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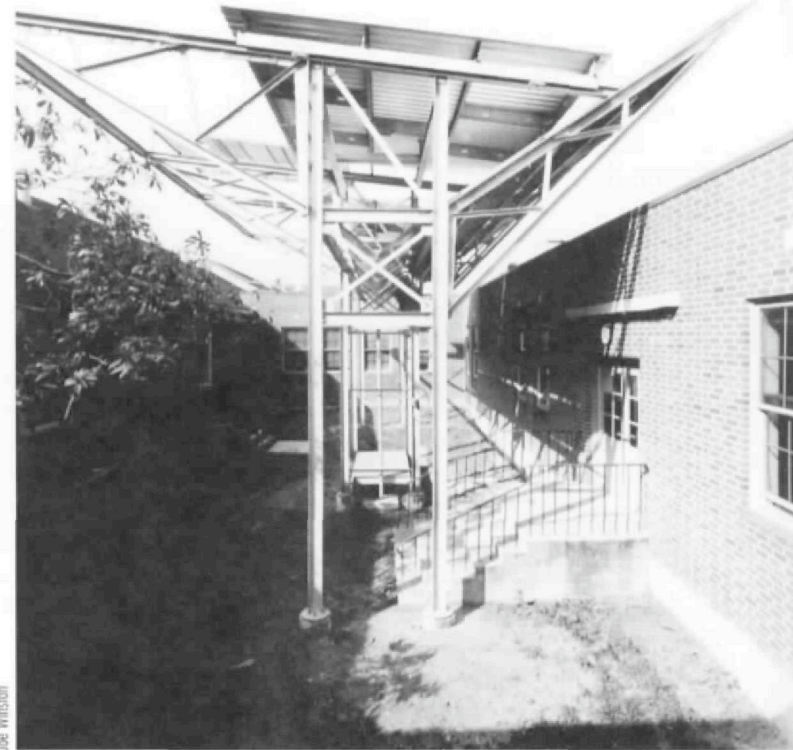
THE MECHANICAL SHADE TREE, POE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A bleak and empty courtyard at Edgar Allen Poe Elementary School was recently the location of a joint project of Poe School, HISD, and the Design/Build Studio of the Master of Architecture program at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture, University of Houston. Eleven

first-year graduate architecture students from UH designed and constructed an imaginative steel structure that will provide rain and sun protection for Poe students. Patrick Peters, associate professor of architecture, led the team with instructor George Sacaris. In cooperation with Poe's principal, Dr. Anne McClellan, its Parent-Teacher Organization garnered community support, both cash and in-kind donations, to finance the project.

Before plans for redesign of the courtyard began, planners visited Bellaire and West Oaks hospitals' ROPES (Reality Oriented Physical Experience Services) playgrounds. Peters said, "Although we did not design a ROPES course, we did work with Poe's physical education teacher, Lisa Youden. The structure we finally designed was engineered to allow for a future ROPES program."

The galvanized steel elements for the canopy were fabricated at UH's architecture model shop and assembled on site. Students learned first-hand to follow a project from the drawing board to completion, giving them practical experience that will be valuable in the future. The Mechanical Shade Tree, the sixth such design-construction project that UH students have built in Houston, has won several honor awards: ACSA National Award for Excellence in Design Studio, 1997; ACSA National Award for Integration of Technology in Design, 1997; and the AIA, Houston's *On the Boards* Student Award, 1997.



Mechanical Shade Tree, Poe Elementary School, 5100 Hazard, Design/Build Studio, Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture, University of Houston, 1997.

