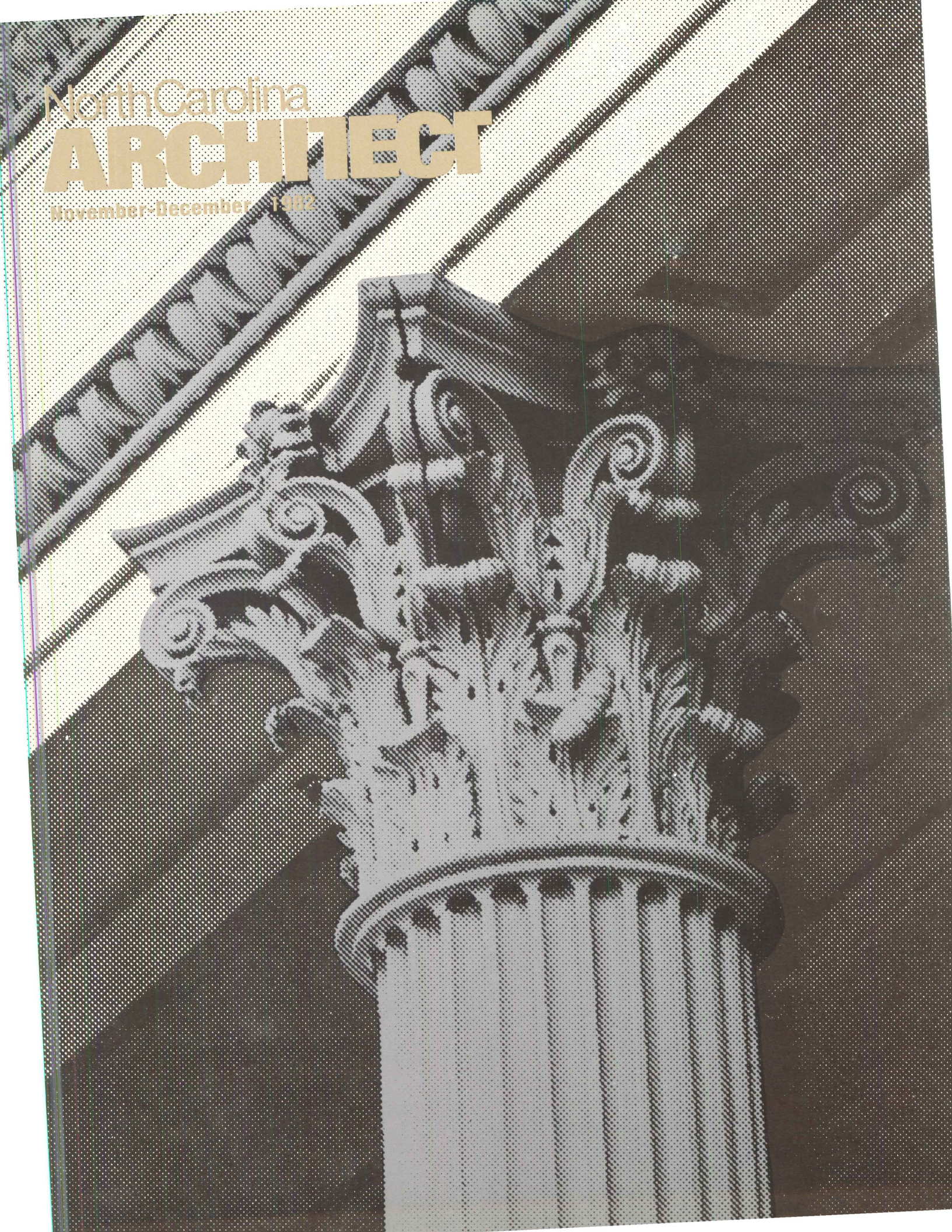


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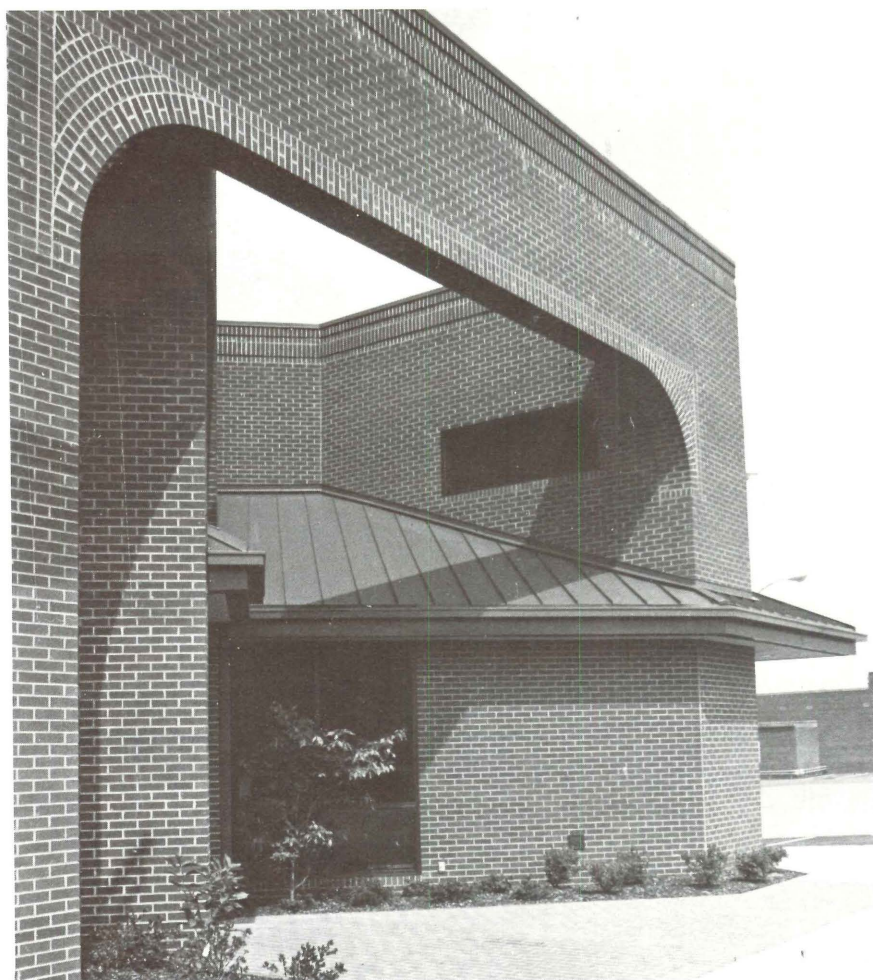
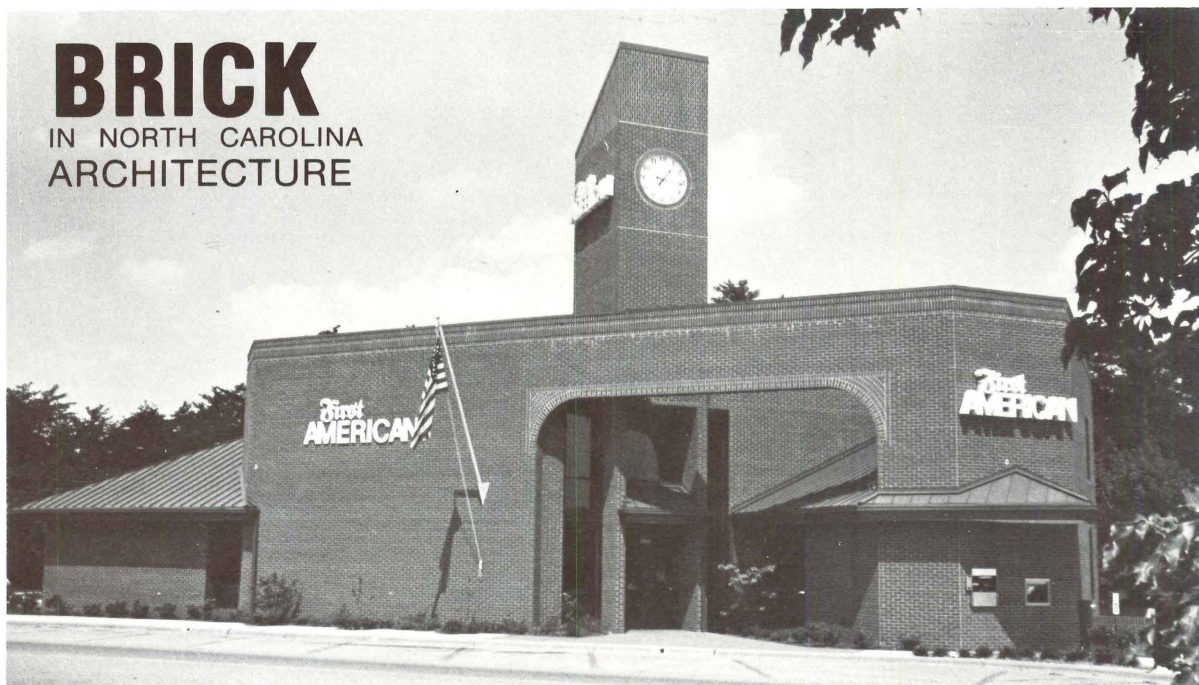
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# North Carolina ARCHITECT

Vol. 30 No. 6  
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# WILMINGTON

## A CITY WHOSE TIME HAS COME

*Wilmington, North Carolina is a city whose time has come — again.*

*From its establishment in 1733 and beyond the Civil War, Wilmington enjoyed phenomenal growth and prosperity due to its prime seaport and prolific cotton and rice-growing plantations. Majestic homes, halls, and churches rose in orderly clusters along its brick-paved streets. Built by wealthy Southern gentry and designed by some of the nation's foremost architects, they became a study in classical architecture. And Wilmington became a city of classic beauty.*

*Yet, like most American cities, Wilmington*



*fell prey to the urban blight that tarnished the twentieth century as its residents flocked to the suburbs. The abandoned homes began to deteriorate. The once colorful riverfront became a seedy network of vacant warehouses and dark, dangerous streets. And its bustling business district floundered as local merchants packed up and moved to suburban shopping centers.*

*But something happened in the mid-Sixties that eventually reshaped the fabric of the center city. Perhaps more than any other town in this state, Wilmington has been uprooted and replanted by the historic preservation phenomenon that's swept the nation over the past two decades.*

