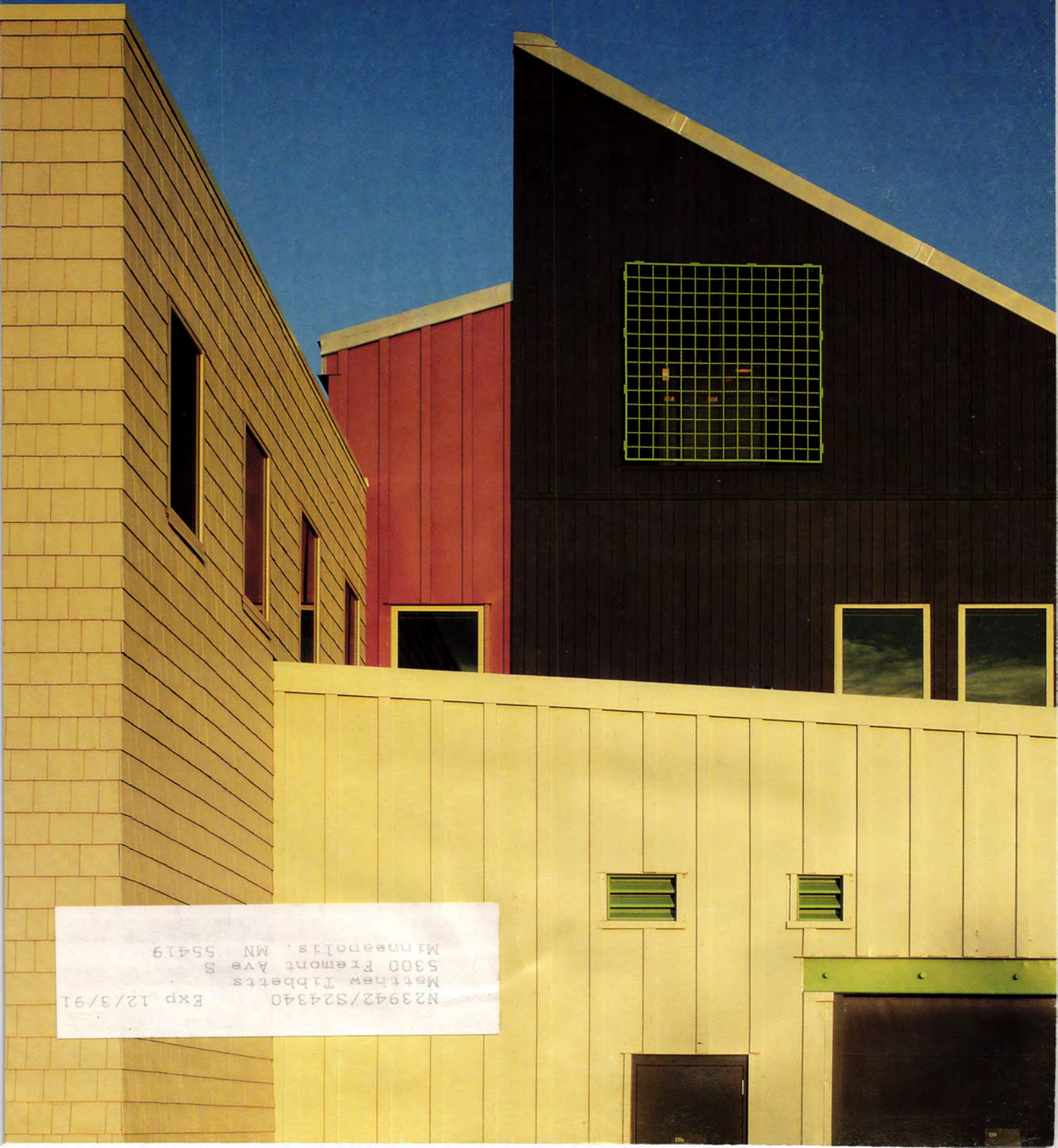



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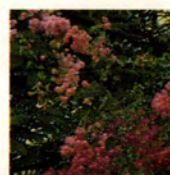
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14 American Indian masks



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Cover: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Center. Architect: Ellerbe Becket. Photographer: George Heinrich.

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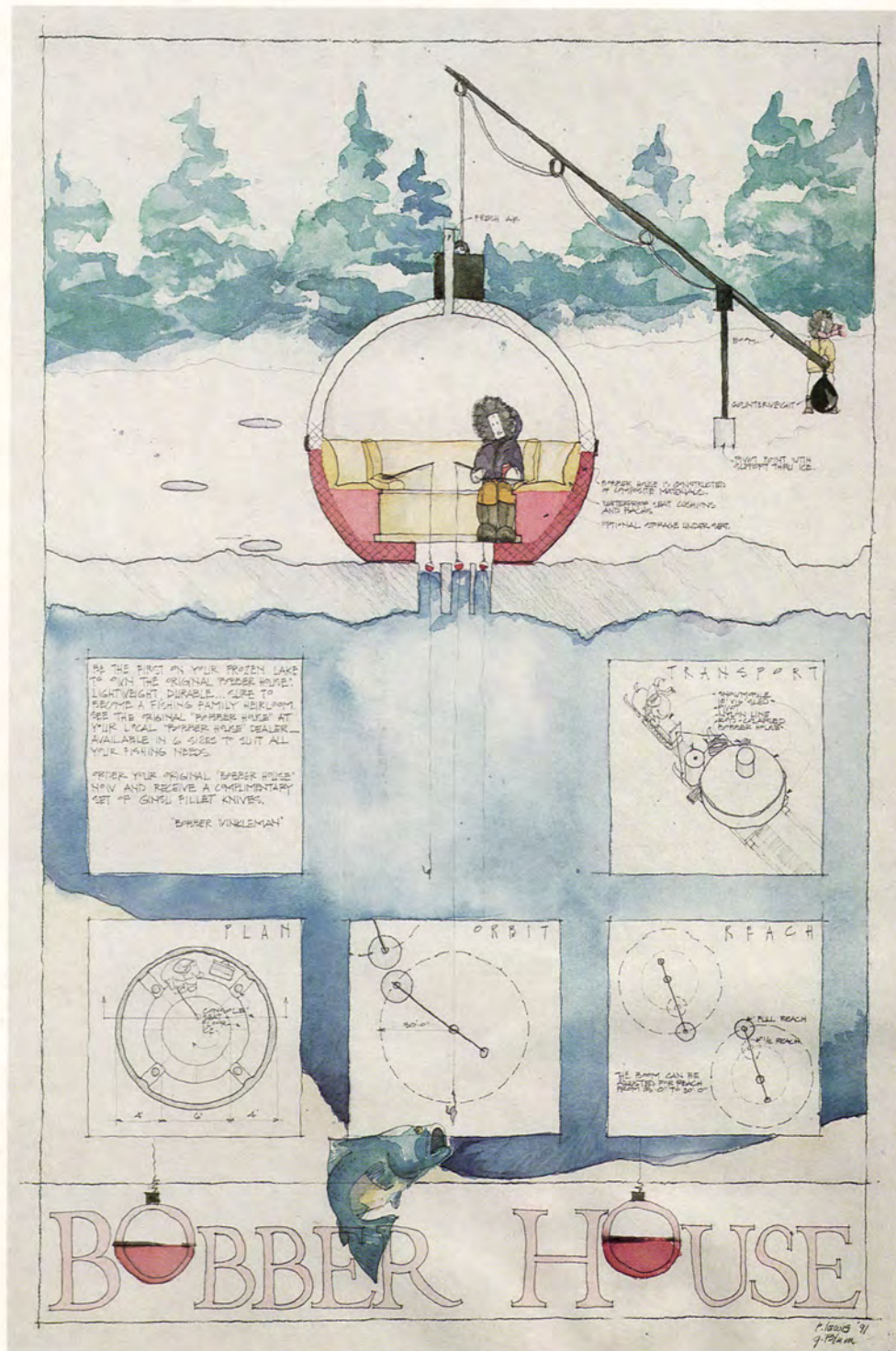
sketches

Anglers' delight

Ice fishing is all the rage in Minnesota, and nobody knows that better than conceptual artist Larry Stark. He helped organize the

"Delight on Ice" ice-house-design competition, held in conjunction with the Minnesota Society of Architects' annual winter design retreat in January. The 30 submissions represented the eclectic—and

frequently eccentric—tastes of angler-enthusiasts. The entries ranged from a knock-off of the Chrysler Building, a Frank Gehry-inspired carp, a "flying fish" that glides across the ice, to modernist- and postmodernist-inspired houses. Conference speakers, along with the general audience, selected the Bobber House as the best of the catch. Designed by Rebecca J. Lewis, Gail Blum and Jeff Denny, the house features a bobber balanced by a weight. Simply lift up on the bobber while the weight holds the house up, and ice fishermen can slip in through a hole on the bottom. The entries will be part of an exhibit next January at the Minnesota Museum of Art, which will coincide with the St. Paul Winter Carnival and the Super Bowl.



Sky-high skyway

Minneapolis will see its first 4th-level skyway when the new Dain Bosworth/Neiman-Marcus complex opens this fall. The \$1 million bridge will span Sixth Street from Gaviidae Promenade to Gaviidae Common and will feature the image of outstretched wings, a reference to the two retail centers' "loon" theme. Brookfield Development, which manages Gaviidae Common and is developing the new project, pushed for a 4th-level bridge to encourage consumer traffic on the upper floors. Gaviidae Common's upper levels have had lackluster leasing since the complex opened nearly two years ago. In granting Brookfield's request, the city council set stiff guidelines for future skyway development, which, among other points, prohibits skyways from crossing Nicollet Mall above the second level. The Dain Bosworth/Neiman-Marcus complex is designed by Lohan Associates of Chicago.

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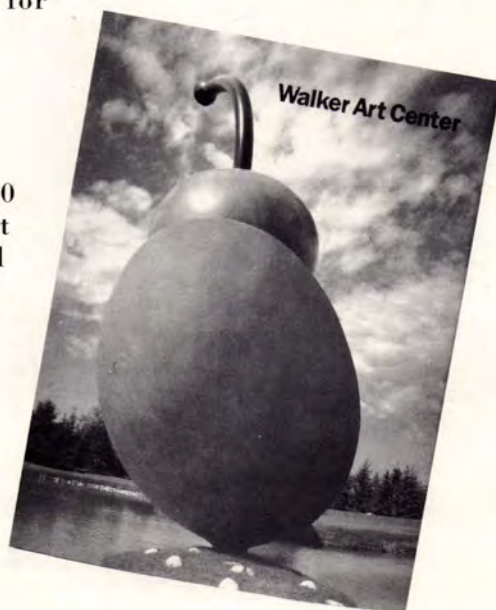
For all those who love the dusty sanctums of the library, who hold special memories of small-town Carnegies to big-city libraries, *Reading Rooms*, edited by Susan Allen Toth and John Coughlan, pays homage to the American library through a collection of stories, memoirs, essays and poems. Divided thematically, the 486-page anthology features the writings of Eudora Welty, Nikki Giovanni, Grace Paley, Bernard Malamud, James Baldwin, Maud Hart Lovelace, Annie Dillard, and others. Toth is the author of several collections of essays (and also is represented in the book). Coughlan is a life-long supporter of the library and holds an extensive collection of Carnegie Library postcards. *Reading Rooms*, published by Doubleday, is available at area bookstores for \$27.50.

At the Walker

In the past 30 years, Walker Art Center has moved

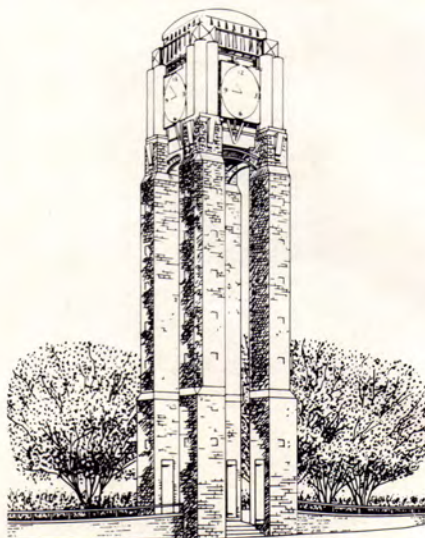
to the forefront of contemporary museums in America, and the

recently published *Walker Art Center: Painting and Sculpture from the Collection*, lays testimony to the institution's vast resources. The 576-page volume includes essays by art historians, as well as an introduction by former director Martin Friedman, who led the museum since 1960 before retiring last year. The glossy, four-color book contains more than 500 illustrations, nearly 300 in color. Published by Walker Art Center and Rizzoli International Publications, the book is available at the Walker bookstore or through Rizzoli for \$85.



Finding the suburban center

As housing developments and freeways continue to swallow the suburban countryside, many towns have begun a quest to locate their centers, to bring focus to random urban sprawl. Bloomington, in celebration of its 30th birthday as a "city," has undertaken a campaign to build a 53-foot clock tower at the corner of 98th Street and Lyndale Avenue, the city's historic origin and unofficial "downtown." Funded through donations from individuals, businesses and organizations, the Bloomington History Clock Tower, designed by Johnson/Reis & Associates of Minneapolis, will be made of brick and stone and feature four clock faces, musical chimes, commemorative plaques honoring donors and a 5-foot bronze seal illustrating the suburb's 147-year history. At night, the lit tower will serve as the city's beacon. As part of the clock-tower celebration, a time capsule will be sealed for opening at the city's 50th anniversary. Construction is pending final funding, but may start as early as this spring.





