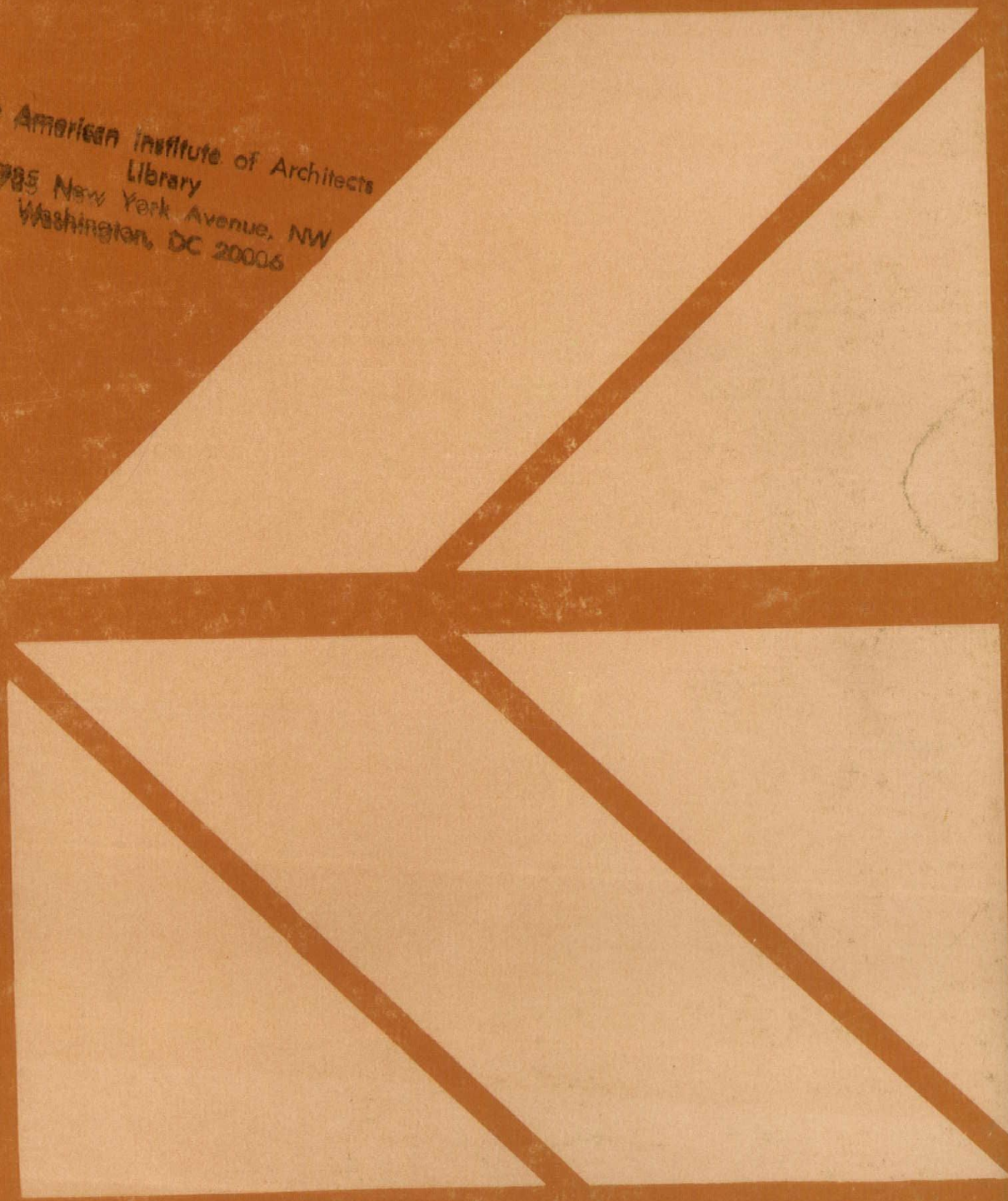
ARCHITECTURE NEBRASKA



ARCHITECTURE NEBRASKA VOLUME 2

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The views expressed herein are
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for academic credit.

contents

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editors' message

by H. Keith Sawyers and John E. Hancock

During the spring semester of 1978 students participating in the gradute seminar on architectural criticism, taught by Professor Keith Sawyers and John Hancock, accepted the challenge of producing the second issue of *Architecture Nebraska* magazine. The idea for this publication was originated two years ago in a course on architectural criticism taught by Professor Roger Schluntz. Volume one of *Architecture Nebraska* was the product of that class.

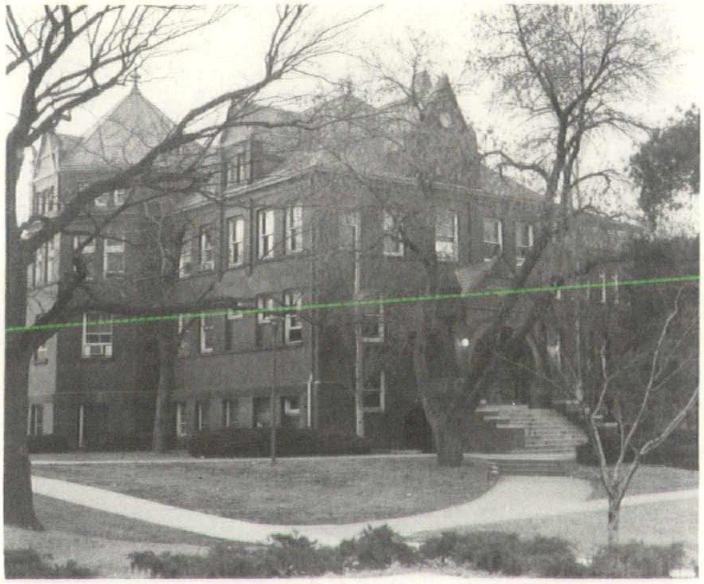
It was the goal of those responsible for the first issue that the magazine ". . .would provide a forum for students (and eventually faculty and professionals) to express their own critical reactions to the built environment." With this issue, we have continued that effort and supplemented it by the inclusion of contributions from professionals, faculty and the well-known critic, William Marlin.

As in Volume one, a portion of this issue has been devoted to brief reviews of several projects receiving recognition by the Nebraska Society of Architects. Since a magazine was not produced last year, this issue includes Nebraska AIA award projects from both 1976 and 1977.

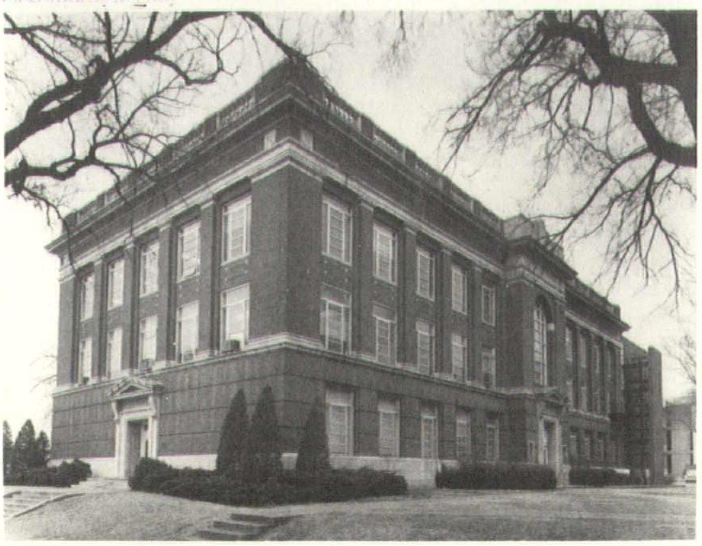
college of architecture facilities design competition

INTRODUCTION
by W. Cecil Steward

After the College of Architecture was established as an independent administrative unit in 1973, work was begun almost immediately to analyze the need and opportunities for development of a capital construction project to improve the physical facilities housing the programs of the college. The initial program analysis started as a studio project in the graduate studio in the fall semester of 1974. The first draft program of needs was subsequently assembled in the Dean's office utilizing various segments of the programs produced by the graduate student teams.



Architectural Hall



Former Law College

With a rough notion of the scope of the facility required to house the present programs and those vaguely projected for the future, the architectural program was set aside until a reasonable plan of accomplishing the project could be studied and approved. Several assumptions were made and tested with the professional community and officials of the University; ultimately these would become essential parameters of the process and the design program. The assumptions were: a) The location of the College in relation to other allied disciplines on the campus is considered excellent and should not change unless absolutely essential; b) The historic value of Architecture Hall as the oldest existing building on the UNL campus should be preserved and its entry on the roles of the National Registry of Historic Places should be respected; c) The adjacent building formerly housing the Law College should be analyzed in detail and the decision to keep or raze it should be made essentially on a cost-benefit basis to a comprehensive facilities plan; d) The academic disciplines and programs administered in the College are, and will continue toward the foresseable future to be, in a growth period, and thus the present space deficiencies which exist will become more critical each year; e) Due to the fact that the selection of architects and engineers for contract work for the University had in the past been less than comfortable or equit-

able (in view of the general professional community), and in considering the out standing precedence of the competition for the Nebraska Capitol, a distinct opportunity exists for the architects's selection to occur by competition; f) A structured design competition will afford the College the best opportunity of maintaining good, positive relations with the community of practicing architects throughout the state; and g) The architecture program has a tradition of producing competent design-sensitive architects and thus design execution among practicing graduates of the school could be expected to result in a strong solution.

With support and encouragement from the professional community and officials of the University a capital construction budget request of $25,000 to support a professional design competition was approved by the Board of Regents in the fall of 1976.

Following the creation of a faculty-student committee and a definitive process for extensive and detailed revision of the program statement, the Regents approved the *College of Architecture Facilities Design Program* in June, 1977. The program was designed to be the principal document of communication for the design competition. In its text an explicit effort was made to communicate qualitative requirements as well as quantitative data; care was given in soliciting faculty and student input to the document and to use the input in such a way to have it convey values and educational philosophy, as well as the detailed physical requirements of the environment.

On July 1, 1977, after the Legislature authorized expenditure of the $25,000 appropriation, announcements were mailed to all graduates of the architectural program at UNL and to all architects with principal offices of practice within the state. Entry registrations were closed on September 1, 1977; project entries were received on December 1; judging occurred on December 9 and the winning entry was announced on December 16, 1977.

From the beginning the design competition was intended to accomplish the following objectives:

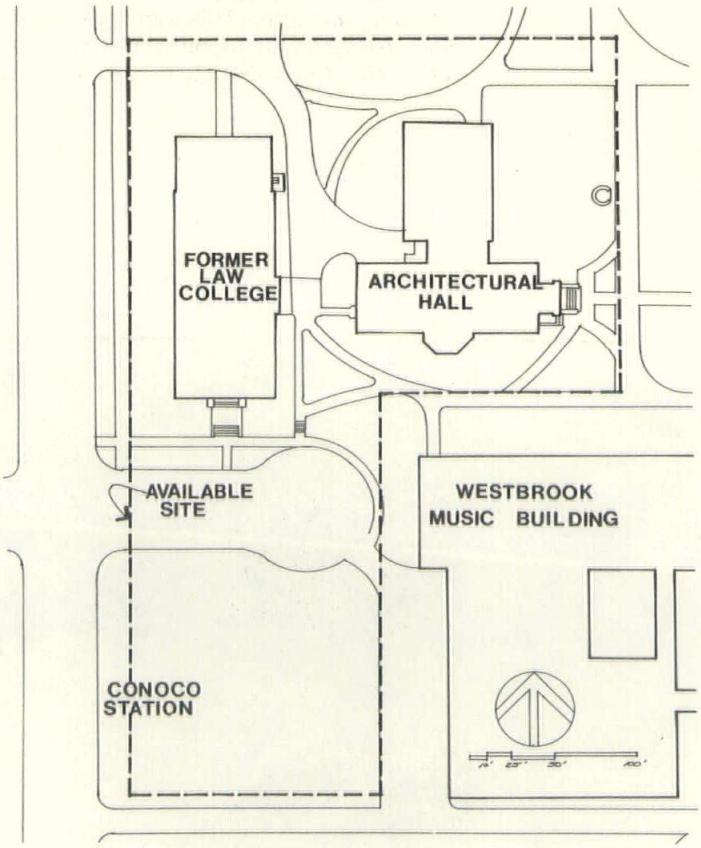
To suggest alternative solutions: •The nature of the project (i.e. two existing buildings, historic preservation requirement, the amount of new space required, cost determinants, the quality of space desired, etc.) presents the opportunity for several alternative design concepts. The review of multiple proposals would aid decision making.

To assure quality design combined with cost efficiency: •A variety of possible concepts creates more than an ordinary urgency for the analysis of first and life-cycle cost effectiveness.

To demonstrate university's concern for energy efficiency: •The need to maximize energy conservation measures in both new and remodeled construction.

To capitalize on the building as instruction: •The facility housing a professional program in architecture should demonstrate exemplary principles of design and building technology and should be available to the faculty for such day-to-day instructional demonstrations.

To allow all professionals an equal opportunity: •To help sustain the positive, constructive relationship between the College and the local community of professionals.



concept statement

by Bahr, Vermeer & Haecker

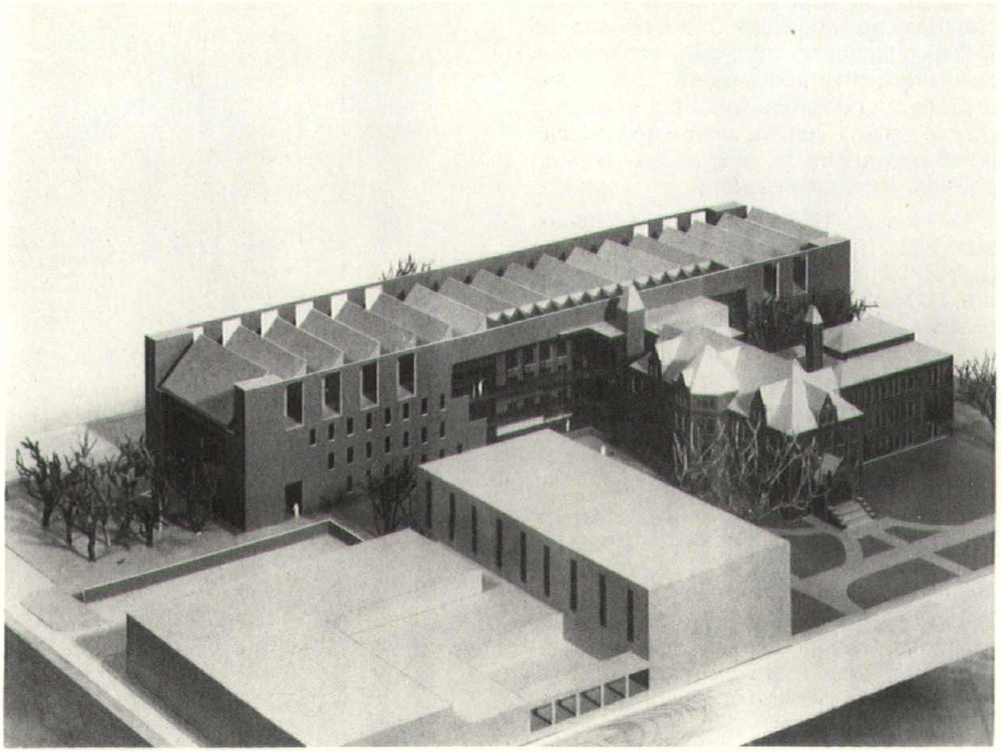
SOLUTION

The building is conceived as an addition, not an independent structure. Both Architectural Hall and the Former Law Building are to be kept, one for its obvious historic value and the second as an existing and reusable resource. The solution proposes a new west wing that envelops, and becomes an integral part of the Former Law Building. This new wing is connected to Architectural Hall with a glass-enclosed circulation atrium with minimal disruption to the old building.

Facades, fenestration, and materials of the new wing are compatible with Architectural Hall. Windows are of the same proportion and scale; the brick is to match. There is minimal exposure to the west due to bad sun glare, limited view, and an off-campus exposure. The building is more open to the east. The glass atrium becomes a part of the east wall with the courtyard entry and campus view in this direction.

The entire roof of the new west wing is composed of north-facing, clerestory monitors lighting the upper design studios. The south slope of these monitors is adaptable to future solar panels, and the extended slope on the south elevation is an emulation of the roof of Architectural Hall.

Floor plan arrangements in both the new and old wing are determined by function, not by department, to encourage inter-



disciplinary exposure between students and faculty. The ceremonial spaces, i.e., adminstrative, library, gallery, are in Architectural Hall as a symbolic heart of the complex, with the functional and working spaces in the new west wing: studios, workshops, faculty offices, and support spaces. Phased occupancy is possible with this split of functions and plan arrangement.

As a major visual element in the atrium, and at other key locations, we are proposing the display of the plaster casts for the State Capitol sculptures. These would serve as an historic reference for the student and are a valuable resource that should be visible to the public. The atrium also serves as the faculty/student lounge for the complex and the central circulation node, both for vertical and horizontal traffic.

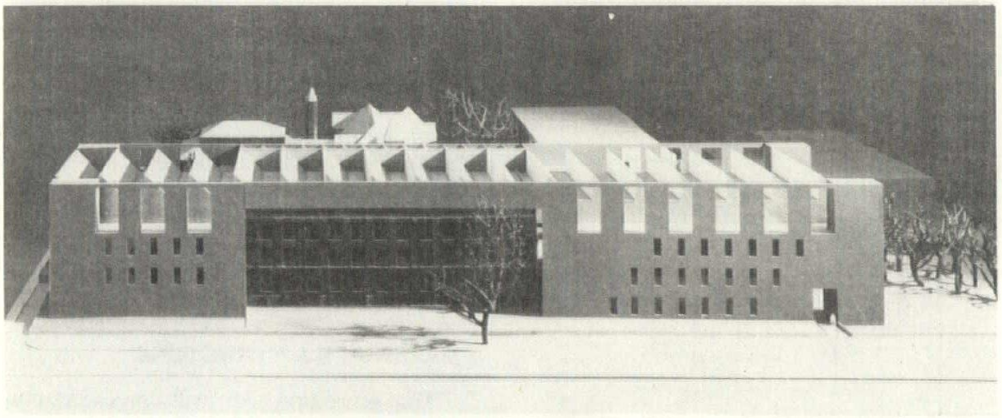
We hope that this solution is a reminder, in fundamental design terms, that the resources of the past and the requirements of the future can be combined to create a successful and economical complex.

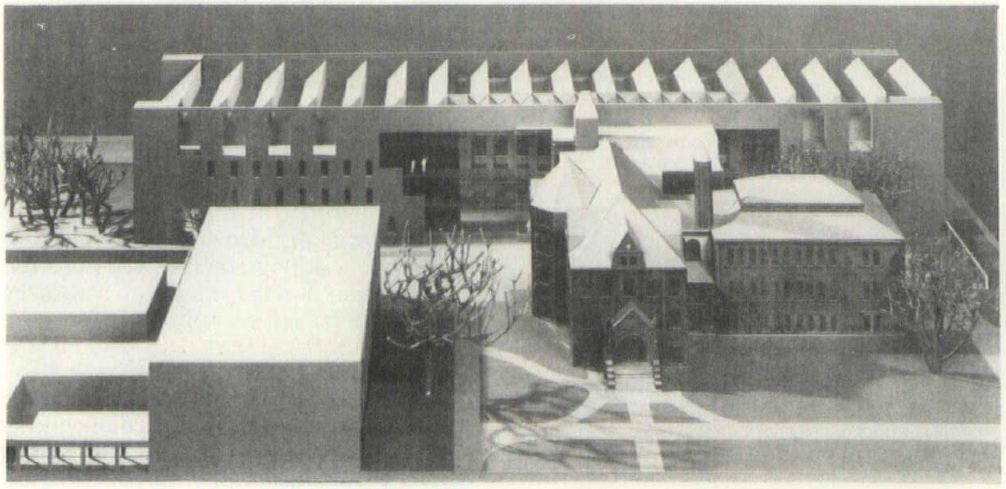
SITE & ENVIRONS

The new west wing is massed from north to south parallel to 10th Street, creating a wall to the campus on the west and from the east, or campus view, providing a backdrop to Architectural Hall. Its fenestration, scale, and materials are meant to complement, not compete with, the historic building in the foreground. The eastern campus entry to Architectural Hall will remain with a major internal circulation route through the gallery to the new atrium entry.

ARCHITECTURAL HALL

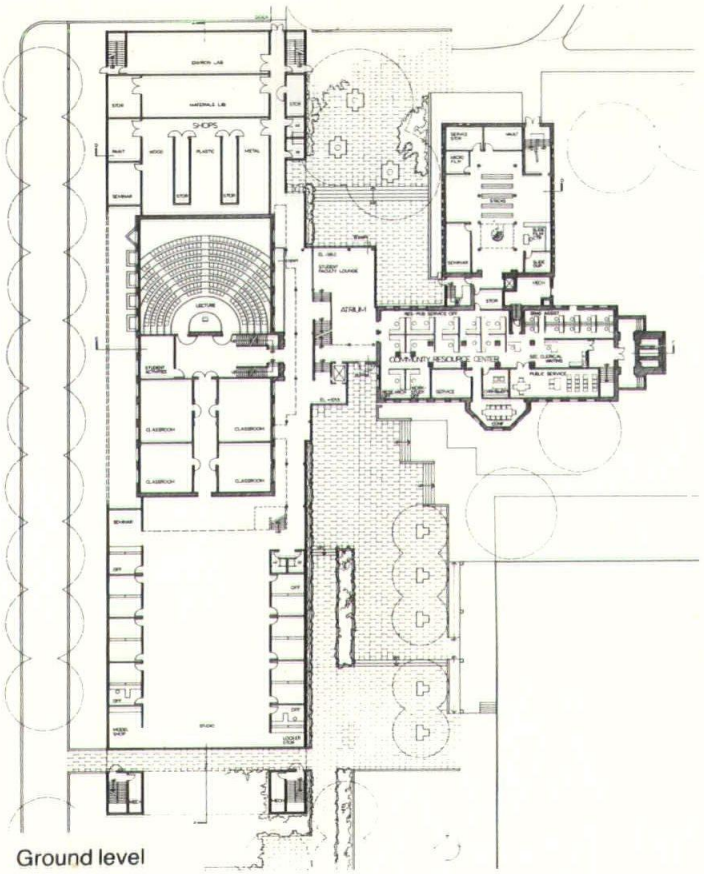
This building is to be restored on the exterior and adaptively renovated on the interior, primarily by subtraction not additions, i.e., walls will be removed wherever possible to open up the volume of the build-





ing, ceilings will be exposed at key locations such as those existing in the gallery, and, in the library space, a floor-penetrating stack area will be incorporated to physically connect this three-level function. This exposure of the building's structural system will provide object lessons for the student, comparing the structures of the old building with the new west wing.

Further, we propose total utilization of the existing attic in Architectural Hall. In addition to the spaces identified on the plan, we recommend that this would be an ideal location for the offices of the State Chapter AIA.



Ground level

FORMER LAW BUILDING

This building will be adaptively reused with the removal of some partitions, and the conversion of the existing lecture hall to a two-story volume by removing the middle floor. The stacks to the north are not deemed adaptable and, therefore, this space will be removed down to the grade level floor.

The existing facades on the east, south, and north will be retained as object lessons for the student. The west facade will be incorporated into the skin of the new structure and left exposed as a part of the facade composition. Further potential with these facades would be to paint them, as in a lesson book, to identify their architectural elements.

MATERIALS & STRUCTURE

The enclosing skin will consist of conventional brick curtain walls supported on a structural steel frame, with brick to match Architectural Hall. The new west wing will have free-span steel trusses, to allow for large, open flexible spaces, with the entire top floor served by light monitors which provide indirect north light to the studios; their south slopes are adaptable for future solar panels.