BY KIM JOHNSON DEVINS



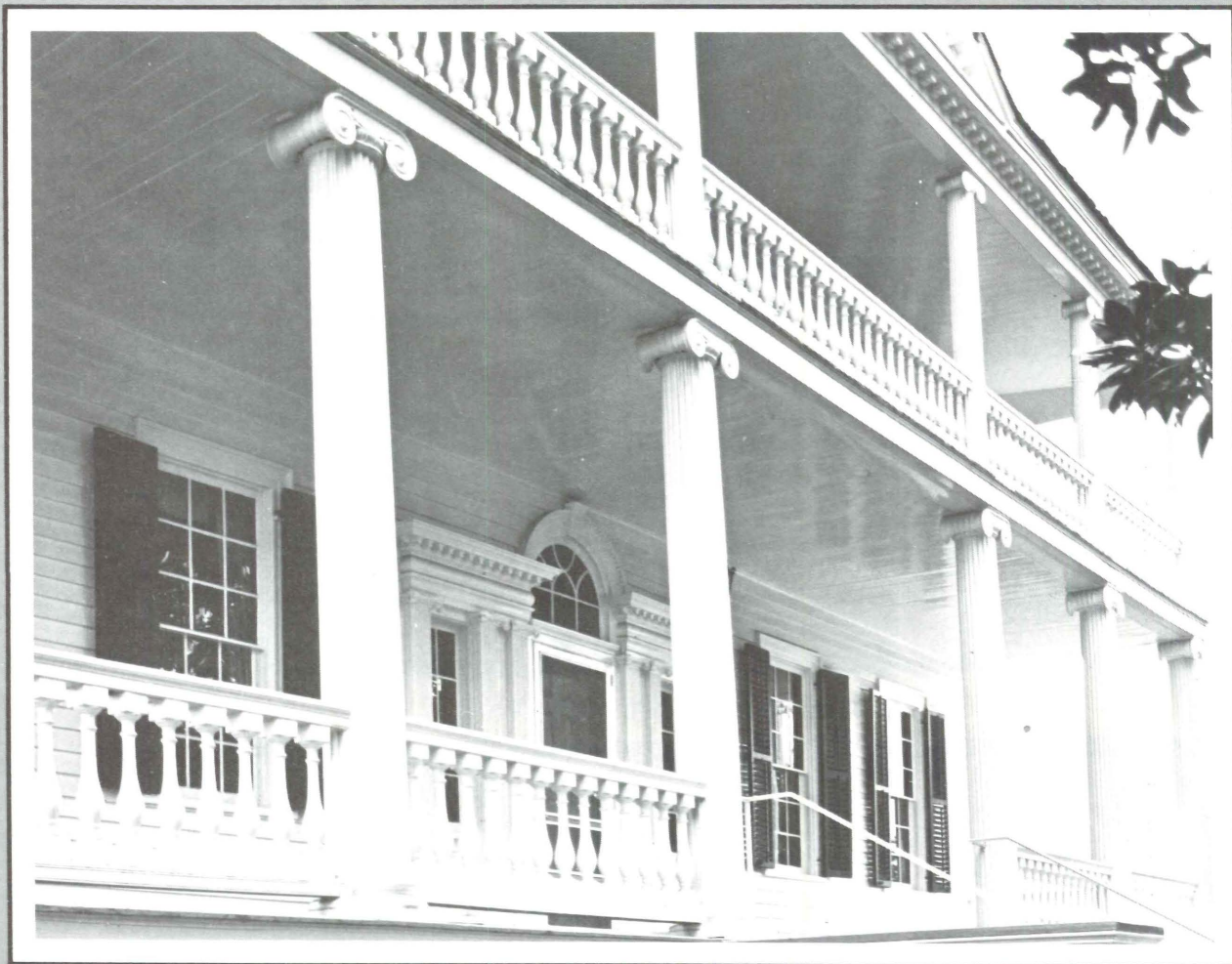
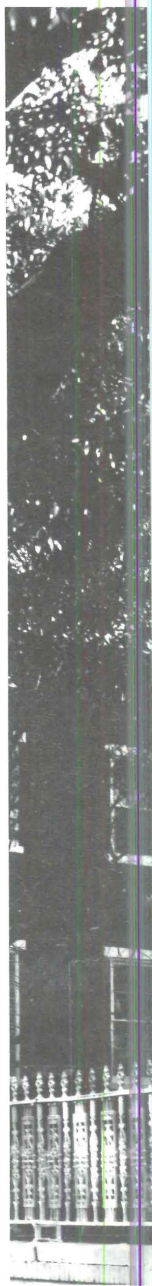
**F**or a Southern city that's up to its capitals and cornices in tradition, it's surprising that Wilmington's populace had to be encouraged to do something about its dilapidated downtown. The Colonial Dames made an attempt as early as 1937 when they purchased and restored the Burgwin-Wright House, General Cornwallis' headquarters during the Revolutionary War. But the people of the city needed a fire lit under them, so to speak. And one man who was willing to strike the match was architect Leslie N. Boney Jr., FAIA. In his offices, located in an 1854 Classic Revival home he renovated on Fifth Street, Boney recalled how it all began...

"In 1950 there was an NCAIA meeting in Asheville; the speaker was Werhner Sensbach, city planner for Columbia, South Carolina. His speech related how Columbia was preserving its historic past. I looked at this presentation and recognized that Columbia was a 'new' town compared to Wilmington; it hadn't a fraction of the heritage and beauty of

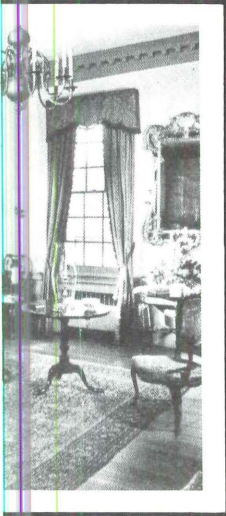
Wilmington, yet he was making such a big deal out of it."

Afterwards, the architect began to feel personally challenged to see what Wilmington "had and wasn't appreciating," he said. "So I called Mr. Sensbach and asked him to come here to meet with me and some city officials — to evaluate, as an objective observer, our area. When he came, he was very impressed with what we had. He saw that we had a fairly compact area to deal with — the old section of Wilmington — and he saw that the potential for saving it was *very good*."

The result of this visit, Boney said, was that "the city was challenged to do something about its planning and zoning." But the wheels of government — especially the local variety — turned slowly. And before any action could be taken, a city planning department had to be organized. At the time, the so-called planning department consisted of a city engineer and a citizens' advisory board. "There was no up-to-date plan for the city," Boney noted.







A heated controversy over a new bridge to span the Cape Fear River, plus the town's desire to qualify for federal urban renewal funds "served as a catalyst to get the city to form a planning department," Boney said. And when it finally happened, he was appointed to the board.

Soon afterwards, Boney called Raleigh planner John Voorhees, of the state Department of Conservation and Development, to come to Wilmington and discuss the historic section with him. In 1962, with the valuable assistance of the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society

*Opposite: The Burgwin-Wright House, built in 1771, was purchased and saved by the Colonial Dames in 1937. It was restored by Ehrling H. Pedersen of Philadelphia in 1940, then again by Leslie N. Boney Architect, Inc. in 1950. Left: The interior is furnished with appropriate period antiques.*

*Below: The Hathaway-Boney House, built in 1854, is now the Boney family home. The architect's offices are located in the remodeled basement and in other structures on the property. Photography: William J. Boney, Jr.*

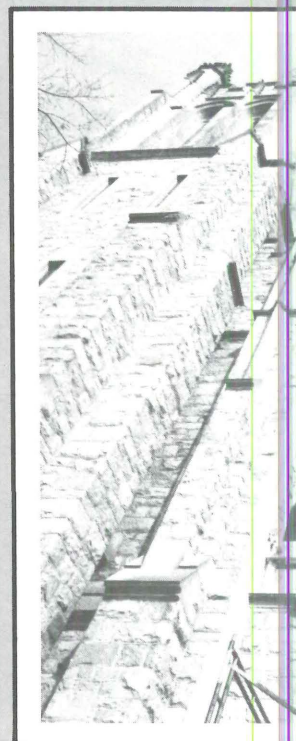




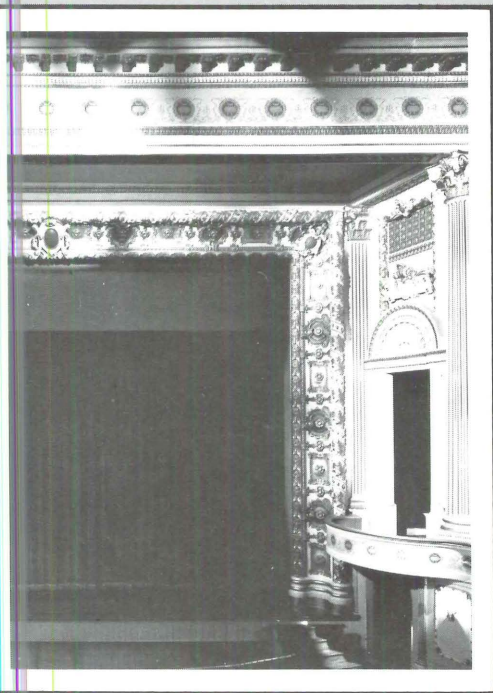
(estab. 1956), the Wilmington Historic District was officially zoned. A Board of Architectural Review was also organized to oversee any future rehabilitation work on the houses within the district; Boney's brother, Charles Boney, FAIA, served as its chairman for many years. Concurrently, the New Hanover Council of Architects conducted a study to evaluate the houses and other buildings for historic significance and general condition.

Through this activity, Wilmington's preservation flame began to flicker to life. But it would take a lot more — i.e., community commitment — to make it blaze. "It was one thing to establish an historic district," Boney said, "but who was going to *do* anything about it?"

