity. The most disrupted asset class was commercial office space. In the energy corridor, one 14-story office building held less than a foot of water, but full recovery took six months, due to labor and material shortages. The second-most disrupted asset class was medical office buildings, which occupy disenfranchised areas. They have little infrastructure support and little resilience design in comparison to medical centers, which fared well during Harvey. The third-most affected asset class was hospitality, which hosted displaced people, many of whom did not have the means to pay. The fourth-most disrupted business type consisted of not-for-profits and churches. On tight operating budgets often dependent on fluctuating donations, they offered space as temporary shelter and acted as impromptu medical providers.

Harvey highlighted problems with the resiliency of Houston's infrastructure. For example, local streets designed to act as a secondary drainage system in the event of a major storm were impassable. Getting replacement chemicals to wastewater treatment plants required hovercrafts and police escorts, which took weeks. While medical centers fared well in-place, they were inaccessible to many people who needed them. Major highways were flooded and unusable for weeks. Due to delayed congressional approval, FEMA funds were held up before passing through to the Texas General Land Office and finally being forwarded to the City of Houston for disbursement. So what's Houston doing about it?

#### **100 Resilient Cities / The Rockefeller Foundation**

The Rockefeller Foundation created the 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) network in 2013, a \$164 million global effort to connect and enhance resilience efforts around the world. Thanks to the sponsorship of Shell Oil, Houston became the 101st participating city on August 29. The foundation provides a framework for planning and design solutions to increase robust system responses. The resilience framework addresses acute shocks like floods, disease outbreaks, terrorist attacks, and earthquakes, as well as chronic stresses like high unemployment, inadequate transportation systems, endemic violence, and chronic food and water shortages. Climate-related

shocks are the number one disruptor of normal city activities and services. For cities already experiencing chronic stress, climate-related shocks can be especially devastating.

The 100RC framework brings a methodology for prioritizing building strategies to address both acute shocks and system stressors. The program provides two years' salary for a chief resilience officer. 100RC provides a platform of over 120 strategic partners around the world who have donated pro bono hours valued at over \$200 million in services and information-sharing. The framework does not include a segue for capital investment. Forty-seven of the existing 100RC have released resilience strategies, which contain more than 2,300 concrete actions and initiatives. 100RC estimates that 70 percent of the world's population will live in urban centers by 2050: We need to build resilient infrastructure now.

The New Orleans-based Water Institute of the Gulf will act as Houston's principal technical partner in designing a formal resilience strategy. Niel Golightly, chief of staff of the Recovery Office for the City of Houston, says "The best solutions encourage livability, mitigate risk, and increase protection for both current and future uses," and multidisciplinary designs and solutions are stressed.

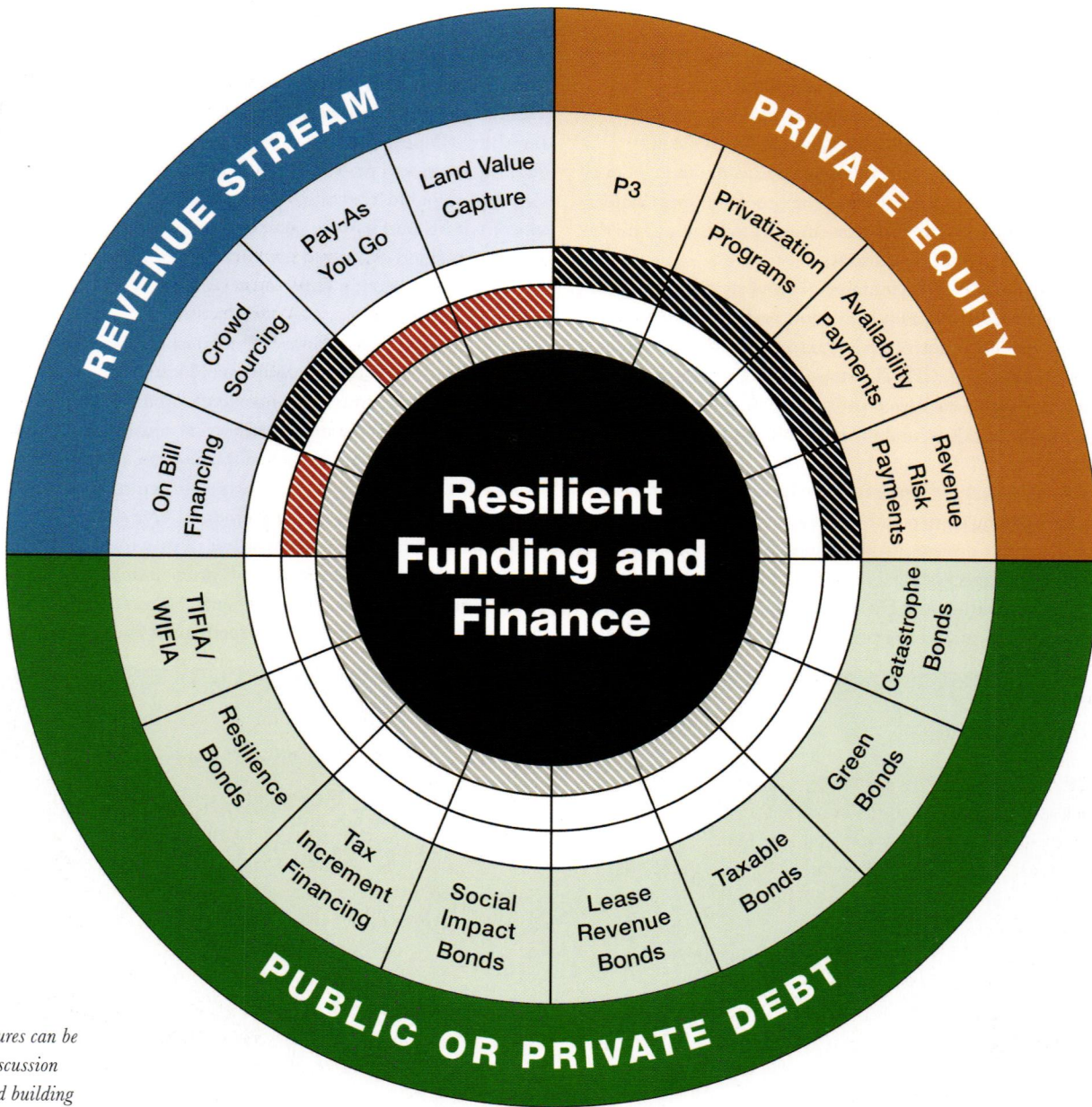
#### **Infrastructure / City of Houston**

To prevent the severity of flooding in Houston's office core, the North Canal project looks to divert the swollen curves of White Oak and Buffalo bayous. Steve Costello, Houston's flood czar, notes the project should lower water in the bayous by two to five feet during flood events. The estimated cost is approximately \$160 million, with multiple agencies directly participating and benefiting from the project. The long-term vision includes a revitalization of the pedestrian path for the center of Houston. The North Canal project along White Oak and Buffalo bayous has been on the books for more than 20 years but could not move forward due to lack of financial resources. Now, the project has been submitted to FEMA for funding.

The Ruffino project is another flood mitigation measure that has been on the books for years without financing. It's a dormant landfill on Keegans Bayou, which could provide relief for downstream areas on Brays Bayou, like Meyerland, that have continually flooded for years. Nearly all Meyerland is located within the 100-year flood plain. Under the new proposal, the City of Houston will dig out the landfill and create a detention pond. Relocating the landfill will cost \$200 million, with an additional \$50 million required for channel improvements along Keegans Bayou. The city is seeking federal funding to complete the project, which requires coordination with county, state, and federal agencies. "If you get everyone involved, you can maximize the available funding at all levels," says Costello. "Federal funds require a local share. By engaging all players, it minimizes your contribution at the local level and increases agency collaboration."

#### **Adopt-a-Drain / City of Houston**

The City of Houston, in conjunction with Keep Houston Beautiful, launched the Adopt-a-Drain program in April 2018. This participatory program asks community members to adopt an access drain inlet in curbs and gutters along Houston's streets, committing to keeping the gutter free of debris and clutter for 10 feet to either side. The goal is to ensure that Houston's miles of drainage systems can function optimally in storm events. According to Houston Public Works, of the 100 adopted drains surveyed by the maintenance department, 90 percent had improved conditions in comparison to drains not in the program. The City of Houston spends \$10-15 million annually in stormwater



Resilience measures can be a challenging discussion for architects and building owners. In implementing measures, discussion often centers around who will pay for the capital expenditures. Who owns the risk of not being resilient? Who benefits from the operational savings? This graph shows how Arup evaluates financing options among revenue stream, private equity, and debt with a focus on risk transference.

maintenance. Full implementation of Adopt-a-Drain could substantially reduce operating costs, and improve the quality of water draining into Galveston Bay.

#### **IncentiFind**

Since building resiliently can reduce long-term risks for property owners, states and municipalities are beginning to offer incentives to those who implement such measures. After years of connecting building portfolio owners and developers with sustainability initiatives at AECOM and Jacobs, Natalie Campos Goodman created IncentiFind, a database of over 12,000 sustainability and resiliency initiatives. The process allows a lender to incorporate sustainability with the cash flow analysis to demonstrate the business case for sustainable, resilient solutions.

One such loan product is CPACE (commercial property assessed clean energy). The program is funded by private investors and government programs, but enabled by state legislatures. In Texas, only existing buildings are eligible for CPACE financing. CPACE allows owners to borrow money for energy efficiency, renewable energy, or other projects against their tax bill. The debt is tied to the building, and the loan stays with the building through transactions.

IncentiFind works with over 500 lenders to create similar financial win-win scenarios for building owners in both new and existing projects. Common resiliency incentive projects include renewable energy, combined heat and power, battery storage, backup generation, microgrid, electric vehicle charging, efficient lighting and HVAC, water efficiency measures, building envelope improvements, wind resistant roofs and windows, and

flood mitigation. These loans can cover all hard and soft costs for qualified resiliency projects, providing better terms to improve cash flow impacts for building owners.

#### **The Wortham Theater / Arup**

The Wortham Theater, home to the Houston Ballet and the Houston Opera, sits on the banks of Buffalo Bayou. Harvey overwhelmed the building's floodgates and water breached the backstage door, spilling into the orchestra pit and the first few rows of seats. In some places, the building held 12 feet of water. All HVAC systems, electrical switchboards and panels, components of the mechanical stage lift, and finishes in flood-damaged areas required replacement. The two parking garages flooded in three subterranean levels. It took five weeks to pump the water out.

Water levels during Harvey climbed more than 38 ft above sea level. In rehabilitating Wortham, Arup and Houston First decided to protect the theater and its garages against floods up to 41 ft above sea level. Tom Smith of Arup says that designers need to consider how a building will handle water once it has breached the interior, as well as how to keep it out. Ventilating bacteria-filled water, protecting equipment, and draining after a breach are all important considerations. Five or six feet of water adds significant weight and could cause loss of structural integrity.

The design was prioritized for 1) immediate recovery; 2) restoration; and 3) mitigation against future events. Submarine doors were added at the Smith Street entrance. Sensor-activated flood gates were added facing





**Facing** During Harvey, water overwhelmed the flood gates of the Wortham Theater. The design and construction schedule for repairs was nine months, indicating an incredibly efficient and cooperative design-build process.

**Left** Steel doors in the Wortham's masonry block walls had to be replaced due to corrosion in the steel frame. Block surrounding the doors was cut out and replaced, as well. Fire protection was replaced on structural steel columns, which were not corroded.

the bayou and at the Prairie Avenue entrance. In an ideal scenario, all mechanical and electrical equipment would be moved to the roof, but it was not cost-effective for this project. Instead, the systems were raised internally within their existing basement: The electrical substations were elevated 10 ft and the air handlers 4 ft. The theater re-opened on September 26.

#### Code Changes / Houston Public Work

Throughout the rebuilding effort, Mayor Sylvester Turner directed Houstonians to build for the future. Houston City Council approved stricter building codes with the intention of reducing flood damage. The mayor introduced measures in January 2017, but city council did not approve them until April 2017 in a 9-7 vote. It was the first modification to the flood plain in over a decade. Within Houston's Infrastructure Design Manual and Building Code, the following revisions took effect September 1, 2018:

- Chapter 9: Detention requirements are no longer grandfathered for existing paved surfaces.
- Chapter 13: For infill development, site drainage was formerly allowed to drain through the site from front to back. Now, stormwater cannot be displaced to adjacent properties.
- Chapter 19: Previously, the residential finished floor elevation was required to be one ft above the 100-year flood plain, and homeowners within the floodplain were required to have flood insurance. Now, the requirement will be two ft above the 500-year flood plain. The ordinance will affect all new construction and any home that increases more than 33 percent in square footage.

During Harvey, a third of homes in the 500-year flood plain were damaged by flooding. In the 100- and 500-year flood plains, 84 percent of homes would have avoided damage had the new regulations been in place.

#### Conclusion

Houston had many successes during Harvey when compared to Tropical Storm Allison in 2001. The Texas Medical Center was able to shelter in

place without flooding. Unfortunately, many people had trouble accessing it, which speaks to the need for transportation resiliency. Moving forward, we can expect to see more projects like Partners HealthCare in Boston. They included operable windows in patient rooms that are on timers. They moved all electrical and mechanical systems to a penthouse on the roof, added a boat ramp to the entrance for emergency access during flood events, and added planting and retaining walls to act as a reef against storm surge. Partners reported a revenue of \$13.4 billion in 2017. The resilience modifications cost less than .5 percent of their annual revenue. This investment will mean the difference between success and loss of life in the next extreme event.

By offering incentives and financing options for sustainability and resilient solutions, cities and states can address the limitations of today's codes and zoning while also encouraging the construction of better-protected buildings in the redevelopment of existing properties for higher-value uses. Architects now have a powerful set of tools to discuss such solutions with building owners.

