



Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

Nina J. Cullinan 1896-1983

She was a person you took in her entirety, with unqualified love, in the same way she took her many friends.

She could be fierce. Always loyal to her own, she was nonetheless ready to do battle with them at the drop of a lace handkerchief on behalf of the absent person, persons or group that came under attack. Any careless remark or prejudicial judgment would evoke her defensive queries: Were you there? Did you actually hear that? Did you see it happen? Where did you get your facts?

But her fiercest onslaught came forth when some unsuspecting, unwarned, good-intentioned stranger called her "Miss Nina." Behind an out-thrust finger, a hard and unblinking gaze would impale the cringing person until she had adequately and indignantly explained that she was "Nina" or "Miss Cullinan" but never to be addressed like an old maid, an object to be pitied, in a condescending way, in a familiar and patronizing manner—Southern style.

She was a confirmed lover of life. She felt that she was blessed with an opportunity to enjoy life for a long time, largely on her own terms, according to her own style and beliefs.

She loved good food, served delicious dinners and ate well. But she was scarcely a gourmet or a connoisseur.

She loved nature and all wildlife. But she scarcely knew one plant, tree or bird from another.

There was no doubt that she felt this planet was a wonderful place and that life had been generous to her. Passing from what was to her a magnificent world just meant going to a place where there was more beautiful scenery, higher ranges of mountains, broader vistas—a paradise of healthier, happier, better people and dogs, but certainly not angels and cherubim. It was as if the here-and-now was all the reward she asked for or needed.

She loved art, music, ballet and opera. But she was not a pedant, an expert or in any real sense knowledgeable. Yet before a painting or just after a performance, her judgment, often unduly generous to a young artist, rang true and telling.

Her energy was prodigious. Although exhausted by a long trip and many demands on her, a short nap or an overnight rest would prepare her for another run at life. On the day after a harrowing course of treatment for the cancer that killed her, she might entertain a friend with Mexican food or drive to Galveston to take a lady in a nursing home to visit her family.

She was wise. There were a few—but not many—blind sides to Nina. To the end, of course, she was a "sucker" for a sincere pitch for a good cause. Few people, least of all her family, knew the extraordinary breadth of interests and areas of support implied by these good causes. They meant helping an artist, helping to fund a student field trip to the East, helping to start a bookstore, paying somebody's medical bill, donating a building or a park, underwriting a book, along with innumerable on-going cultural and human welfare activities that she never failed to support.

She was American to the core. She was democratic and unpretentious; optimistic and forward-looking; generous and giving; pragmatic and well-organized; and always unfailingly supportive of the underdog or of those less fortunate. And behind it all lay gaunt, unrelenting character and a will to fulfill obligations.

Portraits done posthumously have a special quality. The question must occur to viewers: why did the people who commissioned them select that time in a person's life? For Nina Cullinan, a painting or a photograph of her—had she allowed it to be made—would have had to be done late in her life to do her justice. More and more her face came to show her inner vitality, curiosity, kindness and air of expectation. As she put it: "I'm not much in the looks department." But to all who came to know her she grew more and more beautiful, strangely innocent yet knowing, in her own uniquely private way.

Anderson Todd

Citelines



Proposal for Market Square
(Downtown Houston Association)

Market Square Remodeling

A plan sponsored by the Downtown Houston Association, a non-profit civic organization whose members represent businesses, corporations and institutions with a stake in the central business district, has been prepared to transform Market Square. This will be the second time in less than 10 years that Market Square has been reshaped. As a Bicentennial project, the Junior League of Houston in 1976 underwrote the "greening" of what, for fifteen years, had been a surface parking lot in 1976, turning it into an undulating meadow of grassy hillocks dotted with saplings. This rolling landscape (somewhat uncharacteristic of Houston in general and downtown Houston in particular) was the work of Fred Buxton and Associates, landscape architects. Reyner Banham, upon being shown the square in 1977, dubbed it "Titty Park."