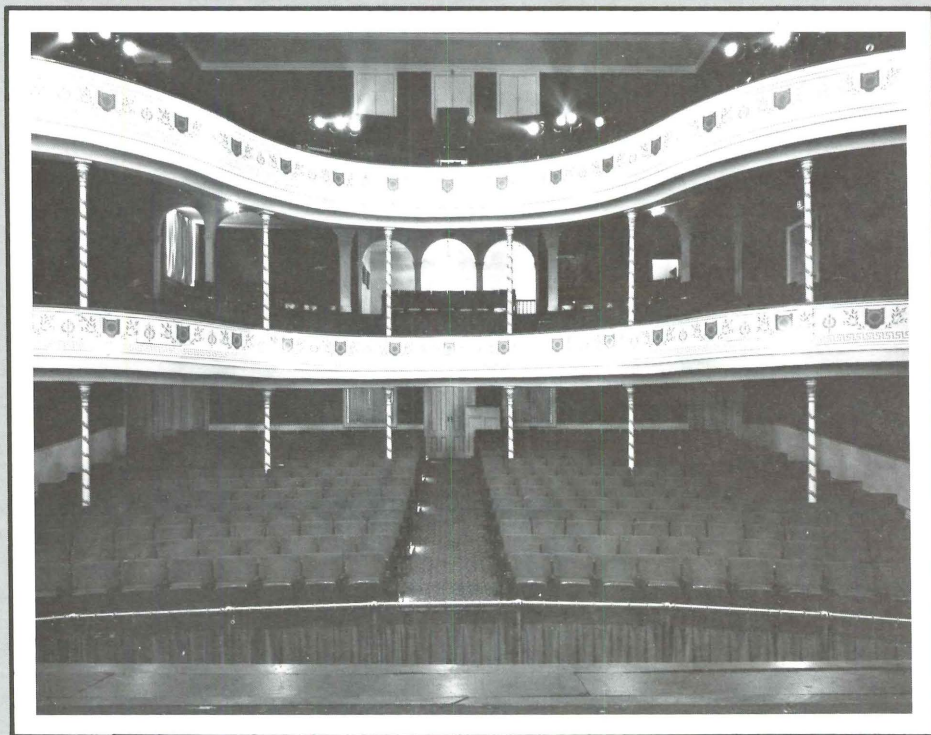
The answer to that question came when a group of citizens formed the Historic Wilmington Foundation in 1966. The Foundation created a revolving fund to buy, restore, and sell historic properties in the district — which was the first revolving fund for historic preservation in the state. And according to Boney, an important key in the Foundation's efforts was its executive director R.V. Asbury Jr., "a dyed-in-the-wool preservationist," formerly with the Boney firm.







Boney's firm has been involved in the restoration of many historic homes in Wilmington, including: the 142 deRosset House (upper left); the Donald MacRae House, ca. 1900 (left); and the extraordinary 1858 Bellamy Mansion (lower left). Boney has also served as consulting architect for improvements to the 1927 First Presbyterian church (below) since 1950. Above and right: LNB's restoration of the 1858 City Hall-Thalian Hall received an NCAIA Award in 1976. The elaborate ornamentation in the theatre was meticulously reproduced. General contractor: Luther T. Rogers. Interior design: Samuel H. Hodges. Photography: William J. Boney, Jr.



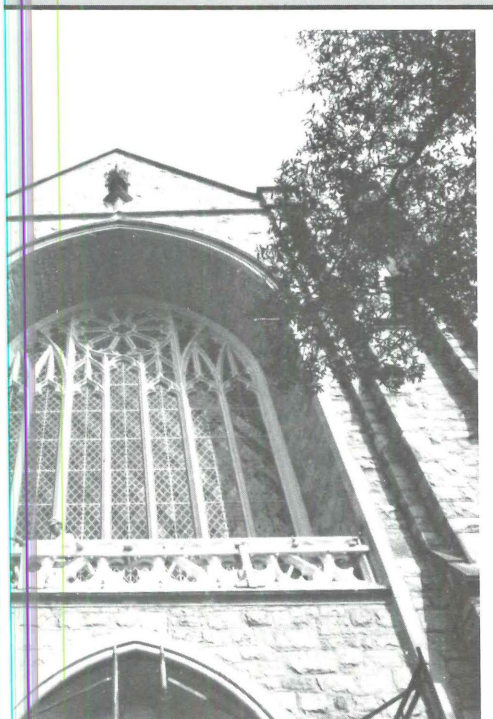
## ONE ON EVERY CORNER

Since 1966, downtown Wilmington has been swept by preservation fever, and today its picturesque streets are a study in the *restoration* of classical residential architecture. Many of these homes Boney's prolific firm rehabilitated, including the five-story Greek Revival Bellamy Mansion, originally designed for Dr. John D. Bellamy (1817-1896) by Rufus H. Bunnell of Connecticut. (Its construction was supervised by Wilmington's most outstanding architect and builder of the time, James F. Post.) The project has involved restoring the 1858 exterior to its original condition, and stabilizing the servants' quarters. Restoration of the interior is planned as funding permits. The firm has also been involved in the preservation of the deRosset, MacRae, Burgwin-Wright, and Latimer houses.

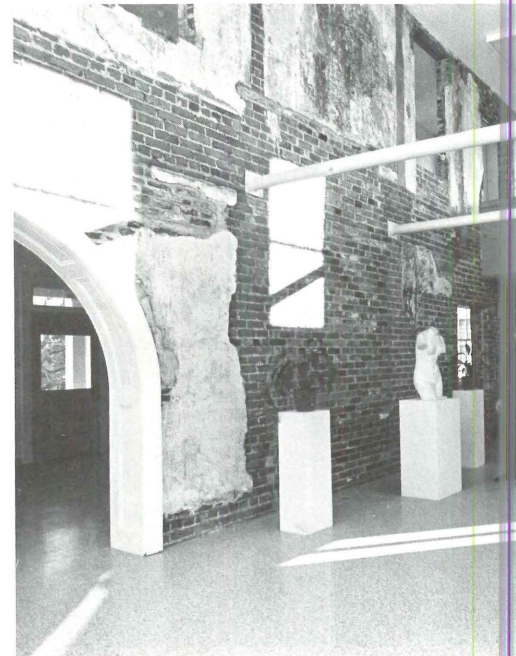
Boney's professional preservation

efforts haven't been limited to residences, however. For example, he personally supervised the restoration of the tremendous stained glass windows of First Presbyterian Church, a Hobart Upjohn creation. The work involved replacing the disintegrating cast stone window tracery with limestone — a lengthy, tedious, and expensive venture.

But if there is one restoration project Boney and his firm are best known for, it would have to be City Hall-Thalian Hall, an 1858 product of the renowned theatre designer, John M. Trimble (1815-1867). To accommodate Thalian Hall's contemporary function as a performing arts theatre, it was restored to its 1900 condition with new plaster, seating, carpet, and a painstaking reproduction of its interior Victorian colors and details. The project won the firm an NCAIA Award for Historic Preservation in 1976.







## MEANWHILE, DOWN BY THE RIVER

As much as historic preservation has breathed new life into the downtown neighborhoods, that architectural hybrid known as "adaptive reuse" has created a metamorphosis of the riverfront. This former no-man's land, where only the local derelicts dared to venture after dark, is now one of the most inviting areas in the city.

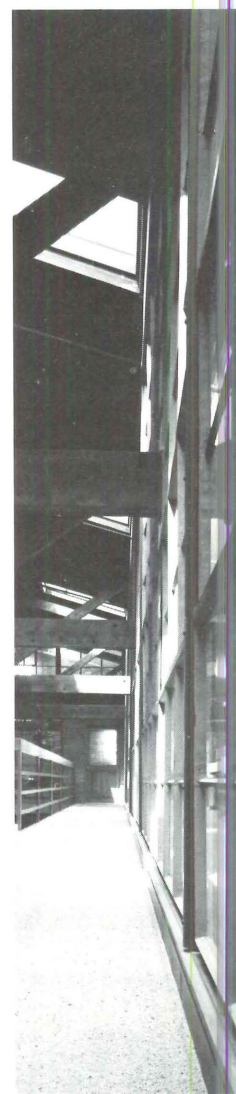
The transformation was largely due to the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Wright Jr. who have purchased and saved at least 30 historic properties in downtown Wilmington, including several along the river. A group of these riverfront buildings is now "Chandler's Wharf," a charming shopping and dining cluster. And to convert two century-old warehouses into retail and office spaces for Chandler's Wharf, the Wrights commissioned Wilmington architect Ligon B. Flynn, AIA.

Flynn's "mini-mall" is organized around a central, unconditioned court in "Warehouse C." A hallway off the court, paved in the same brick, links the two warehouses and leads to a side entrance. According to Michael Moorefield, Flynn's senior designer, the 12-foot bays suggested by the thick wooden trusses overhead became the ordering system for the lower level shops. Because vertical space was limited, a simple metal decking was used for the second floor, which also harmonizes with the buildings' existing materials. A curtain wall around the upper level — where, incidentally,

Flynn's offices and studio are located — leaves the interior visually open from front to back. Skylights pierce the roof, drawing sunlight into the central court, and colorful canvas awnings enliven the masonry exterior.

Several blocks up the river from Chandler's Wharf, a group of bulky brick and beam structures has also been converted into an attractive shopping complex, "The Cotton Exchange." Designed by Reg Narmour/The Architectural Group, of Charlotte, this adaptive reuse venture also integrates high tech materials into a rustic historical setting. Glass walls fronting its montage of shops keep the network of hallways from becoming claustrophobic. And its multi-leveled interior, including an open-air walkway on the ground level, has been attracting shoppers from across the state. The property was developed by Joe Reaves and Mal Murray of Wilmington. It received an NCAIA Award for Historic Preservation/Adaptive Reuse in 1978, and a "Sensible Growth" Merit Award from *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine in 1979.

Between both of these riverfront retrofits, at the base of Market Street, landscape architect Edward Durell Stone Jr. of Florida is constructing a series of wooden decks, docks, and walkways, accompanied by an appropriate lighting program and plantings. The work on "Market Plaza" is directed out of Stone's new Wilmington office.





