



Ando proposal, site plan showing Kimbell Museum at left.

Winning proposal, Tadao Ando.

HARMONIC PROGRESSION



Ando proposal, photograph of model.

Barbara Koerble

Fort Worth and its Cultural District took a significant step forward when the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (MAMFW) announced on May 6 that Tadao Ando will design its new building. The art museum will be Ando's first major commission in the United States. Ando competed against five other architects, including Arata Isozaki, Tokyo; Richard Gluckman, New York; Carlos Jiménez, Houston; Ricardo Legorreta, Mexico City; and David Schwarz, Washington, D.C. The architectural review committee chairman, Anne W. Marion, commented, "We had six wonderful proposals to consider, and we thank the architects for their excellent submissions and presentations here in Fort Worth. The committee was moved

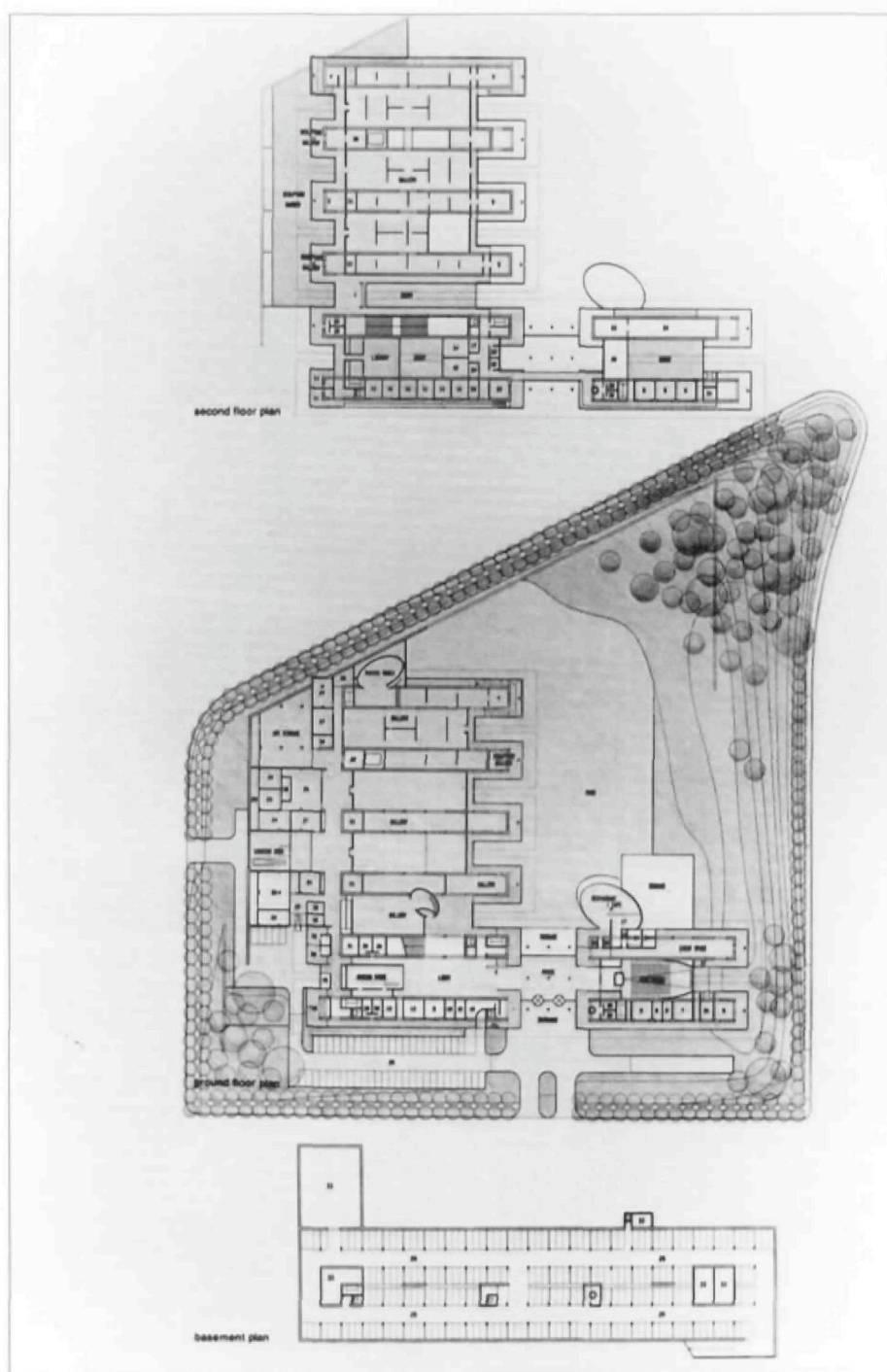
by the beauty of Mr. Ando's concept, his responsiveness to our program, and his poetic handling of the site."¹ The cost of museum construction will be covered by private funds. Marla Price said that she was "not sure" if funding is in place yet, however this suggests that substantial donations from trustees and other museum supporters have been promised.

