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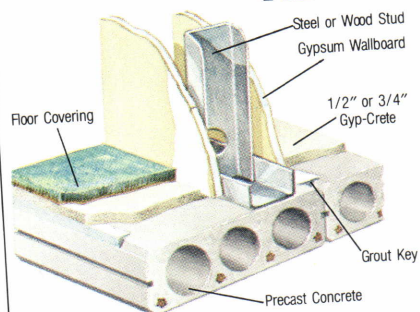
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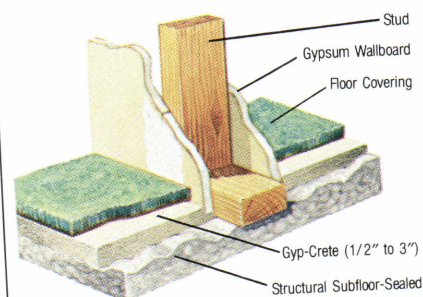
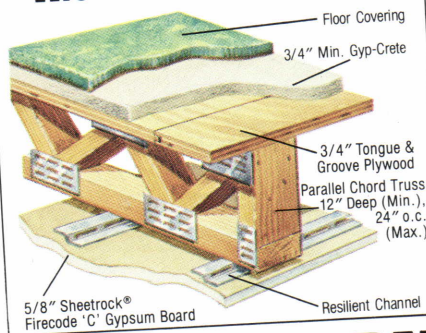
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Cover: Queens Station in Charlotte, designed by David Furman. Photography by Larry Harwell.



ARCHITECT'S HOME AND ITS OFFSPRING

Kirby's 'Court House' Offers Privacy, Security, Efficiency

When J. Aubrey Kirby designed his family's first residence in Winston-Salem, he knew in advance "it had to be marketable, because I didn't want the house to be our last one."

After several years of working for other firms, he was just launching his own architectural practice in the Triad, and, if all went as he expected, within a few years he would be selling the first house and moving into a larger residence he planned to also design himself. So the first house was a three-bedroom, two-bath ranch style residence—"just a very typical rancher," he says.

"We lived in it for seven years, and it was a fine house and still is for the people who bought it," Kirby says.

The design of the second house for his family—his family's "ultimate" house—was a court house.

*By Gaylord Shaw
Photography By JoAnn Sieburg-Baker*

No, not the kind of public building you find on courthouse square, but a single-family residence where the rooms surround a central, outdoor court.

While the house Kirby designed in the early 1970s was tailored specifically to his own family's needs and desires, the plan has since appealed to several of his clients, and he has patterned homes for them after his own. His own residence, in effect, has had offspring.

But the possibility of such offspring was not at the forefront of Kirby's thinking when he set out to design his

family's new house. Instead, he recalls, he was saying to himself, "I want to do something we want to do—I don't care if I ever have to sell it or not. I wanted to try to do, within reason and within a budget, what I'd like to do for the way I'd like to live."

"I . . . consider my house, my personal residence, as a kind of sanctuary, and I think we all do, or should, because after beating around all day with the public and on the phone and running up and down the highways, you need a place to go."

"So I started on the concept of the court house. I had seen some work that Josep Lluís Sert (1902-) had done some years ago, and in fact, even Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) had done some takeoffs. Between them and some of the things I had remembered in some of my history, the Greek and the

(continued)

Courtyard of architect J. Aubrey Kirby's residence (left) insures privacy, while "court house" design offers view from naturally lit interior (below).



Roman, I wanted to do a house that was truly a sanctuary. So I began to play around with a court concept, and on my house I started out with a complete four-sided court, but the circulation . . . the function, worked better with a U-shaped house and through heavy landscaping and a split-rail fence” to effectively close off the fourth side and achieve the courtyard.

The idea of such a design, as Kirby notes, is deeply rooted in architectural history—going back at least as far as the ancient Greeks in the fourth century B.C.

In an interview published in the *Winston-Salem Journal* last spring, Kirby traced the evolution of the court house concept:

The Greeks had problems with heating and cooling. Artificial cooling wasn’t used until the Romans learned to use water sources to cool the air. Heating was made more difficult because both charcoal and wood were constantly in short supply.

So the Greeks began “orienting their buildings—and entire communities—on a north-south axis with open areas and courts to the south and thick walls and small windows, if any, to the north,” Kirby says. As the centuries passed, the Romans refined the idea. “There are examples of this type of architecture in Pompeii,” that ancient city southeast of Naples where life was destroyed but