Houston 2020 Visions is a yearlong invitational collaborative process led by City of Houston Council Member David W. Robinson, FAIA, and the AIA Houston chapter. Aptly tied to the Harvey anniversary, the project kicks off August 25, 2018 and concludes August 25, 2019. "As a citizen-architect, I want to help our city consider the best thinking and ideas to help build forward for a better future," Robinson says. "Mayor Turner has been adamant about not 'funding for failure.' As we anticipate recovery funds coming down from the state and federal government, we need to be ready with creative and innovative ideas for how to rebuild a better city." The program seeks expansive, creative visions for resilient responses, including infrastructure projects, policy recommendations, warning systems, and resilient housing design. Lectures and community meetings throughout the year will conclude with a Call for Visions, to be exhibited at the Architecture Center Houston and released in publication. Who better to design the next wave of resilient futures than Houston architects?

Jen Weaver, AIA, is an architect and developer in Austin and Los Angeles.





# Gathering Texas

IN THE PAST DECADE, SEVERAL CITIES IN TEXAS HAVE OPENED IMPORTANT DOWNTOWN PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES. THEIR PURPORTED PURPOSE HAS BEEN TO ATTRACT THESE CITIES' DIVERSE POPULATIONS AND RE-CREATE LIVELY URBAN CENTERS IN PLACES DECIMATED BY MORE THAN 50 YEARS OF AUTO-CENTRIC DEVELOPMENT. HOW ARE THEY DOING? HERE, A UT AUSTIN RESEARCHER EVALUATES THE PERFORMANCE OF TWO SUCH PROJECTS: DALLAS' KLYDE WARREN PARK AND HOUSTON'S DISCOVERY GREEN.

by Gabe Colombo



**O**n June 17, 1972, on a long strip of empty land at the north end of downtown Dallas, between one- and two-hundred thousand young people gathered for an eight-hour-long Christian music festival, the culmination of a days-long event that came to be known as Explo '72, or the “Christian Woodstock.” The land, left derelict by a drawn-out right-of-way acquisition process, was eventually excavated to create the 12-lane Woodall Rodgers Freeway. But, for that moment, the glacial advance of state bureaucracy allowed an organic celebration of community to arise, and for public space to be claimed, not bestowed.

Decades later, the construction of Klyde Warren Park over the freeway has resurrected that public space, knit together the pedestrian experience of Downtown and Uptown, and provided a gathering place for these neighborhoods and the city as a whole. The integrated design and range of amenities — from the dog park to the great lawn, from food trucks to an outdoor reading room — provide something for everyone.

At least, this is what most of what’s written about it would lead you to believe.

Yes, the park, designed by The Office of James Burnett and completed in 2012, gets many things right. It is stuffed full of things to do, an antidote to the expansive monotony of largely inactive modernist plazas (such as Dallas’ City Hall Plaza, which could get its own makeover). Its design is human-scaled and its details sensuously rich: Crunching gravel pathways give way to smooth stone in patchwork shades of gray, and graceful parabolic arches are rhythmically interspersed with red oak trees and bright

orange and green cafe tables and chairs. Its long, narrow strips of program encourage interaction among people while providing intimate spaces to “claim” and in which to feel comfortable.

But Texas’ landmarks of contemporary urban design — including Klyde Warren Park — should be held to a higher standard. In a state with a history of intersecting cultures and automobile-oriented city-building, and in an age of digitalized life, physical public spaces represent a unique opportunity: to gather people of different backgrounds, encouraging tolerance, understanding, civic pride, and engagement; to speak of the cultural heritage and aspirations of a city and region; and to provide an authentic, rooted sense of place.

This is an opportunity, and a democratic necessity, against which Texas’ contemporary public spaces should be judged, beyond their successes at simply attracting droves of people. And there are some — like Houston’s Discovery Green, completed in 2008 and designed by Hargreaves Associates, with architecture by Page — that do rise to the occasion more successfully than others.

#### **The Data**

If a public space is advertised as a gathering place for a whole city, the data should back up that claim. A recent research project conducted by this writer at The University of Texas at Austin gathered sample data of visitor demographics at four of Texas’ most-lauded recent public spaces, including Klyde Warren Park and Discovery Green. Visual counts of visitors were taken at various locations in each park, broadly categorized by race/ethnicity and age. These data (with sample sizes of 584 at Klyde Warren and 509



at Discovery Green) were then compared with census data for the county in which each is located (Dallas and Harris counties, respectively).

The results show that Discovery Green attracts a much more diverse group of visitors than does Klyde Warren, despite the similar racial and ethnic diversity of each county. In particular, the observed sample proportion of Latino visitors to Discovery Green (44 percent) is more than twice that at Klyde Warren (19 percent). Both Dallas and Harris counties' census proportions for Latino residents are around 40 percent. Conversely, the observed sample proportion of white visitors to Klyde Warren (50 percent) is about 1.5 times that of Discovery Green's 34 percent, a much closer figure to the 31 percent of both counties' populations estimated to be white.

What's going on?

I argue there's something more than just pure coincidence at work here. For Discovery Green to achieve better success than Klyde Warren Park at attracting a more diverse cross-section of visitors — and, in doing so, to create a more democratic public space, a real gathering place for the whole metropolis, engendering more cross-cultural understanding and empathy — specific strategies have been employed.

### Which Side's Story?

Starting on the largest scale, the location of public spaces can be carefully chosen to ensure that certain populations are not disproportionately excluded by virtue of more difficult access. Because minority and lower-income citizens often rely more heavily on public transportation, proximity to bus and rail lines is critical. But, more than merely being served by transit, a venue's placement can acknowledge that the space is dedicated to generally underserved communities. Stating that "Downtown is for everyone" does not do the trick.

Discovery Green is located on the eastern edge of Houston's downtown, a block away from the first downtown stop on the Green and Purple light-rail lines, which connect to the minority communities on the east side of Houston. Klyde Warren Park is also located on the edge of its city's downtown, but it instead bridges the culturally elite Arts District and the chic Uptown neighborhood. Its placement on the north makes it appear to be the domain of the wealthy white communities of North Dallas, and this translates into a less diverse, whiter visitor population.

Dallas' Downtown Parks Plan calls for new parks throughout the urban core, with several located near the lower-income and minority neighborhoods to the south and east. The high pedestrian volume in Uptown and the visitors drawn to the Arts District also contribute to the active success of Klyde Warren. But the creation of the first new landmark public space in that location sends a different message about the priorities of the city than does Discovery Green.

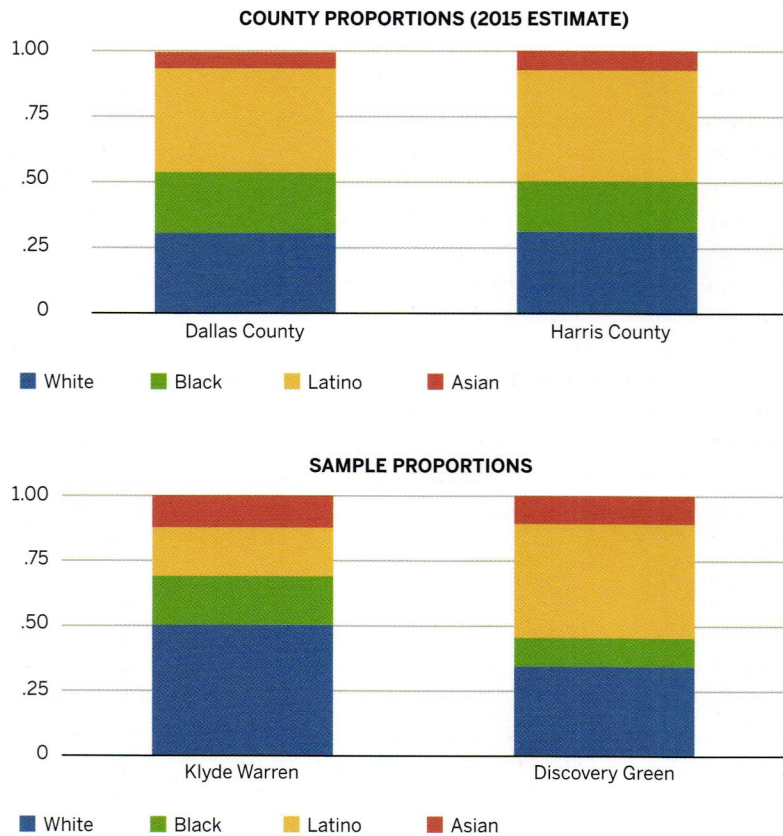
### Living Rooms

Discovery Green and Klyde Warren Park are both effective at presenting a legible story through the division of space: a story of different component parts interacting in a harmonious way. Like many contemporary public spaces, Discovery Green and Klyde Warren feature a clear network of texturally distinguished paths that allow ease of circulation, enclose program cells, and direct visitors from entrances to important nodes. I argue diverse visitors can project themselves onto this experienced spatial harmony, and so feel more comfortable being around people who are different from them.

Paths are usually stone or wood, while program cells include plantings, grass, rubber, gravel, or water features. Discovery Green has an advantage, in that its larger size (12 acres vs. Klyde Warren's 5) allows for more and

**Facing** *The Explo '72* festival on the future site of Klyde Warren Park was a celebration of community in an organically-claimed public space.

**Right** A comparison of the counties' census proportions to observed sample proportions shows Discovery Green's greater success at attracting more demographically representative visitors.



**Right** *Discovery Green's simpler, humbler design details create a more welcoming atmosphere than Klyde Warren's polished, glitzy finishes.*

**Below** *The legible structure of paths and program cells at Discovery Green creates a harmonious spatial story onto which visitors can project themselves.*



larger spaces — though not too large, and always contained within the clear structure of program cells — that various types of people can claim and make their own.

A certain amount of balanced asymmetry — a trend in contemporary urban design — can also create a sense of informality and comfort crucial to attracting diverse visitors. When more intense programming — playgrounds, food, water features — is concentrated in a section of the space, as in Discovery Green's northwest corner, a lively hub of activity is created, and the remaining areas of the space are then opened up for nonprescribed uses: picnicking, portrait-taking, ball-playing, and so on. The tension between the two engenders interest and fluidity; it also allows various demographic groups (for example, young families as well as elderly couples) to claim areas of the park with enough room to avoid feeling encroached upon.

Finally, thoughtful design can ensure that outside nuisances do not intrude. The perimeter of trees surrounding Discovery Green and most of Klyde Warren do this well, creating a human-scaled respite from surrounding automobile-oriented urbanism. On the other hand, at Klyde Warren's southwest and northeast ends, the noise and visual banality of the highway and bordering streets are overwhelming. And the park's design in these locations does not create enough of a separation to allow visitors to feel quite comfortable. This gives rise to what urban activist Jane Jacobs called unattractive "border vacuums." Especially in Klyde Warren, where space is at a premium, this is a missed opportunity to allow visitors maximum space in which to feel comfortable among their diverse fellow citizens.

#### **Ennobling or Conforming?**

Comfort extends to the general aesthetic of a space as engendered by its design characteristics: Is the space attempting to impose a certain class identity on visitors? At Klyde Warren Park, I find that this is the case. The design of Klyde Warren is upscale with refined details — the shimmering metal, all-glass curtain walls; the Parisian-style tables and chairs. It could be argued that these are an expression of Frederick Law Olmsted's theory that public spaces can ennoble all classes of people by giving them open access to a beautiful place. But this idea of ennobling design assumes that there is a particular cultural mold synonymous with "nobility" — a mold that, in the U.S., has been white Anglo-American since the country's inception. As a result, Klyde Warren's glitz is an articulation of wealthy white culture that is pleasurable for some who enjoy a certain level of financial comfort, and yet it creates a psychological barrier to entry for those who do not. The park's general aura of contemporary European-inspired urban design is one of delicacy and effervescence: As one Dallas resident remarked, it can feel like a "fake park" — not a real place for different types of real people, but a fantasy place for the well-off.

Discovery Green is much more successful in creating a warm, down-to-earth, democratic atmosphere. Its materials are plain and tactile: primarily unpolished wood, stone, and glass. It's a kind of philosophical descendant of the modernist ideals of pragmatic design for all, minus the placelessness and lack of human scale that accompany many of the movement's built works. Here, the designs of features — from sidewalks to benches to buildings — are basic and solid, not flamboyant. The outdoor furniture is less overtly elegant than that at Klyde Warren Park, eschewing colorful Parisian café tables and chairs in favor of simpler, black metal ones. These choices reflect a welcoming, timeless quality. Even the high-end restaurant does not attempt to outshine the other features of the park: Its simple

architecture is fully harmonious with the other buildings. The emphasis on equity here is palpable.

Choices regarding art on display can also play a significant role in representing the diversity of cultures in the city and region, rather than showcasing one particular culture. Discovery Green is most successful in this, featuring a range of sculptures of varied style and cultural meaning. When such diverse artistic representations are absent — as in Klyde Warren Park, which lacks any prominent public art — many perspectives are excluded from view, and the rich and complex tapestry of Texas history is denied a full expression.

Landscape can also foster a sense of equitable, unique place. Klyde Warren Park features predominately native plants, including prairie grasses and Texas sage, but these do not feel like fully integrated elements of the overall design. In contrast, Discovery Green creates a range of developed micro-ecologies: The amphibious lake area, for instance, shaded by overhanging Montezuma cypress trees and framed by simple boardwalks, feels as though it belongs to the coastal ecology of southeast Texas; and the grove of loblolly pines evokes nearby East Texas. The humble, rooted, diverse landscape, art, and architectural details synthesize at Discovery Green to create a space that pays homage to the place and its past while welcoming many democratically forged futures.