The new Modern Art Museum will be located close to the Kimbell on a 10.96-acre site bordered by Darnell Street, Arch Adams Street, Camp Bowie Boulevard, and University Drive. Now occupied by a brick apartment complex built in 1944, the site was purchased in July 1996 by Fort Worth's Burnett Foundation, whose president, Anne Marion, was asked to head MAMFW's architecture review

courtesy Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth

courtesy Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth

courtesy Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth



Ando proposal, plans.

FORT WORTH'S NEW MODERN ART MUSEUM BY TADAO ANDO

committee. The Modern's present museum, at Montgomery and Lancaster streets, predates both the Kimbell and the Amon Carter museums. It was designed in 1954 by Herbert Bayer who, after teaching at the Bauhaus in the 1920s, immigrated to the United States in the 1930s and built a successful career as a graphic designer. The Fort Worth Art Center was one of his few buildings. The Scott Theater was added to the north side of the museum, and later additions by Ford, Powell & Carson (1973–74) largely obscured the Bayer façade.² The motivation for construction of a new building stemmed from limited gallery space. There is not enough room to host special exhibitions and keep the permanent collection on view.³ Richard Gluckman,

known for his remodeling of existing buildings for gallery space, was asked to evaluate the Modern's existing building to determine whether a renovation or expansion would be feasible on its present site. Gluckman found the old building too confining and recommended that the MAMFW construct a new museum.⁴

Museum Director Marla Price and Chief Curator Michael Auping were responsible for recommending a preliminary list of architects. They traveled extensively to evaluate buildings that architects under consideration had designed. Price's recollections of their

trip to Japan are particularly vivid. The work of several Japanese architects, including Ando, Isozaki, and Kenzo Tange were on their itinerary, but Ando's Water Temple of Hompukuji and the Chikatsu Asuka Historical Museum were, for her, among the most compelling. The Historical Museum exhibits burial mound artifacts in dark, tomblike rooms. "It hits you in the stomach — you can't speak for hours after visiting it," Price said of her experience at Chikatsu Asuka.⁵

Price and Auping compiled a list of 25 architects for the review committee to consider. Six finalists were selected by secret ballot and announced on September 20, 1996. Because the voting was secret, why some architects did not make the cut is a matter of conjecture, but Price speculated that Rafael Moneo and Renzo Piano, having designed museums in Houston, were not considered for that reason. Also, Richard Meier, heavily involved with the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, may have been thought to be overcommitted. Frank Gehry and Rem Koolhaas were discussed at length, Price explained, but their work apparently did not correspond to the more conservative sensibility of the committee.⁶ Neither was Robert Venturi seriously considered. One also suspects that the list of competitors purposely excluded any architect who might have challenged the preeminence of the Kimbell in the Cultural District's pecking order.

The finalists were given the program in mid-November and proposals were due April 1, 1997. Each was awarded \$25,000 to defray the cost of design preparation and travel. On April 21

and 22, the review committee reconvened to hear one-and-one-half hour presentations by each team. The designs were previewed by the press on April 24, and shown in a public exhibition that opened on April 26. The committee met again on May 5 and voted unanimously to commission Tadao Ando for the new museum.

The role that the Kimbell Art Museum played in the competition proposals cannot be overstated. This year



Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 1309 Montgomery Street, Herbert Bayer, architect, 1954.

marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Kimbell. With hindsight, it is obvious that this relatively small museum set a new standard for American art museums. In fact, the architectural program for the new Modern Art Museum quoted from the Kimbell's program of 1966: "A visitor's experience should be one of warmth, mellowness and even elegance. They should be charmed. The spaces, forms and fixtures should maintain a harmonious simplicity and human proportion between the visitor and the building and the art observed. The creative strength of the building should lie in simplicity and directness of approach to the uses of the building, clarity of the disposition of parts, harmony in the relationship between visible form and means of construction, taste in the proportions of those forms, quality of materials and exquisite craftsmanship in putting the materials together."⁷

The architectural program did not specify where the museum was to be placed on the site, so the architects had the option of orienting it toward the Kimbell Art Museum on Arch Adams or toward the commercial strip on Camp Bowie Boulevard. All six finalists placed an entrance to the museum on Darnell Street. Ando and Schwarz oriented their museums toward the Kimbell; the other architects chose to address the Camp Bowie Boulevard side of the property, and Isozaki also made gestures to University Drive. The architects were not given a budget, which accounts for disparities among the submissions, including parking arrangements, which were proposed for both above grade and below.

