

# FORUM

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FORUM

9

Monthly review of events and ideas.

SLAUGHTER ON 6TH AVENUE 13

A five-block stretch of New York's Avenue of the Americas, the scene of \$415 million in new construction, is a shambles which even the splendid CBS building can't redeem.

FOCUS

20

Monthly review of new buildings.

DOWN WITH GOOD TASTE! 26

Tongue firmly in cheek, the Forum reveals the existence of an international conspiracy against architectural refinement.

PRE-COLUMBIAN GALLERY 29

The buildings of the Americas' oldest civilizations, in the words and photographs of Victor Lundy.

FROM UXMAL TO I.B.M. 37

Lundy's impressions of Pre-Columbian stonework are reflected in his most recent building.

BLESSING'S DETROIT 44

The award-winning urban design program of the Motor City reflects the persistently three-dimensional concepts of its planning director.

GHIRARDELLI SQUARE 52

Architects Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons and collaborators make a delightful urban experience of a San Francisco chocolate factory.

THE SWISS PAVILION 58

Asked to "revisit" LeCorbusier's famous Paris building for the Forum, Architect Shadrach Woods responded with a significant statement on modern architecture's past—and its future.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

So far each issue of the new FORUM has been slimmer than the last. Lest our readers fear we will continue to diminish to the vanishing point, we hasten to assure them that we view the FORUM's trim figure with a measure of equanimity, if not with unalloyed pleasure.

One sustaining dividend we get from our Spartan advertising diet is the frequently expressed delight about how manageable a package the magazine is at present. We threaten to get bigger, but promise never to get so big that it becomes difficult to read—or even to find—a given piece of advertising or editorial matter.

In order to carry out that threat as quickly and as effectively as possible we gave serious thought to seeking the advice of Doyle, Dane, Bernbach, the advertising agency which made such a mighty virtue out of the unencumbered smallness of the Volkswagen. They were also the ones who saw that the shorter lines in front of the Avis counter could make car renting a more convenient and attractive transaction.

But we didn't follow through with the idea. We felt that the people at DDB might find it difficult to get along with a client convinced that he is No. 1.

We are happy to report now that the news from each of our 12 sales offices is good. Bare cupboard days will soon be behind us. Meanwhile, if DDB will excuse the expression, "We'll try harder."

—L. W. M.

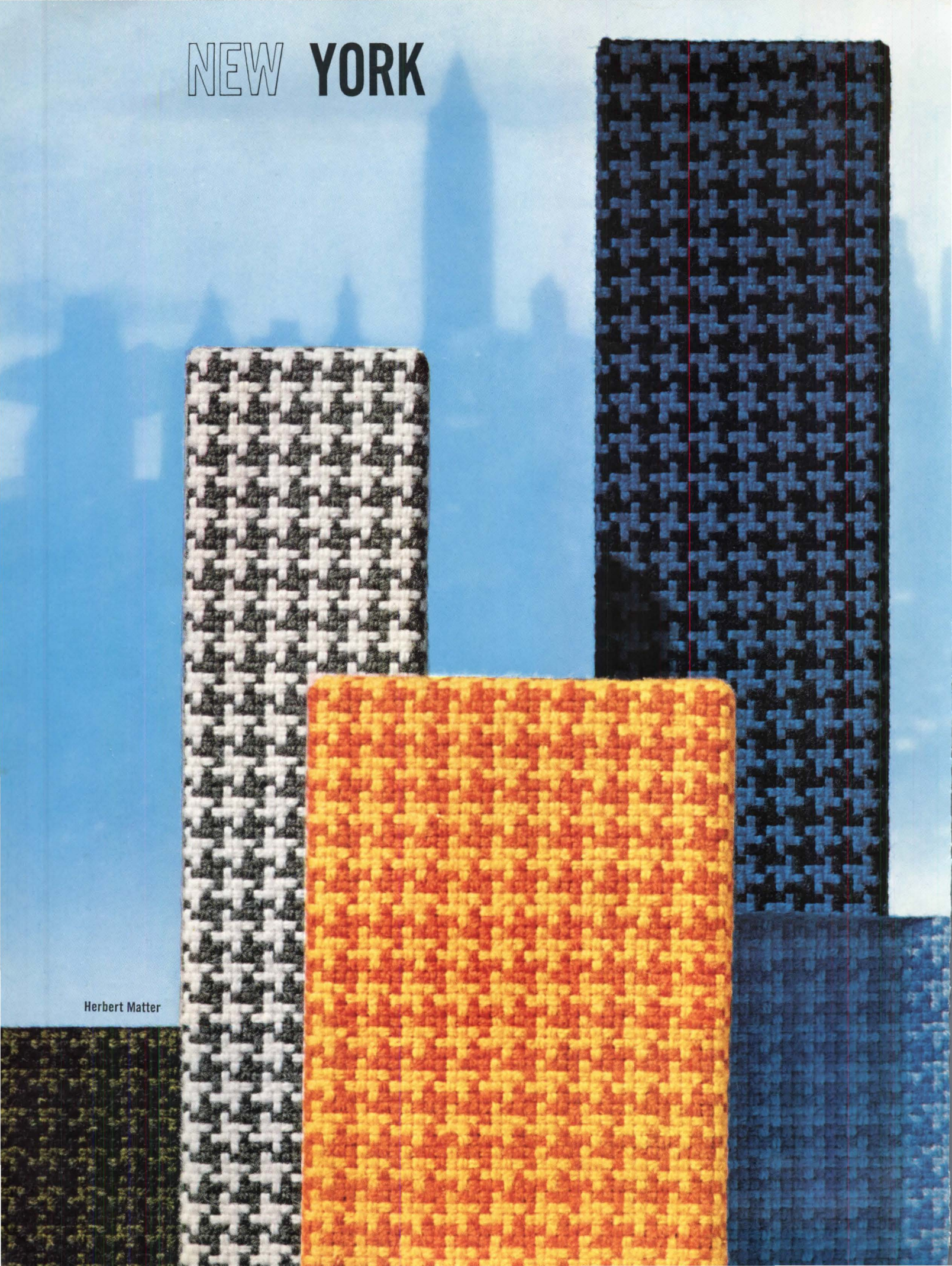


Cover: Palace of the Governors, Uxmal (page 34)  
Photograph by Victor Lundy

P. S. For those who like the FORUM at even smaller scale, microfilm copies of each issue can be obtained from University Microfilms, 313 North First St., Ann Arbor, Michigan.

