

News from NoHo: Out of Houston's fledgling arts warehouse district come tidings of Made in Texas '85: A Design Competition of Furnishings by Texans. Sponsored by Mimi Davies's Requisitions, this is a juried competition open to all Texas residents for new designs for furniture, lighting fixtures, floor coverings, textiles, and accessories. First prize is \$10,000 and judges include Barbara Rose, Charles Pfister, Mariana Greene, Gary Whitney, and Dennis Miller. Winning entries and other notable entries will be exhibited by Requisitions at its showroom in Houston Artists' Warehouse District in February and March 1985. Deadline for entries is 7 January 1985. Contact Requisitions for details. And move over Memphis.

Big Cité Beat

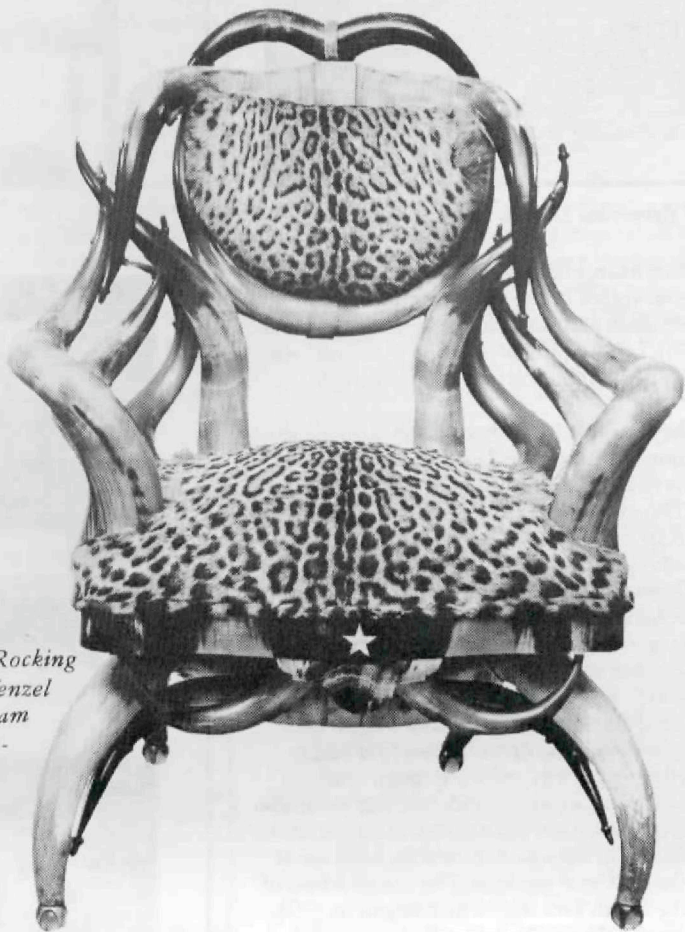
Occupying the chair of Yale University's William M. and Charlotte Shepherd Davenport Professor of Architectural Design this fall are Taft Architects - all three of them. At the commencement, mid-point, and end of term, Taft partners John J. Casbarian, Danny Samuels, and Robert H. Timme were present collectively. In between the three taught in serial rotation. Asked if one chair wasn't a bit wee for three people, John Casbarian explained that Yale had modified it to accommodate them, seating Taft on the Davenport couch in architecture.

Gerald D. Hines Interests is to fund five major architectural exhibitions at New York's Museum of Modern Art, beginning with a show on the work of Leon Krier and Ricardo Bofill in June 1985. The grant from Hines Interests will additionally cover accompanying lectures, symposiums, and catalogues. Dallas developer Vincent A. Carrozza has also emerged as a patron of architectural scholarship; he is listed as a sponsor contributor to the fourth number of The Harvard Architectural Review (MIT Press, 1984).

