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May-June 1979

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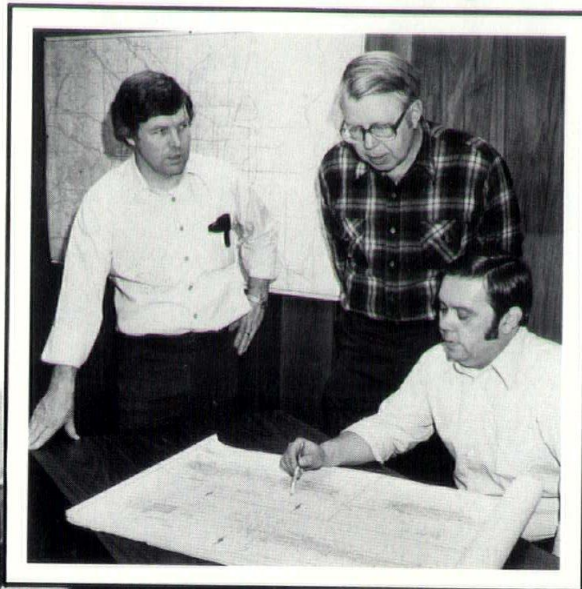


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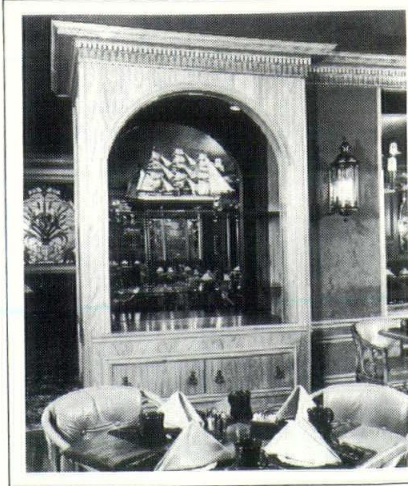
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ARCHITECTURE MINNESOTA

Vol.5 No.3 May-June 1979

The magazine for Upper Midwest design professionals and their clients

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Editor

Bernard Jacob AIA

Publisher & Managing Editor

James P. Cramer

Director of Marketing

Pamela W. Obando

Assistant Editor

Becky Banyas Koach

Graphic Design

Sandra K. Johnson

Circulation

Mindy Leventhal

Theresa Nedry

Dee Anderson

Business Manager

Terri Baumgartner

Architecture Minnesota is published by Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects, James P. Cramer, Executive Director, 314 Clifton Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403, (612) 874-8771.

Committee for *Architecture Minnesota*: Chairman:

Edward A. Sovik FAIA, Francis Bulbulian AIA, Elizabeth S. Close, FAIA, Linn Ann Cowles AIA, Steve Edwins, Bernard Jacob AIA, James I. Lammers AIA, Leonard S. Parker FAIA, Carl John Remick AIA, Julia Williams Robinson, Kenneth R. Stebbins AIA, John Ivey Thomas AIA, Milo H. Thompson AIA, Stu West, Bruce Wright.

Editorial offices: Bernard Jacob AIA, 4716 IDS Tower, Minneapolis 55402, (612) 332-5515.

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Another Design Imperative

Architecture as an art is finely attuned and all too reflective of the particular ambitions and fears of its patrons. . . . Our present mode, what has been named the post-modern period, allows for a great diversity of approaches and design. There is no overpowering dogma to guide the designer or the critic. A laissez-faire attitude prevails. The only disciplines being imposed are those more practical ones of economy, code compliance and often speed of erection. One of our great architects, Philip Johnson, in an excess of enthusiasm, ridiculed, in his AT & T Building, accepted norms of taste and design and at once dramatized the chaotic state of the art.

Nevertheless, important or popular trends in the practice of architecture are readily observable. One is 19th Century Positive: the restoration and rehabilitation of eclectic buildings. The discipline and the design are set, yet neither is so rigorous as to be confining. They demand imagination, attention to detail and a great sense of humor. Then we have fashion design, an amalgam and free arrangement of varieties of Philadelphia traditional, modern and post-modern forms and details. What makes these designs fashionable is that they supercede themselves so easily. The great corporate architecture is, by and large, cost effective container. It is pleasant, easy to take and nice to work in.

If the art of architecture has few impositions, the practice of architecture has enough of them: governmental regulations, life-cycle costing, environmental impact analysis, availability of materials and energy conservation. It could be argued, indeed, that getting any building built nowadays is an art—albeit a different kind of art. Energy conservation, as the last issue of *Architecture Minnesota* so dramatically demonstrated, has become one of the strongest factors influencing designs of all styles and levels. Indeed, the one outstanding style characteristic of the period might be named **Solar**. A great deal of creative imagination is being expended making buildings energy efficient, less dependent on fossil fuels and more economical to operate. A majority of new buildings and many rehabilitations have not only been designed for best passive

energy conservation but also include solar collectors and other alternate energy producers. None of these have particularly influenced architectural forms yet, although—as more experience is accumulated—the solar art will become more sophisticated. Indeed, energy conservation has surfaced as a powerful design imperative. The patrons of architecture support it and the profession is performing up to the highest standards of service.

However just because the practice of architecture is best at solving real problems which are also common to its patrons, such as dwindling natural and energy resources, it need not become indolent. It will dedicate itself to some of the other problems that so desperately need dedication, intelligence and ingenuity. There are users who need both patrons and architects. They are not all poor, but many are, they are not all disadvantaged, but many are, they are not all unhappy, but from Cleveland to Calcutta they need shelter. Decent shelter, sensitive delicate environments which collect the human spirit like a natural resource and cause it to energize its imagination and its hopes.

Government subsidies do not solve housing problems, they alleviate economic problems. To make decent housing affordable to all segments of the population, to develop housing systems and designs which can be replicated and adapted in various areas of the state, the country and even the Third World will require the industry's, the profession's and the bankers' total support. The moral imperative of such a commitment is as immediate as the alleviation of the energy crisis. The practice of architecture may then lead to the art of architecture. If human energies and aspirations are carefully assembled and collected and delicately sorted, they may give rise to architectural forms and designs which because of their practical source are incontrovertable, even though they may be as elementary as a solar collector. Such collectors of the human spirit are not easy to design; they are difficult to calculate and impossible to program. They will take hints from the computer however, from the economist, from folklore and the contours of the fields.

—Bernard Jacob



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An architecture professor at the University of Nebraska says that the state's small towns can revitalize their main street areas to compete with larger cities and communities. According to Professor **Ted Wright**, who visited **eight southern Minnesota communities** recently to urge civic leaders to plan and redevelop their downtown areas, a successful revamp can be done partly by learning lessons from suburban shopping malls restoring a turn-of-the-century atmosphere to business buildings and avoiding what he calls "self-fulfilling pessimism." Wright said that shopping malls are trying to synthetically duplicate the main street atmosphere of small communities. Main street, he acknowledges, already has that ingrained "friendly" and "folksy" spirit, and business leaders should learn to properly exploit this image.

The Spitznagel Partners, a Sioux Falls architectural and engineering firm, are the selected architects for a new \$600,000-plus **Rock County Human Services Building** which will be built in **Luverne**. The building will house offices for the Southwestern Mental Health Center, Rock County Family Services and the Great Plains Nursing Service.

The Saint Paul firm of **Winsor-Faricy Architects** has completed plans for a **seven story office building** at Sixth and Robert Streets, sponsored by the Farm Credit Banks of Saint Paul. Skyways will link the new structure with its surrounding neighbors, including the American National Bank building across Robert Street. The elevated transit line, best known as the Downtown People Mover, will run about 10 feet from the building on the west side of Jackson Street. Winsor-Faricy's design will allow a future expansion to 10 stories.

A major remodeling of **Pipestone's historic Calumet Hotel** is underway with architectural direction by the Minneapolis firm of **Peter Nelson Hall Associates**. The 1887 landmark, considered by many as the cornerstone of the downtown historic district, will be remodeled into a restaurant and bar on the first floor

and into commercial offices in the basement. The restaurant will have a seating capacity of between 250 and 300, while the decor will resemble the original hotel restaurant. Plans call for the old bank vaults, portions of the ceiling and walls, and other features to be left intact. The basement plans call for the space to be divided into six commercial rental spaces with another room for mechanical systems. A concourse will run from the front to the rear for easy access. Almost a loser, the old hotel was put on the market in early 1978 when a state fire marshal ordered that it be brought up to code or closed.

Another \$7 million has been added to the \$500 million building spree underway in downtown Minneapolis. Designed by **Williams O'Brien Associates**, Minneapolis, and M.R.I. Development, Oshkosh, Wis., construction has begun on a 109,000 square foot office building called **Bridge Place**, located at the corner of South First Street and Third Avenue. A two-phase project, the initial \$7 million stage will include a five story office building, underground parking, a plaza and a skyway, to be completed by 1980. The second phase will include an eight level tower with apartments, although a final construction schedule has not been determined. Located in the Gateway urban renewal area, the site was sold to the developers for \$50,000 by the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority. Officers in the partnership are Lorenzo Williams and James O'Brien, both of Williams-O'Brien, and Wayne Chaney and Leonard Backus of the Oshkosh firm. Knutson Construction Co., Minneapolis, is the general contractor and Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co., Milwaukee, is the mortgage lender.

Sherburne County will soon have a **multi-service facility in Elk River**. Architects for the 41,000 square foot facility, now under construction, are **Wemlinger-Remely And Associates, Inc.**, of Saint Cloud. The \$2.5 million structure will house the Social Services Department, Sheriff's Office, Clerk of Court, judicial chambers and two courtrooms. The building, which is in the initial phase ►



of development, is located on a 20-acre site and is designed for both vertical and horizontal expansion. The design also incorporates energy conservation techniques and provisions for flexibility to accommodate increasing County services.

Construction is now underway on a new 56-unit luxury condominium project between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun by Gunnar I. Johnson Construction Co. Called the **Isles Condominium**, the 8 story, \$5.2 million brick building was designed by **Bruce Knutson Architects, Inc.**, of Minneapolis. Special features of the project are enclosed balconies and a spacious 8th floor party room that overlooks the adjacent lakes and parkways. Completion is scheduled for November of this year and presale response has been favorable according to the owner, Claude, Inc.

Construction is underway for a new \$1.5 million, six story **senior citizens high-rise** in the western Minnesota community of **Granite Falls**. Designed by **Miller Hanson Westerbeck & Bell**, Minneapolis, major features of the project include an elevator, a community room with kitchen, tenant lounges and laundry areas. The exterior is of precast concrete faced with brick. Rental assistance has been established under Section 8, a HUD program which provides low and moderate income families with housing based on ability to pay.

Green, Nelson, Watten, Weaver & Winsor is the new name of the 58-year-old Minneapolis architectural

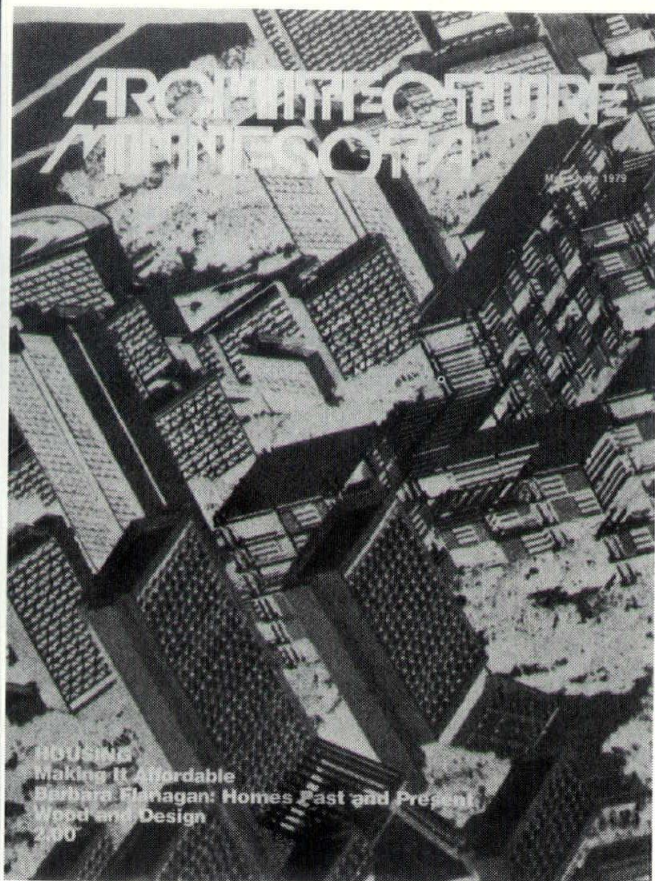
firm, **Bissel, Belair & Green, Inc.** The change was made in order to identify the five presently active principals, Gene Green, Arthur Nelson, Vern Watten, John Weaver and Mark Winsor. The firm has also recently relocated to offices in the American Hardware Mutual Insurance Co. building at 3033 Excelsior Blvd. The value of construction designed by the firm has averaged \$15-20 million annually in recent years.

The 35-year-old Minneapolis architectural firm of **Hills, Gilbertson & Fisher, Inc.**, has officially merged with **Centrum Architects, Inc.**, a much younger, but nevertheless active, design firm. The new partnership will be known as **Hills, Gilbertson, Fisher/Centrum Architects, Inc.**, and will be located at 6311 Wayzata Blvd., Minneapolis. The new firm will specialize in medical facilities, churches and commercial structures.

A team of architects and engineers from **Hammel Green and Abrahamson, Inc.**, Saint Paul, won first place in a regional, earth-sheltered housing competition. The winning team is made up of **Mark Dohrman, Richard Heise** and **Michael Joyce**, all architects, and **William Poppert**, mechanical engineer, won first place in the professional category for multi-family housing design. The winning multi-family scheme developed by the HGA team uses a number of passive and active solar heating systems such as triple-glazed windows, hard-surfaced, heat absorbing floors and concrete slab

construction. The slabs are designed to collect and store solar heat and radiate it to the interior spaces. Insulated shutters minimize heat loss from windows during the winter months, and roof overhangs minimize heat gain during the cooling season. Sod covered garage roofs slope up to direct north winds away from the units. The Underground Space Center of the University of Minnesota sponsored the competition to stimulate interest in the design of earth-sheltered housing. The winning design was one of 23 entrants in four categories.

Keiser Architecture Corporation has opened a second office located in the Mick Office Plaza, **Worthington**. According to Roger J. Keiser, firm president, the office will offer full architectural and engineering services. The firm also engages in its own development projects and acts as developers for investors in commercial and residential properties. The firm is currently involved in the design of an estimated \$10 million worth of commercial and residential projects in the Worthington area, and is completing a \$1.2 million construction project at the **Fergus Falls State Hospital**. Second phase planning for a \$600,000 project at the same institution is underway. Additional future plans call for the opening of a third office in Watertown, South Dakota. p.23



BUS ROUTE #6: ARCHITECTURALLY YOURS



The Historic Resources Committee of the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects has created a tour map along one of the Minneapolis' primary bus routes—the #6 line from Southdale to the University of Minnesota.

"The diversity in the sites discussed is a testament to all the people who have lived and worked as a part of the never ending process of creating the cityscape. The Historic Resources Committee sincerely believes that a greater awareness will result from a reexamination of the features along Route #6."

The tour starts at the University of Minnesota, with its large variety of materials and architectural styles. Proceeding past the Mississippi River, Nicollet Island and into downtown, historic and contemporary sites are highlighted. The bus then follows Hennepin Avenue through downtown and south to Lakewood Cemetery. The Route continues on France Avenue, ending at Southdale Center.

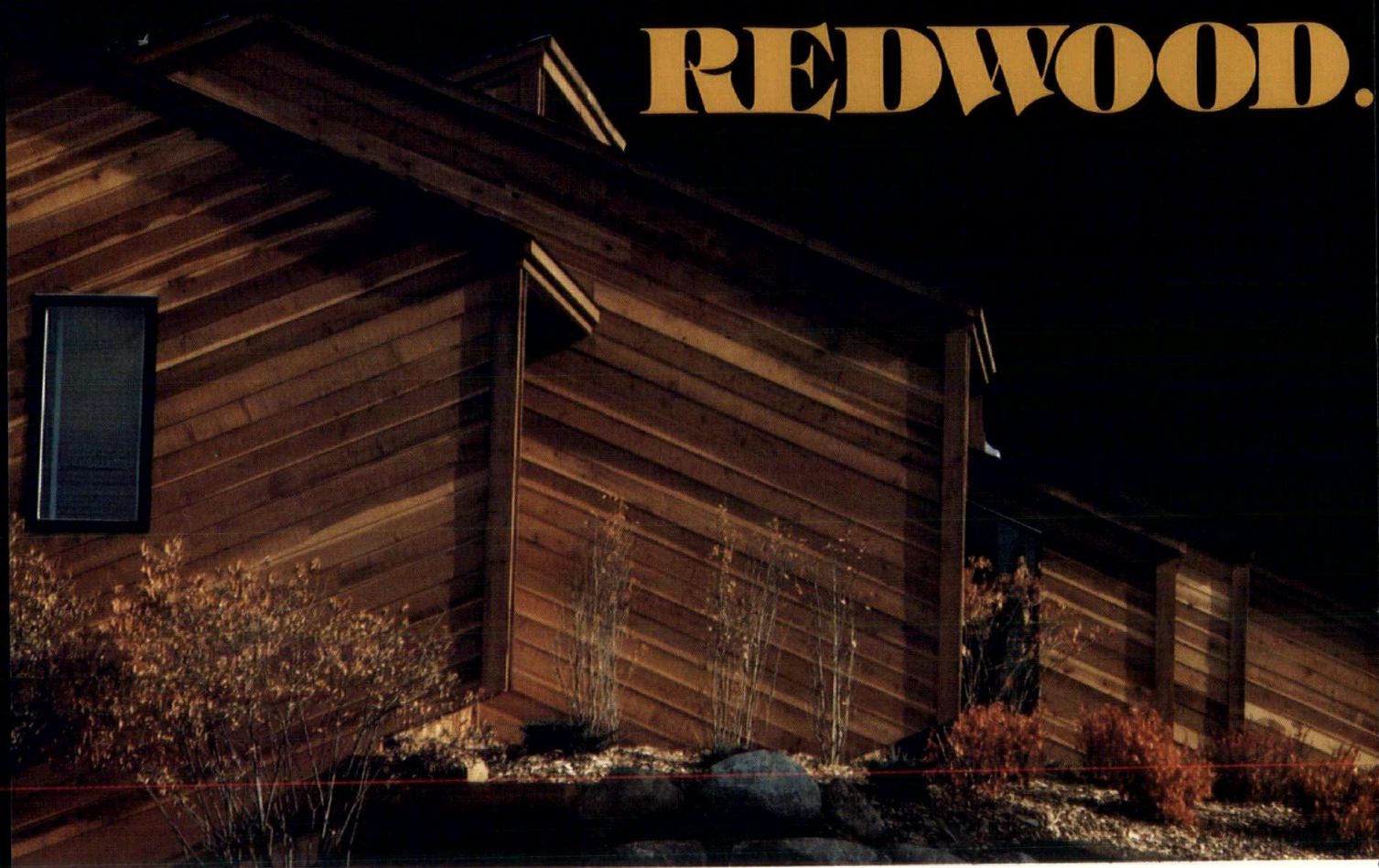
Twenty-six architectural sites are described and pictured in the Bus Map brochure. Passengers on a #6 bus may leave the bus and inspect the sites along the route without paying an additional charge. A transfer should be obtained before getting off the bus. The rider should board another bus going the same direction within one hour.

Call The Metropolitan Transit Commission for additional transfer information: 827-7733.

This Bus Map containing descriptions of 26 architectural highlights along Route #6, was published by the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects, 314 Clifton Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403. Additional copies may be obtained from that office.

Above right: Linn Cowles AIA, Robert Mack AIA and Charles Pohlmann, graphic designer who together created the Route #6 Bus Map with the Historic Resources Committee of the MSAIA.

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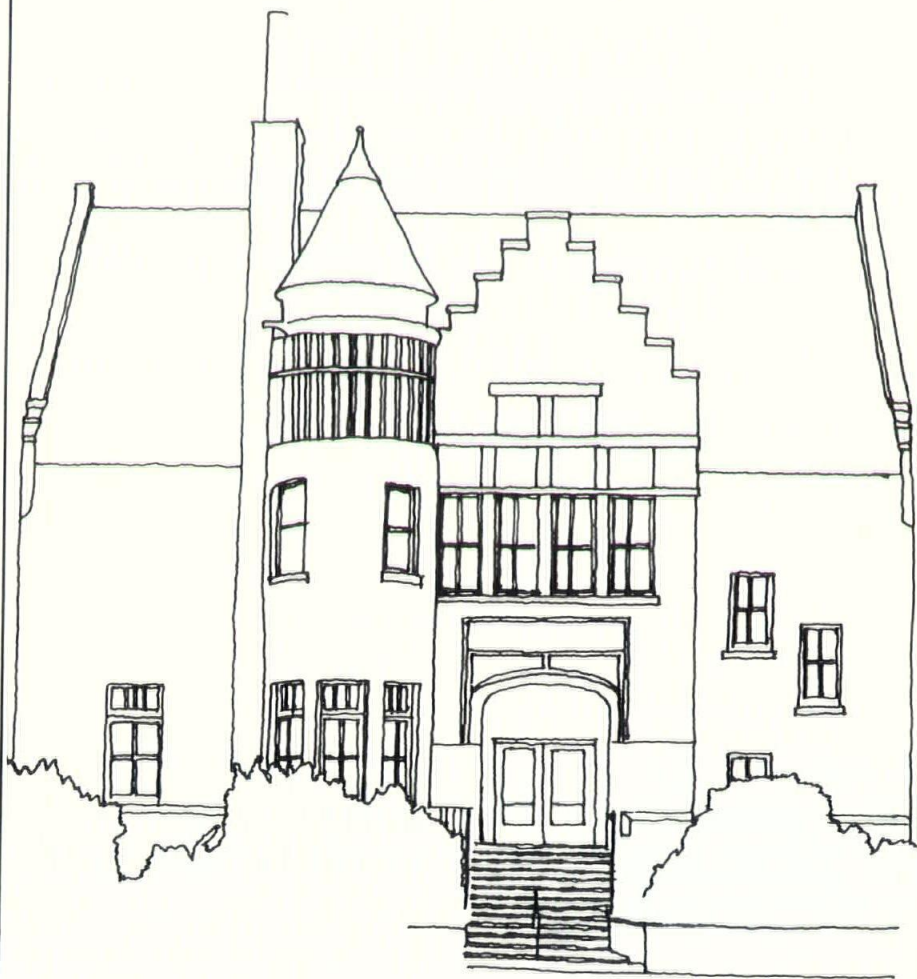
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Benjamin Thompson, a Boston-based architect, is directing the renovation work that will convert the 69-year-old **Hotel Saint Paul** into a modern facility and preserve the structure's turn-of-the-century decor. The \$8 million renovation project calls for modernizing the interior of the building to provide some 285 to 300 rooms, along with a new main entrance opening onto Market Street across from Rice Park. The hotel will also contain renovated eating and drinking establishments. Future plans also call for the development of a 400-car garage and an office building to be built on remaining block space around the hotel which was included in the \$4,250,000 purchase by a group of private investors headed by Saint Paul realtor Russel C. Douglas. The group may spend as much as \$24 million on the project over the next five years, according to Douglas.