The Houston offices of the SWA Group and Gensler and Associates have collaborated in devising the plan for Market Square's transformation. In a four-phase operation estimated to cost \$2.3 million, the hillocks will be flattened, then the existing live oak trees will be transplanted around the inside of the square's perimeter sidewalks. Within the resulting enclosure a second tree ring—a double row of shumard oaks—will be planted around a spacious central lawn that measures about

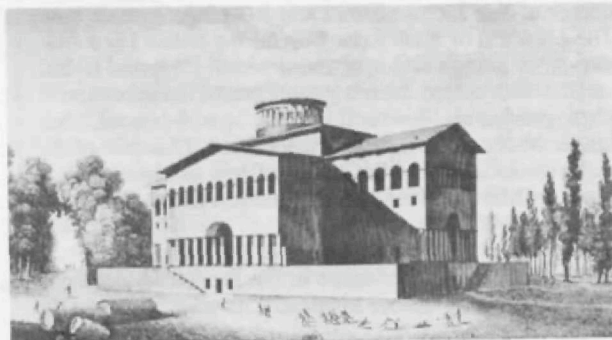
150 feet square. A low, triangular platform, suitable for performances, will be stationed at the northwest corner of the lawn (the Milam-Congress intersection). At the southeast corner (the Travis-Preston intersection) will rise the most expensive feature of the proposal, a \$1.39 million replica of the clock tower of the last City Hall and Market House to occupy Market Square. This was built in 1904 and burned in 1960.

Urbanistically, the SWA-Gensler proposal represents a much more sensible and appropriate scheme for the design of a public square than does Buxton's. It may not restore quite the level of activity that Market Square knew when it was the site of the city's central public market (1840-1929) and municipal government (1840-1939), or even after the 1904 City Hall became the Trailways bus station (1940-1957). But, as a result of the listing of the blocks surrounding Market Square in the National Register of Historic Places (as part of the 16-block Main Street-Market Square Historic District) this past January, investors now can qualify for substantial federal and municipal tax breaks for rehabilitating buildings within the district. By supporting this listing, sponsored by one of its members, Houston Old Town Development Corporation, the Downtown Houston Association hopes that their plan for Market Square will imbue the new downtown district with a strong focus and provide a public space that can be used intensively rather than merely contemplated from the curbline.

Johnson/Burgee and UH College of Architecture

Although the College of Architecture at the University of Houston was organized in 1946, it has always occupied hand-me-down facilities, most recently the ex-College of Engineering complex and a group of 1940's "temporary" metal buildings. An electrical fire which badly damaged the largest of the temporary buildings in 1976 prodded university and college officials into considering permanent quarters. This encouraged architecture faculty members to propose a competition to select an architect, a suggestion that did not find favor with university authorities however. Instead in the fall of 1982, the Board of Regents named Johnson/Burgee Architects and Morris*Aubry Architects to collaborate on the design of the new architecture building. Construction of the \$19.8 million structure should begin in the fall of 1983 and be ready by the summer of 1985.

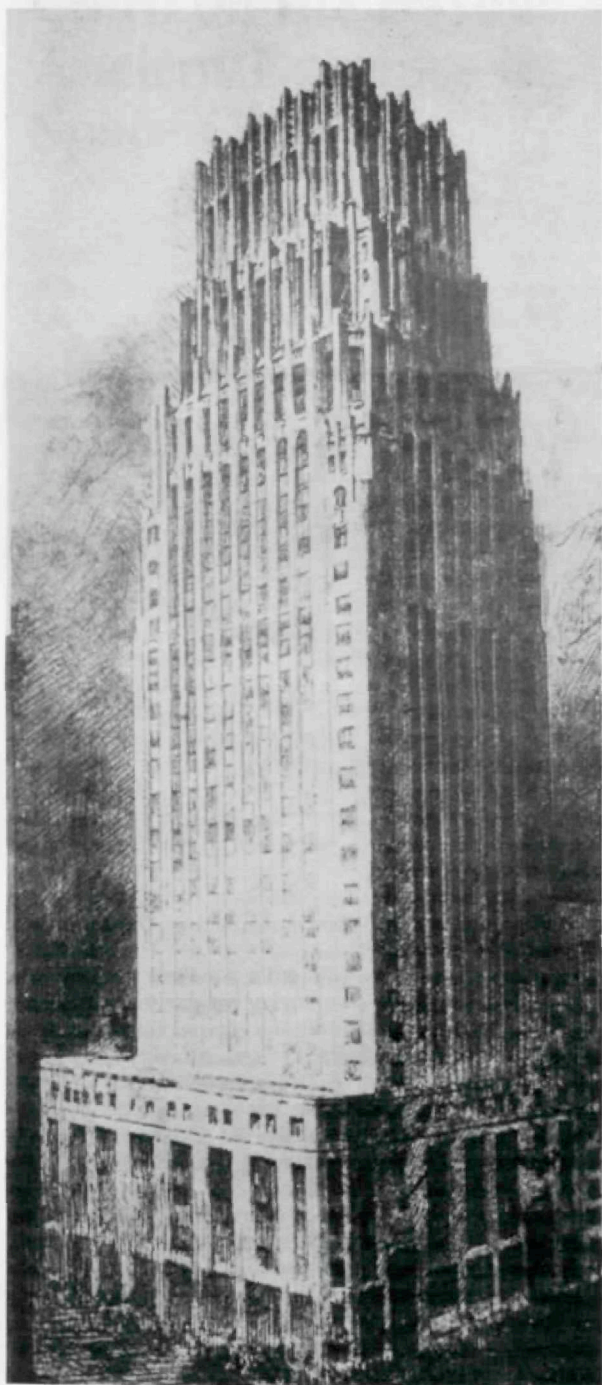
Schematic drawings were presented on 8 March. These depict a three-story with garret building, rectangular in plan, configured around a rectangular, central *cortile*. Loft-like tiers of studio spaces will overlook this air-conditioned evocation of the Ecole des-Beaux-Arts's Salle des Etudes. As at Johnson/Burgee's Dade County Cultural Center in Miami, Romantic Classicism surfaces in the proposed treatment of exteriors; Ledoux's project for the House of Education at Chaux is cited as the source. Philip Johnson has indicated that the building will be clad in fossilated limestone, a Texas "regional" material employed for the university's original buildings, which were constructed between 1939 and 1951 in a stripped classical idiom. (It was also the material with which Johnson clad his Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth of 1961.) The symmetrically composed front elevation of the architecture building will terminate the Elgin Avenue access drive, providing a ceremonial en-