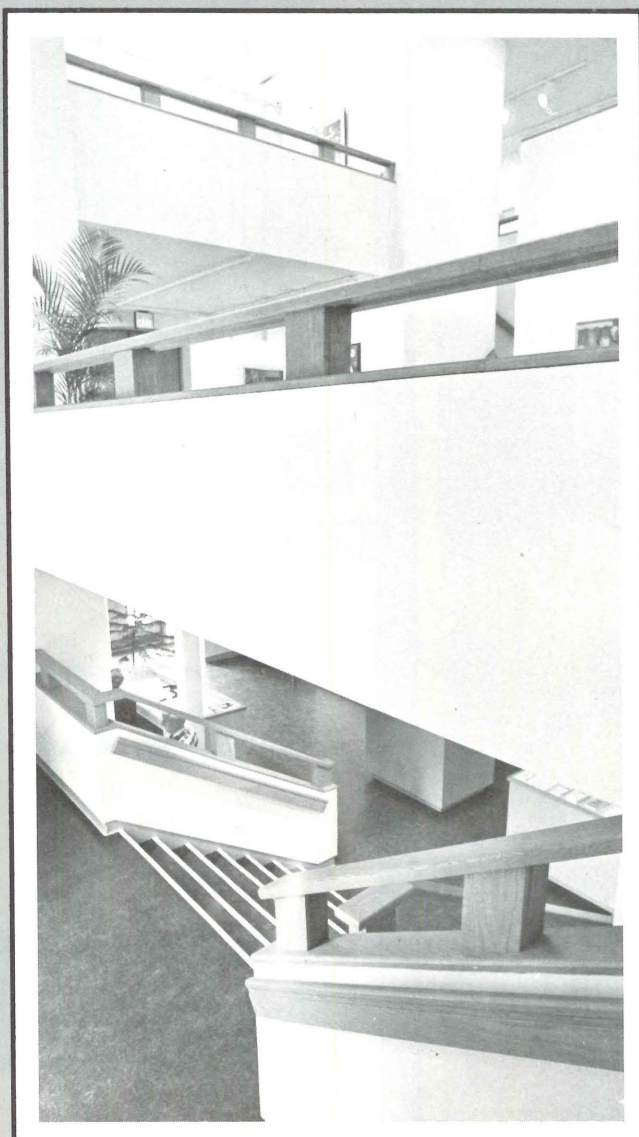
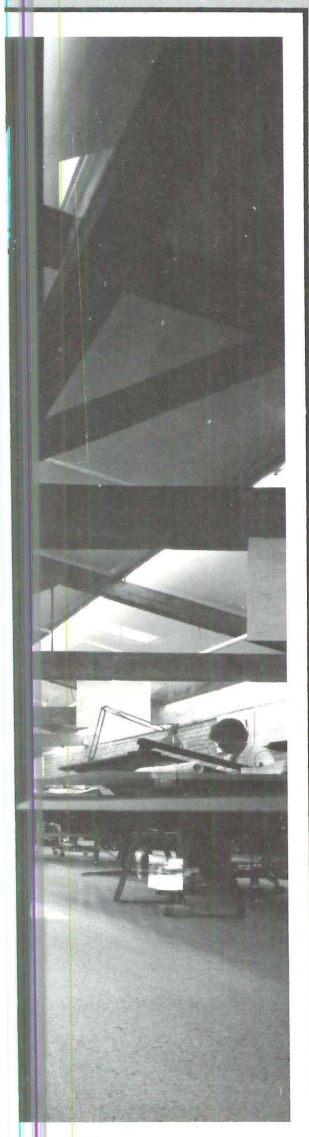
## RETROFITTING FOR ART'S SAKE

**B**ack a few blocks from the river, another significant new-use project is under-way: the St. John's Museum of Art complex, which is also coming off Ligon Flynn's drawing boards. Since 1962, the Museum has been housed in the historic — but too-small — St. John's Lodge, built in 1804. To expand the Museum's facilities, its building commission purchased the former St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church next door and the 1840 Cowan House behind it.

The church's conversion has been completed, and its adaptability to an art museum was a "lucky coincidence," Flynn said. "The main space was tall enough to insert a mezzanine level, so we were able to double the exhibition space."

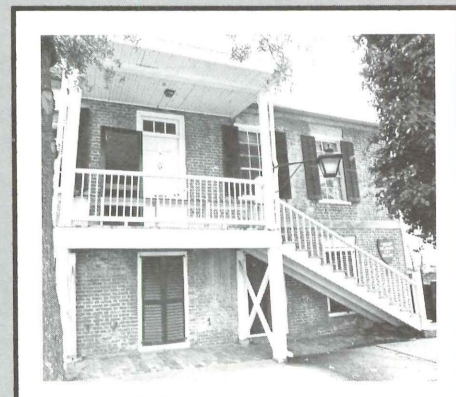
The former basement is now a sales shop and storage facility. New staircases lead from this lower level to the main floor, then up to the mezzanine galleries. Pickled wood trim, white walls, and pale carpeting brighten the linear interior, forming a quiet support for the Museum's permanent and transit exhibits.

The Cowan House is also finished, and is now an artists' workshop and classroom. The old lodge, and an addition planned to its rear, will become more gallery, office, and meeting space, overlooking an outdoor sculpture garden in the center of the complex. An underground tunnel will physically link the church and lodge; extensive landscaping will visually unify all three buildings.



*Top left: An "alley" unites two century-old riverfront warehouses into a retail/office mall in the Chandler's Wharf development. Below left: Metal decking created a second floor for "Warehouse C" where the architect's offices and studio are visible behind a curtain wall. Architect: Ligon B. Flynn, Architect. General contractor: River Enterprises (a division of Wright Chemical Corporation). Interior design: LBF. Photography: Jerry Markatos.*

*Another adaptive reuse project shapes the St. John's Museum of Art out of three historic structures on one corner of downtown Wilmington. Top right: The Cowan House is now an artist's workshop and classroom. Below right: St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church was transformed into contemporary gallery space with a sales shop located in the former basement. Below: The 1804 St. John's lodge completes the complex and will become more gallery, office and meeting space. Architect: Ligon B. Flynn, Architect. General contractor: Luther T. Rogers. Interior design: LBF. Photography: Roy Zalsky.*



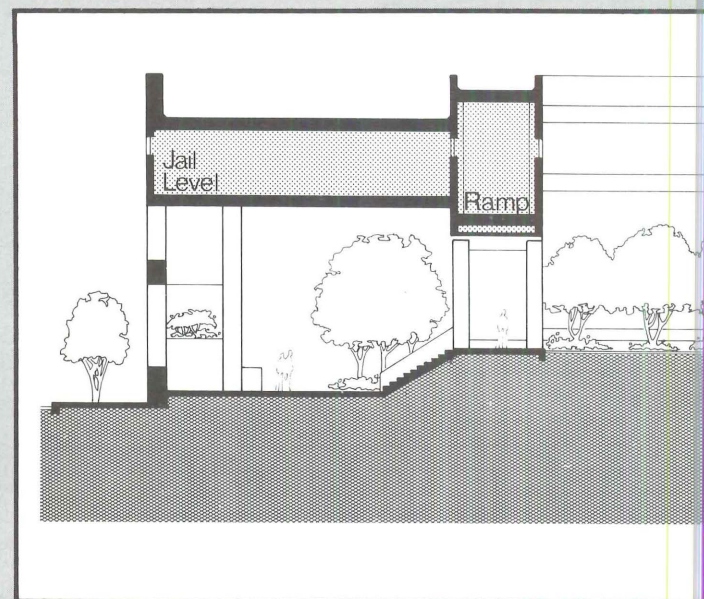
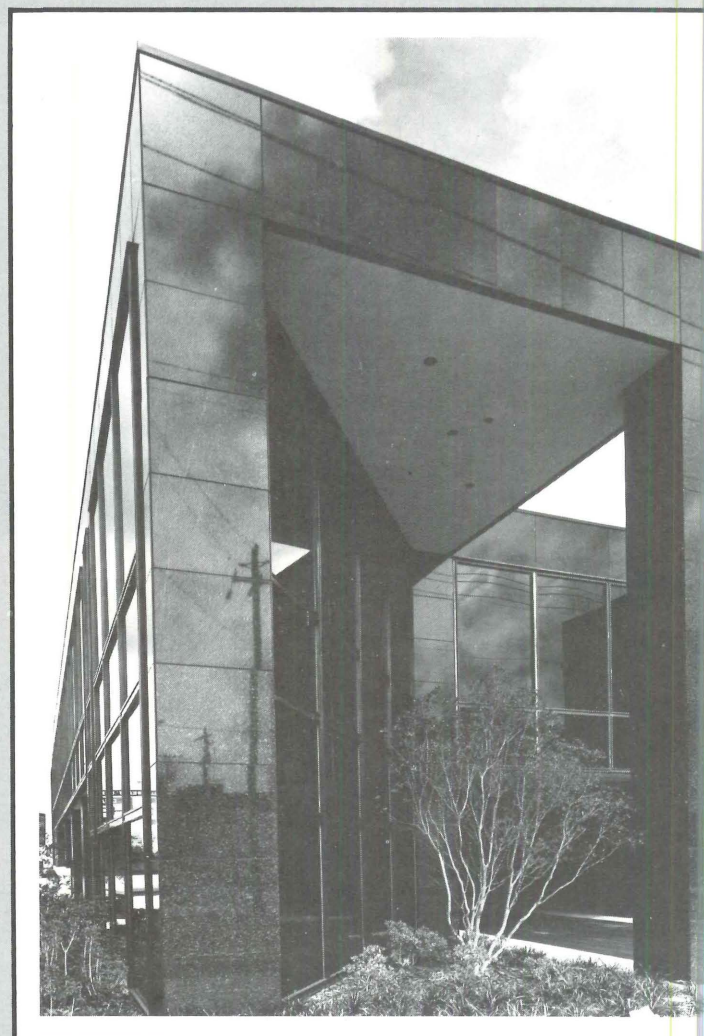
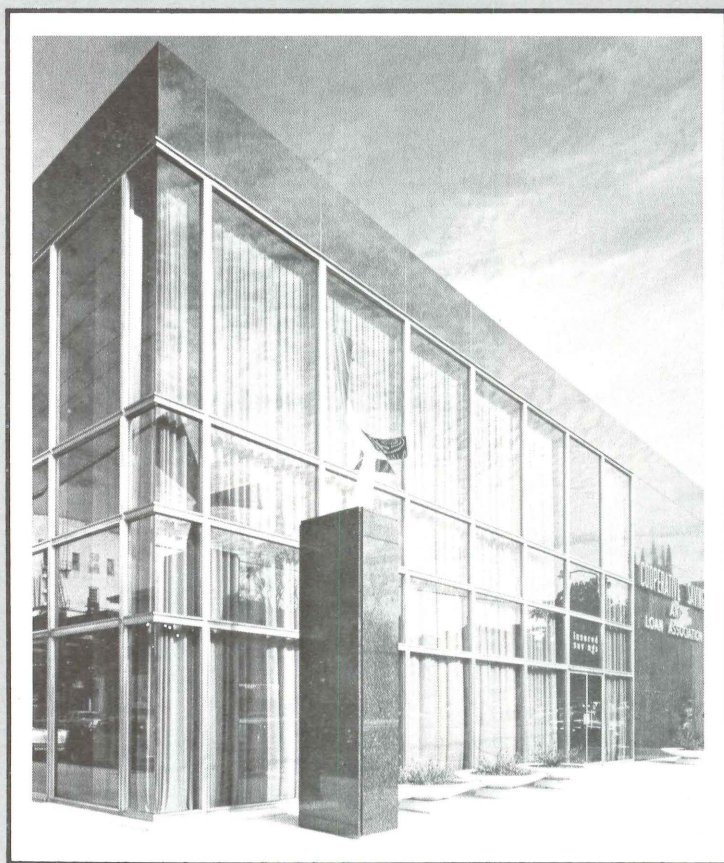