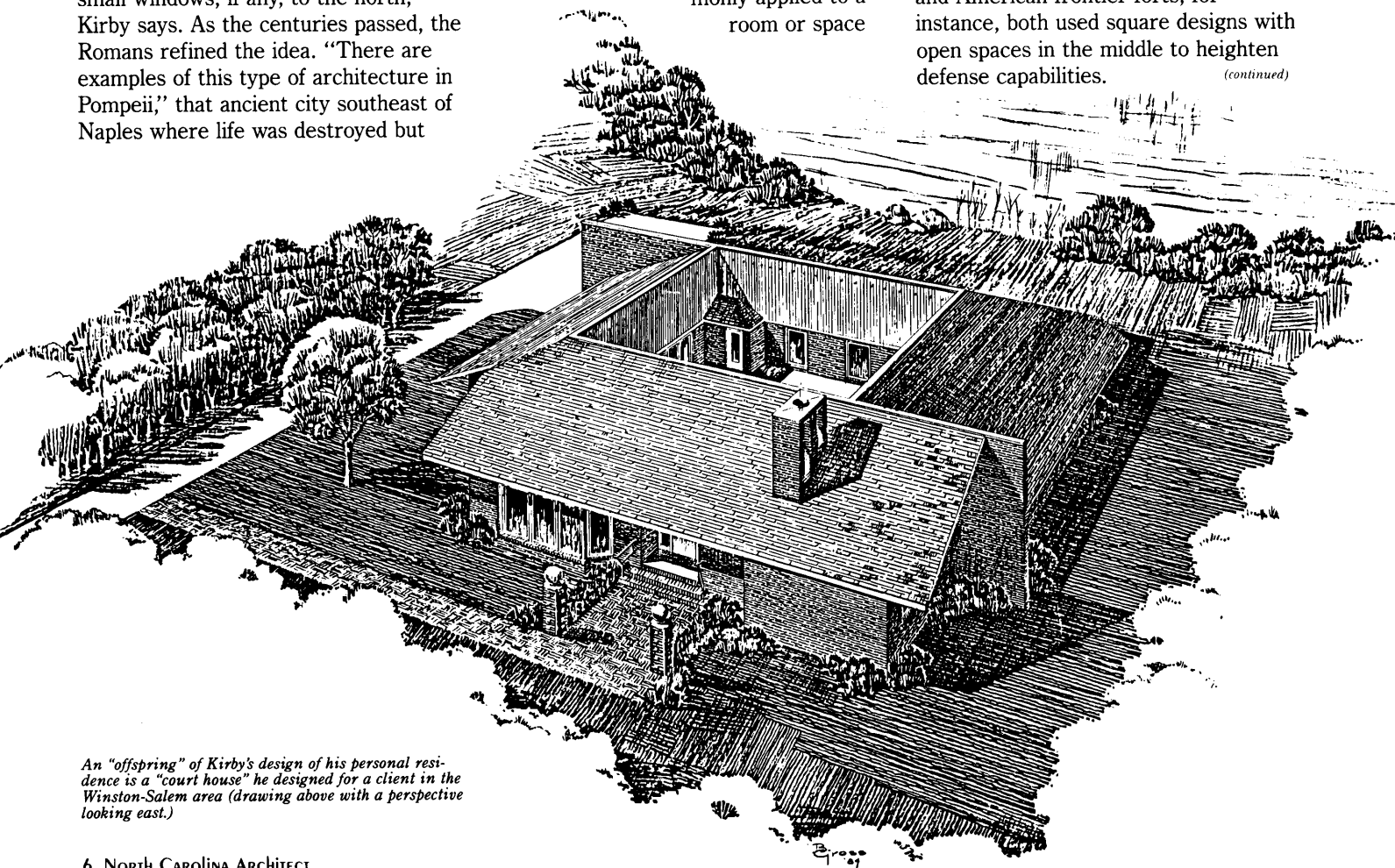


J. Aubrey Kirby: Home is a “sanctuary.”

many buildings were preserved by the lava and ash of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79.

The Romans called the open central court an “atrium,” a word now commonly applied to a room or space

designed to take advantage of the sun’s energy. Indeed, energy efficiency is one hallmark of the court house design. Another hallmark—security—also is well rooted in history. European castles and American frontier forts, for instance, both used square designs with open spaces in the middle to heighten defense capabilities. *(continued)*



An “offspring” of Kirby’s design of his personal residence is a “court house” he designed for a client in the Winston-Salem area (drawing above with a perspective looking east.)

'Picky'

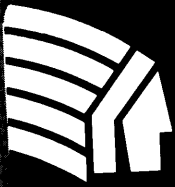


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Privacy, something of great importance to many homeowners, also can be heightened by a court house design. Fewer and smaller windows can be placed in the outer walls. But inner walls—those facing the court—can have expanses of glass with windows and doors overlooking or opening onto the court.

When Kirby designed the home, he says his wife, Nancy, “wore the client’s

The two sets of children’s bedrooms flank the entry foyer. Taken together, the rooms form the outside portion of the bottom of the “U.” Across the hall, the living room and dining room open to the courtyard. To the left of the dining room are the carport, breakfast room, kitchen and utility room. The right side of the “U” is composed of a den, a study and the master bedroom suite, which has an expansive view of the court.



Gently curving walkway graces the entrance of the Kirby residence.

hat. She told me what details, what functions she wanted.” At the time, for example, all four of their children—two boys, two girls—were living at home. That led to this arrangement: two bedrooms separated by a bathroom for the boys, and—down the hall and on the other side of an entry foyer—two bedrooms separated by another bath for the girls. (Two of the children now are in college, two others already out of college.) The master bedroom suite (including a study) was placed some distance from the children’s bedrooms. This afforded privacy both for parents and for teen-agers. But, as Kirby notes, the parents’ suite is equipped with an intercom system so sensitive “you could, if you wanted to turn it on, hear the children breathing at night.”

The court itself is carefully and fully landscaped but does not contain a swimming pool because Kirby says it is easier to drive a few blocks to his swimming club than to maintain a backyard pool.

The Kirbys’ budget for construction of the house, which contains about 3,000 square feet, was \$50,000 when it was designed and built in 1971. With what he placed as today’s rough yardstick of \$50 per square foot for construction costs, the value of the Kirby house has at least tripled.

Nancy Kirby, like more than half the women in the U.S. today, works outside the home. She has a degree in business administration and is secretary-treasurer of J. Aubrey Kirby Associates Inc., Architects and Planners.

She is, her husband notes with a

(continued)

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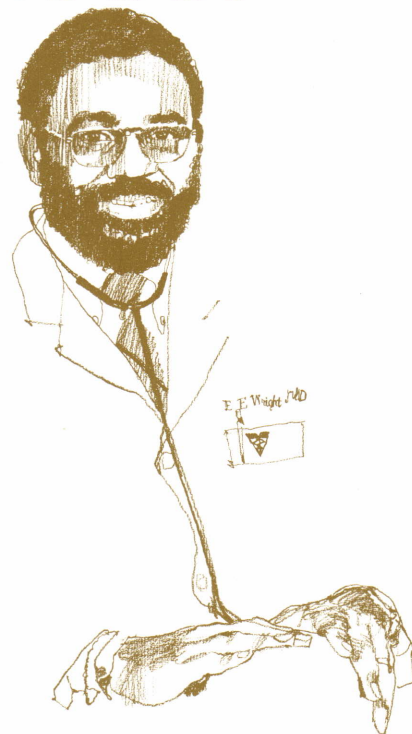
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Nancy and Aubrey Kirby relax in their Winston-Salem home.

laugh, "now the majority stockholder, so I literally work for her both at the office and at home." Then, in a more serious vein, he adds: "The fact that she takes care of so many of the business details gives me the time to play at being an architect. It has worked out well for us."

The five-member firm "does just about everything" in its practice, Aubrey Kirby says, including public buildings, libraries, solar fire stations, office buildings, condominiums and single family residences.

Both Kirbys are pleased that the design of their home has smoothly adapted to the changing needs of their growing family. It served their needs well while the children were growing up, the Kirbys say, and still serves the parents well now that the children are gone and come home only for visits.

"After 14 years of living here, I can't think of anything I'd change," Nancy Kirby says. "And I don't think there is a better compliment you could give a home's design."

More than a decade after completing his own residence, Kirby had an opportunity to design another court house. It came when a Forsyth County couple—a husband and wife who both are professionals and who prefer anonymity—signed up as clients. "They gave us a free hand," he recalls. "Some people come with preconceived ideas. They didn't, other than the number of rooms and baths and basic sizes and so forth.

"So I had been harboring this total court concept in my mind ever since I did my own house, and I thought to myself, 'maybe this is a chance to do that, to extend my idea a little bit further'."

Once the clients saw his ideas on paper, "they were tickled to death with it. Since they both have very active professional lives, they wanted a place they could come home to and relax."

And with a private court, "it's just a different world when you are in there. If you wanted to be a nudist you would have no problem at all . . . it has the ultimate in privacy."

For the design of this client's home, which was under construction this fall, Kirby says he decided to have "all the public rooms face the court" with expanses of windows and doors in the living room, family room, dining room and kitchen overlooking or opening onto the 40-by-40-foot court and its free-form swimming pool.