# NEW YORK

Herbert Matter



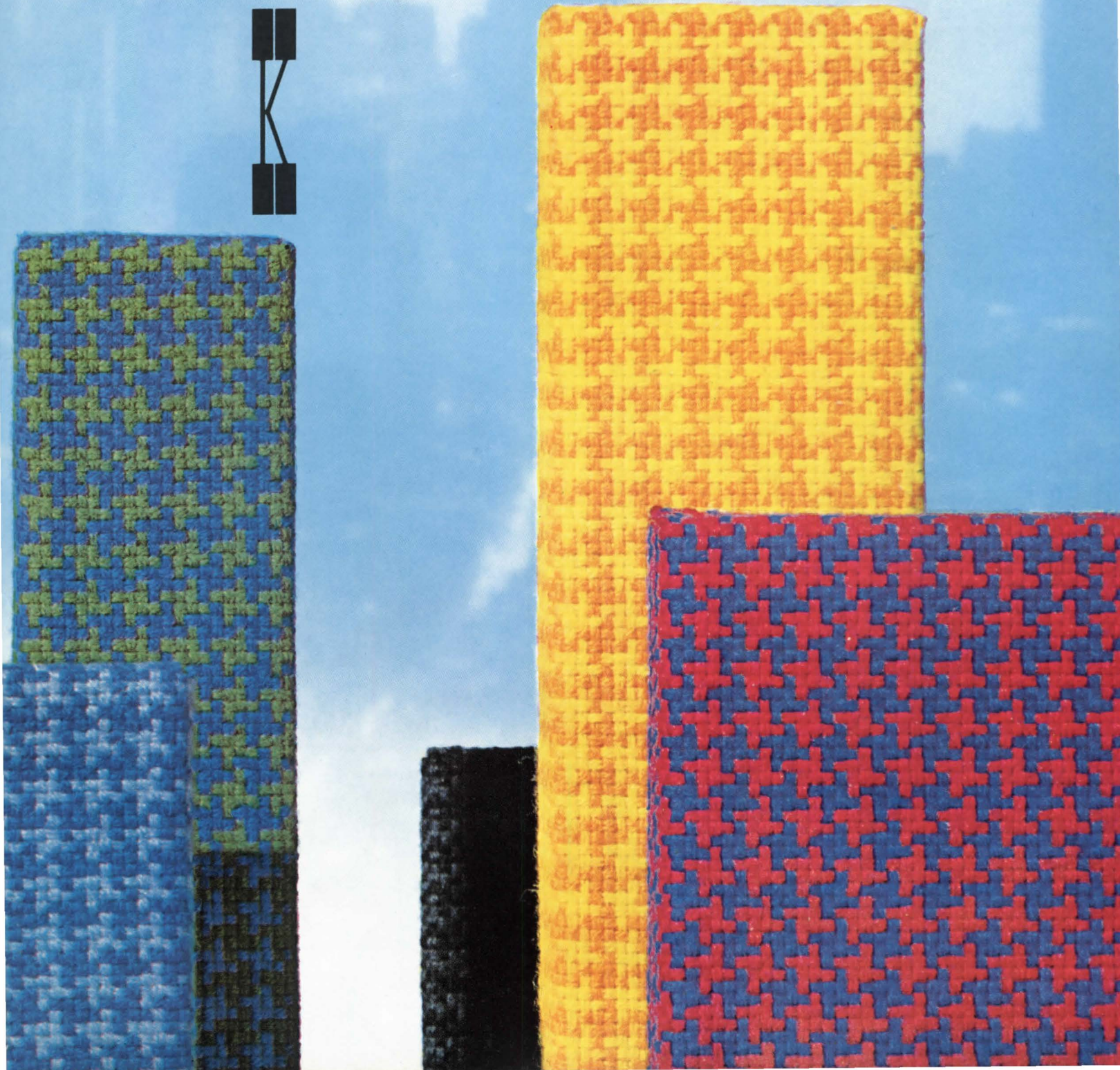
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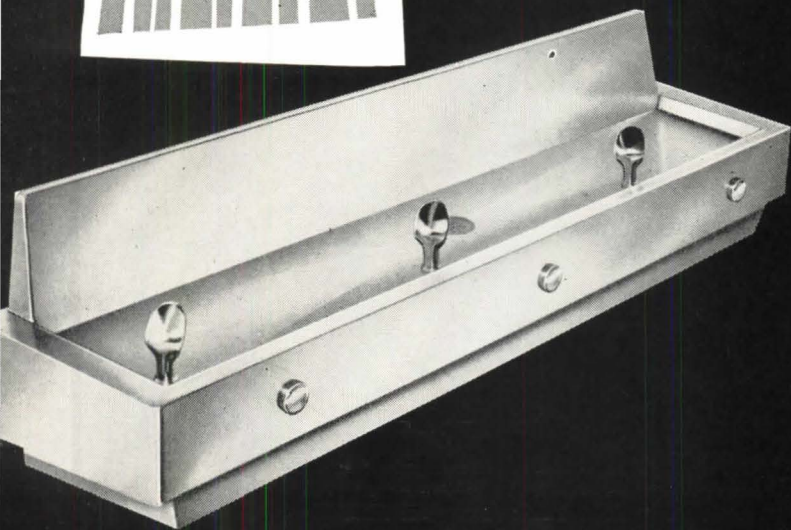
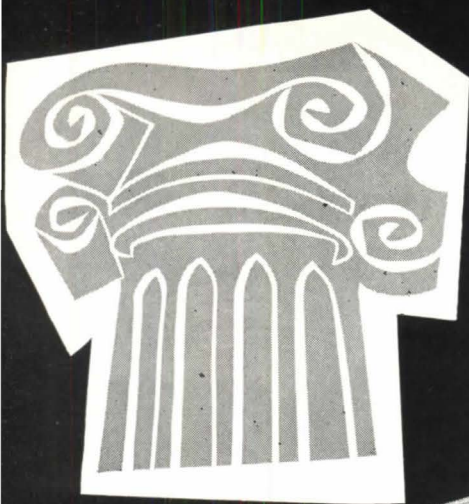
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## LETTERS

### HONOR AWARDS

Forum: Your editorial about the AIA Honor Awards (May '65) certainly seems to me to recognize certain valid weaknesses in the system—particularly the “photography contest” aspect—and to offer several most practical solutions.

RICHARD N. ANDERSON, JR.  
Richmond, Va. *Architect*

Forum: Bravo! Bravo! Bravo! to your editorial. You hit the nail on the head.

MARTIN GUTTMAN  
Camden, N.J. *Architect*

### LABORATORIES

Forum: Your presentation of the Salk Institute (“Procession of massive forms,” May '65) and Yale Laboratory (“Labyrinth sealed in limestone,” May '65) was reminiscent of a Forum presentation many years ago—the feature article on TVA architecture (Aug. '39). The TVA material was gathered by your former editor, Howard Myers, during a visit of several weeks to Norris and other TVA areas. At that time Myers commented that the design and surface treatment of dams and power houses (previously designed by engineers as Grecian or Gothic replicas) constituted an architectural revolution and would have a lasting effect on future structures. How right he was is evidenced by your May issue.

EARLE S. DRAPER  
Planner, Landscape Architect  
Vero Beach, Fla.

Forum: For the second time in a year I am delighted to have the opportunity to thank you for a marvelous article on a building of mine (“Research placed on a podium,” May '65). Everything was handled beautifully and I couldn't be more pleased. I was even pleased with your criticism; I probably deserved much more.

FORUM was never better and thank God we again have an architectural magazine. . . .

JAMES STEWART POLSHEK  
New York City *Architect*

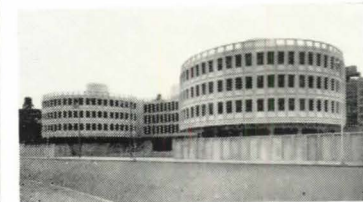
### WASHINGTON SKYLINE

Forum: The article on the Washington skyline by James Bailey (May '65) was developed on an incomplete base. It does mention the earlier study by Marcou, O'Leary and Associates in which I participated, but it does not relate this earlier study to Mrs. Smith's, and perhaps this is unfortunate.

The earlier study recognized that the Washington skyline is set at ground level and at general window view heights from existing buildings. This skyline is the rim of the bowl provided by the surrounding hills of Virginia and Maryland. The strip photographs you published are from heights in Virginia. Such views, while frequently used by photographers, are not the way to judge the skyline or the appearance of the city. Washington's skyline, as we said in our report, is the rim of the bowl. On this rim are perched several conspicuous monuments, including the Washington Cathedral and the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The total topography of Washington provides a series of benches to the city's perimeter that raise the bases of many buildings well over the downtown height limits. . . .

CARL FEISS  
Planning and Urban Renewal  
Washington, D.C. *Consultant*

*The Forum agrees that there is more than one way to view a skyline, but disagrees that the view we published should not be one of them. While it fails to support Mr. Feiss's point about the “rim skyline,” the view makes an equally valid point of its own.—ED.*



### MATURITY

Forum: Re. your article entitled “West” (April '65), discussing a Maidenform building at the Fair: there are better buildings than the one you show. Enclosed is one that might be called “more mature” (above).

MARGARET B. GEDDES  
Providence *Architect*

*Mrs. Geddes' entry is the Police Administration Building in Philadelphia (Feb. '60) designed by Geddes (no kin), Brecher, Qualls & Cunningham.—ED.*

### FORUM'S RETURN

Forum: The first issue in both content and form struck us as a marked improvement, and we hope that we can get aboard immediately. May we start with the first issue please?

