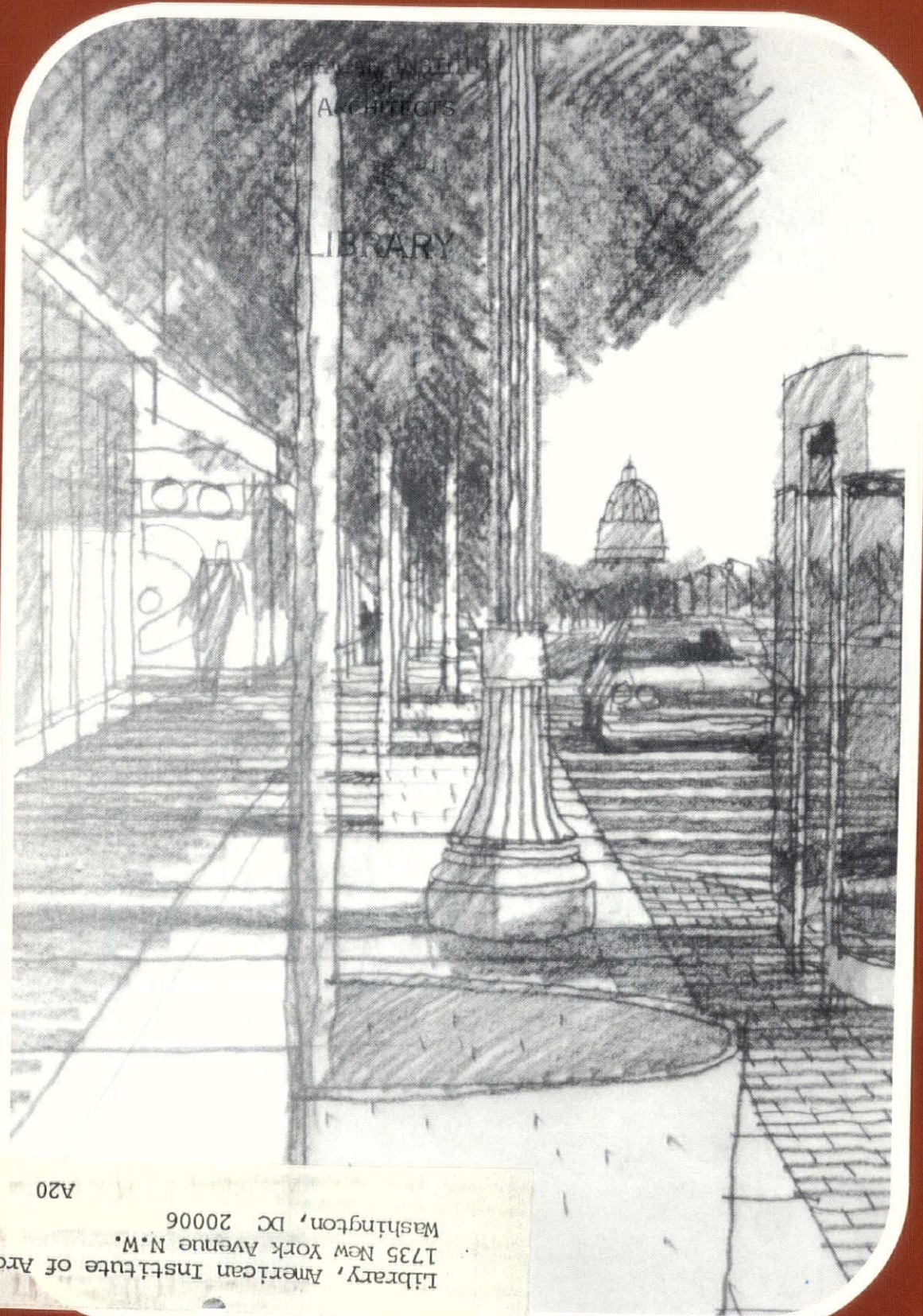


ARCHITECTURE MINNESOTA

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ARCHITECTURE MINNESOTA

Official publication of the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects

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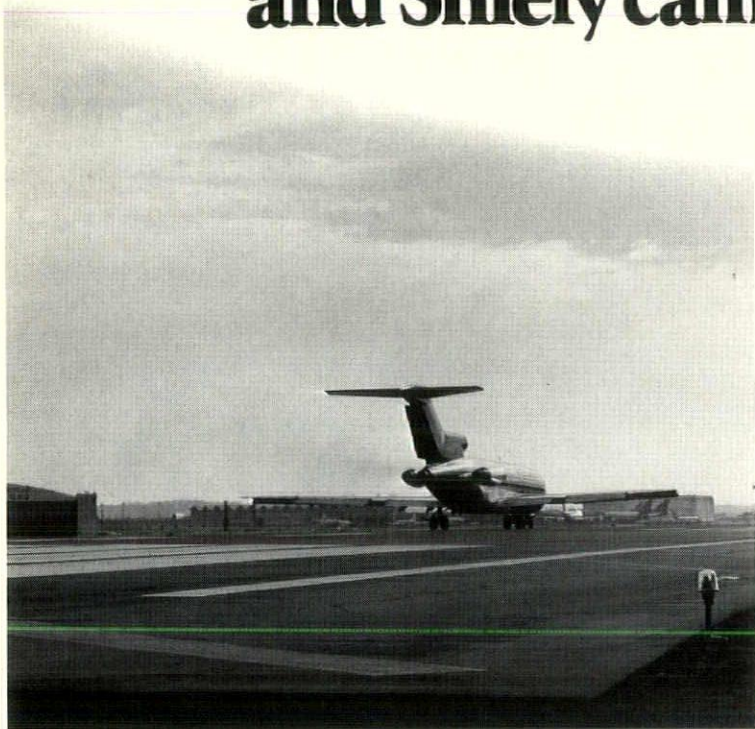
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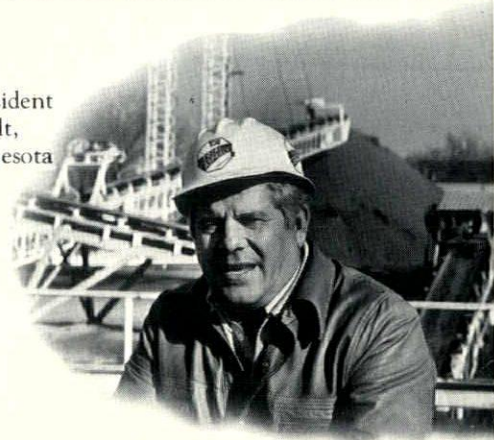
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THE FAILURE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE CRITICS

From the Editor



The failure of Modern Architecture, this dernier cri of architectural journalism, was recently exposed again by Wolf Von Eckardt of the Washington Post in a talk presented at the University of Minnesota. He covered by now very familiar ground, e.g. the "brutal, abrasive, anonymous" nature of modern architecture, the resemblance of all buildings to each other, the "arrogant disdain of the past", the lack of ornament, etc. etc.

One of the first and most enthusiastic oracles of the Great Fall was Peter Blake, formerly editor of House and Home, of Architectural Forum and of Architecture Plus. In a very crisp, orderly and modern manner he prepared a list of false assumptions drilled into "every modern architect". Ada Louise Huxtable of the New York Times has, with less bravado but equal zeal, written extensively on the subject. Her writing is more informed, more compassionate and she even allows, albeit tragically, that "Modern architecture is acknowledged to be an immense, incontrovertible and often magnificent fait accompli, paralleled in importance and achievement by only a few periods in civilization . . ."

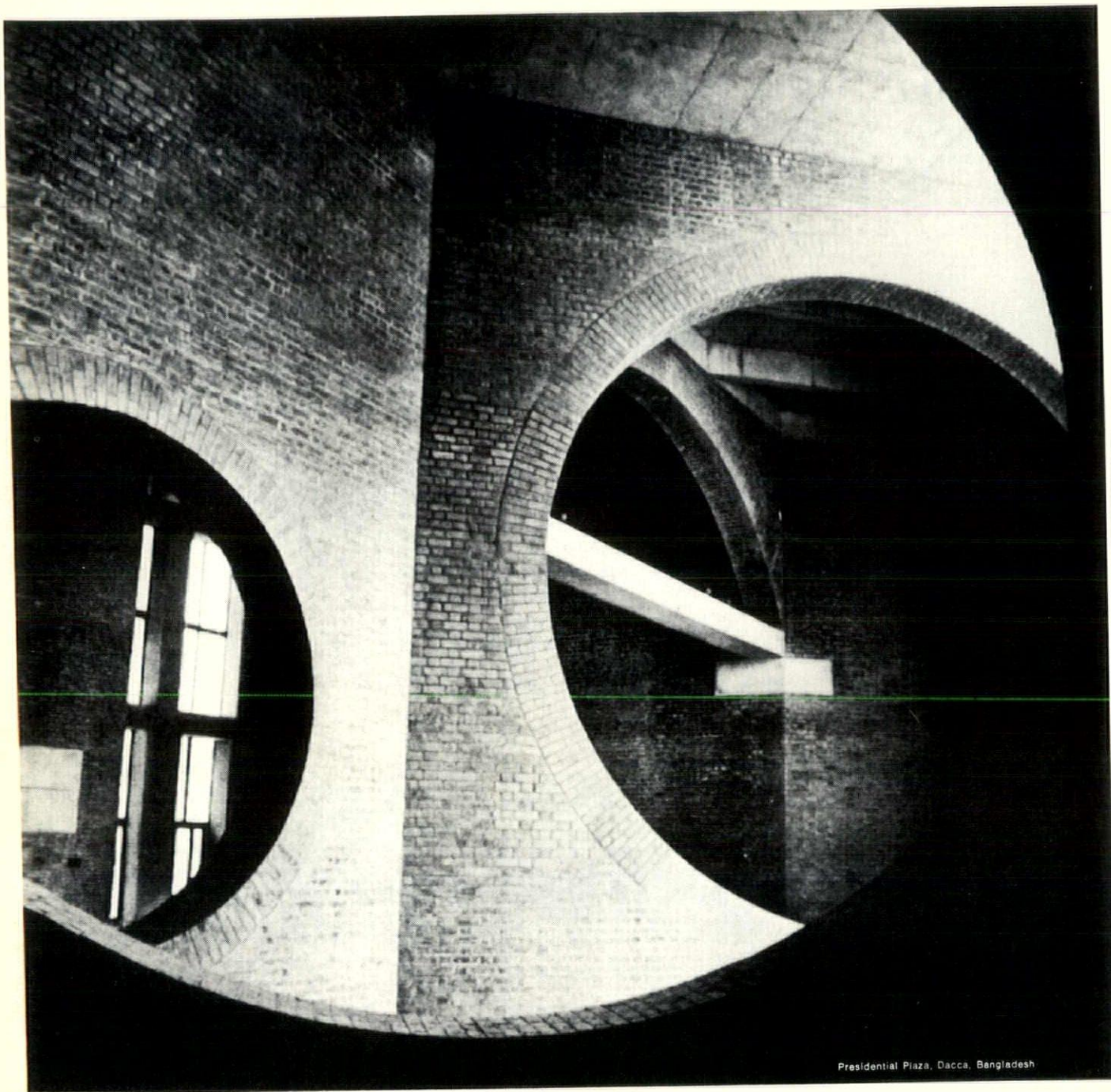
Whether it was Peter Blake's ennui or antennae which unleashed his grand announcement is immaterial now. The choir that followed is obvious testimony to widely held views. And thus, then, as a critic he did his job well. The critic as interpreter functioned according to his script. He saw, he weighed, he judged and he published. But why, oh why was modern architecture allowed, and even encouraged by the critics, to mislead and abuse the world, the environment and the people for nearly fifty years? It happened in the same way as the 1918

Armistice at Compiegne became a failure, as Picasso's Guernica was to be a failure, and as Henry Ford's invention turned out to be a failure. The critics, the informed and learned interpreters of the culture, were out to lunch.

Wolf Von Eckardt praises the "grass roots movement", the popular movement to save old buildings, as an indication of the people's affirmation of the past and he sees this as a powerful movement. He sees the future of architecture as resulting from citizen involvement, citizen participation which will create an architecture and environment to suit its needs and tastes.

This view of the future of architecture and of a culture is as naive as the modern movement's dreams appear now to have been. This new populism in architecture can be assigned a fairly short life span because as old buildings get scarcer, new old buildings will have to be built. The architectural avant garde is already building new old buildings of course. They interpret and reinterpret the past and recent past, sometimes with infinite taste and a great deal of humour. However historic preservation and historicism by themselves cannot take us very far into the future. They will not provide urgently needed housing units, they will not provide us with new moral or ethical values or reduced labor costs. To help develop the architecture of tomorrow today, the architecture critic need not be a prophet. But he can, at least, with the poet perhaps, expand our vision, the range of our eyesight and of our hearing. The architecture of tomorrow need not be a failure.

— Bernard Jacob



"I asked the brick what it liked and the brick said, 'I like an arch.'"

Louis I. Kahn

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ART FOR THE FOLKS

Twenty centuries ago, the Roman poet Ovid made the observation that *"Nothing is more useful to man than those arts which have no utility"*.

On April 21, 1977, Governor Rudy Perpich in a major policy address on the state of the arts in Minnesota, included among his recommendations, a proposal that the state should embark on a program to bring the arts to our public buildings. He also succinctly outlined a series of proposals to strengthen public support for the arts and provide additional funding for the arts. His rationale was best summarized by his statement:

"I believe that the arts in Minnesota are a very important part of our quality of life. One of the major reasons that this is such a good place to live is that we honor art and those who create it. The arts in Minnesota benefit each of us in many ways. Whether it's painting or music, theater or poetry, crafts or dance, we all have access to treasures from which we can draw beauty, satisfaction, peace of mind and strength. The arts help us to realize who we are, to celebrate our individuality. They are, in the best way, an affirmation of ourselves."

"But while Minnesota citizens, businesses and foundations have contributed their money and talents to the arts in amounts unparalleled elsewhere, state funds have been insignificant over the last ten years, by comparison with other states. For example, while we point to our arts with such pride, we appropriated in state monies only 13 cents per person last year. Colorado provides 90 cents; New York almost \$2 per capita; Utah does better than twice as well as Minnesota in state appropriations. If we are to maintain the arts as part of our quality of life, we must do much better than we have."

Perpich also indicated that "for all future bonding proposals for construction of new state buildings or for major renovation," he will recommend that 1% of the total construction cost be allocated for the purchasing or commissioning of works of arts for those buildings. "These paintings and sculpture" he stated "will make magnificent contributions to those buildings." They will enhance the physical beauty and help to humanize them. These works of art will in most cases be created by Minnesota artists. As such the funds will encourage the development of local artists and provide an opportunity for them to display and become recognized for their works. Who knows, for example, whether the new state office building in Bemidji won't show the first works of the next world famous Minnesota artists."

The Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects has historically supported the need for 1% of the building budget to be committed to art. However, we believe that it is important to understand the care that must be taken, and the manner in which this program is implemented.

Most importantly, it is paradoxical and foolish to do so if the original building budget is cut to the point that the functions in the building are not properly accommodated and that in essence the art of architecture itself is not of the quality to be an art form. Unfortunately the State of Minnesota has in recent years had some extremely tight

(continued on page 10)

UNDERGROUND POLITICS

"When the banner is unfurled, all reason is in the trumpet." A Ukrainian proverb.

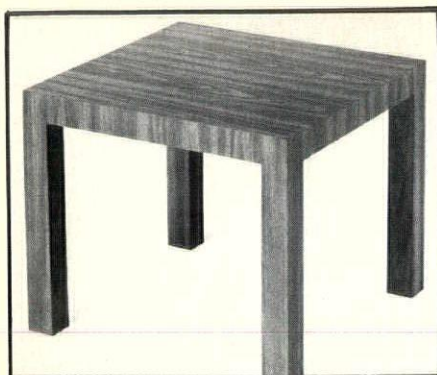
New buildings and major construction projects, have historically been lightning rods to which media and politicians often direct mutinous mumblings, sometimes unfortunately not seeking to carefully assess the need for the new building, the benefits and the importance of its function or the programs to be carried on within it. Such recently was the case with the proposed 35 million dollar underground Capitol Government and History Center.

By early April the trumpets of misunderstanding had reached a level of widespread media misconceptions, which led to public misunderstanding. Within hours of a former Minnesota Governor's holding a press conference charging that the proposed building was to be built on the site of a major flowing underground river (a false statement) and would likely be filled with millions of gallons of water (a false statement), the majority caucus in the House of Representatives, seeking to take away a potential political issue from the minority Republicans voted to abandon plans to consider this session a bill providing financing. The decision was in large part a political response precipitated by widespread misunderstanding. It was created by the failure of those who knew the case for the building to clearly make the case, and most of all by considerable misconceptions created by press coverage of the proposed building.

The point is not to look back, but to try to shed some understanding on why the facility is needed and why it would be a considerable asset to Minnesota. The need for the building was established only after a careful study. In addition there was a very careful examination of alternative sites for the facility. A correct decision was made to site the building underground in front of the Minnesota State Capitol. Some citizens, correctly using their prerogative, raised the issue that the building should not be so sited, as it would harm the State Capitol Mall.