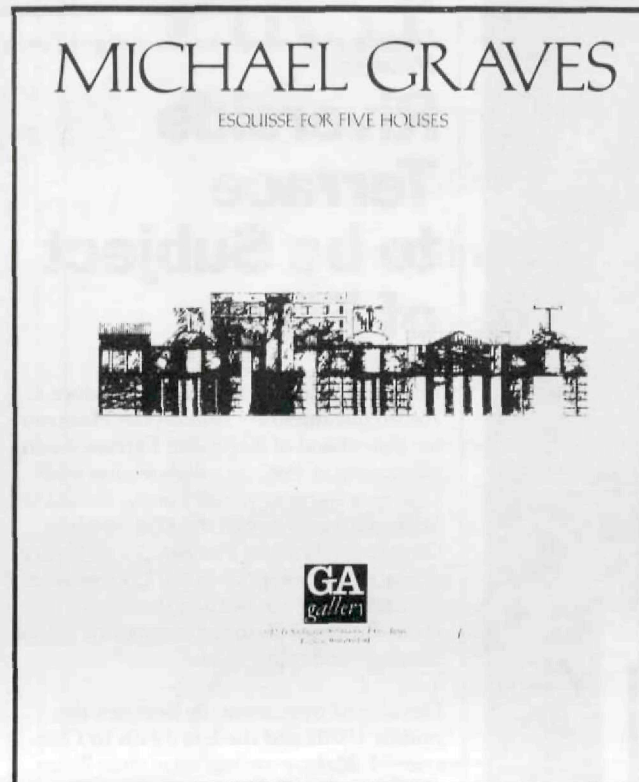
Want to get someone's attention? Send an oak tree. That's what developers Wortham, Van Liew & Horn did in October, along with an invitation to the groundbreaking on 22 October for their 52-story Heritage Plaza, next to the Federal Land Bank in downtown Houston (M. Nasr and Partners, architects). A six-foot high Heritage oak accompanied each invitation, along with planting instructions. How you got it into the elevator, through the tunnel to the garage, and into your car was something you had to figure out, however.

Global Architecture, the Japanese architectural publishing company, has issued a GA Gallery catalogue of an exhibition it mounted in Tokyo in April and May 1984 called "Michael Graves, Esquisse [sic] for Five Houses." Splashed across both cover and centerfold of the catalogue are two elevation studies of Graves's projected house for Barbara and Gerald Hines in Houston, dated 1983, a formal extravaganza that climaxes in a hemicycle 50 feet high and 50 feet in diameter. Final items in the large format catalogue are two elevation sketches of a delightful house and studio alla rustica, also of 1983, for Robert Glazer in McKinney.

Private residence, Houston, Texas, 1983, Michael Graves, architect (Cover of "Esquisse for Five Houses," published by Global Architecture, Tokyo)



Made in Texas: Horn Rocking Chair, c. 1890-1900, Wenzel Friedrich, gift of William Gill (Photo by A. Mewbourn, courtesy The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston)



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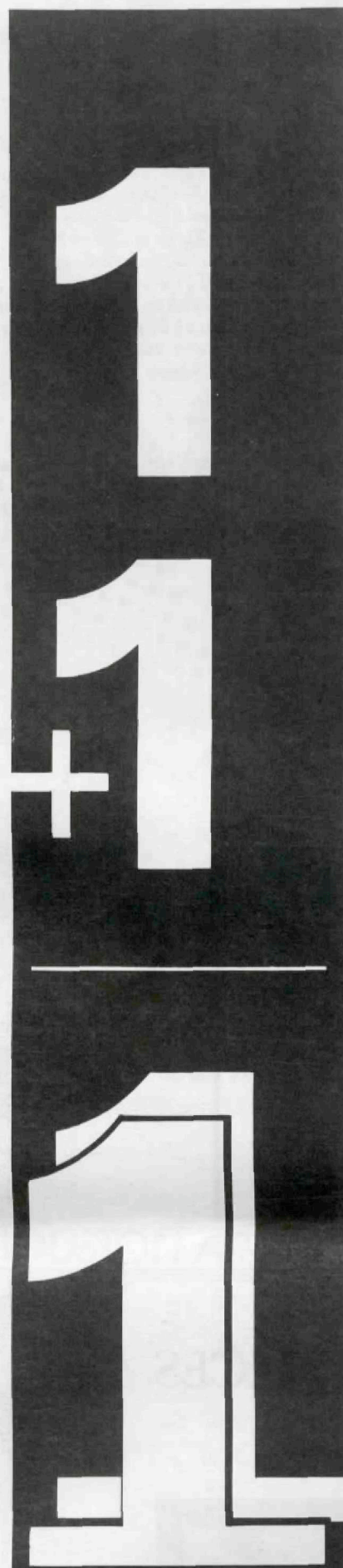
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Looking west along the MacGregor Parkway in Riverside Terrace (Photo by Paul Hester)

Riverside Terrace to be Subject of Film

Film maker Jon Schwartz will produce a 16mm documentary film on the Houston neighborhood of Riverside Terrace during the spring of 1985 in collaboration with Gertrude Barnstone and Joanne Brodsky. Schwartz plans to call the film "This Is Our Home, It's Not For Sale," a reference to the slogan adopted in the 1960s when Riverside Terrace became the focus of Houston's most famous instance of "block busting" and white flight.