WILLIAM M. GOLDSMITH  
Chicago *Industrial Designer*

*Welcome aboard, but starting with the second issue. Our supply of the first is exhausted.—ED.*



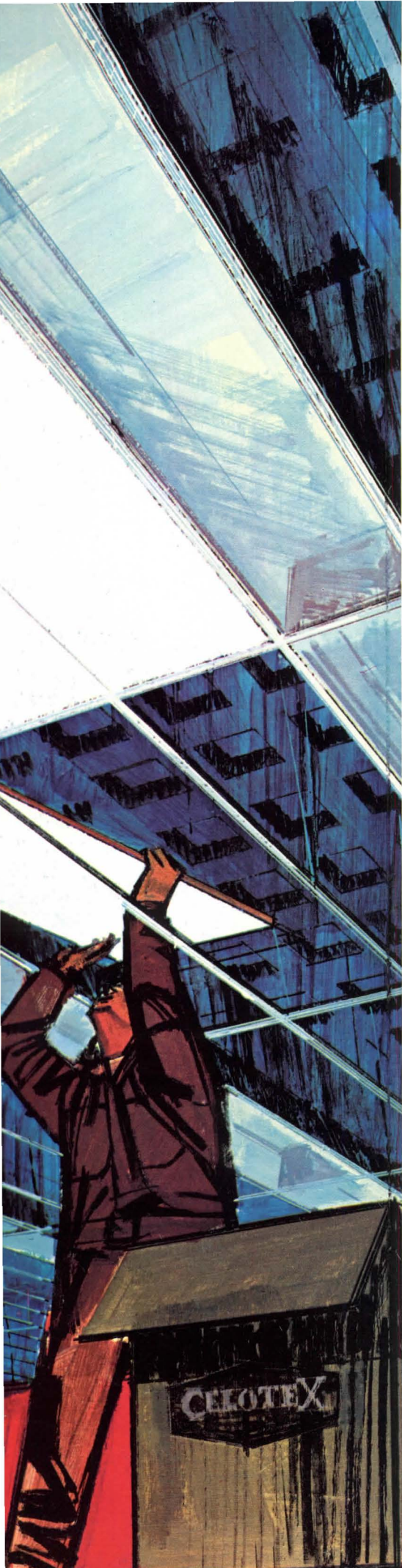
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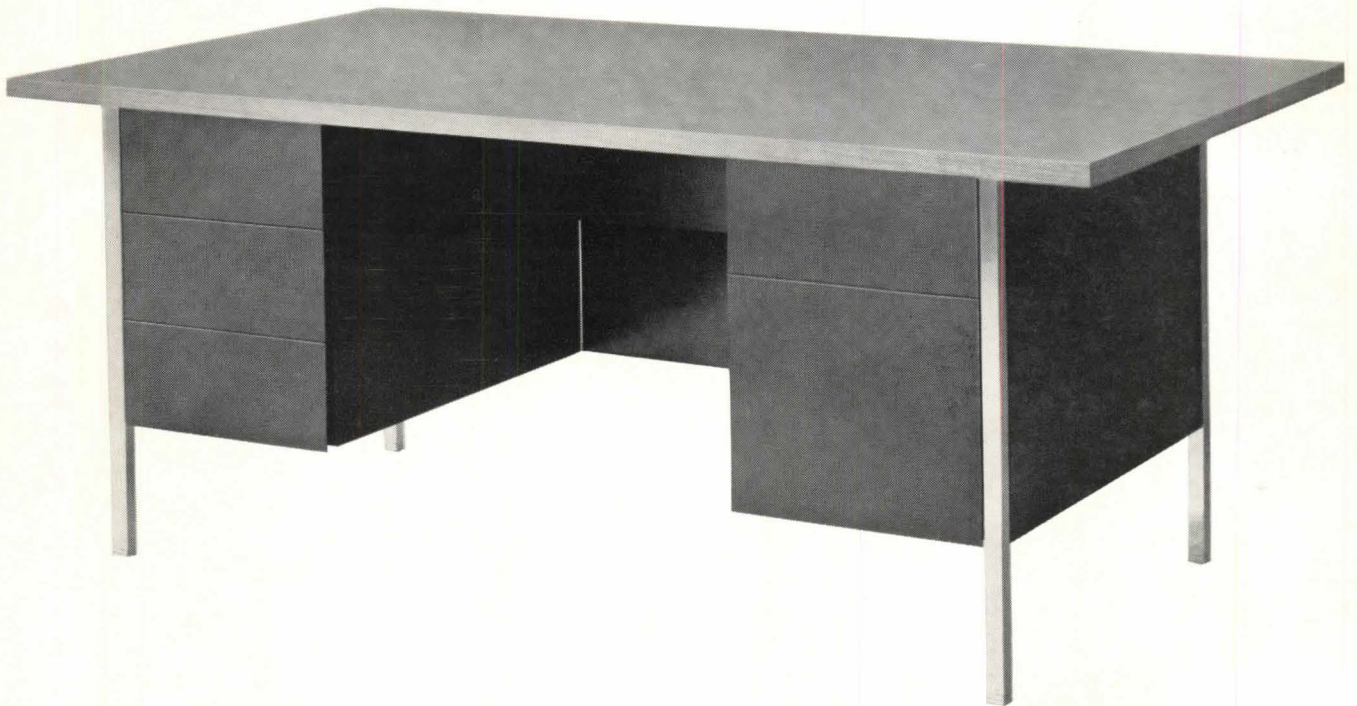
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# FORUM

You never know who is going to give you a helping hand, but we have never had a prettier helping hand than that of Miss Petula Clark, whose absolutely sensational song, "Downtown," won a "Grammy" award from the recording industry last month for



multi-million-copy sales. Miss Clark will probably consider our endorsement the most unexpected accolade she has received for her efforts; but, after all, we have been trying to say the same thing about Downtown (and Center City, and all the rest) for close to 20 years. We herewith reprint some of the lyrics of her great song, though they can't possibly convey the quality of her tune or her voice:

"When you're alone—  
and life is making you lonely,  
you can always go—  
**DOWNTOWN!**

Just listen to the music  
of the traffic in the city.  
Linger on the sidewalk  
where the neon signs are pretty.  
How can you lose?

The lights are much brighter  
there,

you can forget all your troubles,  
forget all your cares. . . ."

Well, that's exactly why we think Downtown is a place worth saving. We herewith nominate Miss Petula Clark for this year's Gold Medal of the AIA—particularly since the AIA hasn't found any other worthy recipient for 1965.

## WASHINGTON

### NEW TOWNS ON THE SKIDS

Sometime this month, barring unforeseen developments, Congress will pass the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965 minus

the provisions relating to development of new towns (like Reston, Va.—see below). Congress thus will demonstrate its unwillingness to face the long-range problems of American urbanization—which means the problems of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The new towns provisions—calling for federal insurance of large-scale loans to new-town developers and low-interest federal loans to states for advance acquisition of potential new town-sites—were deleted from the bill by the House Banking Committee. The action followed subcommittee hearings in both the House and Senate that revealed a contagious lack of enthusiasm on the part of the administration, and outright hostility on the part of powerful pressure groups. The merits of the case were scarcely debated.

The only effective testimony in



favor of new towns came from the American Institute of Planners. "At stake," said AIP's position paper, "is the chance to create more appropriate solutions to problems of urban growth and extension. . . ." Following the House committee's action, the AIP newsletter commented succinctly, "God help us!"

### LUKEWARM DEFENSE

HHFA's Dr. Robert Weaver opened both the House and Senate hearings with a presentation of the new town-proposals that dwelt at curious length on the opportunities they offered to small home builders.

"For some people," Dr. Weaver replied, new towns are "the answer to all of the urban expansion of the next decade. . . . This is pure sophistry. I think the new towns offer a very interesting ve-

hicle for experimentation. . . ."

Dr. Weaver's lukewarm defense was all the encouragement the new towns' opponents needed. A spokesman for the Mortgage Bankers Association of America testified that "adequate funds are currently available to finance as many of this type of projects as the market is in a position to absorb." The National Association of Real Estate Boards was more rhetorical: the new-town aids, said its spokesman, "represent an unwarranted intrusion of Government into the control of the future use of land."