#### **Follow the Money**

Both Discovery Green and Klyde Warren Park effectively inject commercial activity to bring life to the space, a touchstone of contemporary public space design: Each has both indoor and outdoor dining space and opportunities to purchase drinks and snacks. They differ, however, in the degree to which these options are of sufficiently varied price points (and varied in their branding's target audiences). This, I argue, is key to attracting visitors at various socioeconomic levels. Klyde Warren Park's most important design focal point is the high-end restaurant, Savor, a gesture that emphasizes the park's deference to the well-off. Klyde Warren also includes a row of food trucks and a burger kiosk, but their sleek branding and higher prices appear mostly aimed at middle-class, foodie visitors.

Discovery Green has fewer food options, but they are of a wider variety. The Grove Restaurant is high-end and plays host to formal events, while the Lake House is a much more modest café, with inexpensive food and unstuffy branding. The Lake House is significantly more permeable in its design, with an outdoor terrace at grade with the adjacent lawn and promenade and a deck overlooking Kinder Lake to the north. The Grove, on the other hand, is vertically removed and surrounded by trees, giving it a treehouse quality. In contrast to Savor restaurant at Klyde Warren, the Grove is not given design prominence in the park, and it does not encroach on the Lake House's expansive turf.

Discovery Green also allows snow cone and ice cream trucks to park in and pull up around it. Neither is remotely high-end. A Latino ice cream man said that the presence of "good people, family people" and a better sense of security had kept him doing business there for more than a year. In other interviews, visitors to Discovery Green indicated that the presence of food trucks would make those spaces more attractive to them, however, and they are an easily implemented opportunity to expand the range of food options. Management should ensure that food trucks' prices and branding are varied: \$1.50 slices of pizza and \$12 Asian-Mexican fusion bowls should coexist.

Ownership paradigms are another financial matter that can support or hinder democracy in public space. The model of public-private partnership

*Klyde Warren Park's location bridges the upscale Arts District and the chic Uptown neighborhood, which makes it feel deferential to the wealthy white neighborhoods of North Dallas.*



that characterizes both Discovery Green and Klyde Warren Park — and many contemporary urban parks and districts, such as the Central Park Conservancy in New York — benefits from having a focused organization that manages branding, programming, and operations. The two Texas parks are owned by their respective cities but operated by private nonprofit management entities: the Discovery Green Conservancy and the Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation.

On the other hand, the capacity for a public space to be democratic diminishes with increasing private control. Both Discovery Green and Klyde Warren Park have posted rules that include certain prohibited activities: bringing glass containers, conducting commercial activity without a permit, or carrying weapons, to name a few. The amount of privatization should be limited, and the range of activities allowed to take place should be maximized, within reason. Otherwise, constriction of use begins to interfere with the ability for a truly public life to play out, with all its concomitant grit and beauty.

#### **Diversity Versus Harmony**

Diversity is at the core of Jane Jacobs' urbanism theory: "We need all kinds of diversity, intricately mingled in mutual support." The aim of planning, she writes, should be to cultivate "congenial places for this great range of unofficial plans, ideas, and opportunities to flourish." Diversity yields diversity, in Texas cities just like anywhere else. We should expect our public spaces to include diverse, locally relevant program, texture, use, transportation access, and landscape, so that they can speak to and attract as many kinds of visitors as possible. These must be calibrated, of course: A lack of balance among uses for old and young, rich and poor, and a lack of careful placement — to encourage both

turf-claiming by various groups as well as interaction among them in neutral zones — may render a space less successful.

This also presents us with questions: How much diversity can a place handle? How much continuity do we need? Discovery Green is a good example of a public space in which uses are highly diverse, and the experience of the park does not suffer from that mixture but is, rather, enhanced by it. The number of responses by interviewed visitors at Discovery Green saying diversity was an element attracting them there — as well as the relative ease that this researcher experienced in approaching visitors — are significant factors.

This research, then, points to a need to foster as much diversity as possible, within a legible framework. Discovery Green is, again, a paradigm, in terms of both harmonious spatial structure and design character. The Carpenter Plaza redesign in Dallas has an opportunity to overcome some of the oversights of Klyde Warren Park in this sphere, but only if a concerted effort is made to do so. The strength of Texas' state identity was born not out of a single culture or economy but out of the profusion of overlapping cultures and economies butting heads at this peculiar junction in the world. To avoid sacrificing that spirit and history, and to ensure a thriving democratic future, public spaces and their designers must embrace this reality with humility and resolve.

*Note: This article has been adapted from the author's urban studies and Plan II Honors undergraduate thesis, "Gathering Texas: Evaluating the Socio-Cultural Performance of Urban Public Spaces in the Lone Star State," completed at The University of Texas at Austin in 2017.*

Gabe Colombo is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin.



*The design details at Klyde Warren Park are aesthetically beautiful and well-structured to provide intimate spaces, but can make the park feel “fake,” as one Dallas resident remarked.*



*Revival of the streetcar,  
introduction of bike lanes,  
and reclamation of upper  
stories revitalize Convent  
Avenue in downtown  
Laredo.*

## Walk There

ACCORDING TO SOME VIEWS, TYLER AND LAREDO REPRESENT VERY DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF TEXAS — THE FORMER, AN EAST TEXAS HUB WITH STRONG ANTI-GOVERNMENT LEANINGS; THE LATTER, A BUSTLING BORDER TOWN AND MAJOR INLAND PORT. BOTH CITIES, HOWEVER, ARE LOOKING AT NEW MASTER PLANS, DEVELOPED BY ARCHITECTS WITH GRASSROOTS SUPPORT, THAT AIM TO REINVENT THESE CITIES ON NEW URBANIST PRINCIPLES.

by Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA

NORTON  
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La Bonita

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SPECIAL

EL PERO  
No 756



**T**he demand for mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods has steadily increased in recent years as millennials and empty nesters, in particular, have shown a renewed interest in less automobile-dependent lifestyles. As cost of living in such larger Texas cities as Austin, Dallas, and Houston continues to rise, smaller Texas cities and towns are experiencing a trickle-down effect — an influx of new residents looking for affordable urban living with many of the same amenities and advantages offered by larger metropolises. Two of these cities, Tyler and Laredo, have recently experienced renewed planning efforts, many of them organized at the grassroots level and based upon principles of New Urbanism; yet the expression of each is uniquely reflective of its particular culture and place.

The Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) originated in the early 1990s as a response to the sprawling, automobile-oriented development that dominated American cities following WWII. The preamble to its charter begins: “The Congress for the New Urbanism views disinvestment in central cities, the spread of placeless sprawl, increasing separation by race

*Now, citizen-architects in Tyler and Laredo are helping to cast a new vision for their cities and propose development strategies based on timeless principles of human-scaled urban design.*

and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness, and the erosion of society’s built heritage as one interrelated community-building challenge.”

New Urbanism emerged predominantly from three urban design concepts — urban infill that supports walkable streets, traditional neighborhood development (THD), and transit-oriented development (TOD) — and it addresses multiple scales of development — from street, to block, to neighborhood, to region. Though initiated by architects, the CNU has evolved into a multidisciplinary organization comprising builders, government officials, nonprofit leaders, and concerned citizens, among others. Now, citizen-architects in Tyler and Laredo are helping to cast a new vision for their cities and propose development strategies based on timeless principles of human-scaled urban design.

#### **Tyler**

About 100 miles southeast of Dallas, well behind the “Pine Curtain,” Tyler has undergone a recent population surge, not only due to spillover from the Dallas metropolitan area, but because it has become the rural hub for the entire East Texas region at large. Unfortunately, the city has developed in an unsustainable linear growth pattern to the south for 75 years, with demands on infrastructure increasing as the city’s boundaries are stretched. This development pattern has resulted in an inequitable distribution of Tyler’s public resources and disinvestment in the north quadrant of the city.

Nearly a decade ago, the City of Tyler developed a comprehensive plan known as Tyler 21, which cast a vision for its development into 2030. However, with a fiscally conservative government, little progress has been realized. In response, local firm Fitzpatrick Architects initiated a grassroots planning effort to leverage the city’s existing radial organiza-





*A proposed courthouse plaza for Tyler serves as a new community destination and transit stop, having the potential to connect the entire eastern quadrant of the city.*



tion, promoting a proportionate growth pattern, densification, and a reset of the historic downtown. “We became aware as a firm that our city can have the greatest plan in the world, but without mutual consensus, support, and excitement at the leadership level, little happens,” says Brandy Ziegler, AIA, partner at Fitzpatrick Architects. “We began this grassroots effort to support and give new energy to the groundwork already laid, by doing what we do best: visualizing.” The firm has focused efforts primarily on what they term catalyst projects — projects that would best leverage financial resources to make the greatest impact on the city and create an impetus for change.

One such project reinvigorates the historic downtown core, which runs along Broadway Avenue, Tyler’s primary north-south corridor. Many of the buildings in the area are vacant and boarded up. The plan proposes a street improvement project, reducing the current four-lane street to one lane, widening the sidewalks, and introducing bike lanes, free short-term parking, and landscaping to promote walkability and other alternative modes of transportation. An estimated \$3.5 million investment could change the entire personality of the downtown.

The plan also looks at infill projects, preserving the historic urban fabric and introducing mixed-use projects to lend vitality to the area. “We just recently finished a project called The Foundry. It was one of the first

pioneer projects we completed downtown. It’s a coffee shop on the [ground floor] and a church [above]. It’s working,” Ziegler says.

The courthouse now occupies the central square, which is currently bisected by Broadway Avenue. Historically, it had operated as a single, unified plaza, but in 1955 — as many Tyler residents now lament — the historic courthouse was razed to build what was considered a “modern” courthouse, and the plaza split in two. Reunifying the plaza is one of the most significant moves of the newly proposed plan. “We thought, if we’re going to dream, let’s dream big. We thought this would be the most contentious piece of the presentation, but it’s actually one of the most exciting pieces people respond to,” Ziegler says.

Within the plan, the plaza is reunified, Broadway Avenue closed, and traffic redirected around the perimeter. The western edge of the plaza is redeveloped with new features, such as a civic restroom pavilion, restaurants, food trucks, and a stylized play structure in the form of a rose, inspired by Tyler’s moniker, “Rose Capital of the World.” A new courthouse — double the size of the current one — is introduced on adjacent county-owned land. The plan also repurposes two underutilized existing rail lines for a trolley or other type of mass transit.

“It’s a stereotyped area,” Ziegler says. “‘Behind the Pine Curtain’ is probably not a positive term. But there’s so much un-tapped potential here.”



*Tyler’s gateway to the city center along Broadway Avenue is primed for redevelopment. Infill projects create an urban edge, complementing historically significant buildings and increasing density.*

In addition to improving quality of life, the plan makes a lot of financial sense. Property located along an open plaza such as this can expect its value to rise 300 to 400 percent, while retail sales can double. “A plaza like this actually becomes an anchor tenant,” Ziegler says. “When you talk to developers, their first thought is, ‘What is our anchor tenant going to be?’ The plaza becomes that and becomes the draw to downtown that gets people to linger. It really activates the whole space.”

At this writing, the plan has been presented to nearly 300 individuals in the public and private sectors, including the city manager, city planner, parks board director, and business owners. Fitzpatrick Architects also worked directly with the City of Tyler on an application for the BUILD Grant. Organized as an 80-20 match program — with 80 percent of funds supplied through the grant and 20 percent by the city — the grant could potentially provide an additional \$6-\$7 million for capital improvements.

As Ziegler excitedly explains, “There’s been a huge response. We’ve not had a negative word. Everybody that we’ve shown it to has gotten more and more excited. We’ll adjust some things as we get feedback in real time, keep it live. Not that this is the only concept that would work, but with the conversation, [we want to] make people aware that this would be a huge benefit to our community.”

## Laredo

Located along the U.S.-Mexico border on the banks of the Rio Grande, Laredo is the United States’ largest inland port and its third largest port, overall, with nearly \$200 billion in trade passing through the city annually. In September 2017, the city adopted Viva Laredo, a 500-page comprehensive plan composed of 12 chapters addressing land use patterns, mobility, downtown and inner-city revitalization, historic preservation, housing, sustainability, health, public parks, economic development, education, arts, and culture. However, because of Laredo’s border proximity to Nuevo Laredo — they can be viewed as one city with an international boundary and a language barrier in between — Viva Laredo expands beyond typical New Urbanism principles to include a chapter on global initiatives, which outlines strategies for increasing connectivity and coordinating cultural, economic, and educational opportunities with its Mexican sister city.

Laredo’s previous comprehensive plan had lapsed 25 years prior. As a result, the city government brought on Frank Hickey Peña — a joint venture formed by two local architecture firms based in Laredo — to devise an update. “There were a lot of things that happened that made it possible for the kind of comprehensive plan that happened in Laredo, a confluence of



*The current state of Tyler’s city center, showing a “modern” courthouse and Broadway Avenue bisecting the plaza. The proposed design envisions a reunified plaza and new courthouse in a historic style, with new public amenities drawing the community back to the city center and increasing property values.*

*An existing regionally scaled shopping destination along Del Mar Boulevard in Laredo is transformed into a mixed-use urban neighborhood with pedestrian- and bike-friendly streets.*



forces,” says Viviana Frank, FAIA, founding principal of Frank Architects. “The city was really starting to feel that they were in need of some vision, of some plan, and it permeated not only the administrators, but the citizens themselves. They had no clue what process we were going to go through. It was a really exciting 18 months in the city, for many of the citizens and representatives, [because they realized] how empowering it is to build consensus and to actually plan the city.”

In addition to Frank Hickey Peña, the Miami-based town planning firm Dover, Kohl & Partners was added to the team, along with Angelou Economics and nine other consultants. “That was what brought the strong influence of New Urbanism into the mix, here — partly because we were aiming for the kind of planning that puts people first, and that’s what Dover Kohl’s strength is,” says Mario Peña, AIA, principal at Hickey Peña Architects.

