

2 MORE COMPETITIONS



1 School of Nursing and Biomedical Sciences Building, University of Texas, Houston

On February 19, the University of Texas Houston Health Science Center (UTHHSC) announced that Patkau Architects of Vancouver, British Columbia, were winners of a limited architectural competition for the design of a new School of Nursing and Biomedical Sciences Building in the Texas Medical Center. This marks the first time the UT system has used an invited competition to select an architect. Rives Taylor, campus architect for UTHHSC, and Brian Yeoman, associate vice president of support services, initiated the idea of the competition. Lawrence W. Speck, dean of architecture at the University of Texas, Austin, served as the competition adviser and recommended the six firms invited to participate. The entries, exhibited in Austin at the School of Architecture's Mebane Gallery in April and May, were submitted by the winners, Patkau Architects; Lake/Flato Architects of San Antonio; Steven Holl Architects of New York; Rodolfo Machado/Jorge Silvetti of Boston; Taller de Enrique Norton y Asociados of Mexico City; and Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates of New York.

Jurors for the competition were Dr. James Broadus, director of facilities, planning, and construction at the University of Texas, Austin; Carolyn Grant Fay of Houston; Harrison Fraker, dean of the College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley; Richard Ingersoll, associate professor of architecture at Rice

University and editor of *Design Book Review*; Donna Robertson, dean of the College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago; Donald L. Stull, architect, of Boston; and Cynthia Weese, dean of the School of Architecture, Washington University, St. Louis.

The School of Nursing presently occupies remodeled space in the former Prudential Building (Kenneth Franzheim, 1952) on Holcombe Boulevard, now part of the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Despite its architectural and historical importance, M. D. Anderson is considering demolition of the Prudential Building, perhaps within the next ten years, which will require relocation of the school. Also, during an in-house planning effort in 1993-94, the University of Texas determined that the nursing school needed updated facilities. The site chosen for the new building is on a prominent corner owned by the Texas Medical Center between Holcombe Boulevard and Bertner Avenue adjacent to the UT School of Public Health (MacKie & Kamrath, ca. 1978). The two-story building now on this long narrow sliver of land will be demolished. To the east of the site is Grant-Fay Park, a landscaped area with old trees facing Holcombe, which is all that remains of Grantlands, the childhood country home of juror Carolyn Grant Fay.

The six competing architects were given an extremely detailed brief for a ten-story building to house the School of Nursing, the School of Allied Health

School of Nursing and Biomedical Sciences Building, University of Texas, Houston; winning competition proposal, Patkau Architects.

Stephen Fox

Sciences, and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences as well as a commons for UTHHSC. Architects were instructed to include unprogrammed shell space for future expansion and were encouraged to propose sustainable design approaches to make the building energy efficient and environmentally responsive.

The Patkau design (like those submitted by Lake/Flato, Machado/Silvetti, and TEN y Asociados) fills the entire building site. Patkau proposed a ten-story building, faceted in plan at its narrow north and south ends, giving the tall slender building a prowlike leading edge at the Holcombe-Bertner corner. Interior courts are opened up inside the building, rising through floors one through four and floors six through ten. These provide occupants of the upper floors with easy access to the outdoors. A massive tank on the ninth floor is for the storage and distribution of grey water (untreated rain water utilized for toilets and other non-consumption purposes). The long east and west walls of the building are faced with closely spaced horizontal louvers. Large-scale cutouts penetrate the louvered screen walls. Atop the building are ranks of south-facing solar panels. Patkau's model, with its emphasis on slatted louvers, has already prompted a nickname for the new building: the Popsicle-stick building.

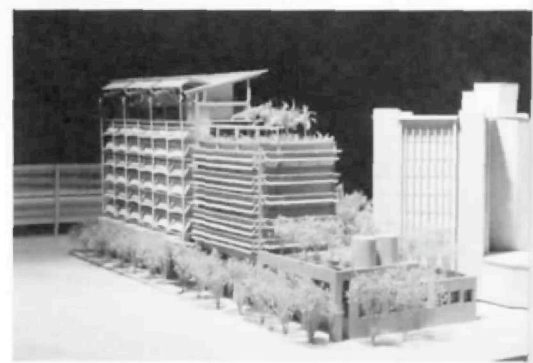
Lake/Flato were the only competitors to propose a detailed landscape plan for the space between the new Nursing School Building and the exiting School



Rodolfo Machado/Jorge Silvetti proposal.



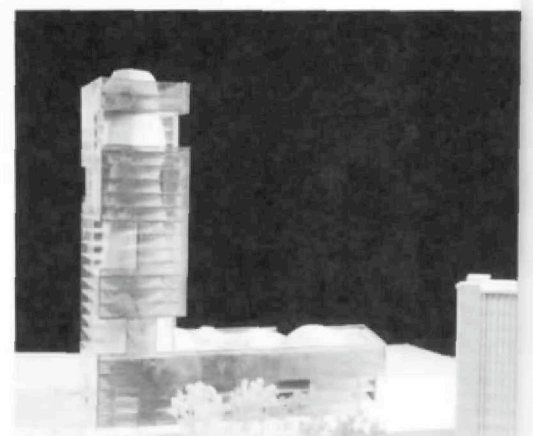
Taller de Enrique Norton y Asociados proposal.



Lake/Flato Architects proposal.



Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates proposal.



Steven Holl Architects proposal.

