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On the cover: Interior of Meredith Corporation's old tower, reborn as an urbane symbol. Architect: Charles Herbert and Associates. Photograph: Paul S. Kivett.

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news, notes & opinions

Minneapolis Firm Designs Turtle

A 63,000-square-foot turtle has recently been completed in Niagara Falls. Yet in a town where tourists are looking for fun, this turtle is no joke, but a serious work of symbolic architecture. It has been built to honor the Iroquois creation myth that tells of how the earth was brought up from the bottom of the sea and placed upon the turtle's back. This image was chosen by the six tribes of the Iroquois Nation and carried out by the Hodne/Stageberg Partners, Inc., of Minneapolis, in their design of the Native American Center for the Living Arts. Its founders, who raised \$6 million to build it, intend the Turtle to be the most comprehensive gallery of Native American art and culture in this country.

Dennis Sun Rhodes, a 34-year-old Arapahoe architect with the firm, was the cultural interpreter and a design collaborator with Thomas Hodne, Jr., FAIA. The Iroquois chose the site, Sun Rhodes said, for both religious and economic reasons.

"The Indian people always have a sacred place on the earth. For the Iroquois Nation, Niagara Falls is their place of worship. The white man's side, the reality side, is that the Turtle has to survive economically. So it is placed at a tourist focal point, which Niagara Falls is."

Like many cities, Niagara Falls is going through a redevelopment phase. The Turtle is one building on a new mall which extends from a convention center to the Falls.

Once the visitor enters through a section of the tail, he is within the round body of the Turtle (see plan and photograph below). This is the dome-covered "Great Circle of Life" where, in Iroquois tradition, all good people are drawn together. Within the larger circle of the building's perimeter is a smaller circle designed as an amphitheater and exhibit hall large enough to display fullscale Indian structures. Although this double circle made construction more difficult, Sun Rhodes said he is pleased with the sense of movement it conveys.

The Turtle's head contains a penthouse apartment for an artist-in-residence, administrative offices, and two restaurants. Two of the legs are contemporary and traditional art galleries, a third is the museum shop, and the fourth encloses the mechanical equipment and space for the curator. An archaeological museum is located in the western side of the underbelly. A demonstration studio, where the public may





view Indian artists at work, will eventually be added to the tail, which faces the mall.

The Hodne/Stageberg Partners have designed eight structures for American Indian clients, including the Native American Center in Minneapolis.

Iowa Enacts Solar Access Law

Iowa has removed a potential deterrence to those who wish to build solar collectors: the lack of control over access to the sun.

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The law also contains a provision that allows cities and counties, in their subdivision ordinances, to prohibit deeds for property from imposing unreasonable restrictions on the use of solar collectors.

MSAIA to Open New Store

If you enjoy browsing through architecture books but rarely get to the Architectural Center in St. Paul, you will be happy to hear that the Minnesota Society of the American Institute of Architects (MSAIA) is opening a second bookstore. It will be located in the heart of downtown Minneapolis, at 910 Nicollet Mall.

"Paper Architecture," as the store will be called, will carry the architecture books and quality children's books now stocked by the Architectural Center as well as an expanded collection of design magazines, quality writing instruments, and toys. One portion of the new store will serve as a gallery where drawings by local and national architects will be for sale. Paper Architecture is tentatively scheduled to open on October first.

The selection of the Nicollet Mall location concluded a two-year search for a site by MSAIA. Lorenzo D. (Pete)

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Williams, FAIA, chairman of the search committee, said they considered the skyways and various other locations but chose the Nicollet Mall because of its architectural significance and encouragingly heavy pedestrian traffic.

"The principle reason for the kind of success the St. Paul store has had is directly related to its location," Williams said. "A location on the Nicollet Mall would be comparable, if not better."

Once the lease was signed in June, the hiring of the architecture firm to design the Paper Architecture interior and signage took place quickly. All MSAIA member firms were invited to submit proposals. The winning firm, one of 21 applicants, is the Design Consortium. Members of the selection committee were Leonard Parker, FAIA, Tom Dunwell, AIA, Bruce Abrahamson, FAIA, chairman Herb Ketcham, AIA, bookstore manager Susan Davis, and John Kaul, the local director of government affairs for IT&T. Some of the Design Consortium's recent work includes the interior design of Les Quatre Amis restaurant, the J. B. Larson Showroom (see AM June/July, 1981), and the Pillsbury Waite Neighborhood Service Center. The remodeling of the 2,000 square foot space is underway.

"I want this to be an interesting place for people to come in and browse," said Davis, who will manage both stores. "I want it to be fun. I especially want people to feel that what we carry responds to their appreciation of design."

Strong Nigerian Winds Shape Housing Design by Twin Cities Firm

The Williams/O'Brien Associates, Inc., of Minneapolis is designing housing for the United States Consulate and staff in Kadunna, Nigeria. The project, located in a residential section one mile from downtown Kadunna, consists of eight units for staff personnel on two adjacent parcels of land, and one officer's quarters.

According to Stephen M. DeCoster, AIA, architect on the project, one of the hardest tasks was ensuring energy efficiency in a climate where the sun's angle is only 11° from vertical and shade is thus at a premium.

This was accomplished by the use of extensive landscaping and the manipulation of earth forms to direct natural breezes over the buildings. Kadunna suffers from an unusual climatic condition called the harmattan winds. These are strong, dusty winds that blow sand down from the Sahara Desert and generally last as long as our winters. Conseqently, special window and entrance details had to be developed, in addition *continued on p. 64*

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A Visit With John Clark Donahue

In almost twenty years, from its inception in 1962, (when it was called the Moppet Players), the Children's Theatre Company (CTC) has risen from obscurity to worldwide recognition as the most innovative, professional and exciting theater group devoted to the entertainment of children. From the original cast and crew of four, (where everyone did everything), the CTC has increased its repertory cast to 12, its artistic staff to 13, and its technical crew to over 30, with many more interns and understudies in both acting and technical production. The theater also has 33 instructors, assistants, and outreach personnel in their school for teaching children the fundamentals of acting and theater production; and it has an administrative staff of twenty-three. This last winter the CTC received the coveted Margo Jones Award. Said one of the award committee members; "I know of no theater in the country so truly original and creative as the Children's Theatre Company."

From its beginning to its present lofty eminence, this celebrated theater has been guided and inspired by one man: its artistic director, John Clark Donahue.

Donahue probably bears the closest resemblance to a Renaissance man you are likely to find in the Twin Cities. At one time or another, and often concurrently, he has been a director, playwright, composer, musician, artist, educator, set designer, choreographer, film director, gourmet cook, to name the most easy to label of his designing ways. "Theater and writing, music and art, choreography, design and sculpture; I consider them all very much related", he says. "The different materials and different uses of them; the same principles apply as far as I'm concerned".

If he is not busy at the theater, he is busy one city block away turning his talent towards renovating and improving his 89year-old wooden house that he managed to save from the wrecker's ball when the new Minneapolis College of Art and Design building went in across the street.

We spoke to Donahue one bright summer afternoon on the red brick patio at the side of his Minneapolis house, surrounded by lush greenery. Tall, bearded and balding with clear, pale-blue eyes, and dressed in a light cotton shirt, sleveless sweater opened at the front and dark corduroy pants, he talked of the things he most cares about in his life.



AM: What aspects of design in theater and your life do you find most important?

JD: I think I should tell you first off that I always, when I was very little, thought I was going to be an artist. I went to art school on Saturdays and in the evenings when I was in my early teens, like 12 or 13, and then went to the University of Minnesota with the idea of being a painter and print maker. I had no idea I would be going into the theater at all. From very early on I've always been highly visual and aware of design considerations, although I didn't think of them in those terms when I was small, I'm sure. I like visual order in things, so it's been a part of my aesthetic sensibility ever since I can remember. When I finally discovered theater, interestingly, I discovered it through design. It was found that I could paint and draw and theater friends of mine got me over to the scene shop. I began to work in there and help out, and was soon asked by graduate students to design shows for them. So I fell into the theater through my design work. When I became involved as a director, I brought with me my sense of the visual and often would write and direct and design works so that the whole, all the elements, were intact and riding on the same aesthetic vision if you will.

I consider my background in art and my interest in design to be very important in my whole career in the theater. I was also a musician and studied music early on and then played jazz professionally, and so music is a strong part of our productions too. For me the theater is not just words, it's the total life on the stage, and certainly the visual elements are a very important part of it.

AM: Do you find that your design sense carries over into the way you arrange and deal with your own working spaces on a design level?

JD: Yes, I'm very conscious of the harmony and continuity of elements: I don't like to introduce into a situation. elements that are texturally wrong or materially inappropriate unless they are justifiable surprises and juxtapositions that serve a purpose. Natural materials and the question of integrity of materials as it relates to design mean everything to me. I'm interested in the balance between order and symmetry and a certain amount of chaos that I think represents my own personality. I like to be reminded in an almost Victorian fashion of certain aspects of my life, with memorabilia and other things tossed around here and there, which can exist for me as long as there is a fundamental order working beneath it. Like in this garden: I keep it fairly formal, but then I let certain things grow a little wilder and the whole thing I think reflects my sensibilities. I think if mankind is going to invade nature's order then that invasion ought to be as harmonious as possible, and that's very difficult to do. We shouldn't simply try to take it over and hold onto it completely.

AM: Are there any designers or people in the past who really had a strong influence on your direction or design sensibility?

JD: Well, a great painter and one of my best teachers, the late Cameron Booth, who was at the University of Minnesota Art Department when I was there, taught me a great deal about how the elements before us work together to make a whole, and how they move at different rates of speed; how the disparate parts fit together; how to see the whole thing and to see how the parts work. He taught, me more than anyone *continued on p. 68*

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Lake Superior Maritime Museum, Architect: Architectural Resources, Inc., Hibbing, MN; Army Corps of Engineers



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At the Lake Superior Maritime Museum located on Minnesota's waterfront in Duluth, a location buffeted by winter's bone-chilling gale force winds, the architect specified Cronstroms CTS thermal barrier energy saving walls and windows for a new addition linking two sections. Notice the bent mullions of the upper section.

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First Federal Savings and Loan, Architect: Gene Hickey & Associates, Minneapolis, MN



scanning the media

Being a collection of hard facts and appealing notions gleaned from the pages of periodicals you'd read if you had the time

PLANNING (June, 1981): Author Bill Rotolo describes how pro-bike forces in Schaumburg, Illinois used aggressive marketing strategies and political acumen to sell the Chicago suburb that's grown like Topsy on a comprehensive bikeway plan. Now a city of 53,000, Schaumburg has already built 13 miles of Class II bike paths (for semi-exclusive use by cyclists), expects to have another 17 by 1985. Copies of the 37-page Schaumburg Bikeway Plan are available for \$4 from the Schaumburg Planning Department, 101 Schaumburg Ct., Schaumburg, IL 60193.

FORTUNE (July 27, 1981): The Rouse Company, famous as the developer of Boston's revitalized Faneuil Hall Marketplace and Philadelphia's Gallery at Market Street East, has begun major redevelopments in the downtowns of Milwaukee, St. Louis, San Francisco and New York City, plus feasibility studies in eleven other cities.

What makes Rouse a success? According to *Fortune*, a yeasty mix of restaurants, fresh food booths, pushcarts, kiosks, specialty shops, bakeries—in short, all the sensory attractions of a genuine market and gathering place. Surprisingly, architecture ranks second to merchandizing, presentation, and display in the Rouse strategy.

THE NEW YORK TIMES (June 18, 1981): Contrary to past assumptions, city planners are discovering that gallerias, atria and enclosed arcades for high-rise towers—developed to compete with suburban shopping centers—are often unnoticed and unsuccessful.