A **Japanese memorial garden** will be built at **Como Park, Saint Paul**, this summer thanks to a \$100,000 donation from the children of the late Charlotte P. Ordway. The garden will be designed by the landscape architect for Nagasaki, Japan, Saint Paul's "sister" city and will include water pools, a small waterfall, bridges, Japanese lanterns and various shrubs. Intended to be a quiet retreat, away from the more hectic areas in the park, the garden will be built by Ray Zierden, a California-based landscaper who also constructed the Hamm's Memorial Waterfall in Como Park. The landscape architect, Masame Matsuda, designed the park with assistance from Mikio Tanguchi, chief of parks, Nagasaki, Japan. Both were in Saint Paul several years ago and photographed the site. The late Mrs. Ordway, who died in 1974, was active in many Saint Paul cultural activities for over 60 years and was a founder of the Saint Paul Garden Club. Officials say the garden will be one of only about eight authentic Japanese gardens in the country. In accordance with Japanese custom, all rocks will be specified in a set distance apart from one another. ■

Tradition.



As Minneapolis progresses by leaps and bounds, some vestiges of its past remain. The North Branch Library, from 1893 to 1977 a center of learning for the North Community, stands as a striking reminder of our solid history. The Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority is currently accepting proposals for the purchase and restoration of this landmark at 1834 Emerson Ave. No.

Currently owned by the MHRA, North Branch Library is located in the West Broadway tax increment district and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Development criteria packets for the commercially-zoned building are available from the MHRA Central Marketing Department, 501 S. 8th St., Mpls., MN 55410, (612) 348-6362. Price negotiable. Proposals are due July 16.



I Remember Summer on the Front Porch . . .

Barbara Flanagan

People say to me:

"How do you like living in a house?"

They don't say, "again," because they assume that people who choose to live in apartments have never been lucky enough to live in houses. Lucky? You should see our leaking roof.

Until recently, in fact, there was almost an unspoken insinuation that people who lived in high-rise apartment buildings did so because they couldn't afford anything better.

I understand that attitude because I grew up with it.

In the Des Moines, Iowa, of my childhood, families I knew didn't live in apartments or attached townhouses. Only a few lived in what I remember as spacious duplexes.

Just about everybody lived in houses with porches, front yards, back yards and, usually, one car garages. Nobody parked cars on the streets in those days because we only had one car.

I remember how slick I thought it was when we finally acquired a house with a two-car basement garage. To do it, we left behind a house with not only a front porch and a back porch, but a sun porch and two sleeping porches. Imagine giving up all of that for another car!

The house with the porches is where I gave a memorable party when I was in 8th grade. No, make that "scandalous."

A crowd of older (10th grade) boys crashed the party and grabbed my grandfather's Morris chair from the front porch. Since the chair had casters on it, the boys thought it an ideal vehicle to roll down the 45th St. hill—with them in it.

The Morris chair had made several trips up and down the hill before my grandfather rescued it. The refreshments my mother and grandmother dished up saved the party.

Now then, during this time in my life, even though I loved that house and the next one we moved to, I

Photography: Stu West



yearned for an apartment similar to those I saw in the movies.

Remember the Art Deco penthouses with miles of terraces that Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire always occupied? And the floral chintz splendor of Gene Tierney's New York apartment in "Laura?"

Myrna Loy and William Powell as "Nora and Nick Charles" in "The Thin Man" movies had a stunning flat. They were even allowed to keep their dog, "Asta," in residence. Think about that a bit.

The only house I liked in the movies—even better than "Tara" in "Gone With the Wind"—was the 6-story Manhattan townhouse that Katherine Hepburn called "home" in the movie, "Holiday."

Obviously, the minute I was on my own in the big city of Minneapolis, I tried to find them all. The surprise was that everything in Minneapolis—and St. Paul—resembled the dwellings in my hometown. Oh, St. Paul had a few row houses similar to Hepburn's, but in those days I

wasn't bright enough to re-discover them.

The only penthouses I knew about were atop hotels so I moved into an apartment on Spruce Place near Loring Park. It came completely furnished with everything, including cockroaches. I didn't stay long.

I moved to S. Humboldt (with bats), to S. James (with mice) and S. Knox (with fussy plumbing). All of the apartments were close to the lakes, though, and that's what made the difference. No one in Des Moines lived on a lake because there weren't any. (I'm happy to report that the flooded sandpit of my youth has now been redesignated as Gray's Lake and some people do live on it.)

The houses I saw as I traveled through the Twin Cities were familiar, as I said before, because they reflected the same architectural trends.

There were the rambling brick and frame houses built between 1870 and 1910. My great Aunt Emma lived in one of those. It had a true parlor as well as a living room, high ceilings and loads of fireplaces.



There were the houses from World War I—solid looking in brick or stone—and the California bungalows of the 1920s, often with Spanish-style details such as fake balconies and red tile roofs.

About 1940, three of my friends moved into new houses. Two were French Provincial of white-painted brick. The third was a red brick Colonial. I never dreamed that anything in my hometown could be so splendid as those three houses.

The great mansions of St. Paul's Summit Av., and the Lake district in Minneapolis existed in Des Moines, but there weren't quite so many of them. It seems to me that not a lot has survived progress although the neighborhood south of Des Moines' Grand Av., remains as vital as the Kenwood and Lowry Hill areas in Minneapolis. Again, the houses are "cousins."

Although I had loved living in houses, by 1965 when I moved into the Towers Condominiums in downtown Minneapolis, I was a committed "cliff dweller."

That move, however, was a true pioneering gesture. Friends safe in

the suburbs—where the rambler began to blight too many vistas by the 1950s—marveled that I'd dare to live on "Skid Row."

My husband's automobile insurance was cancelled. The company explained that the area in which we lived was too dangerous. We had to send them a diagram of the new building and its underground garages to be reinstated.

Since the Towers was rental property at first, it lured a few more trail-blazers as did such luxury rental buildings as 740 River Drive (where Abigail Van Buren lived), the Calhoun Towers and Kellogg Square.

Two other apartment buildings always considered as suitably important addresses continued to flourish. They are 510 Groveland and 2615 Park Av., both co-operatives.

The condominium idea—learned by many well-off Minnesotans vacationing in Florida and Arizona—helped change some minds about apartment-living here. So did the revival of townhouse construction.

Perhaps the best success story is at Loring Park—on the site of my first Minneapolis apartment on Spruce Place. The plush Greenway Gables townhouses have been snapped up even though most of them sported six-figure price tags.

The rediscovery and reconstruction of older homes, townhouses and apartments in both cities is also working to lure people back into the city.

In spite of an apparent boom in the building of multi-unit residences, most people continue to prefer the unattached single house. Today, most of the new ones are in the suburbs.

The better-designed houses have revived the porch as a deck or a terrace.

If somebody would make a decent old-fashioned up-to-date Morris chair again, I think it would sell.

I certainly have room for one on our back porch.

Oh, yes, the house I live in has a back porch. We moved into the 50-year-old four-bedroom stucco atop Lowry Hill because we needed room for three growing children.

It's a lovely house in spite of the roof, one mouse and a furnace that had to be replaced in the middle of winter.

After 30 years of carefree apartment-living, I am coping. And on a clear day, I can see right past the Basilica of St. Mary to the Towers Condominiums 17 blocks away.

In winter, I often wish I still lived there. Life was so simple.

Then I remember summer and the porch. Maybe it's worth a leaky roof. ■



Barbara Flanagan is a famed Minneapolis Star columnist. Her vigilance, enthusiasm and love for the city are legendary. Her passion for making the city more liveable has energized us all.

Victorian Architecture is Alive and Well

Christopher Owens

Preservation of nineteenth-century houses is not always part of an organized and conscious movement. Throughout Minnesota's towns and cities, the nineteenth century survives as the familiar landscape—preservation in the literal sense of the word.

Bohanan-Owens House, Woche & Strong Architects, Duluth.

Victorian Architecture. The words conjure up an image of elaborate decoration, richly varied materials, and an outward display of wealth and grandeur. But the qualities associated with Victorian architecture have not always been admired in the twentieth century. Lewis Mumford, outlining the development of American architecture, saw little to value in nineteenth-century buildings:

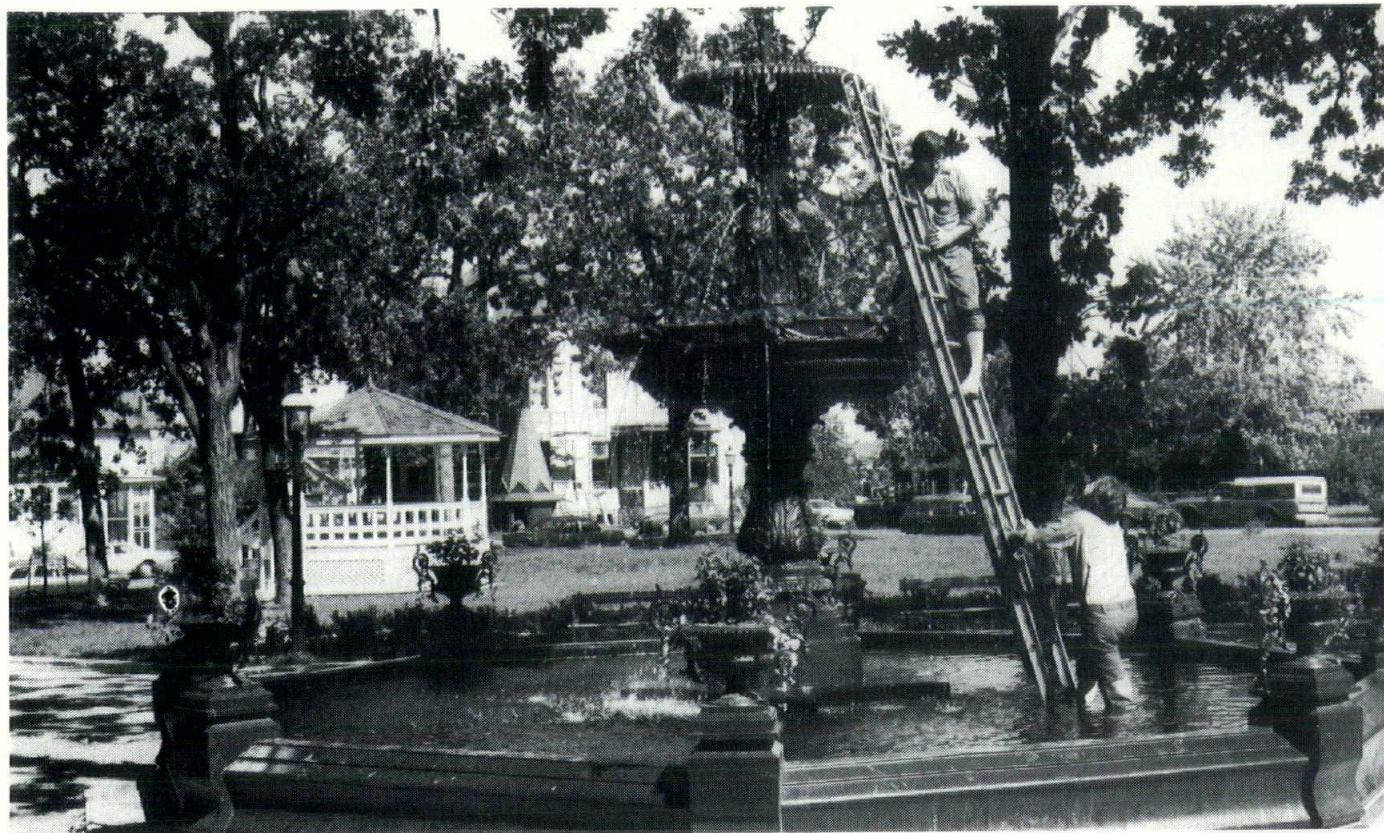
With the little eddies of eclecticism, with the rage for the Mansard roof, or the introduction of German Gothic, . . . the taste for Queen Anne domesticity, there is scarcely any need to deal; they represented only the dispersion of taste and the collapse of judgment which marked the Gilded Age.

Many architects shared this opinion. Frank Lloyd Wright, a leader of the reaction against the "borrowed fineries" of Victorian architecture, decried the "ribald and inebriate freaks of fashion bedecked with painful deformities" that he saw everywhere about him.

The opinions of Wright, Mumford, and other critics informed the intellectual climate of the first half of this century. But popular opinion did not necessarily endorse the modernist movement—at least where residential architecture was concerned. Until World War II, the American landscape was basically a nineteenth-century landscape. Downtowns were dominated by buildings dating from the turn-of-the-century and earlier. In the "best" neighborhoods, nineteenth-century houses predominated. And even in newer neighborhoods, houses were built in revival styles—not the Greek, Italian, and Gothic revivals of the nineteenth century but the Georgian, Tudor, and Spanish revivals of the twentieth. There existed, to a large extent, a consensus of what a house should be: two stories, rectangular, a pitched roof, and some kind of applied decoration to give it "style."

Philosophically, it was not until after World War II that Americans abandoned the nineteenth-century conception of what a house should





look like. The reasons for the changing attitude are complex, involving demographics, economics, and technology as well as taste. The results are best seen in larger urban areas, where suburbs spread over once-rural landscapes and older neighborhoods were gradually abandoned. The tract house was basically a new architectural form.

But in rural areas and small towns, much of the built landscape of the nineteenth century survived. The reason was not so much a conscious decision that nineteenth-century architecture was better or more beautiful than modern architecture, but the familiar buildings were sound, comfortable, and utilitarian. There was simply no reason to replace that which was useful.

Many Minnesotans have been preservationists without ever consciously applying the formal label to their activity. The activity, after all, is living in a familiar house, probably passed down through several generations of the family. One may be proud of one's house and the family traditions associated with it and yet not be fully aware of the larger preservation movement to which one contributes. For preservation as a conscious activity is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Until the late 1960's, organized local historic preservation efforts centered on museums. The oldest or largest or most important house in town was preserved because of its associative values. It illustrated the history of the town. Residential preservation—the preservation of privately-owned and occupied houses representative of their period and style—is largely a phenomenon of the 1970's. The reasons for the new approach to preservation are many: local pride; disillusion with urban renewal's effect on neighborhoods and cities; the 1966 Federal legislation encouraging creation of historic districts and offering grants for private restoration work; a general social and cultural discontent with the "throw-away" culture of post-World War II America; and a rekindled interest in nineteenth-century culture and values. Whatever the motives, organized preservation efforts are reclaiming ever-larger parts of Minnesota's nineteenth-century heritage, not as museums but as living communities. Towns and smaller cities are striving to establish their own unique identities. In major cities, the "Back to the City" movement has reversed decades of urban decay and offered a positive alternative to urban renewal.

A few examples illustrate but do not begin to catalogue the work of

Above: The city has paid to restore the Park to its nineteenth-century appearance, complete with fountain and gazebo.

Right: Individuals who purchased houses in the Irvine Park Historic District were responsible for their exterior restoration. The finishing touch on one house—a conical roof for the corner tower—was reconstructed on the ground and hoisted into place.



rescuing Minnesota's nineteenth century.

New Ulm. Local pride stimulated interest in preserving New Ulm's unique architecture. Although popularly thought to be German in origin, the city's buildings exemplify the German, Flemish, and Dutch styles that were generally part of nineteenth-century American romantic eclectic architecture. Ethnically, however, New Ulm was settled by Germans, and the Amero-German houses reinforce the contrast between this city and other Minnesota communities. To maintain and enhance its uniqueness, New Ulm hired a consultant to prepare a preservation plan long before preservation was generally popular. The nineteenth century was never really threatened in New Ulm; it was always appreciated.

Saint Paul's Historic Hill District. Reaction to the urban destruction of urban renewal led to the organization of private preservation efforts in the Historic Hill District. Although bisected by Summit Avenue, one of the country's great architectural ensembles, the Hill District had declined physically and economically in the years after World War II. A positive attitude toward the neighborhood was an essential

prerequisite to revitalization. But no common ethnic or social tradition bound residents together as it did in New Ulm. The appeal was the architecture—some of the best to be found in the midwest. Old Town Restorations, a private, non-profit historic preservation organization, led a conscious effort to change attitudes and attract the financial investment that was necessary to make preservation a reality. Beginning with a survey of historic resources—not only houses but also such amenities as open space, vegetation, street furniture, old lamp standards—Old Town developed a plan for the area's revitalization. Unlike New Ulm, the financial resources for the program have come from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as local government and foundations.

Saint Paul's Irvine Park. Were it not for federal policy, Irvine Park would today be surrounded by apartment buildings. The Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established a national preservation policy: federal funds cannot be used for projects that will have a negative impact on buildings and areas that are or could be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Irvine Park was such an area. The city proposed its renewal using federal funds. Therefore, the renewal plan had to include the preservation of

historic buildings. Subsequently, the people who live around the Park have lobbied successfully for the restoration of the Park itself: the original fountain has been reproduced, the gazebo replaced, and appropriate paving and lighting installed.

Duluth. A national preservationist has characterized Duluth as "the undiscovered gem of the Midwest." In its residential architecture, Duluth offers the grandeur of Saint Paul's Historic Hill District but has not suffered the ravages of urban renewal. The city boasts that it once had more millionaires per capita than any city in the country. But even if Duluth did not witness the decline associated with larger cities, its large and impressive houses were often subdivided into apartments or sleeping rooms. A conscious preservation effort is now beginning. Its course is yet to be seen. Like other Minnesota cities, Duluth is on the verge of a preservation explosion whose consequences need to be considered.

There has probably never been as much interest in nineteenth-century architecture as there is today. And the interest is growing. The effects are both positive and negative. Houses, many of demonstrable historic and architectural significance, are being rescued and recycled not as museums but as the residences they once were.

Historic preservation has come of age. And in the process it has become controversial. The net of preservation has extended from the individual house to the historic district to the entire environment and our attitude toward it. The design of new condominiums built on Summit Avenue in Saint Paul is questioned by a neighborhood group and the designs are altered to conform better to the neighborhood's expectations. And in Red Wing, a local group initiates a court case to prevent the demolition of a group of rowhouses important to the city's history. Their demolition for a parking lot is no longer considered a matter that concerns only the owner. In

Stillwater, a preservation group takes the city to court to prevent the demolition of a school.

Preservation of historic resources is a social concern. Preservationists, at their best, act out of a sense of stewardship for the past. But other social concerns are also important. In historic districts, property values may rise so fast that present occupants are driven out. Preservation and restoration can become not a matter of stewardship but of real estate transactions and the profits that investors can reap. Because of real estate values, marginally-significant buildings can become "landmarks."

The balance between attracting private investment and maintaining a neighborhood can easily be tipped in favor of the investor. At that point, is there a neighborhood to preserve?