“We had just had success in El Paso with a comprehensive plan, and Laredo was another border community,” says Jason King, principal at Dover, Kohl & Partners. “It feels like the national media describes the

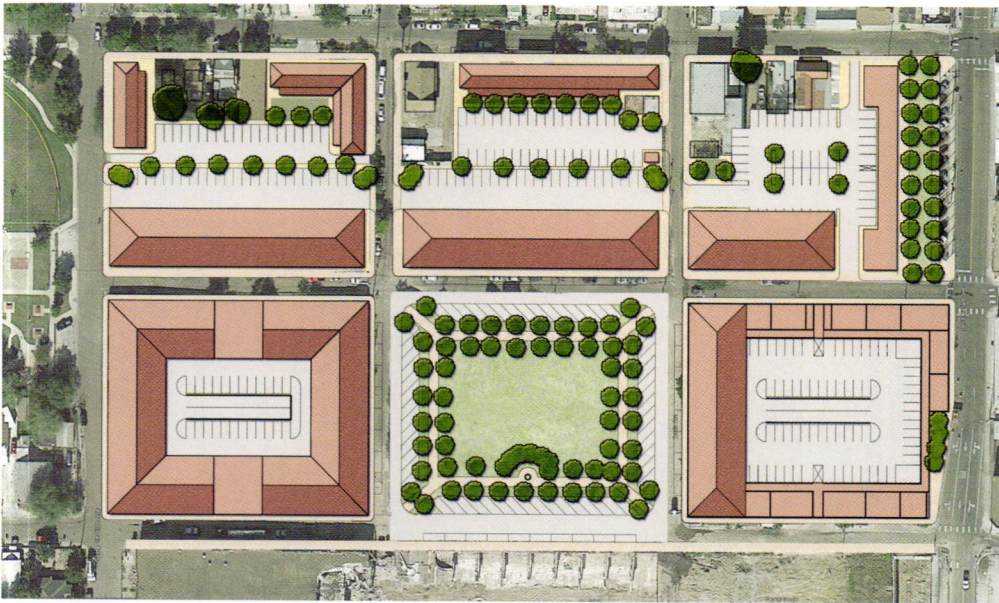
border one way, but we see it in a different way. We see it as a young, growing, energetic place in our country. Along the southern border, there tend to be diamonds in the rough, underdog cities where people really want to be. Once you capitalize on what they have to offer, border cities really are what America is.”

The plan garnered support from residents, public officials, and city staff alike, through extensive participatory planning exercises and such public engagement efforts as an officially recognized New Urbanism Film Festival, interactive focus groups, and a 10-day charrette, as well as a Viva Laredo website that tallied over 35,000 visitors along with hundreds of electronic residential and business surveys completed.

“What we’re doing is, we’re creating a long-range plan,” King says. “What’s nice about Laredo is they have a lot of new arrivals and recent immigrants, and they understand progress through generations. It might not happen in your life, but, if you work toward it, it might happen in your grandchild’s life. It’s a receptive audience.”



*The plan calls for a phased redevelopment of Laredo's city blocks, here depicted with a satellite image of existing conditions and an overlay of proposed changes.*



The excitement generated by Viva Laredo has resulted in the mobilization of grassroots citizen-based advocacy groups focused on a variety of issues, like urban agriculture, sustainable food systems, and biking — even prior to the plan's adoption. "This comp plan empowered the community, where they really felt like they had a say," says Frank Rotnofsky, AIA, founding principal of Frank Architects. "You keep hearing more and more, with anything that's being planned, to make sure it works with the comp plan. It's part of the vocabulary, now. The city council people, themselves, now have started and are pushing master plans in their own neighborhoods. That would not have happened without the comprehensive plan."

In the public realm, the City of Laredo has made numerous strides in establishing the framework needed to implement many of the plan's initiatives: the creation of the Arts & Culture Commission; the Ride El Metro public advocacy group; a new bike/pedestrian coordinator position within the city's Traffic Department; adoption of Laredo's first open data policy;

an urban agriculture ordinance; funding for bike infrastructure; and an overhaul of Laredo's Land Development Code — to name just a handful.

As the open data policy reflects, Laredo is targeting planning efforts based not only on desire but on data. A participant in Bloomberg Philanthropies' What Works Cities program, Laredo has access to technical support and expertise on how to best leverage data to improve services and fund "what works." This approach aligns with the philosophy behind much of the public outreach efforts involved in the creation of Viva Laredo, which Peña explains were as much an educational exercise as they were a planning exercise — not only envisioning a better city but learning what a better city should look like. King concludes: "I think one of the lessons I learned in Laredo is that you can go into a place without a solid commitment to urban planning, and working with the community and its stakeholders, you can help build it."

Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA, works at Overland Partners in San Antonio.

UNFIRED EARTH BUILDING MATERIALS — RAMMED  
EARTH, ADOBE, COMPRESSED EARTH BLOCK — ARE  
A PLENTIFUL, STRUCTURALLY ROBUST, AND NATURAL  
ALTERNATIVE TO MAINSTREAM CONSTRUCTION  
SYSTEMS. UP TO NOW, THEY HAVE BEEN MORE  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE DESERT WEST, WHERE ADOBE  
HAS BEEN USED FOR CENTURIES, THAN WITH CENTRAL  
OR EAST TEXAS. THAT COULD CHANGE.

# The Ground Up





by Jen Wong

*Rammed earth is a new addition to Michael Hsu Office of Architecture's extensive material palette, used for the first time in this community amenity center. Oilfield pipe elevates the dogtrot entry. Illumination is provided by custom fixtures from Warbach Lighting.*

*The rammed earth wall at Wolf Ranch is monochromatic, with minimal variation between lifts. Deep 8-ft overhangs control solar exposure throughout the year.*



**W**hat would compel Hillwood Homes, a Dallas-based developer of tract houses, to build an approximately 125-ft-long dirt wall at roughly twice the cost of stone? For starters, run your palm along the facade of The Den at Wolf Ranch, taking in its anachronistic heft and surprisingly soft surface. There is no other building material quite like rammed earth — never again call it dirt — which transforms soil into stone through sheer will.

Completed earlier this year by Michael Hsu Office of Architecture, the 3,100-sf building is an unexpected find in a 755-acre master-planned development located 30 miles north of Austin. The 18-in-wide, 8-ft-high rammed-earth wall marches along the front elevation in eight segments punctuated by glass openings, a steel barn door, and an airy dogtrot entry that divides the long building in two. This breezeway, which rises above a generous shed roof, leads to the project's Janus face: an all-glass facade along the back that overlooks a lavish, 100-ft negative-edge pool, which in turn foregrounds a panoramic Hill Country vista. "The view is where it all started, really," says project architect Micah Land, AIA, recalling his first encounter with the site's edge and its 80-ft drop to the San Gabriel River below.

As is often the narrative with rammed earth, the architects were looking for a material with a strong connection to the land. What could be more immediate than the ground you stand on, made of rock dust millions of years in the making? Still, convincing the client to shell out double takes more

than making the case to build local. "It's an unknown material," said Land, describing initial skepticism surrounding the proposal to use rammed earth. "There's an inherent risk in something new." The architects were given a key assist from Overland Partners who, in 2012, completed El Monumento, a riverfront restaurant down the road that features a prominent rammed-earth wall. "It was really nice to have that reference for [the clients], that they could physically go and see. It was a big influence for them."

With the client on board, the architects worked with De La Tierra's Ron Evans ("the godfather of rammed earth in Texas," according to Land) to find the optimal raw material. "I remember [Ron] coming in to the office one day, and he brought in 30 little jars of dirt, in all different colors, from all over greater Austin. I got a big white poster board, and we just poured them onto it, as if they were little samples or specimens, and labeled each formula." The design team envisioned a monolithic wall, absent of the graphic striations or saturated colors often designed into rammed earth. A mix of soils from nearby quarries in Florence and Buda was selected both for its site-matched color and its workable composition. Portland cement in a mixture of white and grey was used as a stabilizer.

The result is handsome. From afar, the wall reads as a warmer version of board-formed concrete. Up close, the lifts — striations created from the tamping construction process — increase in legibility, and the material reveals its complex texture: aggregates exposed here, and polished over there. Chamfers built into the edges and corners of each wall segment have





**Left** *Down the road, a popular riverside restaurant in Georgetown by Overland Partners is a local precedent that paved the way for the city's second rammed earth building.*

**Below** *A residential conversion of an existing rammed earth barn with 2-ft thick walls, by Furman + Keil Architects.*



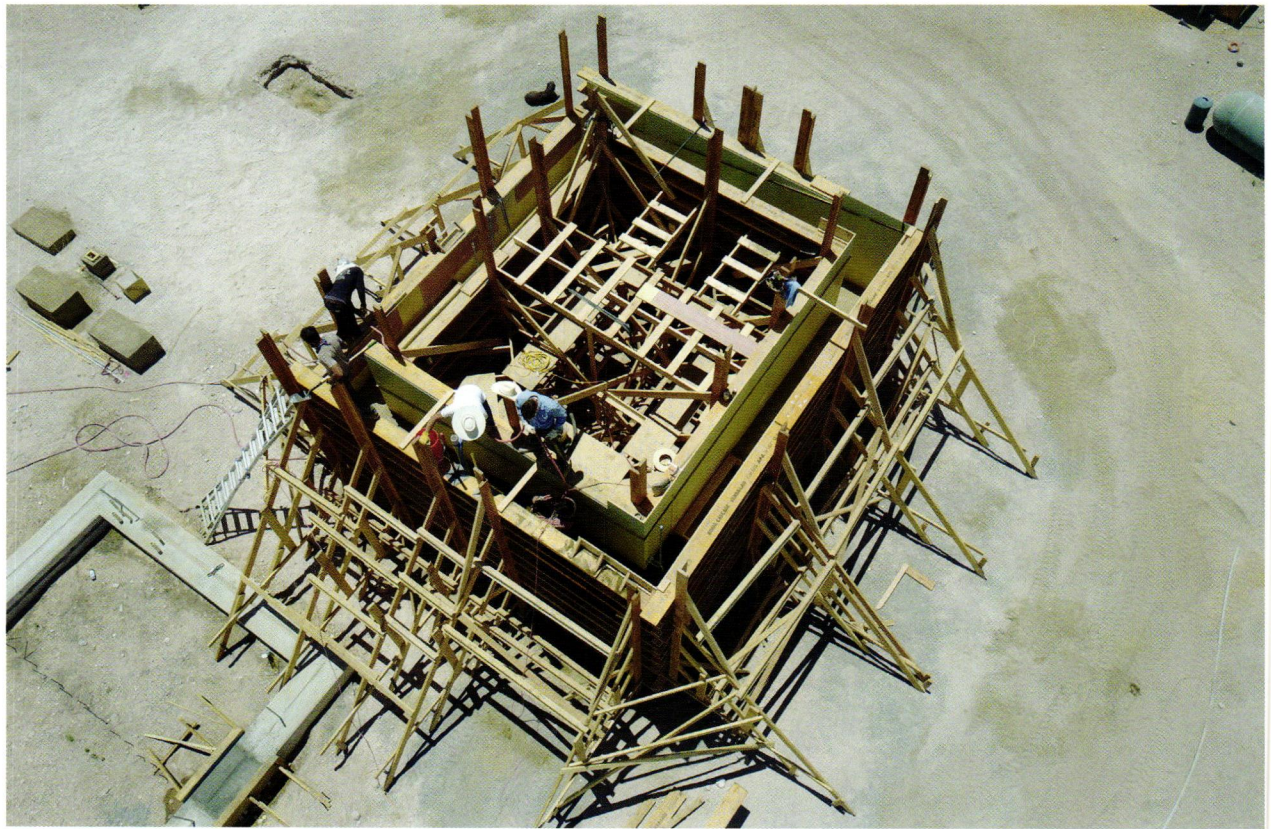
a satisfying crispness. In the high heat of summer, the walls are velvety smooth and cool to the touch, like river stone. In the winter, bathed by the low sun, they emanate warmth.

The earthen walls, expected to mature with use, inspired other material choices key to the project: Corten steel cladding and columns that will develop a patina in the humidity, and vertical grain Douglas-fir. “Every conversation about the building was about the connection of the land to the building, and about how they both grow together,” said Land. “Over time, [the wall] will grow; it’ll age with the site and the landscape. Had the client not got on board with that, conceptually and philosophically, many things wouldn’t have ever happened.”

Four hundred miles to the west, in Marfa, Lake|Flato’s second rammed-earth project is under construction. The first, located in Henderson, Nevada, was completed earlier this year. In contrast to The Den at Wolf Ranch, Perry Ranch goes all in: Each of the eight freestanding structures of the residence, clustered around a courtyard and linked by exterior pathways, is constructed of 24-in-thick rammed earth walls. The 5,500-sf project is being built by Pilgrim Building Company and Enabler, fresh off another rammed-earth project in Blanco designed by Jobe Corral, dubbed River Ranch. Once again, an existing precedent was important for overcoming the hurdle of an unfamiliar material. As Lake|Flato associate Jennifer Young, AIA, recalls, “We took our clients out to see the Blanco project, and they fell in love with it.”

**Right** *The reusable formwork system for one of eight rammed earth casitas in a Marfa residence by Lake|Flato, slated for completion in 2020.*

**Below** *Says Branson Fustes of Enabler: "As more and more rammed earth projects are being designed and built, the knowledge base, expertise and labor force become more established."*





*The Sundown Residence, by Mark Oberholzer, AIA, with Glass and Dangel, utilizes graphic rammed earth walls throughout. “Mockups had to be made to determine color, texture, proportions, and dimensions. The design process was iterative and almost more like a design-build process,” says Uli Dangel, AIA.*

For Lake|Flato, the performative qualities of rammed earth are as significant as its aesthetic impact. Rammed earth is ideal for desert climates, its thermal mass able to exploit large diurnal swings in temperature. “Even without a roof on the structures... you walk in and it’s at least 10 degrees cooler than it is outside,” Young says. Early on in the project, the design team worked closely with a thermal consultant to model the material’s performance and tweak overhangs. Comfort simulations seemed to indicate that a cooling system could be omitted, but in the end a lack of precedent led the team to take the safer route. The project uses a mix of radiant flooring and VRF HVAC, placed selectively in accordance with modeling outputs. Young hopes to conduct a post-occupancy study using e-monitors to examine systems usage, thermal comfort, and modeling accuracy. The hope is to use the data to improve performance and to support more passive design in future rammed earth projects. The project will be completed in 2020.