The new wing is to be vine-covered, for campus imagery, ecology, and energy conservation. During summer the vines provide a natural solar insulator, and during winter months will allow the sun to warm the dark-toned brick, reducing total energy requirements. The vine species is *Nephrolepis Exaltata Bosteniensis,* that has sucker taps non-damaging to masonry and can be cultivated to provide total surface cover where desired.

jury report

by William Marlin

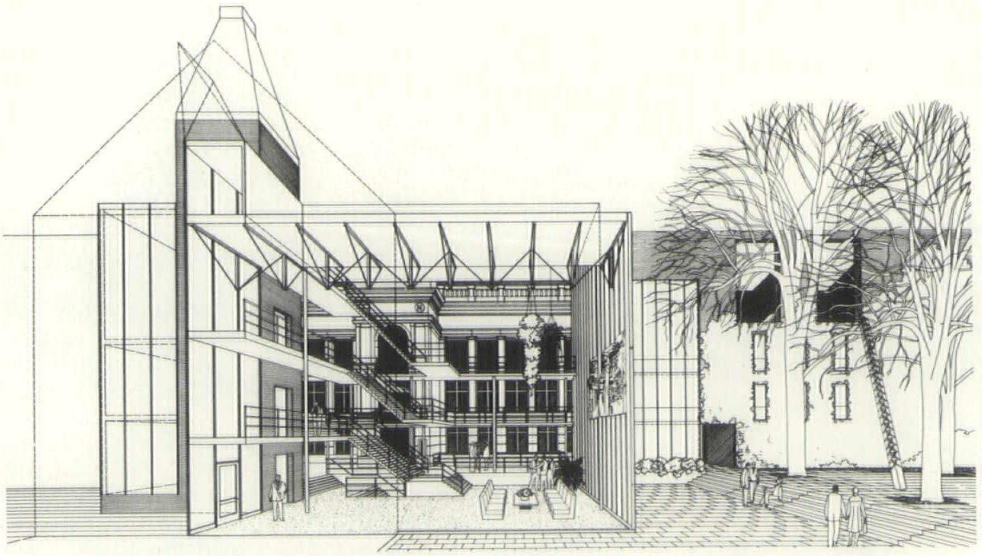
The College of Architecture, of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has chosen a course, by way of its recent design competition for its expanded facilities, that will not only better insure an enhancing architectural presence, but a course that will also result in an architectural expression that is worthy of both the history and the aspirations of the people of the State of Nebraska.

Architecture is among the most telling, tangible frameworks for considering, and accommodating, the values of a people. A building for the study of architecture is all the more important a challenge. It must be, by its very nature as a venue for humanistic insight, cultural perspective, technological exercise, and aesthetic development, an example for those who will share buildings, or, as Winston Churchill once reminded us, for those who are shaped by buildings. Architecture in this sense is not only a public art. It is a public act, conveying, in addition to functional, programmatic, and economic realities, a sense of social, cultural, and civic conviction.

Editor's Note: The jurors for the College of Architecture Facilities Design Competition were William Marlin, Architectural critic for the Christian Science Monitor *and Associate Editor of* Architectural Record, *Chairman; William Turnbull, FAIA, of MLTW/Turnbull Associates, San Francisco; Ralph Rapson, FAIA, of Ralph Rapson & Associates, Minneapolis; Dale Gibbs, Professor of Architecture, College of Architecture, UNL, and Harley Schrader, Director of the UNL Physical Plant.*

The College of Architecture is now embarked on, more than a building program, the setting of improved standards for public design that is sure to leaven the look of public facilities in Nebraska, and the outlook of her conscientious citizens, in the years to come.

The first choice of the Jury for the new facilities of the College of Architecture, which emerged through careful consideration of six submitted schemes on the 8th and 9th of December, 1977, is a simple,

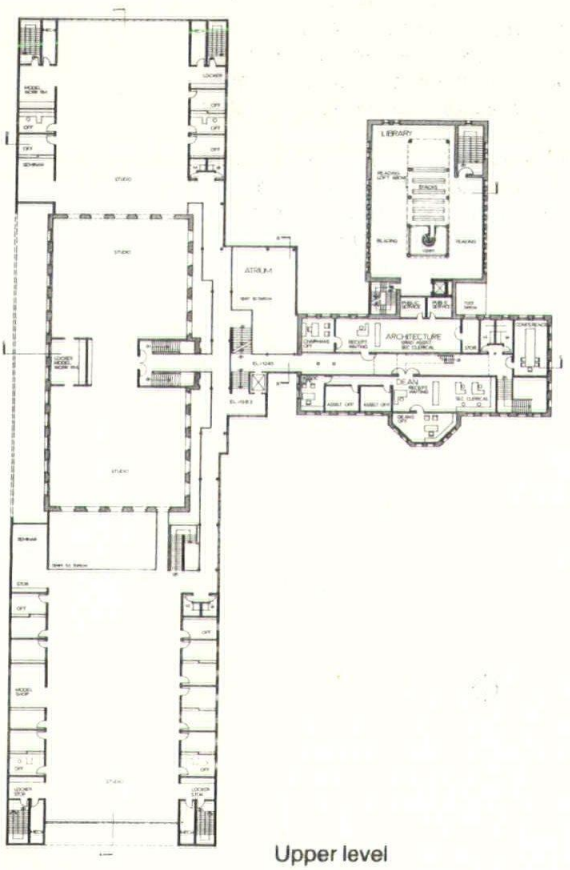


Section through atrium

straight-forward, skilled accommodation of the program in terms of functional requirements, in terms of aesthetic sensitivity, and in terms of preserving the historic qualities of both Architecture Hall and the Former Law Building.

The identity and integrity of these existing elements are enhanced, not effaced, by the character and composition of this architect's scheme. The new construction will be of that compelling quality, all too rare, that engages our attention through its subtleties rather than assertiveness. For it will not only call attention to its own nature but, being a congenial neighbor, it will also call attention to the qualities of its context—that is, the cumulative structural and spatial character of the campus as a whole.

The proposed new construction, acting as an envelope around the Former Law Building, will be an unostentatious "backdrop" to Architecture Hall. The restoration and reuse of Architecture Hall has been splendidly worked out. The ebullient brick massing of this Richardsonian style national landmark is not only kept intact, speaking functionally; the scheme enriches its value—opening up areas that are now somewhat confining, liberating the long closed-up skylights, even recapturing the old attic for new uses. This is not only the preservation of history but also an intensification of it. And Architecture Hall, made an energetic part of the total plan, will thus become one of the more engaging "modern" works hereabouts.



Upper level

The Former Law College has been physically incorporated with simple care, and the envelope of the proposed new construction acts as a visual foil for both it and Architecture Hall just to the east. New brick will thus beckon to the old brick of Architecture Hall itself, while at the same time both enfolding and revealing the Former Law College in an interplay between the past and the present. Its old east facade is revealed by way of large expanses of glass along the outer east edge of the new construction and the old west facade is revealed, even celebrated, by the architect's having framed it with a big brick "eyebrow" that is thrust out from the old elevation and connected with the north and south portions of the new construction. This way, this piece of the past is carefully cropped, as a precious old photograph might be—except that the Former Law Building was, and would remain, a multi-dimensional image, as much full of memory and emotion and metaphor as it would be of new functional life.

The entrances to the new construction are located to tie into the traffic patterns of the campus, and provide a tie for off-campus traffic leading to and from the heart of downtown Lincoln. The major entry area, and, by way of it, the most direct access to the surviving east facade of the Former Law Building, is at the mid-section of the new east facade. Here the major patterns of internal movement are also quickly, clearly defined by the architecture.

The planning here is quite astute. Like the external massing, the internal configuration is simple and direct—an "in-line" plan providing large contiguous studio spaces with offices alongside. The spaces of the Former Law College are fully re-used. The brick textured expanses of wall on the west edge of the new construction, again standing out from and framing the old west elevation, effectively screen the inside class-

rooms from the noise of the street that runs along that side of the site. And this massing also serves to cut down on the effect of heat during late afternoons. Aesthetic character and pragmatic concerns are thus resolved here.

This resolution is also manifest in the way that the architect of this scheme has shown that new construction, even as it defers to and dramatizes such buildings as Architecture Hall and the Former Law Building, can also convey a consolidating, unifying presence of its own. The Jury was particularly taken with a handling of the upper screenlike walls of brick, punched out rhythmically with rectangular openings—rather like open-to-the-sky arcades. This, enhanced by the spare use of windows in the brick walls below, works visually to reduce the apparent height of the new construction because, in effect, it all seems to become lighter and less massive as it gets higher. This also helps the architect to fit in, all that much more agreeably, rather than capriciously throwing a fit—the fate of too many plain old "modern" buildings.

This sense of "fit" also works on the scale of the campus. The new building will present a defining, lining "wall" to the flow of space coming over westward from the Fine Arts enclave. What is more, the architect has been particularly specific about the nature of landscaping materials, especially vines. These will soften the scale of the new building even further, lending texture, dimension, color and mood, making the new construction evocative of the familiar image of history's "halls of ivy." Such landscaping materials will also work well in providing passive screening for light and heat—thus giving a pleasant assist to the aim of energy conservation.

Energy was understandably a central concern of the Jury, and the first place winner could serve as an illustration that such a crucial, particular matter need not curb design excellence. In this scheme, a sequence of sawtoothed skylights runs the entire length of the roof, and in fact, becomes the roof. The architect's idea is that these sawtoothed slants will eventually be attached for the installation of solar-energy panels. But his idea embraces more than that specific technical option and the long-term energy and economic dividends that would result. What the architect has offered is a way to secure that option, thus cutting down on the use of conventional energy over the long term, without cutting down on the character of the architecture when the process takes place. The eventual technical and structural adjustments for a solar-energy system will not, in this design, be a cause for disrupting the unity and simplicity of the architecture.

This first choice of the Jury, then, creates several important connections. The motivating spirit and formal substance of the proposed new construction connects with Architecture Hall, which is left as a refurbished, free-standing subject of, among other things, our affection—and with the Former Law Building, which has been comfortably, visibly taken into the structural confidence of the new construction itself. Its massing and materials also make connections, visually if not physically, to the character and configuration of the neighboring campus. Finally, aesthetics, function, planning, and energy characteristics seem to have been cut from the same cloth. The Jury is certain that it will be a good-looking, good-working, good-natured element of architecture—and of campus experience generally.

Any first choice, of any jury, of any design competition, is expected to be studied and improved upon. Such preferred schemes, by way of perspective on the process of competitions, tend to be chosen because, among other things, they seem to be most naturally susceptible to thoughtful refinement from within their essential design character. Without this essential character, "refinements" can only be a cosmetic ploy to conceal pervasive conceptual faults.

A jury also looks at submissions from the standpoint of how convincingly the sensitivity, maturity, control, and care of the architects are conveyed—and thus how readily that architect will be able to respond to matters of refinement in ways that are consistent with both the objective requirements of a client and the more subjective dictates of creative conscience.

The Jury for this design competition, with specific refinements in mind for the consideration of both this client and this architect, also warmly endorses what it discerns to be a most serious professional potential for a caring, competent adjustment of and follow-through on the design that has been chosen.

The central concern of the Jury is that the

east entrance area, with its link to Architecture Hall, be restudied in this scheme. It is at this point in the plan that the inter-related conceptual themes of context and connection, so beautifully dealt with elsewhere, seem somewhat in want of greater attention. Any link between Architecture Hall and the new construction should not compete formally. And in the scheme that the Jury prefers, the contemplated massing of the link does compete, what with an extensive amount of glass that is set up in a somewhat incongruous array of window-walls. From the standpoint of energy conservation and operating costs, it may also be questioned.

Additionally, this link should be improved upon so that the courtyard-like areas to the north and south of the link have a more definitive quality, both separately and with respect to the way they flow together. The Jury points out that it might be wise for these two areas, with people on foot moving back and forth through them, to flow together beneath a much-simplified bridge-style connector. Placing the vertical circulation that is pretty contained in the link within the envelope of the new construction surrounding the Former Law Building should also be carefully studied for its functional and visual results.

Another concern of the Jury pertains to the overall massing of the new construction. As earlier explained, it is generally felt that this dimension of the design is already especially thoughtful, but it may be that the upper screen walls with their rectangular openings, will, upon study, be all the more agreeable if they are made slightly lower. And this can be done without sacrificing the architect's purposeful, commendable intention of lightening the visual load of the massing. A somewhat lower profile would also help set off the picturesque campus silhouette of Architecture Hall, and this could also be done without undercutting the positive role of the new construction as a needed "backdrop" along with the west edge of the site.

The west elevation of the new construction, framing the old west elevation of the Former Law Building, should also be thought over carefully. The Jury likes the architect's idea of the connective upper "eyebrow" that consolidates the framing effect, but several eyebrows were raised about the details involved in supporting such a lengthy stretch of brick without having to have structural ties back into the old facade. The Jury suggests further study.

The design also incorporates a sequence of skylights which, along with the high screen walls, may result in some maintenance questions. This concern is accentuated by a second sequence of smaller skylights that runs along the east of the new construction, above the main entry area. Any modification of the skylights, most crucially the ones above the entry, must be thoughtfully related to those modifications, already urged by the Jury, of the link to Architecture Hall. The Jury further agrees that it will be necessary, for both the client and the architect, to work in close and respectful sympathy for one another's aims to ensure that durable, dependable, maintainable detailing is seen to during design development in order to minimize long-term utility and maintenance costs. Also, with all of the architect's formal, functional, visual emphasis on the skylights as an integral and integrating quality of the scheme, it would be wholly in keeping were more attention given to the formal, functional, and visual effects of such light filtering down through the building. Such nuances of detailing will make the most of a design impulse that is already most worthy in both aesthetic and technical terms.

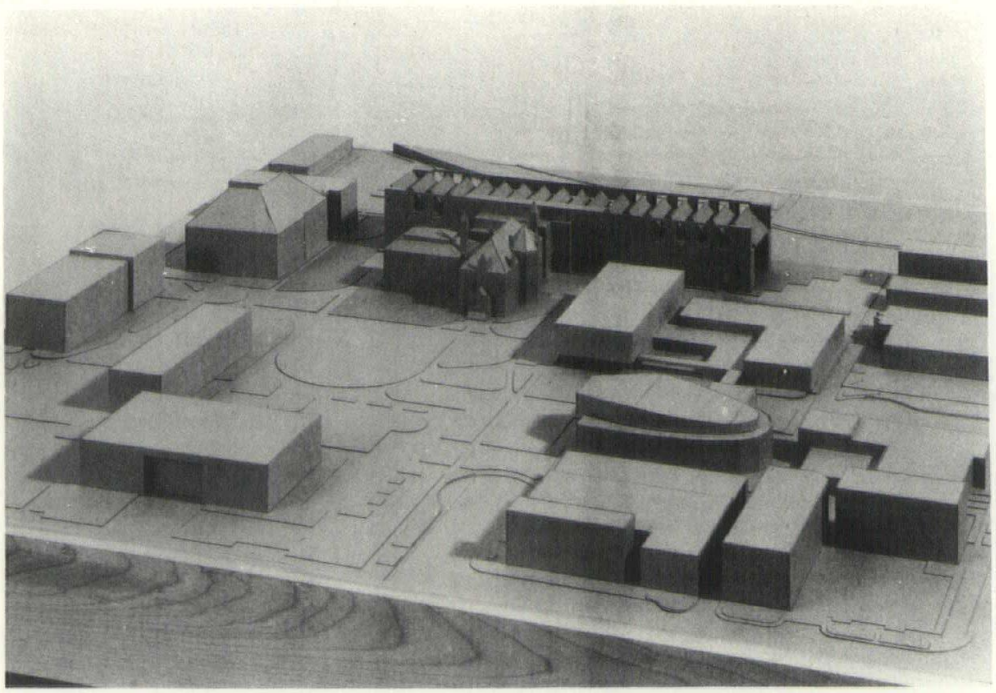
As for the matter of functional planning, the Jury was enormously pleased by the architect's obvious veneration of Architecture Hall, and by the skilled retention of administrative and library functions within it. In some places, however, there is a tendency to make several little spaces out of some that are pretty large and really quite delightful. This might bear some rethinking. The restoration of the library is first-rate, the loft reading areas having been beautifully handled, along with the thought of bringing back those old skylights. The Jury did wonder whether the College needs all three floors of library thus projected, and if the College really does not need all three, it was suggested that the upper level might serve as a secondary exhibition area. Certainly the Jury could not help but heartily commend the College for the renewed and resolute program of its library, which, as it's carried out, promises to result in a rich, resonant resource for serious scholarship. In all events, Architecture Hall will, with this scheme, provide an ample, affable framework for reading, contemplation, research,

and whatever else goes on in libraries. The recaptured attic area with its wonderful timber detailing would be best used, the Jury feels, as a place for seminars and conferences.

With respect to the new construction, surrounding the Former Law Building, interior traffic, all under the same roof, seems comfortably, conveniently, inter-meshed with the various functions. If there is a problem at all with the lay-out here, it has to do with a sequence of tiny spaces running between the corridor and the east facade of the Former Law Building. But for this minor notion, the Jury was impressed by the architect's planning totally, and services to both their present and projected facilities have been thoroughly thought out as well—a matter of not incidental moment to those seeing to the Physical Plant of the University.

While the Jury feels that almost all of the six schemes submitted, most manifestly its second and third choices, had varying degrees of merit in addressing the range of functional, aesthetic and professional uses embodied by the program of the competition, it is fully convinced that this range of issues has been most sensitively and maturely met by the winning scheme. The suggestions that the Jury has made for its refinement are made in the spirit of strengthening an already thoughtful concept, whereas the second and third choices are proportionately less cohesive and convincing.

It has been over half a century since a design competition was held in the State of Nebraska for a major public facility—the selection of the great Bertram Goodhue as the Architect of the State Capitol. That work became an example for others, an inspiration, and it remains an enduring, even endearing tribute to the finest instincts of Great Plains culture. The chosen design for the new facilities of the College of Architecture of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is not only a public building in the technical sense but, because it will be informing, instructing, and inspiring those who will be expressing that culture in coming years, it is thereby a public building of profound symbolic importance. The Jury of this competition is honored to have been a formulative part of this process. It is persuaded that its chosen design, while enhancing the evidence of history, will also, to as important an extent, make history—doing so in a way that the nation as a whole is sure to notice and admire.



critique

by Matt Metcalf

The first place winner in the College of Architecture Facilities Design Competition was extremely well-presented and this may have accounted, in part, for the firm of Bahr, Vermeer, and Haecker having been awarded the commission. However, upon examining this simple yet intriguing solution, I felt somewhat puzzled and disturbed by some of the ideas and features included in their design.

When analyzing this scheme, it becomes apparent that for one thing, the designers did not choose to concern themselves with the orthodox notion of expressing the "integrity of materials." This is quite evident from their use of a 140-foot free "flying" brick beam. If one takes the proper precautions, of course, a beam of this nature can be constructed; but serious questions could be raised as to whether it is worth the effort. This beam is intended to visually relate the north and south portions of the new construction by actually physically tying them together, but other means of making this aesthetic connection could probably have been devised which might have been both more subtle and more practical.

The architects chose to renovate and add on to the existing Former Law Building rather than tear it down. It is apparent that this was done more for economic rather than aesthetic reasons, from the fact that the new addition they have proposed has seemingly swallowed up the older building and left only one side of this "hapless" structure in view. This gesture could be interpreted as a rather tasteless satire on the currently unfashionable qualities of classical architecture.

The new structure frames this lonesome, lost elevation and reads as a paste-on wallpaper facade—a feature which contributes to the simple, abstract formalistic character of the addition, but which is questionable with regard to structure and construction. Large openings have been punched out at the top of this "paper" (or, if you prefer, "cardboard") wall, apparently to lighten its massiveness. These ten-by-twenty foot openings leave a free-standing parapet wall which looks as though it might be blown over by the first gust of wind.

The east elevation, which partially defines a courtyard between Architecture Hall and the new structure, also utilizes simple forms and lines. Here, brick and large areas of glass provide the architects' intended "simple backdrop" to the irreplaceable Architecture Hall. The design of this elevation is quite pleasing, leaving aside the possible maintenance and energy-consciousness problems associated with the large areas of glass and I find it much more acceptable as a "backdrop" to Architecture Hall than is the west facade as a "picture frame" to Former Law.

The solution to the tricky problem of connecting the new and old structures was handled in a reasonable manner by the designers. Instead of supplying a system of ramps, the connector allows for direct access from each level, as well as providing space for a student/faculty lounge. This connector provides a pleasant transition between the new and old buildings and bisects the outdoor area between them, thus creating a private courtyard to the north. A vertical circulation shaft is located in the connector, which, through the use of a double-entry elevator, resolves the difficult problem of incompatible floor heights in the two existing buildings. Unfortunately, the top of this shaft makes a futile attempt at expressing some relationship with the existing air-intake tower on Architecture Hall. I find this type of historical referencing simplistic and amateurish—it does not complement the original, but rather detracts from the inherent historical meaning of the older tower.

The blatant constrast in scale and articulation of function and structure between the new building and Architecture Hall is obvi-

ously intentional and seems to be a reasonable approach to a touchy situation. However, there are two features I strongly question. First, the designers are indicating the use of brick for the new structure and apparently this brick is to *match* that of Architecture Hall. This contradicts the most basic principle of how "backdrops"work, i.e. by *contrast* as well by simplicity. Furthermore, matching the brick and mortar joints of an eighty year old building with a respéctable degree of accuracy is probably not going to be easy and certainly not economical.

The second feature I question is that the architects are relying on ivy to cover the building, ostensibly to add to the "collegiate" atmosphere of the campus. One wonders why the designers have proposed the laborious task of matching Architecture Hall's brick only to also propose covering it up. Will the ivy really grow and cover as much area as the design has shown? It seems a bit unrealistic to use the ivy as such a strong and important design element. Even though it is rather pleasing and "symbolic," it may be just too unpredictable.

On the whole, I find the scale of the new structure uneasy and extremely monumental, especially when I imagine myself walking toward Architecture Hall from the east. This new structure would be overhwelming in its height and in its solid, massive unarticulated appearance, quite contrary to the architects' stated intention to be "non-heroic." It seems not only to act as a backdrop to Architecture Hall, but also as a huge and somewhat ominous "big brother" which, having swallowed up one old building, now hovers over another smaller and less assertive neighbor. The huge window-like cut-outs in the upper portion of the building help to express its disproportionate and massive appearance, by suggesting giant parapets which, if seen as extensions of the actual functional walls, make the building seem even larger and more "heroic" than it really is.

One very positive evaluation I have of this project is the overall organization and functional simplicity of the floor plan. I agree that it is sensible to keep all of the administrative and community related areas, including the library, in Architecture Hall and to locate the studios, classrooms, offices, and various other functions in the new structure. There really is no need for everyday interaction between students and administrators, but there is a need for continual interaction between teachers and students and it appears that this solution has acknowledged that fact. However, one criticism that can be made regarding people interaction is that this solution separates the teachers from the administrators, consequently fostering little or no constant, easy interaction and communication between these two groups. It should be pointed out that some of the architecture college faculty function both as administrators and teachers and this scheme would make it inconvenient for a faculty member to function in both of these capacities.

The idea of lining the teachers' offices along two sides of the studio space is also questionable. This prevents the students from experiencing an upper level view of the outdoors, particularly the "fun" courtyard space directly below to the east. I also question whether student or faculty would appreciate such a regimented and rigid arrangement particularly when using these spaces daily.

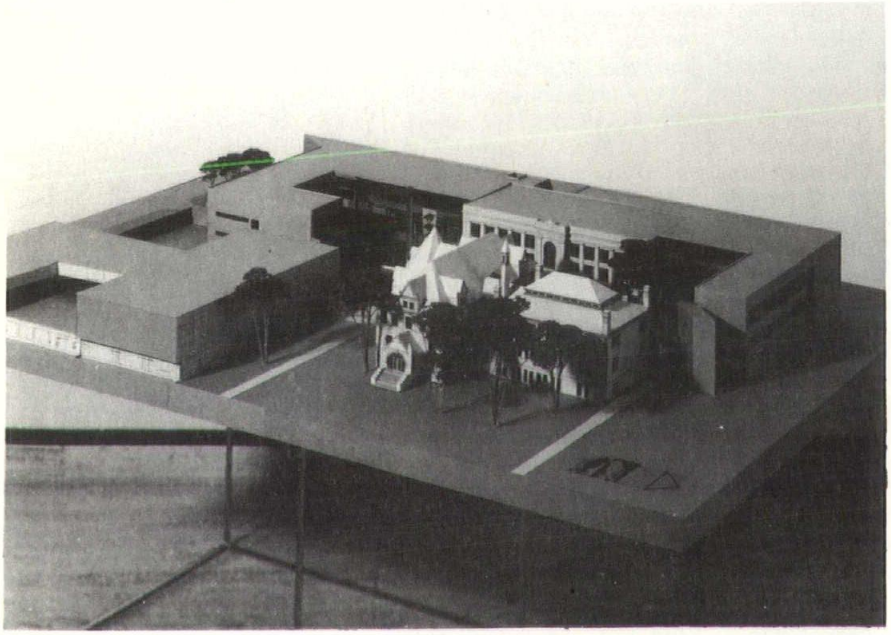
Finally, the solution could also be criticized for a general superficiality, in that many of the highly complex areas were not designed according to functional considerations. For example, viewing angles in the lecture room are very poor. The media center is shown in an isolated location, with important adjacencies (to slides, films, classrooms, and environmental simulations lab) ignored. The diagrammatic simplicity in these areas and others is entirely misleading, as extensive redesigning and rearrangement would be needed to accommodate the actual complexity of the programmed requirements.