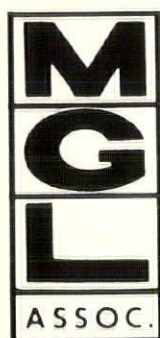
The Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board held a national architectural competition requiring an underground facility which would preserve or enhance the mall. Over 250 architectural firms presented proposals which represented several million dollars of professional time. A highly respected jury selected 5 finalists, each of whom received \$25,000, and all of whom spent considerably more than that in preparing their final proposals. The jury selected what many individuals feel is a brilliant proposal essentially creating an underground garden with the public hearing rooms, galleries and educational facilities fronting on balconies overlooking the garden. Many feel that it would do for the capitol area what the Crystal Court has done for downtown Minneapolis, providing vitality as well as needed public facilities. Many believe it would eventually be one of the most significant buildings in the country from the standpoint of architectural design. The design that was selected was that of a distinguished Chicago architect Helmut Jahn and his firm C.F. Murphy and Associates.

However, by that time, the trumpets of the media and politicians had drowned out the careful mellow examina-



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tion of need which should have taken place prior to funding even the competition. There were misconceptions, ranging from those of the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, too numerous to mention here, to the inadvertent mistake made by many that it was to provide legislative offices. Such was not the case.

Being involved as a legislative advocate, I've daily had an opportunity to see the capitol building function. Many demands are placed upon it including approximately ½ million visitors a year. Most of them are Minnesota school children but many are citizen groups seeking to have their voice heard. Presently the children are, in all fairness, treated like flocks or herds of fowl or livestock. There are inappropriate facilities for loading and unloading and for accommodating truly educational functions.

With the expansion of the Minnesota Science Museum and its planetarium this area is destined to become the most important non-school educational environment in the state and attendance will rapidly expand. There is also an ever-increasing number of public hearings, including those on administrative rules and regulations.

The important thing is not to point the finger at those who point a finger, but to look ahead. Time is usually a healing agent and if the proposal has merit and if the need is strong and clearly communicated, policy makers and the public could still fund this facility. The Minnesota Historical Society, the Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board and the Minnesota legislature must make a good case for the building.

It might be useful to start by clearly understanding what was to be in that building. The joint legislative committee on Capitol Area space need had recommended that facility be constructed under the mall to satisfy the following needs:

Legislative and Executive branch hearing rooms for public meetings in a central, easily accessible location. 17 rooms, 51,160 sq. ft.

An historical museum which would be a substantial expansion of the present Historical Society museum located near the capitol. It would allow the state to better serve the half million visitors to the capitol each year. Many artifacts of Minnesota history are now stored in warehouses unavailable to the public. 89,138 sq. ft.

An auditorium which would be an integral part of the educational programs of the Historical Society and would be used for large legislative and executive branch meetings. 13,760 sq. ft.

A cafeteria, food service facility. There is presently no food facility in the area capable of handling the public needs, and the Capitol cafeteria will soon be in need of a costly remodeling. 9,835 sq. ft.

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The parking ramp would include 200 public spaces and 250 spaces for legislative, judicial and executive branch parking. In addition it would provide safe public access to the area for the school children who come by bus.

200,000 sq. ft.
(includes circulation)

Lobby and other support space.

5,450 gross sq. ft.

The building was intended to be an energy efficient ground structure fully landscaped. The committee chose the mall site after review of architectural studies based on geological qualities, utility locators, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, adjacency requirements and aesthetics. For the following reasons, the mall was determined to be the best site:

1. It best relates the function of the proposed building to existing buildings and their uses.
2. It is superior for automobile, transit and pedestrian circulation.
3. It could be done without jeopardizing the natural beauty of the capitol mall.
4. It requires the least amount of utility relocation.
5. The size of the site allows for the greater design flexibility.
6. Construction under the mall best implements the CAPB master landscape plan for the capitol area and offers an opportunity to enhance the building itself.

Perhaps the building will never be built. Perhaps there is so much political controversy around it that a careful examination of need will never take place. Hopefully that is not the case. Minnesota is quite correctly regarded as having one of the most progressive legislatures in the country. It is also noted for its very vigorous press. I personally believe that this is not, nor should it be, a partisan political issue, nor a cause celebre in the state press. The building needs a fair and careful hearing by the public and committees of the Minnesota legislature. □

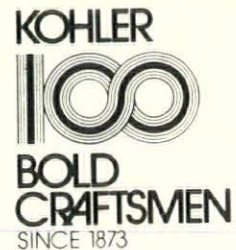
ART FOR THE FOLKS

(continued from page 7)

budgets on its public buildings. The net result has been that many architectural design elements in these buildings have had to be sacrificed in the interest of meeting budget. It makes little sense to eliminate from those buildings elements of architectural design and then to provide 1% for art within the structure. Care must be taken to insure both.

Fortunately, the Governor envisions the involvement of the Minnesota State Arts Board, an institution which is becoming highly respected under its new leadership and staff in Minnesota and throughout the country. It is also important that the artists be selected in consultation with and through involvement of the architect. It makes little sense to have a monumental piece of sculpture in a non-monumental place. The artist should be selected early in the design process and the art should relate to the architecture and the interiors. In addition there is the very sensitive matter of how the artist will be selected. The Governor should be applauded for his high commitment to the arts and we should proceed with care and sensitivity to implement his proposal, but only if architecture itself can be allowed to flourish as an art. □

—Daniel J. Sheridan



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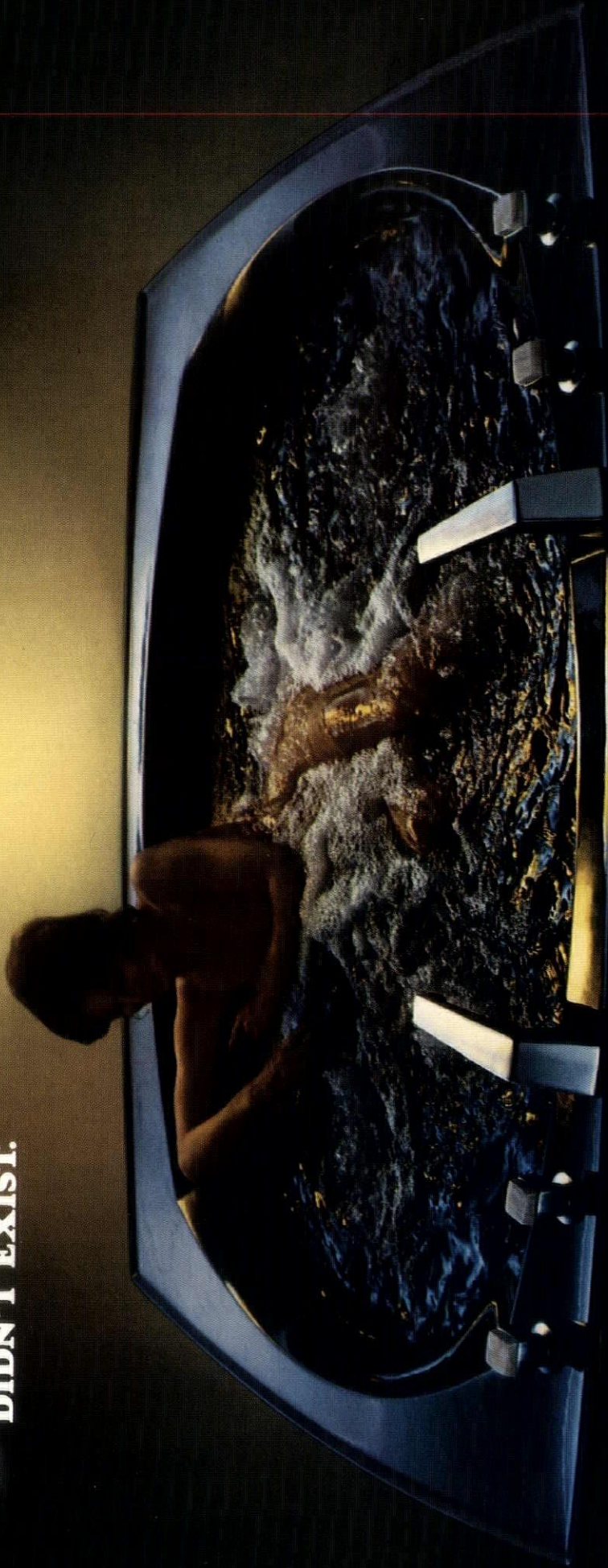
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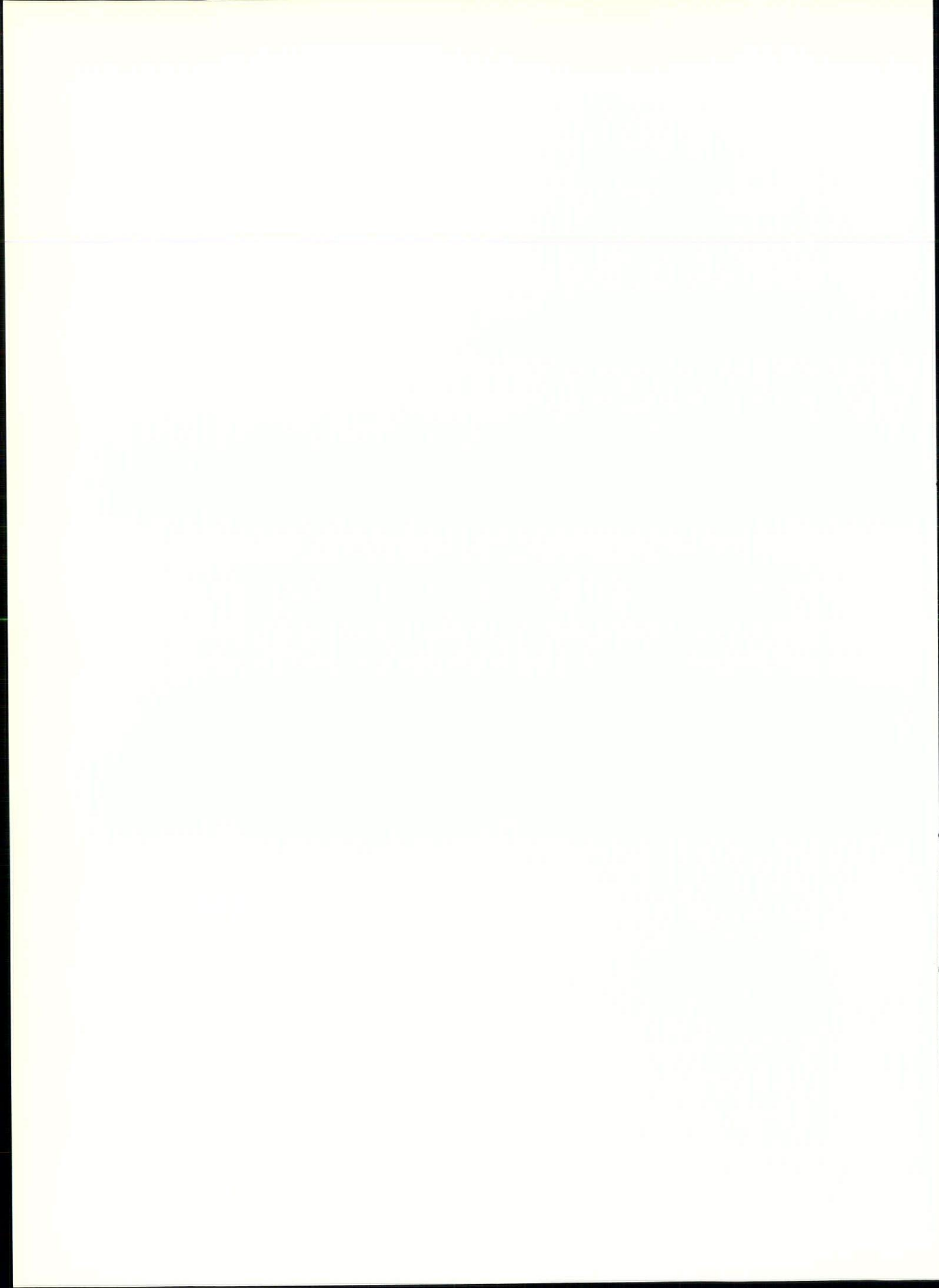
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ARCHITECTURE AT A GLANCE

Carlton

The Duluth firm of **Melander & Melander, Architects**, has been selected for the remodeling of the **Carlton County Courthouse**. The firm's design won the approval of Dallas K. Reynolds, Architectural Specialist, National Clearing House for Criminal Justice Planning and Architecture. The project which involves the addition of space for court facilities, is supported in part with funds from the Governor's Crime Commission with assistance from the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission. A Law Enforcement Assistance Administration Grant sponsored the services of Mr. Reynolds.

Edina

The new **Colonial Church of Edina** will resemble a colonial village gathered around a town square according to the design plan of the Saint Paul architectural firm of **Hammel Green & Abrahamson**. The new "meeting house" will be located on 22 acres and is expected to cost \$3 million. The site is part of the Nine Mile Creek watershed district and the congregation has agreed to leave much of the land in its natural state.

In carrying out the New England village theme, the complex will have four gabled-roofed buildings around the perimeter with a flat-roofed, one-story area in the center with walkways, kitchen, library and other functional and common areas. The "meeting house" or sanctuary, will seat about 650 people on the main floor and 350 in the balcony areas. Another unit in the complex will be a 3,000 square-

foot "great hall" which will be used for dinners, Sunday School and other gatherings. Roofs of the gabled units will have metal surfaces that will eventually become grey-green in reminiscence of older buildings.

Hastings

The Dakota County Board has selected The Adkins Association of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, to design a new social services building for the county. Construction and design costs will be funded with a \$300,000 community development grant from the federal government with assistance from local revenues.

Lakeville

Matson, Wegleitner & Abendroth Architects, Inc., have been selected as architects for building alterations at the Lakeville, Minn. **Middle School and the Orchard Lake Elementary School**. The proposed alterations are planned to incorporate a number of energy saving measures.

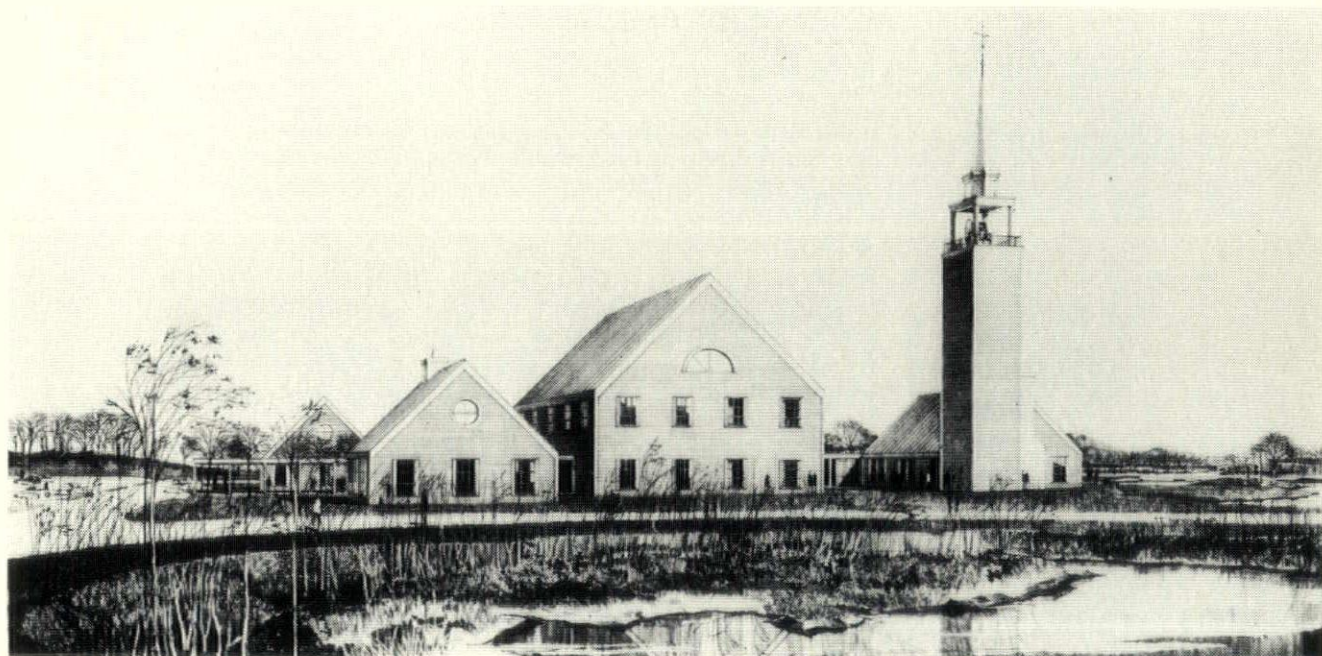
Litchfield

Patch, Erickson and Madson Architects Inc., Minneapolis, are the designers of a 60 bed skilled nursing facility in the western Minnesota community of Litchfield. Developers for the project are Augustana Homes, Inc.

Rochester

Korsunsky, Krank Architects, Inc., of Minneapolis, have been selected for the design of a proposed \$10 to \$12 million **twin-towered hotel, apartment and commercial complex** for the

The Colonial Church of Edina by Hammel Green & Abrahamson



How New Jersey Saved \$12,000,000

In New Jersey in 1976, contracts were let for 51 public construction projects in the range of \$100,000 or more. By law, all publicly financed construction in New Jersey must call for both separate and single bids. In 48 of last year's 51 projects, the separate bids were lower; 9.7% lower than the total amounts submitted on a single contract basis. Because of separate bids, New Jersey taxpayers were saved \$12,204,284.* It follows that proportionate savings can be achieved in private construction.

That's why architects, engineers, and owners should make the comparison. *Separate* the mechanical, electrical, and general construction bids, and save.

*Source: Mechanical Contractors Association of New Jersey. For complete details, write or call the Twin Cities Piping Industry Fund, Suite #304, 2829 University Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, Mn. 55414 (612) 378-7600.

