

## Zoning in the Fast Lane

Those who thought that zoning in Houston might be kinder, gentler, saner, and savvier than most other places may have to guess again. The original charge was to create a plan "unique" to Houston – mindful of the diversity that characterizes many of the city's best-functioning neighborhoods. But the proposals currently being considered by the planning and zoning commission, in the unrealistic expectation of producing a draft plan by July, may be in fact counterproductive. Among other things, serious consideration is being given to the exclusion, in the name of domestic sanctity, of such dubious neighborhood "nuisances" as parks, mother-in-law apartments, community centers, corner grocery stores, small in-home daycare arrangements, and other innocuous cottage industries. ■ As a latecomer to zoning, Houston should learn from the experiences of other cities. Proposals now before the commission run the risk of encumbering the city with an inflexible code that would discourage mixed uses and densities while reinforcing economic stratification – ameliorated only by an unwieldy conditional-use process. The initial recommendations made to the commission by its consultants advocated a neighborhood-specific "matrix" approach to zoning conducive to integrated uses. But this more complex, custom-tailored approach seems to have been given short shrift of late, and recent committee discussions have focused almost exclusively on lockstep, boilerplate regulations. ■ Experience shows that zoning works best when it is but one of several mechanisms (including comprehensive planning) used to support an urban vision that accommodates diversity and the everyday needs of neighborhood life. An overly rigid blanket approach to zoning would lead to a simplistic compartmentalization of the city, indulging suburban ideals at the expense of urban possibilities. The planning and zoning commission should take the time it needs to do its work sensibly and sensitively rather than use the July deadline as an excuse to bring forth an unresponsive pro forma zoning document that would merely perpetuate an obsessively tidy version of the present. Zoning should be a tool for the creative ordering of the future, even if it means waiting a little longer. ■

# RIZZOLI

### The International Style: Exhibition 15 and The Museum of Modern Art



America's acceptance of modernist architecture can be fully understood only in reference to a 1932 Museum of Modern Art exhibit entitled "Modern Architecture—International Exhibition." Curated by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock (and called "Exhibition 15" by the Museum), the show used models, drawings, photographic enlargements and site plans to introduce this country to architectural projects from around the world influenced by the work of the European avant-garde.

*The International Style: Exhibition 15 and The Museum of Modern Art*, the book published to accompany the current exhibition at Columbia University's architecture galleries, recreates—60 years later—the watershed Museum of Modern Art show.

224 pages. 9 X 9". 160 B&W illustrations. \$29.95, paperback.

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Banco de España, Jaén, 1983–88, Rafael Moneo, architect.

Hisao Suzuki

### RDA Events

## Contemporary Spanish Architecture

The Rice Design Alliance will commemorate the Columbus Quincentennial with its fall 1992 lecture series, *Contemporary Spanish Architecture*, featuring four of the country's leading architects.

#### 23 September

**Luis Fernández Galiano**, editor and publisher of *Arquitectura Viva* and *A & V Monographs* and chair of theory, projects, and history at the School of Architecture of the University of Madrid, will introduce the series. His recent book, *El Fuego y la Memoria*, examines the philosophical relationships between architecture and energy.

#### 7 October

**Rafael Moneo**, José Luis Sert Professor and former chairman of the Department of Architecture, Harvard University, practices in Madrid. Recent projects include the National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida, the Atocha train station in Madrid, the Miró Foundation in Mallorca, and the International Airport in Seville. Moneo was recently awarded the commission for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

#### 14 October

**Elias Torres-Tur** and his partner, José Antonio Martínez Lapeña, practice in Barcelona. Their projects include the conversion of an 18th-century church into a concert hall, exhibition space, and

chapel; an apartment remodeling on the island of Ibiza; and an urban park in Barcelona. Torres-Tur has been a visiting lecturer at Harvard and UCLA.

#### 21 October

**Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra** practices in Seville, where he has won numerous awards for his designs for apartment buildings. He is the architect of the Colegio de Arquitectos of Andalucía and the Navigation Pavilion at the world exposition that opened this spring in Seville.

#### 28 October

**José Luis Mateo**, former editor of *Quaderns d'Arquitectura i Urbanisme*, teaches at the School of Architecture at the University of Barcelona. He practices in Barcelona. Recent projects include the renovation of an old textile factory into a swimming pool and sports center, and the Sports Campus of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

For more information call 713-524-6297.

#### SAVE THIS DATE!

The fifth annual RDA gala will be held on

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14.**

The evening will include dinner, dancing, a silent auction, and a great time.

### City Slickers

#### Reinventing the Center City

22 June, 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

A discussion of inner-city redevelopment cosponsored by the RDA and the Rice Institute for Policy Analysis. Participating mayors are J. E. "Bud" Clark, Portland, and Joseph P. Riley, Jr., Charleston. William F. Stern will moderate. Rice Faculty Club, Rice University. \$10 paid reservations required. Space limited. For information, call 524-6297.