In conclusion, it seems to me that the entry submitted by Bahr, Vermeer and Haecker is questionable as to its being worthy of the first place award. Although it contains some very unique and impressive features, and although it was very well presented, there are numerous impractical and disturbing aspects which make it impossible for me to arrive at an overall favorable opinion.

critique

by Jay Perantoni

"The process of evaluating sensory data and the resulting environmental judgments involve generally a simple comparison decision: comparing new experiences and environments to all those that have gone before. Noting similarities and differences between one's experiential base and those new experiences encountered daily is a basic part of the environmental education process. Our intent, therefore, is to develop the College of Architecture Facilities as a complementary but contrasting pair. The strength of this solution will be in the similarities and differences between the new Architecture Hall and that which has gone before the old Arch Hall." (Excerpt taken from Design Concept Statement by HD&R, Architects.)



This design problem of creating an addition/alteration to a historical landmark finds its purest and perhaps most diagrammatic solution in this proposal. The generative concept was to create a new Architecture Hall which, by engulfing and then extending beyond the Former Law Building, would serve as a spatial container and a visual backdrop to the old Architecture Hall. This reading of a contained object within another object begins to initiate a "complementary contrast" between the old and new Architecture buildings. Significantly, the approach lends itself to a strong design statement based on contrast, and resulting in an educational experience validated by assets as well as shortcomings.

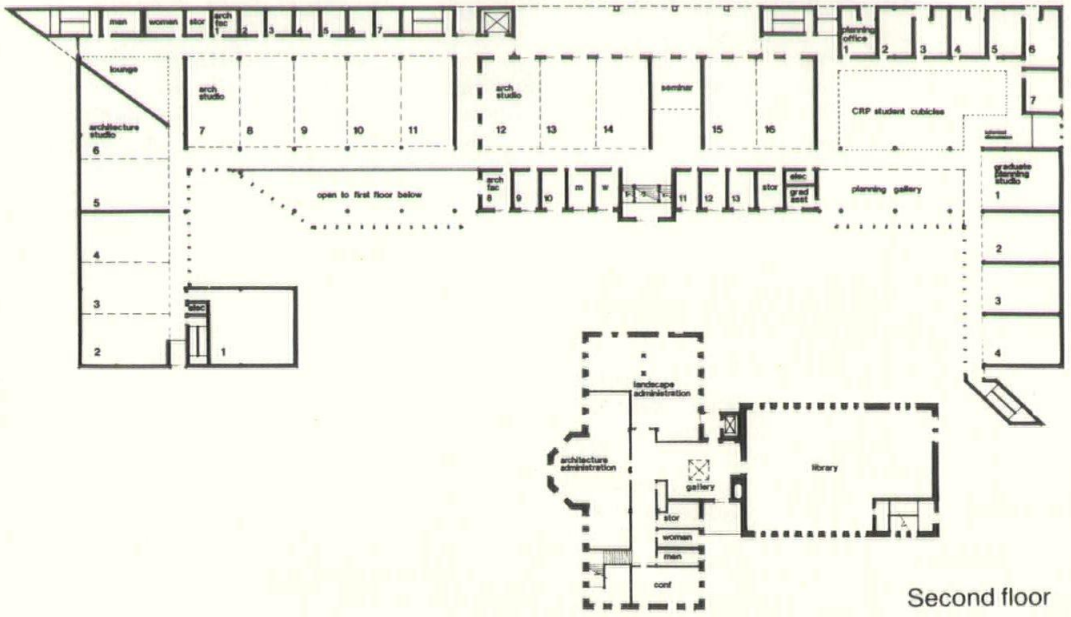
Old Architecture Hall is one of the few visual delights on the UNL campus. This venerated structure is complex in its articulation of parts--displaying some very formal notions about form and entrance events as well as distinguishing between major and minor spaces. Additionally, the building evokes fanciful images of the Romanesque, the Victorian and, of course, the Richardsonian Eras. The uniqueness of the building is further enhanced by some rather subtle details including the rich warmth of the brick and the slightly arched window lintels. Cumulatively, these characteristics result in a building worthy of preservation; one whose visual distinction is merited.

Appropriately, this design proposal recognizes the visual and historical significance of old Architecture Hall. The contrast between the old building and the unobtrusive, almost anonymous, new structure intentionally focuses one's attention upon the historical one. The solution might be likened to wrapping a jewel in black velvet in order that its intricacies be best displayed.

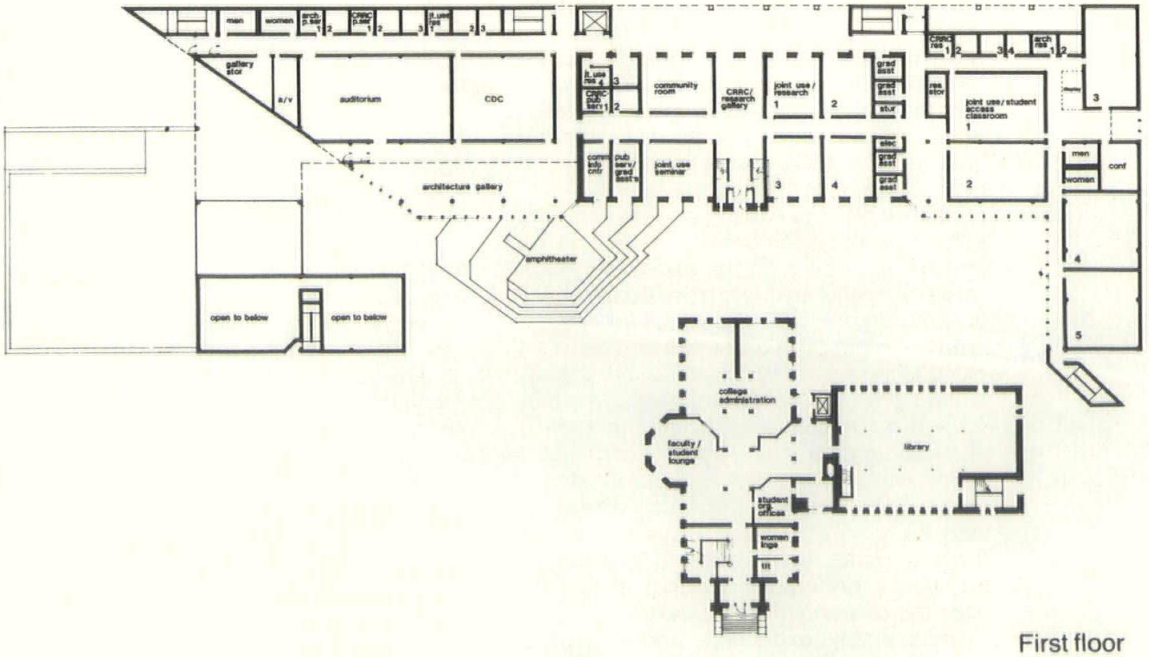
The practice of subordinating a major project to an important existing building is an approach seldom found in the annals of modern or post modern architecture. If for no other reason than that, the proposed design would contribute a great deal to an ego-ridden world. However, as man reacts most strongly to those objects which display a variety of relationships or evoke

numerous associations, the proposal for the new Architecture Hall would hardly be satisfactory is it didn't consist of a multiplicity of gestures directed to old Architecture Hall and the shared proximity.

Almost contradictory to its role as an unobtrusive background, the new Architecture Hall incorporates some rather demanding parts; not the least of which are the multistory glazed projections which face



Second floor



First floor

old Architecture Hall along the new east wall. While costly in terms of energy, the projections command attention especially when viewed against a planar brick surface in which fenestration would be cleanly cut. That same east wall also demonstrates contrast by adjacency as the original facade from Former Law Building is allowed to surface from the wrappings. The effect comes close to jeopardizing the anonymity which the new building seeks to display for the old.

As the architect's generative concept of "complementary contrast" suggests, the new and the old buildings are destined to be perceptually unique experiences; however, the functional and instructional necessity of linking the structures is paramount. The decision to make the major tie between old and new buildings a spatial rather than physical link is respectfully logical although debatable.

In contrast to the existing conditions, external space about the proposed College of Architecture would become a major design element. The extension of the Former Law Building axis and the turning of its ends to the east result in a strongly delineated courtyard. Entrance into the new structure would be through the Former Law facade, yet the strong definition of the external space would make that entrance a far more noteworthy event than it is at present. The problem shifts, however, to one of articulating an entrance into the rear of old Architecture Hall. The entrance would need a sizable scale to gain recognition within the courtyard and it is here that the proposed design begins to falter.

The problem of relating an entrance within the rear of old Architecture Hall might be stultifying. However, the underlying issue remains one of linking the two complementary structures. In the case of a historical landmark, the physical separation between old and new seems desirable, but the resulting physical distinction between structures promotes an air of detachment which is hardly in character with the congeniality of old Architecture Hall, or appropriate for midwestern winters. Obviously, the decision for a purely spatial link goes beyond the pragmatic realm, especially since the architect's generative concept almost invites the creation of a physical tie.

Indisputably, experience and learning is by contrast; contrast obtained through juxtaposition, through superimposition—as one might experience the facade of Former Law as a fragment projecting from the new structure. However, contrast is also obtained through the more subtle process of sequential accumulation. The entrances into the courtyard, whether from around the sides of old Architecture Hall or through the proposed angular slot along the southwest corner of new Architecture Hall, are major sequential events which lead from outside to inside. Such an approach seems warranted in the structuring of new space around old. The inherent potential in a physical link would not only satisfy pragmatic concerns but, if handled well, could do so without jeopardizing old Architecture Hall's historical character. Most significantly, the physical link could be so designed as to provide insight into what is "old" and what is "new," as well as demonstrating how architecture could be utilized in bridging a pair of opposites.

Regardless of this subjective shortcoming, the overall solution for a new Architecture Hall displays a concern for students by providing for a strong sense of community. Just as the new and old buildings relate through and focus upon open space, a similar ordering device is employed for the internal organization of the new building. The Galleries for the Architecture and Planning Departments which occupy the glazed projections so visible from the courtyard are, in fact, treated as open objects within the interior. The Galleries command multilevel space which is bordered with design studios and circulation balconies. These interior courts are not merely the foci of peripheral cellular space but they represent the external courtyard in a microcosm, serving as gathering spaces, and as memorable events in the course of a day.

The proposed solution would go a long way in exemplifying and strengthening the unique spirit found within the College of Architecture; a spirit which is largely due to an ineffable kinship reminiscent of life within a large family. The spirit is also one of learning and sharing experiences among friends. The new Architecture Hall would perpetuate that spirit; for in what better environment could one hope to examine architecture than one which begins to display its formative concepts and processes as a means for understanding experience itself?

critique

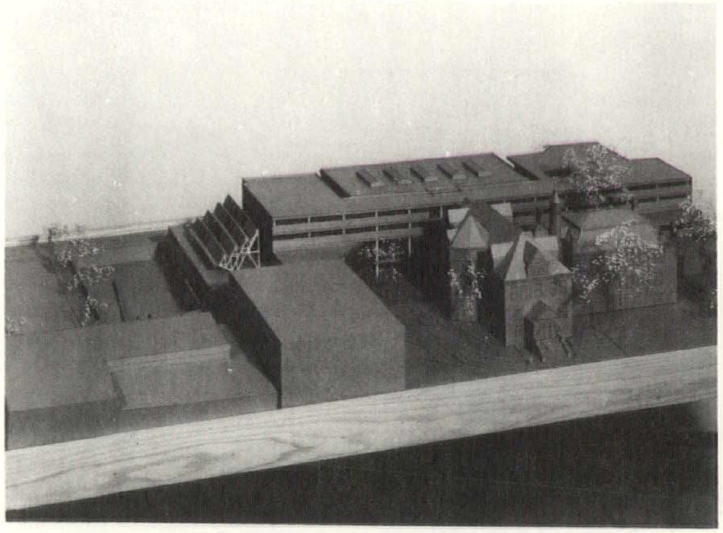
by Roger Nielson and Matt Metcalf

This design proposal requires a great deal of time and study to appreciate the subtle yet exciting spaces that exist within it, and it is possible that for this reason it was somewhat overlooked. Other solutions appeared to be much more formalistic and rigid by contrast, and as a result subordinated considerations for the convenience and enjoyment of the building's users in favor of formal preoccupations or individual design philosophies.

This scheme, on the other hand, is more keeping with the doctrine of "inclusivism" as espoused by Charles Moore, Robert Stern, and others, according to which a building should conform to people's needs and feelings and to environmental factors that impose outside constraints upon it. These latter constraints include such things as exterior circulation paths, contours of the existing site, and relations to existing buildings.

Accepting and reflecting such constraints as these, the first floor plan of this design is complicated and subdivided into six separate, yet connected nodes of activity tied together by exterior courts and malls. A clearly defined and regularly ordered plan does not exist on this ground level. The second floor, however, being somewhat more independent of these external constraints, is transformed into a more straightforward and clearly defined arrangement. The third and fourth levels are totally organized and ordered, as they are able to reflect the functions within the building without having to deal with outside constraints. The outside facade of the structure expresses this phenomenon of metamorphosis, lending clues to the functions within the building as well as the external forces acting upon it.

Concern for the movement and visual experience of the students between and through the complex of structures is one of the strong aspects of this solution. The space enclosed by the buildings on either

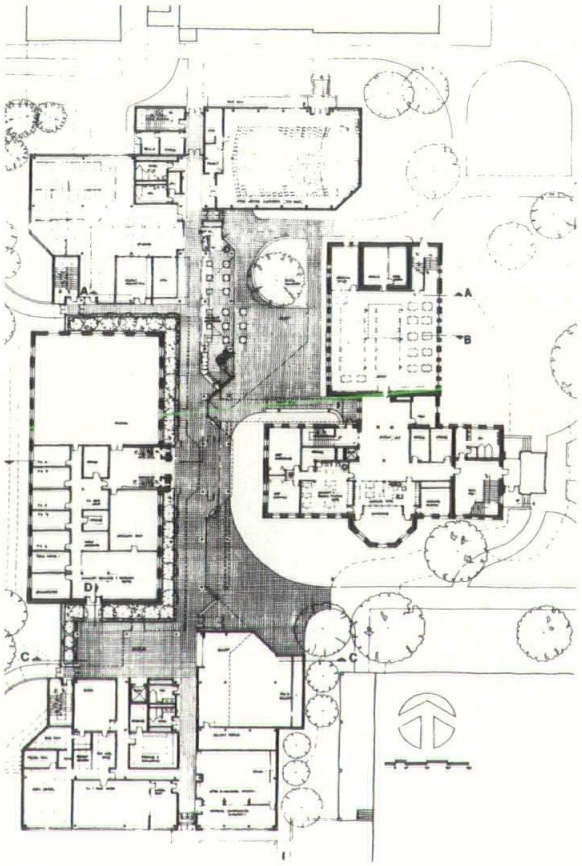


side is purely a student area, where one can enjoy talking, studying, or doing most anything. The sense of security and privacy in this court is very apparent, due to the attempt at surrounding the space on all sides. The designers have successfully created directional paths for pedestrian movement, and have accounted for entrance into this complex from virtually every direction.

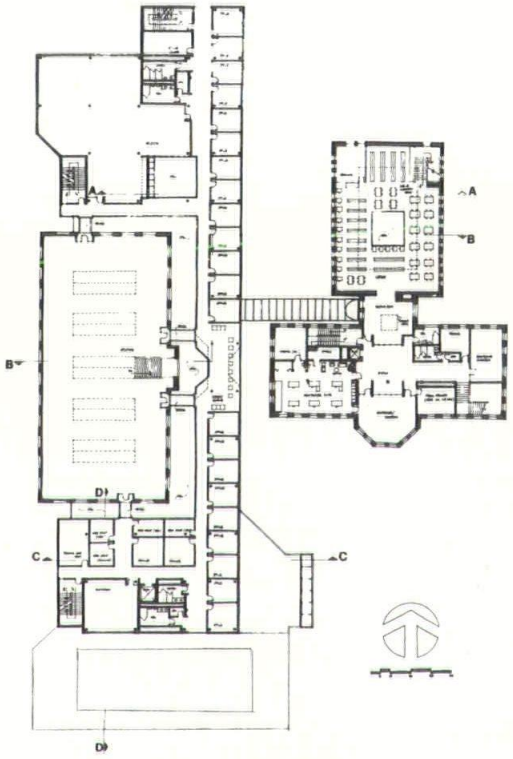
Two ceremonial entrances to the new structure exist on the west facade, flowing down to the sidewalk like small streams. A small break in the bank of the streams allows for a diversion of flow to the opposite direction. A conscious effort was made to relate this experience to that of the ceremonial entrance to UNL's stadium to the north of the Former Law Building. These entrances are emphasized by a combination of architectural elements such as cantilevered floors above, skylights to the sides, and a strong sense of penetration through the building. Other entrances into the courtyard area of the complex are very

directional and very pedestrian oriented, creating street-like effects. To aid the visual transition from unorganized open space at the northeast to a defined and organized court, the north wing of the new construction is set at an angle, defining the direction of flow.

The west facade of this design also manifests a strong consciousness of the Former Law Building, and attempts to emphasize its importance as a piece of the past, rather than trying to in any way to conceal or play with it. This emphasis might not have been achieved however, if the facade of the new construction had not been set back at the north and south ends of the Former Law



First level



Third level

Building. This detail in effect pulls the older building out from the grips of the new construction, leaving a "moat" around its entire perimeter. The form of the new construction thus appears to have been sensitively determined by its need to flow in and around the existing building as if in a gentle but respectful embrace. As a result of this low-key approach, these embracing segments of new construction on the north and south ends appear as separate entities added to each end, and do not have a strong unifying element to tie them together, other than the subtle inflection created by their symmetrical treatment.

It is easily seen that the architects of this solution have made an attempt to express interior function through architectural form. The ribbon windows correlate with the linear office space arrangements, while the large solid or void areas correspond to either study-classroom areas or casual open areas. The ribbon windows, particularly on the east elevation, make a strong horizontal statement which complements and balances the vertical stature and composition of Architecture Hall. This horizontal effect of the proposed structure adds, by a skillfully contrasting simplicity, an effective backdrop to the historical monument.

A thorough evaluation of this design must take into account the way the existing spaces within the Former Law Building have been handled. The exterior walls of the structure have been glorified by the concern for maintaining their original identity, yet the same concept has not been heeded for the interior spaces. This is of course largely due to the change in functions. For example, whereas the large lecture room on the main level of the Former Law Building is adequate for lectures, when this function is combined with the viewing of slides the sight angles are not satisfactory. On the other hand, the third floor (formerly the Law Library) has been redefined as design studios, a function which can take advantage of the original character of the space—with its openness and its high, classically-detailed ceiling. These studios have access from the new construction by way of bridges that have been placed across the "moat." These bridges allow the students to perceive the transition from new to old, as well as to view the classical facade of Former Law as a learning tool.

The degree to which the functional arrangements in this scheme are broken up and rather hard to read may be part of the reason that it did not win the competition. Finding one's way around this complex would not have been an easy task, in fact it might have bordered on confusion at various locations. Corners, ninety-degree turns, elevator placements, and divisions of rooms, all make the circulation and traffic patterns of this solution seem not only confusing but somewhat tiresome. A further simplification and refinement of the circulation arrangement of this otherwise very sensitive solution could have improved its readibility and might have thus enhanced its chance for a first place award.

The change in elevation between the floors from Architecture Hall to the Former Law Building made it very difficult to physically link the two structures without the use of an elaborate system of stairs. The choice of these architects, however, was to place a connecting skywalk between the throat area of Architecture Hall where the library wing is attached. This allows for a longer span thereby allowing a ramp system (a code requirement) instead of stairs. The connection was not made on the first level because of the desire to retain continuity of the outdoor student commons area, nor on the third level because of aesthetic considerations—the desire to make the connection as minimal as possible to the Richardsonian Architecture Hall.

It is evident that a conscious effort was made to group related functions in clusters rather than by a purely departmental arrangement. This intention, combined with a sensitivity to the influence of external constraints, required some compromises, and resulted in a rather polymorphic design. However, the spaces have the character and excitement that would be necessary for a college of architecture and the education of its students. Just as the physical building coexists with the exterior forces that help shape its form, this new College of Architecture design would have also been a communication link between the people of Nebraska and the architectural profession.

nebraska aia awards, 1976

INTRODUCTION

In mid-December the Nebraska Society of Architects design awards for 1976 were presented to the architects of six buildings. The award jury consisted of John Cunningham of Cunningham Architects, Minneapolis, Chairman; Dick Morrill of Ralph Rapson & Associates, Minneapolis; and James Nagle of Booth & Nagle Architects/Planners, Chicago.

Receiving merit awards were Davis, Clark & Associates of Lincoln for the Lincoln Air Terminal; Robert Findley and John Sinclair of Lincoln for the Findley-Sinclair duplex, Lincoln; Bahr, Vermeer & Haecker, Architects of Lincoln and Omaha for the A.V. Sorensen Library-Recreation Center, Omaha; and Neil Astle & Associates of Omaha for the John Moorehead residence, Falls City.

The jury also selected two buildings for honor awards, the highest citation. These two projects appear on the following pages.