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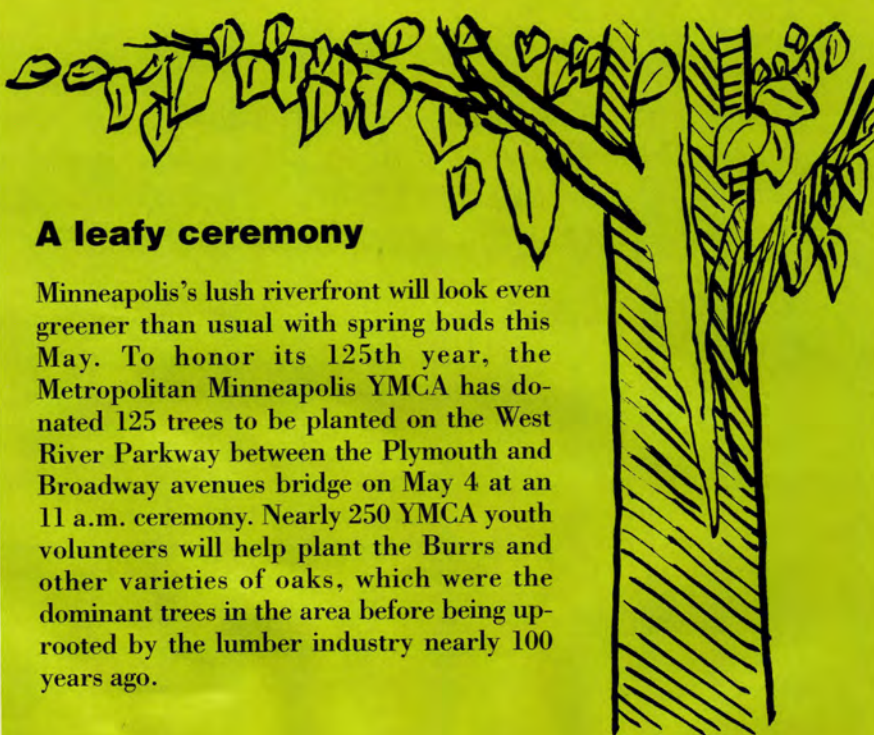
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Endangered species



As crackerbox, suburban movie screens continue to proliferate, Minneapolis stands to lose one of its great modern screens. The Cooper Theater in St. Louis Park reeled its last picture show in late January, and now stands waiting for new development. The theater's owner, Cineplex Odeon, sold the house to General Mills, which plans to level the site to make room for—just what we need—a new chain restaurant. The circular Cooper, with its 135-foot curving screen, was the first theater in Minneapolis to introduce moviegoers in 1962 to Cinerama, a high-technology, audio/visual system that used three synchronized film projectors to fuse panoramic images, thus propelling the audience into the middle of the action. And even as Cinerama's popularity waned and Hollywood switched to "wide screen," the Cooper remained with the largest screen in town. A citizens' group has been formed to help save the theater, but that may prove a tough battle because the theater lacks historic designation. With its familiar orange facade and broad-stroke insignia, the Cooper is a 1960s interpretation of the grand movie-houses of yesteryear—and now a fading light.



A leafy ceremony

Minneapolis's lush riverfront will look even greener than usual with spring buds this May. To honor its 125th year, the Metropolitan Minneapolis YMCA has donated 125 trees to be planted on the West River Parkway between the Plymouth and Broadway avenues bridge on May 4 at an 11 a.m. ceremony. Nearly 250 YMCA youth volunteers will help plant the Burrs and other varieties of oaks, which were the dominant trees in the area before being uprooted by the lumber industry nearly 100 years ago.

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Minneapolis/St. Paul Home Tour Various sites May 4-5 Free and open to the public

The fourth annual Minneapolis/St. Paul Home Tour will open 65 Twin Cities houses to the public, offering visitors the opportunity to discover new neighborhoods and discuss remodeling ideas with local designers and homeowners. The 25 St. Paul houses and 40 Minneapolis residences, many of which have been remodeled recently, represent a spectrum of prices, styles, sizes and vintages. Experts on energy efficiency, local schools, remodeling techniques and neighborhoods will be available to answer questions.

For more information call 673-2491 in Minneapolis and 228-3336 in St. Paul.

The Art of Paul Manship Milwaukee Art Museum Through May 5

Renowned Art Deco sculptor and St. Paul native Paul Manship is the subject of this exhibit, which will feature more than 120 sculptures, medals, drawings and decorative pieces. The artist was known for his technical virtuosity, and he personally supervised every aspect of the production of his sculptures, from the initial sketches to the final gild-

Architecture Tomorrow Edge of a City Walker Art Center April 21-June 23 \$3, free for members Opening-day lecture April 21, 3 p.m. WAC Auditorium Free with admission

Walker Art Center winds up its landmark six-part "Architecture Tomorrow" series with "Edge of a City," in which New York architect Steven Holl investigates the urban environment and explores strategies for curbing urban sprawl. Holl will use models, maps, photomurals and watercolors in his large-scale installation to present six city edges—Cleveland, Dallas-Fort Worth, Manhattan, Phoenix, Milan and Fukuoka, Japan. He will emphasize the sensory experience of cities by showing the play of light and shadow on stone, the movement of clouds across the night sky and the shifting planes of tall buildings.

A professor of architecture at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Holl believes that built forms should stem from the direct sensory experience of place, which he discussed in a 1988 essay in *Design Quarterly*, "Within the City." His firm, Steven Holl Architects, established in 1973, has won numerous awards and honors, including the 1990 Arnold W. Brunner Prize in Architecture.

Holl will discuss the creative process behind "Edge of a City" on April 21 at 3 p.m. His design for the University of Minnesota College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture addition will be on display in the Walker lobby.

For more information call WAC at 375-7600.



Case Study: Porta Vittoria, Milan, will be part of the "Edge of a City" series at Walker Art Center, through June 23.



Paul Manship's *The Fox and the Crow*, bronze, 1952.

ing of the surfaces. Because of his style and subject matter, his work was particularly well-suited to architectural uses, and he received numerous commissions to decorate buildings, parks and gardens. One of his best-known works is the massive statue of Prometheus, built in 1934 for Rockefeller Center in New York City. A 214-page catalog will accompany the exhibit. For more information call (414) 271-9508.

Continued on page 58

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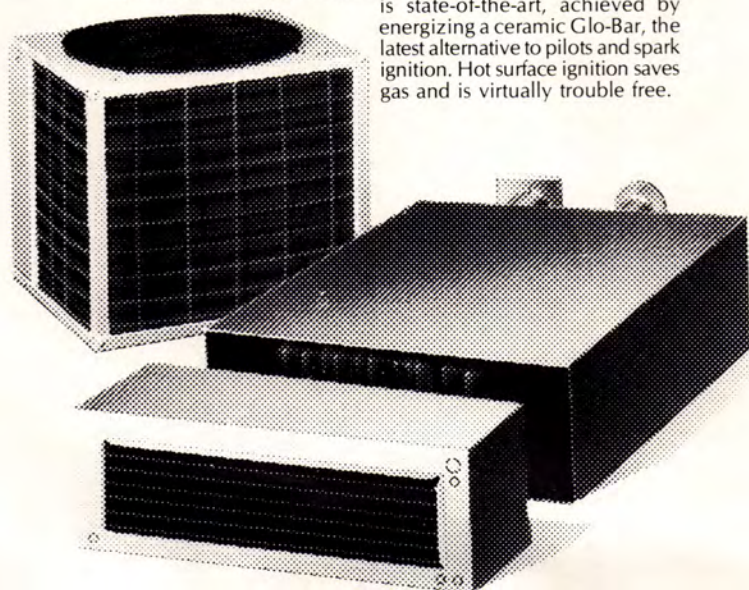
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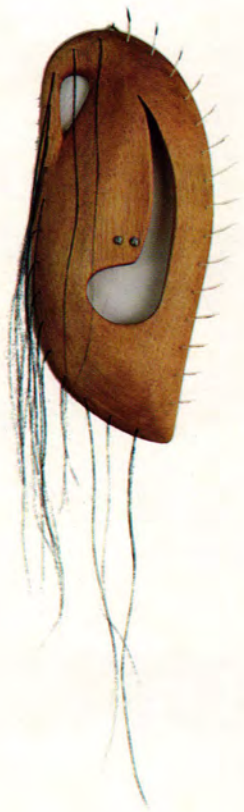
objects of design

Since prehistoric times, masks have been made to conceal, to protect and to transform the personality of the wearer. An integral part of ritual and myth, they link the past with the present and serve as a means to understand the mysteries of the universe. The masks here—all by contemporary American Indians and currently on view at the Raven Gallery, Edina—reveal their makers' deep concern with traditional values and beliefs and keen attachment to the natural world. For with wood, fur, fiber and clay, these artists show us their gods and demons, their ancestors and ghosts, and the great animal spirits that inhabit the land and sky. And in so doing, they help preserve their heritage for generations to come.

Sandra L. Lipshultz



DON F. WONG



By taking a facial cast of a respected Ojibwe physician, Sally Thielen created this haunting portrait of Dr. Geoff De Leary (above, \$500). Frank Downey's pine mask (above center, \$390) also represents a healer of sorts—an Inuit shaman, whose skewed features indicate his trancelike state. Canadian artist Gerard Tsonakwa illustrates Abenaki legends and his own dreams in his work. His Fun Maker (above left, \$650) celebrates life's pranksters, or clowns, while his Elder Ghost (lower far left, \$350) honors the dead. As one of the Holy People, Spider Woman (lower far right, \$1,250) first made plants and animals and then fashioned humans out of the four sacred colors. Alan Wadzinski used painted cedar, copper and horsehair for his Whistling Antelope (first from lower left, \$700), while Lillian Pitt combined clay, feathers and iridescent glazes in her puckish Stick Indian (lower center, \$500). Her Birdman (first from lower right, \$950) recalls the supernatural power of eagles and ravens to traverse different cosmic realms.

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Louis Lundgren: Building a program to house the homeless

By David Anger

Long before the champagne was popped at swank black-tie benefits for the homeless, and long after the issue will have lost its fizz with the glitterati, Lou Lundgren will be talking about affordable housing.

"I see a housing problem," says Lundgren, who has been a leading figure in Minnesota architecture for years and one of the chief advocates of enlisting architects in the fight against homelessness. "And I see myself as being especially skilled as an architect at bringing diverse people together; I feel that I have an obligation to help humankind."

Architect, planner, developer and civic activist, Lundgren points to downtown St. Paul where much of his architectural achievement was completed during the urban-renewal heydays of the late-1960s and early-1970s. Like proud monuments, Lundgren's architectural drawings, including Kellogg Square, the Federal District Court Building and the First Bank of St. Paul addition, fill his Lowertown office.

A nonconformist with idiosyncratic ways, the St. Paul native and University of Minnesota graduate says he first had his "eyes blasted open" about the world's housing crisis after attending a conference in Mexico City in 1972. Only a decade later, Lundgren answered a "call" to action when the housing crisis reached epidemic proportions throughout the United States.

For the first time since World War II, home ownership in the United States is on the decline, and the number of homeless range from a conservative 250,000 to an



Louis Lundgren in his Lowertown office. Believing that architects should help alter society's problems, Lundgren has led an ambitious campaign to enlist design professionals in the war against homelessness.

HILARY BULLOCK

alarmist 3 million. In the Twin Cities alone, an estimated 30,000 people use the shelters in a single year. Yet despite presidential proclamations and media clamoring, homelessness awaits a concerted, well-financed response from the federal government, Lundgren says. He laments that the profession, and the country, is too shortsighted. "There's too much attention placed on what can you do for me today, not what can you do for me in 20 years," Lundgren says.

Seeking to mobilize architects, Lundgren served as chairman of the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) Housing Committee in 1984 and hosted a three-day meeting in St. Paul to address the issues of housing the homeless. The meeting was the genesis of the AIA Search for Shelter design-charette program, a collaboration between architects, design-related professionals, students and non-profit housing agencies. Since 1987, Lundgren has led the Twin Cities' design charette, an intensive, weekend-long session in which designers break into teams

to evaluate existing buildings (presented by agencies) and propose solutions for converting the buildings into suitable housing for the poor.

Lundgren's exhaustive vitae further reflects civic and professional involvements past and present, including board membership on the St. Paul Overnight Shelter Committee, Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless and Community Action Housing Now. He is founder and president of Minnesota Affordable Housing, a non-profit organization formed to create affordable housing, and he is this year's recipient of the St. Paul Chapter/AIA Citizen Architect award.

Some colleagues view Lundgren more as a catalyst than an innovator, but nonetheless applaud his efforts.

"I think Lou's work has been very valuable," says Lisa Kugler, housing director for the Whittier Alliance, a non-profit neighborhood association in south Minneapolis. "The charettes have

Continued on page 60

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Finding the aesthetic core

By Rich Laffin

In his book *Elegant Solutions*, Owen Edwards refers to mathematics and physics, in which the term "elegant solution" indicates a way of solving a problem that is not only correct and efficient, but also pleasing to contemplate. This concept applies to other fields as well. Edwards, for example, notes suspension bridges. In particular, he cites the Golden Gate Bridge, whose beauty and grace spring inevitably from the necessities of its construction, as "the kind of solution that can make you grateful for the problem."

We tend to take for granted the elegant solutions of the world around us. From industrial designers have come articles like paper clips, zippers and Swiss army knives, exquisite in their detailing and economy of form. Rubik Cubes, Alexander Calder toys and the illustrations of Dutch artist M.C. Escher

delight the eye and engage the mind for similar reasons.

Is it possible to identify examples of architecture that we also would deem elegant? Architecture, being fundamentally more complex, is harder to assess. But it is those buildings whose design requirements have been solved in the most direct manner that have their own special aesthetic value.

Several examples readily come to mind.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has become part of our national consciousness and will undoubtedly affect the way we hereafter view all memorials. The Vietnam War was the source of tremendous pain, not just for grieving families, friends and veterans, but for all who questioned our nation's role in world politics. Maya Lin, who designed the Memorial in 1983, immersed herself in a well-formed question: How do you represent the figurative wound that needed healing? The stark presentation of the names, the way one is reflected in the polished-black granite among the names of

the dead and the symbolic and physical closure of the walls all contribute to the immediacy of the design. The Memorial possesses the quality described by British architect Peter Smithson [in referring to Stonehenge] when he observed that "the most charged of architectural forms are those that capture the empty air."

James Stirling's Leicester University Engineering Building in England (1959-1963) is perhaps as free of preconceived stylistic elements as any structure is likely to be. The design was generated from a rigorous problem that incorporated diverse functions with different spatial and daylighting requirements on a small, awkward corner of the campus. The ensemble of resulting forms is innovative and memorable. One is reminded of designer Charles Eames's comment that the solution should articulate the stated needs, so that the problem itself becomes part of the pleasure of the design process. The more one returns to studying Leicester, the more one is rewarded by new understandings



The Golden Gate Bridge's beauty and grace spring naturally from its form and function.