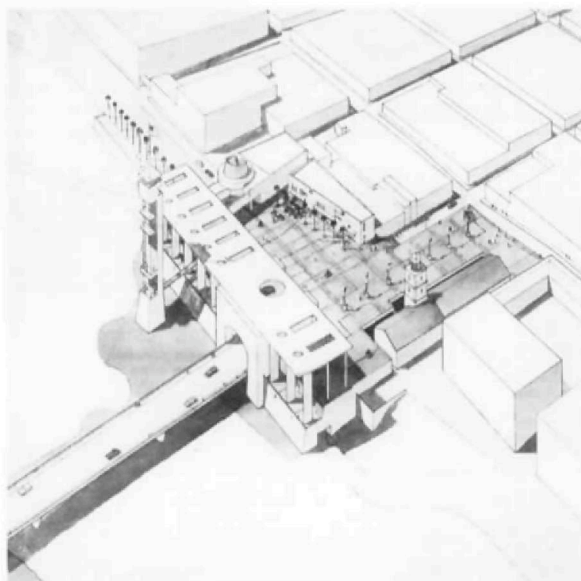
2 El Portal: Laredo/Nuevo Laredo City Embraced by Two Countries

of Public Health. Their design reads architecturally as two buildings. TEN y Asociados also split the building in two, treating the components as parallel slabs (rather than side-by-side, as Lake/Flato did) separated by a central court.

Machado/Silveti emphasized the slab-like nature of the building by contrasting small-scaled windows with much larger penetrations and giving it a pronounced directional thrust with a pedestrian bridge spanning Holcombe (called for in the program, but not included by other competitors). The two New York competitors proposed buildings taller than ten stories. Williams Tsien & Associates designed a 16-story tower to minimize the impact of the building on its small plot. Steven Holl's submission was the most unconventional. He juxtaposed program spaces configured as biomorphic blobs with a rectilinear, cage-like tower containing the blobs.

The University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center must now raise approximately \$60,000,000 to clear the site and construct the new building. The architects, along with local associate architects and other consultants, still have considerable design work to do. Certain elements of the competition, especially the environmental paraphernalia (encouraged by the university but scarcely addressed in its otherwise extremely precise and prescriptive program), may well prove vulnerable to the value engineering that will ensue as design development goes forward.

Despite uncertainty, the university's decision to stage an architectural competition has proved rewarding. It has enabled the university administration, faculty, and staff to see how its programming can be variously interpreted by different architects, and it has given the university the courage to hire out-of-state architects of exceptional design ability, promising the Texas Medical Center a caliber of architecture that has been too rare in its 50-year history. ■



El Portal: Laredo/Nuevo Laredo International Bridge, winning competition proposal, Rebecca Angus and Stephanie Jackson.

The City of Laredo awarded first prize to Rebecca Angus and Stephanie Jackson, architects from East Fremantle, W. A., Australia, in an open competition for an urban design proposal to reconfigure the approach to the Bridge of the Americas, the downtown pedestrian and vehicular bridge linking Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico. The competition results were announced on April 19, 1997, in Laredo, and all competition entries — 33 from architects in the U.S., Mexico, France, Australia, Egypt, and Italy, and 28 from students and interns — were exhibited at the Laredo Center for the Arts until May 14.

The competition program called for a ceremonial entrance on the Laredo side of the bridge. Competitors had to work with a constricted urban site abutted by properties that the City of Laredo does not control and confusing traffic patterns that bring large numbers of pedestrians into conflict with heavy vehicular traffic. The Angus-Jackson design used the site's downward slope toward the bank of the Rio Grande to route pedestrian traffic underneath the street, which is used by incoming vehicles, and through a landscaped, amphitheaterlike terraced park at the river's edge. Pedestrians can either follow a ramp up to the bridge leading to Nuevo Laredo or climb to a viewing platform on the Laredo side of the Rio Grande.



Second place competition proposal, Longoria/Peters.

Second place in the competition was awarded to Longoria/Peters of Houston and third place to the team of Charles A. York, Odell Thompson, and Sharon Fleming of Austin. Honorable mentions were awarded to Kimberley and Richard Miller of Philadelphia; Steven K. Quevedo of Dallas; the team of Maria Eugenia Calderon, David

Graeber, Carlos Mejia, and Ovidio Cavazos of Laredo and Austin; the team of Gevork Hartoonian, Bernardo Gogna, Lisa Chu, Shaowen Wang, and Rafaela Bortuluzzi of New York; and the team of Ignacio Quinonez Pena, Juan Antonio Medina, Alejandro Quinonez, and Florentino Medina of Nuevo Laredo.

A separate set of commendations was awarded in the student-intern category. First place went to Monica C. Rokicki and Mario A. Reyes of the University of Houston; second place to David Williamson of the University of Texas, Arlington; and third place to the team of Allan Henderson, Benjamin Jennings, Ian Venegas, Edmundo Palacios, and Carlos Nunez of Ball State University and the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. Five honorable mentions were also given in the student-intern category.

Jurors for the competition were the architect Abraham Zabludovsky, Mexico City; architect, theorist, and teacher Livio Dimitriu of the USA Institute, New York; Joseph Rosa, chief curator of the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C.; Laredo City Council member Consuelo Montalvo; Laredo art collector Rosi de Anda; and Laredo businessman Evan Quiros. Laredo mayor Saul Ramirez said that funding to develop the urban design plan could come from federal sources earmarked for downtown revitalization. Webb County judge Mercurio Martinez pledged the financial support of the county to ensure construction of the improvements.

The competition was co-sponsored by a host of Laredo institutions. Professional advisers were Laredo architects Viviana Frank and Frank Rotnofsky. SF ■

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