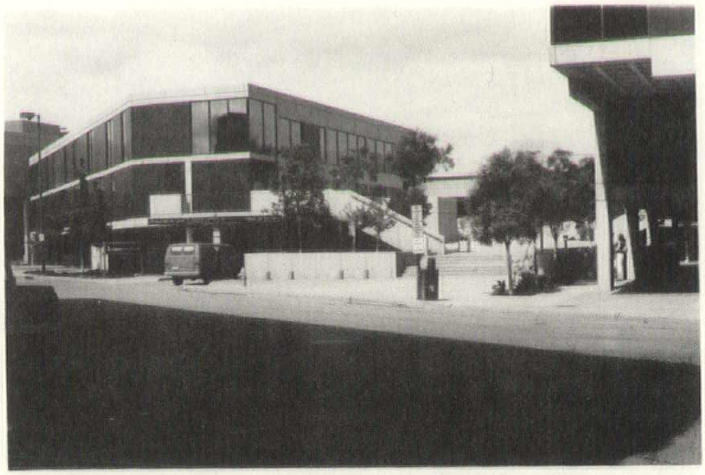
honor award

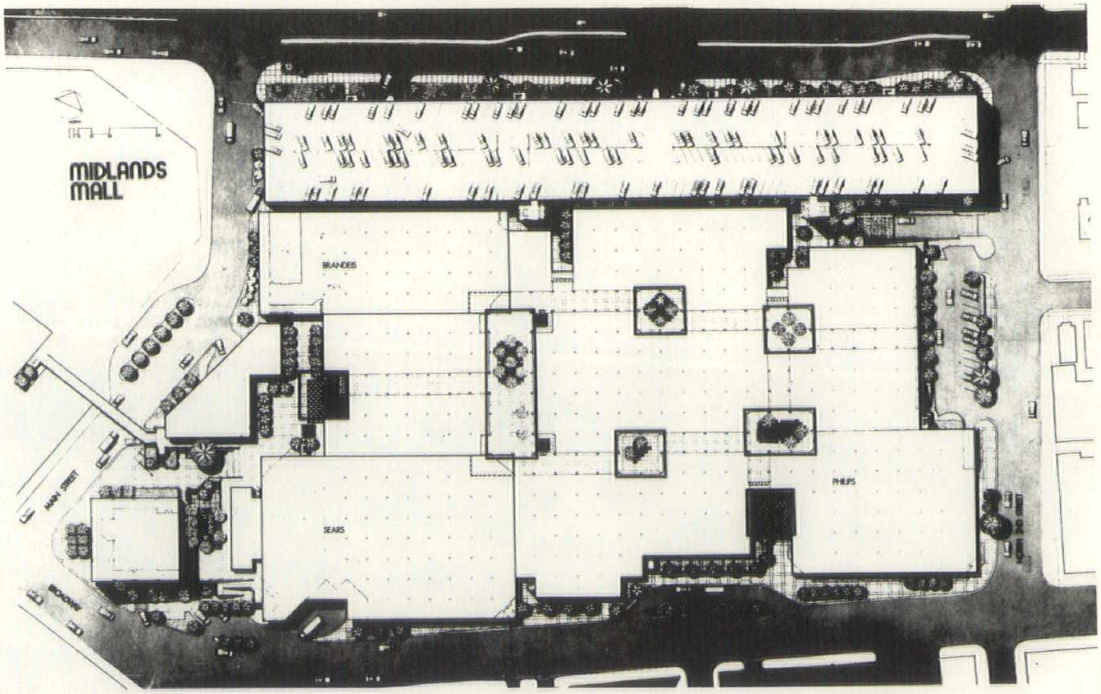
MIDLANDS MALL, COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA
NEIL ASTLE & ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS

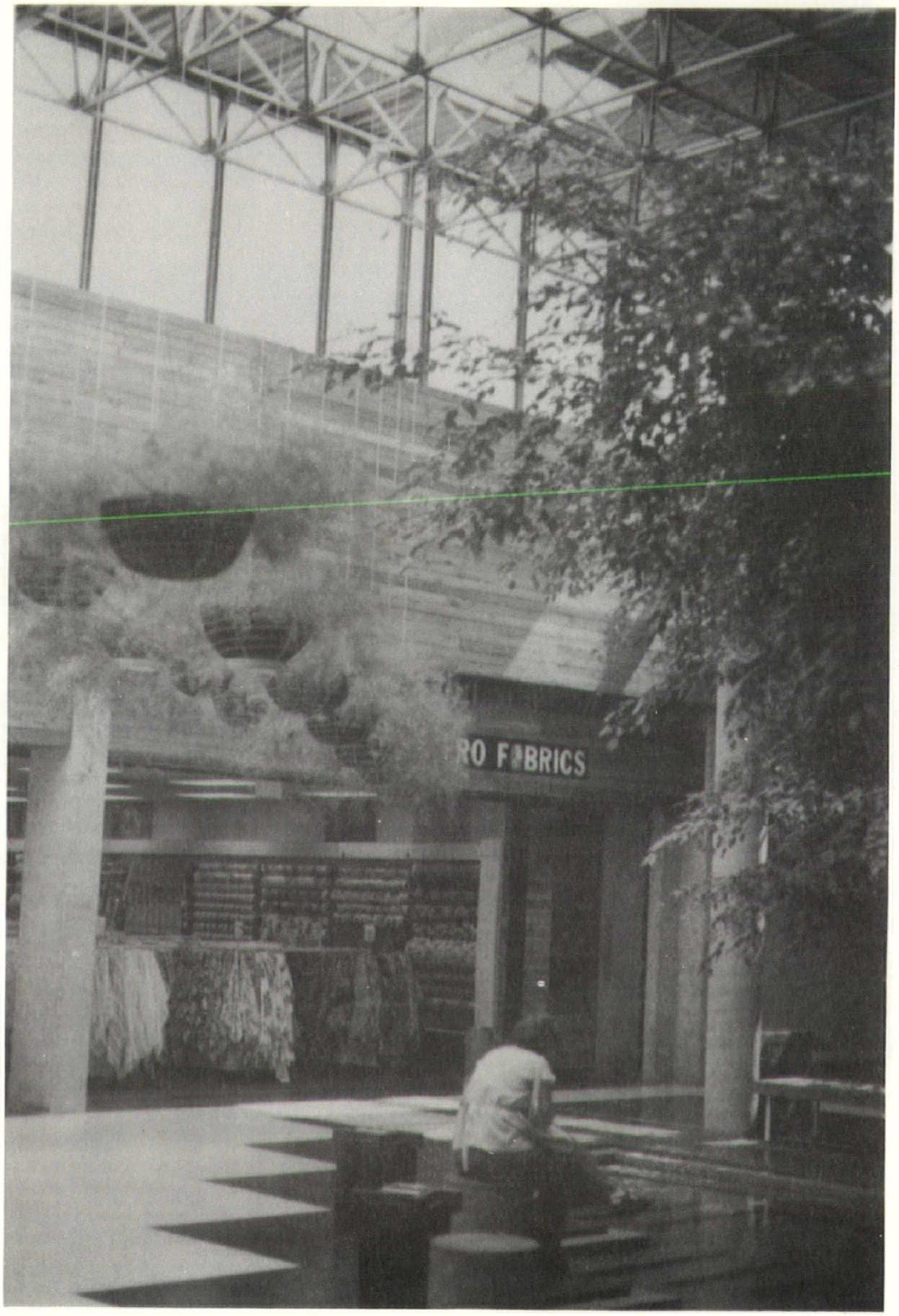
critique

by Matt Metcalf

Council Bluffs, Iowa, is but one of many American cities to experience "urban decay." A few years ago, concerned citizens initiated a program to revitalize their economically and visually depressed downtown business district. Aided by a grant from the Federal Urban Renewal Program, Dale Ball, president of the Midlands Corporation, undertook plans for a new urban shopping center which was to be located in the heart of the Central Business District. The resulting project contains an extensive multi-level parking facility accommodating 1200 cars with provision for future parking on the roof, 307,500 square feet of retail space, 50,000 square feet of office space, a four-plex theatre, and restaurant and food service facilities.

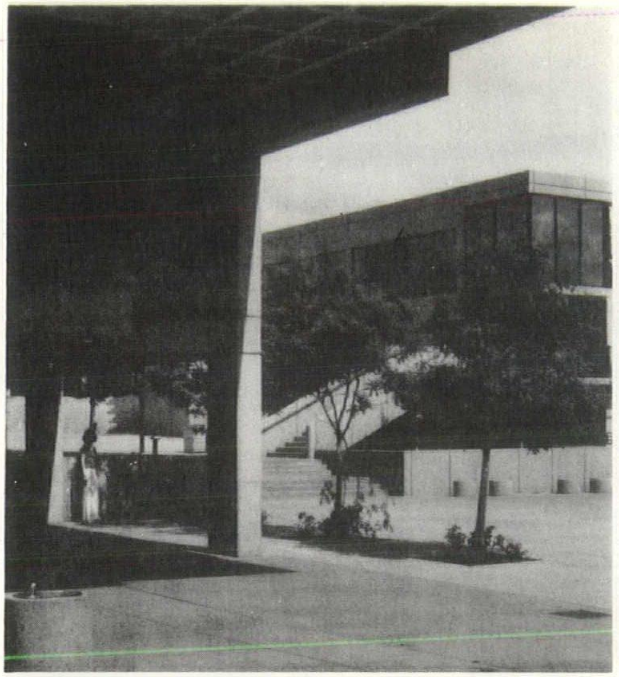


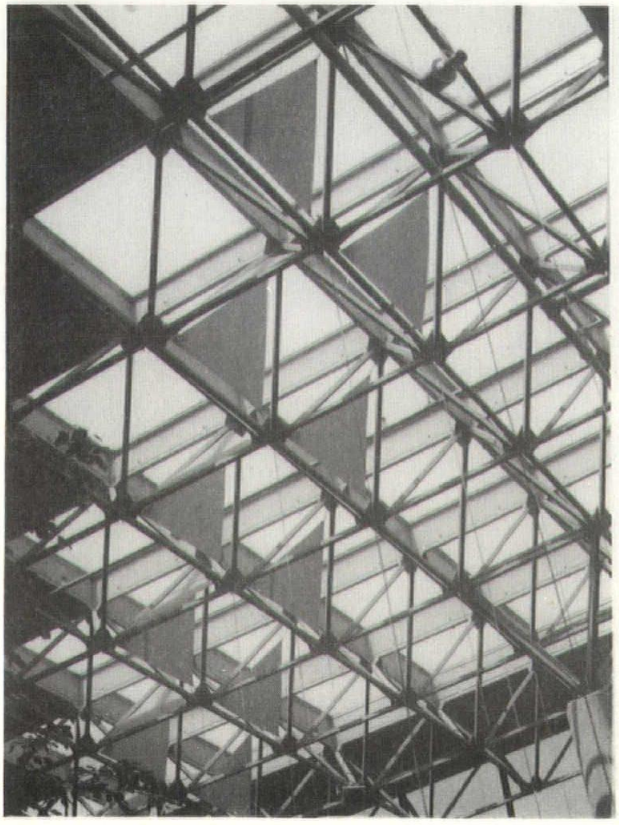



RO FABRICS

The design concept for the project acknowledges the essential economic parameters commonly associated with this business type, including the need for flexibility. What makes it noteworthy, however, is the unusual degree of attention focused upon much more subtle psychological and philosophical concerns. According to architect Neil Astle, "the mall should be a place where people go to feel comfortable." Accompanying this idea was his intention to utilize the mall as a backdrop for people and activities "emphasizing life within the shell and not the shell . . .itself." These are laudible objectives which too often succumb to economic constraints.

Midlands Mall is a project which illustrates that a sensitive and sincere concern for the customer does not have to be sacrificed in the process of turning a profit. The building when viewed from the exterior is basically opaque. The introverted appearance of the complex tends to suggest that the majority of shoppers in fact arrive by





automobile via the parking garage, from which they may proceed directly to the shopping precinct. This shopping area is bordered by three large department stores which act as the main drawing forces for the entire complex. The main pedestrian entrance is on the southwest corner of the site and faces onto one of the principal circulation nodes in the business district. A detached office building occupies a prominent position on this elongated corner and identifies the location of the main entrance.

Internally, an enclosed climate-controlled pedestrian mall loops around a centrally located cluster of shops and connects the parking garage, the entrances, and the major department stores. The mall is covered by a low ceiling and is rather dimly lighted, thus tending to direct the shopper's attention to the more brightly illuminated interiors of the stores. Spacious, colorful enclosed plazas of various sizes are located at comfortable intervals along the mall. Spanned by a metal space frame structure and generously illuminated by clerestory windows, each of these plazas has its own special character. They provide a sense of orientation as well as spaces for resting, visiting, playing, eating, or just watching other people. Throughout the mall the prevailing mood is informal and the comfortable human scale is enhanced by imaginative and intricate wood detailing, a variety of textures, and carefully harmonized colors.

Shopping at Midlands Mall has been elevated to a pleasant adventure and each visit can result in the discovery of some new feature of activity. This is a facility designed for people and it is destined to become a landmark in Council Bluffs.

honor award

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER
COLLEGE OF NURSING, OMAHA, NEBRASKA
DANA, LARSON, ROUBAL, & ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS

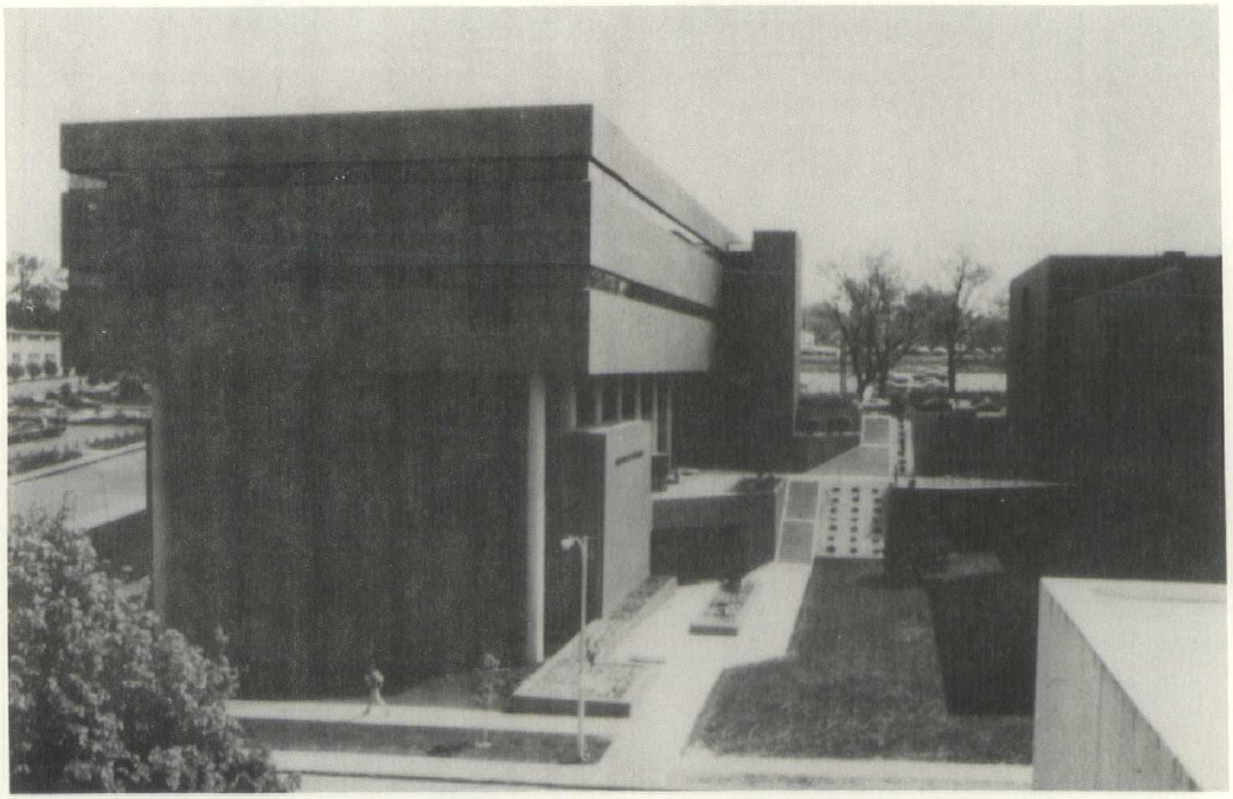
"place comes to omaha"

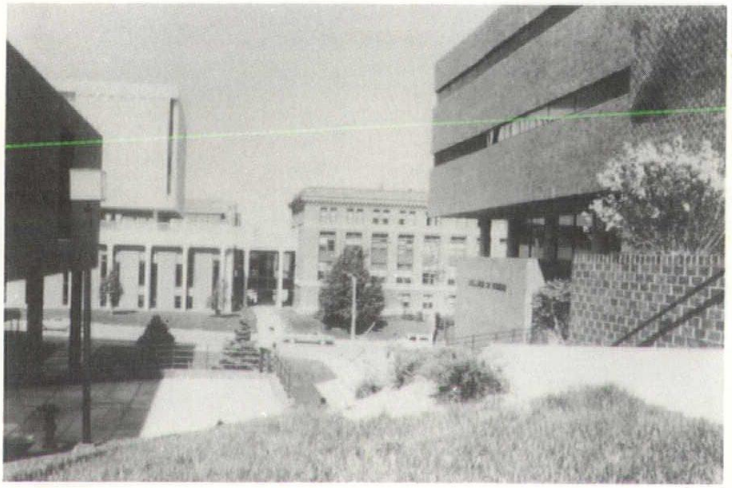
by Jay Perantoni

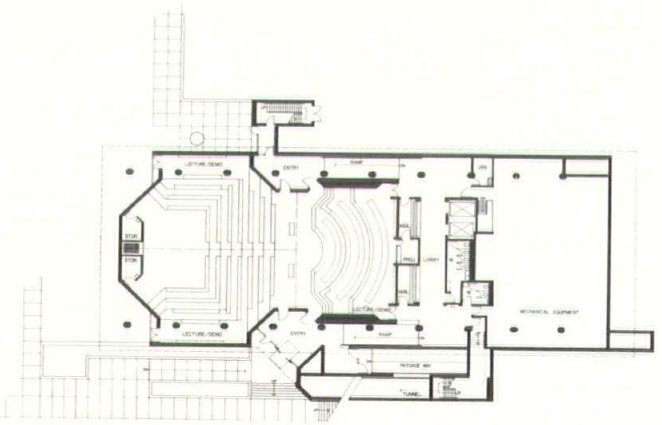
Until recently, motorists traveling along Omaha's 42nd Street were likely to have been bored with what they encountered of the built environment. Even passing next to the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the experience seemed to lack involvement, in spite of the pretentious monuments and frozen cliches visible from the street.

At nearly 400,000 people, the city has grown like a cancer; a victim of the suburban ideal, a majority of the land has succumbed to the single family cottage dream. This anything-but-intensive-use even dominated the UN Medical Center which had been lacking any superbly urban quality, but especially that of space sculpted by adjacent building; conceptually evident yet playfully revealed.

However, 1975 was a year of changes as the University established goals for the qualitative improvement of its physical environment. Spearheading the new upgrading and expansion program, the con-







FIRST LEVEL

struction of the College of Nursing almost single-handedly brought coherent urban space to the Medical Center campus and simultaneously strengthened the connotation of "place" within the community.

In its short history, the College of Nursing has become a visual landmark. Located adjacent to the University of Nebraska's Medical Center, the Nursing College is physically dwarfed by the health care facilities, but larger size and pretentious formalism don't always make good architecture. Rather the quality of the Nursing College's response to the street, to the Med Center and to its own external space is what generates the enthusiastic response, hence visual recognition within the community.

The siting of the College of Nursing on the east side of 42nd Street initiated a surge of campus expansion into virgin territory. This expansion has altered the experience of passers-by from a mere tangential relationship to a more sequential and impressionable experience. The sequence takes the form of a highly visible progression, as the heights of the Nursing College and subsequent buildings reflect the undulating character of the topography along 42nd Street.

The selection of a building site adjacent to the main body of the campus and yet detached from that body necessitated a means of establishing and communicating the link between campus and expansion. Within this realm, the Nursing College displays some of its strongest and most subtle attributes. For example, an abruptly raised front and the pregnant tension of the massing ready to leap across the road to the campus are obvious references to the link. Yet on a more subtle level, and in the best tradition of urban and college campus planning, the attempt to define a continuity was manifested in the creation of a coherent, imageable space.

The continuity, or perceived spatial flow, defined by the Nursing and Pharmacy buildings back to the campus is quite evident and sufficiently intriguing to be recognized by both pedestrians and motorists. The directionality of the adjoining buildings and the effect of a 30 foot slope rising across the site creates a dynamic three-sided enclosure; which is to say that if space were visualized as a viscous fluid, the contained space would literally flow back to the old campus. Indeed the exper-

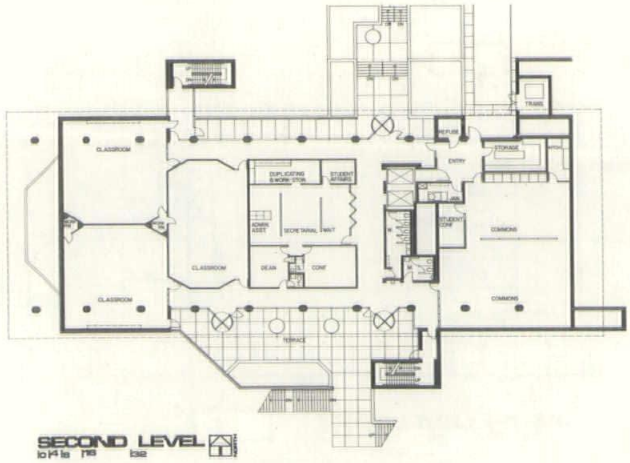
ience within that space is not far removed from the analogy. The only difference being that moving in the reverse or upstream direction, surprisingly little resistance is encountered; in fact it is noticeably easier to enter into such a well defined space—expecially when the space communicates such a significant linkage.

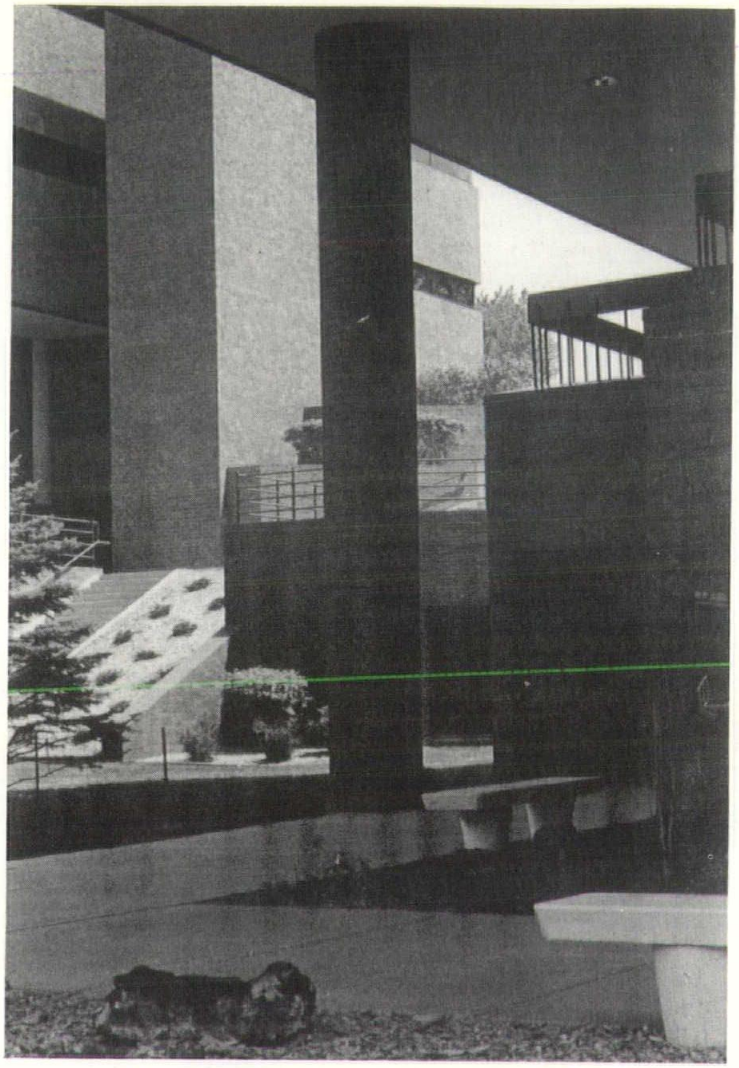
The image of the space owes as much to the continuity of its flow as to the complex character of the whole. Descending from university parking lots to the east, the constantly sloping hillside becomes the back of the spatial container. At the top, the path wanders almost whimsically around trees and planters. Then suddenly, a corner turned and the axis of flow is revealed; rushing downward in a monumental flight past several inroads to the Nursing College, beyond the lawn, the street, destined for the heart of the campus.

The awareness elicited by the users of the space is by no means neglected upon entering the College itself. The building displays more involvement with its exterior space than any of its neighbors on campus. Eighty thousand square feet of classroom and laboratory space is distributed over five levels, of which three are directly accessible from the courtyard. In a yin-yang relationship, both building and external space have affected each other. The lowest level contains the major lecture halls with a high turnover of use by nursing and other students, thus access occurs closest to 42nd Street. The next two levels house more sedate administrative and graduate program functions involving less traffic and locating respective access further up the hillside. The entrance and exiting events maintain an appropriate individuality relative to the quantity of users and the direction of flow. Furthermore, some of the interior is allowed to seep out of the courtyard, as in the case of the administration level. The emphasis and acknowledgment given to this level is manifested in a semi-formal plaza which bisects the external flow and states "enter here" in no uncertain terms to visitors.

The understanding or imageability of a building's interior is often dependent upon the user's recognition of his place in the cosmos if not simply within the building. As contact with the external world diminishes, the user must rely upon internal cues for monitoring location. The Nursing College is simply too big to orient all of its spaces around the courtyard so it attempts to convey the notion of "center" by means of the internal lounge cores adjacent to the elevator cores. This consistently treated commons not only serves a pragmatic use but psychologically extends the transition from arrival at a new level to working one's way back to the closed world behind doors. In spite of a lack of any metaphorical references between the lounges and the contained openness of the courtyard, the "central" lounges are sufficiently imageable to help guide most visitors. The concern for a "center" is almost too demanding to bring to bear on this building, as it is doubtful that the architects could have provided as much internal contact with the delightful courtyard as most users would have liked.

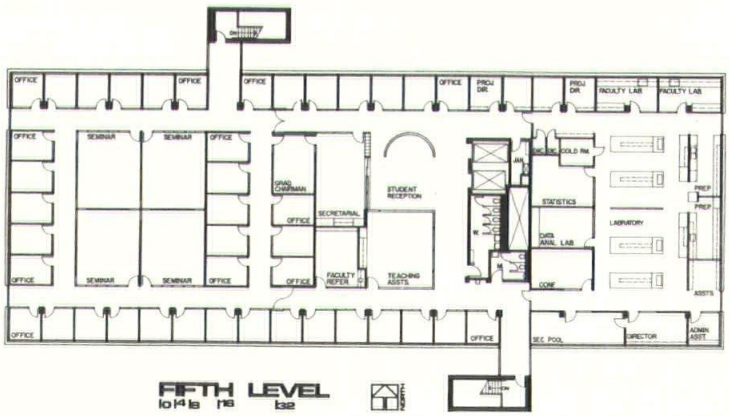
Nonetheless, the building does distinguish several ceremonial and leisure functions to be afforded a visual linkage with the courtyard. While the dining commons, study lounges and visitors reception are granted the pleasant tie, it's somewhat surprising that none of the aforementioned are treated as open spaces in their own right. They occur in a manner rather similar to the closed functions; a bit mysterious, and yet the implied similarity is troublesome. It is only after one becomes a frequent or full time user that the encounters with the courtyard from within become more numerous, perhaps occuring at patterned intervals, ritual-like, during the day. The building itself serves as a conscious screen to the courtyard, controlling when and where views are developed.