The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a design whose simple elegance has touched our national consciousness.

gleaned from its massing, its juxtaposition of materials (primarily glass and masonry) and its all-important connections.

Rice Park in downtown St. Paul, built in 1849 and redesigned in 1968, provides the city with an identifiable cultural center that glues together a number of institutions. The park itself is perhaps not so striking as the edifices that define its edges: the Landmark Center, the St. Paul Public Library, the St. Paul Hotel, the Minnesota Club and the Ordway Music Theater. Journalist Dave Moore writes in *Minnesota Monthly* that here, surrounded by these older buildings which "reflect the patient workmanship of a slower time,

I am reassured by the sense of stability. And civility. I like to imagine many of the people who frequent this little world to be educators, historians, librarians, concierges, curators, artists—people who do preferred and chosen work."

The sense of stability that Moore writes about is becoming the exception in urban America. Architecture should be everyone's concern because we view our cities largely in terms of their buildings and public spaces. In Europe, for example, we are aware that, until this century, the principal buildings of a town—the churches, the town hall, the guild halls, the opera house—represented the ongoing life of the community.

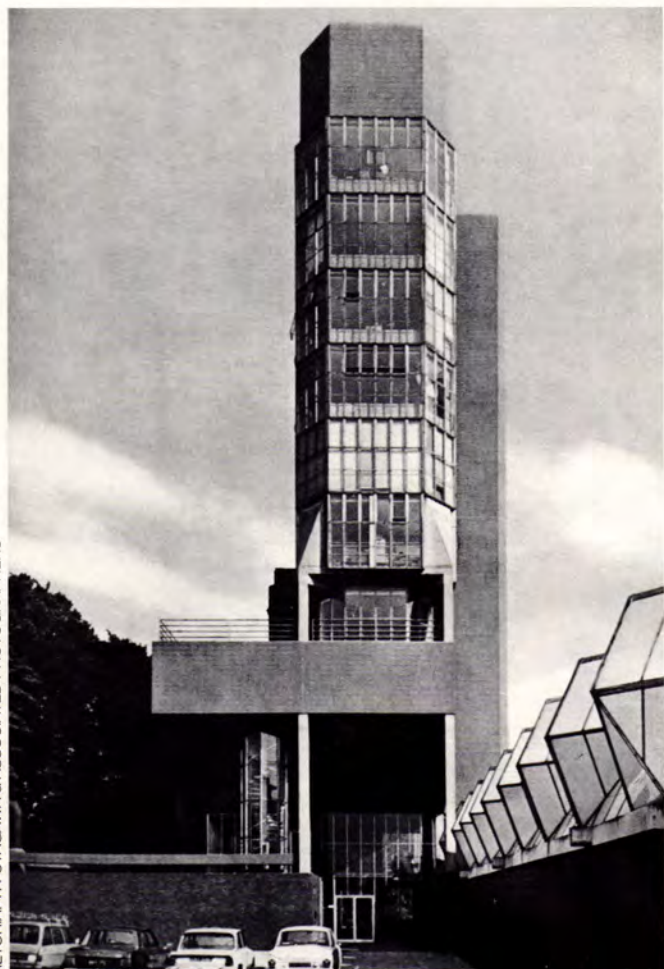
But in an age when most urban buildings are commercial, when buildings are seen as commodities valued primarily for their leasing rates, what is allowed to endure? The Armory in Minneapolis is a landmark structure,

yet we are ready to raze it because it no longer produces revenue.

Design takes on ethical dimensions whenever it affects people's lives by altering the environment. Robert Campbell, in a recent lecture at Walker Art Center, addressed our distressing tendency to isolate groups of people, through design, by class. Middle-class suburbs, pedestrian-hostile roadways, sterile skyways and faceless office and government buildings all tend to force people apart in ways that are both overt and subtle.

Poor design can debase the human spirit. Owen Edwards suggests that "inept solutions (or merely expedient ones), nondurable goods and opportunistic concepts all reveal a kind of entropy, one that little by little erodes our faith in the future, and in ourselves." Poor designs "are more than annoyances; they are saboteurs of the soul." Edwards concludes that in a fundamental way, the number of elegant solutions available to a society is a measure of that society's well-being. Architects, designers and planners must become stronger advocates for the type of world in which we all want to live.

Rich Laffin is an architect with Tom Ellison Architects, Inc.



The Leicester Engineering Building by James Stirling incorporates diverse functions without stylistic pretense.



Rice Park in downtown St. Paul has become the cultural center of the city.

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editorial

Square one Minneapolis forever seems to be starting from square one, rebuilding from scratch. In this issue, we look at one of Minneapolis's grandest schemes to reinvent the city. The Gateway urban-renewal plans of the early-1960s leveled 17 downtown blocks in an attempt to clean up the north-loop's tarnished image. The area had become Minneapolis's minislum, with deteriorating buildings, notorious bars and more than its fair share of winos and derelicts. The city's answer to this urban blight was simple: Wipe the slate clean and start again. When the wrecking ball tumbled its last building, the north loop, with dust and rubble everywhere, looked like a war zone. In the name of urban renewal, the Gateway became a sea of parking lots, stripped of any sense of place. And though redevelopment did follow, it came at a snail's pace and took more than 20 years to fill the gaps in the urban landscape.

The grandiose, urban-renewal philosophy that leveled the Gateway still exists today, albeit on a smaller, seemingly more-innocuous scale. In the late-'80s, all the downtown-revitalization hoopla was focused on Block E. Those seedy bars and suspicious-looking characters hanging out were a perceived threat to the city's image as a clean, safe place to live. So down went the entire block. More than two years later, Block E is tidy and safe, all right—but redevelopment has not followed quickly, as was hoped, and Block E is now a lifeless parking lot where urban streetlife once existed.

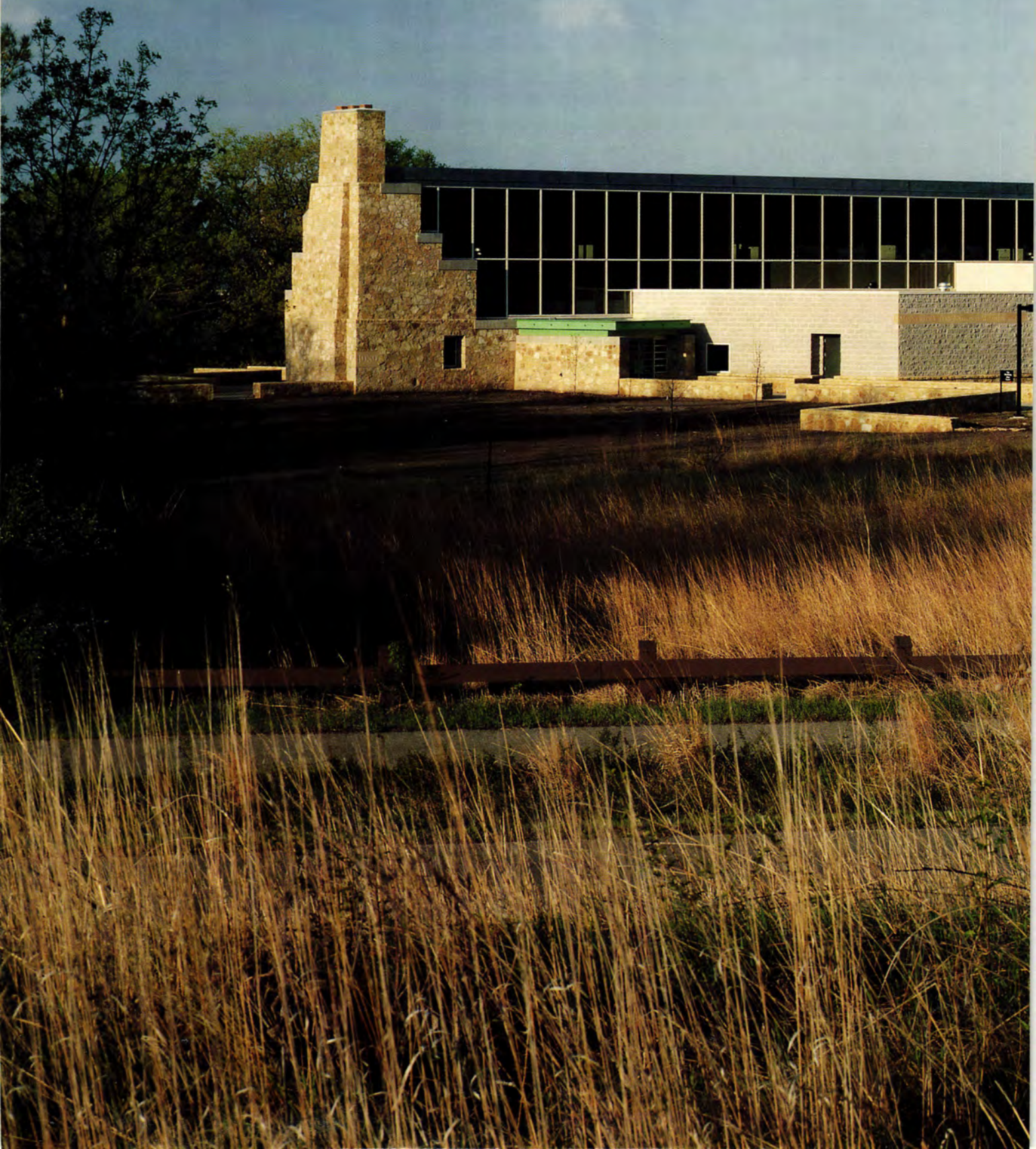
By approaching urban renewal atop a bulldozer, Minneapolis chips away at its sense of place. Cities are comprised of diverse elements, from grand architecture to undistinguished-but-functional buildings, from gray-suited businessmen to colorful street characters. Cities are built upon history and incremental change. The Gateway ceased to be the Gateway once it became a 17-block field of blacktop. Likewise, Block E, now paved over and seemingly safer, no longer exists as a vital part of the city's character and energy. A street bustling with people is much more interesting (and safer) than a parking lot. Minneapolis needs to focus on the elements that make a city "urban." Replacing streetfronts with parking lots is, essentially, to replace a city with a moonscape.

Eric Kudalis
Editor

Where the wild things are

Four Minnesota interpretive centers open their windows on the world of nature

By Elizabeth Kaibel





Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Center

The moment you step inside the new Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Center, designed by Ellerbe Becket of Minneapolis, you want to step outside again. Not that the center isn't stunning. Not that you don't want to explore the interactive exhibits, toast your toes by the fireplace or browse in the bookstore. But nothing is more alluring than the river panorama that you immediately glimpse through glass doors.

That view is both the center's pièce de résistance and, ultimately, its raison d'être. Established in 1976, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a unique urban preserve—one of four in the country—that provides diverse plant and wildlife habitats, as well as recreational facilities. A 7,000-acre greenbelt, it stretches from Fort Snelling to Jordan, encompassing woods and wetlands, meadows and swamps, a heron colony and a rare limestone fen. Yet until the center opened last summer, few Minnesotans knew the refuge existed.

To rectify that lack of visibility, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service chose an unconventional site. Just off Highway 494 at the 34th Avenue exit in Bloomington, it faces a hotel-office strip to the north and the river to the south. Thus "the stereotypical Minnesota interpretive center—a log cabin nestled in the woods—just didn't fit," Karl Ermanis of Ellerbe Becket says. Instead, Ermanis drew inspiration from the region's native materials and historic farm buildings. The result is an elegant, eye-catching center that's on the flight path of both jets and Canadian geese.

In a similar juxtaposition, the design uses both contemporary materials—metal panels, glass, concrete siding—and traditional ones, such as Kasota stone and cedar shakes. A sense of play, coupled with Ermanis's passion for polychromatic buildings, is obvious in



The rambling Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Center (previous page) is in a decidedly rustic setting overlooking the Minnesota River Valley, yet suburban-office developments and Hwy. 494 are a stone's throw from the front entrance. Architect Karl Ermanis of Ellerbe Becket pulled visual cues from the region's native materials and historic farm buildings to create a distinctive, layered facility of stone, concrete, metal and glass (above and below). A dramatic 2 1/2-story central corridor (opposite) bisects the building. Exhibits are on the right, a bookstore and auditorium on the left.







the exterior, which is a lively mix of stacked rectangles (an effort to reduce massing of the 34,000-square-foot center) and colors drawn from nature (the doors, for example, are a bright-grass green).

Inside, the exhibit area steps down in four increments, duplicating the four levels of the valley—uplands, hillside, bottomlands and the river itself. Flanking the center are a nature bookstore, meeting rooms and an auditorium; upstairs are offices and a library. But the building's heart is its hearth, just off the main entrance. Crowned by a rough-hewn wooden mantel and ringed by padded benches, the massive stone fireplace offers visitors an irresistible invitation to come and sit, curl up with a book or just chat. On sunny days, light streams through the windows and the "air becomes literally golden," Ermanis



says. And at night? "One evening when I drove by I saw an older woman sitting here knitting," he says.

For the staff, the center "is working beautifully," says Ed Crozier, a USFWS supervisor who managed the refuge for 10 years. "It's certainly a nontraditional design, but it's fun having it attract so many comments—and visitors."

An overlook (above) catches a bird's-eye view of the valley. Ellerbe Becket worked with the Burdick Group of San Francisco and photographer George Heinrich to design the hands-on exhibits (below) and large-scale display panels. The fireplace, the heart of the center (opposite), is nestled in a cozy nook, a perfect spot for relaxing or reading.



McElroy Interpretive Center

On a Sunday morning last April the sugar-maple sap was boiling furiously outside the McElroy Interpretive Center at Wild River State Park, filling the air with the unmistakably sweet smell of spring. The feeding station was doing a bofo business in suet and thistle, wooing downy woodpeckers, goldfinches and common redpolls from miles around. Inside the center, a father and son investigated a beaver-dam exhibit; outside on the deck, a young woman trained binoculars on a budding oak.

It was business as usual at the center, in other words, though business may be all that's usual about this center. Far from the massive log-and-stone structures that characterize much of Minnesota's Civilian Conservation Corps "parkitecture," the McElroy Center is a graceful blend of contemporary design and unobtrusive form. Unlike its 1930s predecessors, it is oriented to the sun; its shuttered clerestory windows and three-sided deck literally open it up to the outdoors. And though the center nestles atop a bluff guarding the St. Croix River, its broken gables and cedar-shingled exterior camouflage it almost as if it were a ruffed grouse crouched on the forest floor.