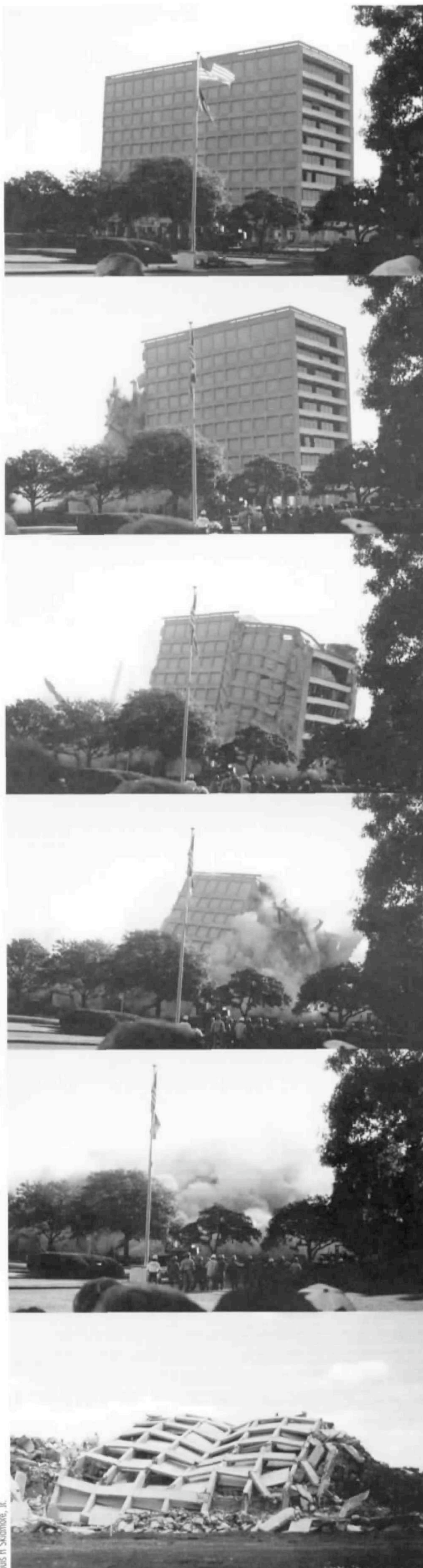


UH architecture students get hands-on experience.



Mechanical Shade Tree under construction.

Alberto Bonomi served as an assistant to the project. The students who participated were Michael Ahmadi, Mohammad Al-Jassar, Rob Blain, Lyndsey Cameron, Kelie Mayfield, Meghan Schwer, Carla Shannon, Chris Shaw, Aimee StCyr, Trent Sullivan, and Denise Wilson.



BLOWN AWAY

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Great Southern Life Insurance Company Building (1965-97) at 3121 Buffalo Speedway was imploded in front of hundreds of spectators on Sunday, May 4 at 8:00 a.m. The building was a significant modern landmark in Houston. See Cite 36, Winter 1996, p. 71

ArchicAD

ARCHITECTS IN THE INFORMATION AGE



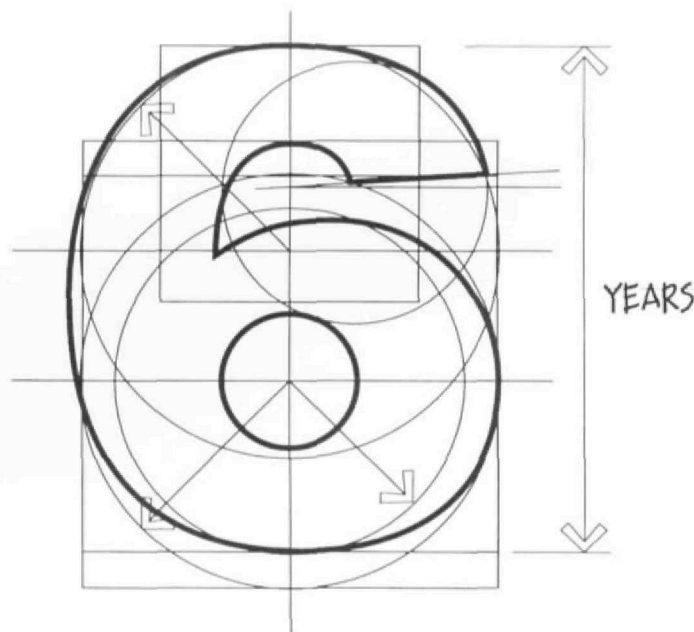
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