Such logic may seem to be firmly rooted in economic concerns and yet the experiential significance of this attitude is the intentional prevention of overexposure; as that which remains suggested or mysterious is often more compelling than explicit fact or overstatement.

Much of the College of Nursing is experienced in the light of tensions between economics, traditional construction, standard system components, logical organization, etc., and the sublime strength and beauty of the exterior space and its relationship back to the main campus. Perhaps the real success of the Nursing College is the manner in which the building contributes to the sense of place which has developed about the Medical Center. Seen from any approach, the building makes obvious references in color, materials, massing, and structure to fit within the established context. Yet in achieving the character of a landmark, the Nursing College relies upon subtle uniqueness which commands a timeless respect. As such, the College of Nursing has provided the University and the city a remarkable urban space and set a notable precedent. Place has come to Omaha.



nebraska aia awards, 1977

INTRODUCTION

The Nebraska Society of Architects design awards for 1977 were presented on November 19 in Lincoln. The 28 entries in the competition were judged by three Chicago architects: Harry Weese of Harry Weese & Associates, Chairman; Michael Lisec of Harry Weese & Associates; and Stuart Cohen, Contributing Editor to *Progressive Architecture.*

Honorable mention awards were presented to Davis/Fenton/Stange/Darling of Lincoln for the George Knight Fieldhouse, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln; to Daryl Klone of Lincoln for the community swimming pool, DeWitt; and to Dana Larson Roubal & Associates of Omaha for Regency Fashion Court, Omaha, and for the Central States Health and Life Company building, Omaha.

Honor awards, the highest citation, were presented to the architects of the four buildings which are briefly reviewed on the following pages.

honor award

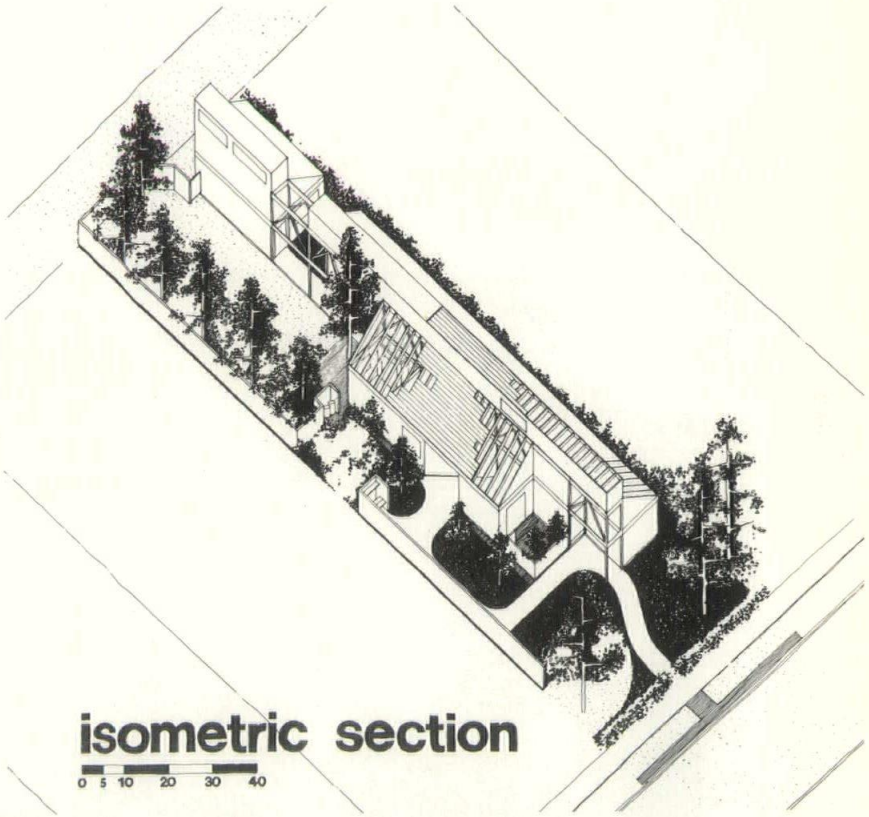
Robert Findley Residence, Lincoln, Nebraska
Robert Findley, Architect

by Roger Nielsen

Instead of a monetary return on an earlier investment, the architect/owner of this residence was left with 340 sixteen-foot two-by-tens. Converting this unusual circumstance into a design parameter, he designed and constructed a residence of outstanding merit utilizing the salvaged lumber.

The site selected for the building is long and narrow. Taking into consideration the shape of the site and the stockpile of lumber, the architect developed a solution based upon a linear arrangement of spaces arranged along a central spine which is oriented perpendicular to the street and extends virtually the full depth of the lot. This functional and structural spine is defined by a double row of columns spaced four feet, eight inches apart. Lateral stability is provided by diagonal struts. Typically, the columns are clearly exposed and partition walls have been detailed as screens placed within the post and beam structure. The two-by-tens were used as roof joists and also laid flat to form a roof deck. Exterior walls are of conventional residential construction. Although the building is long and narrow, the many voids within the skeletal structure, and the interior spaces with clerestory lighting combine to create an unusual sense of spaciousness.

The long, slender structure has been backed up to the building line on the north thereby creating a generous outdoor space along the protected south side which accommodates a patio, a garden, and an outdoor play area. The project displays a sensitive interaction of building with site, and careful attention to construction detailing and the quality of interior space. The solution admirably fulfills the architect's intentions and undeniably compounds his initial investment.



isometric section

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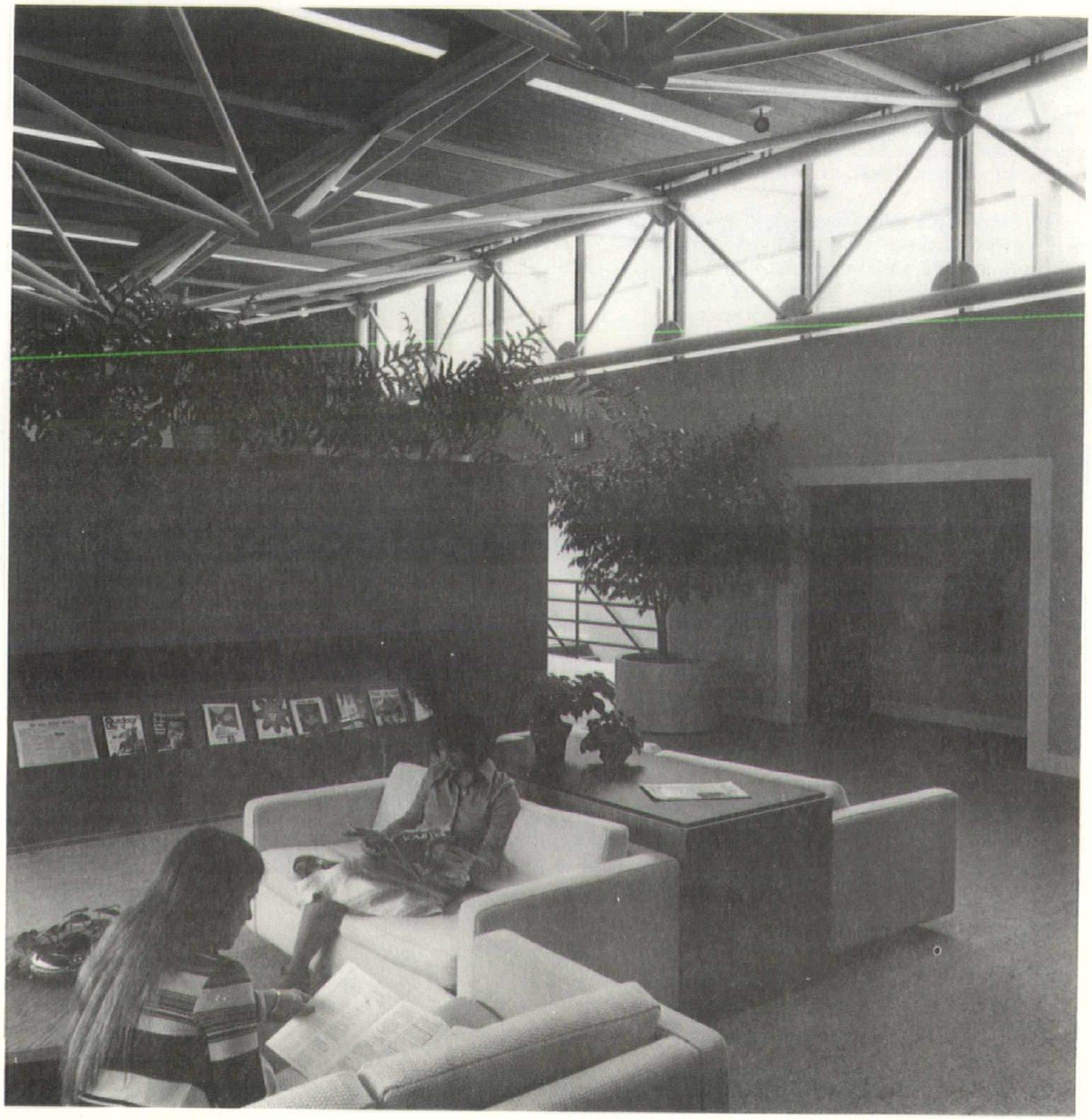


honor award

Nebraska Federal Savings & Loan, Lincoln, Nebraska
Bahr, Vermeer & Haecker, Architects

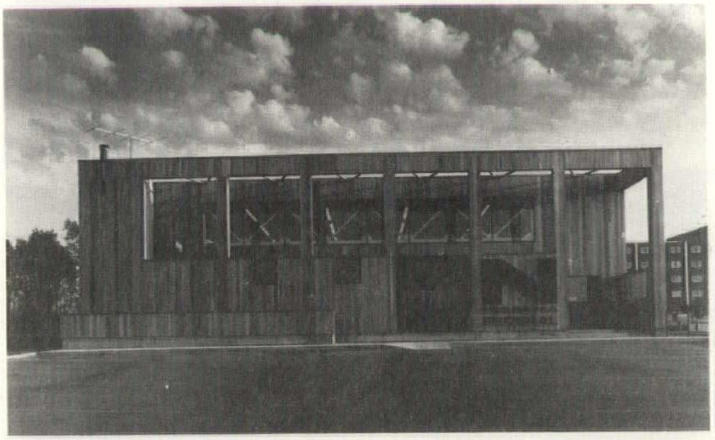
by Scott Schoener

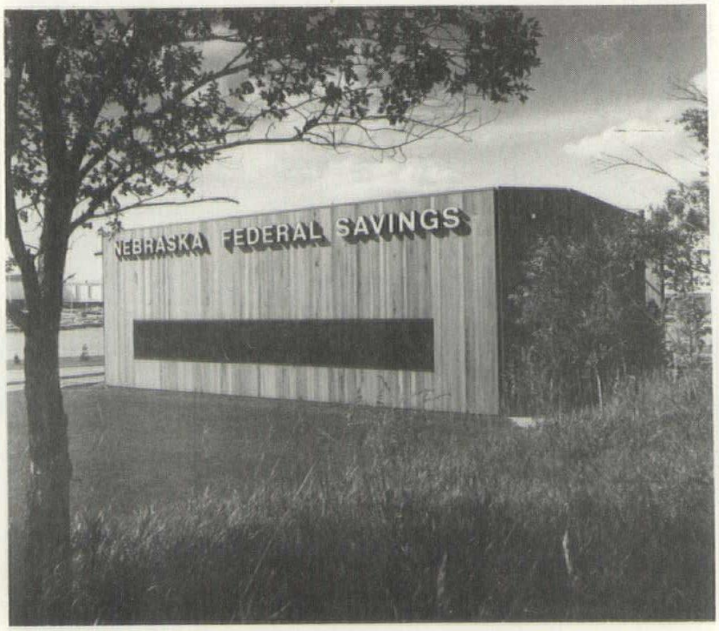
The AIA awards jury stressed simplicity as being a major characteristic of this branch savings and loan facility. However, an examination of several features of the building reveals intriguing complexities and contradictions. The building is somewhat isolated at the extreme southeast corner of a suburban shopping center and is bordered on the south by a busy arterial. Orienting this automobile-dependent facility toward the south might thus appear to have been the anticipated response to design guidelines which emphasized "visibility, identity, and invitation." Instead, the orientation tends to favor the north in both functional and symbolic terms.

When viewed from the street, the building appears to be a simple, largely opaque wood box enclosed by a bearing wall structure. Contrary to these expectations, the opposite side of the building reveals a steel skeletal structure, through considerable erosion of the surface of the box. Furthermore, whereas this building type typically makes strong symbolic gestures to the drive-in customer through the use of a prominent canopy sheltering the vehicular drive, this ubiquitous generic feature is conspicuously absent here. In contrast, the strongest sense of invitation is directed to the pedestrian customer approaching the "eroded" north side.

Inspection of the interior reveals more contradictions. For example, four steel columns are expressed as support for the steel pipe roof truss. Portions of the north and south walls have been recessed to expose these supports, thus implying that load bearing and non-load bearing elements have been articulated as such. However, the roof truss has been allowed to merge with the east and west walls in such a way as to obscure structural clarity.

A number of other details are used in such a manner that only close observation suggests their complexity. Thus, the overall appearance remains one of simplicity—a simplicity which states itself as being the major theme, yet is contradicted through what appears to be a series of mistakes.





honor award

Westroads Racquet Club, Omaha, Nebraska
Bahr, Vermeer & Haecker, Architects

by Roger Nielsen and Man Kay Yung

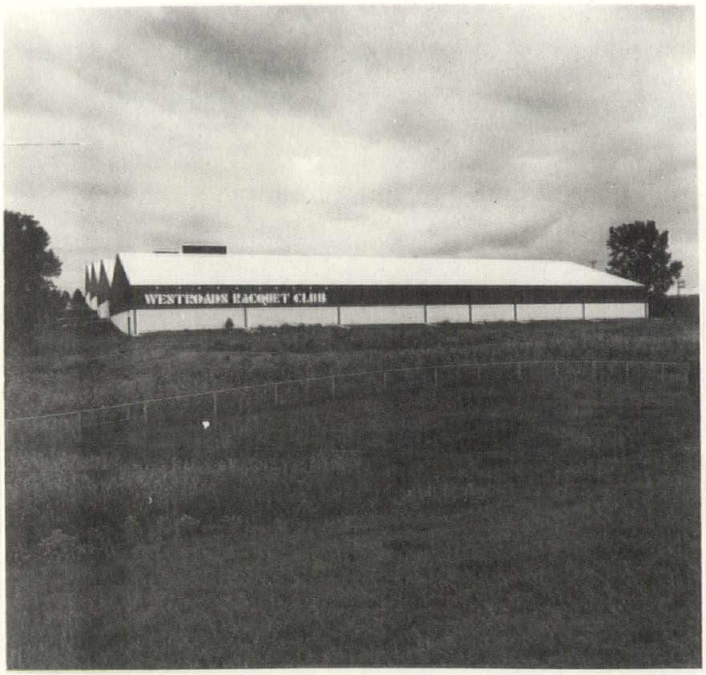
Imaginative and efficient utilization of the site is a praiseworthy feature of the Westroads Racquet Club. Typically a site possessing a substantial slope would pose a difficult and costly challenge in the design of a building such as this, which presumably would require a large flat site. This project demonstrates that the difficulties associated with this constraint can be successfully overcome and even turned into an advantage.

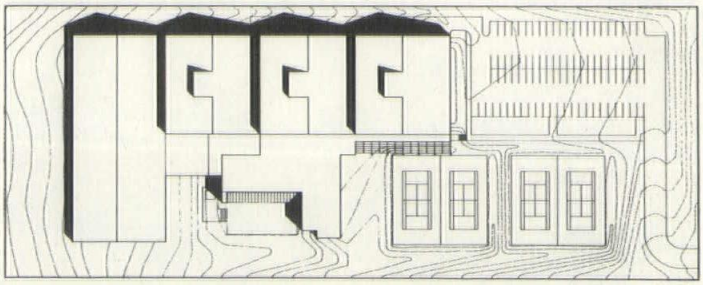
The original facility, consisting of six indoor tennis courts, three handball courts, a squash court, an enclosed swimming pool, and supporting facilities, is housed in three identical "off-the-shelf" metal buildings and a custom designed appendage of concrete block construction. Within less than a year of its completion a metal addition housing five more tennis courts was attached to the west end of the facility.

The building steps down the hill on four different levels. The natural slope of the land allows on-grade access from the east to a centrally-located mezzanine. A snack bar and lounge occupy the west end of the mezzanine, from which one has views overlooking the swimming pool and several of the tennis courts. Here the sloping site has been exploited to create an elevated observation area that becomes a major architectural feature of the complex.

The expansion to the west has not altered the compact radial organization of the original building. However, in contrast to the remarkably open plan and clear sense of orientation present in the original portion of the building, access to the addition is visually obscure and its location seems psychologically quite remote.

By turning economic and site constraints into advantages the architects have provided the club with a facility of unusually high quality.





honor award

BEMIS COMPANY, INC., OMAHA, NEBRASKA
BAHR, VERMEER & HAECKER, ARCHITECTS

by Nick Harm

It is difficult to say where a building succeeds as a work of architecture; novelty is hopefully not the only criterion. What sets an example of "architecture" apart from a structure that any contractor could provide? Assuming that a solution can meet pragmatic conditions of budget and space requirements, it would seem that we are left with "expression" to differentiate architecture from simple "construction."

In the Bemis building, expression occurs in a contradictory manner. The structural system bridges the partition between warehouse-manufacturing and office. The implied metaphor is management flowing freely between the office and the manufacturing area. The metaphor is highlighted by transparency at a clerestory height and also by a significant gesture of physical transition made with a projected, glass encased stair. However, a contradiction occurs at the same point in the building, in that there is a significant shift in floor height between warehouse-manufacturing and the office space, and the chromatic treatment of mechanical systems stops at the office edge. The implications of this statement-denial situation enhance the expressive meaning of the building, and thus aid in the user's dialog with it.

The exterior image of the Bemis building contains a similar contradiction. The light monitors of the manufacturing area are continued in saw-tooth fashion over the office, extending below the parapet only at the office. Here again there is a continuation of form accompanied by a subtle contradiction. Through the designer's skill, dimensional meaning was added to what might otherwise have been another contractor building. Expression contributes to the vitality of the Bemis building.

THE COMMUNICATIVE POTENTIAL OF mental maps IN NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PLANNING 1

by Gordon Scholz

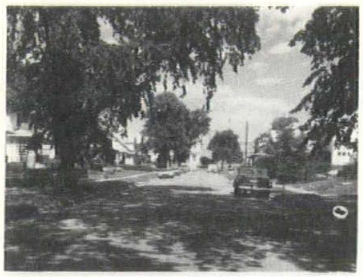


Figure 1—Street west of school along which students A through E live; looking east toward school.

Figure 2—Street east of school along which students H through L live; looking north.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of "neighborhood" is important to planners and architects. The socio-spatial structuring of neighborhoods has been a subject of study and the basis for programs and projects at least since Robert E. Park and E. W. Burgess stressed the significance of neighborhood physical qualities in the early 1900's and Clarence Perry introduced the neighborhood unit idea in the 1929 publication of *The Regional Plan for New York and Its Environs.*

The critical relationship between physical and social aspects of the residential environment is stressed by anthropologist Margaret Mead, who suggests that well-planned neighborhoods can positively impact the development of human potentialities of residents, particularly children, living in those areas:

> In building a neighborhood that meets human needs, we start with the needs of infants. These give us the groundwork on which we can build for contact with the physical environment, with the living world, and with the experiences through which the individual's full humanity can be realized . . .We cannot set our sights too low, but we can aim at any height, for we have as yet scarcely begun to explore human potentialities. How these are developed will depend on the learning experiences we can provide for children through the human habitat in which they live.2

Planners and architects today are experiencing, as well as guiding, a resurgence of attention to problems of neighborhoods, particularly in older urban areas, where recent public policies and programs have been directed with the intent of making the best use of housing and neighborhoods where people already live. For example, the Community Development Block Grant Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, has been designed to encourage neighborhood preservation and housing rehabilitation as one means of providing livable, affordable, housing for Americans.

What steps can architects and planners take to effectively assure the success of these neighborhood preservation and housing rehabilitation projects? Experience has taught us that often there is a communication gap between planners/architects and the people most affected by a plan or project proposal, with the result that projects and programs can create worse problems than they were designed to solve. One implicit lesson in these experiences is the need to elicit the attitudes, perceptions, and priorities of those persons who will be most affected by a planning or design situation. This is a perpetual challenge for planners and architects who deal with multiple-client neighborhood preservation projects.

The problem of communication in neighborhood preservation planning/design situations, coupled with the special significance of the neighborhood environment for children, present a broadly defined challenge, which is addressed in this paper by examining some architectural and planning implications of the spatial conceptions of "neighborhood" held by children in an older urban area of Lincoln, Nebraska. The basic premise is that if it is possible to understand how children (or other residents) perceive their residential physical environment, then it is also possible to identify and, through planning and design process, to preserve or enhance the components which they most clearly value.

MENTAL IMAGE

In general, we can assume the behavior of individuals in any environment is depen-

dent in part upon their mental images of the space and upon the relationship of these images to the activities conceived in and anticipated for that space. Kevin Lynch, in his seminal *The Image of the City*, also points out the less obvious importance of a clear mental environmental image. He says it "plays a social role as well. It can furnish the raw materials for the symbols and collective memories of group communication . . .(and) gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security."3

Mental images of the environment are personal – defined by the values, life experiences, and assumptions of individuals. Although these images are unique among individuals, we also know that many people are aware of the existence of the same things. Knowledge of such shared perceptions, as Lynch suggests, can lead to strengthened individual and group social well-being. Presumably, planning and design for neighborhood preservation could be improved by identifying not only the environmental features known by many individuals, but also the meanings that have been attached to them. It is necessary, therefore, to employ satisfactory methodologies for extracting this information.

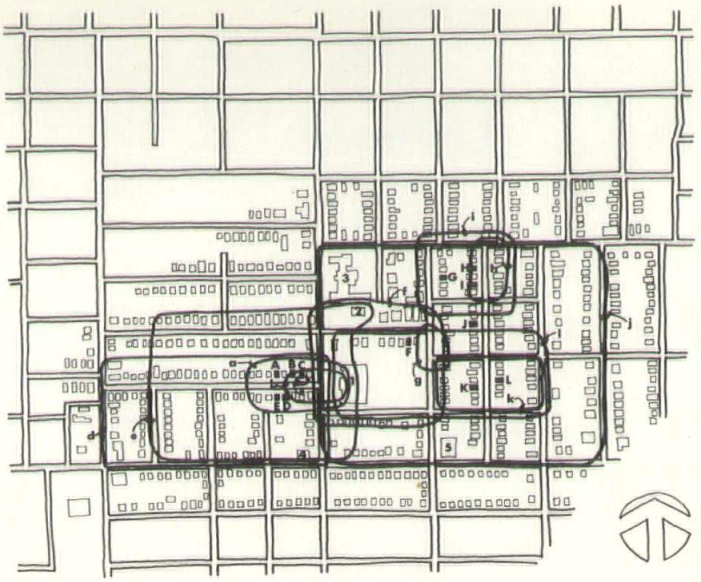


Figure 3—Mental map boundaries. Blackened building indications and adjacent capital letters designate residences of student participants. Lower case refer to neighborhood boundaries, shown by continuous bold lines, of respective letter-designated students. Numbers refer to actual locations of "landmark" structures: (1) School; (2) Shingle Style House; (3) Nursing Home; (4) Synagogue; (5) Church.

MENTAL MAPS

There is no way to directly observe such internal mental images, but a commonly used method of deducing certain properties of them has been the analysis of some form of external representation, such as a sketch map or verbal description.4 In mental mapping research, individuals are asked to draw a sketch map of a place that has been minimally defined by the researcher.