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southern Minnesota city of Rochester. The project goals call for 250 to 300 hotel rooms, 100 to 150 apartment units, 12,000 sq. ft. of commercial ground level space and a 500 car parking ramp.

Saint Peter

Preliminary plans by the Mankato firm of **Wick, Kagermeir & Skaar, Inc.**, have been completed towards the design of an **enclosed shopping mall** for the town of Saint Peter. The one-story building will be occupied by local merchants and will contain a large central area for exhibits and displays.

South Saint Paul

Construction is now underway on a multi-million-dollar **barge slip and terminal staging area** on the west bank of the Mississippi River in South Saint Paul. Designed by **Setter, Leach & Lindstrom, Inc., Minneapolis**, the **Packer River Terminal** a subsidiary of Twin City Barge & Towing Co., is being developed to handle both dry and liquid bulk commodities and general freight, with a complete inter-modal exchange between rail, truck, barge and pipeline. The design of the barge slip will provide docking space for as many as 14 river barges and a track-mounted crane will assist in the loading operations. The site encompasses some 120 acres, portions of which are primitive woodland which will be preserved as an open-space sanctuary for water fowl and wild life.

Saul C. Smiley has been elected to the College of Fellows of The American Institute of Architects.

Fellowship is a lifetime honor bestowed for outstanding contribution to the profession. Fellows are recognized by the designation FAIA. Investiture of the newly elected Fellows will take place on June 5, 1977, at the annual convention of The American Institute of Architects in San Diego, California.

Smiley, a principal in the firm of **Smiley Glotter Associates, Minneapolis**, has combined his architectural career with community involvement. He was a volunteer to the Minneapolis Schools Training Program, speaking to the elementary grades on introduction to the social sciences in construction, building trades, engineering and architecture. He has made numerous appearances before Rotary, Kiwanis,



Saul C. Smiley

Eagles and other service organizations presenting slides and speaking on the history and service of Hennepin County Medical Center as a teaching hospital and its benefit to the community. Currently, he is on the Center City Metro 85 Committee active in Core City development in Minneapolis. A recent accomplishment of this group was launching of the Loring Greenway project, a new adjunct to expansion of the central city core.

He was honored by the Minnesota Society of Architects with the "Award of Merit for Outstanding Service to the Profession."

As an Architect and as a Principal he has been involved in the design of projects receiving local and national recognition. The First National Award in Energy Conservation for Institutional Structures was received from Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corporation for meritorious design of a hospital. Many other awards have been received from the Minnesota Society of The American Institute of Architects, among which was the Award of Merit for the Hennepin County Medical Center on which Smiley served as a Principal and Partner.

For further information, contact the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects, 612/874-8771. □

OLD DOWNTOWNS NEW STREETSCAPES

Prospects or Pipedreams?

Donn R. Wiski
Charles W. Mosher

Downtown pedestrian streetscape improvements, sometimes called pedestrian malls, continue to interest the cities of Minnesota as well as of the nation. The Minneapolis Nicollet Mall led the way in Minnesota. Winona installed an auto free pedestrian mall in the sixties. St. Cloud's St. Germain Mall has been widely publicized. Brainerd is contemplating installing improvements this summer.

What motivates communities to consider planning downtown pedestrian improvements? Historically, the initial impetus has come from governmental programs and resources, notably urban renewal, conceived in response to deteriorating conditions. Many original urban renewal programs resulted in streetscape improvements in some cases and new development activity in others. In the former category are such Minnesota cities as Winona, and LeSueur. In the latter category are St. Paul, Duluth, Willmar, Austin and South St. Paul. Nicollet Mall relied on creative funding, construction, and Urban Mass Transit and Beautification funds.

Currently, motivation to undertake downtown improvements appears to result from three primary factors:

1. Preservation—the desire to protect and enhance existing investments and stem deterioration.

2. Protection—reaction to proposed or newly established competing fringe shopping centers. White Bear Lake, St. Cloud and North St. Paul are examples.

3. Expansion—to meet needs from new or expanding downtown development.

WHAT IS A PEDESTRIAN STREETSCAPE?

Downtown pedestrian improvement terminology is often confusing. The emphasis and priority given to pedestrians is a key distinguishing feature. This emphasis can be categorized as exclusive or shared space.

Exclusive pedestrian streetscapes

This class of improvements provides for the exclusive use of space by pedestrians without vehicular conflicts.

Enclosed Mall— Climate controlled



North St. Paul—a semi-mall with parking. Music floods the pedestrian areas from the light standards. Off-street parking was developed behind businesses.

pedestrian space typified by many suburban shopping centers. Their ability to fit into the fabric of existing smaller community downtowns is questionable given the problem of tying together existing buildings, cost and energy consumption considerations. West St. Paul's Signal Hills Center is an example of enclosing an existing street.

Full Mall—Space is devoted entirely to pedestrian activities. Examples are found in Winona and St. Cloud.

Shared pedestrian streetscapes

Transit Mall Pedestrian space is shared only with transit vehicles as illustrated by Nicollet Mall.

Modified or Semi-Mall—Vehicular circulation is continued with varying amounts of space devoted to pedestrians. Elimination of through traffic permits pedestrian priority. On-street parking can be permitted or excluded. North St. Paul and White Bear Lake are examples.

Lineal Park—Landscaping treatment to sidewalk areas without street, sidewalk or vehicle priority modification. St. Peter is an example.

A final category of improvements deals with building facade renovation or cosmetic treatment. While a necessary ingredient in an overall improvement program, its impact is basically a holding action offering no pedestrian commitment. Moose Lake is one of numerous examples. Table 1 provides a partial listing of cities with downtown pedestrian investments.

Common to all the projects, except the building cosmetic treatment, is their occurrence within the public right-of-way. There are various renditions and adaptations depending on the extent of new building activity, possible encroachment of rights-of-way and so forth. Consequently, mall pedestrian improvements require a good deal of public and private cooperation in the determination of the assignment for use priority of the street.

PLANNING AND TESTING SOLUTIONS

What should be done to improve the downtown?

Should my downtown build pedestrian improvements? Without question, it is desirable to improve the pedestrian environment of downtown. But what should be done in my community? at what cost? how does it get paid for?

There are three basic tests—the



Saint Germain Mall in Saint Cloud has had mixed reviews. While traffic circulation continues as an issue, substantial new investments are occurring and the nature of downtown gradually changing.



Downtown improvements must not stop at the property line but become part of building upgrading and merchandising reflecting the theme and quality of the improvement.



WINONA has developed off-street parking and pedestrian mall extensions following the initial phase. Economic investment and activity is reported increased.

functional test, the urban design test and the economic test. One does not work without the other. They must be part of a process.

The planning or testing process must consider these three elements together and interactively. The process should:

- Be open and visible
- Clearly establish objectives to be achieved
- Identify trade-offs
- Identify key decisions to be made and when they are required

- Involve public and private participants

Importantly, the test must be carefully applied to the specific and special concerns of individual communities. Each city has its own unique characteristics and special set of circumstances. While the tests are easy to describe, they are difficult to apply.

Functional test

The survival of downtown and the



Dubuque's restored clock tower provides a unique focus and personality for downtown. The full mall design provided for fire truck circulation between the planters. Pop. 62,000

ultimate success of any improvements relate to the attention given to a variety of primary supporting systems. Well planned street and parking systems are the most obvious and critical factors necessary to assure successful improvements. Equally important are well planned goods delivery, emergency vehicles, land use, utility and streetscape systems. For example, candidate streets being considered for various pedestrian improvements typically contain extensive utility investments. Proper consideration in the planning phase can result in important cost effective improvements. Various pedestrian improvement options must be tested against their impact of these systems and the broader objectives of the community.

Urban design test

Interpreting community personality, scale, and building quality in conjunction with economic and functional considerations is essential. In many communities, closing a street to traffic would be functionally acceptable. However, the space may be totally out of scale with the buildings or community or be substantially larger than pedestrian activity warrants, creating a dead space that may be both uninviting and difficult to design.

One of the most important needs is for pedestrian improvements to establish downtowns as a focus, displaying the unique qualities and attributes of the community in a quality manner. Cosmetic treatments are often superficial and consequently do little to reinforce downtown vitality. Quality improvements which display a community's unique personality can go a long way in answering or overcoming economic considerations.

Economic test

Economic considerations are probably those most verbalized in discussions of downtown improvements; yet experience suggests that improvements do not pass or fail solely on this point. The most common questions include:

- What will be the impact on my business, my investment?
- What are the prospects for economic expansion of downtown?
- What are the costs, how will they be paid and is it worth it?

In major metropolitan areas, economic growth is usually sufficient enough to support unique, quality,

systematic improvements. In smaller freestanding communities, the justification for major investments is less clear. It has been said that the three most important factors for successful commercial development are location, location and location. Accessibility and the availability of a broad range of goods and services are the most direct measure of location considerations from the consumer standpoint. Parking and to a lesser extent design appearance are also key features. In addition, the population, disposable income and nature of existing businesses are some key tests in establishing the strength of the market from the businessman's standpoint.

It appears, regardless of market considerations, that downtowns are resilient and adapt to changing roles and functions rather than die. The city's development, zoning, and public investment policies must relate to its downtown activities. Where systematic improvements have been made, downtowns have expanded in business investment and activities. Winona, an early entry with a full pedestrian mall, has witnessed business expansion and in turn has extended its pedestrian improvements. St. Cloud, with extensive competition from Crossroads shopping center, has witnessed a great turnover in small businesses

settling into speciality and personal/professional service businesses.

The economic test must generally relate market, location and role factors and also examine financial resources available to support public and private improvements. The evidence indicates that well planned, systematic, high quality downtown improvements with in well-conceived objectives create a climate for increased private investment and increased business activity. Depending on the nature of local competition, the role of downtown may often shift emphasis.

PROSPECTS AND OBSERVATIONS

What are the prospects for Minnesota communities? The last several years have witnessed a trend toward population movement to smaller cities and communities. This population stability or growth offers these communities the economic stability with which to reinvest in their city.

A new emphasis on conservation rather than throw-away is supporting, emotionally and economically, revitalization, activities. Energy conservation supports consolidation of activities. Downtowns have been and continue to be a focus of jobs, shopping, housing and entertainment. They are

(continued on page 34)

Table 1. Partial Listing of Downtown Pedestrian Streetscape Improvements

Outside Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

Major Functional and Streetscape Improvements

City	1970 Population	Type
Montevideo	5,661	semi-mall
St. Cloud	39,691	full-mall
Winona	26,438	full-mall
Moorhead	29,687	semi-mall
LeSueur	3,745	full-mall

Initial Improvements

St. Peter	8,339	lineal-park
Marshall	9,886	semi-mall
New Ulm	13,051	semi-mall
Austin	25,074	full-mall

Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

Minneapolis	434,400	transit-mall
Hopkins	13,428	semi-mall
Edina	44,046	semi-mall
White Bear Lake	23,313	semi-mall
North St. Paul	11,950	semi-mall

UNIVERSITY AVENUE TOOTS ITS HORN

A Case Study of Successful Commercial Revitalization in Saint Paul

Joanna Baymiller

In Saint Paul, Minnesota, a city-wide commercial loan program pumps city monies into business districts in a way that involves the cooperation of businessmen, financial institutions, and city government. In one such area, University Avenue, businessmen are engaged in a revitalization program that may be one of the most ambitious and successful the country has seen.

In mid-October of 1976, a University Avenue businessman in Saint Paul agreed to remove one of several oversized signs on his automobile repair shop, on the condition that other Avenue business people followed suit. A short time later, an Avenue realtor noticed a small group of people in front of his business, looking at lists and pointing out specific obsolete and deteriorated signs that were slated to be removed in a one day effort.

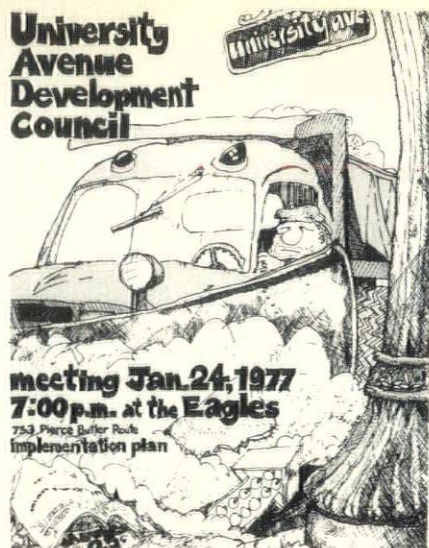
"Take that one too", he said, pointing to one of his own.

The sign removal effort, coordinated by the activist University Avenue Development Council (UADC) was one of the first visible instances in several years of the street's physical improvement.

The Avenue was certainly ripe for improvement. In a sense it has always been in transition. Between Saint Paul's Capitol on the East, and Lexington Parkway on the west, lie industrial, commercial and residential structures which have been part of the Avenue's fabric for 50 to 100 years. The almost two mile strip contains buildings in their third or fourth economic use, vacant lots, housing, abandoned structures, as well as thriving small businesses and industrial plants important to the entire metropolitan area.

Optimism about the Avenue that was prevalent until the mid 1960's be-





Above: a meeting poster

Left: painted graphics on windows suggest interior activity

gan to decline in the late 1960's and early 1970's. By then the Avenue was marked by obvious signs of deterioration—poor maintenance, clearance, and abandonment. The Avenue's image remained confused and chaotic. It had become, in many ways, a litany of the failures of American cities, offering a wide slash of 20th Century Americana overloaded with sign clutter, garish colors and fake building facades, and unidentifiable images—a modern commercial road rash obscuring the message it was trying to convey: stop here.

Historical development of University Avenue

The development of University Avenue followed the pattern of a number of major commercial streets. It became an early residential area as the increasing labor force demanded housing. From 1880 to 1905 it remained primarily residential, with a few corner services. The first tracks for a horse drawn trolley were laid in 1881. In 1890, the route was extended several miles west to Minneapolis.

The Avenue began to develop commercially in 1905, the year the State Capitol was completed at the east end. The first stores were small groceries, bakeries and meat markets which served the surrounding residential community. Other businesses with larger market areas soon began to locate on the Avenue, becoming stable members of a growing commercial district.

The introduction of the automobile had a major impact on the Avenue. According to a 1926 business directory, the street had already become the location for a number of auto dealers, as well as for businesses offering auto servicing or parts. This orientation still dominates the street today.

In the late 1960's, completion of the I-94 freeway between Minneapolis and Saint Paul reduced traffic volume considerably, from an estimated daily volume of 29,000 to about 19,000. The reduced volume makes possible once again the development of neighborhood services not reliant on heavy auto traffic, and on additional development of office and entertainment districts at several locations along the street.

Role of the UADC

But while redevelopment opportunities were once again surfacing,

action and participation was slow. Sensing the possibilities of reversing the cycle of decline, the University Avenue Development Council was formed in 1976 to revitalize the Avenue's existing potential. The Council, made up of business owners on the Avenue, with representation from nearby neighborhood organizations, hired a project coordinator with city planning and community organizing skills. A primary goal of the new group was to encourage existing businesses to stay by determining their needs and assisting them in improving. A second objective was to upgrade the image of the Avenue as a viable commercial street. And a final objective was to attract new businesses to locate on the Avenue.

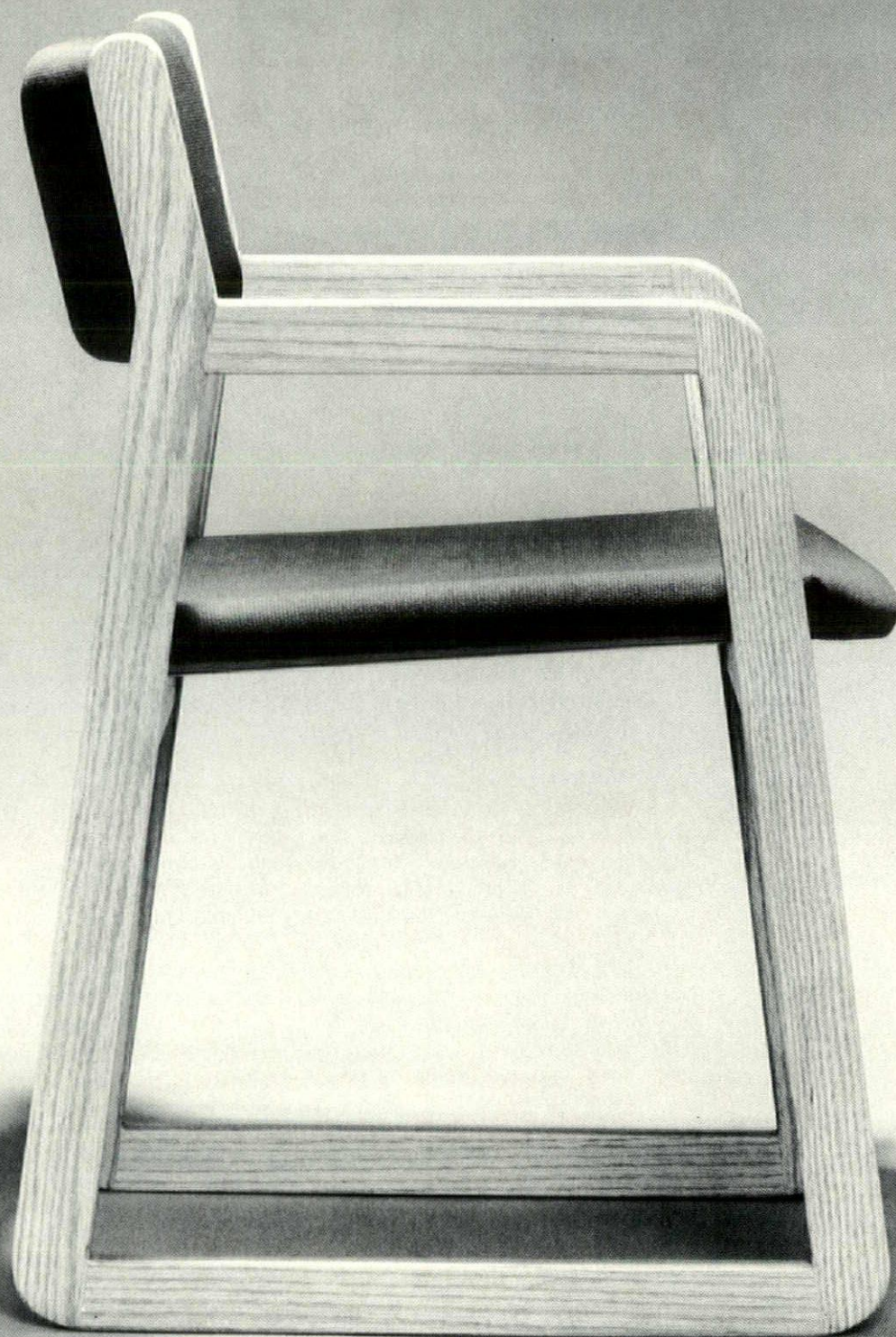
The UADC next hired an architectural consulting firm, Grebner-Schoen, Inc. of Saint Paul, to advise the Council on long-range planning and good design strategies. The consultants set about creating a 1970's physical image for the Avenue, one consistent with its past as a major auto services center and twin cities linkage, and viable for a variety of new present day uses.