Project: House of Education, Chaux, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, architect. (Three Revolutionary Architects, 1952)

trance to the campus, which has been likened by one UH alumnus to a "world's fair" exposition of architecture, most of it (in the preferred tradition of Texas modernism) big, bland and non-controversial.

With the exception of the Student Life Center by O'Neil Ford and Richard S. Colley (1968), the College of Architecture will be the only campus building not designed by a Houston architect. The decision to hire an "outside" architect—albeit one who has maintained a longstanding association with the College of Architecture (Johnson lectured there as early as 1950 while working on his first Houston building, the Menil House)—was perhaps spurred by the attention which Rice University's School of Architecture received after having James Stirling and Michael Wilford perform modest additions and alterations to its existing building. Johnson has once before demonstrated in Houston, with the campus plan and original buildings of the University of St. Thomas (1956-1959), the power of architecture to raise an institution to public notice. The University of Houston central campus certainly needs all the magic it can get and, after all these years of waiting, the College of Architecture could use a home of its own.



Gulf Building, 1929, A. C. Finn, Kenneth Franzheim and J. E. R. Carpenter, architects.

Houston Metropolitan Research Center to Exhibit Drawings of A. C. Finn

In 1976 Michael Spata bought a two-story house at the corner of San Jacinto Street and Rosedale Avenue near The Museum of Fine Arts. Behind the house lay a two-story garage and apartment which he found to be stuffed with rolled drawings and prints, scrapbooks, photographs, architectural models, specifications, ledger books and correspondence files. This pile of material documented the career of one of Houston's most prolific 20th-century architects, Alfred C. Finn (1883-1964).

When Finn closed his office in the Bankers Mortgage Building shortly before his death, its contents were de-

posited in the garage of the house he had built for his family in 1917 in the newly opened Southmore Addition. After Mrs. Finn moved out of the house about 1970, the papers remained behind. Fortunately, Spata called in Peter C. Papademetriou for advice on the disposition of this material. Papademetriou had recognized, during the course of the development of his 1972 book, *Houston, An Architectural Guide*, that archival material existed and should be assembled. With formation of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, he and Drexel Turner appealed to the sponsoring institutions to include an architectural archive. The unexpected appearance of the Finn papers was the catalyst necessary for achieving this purpose. Papademetriou engineered the transfer of this material to the Research Center where Margaret Henson had the massive pile fumigated before she began to process it. When a flash flood struck the basement where the collection was stored, Mrs. Henson's archival expertise saved it from catastrophe; wrapped in plastic garbage bags, the drawings weathered the ordeal.