One of Minnesota's newest and loveliest state parks, Wild River encompasses 7,000 acres of woods and prairie near Almelund, about 60 miles northeast of the Twin Cities. Most of its buildings, including a trail center, picnic shelters and a solar-heated manager's residence, were designed by McGuire/Engler/Davis Architects of Stillwater. Embracing what he says was "a great opportunity to enhance al-



KAREN MELVIN

The single-level McElroy Interpretive Center at Wild River State Park blends contemporary design with traditional, rustic materials, such as cedar shingles and stone (below). The central, multipurpose room (above) is highlighted by a fireplace made of St. Croix limestone.





The center is oriented toward the sun. A three-sided deck and clerestory windows (above) open to the outdoors, while the broken-gabled form reduces the massing, allowing the building to slip unobtrusively into the setting.

ready beautiful surroundings,” Michael McGuire added to the group an interpretive center that had minimum impact on the land while remaining “in kinship or at least sympathy with the area’s surrounding structures,” most of which are farm buildings.

Working with the Department of Natural Resources—a “very sensitive and interested client,” McGuire says—he emerged with a spacious 1-story structure whose complicated form and scaled-down entryway actually make it seem less than the sum of its parts. Inside, a large re-

ception area and multipurpose meeting room create a flexible backdrop for slide programs, habitat displays and a weather station. Fireplaces made of St. Croix limestone offer a haven for chilled cross-country skiers.

What a visitor remembers most clearly about this building, though, is not its shingles and angles but its sense of harmony. Hiking the Mitigwaki Trail, one happens upon the center almost as if it were nothing more than a stand of aspen. And that, of course, is just what McGuire intended.

Gabbert Raptor Center

On the main floor of the Gabbert Raptor Center, a volunteer shepherding a group of schoolchildren lays a miniature-stuffed eagle on an operating table and demonstrates a mock-surgical procedure. One floor below, in a treatment room, a medical team anesthetizes a very-much-alive snowy owl in preparation for surgery.

Public-relations director Barbara Walker remembers all too well when those two scenes shared the same stage. "In our old building, groups of visitors walked right through the treatment area," she says. Raptors being rather high-strung birds, she adds, such interruptions "didn't exactly speed their recovery." But all of that changed in 1988, when the Raptor Research & Rehabilitation Program (RRRP) moved into a new \$2.1 million facility on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus.

Founded in 1972, the nationally renowned RRRP treats more than 500 injured and ill raptors (birds of prey) annually. The center's unique combination of functions—medical care, public education and research—demanded an equally unique architectural solution. Ritter Suppes Plautz of Minneapolis responded with what Michael Plautz calls "a binodal, almost anthropomorphic" design that, at least from the air, resembles a hovering bird.

Perched on a hill overlooking the campus, much as a peregrine falcon perches on a cliff, the center is in a transitional zone between traditional classroom buildings and barns. Both its materials and colors reflect the adjacent architecture. A diagonal, teal-green metal spine with faceted bay windows runs through the center like an arrow, serving as a strong organizational feature. The spine, which houses a gift shop, reception area and educational aviaries that are visible from both inside and out, is flanked on either side by brick wings that hold offices, multipurpose rooms and a small audio-visual theater.



ROBERT PEARL

The Raptor Research and Rehabilitation Center at the University of Minnesota campus in St. Paul combines medical care, public education and research under one roof. The building's spine contains aviaries that are visible from both sides (above and below). The outdoor aviary is used to exercise recovering birds.



The building is bilateral as well as binodal: The main floor is largely public, the underground level private. The latter includes a surgical suite; treatment, patient and x-ray rooms; labs; and a flight corridor for recuperating birds. Filling the gap between the building's wings is an outdoor aviary where exhibition birds live and where staff members exercise recovering birds and present programs.

As it turns out, RSP and the RRRP have more in common than their architect-client relationship and a couple of shared initials. Alexander Ritter's wife, Daisy, is the Raptor Center's education coordinator, and Plautz serves on its board of directors. An accomplished artist, Plautz also has created a silk screen depicting a soaring bald eagle to benefit the RRRP. By donating the entire proceeds from the sale of \$200 prints to the center, he hopes to achieve a goal shared by everyone associated with it: To enable its majestic, winged inhabitants to fly away forever.



The skylit lobby (left) leads to the aviaries and offices on the first level. A teal-green spine bisects the brick building (below), which blends in with the other campus buildings. Architect Michael Plautz says that the building is almost anthropomorphic in design, resembling a hovering bird from the air.





The Rainy Lake Visitor Center at Voyageurs National Park (above and below) has two main entrances to accommodate visitors entering either from the lake or the highway. Though the cedar-and-oak building is popular during the summer, it also serves as a year-round community center for winter-sports enthusiasts.

Rainy Lake Visitor Center

From the beginning, architect Robert Quanbeck says, he had his heart set on enhancing the Rainy Lake Visitor Center with a second-level interior bridge. Since such a feature is hardly *de rigeur* in interpretive facilities, several National Park Service staff members were dubious. But “at one point,” Quanbeck recalls, “the superintendent said, ‘Look, we hired this guy. Let’s trust him on this bridge.’ It was so exciting to have that kind of support.”

This past summer thousands of pairs of feet will tread the bridge at the Rainy Lake center, which stands at the gateway to Voyageurs National Park in northern Minnesota. Designed by Northfield’s Sovik Mathre Sathrum



Quanbeck Schlink Edwins, the 2-year-old building serves as both an informational facility for park visitors and a year-round community center. Most important, perhaps, it has lent visibility and a sense of identity to Voyageurs, one of the country's youngest national parks.

Though the project had built-in parameters—the National Park Service “had a schematic drawing they felt they had to follow for political reasons,” Quanbeck says—he characterizes his client as “a joy to work with. They were critics, not just critical.” Ultimately, he and the NPS were able to abandon the drawing’s massing and forms without compromising its integrity. The result is a stunning 6,000-square-foot center that gracefully can accommodate busloads of tourists during the summer, yet be easily operated by a lone staff member in winter.

Because visitors approach the center in three ways—by car, boat or float plane—it has two “main” entrances, one facing the lake and the other the highway. Granite pavers extend from the parking lot, patio and boat docks into the center; the battered foundation walls also are granite. Elsewhere, cedar and oak are the predominant materials used in exterior siding and interior paneling and trim, respectively. Though one of the center’s most memorable features is a platform-mounted wood stove with an open stack, it’s “mainly for ambiance,” Quanbeck says. The super-insulated, energy-efficient building is warmed by cast-iron radiant heat and cooled by an air-exhaust system that draws in “the smells and delights of northern air.”

As Voyageurs usage grows, so will the center, which is currently expanding into additional offices on the second level. In the meantime, as ranger Deborah O. Liggett wrote Quanbeck last year, the facility “is a joy both visually and operationally.”

Elizabeth Kaibel is an associate editor of MPLS.ST.PAUL magazine.



The main room, which overlooks the lake (above), is warmed by a cast-iron stove. Granite pavers (below) extend from the center to the boat docks and parking lots.



Gateways of change

In an urban-renewal plan of the grandest scale, Minneapolis cleared its famous Gateway-district skid row in the early-1960s to make way for a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for reconstructing Minneapolis"

By Linda Mack

For almost a century, Minneapolis's Gateway area served as the city's skid row. Then beginning in 1960, bulldozers and wrecking cranes destroyed the lower loop just as tanks and bombs had wiped out Europe's cities in World War II.

"Forty percent of the central business district demolished to make way for a new downtown environment," boasted the city's promotional material for the Gateway Center. The accompanying photograph showed the result: block after block of rubble where people used to live, work and hang out. Two hundred buildings were razed, 17 blocks cleared, 3,500 people displaced and 547 businesses bought out.

Urban renewal was not unique to Minneapolis. Cities across the country used federal money to remove blight and build anew in the 1950s and '60s. And many of them, like Minneapolis, renewed areas that had been longtime thorns in their urban image.

Minneapolis's lower loop presented a ripe opportunity for "civic progress." A skid row of monumental proportions, it had been an embarrassment since the turn of the century when 109 bars and saloons and 113 flophouses and hotels served the day-workers who cut lumber, worked fields and manned railroads.

As early as 1906, Minneapolis architect John Jaeger had proposed grand schemes to improve the area near old Bridge Square, where Hennepin and Nicollet avenues converged west of the Mississippi River. E.H. Bennett's more famous plan for Minneapolis (published in 1917) proposed a "station plaza" for the

Hennepin Avenue bridgehead, an idea partially realized with the construction of the Great Northern Depot in 1912 and the Gateway Pavilion, designed by Hewitt and Brown in 1916. These buildings elevated the image of the Gateway area to classical proportions. But the old men still hung around.

The city attacked the area again in the late-1920s. Blighted blocks along the riverfront were cleared to make way for the main Post Office and Pioneer Square in front of it. In 1929, the Civic and Commerce Association proposed a more ambitious plan for a "great civic communication and transportation center" between the Mississippi River and Washington Avenue. Municipal and federal-courts buildings would line either side of a mall running from the Post Office to Washington Avenue, while transportation buildings such as bus depots would be

grouped on Hennepin Avenue near the Great Northern Depot.

The city planning commission adopted a similar scheme in 1939. Drawings suggested a green mall stretching from Pioneer Square to Third Street, where a new federal-courts building would face the Post Office four blocks away. Other public buildings would front the mall in classical symmetry.

But Minneapolis architect Robert Cerny had another vision. As the head of his own firm and executive secretary of the Civic Center Development Association, a group of businessmen concerned with addressing downtown blight, he turned these plans on their axis after World War II. He exchanged classical symmetry for Corbusian rationalism, and focused on Fourth Street, where the seediness of the lower loop began to bleed into downtown. With a grand sweep of



Straight out of Le Corbusier's "Radiant City," the Knutson Company's plan for River Towers would have lined up 1,500 high-rise units across from the U.S. Post Office.

COURTESY MINNEAPOLIS COLLECTION / MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

the hand, the group outlined a one-block-wide corridor between Hennepin and Fourth avenues, where new public buildings should be grouped to form a civic center. The buildings might include a public library, a veterans' club, a public-health building, a public-safety building, and the long-awaited federal-courts building. A city-county office building and state-office building were also possibilities.

Realizing a Corbusian vision of the city, the new public buildings would be slab towers rising in rational order beside a below-grade freeway that would whisk cars through the city between Washington Avenue and Third Street. The Gateway Center Urban Renewal plan did not suggest that all of these be built at once, but argued that when they were built they be located in this area. In sentiments reminiscent of the 1917 City Plan, the development association argued that "such buildings may become an exceedingly impressive group if arranged dramatically in a civic center.

"If the buildings are scattered throughout the loop, each building will enhance its neighborhood but there will be no total effect. If, on the other hand, the buildings are

concentrated in a given area, an impressive civic center will be created which will revitalize the entire neighborhood and become a vital factor in stabilizing the downtown loop district."



In the post-war years, the Civic Center Development Association, with Cerny at its helm, pushed for this idea at every opportunity. Whenever a new public building was discussed—be it a public-health center, the new public library, a county-welfare building, a bus terminal or a public-safety building—the Civic Center Association lobbied for them to be built along Fourth Street. And frequently the efforts were successful. The Public Health Building was planned for Fourth Street, kitty corner from City Hall. (The sketches were drawn by Long and Thorshov, where Cerny worked.) The original proposal to build a new public library across the street from its existing location at 10th and Hennepin was turned around. By 1947, the library board and city planning commission favored the civic-center location at Fourth Street and Hennepin Avenue, where it now stands.

Mayor Hubert Humphrey threw his weight behind the idea, calling for the city council to condemn sites in the civic center, so land would be secured for future public buildings. At least once a year, a Cerny sketch of another possible building would appear in one of the local papers. In 1949, the Civic Center Development Association reported that federal officials would locate a \$7 million federal-courts building in the civic center if convinced the civic center would be realized. The site the association advocated was the block between Marquette and Second avenues, and Third and Fourth streets, where it was built after a delay caused by the Korean War.

Still, by 1952 Cerny was frustrated enough at the lack of progress in the lower loop to write a letter to the editor of the *Minneapolis Star*. "For seven years this association has actively promoted the rehabilitation of the lower loop by urging the adoption of a long-range plan for replacing public buildings in a civic-center area," the letter said. "Yet, during seven years, no positive action has been taken, other than the preparation of plans for a city library in the area." The only other positive step cited was the formation of a Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce committee to push lower-loop improvement, a group later headed by Cerny.

Action had been slim, but planning had progressed. The city planning commission had developed plans for the lower loop that presaged a futuristic, 4-level city and included private as well as public redevelopment. The Plan for the Redevelopment of the Lower Loop Area proposed razing 283 structures, developing a civic center along Fourth Street, expanding industrial and commercial buildings and constructing 19 new ones, establishing a right-of-way for an intercity expressway 18 feet below street grade, and constructing a 3,000-vehicle parking garage above the expressway between Marquette and Third avenues. Almost one-third of the land was to be set aside for private development. Half the cost was to be pri-



A 1959 Liebenberg and Kaplan design for the Sheraton-Ritz block included a "Peacock Alley" of shops and restaurants, a bowling alley, a pool that doubled as a skating rink and an outdoor theater.

vately funded, the other half funded through federal, state and city sources.



As for most major city-building efforts, it took both a push and a pull to breathe life into the lower-loop plans.

The push was the looming growth of the green and pristine suburbs. On July 7, 1955, General Mills, one of the city's oldest companies, announced it would move its headquarters from downtown Minneapolis to a field in Golden Valley. Though the newspapers didn't report it, rumor had it that General Mills head James Ford Bell said he was tired of looking at that dingy old Metropolitan Building from his office atop what is now the Title Insurance Building.

News of General Mills's move came hand-in-glove with plans for freeways tying suburbs to the city and the imminent arrival of Southdale, the country's first enclosed shopping center scheduled to open in the southwest suburb of Edina in 1956. Downtown businessmen began to stir. In August 1955, the Downtown Council was formed, with the Chamber of Commerce Lower Loop Committee and the Civic Center Redevelopment Association as godparents.

The pull was federal money. In 1954, a Supreme Court case ruled that blight could be attacked on an area-wide basis. The federal housing act was expanded and federal money was freed for urban renewal. Minneapolis stood ready.