The new building will more than quadruple the 40,000 square feet of the museum's present building. Gallery space will increase from 15,000 to 75,000 square feet, placing the Modern Art Museum among the largest contemporary art museums in the country. Not surprisingly, all of the competition entries dwarfed the Kimbell in size. Because of the overhanging canopies, the size of Ando's museum is exaggerated on the site plan, even so, it was the largest at



Ricardo Legorreta proposal.

230,000 square feet. Price said that although no budget has been set for the building, it can be assumed that the final size will be around 175,000 to 200,000 square feet. She pointed out that Ando's design could be built in phases. Isozaki included a visual demonstration of the size disparity when he overlaid two models in his presentation. A site plan that includes a three dimensional Kimbell is partially inserted into a blown-up section of one of the gallery spaces. The Kimbell is so small that it looks like a sculpture displayed within the museum. Perhaps Isozaki was alluding to the reverence with which the Kimbell was treated in the competition.

Ando's proposal sought to match the serenity of the Kimbell and to respond in the same architectural language, continuing a polite dialogue rather than interrupting a train of thought. His design consists of six rectangular boxes, divided into four exhibition wings and two long public areas. The building is of double-layered construction, which Ando refers to as a "double skin," an internal two-story concrete wall surrounded by a glass wall envelope. A floating canopy roof of aluminum slats is supported by columns and Y-struts. Ando describes the concrete and glass elements of the structure:

"Through their simplicity, they resonate in harmony with the water and greenery, and inside are resplendent with a variety of spaces, allowing the introduction of the life inherent in the act of creation."⁸

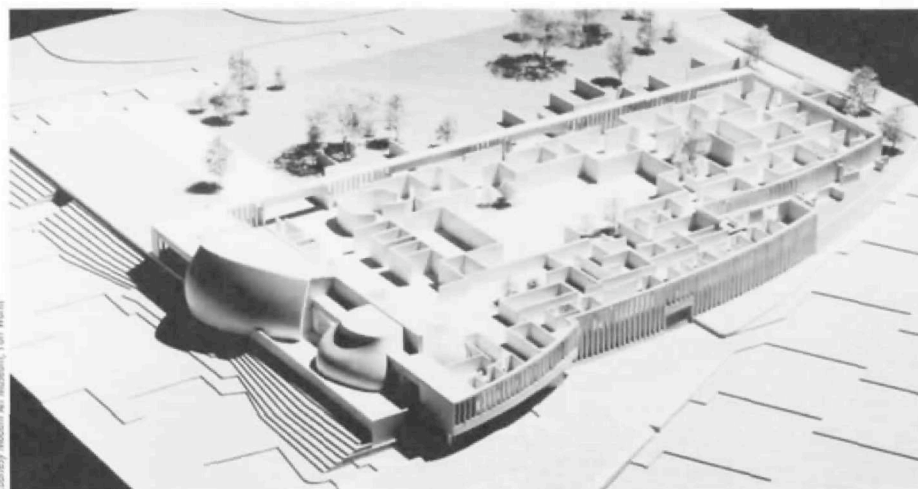
Ando proposes that the end wall of the museum's auditorium be all glass, similar to his Church on the Water. Curtains and slide screens could be lowered as needed. Ando emphasizes integration of the building with nature to reduce museum fatigue. At all levels and areas of the building visitors will be able to step out of the gallery into the enveloping glass corridors from which views of the pools and the surrounding landscape can be seen. At some points, the glass walls will seem to disappear into the reflecting pool. Among the first concerns that Price says the committee will want Ando to address is how the HV/AC system will handle the demands placed on it by the large expanses of glazing as well as the

framing system for the window walls. Ando's display panels propose that a "natural ventilation system," apparently utilizing air circulation over the water, will cool the glazed areas with a swamp-cooler effect.