Now permanently installed in the Research Center's architectural component and supplemented with contributions from A. C. Finn, Jr. and Golemon and Rolfe, the Alfred C. Finn Collection has been taken out of its garbage bags and is being catalogued. Since acquiring the Finn Collection, the Research Center has also accessioned other architectural collections, including the office records and drawings of Maurice J. Sullivan, Harvin C. Moore and a selection of documents from the Kansas City landscape architects Hare and Hare dealing with their extensive Houston work. These are kept in the Julia Ideson Building of the Houston Public Library.

Finn's drawings span the most productive years of his half-century long career (he opened his own office in 1913) and indicate the full spectrum of his work: houses large and small from Houston Heights, Montrose and Courtlandt Place to Shadyside and River Oaks; tall office buildings like the Gulf Building (with Kenneth Franzheim) and the Peoples' National Bank Building in Tyler; the Veterans Hospital among other medical institutions; and a wide array of public buildings such as the Sam Houston Coliseum and Music Hall, the San Jacinto Monument and the Ezekiel Cullen Building at the University of Houston.

Finn was both a businessman-architect and a businessman's architect. His career was linked intimately to the rise of the developer, banker, publisher, hotel operator and Democratic politician, Jesse H. Jones. In fact, as Dorothy Victor, a member of the architectural firm of Sikes Jennings Kelly, discovered while doing research on the Gulf Building in connection with its restoration, Jones actually owned Finn's practice, a precedent for at least one type of developer-architect relationship that still persists in Houston.

With the assistance of the Cultural Arts Council of Houston, the Research Center will mount an exhibition of drawings and photographs in November to document Finn's architecture. This will be accompanied by a catalogue of the collection, prepared by the Research Center's architectural archivist, Michael Wilson, with an essay on Finn's work by Barrie Scardino.

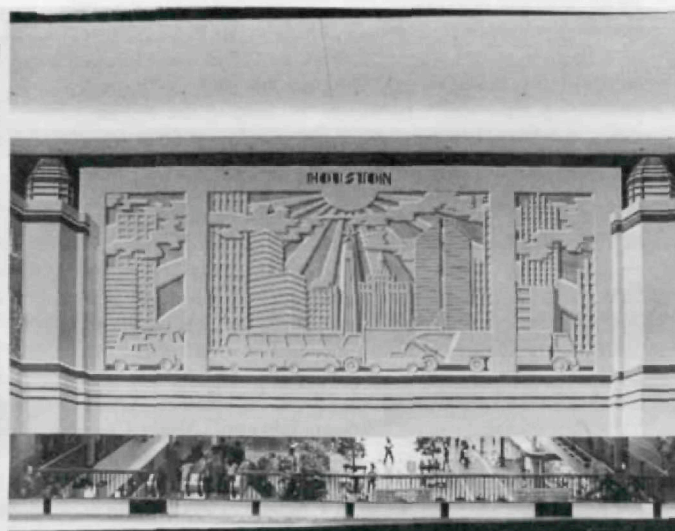
Big Cité Beat



Harold Farb at the Sunar Showroom.

Magazine readers this past fall may have been surprised to see in their September issues a full page advertisement depicting developer Harold Farb settled warily into a Massimo Vignelli Circolo chair at the Sunar Showroom in Greenway Plaza (Michael Graves, 1980), bracketed with a bold headline proclaiming "This Is Farb." Farb appears to have succumbed to Post-Modernism only for advertising purposes; his two big commercial projects—the 45-story San Felipe Plaza (sic) at San Felipe and Augusta and The Centre, a 72-acre multiple use development on the Southwest Freeway—are both being handled by the Houston office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill while The Carlyle, Farb's new grand luxe restaurant at Westheimer and Sage, was decorated by Valerian Rybar and Daigre. However, another local real estate tycoon, Gerald D. Hines, has asked Michael Graves to prepare designs for a house on a lot adjoining the River Oaks Country Club golf course. Hines is already the master of houses designed for him by Charles Moore and William Turnbull (Aspen) and Robert A. M. Stern (Martha's Vineyard). Graves was an unsuccessful contender for the Aspen house commission.

Moving to San Antonio from its proto-Post-Modern building on the Bluff in Corpus Christi is the H. E. Butt Grocery Company, which has retained Hartman-Cox and Chumney, Jones and Kell to reuse adaptively six existing buildings and to design one new building at the former U.S. Arsenal on the San Antonio River. The multi-acre site contains structures dating from the 1850's through the 1920's. On the opposite shore of the river, Ford, Powell and Carson have in progress a restoration-remodeling of the Groos House on King William Street (Alfred Giles, 1880) for HEB's president, Charles C. Butt.