Less than a decade ago developers were allowed to increase the bulk of their buildings if they included one or more of the above-mentioned covered pedestrian spaces in their plans, presumably in hopes of attracting off-street strollers. Now it seems the planners are taking it all back, or rather, filling it all in. Interior courtyards and malls are out, streets, storefronts and exterior pedestrian activities are once again all right. EPRI (Special Solar Issue): The electric utilities industry is often accused by its detractors of downplaying solar energy because it threatens the utilities monopolistic control of power. In this issue of Electric Power Research Institute's always well-designed and edited periodical the scope and nature of its member utilities' solar technology research is discussed. In 1980, 236 U.S. electric utilities responded to an EPRI survey reporting on their participation in 839 solar projects whose total cost was \$35 million. In addition, EPRI itself is sponsoring solar research, though no dollar figure for it is given. Industrywide, seven solar technologies are being pursued: solar heating and cooling of buildings, wind power, solarthermal electric power, photovoltaics, biomass conversion, ocean-thermal energy conversion, and process heat. What are the major obstacles? In EPRI's view, they are a need for a stepped-up investment "as faith in performance and economics grow," and the need of the local utility to maintain enough generating equipment to meet the needs of both solar and non-solar customers on cloudy days.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY ARCHI-TECTS' REVIEW (Spring, 1981): How do architects make architecture? That is, what is the process through which an abstract notion of a building transmogrifies itself into something you can bark your shins on?

This sprightly little journal queried ten Bay Area architects-some well known and a couple young and feisty enough to wish they were-and, predictably, got ten different answers. Several confessed they are terrible at drawing. One said the pencil is an extension of his hand. Several said they rely quite slavishly on model-making, while a couple worry about the skewed perspective induced by peering downward into models (one fellow uses models mainly to help the contractor run a smooth logistical operation-getting the cranes in and out and so forth). Only one of the ten gives any serious thought to color as an integral aspect of the design process.

What, you may wonder, *do* designing architects agree on? Be glad to know practically everyone believes in the magical properties, when it comes to shaping an idea, of the paper napkin.

Atlantic Richfield's solar subsidiary, ARCO Solar, Inc., is now publishing a quarterly newsletter called, inescapably, ARCO Solar News. It is mostly concerned about photovoltaic cell technology and systems in a wide variety of applications around the world. To get on the mailing list, write ARCO Solar News, 20554 Plummer Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311.

NEXT (June, 1981): The fairly new slick monthly that dwells on the future has decided, on the strength of a "Delphi" poll of 47 "noted authorities," that America's cities aren't in such tough shape as many fear. Major conclusions:

1. Of 55 cities considered in the poll, only five are thought to be in serious trouble; 27 will "hold their own," and 23 will "do better."

2. "Cities of Gold" include San Diego, Portland, OR, Seattle, Minneapolis, Boston, Baltimore, Madison, WI, Santa Fe, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Milwaukee.

3. "Cities of Dross" were Akron, Buffalo, Dayton, Detroit, Houston, Atlanta, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Dallas, Gary, Scranton, Newark and Miami.

4. San Diego topped all cities in overall performance, followed closely by Portland, Seattle and Minneapolis. But guess which city is considered "best managed?" Top vote-getter was Minneapolis.

WEEKLY PETROLEUM STATUS REPORT (August 14, 1981): No information source summarized more succinctly the impressive performance of the American public in conserving energy than does this DOE publication. For example, we learn that in the allimportant matter of petroleum imports, the gross amount of crude oil imported in the four weeks ending August 7 averaged 4.0 million barrels a day. That's 15.2 percent below the average for a comparable period a year ago. And, of course, since this unheroic, little publicized conservation effort has been going on since the '73 oil boycott, the compounded performance of our citizenry in recent years is nothing short of spectacular.



ut rejoice in knowing the purpose of those things designed by your own mind.



When L.A. comes here?

Fact is, architects from Los Angeles and all over come to Minneapolis for custom casework, refrigeration and accessories. And the place they come to is ours.

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(You probably know us best as Carlson Store Fixtures, but that's only one Stein division. Only one of our awardwinning ways of bringing ideas to life.)

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editorial

Assaying "a journal of design and creative living"

It has occurred to us at AM in recent weeks that close readers of the contents page might suspect we have tried unceremoniously to slip something past them. No one can miss seeing, of course, that after calling itself Architecture Minnesota for a number of years, this magazine flies under slightly reconstituted colors: that is, we are now big caps AM and little italics architecture minnesota.

But that is not all. Instead of being "a regional review of design and architecture," as it was for years, AM invites you to consider our new self-image. All of a sudden we are "a journal of design and creative living."

Further, you may see at a glance that the contents page for this issue introduces some new and perhaps odd-sounding regular features (odd-sounding, at least, in the somewhat constrained world of professional periodicals). Take "Smart Money," for example. What's architectural about *that*?

I think we owe you an explanation.

As always, we fervently hope that every architect who happens across AM will feel compelled, because of *being* an architect, to subscribe. The same applies to advertisers who seek the attention of architects or those who build, finance, equip or furnish the buildings architects design.

Dare we expect more?

As an associate of architects, I have noticed that theirs is a profession that tends, as do certain other professions, to talk to itself. I have also found that architects worry, perhaps more than most others, about whether they and their work are really understood by non-architects; and if not, why not.

Well, much to my satisfaction, Minnesota's architects as a corporate entity have not only noticed these same things but also agree on an editorially pregnant premise, which goes like this: Being generalists, architects share many common interests with (1) those who commission architecture, (2) those who take architecture seriously as an art form, and (3) especially those who simply enjoy opening their pores to good design and having it affect the way they think and act. So why not share our common interests?

Given such a benificent overview, the editors of AM responded by first thinking up what seems a more apt sub-title, the aforementioned Journal of Design and Creative Living. Then a few editorial ideas started sprouting, as found in the several new departments introduced in this issue. Such as:

Best Products By Design. Who, architect or otherwise, we wondered, wouldn't like to hear about something that works as well as it looks? Or vice versa?

Designer Profile. Well edited as an architectural subject may be, mightn't the reader find it even more interesting if the architect's thinking and value judgments were presented in a companion story?

Scanning the Media. Plagued as we all are by too little time and too much to read, who wouldn't welcome a regular feature that draws on an array of quality periodicals for the gist—just the gist—of their most thought-provoking articles?

A Talent for Living. Who doesn't enjoy a success story? Especially one measured by qualitative, rather than material, standards?

Smart Money. Who wouldn't rather spend their shrunken dollars on better, rather than just more? Lest it seem from the above recitation of expanded editorial coverage that AM aims to be all things to all people, be assured that we know our place. Or, more exactly, our places. Our places include Minnesota first and foremost, followed by the Upper Midwest, and also those very special regions of the mind and spirit where creative energies flourish. If we can capture a fraction of all who identify with one or more of these places, this magazine will surely experience an embarrassment of riches.

William Houseman Editor



The Architectural Rewards of Staying Put.

The Meredith Corporation, a communications enterprise that cultivates a progressive image, almost abandoned its ancestral headquarters downtown for suburban anonymity. Then, at the brink, it demonstrated how really progressive it could be.

Architects are proving quite regularly these days that good old buildings can be rehabilitated to function as well as good new buildings. Less often, but still often enough, an old, abused building may be so sensitively restored as to start life over again as a serious work of architecture.

The new corporate headquarters of the Meredith Corporation in Des Moines fits neither of these classifications. It is, in fact, the rarest of the rare: a renovation project whose benefits are so many, and of such a high order, that they not only could not have been programmed in an all-new building—they probably could not have been even imagined.

No one appreciates better than Meredith's decisionmakers how consumately Charles Herbert and Associates turned an architectural mess of pottage into an unforeseeably delightful corporate environment. It was they, after all, who nearly hired a top out-of-state firm to do the wholly predictable: namely, design a box to sit on a remote "campus."

Staying put, as the Des Moines-based Herbert firm's study of the downtown site recommended, has yielded Meredith such substantial rewards as these: an expanded and well-appointed workplace as up-tothe-minute as that in any new office tower; a threelevel circulation spine that connects with an on-site parking garage; increased energy efficiency; sundrenched courtyards; integrally spectacular wall murals and sculptures; and a fresh public image compounded of a 70-year-old brick tower and street facade juxtaposed with sleek new aluminum and glass sheathing which reflects the tower's mirror image seen in the Meredith entrance photograph, opposite.



Since its early days as the founder of Successful Farming (and now Better Homes and Gardens, plus being the owner of radio, TV and major printing facilities), Meredith has been a not particularly conspicuous presence, architecturally, at the west end of the central business district in Des Moines.

Indeed, since the com-pletion of its \$22 million rehabilitation and expansion, the company's landmark tower has acquired a symbolic importance it never had before. It is not only a striking contrast to the sleek glass and aluminum wall alongside but is enlarged visually as a mirror image (opposite). The original brick facade remains in place to help the tower uphold a contextually familiar role, while the parking garage (left), and new connecting elements are respectfully wrought contrasts.



An inspired blend of newly carved space and the muralist's art create a reception area that causes visitors to gasp. The space was formerly one of three light wells of the most rudimentary purpose in a factory environment; now they are dramatically scaled social magnets along a threelevel circulation spine. The muraled walls brilliantly conceived by Richard Haas echo the skylights overhead (and add a fictitious plane), then go an imaginative step further by repeating the quoins of the exterior tower wall around interior doorways on three levels (above).









More trompe l'oeil dignifies the corporate name on rear reception wall (far left). Skylights are of two glass types: reflective on the planes angled south, clear on the north, thereby not only satisfying energy and environmental considerations but also creating two different tones of shadows!

More nearly resembling a luxury resort than an office structure, the Meredith expansion offered the architects a chance to create delightful outdoor terraces between the parking garage (above), and the totally rebuilt element opposite. The employees' cafeteria overlooks the upper-tier terrace, while the lower terrace provides a pleasant outdoor amenity when seen from offices, and a pedestrian passage from garage to main building.

A second skylit interior court along the headquarters' main east-west circulation spine is an inviting gathering place for small groups (left). Door and window openings into this sunwashed court have been painted in pastel colors to convey the charm of a child's playhouse. The abstract flower sculptures are by Karen Strohbeen. The secret of the Meredith project really *was* a secret: a series of old additions not good enough for the public to see



The minor miracle that is the Meredith plant reborn derives from two special circumstances. One is a sloping site that always encouraged the company to build *down*, literally and figuratively, whenever its burgeoning printing opera-tions needed additional blue-collar work space. Reasonably enough, nobody passing by at street level would notice what was being built out back (see aerial photo above). The second circumstance is that all of this inconsequential space was good space, structurally, and it went in the right direction: south. So when the architects considered these interesting circumstances, they arrived at the ingen-ious master planning solu-tion implied in the three axonometric drawings shown here. They invite attention to the role pure luck can play in restoration work: the old factory air shafts were seized on, not only to introduce dramatic spaces into an essentially new corporate headquarters, but also to bring co-herence to the workplace of a sophisticated communications company. These handsome courts are literal landmarks, appreciated in the everyday com-ings and goings of Meredith people and their visitors. Paradoxically, as the drawings make clear, the old Meredith brick tower and adjacent street facade contribute little to the overall success of the new complex. No less paradoxically, however, they are more significant as a corporate symbol today than they ever were: they were almost studiedly unnoticed in Des Moines until they stood, all of a sudden, hard by a new piece of ar-

 \checkmark

chitecture.

Will they get it in Des Moines?

"Yes," says the architect whose firm did the Meredith project. "Eventually."

Charles Herbert and Associates is located on the second floor of a venerable office building in downtown Des Moines. Unless you know where you are going, you may have trouble finding the place, because there is no name on the tall glass door: just the room number, 202, in figures about an inch tall. And once inside, if you wanted to exchange business cards with anyone, you would be out of luck. No one at this firm has a business card.