By the Fall of 1976, the Council began sponsoring a series of "Avenue Update" meetings to inform the business community of their activities and goals and to encourage additional participation. Concurrently, it secured second year Community Development funding from the City of Saint Paul to finance a number of physical improvements. In September, the Council brought Cambridge Consultant Ronald Lee Fleming, a vigorous crusader against visual blight, to speak at the first of the Update meetings. Fleming's advice—reduce the visual clutter, became a call to action.

Within six weeks of the meeting, the Council sponsored a voluntary sign removal project. While Saint Paul's Mayor Goerge Latimer sipped hot coffee and swapped stories in an Avenue cafe, several Twin City sign companies which donated crews and equipment for the day began to haul down several tons of obsolete and deteriorated commercial signs from over 26 locations on the Avenue. It was, as several active businesspeople noted, the first visible sign of improvement on the Avenue.

In January, 1977, following months of studies and surveys, the consultants presented to the Council and to the business community a Commercial Revitalization Program Implementation Guide. Stressing that the recommenda-

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tions were a "guide" rather than a "plan", the consultants recommended programs which would take advantage of opportunities already existing and strengthen areas which had a recognizable image on the street. For example, the guide defined three specific subdistricts—oriented toward entertainment, retail and automobile services, and Capitol-related or office areas—as well as several major intersections, or "nodes" which needed a stronger visual identity. Guidelines presented included:

- general property and building maintenance along with design of new storefront and street signs;
- new pedestrian rest spots and street furniture, new bus shelters, and landscaping;
- increased commercial access from alleys and increased parking along major commercial areas;
- development of gateway, or "mode" districts along the Avenue that would further identify different districts for shoppers.

The design guidelines would be implemented with the assistance and support of several public agencies and with additional community development funds matched by funds from local financial institutions. Current programs provide for a variety of loans and matching grants to encourage business owners to renovate or improve their establishments.

An exterior renovation matching grant program, for example, offers a maximum of \$1,500, or one third of the improvement cost, to business owners who voluntarily comply with the design framework and submit plans for approval by the UADC. Also in effect is a straight loan program, which offers a maximum of \$25,000

for both exterior and interior renovation at 5½% interest.

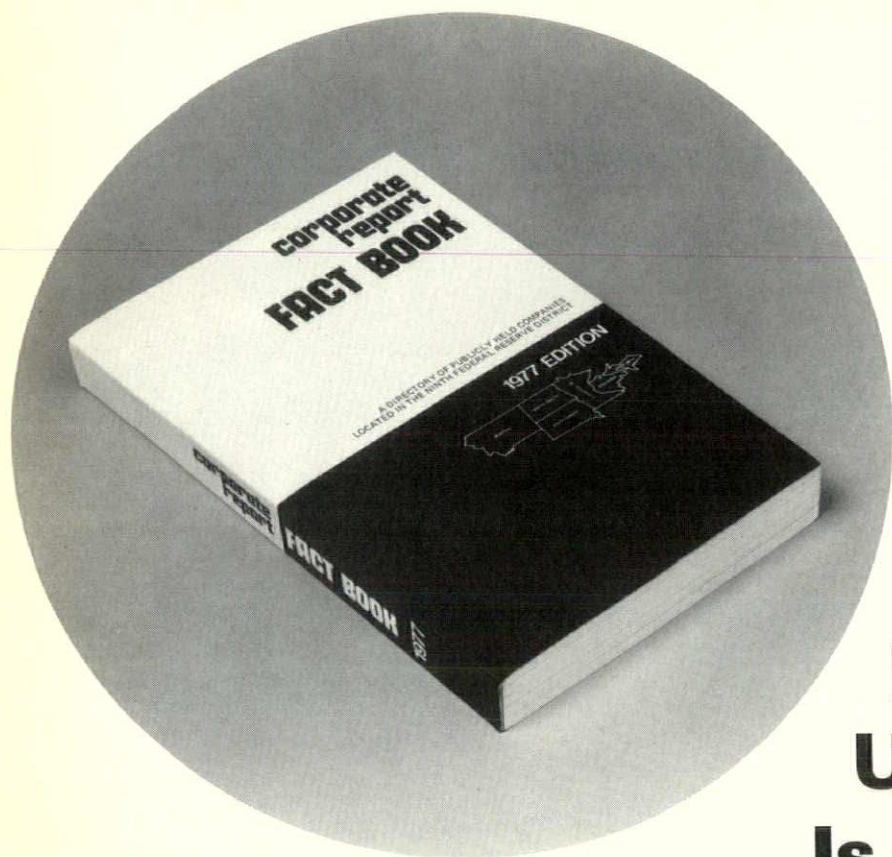
In early March, the Council formed a companion organization, the University Avenue Development Corporation, in order to participate in yet another program. The corporation will act as a Local Development Corporation (LDC) under guidelines set up by the Small Business Administration's 502 Loan Program. Through this vehicle, the LDC, made up of University Avenue business people with representation from all three area financial institutions, can make available SBA guaranteed loans of up to \$500,000 per business.

Plans call for the implementation of a model area, envisioned as a major intersection in which a variety of the new design strategies can be experimentally demonstrated. Currently under consideration as part of the public improvements are new street lights which provide more functional as well as economical lighting for businesses, pedestrian bus shelters, and street furniture, as well as implementation of the new "gateway" signs.

Today, the potential for significantly expanded retail, industrial, commercial, and office development along the Avenue is greater than perhaps any time in the Avenue's recent history. Spurred by a sense of direction and an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation between Avenue business people—who are successfully remaking their street—and city officials, who are cheering them on, their efforts seem destined for success. ■

Joanna Baymiller is a free lance writer who has written about planning and renovation efforts in several areas of Saint Paul, including the Historic Hill District, downtown, and University Avenue.

University Avenue looking east



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WINDSLOPE

Mike Wilkenson

Architects, by the nature of their calling, design buildings, not develop them.

However, the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects, mainly through efforts of the Minneapolis Chapter, has gotten involved in the development stage of the building industry as well as the design aspect. This is being done in the form of **Windslope**, a 168-unit public housing project in Eden Prairie.

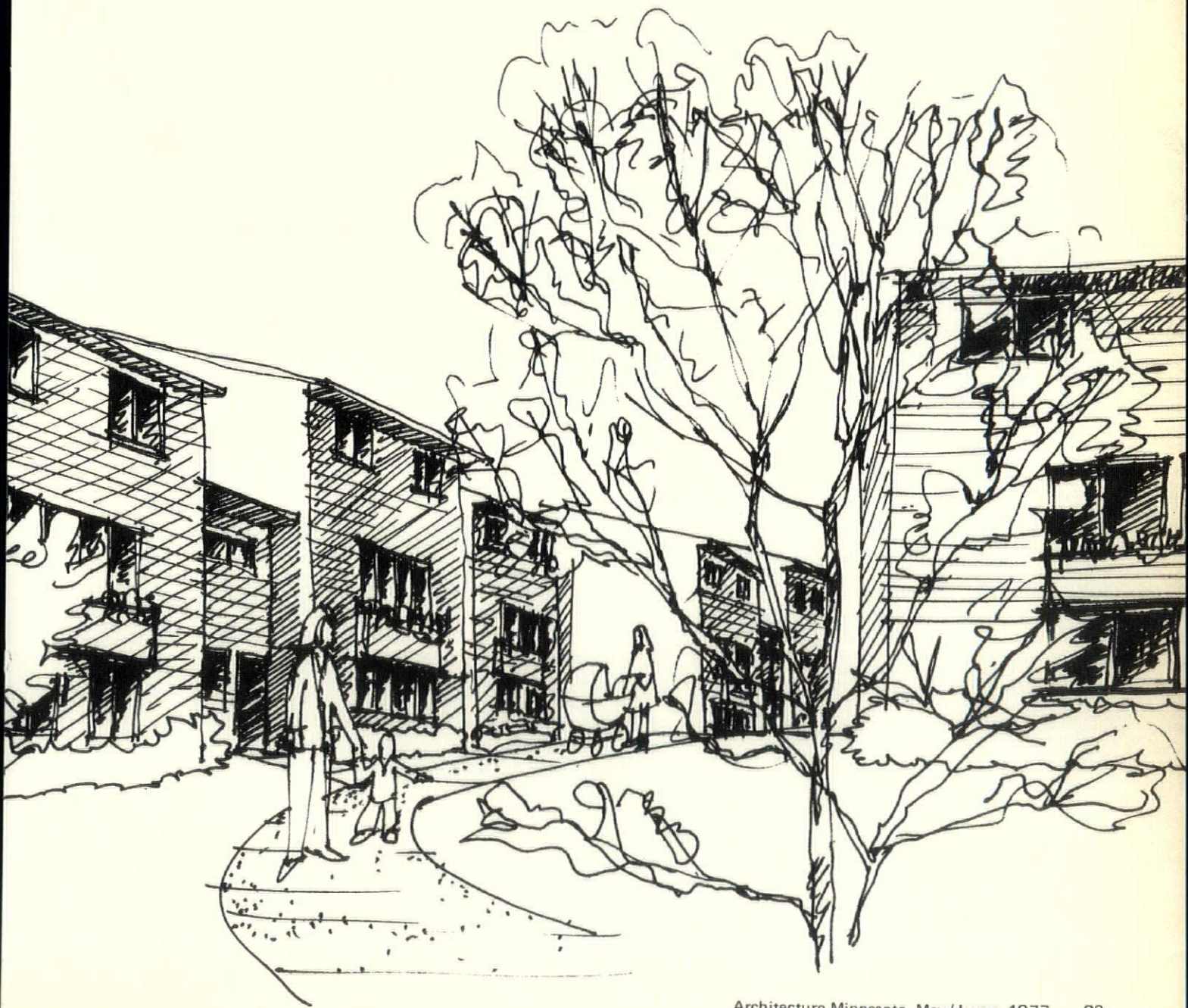
Windslope is located in The Preserve, a community development fea-

turing various kinds of housing, already partially occupied.

The Minneapolis Chapter of MSAIA is sponsoring the project which officially got underway in December with groundbreaking ceremonies. Construction is proceeding and occupants will move in by December of 1977.

In announcing the start of Windslope, the MSAIA called it "the first public housing project in the country financed by a nonprofit professional organization."

Windslope is financed under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section Eight program



which requires the qualifying low and middle-income occupants to pay one-fourth of their annual income towards rent with the final difference being subsidized by the federal government.

Design of the project is being done by **Winston and Elizabeth Close** of the Minneapolis firm of **Close Associates, Inc.**

Why did the architects become involved in Windslope and how did the project develop historically?

The culmination of the project will come about after seven long—and many times—frustrating years for MSAIA and the other parties who wanted so badly to get the project started.

"In October of 1969, we formally passed a resolution calling for Chapter support of the idea of a housing project," says Don Hustad of Hustad-Pontinen Architects, Inc. "But then we encountered many problems and setbacks."

Hustad put in many hours over those seven years arguing for the idea and estimates that 13 or 14 other architects also took time away from their regular jobs to give the proposal a boost.

Two other site locations were considered, in somewhat differing forms, before The Preserve became the final selection.

The first idea was a renovation, specifically the row house site on Milwaukee Avenue in Minneapolis. The two blocks of houses were built at the turn of the century by the Milwaukee Road as a housing site for its employees. The Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority was approached about being the other developer, but declined. Today, Milwaukee Avenue is alive and well as a historical site under the auspices of the Minnesota State Historical Society. The architects, however, had to go looking elsewhere for their project site.

"We approached Brooklyn Park in 1972," Hustad recalls. "Their Planning Commission approved it, but it was turned down by the City Council."

Public pressure over any low and middle income public housing was the main cause for the council's action. A similar plan was presented to Eden Prairie.

"We think Eden Prairie is a very forward-looking community," says Wolfgang Penzel, who was a councilman when the plan was first brought to council chambers in 1972. "We

were the first community in the area to put together a comprehensive guide plan on development. When the Preserve plan was first brought before us in 1970, we required that the developers (Minnesota Gas Co. and Carter and Gertz, Inc., an engineering firm) present public housing possibilities as part of their planned unit development."

Penzel says The Preserve began to look for a public housing project developer. It coincided with the search by the MSAIA people to find someone to provide the property for the project.

"One of the things we feel is very important in any public housing project is good management," Penzel adds. "That sounds simple enough, but too often good management is lacking and that is why so many public housing projects fail. However, the council and other officials of Eden Prairie were impressed with the Windslope management as well as other facets of the project."

MSAIA in the meantime, was interested in Eden Prairie as a project site. Hustad says the Metropolitan Council suggested the idea and felt Eden Prairie would be receptive.

"We felt The Preserve had the kind of setting and support services needed to make the project a success," Hustad says.

But, just as things seemed to be moving along, the Nixon Administration decided, in 1974, to put a moratorium on all federally-backed public housing.

"We were hoping to get 236 money since conventional loans were dried up at that time," adds Hustad.

A two-year, go-nowhere period followed.

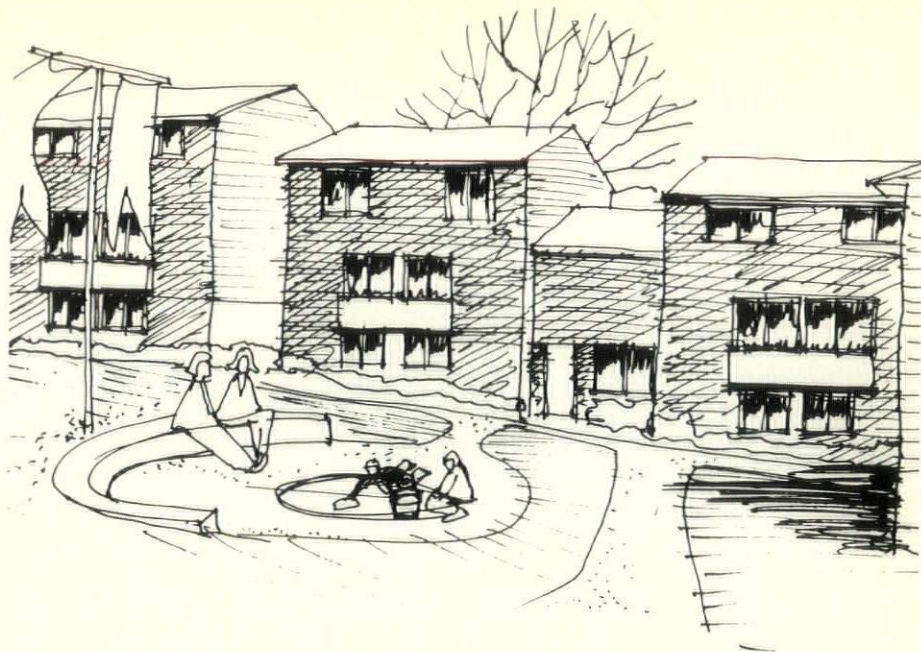
"In 1976," Hustad says, "we finally got HUD to back financing through some Section Eight programs that would come through the State of Minnesota."

Winston Close, the Windslope design architect (along with his wife, Elizabeth), is the first to admit the project will have some design limitations, basically because of cost and local building codes.

The project will cost \$4.3 million.

"At the same time," Close says, "I expect it will be a complex which will have some unique, practical features and will be as individualistic in style as we can possibly make it."

The Preserve already has several community services, so Windslope



won't have to keep large blocks of open land, although there will be immediate space for things such as parking, mini playgrounds and walkways.

Close has created a unique apartment-townhouse complex. Building clusters will vary from 12 to 24 units each. A typical approach will be one building housing two apartments and four townhouses. The apartments will be at ground level and the townhouses at the top two levels. Each building will have a front entrance. Because the entire project sits on a slope, Close related the entryways to the living units by having stairs leading from the vestibule area down to the apartments and up to the townhouses.

