

GYP-CRETE Floor Underlayment Offers Quality You Can Stand On! Economy You Can Bank On!

plus: Fire Control • Sound Control • High Strength

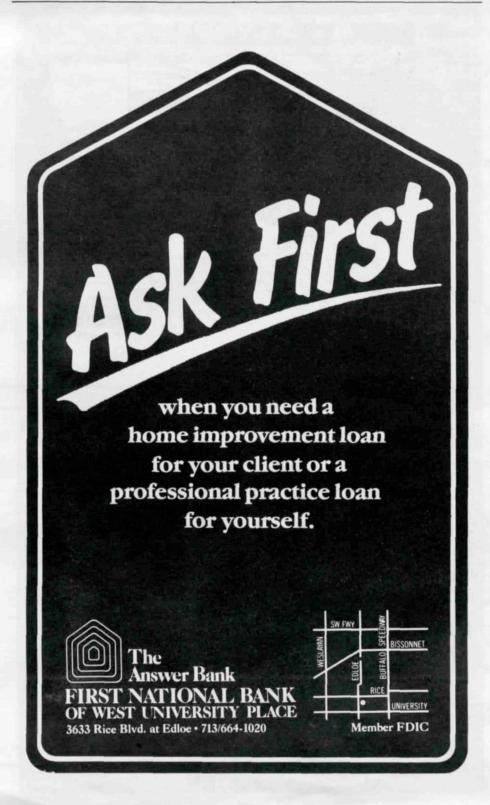
- Lightweight Economy
 Sets in 90 Minutes
 - Eliminates Double-Plating

NO SHRINKAGE CRACKS

GYP-CRETE® Floor Underlayment is a lightweight, highstrength gypsum cement which quickly forms a fire resistant, sound insulated and crack resistant floor. When used in combination with other components of wood frame assemblies, or as a non-structural underlayment over precast concrete, GYP-CRETE sets to a smooth surface that extends the life of floor coverings. In renovation projects, GYP-CRETE is unsurpassed in correcting problems with uneven existing floors.

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Crabbing About Preservation

John Kaliski and Stephen Fox





Top: Crabb House, 1936, John F. Staub, architect. Above: Crabb House, demolished, 1985 (Photos by Paul Hester)

One of Houston's most famous and beautiful houses, the Dolores Welder Crabb Mitchell House at Pine Valley and Troon in River Oaks, was demolished on May Day, despite outcries of protest from the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance and a demonstration organized by Carolyn Farb whose participants included Mrs. Lloyd M. Bentsen III, Mrs. Peter S. Meyer, Mrs. Thomas W. Houghton, and Mrs. Peter T. Scardino. The Spanish Colonial style house - built in 1936 to the designs of John F. Staub - and its gardens were sold to Kenneth L. Schnitzer, Jr. and Douglas W. Schnitzer, who have retained Benjamin E. Brewer, Jr. to design replacement houses on the site. While the owners were completely within their legal rights to first strip and then bulldoze the house, is the issue merely: one can do with one's property as one pleases?

The destruction of any clearly superior example of Houston's architectural heritage in any stable, restricted neighborhood both diminishes the overall quality of the immediate environment for the people who reside there and hastens the destruction of a fundamental public trust that these stable neighborhoods constitute for all of Houston's citizens. In an essay which appears in *Modulus 16*, "Towards a New (Old) Architecture," Carroll W. Westfall defines the meaning of public rights in a civilized city and their relationship to architecture:

...buildings serve institutions and give form to the civil and political values they promote:

...cities are places where public purposes shape and check private ends; ...buildings in cities represent that balance between public and private which promotes civility. Westfall does not limit his argument to public structures but aptly demonstrates that "...ornamenting the city with decorous private residences [has] a public consequence and affects the community at large. They are clothed with a public interest, and therefore ought to be retained as part of the city." The author suggests that an owner who cannot inhabit an important structure without destroying it should, with the public trust in mind, divest himself of it.

Houston does have a past — historical, institutional, and architectural. The continuing destruction of this past, both public and private, works like an amnesia to vandalize and demean the values that made Houston great.

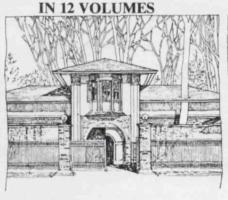
Aubade (Houston, 1985)

Each year The Houston Festival Foundation, Inc. commissions a poem about Houston. The following poem was written by poet Susan Wood for the 1985

Susan Wood

- I This far south November might just as well be summer some days, it's that green and hot. Leaves don't turn here, or fall, drifting down to be raked into bonfires of their own color. One morning we look up and suddenly, it seems - find them gone, we don't know where. It's the way the diaphanous body of the sky seems to fill overnight with towers, its unblemished blue disappearing into mirrors of glass and steel. Like the future, they are beautifully anonymous, each face a face at the window as though the body is a box which holds the heart and is crowded with absence. In this climate, how shall we know we have been saved?
- II In the neighborhoods of Houston, we were children. Mornings we walked on air, moments our stilts cut a wide path through clouds of grass. I think of a grandfather who lived by his hands carefully planing the boards to make those wooden legs. He knew children want to be lifted up. We wanted to rise above our small selves, as though knowledge equalled height. We'd climb the body's ladder any way we could, even scale a tree's green cliff to watch a pair of lovers melt to shade. He was taller, and stronger, but when she raised her mouth to his, each face opened to the other like a door. Down below us, the garden ran wild, rioting azalea and oleander, the pure white flame of the lilies. High on those high limbs, everything seemed possible, that even if we held our breath, the flowers would go on blossoming.
- III Remember a night in deep summer, nineteen hundred sixty-nine? The television bloomed blue in the dark and outside a light hung like a pale disc in the dark fold of sky. Our city was walking on the moon! By morning, it had disappeared. We could not believe our eyes. I think of that when I walk at dawn along the wet streets, light beginning to leaf through the live oaks, the moon still a thin shadow of smoke in the clouds. Above the trees the towers rise, a painting's stylized idea of city, a version of the earth looked at from the moon. It's the way experience seen from a great distance seems somehow unreal, and more intense Childhood, a particular summer day after rain. Mimosa, the trees shaking out their leaves, the faint sour fruit of earth. Description is the best you can do, but not enough. It's the feeling of the day you remember anyway, the way everything seemed secret and blameless at once. Just a hint on the early air of what you'd have to learn, that something final had begun, and nothing you could do would make it stop.
- IV This chapel might be anywhere, it is so anonymous. But it is here, in the middle of Houston, at the edge of a field, late in the century. Inside, in the darkness, the eyes begin, finally, to see. As though these canvases took all our light and gave it back. Sitting alone this morning, I think how much it must have hurt him, to hold his heart in his hand like that, to make of rage a grave and sorrowful music. But Rothko is here now, and King just outside the door. Newman's obelisk breaks its inscription across the still pool's surface: Forgive them for they know not what they do. Can we forgive ourselves? He is out of bounds now. He rejoices in man's lovely, peculiar power to choose death and live -
- Driving east on I-10 at dawn, I see Houston loom, backlit by sun, red, a hundred copper obelisks cut off by cloud. They might be floating in a water blue sky. They might be on fire. I try to imagine this as the last morning: To look up, suddenly, and find a sky gone white and absolute. No time to say what disappears. I try to imagine it. We must imagine it to live. How far will the flash be seen? No father to forgive us, not knowing what we do.

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