The Den at Wolf Ranch, El Monumento, Perry Ranch, and River Ranch mark four architects’ entries into a growing group of established Texas firms using rammed earth for the first time. This group includes Page, who completed the Torcasso Residence in Santa Fe, in 2014; Glass and Dangel with Mark Oberholzer, responsible for the Sundown Residence outside of Austin, in 2015; and Furman + Keil Architects, who converted an existing rammed earth barn into a residence in 2010.

While many architects are enamored of the material, they struggle to see it implemented on a larger scale. “It’s so beautiful,” Land says. “I’d love to see it all over: Take Austin white chalk stone and remove it from Central Texas and plug in rammed earth — I’d love that. But I don’t see people getting on board with a rammed-earth revolution. It’s a slow, laborious material to work with; it’s not efficient; it’s not speedy; it’s not as machined as a lot of materials today that are thought of as reliable and trustworthy. Perhaps that’s why it’s so beautiful.” These challenges — the high upfront cost, the labor-intensive work paired with a small workforce, scant resources for architects and their consultants, and plain old material taboo — are all realities to be tackled.

For now, one can find signs of stunning progress outside of Texas. As Ron Evans points out, “It’s possible to underestimate [rammed earth’s] versatility. We see a lot of well-grounded, massive, block-shaped volumes which obviously rammed earth excels at. But among the proven possibilities not being utilized are things like tapered compound curves, pre-tamped modules, hybrid or compound walls, and surprisingly thin sections.”

For real-life examples, look to the work of David Easton of Rammed Earth Works in California, who earlier this year delivered a 3-in-thick, 200-sf precast panel in cool blue hues, no pigment added, for Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. Equally impressive is a 40-ft-tall, 180-ft-long undulating wall currently underway for the artist Andy Goldsworthy, originally intended for fabrication with the use of self-driving rammers operated by remote control. Further afield, find inspiration in the Ricola Kräuterzentrum in Switzerland, completed in 2014 by Herzog & de Meuron. Under the guidance of Austrian rammed earth master Martin Rauch of Lehm Ton Erde, the architects clad the 35,000-sf building with over 600 precast, unstabilized rammed earth blocks.

Though perhaps most visible to architects today, rammed earth is just one of several approaches to building with unfired earth. In what is now Texas, earthen building first took the form of sun-dried adobe blocks. Thousands of years later, Larry Doll, AIA, a longstanding professor at the School of Architecture at The University of Texas at Austin until his

**Below** A CEB residence in Wimberley, designed by the homeowners, incurs just \$1.20 per day in cooling costs during the high heat of the summer.

**Right** Located in the historic heart of San Antonio, a residence by Nicolas Rivard includes a CEB volume protected by lime plaster and generous overhangs. San Antonio has emerged as a hub for earthen architecture in Central Texas: It is home to AECT, a longtime fabricator of CEB machines, and the Earthen Construction Initiative, an active advocacy group.



passing earlier this year, used modern adobe blocks to build a desert retreat in Marfa for himself and his wife, Laura. Stabilizing the blocks with 11 percent Portland cement omitted the need for a waterproof render, allowing for impactful expression of the material on both the interior and exterior of the building. The adobe units, padded by mortar joints half their height, create a strikingly graphic pattern throughout. At each window and entry, this motif extrudes through, revealing the impressive depth of each block.

As rammed earth has evolved to meet modern demands, so too have earth masonry units. Compressed earth blocks (CEBs), roughly the size of adobes, have the uniformity of a standardized industrial material. If Evans is the godfather of rammed earth in Texas, then Jim Hallock surely holds that honor in CEBs. Hallock, who started his building career as a carpenter, changed his allegiance to CEBs the first time he laid eyes on one in the early 1990s. He had been searching for a material solution for his wife, Nora, who has a high chemical sensitivity. “I saw this machine popping out 300 adobes an hour, and I was a five-second sell,” Hallock says. “I wanted to do something that would not only help Nora but that might have an impact on the natural building movement.”

Hallock recognized in CEBs the potential to scale up. “This isn’t some goofy hippy shit from the ’60s. This is a structurally sound, plentiful, local building material that’s fireproof, bug-proof, soundproof, bulletproof, and breathable.” He points to the work of ¡Échale! A Tu Casa in Mexico, a social enterprise which has built over 30,000 CEB

homes since 1997 and is midway through the development of 50 showcase residences designed by the likes of Alberto Kalach and Pritzker Prize-winner Rafael Aranda.

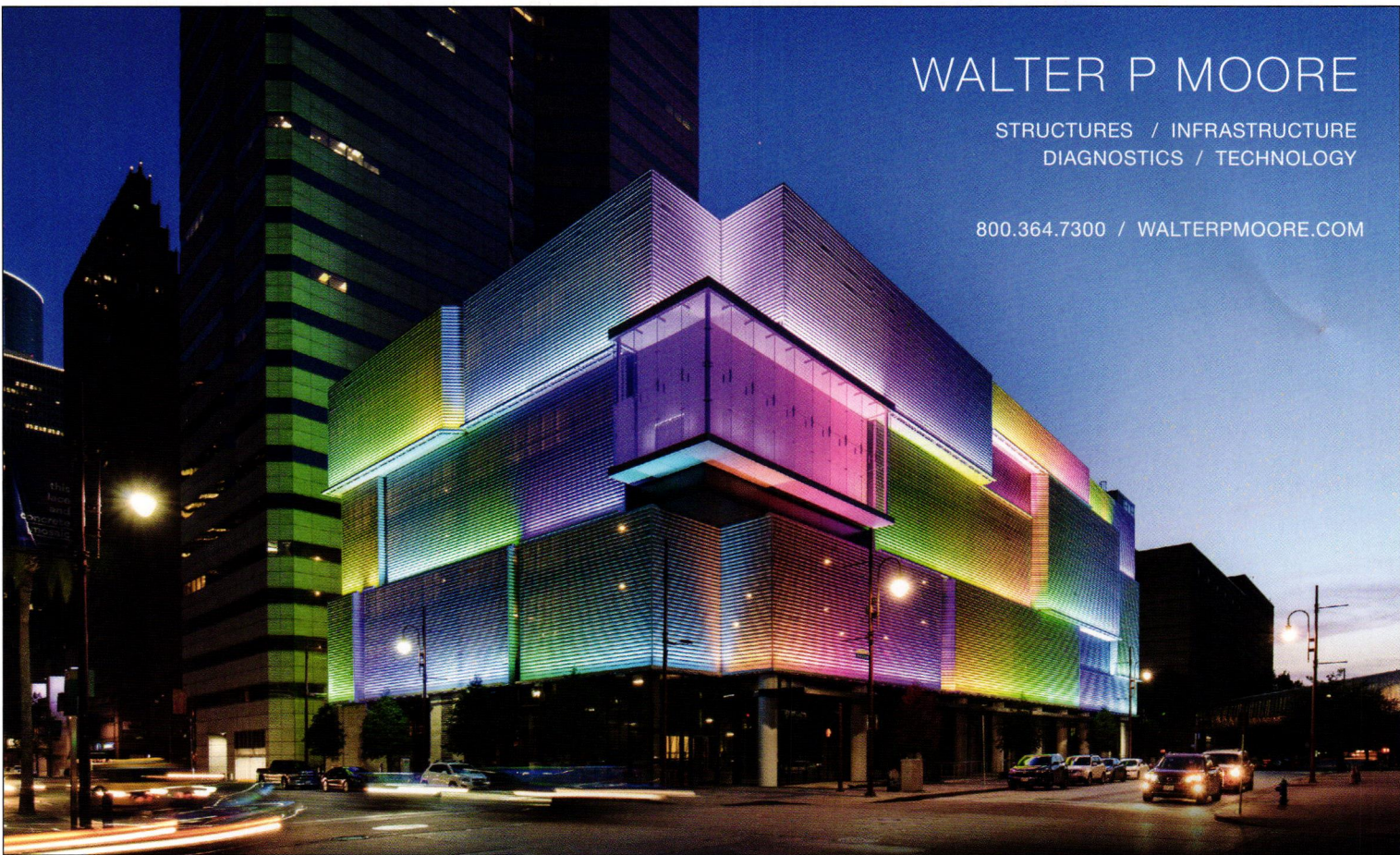
Though there isn’t yet a high-profile CEB building in Texas, there are solid examples realized by individuals with an interest in building performance, the rational consumption of natural resources and energy, occupant well-being, and scaling up. Outside Austin, two siblings, the Cavanaughs, have each built a CEB house: Becky, with the help of architect Gayle Borst; and Charles, of his own design. Hallock built the 10-ft-tall walls on the latter Cavanaugh house, and also collaborated on a multi-unit development in San Antonio, 3050 Eisenhauer. Also in San Antonio is a single-family residence designed by Nicolas Rivard, who completed the project while earning an accredited degree in architecture. The buildings deploy a range of architectural strategies for dealing with the central Texas climate: long overhangs; white lime plaster; reflective, insulated roofs; and careful site orientation.

Whatever the method — rammed earth, adobe, or CEB — unfired earth is a material that holds undeniable potential. But in order for it to enter the mainstream, a multi-front effort from architects, engineers, builders, policy-makers, clients, and manufacturers will be necessary. As we’ve seen, built precedents are critical for the propagation of future projects. It’s hard to be first. Who will lead the way?

Jen Wong is director of the Materials Lab at The University of Texas at Austin.



*Larry Doll, AIA, formed a close partnership with the adobe builders of his Marfa residence. Laura Doll recalls, "One day during construction, the building crew told Larry that the house would last for hundreds of years because of the strength of the adobe material. Whether that's true or not, it reflected a pride and commitment to quality construction that Larry deeply appreciated."*



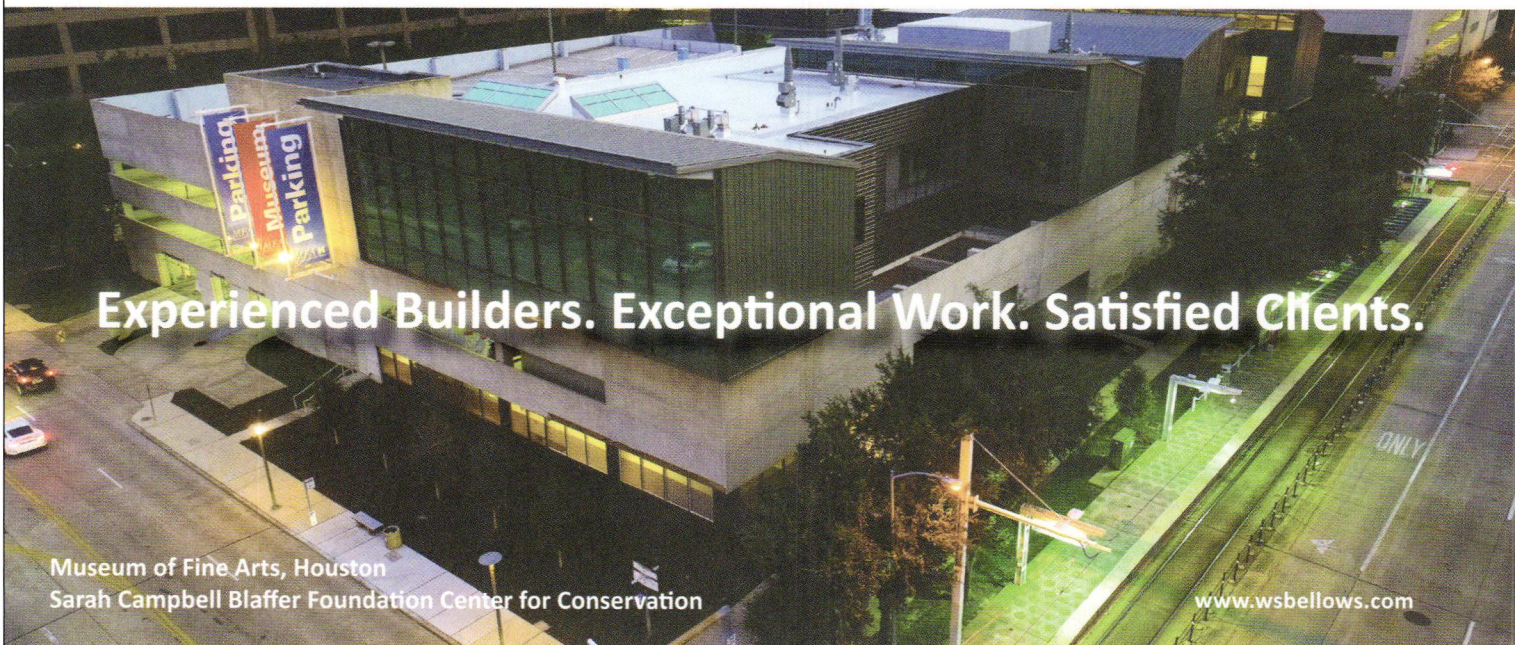
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*Despite their strict functional requirements, parking garages have given rise to a surprising number of typological inventions. There are continuous ramp ones, split-level ones, flat ones with an external spiral, corkscrew ones. The parking garage is a straitjacket that allows multiple solutions, one that inspires creative freedom precisely because there is none.*

— Reinier de Graaf, “Four Walls and a Roof”

It has been said many times that Houston is “overparked.” By some counts, the city has 30 parking spaces per resident. And, while Houston is famous for its lack of zoning, the local building code does mandate minimum parking requirements for new development, a policy that has significantly influenced the built environment. Rather than a city shaped in response to human proportions and bipedal limitations, Houston’s form has been designed and constructed to accommodate cars. The same can be said of most cities in Texas — and, indeed, of most urban development after World War II (though it must be noted that impromptu favelas and slums, pedestrian zones by virtue of their residents’ poverty, now make up the globe’s fastest-growing urban typology).