In addition to the recall abilities of an individual, the process of conveying mental images by means of two-dimensional map representations (drawings) requires at least three distinct mental and manual skills from the mapper: (1) reducing the scale of the perceptions; (2) rotating the viewing perspective from horizontal to vertical; and (3) abstracting one's three-dimensional polychromatic perceptions of the real world to the two-dimensional monochromatic semi-iconic signs and symbols of the drawing.5

The sequence, time, sophistication, and rate of development of these skills varies from person to person, thus making the interpretation and comparative evaluation of

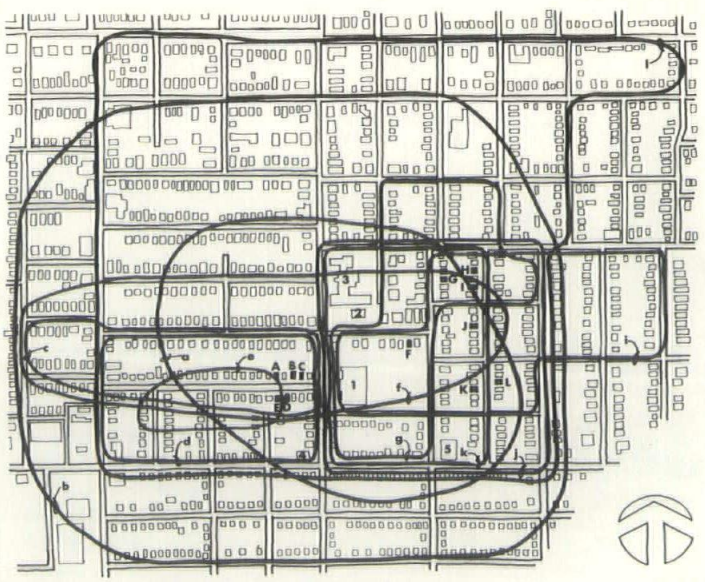


Figure 4—Structure map boundaries for second exercise. Symbols are the same as for Figure 3.

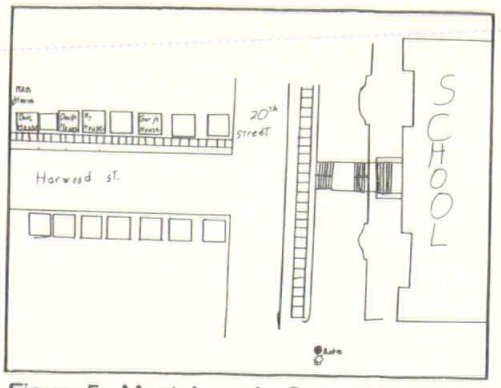


Figure 5—Mental map by Student A.

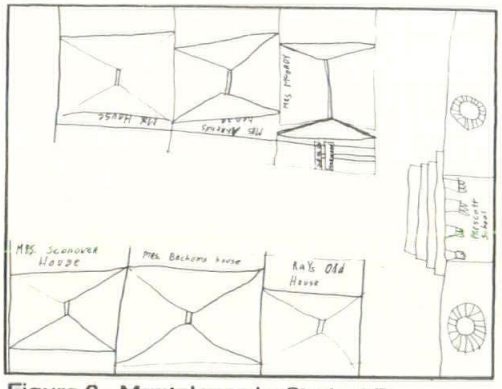


Figure 6—Mental map by Student B.

mental maps, even if assembled on the basis of other definable, consistent, criteria, a difficult methodological problem. Arguing that drawing abilities tend to lag behind mental image development, Hart and Moore 6, in fact, have warned against using children's drawings as a research tool for measuring environmental cognition. Perhaps this is less of a problem with adults; however, investigation and resolution of these issues in cognitive development is beyond the scope of this paper.

Milgram recognizes that the mapper may not be able to draw very well, that errors in the early stages of drawing the map may lead to distorted or complicated results and that certain mental images may be difficult to transfer to paper. "But still, the sketch is an opening into his conception of the city."7

Because complicated sets of variables influence the results of mental mapping exercises, perhaps the most meaningful interpretation of such maps for purposes of neighborhood planning and design involves analysis of the items indicated most frequently by the participating mappers. Generally, it is concluded that what is not pointed out or shown is of relative insignificance to the individual subject and therefore does not warrant inclusion on his or her map representation. The types of things included or omitted from the maps thus communicate the major components of shared perceptions by residents of their neighborhood environment.

This method elicits perceptions of an existing situation. Implications for planning and designing future environmental change must be inferred. This is clearly a less direct method of involving neighborhood residents than would be some form of active participation in the planning and design of neighborhood spaces; however, the technique in no way precludes the additional use of more direct participatory planning and design methods. A mental mapping exercise for residents in the early stages of neighborhood planning and design might help reveal important subconscious or subjective values which otherwise might not be expressed.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

In the research reported here, approximately 150 fifth and sixth grade students, ages 10 through 12, in a public school located in the Near South Neighborhood of Lincoln, Nebraska, participated in a three-part exercise series conducted in classroom settings. Only part of the student participants in the project lived within the Near South, a 200-block "neighborhood" directly south of the central business district, with boundaries that had been defined by community leaders and city officials for political and administrative purposes.

With minimal introduction to the project, the students were each provided with a piece of 17"×22" drawing paper and a No. 2 pencil. They were asked to

> ". . .draw a quick sketch of your neighborhood, showing what you consider to be the most interesting and important features. Make it just as if you were making a rapid description of your neighborhood to a stranger covering all the main features . . ."8

This was followed by a structured mapping exercise, for which each student was given a 24"×36" blue line print of Lincoln showing all streets schematically as single lines, along with street names; no landmarks were shown, with the exception of a

Figure 7—Front view of school building.

dot positioned at the location of the students' school. Provided with a red pencil, the students were asked to mark the locations of a series of items, beginning with an "X" on the block where they live; then a line tracing their usual path to school; and "a line around the part of the city which you think of as your neighborhood."9 The students were then asked to locate, by sequential numbers, six prescribed landmarks or areas of city-wide significance, followed by three indications of family shopping locations.

The third and final exercise in the project was a questionnaire consisting of a series of 34 semantic differentials, with which the students were asked to describe their neighborhood. Also included were questions describing the respondents.

RESULTS

This paper considers only the mapping responses of 12 students from the overall project described above, who live within the administratively defined Near South Neighborhood, within close proximity to one another and within the immediate vicinity of their school building. By comparing perceptions of children who share essentially the same neighborhood living environment, analytical attention is given to the perceived extent of neighborhood and to the significance of local landmarks – particularly the school building, which has traditional theoretical basis as a key neighborhood component.

Figure 1 is a view on the street west of the school, looking east toward the school building. Five of the students (A through E in Figures 3 and 4) live along this street. Figure 2 is looking north on the street east of the school along which students H through L live.

A composite indication of neighborhood geographic extent for the mental maps of all 12 children is provided in Figure 3. Results from the second exercise, neighborhood indications on the printed maps, are shown in Figure 4. Seven of the 12 mental maps also are reproduced in this paper.10

The results show that there is a considerable variation in the geographic extent and image content of neighborhoods perceived among the 12 students. Areas marked as neighborhoods on the street base map (Figure 4) tend to be considerably larger than those drawn in the sketch maps (Figure 3). None of the perceived neighborhoods is as large as the 200-block officially-designated Near South Neighborhood. The largest mental image of neighborhood in the first exercise is the 13-block area mapped by Student J (Figures 3 and 13), the only one of the 12 students who also marks the same area on the street map in the second exercise (Figure 4). The mental image of smallest geographic scope is by Student C, who uses the entire drawing paper to sketch the front elevation view of her house. Most neighborhood areas are quite small, often including no more than the street on which the student lives, e.g., Figures 5 and 6.

In all of the mental maps, the southern neighborhood boundary never extends beyond the east-west arterial street one block south of the school. This is also the southern boundary of the officially defined Near South Neighborhood. Only Students A and B extend their neighborhood boundaries beyond this street in the second exercise (Figure 4). Thus, the perception of heavily traveled major streets as neighborhood edges is evident in these maps.

Figure 8—Northeast playground entrance and rear view of school building.

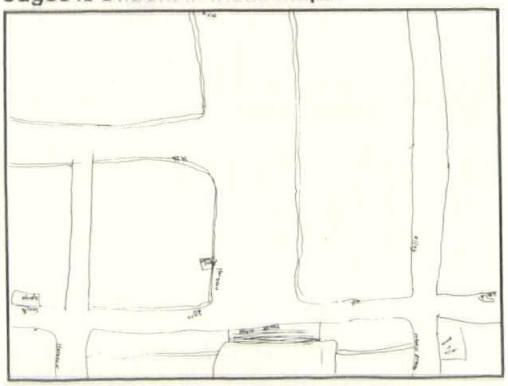


Figure 9–Mental map by Student E.

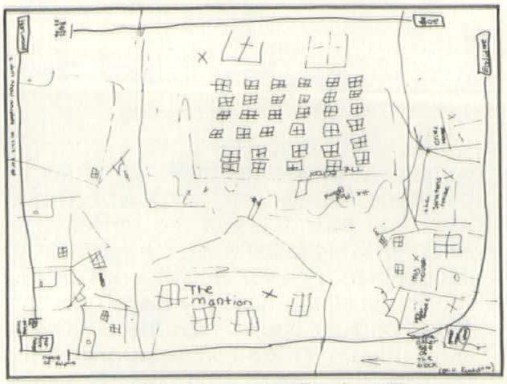


Figure 10–Mental map by Student F.

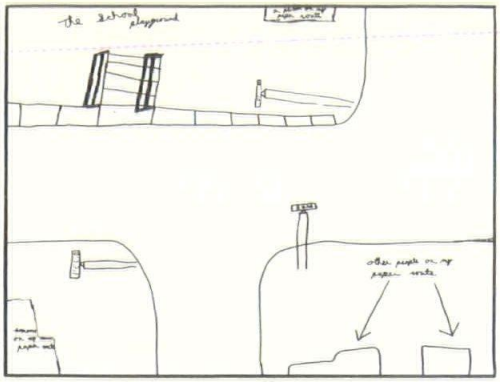


Figure 12—Mental map by Student G.

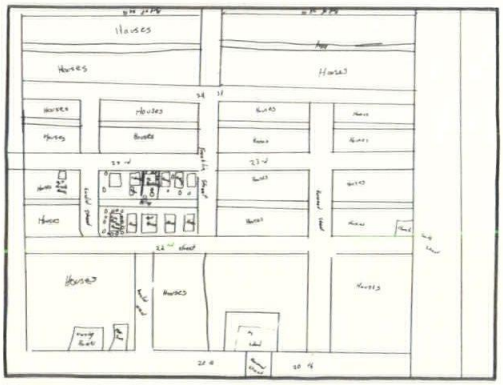


Figure 13—Mental map by Student J.

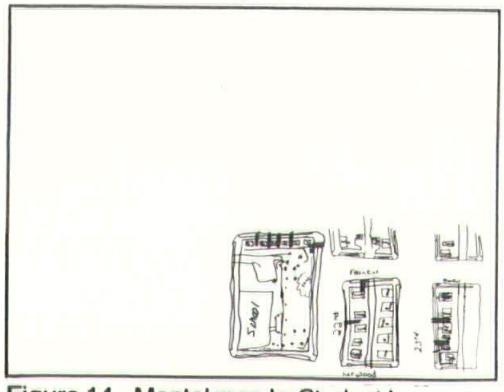


Figure 14—Mental map by Student L.

The west (front) side of the school is a commonly designated boundary of neighborhoods for students living on both the west and east sides of the school. For students living to the west, the symmetrical Jacobethan Revival front facade of the school building, the entry steps, and terraced podium upon which the building is sited (Figure 7) are conveyed graphically (Figures 5, 6 and 9) as a rigid and formal edge or enfrontment, suggesting that this side of the school site tends to terminate the life, activity, and sense of neighborhood place for these students. The higher volume of automobile traffic carried by the street west of the school also may contribute to this perception.

Students living to the east of the school are more likely to include the school playground, as well as less formal images of the entire school building, in their maps (Figures 13 and 14). Student F, who lives on the same block as the school, focuses her mental map (Figure 10) on the school block and portrays the school building as an anonymous array of mullioned windows. The graphic representation of her surrounding neighborhood is less clearly structured and bounded than the maps of the other students.

In another example, Student G (Figure 12) gives major emphasis to the northeast playground entrance stair (compare with Figure 8) in a very confined neighborhood area, which even excludes reference to his own house.

Most of the twelve mental maps studied here refer to one or more of the five "landmark" buildings indicated in Figures 3 and 4. For example, the "synagod" is labeled in Figure 9; the "church" and "nersing home" in Figure 13. Perhaps most interestingly, there is significant mention of a privately-owned shingle style house (Figure 11) located north of the school, identified variously on the maps as the "castle or mason," "the mantion," and "mansion" (Figures 9, 10, & 13).

A neighborhood preservation planning process which takes account of the mental images of boundary revealed here and which also actively involves residents in planning and design decisions, presumably would produce legitimate proposals which intentionally either reinforce or diminish existing attitudes about the extent and quality of neighborhoods.

The mental maps studied here begin to convey some general similarities, as well as differences, among children's perceptions of how the nearby school, playground, and other major and minor environmental characteristics relate to their respective mental images of neighborhood. Further study of such images and their relationship to neighborhood conservation and preservation objectives would begin to suggest appropriate design alternatives to planners and architects.

Figure 11—Front view of Shingle Style House north of school building.

CONCLUSION

People's needs and desires with regard to the environment can be better understood if it is possible to learn how they conceive of it. Mapping techniques such as the one described here provide some insight into individuals' mental images of their environment.

In the preservation and conservation of older urban neighborhoods, it may be constructive to project the positively valued components of mental images, revealed through mental maps, in the renewed neighborhoods. Perhaps, then, built environments will communicate much more a sense of place and, as Lynch suggests, thereby contribute to the social well being of residents.

Regarding the importance of neighborhood environments to the physical, psychological, and social development of children, if we view "environmental education . . . as experiential learning, it is clear that young children would benefit most from a range of types of experience with their environment . . . "11 The preservation of positive, stimulating, environmental influences to enhance this purpose is critical, and mental mapping is one method by which planners and architects can begin to identify the valued components of neighborhood environments, not only for children, but for all types of residents.

However, mental mapping is not a panacea for meeting the challenge posed in this paper. Large scale use of the technique is costly and analytically difficult. As this paper has pointed out, there are methodological problems with the technique, one of which is accurate interpretation of the results. Nevertheless, effective communication among all participants in the environmental design process, even through such indirect means as mental maps, is crucial. Perhaps the time has come to seriously consider the idea of developing and teaching a mapping language which provides the means for giving the reader a clearer understanding of the writer's intentions, 12 and which thereby optimizes this potentially expansive and expressive mode of communicaton.

FOOTNOTES

1The research here is part of a project on neighborhood conservation administered by the College of Architecture, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., a Federal agency. Assistance with the field work described here was provided by Mark Hill, Dave Irvin, and Jody Joseph, graduate student research assistants in the College of Architecture. Appreciation is extended to the Lincoln Public School System for cooperation in this project.

2Margaret Mead, "Neighborhoods and Human Needs," *EKISTICS* 21, (February 1966): p.126.

3Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1960), p. 4.

4Gary T. Moore, "Developmental Differences in Environmental Cognition," in *Environmental Design Research; Volume II: Symposia and Workshops,* ed. Wolfgang F. E. Preiser (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., 1973), p. 234.

5David Stea, "Program Notes on a Spatial Fugue," in *Environmental Knowing: Theories, Research and Methods,* ed. Gary T. Moore and Reginald G. Golledge (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., 1976), p. 112.

6Roger A. Hart and Garty T. Moore, "The Development of Spatial Cognition: A Review," in *Image and Environment: Cognitive Mapping and Spatial Behavior,* ed. Roger M. Downs and David Stea (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Col, 1973), pp. 246-288.

7Stanley Milgram, "Psychological Maps of Paris," in *Environmental Psychology: People and Their Physical Settings,* 2nd ed., ed. Harold M. Proschansky, William H. Ittelson, and Leanne G. Rivlin (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), p. 108.

8From project procedural narrative.

9From project procedural narrative.

10The map reproductions are proportional reductions of the full 17"x22" drawing sheets used for the exercise. Indications on these maps have been enhanced with ink to improve reproduction quality at the reduced scale.

11Frank R. Klett and David Alpaugh, "Environmental Learning and Large-Scale Environments," in *Environmental Knowing: Theories, Research, and Methods,* ed. Gary T. Moore and Reginald G. Golledge (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., 1976), p. 130.

12Denis Wood and Robert Beck, "Talking With Environmental A, An Experimental Mapping Language," in *Environmental Knowing: Theories, Research, and Methods,* ed. Gary T. Moore and Reginald G. Golledge (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson, and Ross, Inc., 1976), pp. 351-361.

two architects

By Jay Perantoni

The practice of architecture encompasses a wide range of concerns which are often not apparent in the finished building. Whether one dismisses those concerns as victims of the building realization process or acknowledges their continuous though somewhat obscured existence, architecture is seldom understood solely in terms of the architect's design process, generative concerns or ultimate messages embodied in the final product.

This article initiates an exploration into one of those concerns as it is viewed relative to the work of two architects. In recognizing architectural signification as a mark of intention to communicate through the use of signs, one must be willing to view architecture as a language of built forms—a language composed of a vocabulary of parts selected by the architect and manipulated into the final form by means of a coherent system. In order to facilitate communication, the creation of architecture may not be left to chance. Furthermore, some qualitative difference must exist between the various parts utilized or the manner in which those parts are disposed. This allows distinct hierarchies of impressions to form by breaking down the homogenous into perceivable 'here or there' spaces.

In order to analyze the architectural signification of a design, it is necessary to investigate the prevalent architectural theories viewed within a cultural context. An equally valid means is to examine the writings and works of a single practicing architect. In either case, the attempt is to reveal or at least speculate upon formative design considerations.

The works of two architects designing buildings during radically different eras are presented. The villa designs of Andrea Palladio, whose work during the Cinquecento period of the Italian Renaissance was strongly rooted in the culture of his day, will be juxtaposed against the published house designs of Peter Eisenman, a polemical architect of the 1970's, whose work attempts to be removed from any cultural influence or interpretation. Eisenman's work explicitly reveals an architectural concern with formal process, whereas the implicit manifestations of design process in Palladio's work are removed from initial recognition and thus difficult to comprehend. Nonetheless, the work of both architects provides an interesting opportunity to examine communication within architecture.

From their writings or public lectures it may be assumed that both Palladio and Eisenman attempted to communicate through architecture. Since neither architect approached design as a random or purely functional series of events it is fortunate that both architects sought to demonstrate their means or system of design within actual projects. This common ground, facilitating communcation, is recognized as the syntactical dimension of architecture. However, significant distinctions remain between their work. For while Palladio attempted to resystematize the ideas of classical antiquity in the use, organization and inherent implications of that vocabulary, Eisenman's architecture has shown a concern for the conceptual aspects of form, independent of previous architectural significance. That is, while Palladio manipulated an ancient but recognizable vocabulary to meet the needs of his society, Eisenman has worked with what he considers the universal elements of point, line, plane and volume described by representational geometry in the creation of forms which freely display the process of their creation.

Palladio and Eisenman were both concerned with architectural signification as it is mediated through human perception; although a distinction between their respective implicit and explicit recognition of the language construct to architecture must be made. For Palladio, the architectural lan-

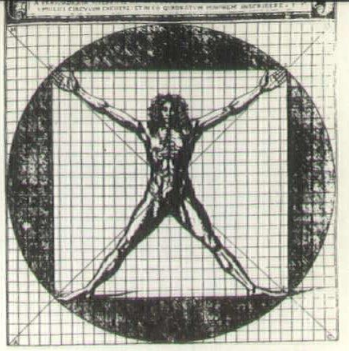
guage was to be found in the writings on Greek and Roman Classicism as set forth by Vitruvius in what is considered the oldest surviving treatise on architectural theory, *De Architectura Libri Decem* (The Ten Books on Architecture), dating from the first century, B.C. Palladio restructured the Vitruvian work into his own book, *I Quattro Libri* (The Four Books), which expounded many of the virtues of classical architecture as found in the Vitruvian treatise. In response to contemporary humanism, Palladio expanded his treatise to incorporate a mathematical basis for proportioning and sequencing architectural elements and spaces. Such a concern was as much an influence of his Renaissance predecessor, Leon Battista Alberti, as it was a response to the recently discovered mathematical basis of musical harmony. Palladio's book was intended to provide a basis of values and experiences by which others might design and subsequently evaluate architecture. Not surprisingly, Palladio's own architecture was reminiscent of the heroic classicism from Antiquity updated in accordance with the Renaissance theories on geometry and harmonic ratios found within his treatise.

For Eisenman, the key to architectural signification was not to be found in historical doctrines but rather in the study of signification as a process which looks to a variety of disciplines in searching out those general principles equally valid to architecture. For architecture to be a language capable of communication, Eisenman turned to the field of linguistics, especially the communication theories proposed by Charles Morris and Noam Chomsky. For it is from the semiotic triad of sender, receiver and message that Eisenman has developed a set of concerns about the nature of architecture, its structuring and consequent understanding. Just as the absence of a message would preclude intentional communication, a similar confusion would result if the message was structured incoherently. In response to this situation, Eisenman has sought to reveal his design process in architecture. On a formal level Eisenman has established explicit process as one purpose or message in his communication.

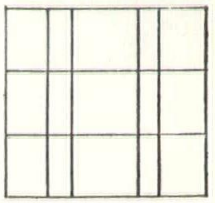
The analogy between Palladio and Eisenman is neither self-evident nor can it be discussed in a simple compare/contrast format; especially as each architect has sought to represent his work in significantly different ways. For Palladio, whose work dealt with idealized forms and geometry, the viewing of two-dimensional plans and elevations are useful for a visual understanding of the order and virtues behind his work. Eisenman's architecture demands the visualization of formal relationships between built elements and resulting space which only begins to be conveyed through the use of axonometric drawings with an accompanying text. Thus the evaluation of each architect must proceed in a manner appropriate to each. Whereas Palladio's systemization of parts and process can be observed only by viewing a series of his projects, Eisenman's system is wholly demonstrated within any one project.

Andrea di Pietro da Padova, known as Palladio, was famous for his well-received treatise which provided a survey of Renaissance architectural practice from the prevalent cultural viewpoint of humanism which embraced order, beauty, classical virtue and mathematical harmony. Palladio's most significant contribution was the application of the classical design vocabulary to the Florentine Renaissance. The fit of a "borrowed" vocabulary to the Renaissance was accomplished by synthesizing the ideas of classical antiquity (namely the Platonic notion that beauty and order could be synonymous) with the humanist idea of man as the center of the cosmos. This effectively related to the culture at hand as Palladio's designs bridged the Cinquecento philosophical schism between Christianity and the revival of "pagan" humanistic concerns.

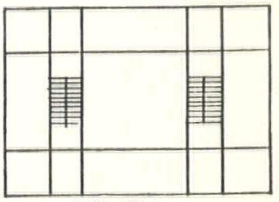
The Renaissance man as *Uomo Universale* was an attempt to conceptualize the humanistic attitude. Man was seen in the image of God and as having a wide range of intellectual powers in the science and arts. Pure logic and reason were highly respected as both developed from the writings of Aristotle and Plato. Mathematics and the ordering of the universe were seen in terms of pure geometric forms such as the circle, square, sphere or cube. Within this Renaissance conception of the cosmos, man not only became a part of the order, but was central to it. As Palladio's architecture may be viewed as an ordering and hence a representation of the cosmos, it is no surprise that Palladio was viewed as the concretization of the humanist ideal.



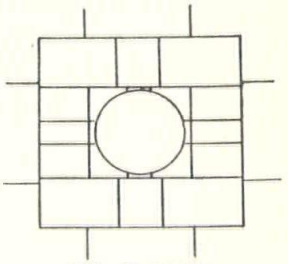
Renaissance Conception of Man and Geometry



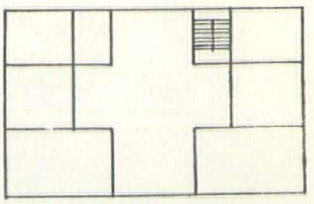
Geometrical Pattern of Palladio's Villas



Villa Thiene



Villa Rotunda



Villa Malcontenta

Abstracted Floor Plans of Three of Palladio's Villas

Villa Thiene

Villa Rotunda

Villa Malcontenta

However difficult it may be to apply or extract architectural theory from the building itself, Palladio managed to display several of the basic Renaissance precepts in a manner which not only revealed the semantic implications of the classical vocabulary but which also demonstrated superior logic and reason in the syntactic dimension. Perhaps more than his civic monuments or ecclesiastical designs, Palladio's villas displayed the primacy of geometric logic; a major hall located on a central axis with the subordination of peripheral spaces, disposed to fit the functional needs of a villa in a symmetrical pattern about the central hall.