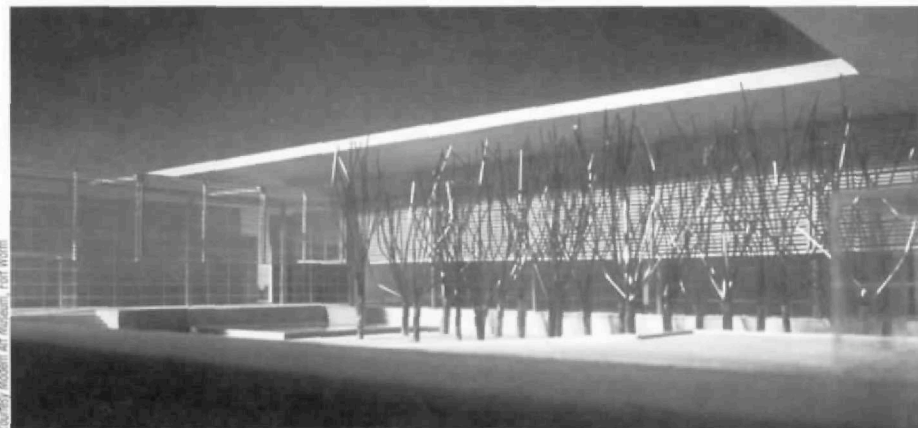
Price describes Ando's planning of exhibition space and support services as "a professional's dream of a system; the best I've ever seen."⁹ Unlike some of the competitors, who struggled with planning truck access points for art shipments, Ando's scheme makes loading directly to the sculpture garden and exhibition spaces feasible and provides direct access to all support services.

The site plan devised by Ando deals with the problematic, highly-trafficked intersection of Camp Bowie Boulevard and University Drive on the northeast corner of the site. A dense grove of trees covering this triangular wedge will open to reveal rectangular wings along Camp Bowie Boulevard. These wings are surrounded by a pool of water on the southern side. It was this integration of landscape and structure that strongly impressed the committee. Ando described his proposal as an "arbor for art." The woods created at the intersection of Camp Bowie Boulevard and University Drive, Ando explains on his text panel, is symbolic, serving as a starting point for the cultural precinct as a whole. By surrounding the site with trees and water, Ando's museum offers, as does the Kimbell, a peaceful counterpoint to the city itself. In 1984 Ando wrote: "I do not believe that architecture should speak too much. It should remain silent and let nature in the guise of sunlight and wind speak."¹⁰

The influence of Vitruvius can be seen in the Ando scheme where elemental simplicity is underscored by the use of Y supports, referring to an ancient structural form used in primitive huts. Vitruvius wrote: "At first [the men of old] set up forked stakes connected by twigs and covered these walls with mud."¹¹ Ando told the review committee during his competition presentation that he named his dog Le Corbusier in homage to the great modernist architect, but critics have generally compared Ando's work to that



Arata Isozaki proposal.



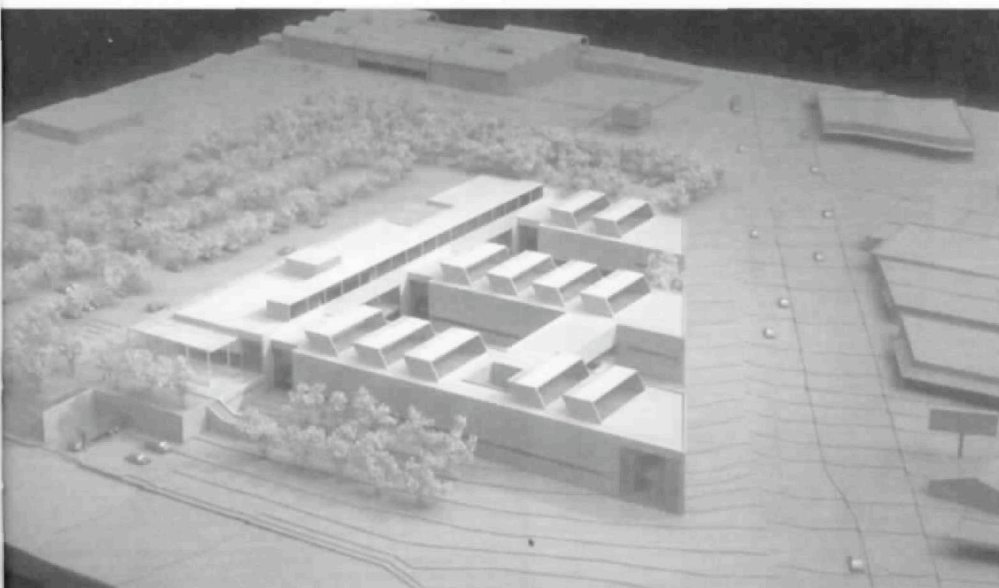
Richard Gluckman proposal.