Haas Mural Unveiled

Richard Haas was in town to lecture to the RDA, attend a reception at the McIntosh/Drysdale Gallery, which opened with a show of Haas's work, and to dedicate "Houston," a 70-foot long mural at Town and Country Center, on 17 February. The mural is a tryptic in the

Houston, 1983, Richard Haas, artist, Town and Country Center. (Photo by Douglas Harvey)

public art style of the 1930's and 40's. The central, three-part panel consists of a composite skyline pushing up against a radiant sun, with bumper-to-bumper traffic at base level. Haas's ironic retrospective vision of progress features such architectural icons as the Niels

Esperson Building, the San Jacinto Monument, Pennzoil Place and One Post Oak Central. The mural was commissioned by Ernest W. Hahn and Dan Moody, developers of Town and Country Center.



As architectural compensation for Corpus Christi, Batey and Mack have just completed a 7,500 square foot villa on Ocean Drive for Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin D. Holt. Clad in travertine and granite, the Holt House derives its inspiration from Lawrence Alma-Tadema's late 19th-century paintings of classical Roman *dolce vita*. Also in the offing are two more Corpus Christi residential projects by Batey and Mack.

To publicize its move to new quarters at 3355 West Alabama, **Morris★Aubry Architects**, in lieu of the expected corporate deluxe announcement, has distributed an accordion-fold picture postcard packet. Called "Morris★Aubry, 45 Years in Houston" and designed by Flat Lizard Graphics, the packet contains color-tinted postcards of eight buildings designed by Morris★Aubry, each juxtaposed with a Houston monument to which the building is related by a pun. For instance, the Sam Houston Monument is superimposed on the First City Tower above the caption "Charge!" Thirty-three fifty-five West Alabama shares its frame with the Goodyear Blimp; the punch line reads: "A Moving Experience." The sign from Cutter Bill Western World pops up in front of 1600 Smith Street, a 56-story building under construction in Cullen Center, to the accompaniment of "Hi, Tex." A cute idea, but for star architects the humor is a little weak. More is arbitrary (than amusing in these) arch texts.

To draw public attention to the recently designated Main Street-Market Square Historic District, the Downtown Houston Association has organized **Project Walls**, a public mural program coordinated by Joan Seeman Robinson. Robinson has assembled an art selection committee and an advisory board for what she describes as Phase One of the project. This will entail locating an appropriate surface (several exposed blank walls are under consideration), an artist of national reputation to execute a mural, and the funds to pay for it.

For Sale are a number of choice items of Houston domestic architecture. François de Menil has his much publicized Charles Gwathmey re-do of a Gene Aubry re-do of a George Pierce-Abel B. Pierce ranchburger on the market. For \$10 million, one can choose between Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson's Rienzi (a neoclassical casino by John F. Staub with an added ballroom by Neuhaus Associates) and chez Baron and Baroness Enrico di Portanova (the swimming pool that ate Reba Drive). In case you missed it, the Portanovas were featured in the October number of *Town and Country*, reclining at Arabesque, their thousand-and-one nights fantasy on Acapulco Bay designed by Aurelio Muñoz Castillo. The W.S. Farish House in Shadyside, a superlative Regency-style country house designed by H. T.



2. *Hi, Tex* architecture, Morris ★ Aubry Architects. (Flat Lizard Graphics)



3. (For Sale) Farish House, 1925, Harrie T. Lindeberg, architect. (Photo by Paul Hester)

Lindeberg, is listed for a cool \$8.5 million. The one-time residence of another co-founder of Humble Oil and Refining Company, Governor Ross S. Sterling, at Yoakum and Kenwood is also available. Recently entered in the National Register of Historic Places, the Sterling House contains one of the most exceptional front porches in Houston (A. C. Finn, 1919).

both—is still being examined by MTA's technical staff. Also undecided is where the line will make the transition from an elevated to subway configuration at either end of the downtown segment. At the north end the MTA staff prefers to continue the line beneath Buffalo Bayou in a subway configuration, surfacing near Interstate-10. However, the Buffalo Bayou Transformation Corporation would like for the rapid rail line to cross the half-mile distance between the bayou and I-10 in an elevated configuration in order to include a station along this route, which would enhance the corporation's potential to stimulate redevelopment of this early 20th-century warehouse district.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority proposes that the south end of the subway be located at about Hadley Avenue, three blocks south of Interstate-45. This means that the transition would occur in front of the new Knoll Showroom, now under construction to the designs of Tigerman Fugman McCurry. It would also mean that the elevated guideways of the rapid rail line would traverse Main Street for nearly 10 blocks before veering off it near Francis Avenue, despite the City Council's resolution placing Main Street out-of-bounds for elevated construction last November.