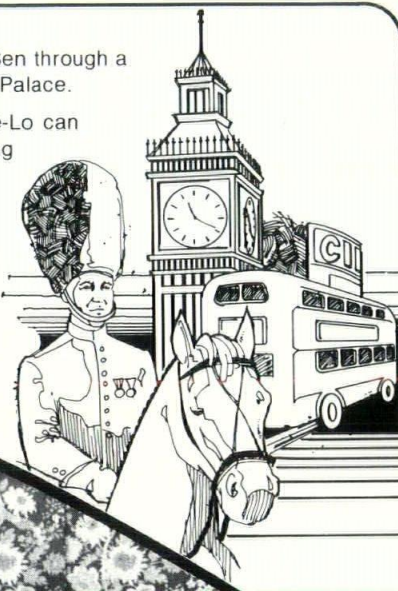
The social issues of preservation need to be dealt with as urgently as the aesthetic questions, especially in larger cities such as Minneapolis and Saint Paul. In a twentieth-century democracy, historic neighborhoods cannot become the enclaves of the elite that they were in the nineteenth century. Yet it has to be realized that Victorian mansions cannot be maintained without considerable financial resources. One of the major challenges of preservation in the 1980s will be to reconcile the costs of preserving the past with the economic priorities of an uncertain future. ■

Christopher Owens, Executive Director of Old Town Restorations, is a member of the Board of Advisors of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

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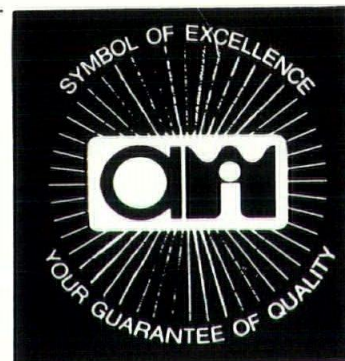


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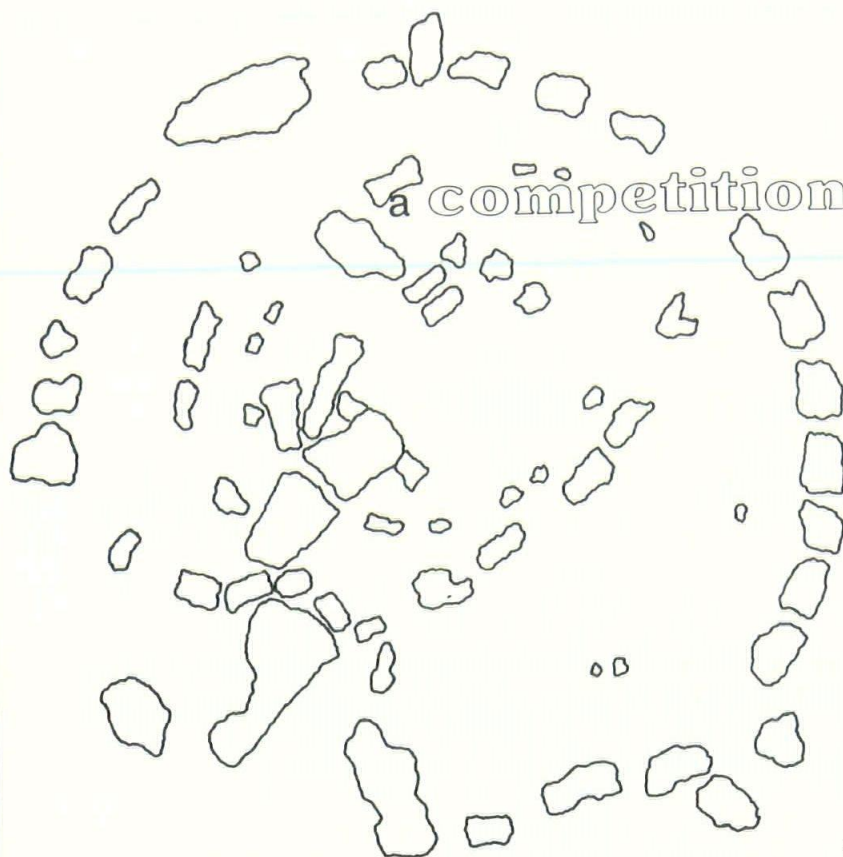
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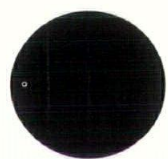


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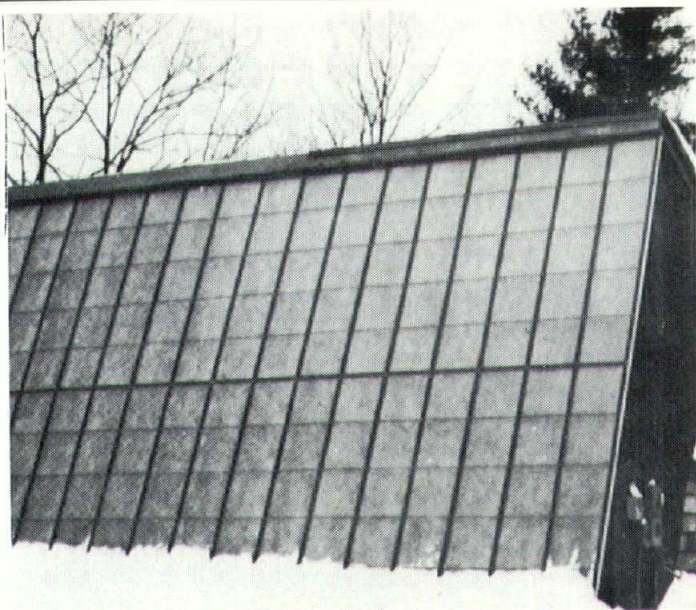
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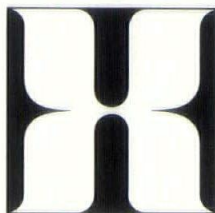
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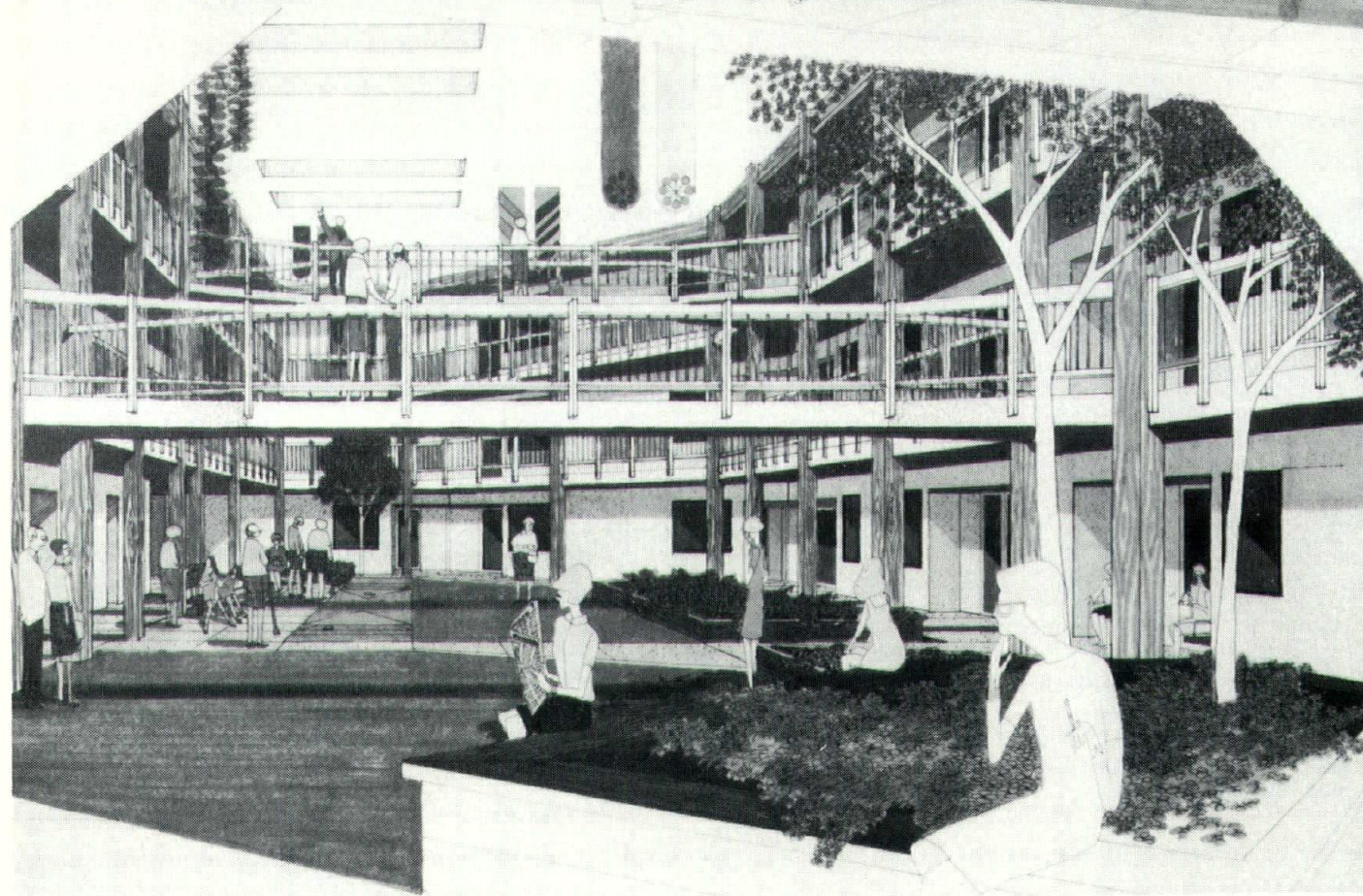
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The MHFA – Making Housing Affordable

Carol A. Morpew

The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA), is the state agency charged with the near herculean task of righting an increasingly lopsided housing market. Economic trends developing over the last decade have adversely affected the housing situation in most areas of the country including Minnesota. In short, low and moderate income families are being eliminated from the private housing market. Eliminated from the rental market as well as from single family ownership situations. The MHFA was created in 1971 to act as a go-between, stimulating the private housing industry in Minnesota while administering the distribution of newly appropriated federal housing assistance monies.

Other states have likewise created housing finance agencies (HFAs) to interact with government and the private sector. The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, however, has gained national recognition for the diversity of housing alternatives it finances, the Agency's ability to reach rural as well as urban areas of the state, and the attention the Agency gives to disadvantaged groups.

Since 1971, the Agency has developed, operated, and refined housing financing plans in three major areas—apartment development, home ownership mortgage programs, and home improvement financing plans.

Apartment Development

MHFA-financed housing comes in all shapes, sizes and locales. The apartment complex serving the small northern community of Ada as well as the soon-to-be-finished Nicollet Towers on the edge of downtown Minneapolis are both developed and financed by the MHFA. Since 1975, the Agency's Apartment Development Program has served 120 rural and urban communities throughout the state. The Agency involves itself in these projects from the early conceptual stage, commits financing, coordinates the projects with private profit or nonprofit developers, and oversees the management process. The Agency's two primary responsibilities under the program include providing financing to developers at lower than market interest rates and administering the federal rent subsidies to low income

tenants residing in these MHFA-financed complexes. Financing for the projects comes from the legislatively authorized sale of tax-exempt bonds. The 1979 Legislature is currently considering increasing the Agency's apartment development bonding authority by \$250 million.

In addition to coordinating the construction financing of these apartment developments, the MHFA also distributes rent subsidies to qualified low-income tenants. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides the housing assistance payments under its Section 8 program. The MHFA is the designated Section 8 administrator statewide.

Each of the apartment developments (and group homes for the developmentally disabled) is privately designed, usually by local architects. The special attention architects, developers, and Agency pay to quality design, construction, and management also enables MHFA developments to attract tenants of varied incomes. Recent housing studies have shown that the design quality of a multi-family structure and the expertise of the management team are two important variables affecting the feasibility of an income-mixing policy. This economic integration in rental units financed by the MHFA meets the State Legislature's requirements of providing apartment developments for tenants of varied economic means.

Homeownership

Although the MHFA Apartment Development Program has burgeoned in the last year, the Agency's interest in providing homeownership opportunities remains strong. The Agency operates homeownership programs because Minnesotans are overwhelmingly homeowners. In 1977, nearly 75 percent of all occupied housing units in the state were owner-occupied. The rising costs of land, construction, and financing have been threatening this preference in recent years, however, and since 1973 the MHFA has been operating financing programs which provide low and moderate income Minnesotans with homeownership opportunities.

The current Affordable Home Mortgage Program provides

Winnebago Seniors House
Winnebago, Minnesota
Miller Hanson Westerbeck Bell
Architects, Minneapolis



mortgage loans at below market interest rates for existing and newly constructed homes. Proceeds from the sale of MHFA tax-exempt revenue bonds finance the Affordable Home Program. In 1978, the effective MHFA mortgage interest rate was $6\frac{3}{4}$ percent, compared to $9\frac{3}{4}$ percent on a conventional mortgage. That translates to a \$78.75 savings per month in principal and interest payments on a home valued at \$37,500.

A second form of financial aid available to qualified Minnesotans, known as the Homeownership Assistance Fund (HAF), is also administered by the Agency. HAF uses state appropriations to reduce the downpayment and monthly principal and interest payments for first-time homebuyers. In effect, the program enables a qualified family with an adjusted income as low as \$10,000 to assume a mortgage of slightly more than \$33,000. Given today's housing costs, that same family, relying on conventional financing would be limited to a home in the low \$20,000 price range.

MHFA's volume of homeowner mortgage activity virtually eclipses that of most other state housing finance agencies. In the fiscal year just ended, over 2,000 homebuyers were approved for Affordable Home Mortgages totaling \$66.5 million. The Agency is also a leader in the innovative housing research it is

conducting. Two programs have been established that are pioneering new design approaches and better utilization of existing resources. Energy conservation, the use of innovative energy sources, and the adaptability of a project to a variety of sites are all factors considered in awarding Innovative Housing Loans to nonprofit developers. Innovative home designs that incorporate passive solar energy systems or specify underground construction are also being supported by Solar/Earth Sheltered Demonstration Grants administered by the Agency. In appropriating \$500,000 to establish this grant program, the 1977 Legislature set four major goals for the MHFA Innovative Housing Program.

First, the homes are intended to demonstrate reduced annual energy demand and reduced dependence on offsite sources of energy. Second, the structures will make use of proven construction techniques and energy systems which can be utilized in future low and moderate-cost housing. Third, reliable data systems will gather information on the homes concerning annual energy consumption, construction costs, construction techniques, public and institutional responses to the project, and the impact of the demonstration on the occupants' lifestyle. The fourth goal is to provide a high level of visibility and good public access to the homes so that a greater public

Above:
Meridian Apartments
Duluth
Damberg and Peck Architects
Duluth

Right:
Buffalo Elderly Housing Project
Buffalo, Minnesota
Birkeland Architects, Inc.
Buffalo



awareness and acceptance of the solar/earth sheltered technology will be generated.

Home Improvement

In 1974 the State Legislature established the first state-sponsored rehabilitation program in the country. The legislators directed the Agency to finance the rehabilitation of homes owned by families of low and moderate income through the use of low-interest loans and outright grants. The same excessive land and building costs that created the need for government assistance in new housing construction prompted the Agency's action to preserve the existing housing stock.

MHFA makes FHA Title I insured home improvement loans at below market interest rates through local lenders. The loans are financed with the proceeds from revenue bond sales and legislative appropriations. Individual home improvements eligible under the loan program include energy conservation measures, structural additions, interior and exterior remodeling, roofing repairs, plumbing, heating and electrical repairs and improvements that make homes more accessible to the handicapped.

The Home Improvement Loan Program is currently administered at the local level by 224 financial institutions and public housing agencies located throughout the state.

The banks and savings and loans receive a fee from the Agency for originating and processing loans. The loans are then purchased from the lender by the MHFA.

The Home Improvement Loan Programs simple operating procedures and the widespread participation of local lenders make it an efficient and popular method of conserving Minnesota's housing stock. In 1978 over 6,000 home improvement loans were made totaling \$26.8 million.

Some homeowners are not even able to repay the reduced interest home improvement loans administered by the MHFA. Since 1976, the Agency has been operating a grant program for those whose income is \$5,000 or less. Grants of up to \$5,000 are made to eligible homeowners for improvements to increase energy efficiency. A significant percentage of these grant recipients are elderly homeowners on fixed incomes, anxious to remain in their homes, but aware that repairs are needed. A repayment provision prevents opportunists from selling their enhanced properties soon after the grant work has been completed and gaining the windfall. Property inspections prior and subsequent to the repairs also ensure that all work is satisfactorily completed. Nine million dollars from a two-year, \$21 million budget has already been used

to assist 2,500 very low income homeowners.

The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency is currently in its sixth year of operations. It's fair to say that the faltering economy that created the need for the Agency has also at times hampered the Agency's progress. The overall record of the MHFA is nevertheless impressive in terms of number of units financed, number of local economies bolstered by a new housing development, and sheer numbers of Minnesotans directly benefitted by MHFA housing assistance.

Carol A. Morphew is a planning and urban affairs analyst with Team O Architects, Minneapolis.

Imagination and Innovation in a State Agency

A conversation with James J. Solem, Executive Director of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and James P. Cramer, Executive Director of the Minnesota Society American Institute of Architects.

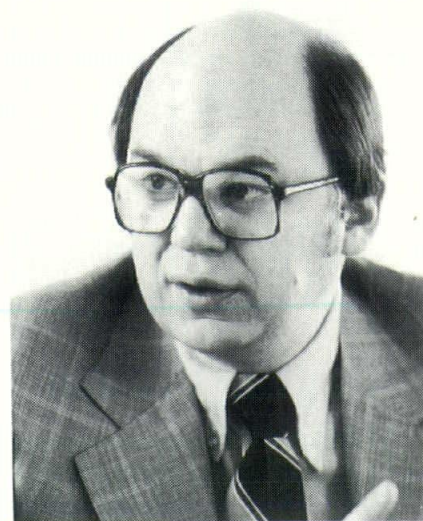


James Solem: The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) is one of thirty-nine state agencies that exist around the country to help low and moderate income families get better housing. MHFA was created in 1971 by the Legislature and actually began production in late 1973 and 1974. My own involvement goes back to 1970 when I was in the State Planning Agency and did all the staff work on the initial legislation and creation of the Agency and served as its first active Executive Director but I did not want to be director then because I thought they needed someone who knew something about housing production.

James Cramer: What is the scope of the MHFA's programs?

James Solem: We have bonding authorization up to \$900,000,000 which is broken down as follows: \$175,000,000 for single family rehabilitation and \$725,000,000 for apartment development and for single family mortgages. We are before the Legislature with a request for an increase in our bonding authority of \$450,000,000. \$250,000,000 of that is for apartment developments and \$200,000,000 for single family mortgages.

The Minnesota Agency is very different from other state agencies in that we get a substantial amount of appropriated dollars for *specific* programs. Our current appropriation request is \$42.5 million and we do some fairly innovative and imaginative things with that. We have the only program for Indian housing in the country done by a state agency.



JC: How does it relate to what federal agencies do?

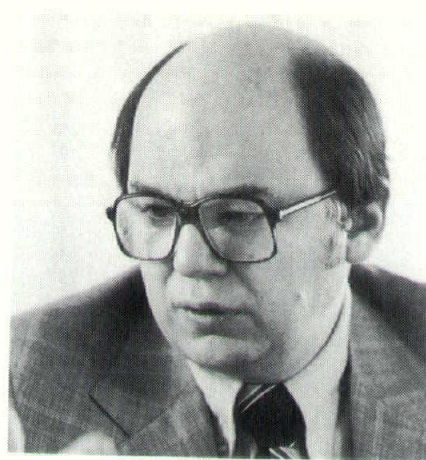
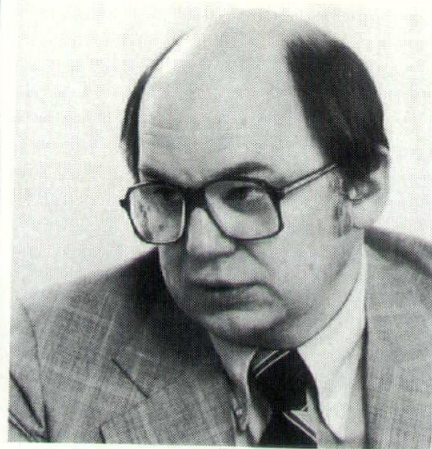
JS: HEW provides the sewer and water for some subdivisions on reservations. Then our program, which is run by reservation housing corporations, will finance the housing. But the same family would not combine state money with BIA or HUD money.

We also run the only housing rehabilitation grant program in the country with state dollars which takes the biggest portion of our appropriated dollars, a total of \$21.5 million. We have an interest write-down for the housing rehabilitation loan program of \$6 million and something called a homeownership assistance fund to help lower income families purchase their first home, that's \$10 million. This program provides no-interest loans for down payments and reduces the monthly payments in the early years of the mortgage. It's the only program of its kind in the country. It's like a variable mortgage except we provide a no-interest loan for families with \$13,000 or less income.

JC: Why is Minnesota a leader in this area?

JS: Well, I think we have been fortunate in that we have had a series of Governors who are interested in housing, beginning with Governor Anderson and continuing on with Governor Quie. Governor Quie has supported our bond increase and appropriations to the very dollar we requested. We have had the active involvement of the Legislature in that legislators from both parties have been very much interested and supportive of the Agency. Indeed our

Photography: Stu West



most innovative and imaginative programs have come out of the Legislature. And just yesterday we had an open house with the first earth-sheltered home that we are financing in Burnsville. We will have financed more earth-sheltered homes and know more about them than any other financial institution in the country. By the end of the summer we will have financed twenty-one of those structures which have very elaborate energy monitoring systems.

JC: We have talked about the dollar amounts, Jim, and it is sometimes easier to comprehend if you put it in terms of the number of families affected.

JS: Let's start with apartment developments. We have financed or agreed to finance 172 developments, 11 of those are under the old Section 236 program, the rest of them are Section 8. That has resulted in 13,060 apartment units. There are probably only two other states that have financed more apartment units than Minnesota: New York and New Jersey. More importantly, however, there are 13,000 units in 172 developments and 120 different communities around the state. The Agency has thus had an enormous impact statewide. We operate with a very explicit allocation plan which forces us to get all of our programs distributed around the state. Those 13,000 apartment units are split almost half and half between elderly and family housing. We have probably done more family housing from the Section 8 program than any other state agency in the country. Nineteen developments are in Minneapolis, eight or ten in Saint Paul. There are family townhouse

developments in the suburbs that simply would not have happened without the Housing Finance Agency. We run the largest rehabilitation loan program outside of the Department of Housing and Urban Development—\$35,000,000 a year in rehab loan bonds, another \$11,000,000 a year in grants and three or four million dollars a year in interest write-downs. So we are doing about 15,000 rehab loans biannually, about 6,000 homeownership loans biannually, between 6,000-7,000 apartment units biannually and about 4,500 grants. A substantial number of families are being helped in Minnesota as a result of the Housing Finance Agency, but, even more importantly, we try and manage our programs in such a way that we can plug into and give leverage to local programs. We have all kinds of examples of the way in which resources of the Agency are combined with community development money, with local government dollars, and tax increment financing write-down of land. We are playing a minor but important role in the earth-sheltered townhouses in the Seward West Redesign area where we helped with the write-down loan programs for families to get one or two of those units. We also helped with some of the write-down of their development costs with no-interest loans to get them started so that there is private money, city money, and other public money involved with all that. I think what's unique about the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency is that we aren't just in the apartment development financing game. We have a mixed program and an opportunity to work with local governments in all areas of the state in a lot of very different and imaginative kinds of ways.