For Palladio, the systemization of the ground plan was of great importance. That process involved a search among a limited number of parts to establish a syntactical dimension which resulted in mathematical and visual harmonies. The basic vocabulary of manipulatable parts can be narrowed to three major elements; the central or axial hall space, the peripheral spaces and the classical portico. Any given arrangement of these elements in a specific villa appears to be a frozen view of the architect's systemization and manipulative process at a given point in time. Thus any one villa displays a specific syntactic position, that is, a single point along Palladio's scale of potential geometric organizations demonstrating the range of relationships between interior and exterior elements.

For example, the design of the Villa Thiene displays the pervasive geometry of an ABCBA rhythm of wall positions which not only determined the location of internal functions but which also defined the size of the portico. In the subsequent Villa Cornara, the central hall remains nearly square yet spatially detached from the entrance event as the portico projects as an additive form to the building mass. The subtle sympathy in scale between the central hall and portico serves to integrate the whole and foreshadow unseen internal events prior to entrance. The Villa Rotunda may be viewed as a complex elaboration on this demonstrative system. Porticos on each of the four sides define internal centrality. The subdivision of peripheral spaces not only generates major and minor axes but also provides subtle volumetric and proportional transitions from the exterior to the center.

The facades of Palladio's villas required a similar coherent systemization of elements so it is no wonder that the architect's approach was identical. By limiting the design vocabulary to a few parts or characteristics such as the recognizable base, the entry stairs, the classical portico and simple Platonic massing, Palladio was free to vary the combination of elements as well as their relatioship to each other and to the whole. As a result, Pladio's facades exhibit a continuous search to define potential formal relationships between parts; a quest undertaken by a Renaissence mind in seeking the laws and limits ofhis universe.

By use of his "borrowed" vocabulary, Palladio's architecture understandably displays near infinite variations in the semantic dimension, most of which are references to Classical Antiquity. The syntactic dimension of his villa facades demonstrates Palladio's search within the more limited range of possible visual attachments between the building's massing and its portico. For example, in the Villa Thiene, the main facade was designed as a flat temple front, lacking a projecting portico. However, the subtle delineation of a portico is expressed upon the facade in stone relief. By association, the **portico projects**; in reality, the building's mass and **portico** are one, defined in shallow space.

In the Villa Rotunda, the portico exists in support of the diametrically opposed position, namely as an isolated element nearly detached from the building mass. As the proportional form of the portico has approached a platonic, geometric completeness, the form begins to act independent of the mass to which it is attached. The portico projects from the mass yet is subordinated and hence tied back into that mass through their relative scales. The portico is further restrained from pure independence due to a subtly implied penetration of the portico back into the building mass.

Firmly entrenched in the middle ground of potential attachment relationships is the Villa Malcontenta where the portico was made an integral part of the building's mass while maintaining an aloof adjacency which implies independence and detachment. While the portico is projected from the building mass, strong visual ties that were continued from the massive block were wrapped around the portico in a gesture of attachment or containment. Here the sub-

stantial base was the key to that rich ambiguous tie between the portico and the building's massing.

Palladio's architecture was of course more complex than the singular issues discussed here would lead one to believe. The concern with architectural signification went far beyond the purely syntactical dimension of systemization; indeed, first and foremost one must acknowledge the semantic implications of a historical tie and the applicability of that "borrowed" vocabulary. Only then may one examine Palladio's 16th century experiments in the perception of form and concern for the nature of attachments in his attempt to display a pervasive logic within architecture.

Some 400 years after Palladio, contemporary western culture has evolved into a self-examining society which shares a concern with the Renaissance for the understanding of architectural signification. Obvious differences exist, however, as the Renaissance architectural codes were constituted and institutionalized, whereas recent architecture has been characterized by a plurality of approaches.

The pluralist position assumes that man's experience is cumulative and that his existence is multi-focused. The responsibility of the architect in this culture has been to provide a significant degree of resolution within any given architectural composition so that specific themes or gestures are recognizable and experienced. This is accomplished through a wide range of stylistic approaches and/or logical constructs. Peter Eisenman is one American architect whose work is indicative of architectural pluralism.

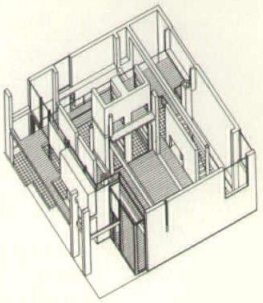
According to the pluralist approach, all the previous architectural codes are to be abandoned. New codes are instituted and the "rules" changed at the architect's discretion. It therefore becomes difficult to communicate through the architectural language process unless one is an insider, knowledgeable of the new rules.

Eisenman's work follows this esoteric path. As there is no relationship between form and conventional meaning, his work initially appears unintelligible. It is only through viewing Eisenman's architecture from the basis of his theory and specific concerns that one may begin to understand the significance of his structures in a manner which is not unlike how one understands language. However, communication is inimical in Eisenman;s architecture as most external referents to his vocabulary are eliminated. For this reason, the lack of viewing context, one has difficulty grasping the forces at work.

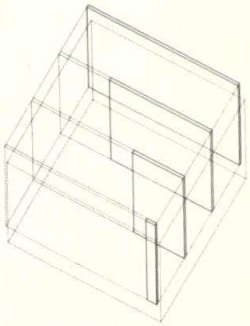
In attempting to understand Eisenman's work, one must recognize several of his parameters. Primarily, the matching of form with program or form with function is eliminated. Eisenman's structures are "houses" only by title and by actual use. Secondly, in acknowledging the force of gravity, Eisenman incorporated a structural grid which, modern technology has enabled to become more than the traditional pragmatic element that it once was. Eisenman's structural network has been freed for manipulation and exploitation as an organizing system. Finally, Eisenman's selection of a vocabulary is based on aesthetic decisions similar to those from early modern architecture. His "cardboard" architecture is an attempt to remove the inherent semantic dimensions in the act and materials of enclosing space. Eisenman's white planar surfaces are surprisingly close to the idea of pure abstract planes.

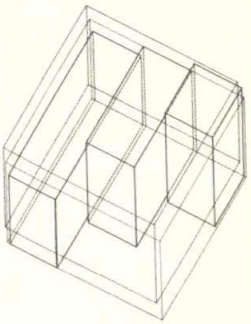
Given these parameters, it is obvious that in order to perceive the intent of Eisenman's work one must relinquish all the normal external references and consider a situational framework where architectural form is related only to itself. Within this framework, a building can only be viewed as a complex of interfacing units, derived through a rational process where no singular elements exist since all the components are referenced to each other physically or through the organizing system.

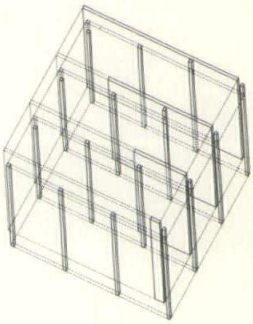
Eisenman's main concern is with architecture as the manifestation of a system of relationships. The generation of architectural form is likened to linguistic theory which purports that syntax is the primary generator of a communicable language. However, the notion of architectural syntax is not as easily defined as its linguistic counterpart. In language, the word-object has an intrinsic meaning whereas in architecture there are numerous potential syntactic structures. For Eisenman, it is the architectural system—that is, the controlled syntactic structure which serves as the generator of architectural form as well as the meaning of the communication. As a result, Eisenman's architecture approach-

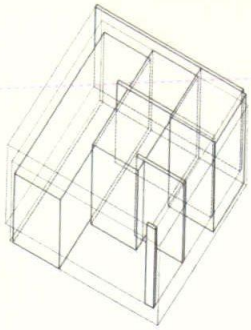


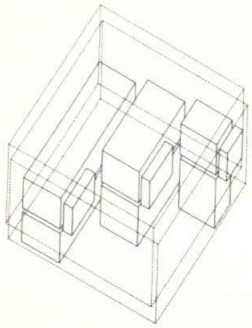
House I

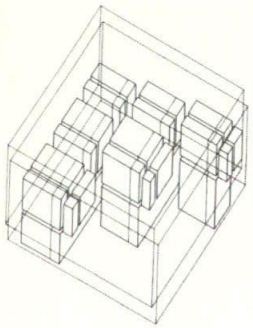












House II
Sequence From Form
Generation Process

es narcissistic self-examination of its own syntactic *raison d'etre*.

Eisenman has introduced the important idea from the linguistic notion of generative or transformational grammar wherein language is viewed as a generative activity rather than as a passive description of semantic or syntactic relationships. Whereas the application of a language framework to Palladio's work provided one means of displaying the logical examinaton of formal design concerns, especially the syntactic nature of Palladio's systemization; the use of a syntactical structure is not overlaid on Eisenman's work for the purpose of analysis but rather is inherent to the definition of his form generation process.

Eisenman's elimination of the traditional semantic dimension of relating program or function to form has been replaced by a system of internal relationships delineated by the major components of his vocabulary—namely line, plane and volume. These components are integrated into a system of internal referents so that the traditionally independent characteristic of volume can be seen as a residue or conversely, initiator of a plane. Eisenman's architectural concerns are orchestrated by an internal system of "deep structure" oppostions for which the form generation process is specifically derived. The result is an alternative to existing conceptions of spatial organization.

In Eisenman's House I design, the intention was to explore ways in which form and space could be structured in order to produce a set of formal relationships in which the emphasis and understanding of the structure was centered on the forms themselves. The attempt was made to find a more precise control of the logic guiding the relationships between the forms. Thus House I was undertaken as an attempt to conceive the environment in a logically consistent manner, independent of pragmatic or semantic meanings. This design then set the stage for subsequent attempts at stripping the traditional semiotic dimensions from the architecture, save for the syntactic structures themselves.

In his House II design, Eisenman incorporated the specific generative "deep structure" oppositions of column/wall, volume/column and volume/wall. Instead of the traditional synthesis between program and form, Eisenman developed a series of rules which he utilized in the division of a basic cube of space. The initial division into a 3X3 grid was supplemented by decisions to delineate the structure by means of both a column and a wall system which would be organized on a diagonal through the cube while keeping to the rectilinear grid. Finally, after numerous other manipulations, the various volumes were then allocated for the living functons of a family.

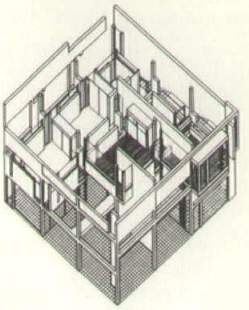
On the surface level of interpretation, Eisenman's complex of volumes and elements are relegated, as Palladio's were, to arbitrary functional designations; yet this realization is virtually meaningless. Given the architect's concerns and intentions, House II begins to yield a wealth of information about the articulation of a column and a volume in the creation of additive form, or equally about the situational development of subtractive form when walls are cut away to reveal columns. While this level of interpretation seems sufficiently esoteric, it is in fact, only a simple understanding of explicit concerns in Eisenman's work. Further evaluations would reveal implicit notions about movement related to the diagonal layering of the column/wall opposition and the dialectic between the formal conceptual relationship and the object itself.

Inevitably, Eisenman's work is inpenetrable for many and progressively obscure for others at varying levels of conceptual awareness. The point, however, is that his architecture, like most, is often more than what it appears to be. Eisenman's architecture can only begin to be understood in light of his intentions and by means of his syntactic structures. The noticeable discrepancy between that which was intended and a primary perception of his work lies with the associations evoked by Eiseman's "cardboard" aesthetic and the vocabulary from the early Modern Movement. This leads to a semantic charging of his structures which is hard to dispel, but which by no means, negates the validity of the formal generative concerns that his architecture is about.

Where Palladio's adaptation of a "borrowed" vocabulary was intended to specifically convey the nobility and the virtues of the past, Eisenman's vocabulary was selected for its abstract visual qualities and it only inadvertently evokes associations with

the recent past. While Palladio's manipulation and systemization of parts conveyed the logic and reason which was central to an entire culture, Eisenman's syntactic structures are in response to more private realities which typify a pluralist society. The common ground between these two architects is an intention to communicate through architecture with architecture.

Concern for architectural signification must occur during the design process. This is self-evident from the foregoing analysis. The works of both architects illustrate the fact that initial considerations and those design concerns which become obscured during the building process are crucial in attempts to interpret or read architecture. This view is substantiated by the body of architectural criticism which has established the necessity of evaluating architecture not only by personal reaction but also in the light of the architect's intentions. While the communicative concerns of an architect may be implicitly or explicitly contained within his work, at least the recognition of architectural design concerns brings the viewer a step closer to understanding the meaning of a given work as well as the architect's positon relative to his culture. Ultimately, architecture which is concerned with signification is capable of demonstrating how man conceives and percieves space and built form. This heritage will generate meaningful architecture in future generations as has been the case through history.



House II

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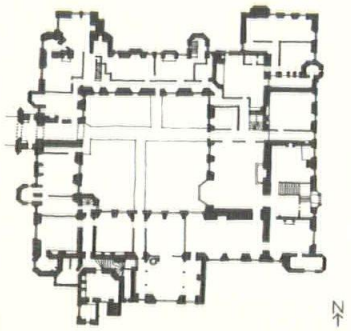
I would like to take this oportunity to express my gratitude to the Leo A. Daly Company for their Fellowship Award which afforded my research into the Italian Renaissance.

COMPTON WYNYATES:

form and symbolism

by John E. Hancock



1. Plan

This essay was written in 1973 as an independent study project in connection with the College of Architecture's London Study Program, under the supervision of Professor Dale Gibbs. It has been condensed and re-edited for this publication.

The name Compton Wynyates comes down from Saxon times: "cwm" in the British and "cumbe" in the Saxon meaning a deep hollow in a hill; the word Compton, then, meaning the town or hamlet in the hollow. The word "Wynyates" is thought by some to be a corruption of "wind-gates" or the "vale through which the wind blows." This essay will explore how these and other aspects of the form and setting of the house may be interpreted, and how they operate in compositional and symbolic terms.

It is remarkable that the property has been in the direct male line of descent since the beginning of the thirteenth century, when Philip de Compton (Philip de Arden before he moved to this site) made his home here in 1204. In the 1480's, Edmund Compton constructed the earliest parts of the present house: four wings around a quadrangle (fig. 1 and 2), including the Big Hall. His building can now be easily recognized by its stone-slated steep-pitched roofs and dormers, and four-foot-thick walls. It is doubtful that Edmund incorporated any of the Compton's earlier medieval manor house in his construction, other than perhaps reusing some of the materials.

2. View from west

3. View from northwest

Upon Edmund Compton's death in 1493, his eleven-year-old son William became a ward of the Crown and page to two-year-old Prince Henry (later the Eighth). They grew up together as close companions, and their relationship deepened with the passage of years rather than being poisoned by it. Throughout William's life no one stood higher than he in the King's favor. Henry VIII knighted William for gallantry at the Battle of Tournai, on the steps of the Cathedral there, in 1512, and granted to him the privilege of adding the Royal Lion of England to his coat of arms.

It was Sir William Compton who invested the house with its present pageantry. He built most of the projections from Edmund's square plan, including the chapel, the corner towers and battlements (fig. 4), and the west front entrance porch. He embellished the interior with bay windows and stained glass, and built the decorated octagonal chimneys. In Sir William's time, the house was still surrounded by the old moat (fig. 3), and the grooves from the drawbridge chains can still be seen in the stone arch of the porch (fig. 14).

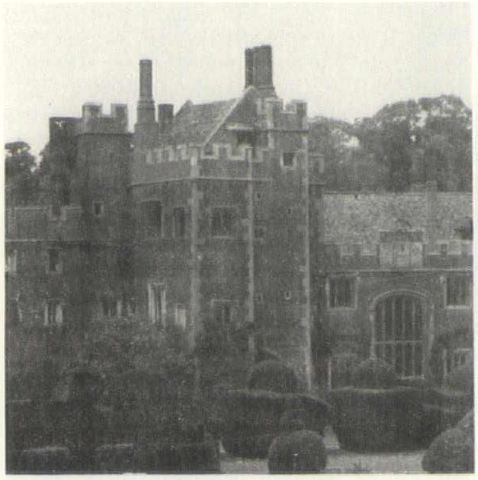
Compton Wynyates is an ensemble of man-made elements set in a magnificent natural setting of hills and trees. The perceptual relationships between these elements and their setting may be effectively analyzed by means of a description of the sequence of experiences as one approaches the house.

Coming along the road from Banbury and London (fig. 5 and 7) the first object seen is Compton Pike, an obelisk on the hill south of the house, and part of the network of beacons used to warn of the coming of the Spanish Armada. At the moment when the pike becomes first prominent, its point aligns with the viewer's horizon overlooking the countryside of southern Warsickshire. It begins to be obvious that there is a wooded valley on the right, and that the road is going to lead down into it. The sweeping curve of the hill on the left leads one's eyes from the pike down across the road and into the dense trees which appear to fall away into a hollow.

Through the trees on the right (fig. 6) one glimpses a windmill across on the far hilltop. It is silhouetted against the sky above the "wind-gate" at the top of an apparently

5. Site plan

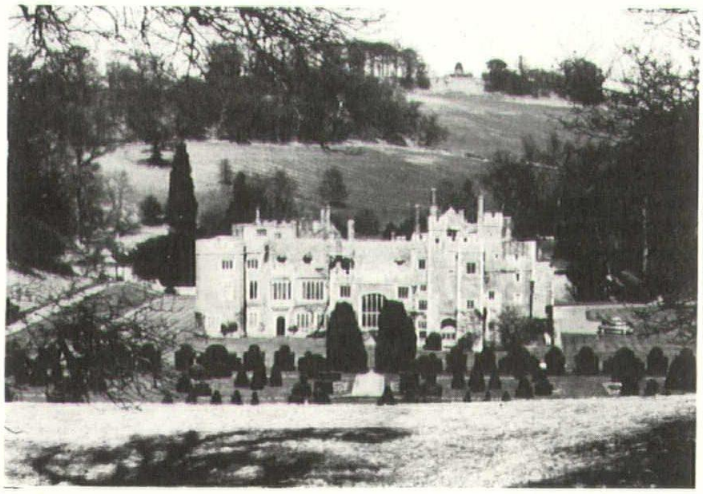

6. Road


4. View from southwest


7. First glimpse

deliberate clearing in the trees. The rather straight edge of the trees gives the impression that the mill points to something. The foreground of trees is still disorderly and it is as yet unclear what the pike and the windmill seem to be signalling. But a little farther down the road, some rooftops and bright raspberry colored brick chimneys become visible through the trees. It is the first clue that there is some settlement in the wooded hollow.

A little further down the road the ground begins to fall away dramatically under the trees on the right. Intermittently, due to the screen of trees, one sees that there is a manor house in the valley (fig. 8). It sits in the center of a cup of wooded hills, the only outward gap is the "wind-gate" to the northwest. The other colors appear, to complement the bright red-orange of the brick: the blue water of the old moat and ponds, the succession of which leads one's eye outward through the "wind-gate," and the deep green of the hedges and evergreen trees. The windmill and its straight edge of trees are now seen to point to the manor house.



8. View from south

One of the things which helps make the approach to Compton Wynyates so intriguing, besides the elements of mystery already described, is the fact that the house is first visible from a distance of only 200-300 yards. It is secluded and surrounded, providing a sense of shelter, security, warmth, and "home." (Compton means the settlement in the hollow.) The windmill, in contrast, stands out against the open sky, symbolizing escape, freedom, and vulnerability.

Several things become evident as one directly faces the south elevation (fig. 8). The windmill and its clearing can now be seen to point directly to the house, and in fact it is on axis with the roof peak of the west (front) side of the square plan; and with that of the highest tower (the southwest).

The gardens and hedges act as a kind of upholstery between the house and the wilderness; a transition from the man-made to the natural. The dark bush and tall tree on the right serve to define the composition, stopping one's eye from wandering off into the wilderness. One can notice similarities between the outline of the house itself and that of the horizon with its trees, and that of the bushes in the garden: all jagged rhythms with varying degrees of regularity. The picturesque skyline of the house, with its many chimneys, gables, and crenellations, is not too much unlike the skyline of the ridge behind with its windmill and intermittent trees. And when viewed from almost any angle the house has a backdrop of hills or trees—never open sky—reinforcing the feeling of sheltered protection. Meanwhile, the color contrast sets the house apart from its natural setting, with the warm red-orange brick giving an invitation to a place of shelter and warmth, in contrast to the climatic forces suggested by the greens, browns, and grays of the surroundings.

The approach to the house continues along the southern ridge and the sequential view from along the road is continually interrupted by all the trees (fig. 9). Continuing down the road the elevation drops, and Compton Pike on the left, appears to rise, simultaneously as one passes close to it. The trees become thicker, even on the left side, and the road curves to the right and starts downward into the forested road into valley forest hollow. The approach route curves far around to the west of the house

before turning toward it and coming to the west front.

As one starts down the slope from the south ridge, the west elevation becomes barely visible with its two pointed gables, symbols of domesticity and shelter. Further down and around, the forms of the entire house become clear (fig. 10).

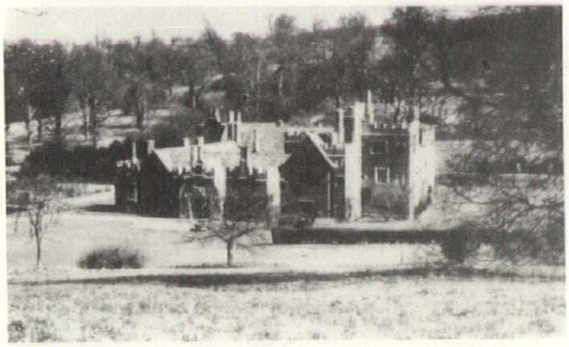
The roofs of the south and east sides of the original square plan are higher than those of the north and west. Also, the largest of the later additions are along the south and east wings. In this way, the house further resembles its setting, in so far as the hills which surround it also rise principally to the east and south, with the northwest being the low opening or "wind-gate." Looking at the west elevation it can be seen how the south gable is higher than the north one, and the south tower and chimney cluster are higher (and more complex) than the north ones, and the outline of the hill behind rises similarly from left to right. In fact, from the first bend in the drive as a vantage point (fig. 12), the line of the hill appears to connect precisely from the rooftop of the north tower up to that of the south tower.

The gate off the main road is on an axis (fig. 11) which runs between two rows of trees, across the lawn and up to the front porch with its main entry arch. The process of passing through the trees now becomes somewhat ceremonial (they are planted in straight rows): it is a symbolic penetration of the forests which surround the entire site.

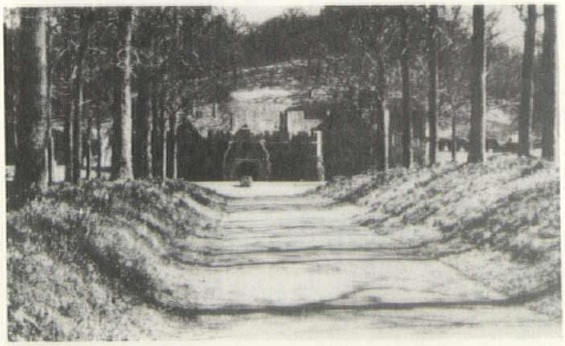
As one progresses farther down this canopied lane, the opening at the end becomes larger, the trees become less predominant in one's field of vision, and more of the house itself and its lawns and gardens becomes visible. The facade is uncovered as if by an opening curtain. One gradually becomes aware that the house is not symmetrical: that the entry portal is in fact off center, that the two gables of the facade are not equidistant from it or of equal height; and that the southwest battlements are larger and higher than the northwest. What has now become a rather ambiguous "almost-axis" is then even further contradicted by the path which the road takes. It curves way around to the left, with no axial connection across the wide lawn; thus strongly contradicting what had once appeared to be an axial approach.

Like the "almost axis," the house itself is, in a sense, also ambiguous and contradic-

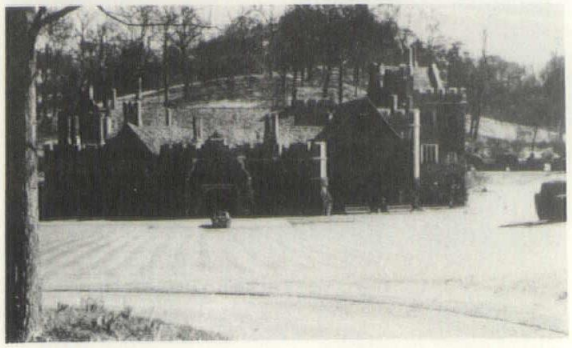
9. View through trees



10. View from southwest



11. Drive



12. View from drive

tory. It is a unity formed of an accumulation of similar yet different small elements into an ambiguous hierarchical relationship. In other words, as can be observed on the south and west elevations, the various elements of compositional interest and/or importance compete with each other for visual dominance. This ambiguity of foci reinforces the fact that symbolically there are a number of factors to be expressed by the form of the house. The gate-arch, the gables, the southwest tower, the chapel windows, the crenellations, and the chimneys, all have meanings of their own and all fight for predominance.