By the time federal money was allocated in 1958, the original conception of a civic center along Fourth Street had been expanded to include private redevelopment of the blocks between Fourth Street and the river, and Hennepin and Third avenues. Hotels, office buildings, restaurants and parks would join Cerny's now-seemingly modest proposal for four new public buildings.

"The new city..." promised the city's promotional material for the



Gateway Center, before demolition in 1960 (above), and after in 1962 (below). The boundaries (above) ran past the Post Office, took a swath across Washington Avenue from the Milwaukee Road Depot and then turned down Fifth Street to First Avenue North.



Gateway Center. "The sheer force of Minneapolis's great building boom, with the bulge of the boom in new office space, hotels and apartments, is given direction by the Gateway Center redevelopment—on a scale so gigantic as to refix the city's look. In the Center, art and tradition will be cherished. Sightseers may dine at sidewalk cafes, shop at markets with a foreign flavor, visit art galleries and watch ice skaters play amid the major business and civic buildings of the city." In this modern wonderland, one-third of the area was to be maintained for parking.

In all, 17 blocks were to be cleared for the "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for reconstructing Minneapolis." The area was roughly bounded by First Avenue North, First Street, Third Avenue South and Fifth Street. In those blocks there were 3,500 people (mostly white males over the age of 55), 547 businesses (60 of which had liquor licenses), 23 hotels housing 1,084 people, and 201 buildings.

Among the buildings stood the old Federal Courthouse and Post Office with its spired top; the Vendome Hotel, which sported a replica of the head of the Statue of Liberty; the Pence Opera House; the monumental Janney Semple Hill warehouse across from the Post Office annex; and E. Townsend Mix's eclectic Metropolitan Building, the tallest building in the Northwest when built in 1889. "Just walking down Fourth Street was a real experience in Victorian architecture," recalls John Cummings, who joined the Minneapolis planning department in 1958. The area also included two important public spaces, Gateway Pavilion and Pioneer Square.

They all came down, creating huge swaths of rubble that clouded the air. As if in some psychic act of sacrifice, American cities destroyed what World War II had not. The enormous Janney Semple Hill warehouse was built like a bomb shelter; workers had to use acetylene torches to rip it apart. The Metropolitan Building took three months to demolish during the

summer of 1962. Its cleared site served as a surface parking lot for almost 20 years.

Out of the rubble rose the first Minneapolis buildings designed with a modernist sensibility. The Public Health Building at Fourth Avenue and Fourth Street was the first to be completed in 1956. Thorshov and Cerny served as architects. The public library, designed by the Minneapolis firm of Lang and Raugland (later McEnary and Kraft), was under way in 1958, as were the State Employment Security Building at Second Avenue and Third Street and the Federal Courthouse, both designed by Cerny. The civic corridor was taking shape, and in more ways than one, it was Cerny's.

Private investment followed. (Ironically, a surface parking lot for Midland Bank represented the first private project.) In March 1960, the Minneapolis H.R.A. offered 35.5 acres for sale and a year later International Properties, a subsidiary of Knutson Company, bought the land. The idea was to attract "special-purpose" office buildings occupied by a single user. Such businesses could afford to be away from the business center and were the ones tempted by the cheaper land prices and convenience of suburban relocation.

Knutson's proposal included a sophisticated new Sheraton hotel on the block across Nicollet Mall from the public library. Finished in 1963, the hotel and its sinuous concrete parking ramp were designed by Cerny. A new home office for Northwestern National Life, a corporate temple by Minoru Yamasaki Associates of Detroit, would rise on the former site of the Gateway park. Less distinguished were IBM headquarters on Marquette Avenue between Washington Avenue and Third Street, and a parking ramp on Fourth Street and Nicollet. (Meanwhile, the red brick of the NSP building by Pietro Belluschi of Boston with Ellerbe Architects of St. Paul was rising on Fourth



After studying at the University of Minnesota and Harvard Graduate School, Wisconsin-born Robert Cerny traveled to Europe, where he was especially

impressed by the efforts of Scandinavian cities to modernize urban planning. Cerny worked three years as an associate architect with the Tennessee Valley Authority, then returned to the Twin Cities in 1936 to teach at the school of architecture at the University of Minnesota. As a 1952 *Minneapolis Star* profile noted, "things in his profession [during the 1930s] were, to put it mildly, quiet," and he had plenty of time to ponder why earlier piecemeal plans hadn't worked. He soon became the engine behind the idea of revitalizing the lower loop by creating a civic center.

Starting with \$18 he spent for an aerial photo from which to make drawings, Cerny preached the idea to anyone who would listen. "The early designs and visualizations [of the Gateway Center] were prepared under his direction," according to an article in the July/August 1975 issue of *Architecture Minnesota* by Frederick Bentz, who worked for Cerny and Associates. "For years there was a working model of the Gateway Center in the office. Seldom a week would pass that Bob was not explaining his concepts to some business or civic leader...until finally the entire community poured its efforts into the Gateway Center."

Cerny mastered the political process better than any Minneapolis architect before him. He lived in Minneapolis's Prospect Park on the same block as Arthur Naftalin, aide to mayor Hubert Humphrey (and future mayor himself). He also was close friends with Humphrey. He saw a conjunction of interests between his involvement in civic committees and the growth of his architectural practice. He was right. First as a partner of Long and Thorshov, then as head of Cerny and Associates, he was tireless in promoting civic ideas which just happened to result in architectural work. Growing to more than 125 staff members in the 1950s, Cerny and Associates became second in size only to Ellerbe.

Continued on page 64



The vanishing faces of the

GATEWAY

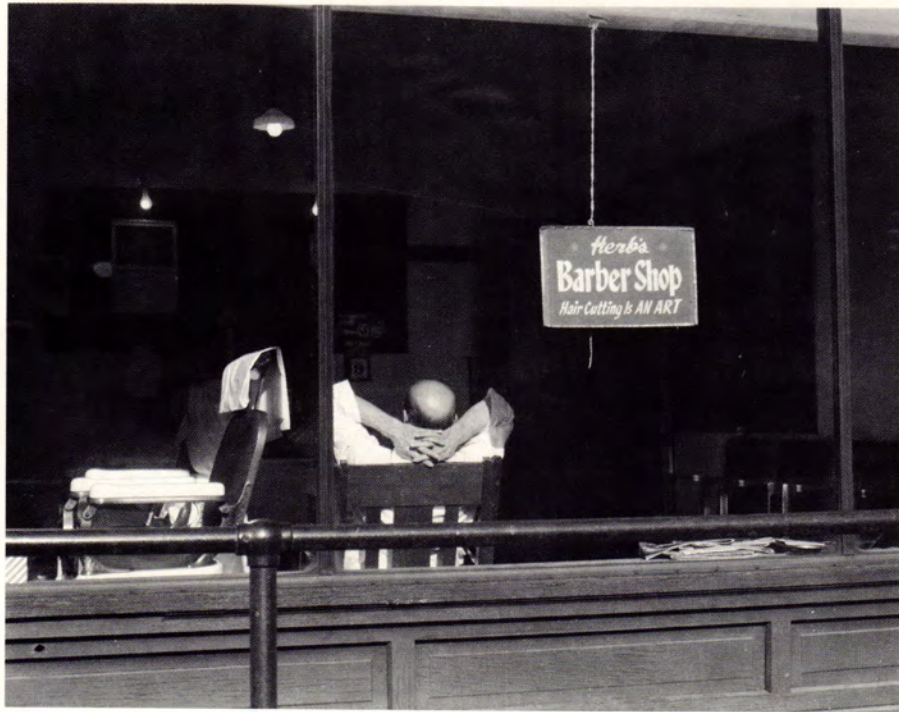


Using a large-format camera, Minnesota photographer Robert Gene Wilcox sought to capture the Gateway's character and flavor, its vanishing "faces and facades," in the final days. And though most of the Gateway's "undesirable," low-income, single men had been dispersed by the mid-1960s, and such architectural gems as the Metropolitan Building demolished, Wilcox's photos remain a lyrical record of a lost neighborhood. *Photos courtesy of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts*









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Caring for the young and old

From a day-care center's "little schoolhouse" to a retirement home's "midwestern" patio, the architecture of caring finds comfort in familiar elements

By Barbara Knox



GEORGE HEINRICH

Anderson Dale Architects of St. Paul broke from the institutional look of the North Hennepin Community College campus for this "little schoolhouse," which is the first day-care facility incorporated into the community-college system. The vividly colored structure with its pyramidal roof and enclosed playground offers a homey setting for kids whose parents are in class.

North Hennepin Day Care Center

In 1985, Anderson Dale Architects went to work on the first day-care center designed for Minnesota's community-college system. Considering that this day-care element was just one ingredient in a much larger project—all of which catered to adults—the architects set out to create a space that would be both visually appealing and comfortably scaled for kids who were spending time in a college environment.

"We didn't want to put little kids in a college," says Bill Anderson, president of Anderson Dale. "In effect, we designed a little schoolhouse that has an identity all its own."

The little schoolhouse Anderson refers to is actually a vividly colored structure of glass and metal topped with a sloping pyramidal roof. Each corner of the "school" features large, plate-glass windows that look out onto a play area enclosed behind a retaining wall. "This is their yard," Anderson says, "their piece of the overall project."

The focus of the project for the architects was not a day-care facility but rather a Careers and Continuing Education building for the North Hennepin Community College. But when the state decided to include the child-care component, the architects set out to inte-

grate the facility into the overall complex.

"Each component has its own identity," Anderson explains, referring to the continuing-education, nursing and business elements that, in addition to the day-care center, make up the project. Distinguished with bright, primary colors, the day-care center comprises 4,000



GEORGE HEINRICH

square feet of the 30,000-square-foot complex. Inside, carpeted floors and wood surfaces provide a warm, welcoming place for kids to play in the central area, which is surrounded by appendages dedicated to specific functions, such as a kitchen, bathrooms and offices.

Anderson notes that the design also has a secondary, more subjective advantage: Exposed ducts and beams give a strong sense of structure, "letting the kids understand more about how buildings are put together." Evidently, the building leaves a strong impression on many adults, as well as children. In 1986, Anderson received a letter lauding his firm for the excellent job it had done on the center. The letter was signed by Governor Rudy Perpich.

A canopied entrance (above) leads into the day-care facility, which is attached to the Careers and Continuing Education building. In the main playroom (left), exposed ducts and beams reveal the building's structure, "letting the kids understand about how buildings are put together," the architect explains.



LEA BABCOCK

Capitol Child Care Center

Because the state of Minnesota is not in the business of providing child care, Rosemary McMonigal Architects had more than the usual amount of work to do when the firm was hired to design a prototype day-care project for the Minnesota Department of Administration.

Since the state was uneasy about being in new territory, the first step for McMonigal was to provide a feasibility study with extensive budget information to back up a major renovation. Once accepted, the plan went into construction in the spring of 1990.

Essentially, the Capitol Care facility was designed to provide day care for state employees within walking distance of their offices. For the architects, that meant starting with an old warehouse/showroom building located one block east of the Capitol Mall on Robert Street in St. Paul.

"The building had no windows but was otherwise structurally sound," McMonigal reports of the cement-block structure. Surrounded by parking lots, a truck-maintenance yard and a busy street, the building was also below grade on two sides, all of which set up some stiff challenges for the architects.

"Basically, we had to provide six classrooms and staff-support spaces," project architect Mina Adsit explains. "We wanted to get the classrooms to the perimeter of the building so we could get light and air into the space. And we also needed to develop a green buffer zone outside for play space."

The resulting design provides classroom space for infants, toddlers and preschool children along two

sides. New windows were set 9 inches above floor level to allow even crawling infants a view to the outside. Also, interior windows to the hallways allow kids to see other kids as they move through the space. The architects placed support functions, including mechanical/storage rooms, playrooms and offices on the below-grade walls, but added skylights to flood play areas with natural light.

"There is a lot of natural light in the building now," says Adsit, who adds that a combination of fluorescent and incandescent sources on dimmers allows the staff lighting options to accommodate various functions. Likewise, acoustical controls were important in a facility that centers around noisy young children. Batt insulation in the ceiling and walls, as well as acoustically sealed windows and door frames, keep noise under control.

The center's overall tone is residential, making liberal use of natural woods, carpet and vinyl tile. According to McMonigal, the teals and corals were deliberately chosen to provide a cool, consistent backdrop for the vivid colors associated with children's clothing and toys. Hallway floors use patterns in the vinyl tile to emphasize directions and define various entries, while the classrooms have a combination of carpeted and tiled areas.

Outside, landscape architect Derek Young scaled a playground of small trees and shrubs, and even designed a miniavenue for a tricycle path. What had been a truck-loading dock was transformed into a terrace with railings, providing a spot for teachers to oversee playground activity below.

According to McMonigal, the project's successful completion resulted from a laudable team effort. "Contrary to the belief that you can't design by committee," she says, "this project really benefitted from the input of a lot of people from the state, from child-care authorities and the architects. That committee approach really helped make this project what it is."



JAMES ERICKSON

Windows are set 9 inches above floor level (above) in the Capitol Child Care Center so children easily can see the comings and goings.



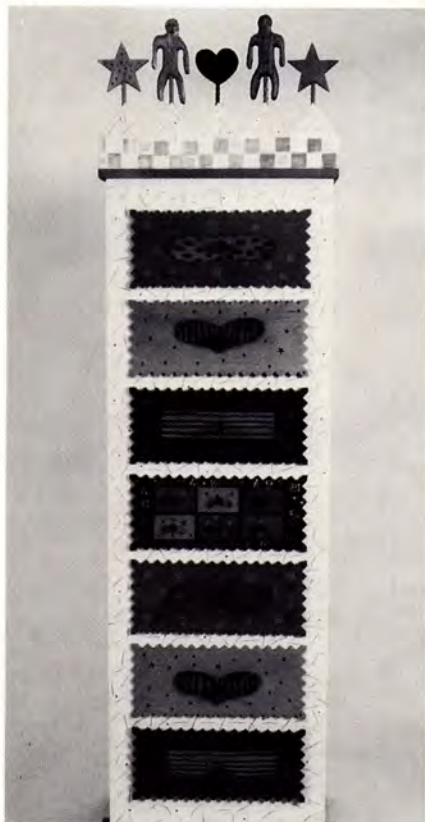
Architect Rosemary McMonigal took a windowless cement-block building near the state Capitol (above) and turned it into space for six classrooms and staff-support offices. Though the building is surrounded by parking lots, a truck-maintenance yard and a busy street, McMonigal secured a green buffer zone for a playground (top), which was designed by landscape architect Derek Young. Classrooms with large windows are grouped along two sides (left).



previews

Continued from page 11

American Craft Expo Minneapolis Convention Center May 9-12 \$5



A painted and dyed lingerie chest, by Jeanine Anderson Guncheon.