(continued)

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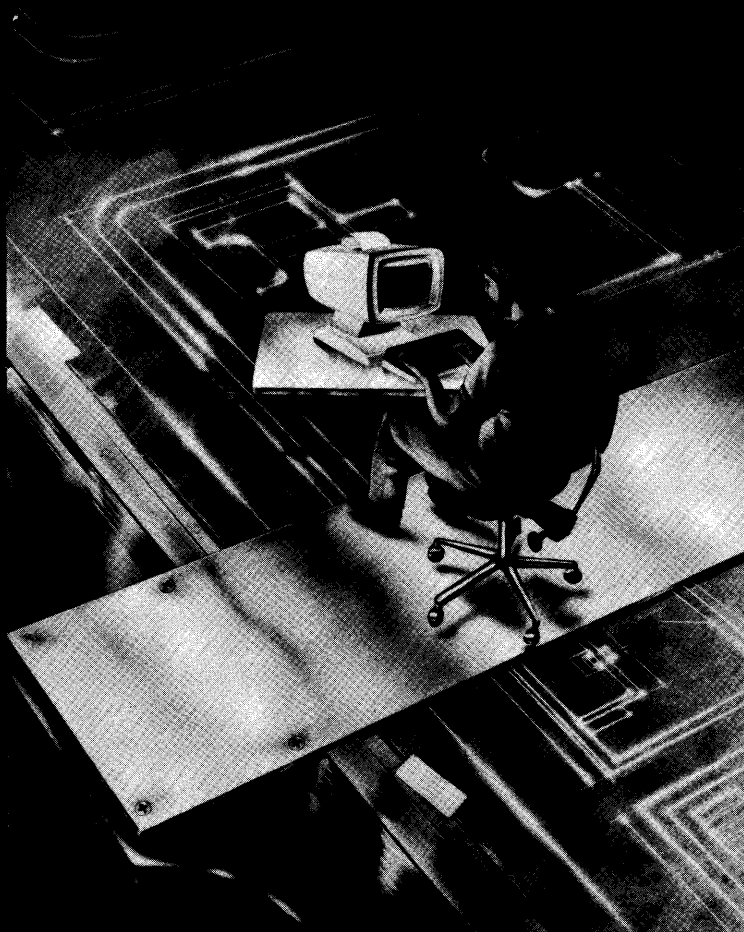
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To insure greater privacy, the bedrooms are separated from the court by hallways, which in turn open onto the court. The master bedroom, its dressing room, large bath and walk-in closets and a sunroom are at the "rear" section of the house. The "front" section consists of the entry foyer and living room on the left and the family room on the right beyond a powder room and closet.

The kitchen, dining room and a mudroom are on the left side of the court. A library as well as two bedrooms, each with full baths, are on the right side of the court.

The house has about 3,000 square feet under roof and is designed with offsets in exterior walls to break the lines. Wide overhangs also are intended to give the feeling of a low house, Kirby notes.

As work was progressing on this court house, Kirby recalls, "another client came in and this scheme appealed to them, too. They had had a break in, and they were concerned about security."

This client's house, on which working drawings are being completed, is large, with about 6,000 square feet under roof.

"All three of these houses are designed on a four-foot module, making materials such as plywood, carpet, sheet rock and vinyl sheet flooring work out with minimum waste," Kirby notes. "This is especially evident in our own house as battens are placed every four feet on center throughout the exterior of the building."

The site of the largest of the court houses is on a lake, so living areas are designed to offer views of the water. The house will have a living room, dining room, kitchen, breakfast area, master bedroom suite, a guest room, four other bedrooms, a library, recreation room, music room, utility room, laundry room, storage and a large garage.

All of this surrounds the central court, which measures about 40 feet by 48 feet and which will have a swimming pool.

With North Carolina's climate, Kirby says, it is possible to make maximum use of the court for seven or more months of the year.

"It really just extends your space," he notes. With a court yard measuring 40 feet by 40 feet, he adds, "you pick up another 1,600 square feet of space that is outdoor living space a goodly part of the year." □

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Off The Drawing Board

REG NARMOUR'S FIRM HONORED FOR RENOVATION OF CHARLOTTE BUILDING

The Charlotte-based firm of Reg Narmour/The Architectural Group has won a merit award in a national competition for its rehabilitation of a turn-of-the-century building on North Tryon Street in downtown Charlotte.

The firm was recognized in the best commercial rehabilitation project category in the 1984 Builder's Choice design and planning awards program sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders' *Builder* magazine.

Renovation of the 46,000-square-foot building at 227 N. Tryon St. was for the law firm of Helms, Mulliss & Johnston, which bought the three-story building in 1982.

According to the architects, rehabilitation was planned in such a way so as to restore many of the original elements

of the structure, including the building facade, oak hardwood floors and more than 20 fireplaces.

The building was erected in 1902 to house the Leland Hotel. It later was an automobile dealership, and from 1936 until the law firm bought it two years ago, housed a furniture store.

The architects note that they used artifacts from old buildings in Charlotte, New York City and elsewhere to help create the "turn of the century ambience known in the Leland Hotel."

Sponsors of the competition say they received a record 754 entries this year, and that judging was conducted by a 12-member panel of architects, builders, planners and other industry experts. Honorable mention, merit and grand winners were selected in the design categories, and a total of 57 projects were honored at an awards dinner in Washington, D.C.

For the 227 N. Tryon St. project, the firm also had received in December 1983 a Kamphoefner Award for "contributions to excellence in architecture."

Besides its headquarters in Charlotte, Reg Narmour/The Architectural Group has offices in Raleigh, Tampa and Washington, D.C. In addition to commercial and rehabilitation design projects, the firm's spokesman adds, it has designed more than 40,000 multi-family residential units.

NEW CHARLOTTE OFFICE FOR SOUTHERN ELEVATOR

Southern Elevator Co., with main offices and plant in Greensboro, has announced the relocation of its Charlotte branch office to new and larger quarters in the Bissell Business Park.

The new address is 4109 Stuart Andrew Blvd., Suite A, Building I, Charlotte 28210, and the new telephone number is (704) 529-1025. (The mailing address remains the same: P.O. Box 33846, Charlotte 28233.)

The Charlotte branch office is Southern's oldest, having served the southern half of North Carolina and all of South Carolina for more than 35 years.