Venturi's phenomenon of "both-and" is the form of ambiguity operative here: Which element is most important? At Compton Wynyates the answer is no one of them but all of them; and the observer's perceptions and appreciations are heightened by having to deal with the question.

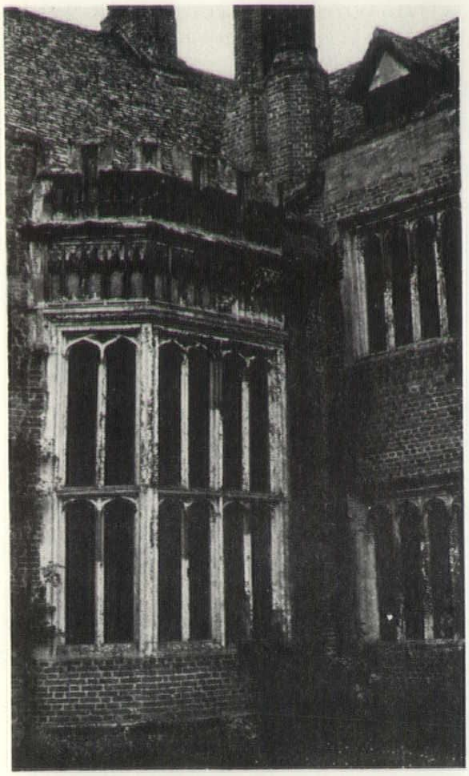
There seems to be no obviously predominant form element in the composition, and neither are there any subtle hierarchical relationships of parts to the whole, or inflected fragments which would serve to unify. Rather it is a whole which is more difficult perceptually: that of equal combinations of parts. The rectangular forms of the west front facade are important because of the large quantity of them. The triangular gables are important because of their large size and strong color contrast, even though there are only two of them. The vaguely-circular entry portal and arch achieve importance because they are on what is almost an axis of symmetry; they protrude from the wall plane, and they are the focus of meaning and activity. These three groups of forms, therefore, tend to balance each other in a continuously ambiguous dynamic manner.

The formal language of the house is one of a consistent irregularity: mild disorder within a larger, loose order. The plan is a tightly knit square with no major protrusions to compromise its compactness either horizontally or vertically. It exhibits both order and disorder. It is a blending of order and expediency: gables are of unequal height and pitch. The more than forty chimneys are placed inconsequentially all over the roofs. Turrets and a curtain wing were added on available ledges on the inner side of the former moat. Door and window openings occur in size and position as was convenient on the inside. Yet the plan keeps its overall loose order.

Compton Wynyates is both symmetrical and non-symmetrical. As one approaches along the drive, one is quite aware of an axis leading into the entry portal and courtyard. As has already been pointed out, this axiality is subtly contradicted by the realization that the facade is not actually symmetrical. The resultant casualness of the composition allows each part to be independent, not needing to inflect precisely to its partner as in a purely symmetrical or more straight-forwardly integrated scheme. The style and method of organization of the house is such that it was always possible for it to gracefully accommodate new additions as convenience demanded and as the site allowed.

Another type of perceptual ambiguity involves the double-meaning element. A vestigal element, or remnant of an earlier time, has an ambiguous combination of an old meaning and a new meaning. The pieces of the old moat around the northern perimeter of the house (fig. 3) are such a remnant. Their old meaning, which is called up by association, is an allusion to the days when the house was required to be fortified against invasion. Their new meaning is the result of a new use and context: as part of the garden and landscape scheme, they make attractive reflecting pools to set off the picturesqueness of the house. The combination of old and new meanings serves to increase one's delight in the experience.

The extensive embellishment of the house which was carried out by Sir William Compton during his lucrative friendship with Henry VIII could be viewed as part of his desire to make known to the world the significant degree of his political and economic success. His father's extravagant decision to use brick for the early part of the house, in a predominantly stone-building area (the fringes of the Cotswold Hills), had been a manifestation of this same drive. William added extensively to the house but besides greatly increasing the volume and general impressiveness of the place, he also added personal items which were of significance only as a result of (and as an expression or symbol of) his own particular achievements and position. Fulbroke Castle had been a personal gift to him from the King himself, and so parts of it such as



13. Oriel window

14. Portal

stained glass and the great oriel window (fig. 13) were proudly displayed in prominent positions such as the Big Hall. The stained glass in the windows of "Henry VIII's bedroom" (so-called) depicts the coats of arms of Henry and Katherine of Aragon, permanently signifying that Their Majesties had slept there. Most important of all are the decorations on the front entry portal (fig. 14). The Royal Arms of England, supported by the dragon and the greyhound, which was used only by Henry VII and Henry VIII, are carved above the main entrance, surmounted by a crown inscribed in Latin, "To my Lord King Henry the Eighth." In the right spandrel of the arch is the portculus, a badge of the Tudors. In the left is a representation of the arms of Katherine of Aragon. The Tudor rose motif is incorporated liberally in the drip moldings and other decorative features of the porch. It is clear that Sir William enjoyed boasting of his close association with the Royal Family. And, it is appropriate that he did so, as these are symbols which acknowledge the source of the wealth which made the present extent of Compton Wynyates possible.

The fact that the entry portal is the focus of the decoration, combined with its unique form and position, reinforces a strong sensation that it is the main entrance. There is no doubt about it from the moment it appears at the end of the "almost-axis." The rounded arch of the doorway is a strong, obvious, time-tested symbol for an entrance, calling forth associations with the cave as a dwelling place. This, combined with the also roughly rounded, protruding form of the portal, further clarifies its function.

Perhaps the next most important bit of symbolism on the house which Sir William himself might have been aware of is the chapel window. With its prominent position in the center of the south facade (in fact, on axis with the later Victorian topiary garden) it is both the largest window in the house and the only one which is arched (fig. 8). It achieves its symbolic dominance through exception. The arch had religious connotations as a result of the contemporary Tudor gothic church buildings such as Henry VIII's chapel at Westminster Abbey. The large size of the window and the fact that it faces south let in the maximum amount of light; a symbol of the presence of God, and a particular characteristic of the English brand of gothic.

The triangular gables of the west elevation (fig. 2) achieve their prominence (although not dominance) by two means: their exceptional shape (they are the only large triangles on the house), and their exceptional color and materials. (They appear darker because they are the only half-timbered construction on an otherwise brick building.) The triangular shape is a well-established symbol of shelter and "home," and it is these gables, therefore, which most contribute to the peaceful, domestic feeling that Compton Wynyates is justly famous for. They contradict the crenellations (the latter representing conflict and defense) both in terms of form and in terms of symbolism. By the way in which they are unyieldingly superimposed on top of where it appears that the defensive battlements should continue on across, the gables seem to stubbornly declare that in spite of the wars which have been fought here, this is still "home."

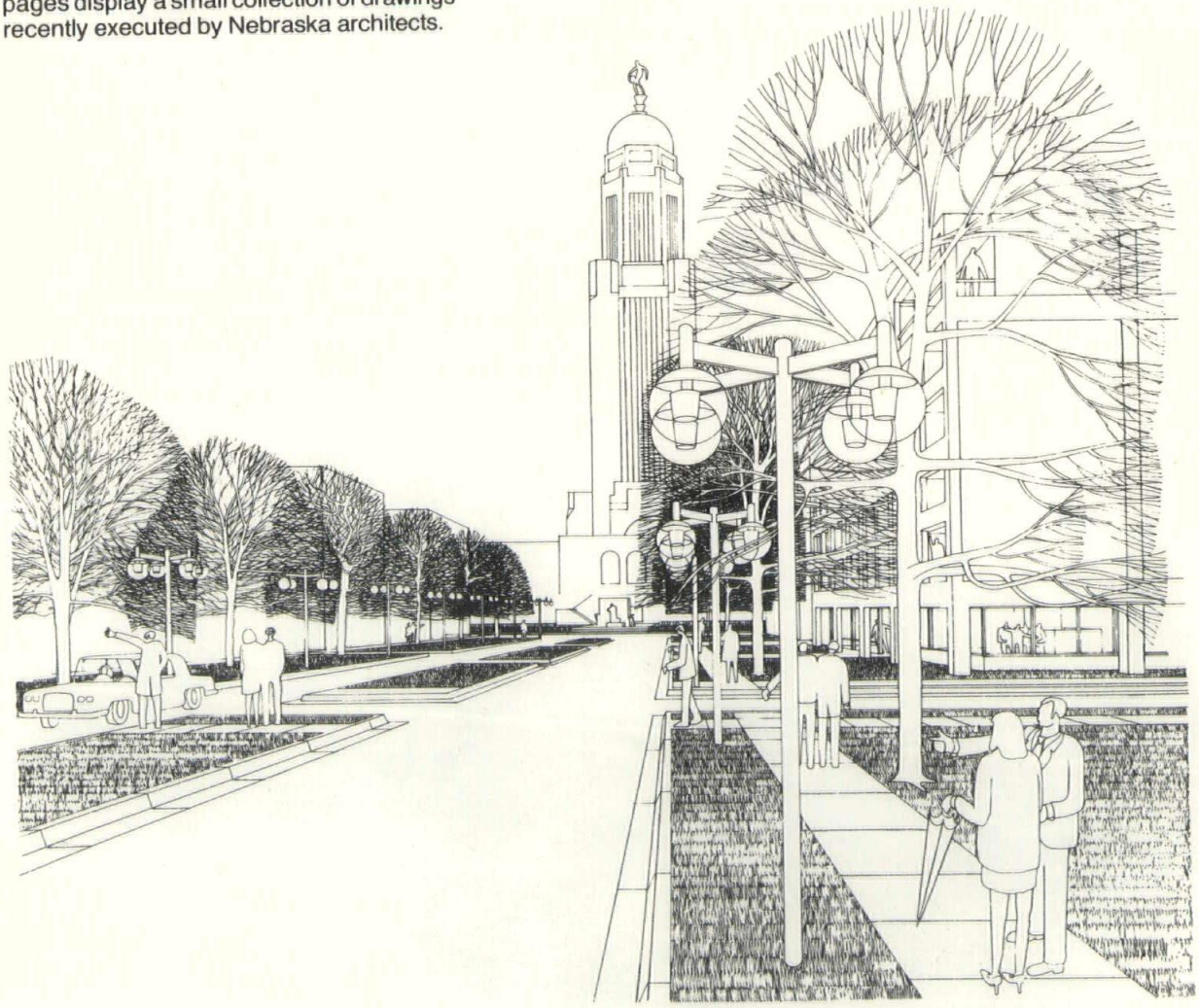
The dormers (fig. 13) are small scale repetitions of what the gables of the west front express about peace and war. They are variations on the same theme, although they seem to get overpowered by the battlements. A certain prominence still exists, though, because of their pointed shape within an otherwise rectangularized composition.

The little room with the pointed roof at the top of the southwest tower (fig. 4 and 8) was reached only by a secret entrance, and it served as a hiding place in the event of an invasion. So, its gabled form (peace and shelter) is hidden high up among the battlements of the tower, dominated and almost covered by them, and almost out of sight.

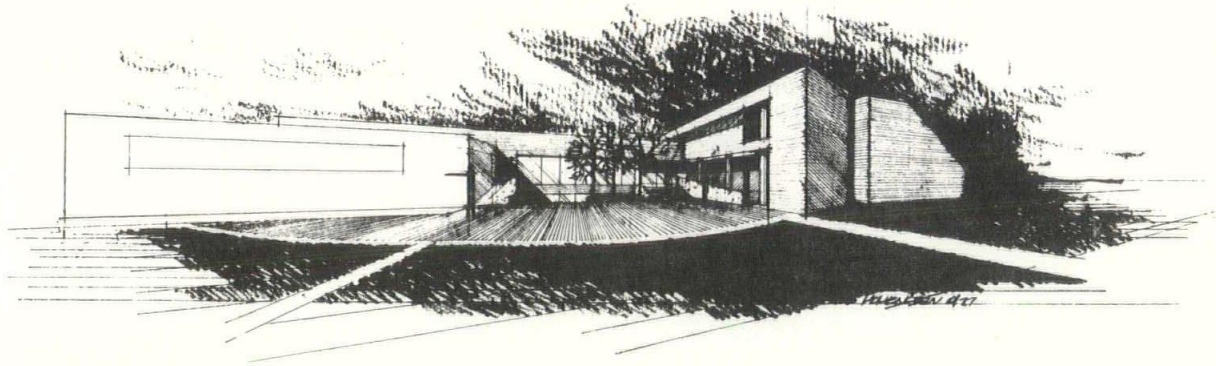
Architectural symbolism, then, could be defined as the application of functional ornament to an otherwise finished piece of architecture, or the use of certain forms primarily because they have individual meanings which have been established by past associations or cultural conditioning. Most of what has been pointed out at Compton Wynyates is of this latter type. Symbolism such as this might be considered out of place in orthodox modern architecture; dismissed under such dogmatic phrases as "ornament is dishonest," or historical forms are irrelevant," or "it's better to be original." But forms whose meanings have been firmly established by history (or somewhat irrational symbolic decoration) can reinforce a meaning, intention, or function; relate a building to its historical and geographical context; and make it "speak" to the user in a sometimes very human and personal way.

drawings by nebraska architects

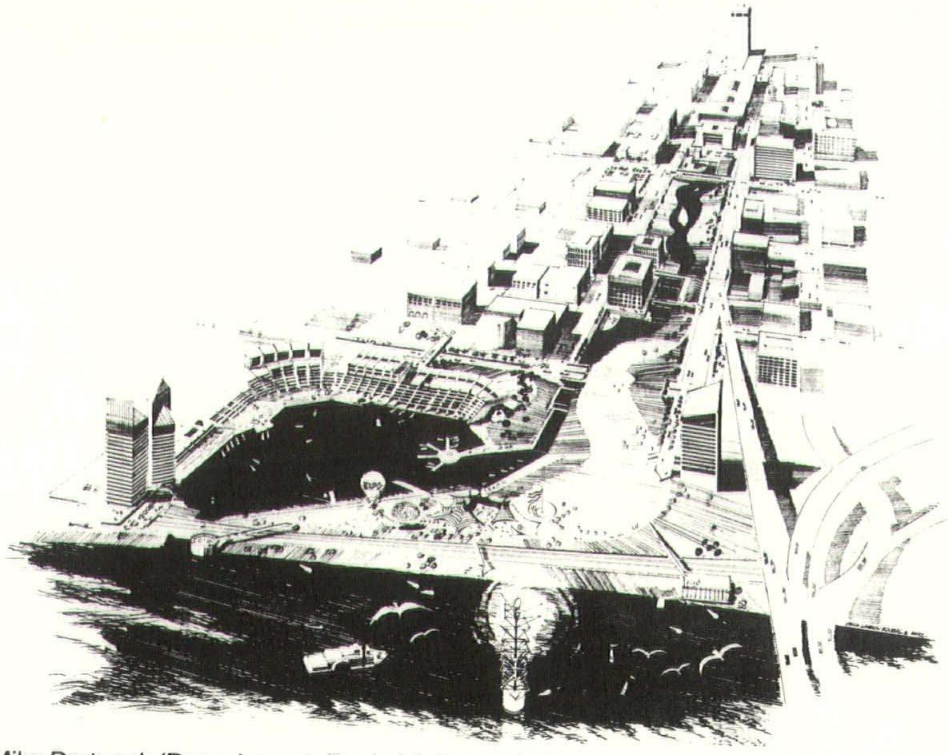
A good architectural drawing possesses a timeless quality. The craftsmanship exhibited by such drawings is infrequently mastered and generally envied but, fortunately, can be readily appreciated. The following pages display a small collection of drawings recently executed by Nebraska architects.



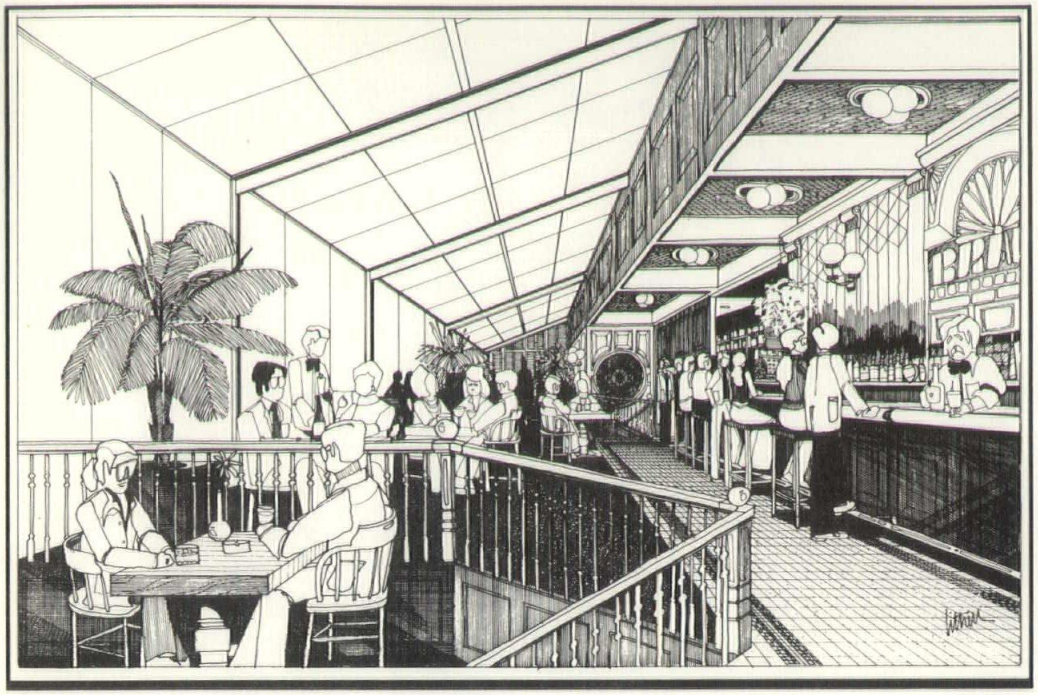
Tom Laging



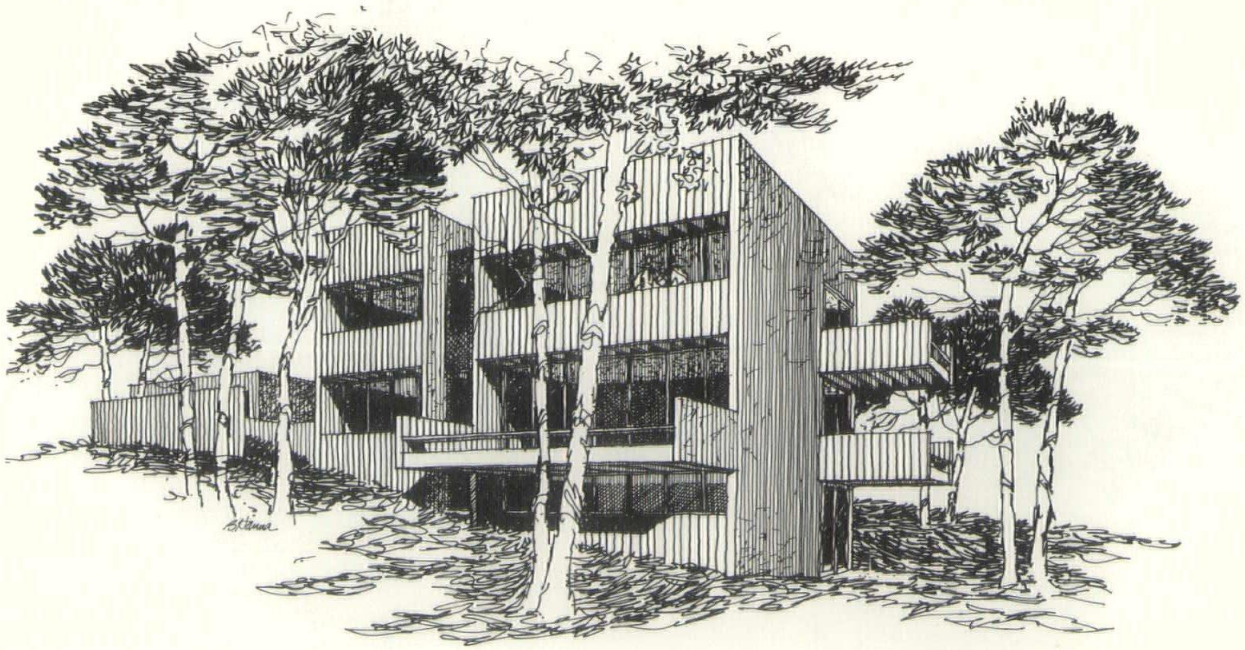
Jim Hohenstein (Henningson, Durham, & Richardson)



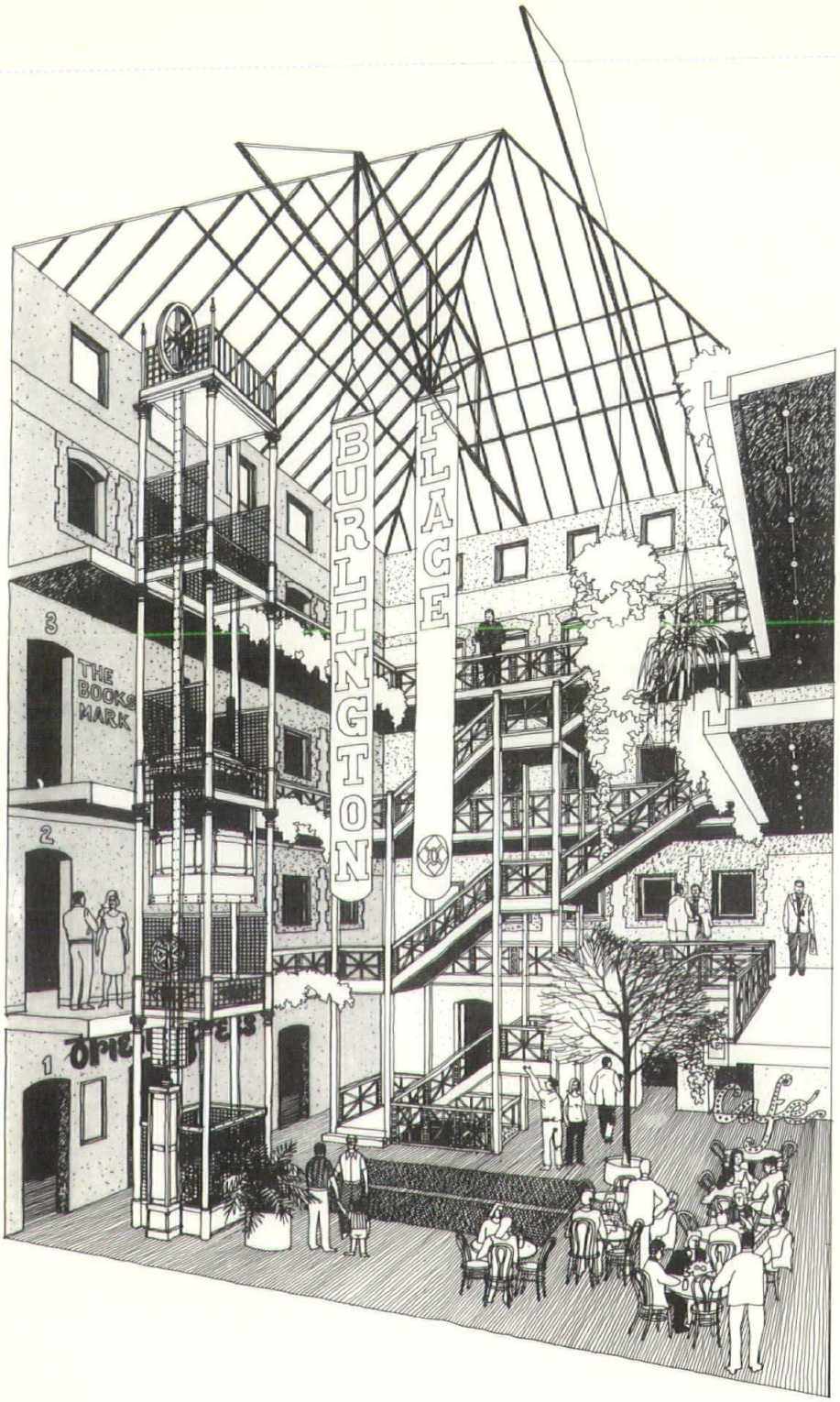
Mike Bartunek (Dana, Larson, Roubal & Associates)



Dave Littrell (Geller Design)



Robert Hanna (Hanna Architects)



64 Gary Bowen (Bahr, Vermeer & Haecker)