Developed incrementally between the middle 1920s and the late 1940s by Clarence M. Malone and the Guardian Trust Company, Riverside Terrace lies along both sides of the MacGregor Parkway between Hermann Park and MacGregor Park. During the 1930s it became the pre-eminent neighborhood of Houston's Jewish establishment, whose members built houses along Riverside Drive, North and South Calumet, South MacGregor Way, and North and South Parkwood. Although historian Barry J. Kaplan has determined that Jews never exceeded 1/3 of Riverside Terrace's population, the area nonetheless became known popularly as the Jewish River Oaks.

Riverside Terrace was joined by other, smaller, subdivisions, notably Timber Crest of 1941, as well as a series of large estates along Brays Bayou. Such well-known Houston architects as John F. Staub, Birdsall P. Briscoe, William Ward Watkin, Joseph Finger, and Lenard Gabert were responsible for houses there. In the 1940s and 1950s, Bolton and Barnstone, Max Flato, MacKie and Kamrath, Bailey A.

Swenson, and Wylie W. Vale made it a showplace of the various tendencies in modern architecture then current in Houston (see "Going Modern in Houston" and "The Wright Stuff," *Cite*, Fall 1984).

In the early 1950s houses in the older sections of Riverside Terrace, north of the bayou, began to be sold to black families. This coincided with the expiration of deed restrictions in these sections, which allowed strip shopping centers, garden apartments, churches, and motels to be constructed on the sites of many of the larger houses. The southern sections succumbed to real-estate pressure during the 1960s. It was then that the block-busting campaign was most fiercely waged. Despite hold-outs, the transition did occur, although it was orderly enough that incoming, affluent black families were able to preserve the deed restrictions and thus maintain the environmental character of the southern sections. The construction of the South Freeway, which began in 1968, cut a wide swath of destruction through the northern sections. Not only did it compound damage already sustained, it resulted in a particularly offensive series of elevated interchanges on top of the MacGregor Parkway. Fortunately, the freeway bypassed the southern sections.

Having grown up in Riverside Terrace, Schwartz is curious now about the social-historical phenomenon it represents, one that is not unique to Houston: the transition from elite Jewish neighborhood to elite black neighborhood. Schwartz plans the film to be, as he says, a combination of "oral history" and "visual history," juxtaposing the places and houses of Riverside Terrace with representatives of the four generations of Houstonians who have resided there. Schwartz presently is seeking people who live, or did live, in the neighborhood for interviews. He hopes to have the film completed by summer and televised on PBS.

Stephen Fox

Houston Botanical Garden Proposed

The Garden Club of Houston held a public meeting on 18 September at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park to propose that a botanical garden be built in Houston. Presiding at the meeting was Alice York Staub, who introduced Duncan Caldecott, retired director of the Tennessee Botanical Gardens and Fine Arts Center in Nashville. Caldecott spoke on the purpose and history of botanical gardens and illustrated a wide range of examples. Mrs. Staub also introduced Donald G. Olson, director of the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Houston. Olson informed the audience that he is prepared to authorize the reservation of between 50 and 300 acres in Cullen Park as a site for the garden, which he called a "critical element" that the city now lacks. While there are the arboretum in Memorial Park and some modest specimen gardens in Hermann Park, neither is capable of being

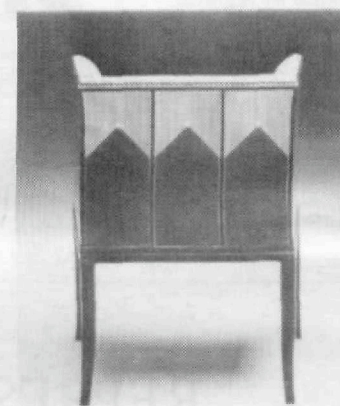
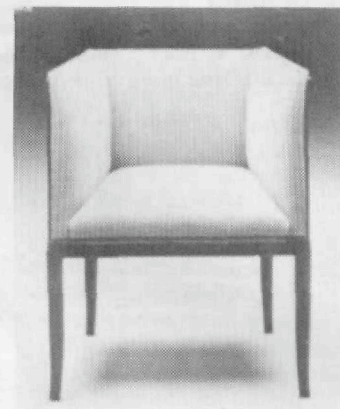
expanded to a full-scale botanical garden.

According to Gay Gooch Estes, president of the Garden Club of Houston, a steering committee is now being formed to organize efforts to construct the garden. Over the next six to twelve months, this committee will formulate goals and develop strategies to build the botanical garden. Mrs. Estes emphasized that any interested individual or organization was welcome to participate in this process.