of Louis Kahn.¹² While Ando's eloquent expression of concrete, glass, and light is reminiscent of Kahn, Ando works in a more purely modern vein, exhibiting fewer of the classicizing or Beaux-Arts tendencies that mark Kahn's later buildings. However, neoclassical echoes from Edward Durell Stone's Kennedy Center are also vaguely evident in Ando's entry. Consciously wishing to avoid a design that would soon appear dated, the committee and staff agreed that Ando's proposal would age gracefully.

Of all the competitors, Ricardo Legorreta was the most demonstrative, although he did not stray from his signature style. His artistic renderings made his presentation the most appealing to the public, but they gave short shrift to the illustration of staff/service spaces. The renderings of a 48-foot entry tower, which is perforated and lit from within by colored lights, depict interior patterns of light and shadow on the blank walls. The glowing tower would be a beacon for pedestrians at night. A counterpart to the nearby tower of the Will Rogers Coliseum, this was the only feature of any of the entries that was over two stories high, and, in that context, seemed daring. Legorreta created a sprawling physical complex, like a city, taking full advantage of the large site. His museum was surrounded with formal gardens and groves of trees. His was the most overtly referential entry showing historical precedents such as the Alhambra. Some of Legorreta's spaces, though, were overly dramatic spatially, such as the special exhibition pavilion with its rotated corbeled pyramidal ceiling.

Isozaki presented a proposal that reacted against the formality of the Kimbell. He described his *parti* as: "a turbulent flow [that] intersects with the orthogonal grid system of the Kimbell Art Museum to create the geometry of the Modern Art Museum."¹³ Yet in the exterior form of Isozaki's building, most of the intended disorder is concealed by the overlying rectilinear form of the building screened by a repetitive two-story colonnade. Bulging extrusions on the east side intended to house special events and the auditorium and curvilinear walls on the Camp Bowie Boulevard façade may be Isozaki's response to the program's request that the museum serve as an introduction to the whole district. These more organic forms are uncharacteristic of Isozaki's previous museums, which have been primarily composed of severe volumetric forms.

Richard Gluckman, who gave up the opportunity to redesign the Museum's old building, won the favor of the curatorial staff with his appealing layout of gallery spaces and well-integrated service facilities. In addition to adaptive reuse projects in existing buildings for the Warhol Museum and the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum (a project of Mrs. Marion and her husband), he has designed gallery spaces for several prominent New York dealers. But, his design for the Modern Art Museum was his first for a free-standing building. It had some of the most varied and complicated elevations, which were unified by a continuous canopy roof. Due to the complexity of the design, Gluckman's exterior lacked the iconic clarity of the Ando design.



Carlos Jiménez proposal.

Carlos Jiménez's project was notable for its parallelogram-profiled light monitors and its fingerlike gallery wings, which addressed the site with more delicacy than most schemes, including Ando's. Jiménez's volumetric expression was characteristic of his other work, particularly the Central Administration Building of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Spencer Studio Art Building at Williams College. His entry not only employed a formal economy of means but would have been the least expensive to build and maintain.

David Schwarz decided to out-module the Kimbell. He must have recalled the shrinking of Kahn's museum during design development and decided to hedge his bet by presenting three alternative schemes from a baby-size museum to a papa-size one.¹⁴ His schematic manipulation of the module, complete with a morphology diagram, was intended to show flexibility for gallery additions. In reality, his galleries would have offered too many choices in traffic patterns. His model interiors show tentlike, vaulted galleries acting as circulation spines with openings to adjacent flat-ceilinged rooms. Even though ceiling heights vary, oversized contemporary works could not have been hung on the slanted, vaulting walls. There was no incorporation of two-story display space, as in several of the other schemes. The least convincing aspect of Schwarz's presentation was the Darnell Street elevation showing a flat-roofed modern wing juxtaposed with pitched-roof pavilions. The overall impression of Schwarz's entry was that of a building with a split personality, straddling historical periods. Due to the presence of several Bass family members on the review committee and the fact that Kit Moncrief, another committee member, is president of the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame now being designed by Schwarz, there was local concern that the competition might unfairly favor Schwarz. While these and other connections might have helped him, the review committee would have had difficulty justifying the selection of



David Schwarz proposal.