CONSTRUCTION EXPO SLATED IN RALEIGH

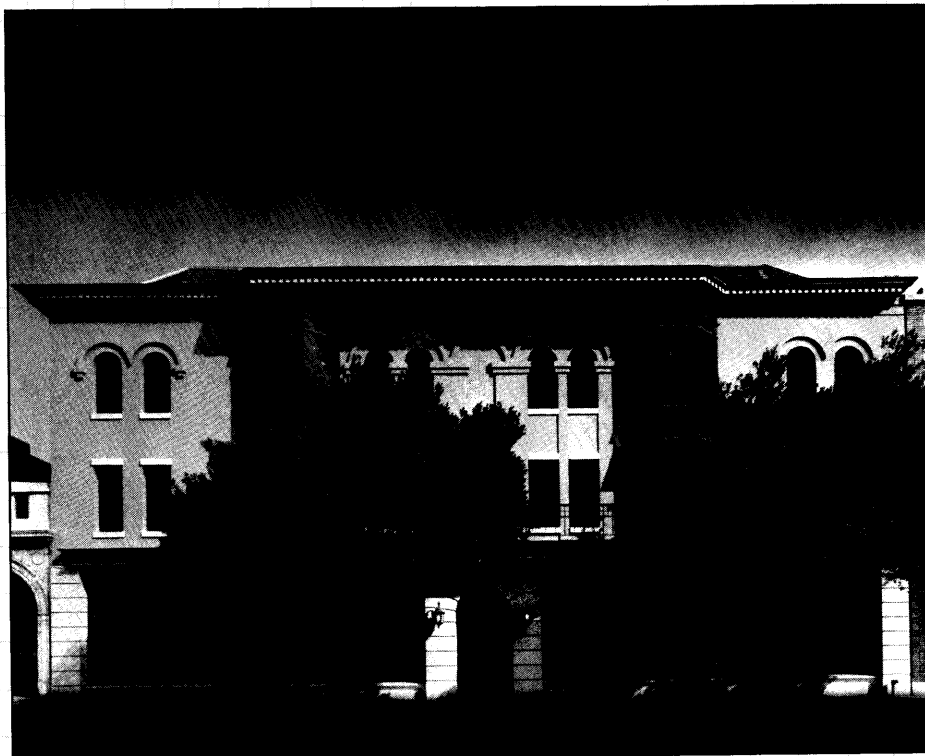
Raleigh will be the site of what is described as the first large-scale construction trade exposition and conference held in the eastern United States.

EASTCON 85—the "eastern international construction exposition and conference"—is scheduled for next Sept. 10-13 at the N.C. state fair grounds. It is organized and managed by Charlotte-based Southern Shows Inc. and sponsored by the 3,200-member Carolinas Branch, Associated General Contractors.

According to the announcement, more than 40 AGC chapters in eastern states are co-sponsors, and state and regional chapters of other trade associations are also cooperating in staging the event.

Robert E. Zimmerman, president of Southern Shows, says plans are for EASTCON to be held every other year in the future. He says more than 1,400 firms were surveyed during a six-month period to determine if they would support such an event, and that more than 90 percent responded positively—including some who asked to reserve space even before receiving an exhibitor's prospectus in the mail. Since the mailing, he adds, "the telephones have been busy" with requests for space at the 1.1 million-square-foot facility which offers 200,000 square feet of indoor space plus 21 acres outdoors.

Daniel M. Owens, manager of education and research for the Carolinas Branch, AGC, says a high-quality educa-



National merit award given for renovation of this building at 227 N. Tryon St., Charlotte.

tional conference is being organized to run concurrently with the exposition. "Our emphasis is going to be on seminars and workshops which deal with better management, increased productivity, and new technology," Owens says.

Sponsors add, however, that the seminars will not be in session while the exposition itself is open. Many will take place early in the day at nearby McKimmon Center, owned by N.C. State University.

The exposition itself, the sponsors say, is designed to provide a convenient marketplace for manufacturers, distributors and others who serve the construction industry. It has been certified as an "official international trade fair" by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

HAMMILL-WALTER DESIGNS FACILITIES FOR PIEDMONT

Piedmont Aviation Inc. has named the Winston-Salem architectural firm of Hammill-Walter Associates Inc. as designers of a new headquarters for its general aviation group and an additional aircraft storage hangar at Smith Reynolds Airport in Winston-Salem.

According to Piedmont president William R. Howard, the expansion will further enhance the general aviation, or light aircraft, division which the company has operated since 1940.

The new two-story, 14,400-square-foot headquarters building will have general administrative offices plus offices for the Beechcraft sales department and the charter sales department and a flight planning room. There will be room for expansion, and a new parking area also will be built.

The headquarters will be attached to the new 27,600-square-foot hangar, which will provide storage for up to 24 light aircraft.

The hangar and headquarters will be built where the current offices and two nearby hangars are located. The existing structures, dating to the 1930s, will be torn down.

Cost of the facilities is estimated at \$1.9 million, and construction is expected to be completed by Aug. 30, 1985. The builder is Fowler-Jones Construction Co. of Winston-Salem, which built Piedmont's Thomas H. Davis Training Center, a facility designed by Hammill-Walter.

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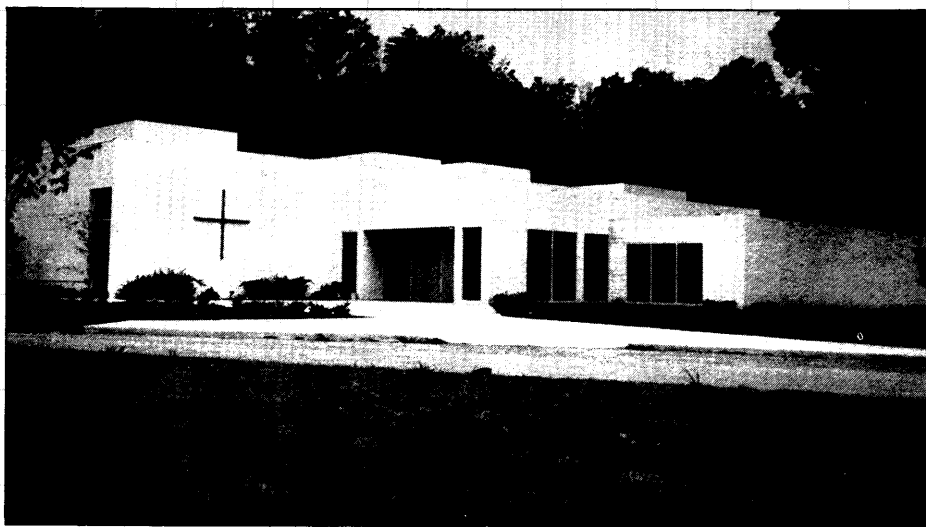
Two North Carolina architectural firms have been honored by the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture, an affiliate of the American Institute of Architects, for their work in promoting excellence in these specialized areas.

National awards went to Architectural Design Group of Shelby for its design of the Church of St. Thomas More in Lynchburg, Va., and to RWC Inc. of Durham for its design of an organ gallery at the Duke University Chapel.

Crawford Murphy, president of the Shelby firm, accepted a "national citation award" at the IFRAA's national

conference at the Urban Center in New York. His firm also was invited to exhibit its general ecclesiastical work, as well as the award-winning design of the Virginia church, at the premiere OPUS '84 exhibit in Cincinnati, Ohio, from October through January.

Robert W. Carr of RWC was project architect and Jim Ward was the Duke University architect for the organ gallery, which received a "special category award for excellence in design" from the national group. The project involved design and construction of a platform in the Gothic-style chapel for a 4,500-pipe Flentrop organ given to the university.