"We have avoided the necessity of outside steps and with a common entrance have improved building security."

To get away from the regimented look of multiple living units, windows from ground level buildings don't correspond to those of townhouses. In other words, no exact window rows.

Windslope is basically designed to integrate the housing units into natural surroundings while at the same time providing a general sense of community for the residents.

A major landscaping scheme is underway and is being designed by landscape architect Herb Baldwin.

The project sits on a crescent-shaped piece of land and the approach calls for winding walkways and the planting of trees and shrubs to enhance the site.

The playgrounds, called "tot

lots," feature interesting safety, as well as practical, aspects. They are located between each building cluster so that parents can have a direct view of the areas from their respective apartments. On the backside of the site is the parking area which has garages. The back of the garages about the grounds adjacent to the "tot lots."

"The garages prevent kids from running into the parking lots," Close points out.

The second row of garages, located on the other side of the site, along the street, will act as an aesthetic barrier. From the street, the ground slopes up to five feet from the flat roof. The visible roof area and back walls will be covered with foliage and shrubs.

Mayor Penzel likes the approach that the design team has taken and adds that it was a key factor in winning support from the city.

"In the past, public housing has usually been very distinguishable from private multiple housing. Usually, there is little in the way of architectural design, there are no garages and nothing in the way of immediate recreational areas. Windslope, however, has done away with these problems."

By simply following what he calls "normal requirements," Penzel says the people developing Windslope "were able to circumvent the problems so common to most public housing." □

Mike Wilkenson, a free-lance writer, is regional correspondent for Building Design and Construction magazine.

Pella Clad windows are for people's comfort

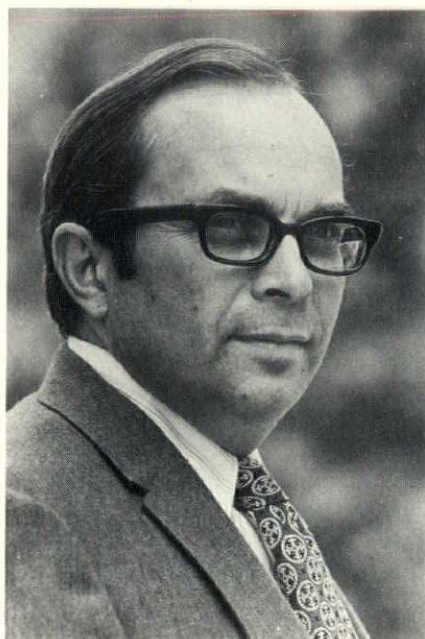
St. John's Hospital in Red Wing, Minnesota chose Pella Clad as replacement windows to fit existing masonry openings. **Pella Clad** — wood on the inside ... where it matters to people's comfort **and** the heat bill — metal on the outside ... where it matters to the building owner (low maintenance).

They also chose **Slimshade**, the venetian blind that operates between two panes of glass, protected from dust and dirt.



ARCHITECTS IN GOVERNMENT

Bonnie Richter



JENE T. SIGVERTSEN

**Executive Director
Office of School Plant Planning
and Maintenance
School District 625**

"One of my major responsibilities is to provide the best stimulating environment that will allow the education process to occur," says Jene Sigvertsen. As executive director of planning and maintenance for the St. Paul schools, Sigvertsen has a great deal to say about school facilities from architect selection to maintenance.

With a construction program of about \$50 million over the last five years, Sigvertsen serves as a liaison between architect and school administration. An architect can best fulfill the demands of his position "because of the tools native to an architect's experience and the kinds of training an architect has." Essentially, that experience "is the process of understanding design and construction, and implementing them in an orderly way."

Architects are also uniquely qualified to oversee operation and maintenance of the district's 87 facilities, says Sigvertsen, who sees the value of maintaining a facility "in sympathy with the original design state."

An added value to combining the responsibility for architecture and maintenance is the ability to review

the long-term performance of materials, mechanical systems and functional concepts. Sigvertsen is able to analyze the relationship between these concerns and bring that information to the design process, he says.

Sigvertsen considers his advice as guidance to the architect rather than a usurpation of his or her prerogatives. "We commission architects—competent architects. We don't attempt to design for them," he says.

Sigvertsen's role, together with three staff architects, is that of "coordinator—liaison—interpreter of educational needs to the architect." Those educational needs don't come only from the administration. "You can't design a successful facility today without broadening the 'user' to include the community," says Sigvertsen, who is responsible for soliciting community involvement in the design process.

Sigvertsen attended the University of Minnesota and is a graduate of Metropolitan State University. He has been a practicing architect for about 25 years, working with Minnesota firms before joining the School Board 10 years ago.



C. WARREN PETERSON

**Director of Properties for
the Metropolitan Airports Commission**

Of the several people interviewed for this article, C. Warren Peterson

Government has influenced the urban landscape since the earliest peoples banded together under a common ruler. From the design of a fortress wall to encompass the city to a contemporary street grid, government edict has given shape to our surroundings.

For the most part, architects have played a passive role in this urban design. They have been hired by government to design specific buildings, but the three-dimensional relationship of those buildings within the city's urban systems, geography and economic structure have been beyond the control of architects.

Today, however, some architects are becoming an integral part of those governmental policy decisions in their roles as professional advisers to government. Part one of this series was published in the March-April issue of *Architecture Minnesota*.

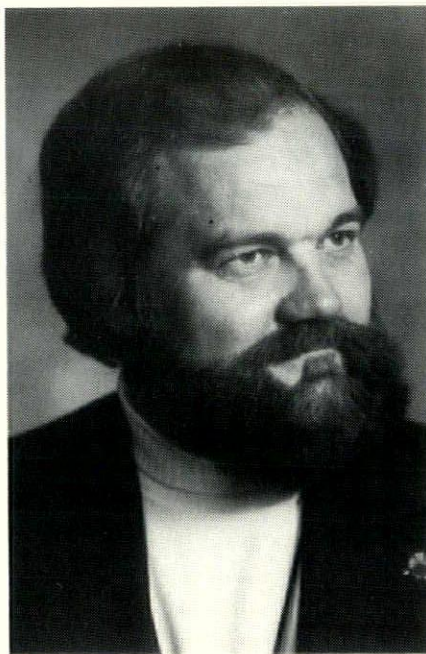
has had the most experience as an architect in government. He started with the metropolitan airport 20 years ago when it was known as Wold Chamberlain Field and has worked directly with the development of the current airport facility.

As Director of Properties for the Metropolitan Airports Commission, Peterson functions as liaison with architects and engineers as far as the public buildings at the airport are concerned. He develops all building programs directly with the professional representatives of the airlines.

Training as an architect is invaluable in his position, says Peterson, "because all basic preliminary design is initiated in our office and then implemented by the architect."

Peterson is also in charge of concession contracts for the airport and design modifications necessary to accommodate those concessions. A decision to house a sophisticated Native American gift shop rather than a Frederick's of Hollywood could well have been as much a design consideration as a financial one.

Peterson was graduated in 1949 from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Architecture degree. He worked four years as assistant to the State Architect and four years in his own practice before joining the airport staff.



WILLIS L. KINGSBURY

**Community Development Director
City of Moorhead**

Up until a year ago, Willis Kings-

bury was planning director for Moorhead. In his present position as Community Development Director for the City, a number of positions have been pulled together so that Kingsbury now administers an incredible potpourri of planning, housing, economic development, codes administration, and mass transit. The City has realized the interrelationship of these normally fragmented concerns and with the creation of Kingsbury's position comes an unprecedented opportunity to coordinate that interface.

An architectural background is important to his position, says Kingsbury, because an architect has "the vision plus the breadth of ability to juggle the social and the physical."

Where an architectural education is found wanting is in the area of "client contact"—actually working with the members of a community to ascertain their needs and preferences. The planning schools have done a better job in this regard, says Kingsbury, developing "a stronger theme of being able to work with people." He sees architectural schools as already moving in that direction, however.

Kingsbury dislikes the traditional cold and impersonal programming approach that creates a document and a building, but does not allow the people affected by that building an opportunity for expression. "The process of getting to the final product is as important, if not more so, than the final product itself," he says. "The user should fully understand the final product so that he can make the best possible use of it."

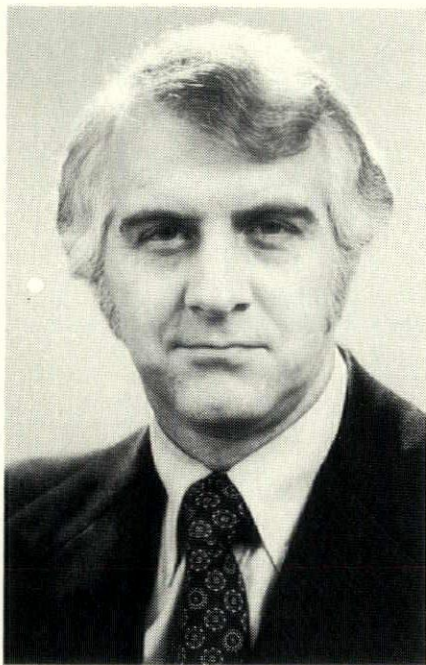
As an example, Kingsbury describes a new housing project in Moorhead with 150 units for the elderly in that city's urban development district. "We worked with the seniors on site selection and on through design so that the units designed fulfilled the needs of the citizens." Essentially, Kingsbury serves an oversight function to assure control by those people immediately affected and by the City of Moorhead in general.

It is a mutual education process, as well—the client educating the architect through Kingsbury, and the client being educated about architecture. "The emphasis is on the architectural quality of the building as a long-term asset to the community," says Kingsbury.

He calls it "riding both horses"—client and architect—and very strongly affecting the conceptual issues of the

resultant designs. It is a positive affect, according to Kingsbury, because it evolves through a broader "theme of compatibility" with entire city systems, both social and physical, than would a traditional design approach.

Kingsbury holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from North Dakota State University and worked six years with Sovik, Mathre and Matson Architects in Northfield before spending two years with his own practice in Moorhead.



WILLIAM L. SCHROEDER

Staff Architect for Hennepin County

"Let me broad brush it for you," says William Schroeder, as he starts to define the complex duties that go along with the amorphous title Staff Architect for Hennepin County. "This office is structured to render professional assistance to the County Board and administration in all matters relating to new construction, remodeling, space analysis, facility adaptation and repair—the whole gamut of project types that a large space user might need.

"Primarily we're here to function as in-house expertise on contracting for services and to provide long-range planning and capital project budget administration and estimating."

Schroeder, together with Staff Planner Robert Isaacson, two architectural assistants and two planning assistants, coordinates and oversees the day-to-day liaison between the design community and the client, Hennepin County. From identifying department-

al space needs to hiring an architect to cost estimating, spec writing and program interpretation, they structure and guide the process. Their work includes administering all contract payments including consultant services and assisting the legal department with all claims relative to construction and bonding, as well as assisting property management with such considerations as energy conservation.

Traditionally the architect has played the role of professional adviser to the client and Schroeder's work is clearly an extension of that role. "I'm here to apply my architectural knowledge to make sound judgments for the County and to act in consort with design professionals," says Schroeder.

Schroeder uses "value analysis" in the design process—formulating "an economically sound basis of judgment on what is built."

"We don't give crits on aesthetics, necessarily," says Schroeder. "It's not the visual appearance alone, but the value visually, functionally and economically that concerns us." He gives the example of a library where an architect may have specified a very expensive and rare wood to surface the circulation counter. His function would require that he play devil's advocate and ask the architect if that species and cut of wood is as durable as it must be or if perhaps there might be another wood that is more durable and yet gives the same visual appearance—at the same or less cost.

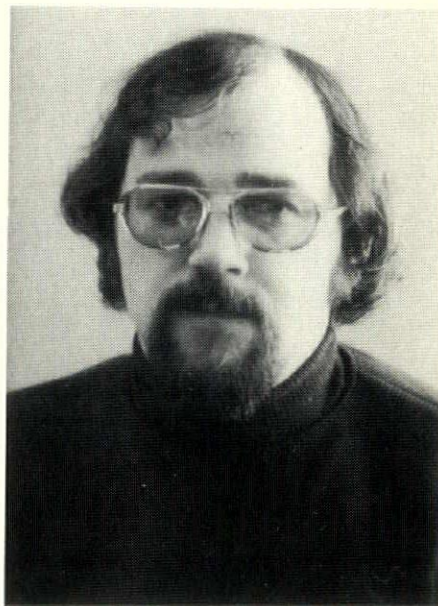
On another scale, Schroeder works with architects at the schematic stage, discussing the kind of assemblies the building will have—skin, structure, mechanical and electrical systems, fuel characteristics, materials, etc. Schroeder sees this as beneficial to both parties. "Architects and engineers rarely have updated information on operating costs," he says; information that the County maintains on a daily basis. "Together we'll decide what is most effective."

"It takes someone who understands the owner function to effectively assist the architects in this," Schroeder says. He is also able to function as translator in that capacity, translating the needs of the client into the language of architecture.

Schroeder has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Kansas and was in practice in Wisconsin before coming to Hennepin County in 1972. As an architect he is in a

particularly sensitive position because his office is "the keeper of all requests for consideration of service," says Schroeder. At the request of the County Administrator a list of potential firms is compiled from that file when a new building or remodeling project is scheduled.

For example, for the new Hennepin County Jail a list of 20 firms was compiled based on known previous experience. "From that list, based on our knowledge of the project, we mailed out a questionnaire to determine the suitability of the firm to the project," says Schroeder. The list was then narrowed (in the case of the jail, to seven candidates) and after a complex interview process, three firms were chosen. Those firms were recommended to the County Board who eventually appointed one firm for the project, says Schroeder. He will monitor the course of that decision from then on.



GERALD W. JOHNSON

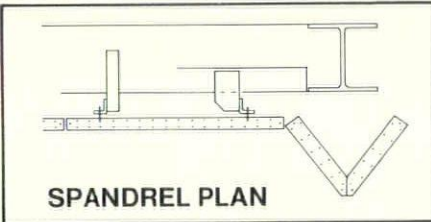
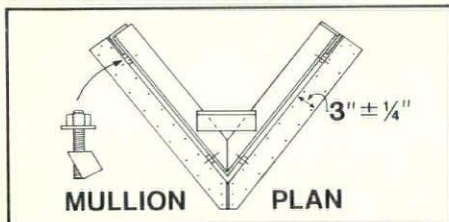
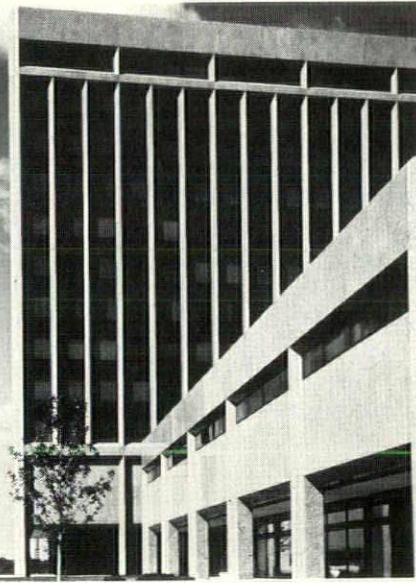
**Registered Architect for
the City of Duluth**

Since April of last year, Gerald Johnson has been directly involved in preparing building programs for the City of Duluth that utilize those Community Development dollars flowing back to the cities from the Federal Treasury.

Johnson attends community meetings throughout the City and gathers the background that used to take architects months to assemble. "Their fee used to go right down the drain," he says, fully aware of the time that such work can consume. Johnson now

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formulates the program for city projects and "feeds it back to the architect in documented form."

The benefits are twofold, Johnson says. "It is profitable for the architects and the City gets the project they envisioned."

In the past, the architect or the community club or organization never reported back to the City on a project, other than financially, and the City had little input into the project, either, Johnson says.

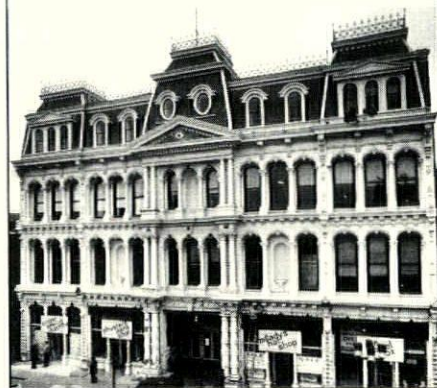
That information trading is important to Duluth because it architecturally is a closed shop—only Duluth architects can design City projects. "We like to pass the work around," Johnson says. "It's sort of an architectural round robin." Since the City never asks for a proposal from the architects before hiring them, it is crucial that the City have the kind of information about performance that Johnson can give.