The prevalence of parking in Houston has made it impossible for architects and their clients to ignore it or relegate it to an engineering exercise. If people have been turned into hermit crabs that must find a place to park their carapace in order to run their daily errands, then it would be awfully nice if that place offered more than just storage. The following essay surveys 10 Houston parking facilities, new and old, that give their users and their neighbors a little something extra.

# Ten Houston Parking Facilities

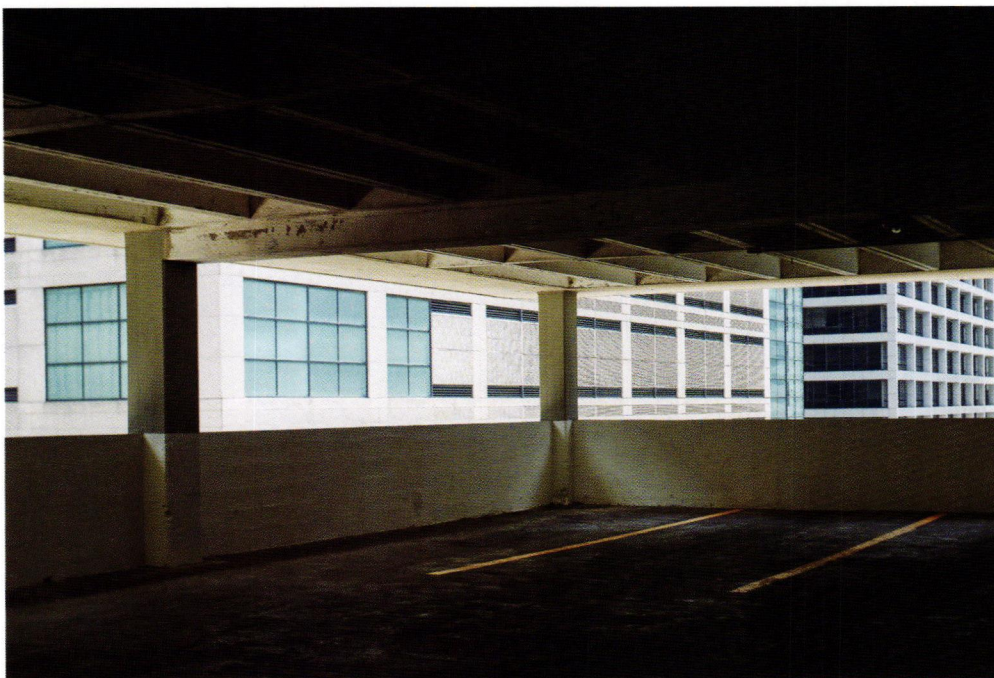
Text by Aaron Seward

Photography by Leonid Furmansky

## Remnants

### Foley's Garage

Parking is at such a premium in Houston that garages often outlast the buildings they were erected to serve. This one was designed and built in tandem with Foley's block-square department store just across Travis Street. Completed in 1947 and designed by the Houston architect Kenneth Franzheim, the complex was equipped with a pneumatic tube so that, as customers bought items from the store's various departments, they would not need to carry their purchases around with them. Instead, the packages would be shot from the location of the sales transaction to the parking exit, and an attendant would load them into the customers' cars as they departed. Foley's was the first department store in Houston to build its own parking garage. The current owners, who tore down Foley's, did a cheap repainting of the face brick, making the garage look much drabber than was originally the case.







### The Shamrock Hotel Garage

Another vestigial remain, this garage was designed and built in 1949 in conjunction with Texas wildcatter Glen McCarthy's 1,100-room Shamrock Hotel, which, somewhat counterintuitively for the time, was built three miles southwest of downtown. Both the hotel and the garage were designed by Fort Worth architect Wyatt C. Hedrick. Although the development's restaurants, club, and lounges were located at the base of the hotel, the ballroom-convention center was located in the garage. This was the first multi-story parking garage built in Houston outside downtown. Although the Texas Medical Center demolished the hotel 31 years ago, it retained and still uses the garage and its function rooms.



## Contextual



### 1311 Louisiana Street

Sometimes, garages just want to fit in. Designed by Gensler, the 16-story 1311 Louisiana Street garage (2015) is an amenity-rich high-rise for cars that is of a kind with the slick office towers that are its neighbors. The 1,600 parking spaces are accessed by a double-helix, one-way ramp system that climbs two floors per revolution, accelerating the time it takes for users to reach their space. A glassed-in, air-conditioned vertical circulation core at the corner of Polk and Louisiana streets features four high-speed Schindler elevators and a staircase that overlooks the street. Security guards patrol the well-lit facility regularly, and there is an on-site professional car detailing service. At the ground floor, there are a parking office, restrooms, and 3,000 sf of retail space.





## 805 Franklin Street

At other times, garages have no choice but to blend in with the crowd. Located in the Main Street Market Square Historic District, the 10-story Franklin Street garage (2018) had to assume a form that was sympathetic to its century-old neighbors, which include the Magnolia Ballroom, the Cotton Exchange building, and the Bayou Lofts. Designed by Powers Brown Architecture and built on land that had been a surface parking lot since the 1960s, the 299-space structure is outfitted with a beige brick facia on the first two levels, brown painted precast panels above, and aluminum frames that mimic the rhythm of the surrounding punched-window built fabric. Stair towers at each corner, enclosed in chain-link fencing, are capped by overhanging cornices. A two-story-high “PARKING” sign attached to one corner explicitly states the building’s function, should anyone mistake it for a 19th-century warehouse.



## Screened

### Lyric Center Garage

Some parking structures cloak their identity entirely. The 800-space Lyric Center Garage (2018), designed by Munoz + Albin, is one of them. Serving the Lyric Center office building during the day and the theater district after hours, it is clad in a patchwork assembly of white corrugated metal panels with a 30-percent perforation that ventilates the parking decks and admits spotty daylight. At night, color-changing LED fixtures animate the white surfaces, and at one corner of the fourth floor, a cantilevered glass-enclosed box provides an exhibition space for art or branding. Parking is on two below-grade levels and eight above grade, with the ground floor given over to Lyric Market, a 31,000-sf retail-and-food court that spills out onto a public plaza anchored by David Adickes' 36-ft-tall sculpture of a cello player, "Virtuoso."





### Cambridge Office Building Parking Garage

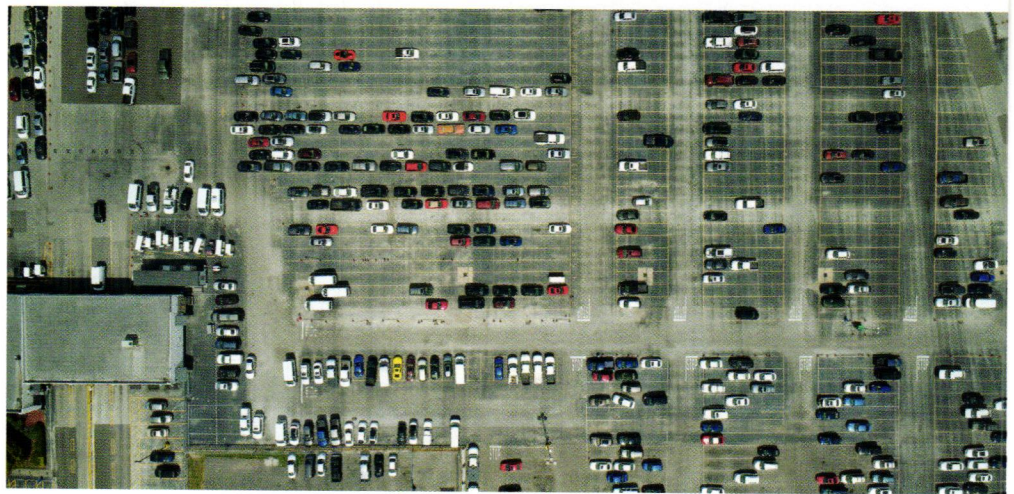
This Rice University parking structure is also demure about its infrastructural identity, to the point of shrouding itself in fig leaves. Designed by Philadelphia architecture firm KieranTimberlake (which also designed the administrative office building that is attached) the seven-story, 450-space garage is wrapped in trapezoidal, coated PES tensile mesh panels printed with a pattern of creeping fig vine leaves. The architect wanted the volume to blend in with the campus' evergreen oak tree canopy. Structureflex, which fabricated the screens, employed a UV ink to prevent fading. The tensile mesh is stretched over an aluminum tension and steel tube structure that peels away from the underlying concrete slabs in places, giving the whole a sculptural presence and opening reveals that improve ventilation. Levels one through five are outfitted with electric vehicle charging stations.

# Sponge

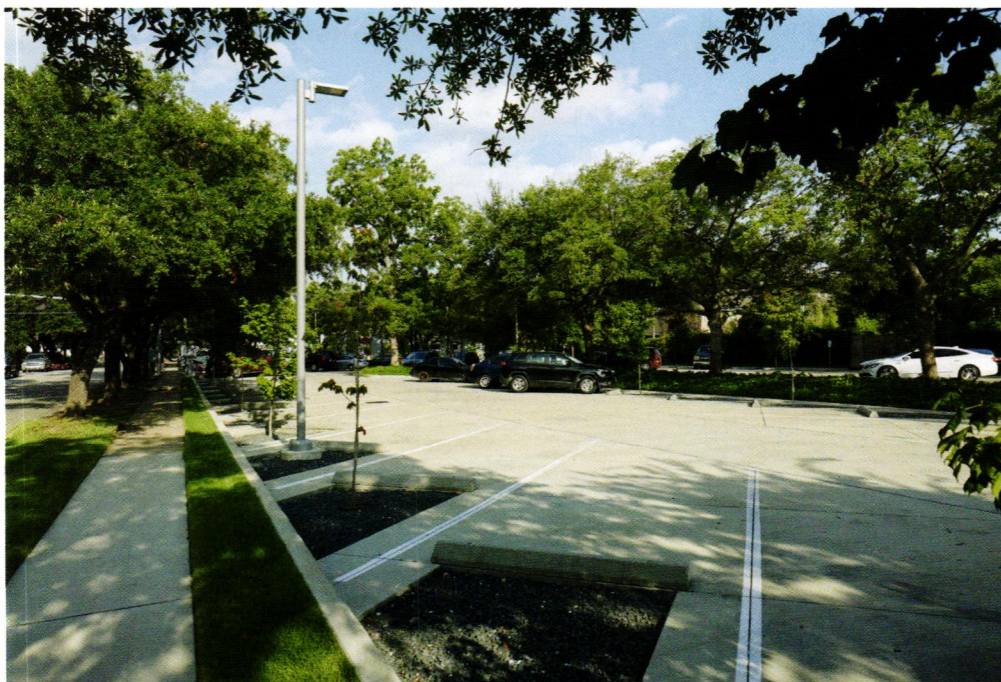


## Manheim Texas Hobby

Perennially front page news, flooding is a worsening problem in Houston that is aggravated by the city's untold acres of impervious paving, much of it forming surface parking lots. This constructed strata at the upper layer of the earth's crust sheds rain quickly into the already-overtaxed drainage system. Manheim, the world's largest automobile auction company, has taken recent steps with its 165-acre Hobby Airport facility to refrain from making the problem worse, adding 15.25 acres of parking that is paved with a permeable system. The company used TrueGrid, a local manufacturer that makes a paving grid from recycled high-density polyethylene that is infilled with gravel or grass. The system claims to be 100 percent permeable, capable of absorbing and detaining stormwater instantly, and able to reduce the heat island effect associated with asphalt or concrete.



## The Menil Collection Parking Lot



The Menil Collection's parking lot (2015) also takes the sponge approach, but with more concessions to the user experience. Designed by New York landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, which is working on an overhaul of the entire 30-acre Menil campus, the parking lot is also a garden planted with 80 new trees and 19,000 sf of ground cover and perennials. Visitors can follow a shaded pathway along a row of live oaks that already existed on the site. Stormwater runs off the concrete paving into swales planted with irises and chalk maples. Excess water is collected in an 8,000-cubic-ft cistern and is used for site irrigation. The lot was given a "special parking area" designation by the Houston City Council, allowing the Menil to provide fewer spaces than the code normally requires — 1.8 spaces per 1,000-sf of gallery, bookstore, and classroom, as opposed to three spaces — and to locate them four times farther away from the building than usual.



# Building Eats Garage

## The Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation

We've been hearing about the death of the parking space for a while now but, until ride sharing and autonomous vehicles really make strides in taking over personal mobility, in Texas the garage will remain an essential component of any significant development. Nonetheless, here is a building eating a garage: the Lake|Flato-designed conservation center at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2018). The architects transformed half of the museum's Binz Street garage into a 20,000-sf facility that consolidates the conservation departments under one roof. The addition is defined by three east-west oriented sheds that capture northern light. Flat-roofed bays between the sheds contain support spaces for the studios. While the museum did lose some parking area, the space will be more than regained with new subterranean garages beneath the Steven Holl-designed Glassell School and Nancy and Rich Kinder Building.





## Paint It Bright



### **Sky Dance, by C. Finley**

One consequence of Houston's Swiss-cheese-like development pattern (a modality that may in large part be attributed to cars) is that there are a lot of blank walls. In recent years, more and more of these surfaces have become host to brightly colored murals. Such is the case at 1415 Louisiana Street, a 43-story tower designed by Nasr/Penton & Associates and 3D/International and completed in 1983. It was originally planned as a twin tower, but its second phase never mate-

rialized. In its current condition, the in-building 391-space parking garage faces a surface parking lot with a 130-ft-tall, 230-ft-wide wall. The CEO of the anchor tenant, WEDGE Group, recently commissioned a mural for the surface from New York-and-Rome-based artist C. Finley. Her subject — three Houston Ballet dancers in mid leap — is rendered in motley on a field of sky blue. At nearly 30,000 sf, it is the city's largest mural. How fitting that it should be on a parking garage.