JC: You are beginning to convince me that maybe we do have some affordable housing.

JS: Within limits, it's affordable. Our adjusted income limit for single family is \$16,000. We are in the process of increasing that income limit. Our mortgage limit is \$37,500 for an existing house or for a new house without the land. We've put out \$68 million in mortgage money this year at houses in that price range so that there are a lot of people who would not have been able to afford a house otherwise and get access to homeownership through our programs.

JC: What is the mix between rural and the urban areas as far as your financing?

JS: We have a detailed allocation plan, but the numbers all work out so that it's almost fifty-fifty with the exception of rehab where obviously there is a higher percentage of homes in the Twin Cities that need rehabilitation. There is no other state agency in the country for example that has put developments in 120 different communities. I think that's a phenomenal record. And as a result of this we involve developers, architects, builders and managers from all over the state.

JC: How many architectural firms have you worked with?

JS: Since 1974, there have been 61 architectural firms involved in 172 different developments. That's \$400 million worth of apartment development financing. We have had, I think, a fairly major impact on the architectural practice. I am very pleased with the quality of the buildings that we produce. We try to build the best possible buildings we can within whatever constraints there are from HUD and the available



monies. We give architects a substantial amount of freedom and if you were to see all the renderings hanging on our walls there are no two that look very much alike. Indeed the range of design is quite substantial.

JC: Can you talk more about imaginative design?

JS: We have a building for the elderly down in southwestern Minnesota. It's a lovely building, five or six stories high with an atrium used as a community space, activity area for get-togethers.

We try and put a building financial package together that will be an asset to the community and will get community acceptance, that will provide a pleasant, decent place for people to live and that will last for the life of the mortgage. There are all kinds of examples of older publicly financed buildings that have not met that criteria. We are now rehabbing some of these. Frankly, we get criticized every once in a while because our buildings are too good.

JC: I want to get back to something that you touched on just a bit ago and that is the role that the Housing Finance Agency plays in the resurging strength of our inner cities. What do you see is happening in that area and how do you influence that?

JS: Well, I think a lot of exciting things are happening, both in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The rehab program is targeted in the way in which cities want to be targeted, by neighborhoods. We have a Neighborhood Housing Service (NHS) over in the Merriam Park area in Saint Paul where we're tied in with private lenders and the City

of Saint Paul. Our programs, I think, have been very significant in the resurgence of that whole neighborhood. In Minneapolis the same is true with both our rehab and homeownership programs. The city has used them in specific target neighborhoods. Our apartment development program becomes a very important focus of major capital investment. Mears Park in downtown Saint Paul, our largest mortgage, \$9 million, is going to be the cornerstone of the resurgence of Saint Paul's Lowertown.

JC: Is that started?

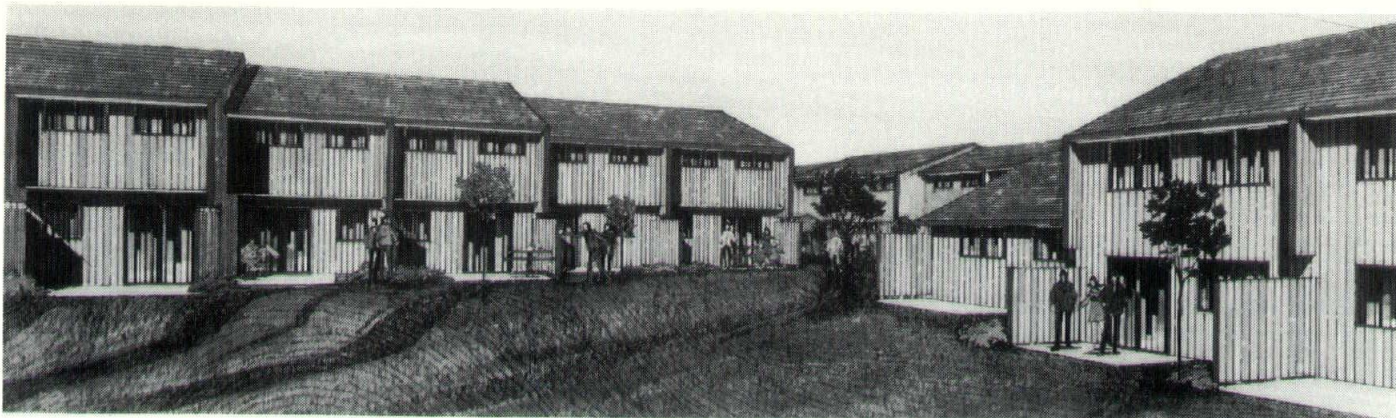
JS: Yes, and doing very well. The Lowertown area was designated by the city as a Neighborhood Strategy Area (NSA) and we have 340 Section 8 units assigned to us by HUD. So we'll be plugging in with the City of Saint Paul and private developers in that neighborhood. The same thing is happening in Minneapolis with Loring Park. We have two developments in Loring Park including the very large Volunteers of America. There is in Saint Paul, at Rice and Marion, a very nice apartment building, rented up this spring, a cornerstone in the redevelopment of the Rice Street area. There are a lot of similar examples, where a major investment in one of our buildings serves as the focal point of neighborhood revitalization.

JC: Do you have staff architects?

JS: Yes, we do. We have a chief design architect, Murray Casserly, who does all of our architectural review and does all of the work in the development process with the architect and the development team. Murray has several architects working for him.

JC: Elaborate on the development process.

JS: We go through an initial selection process. For example, for 1979, the month of April is our selection period. We get an allocation from HUD of so many Section 8 dollars which we translate into units. We advertise for applications from developers. This year we received 175 applications. We do a site review and market analysis and then we do a selection based on our allocation plan, the needs analysis done in cooperation with all the regional agencies, HUD, and the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA). We pick x number of developments for processing. We begin a fairly sophisticated and I think well managed underwriting process which gets us to the point where we make a final commitment to finance construction. From day one we insist that the developer and the architect and whoever else is involved work together with our staff on a team basis to put that development package together so that we can make the final commitment to finance. We've done that in as short a period of time as five months when the developer and architect got their act together and got the work done. The average is probably closer to 9-12 months. We will move as fast as the development team can move and as fast as they can get all the appropriate local government clearances. But through all that our staff works very directly with the architect and deals with all the architectural design problems, keeps the project within whatever cost limits are necessary but makes certain that we get the best quality design and the most energy-efficient design possible.



JC: Has any pattern developed of certain architects being more dependent on the Agency?

JS: I don't think so, but I don't know. I think there are some architects who have a particular relationship with a developer and do a lot of work for that developer. In those 172 developments we have financed, we have worked with 106 different development teams so that we have 61 architectural firms most of whom are doing more than one project with a particular developer but the numbers would indicate that the distribution is actually pretty good.

JC: Let's look to the future Jim. What do you see the Housing Finance Agency being involved with in the next year that's particularly innovative.

JS: Well, we're not asking for any new programs nor do I think we'll get any from the Legislature this session but we will essentially be continuing what we're already involved in. The innovative part I think will come from the pressure to make the apartment development program work within the cost constraints that are being developed by both HUD and Congress. I think there's going to be tremendous pressure on architects and on the Agency to retain what I think is our high quality of design and construction standards at a time when the cost pressures are such that it will take every ounce of imagination and innovation. We've also got to continue to look for whatever imaginative and innovative ways there are to build even more energy conservation into what we do. We are also in the process of looking for ways in which we can do even more in terms of linking up with local governments. It would seem to me

that we are very close to the time when the Agency simply won't be able to finance anything that doesn't have some local government participation in it. I think we are also going to have to look for new ways to try to build in more assistance for larger families, recognizing that the larger family with lower income is substantially at a disadvantage in today's housing market. It's tough to do that in the apartment development program since four-bedroom units are so expensive that we can't do very many of them. We are going to need to find some cooperative mechanism of working with local government. I think the area we're going to concentrate on in the next couple of years is improving our delivery system to local government and lenders. The think I didn't mention earlier is that all of our loan programs work through private lenders or in some cases city HRA's. We have lending institutions around the state involved in our single family program and an enormous involvement by banks and savings and loans, 224 lenders in our single family rehab program. We've got to look for ways to strengthen that relationship and make it work better and do a better job of leveraging and combining financing resources.

JC: What federal monies flow through this agency?

JS: Well, the Section 8 rent assistance that comes through the Agency now is \$42.5 million a year. This is a very significant amount of money. We are already locked into substantial additional income of federal money coming into the state through the Housing Finance Agency, and that will increase as we get more units under construction and get Section 8 assistance for those units. Our single family home purchase program operates at a level

Left:
Okabena Towers for the Elderly
Worthington, Minnesota
Architectural Design Group
Rochester, Minnesota

Above:
Sunrise Meadow Family Housing
Saint Peter, Minnesota
Johnson, Sheldon & Sorensen Architects
Minneapolis, Minnesota

of about \$100 million. The rehab loan program is about \$35 million a year. Grants are at \$11 million a year. My estimate for the next couple of years is that about \$280 to \$290 million a year of various forms of housing assistance money will go through the Housing Finance Agency. It will be made available to people in Minnesota for one program or another.

JC: It appears that the quality of life for the people in Minnesota is a good deal better because of the MHFA than it would otherwise be.

JS: Well, I think so. I should say a word about the guy who really deserves the credit for that, Jim Dlugosch. Jim was the first Executive Director and put all of these programs together. I think if you were to ask around the country about the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency virtually everybody who knows anything about housing would agree there we're clearly the most productive and imaginative of Agencies. He deserves, along with the staff, the real credit for the success of the Agency's programs. ■

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Interior of "meeting house," Colonial Church of Edina. It is the largest of five gable roof buildings linked by one-story glassed colonnades. Simple, barn shapes and natural materials adhere to Puritan, colonial village roots of church. Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, architects. Kraus-Anderson of Minneapolis, general contractor.

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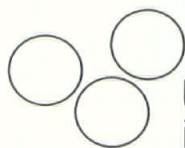
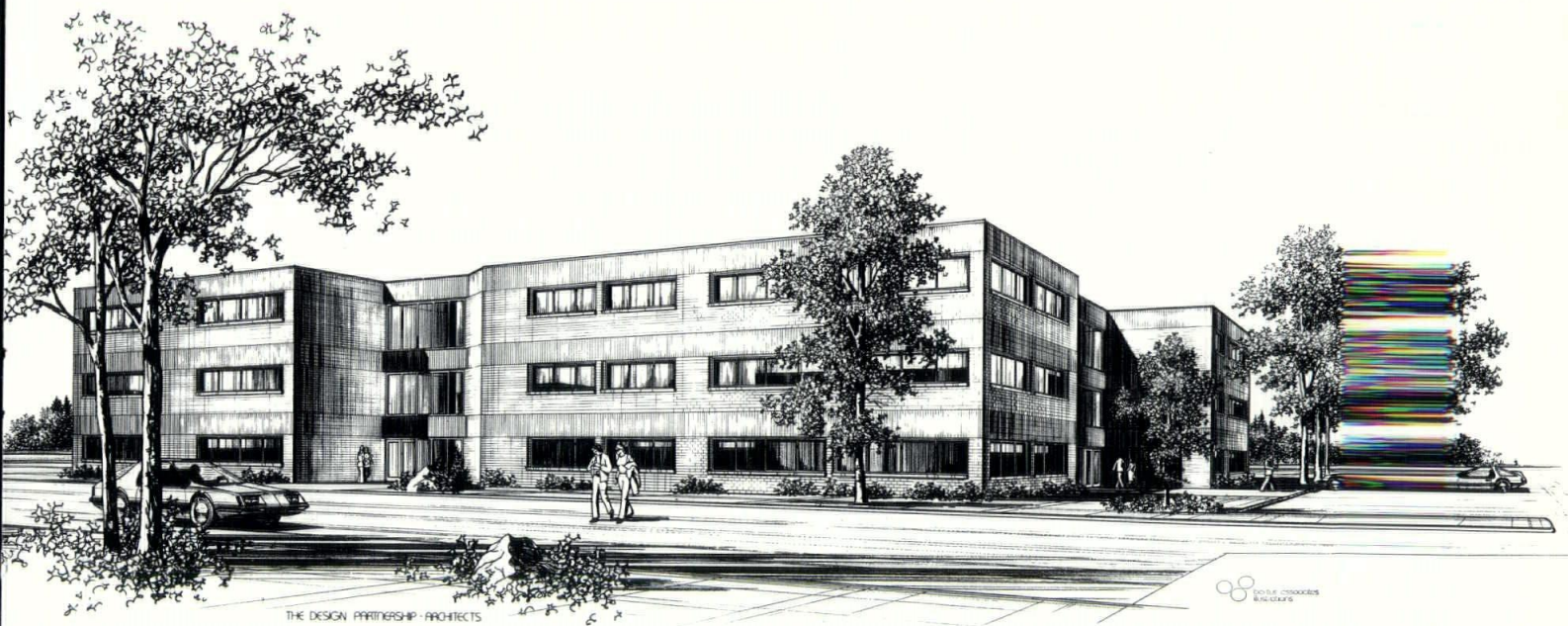
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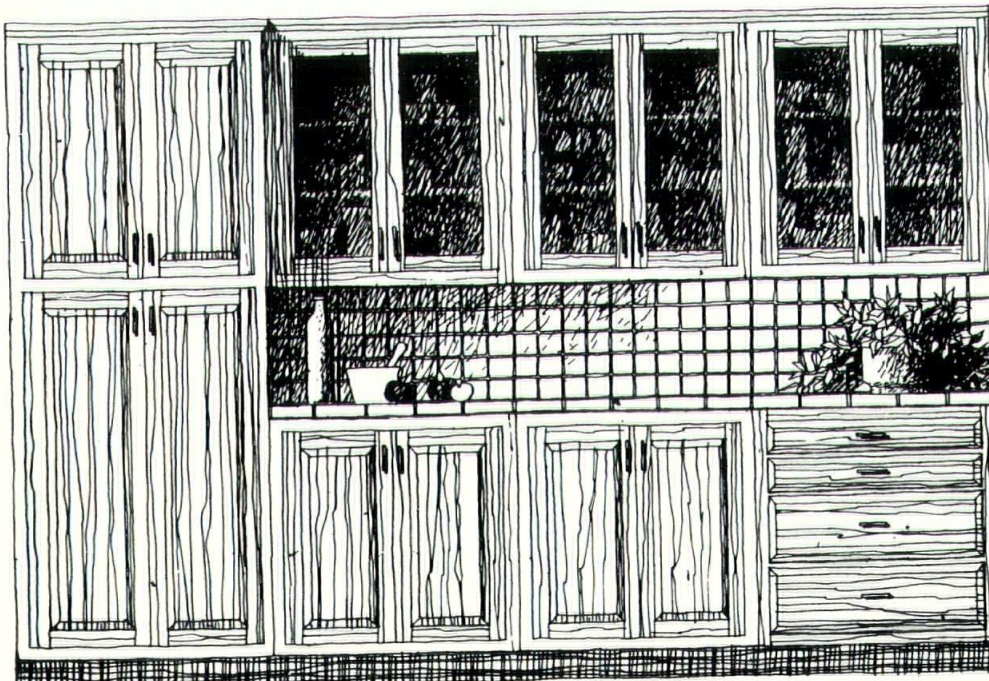
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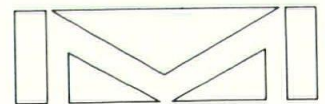
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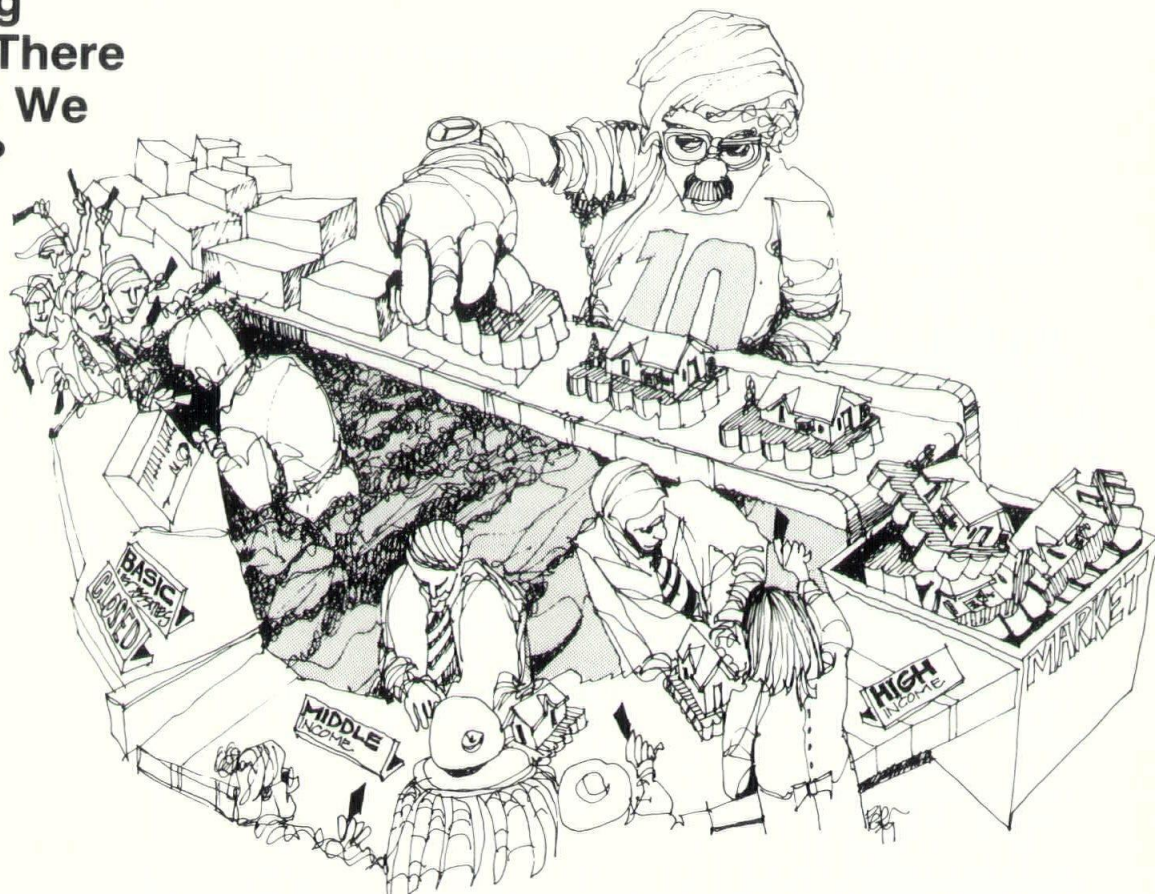
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The Housing Crisis: Are There Scapegoats We Can Blame?

James I. Lammers



Virtually no new, privately financed apartments are being built in Minnesota today. This is true even in the face of record low vacancy rates (5.5%) in the Twin City Metropolitan area, and even lower outstate.

The reason for this is simple—any investor or developer can tell you: the numbers just don't work out. Operating expenses (taxes, maintenance, utilities, insurance) account for 44% to 45% of gross rental income, and debt service (mortgage principal and interest payments) accounts for an additional 52% to 55%. At best, this leaves a very small cash flow margin which, coupled with the present high equity requirements, means a very poor return on investment. While it is true that tax shelter (depreciation) and appreciation due to inflation provide additional incentives, these alone are not enough to make a project viable.

At the same time that operating expenses are increasing due to inflation and increased taxes, and debt service costs are increasing due to high interest rates, the amount of front end cash which must go into a project is increasing due to escalating construction costs. Based on the

economic value of a project, projected from comparable rents in the area, few lenders will provide more than \$14,000 to \$15,000 in mortgage money per apartment unit. This means that the developer/investor must come up with an additional \$5,000 or \$6,000 per unit. Given today's competition for a finite amount of investment dollars, new apartment building simply does not come out on top.

By and large, the apartment construction going on today is almost all financed through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Farmers Home Administration or HUD programs such as FHA 221d3 or 221d4. These offer lower interest payments on the mortgage and/or subsidies which enable the rents to be lowered for low to moderate income tenants who can qualify. With lower rents, they are stiff competition for conventionally financed projects.

The area of luxury apartment housing may be the only exception to this rule. For some time, lenders have been turning their attention from the "bread and butter" project to the luxury project because they find that in time of economic stress rental income is more stable due to higher

tenant incomes. Luxury apartments are identical to market rent units except that location may be more desirable (hence slightly higher land costs) and the units themselves may be somewhat larger. However, the land cost is always a small fraction of the total housing project cost and, while construction costs for a larger unit are somewhat higher, the cost per square foot actually decreases since the extra area is inexpensive to build (no additional plumbing, doors, windows, etc.).

The net result of these two trends is to leave the middle income tenant without sufficient housing. This situation is further aggravated by the high cost of single family homes which throws more and more people, particularly young families, into the rental market.

Are there any scapegoats we can blame? Perhaps a few. Minnesota property taxes, the single largest operating expense, are double what they are in Wisconsin. Land costs per apartment unit are increasing due, in many cases, to restrictive zoning which calls for low densities. Suburban housing moratoriums,

no-growth policies and threats of rent controls all inhibit development. Interest rates are high due to government policy intended to curb development and therefore limit inflation. However, this simply increases costs—presently long term financing is over 10% and construction financing is as much as 16%. Code requirements which produce safer, longer lasting buildings are not without cost. Sewer accessibility charges (over \$400 per unit in the metropolitan area) plus assessments for street, curb, gutter, water, etc. all have their effect.