Johnson is a 1968 architectural graduate of North Dakota State University and has worked with firms in Fargo and Duluth. He also spent two years participating with the Architectural Consortium on Model Cities programs. □

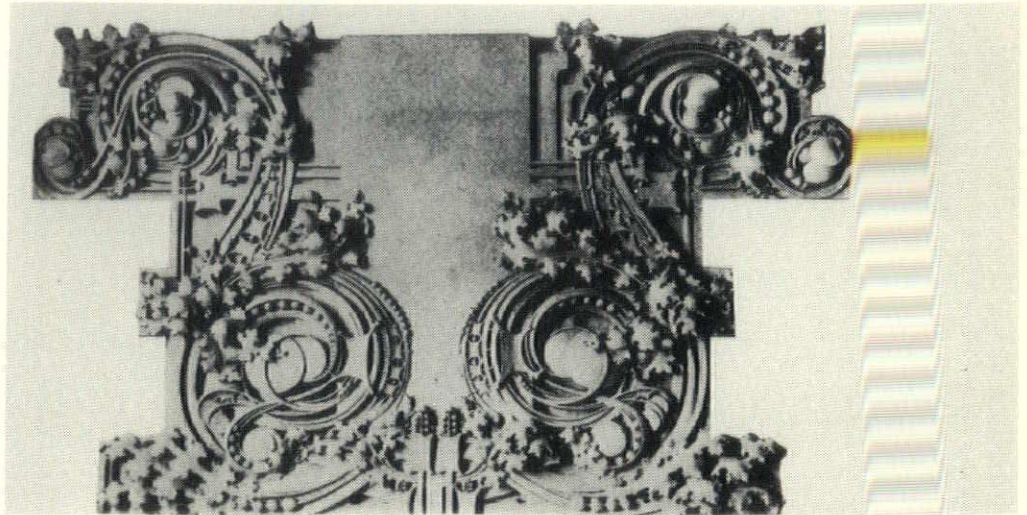
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PURCELL AND ELMSLIE



Ernest Sandeen

The architectural reputation of William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie is firmly established. As a result of the careful and loving scholarship of David Gebhard and H. Allen Brooks, the work of these second-generation Prairie School architects is well-known and well-appreciated by students of American architecture. The Purcell and Elmslie exhibition put on by the University of Minnesota Gallery during the past autumn and winter was not intended to awaken respect for a pair of neglected architects, but rather to display a few of the drawings, photographs, and artifacts of the Purcell-Elmslie collaboration which are now collected in the Northwest Architectural Archives at the University.

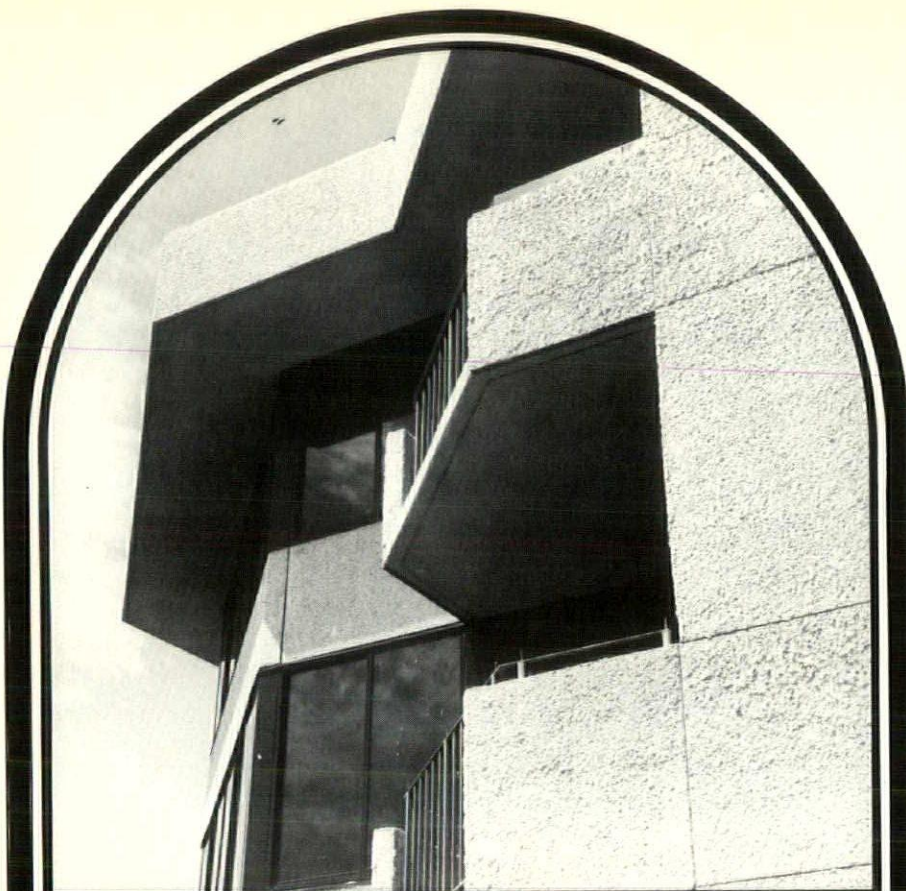
But a visit to that exhibition could hardly help but provoke some thoughts about the character of that seemingly ideal partnership. Purcell, the younger of the two men, came to Minneapolis in 1906 to work with George Feick, an old Cornell University undergraduate classmate. Their practice grew quite rapidly, but no one has argued that they produced work of great distinction before Elmslie moved to Minneapolis to join them. As a boy, Purcell had lived across the street from Frank Lloyd Wright's house and studio on Forest Avenue in Oak Park, Illinois. Through-

out his life he was a defender and advocate of Wright's work and sometimes asked Wright's advice about his own designs.

Purcell and Elmslie had met in Louis Sullivan's office where Purcell had been employed for a few months in 1903. By 1909 Sullivan's office was not active enough to keep Elmslie busy, and toward the end of that year he reluctantly left the old master to set up with Purcell and Feick. He was nearly forty years old, Purcell was thirty. Feick's contribution, never substantial, ceased when he left the firm in 1913.

Perhaps the best-known commissions of Purcell and Elmslie were the Merchant's National Bank in Winona, Minnesota, built in 1911, and the related 1912 Crane house in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, and 1912 Deck house in Minnetonka. The smaller Edna Purcell house (1913), Oscar Owre house (1912), and Ward Beebe house (1912) have also been highly praised. One might want to add to this list of accomplishments the 1912 design of a commercial building, the Edison Phonograph Shop in Chicago.

All of these buildings were represented in the University Gallery show either by photographs or plans. The quality of these buildings, both in decorative detail and in the total design, is extraordinary. It was especially interesting to be able to examine the plans for the Decke-



Point of France, Edina, first high rise luxury condominium in this area. Korsunsky-Krank and Joseph Phillips, architects, Kraus-Anderson of Minneapolis, general contractor.

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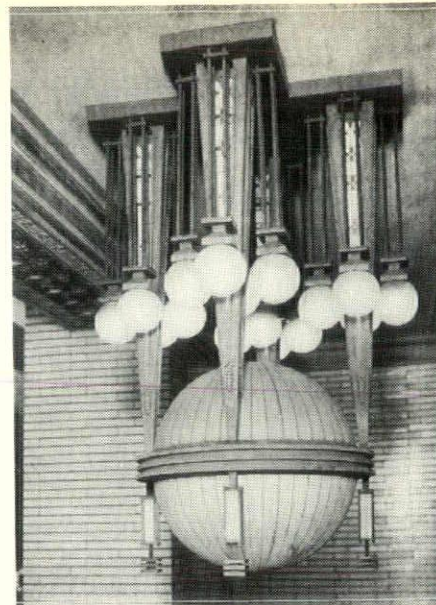
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house, which has received much less attention in general architectural texts than the Crane house, whose Massachusetts location has granted it much more notoriety.

These were not the only buildings illustrated by any means. What seemed striking, however, was that none of the later designs seemed to reach the level of the early work. Within two years of the formation of their partnership, Purcell and Elmslie had produced a bank, a store, two large residences, and three smaller houses all of which have been granted the status of near masterpieces by historians and critics. But in the banks built for Hector, Minnesota, and Albert Lea, Minnesota, in 1916 and 1921, in the houses built for Louis Heitman and Amy Hamilton Hunter in 1917 and 1916, in the Kasson, Minnesota, municipal building of 1917 Purcell and Elmslie did not seem to be able either to duplicate their earlier successes or to move beyond them in any significant direction.

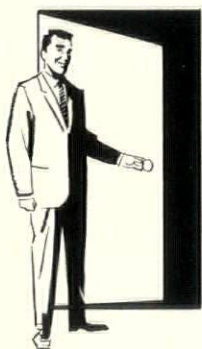
The P & E partnership only lasted until 1922 although both men lived for decades longer, Purcell until 1965 and Elmslie until 1952. There is no evidence that the two partners had a falling out or serious disagreement. Perhaps they recognized more clearly than we that whatever magic was generated by the pooling of their talents in 1910, the effect was only momentary.

The crisis of their partnership was a crisis felt throughout the Prairie School—that group of architects who felt that they were consciously following the brilliant lead of Sullivan and Wright. Sullivan, of course, designed

very little after 1910. Wright seems to have wished to make a clean break with that design tradition when he left the United States in 1909. The houses which he designed in California and Oklahoma during the 1920s can be accounted for on the basis of his stylistic development, but they cannot be called Prairie houses. Thus, it might be argued that the Prairie School had reached the point where its practitioners were forced to make a choice. They might either strike out in new directions or they might simply repeat the work of their masters in different variations until their clients tired of it; that is, they could treat the Prairie Style as another in the long line of historic styles. That Purcell and Elmslie chose not to take that latter course is a tribute to their architectural integrity. □

Dr. Ernest Sandeen is James Wallace Professor of History at Macalester College in Saint Paul. He also teaches a course on the history of architecture and is presently writing a book on the history and architecture of Summit Avenue in Saint Paul.

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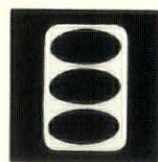
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OLD DOWNTOWNS

(continued from page 17)

virtually the only commercial areas of the community that are pedestrian oriented.

Downtowns in most small towns have not been beset by the problems of congestion, difficulty of parking or perception of scale. They continue to serve their historical function as a gathering place in the community, reflecting its image and its role as a communications center. Time has altered the pedestrian focus of the area with the influx of more automobile traffic and the deterioration of the physical plant. But community events still focus on downtown.

A great deal of potential can exist for a community to capture and expand its vitality as a place for people within its downtown area. Such improvements could be instituted merely to make areas look better by giving them some type of cosmetic

treatment. In some limited cases, this may be appropriate. In most cases, more is required.

A range of opportunities does exist, supported in Minnesota by the availability of tax increment financing. Private subscription, special assessments, general city capital improvement funds, and utility funds are some of the techniques available.

Some observations emerge from those communities which have successfully implemented pedestrian streetscape improvements:

- Streetscape improvements must be related to functional, urban design and economic factors.
- Commitment and focused individual or collective leadership have brought implementation. Lack of resources, although often cited as a deterrent, can be overcome through commitment and blending of a variety of resources.
- A threshold level of improvement has to be established to assure a return for the investment. Scattered or insignificant bits and pieces do not

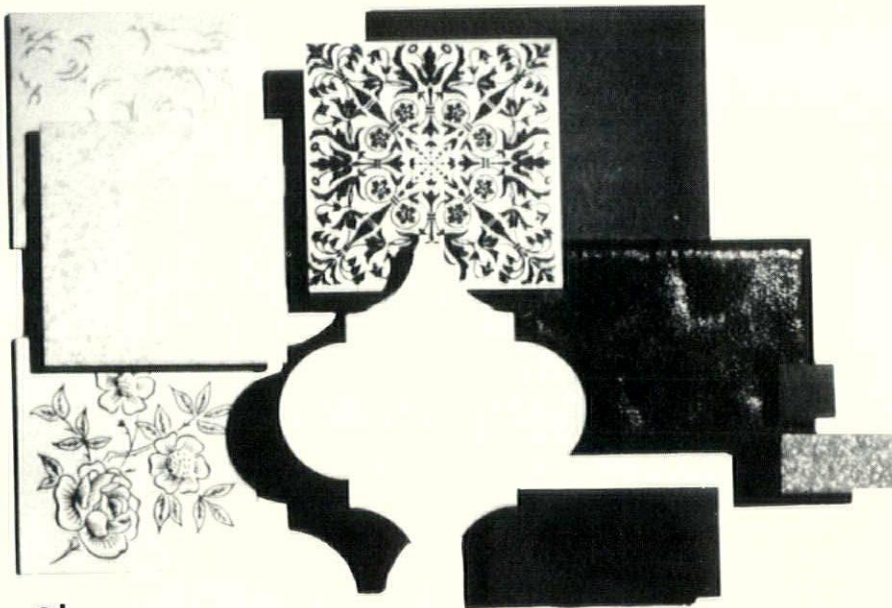
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do the job.

- The streetscape has to achieve a level of quality which establishes and maintains a strong image.

- Public and private involvement is mandatory.

- Commitment to a continued high level of maintenance is required. Proper design can assist in this effort.

- Activities and events must be planned to assure active use.

- Merchandise displays, techniques and products, as well as interior and exterior building improvements, must be undertaken.

- Change in downtown activities can be anticipated. Trends need to be observed and captured in support of downtown objectives.

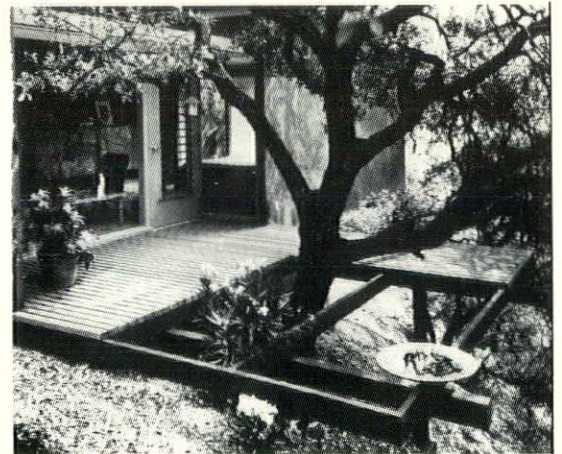
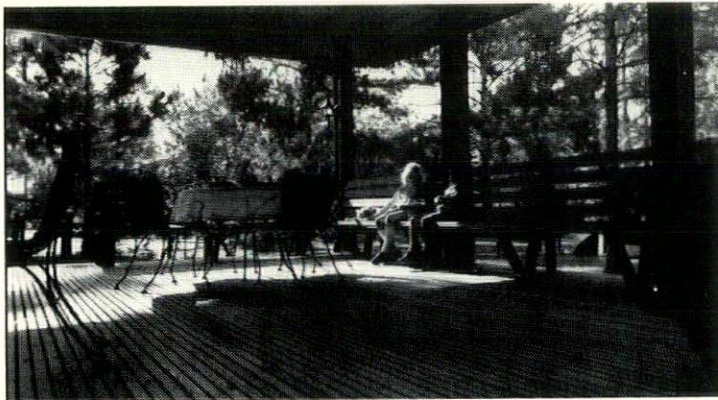
Malls mean different things to different people and so they should. They are not necessarily the air conditioned space connecting stores. They are instead the flavor, the symbol of the city and reflection of the pride and concern for its future growth and development. Malls take many forms and should. No one form or solution can readily be adapted or recommended for any one community. Above all, the mall or pedestrian

streetscape improvement for the downtown should be a statement for the community—its character, its quality, and its future aspirations. That challenge and that opportunity is open to Minnesota communities. □

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Charles W. Mosher is a registered landscape architect and chief designer for Barton-Aschman. He has received awards for numerous projects including Tower Clock Plaza in Dubuque and Frankfort.

Donn R. Wiski is a former planning director for the City of Duluth. He has extensive experience in downtown planning for communities of all sizes including St. Paul, Wayzata, New Ulm, Madison and Ashland.