Schwarz based on his submission.

Problems that Ando will have to resolve include how to handle parking so museum security is not compromised. How much the Modern Art Museum is willing to pay for underground parking remains to be seen. Current figures estimate above ground parking at \$5,000 per vehicle, while underground may run as high as \$30,000 per vehicle.¹⁵ Parking space is at a premium during major events such as the Stock Show or the Kimbell's blockbuster exhibitions. Moving into the Kimbell sphere will make parking an important issue for the museum. A six-acre tract east of the Kimbell is owned by the Fort Worth School District and is occupied by its administrative office building. Kimbell Director Ted Pillsbury has indicated that this is the logical place for expansion of his museum.¹⁶ However, the school district's deed stipulates that the property will revert to the heirs of the donor if its use is not school-related.¹⁷ There had been discussion about closing Arch Adams Street during the Kimbell's ill-fated expansion project.¹⁸ Were Arch Adams Street closed to through traffic now, the northern half could be used for access to parking areas for the museums. The southern section of the street could be used for future Kimbell expansion or as an inexpensive addition to existing parking.

The competition process used by the Modern Art Museum worked very well. It

satisfied the public's curiosity, invited response, and promoted fair play. Carlos Jiménez commented, "the competition was handled very professionally. They were careful to treat everyone equally."¹⁹ By sharing the competition entries with the public as both an entertaining exhibition and an educational tool, the museum almost guarantees interest and enthusiasm for its project. The most frequently heard criticism by architects about the competition was the less than adventurous list of invited participants.

Ando's design is in part indebted to Kahn's revitalization of the language of modern architecture, which persists as a vital expression thirty years later. The success of Ando's competition design reflects the continuing vitality of modernist architecture, and pairs the work of a respectful follower with one of his mentors. Construction of the Ando museum will provide an extraordinary opportunity to view the work of mentor and disciple side by side. His proposal promises a serene environment for art, and it should be an important addition to Texas's museums. ■

1. Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, press release, May 6, 1997. Other members of the committee were Lee M. Bass, Nancy Lee Muse Bass, Perry R. Bass, Cornelia Blake, Kay Fortson, William P. Hallman, Jr., Edward R. Hudson, Jr., John L. Marion, Kit Moncrief, and Marsland Moncrief. Ex-officio members were Dr. Marla Price (Director, MAMFW), Michael Auping (Chief Curator, MAMFW), and advisory members Dr. Edmund Pillsbury (Director, Kimbell Art Museum) and Dr. Mark Thistlethwaite (Kay and Velma Kimbell Professor of Art History, Texas Christian University).

2. Founded in 1892 as a gallery in the downtown Carnegie Library, the MAMFW is the oldest art museum in Texas.

3. Janet Kutner, "Fort Worth Modern Art Museum Plans Move," *Dallas Morning News*, July 19, 1996, p. 31A.

4. MAMFW, press preview, April 24, 1997. Herzog DeMeuron also gave MAMFW officials an assessment of the existing building, but they were not considered for the new commission as Gluckman was.

5. Marla Price, Fort Worth Chapter, AIA, Tour of MAMFW competition exhibition, May 20, 1997.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Richard Fargo Brown, "The Kimbell Museum Architectural Program," 1966.

8. Tadao Ando, panel text, competition entry. "Two features are characteristic of my work: a use of limited materials, which have their textures exposed, and an ambiguous articulation of the function of space. I believe that these attributes enable me to produce effective spatial prototypes." (Tadao Ando, "A Wedge in Circumstances," *The Japan Architect*, 243, June 1977).

9. Price, FWAIA Tour.

10. Tadao Ando, *Buildings, Projects, Writings* (New York: Press, 1984).

11. Morris Hicky Morgan, translator, *Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960), p. 39.

12. Francesco Dal Co, Tadao Ando: Complete Works (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), pp. 10, 13.

13. Arata Isozaki, panel text, competition entry.

14. This presentation recalled the "pick-your-style" elevations Schwarz prepared for the Texas Rangers Ballpark competition. See Barbara Koerble, "Squeeze Play," *CITE*, Spring 1992, pp. 16-21.

15. Price, press preview, April 24, 1997.

16. Kutner, p. 31A.

17. Price, FWAIA tour.

18. Barbara Koerble, "UTA Architects, Others Offer Expansion Ideas," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, February 18, 1990, sec. 6, p. 5.

19. Telephone conversation with author, 1997.