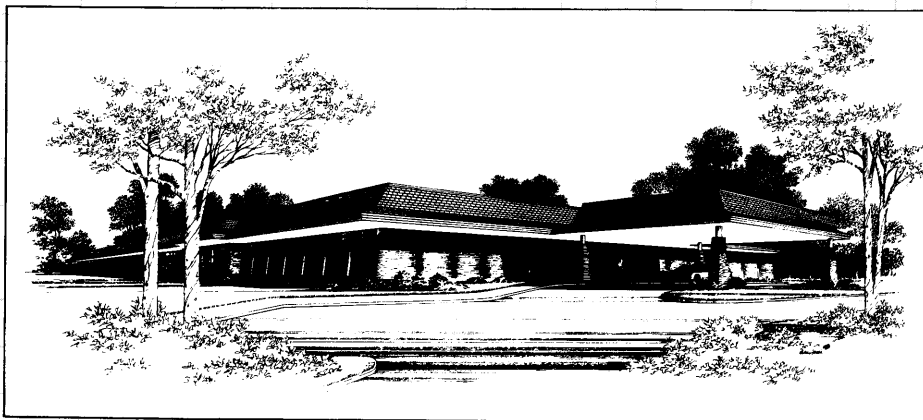


Award-winning Church of St. Thomas More.

JEFFERSON-PILOT STARTS WORK ON DATA CENTER

With J. Hyatt Hammond Associates Inc. as architects, Greensboro-based Jefferson-Pilot Corp. has started construction of a corporate data center to house operations personnel and data equipment for all of the firm's insurance subsidiaries.

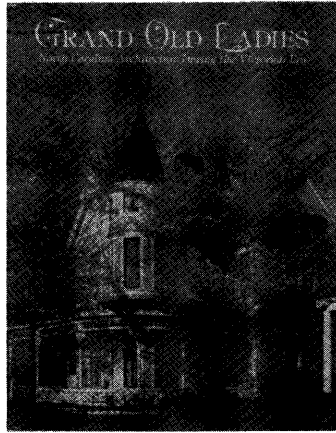
The 35,000-square-foot building is located on a 14-acre site located across from Pilot Life Insurance Co.'s home office complex. The project, estimated to cost about \$3 million, is scheduled for completion in mid-1985. General contractor is J. Wayne Poole.



Architect's drawing of Jefferson-Pilot Corp. data center.

(continued)

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UNCC STARTS WORK ON SCIENCES BUILDING

Construction is underway on a \$6.9 million physical sciences building at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte designed by the Charlotte-based architectural and engineering firm of Peterson Associates.



The two-story, 103,000-square-foot building is located on a 3½-acre site and is scheduled for completion in September 1985. Butler & Sidbury of Charlotte is general contractor.

PARAGON CONSTRUCTING MORE N.C. APARTMENTS

Paragon Group, the Texas-based national development and management company, has announced major projects in Asheville and Winston-Salem, both designed by Charlotte-based Reg Narmour/The Architectural Group.

In Asheville, 176 units are being added to the Turtle Creek apartments, increasing the size of the complex to 384 units by the spring of 1985.

In Winston-Salem, construction is underway on the 288-unit Northcliffe apartment community, with completion scheduled by the summer of 1985.

Paragon's Charlotte office manages 5,000 apartment units as well as shopping centers, office buildings and other properties in the Carolinas and Tennessee.

McDEVITT & STREET CO. OPENS TRIANGLE OFFICE

Charlotte-based McDevitt & Street Co., ranked as the nation's ninth largest general building contractor, has opened a 14th office—this one to serve the rapidly developing Triangle area.

Douglas N. Collins is vice president and general manager of the new operation. Among the firm's projects in the Triangle area are One Hannover Square, a 400,000-square-foot office building in downtown Raleigh, and Two Northchase


(continued)



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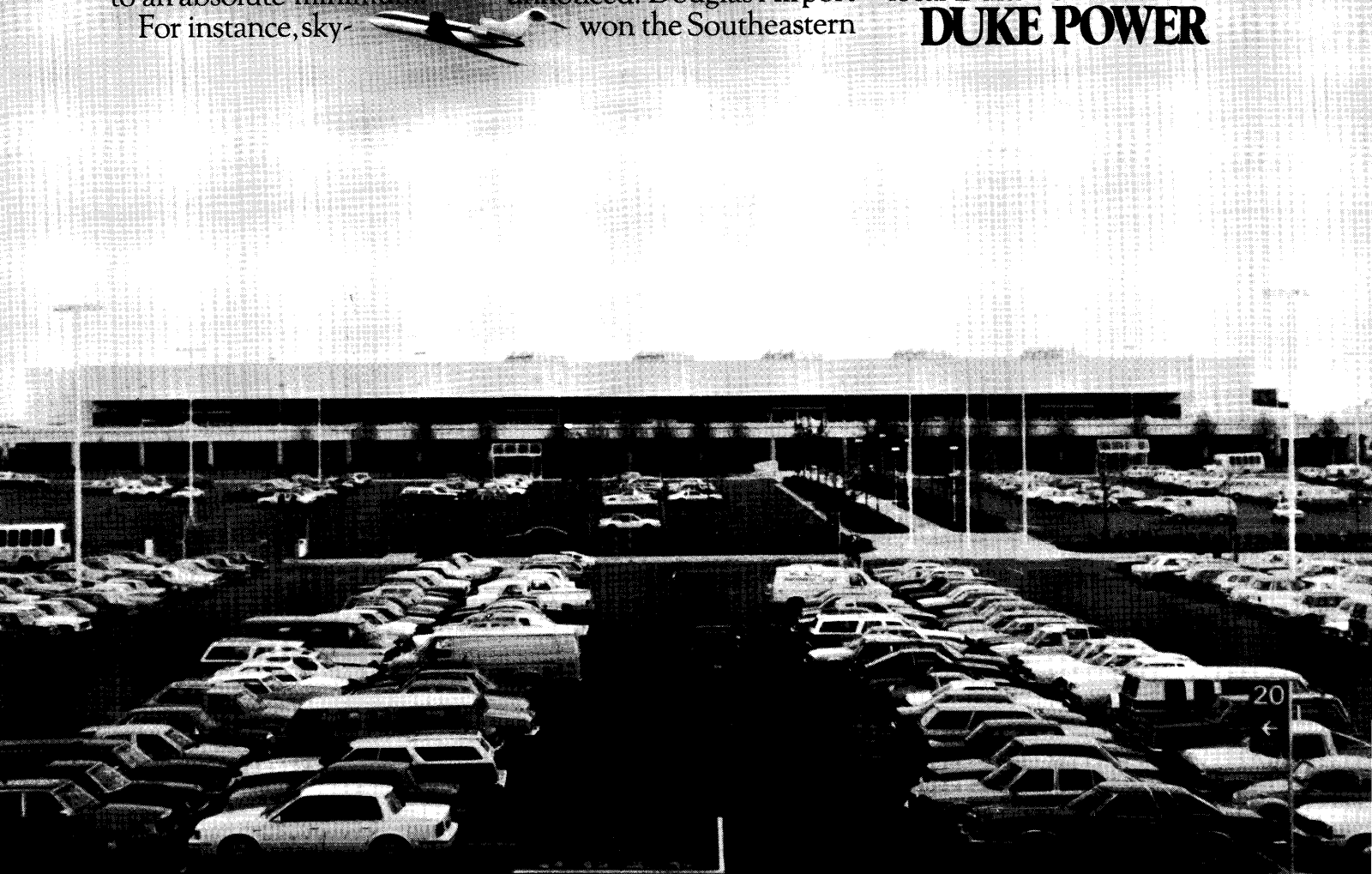
won the Southeastern

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Brick Association of N.C. Awards \$5,000 in Grants

The Brick Association of North Carolina has announced donations totaling \$5,000 to three N.C. universities and a construction training organization.

