

the walls, later augmented with asbestos. The church was equipped with a gas-fueled heating system; gas was so plentiful in the 1940s that the church got it for free. The funnellike interior, while splendidly dramatic, hardly fosters energy efficiency: any heat introduced through the forced-air system simply rises to the top of the 50-foot nave. Heating and cooling costs have consequently exhibited a skyward tendency of their own. David De Long of the University of Pennsylvania, who prepared the catalogue raisonné of Goff's work, also cites as problematic the somewhat crude construction by untrained, mostly unsupervised workers, and unresolved details induced by the complicated geometry.<sup>6</sup> Nearby development and road improvements changed drainage patterns, which led to flooding from rainwater runoff once the original doors with their seals were replaced. Only recently has the site been regraded in an effort to control the problem – a particularly nettlesome one during the summer of 1989, when the church flooded four times.

The last straw was the failure of the church's air-conditioning condenser unit, which prompted the congregation to abandon Goff's church last August for a still unfinished metal building next to it. This multipurpose prefabricated gymnasium, built at a cost of \$100,000 thus far, serves as a facility for worship, a nursery school, meals, and recreation. But the vitruvian root of the congregation's disaffection is perhaps more a matter of delight than of firmness or commodity. Merrill Blair recalls that from time to time in the early days the church would leak, but we always repaired it, that was something that could be handled." In his view, much of the collective memory of the teepee was lost in 1973, when the congregation splintered over "personality conflicts." Five of the six church deacons, including himself and nearly 50 other members, left the church. Those who left were those who had built it, "the ones who loved it," he says.



Barbara Koerble

Detail of outside-mounted cake-pan light.

Today, since the West Edmond oilfields have played out, the oil riggers who built the teepee church have mostly moved on. Other early members of the congregation have grown old or passed away. One of them, Lila Stennett, died just last year in her seventies. A pillow she sat on, embroidered with her name, still lies in one of the wooden pews, left behind when the congregation abandoned the church. The memories of the church builders have no place in the new meeting hall next door, filled with young, bustling couples and their children.

As John Ward acknowledges, "Probably the sentiment [to save the church] is coming more from the community than anywhere else, because it is a landmark." He estimates that 95 percent of his young congregation is new to the church and has no attachment to the teepee. Even so, he maintains that "nobody is really bent on tearing the thing down, but the frustration

of having to deal with the problems with it was what was getting to everybody. One of our interests in the thing is just to get the teepee on the outside looking well so that it doesn't just destroy the looks of everything else around here." Others are less tolerant. Beulah Strickland, a parishioner who describes how she was healed in the church in 1985 of a compressed fracture of the spine, says: "It'd take several small fortunes to fix it. I'm one of those people who see no sense in throwing good money after bad. I know it's history and all that, but if somebody would just take it off that would be wonderful. Maybe some nice tornado [will come] and just lift it off."

At least one promising development for saving the church is the involvement of Oklahoma City architect Gary McCowan, who has experience with restoration projects, including Frank Lloyd Wright's Millard House in Pasadena and Inness House in Los Angeles. McCowan was also the local associate for two of Goff's unbuilt houses in North Carolina, and he worked in Bart Prince's office on the construction drawings for Goff's Joe Price Pavilion at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. McCowan has offered to donate his time to prepare drawings of the church in its present state so that accurate cost estimates for repairs and asbestos removal or encapsulation can be obtained, a first step in seeking matching restoration funds from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. But McCowan's offer has yet to spark the congregation's enthusiasm, and he admits, "It's very hard to pursue a project if you feel the people you are trying to pursue it for are not really interested in it anyway."<sup>7</sup> As a matter of immediate priority, McCowan has recommended basic measures to stabilize the exterior and control flooding.

The church's plight also has come to the attention of the Friends of Kebyar – an international organization of Goff aficionados – who, according to Jean Eckenfels, editor of its newsletter, would be disposed to serve as an umbrella organization for fundraising purposes. Among preservationists, few would disagree that the church is worth saving and that time is running out. In the opinion of David De Long: "Hopewell Baptist is a very important record of how Goff approached the design of churches. It's also an important record of how he was able, for practically no money, to design a building that could be handmade by the local people and that would be a symbol for them. I think it is of strong sociological and historic importance." With a little help, it might yet be remade by hand. ■