These decisions rest ultimately with the MTA Board, which must approve all of the staff's recommendations before they can be carried out.

Event to Inaugurate The Center for the Study of American Architecture

Lawrence W. Speck

In pursuit of the "American strain" in architecture, a number of public institutions across the United States are establishing centers for the study of American architecture. The "mother" center will be at Columbia University in New York. Columbia's preeminent architectural resource, the Avery Library, qualifies it as the hub of this scholarly network. Regional centers will be established at The Art Institute of Chicago, at Tulane University, at The University of Texas at Austin and in the West at an (as yet) undetermined location.

The charge of the various centers is to "establish and examine cultural and environmental conditions which have directed the course of American building." Clearly this represents a bias toward the sort of architecture which reflects regional landscapes, climates and peoples, as well as the purposes buildings fulfill, rather than prevailing styles or ideologies. The establishment of a network of centers rather than a single center acknowledges the diversity of cultural and environmental conditions throughout the United States and reflects the organizers' desire to "heighten interest in and respect for local architectural traditions."

The resources being assembled for this new endeavor are remarkable indeed, making it perhaps the most ambitious effort ever mounted in this country in the name of architectural research. The Board of Advisors for the National Center at Columbia includes Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Ada Louise Huxtable, Edgar Kaufmann, jr., I. M. Pei and Vincent Scully. Income from an endowment (which is expected to exceed \$8 million) will support a community of Fellows—both scholars and architects—who will be selected annually on a competitive basis. In addition, public colloquiums and lectures as well as publications will be supported by the National Center.

As a sort of "kick-off" for the National Center, Columbia is sponsoring a major symposium and exhibition in New York this spring entitled "American Architecture: Innovation and Tradition," co-directed by David DeLong, Robert A. M. Stern and Helen Searing.

The exhibition, which will open in New York on 21 April and will subsequently travel, contains work from various parts of the country chosen by six guest curators: Gerald Allen from the South, Richard Longstreth from the Great Plains, Deborah Nevins from the Northeast, Lawrence Speck from the Southwest, Sally Woodbridge from the West and John Zukowsky from the Middle West. The symposium, scheduled for 21 April through 24 April, will have three major sessions: "The Place: Urbanism, Suburbanism and Civic Design," "The Object: Decorative Arts, Industrial Arts and Interior Design," and "The Buildings: Vernacular and Monumental Forms." Speakers will include J. B. Jackson, Denise Scott Brown, William Jordy, Thomas Hines, James O'Gorman and Arthur Drexler. In contrast to many recent symposiums, this one has involved the advance exchange of papers, so that presentations should represent a refined point of view of the designated topics. Proceedings from the symposium and selections from the exhibition are scheduled to be included in the inaugural issue of *American Architecture*, the regularly published journal of the National Center.

Of the four regional centers, the Southwest Center at The University of Texas seems to be the most advanced in planning its future role. Although its conception followed considerably that of the National Center, several activities are already in progress and fund raising is well underway.

Like Columbia, The University of Texas plans to focus the Southwest Center's work on its considerable resources including the School of Architecture's library, which is one of the largest architectural collections in the country, the architectural archives of the Humanities Research Center, the Barker Texas History Collection, the Winedale Historical Center and the rapidly expanding Architectural Drawings Collection. Fellowships, colloquiums, exhibitions and publications will comprise the major activities of the Southwest Center.

MTA to Build Main Street Subway Someway

Following several months of intense controversy, including the passing of resolutions of disapproval by the Commissioners Court of Harris County and the Houston City Council, the Board of the Metropolitan Transit Authority declined to support the proposal forwarded by MTA General Manager Alan Kiepper for routing the MTA's rapid rail line through downtown Houston on elevated guideways above Main Street. This would have represented one segment of the initial 18.2 mile system which the MTA Board authorized at their meeting of 29 September. Instead, at the 27 December meeting, the board voted to build the downtown section in a subway configuration. In early March contracts were awarded for the design of the first 11 stations. The three downtown subway stations beneath Main Street were awarded to a team for which Morris★Aubry Architects and John S. Chase are project architects.