North Carolina State University's School of Design received \$2,000, and donations of \$1,000 each went to the School of Architecture at UNC-Charlotte; the Department of Architectural Engineering at N.C. A & T State University, and to the Carolinas Construction Training Council.

Marion R. Cochran, general manager of the Greensboro-based trade organization, says the annual donations will be used for partial scholarships, assistance grants for visiting professors and to help purchase educational materials.

Cochran says that besides assisting students, the donations are a way of

thanking the construction profession for using brick.

"We will send a card to architects across the state letting them know a contribution is being made in their name," he adds. "It's better than sending each architect a basket of fruit. The schools will put the money to good use."

NAMES AND CHANGES IN N.C. ARCHITECTURE

Charles E. Joyner, head of the department of design at N.C. State University's School of Design, has been appointed assistant dean of the school, according to an announcement by NCSU chancellor Bruce R. Poulton and school dean Claude E. McKinney.

McKinney says Joyner's responsibilities will include recruiting minority and other students, directing a summer design workshop for secondary school students and acting as liaison with minority colleges and universities that have students planning to enter the graduate program in design. Joyner also

will administer the school's cooperative education program.

Joyner was an assistant professor of art at N.C. Central University before coming to NCSU in 1977 as assistant professor and director of the design fundamentals program. He was promoted to associate professor in 1979. A native of Smithfield, he holds a bachelor's degree from N.C. A & T State University and a master of fine arts from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Jacob S. Kanoy and **George H. Doerman** have joined the Laurinburg-based firm of Snowden, Stogner and Associates, architects/engineers/planners. Kanoy, who was named a principal of the firm, previously was senior staff architect for Duke University and has 13 years experience in the planning and design of commercial, medical and educational buildings. Doerman, who has practiced in Sanford and Clarksburg, W.Va., has designed schools, churches, industrial, office and shopping center projects.

Cyndee Gibson Patterson has

(continued)

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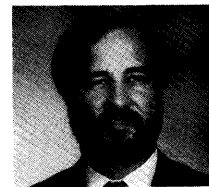


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Charles Joyner



Jacob Kanoy



George Doerman



Cyndee Patterson

joined Jenkins-Peer Architects as director of marketing. Ms. Patterson, a graduate of Purdue University with majors in psychology and business, has been an account executive for the securities firm of J.C. Bradford Co., an investment officer at NCNB National Bank and most recently a fashion/special events coordinator for Belk Stores. In 1982, as a leader of the Central Charlotte Association, she was co-founder of Springfest.

Gary D. Cline has been named vice president of Reg Narmour/The Architectural Group with responsibility for the firm's Raleigh office. Cline joined the firm in 1980 as a project manager in the Charlotte office and moved to Raleigh in 1983.

Three new project architects have joined Hakan/Corley & Associates, a Chapel Hill architectural, engineering and planning firm. They are **Deborah Kane**, a graduate of Montana State University in Bozeman who formerly worked with E.F. Link & Associates in Billings; **Robert Jay Brickner-McDonald**, a graduate of the University of Houston, who formerly worked with Bashor-Palmer in Greenville, S.C.; and **Eric Morgan Tjalma**, a graduate of the University of Maryland who previously was with Vitro Corp. in Arlington, Va.

Jane Roycroft has been named marketing coordinator and **Patricia A. Rice** has been named architectural information manager of O'Brien/Atkins Associates, a firm with offices in Durham and Chapel Hill.

G. Lee Buckner has joined Wilkerson Associates Inc. of Charlotte as a principal. A graduate of UNC-Charlotte, he formerly was with Freeman-White Associates in Charlotte.

Michael J. Hining has been named director of quality control for CHR Associates, a Chapel Hill-based architectural/engineering firm. □

FOR LOVERS OF 'GRAND OLD LADIES'

*A non-architect views
a book on N.C. examples
of Victorian architecture*

To dispense with the formalities: the book is titled *Grand Old Ladies: North Carolina Architecture During the Victorian Era*; the editor is Marguerite Schumann, head photographer is JoAnn Sieburg-Baker, and the introduction is by Dr. Sterling Boyd. It is published by The East Woods Press of Charlotte, and the price is \$19.95.

Now, in fairness to our readers, I should confess that I should not be writing this article. I have no credentials as an authority on the subject being discussed, and I am not an unbiased reviewer.

In the first place, I am not an architect and couldn't design a dog house, much less a people house or public building.

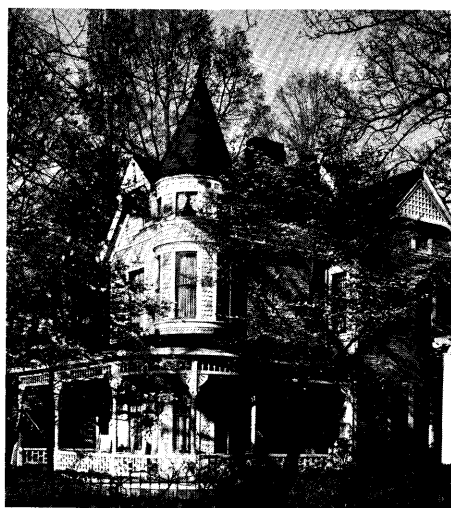
Second, my artistic aptitudes are so limited that I lose in any finger-painting competition with my four-year-old daughter.

Now, as to bias, mine is overwhelming. I simply love old buildings, especially those showered with tender care through the years by proud owners. And, although I have never met her, I love Marguerite Schumann (or at least her work and dedication). Listen to a bit of her forward to her newest book:

"I hope that *Grand Old Ladies* will encourage North Carolinians to look at the built world around them with new eyes. Beyond that, I hope it will stimulate some to acknowledge and respect the remnants of Victoriana that remain. I hope, too, that it will encourage many to join the small army of little old ladies in tennis shoes (of which I am a proud member), as well as their more numerous, more chic, and much younger companions in preserving what is left of a period that has much more to recommend it than simple nostalgia."

How can you not love someone who openly declares herself a little old lady in tennis shoes? Or who clearly cares so much about enjoying and preserving some of the best of North Carolina's heritage—and architecture?

My love affair with Marguerite Schumann actually began several years ago



Victoria, a Charlotte residence on the book's cover.

at the Charlotte airport when, waiting for a plane, I picked up a copy of her *Tar Heel Sights: Guide to North Carolina's Heritage*. (The East Woods Press, \$8.95.) Since then, this pocket sized book has been my family's constant companion as we have become acquainted with this marvelous state, serving as sort of a road map as we roamed here and there, especially on day trips or weekend jaunts as we discovered such joys as the Zebulon Latimer House in Wilmington, the Union County Courthouse in Monroe and the Carl Sandburg House near Flat Rock, to mention just a few. The book now is a bit dog-eared and worn but has a permanent place in the Buick's glove compartment.