## A BOOST FOR THE BUSINESS DISTRICT

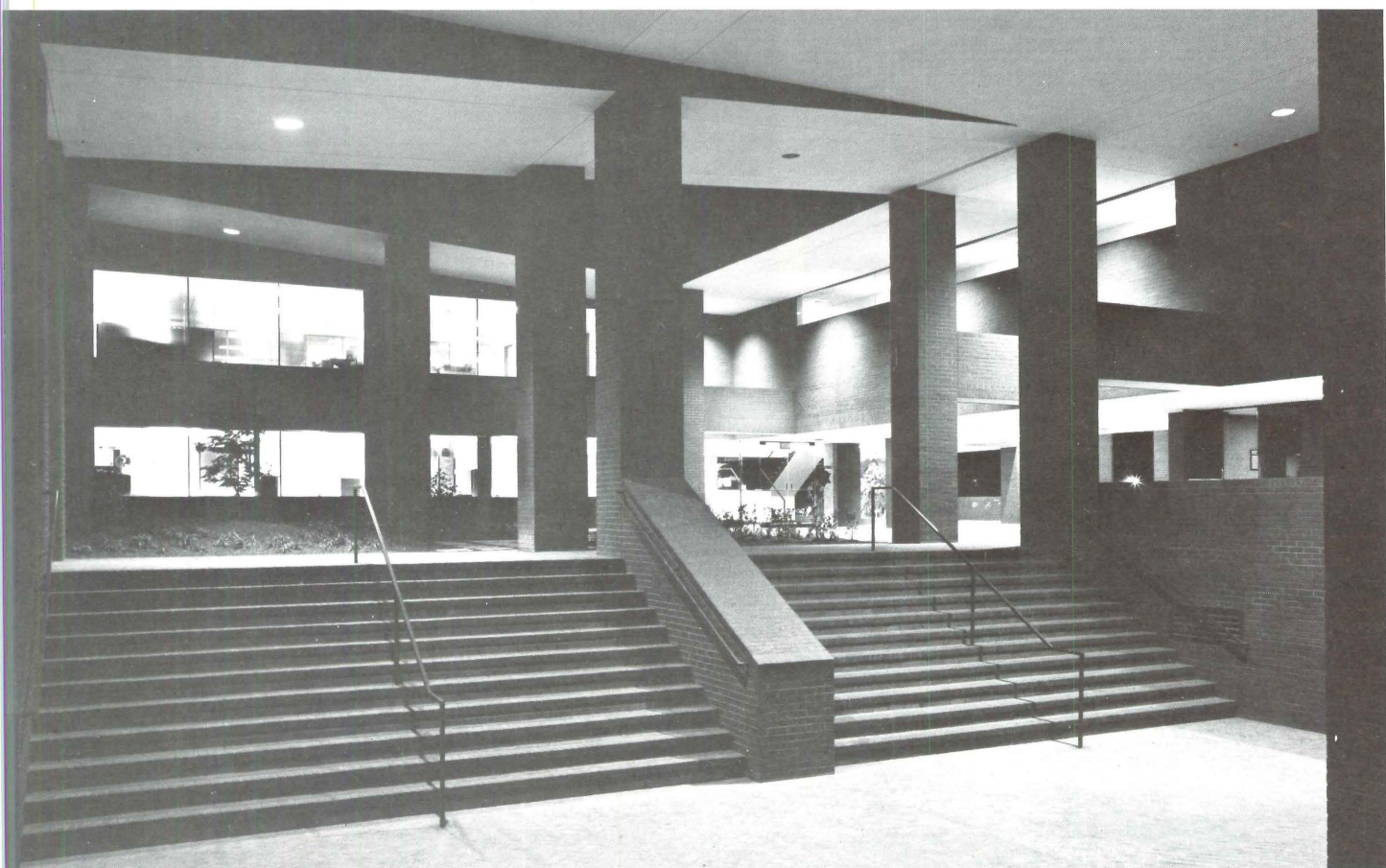
**W**ilmington's downtown business district is also reaping the benefits of the center city face-lift. A group of businessmen and other citizens have formed D.A.R.E. — the Downtown Area Revitalization Effort. Its purpose is to buy old commercial buildings — which have been, like so many missing teeth, dark gaping holes along the streetscape — and find new uses for them.

Their architectural assistance has come from several firms, including Synthesis, Inc. of Wrightsville Beach. Under the auspices of the firm's principle, Jay DeChesere, AIA, Synthesis conducted a survey of the business district and offered suggestions for the buildings' future uses. As a result, Synthesis was commissioned for several storefront renovations.

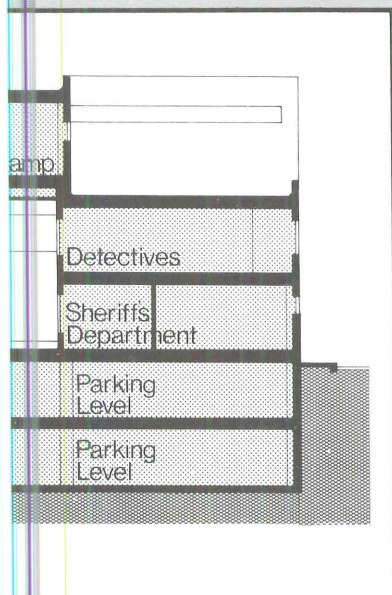
The firm was also responsible for the restoration of the Bank of North Carolina's 19th century building on Front Street. According to Alan Hill of Synthesis, Inc., part of the job involved extensive research to develop an appropriate palette for the old bank.







Far left: The Cooperative Savings and Loan building, 1960, and its 1981 addition (left). Architect: Leslie N. Boney Architect, Inc. Sculpture: Roy Gussow. Interior design: LNB. Photography, the original building: Joseph W. Molitor; the addition: William J. Boney, Jr. Above: An interior view of the New Hanover County Law Enforcement Center, 1979. Below: A sectional drawing shows the Center's two levels of underground parking.



## WILMINGTON, 1982

**A**rchitectural activity in Wilmington hasn't been limited to its historic properties (although they do tend to steal the limelight). For example...

While Leslie Boney was involved in the preservation effort in the 1960s, he and his partners were also erecting a new building on Market Street that's now a contemporary landmark. The Cooperative Savings and Loan building, a sleek composition of black granite, tinted glass, and polished bronze, became a symbol of the city's eye towards the future, and was selected for the finals of the Architectural League of New York Gold Medal Competition. This attitude was also captured in "Flight," a stainless steel sculpture by New York artist Roy Gussow that perches atop a black granite pedestal by a corner of the facade. The building and sculpture received an NCAIA Collaborating Artist's Award.

Two more recent developments closer to the heart of the historic district are the products of one of Wilmington's largest architectural offices: Ballard, McKim and Sawyer.

In a joint venture with Hartman-Cox of Washington, D.C., BMS caused a tidal wave of controversy with its bold design for the New Hanover County Law Enforcement Center, completed in 1979. The massive brick structure houses the police and sheriff's departments, a 120-person jail, Civil Defense, ABC Enforcement, and the related vehicles — on a one-acre site. The architects' challenge was "to maintain the necessary security without destroying the scale and the texture of the surrounding older neighborhood," explained Herb McKim, AIA, partner-in-charge of the project.

To lessen the contextual impact of the Center's 117,712 square feet, the bulk of its volume is below grade — including two levels of underground parking — and on the upper floors; the pedestrian level is a walk-through plaza, punctuated by a small central court. The roofline was kept along the same plane as the three large historic buildings nearby, including the 1896 Victorian courthouse. The Center's red brick *and* mortar were used to suggest the old brick of this courthouse.

According to McKim, BMS wanted to give the city a dramatic, sculptural form



*Right: An exterior view of the New Hanover County Law Enforcement Center. The pedestrian level was designed as a walk-through plaza; the bulk of the building is below grade and on the upper floors.*

*Architects: Hartman-Cox, Washington, D.C., and Ballard, McKim and Sawyer, Wilmington. General contractor, phase I: Davidson and Jones; phase II: J.M. Thompson. Interior design: BMS. Photography: George McKim.*

for its Law Enforcement Center, that would also mesh with its historic surroundings. Since its completion, this geometric configuration has been called everything from "art" to "grotesque." Nevertheless, the \$4 million-plus Center is a powerful face in the context of a progressive city.

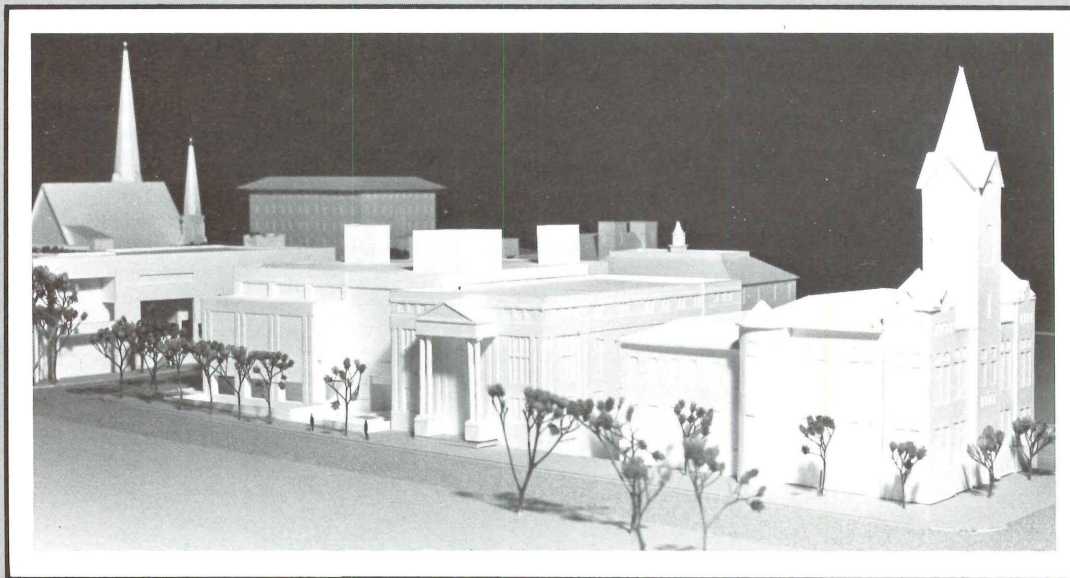
Far less controversial but every bit as significant is BMS's 90,000-square-foot addition to the renovated Classical Revival Courthouse designed by Leslie N. Boney Sr. in 1924. Now under construction, the addition will also be connected to the Law Enforcement Center via an underground tunnel. The Courthouse plus its addition will be called the "New Hanover Judicial Building."