Condominium building seems to have replaced apartment building, and the conversion of apartments to condominiums further reduces the number of available rental units. There were approximately 2,000 conversions in the metropolitan area last year. One recent conversion of 300 units in Edina was sold out within 27 days. Condominium conversion and construction is increasing in popularity. Unfortunately, it represents an erosion of rental housing stock and of development energy.

Are there any solutions to this crisis? All indicators point to government intervention through alternative tax exempt financing vehicles. Presently, one of the largest government subsidies to housing is in the form of depreciation, which allows the property owner to receive a tax rebate by sheltering income. This is a simple mechanism; it provides a direct incentive to the investor and eliminates the need to send tax dollars to Washington only to have

them return in the form of subsidies or grants. However, this "tax loophole" is being slowly closed. There is talk of eliminating it altogether, and if this happens, the apartment housing industry will cease to be sluggish—it will be dead.

The problem is not in construction technology. HUD's flirtation with industrialized building systems in the late '60s had no positive result. Alternative life styles such as communal living are often touted as an answer, but to date, the alternatives affect only a few. It is too simplistic to say that rent levels just have to catch up with construction costs. This will make rental housing unaffordable to more and more people or push them into condominium markets. Graduated payment mortgages (gradually increasing payments for the first 5 or 10 years) may be possible; they are just beginning to be used for single family housing.

It seems we are at a crossroads—either government, state, federal and local, must reduce the restrictions and limitations which tend to make housing development unprofitable for the private sector; or government must take over the role of underwriter not only for the low to moderate income market, but for the moderate to high income market as well. ■

Mr. Lammers, a principal in the Minneapolis firm of Hills Gilbertson Fisher/Centrum Architects Inc., is an architect/developer who also teaches in the area of investment building.



Drawings by Peter Kramer

Cash Flow Analysis/Typical Rental Unit

Assumptions:


Land Cost	\$1,000/unit
Construction Cost	\$20,000/unit
Financing	10 1/4% 29 years
Rent	\$280/month
Mortgage Amount	\$14,000

Gross Rent:

Operating Expense @ 44%	\$3,360/year
Debt Service (14,000 @ 10.82%)	\$1,478
Cash Flow (3,360 - 1,478 - 1,515)	\$1,515
	\$367

Investment

(\$1,000 + \$20,000 - \$14,000):	\$7,000
Cash Flow Return (\$367 ÷ \$7,000):	5.24%

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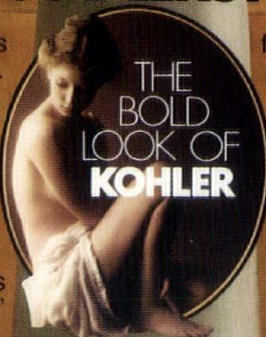


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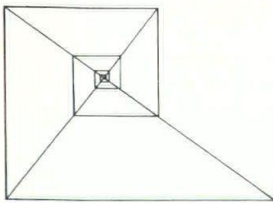
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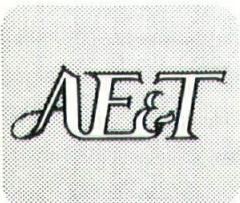
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Living Tall or Living Small?

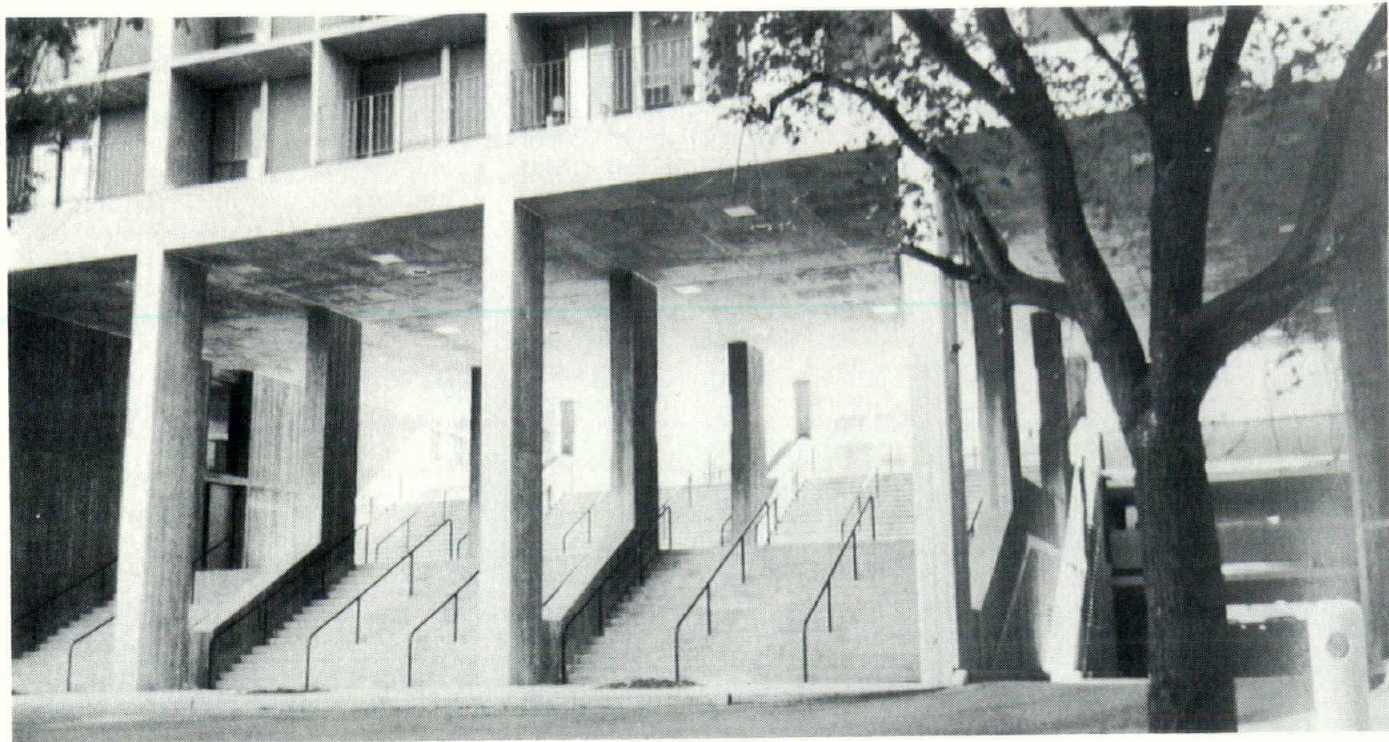
David Cooperman

From the time tall structures made their appearance in the modern city, over a century ago, until now, they have been received with intense ambivalence. The ten story Western Union building in New York (1872) was proclaimed by a contemporary critic as "a hideous, top heavy . . . huge brick and granite nightmare." And yet, within twenty years the forest of steel skyscrapers was regarded as a highly attractive symbol of expanding energies. Similarly, the antagonistic chorus that greeted the Eiffel Tower in 1889 gave way by the end of the century to a consensual identification of the lacy structure with Paris itself. When tall buildings began to be used as residences their general high status location in cities and the views of the cityscape they afforded their wealthy residents endowed the capitalist-industrial city with its appropriate bourgeois monuments. But when high rise apartment buildings were used to enclose those who could not afford to escape from the inner city the predictable response was a mixture of anger, fear, and aggression: physical attack on the buildings by residents, fear by non-residents who could see the cement jungles rise against the urban skyline, and anger against the planners and architects for having designed such apperceived malignancies. In the past twenty years, the Pruitt-Igoe disaster in St. Louis, the collapse of the Ronan Point flats in London, the antipathy to new tall buildings as despoiling the Paris cityscape, and the extensive unease about tenuous mother-child effects in Europe and North America have punctuated reactions and movements against tall structures as such. Because of their very protrusive nature they have inspired collective images of disaster—from King Kong to The Towering Inferno. Oscar Newman's popular thriller, *Defensible Space* identified the root of social evil in the criminogenic city as "the apartment tower itself, that is the real and final villain of the piece," (a work which Ada Louise Huxtable hailed as a scientific masterpiece). In more specific passages however, Newman noted that the allegedly universal law-like impact of tallness on social behavior extended only to large, low income families. While high rise residential buildings are no longer constructed for the masses of impoverished people, the tall condominium tower in this country

and the numerous luxury and middle class apartment buildings in Europe and the Middle East increasingly extend across the urban habitat. In the central business districts of sunbelt cities as well as older Northeastern cities, and, especially in the high density freeway intersections of first ring suburbs, the tall building office complex, often accompanied by a high rise residential area becomes the building type which increasingly predominates. How can we sort out this mass of ambivalence?

Let us distinguish among two types of critical examination of the question: symbolic, and social-behavioral (including allegations about the harmful effects of tall buildings). The first point to be made is literally the most obvious: tall structures anywhere attract attention because of their very height, and hence will universally be a symbol-provocative element in the range of collective visibility. The Bastille was destroyed by a revolutionary mob not only because it was a prison but because it was the towering prison, easily symbolizing towering repression to all. During periods of social apprehensiveness such structures serve as lightning rods for storms of popular resentment. And during times of social expansion and growth they generally were regarded as signs of the focal points of productivity. The Brooklyn Bridge was celebrated as a source of American solidarity; the Eiffel Tower (a bridge stood on its end) came to be viewed as the symbol of Republican France. (Part of the original objection to it was that it was higher than the Cathedral of Notre Dame. As Republican rather than Clerical values predominated in Paris, aesthetic loyalties were transferred. Now the complaints against tall Parisian buildings include the charge that the predominance of the Eiffel Tower will disappear.)

In the Twentieth Century the fate of architectural styles and their reflected symbols is tied to the Tall Building. Recently the outcry against Modernism has been considerable. And while it is directed against the formalistic elements of Internationalism, whether small or tall, the central target seems to be the towering offspring of Le Corbusier and Bauhaus, if not of Jenney and the Chicago school. Ada Louise Huxtable was able to pinpoint the



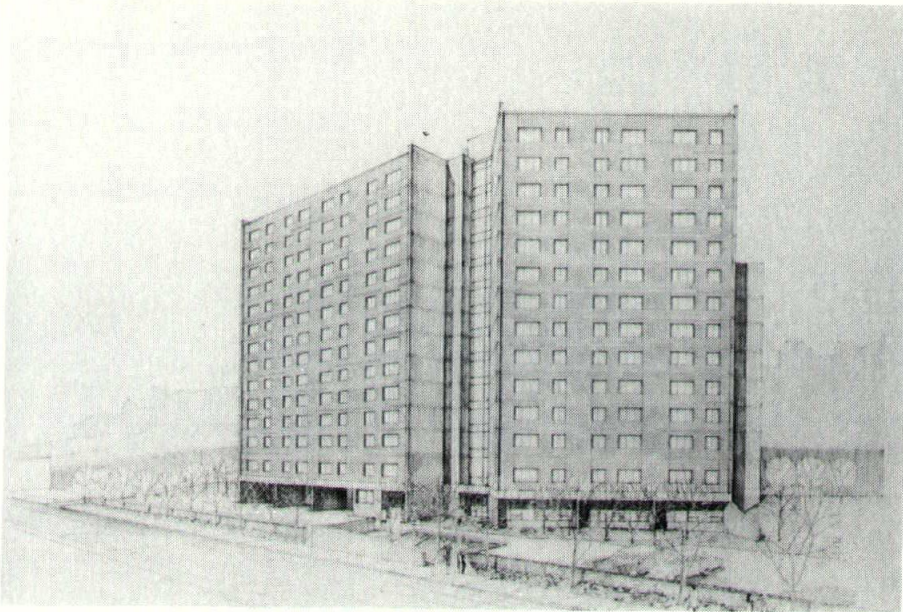
demise—not only of the style. “In 1977 modern architecture was declared dead,” she wrote. Yet the tombstone signifying this demise was another tall building—Philip Johnson’s AT&T building. The irony is that given the increasing height of central city skylines, anti-Modernists statements must perforce be more monumental than the structures whose aesthetics they contradict. The reaction to the AT&T building assumes its immense collective visibility. Had it been designed as another low rise furniture store or gas station in a suburban shopping center, it would have fit as perfectly as an Ethan Allen Colonial shop or an Amoco station. On a tall building in New York however, the context is dramatically different and its aesthetic meaning is literally disturbing.

Moving to social-behavioral considerations, we should distinguish further between questions concerning the harmful effects of tall buildings from general social-behavioral considerations. High rise residential habitats have been alleged to cause, among other things, crime, an increase of respiratory ailments, kinetic deprivation among children, increased neuroses among housewives, familial disintegration, disorganization of community patterns, and social malaise. When published reports alleging such morbidity effects are read with the minimal standards one

applies to empirical studies of any kind, the charges cannot be sustained in any clinical sense. So, for example, Newman’s own published statistical tables do not support his argument. In fact, when his own data are re-examined they support a different hypothesis, namely that high rise buildings were built in high crime neighborhoods and that when neighborhood crime is statistically controlled, the height of the building is not significantly associated with crime. Arguments about clinical effects on children turn out to be prefaced by disclaimers concerning the scientific basis of the argument—disclaimers issued by the author. Arguments about increased respiratory ailments turn out to be based on a case study of a military dependents population housed in a four story barracks, and so on. Now of course nothing noted so far implies in any sense the converse of the argument—that high rise buildings are good for one’s health. Obviously, poorly designed tall buildings have harmful effects—in the same way that poorly designed small buildings show the same thing. But what seems to be the case is that *undesirable* characteristics of tall buildings are often declared to be *harmful* in order more fearfully to emphasize the *dispreference*. Studies carried out with adequate scientific design, however, show no significant personality differences between children reared in

low rise, or children in high rise buildings, although mothers, in general prefer to rear children in low rise surroundings, assuming that adequate private play areas are part of the low rise preference. Some design characteristics of any dwelling which are related to harmful effects, according to most recent research, concern crowding—more specifically, persons per room, but there is no evidence to suggest that this effect is different because of the height of the building.

Turning, finally, to a consideration of satisfaction, of preferences, and to the complex set of questions concerning social behavior and unit/building design, we here are concerned with an almost infinite set of variables. The degree of satisfaction, or of dissatisfaction with living in a high rise building depends, among other things, on stage in family life cycle, household income, degree of marital or personal (psychological) satisfaction, degree of choice in moving to the residence, immediate past housing experience, anticipations of future housing, degree to which others in the building are similar to one’s self, design characteristics of the building, attitudes toward the surrounding neighborhood, and reasons for moving into the building, especially the characteristics of the trade-offs. In short, satisfaction levels vary in much the same way that they



do with regard to low rise buildings. Since, to my knowledge, there are no comprehensive, large-scale controlled studies of comparative low, high rise satisfaction levels, we do not know what the specific degree of differences are on the variables just cited.

In a recently published study of comparative residential satisfaction of people moving to and from high and low rise buildings in Toronto, William Michelson suggests that a proper housing stock in any city, with an appropriate mix available at affordable cost to residents at different stages in the life cycle, increases the likelihood of satisfaction of families living in high rise apartments. As for commonly held assumptions concerning a link between tall buildings and lack of community he notes,

One of our critical findings lay in our failure to support previous assertions of a deficit in social interaction among families in high-rise apartments, particularly in the short run. The major difference found was not in amount or in place of contact, but rather in the way people originally

met those who became their friends.

What is implied here is that the size and general social organization of a metropolis affects the degree to which people make specialized residential choices. In New York City, where different ethnic groups have resided in high rise buildings over the course of three generations for a single family, such structures can function to provide the critical mass of population needed to sustain community and family. In cities of smaller size, high rise buildings play a less specialized function, for example, to house broader categories of elderly people. Hence the question of building height and satisfaction requires consideration of the broader urban environment for proper answers.

To ask the question 'Which is preferable, living in a tall or living in a small building' is inviting an absolutistic response, like 'small over tall, anytime' or, for most people it may be a spurious question. Why should one assume that we should be for or against a structure because of its height alone? If the response to such a question for most people is, 'that depends', then clearly we must ask in turn, 'depends on what?' And that, as we have seen, cannot be simply answered. ■

David Cooperman is Professor of Sociology at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of numerous publications and was sociological consultant to Cedar-Riverside Development in Minneapolis.

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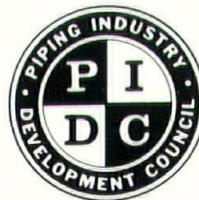
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Saint Paul's University Grove: A Designed Community

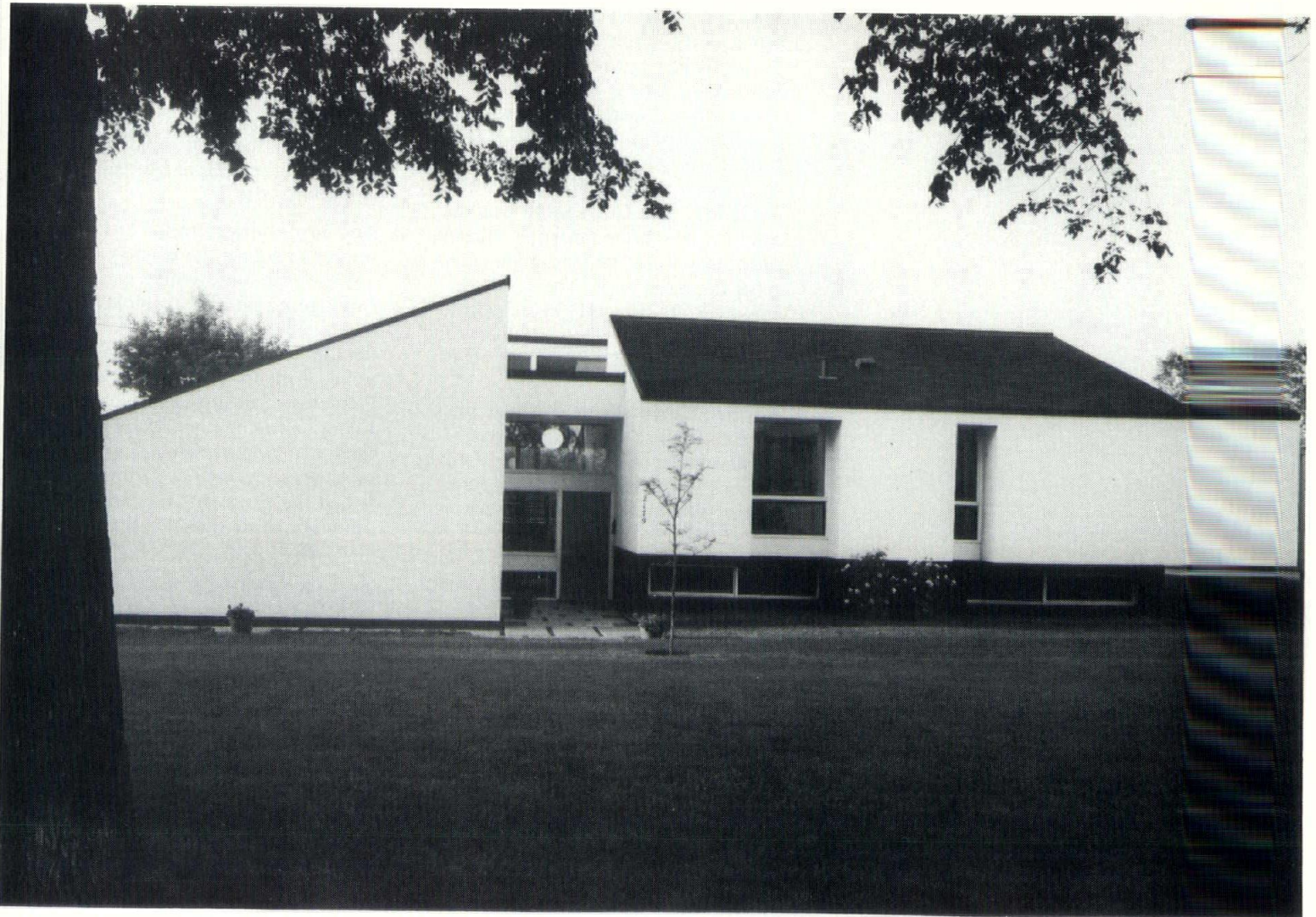
Bruce N. Wright

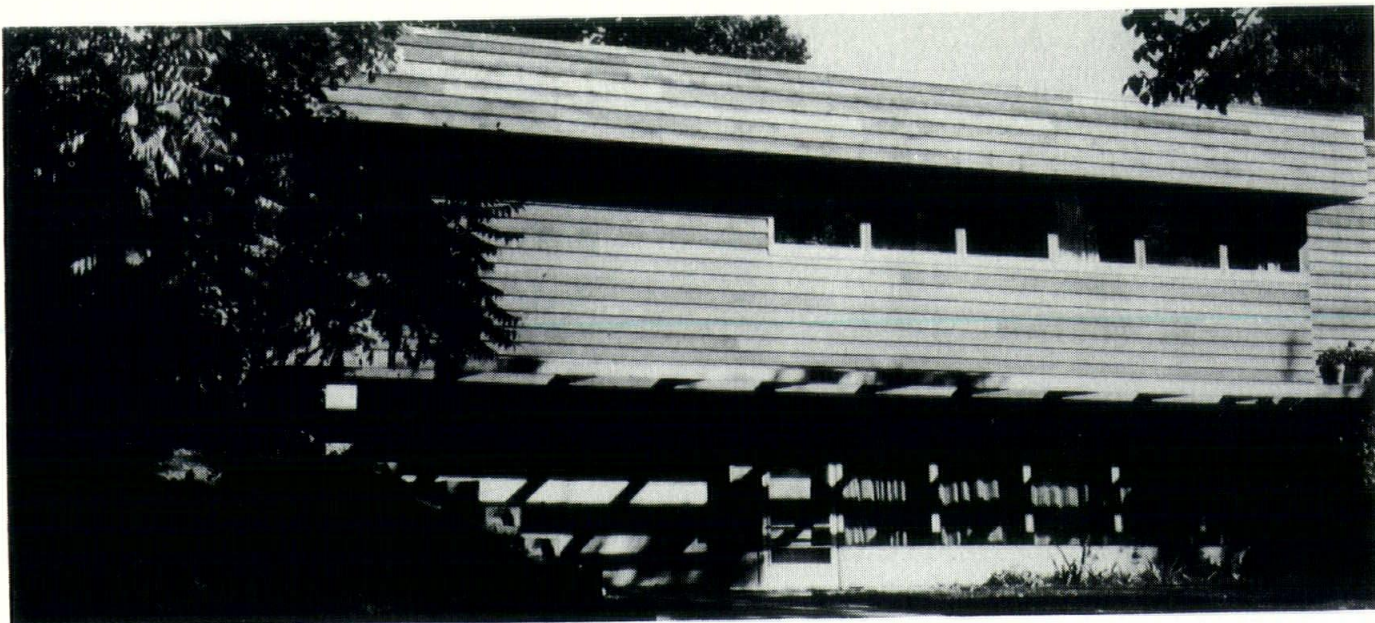
Fifty years ago, before such creatures as oil embargoes, OPECs and stagflation, University of Minnesota Comptroller and Secretary to the Board of Regents William Theophilus Middlebrook and his colleagues decided that a good way to attract top quality professors and administrators to cold climated Minnesota would be to provide land on which they could build their own houses. This concept provided the additional attraction of a community where one's neighbors were of the same social background and temperament; an important factor indeed to someone new to a region and not sure of how long they would be staying. Secretary Middlebrook figured a good minimum price for an architect designed home at that time should be—oh, say \$6,000, including lot and architect's fees.