#### ALL-OUT ATTACK

The heaviest artillery was fired by the National Association of Home Builders and, oddly, by the National League of Cities and the U. S. Conference of Mayors. The NAHB representative began his testimony by piously proclaiming the organization's concern with the environment, then let loose a barrage. "We oppose turning over to giant corporations effective control over a large part of residential building sites," he said of the proposed insured-loans program. "No serious abuses of land development now exist sufficient to require . . . that Government supplant private enterprise. . . ."

Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh of Detroit was a good deal more open in his testimony. "With the great thrust of the programs today to try and make our central cities more livable," he said, "I am not sure that we should be passing legislation to encourage subdividers to move out even farther."

Ira S. Robbins, president of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, asked for further study, pointing out that Britain looked into the matter for 38 years before embarking on its new-towns program.

"If you wait 38 years," Senator Paul H. Douglas commented wryly, "the land will all be used up."

of Modern Art. He knows exactly how to handle your problem.

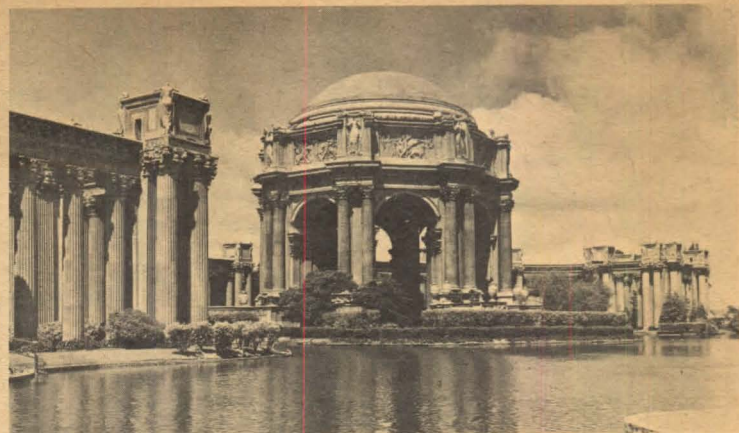
The reason he does is that a good friend of his, close to the Mexican Government, played just such an elaborate practical joke on him a month ago. The Mexicans, having heard that the New York World's Fair was just about to fold, decided to give Robert Moses a helping hand by shipping this fabulous hunk of stone (below) to New York, for display at the Mexican Pavilion out in Flushing Meadows. Except—well . . . OK, but . . . wasn't there a chance of exhibiting Olmec Head Number One (its official designation) in a slightly more prestigious place, for a couple of weeks, before carting it out to Long Island?

To d'Harnoncourt the answer was obvious: Olmec One should be plunked down on the Seagram Plaza. And, having a certain amount of pull with Seagram's co-designer, Philip Johnson, d'H. fixed it up.



The trouble was, of course, that the Seagram Plaza had not been engineered, specifically, to support 16-ton Olmec heads; nor had the roadway of Park Avenue, which spans the N.Y. Central tracks. And under Seagram's Plaza there are located facilities likely to be adversely affected by a cave-in.

Johnson called in the engineering firm of Severud, Perrone, Fischer, Sturm, Conlin, Bandel and asked them about Olmec One. Their answer: put him on a pad placed squarely over a supporting column. So Olmec was set carefully on an elaborate criss-cross of 12" by 12"s, spread out over an area 12-feet square. So far, everything looks fine—except that we seem to detect a very slight tilt, westward, in the Seagram Tower.



#### INSTANT LANDMARKS

For some years, Bernard Maybeck's charming Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, built as a temporary structure for the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition, and consisting largely of chickenwire, horsehair, hemp and stucco, had been crumbling in a genteel sort of way. It was a delightful sight: a surrealist dream.

Unhappily, every now and then, the dream turned into a minor nightmare when a cornice or two would come hurtling down. And so the authorities in charge of eliminating hurtling cornices, kept threatening to get rid of the Palace altogether.

Then, in 1959, a San Francisco benefactor, Walter S. Johnson, decided to do his bit by contributing \$2.3 million to have the palace replaced by an exact replica in reinforced concrete, to last forever! The state, the city, and others helped to swell that fund, so the project could go ahead.

Since Mr. Maybeck was dead, there were no very authoritative voices raised against this sadly mistaken bit of civic benefaction. If Maybeck had been around, we'd bet he would have said a thing or two about "the nature of materials," and related matters.

Anyway, the reinforced concrete replica is rising fast, we regret to say; and though it is a completely faithful reproduction of the original, it looks no more like the old palace than a statue of George Washington looks like George Washington.

Still, the episode has suggested an idea to us, which we offer, herewith, to the National Trust and U.S. Rubber, free of charge!

A friend of ours spent the war in an outfit that was armed, solely, with giant bicycle pumps. Whenever U.S. forces were able to corner a German division or two, our friend's outfit was called in to pump up giant balloons

which, when properly inflated, looked like U.S. Army howitzers, tanks or simply, GI's. Whereupon the Hun surrendered.

In short, the *economical* way of saving landmarks is to get U.S. Rubber to reproduce any given landmark in the form of a balloon, and to have the ladies of the National Trust pump up those balloons whenever the bulldozers have withdrawn from the battlefield. It would be much cheaper than reproducing them in concrete—and, moreover, you could move them almost anywhere. And, of course, if the landmark, thus preserved, turned out (upon sober reflection) to be not quite so gorgeous after all, you could always ask the ladies to get out their hat pins.

#### THIS HURTS US MORE THAN . . .

We don't like to knock the Museum of Modern Art more often than seems absolutely necessary; for, actually, we love it. But because the MOMA is rarely criticized by anyone who is generally on its side, we feel that a word or two may be called for from us about its current exhibition entitled MODERN ARCHITECTURE, U.S.A. That exhibition, to put it bluntly, is a pretentious joke, delivered in poor taste.

To describe the show briefly, and somewhat sweepingly: it consists of 71 huge transparencies, in what might be described as "Livid Color," of the "most significant" American structures of the past 60 years or so. Those transparencies—well, the color really kills you, it's straight picture-postcard stuff—those transparencies are mounted in boxes which, in turn, contain the number of fluorescent tubes required to make the color blow your brains out. We won't argue about the selection of buildings—this is a free country—nor will we nitpick about some of the minor inaccuracies in the captions.

## ARTS

#### VERY BIG BROTHER

Next time an influential friend offers you the loan of a 9 foot high, 2,500-year-old Mexican Olmec head, made of a single piece of basalt weighing 16 tons, and asks you to display it in a prominent place, we suggest you get in touch with René d'Harnoncourt, director of New York's Museum

We *did* get the impression that we had seen precisely the same collection of "five-star buildings" about a dozen times before. Still, that's the price you pay for rapidly advancing age.

We *would*, however, like to say something about the technique of installation, and the pretentious effect of the total production.

Those boxes, different in size, painted white, and shippable, we gather, to Oshkosh, are piled one on top of the other in the manner of a *de Stijl* construction. They are held in place at ground level by rows upon rows of square, hollow, brass-colored aluminum stumps that resemble World War II "dragon's teeth" tank-traps, or, perhaps, some of those ashtrays found in parlor cars (below). In short, what was attempted here was to create, inside the museum's galleries, a "Great Work of Urban Architecture" in white, gilded aluminum, and livid color—a thing that would be greater than the sum of its parts.

This suggests that the museum either thought the parts, singly or in sum, weren't so hot; in which case why have the show? Or that the museum thought that it could improve upon the parts (Mies, Wright, Saarinen, etc., etc., all at their best); in which case the show reveals a mild case of MOMA-megalomania.

As a matter of fact, the parts are OK, but they are isolated events on a disturbing and often dramatic skyline. An exhibition of American architecture in 1965, it would seem to us, might have conveyed, both in content and in presentation technique, some of the dynamics of the American city—the good as well as the bad, the staggering dimensions on the one hand and the occasional, happy detail on the other. With half the budget that was eaten up by those "dragon's teeth" and

those panoramic postcards alone, one might have produced a show that, above all, was motion, action, drive, momentum personified. In short, a show whose hero (or villain) was the American city, not the MOMA which seems to have felt that *it* was called upon to produce an architectural masterpiece, that *it* was an exhibit.