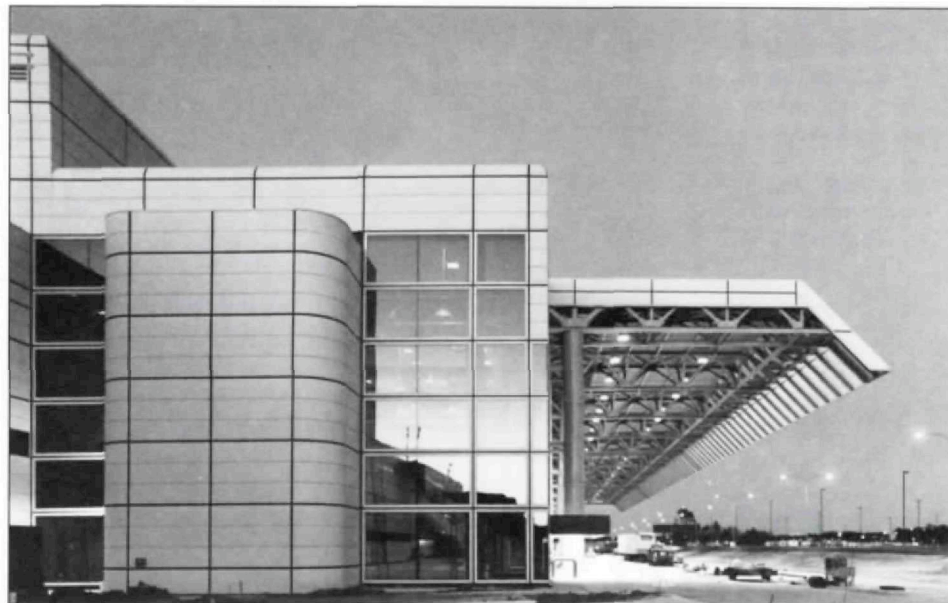
#### Notes

- 1 "Drill Pipe, Faith and Hard Work," *Architectural Forum* 101 (December 1954), pp. 122-23.
- 2 See the bibliography in David G. De Long, *Bruce Goff: Toward Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1988). The teepee church is illustrated and discussed on pp. 98-99.
- 3 Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver, *Adhocism* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), p. 86.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- 5 Mary Jo Nelson, "Days Numbered for 'Wigwam,'" *Sunday Oklahoman*, 8 October 1989, pp. 1, 2.
- 6 De Long, p. 99.
- 7 McCowan and I met with John Ward at the church in Edmond on April 8, 1990.

I thank Dennis Stacy of Dallas for calling my attention to the plight of the teepee church.

## Recent Arrival

### International Airlines Building, IAH



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Detail of side elevation, International Airlines Building, Mario Bolullo with Harry Golemon Architects, 1987-90.

The architecture of Texas airports is about as memorable as the experience of flying today's Greyhounds of the sky. Compared to the train stations of a former era, most airports are curiously anonymous points of arrival and departure, more like overgrown bus stations than civic gateways, with the exception of Eero Saarinen's terminals at John F. Kennedy and Dulles International airports. The new International Airlines Building at Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH), which opens in May, is a modest effort at self-improvement. Viewed as an excursion in international regionalism, its vast front awning recalls the like-minded visor of the Stazione Termini in Rome (Montuori and Calini, 1947). At IAH, the wall-to-wall snap-brim awning prefaces a generic series of white-enamel-clad, appliance-like concourses and lobbies that depart from, and lighten up, the prevailing architectural scheme of the airport. Designed by Mario Bolullo with Harry Golemon Architects (in a joint venture with the office of Pierce Goodwin Alexander & Linville and in association with James L. Marshall Associates and Molina and Associates, Inc.), the new arrival is a somewhat restrained extrapolation of the similarly applanclike demeanor of Bolullo's George R. Brown Convention Center (*Cite*, Spring-Summer 1988, p. 6).

The 440,000-square-foot terminal represents both an increase in the number of international gates at IAH (from 8 to 12) and a complete consolidation and upgrading of the Federal Inspection Services facilities that monitor them. The building is located at the far eastern end of the ABC enfilade of previous terminals and is, in fact, attached directly to Terminal C, with a connector that also houses three gates. As an addition to Terminal C, the new building is sited in a way that breaks somewhat with the master plan for the airport. The previous terminals are situated between the two parallel roads running east and west. Although the terminals are bounded to the north and south by the roads, pedestrian bridges extend over the roads to the gate concourses adjoining the aircraft apron. The International Airlines Building is set immediately adjacent to the apron, above and parallel to the north service road, to better accommodate wide-body aircraft; the area between the roads will be used for the new terminal's large surface parking lot. A tunnel provides direct access into the terminal, and a subway stop below the lot links it to the other terminals.

The building responds to the program in a direct and clear-headed way. Of primary importance is the twofold organization of sequential spaces and checkpoints that receive and control both arriving and departing passengers. The design of cus-

tom facilities must meet stringent federal regulations with regard to security and control of contraband. The Federal Inspection Services therefore played a central, if anonymous, role in organizing the building and occupy a sizable portion of it.

The superscaled *brise-soleil* that marks the front of the building serves as a porte-cochère and shades the main ticket lobby, which lies beyond a multistory glass curtain wall. It signals the main entrance and also confers a sense of autonomy on the terminal. Beyond the main lobby, incoming and outgoing passengers are kept apart on separate floors. Those departing pass from the lobby through an inspection point and ascend to a departure level with immediately adjoining gates. The departure level is a secure (i.e., controlled-access) but open and continuous waiting room, with concessions and duty-free shops located in freestanding pavilions below an expansive ceiling. Arriving passengers are led from their airplanes onto a different floor, passing through a system of secure corridors down to the baggage claim area. Then they move through customs and exit into the main lobby on the south side of the terminal.

Future expansion of the terminal has been anticipated in both the architectural and structural design, which will accommodate the addition of another floor. Future plans also include the possible use of "mobile lounges" like those at Dulles. Bolullo's sprightly array of streamlined aluminum panels, glass, exposed structure, and brightly colored or polished materials, mounted not altogether comfortably on a precast beige aggregate base as a concession to the neighboring Terminal C, will alleviate at least some of the anxiety of its customs-bound patrons. Moreover, the rhetoric of gleaming efficiency and reliability will make a reassuring connection for those destined for the convention center downtown.

Joe McGrath