"We didn't want to try to reproduce the classicism of the older building," McKim explained. "Instead, we kept the scale, materials, and proportions of the addition in harmony with that of the older structure." The shell will be limestone and spandrel glass, embellished with vertical bands to echo the lines and proportions of the Courthouse's fenestration. The facilities will include three district courtrooms, three superior courtrooms, judges chambers, a juvenile courtroom, plus libraries, offices, and conference rooms. Total cost is expected to be in excess of \$5 million.



**T**hese are only a few of the many people who have been actively involved in the revitalization of downtown Wilmington. Credit must be given to the individual homeowners who have lovingly sanded, plastered and painted their private historic treasures bringing back the community spirit that originally built the city. And then there are the many architects who have cared about how their work would effect the built environment, and have designed accordingly.

Downtown Wilmington is still evolving, as more time, money, and energies are expended on its old and new architecture each year. It would seem that this traditional city has adopted a new credo: Commitment. ■



*Left: A model of the addition to the 1924 Classical Revival Courthouse (center) shows the new structure's historical context. Architect: Ballard, McKim and Sawyer. General contractor: Midsouth Construction Company. Interior design: BMS. Photography: George McKim.*



# A Personal View

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

By BETTY SILVER, HONORARY AIA,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCAIA

Although the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects was organized in 1913, there were only a few members and meetings were random. After World War II many returning veterans completed their education and NCAIA began to grow and grow. It became apparent that a state-wide communication system needed to be established. With that thought in mind, some enterprising architects in Charlotte contracted with a publisher there and *Southern Architect* was born in May, 1954. This was a slick magazine to bring architects and architecture to the attention of prospective clients. News of members, Chapter committees and activities were included with articles on new post-war buildings in the state.

A magazine for the southeast was the original concept of *Southern Architect* — not just North Carolina. However, after some years it became evident that gathering information from other states was not feasible. The magazine needed more local identity and so evolved **North Carolina Architect**, which it has remained for the past 20 years.

In the mid-Fifties the NCAIA Executive Committee decided the Chapter had grown to the extent they needed paid staff. Jerry Stockard of Raleigh had an organization staffing small associations and agreed to serve as NCAIA's first executive secretary. The publication of *Southern Architect* was moved to Raleigh under the aegis of Stockard. He became responsible for obtaining editorial material as well as advertising for the monthly publication. And so it progressed.

Early on, all registered architects in North Carolina comprised the basis for a mailing list to receive *Southern Architect* free of charge. Then a list of potential architectural clients was developed with the aid of NCAIA members and the magazine now was received by some 3000 individuals. As a tool for advertising sales, the expanded mailing list served as a great boost.

By the early 1960s, NCAIA had grown to nearly 300 members and it was decided to establish an office and employ one full-time staff person. A small one-room office in downtown Raleigh was acquired, minimum office equipment was installed and an executive secretary was hired. And the responsibility for the magazine moved again. For among other duties, the responsibility of publishing *Southern Architect* was given to her. (Oh yes, even that long ago a "her" replaced a "him.")

Then began her learning process of galley proofs, paste-ups, scaling photos to size, dealing with printers, mailers, mailing lists and the myriad other complexities of magazine publishing. But for the great assistance of

the many architect members, the new executive secretary and the magazine may have both fallen flat on their faces. Well, live and learn!

So, onward and hopefully upward. After the first big step of establishing an office, small though it was, expansion was inevitable. In a short time, the NCAIA office moved to larger quarters which enabled staff to have more working space for the diverse duties of running a magazine and an association.

At that time it was off to the road and calling on potential advertisers for the newly-named **North Carolina Architect**. Some results were produced to the end that advertising increased and **North Carolina Architect** changed from a monthly to a bi-monthly publication.

Now, as to content, gradually more articles of general interest were generated from inside and outside the profession. The general public particularly enjoyed reports of historical significance. When these were published there always were calls for additional copies of the magazine and even after ten to 15 years these serve as reference material for current authors.

During the 1960-1978 period a number of Raleigh architects served as chairmen of the **North Carolina Architect** committee. The duty assigned to them was gathering material for publication, which was no small volunteer job. Each of the six-a-year issues was devoted to a particular theme, one of which was publication of the annual NCAIA Awards Program winners. Each year the Chapter invites its members to submit photographs, slides, floor plans, site plans and a summary of the problem solving process for projects designed by AIA member firms. These submissions are juried by three or four distinguished architects from North Carolina. The best projects are selected to receive awards for design excellence. Usually from 40 to 70 entries are received and from these there may be from one to ten recognized as outstanding. The design firm, along with the client and general contractor, are then invited to an awards banquet at the NCAIA annual convention. The entries are all exhibited at the convention and the winning projects are published in **North Carolina Architect**.

Until recently, architects were forbidden to advertise by the AIA Code of Ethics; in essence, winning an award for design was a way of bringing a firm's name to public attention. Since the Justice Department's ruling on ethical standards as a "restraint of trade," advertising by architects has become more prevalent, but by no means has it swamped the market. Projects worthy of publication in architectural journals still offer

*continued on page 14*



# A Personal View

continued from page 13

architects an excellent opportunity for positive publicity — at no cost.

Historic preservation and adaptive re-use of buildings produced great interest in the magazine and brought the first paid subscriptions. There were scholarly essays on colonial architecture in North Carolina, "coastal cottage" architecture indigenous to our state, and a history of early 20th century buildings in Raleigh, to name a few. Each of these articles placed architecture and its social implications before the public.

Also, there were articles about various cities around the state featuring their best architecture and city planning. In some instances proposed new buildings were included.

A single thread was apparent in every issue — promotion of awareness of our surroundings and how our lives and work and play are affected by the architecture we experience.

In the mid-1960s NCAIA was fortunate to fall heir to the beautiful old water tower property in downtown Raleigh. Chapter headquarters were permanently installed and with expanded space, another staff person was added.

In 1977 NCAIA employed a full-time editor, Ernest Wood, whose experience as an art and architecture writer for newspapers brought a new professionalism to **North Carolina Architect**. In his more than two years with the publication, the quality of the magazine improved noticeably and public acceptance and awareness increased. Alas, greener fields called him away and the search was on for a new solution to publishing the **North Carolina Architect**.

In the fall of 1979 Spectator Publications, Inc. indicated an interest in taking over the publication of the Chapter's magazine. Following a series of negotiating sessions between the NCAIA Board and Spectator editor/publisher R.B. Reeves III, a contract was signed for Spectator to publish **North Carolina Architect** for three years beginning in 1980. This was a giant step forward for the magazine to acquire professional staff

and advertising personnel. Spectator staff and an NCAIA-appointed editorial board have worked hand-in-glove to produce a quality magazine of interest to the public and the profession.

With this, the final issue under Spectator Publications auspices, **North Carolina Architect** is ready for its next step. Whether that will be another publisher or oblivion is yet to be decided. ■

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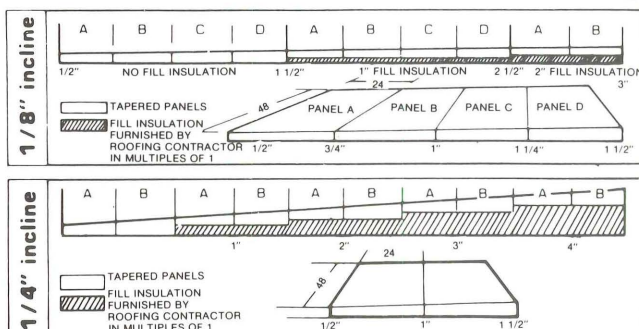
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## More On Aesthetic Regulation

I read Mr. Allen's article "Architecture and Aesthetic Regulation: A Lawyer's Look Through the Looking Glass" (N.C. Architect, July-August 1982) and found myself somewhat in sympathy with his frustrations, although I disagree with his conclusions. Furthermore, as a licensed architect having extensive experience not only with historic preservation but also with "new" design projects, I feel a need to respond to several of Mr. Allen's points.

If I may summarize and paraphrase the main points of his article as I understand them:

1. Land use ordinances are usually intended to promote, among other things, the general welfare of citizens. In recent years the term "general welfare" has been interpreted to include issues broader than health, safety and morals.
2. The State and enabling legislation and the Raleigh Historic Districts ordinance are inconsistent and confusing and the associated processes of review and approval impose a burden on designers and developers.
3. The existence of the preservation ordinances carries the risk of a wider exercise of aesthetic control by government at the expense of the citizens and there remains a question of whether such control should rest with "the State or private citizens."

With respect to the first point, I wonder if the broader interpretation referred to may not actually be a return to some much older attitudes about the public welfare. I was privileged to hear a presentation several years ago by a gentleman who was legal counsel for Parcs Canada regarding the changes in property law from medieval times to the present. My understanding is that the present legal distinction between real property and personal property grows out of English Common Law. The issue seems to have been that ownership of real property, buildings, and land carried with it an obligation to the community, since the ownership and disposition of that property could affect the well-being of all citizens of the community. Personal property on the other hand carried no such obligation and the ability to acquire and dispose of personal property lay solely with the owner.

The illustration given suggested that in many English villages the Town Commons was privately owned, and that the community, whether through direct regulation or tradition, imposed restrictions on the owner's right to develop or dispose of such land for his own personal purposes. The presentation made the point that within the past hundred years or so in North America the obligations of real property owners to the community had eroded to the extent that only the obligation for safety

and health remained. The attitude of American courts toward historic preservation legislation was applauded as a victory for the general public in re-establishing their traditional community rights over individual owners of real property.