Back to the drawing boards MOMA! And don't start getting stuffy on us after all these years.

## BEAUTY

### RALLY AGAINST JUNK

"It was the most dazzling audience anyone was ever subjected to," said Edmund Bacon, Philadelphia's planning director. He was referring to the all-star status of those who attended the panel discussion on "Townscape" during last month's White House Conference on Natural Beauty.

In all, over 1,000 attended the two-day gathering. Their purpose in being there was to make practical recommendations to the President on ways in which beauty could be instilled and ugliness expelled from cities, suburbs and countryside. The delegates were welcomed by the First Lady, listened to and encouraged by top government officials and, finally, greeted by the President himself, to whom they presented their recommendations:

- Establishment of a national council on natural beauty and recreation, with a "full-time staff competent in the fields of environmental planning, resource conservation, recreation and community planning;"
- A national program to list and certify historic buildings and places, and the revision of tax policies to encourage preservation;

- A national design center which would work to improve the appearance and coordination of street furniture;
- Financial assistance to cities for programs to improve the quality of street signs and furnishings;
- The creation of waterfront districts in cities so that waterfront areas could be set aside and developed as scenic zones;
- An educational program to instill in children an appreciation of the urban environment;
- A Presidential "call for a massive reappraisal by municipal governments of all their policies and programs which affect the urban scene," including control of junkyards, outdoor advertising, gas stations, and parking lots;
- An omnibus bill to establish protection of "natural and urban beauty as federal policy in all federal programs;"
- "New and substantial programs of scenic roads and parkways in reasonable proximity to the large population centers of our nation."

### LBJ FAVORS BEAUTY

No sooner had the President received the list of conference recommendations than he announced that he was transmitting four beauty bills to Congress. The bills would prohibit billboards and junkyards within 1,000 feet of interstate and primary highways; require states to use three per cent of their federal highway aid for landscaping and beautifying roadsides; and require states to use one-third of their federal aid for secondary roads to build new scenic roads or access roads to beauty spots and recreation areas.

But neither the conference nor the bills were enough to please the *New York Times*, which said in an editorial: "The issues involved in creating a more civilized and humane environment go much deeper than any cosmetic approach can reach or resolve . . . Creation of a more beautiful environment inevitably means hard fights with rapacious real estate and construction interests, truckers and highway bureaucrats, power companies and the Army Corps of Engineers among many others. It means a kind of politics much tougher and more sustained than anything dreamed of by garden clubs. The interests that make money out of slums, pollution, ugliness and misuse of the land—and the technicians in some government agencies who are their allies—will not yield to anything less."

## FIASCOS

### NATURELOVERS GO HOME!

Nearly 100 miles of the Grand Canyon's inner gorge are threatened with inundation by two proposed hydroelectric dams.

The dams, one at Bridge Canyon and the other at Marble Canyon, would produce marketable energy to pay some of the bills for the \$3.1 billion Central Arizona irrigation project. The downstream Bridge Canyon dam, conservationists say, would cause water to back up 13 miles into Grand Canyon National Park.

Last month the U.S. Budget Bureau offered a compromise: build the Marble Canyon dam, but defer the one at Bridge Canyon. The compromise was endorsed by the President and by Interior Secretary Udall. But conservationists, led by the Sierra Club, will continue their fight in Congress—some of whose members might recall Theodore Roosevelt's words about the canyon: "Leave it as it is . . . The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it." Elsewhere:

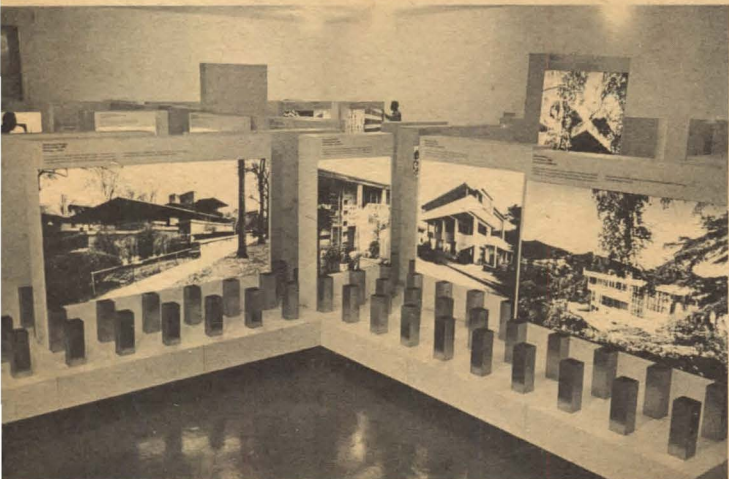
- In Westchester, N.Y., residents last month staged a sit-down demonstration to stop the widening of the Cross County Parkway with the attendant removal of trees, stone bridges and some homes.

Sixteen sit-down objectors were arrested, including two pregnant women, a rabbi, and the wife of a county supervisor. The next day Governor Rockefeller order-



ed a re-study of the plans for the superhighway, but the re-study, apparently, took no more than four days (including one weekend); then the bulldozing and tree-cutting were resumed.

- Minnesota and Wisconsin conservationists have suffered a setback in their fight against the construction of a \$63 million power plant on the St. Croix River—which forms the boundary between



the two states and is the *only* unpolluted river near a major U.S. metropolitan area today.

After nine months of controversy, Minnesota's Water Pollution Control Commission last month gave the Northern State Power Company its go-ahead.

In a desperate, last-minute move, Carl A. Pemble, president of "Save the St. Croix, Inc.", is trying to seek an injunction against Northern State—at least until public hearings on the project are completed in Wisconsin.

• In Italy, the State Road Agency, which has been cutting down trees along the country's highways as traffic hazards, conducted a public poll of 90,000 Italian motorists to get their reactions.

The results: Question A: "Do you consider trees a traffic hazard?" Answer: 56% "yes," 43% "no," 1% undecided. Question B: "Are trees an essential element of the landscape?" Answer: 47% "yes," 51% "no," 2% undecided. Question C: "Do you wish to have the trees (along highways) eliminated?" Answer: 54% "yes," 45% "no," 1% undecided.

We don't want to seem chauvinistic, but *our* experience has been that the way to eliminate Italian traffic hazards was to eliminate Italian drivers.

**CITY LOVERS GO HOME, TOO!**

In Manhattan, where the authorities have been plotting for several years to build an expressway across the downtown area—thereby wrecking much of the cast iron architecture along and around Broome Street (below)—the mayor finally made it official: the Lower Manhattan Expressway will be built.



Three things intrigue us about this announcement: first, a local newspaper discovered that the City Planning Commission had furtively submitted a detailed sketch-proposal for this particular act of urban vandalism to the HHFA—and so the mayor was on the spot: he had to do *something*.

Second, the sketch-proposals revealed that all the reasons previously given by the city for building the monster—getting cars, fast, from Brooklyn to New Jersey—were rubbish. In fact, the partial plan finally released (above) shows the Expressway will have *at least 10* access and exit ramps in Manhattan proper (each of which will chew up some more invaluable architecture and will further *aggravate* the traffic congestion downtown).

Third, the mayor was all set to make his announcement around the middle of May, when, suddenly, Rep. John V. Lindsay (R.) announced that he was ready to take on the mayor in next November's election, on a fusion ticket. So the mayor, seemingly shook up by the prospect of having to face some *real* opposition for a change, delayed his announcement until May 25th to gain time to find out how many

votes the expressway might cost him. (Ah, the trials and tribulations of exercising leadership!) Mr. Lindsay, by the way, opposes the expressway, and he didn't take any public opinion surveys to discover his *own* opinion.

**Elsewhere:**

In St. Louis there has rarely been an outcry as great as that created several months ago when the GSA announced plans to demolish the charming Old Post Office to make way for a spanking new federal office building. Action groups were quickly formed to save the building; pickets marched in front of its Victorian facade; the *Post-Dispatch* launched an editorial campaign; and the St. Louis AIA chapter worked up a



remodeling scheme to provide as much modern office space as the new building would contain.

Throughout the furor, GSA patiently listened to the pleas, but its mind was made up. Last month it said no.