On the other hand, nearly everyone who works here as a registered architect is also a designer. That is, architects associated with Chick Herbert, to call him what everyone else calls him, are all. by current definition, hot pencils. They get a design job to do, and they do it. Cal Lewis, one of the best of them, recalls being given a project to design almost immediately on arrival eleven years ago. "I made a few marks on paper the first few days and waited for Chick to come around and look over my shoulder. He didn't come, and he didn't come. It finally dawned on me that I was really supposed to design that building.'

Not surprisingly, under such circumstances, it doesn't much matter about the business cards. Once they sign on, the hot pencils indentify indelibly with the Herbert organization. Since 1961, when the firm was established, just two architects, as nearly as anyone can remember, have left of their own accord:



to relocate in the Southwest. Superficially, the head man in this firm comes across as your regular Fountainhead type, by which I mean he is a tall, strapping, good-looking outdoors sort in his mid-fifties who lives with a bum knee from tennis intensity, a wife from a locally prominent family, and five non-architect sons. ("Any of them who'd have wanted architecture would've had to want it bad enough to go it alone.")

He wears the silk rep tie, the white shirt, the expensive haircut and, sitting in the all-white office (save for splashes of blue-grey in two nice, geometrically companionable drawings on starched linen), an amiably purposeful manner.

But by all reliable accounts, Chick Herbert aggregates as more than the sum of the above-noted discrete parts. For one thing, he runs an Iowa-based practice that has won more state, regional and national awards in recent years than perhaps all of the other firms combined. (One recent year, a tough jury of Ulrich Franzen, Ivan Chermayeff and Jeanne Davern astonished themselves by giving Charles Herbert and Associates eight of ten honor awards offered by the Iowa AIA.)

Before opening his own office, he worked first for John Flad in Madison, Wisconsin, then, having made up his mind to move to Des Moines, spent several years acting on the supposition that his presence at an old and ailing firm would restore it to health. He was wrong.

They didn't exactly laugh when Chick Herbert and an old associate and new partner named John Locke sat down to draw. They did worse. They predicted they'd starve in six months. Says Herbert, "Even before I left Wisconsin, all of the business advisors I knew through my wife's family said, 'Stay there, because you're never going to get your kind of stuff across here.' My view, then and now, is that if you work at a design quality ethic and don't crowd too much, you can get quite a bit done."

The danger of crowding was largely theoretical the first few years. Herbert retains a vivid recollection of "the most menial jobs"—a garage converted to a family room here, a little country school there. Or, now and then, a contractor might toss a bone the firm's way because he felt sorry for them.

A breakthrough came when the firm got a major building to do at Simpson College in nearby Indianola. The commissions grew in number and importance. In 1979, a very conspicuous project in downtown Des Moines, the Civic Center and its surrounding plaza-was completed. Typically, as happens so often with local boys, the Herbert office landed this high-visibility building only after a major Eastern firm's patently deficient earlier proposal was rejected. Typically, too, the Civic Center's budget was pitiably anemic, having been meat-axed after the excesses of the first proposal had scared the city's arts patrons out of their wits. Herbert recalls Claes Oldenburg saying he thought the project used too much concrete. "I told him that with the kind of budget we had you're lucky it isn't made of dirt.'

Getting the Meredith headquarters commission, a rare opportunity for any architect anywhere, represented a just reward for full services previously rendered. The Herbert office designed a large gravure printing plant for the company some years ago in Lynchburg, Virginia. A highly technical project, it required the special skills of not only Meredith's own staff of technicians but also a factory design consultant. "But," recalls Herbert, "somebody back then decided that maybe an architect would be in charge of that team, and not a consultant from Boston. We did that job, and we later did an ink plant for them; we joint-ventured that one with a rather large A-E firm. These weren't



glamour jobs. But I'm pretty proud of the fact that we worked them through from a piece of raw ground and later got a chance to do their headquarters—after they decided not to build a new one out in West Des Moines with a big-name firm."

How does an architect who pursues a pretty pure design ethic go about getting them not only to get it, but to accept it, in Des Moines? Chick Herbert reflects on twenty tough years:

"You build a certain reputation when you're a firm like ours. People think you don't do the technical things. They think you're just some sort of etherbreather up there. Or, even more mistakenly, they think you get a different breed of clients than other architects."

Far from breathing ether up there, Herbert and Associates aspire to keep their feet on the ground, down here. "What I feel," he feels, "is that we're here to explore, with clients, all of the dimensions of architecture. And if we explore with a whole bunch of people who don't necessarily agree with each other, then we benefit from a broad cross-section. If you are beholden to the medieval practice of passing it all down from the top, you're never going to see a cross-section developing. I don't think we ever quit designing, which is not what efficiency experts advocate in their books. I think we tend to keep at it: Meredith's is a good example. It was an interesting shot at unfolding a projectof changing our minds a few times."

Herbert leans back and smiles. "We have never been in the world of mockups, a la the Air Force Academy and SOM."

---William Houseman













After parking in the allweather garage (itself a fairly uncommon facility to be paid for by a corpora-tion), the employee may take the bright red stairway or glass see-through elevator (above opposite)to one of two routes to the main complex: the street-level canopied walkway which leads to a somewhat ceremonial reception passage (oppo-site below), or an enclosed lower passageway. The employees' dining area (far left) has its own compan-ion terrace beyond a south wall of glass (seen in dis-tance, immediate left). Also benefitting from natu-ral illumination along skylit circulation spine are the open, flexibly planned office quarters (top left). Whimsical touches include a wavy wall in one interior court and a ceiling of billowing clouds painted in the executive restroom. Stair-stepped glass facade of the parking garage (bottom) catches reflection of the 70-year-old landmark tower in early morning light. Far from architectural but vital to the pro-ject was Meredith's readiness at all stages of the four-and-a-half-year building experience to keep its employees informed as they endured the inconvenience of the constant need to juggle people and space. Throughout the complex, a motif of squares is picked up from the exterior sheathing and repeated in interior walls, carpeting and textiles.



By expanding horizontally instead of going high-rise, Meredith gains the visual interest of a small village



Almost everyone in the design professions is always meaning to be in Aspen in June—if only to see what an International Design Conference is like. For the well-meaning who missed this year's convocation—possibly the best ever—here is what it was like.

"I don't believe this is the 31st Annual Design Conference," declared Bill N. Lacy, chairman of the 31st Annual Design Conference, in his opening remarks. "I contend that it's the first. This conference is invented anew each year, and I am this year's inventor."

H' I'I'A I

This year's inventor of the International Design Conference at Aspen was exactly right. For implausible as it may seem to the well-ordered mind, this designers' convocation, arguably the world's most famous, has functioned through most of its history with all the constancy and quality control of a covered-dish supper.

The IDCA has never wanted for illustrious names. Successive chairmen-cum-inventors, each a little more beset than the last, have combed the cultural megacenters and homespun backwashes for novel performers. Then there have been the themes, ranging from the primal to the metaphysical. Probably the two best IDCAs ever have been staged just lately: in 1979, on Japan, and this year's "The Italian Idea."

The Italians came in force. They came with great films, fashions, automobiles and, most important, their ideas. As best they could, they explained how Italian design has won worldwide applause for its vigor. (So, too, does Martin Filler, the wellknown design critic, on page 42.) If, as the gifted auto designer Giorgetto Giugiaro has said, "Ideas are our exports," the Italians found an insatiable market in the record-setting 1,600 design-centered customers who packed the Aspen tent this summer.








One of Aspen's major preoccupations—finding out who *else* is there—has been satisfied in recent years by a set of display boards bearing duplicate I.D. cards, including mug shots, of all registrants (above). Even at an escalated registration fee of \$300, the 1981 Conference was sold out before opening day. The cutoff point: 1,600. All over town, "the Italian idea" was celebrated through such media as flag poles, T-shirted bosoms, street banners and picture windows on which the salutation, "Caio," was scrawled. Despite technical shortcomings no roadshow Chautauqua would tolerate, the Tent remains the epicenter of Aspen's swirling scene



They who fill the Tent freeze by night. They squint by day to fathom slide presentations rendered invisible by infiltrating shafts of sunlight. And they strain vainly by day and night to catch a speaker's words lost in the slap-slap of wind-whipped tent flaps. Yet they keep coming each year to see and hear such notables as Italian stateswoman Suzanna Agnelli (with this year's Conference chairman Bill Lacy, center left), or such distinguished panelists as (bottom from left) Leo Lionni, Lella and Massimo Vignelli on either side of Vico Magistretti, and Bruno Monguzzi.





36 ARCHITECTURE MINNESOTA







Little by little during the week-long Conference, a spectacular Italian hill town takes shape. Its sculptors were a group led by Gary Kinsella named Sand Castling, Inc. By contrast, a preview showing of Ottavio and Rosita Missoni's latest mosaic fabric fashions (left) triggered an instant explosion of shrieking and foot-stomping delirium. Other graphic impressions: a workshop photographer's surrealistic head shot and Gaetano Pesce's far-out furniture inspired by a Manhattan sunset.







Folco Quilici Film director



Emilio Ambasz Architect and industrial designer

"It had long been an assumption that if all of our products were well designed, harmony and joy would reign forever, and would be eternally triumphant."



Piero Sartogo Architect

"Culture is not a decoration of an economy or a state. Neither can culture survive in its own ivory tower. You might think this is a paradox. In fact, it is not, because if you go back to history in Italy, you will discover our past has been centered in towns, very articulated—a country of constant war at small scale: Florence vs. Sienna, Florence vs. Pisa. I could keep naming them forever. But then all of this explodes—Boom! and here is the Renaissance."



ER

Vico Magistretti Town planner and architect



John Casani Engineer for NASA

Franco Raggi Editor-in-chief MODO magazine (Milan)

"Being an architect or designer in Italy from 1960 to now, didn't imply just designing houses or objects but also performing cultural feats, reshuffling the cards, finding links and comparisons with other forms of expression; slipping in the doubt that through this particular field you could make philosophical and cultural statements traditionally foreign to the designer's work."



Gianfranco Gorgoni Photographer, filmmaker



Helen Federico Illustrator, designer



Gene Federico Art director



Giorgetto Giugiaro Auto designer

"The real reason behind the small cars in Italy in the sixties, is that in Italy we had serious problems of costs and materials which were not present in America."



Vincenzo Scotti Economist



Sergio Pininfarina Auto designer

"In these times of economic crisis, it would be a great mistake to arrive at the conclusion that design is less important. Design is becoming more important than ever. Appearance is still the most important factor in promoting car sales."

Being Italian quotes from this ye affirm, means n on your face, or s has flopped, or wor next inspira



Rosita/Ottavio Missoni Fashion designers



Lanfranco Bombelli Architect and industrial designer



Roman Vlad Musical Director of the Rome Opera

"The main characteristic of Italian music is to be very, very strongly rooted in the past, and to have always the necessity to do something new."

lese quotable spen performers eing afraid to fall nother government bout where your coming from



Leo Leonni IDCA International Advisor

"America had a very traumatic impact after World War II on Italian life. The American soldiers brought to Italy a totally new life-style, a way of behavior, that was shocking to Italians. Then came the massive invasion of American products: the Americanization of Italy. It was still a time when the Italians in America were still ashamed of being Italians. I remember I showed a private screening of DeSica's wonderful film, Umberto D. There were big protests from the Italian community in New York that this film was going to give a bad impression of Italy. Things certainly have changed."



Bruno Monguzzi Graphic designer



Bernardo Bertolucci Film director

"I think you have to try to take risks, always. Otherwise, one day there will be imitators that are better than you."

"The most difficult thing about making films is finding the money. A very good friend of mine (who is a great Brazilian director) use to say; 'A movie director is a person able to find money to make a movie.' It sounds a bit cynical but it is true. This art is made with money."