Before the year was half over, Middlebrook could see that this limit

was much too low and in a letter dated July 25, 1929 to Professor Frederick M. Mann, head of the School of Architecture and advisory architect to the University, requested that the minimum be raised to \$8,000. A maximum was set at \$10,000. This was soon raised to \$12,500, and then again to \$27,500 by 1953.

The proposal before the Board of Regents in 1929 was unusual in that it required that every house within the new neighborhood be designed by a registered architect. This would prevent, in the minds of Professors Mann and Roy Childs Jones (newly appointed assistant advisory architect and professor to the University), a "cracker box" from being built next to a Gothic-revival mansion. A way of ensuring harmony and uniformity. Predating Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City of 1935, University Grove offered a sense of the utopian





a *designed* community of (relatively) homogeneous population with little of the standard urban problems of the time, such as poorly maintained property and over crowding.

Today, now that the hundred or so available lots are all taken, the Grove is more concerned with encouraging community involvement and elects a group of homeowners, called the University Grove Homeowners Association, yearly to deal with communication between the city of Falcon Heights (of which the Grove is a part), the University, and the residents. The University owns the land on which the Grove is situated, and, because of its land-grant status, pays no taxes on it. The residents however do. Property taxes paid to Falcon Heights go toward police and fire protection, but no longer cover trash collection.

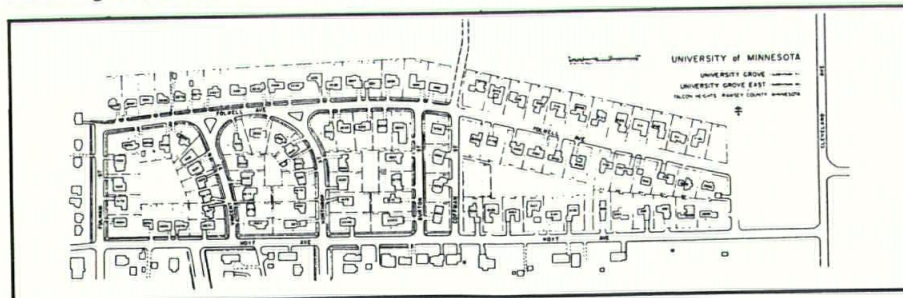
Former University advisory architect Winston Close recalls his early involvement in the University Grove project following Roy Childs Jones' lead: "Our task was one of seeking satisfactory relationships between one neighbor's house and another's, but at the same time allowing for variety of form." This mainly involved checking to see that new construction

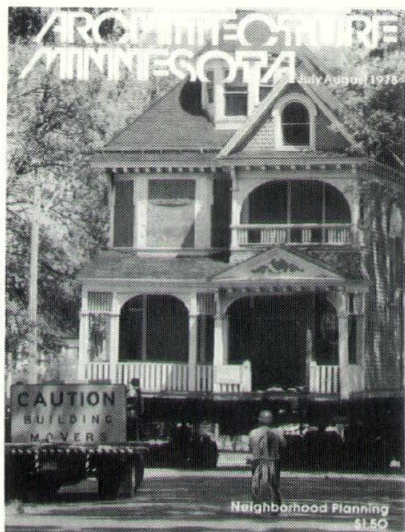
complied with the five foot set-back between lots (later raised to six feet), the front boundary set-back of 35 feet and minimum drainage and landscaping requirements. A maximum height restriction was also imposed to prevent someone from coming in and disrupting an otherwise composed esthetic. Close feels that one of the strengths of the project was the mid-block open areas set aside for immediate neighborhood use. These were welcome spaces in a community that was rapidly developing and helped to cement neighborly ties.

The new enthusiasm for historical reference across the country today is not just a matter of finding and cataloguing worthy examples wherever they might be. For old neighborhoods and new developments alike, it means discovering the elements of healthy and pleasant city living and strengthening or creating them. University Grove has the edge on most communities in this regard. It had the foresight and careful guidance of architects right from the start! ■

Bruce Wright is a graduate architect with Horty, Elving and Associates, Minneapolis.

Page 53:
Livermore Residence
Ralph Rapson Architect
Above:
Close Residence
Close Associates Architects





The 1978 July-August issue of *Architecture Minnesota* had on its cover a house which has a fascinating history.

A St. Paul couple, Gary and Diane Follmer Hietala, saw the house

boarded, realized it had classic Eastlake Queen Anne design and began the search for its owner. After a long search and deliberations including out-of-state companies, the house was purchased at market value, back taxes and obligations were paid and the Hietalas began to plan how to display such an attractive house that had been squeezed in between newer buildings.

Construction on the house was begun in 1890 by its builder, Ole Ask. Mr. Ask and his partner were responsible for several houses in St. Paul before moving to Lanesboro, Minnesota. It appears that Ole Ask used his own creativity in designing his houses. The first residents, Frederick and Isabella Sargent, moved into the house in 1893. The Sargents left their touch on the house, particularly in the pocket where the Hietalas uncovered a Sargent combination

initial hand-painted on the original wallpaper. The house was vacated and vandalized in the mid-1970s.

The house was moved in May 1978 in the first all-private house move in St. Paul's Ramsey Hill area. It is now ready to be occupied with completely new plumbing, heating, electrical, kitchen and decoration.

Restoring a house that has been heavily vandalized is a large task that requires a great deal of dedication. Would the Hietalas do it again? "The end result has made the project worth the work. Regulations, pressures and red tape make a restoration project difficult for the ordinary citizen who wishes to take on a project like this, but we have come through the process and have a unique house that will be our home. The house in time will be restored to the point that Mr. Ask would be proud of it, also." ■

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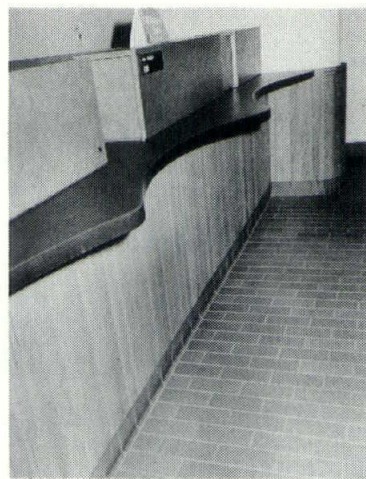
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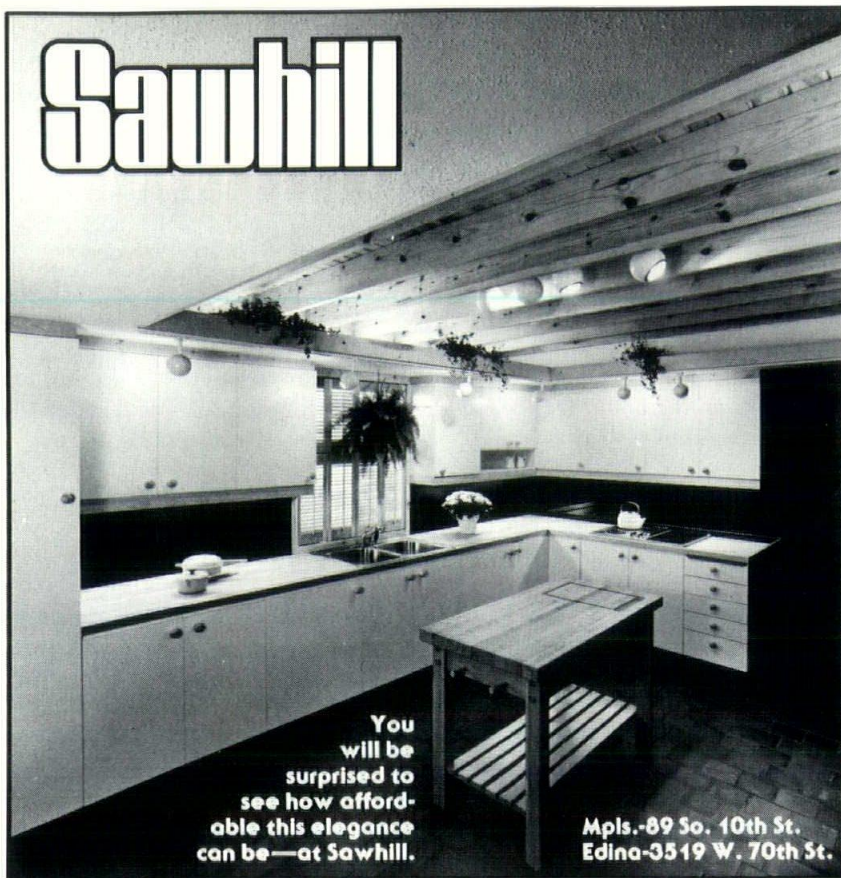


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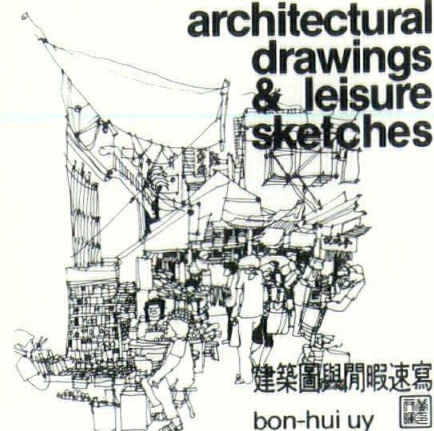
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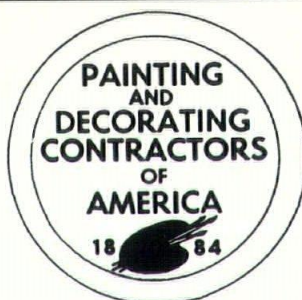


bon-hui uy

Architectural Drawings and Leisure Sketches, Bon-Hui Uy, 9.95 paperback. In the introduction, Richard Meier says, "The use of the hands and the eyes is as fundamental as the use of the mind in architectural training. The creativity of the architectural process must be expressed. Thus a pencil and a sheet of paper starts thought, the sketches become the tool of expression, and the act of drawing is a part of the conceptual process. The works in this book by Bon-Hui show a diversified selection of drawings and sketches which extend beyond the normal boundaries of architectural drawings. This selection is refreshing, sensitive and vigorous. Most of all, it transmits the feeling of an architect in an uncomplicated yet exciting way."





The Lake District of Minneapolis: A History of the Calhoun-Isles Community, David Lanegran and Ernest Sandeen, Living Historical Museum, 8.95 paperback. Following the success of Professor Sandeen's first book, **St. Paul's Historic Summit Avenue**, **The Lake District of Minneapolis** is sure to enjoy the same broad appeal. As with the **Summit Avenue** book the geology, early history and development of the area, as well as neighborhood tours make this volume valuable.

Visionary Drawings of Architecture and Planning: 20th Century through the 1960s, George R. Collins, The Drawing Center, N.Y., MIT Press, 15.00 paperback. The



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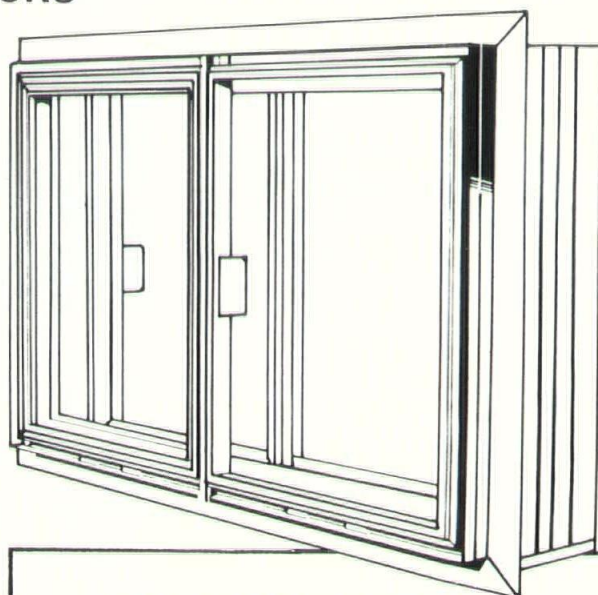
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drawings presented in this catalog are from an exhibition presented at The Drawing Center, New York. The intention of the exhibit, and thus the book, is to discuss the nature of the visionary and what drawings of this kind—paper architecture—are and can be. Included are the work of Raimund Abraham, Peter Cook, Hugh Ferriss, Hiroshima Isozaki, Noriaki Kurokawa, Frei Otto, Amancio Williams, and of course, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, Buckminster Fuller, Louis Kahn and Walter Gropius.

Energy Planning for Buildings, Michael Sizemore, Henry O. Clark, William Ostrander, AIA, 44.00 non-members, 40.00 members, hardcover. Building owners expect their architects and engineers to have the practical knowledge it takes to translate energy theory into a reliable form of practice. This book, written by two architects and an engineer who have hands-on experience in energy-conscious building design and redesign, does just that. It presents a proven process that design professionals can use (or adapt) to study the present energy performance

of a building, uncover opportunities for energy-conscious improvements, evaluate those opportunities, and see to it that they are carried out to the owner's best benefit. The book describes in detail a manual technique for calculating energy usage and shows in a sample problem how that technique can be applied. This allows the reader to evaluate any energy design solution, including solar assisted alternatives. It also provides a basis for understanding computer-aided energy estimating techniques. ■

Susan Davis is manager of the Architectural Center, a bookselling and information service of the MSAIA, in Saint Paul.

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Wood and Design

Steve Edwins



Butler Square, Minneapolis
Renovation: Miller Hanson Westerbeck
Bell Architects
Page 59:
Trinity Lutheran Church
Princeton, Minnesota
Sovik, Mathre, Sathrum, Quanbeck Architects
Northfield

Wood is a timeless and basic material of architecture which has changed remarkably in its shape, manufacture and use as demand increases for its application in all kinds of building. Today wood is not always what we think it is. Trees are now farmed and processed into a wide variety of new wood products which improve on nature for strength, consistency in dimension and at a lower cost.

Many of these wood improvements are due to machine lamination of thin sheets of wood into multiple ply sheets, with the face veneers having the sought-after qualities for weather resistance or for the display of elegant hardwoods. Architects use these wood sheets very carefully as thin sheets, not boards. Wright, Mies, Aalto particularly knew how to use this



innovation well. Southdale is a local example of numerous applications. New wood products are also taking the place of structural lumber joists and rafters. Used together with the sheet products these form a highly refined and systematic way of using familiar wood as the standardized parts of construction.

The demand for wood has also generated unimagined wood

look-alikes, imitations which are used where real wood might be worn by water or heavy use. Imitation wood-grained molded plastics, wood-like panels over vending machines and of course the wood patterned plastics for desktops and furniture.

Both the product innovations and the imitations illustrate the irresistible appeal wood holds in our culture,

because of its properties and ease of use, and also because it is a very tactile, attractive and familiar material.

The imitations, however, go against the grain of architects not only because fakes are fakes no matter how true-to-life, but because the imitations are frequently used in the name of wood as no wood could be. A three-inch fake beam holding up a floor with a 25 foot span is subliminally troublesome.

Innovation, therefore, has come to mean using real wood both honestly, appropriately and also by exercising good design sensibilities. Real boards are a timely example.

Architects have led the way in using real wood boards in and on buildings. Fortunately this practice recovered from near extinction in the 1960s and now everybody uses boards: restaurants, boutiques, shops, reception rooms, hospitals, airports. Interestingly, boards are the number one way to remodel building exteriors, especially for recycled gas stations. Department stores too are using wood very effectively alongside the standard chrome and glass display equipment.

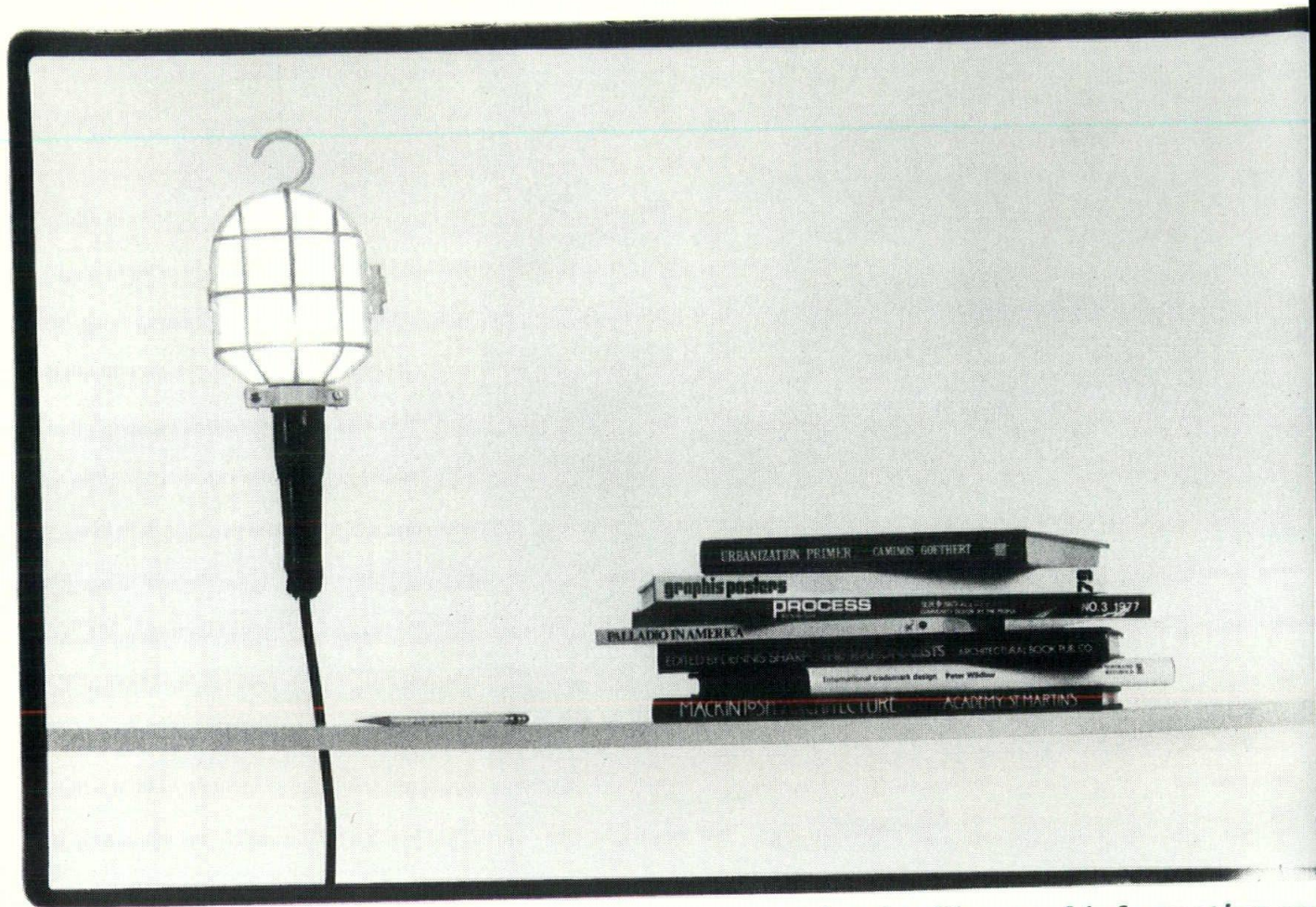
Boards have moved to walls and ceilings, from being standard flooring material. Grades and species once too common for flooring or fine millwork can be laid up to make use of narrower small pieces in strip, board-on-board or infill patterns to complement structural beams of wood, concrete or steel.

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Exposed wood construction (particularly wood posts, beams and ceilings) is part of our building tradition. We appreciate knowing that what we see is what holds it up. Good wood design attempts to show the structural parts where possible, and this requires selection of materials which simultaneously do a job and are attractive.