The decision is particularly difficult to understand because the very same GSA that said "no" in St. Louis is trying to say "yes" in Washington. For in the nation's capital, GSA has been engaged in an admirable effort to prove to Congress that the old "Executive Office Building" next to the White House was well worth preserving. And to establish the potential usefulness of the "Executive Office Building," GSA retained one of Washington's most sensitive architects, Nick Satterlee.

Is there an analyst in the house?

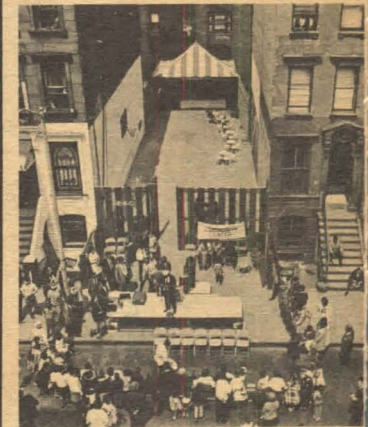
• In Moscow, one of the Soviet Union's leading architects, V. Ol-tarzhevsky, protested the construction of "skyscrapers" in the center of the city, near the Kremlin and St. Basil's. (He was referring, particularly, to the 6,000 room *Hotel Rossiya* now under construction east of the Kremlin.) "Aren't we . . . approaching the wanton American example which is devoid of tradition?" he asked. Well, no: the Rossiya will be only 12 stories high. However, we do feel concerned about Comrade Ol-tarzhevsky's future: as we reported, Comrade Khrushchev was fired in part because he voted against high-rise.

**NON-FIASCOS**

**JUNKYARD TO PLAYGROUND**

The vest-pocket park and playground (below) was once a rubbish-strewn vacant lot in New York's Harlem. The idea for its transformation came from the youth director, Tony Lawrence, at Christ Community Church next door, who was encouraged by the N.Y.C. Parks Association and the Housing & Redevelopment Board.

The little playground was designed by a group of Columbia University architecture students, and the J. M. Kaplan Fund came across with \$4,000 to translate the



design into reality. The church hopes to repeat this performance on two other pieces of Harlem property this summer.

Parks Association President Whitney North Seymour was obviously delighted. "There are vacant lots all over the city crying out for this," he said.

**SIDEWALKS IN THE AIR**

Lots of people in lots of big cities talk about placing pedestrians and cars on different levels.

(continued on page 65)



# SLAUGHTER ON 6th AVENUE





None of the lessons  
of Rockefeller Center  
was applied by those  
who planned the new  
Sixth Avenue

Clockwise, starting bottom, left:  
Equitable Life, J. C. Penney,  
Hilton, a sliver of ABC, and,  
in the foreground, CBS.



Manhattan's "Avenue of the Americas" (known to everyone, except the civic boosters, as Sixth,) originates somewhere in the lower depths of the Wholesale Hardware District, sweeps uptown past the Women's House of Detention, past Macy's, Gimbel's, the Public Library's Bryant Park, and the Rockettes. At about that point we shall, for the present, take a giant leap that will take us to the fringes of Central Park, where the Avenue ends at the foot of a recently installed equestrian statue of Cuban patriot José Martí by Anna H. Huntington, (1).

Sixth has always been an extraordinarily despondent sort of avenue: everybody, and everything, has been turning its back on it. Macy's and Gimbel's really face Broadway, not Sixth; the Empire State Building turned it back toward Sixth, as did the Public Library and the RCA Building. Radio City Music Hall faced Sixth only because it had no other place to face.

But during the past five years or so, a certain stretch of Sixth—roughly between 50th and 55th Streets—has exploded into spectacular activity (2). Some 8.4 million net square feet of new buildings now face the Avenue (plus a few million square feet of "hinterland" buildings to the west and the east). This activity was given its initial impetus by Time Inc., which had the corporate temerity to leap across Sixth (horrors!) to the *other* side of the tracks.

Others immediately followed suit: Equitable Life, J. C. Penney, Hilton, and so on. At the same time, the east side of Sixth was being mopped up by Sperry Rand, CSB, ABC, and others that were beating the real estate bushes in midtown Manhattan.

In short, the five blocks between 50 and 55th Streets, on Sixth Avenue, were being faced with new buildings costing some \$415 million, and built by corporations whose value amounts to a cool \$15 billion or so.

The urban form resulting from all this frantic effort has been almost completely deplorable.

The Sixth Avenue disaster is, perhaps, most vividly demonstrated by a comparison with the original Rockefeller Center (3); now 30 years old: at Rockefeller Center, a single, architectural unity was achieved (disregard the old-fashioned detailing); there was created a complete organism, an underground grid of pedestrian

concourses, truck supply routes, and other services—all tied closely into the existing subway network. And park spaces of a meaningful sort (sunken for protection against Manhattan's howling winds) were created, and their daily use is proof of their success.

Although a few of the recent architectural additions to the Center have violated some of its original forms, they have failed to destroy the fundamental concept. That concept contained only one flaw (already touched upon above): by turning three of its four "backs" (north, west and south) upon the rest of Manhattan, the Center became incapable of coherent expansion in those directions. And, unless somebody decides to tear down St. Patrick's (to celebrate the *next* "Landmark Year"), Rockefeller Center will be difficult to expand to the east also. Still, the old Center stands up remarkably well.

Compare all this to the new Sixth Avenue (4):

If there is any unity in materials and in detailing, it is the unity of the glass-and-metal curtain wall, generally picked to satisfy budgets rather than art. (There is only one exception—CBS—see pages 18 & 19). Indeed, the new Sixth Avenue looks a bit like a *collage* made up of pages from Sweet's Catalog (5).

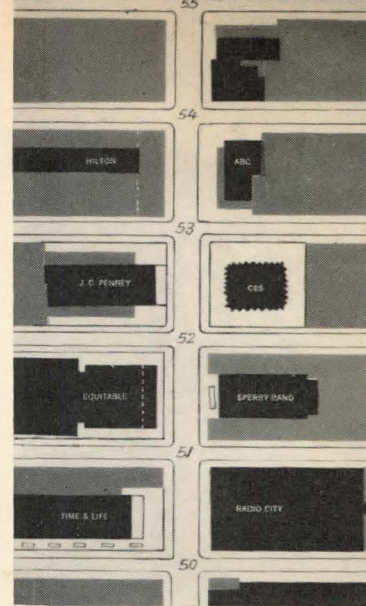
If there is any attempt to tie the buildings together above or below the ground, the evidence escapes the naked eye: indeed, the Time & Life Building turned its back, literally, upon all its future neighbors to the north. This was achieved by bringing out an 8-story wing to screen off the end of the Time & Life Plaza from uptown—apparently to "relate" the new building to Rockefeller Center proper. It is true that Time & Life is joined, underground, to the Rockefeller Center concourse. But this link, and the above-ground effort to tie it into the prestigious Center to its east (some limestone mixed with glass-and-metal), is tenuous at best.

As for the remaining lot of new buildings along Sixth, there has been no attempt to connect them below ground. It is true that an intrepid explorer, equipped with a sub-surface map and a bloodhound, might find his way from the Rockefeller Center Concourse into the basements under Equitable and Sperry Rand, but the chances are that he won't.