Susanna Agnelli Mayor of Monte Argentario



Evaristo Nicolao Architect



Gaetano Pesce Industrial designer



Giorgio Soavi Writer, artist



Massimo & Lella Vignelli Graphic and architectural designers

Massimo: "The good thing about design in Italy is that there are no marketing people around to tell you what you can or cannot do with your designs. Which really is the condition, sine qua non, for getting good design on the streets."

Lella: "In the sixties, when I was working at Skidmore (Skidmore Owings Merrill, Chicago) if anybody had anything that was not black and white and gray, they were really in trouble, and pink shirts were not allowed in the office!"



Mario Bellini Architect and industrial designer

"The archetype of the modern office is the factory, rather than the artisan shop or the notary study. The necessity to organize work as a productive process, where the product is the result of a sequence of human or mechanical operations more and more standardized, arises not only in the factory but also in the office."



Paolo Vitti Director of design, Olivetti



Alberto Arbasino Author



Maddalena Mauro Writer, educator









































































Its peculiar chemistry protects the Aspen Design Conference from either success or failure

The Italian Idea came perilously close to being an unqualified success. But in the final analysis it will be remembered, like most of its predecessors, more for its parts than its sum. For its showy parade of marvellous machines: Alfa Romeo, Lancia, Ferrari, Fiat. Indeed, for the mostly ephemeral impressions duly assembled on this page: the plethora of weird and winsome hats, Aspen's carpenter's Gothic houses, the Missonis' fabrics some would kill for, students' winning poster designs (first prize, a light bulb; second, a boot; third, a flag), pickup picnics, bikers and, lastly and supremely, the Grucci family's fireworks. As the chairman said in his opening remarks, the Italian Idea as an Aspen Conference was invented this year. But it will never be patented.

WHAT MAKES ITALIAN DESIGN SO GOOD?

(And what, considering the low estate to which many think American design has fallen, can we do about it?)

outstanding products of Italian design before the war had been geared for the most part to a luxury market, the significance of the emergent Italian Idea after the war lay largely in its accessibility to ordinary people, and not just to an economic elite. Inexpensive in its Cassina original, even cheaper in its copies, the chiaravari chair demonstrated that plain, well-designed products could be accepted by a wide (and not necessarily intellectual) market. It was a striking departure from the "paythem-to-take-off-the-roses" syndrome symptomatic of Early Modernism; Al-though clean in line, modern design had often been much more costly to produce than the conventionally decorated objects of mass production.



by Martin Filler

n the history of art and design there have sporadically occurred seemingly miraculous conjunctions of time and place when inspired creativity appears to be as much a natural emanation as the weather. Such has been the case in Italy for the past 30 years: one of the longest-running success stories in modern design history, the socalled Italian Idea has become so firmly established that it is now a major influence on the international design scene. It is specifically in the realm of product design that Italy has achieved its preeminence, and the repeated success with which the Italians have created objects that set a high standard of design excellence has focused increasing interest on the conditions that have encouraged that enviable development. But far from being the spontaneous regeneration of an inherently Italian germ of genious, the Italian idea contains lessons that could be duplicated elsewhere if interest in good design were strong enough.

The origins of the contemporary Italian phenomenon can be traced directly to the comprehensive design philosophy of the Italian Art Nouveau, or *stile Liberty* (so named for the London-based Crafts Movement decorative arts emporium). A branch of Art Nouveau less well known than its French or Belgian counterparts, the Liberty Style nonetheless had a much more lasting influence. The ensuing decades after the turn of the century witnessed such immortal Italian designs as the Bugatti automobile, the Fortuny dress and the Olivetti typewriter, but by the 1930s the world's evaluation of Italian design was drastically altered by the recidivism and sterility of the style that has become known as Mussolini Modern.

Thus it came as a considerable surprise in the years just after World War II when Italy suddenly emerged as the most compelling new presence on the European design scene. Symbolizing the new Italian style perhaps better than any other object was Gio Ponti's famous chiaravari chair, first produced by Cassina in 1949 and within a decade virtually ubiquitous via its innumerable knockoffs. All new movements in design seem to need a great new chair as a symbolic rallying point, and although closely based on a classic, "anonymous" 19th century occasional chair, the chiaravari embodied several of the basic characteristics that typified the new Italian approach. It was both lightweight and light of line, with a spare but sprightly appearance decidedly less ponderous than most modern chair designs. One can also see in it the element of humor that became especially pronounced in Italian design in the late 1960s. Above all, the chiaravari chair was a democratic design. Whereas the

Gio Ponti's chiaravari chair, 1949.

But perhaps the predominant quality of Italian design of the late 1940s and the '50s was its suggestive sense of enjoyment-of the sweet life, La Dolce Vita-that those beguilingly uncomplicated objects seemed to promise. For example, the light, effortless form of Marcello Nizzoli's 1957 Mirella sewing machine for Necchi erased any notions of drudgery one might have previously associated with that activity. Just as the omnipresent Vespa motor scooter came to epitomize the new freedom made possible by simple, imaginative, inexpensive industrial design, so the best of Italian product design in the postwar period appealed to the most susceptible sentiments of a new consumer society. Thus the success of the Italian Idea was further extended by its implicit exploitation of the pleasure principle, in contrast to the more earnest intimations of efficiency and social improvement that were the basic aims of most modern design before World War II. But the public, of course, can only buy what is offered for sale by the manufacturer. For the rest of the answer we must look at the factors that led to the production



Marcello Nizzoli's *Mirella* sewing machine, 1957.

of the extraordinary successful components of the new Italian domestic landscape. Among the major contributing elements behind the success of contemporary Italian design are the following:

The lessons of history

Since the time of the Romans, Italy has enjoyed a remarkably high level of public design, which over the centuries has become a basic part of the Italian social contract. Although many Italians today might agree with the contention of the architectural historian Leonardo Benevolo that the "much-admired items and microenvironments [of modern Italian design] may be found in some of the ugliest cities in the world," few Americans would concur that good public design in our own country has been as consistently sought and as successfully achieved. The accumulated artifacts of Ancient Roman, Early Christian, Renaissance and Baroque art and architecture have served the Italians as daily reminders of the survival of art-as opposed to the detritus of our own disposable culture. These monuments continue to act as an impetus to keeping up design standards, and their strong stylistic statements have encouraged the development of new directions in art and design. Although mindful of history, the best Italian designers and architects know that the past can never be relived, and thus they seek to create objects that honor tradition by not aping it.

The importance of design exhibitions

In the wake of the famous Great Exhibition held at the Crystal Palace in 1851, expositions of industrial and product design soon proliferated. Widely publicized and hugely popular, they quickly became a fixture in both Europe and the United States. But the emphasis those early fairs placed on a broad spectrum of manufactured goods became more specialized, around the turn of the century, in expositions dedicated to the advancement of good design: the International Exposition of Modern Decorative Art at Turin in 1902 was one of the outstanding examples of that new didactic direction. The major force in the official endorsement of design in Italy after world War I was the Triennale, the design exhibition

which first took place in 1921, and which almost at once began to exercise an enormous influence. Undiminished by the interruption of World War II, the revived Triennale in the late '40s and '50s kept alive the idealistic impulse of earlier fairs that promoted good design as a vehicle for human improvement (an attitude that coincided significantly with the Marxist orientation of a number of the leading architects, designers and critics of the post-war period in Italy.) The atmosphere of healthy competition generated by the Triennale helped to confirm good design as a valuable-and marketableaspect of corporate identity, and gave added incentive for new manufacturers to follow the example of well-established firms (such as Olivetti) which already enjoyed the commercial benefits of distinguished design. The public exchange of ideas fostered by the Triennale was a decisive element in the remarkably coherent direction of Italian design in the 1950s and '60s, which can accurately be termed "The Italian School" despite its diversity of origin.

The willingness to reindustrialize for good design

Innovative design requires a considerable investment in the new machinery to manufacture it, thus making it necessary for companies to put up or shut up, as it were, when it comes to design development. In this country, retooling for purposes of design has never been more widespread than during the 1930s craze for streamlining-which manufacturers seized upon primarily as a styling gimmick (streamlined toasters? streamlined tricycles?) to boost sales in a consumer goods market seriously hurt by the Great Depression. In Italy, though, it has not been uncommon for designers to design not only a product, but to design the machinery that makes that object, as well, thus helping to eliminate inefficiencies in manufacturing. But the willingness on the part of industrialists to take the risk of design innovation has been offset to some extent by another important contributing factor in the equation of contemporary Italian design:

The availability of cheap labor

Competitive pricing ought not to be overlooked as a major inducement behind the widespread commercial success of Italian design. The post-war displacement of a significant portion of the Italian labor force from the depressed, agrarian *Mezzogiorno* to the industrial cities of the north, a comparatively high industrial productivity rate, and an inflationary/devaluationary syndrome that kept the lira at an advantageous exchange rate in relation to most other Western currencies, all played their part in keeping the price of Italian goods low during the late '40s and the '50s. Although rising labor costs in recent years have led to correspondingly higher prices for Italian products, the high-style cachet of many Italian designs has kept them sought after by the public, further proof for manufacturers that good design can also mean good business. But none of these things would have had such influence had not one overriding factor prevailed:

The high design standards of a cultivated bourgeoisie

Italy is not a magic kingdom of infallibly good design: to be sure, there is a strong conservative streak (especially around the ecclesiastical center of Rome) as well as a high quotient of Kitsch in Italian design on all economic levels. But especially around the major commercial/industrial centers of Milan and Turin there exists broad-based support for the kind of exceptional modern design we now commonly associate with the Italian Idea. The use of architecture and design to convey strong moralistic, political and social motivations of an influential segment of society that embraces capitalists and communists, department store owners and architecture students, movie directors and fashion designers, government officials and craftsmen, offers a rare point of congruence in Italy. The extent to which architecture and design in Italy are able to attract the exceptionally talented-despite the uncertain outlook of the Italian economy and the seemingly institutionalized instability of their political system—is evidence of the durable social impact that many Italians still believe design can have on life in the modern world. Good design is seen by many Italians as being basically regenerative, stimulating society and individuals to think constructively about the quality of the things they make and use.

The astonishingly rapid rise of America from wilderness to world power has deprived us of the long view of life that is such an important component of the Italian character. Rome wasn't built in a day, after all, and it wasn't designed in a hour, either. It took America a long time to find its own authentic expression in art and design. Now, like the postadolescent who suddenly discovers that his elders are not quite so stupid as he once believed, America is again beginning to consider the virtues of older cultures. There is a very great deal indeed that we in this country can learn from the Italian idea, which has the common attributes of all great concepts: clarity, adaptability, and truth.

Martin Filler, the architecture and design critic, was in Italy during the 1981 Aspen International Design Conference on "The Italian Idea."

NEW LIFE From old buildings

Why is it that we often get a greater kick from architectural rejeuvenation than from pure creation? You may consider this question as you discover how artfully the assorted old buildings on the following pages were adapted for today's world.









Second Floor





Third Floor

Imagine, going from Victorian luxe to teeming tenements to restoration luxe—all in less than 100 years

Like the older inner-city neighborhood around it, the MacKubin Row Townhouses in St. Paul have undergone drastic changes repeatedly during its 100-year existence. At one time a fashionable place to live, this six-family Richardsonian Romanesque Revival building from the 1890s was partitioned into a 27-room tenement house during the 1950s.

during the 1950s. Now, after recent neighborhood revitalization, the building has been returned to its original six-unit configuration, but with modern conveniences and a contemporary treatment of interior spaces. Architects Lilyholm, Young and Gleeson, St. Paul, have cleaned and restored the brick and brownstone exterior and added short brick forecourts which both define the individual units and make of them an architecturally coherent whole.

Once inside, the architects have treated each of these condominiums as a dramatic three-story flowing volume. Service and circulation are kept along one wall in each unit and all living spaces are arranged for the greatest enjoyment of the outdoors, front and back, through windows and direct access.