The initial, and ultimate, extent of the garden and its programmatic scope must be decided. Funds must also be raised to construct and stock the garden, although the exact proportion of private-public financial support has yet to be determined. Since 1983 the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Society and the City of Dallas have been developing the first phase of a 66-acre botanical garden. The entire project will take 15 years to complete and is estimated to cost \$15 million. In San Antonio, a major improvement to the city's existing botanical garden is projected in the form of a Botanical Conservatory complex, designed by the New York architect Emilio Ambasz.

Stephen Fox

S T A T U S



Eliel Saarinen 1929-1930
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A highly important achievement in the history of furniture design. This box style chair illustrates a synthesis of Saarinen's architectural and decorative aesthetic. Exemplary of Saarinen's fascination with surface, line, pattern, texture, and metaphor, this chair represents one design from a suite of living room furniture. Only four of these chairs were made for Saarinen House. The four originals are all owned by Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum. This offering marks the first time this prized chair has been available to the public.

Portfolio Available: Eight Dollars

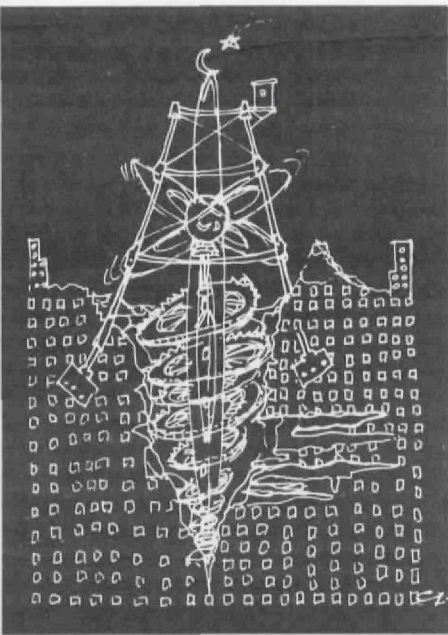
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Local Boys Named in Times Square Competition

Christopher Genik and Peter D. Waldman submitted one of eight schemes premiated by the Municipal Art Society of New York on 17 September 1984 for the redesign of Times Square. Five hundred sixty-five proposals were entered in the open competition, which was organized by the Municipal Art Society and the National Endowment for the Arts. The society staged the competition to protest plans currently underway to redevelop property around Times Square to designs by John Burgee with Philip Johnson for developer George Klein.

The nine-member jury, headed by architect Henry I. Cobb, chairman of the architecture department of Harvard University, deliberated for two days in June before deciding to award eight equal prizes rather than a ranked array. Of the eight, Genik and Waldman's was the only one that dispensed with the former Times Tower, an 80-year-old skyscraper on the site drastically remodeled in 1966. Genik and Waldman proposed to replace it with what one juror, urban designer Jonathan Barnett, described as an "epic poem."

Genik and Waldman produced an allegorical monument informed dialectically by the themes of squalor, purity, and transformation. Times Square is acknowledged to be the center of the universe, and a cultural sewer. Genik and Waldman reconcile these two identities with a public space that is a sewerage treatment plant for both effluent



Redesign for Times Square, by Christopher Genik and Peter D. Waldman, architect

and humanity. It is programmed to enact an annual civic cleansing ritual each New Year's Eve that will replace, yet recall, the Times Tower's special festival role. Its epic character derives from the consistency and intensity with which Genik and Waldman identified, developed, and architecturally embodied the mythic themes that their design evokes.

All eight designs were exhibited at The Urban Center during September and October. Among the jurors were Adèle Naudé Santos, John Hejduk, Carl E. Schorske, Richard Sennett, Vartan Gregorian, Hideo Sasaki, and Ming Cho Lee.

Stephen Fox

RDA Spring Lineup

The Rice Design Alliance's 1985 spring season will commence in January with a new series called Fireside Chats, organized by John Kaliski. At each of the three sessions, slated for Wednesdays between 16 January and 30 January, a Houston architect will present a single project currently in design and then engage in a critical exchange about the project with invited respondents. The chats will be held in the Jury Room in Anderson Hall, the School of Architecture building, on the campus of Rice University. RDA members admitted free.

The spring lecture series, organized by Karl Laurence Kilian and Lorraine Wild, will consist of six lectures on great gardens of the world. Noted authorities on European, Asian, and American gardening and landscape traditions will speak. All lectures will be at 8 PM in the Brown Auditorium of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston on successive Wednesdays in February and March 1985. Admission fee; reservations suggested.

An RDA Forum is scheduled to be held in the Brown Auditorium of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston at 7 PM on Wednesday, 1 May 1985. It will be organized by Andrew John Rudnick. Admission fee; reservations suggested.