All this is especially sad since



1



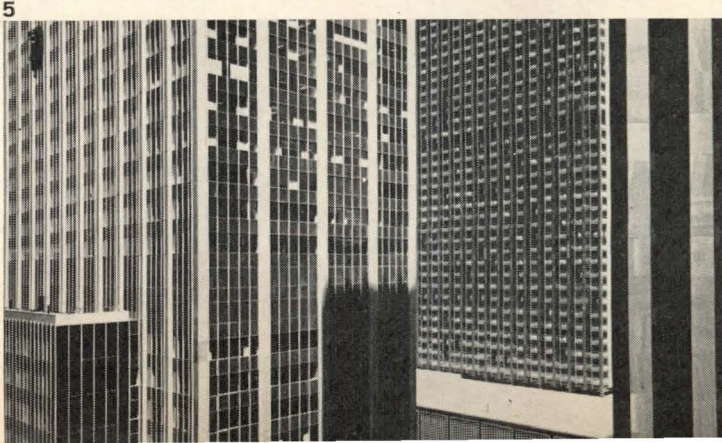
2



3



4



5



The spaces between  
the new buildings  
form a street without  
form, rhyme or reason

View looking south from  
Street: on the east side of  
avenue are ABC, CBS, Sp  
Rand and Rockefeller Cent  
the distance; on the west  
are the Hilton in the  
ground, then J.C. Penney  
Equitable Life.

the City of New York, lead by its mythical Mayor Kafka, has chosen these past few months to tear up all of Sixth north of 53rd Street, to build a subway spur under the Avenue. A section (6) through this new subway spur under the Avenue indicates quite clearly that a few very simple, structural changes would have enabled the Transit Authority to build not only the subway spur, but also a continuous pedestrian concourse (with occasional opening to the sky) from 53rd Street all the way up to Central Park South. This concourse could have provided pedestrian connections between all buildings along both sides of Sixth and saved pedestrians from the automobile stampede, above. In addition the City could have created not only a pedestrian concourse, but also one or two underground trucking routes to service the buildings on both sides of Sixth—like those at Rockefeller Center.

Alas, the various commissions of the City of New York apparently do not speak to each other, and nobody seems to speak to the mayor—and, so, nothing as coordinated as the system suggested above was possible.

Things up above grade are not much better: where the old Rockefeller Center grouped its buildings to create a variety of streets, malls, and a single landscaped, sunken plaza, the new Sixth Avenue is a chaotic agglomeration of piazzas, piazzettas, piazzettinas, arcades (7 & 8) and "courts." Where the motto of the Beaux Arts period was "when in doubt, do a boulevard," the motto of some of today's architects seems to be "when in doubt, do a plaza."

One of the things that makes the new Sixth Avenue and its largely ridiculous plazas such a depressing place to visit is the almost total absence of shops at street level. These new buildings have either fishbowl lobbies or fishbowl banks facing the sidewalk; vacantly, as you stare vacantly back (9 & 10).

The surfeit of plazas in New York, at the moment, is the result of a recent change in the old Zoning Resolution which did away with the ziguart cakemold of old, and substituted a bonus provision which permitted builders who created plazas for pedestrians to go up higher with their towers than those who filled their lots.

In theory, plaza-zoning seemed preferable to ziguurat-zoning: it

does, at least, provide a little more space for pedestrians, until such time, anyway, as the Highway Commission taketh the space away again by narrowing the sidewalks.

But plaza-zoning without some architectural control (self-control or, as in Rotterdam, city-control) is likely to produce a sadly shapeless succession of urban spaces. For a plaza is only a plaza so long as it is an alcove fully enclosed on three sides. This is especially true in an American grid-iron plan city, whose streets can turn into roaring wind-tunnels at a moment's notice; and when that happens, plazas with fountains—and what plaza lacks one?—turn into giant shower-baths for pedestrians.

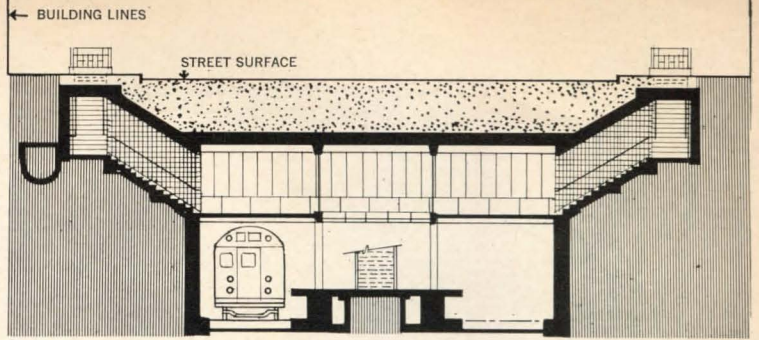
At Sixth Avenue plazas popped up at random and for no particular reason. The Time & Life plaza is nice on a sunny and windless day, when pedestrians sit on the broad edges of those tubs that decorate the plaza (11); the moment wind changes, or the tubs spill over, the sitters have to run for cover. Unlike Rockefeller Center, and like most new plazas on Sixth, this plaza has no benches.

But while the Time & Life plaza and the CBS plaza are fairly successful, some of the others border on the absurd: the elephant trap just outside the J. C. Penney Building (7), with what appears to be the trunk of a victim, desperately waving for help, sticking out of its center, is one of the sillier exercises in urban design to be found on the Avenue. And the niches and notches (12) that surround some of the other newcomers to Sixth Avenue do just one thing: they make the space formed between the buildings—and that space IS the city—look, in plan, like the grin on a Halloween pumpkin. Because of the unrelated setbacks, the niches and notches, the arcades that lead to nowhere (except for the Hilton arcade, which is a headroom-crunching *porte cochère* for whirling taxi-dervishes) because of all this lack of self- or city-discipline Sixth Avenue has ceased to be an avenue or even a street.

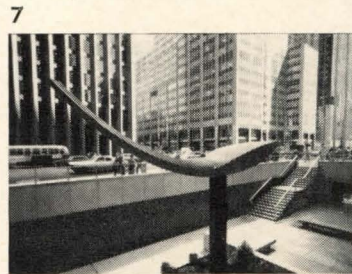
In terms of spatial form, it has become like one of those, sausage-shaped, toy-balloons that widen and contract indiscriminately (13).

In terms of integrated traffic and service systems, it is an opportunity lost through stupidity.

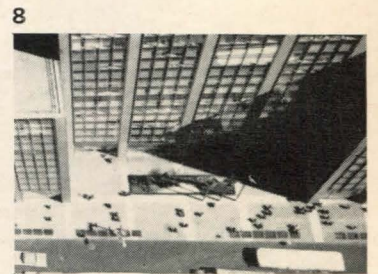
And in terms of surface esthetics, it has become a giant sample-case for a curtain-wall salesman.



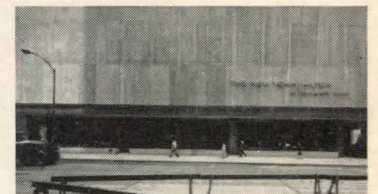
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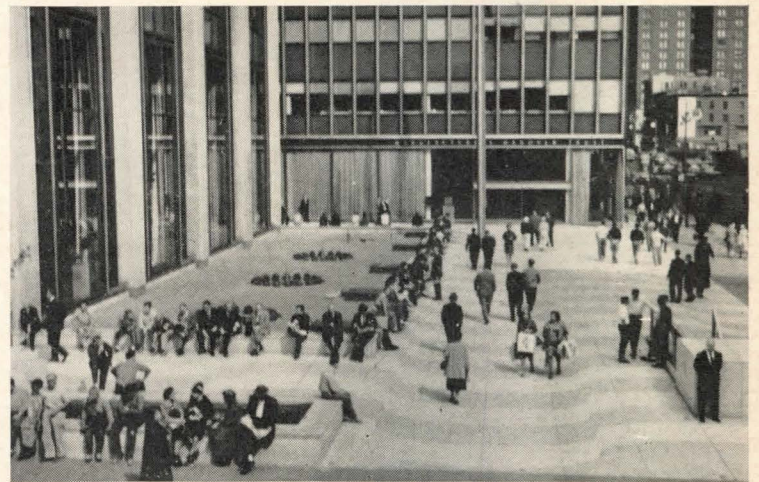
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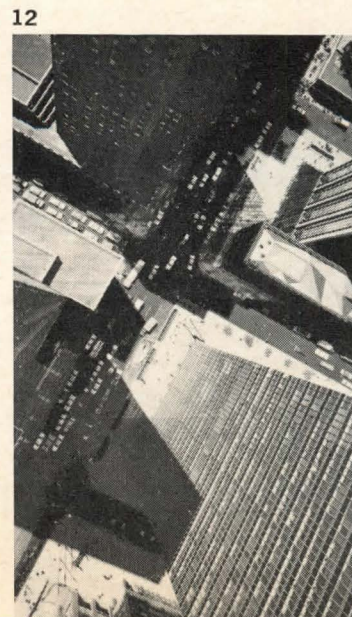
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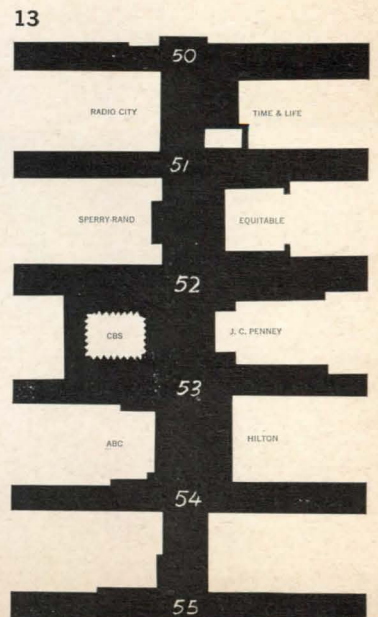
10



11



12



13

Set apart,  
CBS offers a mute  
but unmistakable  
commentary on the  
chaos all around it



Sixth Avenue boasts one example of what *might* have been—at least in one or two respects: that example is, of course, the new CBS Building, one of the last works of the late Eero Saarinen.