Two-story living rooms face east, thus benefitting from an abundance of morning light; and skylights over the stairwells help to keep the apartments bright through the day. Exposed brick walls, mantled fireplaces, wood floors, and natural finish materials used throughout serve to acknowledge the building's original character, in agreeable contrast with the contemporary kitchens and bathrooms.

SAARI & FORRAI PHOTC

HOTO

Converting a vintage St. Paul church into four striking condominiums is an idea Cass Gilbert would have loved

The person who passes the corner of Ashland and MacKubin in St. Paul may notice an old stone church standing there, in apparent good condition. An architectural historian passing by might surmise that the north end was designed by Cass Gilbert, the architect of the State Capitol, and the sanctuary by Thomas Holyoke, who designed it following a fire which destroyed that portion of the original Cass Gilbert work. What will surely escape the passerby is the startling transformation of the church interior into four modern condominiums.



Outgrown by its congregation, the church had been for sale five years when Thomas Blanck, AIA, and three others purchased it in 1980 with the idea of converting it into townhouses.

"We had very specialized acquisition problems," says Blanck. At the closing the five sellers and the four buyers got together and had champagne and sweet rolls; it was more like an adoption than a real estate closing."

To convert the church to housing meant removing all but the exterior walls, structural members, and windows. Yet inside these architectural keepsakes are singular reminders to the occupants that this building was at one time a church. The Heritage Preservation Commis-

The Heritage Preservation Commission permitted only two changes to the exterior of the building: the substitution of garage doors for the classroom windows in the basement (and a sloped driveway to reach them), and the addition of balconies on the east side, where they can't be seen from the street.

For energy-efficiency, the roof was insulated to R-40 and the mortar tuckpointed to make it waterproof and airtight. Insulation was also added to the walls, and each unit has its own heatconserving fireplace.

Inside, the exposed trusses serve as a grid system for dividing the building into four units; each claims two bays of the sanctuary. To squeeze three floors into 26 feet, the third floor was constructed of three-inch decking. Three apartments are 1,580 square feet and the fourth, in the apse, 1,980 square feet. They sold for \$110,000 and \$135,000—all before construction began.



The loft in condominium #1 has the snug security of a tree fort. Sliding glass doors lead to a wood deck.

A spiral staircase twists upward two floors, easily the visual highlight of condominium #2.



2



A venerable saint peers through the pots and pans in the kitchen of condominium #3.

1

A trefoil window pointed the way toward this Victorian bedroom treatment in condominium #4.

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Entering condominium #1 is like going to church: you pass through the original front doors into a small foyer. Beyond a second set of double doors you see a white wall ahead—rather than the expected altar at the end of a long nave. The stairs left of the door lead not to a choir loft but to two bedrooms.

All three floors are centered in a U around the most spectacular stained glass window of the church (far right), located above the front door. The architect left the entry area open to the third floor. Sliding panels rather than doors were specified for the second floor bedrooms. When open, they allow a doubly broad view of the window. This emphasis on a single sight line and the waist-height walls on the entry side of the upper floors create the impression of standing on a balcony. This arrangement also enhances the privacy of each upstairs room.

Occasionally, the high-tech smacks right into the handhewn, as in this second floor study where the plastic laminate bookshelf meets the 70-year-old wooden truss (right).

2 Cond

Condominium #2, located in the center of the nave, shares the same street entrance as condominiums #3 and #4. Its own interior entrance is farthest from the street, and each room radiates from the spiral staircase in the center of the unit.

Half of the living room has a 7'10" ceiling height, while the other half is a full three stories high. The architect placed the fireplace in the low-ceilinged half, giving it the intimacy of an inglenook (right). Although the stained glass windows carry none of their original connotation as church decoration, their presence in such a markedly secular setting is easy to assimilate. They are quite at home in a house.

"You can't make any of the rooms in these condominiums into French Provincial or chrome and glass," says Blanck. "They have so much character of their own that they almost demand rather passive decorating."

In the kitchen, the owners have replaced the sidelights with clear glass to increase the light and enlarge the view outside. Deep red walls are combined with the dark cabinets and wood trim.













3

As graphic as a cutaway drawing, the entrance to condominium #3 displays part of the original church truss system (left). Other reminders of the church remain. A high-ceilinged interior evokes traditional church architecture. The chancel arch begins its long curve; and, straight ahead, a stained glass window is visible over the sink. Further inside, the church references give way to the appointments of any modern townhouse.

The Chancel arch is part of a groin vault 22 feet tall. It has been restored, plastered with a period texture, and painted (lower left). The wall which now fills the archway is raspberry-colored. The stairways which tentatively meet it and surrounding walls are white.

ored. The stairways which tentatively meet it and surrounding walls are white. "Even though the character of the building has greatly changed," says Blanck, "it is still comprised of things which are unconsciously associated with a church—the enriched materials such as brass and stained glass. The deep reds, violets and purples are church colors, so we used references to those colors in the interior."

4

Condominium #4, in the church apse, is the largest and most varied of the Stone Church living units. Ten feet wider on either side of the sanctuary, it once contained the altar and the church office. The chancel arch now frames the dining room. Since the dining room and kitchen beyond it (far left) were the altar area, the floor is raised 24" above the living room and family room on either side. This change in floor levels and the groin vault overhead retain the ceremonial character of the space.

The only remaining portion of the Cass Gilbert interior was discovered one afternoon by the carpenters. The charred areas were scraped or replaced and the space is now a cozy bedroom (lower left).

A bridge overlooking the dining room connects the two bedrooms. The walls above each doorway curve inward in a mirror image of the chancel arch; and the wall opposite the bridge is also curved so that the corridor resembles a passageway in a Star Wars space ship. An amusing fast-foodery where hoagies may be eaten in pedimented privacy



Pontillo's is an unusually agreeable little eating establishment in Minneapolis that manages to cater to both the fast-food fiend and the sitdown diner. As the most recent renovation in the city renovation district popularly known as "Uptown," Pontillo's satisfies its two breeds of customers within a very constrained, but efficiently designed storefront space.

designed storefront space. By centering the entrance vestibule, takeout counter and queuing area squarely between the dining areas on either side, architects Alfred French and Associates, Inc., Minneapolis, have effectively eliminated cross traffic. Rest rooms, a compact kitchen with walk-in coolers, and a rack for ready-and-waiting orders are in the rear. A whimsical wooden framing system of nediment.

A whimsical wooden framing system of pedimenttopped doorways defines individual eating spaces. Quarry tile flooring, and blue-painted fabric "cloud" banners on the 13-foot ceiling complement the abundant natural finished wood.







An interior design firm shows off its space-planning skills in its own offices fitted into an old grain sample room

Proving that its own offices might well be its best advertisement, the architectural interior design firm of Planning and Design, Inc., Minneapolis, has shown how adroitly three work stations, a private office, a conference room and a work-storage room, plus a separate reception area all can be artfully squeezed into 810 square feet.

Function, without loss of design quality, has been the overriding premise in this compact remodeled grain sample room located in the historic Grain Exchange Building in downtown Minneapolis. The results are apparent in the conference room's tackable walls, concealed presentation board and display rail, and in the overhead storage and lighting units at each drafting station. The designers have provided a neutral background for their more colorful do

The designers have provided a neutral background for their many colorful design projects, without detracting from the work itself, by keeping the walls a muted gray and the carpet a charcoal color in the work spaces. White ceramic floor tile and a gray linear metal ceiling complete the reception area.

THE ITASCA

If it is axiomatic that location is everything, then what is all the excitement about an undistinguished warehouse being rehabbed on the wrong side of the tracks?

Squint a little, let your mind's eye take over, and the name begins to acquire a magically marketable ring, not unlike that of the majestic Dakota on New York City's Central Park. No amount of squinting can alter the truth about the Itasca Warehouse, of course, but taken on its own terms, it qualifies as one of the most admirably spunky urban reclamation projects to be found anywhere in this country. It may also become one of the most successful.

The overall rehabbing scheme for Itasca is not without its intriguing aspects. A trio of atriums have been carved longitudinally through the heart of the five buildings that make up the complex. A genuine, albeit concrete-encased, creek runs straight through the middle. Architect John Cuningham and his intrepid partners hope to uncover Bassett's Creek and offer it as a manifestly rippling interior design feature. The ancient loading dock will be kept, probably as a promenade, with flower boxes tucked in windows located, surprisingly, beneath it, for the delectation of subterranean tenants. Instead of taking the easy way out and black-topping the countryside for parking, the developers are doing a praiseworthy thing: a parking ramp is being built within the existing walls of an old attached freight shed. Some 127 condominum owners will be living in upperstory units of uncommonly capacious proportions, especially considering that the prices start at a deflationary \$55,000 (but increase precipitously, of course, with increased size). Along its 700-foot length, the Itasca will provide entrances to 100,000 square feet of commercial and retail establishments, and also to a brand-new Minneapolis Children's Museum, soon to be installed in one 25,000-squareOn the face of it, an Itasca is bound to be good for a city such as Minneapolis. But there is something extra special about the Itasca. This rehabbing is exceptionally refreshing because of the Cuningham team's conscious decision to act as a bell cow. To press the bovine metaphor, the Itasca stands in rather woebegone isolation, at the moment, on the edge of a most appetizing 100-acre pasture. The Burlington Northern Railroad owns this land; but its proximity to the heart of downtown is a circumstance that nourishes the city's planning aspirations for a great deal more high-quality, mixed-use development downtown.

By their initiative, Cuningham and partners hope to exercise a salutary influence over what happens to the surrounding neighborhood. They already think of the Itasca as a little community itself, and nothing could gratify them more than to witness, if not take part in, the growth of a humanely dimensioned and ordered city-within-acity to which the Itasca would gladly attach itself.



Known as the Itasca Warehouse for as long as Minneapolitans can remember, the complex was built in two stages: the flanking buildings in the 1880s, the center ones in 1907.











CUSTOM UNIT



Hewing to the spirit of an original architure that featured massive posts and beams, brick walls and 12foot room heights, Cuningham Architects were able to sub-divide the old warehousing spaces into 127 condominium units of generous size and scale. The two-story model, above, conveys the luxury of "thrown-away" space through the scale of furniture, kitchen counter area. Heating ducts and plumbing are frankly ex-posed as design elements, and seemingly accepted as such by the condominum owners. Using the three great atriums as both archi-tectural and "social" ideas, the architects have arranged the units to open directly to

them. (For John Cuningham's elaboration on this and other design considerations, see his article, page 56). Spacious as the units are, Itasca has offered to those who can afford them even larger customized du-plexes, left. Two modest side-by-side units connect by spiral stairway to a third unit above, thus providing the space-surfeited family with three decks, a separate master bedroom suite up-stairs; additional bedroombath facilities, plus living-dining, downstairs. Note entraces from the atrium on both levels; also that the transoms over them admit daylight entering the atrium from the skylights.

A brick warehouse of the Itasca's scale and substance invites a designer to take serendipitous flights of fancy not often thought feasible in new construction



Exterior elevation of the front

A longitudinal section of the Itasca. Retail businesses will fill the first three floors.



A plan of a typical condominium floor.



Floor plan of the upper retail level.

Within the Itasca's 700-foot length and six-story height, a multitude of uses can be, and are being, planned. The longitudinal section, suggests a compact village under one roof straddling the now-covered Bassett's Creek, with the Children's Museum anchoring one end and a major retail installation (the developers would like it to be an Europeanstyle design center) at the other. The Children's Museum occupies two levels, with the lower one's 20-foot ceilings ideal for exhibits requiring out-sized volumes of space.

The Itasca's transverse section makes clear the central role of the atrium, both as a source of daylight throughout the project and as an architectural means of double-loading the condominium units, fore and aft. Should the creek be successfully unearthed and ren-dered clean and free-flowing, it would be glass-enclosed but accessible at ground level. (Canoists, don't hold your breath.) At the rear, balconies overlook the future park site and, beyond it, the Mississippi. On the front, or First Street North side, the transverse section defines the unique original construction which allows daylight to penetrate the excavated area below the loading dock, thereby encourag ing the developers to install subterranean landscaping for the pleasure of basement-level occupants.