Exactly how the subway will be built—using cut-and-cover construction or tunneling or a combination of

Moore to Design San Antonio Art Institute College of Fine Art

The inveterate traveler and architect Charles W. Moore has landed yet another Texas commission. In October 1982, the trustees of the San Antonio Art Institute retained Moore Ruble Yudell of Santa Monica to design a two-story, 40,000 square foot building to house the institute's newly endowed College of Fine Art. The site is a 2.5 acre tract on the grounds of the McNay Art Institute, in proximity to the McNay (a Spanish colonial revival hacienda of 1928 by Atlee B. Ayres and Robert M. Ayres with extensive additions by Ford, Powell and Carson) and adjacent to the San Antonio Art Institute's present facilities (also designed by Ford, Powell and



Charles Moore and Buzz Yudell (right) designing College of Fine Art with SAAI staff and trustees. (Photo by Gary Hartman)

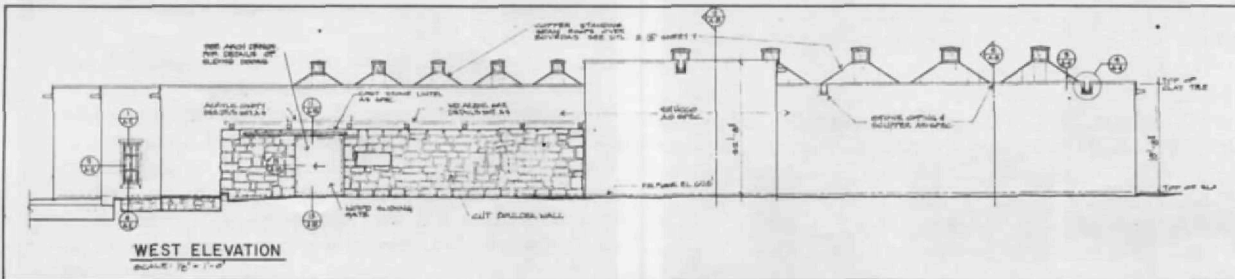
Carson and completed in 1976 and 1979).

Moore Ruble Yudell was one of four architectural firms interviewed by the trustees' building committee. The other three were Robert A. M. Stern, Taft Architects and Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown. O. Jack Mitchell, Dean of the School of Architecture at Rice University, served as professional advisor to the building committee.

The San Antonio Art Institute will raise \$3 million, chiefly from private sources, to erect the new building.

Construction is to begin in the fall of 1983. Completion is scheduled for the fall of 1984 when the Art Institute will open the College of Fine Art, which it describes as "the first independent college of art in the Southwest."

This is Charles Moore's sixth commission in Texas since 1981. Nearing completion in Fort Worth are two projects by Moore Ruble Yudell for the California development firm, John A. Meyer, Ltd.: the conversion of a small building into the Roundhouse Office Building and 18 units of medium income condominium apartments on McCart Street. Under construction at Sugar Land is the Sweetwater Country Club for SugarLand Properties, Inc. on which Moore and the Urban Innovations Group collaborated with MLTW/Turnbull Associates and Richard Fitzgerald and Partners. Still in the schematic stage are two projects, one in Houston, the other in Dallas. Both involve multiple family housing.



1. Cowboy Artists of America Museum, Kerrville, 1981-1983, Ford, Powell and Carson, architects. West elevation.

2. Site Plan, Preliminary design for the Museum of the Southwest, Midland, 1982, Ford, Powell and Carson, architects.

New Texas Museums Under Construction or Planned

The San Antonio Art Institute's construction of a College of Fine Art is only one of several major building projects for Texan art institutions either underway or contemplated.

Chief among these is the Dallas Museum of Art. Despite multiple additions, the present Dallas Museum of Fine Arts in Fair Park, a stripped classical building of 1936 by DeWitt and Washburn and Paul Philippe Cret, has become so inadequate that it "inhibited development and expansion of the collections and the museum's services," according to museum sources. In 1979 Dallas voters authorized a bond issue of nearly \$25 million to construct a new building, which the museum matched with another \$25 million in private donations. Construction began in 1980 and now is nearing completion. The Dallas Museum of Art is located in the newly designated Dallas Arts District, an enclave adjacent to the downtown office center.