As an architect untrained in law, I have no idea whether the above argument has any legitimate basis, however, it is easy to see that the concept is firmly entrenched in the minds of our citizens. A few moments' attendance at any controversial zoning hearing will convince the observer that the citizens themselves feel a clear right to object to development plans which they see as threatening their own neighborhoods or lifestyles. In this regard, the preservation ordinances are closely in line with the apparent desire of the citizenry for a broader interpretation of "general welfare" as it may protect them individually from encroachments.

I would also like to dispute the second point, regarding the clarity of the written regulation. Certainly one can read the Oakwood Historic District Ordinance in an analytical manner and quickly identify a number of individual elements which at first appear vague or seem to contradict other portions of the text. Certainly there are terms used which have a meaning in the context of the ordinance which is considerably different from a meaning commonly understood in some other context. As architects we are all woefully aware of the connotative differences in traditional architectural usage for such terms as "approved," "inspection," and "supervise." As the judge remarked when asked to define obscenity, "I don't know how to define it, but I know it when I see it." Historic preservation is a system of philosophy and practice which, like other disciplines, has and is evolving its own language. When viewed comprehensively, however, I personally believe that the general intent of the Historic District Ordinance is quite clear regardless of quibbles about details or individual cases. It stands as the community's best expression of its concerns for preservation of the Oakwood neighborhood and the other historic districts.

This is not to say that the ordinance should not be revised and updated when the need occurs. Hopefully, through the process of review and amendment, the real points of confusion can be clarified and the concern of the community more accurately expressed. It seems virtually certain, however that no matter how carefully the ordinance is drafted, there will remain issues of contention between the desires of individual property owners and the will of the public as expressed through the ordinance. For this reason some method of

communication between property owners and other citizens is essential. The time-honored process in this country is to provide for commissions and boards of citizens to represent the interests of the community. I can think of no particular reason why land development activities, especially those which may have significant effect on the environment of the community, should not be subject to such review.

The third point raises the "big government" specter, which in these times is a difficult issue to view objectively. However, as an architect who serves on a historic district commission and has been involved in public service in several ways, I would discount the notion that there is any evil and pervasive conspiracy to wrest from designers their creative spark. This is not to say that communities who wish to impose design constraints, be they addressing aesthetic issues or historic preservation, will not do so. They have certainly done so in the past.

Today, for instance, the effect of the Chapel Hill Appearance Commission on the character of that community over many decades is a matter of historic interest. In decades to come, I am sure we will all look back on the effect the early historic district commissions had on the character of their respective communities. My personal experience with historic preservation, however, is that almost all such legislation rests on a backbone of interested citizens deeply committed to protecting their version of the public welfare against decisions by individual property owners whose interests may be self-directed and who may not be completely aware of the effects of their decisions on the community at large.

There is a wonderful anecdote told about an elderly lady in Chicago shortly after the completion of the John Hancock building. She had been an outspoken critic of the design yet had promptly moved into the building as soon as apartments became available. When questioned about her residence in a building she seemed to despise, she is reported to have answered, "I live there because it's the only place in the city you can't see the damn thing." I am not trying to imply that architects should not design John Hancock buildings; however, I do believe architects have a professional obligation to be aware that their work does affect more than just the health and safety of the citizens occupying their buildings. There are citizens who feel strongly about the effects of building design on their lifestyles and environments.

For instance, the architect for the Trailways  
*continued on page 16*



# Letters

*continued from page 15*

Bus Terminal near my home does not have to look at it everyday as I do. Happily, both he and the owner did get involved with the Oakwood community (although they were not required to do so) and many of the possible ill effects were mitigated in the design.

I further disagree with Mr. Allen's implication that design in "a contemporary mode which reflects the structural elements and aesthetic qualities" of the surrounding historic district is a contradiction in terms. There are too many instances of success by architects faced with such assignments. I would recommend that Mr. Allen observe the work of Reg Narmour reported on page 18 of the same issue in which his article appeared, or the sensitive additions and renovations to historic properties and with historic districts designed by many architects across the state of North Carolina. I would suspect that many of these designers perceive the regulations more as a challenge to their abilities than as a limitation on their creativity.

Finally, after all, government at the civic level usually is made up in fact of "private citizens" and is not some enormous anonymous machine. The members of the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission are all citizens who have offered their time as a public service. They have been selected by elected representatives and serve for rather brief periods, permitting the attitude of the board to change with community sentiments.

Mr. Allen is really addressing the first point; that is, whether any individual should have the right to develop or dispose of his property without obligation to the community. I feel that when Mr. Allen chose to build in a historic district, his obligation clearly included responding to the concern of the citizens for preservation and well-being of that district, regardless of whether he agreed with that concern.

I have two other minor comments to offer regarding Mr. Allen's remarks, not by way of criticism, but for clarification to readers particularly interested in the points he has raised. First, there has recently been another challenge to a decision of the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission through appeal to the Board of Adjustments. If I understand the opinion of the city attorney correctly, the board was required to consider the appeal primarily on procedural grounds, that is, whether or not the Historic Districts Commission was found to have followed due process and acted within its authority. In the case at hand, the decision of the Commission was upheld even though the Board of Adjustment expressed considerable sympathy with the plight of the institution bringing the appeal.

Secondly, although the State of North Carolina in fact may have opposed extending the Raleigh Historic District Ordinance into the adjacent and largely state-owned Blount Street Historic District, the state subsequently adopted a policy for its own buildings which

was more restrictive and protective than the city preservation regulations. A comparison of the Blount Street Policy and the Oakwood Historic District Ordinance would reveal few, if any, differences in intent. The North Carolina Department of Administration has subsequently undertaken a considerable effort to rehabilitate its buildings threatened by the long-planned development of the governmental mall.

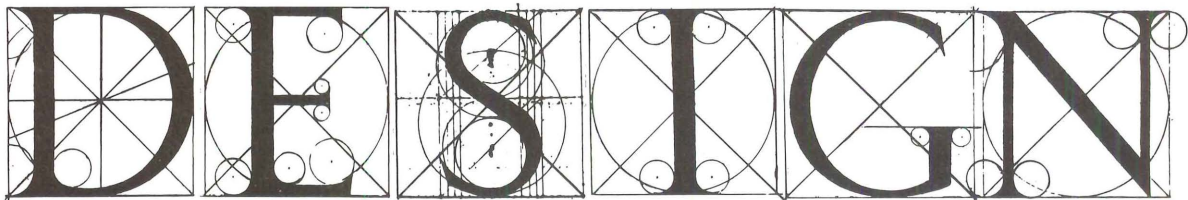
I admire Mr. Allen's candor and honesty in identifying the self-interests which may have colored his opinions. I would be remiss, therefore, in failing to explain that I am a resident and property owner in the Oakwood Historic District who feels that the Historic Oakwood case to which he refers has served the interests of our community by helping to preserve the characteristics of the Oakwood neighborhood which have led so many of us to make our homes there. Nevertheless, I believe that Mr. Allen, by voicing his concerns, has made our charge clear. As architects we can best mitigate against the risk of ill-considered aesthetic regulation by becoming more involved in community affairs and by seeking opportunities for public service. In this way, we can not only keep ourselves informed, but can help to educate public leaders and officials whose decisions may eventually have an effect on our professional practice.

John W. Kinney Jr., AIA  
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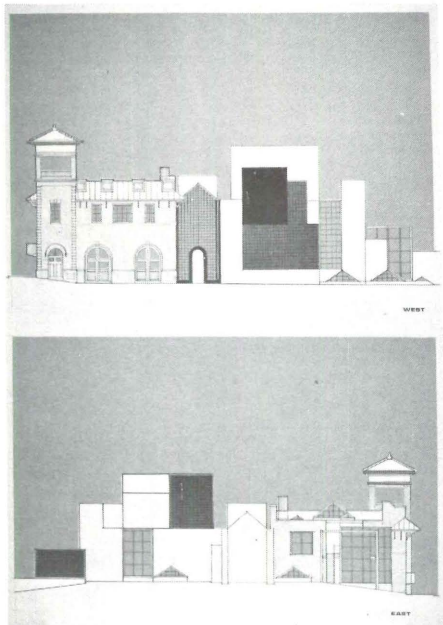


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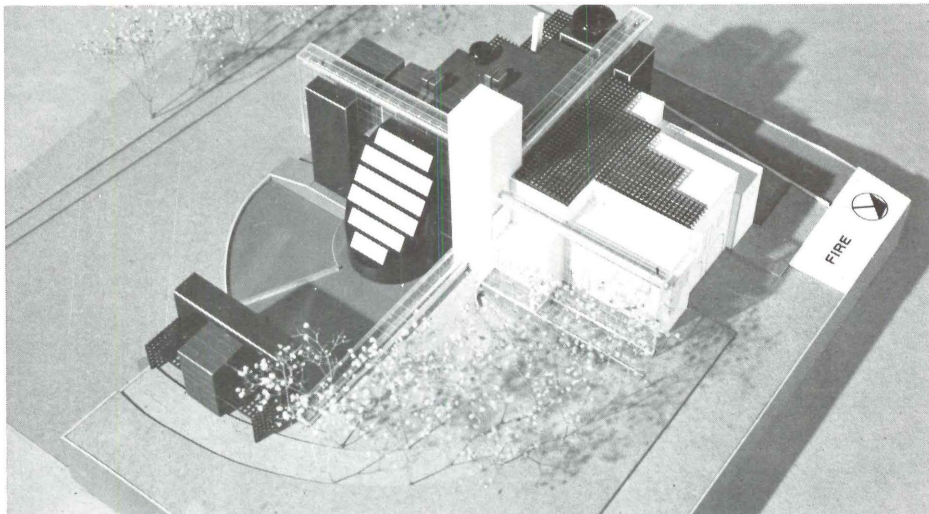
*Two students of UNC-Charlotte's College of Architecture — Alan McGuinn and Randy Long — were selected to submit entries in the Royal Institute of British Architects' 1982 Student Competition. Both Long's project (left) and McGuinn's (right) involved high-tech design in a rehabilitation context.*

## Charlotte

Alan McGuinn, a UNC-Charlotte College of Architecture student, has received one of two first runner-up awards in The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) 1982 Student Competition. He is the only non-English entrant to receive an award.

The designs of McGuinn and another COA student, Randy Long, were selected for the competition as part of the third-year architectural studio under the direction of one of the College's design faculty members, British architect Nicholas O'Shaughnessy.