The 1991 Expo of American Crafts will feature more than 350 of America's finest craft artists, one-sixth from Minnesota. The handmade pieces range in price from \$25 to upwards of \$3,000, and will include both functional and decorative works of clay; hand-blown and etched glass; fiber, both wearable and decorative; metal, including traditional fine jewelry and contemporary works; and wood, ranging from puzzles to bowls, chairs and tables. Now in its fifth year, the Expo is one of only six juried shows sponsored nationally by the American Craft Enterprises, the marketing arm of the American Craft Council, based in New York. Minnesota highlights will include Tim Harding, Craig Lossing and Allen Noska, among others. For more information call 491-1080.

AIA National Convention and Design Exposition 1991 Issues Washington Convention Center Washington, D.C. May 17-20

The sights and sounds of the nation's capitol will be the setting for this year's American Institute of Architects' national convention. Among the highlighted speakers will be Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Robert Venturie and Charles Moore. For registration information call (202) 626-7395.

A National Landmark: Vintage Views of Cranbrook Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum Through May 19 Free and open to the public

This exhibition of architectural photographs celebrates Cranbrook Educational Community's recent designation as a national landmark. For more information call (313) 645-3323.

Minnesota Fiber Art: Four Voices Minnesota Museum of Art Landmark Center Galleries Through June 2 Free and open to the public

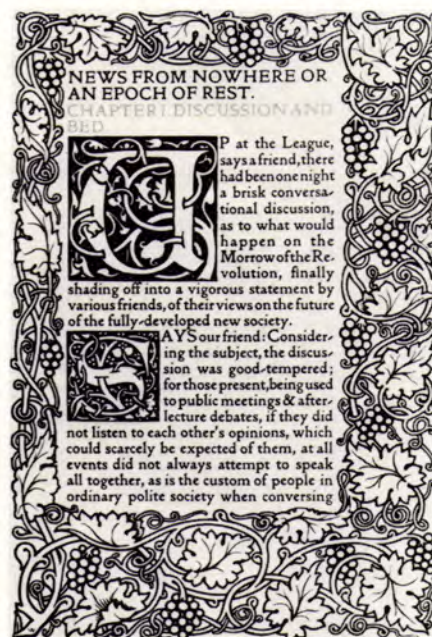
Morgan Clifford, Chad Alice Hagen, Mary Hark and Anne Lindberg demonstrate the great diversity of Minnesota textile art. In addition to the four artists' work, the museum will display fiber art from its permanent collection. For more information call 292-4355.

IFI World Congress Merchandise Mart Chicago June 11-14 \$350

The 1991 International Federation of Interior Architects/Interior Designers World Congress will offer programs and lectures addressing issues facing the industry. The program will occur concurrently with "Neocon 23," the annual conference

and exposition for the contract-furnishings industry. For more information call (312) 467-5080.

A Kelmescott Centennial/ William Morris and his Heirs: Gehenna, Janus and Victor Hammer Minnesota Center for the Book Arts Through June 15 Free and open to the public



From William Morris's News from Nowhere, 1892.

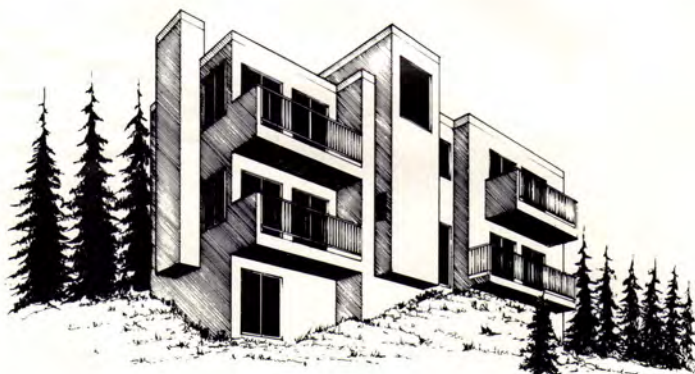
To mark the centennial founding of William Morris's Kelmescott Press in Hammersmith, England, the Center for Book Arts will exhibit 10 of Kelmescott Press's finest books, along with selections from three Kelmescott-influenced, contemporary American presses. Morris, disheartened by lifeless design and poor production standards of late-19th-century books, designed his own typefaces, redesigned the page stressing balance and readability, commissioned handmade paper of durability and beauty, and designed bindings created out of vellum. A 48-page accompanying catalog includes an introduction by leading Morris scholar Susan Otis Thompson and an essay by curator Betty Bright.

For more information call 338-3634.

coming soon

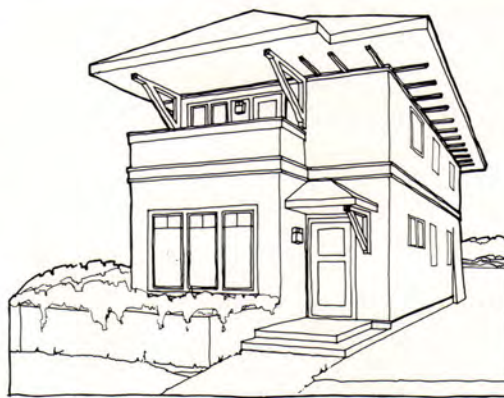
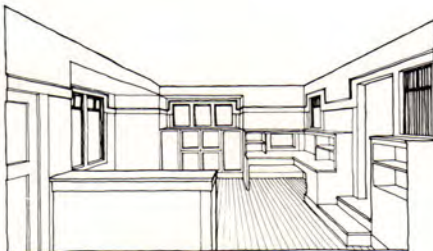
**George F. Cundy
& Assoc. Architects
Project: Wiken Res.
Prescott, WI**

The house is sited on the bluff high over the St. Croix River on what was considered an unbuildable lot. The inverted plan with the living, dining and master suite on the second floor takes advantage of the unmatched view of the river valley. 612/646-3268.



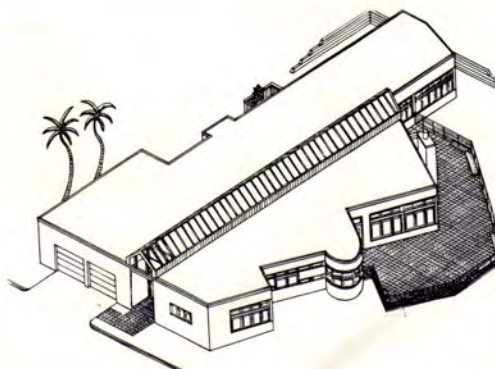
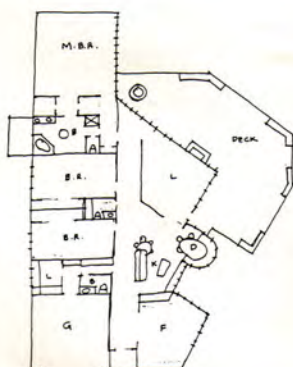
**Rosemary A.
McMonigal Architects
Project: House Addition
Minneapolis, MN**

Craftsman detailing articulates this addition of a family room and master bedroom to an existing bungalow near Lake of the Isles. Bracketed overhangs, planting bed extensions and the use of horizontal banding tie the old and the new together while enhancing the clean lines of the existing home. 612/789-9377.



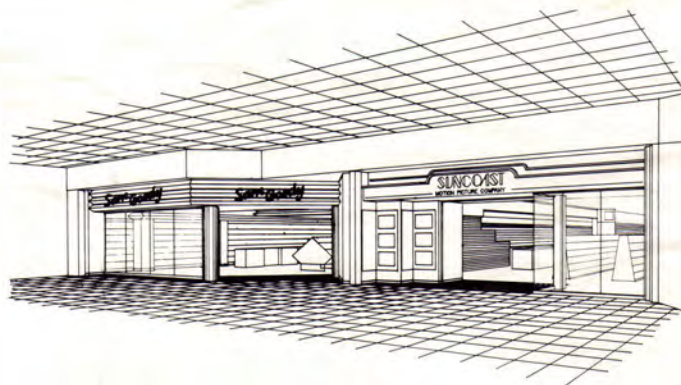
**Edward P. Melich
Architect
Project: Private
Residence
Tucson, AZ**

The family room, kitchen, dining room, living room and master bedrooms overlook the mountains. The atrium separates the bedrooms from activity areas. 612/866-3500.



**Architect: CMA P.A.
Project: Sam Goody
and Suncoast Motion
Picture Co.
Retail Stores
Willowbrook Mall
Houston, TX**

The two Musicland Group store concepts are combined with internal openings and a common cash/wrap area for a total store area of 11,500 sf. Neon is used for storefront signage as well as design motif throughout both spaces. 612/922-6677.



Coming Soon announcements are placed by the firms listed. For rate information call **AM** at 612/338-6763

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Architect: Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik and Associates
Project: Library Restoration
Delano, MN

Repairs to the exterior of this 1888 historic structure will include tuckpointing, replacement of deteriorated brick, new membrane roof, and new shingles on the bell tower. Bob Russek AIA, 612/636-4600.



Architect: Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik and Associates
Project: Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Bayport, MN

This addition sits on a vacated alley to connect the existing Sanctuary with the existing Education Building. The vaulted interior includes a fireplace and loft. Bob Russek AIA, 612/636-4600.



Architect: Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik and Associates
Project: Sports Arena Complex
Moorhead, MN

A second sheet of ice including teamrooms and classrooms will be added to this existing facility. The original arena will be upgraded to accommodate 3000 spectators. Bob Russek AIA, 612/636-4600.



Architect: Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik and Associates
Project: Central Services Building
St. Cloud, MN

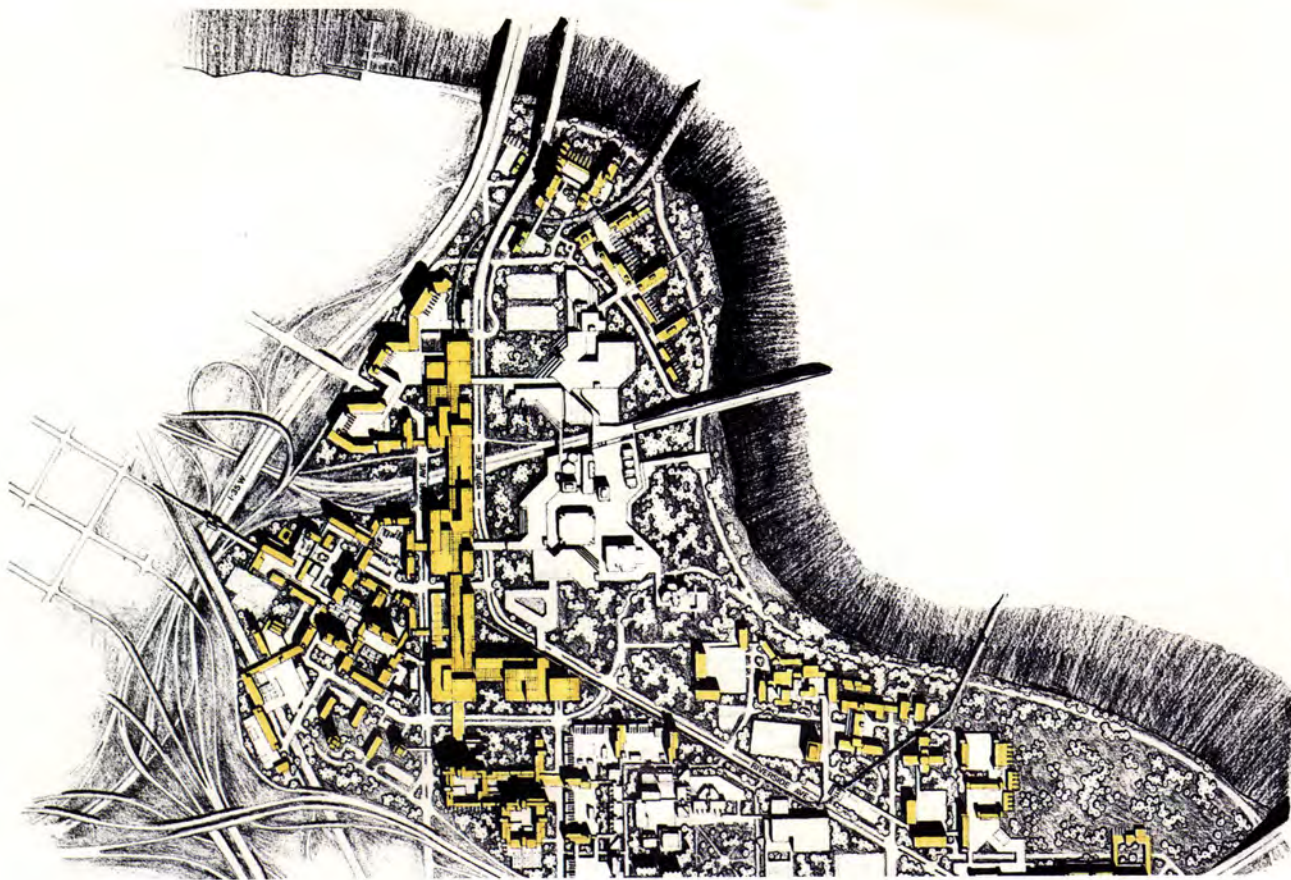
Precast concrete panels and steel bar joists enclose this spacious 120,000 sf building. Included are vehicle storage bays, repair shops, wash/paint bays, and an administration core. Bob Russek AIA, 612/636-4600



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In the late-1960s, American cities—devastated by inner-city decay, emptied by white flight to the suburbs, and dismembered by freeway construction—needed a new vision.

One vision, urban renewal, wanted to tear down the old and build a new society. Americans, at the height of their post-WWII prosperity, reasoned that if America could put Neil Armstrong on the moon, certainly it could apply the same planning and technological know-how to forge a society that was racially integrated, economically mixed and democratically involved.