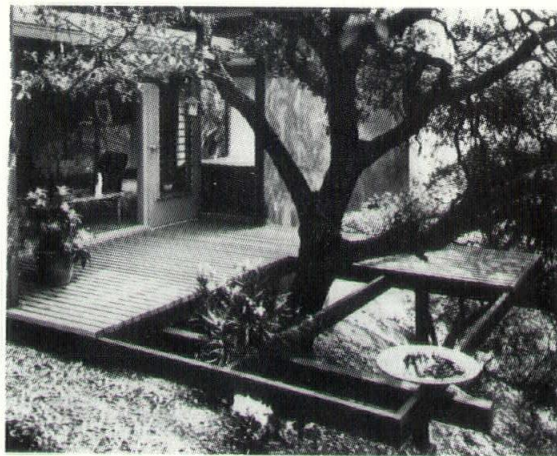
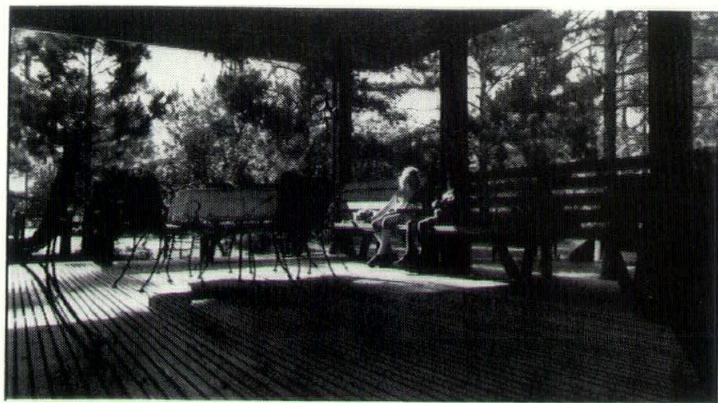
We have much to learn in exposed wood construction because we've been covering up wood structure for generations, and for good reasons. When post and beam construction came to New England, the colonists soon discovered they couldn't rely on ship's carpenters to hand build them and more important, houses needed more insulation and fewer cracks through which the winter winds could blow. ►

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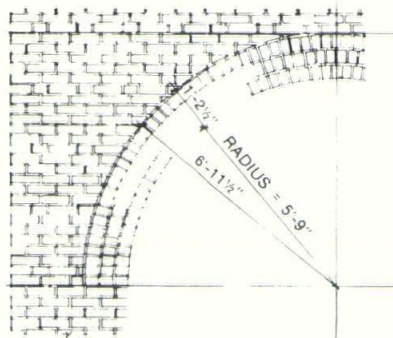
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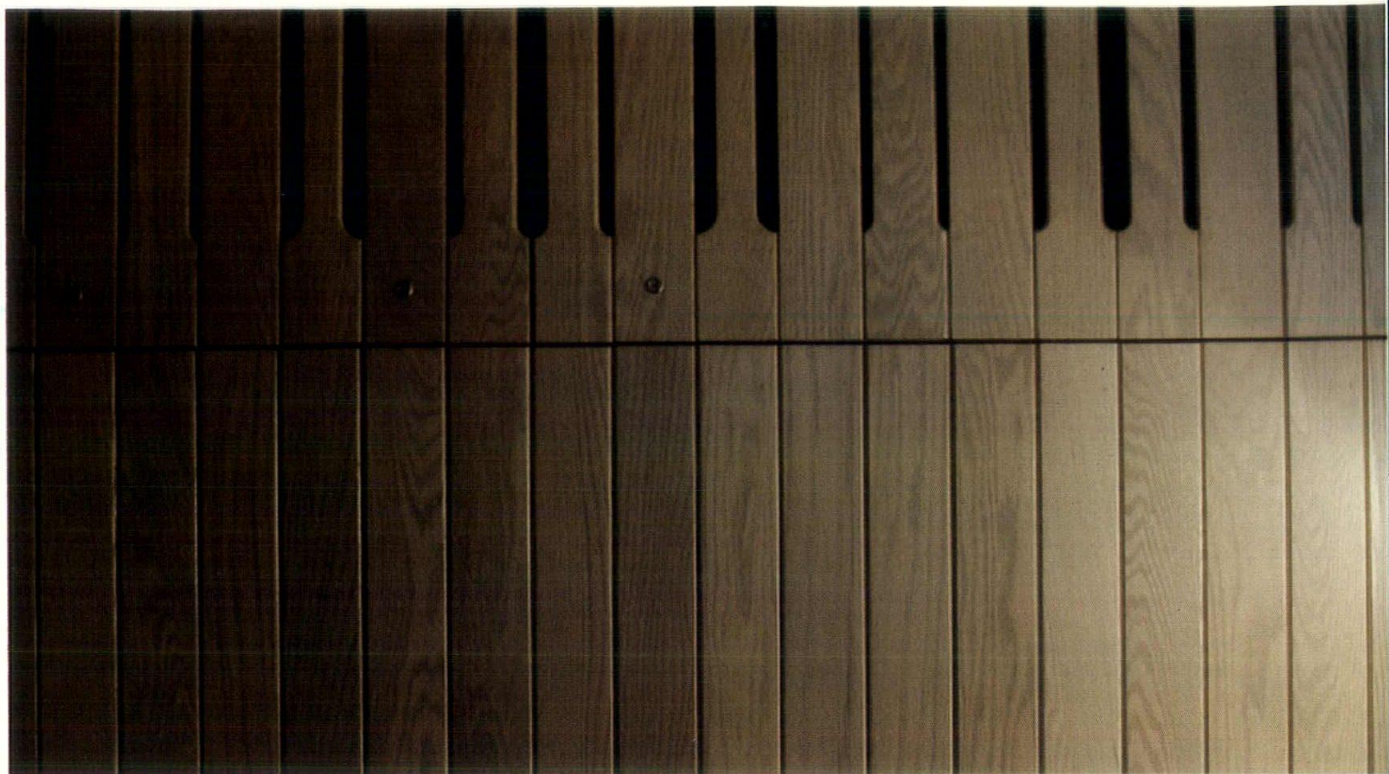
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The first revolution in wood design followed. Stick built construction evolved into a quite sophisticated and economical technique, and covered up the structural studs and rafters, with wood on the outside and with wood or plaster inside. The rough carpentry was put together fast with many similar sized pieces and without complicated jointery. Then the finish carpentry could be applied inside with protection from the weather.

The second development was the standardization of lumber grades and sizes in the decade following World War I. The third development in the last two decades is the lamination of wood into wood products which are as easy to work with as traditional lumber, and are the standardized parts of a highly sophisticated wood construction system—plywood, laminated beams, laminated deck, micro-laminated beams and joists, and wood truss-joints of wood and metal, which are fastened together as a unit.

Warehouse restoration has rekindled interest in the architecture of exposed wood structure. Masonry walls, posts and beams directly tell the story of the building.

In the restored Butler Square building in Minneapolis, the architects installed the mechanical machinery above the existing wood floor deck and covered

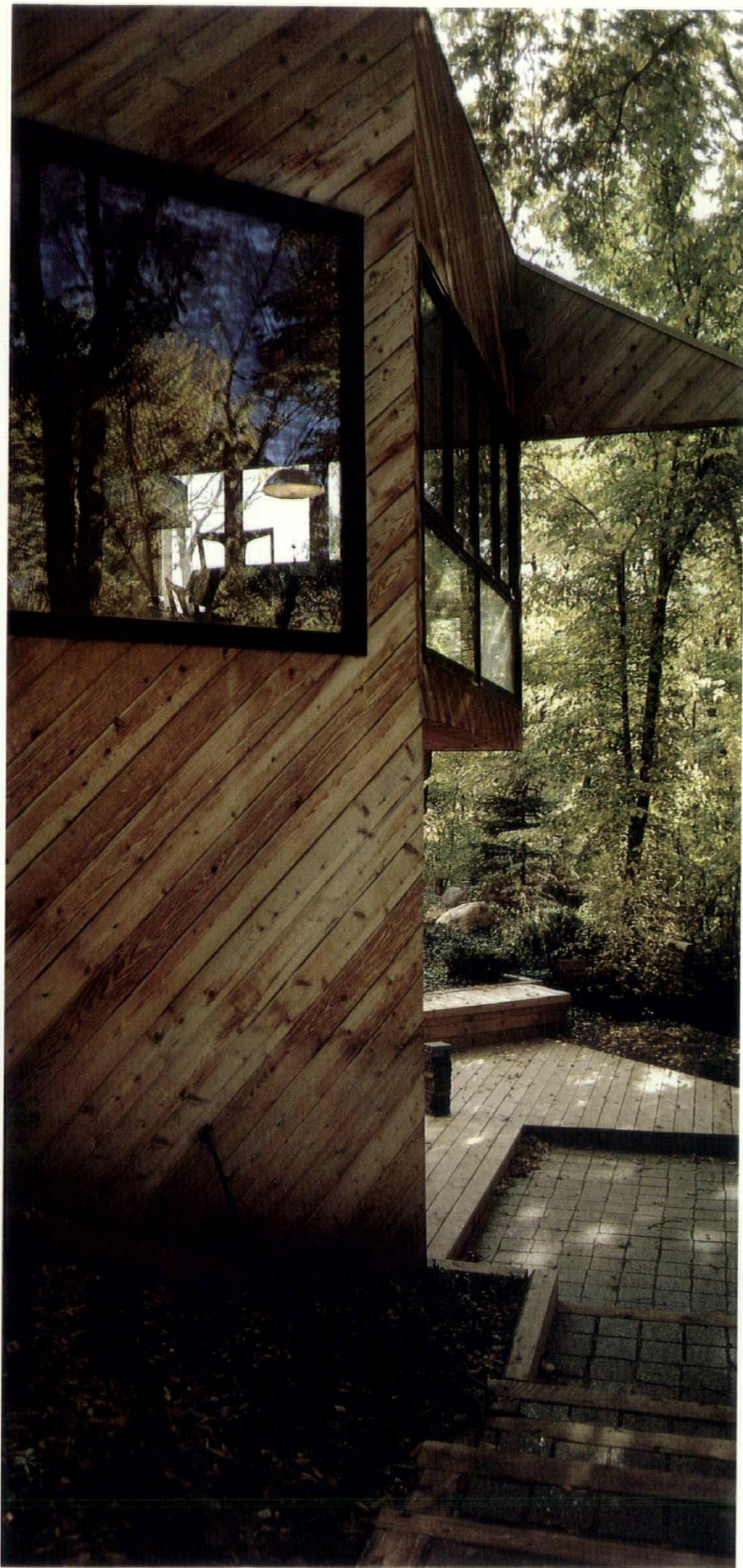
it with a new floor, thus preserving the wood structure for ceiling. New buildings can be readily planned to control the machinery location and to design the duct runs and lighting to complement the exposed structure.

Exposing a part of the structure may provide an opportunity to delight the beholder. Wood roof trusses frequently are designed by architects to span across the large open space as the chief visual attraction in an otherwise ordinary space. Roof trusses of wood announce and celebrate the control of gravity over medium distance spans like no other material.

The roof structure or ceiling framing is doubtless the most important part of a building to expose and use with sensitivity. Architects have learned much from the Japanese tradition based on a highly disciplined understanding of wood construction. The Japanese carpenter/architect depended on extraordinarily skillful and secretly guarded joint designs for interlocking the roof timbers to hold the building together and to achieve a visual coherence. It is an architecture of ceilings and roof structure, used especially well for buildings of real symbolic importance.

The architecture of roadside restaurants has had uneven success at using wood well, but Minnesota's

Urness Recital Hall, St. Olaf College, Northfield. Sovik, Mathre, Sathrum, Quanbeck Architects, Northfield. Red oak boards on the walls of Urness Hall are detailed to cover sound absorptive materials, and part of the electrical fixtures.
Page 63:
Wilson Residence
Cunningham Architects
Photo: John W. Cunningham



Poppin Fresh chain suggests **this** new/old territory in expressive **wood** architecture, made popular.

What continues with innovation **n** are the guiding considerations for the **use** of wood in architecture—the principles of using authentic material to do **that** for which they are most suited. Designers call it honesty, and it is a **basic** self-evident principle. Following from this basis however, the more **elusive** qualities of good design make **the** real differences which are the **convincing** proof to avoid the imitations, **and** look at wood once again. ■

Steve Edwins is a graduate architect **w**orking at Sovik, Mathre, Sathrum and Quanbeck **k** Architects in Northfield.



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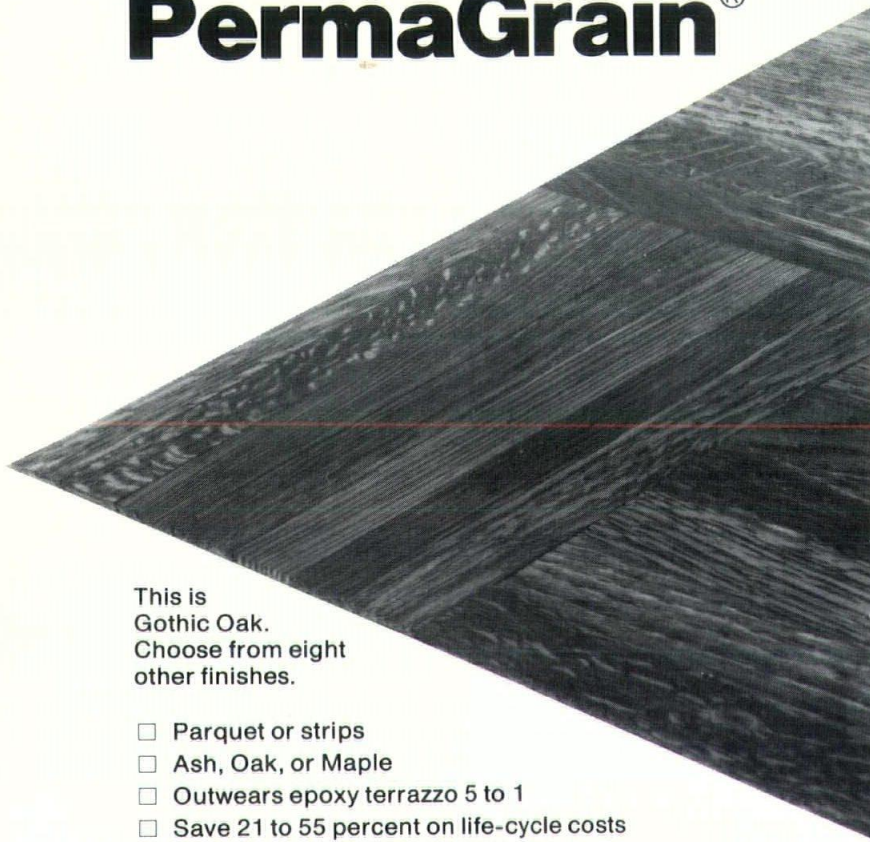
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Recycling the Central City: The Development of a New Town-In Town

Judith A. Martin

Center for Urban and Regional
Affairs, University of Minnesota
1978, 159 pp.

David A. Lanegran

Of all the major building projects of the last decade, none has generated more emotion and controversy than Cedar-Riverside. What began with a few people dabbling in the real estate market around the University's East Bank Campus in the early 1960s, ballooned by 1971 and became the nation's first official New Town-In Town. Judith Martin, a research associate with the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs had the courage to unravel and describe the history of the development. Her book, not quite as melodramatic as a soap opera script, outlines an incredible tale of optimism, obstinacy, greed and charity. The story is so entertaining and the principals and locations so accessible to the graduate students at the University, one wonders why there are not hundreds of these scrutinizing the Heller-Segal attempt to remake the city. Ms. Martin's is the first treatment of the project and is, therefore, a rather general survey of the project's history and major themes. It may be the last book about the area because the development has become embroiled in legal actions, and the records open to Ms. Martin may not be available to readers for several years. Construction has, of course, been halted and a series of financial maneuvers attempted to salvage some of the project's objectives.

Initially written as a doctoral thesis in American studies, *Recycling the Central City* presents a comprehensive description of Cedar-Riverside. Although the book is lavishly illustrated, no attempt was made to present detailed architectural descriptions of the buildings. The financial aspects of the development are described in general terms. Working with David Cooperman, a sociologist who served for a time as a consultant to Cedar-Riverside Associates, Ms. Martin administered and analyzed a resident survey. The results of the survey, combined with



Cedar Avenue between
Riverside and Fifth
Street circa 1930.

an analysis of the thinking of the Heller-Segal team gained from a reading of Keith Heller's private journal, give the book's reader an insight into both the planners and the people they planned for.

The first chapter provides an overview of urban planning and traces the brief history of the New Town-In Town approach. This comprehensive plan for rebuilding the central city was first articulated in the 1950s by Harvey Perloff in a plan for the Hyde Park neighborhood in the vicinity of the University of Chicago. The success of this project was thought to depend upon size. A New Town-In Town had to encompass 50,000 to 100,000 people and contain a wide range of community services. Cedar-Riverside was one of the few projects that approached the scale of Perloff's concept. Although early efforts to redevelop large areas of the older districts of the city have just begun, they are caught in the grip of rising interest rate, inflation and recession. Cedar-Riverside, the country's first project, provides an illustration of all the problems associated with the rebuilding of America's cities.

The story of the growth and decline of the area is told in Chapter Two. This is a lively and well illustrated piece of urban history that in a few pages conveys both the ambience of the area as well as the complicated pattern of early planning efforts. Making clever use of time-lines and brief descriptions of the several

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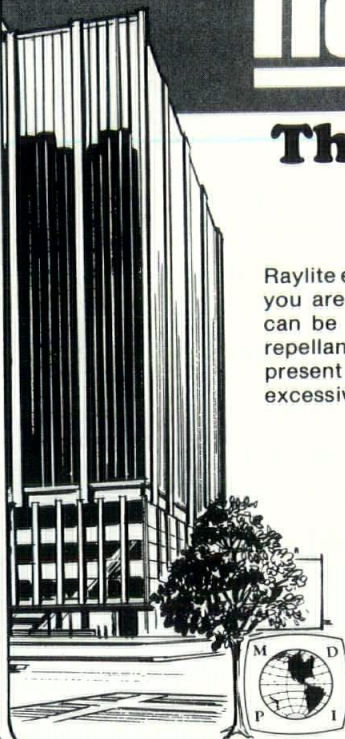
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personalities and institutions in the area, Martin gives the reader a sense of the flow of decision making that preceded the activities of Heller-Segal.

The story gets really interesting in 1958 with the appropriation of 1.5 million dollars by the State Legislature to the University to buy land on the west bank of the Mississippi for the expansion of the campus. The University purchased 35 acres of the community—much through the condemnation process. The residents had no choice but to move out. The expansion of the University and the construction of the freeway system dramatically altered the area's future. The University began building its skyscrapers and associated buildings, its students swarmed over the area in search of housing and the freeway provided the first true boundaries the area had ever known. In 1961 the Minneapolis HRA insured the area would house a mixture of people by constructing 348 dwelling units for the elderly.

Needless to say, real estate speculation was rampant. Martin identified most of the investors and concludes that during this early period not one of them had a clear plan for the development of the neighborhood. Yet, at the same time, no one spoke out in favor of protecting the area because of its historic or cultural character. Their plans seemed to consist primarily of waiting to see what everyone else was going to do.

The great transformation began in 1962 when a Minneapolis physician, Martin Segal, and his wife, Gloria, began to invest in property upon the advice of Keith Heller, a lecturer in the University's School of Business Administration. Martin traces the emergence of the Cedar-Riverside Association from this event in the third chapter of her book. She also argues that the mode of their operation was based on fundamental values and did not conform to what other business operations might have undertaken in the same circumstances. In fact, she states that during the early years the group did not formulate precise goals for the land they were purchasing.

One Heller-Segal policy that deserves special attention was their commitment to the rehabilitation of

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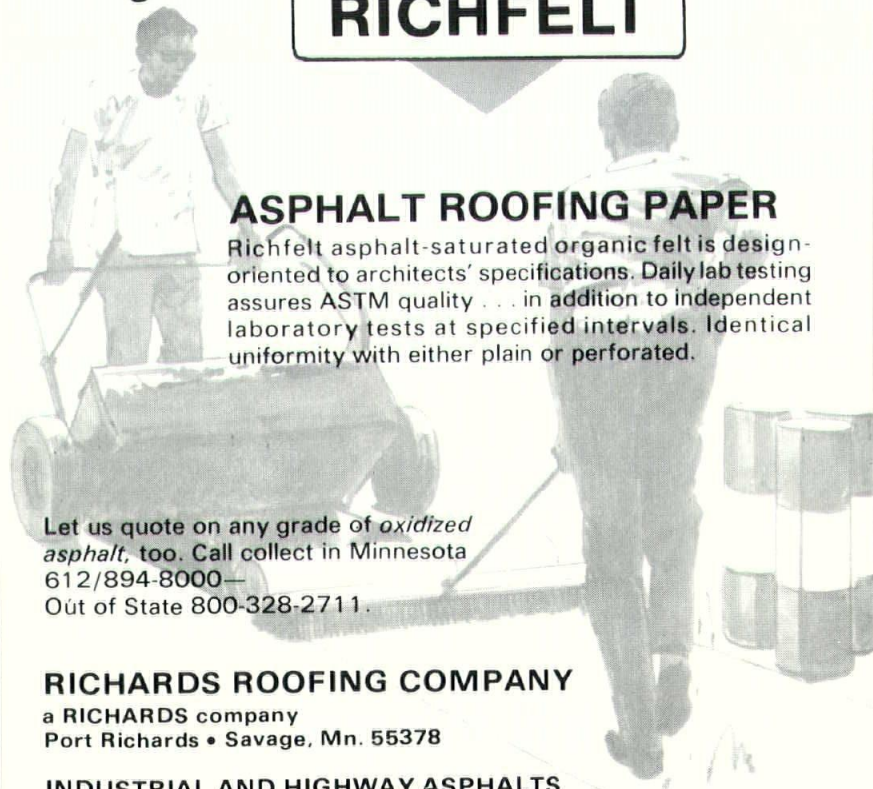
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Ralph Rapson viewing
Cedar Square West construction

their properties and providing low-cost housing until they were ready to begin new construction. They also maintained initial rents throughout a tenant's occupancy. According to Martin these practices were developed out of a sense of what was "right" rather than an appreciation of their fiscal or political implications.