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## Texas Society of Architects Honor Awards

The Texas Society of Architects announced its 2018 Honor Award recipients in August. This program recognizes exceptional members, firms, individuals, and organizations for outstanding achievements in support of the profession of architecture, the built environment, and quality of life in Texas. The honorees will be recognized at various events during TxA's 79th Annual Conference and Design Expo, happening on November 8–10 in Fort Worth.



### Architecture Firm Award

Dick Clark + Associates, Austin

Dick Clark + Associates has shaped the Austin community for nearly 40 years. Founded by the late Dick Clark, FAIA, DC+A started out in residential design, branching into commercial projects in the 1990s. The firm's fingerprint is seen throughout Austin, especially downtown, where they have completed more than 70 projects and pioneered the way in making the core of the city a vibrant place to explore, relax, and live. DC+A's award-winning restaurant designs have defined the comfortable ambiance for which Austin is known, and their modern residences seamlessly blend elegant design with the Hill Country landscape and spirit.



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

Philip C. Henderson, FAIA, Dallas

A visionary architect and urban planner, outstanding civic leader, author and professor, Philip Henderson has been improving Texas spaces for over 50 years. He was a partner at the firm of Pratt, Box & Henderson, whose design legacy was recently recognized with a major symposium by Docomomo North Texas, and later a sole practitioner focused on institutional and commercial architecture, mixed-use, and master planning. Henderson also co-founded, and for decades led, the Oak Lawn Forum and the Friends of the Katy Trail, which served as a model for recent public-partnerships that have transformed the city of Dallas.



### O'Neil Ford Medal for Design Achievement

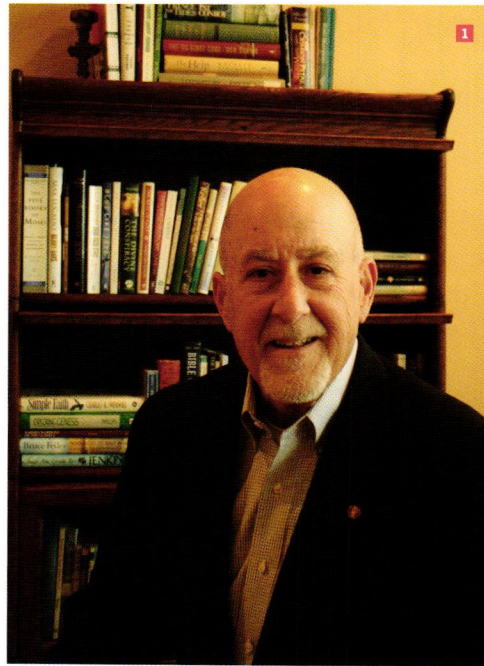
David Lake, FAIA, and Ted Flato, FAIA, San Antonio

David Lake and Ted Flato, both native Texans, met while working at O'Neil Ford & Associates in San Antonio and founded Lake|Flato in 1984. Now a renowned regional firm known for its sustainable modern designs and their engagement with the natural environment, Lake|Flato has received more than 270 design awards, including 11 Top Ten Green Project Awards from the AIA Committee on the Environment, and was recently named one of the Ten Most Innovative Architecture Firms in the World by Fast Company.

# Recognition

## Award for Community Service in Honor of James D. Pfluger FAIA

1 James R. Nader, FAIA, Principal Architect, Urban Bobcat Architects and Founder, Texas Sacred Places Project, Fort Worth

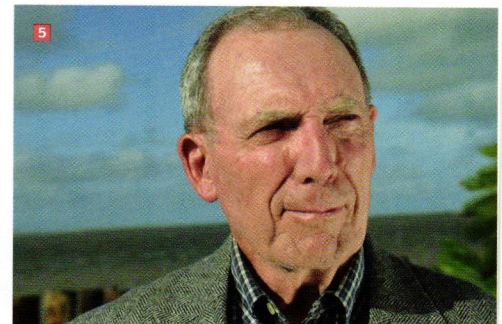


## Award for Outstanding Educational Contributions in Honor of Edward J. Romieniec FAIA

2 Nonya Grenader, FAIA, Professor in Practice, Rice University School of Architecture and Principal, Nonya Grenader Architects, Houston

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

3 Connie G. Rivera, AIA, Project Manager, WKMC Architects, Corpus Christi

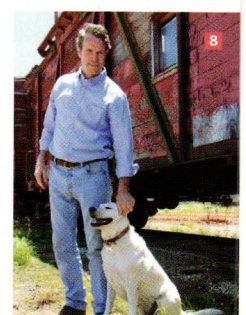


## Associate Member of the Year

4 Victoria Scott Carpenter, AIA, Austin, Project Architect, Black + Vernoooy Architecture and Urban Design

## Mentorship Award

5 Johnny W. Cotten, AIA, Corpus Christi  
6 Women in Architecture Houston



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

7 PechaKucha San Antonio

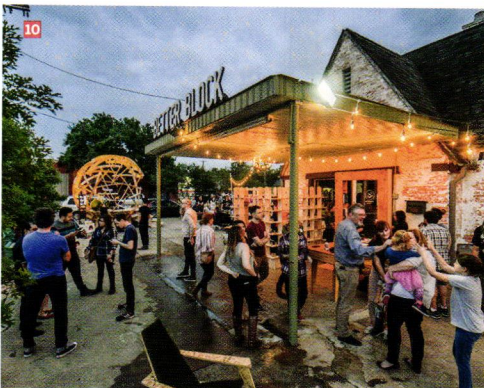
## Artisan Award

8 Brent Hull, Fort Worth  
9 Hatch Workshop, Austin



## Citation of Honor

10 Better Block Foundation, Dallas  
11 Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area, Fort Worth  
12 San Pedro Creek Culture Park, San Antonio  
13 Kimbell Art Foundation, Fort Worth



## Honorary Membership

14 Canan Yetmen, Austin ■





## Midland's Tim Leach Named TxA Cornerstone Honoree

Tim Leach, chairman and chief executive officer of Concho Resources, has been named the Texas Society of Architects' 2018 Cornerstone Award recipient. This award recognizes outstanding contributions from leaders in our community that enhance the quality of life in Texas by elevating architecture and the arts, promoting the value of community, and preserving the natural environment.

Leach's contributions to the field of design are a testament to his passion around quality, environment and the art of architecture. Under Leach's leadership, Concho Resources' corporate campus was the first step in an effort to revitalize downtown Midland, Texas, and Leach has personally been the primary force behind the creation of a new downtown park.

In addition to significant contributions to an endless list of community programs, Leach has shown a keen interest in preserving important historic architecture through a commitment to methodical renovations of numerous properties in Midland, Leakey, and College Station, Texas, and Cane Hill, Arkansas. Last year, Leach was appointed by Governor Abbott to The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents and serves as Chairman of the Committee on Buildings and Physical Plant.

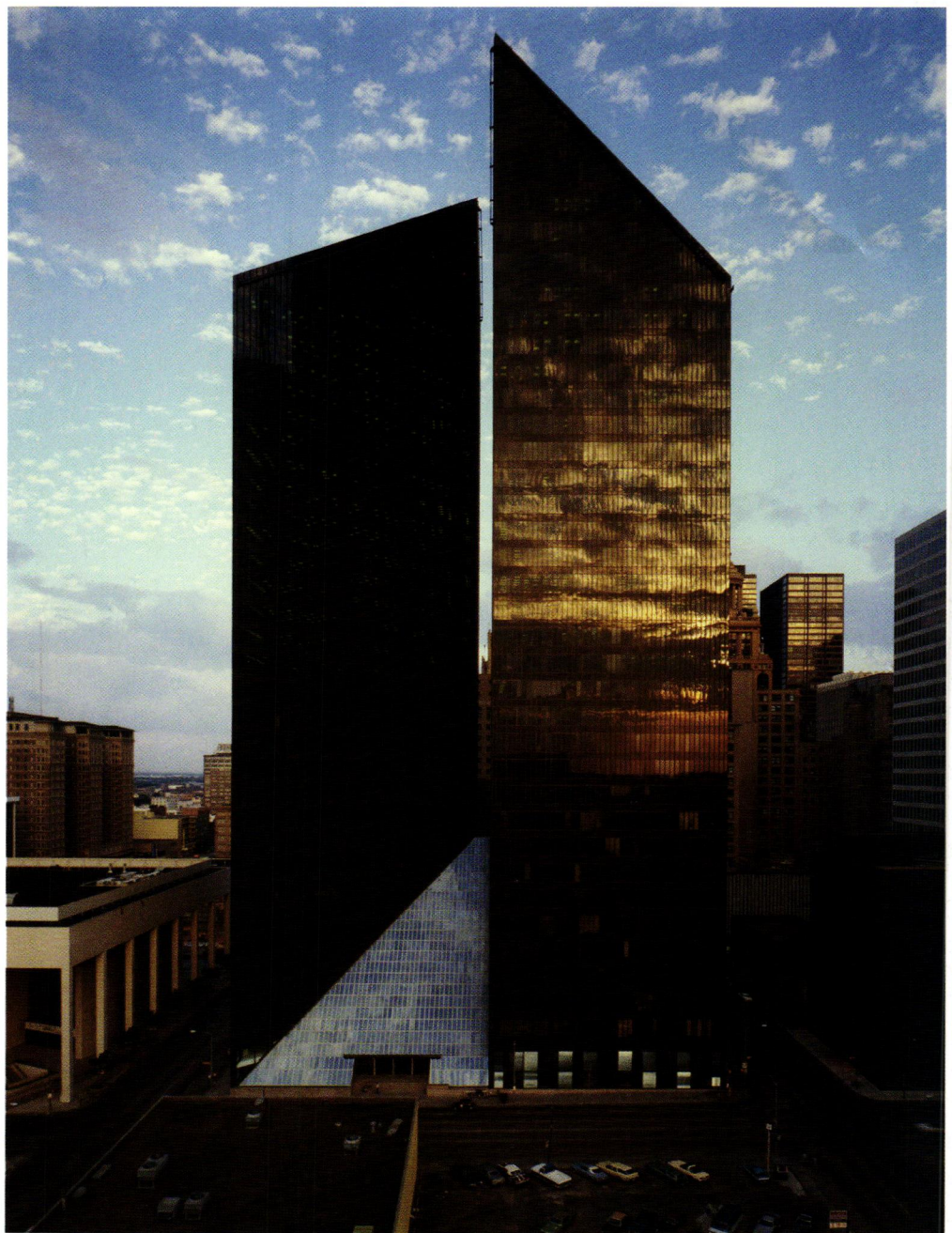
In a letter of support for his nomination for the Cornerstone, Mark Wellen, FAIA, said Leach "is motivated to find projects to benefit the user, and always with quality at its core." The Cornerstone Award will be presented at TxA's Annual Conference in Fort Worth this November.

## Pennzoil Place Receives 25-Year Award

The Texas Society of Architects has bestowed its 25-Year Award for 2018 on Pennzoil Place in Houston. Designed by architects Philip Johnson & John Burgee and S. I. Morris Associates for Houston investment builder Gerald D. Hines Interests, the twin-towered, 36-story office building was completed in 1976. Pennzoil Place, a sensation when it opened, has withstood cycles of stylistic change in architecture to achieve the status of a classic.

Pennzoil Place changed the course of high-rise architectural design: Diverging from the models of engineering rationalism and efficiency associated with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) in the 1950s and '60s, Pennzoil Place showcases the free-spirited play with spectacular geometry that is characteristic of the 21st century. Johnson and Burgee derived Pennzoil's twin tower arrangement, and much else (the towers' reflectively symmetrical trapezoidal plan configuration, the peaked sections — even the slope of the glass canopies sheltering the entry lobbies) by responding to the directives of Hines's client for the complex, Pennzoil Chairman J. Hugh Liedtke. As Frank D. Welch wrote in his book, "Philip Johnson and Texas," Liedtke was emphatic that he did not want a flat-topped orthogonal tower like the one the Chicago office of SOM had just completed for Hines in downtown Houston with One Shell Plaza. Working with a 45-degree geometry in plan and section, Johnson and his associate, John Manley, devised the diagonal planes and profile that give Pennzoil Place its distinctive edge.

The stunning critical success that Pennzoil Place experienced — Ada Louise



Huxtable declared it a "towering achievement," in *The New York Times*, upon its completion; it won an AIA design award in 1977; and it contributed to Johnson being named the first winner of the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1979 — was mirrored in its success in the marketplace. Although Houston was experiencing the economic aftershock of the Arab Oil Embargo as Pennzoil Place was under construction, Hines added two floors to each tower to keep up with demand for space.

Pennzoil Place was instrumental in elevating Hines's profile nationally from that of a

mere client to a "patron" of architecture. And it projected Johnson/Burgee into a new professional role as an immensely successful corporate architectural firm.

Today, Pennzoil is boxed in by taller buildings — one of which is the Bank of America Center, designed by Johnson and Burgee for Hines. In contrast to its neighbors, however, Pennzoil Place seems timeless: It is as precise, crisp, and architecturally authoritative as when new.

Stephen Fox is a Fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas.