Minneapolis architect Ralph Rapson, funded by federal dollars from LBJ's Great Society, began designing a "New Town In-Town," a high-density redevelopment in the

decaying Cedar Riverside neighborhood. Eleven complexes were to march across 340 acres, clear to the Mississippi River, and house 30,000 people in planned, socially engineered, self-sufficient high-rise neighborhoods—complete with parks, grocery stores, mass transit, health clinics and day-care centers.

A second vision of America's urban future, historic preservation, asserted itself even as the first complex, Cedar Square West, was under construction. Preservationists argued that neighborhoods were far too complex to plan, and that design, no matter how good, could not solve social problems. The Cedar Riverside Environmental Defense Fund sued, and work on the "New Town In-Town" halted.

As the battle between urban renewal and preservation bogged down in court, Americans lost their collective self-confidence. Watergate sapped the nation's trust in government. The war in Vietnam both triggered inflation that plunged the economy into recession and choked off federal funding, and ended American faith in technology and our ability to plan the future in all its infinite complexity.

In Cedar Square West, we have only a tantalizing fragment of a vision that was never fully tested, a fragment of what might have been. If design could humanize planned high-rise living, this would have been the place.

Robert Gerloff

A Day In The Winter Of Greg LeMond

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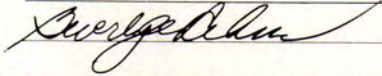
GEORGE HEINRICH

Wild at heart A freshwater marsh is one of the most productive and complex ecosystems on earth, exceeding even the rain forest. Exhibits at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's new Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Center are designed to explain and illuminate that complexity. Panoramic photos of the valley are mounted on large aluminum panels and serve as backdrops for a variety of "hands-on" exhibits, such as high-tech computer games that challenge visitors to successfully manage wildlife habitats while teaching them about the interrelationship between water clarity, sunlight, plant growth and oxygen. The Burdick Group of San Francisco designed the exhibits along several descending levels to correspond loosely with the valley's changing topography. Visitors are encouraged to browse freely, casually discovering new information that will increase appreciation of a little-understood natural treasure—the Minnesota River Valley.

Bill Beyer

Large-scale photos and hands-on exhibits are arranged along several descending levels, creating a casual and inviting environment for visitors. Much of the exhibits' electronic framework is hidden under oak-capped, underfloor raceways.

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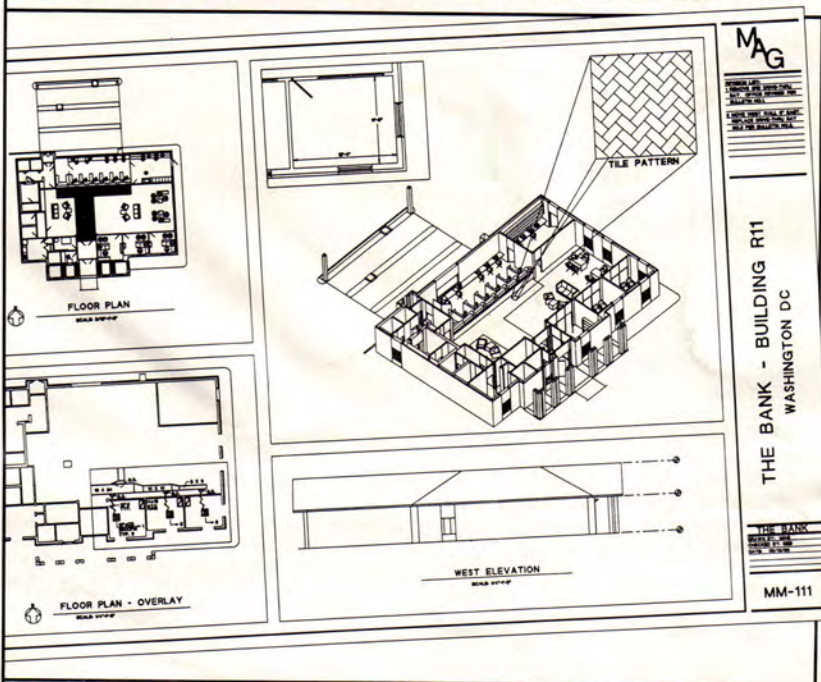
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St. Therese Rooftop Garden

"I hold that the best purpose of a garden is to give refreshment of mind, to soothe, to refine and to lift up the heart in a spirit of praise and thankfulness."

—Gertrude Jekyll, 1908

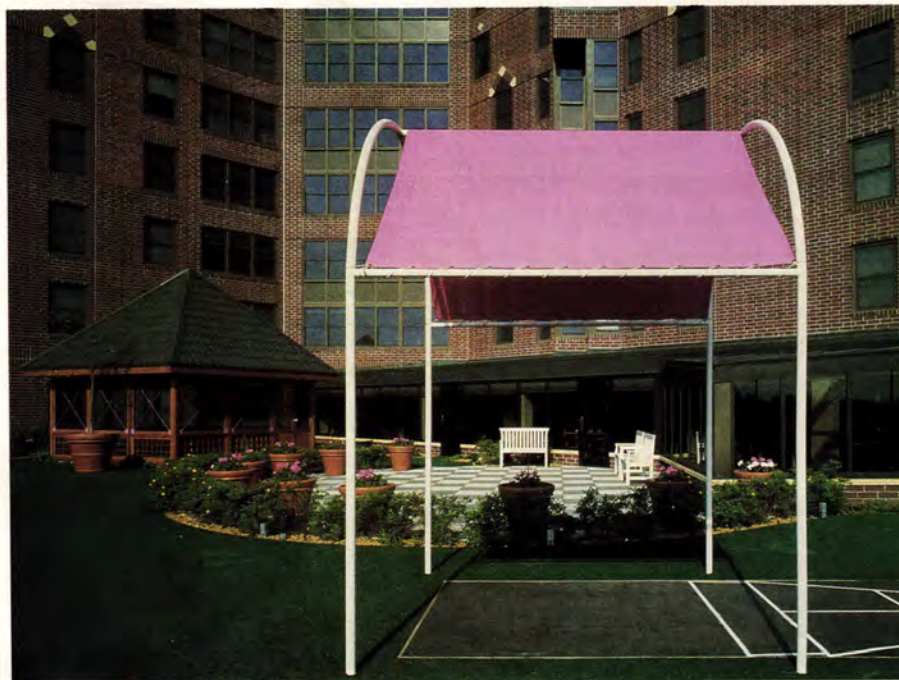
Thomas Oslund, vice president and director of landscape architecture at Hammel Green and Abrahamson, refers to the Jekyll quote when he talks about his work on the St. Therese Care Center's rooftop garden in Hopkins, which he completed in 1987. Despite the fact that his garden is located atop a parking garage in this retirement center, Oslund took his inspiration from typical midwestern backyards, places that routinely supply that "refreshment of mind" of which Jekyll speaks.

"Many of my own neighbors were older people," Oslund explains, "so when I decided that it would be great to give the folks at St. Therese their own backyard, I started by walking through my own neighborhood."

On his walks, he noticed the common threads of typical backyards: "They all had screened buildings and patios, ground plantings, meticulous yards and planters." Curiously, Oslund noted that many of the homes in his neighborhood also had Astroturf on the front stoop. "I finally realized that it was there to supply sure footing and to give some color through the winter," Oslund says.

With all those elements in mind, Oslund set out to create a backyard on St. Therese's rooftop. Opening off from the main dining room, a 2,000-square-foot circular patio allows residents—even those confined to wheelchairs—easy access to the outdoors. Checkerboard-patterned patio blocks define the space, which also features a sandbox for visiting grandchildren. Terra-cotta pots around the perimeter are just 36 inches high, allowing wheelchair residents the opportunity to do their own cultivation.

A 500-square-foot screenhouse stands near the patio, offering a shaded (and bug-free) alternative to the sunny rooftop. Lit from within, the structure features a metal roof, which recalls a similar treatment on the main building, and redwood and screen walls. Here, as on the shuffleboard court located at the opposite end, a brilliant pink is used to define details. ("There's always a pink

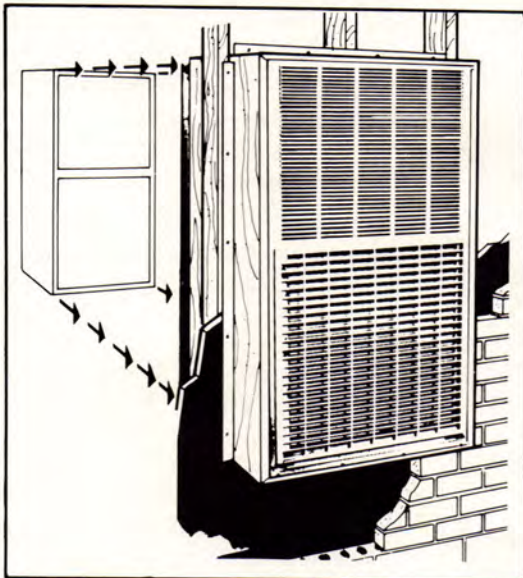


house on every block," Oslund notes, going back to his "typical backyard" premise.) The shuffleboard court, covered with a series of hoops, has pink-canvas awnings stretched over either end to provide relief from the direct sun. Other ground surfaces are covered with Astroturf, which—along with the vivid pink accents—supplies a splash of color all year round.

Cited with an Honor Award from the Minnesota Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the rooftop garden is maintained by the residents, who have documented it in a series of photographs hung inside the building. "I'm very happy with how the garden is maintained," Oslund says. "When the residents documented the garden, that indicated to me the special feeling they have for the space."

Barbara Knox is a Minneapolis free-lance writer.

Landscape architect Tom Oslund of Hammel Green and Abrahamson looked to midwestern backyards for inspiration in his design of the St. Therese Rooftop Garden. A circular, checkerboard patio (opposite) provides the visual focus, while the screenhouse and shuffleboard court pick up on backyard elements. Pink canopies on either end of the shuffleboard court (above) shield players from the midday sun. Terra-cotta pots surrounding the patio are 36 inches high to allow residents to putter in their own gardens.



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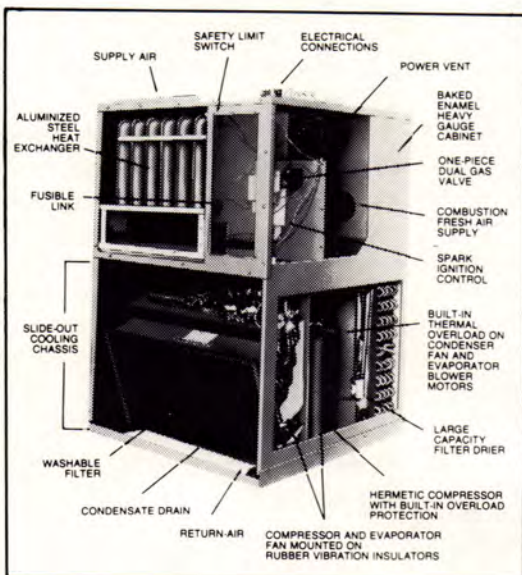
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Art that Works: Decorative Arts of the Eighties, Crafted in America
Minnesota Museum of Art
Landmark Center Galleries
Through June 16
Free and open to the public



Daniel Mack's Rustic Wright Chair, 1947.

More than 130 objects by 117 prominent contemporary designers will be the focus of "Art that Works" as it explores the developments in the American crafts movement during the 1980s. The pieces will range from rugs, glass and tableware, to furniture, lighting and decorative accessories. Among the highlights will be John Bickel's "Walnut Branch Chair," a 1980s reinterpretation of the Queen Anne chair; Walter White's "Asparagus Flatware Place Settings," which makes innovative use of cast-pewter; and Albert Paley's mixed-use of mild steel and slate for his "Plant Stand."

For more information call 292-4355.

Mention the Unmentionables: 100 Years of Underwear
Through June 23
Goldstein Gallery
University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus
Free and open to the public

"Mention the Unmentionables" explores the historical evolution of men's and women's underwear, focusing on their design, style and materials, and how popular perceptions of "unmentionables" have changed over time.

For more information call 624-7434.

Modern Ceramics 1880-1940
Through summer 1991
Norwest Center, Minneapolis
Free and open to the public

"Modern Ceramics 1880-1940," features Norwest Corporation's outstanding collection of works in clay, ranging from tea services and vases to dinner plates and monumental jars. On view in the Norwest Center's first-floor vitrines are 18 objects representing the principal movements of modernism: arts and crafts, art nouveau, Wiener Werkstatte, Bauhaus and art deco.

Among the most exceptional pieces is a French art-nouveau vase by Edmond Lachenal. Also of special note is a floor vase by the Bauhaus artist Gustav Heinkel, which illustrates the tenets of Bauhaus doctrine, especially non-figurative, abstract design. The show is accompanied by a color brochure with short essays on selected works. For more information call the Norwest Arts Program at 667-5136.

About the House
Ongoing
Children's Museum
St. Paul
\$3 adults and children over 2;
\$2 seniors; \$1 children 12-23 months

Ever wonder how a house is put together, what magic keeps the roof from collapsing, the heat from escaping on the coldest winter days, how lights turn on and off, how wa-

ter circulates? This exhibit takes the mystery but not the fun out of residential construction by giving kids a nuts-and-bolts tour of a mock house, from the architect's drawing board to the family photos on the living-room wall.

For information call 644-3818.

Tours of the Purcell-Cutts House
Ongoing
2328 Lake Place, Minneapolis
Free; reservations required

One of Minneapolis's finest examples of Prairie School architecture is open to the public following extensive restoration by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Designed in 1913 by William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie, contemporaries of Frank Lloyd Wright and major proponents of Prairie School architecture, the Purcell-Cutts House in Kenwood is a study in Prairie School at its best, with its emphasis on unity of design, materials, site and floor plan.

The house is open to the public on selected Saturdays. Admission is free but reservations are required and available through the Visitor Information Center, 870-3131. AM

up close

Continued from page 17

brought architects and architectural students to affordable housing."

Lundgren says that the design charettes foster new ideas and awareness, but he admits, "You can't force-feed. You have to teach by example, and the charettes have put forward some pretty innovative ideas for affordable housing."