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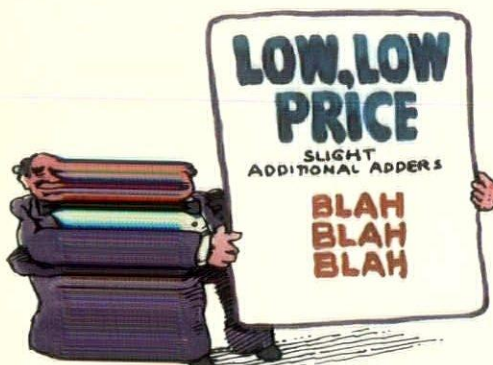
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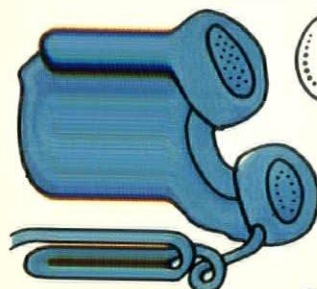


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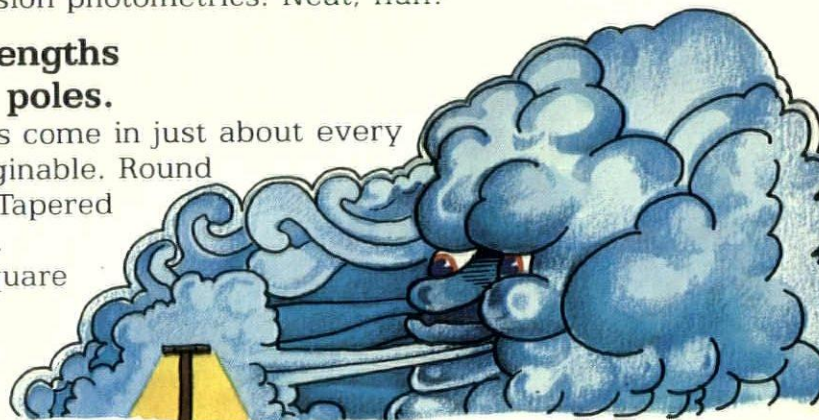
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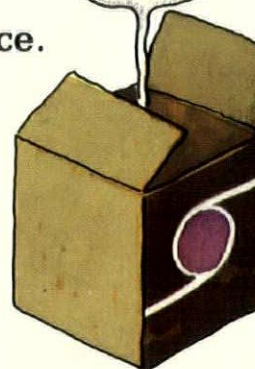


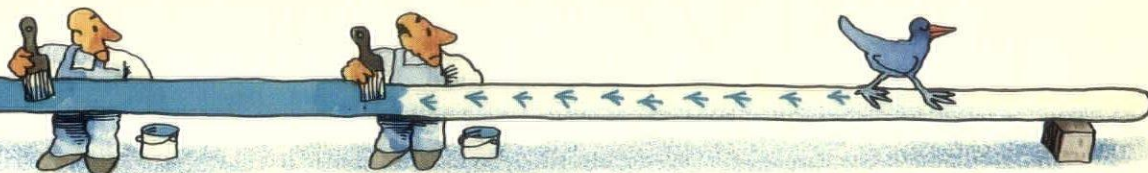
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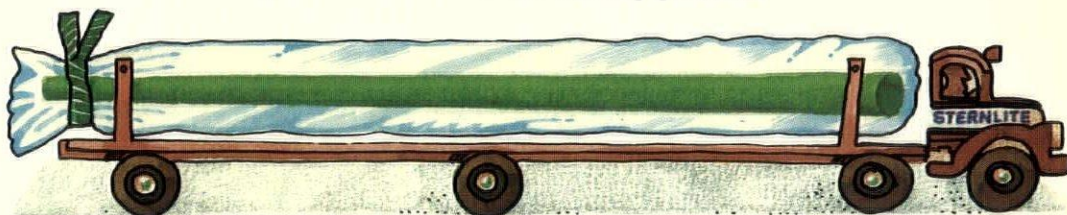
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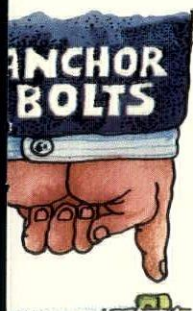


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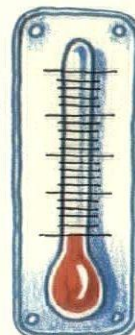
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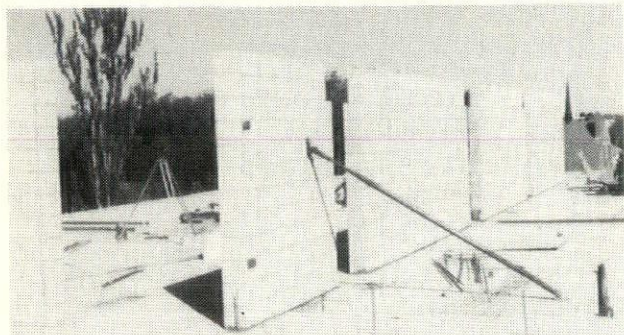


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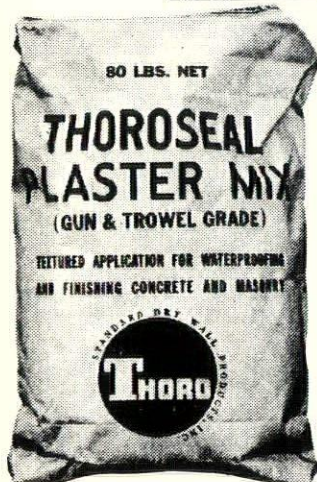
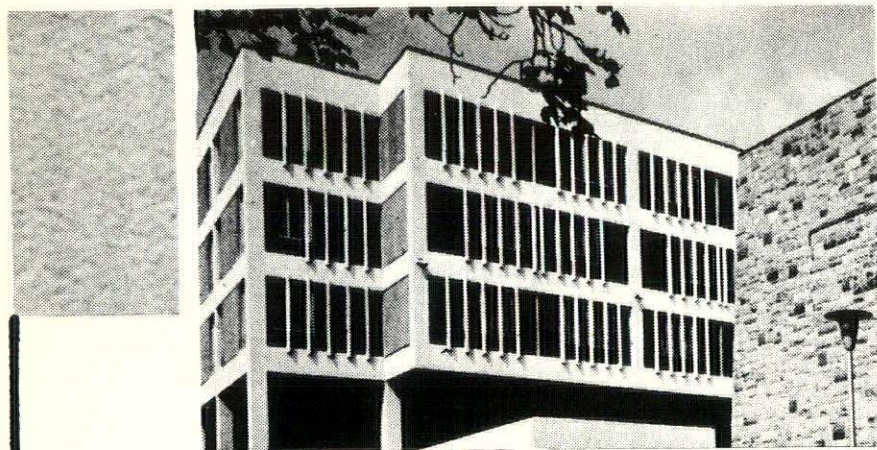
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NONRESIDENTIAL BUILDING STRENGTHENED

March contracts for new construction advanced nine per cent to a total of \$9,936,748,000, it was reported today by the F.W. Dodge Division of McGraw-Hill Information Systems Company.

According to George A. Christie, vice president and chief economist for F.W. Dodge, "Sharp gains in housing and in commercial and industrial building were the construction industry's main sources of support in the past month."

Christie added that "March contracting data confirmed that more is happening in construction markets than just a housing recovery. With the setback of the economy's recovery now behind us, we expect to see further improvement—as had occurred in March—in the critical area of industrial and commercial building."

Nonresidential building contract value, at \$3,002,531,000, was up a strong 22 per cent in March, paralleling the gains in most other basic economic indicators in that month. "Almost all of March's increase was concentrated in commercial and industrial building contracts (up more than 40 per cent), as institutional building value was little improved over last year's amount," said Christie.

March contracts for residential building reached \$5,149,193,000 for a gain of 42 per cent from the year-ago total. The Dodge economist noted that after seasonal adjustment, the past month's dollar value of residential building hit a new high, exceeding the previous peak set in March 1973. The current month's activity fell short of the record for the number of dwelling units started, however.

Without a single new electric power project initiated in March, total nonbuilding construction contract value fell 41 per cent to \$1,785,024,000 despite sizeable gains in highway and sewer/water contracting, according to the Dodge economist.

"It's possible," Christie observed, "that we may experience a setback in the previously booming field of electric utility construction. This industry, which has been moving rapidly into nuclear generation, must now reconsider its future in the light

of the President's recent energy message. It, among other things, carried a strong emphasis on coal as a source of electrical energy.

At the end of the first quarter of 1977, total construction contract value, at \$24.1 billion, was eight per cent ahead of the comparable period of 1976. ■

Credits

The photo of the Chamber of the Minnesota House of Representatives on pages 19 and 34 of the last issue—the March/April issue—of *Architecture Minnesota* was taken by Jay Reilly.

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THE GOVERNOR'S AESTHETIC ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Barbara Kueppers

As one of his first official acts as Governor, Rudy Perpich created the *Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program*, continuing an interest and concern he had as Lt. Governor.

To implement the Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program, Governor Perpich has named a coordinator from each of Minnesota's 87 counties to serve on a Governor's Aesthetic Environment Committee. The objective of the Committee is twofold: to encourage voluntary participation within a network of existing state programs to eliminate visual pollution and to encourage community improvement programs.

The Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program will concentrate on restoring the natural beauty of Minnesota's landscape through

- The removal of abandoned automobiles

- The removal of dilapidated buildings

- Bringing junkyards into conformance with state law

- Community clean up programs

- A statewide tree planting program

Abandoned Autos

Legislation authorizing an abandoned motor vehicle program was enacted in 1971, authorizing the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to reimburse units of government (usually counties) for the expense of inventorying, collecting, storing and transporting abandoned motor vehicles and abandoned scrap metal for recycling. To offset the costs of carrying out the program, a \$1 tax was placed on the title transfer of all motor vehicles weighing over 1,000 pounds. Although about 100,000 motor vehicles have been removed and recycled as a direct result of the subsidies provided by the

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program, approximately 100,000 abandoned autos still remain in Minnesota with an additional 18,000 vehicles abandoned every year.

Although most Minnesota counties have conducted at least one survey of abandoned autos, the Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program hopes to encourage volunteers to work with county officials in regularly updating inventories. Also, since many people have an emotional attachment to a retired, deteriorating vehicle and are reluctant to give permission for its removal, the personal contact afforded by volunteers can assure greater success for the program.

Dilapidated Buildings

Throughout Minnesota there are abandoned and dilapidated buildings which are both a hazard to health and safety and a blight on our environment. Many of these vacant, deteriorating buildings are beyond the point where they can be renovated and constitute a serious fire hazard. Recently arson and suspected arson has dramatically increased in these types of structures.

Legal and financial constraints

have been the greatest obstacles in removing dilapidated buildings. Most property owners cannot afford to remove the buildings or the local authorities have been unable to act. Municipalities have the statutory authority to provide for removal or razing of a hazardous building upon obtaining the consent in writing of all owners of record, occupying tenants and all lien-holders of record. In addition the State Fire Marshall may petition the district court of any county for an order for condemnation. Neither process is speedy.

The Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program will encourage volunteers to work with their municipality to survey dilapidated and abandoned buildings. Owners will then be contacted in an effort to have them either repair or remove the buildings. If an owner is not motivated to begin the necessary repairs, a municipality can proceed under its statutory authority or the State Fire Marshall can condemn the hazardous structure. Local historical societies will be contacted to assure that buildings to be razed have no architectural or historic value. If the municipality is

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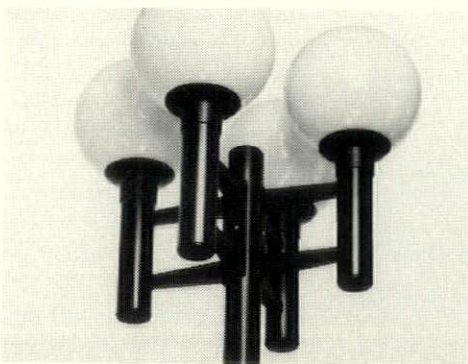
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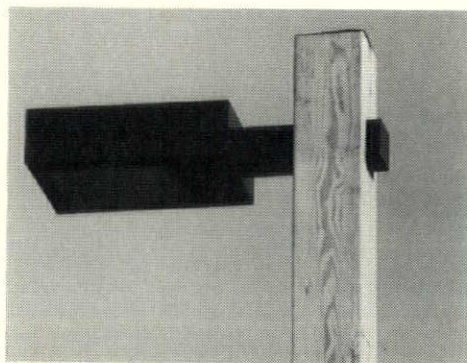


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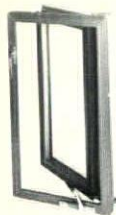


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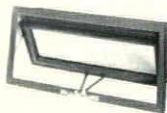
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willing to assume liability, Governor Perpich will make state equipment and personnel available to remove the hazardous structure.

Junkyards

Over a decade ago the Minnesota Legislature declared that in the interest of and to promote public safety, to protect the public investment in our state highways, and to preserve natural beauty, it was necessary to regulate the operation of junkyards on lands adjacent to the trunk highways of the state. The first Minnesota Junkyard Control Law was passed in 1965, the same year as the Federal Highway Beautification Act, popularly known as Lady Bird Johnson's Bill. The federal law provided for 75% federal funding for a control program, with 25% being matched by the state. However, because of differences in the law, lack of appropriated federal funds, certain procedural and legal problems, the state program was not fully operational until 1975. The Department of Transportation administers the program.

A junkyard according to the law is a site used for the storing, buying or selling of junk, including auto graveyards, sanitary landfills not regulated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and garbage dumps, whose bulk is equivalent to five or more motor vehicles. According to the Department of Transportation, a junkyard is non-conforming if it is wholly or partially located within one-half mile of and within view of any trunk highway which was lawfully established prior to July 1, 1971. Any junkyard established after July 1, 1971 which meets the other non-conforming criteria has no legal basis for existence.

To eliminate illegal junkyards and bring others into conformance the Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program will encourage citizens to become involved in encouraging local junkyard owners to comply with state law and to assure that local ordinances are enforced and aren't in conflict with state enforcement. The Department of Transportation's nine state-wide districts each keep an inventory of junkyards within its district and recommendations for methods of compliance with state law.

In 1977 there still remain over 500 non-conforming junkyards throughout Minnesota.

Community Clean Up Day

To instill concern for environ-

mental improvement and beautification in all segments of the community and for all age levels, Governor Perpich will make the Minnesota National Guard available to communities or organizations who wish to undertake a community clean up day. Ideas for projects and how to implement them may be secured from the Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program.

Tree Planting

Because shade tree diseases are taking an accelerating number of Minnesota's beautiful, mature trees, the Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program will encourage communities to undertake tree planting programs. To facilitate volunteer activity, the Governor's program will be a clearinghouse for information and technical assistance from the many state and federal agencies and organizations involved in shade tree disease control and replanting.

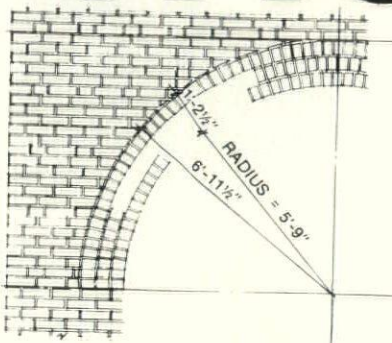
Since a substantial replanting program will involve a considerable amount of dollar resources, Governor Perpich hopes that local public and state agencies and volunteers can join with private industry in undertaking tree planting programs in each of our communities.

Conclusion

Volunteers will lend visibility and support in undertaking the Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program, stimulating interest in environmental improvement and beautification. No new funds will be asked for program coordination or operation. Rather, volunteers will create local public awareness about the program by contacting local news sources, public officials and neighbors. The Governor's Office of Volunteer Services will provide technical assistance to communities interested in undertaking a volunteer effort. The Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program will make available information and technical assistance to citizens to get the job done. According to Governor Perpich, "Our people always respond to programs which promote our high quality of life." □

Barbara Kueppers who was Director of Communications for the Minnesota Bicentennial is now on the staff of the Governor's Aesthetic Environment Program.

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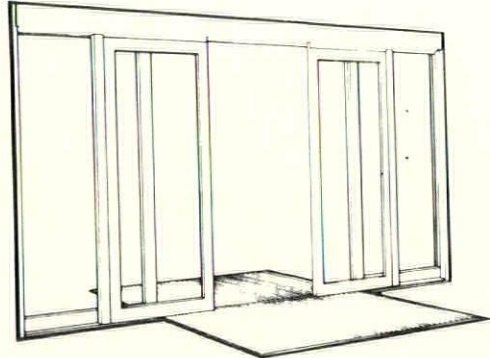
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BOOKS

Georgia Ray DeCoster

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, not in the mind of the reader. This explains the main weakness of Jean Adams Ervin's new work, *The Twin Cities Perceived*, University of Minnesota Press, 1976. Visually, at least to this reader, the book doesn't come off.

Ms. Ervin attempts to convey visual impressions—of beauty, of ugliness, of physical character—through the printed word and use of four artists' sketches, some highly subjective. Representing four different stylistic approaches and uneven quality, the illustrations cause the book's lack of visual impact and continuity. Photographs would have been better at conveying the physical essence of the Twin Cities, as in John Szarkowski's *The Face of Minnesota*, University of Minnesota Press, 1958, or Carol Brink's *The Twin Cities*, Macmillan Company, 1961.

However, *The Twin Cities Perceived* attempts much more and succeeds in other ways. As a mixed bag of architectural commentary, travel brochure and urban sociological-historical text, the book offers a comprehensive survey of Saint Paul and Minneapolis neighborhoods and the forces that shaped them—geographic, industrial, ethnic, economic and architectural.

Seventeen neighborhoods—six in Saint Paul and 11 in Minneapolis—are described in depth and located on the map inside the front and back covers. Both loops are treated in detail, and their major landmarks, old and new, are illustrated liberally in some of the book's best sketches. Puzzlingly omitted from the map are the Historic Hill District and the Irvine-Park neighborhoods in Saint Paul and the Lake Harriet neighborhood in Minneapolis, all dealt with in the text.

Ms. Ervin maintains admirable objectivity towards both cities throughout the book, and although she is occasionally profuse in her compliments toward certain features of each, she is much more frequently critical—and her criticism has great value.

Urban planners, architects, developers, and neighborhood association leaders should take it seriously when she says: "Architecturally neither Saint Paul nor Minneapolis is particularly distinguished and it would be difficult

to sort them out. . . . Both cities grew rapidly, and a dismal lack of imagination in planning for middle and lower-middle class residential areas is evident . . . you can drive and walk through block after block in either city feeling a mild despair over the look of residential areas . . . something could have been done to enliven the homes and surroundings built for people with little money."


The author's repeated examples of how new architecture in old neighborhoods extends their life should be taken to heart by local historic preservationists whose misguided efforts would endlessly reproduce "ersatz nostalgia."

Though the text is sometimes overwordy, Ms. Ervin's word images are occasionally masterful:

"Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Basilica (is) now stranded like a great whale on a beach of highways."

Describing the appearance of Irvine Park in Saint Paul, she says: "The dead and dying cars scattered nearby add to the gloom of what looks like a Tennessee Williams stage set."