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# Resources

## Stretto House Addition, Dallas

**Contractor** Hardy Construction

**Consultants** **STRUCTURAL:** Datum Engineers; **LIGHTING:** byrdwaters DESIGN; **INTERIORS:** Emily Summers

**Resources** **MASONRY:** Texas Building Products; **STRUCTURAL STEEL:** Dallas Metal Fabricators; **EXTERIOR METAL PANELS:** Hardy Construction; **MEMBRANE ROOFING:** Carlisle; **RAINSCREEN MEMBRANE:** Vapro Shield (D.M. Trythall & Co.); **STEEL WINDOWS AND DOORS:** Santiago Ironworks; **SLIDING DOORS:** Fleetwood, Omniview Windows and Doors; **BENT GLASS:** Precision Glass Bending; **LIMESTONE FLOORING:** U.S. Stone Industries; **BATHROOM TILE:** Waterworks; **CORK FLOORING:** Capri Cork, Gabriele's Flooring Solutions; **LIGHT MONITOR SHADING DEVICE:** JBM Metals; **CUSTOM HARDWARE:** Element; **LAVATORIES:** LaCava, TKO Associates; **FAUCETS:** Vola and Watermark, TKO Associates; **BATHTUB:** Blu, TKO Associates; **LIGHTING:** ELP, Innovative Lighting, Bega

## The Den at Wolf Ranch, Georgetown

**Contractor** Beacon Construction

**Consultants** **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** MJ Structures; **MEP ENGINEER:** AYS Engineering; **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** TBG Partners; **CIVIL ENGINEER:** Pape-Dawson Engineers; **RAMMED EARTH CONSULTANT:** De La Tierra Rammed Earth Structures

**Resources** **MISC. METALS:** Empire Fence; **STRUCTURAL STEEL:** Blue Diamond Steel; **MILLWORK:** Trim-Ron; **ROOFING + METAL PANELS:** Sun Roofing; **LANDSCAPING:** Brightview; **LOW VOLTAGE, A/V:** HomePro

## Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan, Laredo

**Consultants** **PROJECT LEAD:** Frank Hickey Pena Architects Join Venture; **LEAD PLANNER:** Dover Kohl & Partners; **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Angelou Economics; **WALKABILITY:** Speck and Associates; **HOUSING:** Gallinar Planning & Development; **MOBILITY:** LNV; **PARKS:** Half Associates; **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Howland Engineering & Surveying; **ANNEXATION:** Sherfey Engineering; **ENVIRONMENTAL:** Gilpin Engineering

## Resetting the City Center, Tyler

**Consultants** **CIVIL ENGINEER:** Aqueous Engineering

## Franklin Garage, Houston

**Contractor** Scott & Reid General

**Contractors** **CONSULTANTS** **CIVIL:** Kimley-Horn & Associates; **STRUCTURAL:** Asa Dally; **MEP:** Dawson Van Orden

**Resources** **CONCRETE:** East Texas Precast; **METAL:** Caisson Fab; **OPENINGS:** Architectural Doors & Hardware ( Republic Doors & Frames ); **CONVEYING EQUIPMENT:** Thiessen Krup; **FIRE SUPPRESSION:** Capital Fire Protection

## Lyric Center Garage, Houston

**Contractor** GILBANE BUILDING COMPANY

**Consultants** **LANDSCAPE:** Kudela & Weinheimer; **FOOD CONSULTANT:** Clark Cooper Concepts; **PARKING CONSULTANT** **CIVIL ENGINEER/ STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Walter P Moore; **MEP ENGINEER:** DBR Engineering Consultants; **GRAPHIC DESIGNER:** FMG; **FEE DEVELOPER:** HINES

**Resources** **CONCRETE:** Baker Concrete Construction; **MASONRY:** W.W. Bartlett; **METAL:** Milestone Metals; **THERMAL & MOISTURE PROTECTION:** F.W. Walton; **OPENINGS:** Momentum Exterior Systems; **FINISHES:** Milam & Co. Painting; **SPECIALTIES:** Vistex Graphics; **EQUIPMENT:** Sentry Control Systems-Skidata Group; **FIRE SUPPRESSION:** Casteel Automatic Fire Protection; **PLUMBING:** Mitchell Chuoke Plumbing; **HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC):** MLN Company; **ELECTRICAL:** Melton Electric; **ELECTRONIC SAFETY**

**AND SECURITY:** Kratos Public Safety & Security Solutions; **EARTHWORK/UTILITIES:** Total Site; **EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS:** Pro Modular

## Menil Gateway, Houston

**Contractor** Linbeck

**Consultants** **CIVIL:** Lockwood Andrews and Newnam; **SOILS:** Olsson Associates; **LIGHTING:** Tillett; **IRRIGATION:** WC3

## MFAH: Sarah Cambell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation, Houston

**Contractor:** WS Bellows

**Consultants** **AOR:** Kendall Heaton Associates; **MEP:** Collaborative Engineering Group; **STRUCTURAL:** Cardno Haynes Whaley; **CIVIL ENGINEERING:** Walter P. Moore & Associates; **PROJECT MANAGEMENT:** Legends Project Development; **WOOD STRUCTURE ENGINEERING + FABRICATION:** StructureCraft Builders; **LIGHTING DESIGNER:** LOI (L'Observatoire International)

**Resources** **STANDING SEAM ZINC SIDING:** VM Zinc; **CENTRIA CASCADE METAL PANEL:** Centria; **DOWEL LAMINATED TIMBER (DLT) WOOD ROOF DECKING/GLUE-LAMINATED STRUCTURE:** StructureCraft Builders; **CONTINUOUS INSULATION WITH COMPOSITE FRAMING SUPPORT (CI-CFS) SYSTEM - GREEN GIRT:** SMARTci; **CURTAIN WALL AND STOREFRONT GLAZING SYSTEMS:** YKK AP

## Cambridge Office Building and Parking Garage at Rice University, Houston

**Contractor** JE Dunn Construction Company

**Consultants** **PARKING CONSULTANT:** TimHaahs; **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Cardno Haynes Whaley; **MEP/FP ENGINEER:** Collaborative Engineering Group; **CIVIL ENGINEER, TRAFFIC PLANNING:** Walter P. Moore & Associates; **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Michael Vergason Landscape Architect; **GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER:** Ulrich Engineers

**Resources** **CONCRETE:** JE Dunn, Greco Structures; **FORMWORK:** McClone Construction Company; **MASONRY:** Pyramid Masonry & Construction Company (St. Joe Brick Works); **STRUCTURAL STEEL:** CC Hunter; **REBAR & POST TENSIONED CABLES:** CSC Steel Services; **ARCHITECTURAL WOOD PANEL & CASEWORK:** Howard McKinney; **ARCHITECTURAL CASEWORK:** Martinez Millwork; **TERRACOTTA PANELS:** Momentum Exterior Systems (Shildan); **INSULATION:** Alpha Insulation & Waterproofing (Roxul) Waterproofing; Chamberlin Houston; **FIRE PROOFING:** Fireproof Contractors Roofing; Peak Roofing; **CURTAINWALL:** Momentum Exterior Systems (Kawneer); **DOORS & HARDWARE:** American Door Products; **DRYWALL & CEILINGS:** Baker Drywall Houston (Armstrong Techzone); **PAINT, ACOUSTICAL PANELS, APPLIED WALL GRAPHICS:** Marek Brothers Systems; **CARPET & LINOLEUM:** ACS Flooring Group (Milliken & Forbo); **FLOOR & WALL TILE:** Sigma Marble & Granite (Stone Source - CeSi); **MODIFIED CEMENT STUCCO:** Golden West Enterprises (Sto); **DEMOUNTABLE PARTITIONS:** Agile Ofis Solutions (DIRTT), Manna Distributors; **ROLLER SHADES:** Marek Brothers Systems (Mechoshade); **TENSIONED FABRIC SCRIM:** Structurflex (Serge Ferrari); **CONVEYING EQUIPMENT:** Eletch Houston; **FIRE SUPPRESSION:** Impact Fire Services; **PLUMBING:** Polk Mechanical; **HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC):** Letsos Company; **ELECTRICAL:** Prism Electrical; **EARTHWORK:** Slack & Company Contracting; **EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS:** Ruppert Landscape

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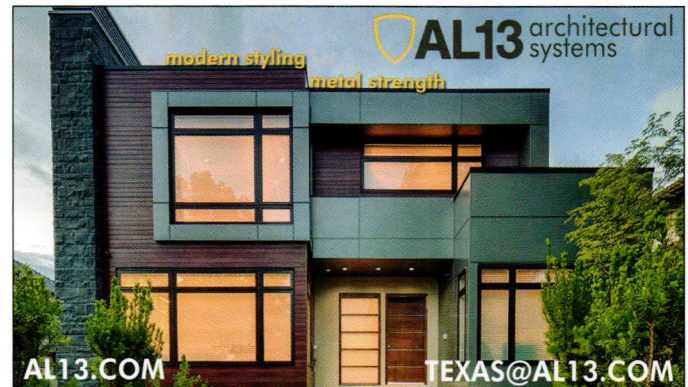
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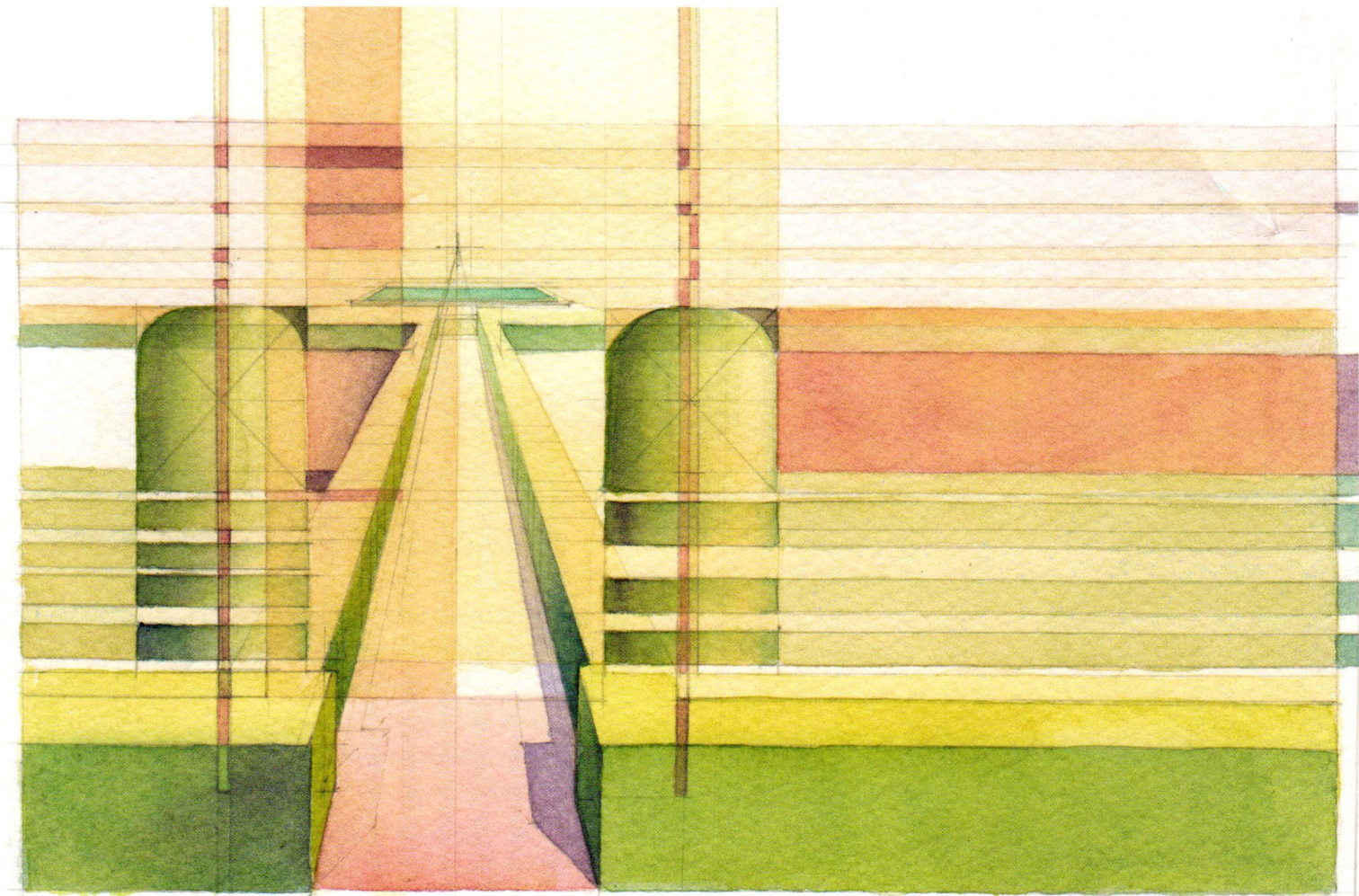
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## Joyce Rosner's Spatial Speculations

**J**oyce Rosner, Distinguished Senior Lecturer at The University of Texas School of Architecture, received a 2007 Gabriel Prize that sparked a decade-long project, the results of which are included in her new work, "Spatial Speculations: Drawing from the Gardens of Versailles." The Gabriel Prize provides recipients with funding to study a particular aspect of French architecture. Rosner chose to create drawings of André Le Nôtre's gardens at Versailles, studying their formal and experiential qualities.

Rosner, who sees the gardens at Versailles as a "continually unfolding spectacle," gathered inspiration from the work of Paul Klee and set about creating a style of representation that could graphically capture the tension and contrast between the building and the landscape, the vertical and the horizontal, and the static and the moving. The resulting drawings are vividly colored abstractions, highly geometric and with multiple vanishing points, that manage to convey the history and architecture of the gardens even as they evoke personal memory and experience.

The work also includes essays by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, Rosner's former professors, as well as Perry Kulper and Mirka Benes. Their contributions place the project in the context of architecture today, when digital renderings have become the standard form of representation in the profession. Kulper describes the work as "a lesson in what it means to work in an unadulterated way, unfailingly committed to what might be discovered in the act of making." Rosner's work highlights the value of the creative process and of non-representational work in the age of AutoCAD.

Some of the comparisons within the work are overblown; likening these drawings to Monet's Haystack paintings is a bit grandiose. But it does have something valuable to say about architectural representation in the digital age. The drawings are wholly captivating, providing a fresh perspective on an iconic landscape and the art of the architectural sketch itself.

Alyssa Morris is a freelance writer based in Austin and former web editor of *TA*.