The first floor plan features a circulation pattern that provides access directly to retail shops from the parking area, left, and at four points along the entrance deck. Condominium owners have their own private and secure entrance to lobby and elevators, as well as a private access from the lobby to the shops and stores in the complex.

Condominiums floor plan shows 18 of 23 units opening directly to one of three atriums (the other five units' residents are not all that far away, either). Unit sizes, not counting customized multiple units, range from 800 square feet to 1,570. Worth noting is how groups of four or more units were incorporated between the heavy brick party walls of the various buildings. Each is open to the next via arched brick doorways.



A transverse section of Itasca



on First Street North.



CONFESSIONS OF AN INTENSE ARCHITECT

The Itasca's architect-developer analyzes—or is it *psycho*analyzes?—why he couldn't resist the compellingly elusive charms of a mournful-looking brick pile

By John Cuningham, AIA



One day, about two and a half years ago, a realtor stopped by the office with a proposition. He knew our firm was interested in historic restorations and rehabilitation. We had done several such projects in the Twin Cities area.

"I have a group of buildings I'd like you to look at," the realtor said. It was February and cold. Very cold.

The first thing that struck me,driving up to the Itasca Warehouse, where faintly visible letters spelled out the name above the loading bays, was how enormous the place was. And after we spent a half hour walking through the arctic interior, without ever retracing our steps, I found that these seven and a half acres under roof modified a person's notion of space.

My feet were like pegs. When the realtor asked me what I thought of it, I said, "I'm so cold and it's so huge I can't concentrate."

All of the remodelings we have ever done, combined, do not amount to as much space as the Itasca. I told the realtor I had difficulty even imagining how to start such a project. It was in a peculiar area, standing as it did in the middle of a vast empty space. It occurred to me that if you lifted the Itasca and plunked it down on Nicollet Mall, it would stretch from the far end of Dayton's all the way to Penney's.

The idea of doing something with these five old attached buildings got hold of us. Doing exactly what, we couldn't say, but I called some friends who agreed that this odd package posed a tempting challenge. We decided to form a partnership to buy the property, and for the past two and a half years we have found ourselves with an organic phenomenon: the Itasca keeps growing and evolving.

One of the unique features that attracted us to these warehouses in the first place is Bassett's Creek. The center buildings in this complex are by no means antique, having been built in 1907. Yet they were the first in the whole city built over the creek. A few years later, covering Bassett's Creek became public policy (not least, I suspect, because the initiative taken at the Itasca site made it O.K.). The city simply channeled the stream through a conduit and covered it.

I know a man who says that when these buildings were built over the creek, the workers just dumped anything down the sewer that ran into Bassett's Creek. We now have a vested interest in reversing history—in opening up this stream, cleaning it up, and running it right through the first floor of the Itasca. (I hope the time comes when you'll be able to launch a canoe inside the building; then I plan to retire from architecture and become a gondolier.)

People interested in buying one of our condominums invariably ask, "What's going to happen around here? Am I going to continue to live in the middle of this wide-open field?" Our quick reply is, "Well, that's not all bad. It's very quiet here on weekends."

What is actually planned to happen is both specific, encouraging, and fairly imminent. Federal policy, for example, calls for a continuous park along the Mississippi—in our backyard, as it were. It is also a part of the grand design to complete a major roadway which begins in New Orleans and, as of now, actually extends north of Minneapolis to Plymouth (see site plan). The Itasca is situated between Franklin Bridge and Broadway, the sole missing link in the road-building process.

The city is interested in this area, officially, as well it might be. Burlington Northern owns the land across the street from the Itasca, but the city's guidelines for its development call for a great amount of housing, perhaps as many as 5,000 dwelling units, to be built here. The availability of more than 100 acres of cleared land in downtown Minneapolis must be rated a golden opportunity unmatched in glitter.



By the time we complete the Itasca consisting of 127 condominiums, 75,000 square feet of commercial space and a new 25,000-square-foot Children's Museum-we shall have created a critical mass capable of helping to shape the neighborhood's future. Even if we do no further work there ourselves, the Itasca will provide a constraint on building heights, since the city would like new construction to go no higher than six stories.

We think of our project as a community rather than a condominium development. In addition to the Children's Museum, commercial spaces will occupy the first floor the entire length of the complex, plus two floors underground in three buildings and a basement in the others. Remarkably, these below-grade spaces have windows admitting daylight; they are underneath the loading docks. The light is somewhat reduced, but there is enough to grow certain plants-ferns, pachysandra and such. So we are going to have subterranean window boxes to be enjoyed by people looking up from their underground vantage point.

The residents of the Itasca, between 250 and 300, will be "living over the store"-but with environmental benefits seldom if ever associated with this classic urban mode of living. There are, for example, the atriums, 200 feet long, which admit daylight throughout the whole project. But since the lower commercial spaces are roofed over with a glass block skylight, ground-level noise is kept from invading the upper condominium levels.

The condominium owners have a locked, secure private entrance. The commercial area has its own entrances, so that complete separation of the two incompatible environments is assured. Legally, they are even described differently. The condominiums are described as occupying a column of air above a commercial space. This is the first time, so far as I know, that air rights have been applied in an existing structure undergoing rehabilitation.

Having been involved with the design of atriums in several buildings, our firm now regards them as something more than architectural ideas. We think they are important social ideas. When you come out of your condominium at the Itasca, you enter the atrium. Moving to the elevator, you may see other people, your neighbors, on your floor or the floors above and below you. You step on the elevator and encounter another person. This person is not a stranger, because you have already made a visual connection. So one or another of you is apt to say, "Oh, you're on the fifth floor." And after you have seen this person a time or two, you might say, "How is your view?" And a conversation will follow leading to acquaintance-

ship. With an atrium as a major design element, it won't be necessary to have the lights on during the day; the interiors will be bright enough without them. That's one simple idea. Another very old idea, the transom, was introduced because the light from the atrium commended it. Each condominium entrance has a transom above the door, thus assuring daylight from both ends of a unit.

Somebody once said urban life shouldn't be tense, it should be intense. Urban life certainly should offer an intensity of experience. At the same time there must be the option for backing away, for disengagement, and I know of no place where this can occur so readily as in Minneapolis. You can go to the lakes and parks in minutes. Or you can enter the skyway system and be a part of one of the most intense urban experiences to be found anywhere.

Minneapolitans who are living at Loring Park, many who have never lived downtown before, are our greatest sales people. They tell their suburban friends to move into town and see what they've been missing. Our own experience at the Itasca confirms the tremendous pull city living is having on people. We built our model condominiums and then sent out 500 invitations to an open house last March. We had 300 replies in a week, and on the Saturday of the open house 700 people showed up. Just like the workmen, they came into this empty warehouse, rode the freight elevator up four flights, walked into the model and saw this unexpected volume of furnished space. The whole idea seemed to blow their minds.

We decided to open the second phase, even though we didn't even have drawings. We would tell interested people where the second-phase units were located and suggest that they pick a window they liked. These started selling, and we quickly went to work on the drawings. When they were completed we would show them to a person who'd expressed an interest. "Oh," this person would exclaim, "That's the window I picked!"

As an isolated enterprise, the Itasca does reinforce today's enthusiasm for recycling worthy old buildings. But its greater significance is perhaps yet to come. As a professor at the University, I am interested in the urban pattern and fabric of this area; it is a subject I teach. The University can be a great aid, I believe, in helping to visualize alternatives for urban development in locations such as the Itasca neighborhood. Models offering a number of alternatives have been built by students in my classes. Other planning and architectural source materials are also available.

The important point is that such materials are public property, accessible not only to the City Planning Commission and Riverfront Development Commission but also to would-be developers. Most of our review boards are made up of laymen. They may benefit from studying proposed plans and graphic aids, against which to gauge a proposed idea. ("I see where it would go in this model. Uh uh, it doesn't look like it'll fit there.")

From where we stand at Itasca, we see an opportunity for Minneapolis that is truly unique. It will be a major watershed in the city's development when as many as 5,000 dwelling units are built downtown. Such growth will bring a profound change in the fabric of the city. At the moment, we are a city of single-family houses on parkways surrounding a relatively dense urban core. All of a sudden the definition of this city will be modified perceptably through the growth of high-quality urban living opportunities at the very core.





The above models of Itasca's immediate neighborhood were done by ar chitect Cuningham's students at the University of Minnesota to suggest to the city and prospective developers various options for carrying out the city's guidelines, which stress housing at 100-units-peracre for this site. In the Cuningham firm's site plan, opposite, an uncovered **Bassett's Creek would be** widened into a reflecting pond across First Street North (where, in their vision low- to middle-rise mixed-use development would border it).

Possibly the Greatest Show on Earth

Or, if not on earth, then surely in the ever-widening world of adaptively reused warehouses. Butler Square in downtown Minneapolis, already a mixed-use circus, has just finished transforming its second (most say its better) half. And what a spectacular opening act—the Flying Segals, courtesy of a venturesome developer and a helpful art expert.

There is plenty of room for improvement, it seems, in the rehabilitation of an old warehouse. Such is the conclusion of critics and sightseers alike who have paid a visit to the newly renovated west half of Butler Square. Like the east half, which was completed in 1974 and promptly received an AIA Honor Award, the west half depends on its skylit eight-story atrium for both architectural drama and effective circulation. Too, the total volume of space is the same. But the new renovation has profited appreciably by hindsight: The atrium, key to the whole structure, is a much more sensitively scaled space, thanks to architect Arvid Elness's decision to retain the massive, 24-inch-thick Douglas fir timbers circumscribing the atrium at the ground level. Says Elness, "It's the building's original scale that has been kept intact. The result, we think, is a much more intimate atrium space."

Doubtless, Harry W. Jones, the insufficiently sung Minneapolis architect who designed Butler Square in 1906, would be pleased. And for a certainty, the west half's developer, James H. Binger, is pleased, judging from the alacrity with which status-conscious tenants have snapped up space on the upper six stories allocated for offices. He has further reason, however, having set out to give the building some aesthetic excitement.

Binger, like most developers these days, wanted some kind of sculpture to heighten public interest. He was thinking of water, perhaps, but dropped this notion after consulting Martin Friedman, Director of the Walker Art Center. Friedman provided Binger with a notebook containing informa-

> Comfortable wooden benches are a new addition to Butler Square with the opening of the western half.

tion on nine sculptors with a "track record" in large-scale public commissions. He thought they were all fine possibilities, but remembering the popularity of two trapeze performers in a retrospective exhibition of George Segal's work at the Walker, he singled out Segal as "an especially strong possibility."

Fortunately for visitors to Butler Square, Binger agreed with Friedman and commissioned Segal to execute the marvelous acrobats now installed in the new atrium. In a letter accompanying the sculpture notebook, Friedman had written, "We think your new space would look great with a group of aerialists suspended from the ceiling, transforming it into a fantastic human 'aviary.' People," he concluded, "would come from near and far to see it."

How true.



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news, notes & opinions

continued from page 14

to the use of wind deflecting earth berms, to prevent sand infiltration.

Further, the housing units were oriented on the site in such a way as to avoid direct sunlight on most building surfaces and placed in a staggered pattern to acknowledge the wind conditions and existing street grid, DeCoster says. A reverse-ventilated wall system was developed to keep the heat of a typical wall indoors no greater than that of the air temperature.

Lorenzo (Pete) D. Williams, FAIA, partner in charge of the project, has told AM that due to recent international political events, the consulate housing requires the use of vandal-proof materials and an auxiliary standby power system on top of the usual security precautions.