The group began assembling parcels in Cedar-Riverside so they could build three-story walk-up apartment buildings. When they felt they had enough land they asked Ralph Rapson to design a building for them. It is important to note that Rapson in 1963 had worked on a comprehensive plan of Cedar-Riverside for the Knudson Company. Rapson encouraged Heller-Segal to abandon their plans and think instead of a larger development. They were convinced.

In 1965, realizing the scope of their plans, Heller-Segal approached other large-scale private developers in the area to discuss cooperative planning. These efforts did not bear fruit, although a group called Cedar Village Associates was formed which consisted of Heller, Segal and Harris, a firm of real estate brokers active in the area. In spite of the dramatic changes in the scale of their plans that resulted in the conversations with Rapson and the Harris firm, Heller-Segal proceeded confidently with their acquisition program. Martin writes of the adventuring as follows:

Though lacking experience in this sort of development, no one else was exerting a determining influence. The Cedar Village planners did not have

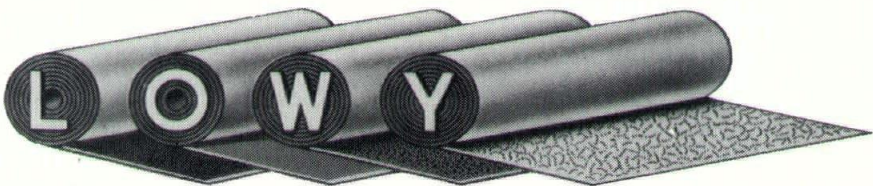
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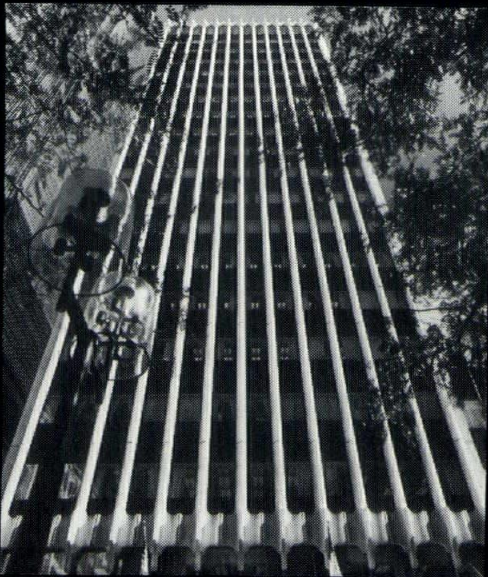


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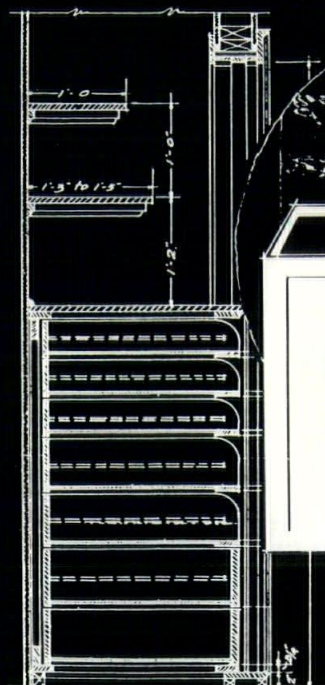


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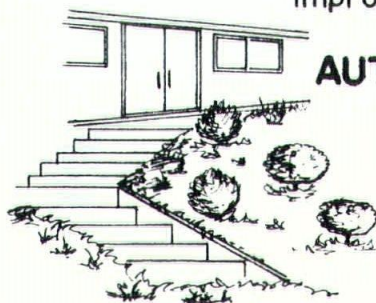
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on hand the amount of capital necessary to implement their ideas, but there was no reason to presume that they could not get it. The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that Cedar-Riverside presented made even the ideas of dreamers and neophytes seem plausible.

During the mid-1960s the group made several trips to other cities in the United States and Europe to visit large inner-city developments. Rapson apparently conducted these field trips and, as a result, the group learned much of design and style. Meanwhile, back in Minneapolis the HRA produced two reports on the area and the Cedar-Riverside Area Council was formed to provide a forum for the expression of community views on development. Although some local residents and merchants were on the council, it was dominated by representatives of the larger institutions. During these years there was a convergence of thinking about the future of the area. The HRA, Heller-Segal and the large institutions envisioned a new high density institutionally-oriented community housing a wide range of people with divergent lifestyles.

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By 1967 Heller-Segal had formed a close relationship with Henry McKnight, the wealthy politician, conservationist and guiding spirit behind Jonathan New Town. McKnight brought Gary Carlson of Bor-Son Company into the circle and an informal working group, that included Rapson and other professionals, began to emerge. During the same year, HRA announced its renewal plan for the area. This plan acknowledged the work Heller-Segal had done in the area and called for the close coordination between the public and private sectors in the construction of an "intensely developed" community. The plan rejected the rigid master plan approach and offered instead a set of flexible guidelines. In the hearings held to get public reaction to the plan, community resistance to development was frequently and forcefully expressed by students and other young people living in the area. These people usually lived in Heller-Segal properties and enjoyed the low rent. The plan was approved in spite of their negative opinions.

Heller-Segal wanted to be designated

he sole private developer in the Cedar-Riverside plan and worked hard at convincing others of the validity of their position. They were already a dominant force in the land market and had excellent ties to both the University and city government. They took a giant step towards the realization of their goal in February of 1968 when Cedar-Riverside Association (CRA) was formed. CRA included McKnight, and as a result, CRA's financial problems were temporarily resolved. CRA assembled a planning staff and set to work developing a plan. Although they were cognizant of the growing number of their tenants who espoused counter-culture and were distressed over the area's reputation as the center of the drug traffic in the Upper Midwest, they could do little about it.

In 1969 the master plan calling for 2,500 housing units and a population of 30,000 was drawn up. In 1970 applications for HUD designation as New Community and loan guarantees were made. Construction began in 1971 and the first residents moved in during 1972. Naturally, the plan called for the latest in technology and artistic design. Both the lay and professional thinking on the planning team is documented in detail by Martin. This section is worth a careful reading by all serious students of urban development. She also probes some of the internal obstacles that hindered CRA. The style of leadership seems to have been a serious problem as were the several flareups of professional jealousy. Conflicts developed because the organization's structure encouraged uninhibited discussions and criticism. The end results were incessant delays and, of course, higher costs.

In the fifth chapter the buildings of the first phase and their occupants, as they were in 1974, are described. Needless to say, the official visions of CRA were not supported by Martin's findings. Indeed, the flowing prose of their advertisements as a grim ring to today's ears.

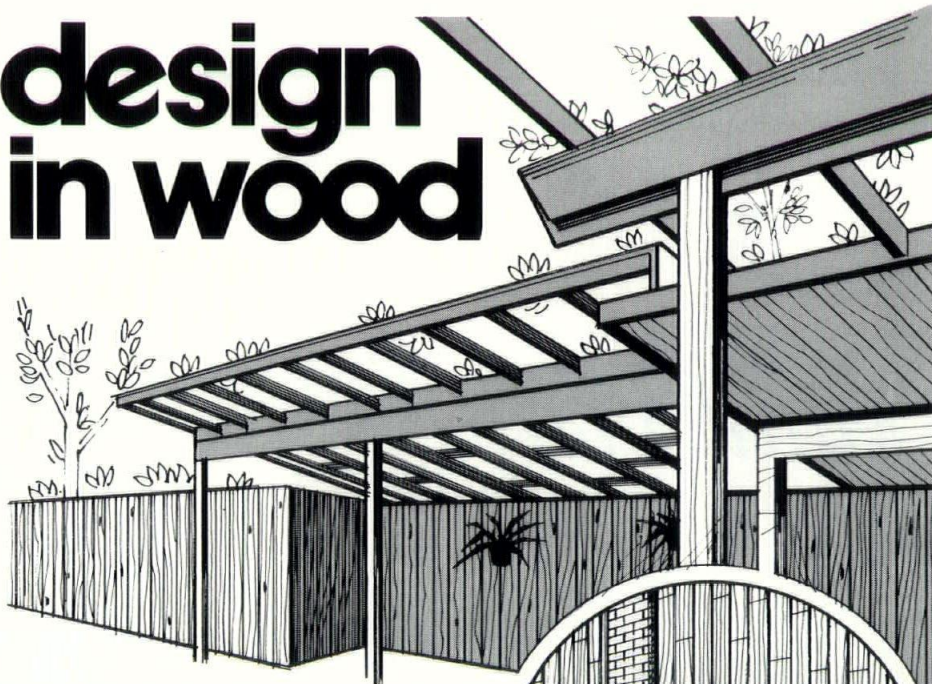
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The actual residents of the buildings were not attracted so much by the visions of the ideal urban community as by the accessibility of the apartments to their work or school. Single working people and students filled the apartments and the overall picture is of a population of young people with some expectation of being upwardly mobile. In fact, it was the population that the project was designed to reach, but they did not come to become part of a stable community. For them, the stay in

Cedar Square West was thought to be temporary. 80.5% expected to stay two years or less, and 45% expected to move within a year. Only 4.6% intended to stay longer than four years. Martin interprets her findings as presenting: *little evidence of the socially integrated community they (the planners) foresaw, as evidenced by the extreme homogeneity of background and aspirations. Nor was there much evidence of commitment to the community as an in-town environment. Clearly, for most residents, Cedar Square West filled a pragmatic need for housing totally unrelated to residents' preferences.* ▶

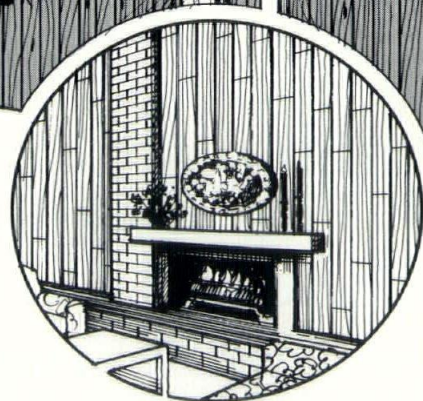
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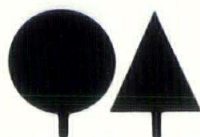
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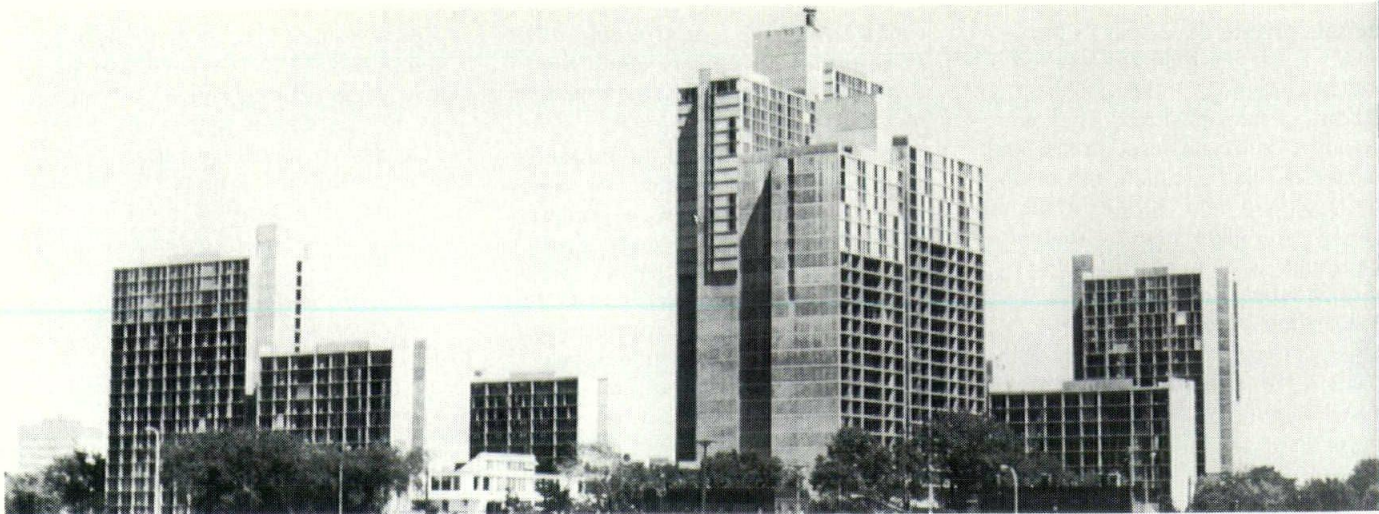


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Martin criticizes the builders and designers of the first phase for planning in a vacuum.

There are many ways in which it seems hard to imagine that the planners eyed their work from the viewpoint of a potential resident. Some examples include the inconveniences caused by putting only three elevators in a forty-story building, installing kitchen cabinets that are difficult for many people to reach and are not of a size to fit many

standard products, and constructing balconies that are too narrow for practical use . . . One can detect a note of unreality in all of the planning that went into Cedar Square West—as if the people involved never really believed they would ever implement their ideas.

In spite of her criticism, Martin thinks that Cedar-Riverside is a much better community than the one that existed there fifteen years ago and believes that is primarily the result of the energy and commitment of

Keith Heller and Gloria Segal—not their planners and architects. She ends her book by concluding that Cedar-Riverside is not a “scrupulous example of New Town planning and development, it seems more a case study of the luck and timing which have always been preeminent in America’s urban development.” ■

David A. Lanegran is professor of Geography at Macalester College. A specialist in urban studies, he has taught and researched the history of the Twin Cities for more than a decade.

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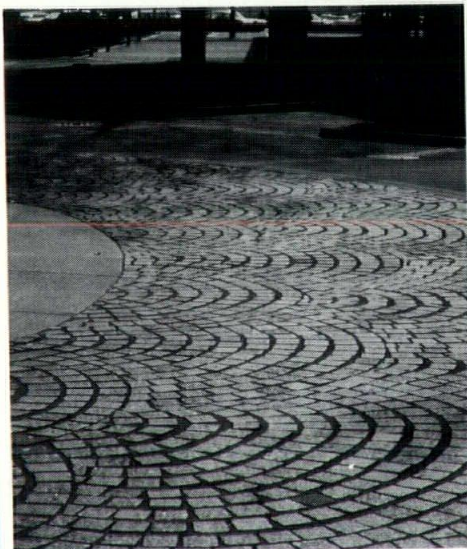
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Minnetonka, and **Robert Anthony**, Dale Tile Co., Brooklyn Center were elected vice-presidents. **Charles Nasby, Jr.**, Chas. Nasby & Assoc., St. Louis Park, was elected treasurer. The non-profit corporation is managed by Enoch N. Peterson, Plymouth.

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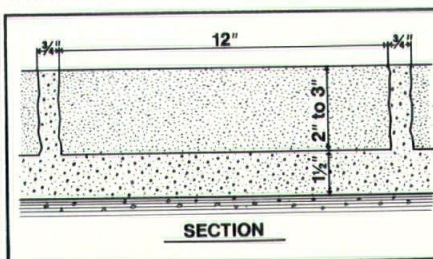
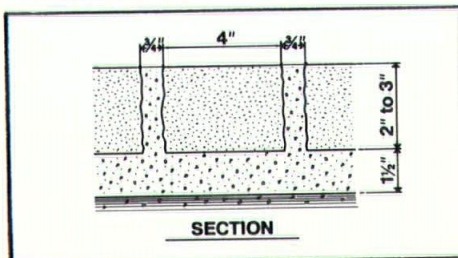
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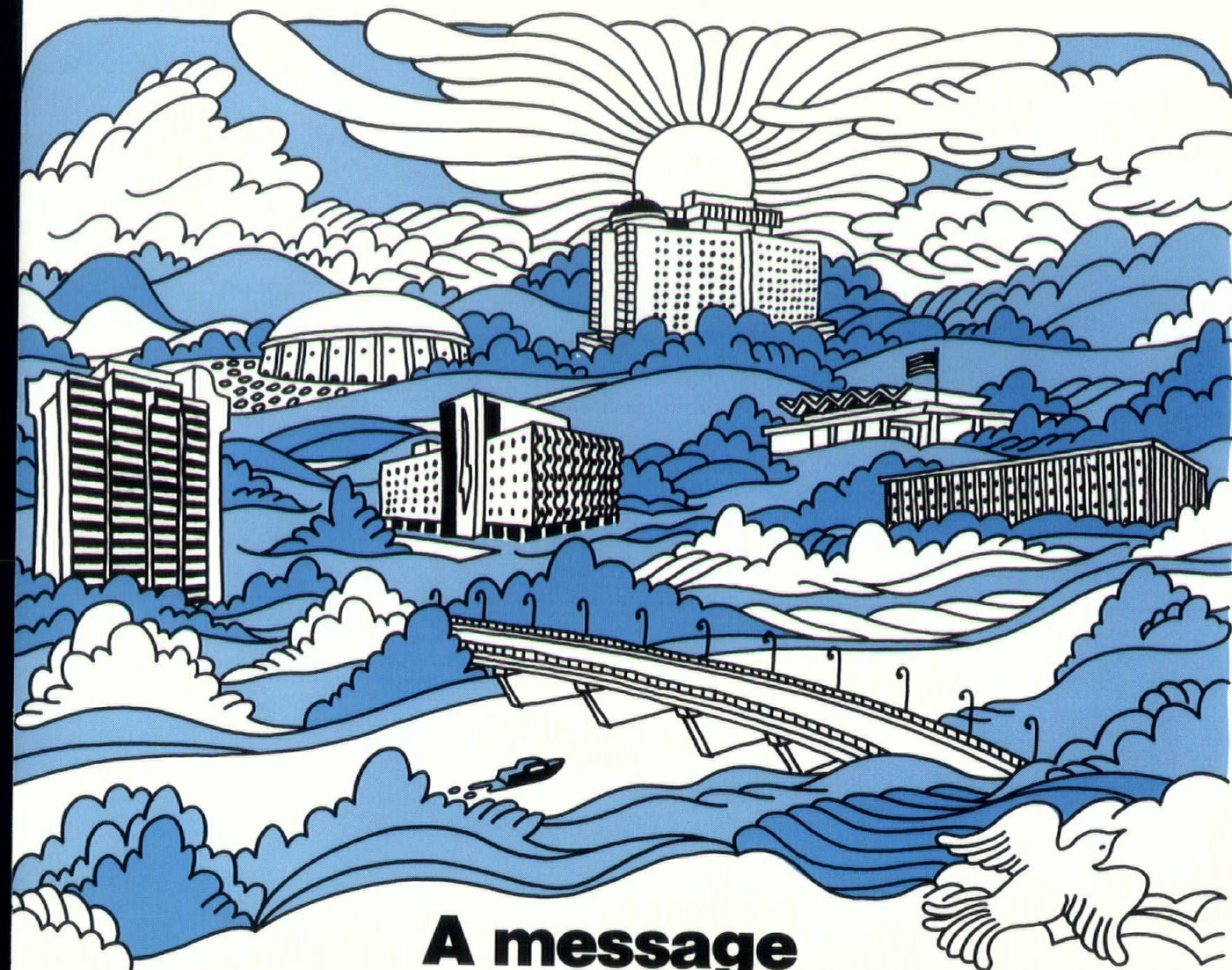


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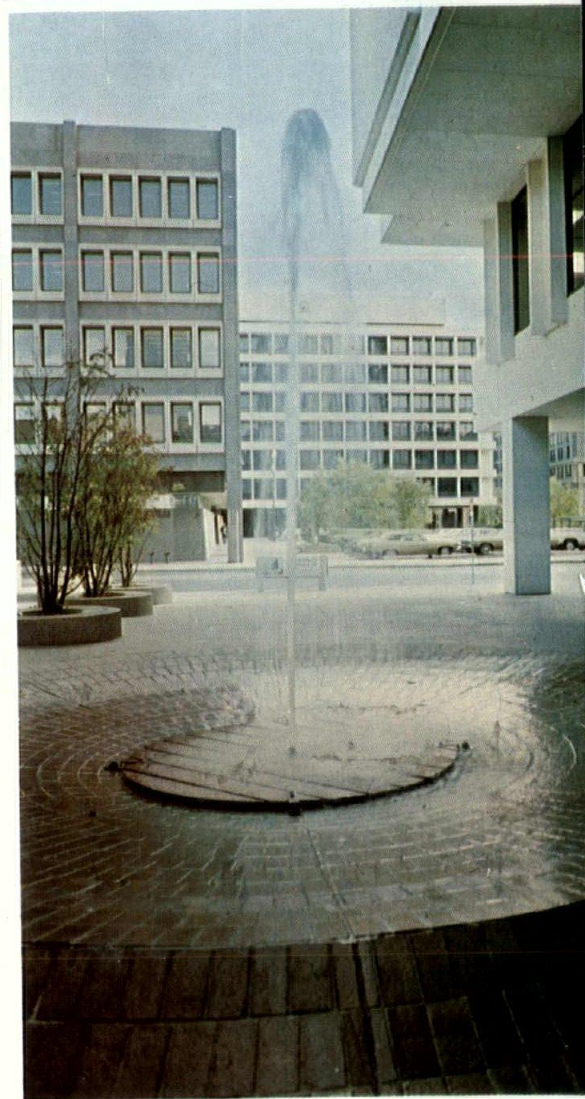
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