Cedar Riverside, the New Town-in-Town, is described as ". . . a most unlikely patchwork quilt made up of Greenwich Village, Gopher Prairie,



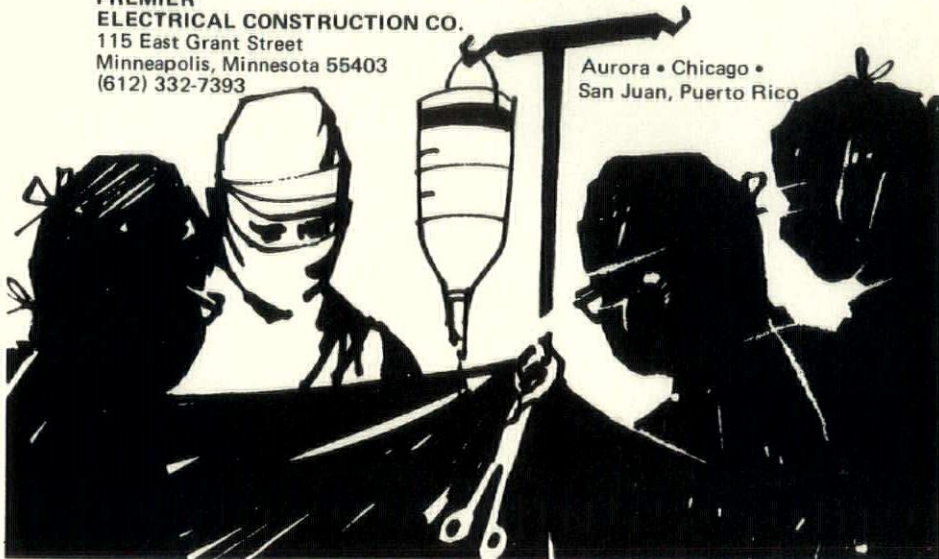
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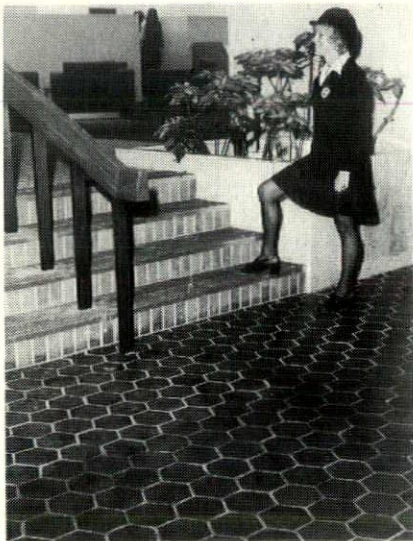


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and Brasilia."

It was especially delightful to read Ms. Ervin's accolade for the much-maligned redevelopment of Mears Park, a far more successful and useful urban open space than is generally acknowledged in Saint Paul.

As for the art work, the black and white sketches by four artists, Robert Halladay, Heidi Schwabacher, Robert H. Taylor, and Gemma Rossini Cullen, are liberal throughout the book, and a few are excellent. Somehow, though, even the best of them are interesting rather than stirring, artistic rather than charged with the visual impact that photos of weather, scenery, and structures can provide.

All in all, *The Twin Cities Perceived* is a useful book, carefully researched and illustrated. It should be of special value to urban and architectural historians of this area. □

Georgia DeCoster is Executive Director of Minnesota Landmarks in Saint Paul. She was Executive Director of the Saint Paul-Ramsey Bicentennial Commission and earlier a member of the Saint Paul Planning Board. As chairman of the Planning Board's Historic sites committee, she was responsible for the publication, in 1964, of Historic Saint Paul Buildings." The famed 'blue book' is still the basic reference book on historic buildings in Saint Paul.

Susan Davis

Planning Jerusalem: Master Plan for the Old City of Jerusalem and Its Environs, Arieh Sharon. McGraw-Hill, \$25, hardbound

From the cover: "The fundamental purpose of the Townplanning Scheme is to preserve and honor the past, the events, cultures and even personalities that have created the Old City and whose influence prevails to the present. Yet, as the Old City is composed not only of the Holy Places but is also the place where traces of ancient life and the demands of modern living are in daily confrontation, the Townplanning Scheme provides for a city which will be able to serve its inhabitants while maintaining an atmosphere reflecting the coexistence of the old and the new. The plan presented in this book is therefore based upon the vision of a living city which preserves a delicate balance between the past and the present."

Illustrated with 71 full color maps; 175 black and white photographs, 27 plans and 28 reproductions of ancient maps, lithographs and etchings.

Exploring the Twin Cities with Children, Elizabeth French. Nodin Press, \$3.50 spiralbound.

Here is an interesting Twin Cities guidebook originally intended as a paper for a Master of Arts degree in Library Science at the U of M. The book is aimed at children's interests but is certainly not exclusive in its scope. Places to visit range from the Como Park Zoo and the Touch and See Room at the Bell Museum of Natural History to group tours of Northwestern Bell and Byerly's Food Stores. Along with each entry is the name of the appropriate person to contact for tours and information about fees and admission. Barbara Flanagan says, "Good touring choices for children. Adults who join them will have fun too."

Now in the store for the first time: *Oppositions: A Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture*, published for the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies. MIT Press, \$10 paperbound.

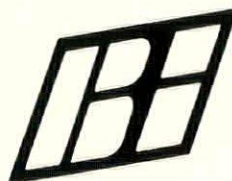
Table of contents: The journal contains an editorial, a section of "oppositions" with several articles, a history section, and a theory article. At the end of the journal is a section

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called "Documents" which attempts to provide primary source material in translation.

Some examples from *Oppositions* No. 5 and No. 6:

Oppositions: Colin Rowe on Robert Venturi and the Yale Mathematics Building.; Charles Moore: A Conclusion; Vincent Scully: The Yale Mathematics Building: Some Remarks on Siting.

Theory: Denise Scott Brown: On Architectural Formalism and Social Concern-A Discourse for Social Planners and Radical Chic Architects.

Editorial: Peter Eisenman on Post-Functionalism.

Other new books of interest:

Urban Dynamics in Saint Paul: A Study of Neighborhood and Center City Interaction by David Lanegran. Old Town Restorations, \$5.95 paperback.

The Sense of Units: The Sufi Tradition of Persian Architecture by Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar—University of Chicago Press, \$22.50 hardbound.

Nature as Designer by Bertel Bager. Van Nostrand Reinhold, \$7.95 paperback.

An Autobiography, Frank Lloyd Wright. Horizon Press, \$17.59 hardbound. A reissue of the original edition with the revisions included plus 82 illustrations and photographs.

Graphic Guide to Interior Design, Forrest Wilson. Van Nostrand Reinhold, \$4.95 paperback.

The Sauna Book, Tom Johnson and Tim Miller. Harper and Row, \$7.95 paperback.

The Spacemaker Book, by Ellen Lيمان. Viking Press, \$9.95 hardbound.

Good Neighborhood: The Challenge of Open Housing, Morris Milgram. W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., \$10.95 hardbound. □

Susan Davis is manager of the Architectural Center of the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects.



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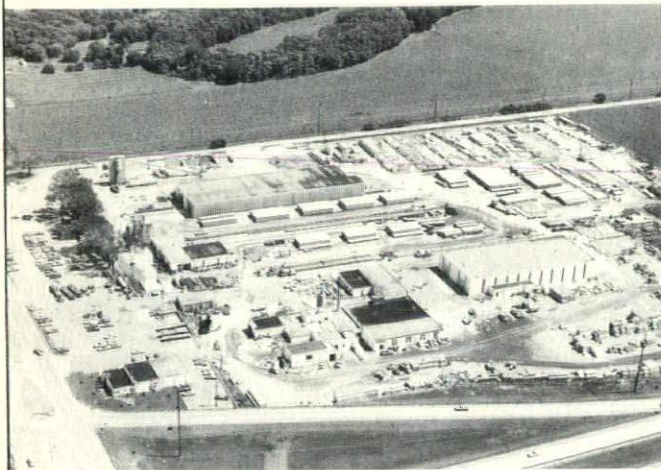
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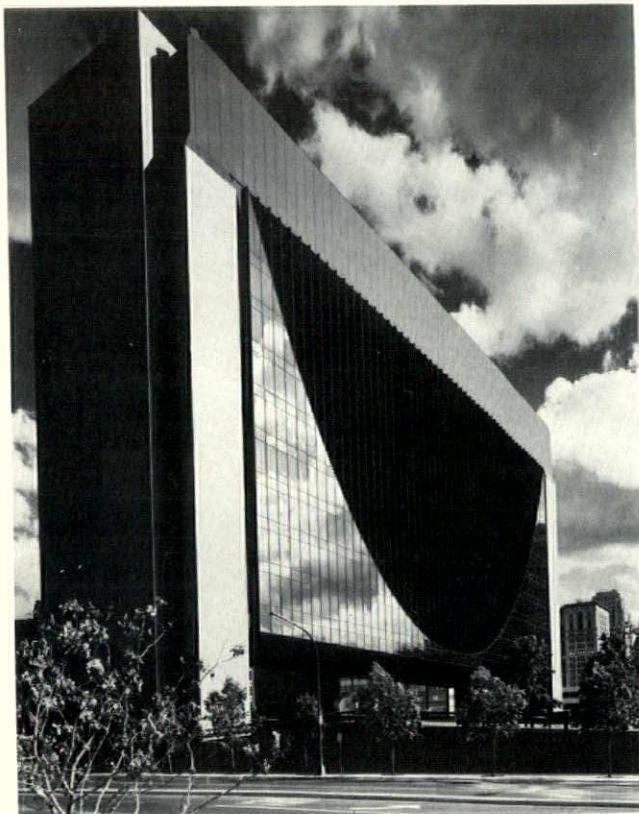
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LETTERS

Editor:

Your editorial in the March-April issue of *Architecture Minnesota* regarding design districts would be appreciated except for the fatal mistake at its outset. The design district ordinance is not dead. Rather, the City Council is currently seeking public comment.

An information packet and questionnaire has been sent to over 100 community groups and representatives. Numerous presentations are being made and many worthwhile suggestions have been received. Most of the response is favorable towards design districts

We would be pleased to provide copies of the questionnaire for any interested persons and make presentations about the current ordinance.

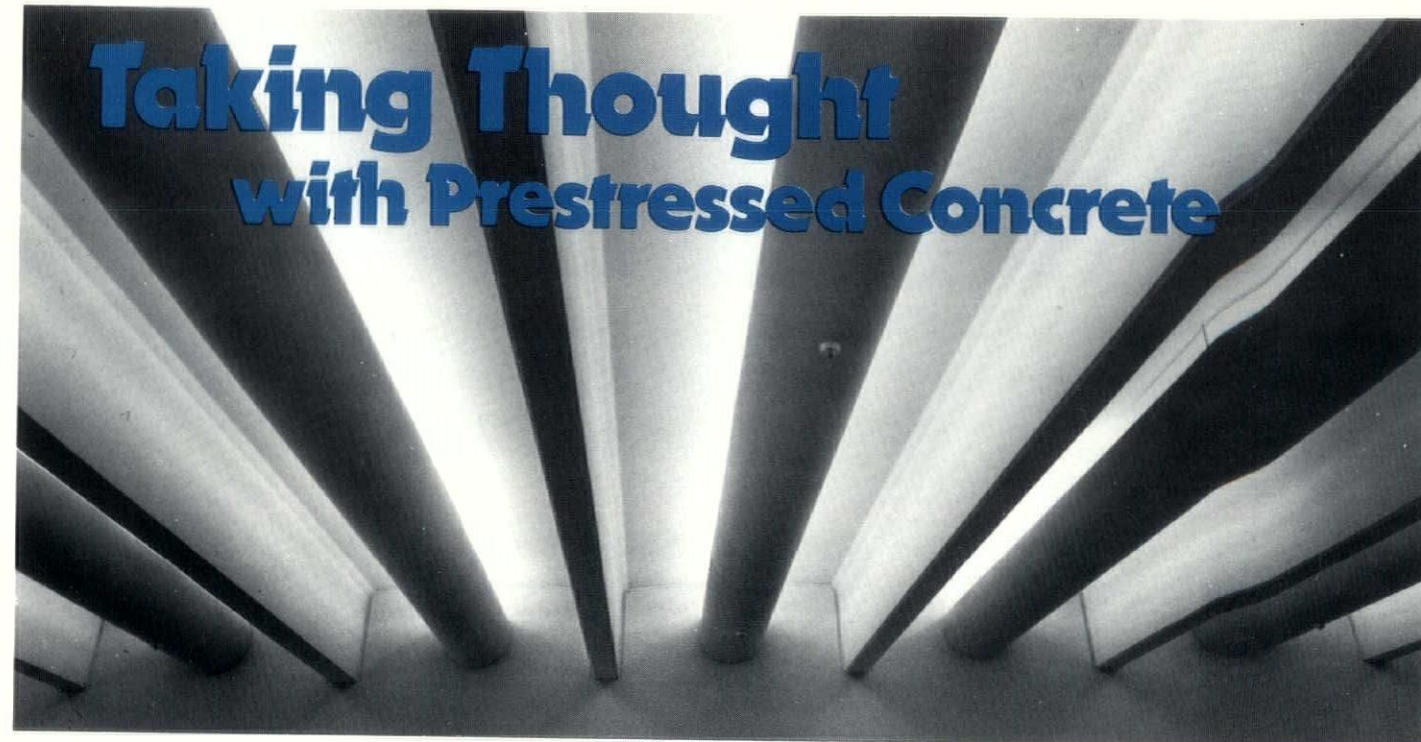
Dan Cohen, Commissioner,
Minneapolis Planning Commission

Editor:

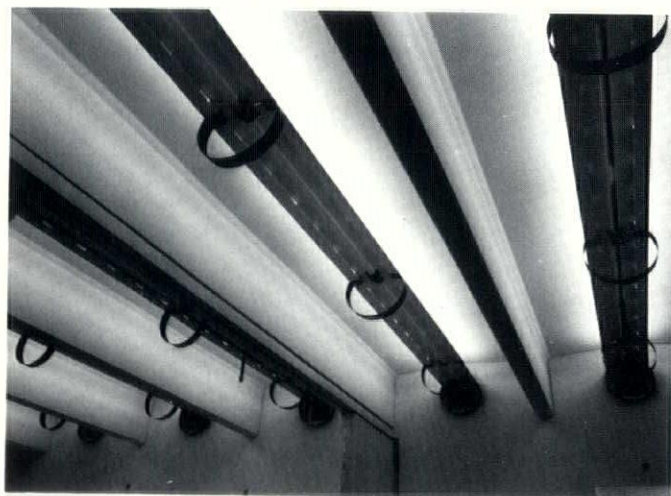
I enjoyed Bonnie Richter's story (pp. 12) on Minnesota II the Terratectural Competition. It is the best coverage of the competition results I have seen anywhere. All the papers have published pictures, maps and sketches of all the proposed new stadiums, but not one of them ever published a good picture of the winning entry to the competition. . . . I am surprised that the press and even the profession did not take greater pains to inform the public and the media of the details of this exciting competition. Here in Saint Paul we have a **national** competition with over 600 entries from all over the country and, from what Bonnie Richter says, from top architectural talent. We have internationally known jurors working to select a winner. They narrow it down to five finalists. Then they choose one winner. An outstanding architectural firm. One of the five is a Minnesotan and his entry is superb, from what I can understand at least. I am proud to have all this happening in my city. Are our papers waiting for the New York Times and Time magazine to discover this incredible story?

Clinton Eastarr II, Saint Paul

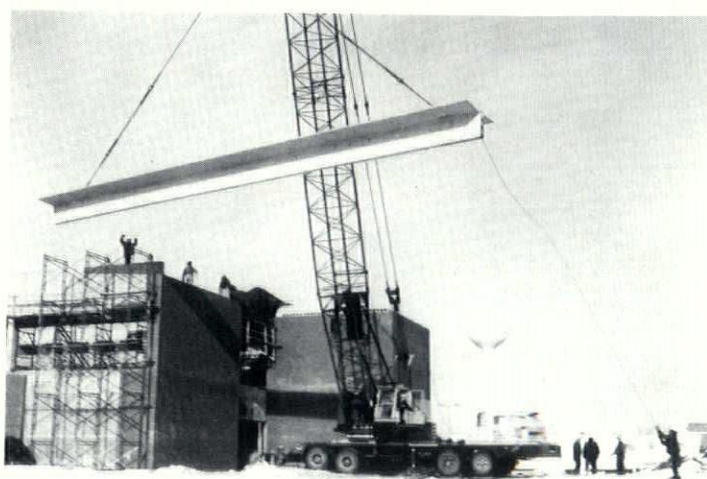
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ARCHITECT: The Architectural Alliance, Minneapolis, Minn.
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Bakke & Kopp, Minneapolis, Minn.
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Knutson Construction Co., Minneapolis, Minn.
MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL ENGINEER: Michaud, Cooley,
 Wallberg, Erickson & Associates, St. Paul, Minn.

The Thoughtful Designer will specify:



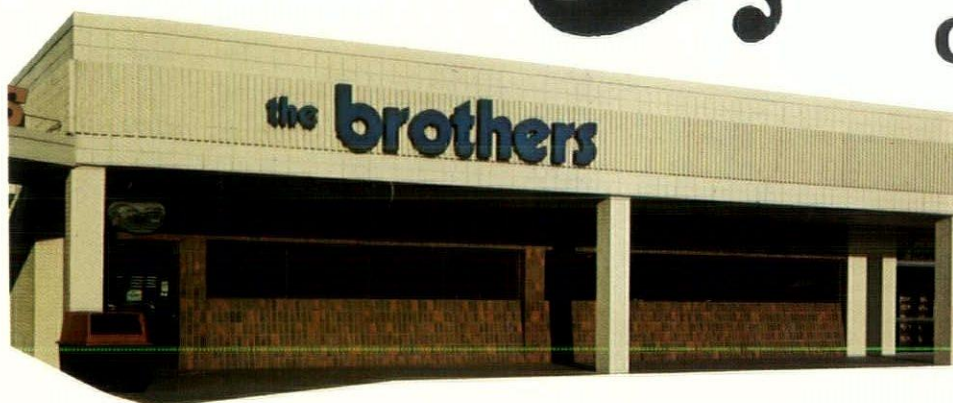
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