The charettes are part of a growing trend to utilize aging and existing housing. According to Lundgren, 28 percent of the country's housing is within graying neighborhoods. Agencies, such as St. Paul's Eastside Neighborhood Group, seek to "stabilize" and "rejuvenate" housing, which may be 60 or 70 years old, Lundgren says.

Other success stories abound, he says, in city neighborhoods like



Opening Gala

June 8, 1991
International Market Square Atrium

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Fantasy Showhouse

June 8 - July 20
4th floor International Market Square

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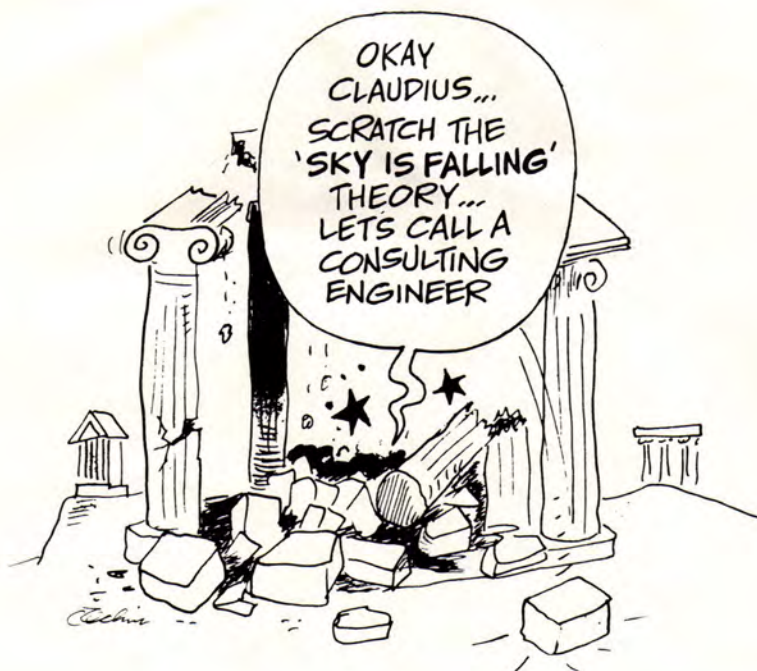
Fantasy Showhouse Entry

4 th floor IMS
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For information on how you can help, please call Diffa Showhouse Co-chairs Cheryl Gardner at 920-4955 or

Darlene Carroll at 920-4112.



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Minneapolis's Whittier and Phillips and St. Paul's Westside, where older homes have been rehabilitated for moderate-income homeowners rather than gentrified for affluent buyers. Large apartment complexes have been downscaled to create affordable yet spacious units.

Gone are the heroic high-rises of the midcentury that failed miserably to meet the needs of low-income people, Lundgren says. Instead, such projects gave birth to new problems, creating self-contained, crime-ridden ghettos like St. Louis's Pruitt-Igoe, Chicago's Cabrini Green and St. Paul's McDonough housing projects.

"They were too big," Lundgren says. These cement jungles were "unlivable," asking the poorest to live in crowded apartments while most Americans enjoy the cozy camaraderie of neighborhoods featuring a mix of single- and multifamily dwellings within new and old housing stock.

Affordable housing should be no different from housing designed for the well-heeled, Lundgren says. "A person who is homeless is no different from you or me. The only difference is that they don't have a home." He believes affordable housing should be well-designed and accessible. It should not be done on the cheap.

"I view the architect's role broadly," Lundgren says, describing his professional philosophy. "Just as law school prepares lawyers for politics, architecture school should make architects better citizens." He continues, "You cannot separate the architect from the citizen. The architect should also be a political being. Architects should help alter society's [problems]. . . If we lick this housing problem, we'd be a great nation."

In a bid for modesty, Lundgren confesses, "I'm not a saint. I do a lot of things which are cold-hearted, 'Republican' things, but I've certainly become much more socially conscious. You have to give back as much as you can."

David Anger is a writer living in Minneapolis and a contributing writer to the Twin Cities Reader.

AM

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Project: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Center

Location: Bloomington, Minn.
 Client: U.S. Department of Interiors,
 Fish and Wildlife Service
 Architects: Ellerbe Becket, Inc.
 Principal-in-charge: Jack Hunter
 Project manager: Frank Brust
 Project architect: Scott Berry, chief,
 John Tinkham, Gerry Voermans
 Project designer: Karl Ermanis
 Civil engineers: Robert T. Brown, chief,
 Laurie Jones, Doug Renier
 Structural engineers: Mark Douma, chief,
 Cliff Ingles, Bill Studtmann
 Mechanical engineers: Doug Maust, chief,
 Jack Sharkey, Rex Rundquist
 Electrical engineers: Lane Hersey, chief,
 Mark Holden, Jerome Biedny
 Construction administration: Steve Saienga,
 Jim Finlason
 Contractor: Arkay Construction Company, Adkins
 Mechanical, West Electrical,
 Malone Displays
 Interior Design: Brian Johnson
 Landscape architect: Bryan Carlson, chief,
 Dean Olson
 Exhibit design: The Burdick Group,
 San Francisco
 Photographer: George Heinrich

Project: McElroy Interpretive Center

Location: Wild River State Park, Almelund, Minn.
 Client: State of Minnesota D.N.R.
 Architects: McGuire/Engler/Davis Architects
 Principal-in-charge: Michael McGuire
 Project architect: Clark Engler
 Structural engineers: Meyer Borgman
 Johnson, Inc.
 Mechanical engineers: Chasney Associates
 Electrical engineers: Chasney Associates
 Contractor: William Construction Co.
 Landscape architect: State of Minnesota D.N.R.
 Photographer: Karen Melvin

Project: Gabbert Raptor Center

Client: University of Minnesota
 Location: University of Minnesota,
 St. Paul campus
 Architects: RSP Architects
 Principal-in-charge: Alexander F. Ritter
 Principal designer: Michael J. Plautz
 Project manager: Bryan Gatzlaff
 Project architect: Bryan Gatzlaff
 Structural engineers: Ericksen Rode/
 Johnson-Sahlman & Associates
 Mechanical engineers: Ericksen Ellison &
 Associates
 Electrical engineers: Ericksen Ellison &
 Associates
 Contractors: Knutson Construction Co., All
 American Mechanical, Bloomington Electric
 Interior design: University of Minnesota Interior
 Design & Graphics, Office of
 Physical Planning
 Landscape architect: Ernst Associates
 Lighting consultant: Paul Martin Lighting Design
 Photographer: Robert Pearl

Project: Rainy Lake Visitor Center

Location: Voyageurs National Park,
 International Falls, Minn.
 Client: National Park Service, Denver
 Service Center
 Architects: Sovik Mathre Saathrum Quanbeck
 Schlink Edwins Architects
 Principal-in-charge: Robert M. Quanbeck
 Project manager: Robert M. Quanbeck
 Project architect: Robert M. Quanbeck
 Project designer: Robert M. Quanbeck
 Structural engineers: Meyer, Borgman & Johnson
 Mechanical engineers: Lundquist, Wilmar,
 Schultz and Martin, Inc.
 Electrical engineers: Lundquist, Wilmar,
 Schultz and Martin, Inc.
 Contractor: Agassiz Construction, Inc.

Interior design: Robert M. Quanbeck
 Landscape architect: National Park Service,
 Denver Service Center
 Display designers: National Park Service,
 Harpers Ferry Center
 Photographer: Saari & Forrai Photography

Project: North Hennepin Community College Day Care Center

Location: Brooklyn Park, Minn.
 Client: State of Minnesota Community
 College system
 Architects: Anderson Dale Architects
 Principal-in-charge: William Anderson
 Project manager: Kurt Dale
 Project architect: Gary Olafson
 Project designer: Rick Christensen
 Structural engineers: Johnston-Sahlman
 Mechanical engineers: LWSM
 Electrical engineers: LWSM
 Contractor: Loeffel-Engstrand
 Interior design: Anderson Dale Architects, Inc.
 Photographer: Lea Babcock and
 George Heinrich

Project: Capitol Child Care

Location: St. Paul, Minn.
 Client: State of Minnesota
 Architects: Rosemary A. McMonigal Architects
 Project manager: Rosemary A. McMonigal
 Project architect: Mina Adsit
 Structural engineers: Gausman and Moore
 Electrical engineers: Gausman and Moore
 Contractor: Earl Weikle and Sons Construction
 Interior design: Rosemary A. McMonigal
 Architects
 Landscape architect: Derek Young
 Photographer: James Erickson

Project: Rooftop Garden at St. Therese Care Center

Location: Hopkins, Minn.
 Client: St. Therese Home
 Architects: Hammel Green and Abrahamson
 Principal-in-charge: Dan Swedberg
 Project manager: Paul Finness
 Project architect: Duane Johnson
 Project designer: Thomas Oslund
 Project team: Thomas Oslund, John Blum
 Structural engineers: Doug Fell
 Civil engineers: Jim Husnik
 Electrical engineers: Bill Howard
 Contractor: Opus
 Interior design: Laurie Parriot
 Landscape architect: HGA
 Photographer: George Heinrich

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Gateways

Continued from page 39

and Nicollet. And the Pure Food and Drug building was underway on Hennepin Avenue across from the Nicollet Hotel.)

Knutson's most ambitious project was River Towers, a \$24 million, 1,500-unit high-rise complex to occupy three blocks on First Street between Hennepin and Third avenues. A Corbusian set-piece, River Towers was to line up four 27-story towers just west of the Post Office with two 16-story towers at either end and low-rise parking structures between. Only two of the towers were built; they are the present-day Towers Apartments on Hennepin Avenue, designed by John Pruyn of Chicago.

By 1969, Gateway urban renewal had generated \$100 million in new construction. The idea of a civic corridor along Fourth Street had been realized; at least there was a string of public buildings. The first wave of private investment had filled in scattered blocks north of Third Street. And the replacement of the city's seedy skid row with gleaming new suburban-style buildings had spurred downtown retailers to build Nicollet Mall. "Gateway renewal made it attractive for developers to come downtown," said Arthur Naftalin, aide to Minneapolis mayor Hubert Humphrey. "It really turned around the downtown."

The pace of construction slowed with the recession of the early-1970s. Knutson's original 10-year contract was extended several times but was finally ended after he ran into repeated financing difficulties. After the Minneapolis H.R.A. took over, the remaining parcels were developed fairly quickly, according to Jerry Leusse, then of the H.R.A.

The second wave of construction brought a mixed bag of buildings: the Crossings, by the Hodne/Stageberg Partners; the glassy Norwest Operations Center, by Peterson, Clark and Associates; the

appropriately Corbusian 100 Washington Square, by Minoru Yamasaki and Associates; and the Towle Building (originally the Galaxy Building) by Korsunsky Krank Erickson, which finally occupied the Metropolitan Building's site.



It was only seven years until one of the original Gateway-renewal products, the IBM building, was razed to make way for Northwestern National Life II, designed by BWBR Architects of St. Paul, and the Gateway area began yet another phase of renewal.

Today, the dust of demolition again clouds the lower loop. The Sheraton Ritz and its sinuous parking ramp already are gone. The public library may be replaced. The Nicollet Hotel was razed this year. The Federal Courts building may be expanded, or, if the city has its way, abandoned and a new one

built north of City Hall on Fourth Street to form a civic group with the Hennepin County Government Center. Even the fate of Gunnar Birkert's Federal Reserve Bank, one of the Gateway's few landmarks, remains uncertain.

The Gateway slate, wiped clean once, may be erased again. No hint of the city's lower loop remains. No dense-packed streets, no buildings that catch the eye or imagination, no places that animate the city. Built to compete with the suburb's image of convenience and safety, the Gateway's buildings remain isolated setpieces in an undefined landscape. Where Pioneer Park formed a pleasing setting for the moderne Post Office, bland buildings block its facade. Where Bridge Square and then Gateway Park marked the historic convergence of Hennepin and Nicollet avenues, the columns of Yamasaki's Northwestern Life building rise in splendid isolation. Where human-scaled buildings once

made streets, overbearing or bland towers rise in cacophonous confusion. Where landmarks once marked corners, one block is indistinguishable from the next. Where smelly old men slumped in doorways, wind whips through empty streets. Where mystery and yes, perhaps danger, lurked, dullness prevails.

As a new wave of development begins, we have an opportunity to learn from the Gateway's past and present. "Renewed" in a time when that term meant wholesale destruction and rebuilding to compete with the suburbs, the Gateway succeeded in stemming urban flight but failed to create lasting urbanism. Now we know better how to make a city, how to create a place that is dense and varied. This time we can get it right.

Linda Mack is the architecture columnist for the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

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lost minnesota

Charles Fremont Dight devoted his life to championing eugenics (the selective breeding of people) and won election to the Minneapolis City Council as an advocate of feeding the city's trash to hogs. Even so, Minnesotans knew Dight best for another eccentricity. He was, as any native knew in the 1920s, the man who built and lived in a treehouse.

Dight came to Minnesota in 1889 after teaching at a medical school in Beirut, Syria (now Lebanon). In 1907 he secured a position as lecturer in Pharmacology at the University of Minnesota, and he shortly set about scouting sites for the house of his dreams. Dight settled upon a lot located close to the murmuring of Minnehaha Creek, but he was not content to conventionally dwell near the natural beauty.

By 1911, Dight had designed and begun construction of perhaps the most singular residence in Minneapolis. Modeling the structure after elevated houses he had seen in Beirut, Dight raised the dwelling on 10-foot steel stilts set in concrete and nestled it within branches of oak trees. "Mr. Dight says he is building his house high for three reasons," the *Minneapolis Tribune* reported. "First, that the ground is low and damp owing to the proximity of the creek; second, that he gets a better view; and third, that he gets more air and sunshine."

The house, constructed of plaster, hollow tile and wood, had a long gestation. When Dight finally completed it in 1926, it measured 18 feet by 22 feet and had four rooms and a porch. A cupola topped one room, which he set up as a laboratory. Planned as a four-season home, it boasted a do-it-yourself hot-water heating system that proved so inad-



Charles F. Dight's Treehouse, Minneapolis, 1926 – ca. 1937

equate in the winter that Dight was forced to wear overshoes inside.

By the time Dight abandoned residence in the house in the late-1920s, it had become an architectural celebrity. Photos of it appeared in newspapers across the country. It remained unoccupied until Dight's death in 1937 and was razed, in all probability, not long thereafter.

Jack El-Hai