The \$29.6 million, 193,000 square foot building is the work of Edward Larrabee Barnes Associates and Pratt, Box and Henderson Associates. As is typical of Barnes's work, the Dallas museum comprises an assembly of rectangular blocks containing gallery, instructional and administrative spaces. The minimally detailed elevations are faced with limestone. Dispersed between and alongside principal gallery spaces are walled garden courts.

Similar in organization and ambience to the Dallas Museum of Art is the museum planned for The Menil Collection in Houston, announced in December 1981. The site of this 70,000 square foot, \$10 million building, designed by Renzo Piano and Richard Fitzgerald and Partners, was cleared in the fall of 1982, following construction during August of the "Test House," a full-scale mock up of a typical gallery bay. Excavation for the museum began in late March.

The San Antonio architects Ford, Powell and Carson have just finished one museum and are planning another. Scheduled to open in April is the Cowboy Artists of America Museum in Kerrville. The building is small—about 12,000 square feet, containing only three galleries—and located on a suburban site along with guest cottages and studios for artists-in-residence. The architecture is derived from one of Ford, Powell and Carson's most famous buildings, the Steves House. It features walls of stucco over block, *bovedas*—the traditional masonry vaulted skylights of Guadalajara—extensive use of wood for doors and windows and a rubble stone entrance passage. A large courtyard surrounded by an enclosed arcade permits access to the galleries, lecture

hall and curatorial spaces on one side and to the administrative spaces on the other. Construction cost was about \$3 million.

The desire to set a building unostentatiously into the landscape also has guided Ford, Powell and Carson's preliminary design of the Museum of the Southwest in Midland. The site is again suburban, this time lying between two large houses (one of which has already been adapted for museum purposes by Frank Welch and Associates) with a carriage house in between. Galleries of different height are clustered around outdoor courts. Light, greenery and water are threaded subtly between publicly accessible spaces to produce an oasis-like effect which should prove quite beguiling on the high, windy, dry plain of far west Texas. The preliminary design calls for about 14,000 square feet in display, curatorial and support spaces to be built for about \$6 million. New construction will be clad in cast stone. A change in the administration of the Museum of the Southwest has caused the project to be delayed until a new director is selected. The trustees chose Ford, Powell and Carson as architects in early 1982 after interviewing O'Neil Ford, Michael Graves and Robert Venturi.

The Dallas Museum of Art, The Menil Collection, the Cowboy Artists of America Museum and the Museum of the Southwest share a pronounced attitude toward building for the display of art in a hot, often hostile, climate. The creation of simply detailed internal volumes and undemonstrative exteriors has been accompanied by the provision of quiet garden spaces and the controlled use of natural light. It will be interesting to see if this attitude prevails in several museum projects which have yet to enter the design phase.

In Austin planning for two museums is underway. The Laguna Gloria Art Museum, housed since 1943 in a suburban country house (Harvey L. Page, 1916), hopes to build a downtown museum containing about 25,000 square feet and capable of further expansion. The architect selection committee of the Board of Trustees interviewed Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, Richard Meier, Mitchell/Giurgola and Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown before choosing the Venturi firm in late April.

The precise location of the museum has not been announced, but it will be built in conjunction with a residential-retail scheme developed by the Watson-Casey Companies. Watson-Casey has offered to build a shell which Laguna Gloria will be responsible for finishing. This offer originated as part of Watson-Casey's proposal to provide facilities for a new Austin city hall complex, a controversial scheme that was rejected by the Austin city council in mid-February. How this rejection will affect the Laguna Gloria project is not clear.

As for the second Austin museum project, Cesar Pelli and Associates completed a feasibility study for a Museum of Fine Arts for the University of Texas in 1981. But before any design work was initiated, the

project was postponed. It is now expected that the university administration and the regents will authorize resumption of this project within the year.

Confined as yet to the status of rumor are two potential museum projects. One is an expansion of the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi, for which Philip Johnson (architect of the museum's building) has introduced onto the scene Batey and Mack. The second is a new building for the Tyler Museum of Art to supersede the present museum, completed on the campus of Tyler Junior College in 1971 by E. Davis Wilcox and Associates. The notion of a competition has been broached to select an architect for the Tyler museum.