Construction of the \$4 million housing project will begin in the Spring of 1982, with completion expected in 1983.

Audubon Society Promotes Own Energy Plan

The National Audubon Society, worried that an ever-increasing demand for energy could damage the country environmentally and socially, has developed a plan it believes can allow for growth and an expanded population while avoiding the high risks of the current sentiment in Washington for all-out development.

It is called, reasonably enough, the Audubon Energy Plan.

Right off, the Audubon Energy Plan questions the assumption that we must consume energy at the present rate or higher in order to maintain our standard of living. Instead, it calls for a renunciation of wasteful energy use. The authors point out that our European cousins enjoy high-quality technological comforts at a lower per-capita rate of energy consumption.

According to Audubon scientists, 50 percent more goods and services could be produced today without using any more energy, a third of this through voluntary conservation as the price of energy continues to increase. The rest of the energy savings can be gained through regulations, incentives, and education to encourage energy-efficient appliances, higher auto mileage standards, energy-saving standards for new buildings, and the required retrofitting of old ones before resale.

Regarding the built environment, the Audubon Energy Plan projects a 25 percent increase in the number of buildings by the year 2000, but a decline in building energy demand due to better-

performing insulation, heating systems, air conditioning, and domestic appliances. Again, higher energy costs are tagged as the incentive for a large portion of the increased efficiency, but Audubon also thinks the adoption of energy standards and novel methods of providing credit for the financing of major efficiency improvements will make a substantial difference.

Even getting 50 percent more work out of all our energy sources, we will still need 80 quadrillion Btu's a year (one "quad" is equivalent to 500,000 barrels of oil every day all year). Defining which resources will produce this energy is where the Audubon Energy Plan departs most radically from the common wisdom. It calls for 20 quads of renewable solar energy in various forms and the reduction in use of nonrenewable energy sources other than coal, for which it recommends a modest increase.

The re-tooling of American technology to make it more energy-efficient could cost \$700 billion over the next 20 years, according to Audubon calculations. The authors of the plan contend, however, that this investment will eliminate the need to import-and pay for-40 quads of oil by the year 2000, saving an estimated \$350 billion a year.

The \$570 billion capital investment necessary to become more reliant on solar energy would be cheaper, they assert, than relying on oil, nuclear power, or gas. Almost half of this investment is earmarked in the Audubon Energy Plan for solar collectors. It proposes that they be financed as part of a building's mortgage by the lending institution, or by the local utility which would add the cost to the customer's monthly utility bill, as is presently done to finance nuclear power plants.

The Audubon Energy Plan recognizes that nonrenewable energy sources are exactly that, and suggests their fullscale development is both short-sighted and, in the long run, bound to fail.

Design Standards Help City Win Award

The architecture firm of Foss Associates in Moorhead, Minnesota, estab-lished a pattern of building renovation in Fergus Falls which lead, in part, to the selection of Fergus Falls as the All-America City for 1980-81.

Fergus Falls won the award for three programs. The first was the establishment of a peer counseling program to work with young people in the community with problems in the areas of drug abuse, human sexuality and mental health. The second involved some 300 people in a program to control Dutch Elm disease and resulted in a drastic reduction in the number of trees lost. The



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A new Fergus Falls storefront.

third program was the revitalization of the downtown area.

According to publicity director Ken Peeders, the revitilization program was a response to the opening of a new shopping mall west of Fergus Falls. The City, through a Community Development Block Grant from HUD, set up a revolving grant program of \$350,000 from which no-interest loans were allocated to individual property owners for renovating building exteriors. As these were repaid, the monies were once again distributed to other owners for similar projects. The City allocated other Block Grant Funds to pay a portion of the interest on private loans to rehabilitate apartments within the central business district.

No aesthetic stipulations went with the loans, but a pattern was set when Foss chose to restore commercial properties of a client to a turn-of-the-century theme. One of these buildings, Midwest Fashions, is now being registered in the Minnesota State Historical Register, Since 1979, 25 buildings have been renovated in this style in the primary shopping district.

Peeders said the changes have lead to increased traffic and commercial activity downtown, a measurable increase in the tax base, and, most importantly, the feeling among Fergus Falls residents that the downtown is still vital and will survive.

MSAIA Convention Coming Up

"Architecture—Who Cares?" is the theme of the 47th Annual Minnesota Society/American Institute of Architects (MSAIA) design exhibition. It will be held November 3–6, 1981, in the new Hyatt Regency Hotel in Minneapolis.

The 3,000 people expected to attend will have the opportunity to hear Nor-

wegian architect and author Christian Norberg-Schulz, landscape architect and urban designer M. Paul Friedberg, Romaldo Giurgola of Mitchell/Giurgola Architects, developer Gerald Hines, and Joan Mondale, whose attendance is sponsored by Women in Architecture.

The convention theme, according to convention chairman Ed Kodet, AIA, is intended to challenge those who assume that everybody cares about architecture (or that nobody cares) and to identify those who do care and their importance in shaping what is built. The subthemes for the four days—The Dreamers, The Shapers, and The Builders—refer both to the people and forces that have an impact on architecture as well as to the different perspectives an architect takes as a project evolves.

This year, the professional development seminars are directed toward all the convention participants from design professionals to office managers. The seminars will explore computer uses, financing a development, how to use the new Energy Sourcebook, firm management, leadership dynamics, how to conduct a business meeting, and professional liability, among other topics. Two new displays will be featured. The "Work in Progress" exhibit will give designers an opportunity to see significant projects now on the drawing boards of regional architects. Others will be drawn to the "New Product Demonstration Area" in the Exhibit Hall.

Those who attend for the traditional events can look forward to the President's Reception and Gold Medal Dinner, Guest Night, the annual meeting, the Publisher's Awards Breakfast, and the Honor Awards Display. The Women's Architectural League Tour is of the Blaisdell Place.

"The focus of the 1981 Convention is twofold," Kodet said. "We want to make it interesting, fun, and even controversial; and, to give people the opportunity to gain as much knowledge as possible."

A "singing bridge" sculpture embellishes Loring Lake

California artist Doug Hollis has installed another of his "sound" sculptures, this time on Loring Lake in downtown Minneapolis. He calls it "Waterwalker," doubtless because it stretches lakeward some 100 feet from the south shore.

Observers within earshot discover that *Waterwalker*, when agitated by movement of the wind, water or people, emits sounds that call to mind an enormous stringed instrument. It was commissioned by the Walker art Center.

-News By Elizabeth Hallstrom

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a talent for living

continued from p. 19

else I can think of, how it all works. He was in his so-called abstract expressionist time then; this was prior to his horses and other things. It was a revelation for me. Of course, being an art student I was exposed to everyone from Cezanne to Mondrian to Franz Kline, in every direction, and that was all very helpful. Between my art, my music and my dance training, and of course I had to go and study sculpture too, I feel they have all contributed to my growth.

AM: Has there been any film or cinematic influence in your work?

JD: Yes. I think my greatest influence in cinema has been Fellini, but for reasons that have to do with making manifest his passionate inner-dialogue in the sense of what I call the child-poet vision that I think gnaws and whispers in us all. I think he makes that manifest in a way that I feel kindred to. "Last Year at Marianbad", by Alain Resnais, had a great influence on me too, for its possibilities in the juxtaposition of time and space. A sense that the realities that could be discussed by an artist were non-linear and limitless just as I suppose Jean Genet and James Joyce have influenced literature. Of course, Fellini's earlier films like "La Strada" also influenced me. Bergman influenced me very much with the kind of elegant simplicity and angst presence. Those would be the most influential I would say in the cinema. I'd like to make more films. I made one feature film, "The Suitecase", which was never meant to be made for release, but which, all things considered, was quite successful. I'd like to make another one now for re-

AM: Viewers often have the sense that they are watching a Fellini movie on stage at the Children's Theatre.

lease. I have one in mind. So we'll see.

JD: Well, they say my direction on stage is very cinematic, and I'm sure that it is influenced very much by film. I grew up being taken by my parents to see the Hollywood musicals so I didn't realize what an education I was getting and how much was retained by me from seeing so many of those things. But, I try to do on the stage those things that are mostly associated with film and television, where it's easy through editing to take great leaps through time and space. In the theater this has not been dealt with very much. In some of my own works, such as my play "Good Morning Mr. Tillie", I've done that to quite a degree. Trying to deal with it in some of the so-called classic works is also very possible I feel, and is of interest to directors today. Certainly Liviu

Ciulei's "The Tempest" at the Guthrie exhibits strong influence of the cinema and modern art on his work.

AM: Do you have any thoughts on architecture in terms of day to day experiencing?

JD: I guess my own attitude about architecture is like my attitude about painting, music and dance. I have eclectic tastes; if it seems right for the place, the time, the person, then I like it. But if it seems related only to a theory or to reasons that don't reflect either the use or the people who are going to use it, then it distresses me. The purity of it for me is not an intellectual thing, it's tied to the spirit involved. I'm much more interested in the spirit involved in the use of architecture than I am in some concept.

AM: Any thoughts on living and lifestyle?

JD: I deal, being in the theater, with such a wide variety of people and concerns and stimuli that I need to be, necessarily I suppose, somewhat eclectic in my embrace. But I like this to genuinely reflect who I am. I love to cook and make the preparation of food as much a design and a work of art as anything else. The ceremony of it is very important to me and the balance of ingredients, that's a chemistry you know. The presentation, the celebration through eating, is all a part of it for me. I cooked brunch the other day for 130 people, including a 15-pound salmon that I poached. I love to do that. I love to engineer a little meal for four people. I recently donated to public TV a seven-course Italian meal for the highest bidder. I think that's wonderful: to try to make something nice. I like the sense of harmony that is possible and the awareness of it among a group of people who come in contact with one another, who are strangers, for instance, to recognize that they can make something anew in their coming together that can belong only to them and recognize that that is what living is about. That's what I try to teach my students; to begin by being sensitive to that possibility, rather than carrying their own myopic sense of possibility with them at the exclusion of all other possibilities. So that means a great deal to me, whenever I encounter it, or whenever I can engender it in anyway. I consider myself lucky to have, in the Children's Theater, in essence a laboratory for developing my work. It is certainly one of the most marvelous theater plants in the world, and the fact that it's devoted to young people is all the more exciting. And I'm happy that I'm able to work here in a city that is alive with possibilities for artists.

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-Interview by Bruce N. Wright

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Fiat has made small cars before, but past efforts tended to shrink the cars down to toy-like sizes with engines so small that they could probably run the heaters or air conditioners on most American cars. In contrast the Panda is designed for full sized people and full size people-type activities, like hauling things or sleeping on the fold-down seats. The rear seat can be adjusted very easily into many positions, from regular upright seating, to a storage sling, a bed, or it can even be completely removed to provide 32 cubic feet of cargo volume.

There are other nice details: The dash board padding can be taken out for cleaning and the ash tray on the front shelf can be moved to either side of the front seating area. Instrumentation is very well designed for a car of this type with straightforward graphics and just enough warning lights, rather than the usual redundancy, to cover the important safety systems.

Panda's boxy form recalls the Renault Le Car, with its large front and rear elastic resin molded bumpers. However, the lower body is painted a matching protective plastic coating, acting as a built-in trim guard. The exterior as well as the interior design are by consultants Italdesign, headed by Giorgetto Giugiaro, who has designed for most of the world's automobile companies (see also page 40). His most notable designs include the VW Rabbit, the Audi 4000, 5000, the Hyundai Pony and the Alfa Romeo GTV 2000.

The car is already on the streets in Europe and is expected to be introduced to the U.S. in 1982. It is one of the better bargains in today's discouraging auto market, currently selling for \$4,705.

—B.N.W.





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The items on this page represent some of the best of the bargains. They were found in the Uptown outlet of *Elements*.