Grand Old Ladies won't fit in the glove compartment. It belongs on the coffee table, and JoAnn Sieburg-Baker's beautiful color photographs on the glossy jacket instantly beckon you to pick up the book for a browse. Unfortunately, none of the other 147 photographs in the book is published in color. Understandable, perhaps, in this age of high printing costs, but still unfortunate. Even in black and white, though, the photography ranges from impressive to stunning.

The introduction by Dr. Sterling Boyd is a rich essay on specific examples of North Carolina architecture that fit into the Victorian era—defined as the age beginning with Greek Revival and ending with the early works of Frank Lloyd Wright.

And the photographs are interspersed with excerpts from the finest of North Carolina writers, from O. Henry to Harry Golden and Max Steele, adding a delightful touch here and there.

My only complaint has to do with the sometimes substantial separation between the written word and the photograph used as an example. (For instance, when the Cabarrus County Courthouse is cited on Page 23 as an example of the Mansard style that emerged to epitomize Mid-Victorian America, the reader has to hunt up the cited picture—"fig. 58"—on page 74 to match the writer's description of the fascinating building with the photograph.)

Maybe there was no way the text could be matched more closely with the photographs. And, what the heck, it gives the reader good reason to thumb through the book time and again. That's what the reader should do anyway: relax, browse and enjoy the rich and fascinating architecture—the *Grand Old Ladies*—found in villages and towns and cities all across North Carolina.

This is a book about remembering, and continuing to love, these *Grand Old Ladies*. And it is must reading for anyone who cares about North Carolina's heritage. —Gaylord Shaw □

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A SPECIAL Type Of ARCHITECTURE

David Furman sees design of multi-family housing as 'very personal and yet very public...'

With a hearty laugh, Charlotte architect David Furman apologizes in advance for "climbing on my soap box."

But, he says, it is a subject he feels so deeply about that he's going to do a bit of preaching anyway.

The subject is housing design. And, his sermon begins, it is time that all architects recognize it "is a special type of architecture that is very personal and yet very public. It represents a high level of commitment on the part of all individuals involved. A guy has to get out his checkbook and spend his own personal money on it. On most architecture, there is a man making a corporate decision that affects hundreds of people, and he is using someone else's money."

"It is a type of architecture that must be received well by the public. The public doesn't have to like an office building or a post office or whatever, but they have to like housing, or it is not going to be successful."

Furman's views—and his considerable talents as a designer—have helped bring ample attention to his young practice, which specializes in design of multi-family residential projects. In barely

(continued)

By Gaylord Shaw

*Photography By Larry Harwell/
Aerial Photography Service, Charlotte*



BARRINGER
SQUARE

four years, his practice has become successful.

Very successful.

Besides several close-in Charlotte projects, he has work underway near Lake Norman and University Park north of Charlotte, in Raleigh and Chapel Hill, Richmond and Baltimore. Since 1980, he has designed or is now designing about 3,000 units. His staff has grown to 16, and he is turning away clients. "You never quite get used to that," he admits. But he adds "we're maxed out—and I don't want to grow a lot more."

Critical acclaim also is rolling in. *Architectural Record* chose Queens Station, a Furman-designed condominium project in Charlotte's Myers Park, as one of the examples for its study of multi-family housing in its August 1984 issue. The same project with Martin Development Group Inc. as developer, won a 1984 NCAIA Design Award. (See *North Carolina Architect*, March-April 1984.)

Queens Station is an example of one of the Furman firm's specialties: blending a high-density multi-family project into the midst of Myers Park, an established neighborhood of fine single-family homes. In this project, the blend was so successful that *Architectural Record* observed:



An interior view of a Bishop's Park unit.

"Although the individual buildings are larger than the surrounding homes, multiple projections and porches, and varied fenestration patterns break their massing down to a comfortably domestic scale, while passages carved through the building clusters connect them back to the streetscape. Indeed, the building forms so faithfully iterate the proportions of the neighboring houses that from the main boulevard it is evident only on second glance that these

are multi-family residences. Their appropriateness and 'fit' are further enhanced by the tactful use of familiar homely materials and indigenous details appreciatively observed and reinterpreted to reflect the special character of their progenitors."

One recently arrived Charlottean put it in simpler terms: "I've been driving down Queens Road for a couple months now and I didn't even notice those condos were there."

(continued)



Barringer Square in Charlotte (facing page, left) and Bishop's Park in Raleigh (above) are two of David Furman's designs.

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Queens Station in Charlotte's Myers Park brought awards and critical acclaim for the way it blended with an established neighborhood.

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The same type of comment has been made about the first apartment complex Furman designed in Charlotte, McMillan Place at the intersection of Providence and Fairview roads in southeast Charlotte. "They don't look like apartments," is an often-heard comment.

To Furman, this is music to his ears. He uses a toothpaste tube to explain why McMillan Place was his first apartment project—why he had always refused any contract to design any apartment complex.

"The standard way that most apartment projects had been approached meant that they looked like they had been extruded out of a toothpaste tube and pinched off wherever the square footage dictates that you have to have a firewall," he says.

But the developer, McGuire Properties, gave him a freer hand to "alter the apartment look within the apartment budget parameters."

The key, Furman says, is to "alter the massing of the building. The two things we did at McMillan Place to alter the massing was we bent it into an 'L' so it is not a long, back-to-back type of approach. We bent the project in half

and we bent the vertical mass by having some two-story elements and some three-story elements, but the variation in the mass really breaks up the project into more of an individual unit look rather than a big building look, where you can ride past that corner and it looks more like a village."

Furman, 36, says his interest in multi-family design didn't blossom at North Carolina State University, from which he holds his degree. "I wasn't interested in much back then, except maybe girls," he laughs. "It took me six years to get through a four-year program."

Rather, he says, that interest—and talent—was nurtured by Reg Narmour, who hired Furman directly out of school for his then-fledgling Charlotte firm. Now Narmour has scores of architects and offices in Charlotte, Raleigh, Tampa and Washington, D.C. but back then, Narmour recalls, "there was only David and I in the office but we called it The Architectural Group anyway."

Furman was with Narmour's firm for more than seven years before forming his own firm. "I got an incredible amount of experience and education

from Reg," Furman says. "I really enjoyed the experience." Narmour also has praise for Furman, and a subtle salute to his success. "We've learned a lot from David in the past few years, too," he says.

As for the future, Furman says there is always a chance his firm will diversify a bit from its nearly total emphasis on multi-family housing. "I think some of the things we've learned to do well, like paying attention to detail (in multi-family residential projects) could be applied to office parks, for example." He says, for instance, that he enjoyed designing a day care center that was part of a high-density village in Charlotte's University Place.

"I'd say I'm interested" in diversifying "but I'm not really pursuing it."