"The projects submitted by Alan and Randy were, in my opinion, of the very highest architectural standard," O'Shaughnessy said. "Perhaps the most interesting and, indeed, the most exciting aspect of the competition result is the potential and international acceptance of 'high-tech' design in the context of rehabilitation. The two projects



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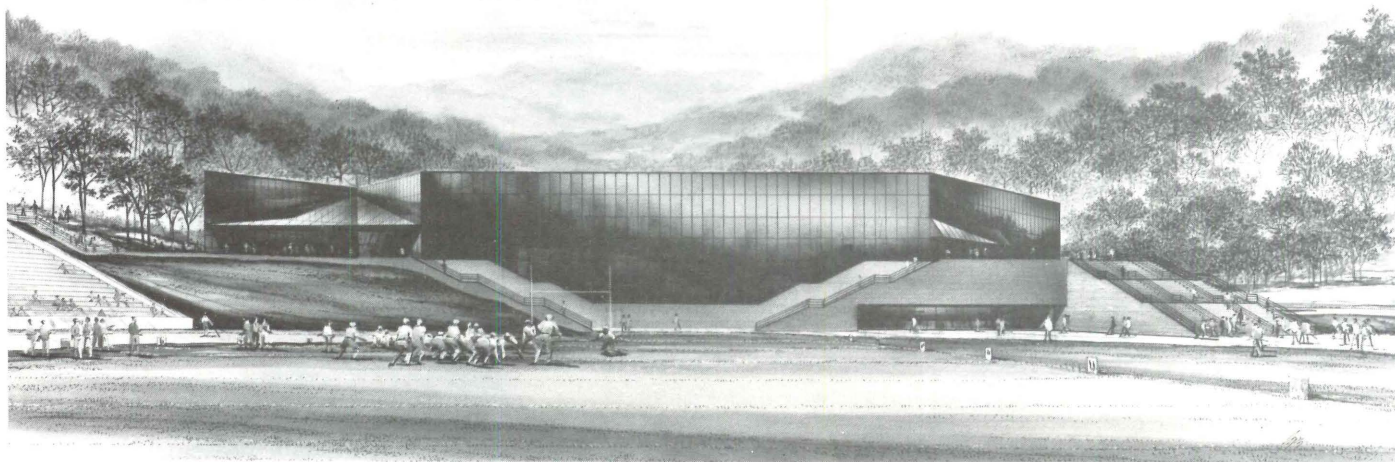
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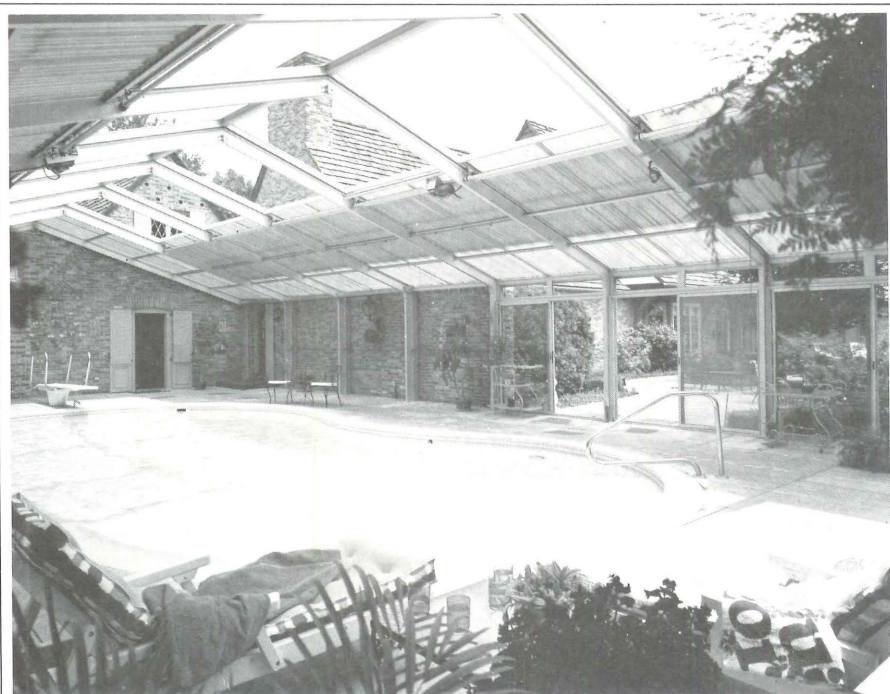


illustrate without doubt that the tasteful and skillful architect can utilize contemporary technologies to flirt with, harmonize, and flatter buildings of historical significance without detriment. If this 'disposable society' will stop demolishing its built heritage and seriously consider the potential of older structures, perhaps the lure of 'old Europe' may be in part replaced by the lure of 'old America rejuvenated.' "

The competition focused on reviving an existing building, selected by the student, through a high technology approach. In the RIBA's report on McGuinn's submission — a fire station in Asheville, N.C. — the assessors stated: "Among the competition entries, this must be the most skillfully designed conversion/rehabilitation there is. The proposal shows genuine understanding of the proposed function, combined with equally good knowledge of the old building."

Charles H. Hight, Dean of the College of Architecture, was pleased with McGuinn's award. He believes it is "extremely important for architects to investigate new technologies and utilize their potential in a manner which

*Above: A 200,000-square-foot Regional Activities Center for Western Carolina University in Cullowhee is now under construction. Architects: Crain/Anderson, Inc., Houston, and Foy and Lee Associates, Waynesville. General contractor: Noonan-Kellos Construction Company, Augusta, Georgia.*



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# Chapter notes

enhances existing buildings and townscapes. This can produce a new architecture, one which is responsive to its environment while advancing the science and art of architecture."

## Cullowhee

A new 200,000-square-foot Regional Activities Center for Western Carolina University in Cullowhee is under construction, designed in a joint venture by Foy and Lee Associates of Waynesville, and Crain/Anderson, Inc. of Houston, Texas.

The Center will house an 8000-seat arena for NCAA Southern Conference basketball, plus facilities for athletic offices, sports training and dressing areas, health and physical education programs (including an auxiliary gymnasium and five handball courts), continuing education classes, a firing range, a communications center, and theatrical and traveling road show events.

According to Jerry G. Barner, president of Crain Anderson, Inc., the design of the building will blend into the Great Smoky Mountains region context. A dark reflective glass exterior was chosen to reduce the bulk of the building, and to reflect the adjacent natural surroundings, he said.

Henry B. Foy, AIA, will serve as principal-in-charge of the project for Foy and Lee Associates; Charles W. Graybeal will be project manager and Gary L. Hill, project designer, for Crain/Anderson. The construction budget of the Center is \$13,527,485. General contractor is Noonan-Kellos Construction Company of Augusta, Georgia.

## Winston-Salem

Construction began this fall on Fire Station No. 14 in Winston-Salem, another "solarchitecture" project by J. Aubrey Kirby Associates, Inc. of that city.

The building consists of approximately 4200 square feet and includes a two-bay apparatus room with adjacent boot and storage rooms, sleeping quarters for six, living areas, and offices. Exterior

materials will be "fire-truck-red" brick and mortar and an asphalt fiberglass reinforced shingle roof. Flagstone flooring will be used for the patio at the back of the building.

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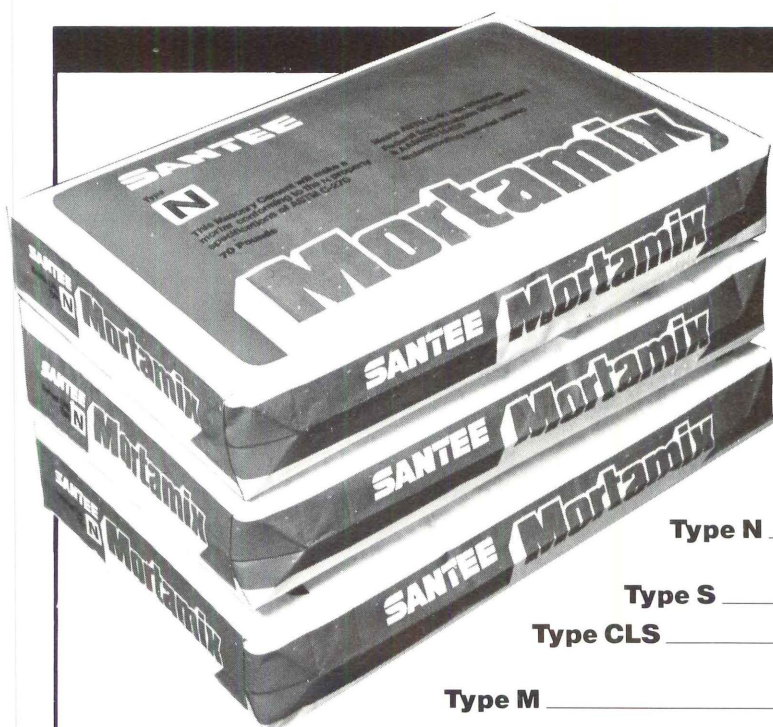
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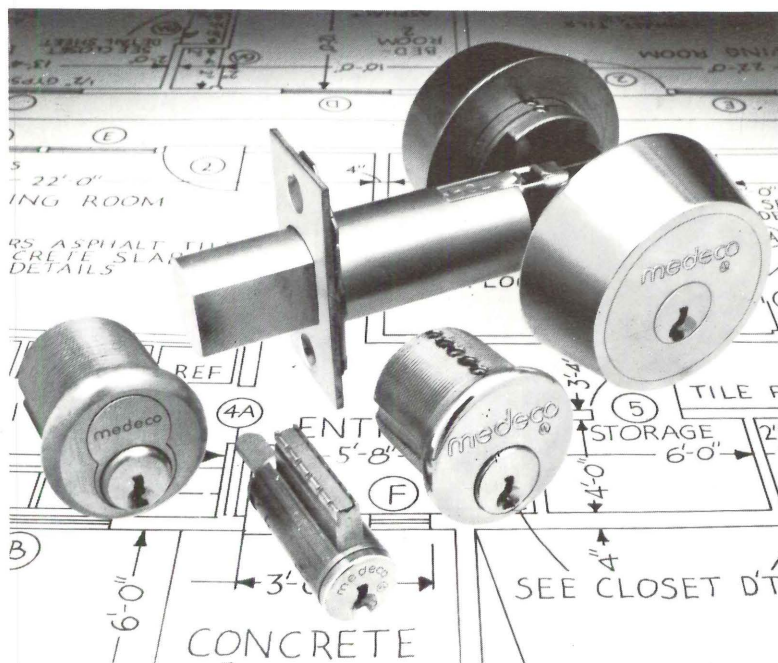
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