For information on any of these events, telephone the Rice Design Alliance's office at 713/524-6297



Richmond Avenue will gain an esplanade but lose some mature oak trees (Photo by Paul Hester)

Esplanades For Montrose

The Montrose area will be the beneficiary of some attention from city hall and civic-minded citizens in the next year. A \$3.1 million dollar contract has been let to John G. Holland Construction Co. to widen and repave Richmond Avenue from South Shepard to Yoakum. The badly deteriorated and heavily traveled artery will become four lanes wide with a grassy esplanade. The project developed slowly because it will entail the loss of 19 feet of now private land along the street, and the destruction of almost 20 mature trees. City Councilman George Greanias described the new boulevard as bordered by special "cobbled," stained and patterned, concrete sidewalks and 250 new live oaks. The esplanades can be developed in the future by neighborhood groups, as was done further east on Richmond, but city guidelines apply.

Montrose will also regain its lost esplanade between Westheimer and the Mecom Fountain. The bidding documents are now being organized to replace the esplanade and resurface the four-lane boulevard. Street parking will be eliminated. Since \$50,000 has been donated by businesses and groups the improvements will begin in those sections, and procede as more funds are raised.

Montrose is also slated to receive a neighborhood library. Kenneth Bentsen & Associates have designed an 11,000 square-foot, stone-clad building for the corner of Mandell and Richmond. However, the library department, legal department, and the Mayor's office are now deliberating whether the facility should be housed in a remodeled mansion on Montrose Boulevard. The mansion is not a real possibility unless an option to purchase can be secured after an initial lease expires. Though it would be laudable to save one of the few remaining "great houses" from the wrecker's ball, either choice will benefit the area.

Janet M. O'Brien

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In March we will visit **Shanghai, Wuxi, Suzhou, Beijing, Xian, Kunming, Guilin** and **Xishuang Banna**, only recently opened to visitors. It is located in 250,000 acres of virgin jungle along the Mekong River, almost in Burma. There are 5,000 species of plants, and it is the natural habitat for over 40% of China's native wild life, including elephants and a primitive monkey, the slow loris. We will visit the Dai people, the largest of the ten national minority groups in the area.

We will enjoy cuisine as varied as the places we visit.

We will return via Hong Kong and have ample time there for shopping. The tour will last 23 days.

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Citelines

Internship Report

In Houston, Texas, during the summer of 1983, under layers of yellowish Hinesian and Century Development stratosphere, the mind and heels of one more developer start to click. Urban planning begins at home, in fact in one's own backyard, and then elbows its way into the Montrose area. This developer knows that yuppies of all sexual orientations make enough money to purchase culture, art, and jacuzzi. Deals are made for property. Market analysis is conducted to reflect the driving need for hot tubs. Vibrantly colored preliminary models are built and visions of bank loans dance in his head.

Three prospects for urban development look rather bright. The first and second, each consisting of four Montrose townhomes, have floor plans that are so cost-efficient in terms of land use that they "will be grabbed right up." And assuming one gains approval from a city clerk who knows very little about sewage access and that the developer knows very well the timing for changing setback requirements in the area, these projects will materialize into great profits. As long as there is a jacuzzi on every other floor, no one will mind carrying groceries up two flights of stairs. After all, isn't this one of the charms of an urban lifestyle? These projects will be uplifting (so to speak) and will address social concern for consumers.

And then there is the European charm of a mixed-use project with luxury apartments for wealthy doctors near the Medical Center, with dog grooming and a hair salon below, along with a sandwich shop elegantly sited on the shifted grid. Three aedicular gates stand on their hind legs at each entry with the stucco potential for a Gravesian palette.

Meanwhile, as long as there is a baldichino propped up in each living room, a Moore-like "room within a room," the developer knows that this project has even got potential for *PA* recognition. Presentation drawings are made with this goal in mind. In addition to its economic viability, all that is needed for its award-winning design is for it to be imbued with existential meaning.

And who might be better to do that but a graduate student dipped for only two years in the historicism and poetics of design problems? How much is existential meaning really worth and how does it enter into a design? ANSWER: minimum wage and *ex post facto*. Just sprinkle a little celebration of entry, some golden section facades, and a twist of polemics between the jacuzzi and the hot-water heater. How can it miss?

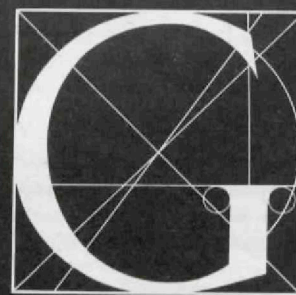
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