

# RDA News



## ON THE BORDER

Last February, 30 RDA members toured the Texas-Tamaulipas border. Led by architectural historian and Brownsville native Stephen Fox, and architect and Nuevo Laredo native Rafael Longoria, the group visited architectural treasures on both sides of the Rio Grande, including examples of Colonial, Victorian, Early Modern, and Contemporary styles.

The ruins of Guerrero Viejo, a historic city in Tamaulipas, was a favorite. The site was remarkable, as was the journey there, which included a flat tire, a band of *federales*, and a bull grazing in the middle of the road. — *Mary Swift*



Front row: Ann Jones, Karen Lantz, Andy Farkas, Charlie Burgess, Pat Burgess, Danna Hahus, Nancy Thompson, Gaye McCullough, Cynthia Toles, Sharon Cunningham, Lily Smith, Arthur Smith. Back row: Bill Stern, Arthur Jones, Surpik Angelini, Minnette Boesel, Donna Kacmar, Marley Lott, Karen Kingsley, Kathy Heard, Rafael Longoria, Tyler Todd, Yvonne Victery, George Cunningham, Karen Schenk, Stephen Fox, Mary Swift, Hill Swift, Ed McCullough, Lynn Kelly.

## MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

The Rice Design Alliance is accepting applications for its fourth annual Initiatives for Houston, a grant program for students and faculty at the Rice University School of Architecture, the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture, and the Prairie View A&M College of Architecture. The program supports projects that focus on Houston's built environment — its history, present condition, and future development. A variety of projects will be considered, including historic research, speculative studies and documentation of the city and its architecture. Separate awards of up to \$5,000 are available for faculty and student projects to be completed in one year. More than one proposal may be funded. Applications are due June 15, 2003, and awards will be announced on August 15. Applications are available at [www.rda.rice.edu](http://www.rda.rice.edu).

## HOUSTON IN A NUTSHELL

### THE 2003 ARCHITECTURE TOUR

**THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE'S** 2003 architecture tour, held March 29 and 30, focused on an adjoining pair of Houston neighborhoods and the range of houses they contain. These are the N.P. Turner Addition (now better known as the Museum District) and West Ranch Estates. They represent two distinct approaches to the development of residential neighborhoods. Both have undergone substantial new residential construction since the 1980s, making the pair a microcosm of Houston architectural trends of the 20th century.

The tour included:

**1117 MILFORD STREET** (c. 1917). One of the earliest houses built in the Turner Addition, this is a bungalow, the most representative Houston house type of the 1905–1925 period, and exhibits the "boxcar" arrangement of rooms-in-a-row typical of Houston bungalows, with bedrooms aligned on the east to catch the prevailing breeze. A 1994 addition by Natalye Appel+Associates discreetly expanded the house's compact interior.

**1112 MILFORD STREET** (1925), by C. B. Schoeppel & Co., has an unusual plan for a two-story Houston house of the 1920s. Major rooms are aligned parallel to the east property line in order to ensure access to the prevailing breeze. In the 1960s, Houston landscape architect C.C. Pat Fleming designed gardens that took advantage of the property's linear organization. The bay window facing Milford was added in 1959, when Milton McGinty enclosed the front porch.

**1117 BANKS STREET** (1931) by J. T. Rather, Jr., with alterations/additions of 1993 by Cameron Armstrong, architect, is an ingenious miniaturization of a "country house" on a single town lot. Because the original interiors were destroyed when the house was used as a medical clinic, Armstrong installed new spaces that not only recapture but enhance the spatial intimacy of the lost originals. April Cohen and Pam Sawyer were interior designers and Ruckel-Dillon-Wright were the landscape architects.

**1338 MILFORD STREET** (1948) is one of the original houses in West Ranch Estates. Rather than demolish it, the owner rehabilitated it in 1992 with landscape architect Reed Dillon of Ruckel-Dillon-Wright

and interior designer Richard Branch. Preserving original room divisions, they demonstrated the flexibility and continued livability of the ranch house.

**1319 BANKS STREET** (2001) in West Ranch Estates is by the New York architect François de Menil. This serene, white stucco house was designed so that indirect sources of daylight provide much of its internal illumination. Floor plans are intricate. Yet one's experience is of light, calm, and buoyancy because of the subtle control of interior coloration and the manipulation of light and view.

**1214 BERTHEA STREET** (2002) by Jay Baker is a modern condensation of a French provincial manor house. Spaces inside range from awesome to intimate. Julie Watkins Baker is interior designer, Thompson Hanson are landscape architects, and Peck & Company executed the wrought-iron detail.

**4714 YOAKUM BOULEVARD** (2003) by the Wittenberg Partnership is 21st-century Houston urban version of a 1950s Los Angeles Case Study house. The house is configured in an L plan around an interior, south-facing courtyard. The Wittenberg Partnership used industrial construction techniques and industrial materials to build and finish this house. Hinged panels allow walls to be opened like doors and ingenious approaches to passive heating and ventilation are incorporated.

The Turner Addition and West Ranch Estates display approaches to suburban development typical of Houston in the first and second halves of the 20th century. They also contain singular works of architecture that animate the neighborhoods and endow them with beauty and distinction. — *Stephen Fox*



4714 Yoakum Blvd.



1117 Milford St.



1117 Banks St.



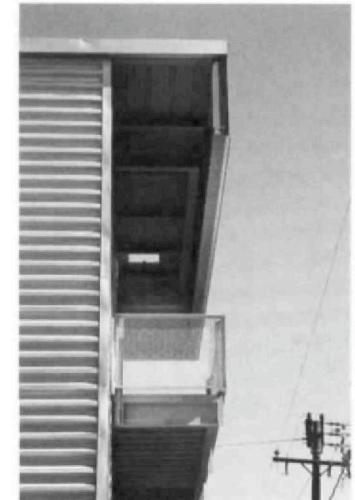
1319 Banks St.



1112 Milford St.



1338 Milford St.



1214 Berthea St.