In response to the inevitable question: What has been your favorite project to design, Furman, rarely at a loss for words, pauses.

"Hmmm. What was it that Frank Lloyd Wright said? That his favorite project always is 'the next one.'"

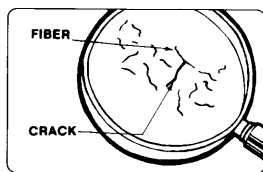
"I guess that's the way I feel. The one I like best is the one on the drawing board today." □

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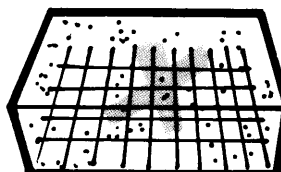
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How To Make Small Look Big

It is a major challenge facing today's architect, and here are a few secrets

Everyday, architects find themselves caught in the squeeze: with soaring land costs, rising building costs, more younger people with less money for housing but with well defined tastes, how is it possible to design smaller housing units that look bigger and more elegant?

David Furman, whose designs of condominium and multi-family residential projects in Charlotte and Raleigh have won critical acclaim—and commercial success—was asked that and other questions in an interview with the editors of *North Carolina Architect*.

Here are excerpts from the interview:

Q. A condominium today may have less than 1,000 square feet of space, sometimes only 800 or so. How can you make that small space seem big?

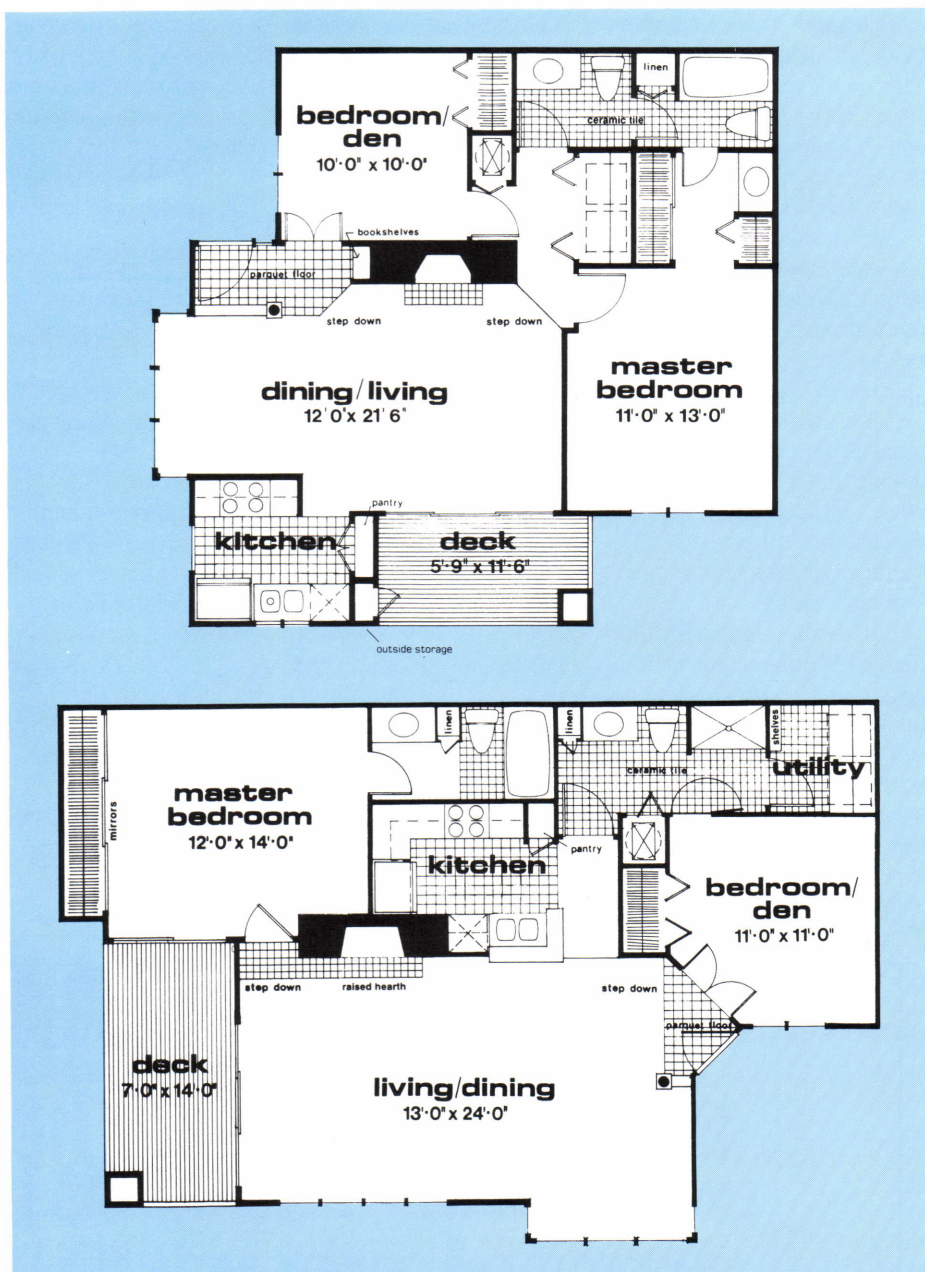
A. We use two basic concepts here: less walls and more glass.

You try to open up as many rooms into a common space as possible: A dining room that is not part of a little square but is part of a living room, which may have a low wall in front of it just to define the area, but visually they connect.

The same with the kitchen. You try to open up the kitchen as much as possible.

You can open up dressing areas into bedrooms. In other words, you can have a bedroom and off to one side of the bedroom you can have the wall keep going, and that turns into an alcove or a closet. So you take all those smaller areas and you try to take the circulation from them and try to put it back into the bigger areas.

Without getting bogged down in a lot of detail on how you do it, you try to keep as many units on the exterior of the building as possible. The building turns corners, or units offset from other units so that you have more glass,



David Furman's designs for Latta Square in Charlotte included an 803-square-foot condominium unit (top) and a 964-square-foot unit (below).

because glass is very important . . .

Q. In other words, just the use of glass can make a unit look bigger?

A. Yes. Also, on the upper floors, we have pioneered a concept where we introduce offsets and step-downs in the units on the upper floors. We sort of developed a floor system that everybody is using now where you step down—there is a six-inch offset. It defines the dining area; you step down into the living area.

People had been doing that on concrete slabs a lot, but no one had been doing it on the second and third floors of stacked flats.

Q. The idea is to make the unit feel more like a home?

A. Yeah. It is a unique sort of thing.

It's a small thing, but it sure adds a lot of extra dimension to the unit. All of a sudden the ceiling in the living room is eight feet six inches instead of eight feet, and while it doesn't cost much that is a big six inches.

Q. What else can you do to make small look big?

A. On the upper floors, we always create more volume . . . by raising the ceilings, vaulting the ceilings. Somehow, raising the ceiling always makes the unit seem bigger. The upper units always seem bigger than the lower ones.

Q. So those are your secrets?

A. Yeah, basically it is less walls and more glass. □



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