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It is so simple, it could be made from a coat hanger, if coat hangers were bigger and plastic coated. This \$7.50 rack attaches to the wall and can hold anything longer than a toothpick that would go into a hanging file.



Plastic Tumblers

Remember the water glass in a typical soda fountain before the days of the nubby plastic tumbler? Someone did, because you can buy a plastic version at *Elements* thick enough to keep a drink cold and your hand warm. The price: $45 \notin$ for the 10 oz. size and a quarter for the juice glass.



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If you have ever priced file baskets, which often go for \$10 apiece, these \$4.00 stacking plastic bins practically sell themselves. They come in blue, red, white, yellow, brown and sand, and at that price are cheap enough to decorate the garage.



Wire Rack Shelving

This rolling cutting board is priced a la carte: \$13.00 apiece for the deep drawers, \$11.50, for the shallower ones, \$49.00 for the cutting board, \$42.00 for the frame, and \$18.00 for the four casters. But considering it is built for permanent use and does not have to stay forever in the kitchen, it offers a lot for the initial investment.



Clamp-On Lights

This clamp-on lamp is plastic down to its hardware without being flimsy. *Elements* stocks them in several bright colors and charges \$14.95, which means they are cheap enough to consider buying two.



Wooden Slat Chairs

Similar to the old-time folding chairs that used to line the walls for grange hall dances, these beechwood chairs are just as simple, sturdy and stackable. They cost \$19.95 apiece. The flamingoes are no bargain at any price.

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Effective on and after July 1, 1980, retainage provisions of public contracts entered into by the State of Minnesota or any of its political subdivisions are amended as follows:

An amount not to exceed **5%** of the value of the contract may be retained. Such retainage may be reduced or eliminated if work progresses satisfactorily.

Contractor may deposit certain securities with the public contracting agency, or in a bank or trust company, in lieu of cash retainage.

Interest on the securities shall be paid to the contractor as it accrues.

THE PIPING INDUSTRY BELIEVES THE PROVISIONS OF THIS AMENDMENT TO PUBLIC LAW HAVE MERIT, AND CAN SERVE AS A MODEL FOR PRIVATE AS WELL AS PUBLIC CONTRACTS.

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An Aspen Diary

A first-timer from Minneapolis consumes ''The Italian Idea,'' a tasty antipasto

By Joanna Baymiller

The West begins in Aspen. Or so it seems to the arriving Minnesotans gaping at the sawtooth mountains and azure sky. Here the native garb is California casual, cowboy or peasant chic; the favored mode of transportation the four-wheel drive Cherokee Chief; the architecture Saloon Modern or Western Victoriana, the latter done up in cerises and mauves.

Half the allure of the annual International Design Conference in Aspen (IDCA) is this once quiet little mining village that has become a winter haven for aspiring jet setters and a summer spa for arts and music lovers.

The IDCA is a Club Med with Content—a miasma of lectures, films, tours, special events, and parties, beginning at nine in the morning and, depending on your friends and your stamina, often lasting until the wee hours of the next day.

Following, from the notebook of this celebrant of The Italian Idea, are the week's variegated impressions:

Sunday We arrive at the tent on the outskirts of downtown for all-day registration.

Many are here to find or make friends, and this begins immediately at Sunday's opening reception, a free form mixer held on the Meadows near the tent. Here and there among the hordes cloaked in colorful anonymity, one could find the recognizable likes of designer Milton Glaser, architect Moshe Safdie, architecture critic Peter Blake, filmmaker Saul Bass, Ben and Jane Thompson, designers Ivan Chermayeff and George Nelson, photographer Henry Wolf and others. The wall-to-wall crowd consciously performs: dressed in everything from New Wave punk chic to Rodeo Drive ritz, their perfected nonchalance disguises the search for someone who might be Someone, or perhaps some *One*.

But soon the nighttime chill is upon us, and we hurry off to find dinner. At Sunday night's brief opening session, Conference Chairman Bill Lacy assures us we're in for a special week. It starts to be special on the way home. It snows. We hurry home to sleep in insulated blankets.

Monday This first morning we are prompt. We shiver in front of the tent, around food bars stocked with the right stuff for the sophisticated continental

breakfast fan. Fresh squeezed orange juice and fresh baked croissants, tiny round muffins, fruit breads, soft cheeses and yogurt. Apple juice and coffee. Just after nine a recorded trumpet calls us to the tent. We make our way through a narrow opening past several squadrons of security people in Conference T-shirts, whose job it is to screen out gate crashers.

Alberto Arbasino, contributing editor of La Republica, leads off. He articulates the effects of political turmoil on Italian culture, and from there we're off. Composer and musician Roman Vlad demonstrates on the grand piano the particular nuances that define Italian harmonies. By lunchtime, we're spilling into the sunlight to find that sandcastler Gary Kinsella and his volunteers have already begun shaping what will become, by week's end, a stunning 12th-century Italian hilltown in miniature.

This afternoon we face a redundancy of appeal-



ing choices scheduled concurrently. We split up to cover what we can, still hoping to see and hear everything. The evening program has no competition. The star is filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci, and he's a sellout. He sits in a spotlight on a small stool, and, unlike his films, he's a disarming naif. His brief answers to questions are followed by a screening of his film, "Luna," which falls somewhere between self-conscious melodrama and High Art.

Tuesday After too many choices on Monday, there are too few today. But those scheduled are *fortissimo*: auto designer Sergio Pininfarina in the morning, and Olivetti design consultant Mario Bellini in the afternoon. Bellini's 270 slides offer a look at some of the products of one of the world's most gifted industrial design minds, and many later remark that this presentation is one of the highlights of the Conference.

By afternoon the weather warms, and during an extended recess in programming we trade sweaters for swim suits. A few set out for horseback riding at a nearby ranch. Others motor up the narrow roads of Red Mountain where contemporary redwood chateaus of boggling cost crown the crest of every rise. Some go in for serious hiking (not easy in the thin air); for sunbathing (can be dangerous in the highaltitude sun), or for shopping (almost confiscatory



for all but the rich). We find shopping for restaurants an onerous chore: In a place where everyone always eats out, the options seem limitless. We choose Primavera Restorante, a northern Italian cafe famous for its homemade pasta. For the day's final session we hear the genius auto designer Giorgetto Giugiaro leave American models wheezing at the starting line.

Wednesday We begin to notice local demography: Aspen is full of youth and beauty. But there seem to be no old people here.

Today's program includes one of only a few presentations on architecture. The IBM Fellows, including Lanfranco Bombelli, Revel Fox, John Hejduk, Evaristo Nicolao and Piero Sartogo, offer fiveminute narratives of their work, illustrated with twelve selected slides apiece. The session provokes a skeptical challenge from Moshe Safdie, who speaks from the audience. Safdie demands to know if Hejduk (one of the New York Five) could really live in the theoretical abstraction of a house he has been describing. Hejduk backpaddles a bit, then says yes, he could. Safdie looks skeptical, shakes his head, and shortly thereafter walks out. A retinue of admirers follows.

In the afternoon there is a guided tour of a half dozen ultimate designer cars parked on the Meadows, and the sound of clicking shutters is a noticeable accompaniment. Nearby, the sandcastle has begun to sport winding streets and protruding turrets. More clicks. All the while, the 30 photographers in Henry Wolf's photo workshop are busy on assignment, taking photos of one another. Life imitates art imitating life, as onlookers click away at them.

By evening we are suffering from sensory overload. Today's program had included a series of witty animated films, including Leo Lionni's multi-award winning "Swimmy"; a tour of Venice via George Nelson's slides; a review of Italian design magazines and a discussion on radical design led by architect Gaetano Pesce. The day's final event is Massimo and Lella Vignelli and their diverse body of work. Visions of Heller plastic dinnerware and Knoll graphics follow hosts of graphic designers to bed.

Thursday A lucky 800 or so of the conferees have tickets to the featured event, an all-day picnic at Aspen Highlands, 3,000 feet up the mountain by gondola. The picnic is almost worth the long waits in lift lines and the vertigo of the ride up. After the Italian-accented comestibles, we take two more lifts to the summit of the mountain, 11,000 feet up, for a wraparound view of terra Colorado. Gliders circle below us, riding the thermals in lazy loops, and far below we can just distinguish a white dot: the Aspen tent. We feel on top of the world.

By evening we are exhausted from lollygagging in the high altitude. Just the same, we make sure we're half an hour early to the tent (as does everyone else). The place is crammed. At least 2,000 people have barrelled past security for a fashion show that's pure theatre. Ottavio and Rosita Missoni, luminaries of the fashion world, have brought in 25 models draped in their extravagant sweater and legging looks. The corps of Denver models are led by a leggy pair of high-stepping prancers from New York who come down the center runway like trotters at the Hambletonian Derby. These clothes could melt many a harsh Minnesota winter, and the showmanship is first class. The audience is on its feet and screaming. What could top this?

Fireworks, of course. Computer synchronized fireworks that fill the sky in perfect timing with a soundtrack of Verdi operas and classical codas. The Grucci family, impressarios of this extravaganza, will get a standing ovation tomorrow at the wrapup. This final night of the conference we crowd into Andrés, along with almost everyone else from the IDCA, it seems, and finish up the night in impromptu parties that go on well into the next day.

Friday The last morning session draws perhaps a third of the group from the day before. Return-to-real-life-looks appear on faces. We listen to final presentations, are told the theme of next year's conference, and applaud the cast and crew. And it's over. A few linger, trying to stretch the moment.

We take picnic lunches and head for Maroon Bells, a notable lake that lies in a valley ten miles away. It is quiet, sunny, and picturesque. We gingerly poke our toes into the mountain-fed lake and find the water near-ice. Returning to town, we have a few hours for gallery hopping, last-minute buying, and more picture-snapping. We stop to see the opening of a "Rauschenburg in the Rockies" exhibit at the Art Center, drive to a secluded site to catch a glimpse of the Charles Moore house being built for big-time developer Gerald Hines, and copy down names and addresses of people we've met. There are a few emotional goodbyes.



Joanna Baymiller writes frequently on architecture and design.

letter from the publisher



Readers of AM, we invite you to share a new pleasure with us, especially if you are also lovers of beautiful books, internationally famous magazines, joyful toys for children (and others), mirthful cards, distinguished architectural drawings, and a host of other extraordinary objects of an impeccable buyer's affections.

We, the Minnesota architects, are about to open a new store, *another* store, if you please; for many of you already know about and patronize our well-established store, The Architectural Center, in downtown St. Paul.

Our new store will open October 1 at one of the very best locations in downtown Minneapolis—Nicollet Mall, between Ninth and Tenth streets. We have given our new store a new name: Paper Architecture. The St. Paul store will be acquiring the same name, since we think it more literally conveys the fact that we shall be selling wares related by appearance, purpose or poetic extension to architecture. The architects who will design the new store are the Design Consortium. They were selected by a distinguished MSAIA jury following a request for proposals addressed to all Minnesota firms. Between now and October 1, they will be supervising the work of creating what I predict will be one of the most talked-about retail environments in the Twin Cities. You may not only look forward to experiencing the store on the Mall, but also in the pages of AM, in our December holiday issue.

If the store is the main event, may we also offer an attractive supporting bill. The news, for example, that AM is now being read by architects and friends of architecture in all fifty states, as well as in a good many foreign countries. Moreover, we expect to see their numbers increasing appreciably, inasmuch as this magazine will be available at bookstores in New York, Boston, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and a few other major cities across the country. So if you have family or friends beyond the Upper Midwest whom you'd like to steer to a bookstore selling AM, just phone us (612/874-8771) and we'll give you a store name and location.

Lastly, I should like to seize on this opportunity to welcome publicly the new members of the Minnesota Society of the American Institute of Architects. If this seems a somewhat parochial thing to do, may I respectfully remind you that they and their fellow members are not only our publishing associates, they are also our cheering section, urging us to be as good as we dare to be.

James P. Cramer Publisher