One may argue about the precise detailing of CBS; but there can be no argument over the fact that this is really a BUILDING, not speculative cubage wrapped in exterior wallpaper. It has strength, serenity, clarity, even color: for like the Seagram Building, CBS, sheathed in dark grey granite, will grow ever more urban as it ages and absorbs soot and grime and turns these to its advantage.

CBS also has presence: it really is a tower, free-standing, set into a slightly sunken plaza. It is, in its way, not unlike the Washington Monument—a single event, a fine piece of sculpture, freed from the surrounding chaos.

But what is it on Sixth Avenue? The answer, perhaps, is that it might have been something more if placed differently on its site.

The British critic, Reyner Banham, pointed out, some years ago, that Saarinen's London Embassy, by setting itself back from the sharply defined corners of Grosvenor Square, permitted the space of that square to "leak out" at the corners. The same flaw seems to exist at CBS, for, by setting the tower back from the building lines of the side streets and of the Avenue itself, Saarinen permitted the space of the Avenue to "leak out" toward the east. Might it not have been better to align the building with its three surrounding streets, and create a plaza *in back* of the tower?

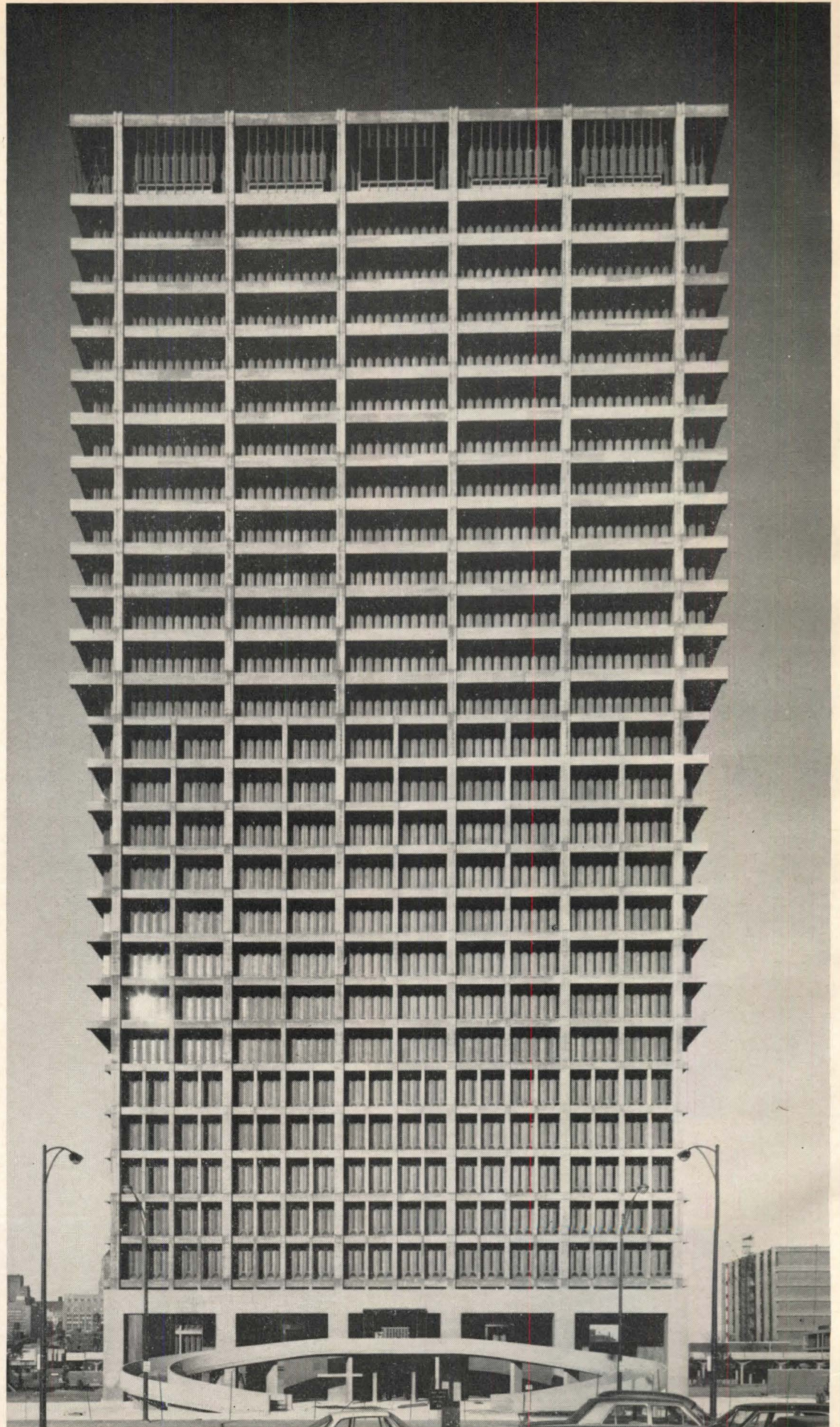
Elsewhere in this issue (page 52), Shadrach Woods suggests that the single building as an isolated event is no longer of significance to our time. We agree.

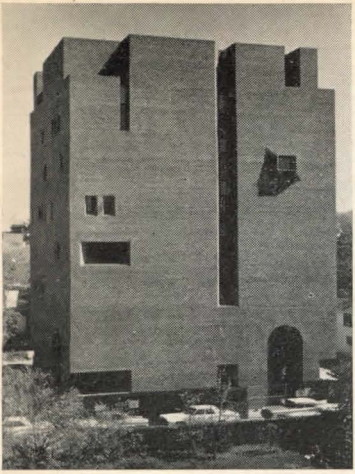
But in a country as backward, in terms of urban design *practice* as ours, it may still be important and necessary to build isolated monuments to clarity and to quality, especially in the midst of chaos and shoddiness. D.H. Lawrence once said (more or less) that the artist's function was to stand outside society and to take potshots at it. (He didn't say "potshots," but that's what he meant).

And so CBS—Eero Saarinen's final pot-shot—stands aloof, alone, serene. And by its very presence, it offers a mute but unmistakable commentary on the slaughter on Sixth Avenue, the slaughter that is our cities today.—PETER BLAKE.

All photographs by J. Alex Langley except No. 1: The New York Times; No. 3: Thomas Airviews; No. 4: Fairchild Aerial Surveys.

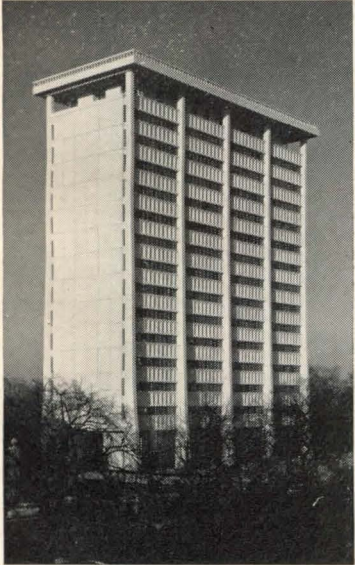






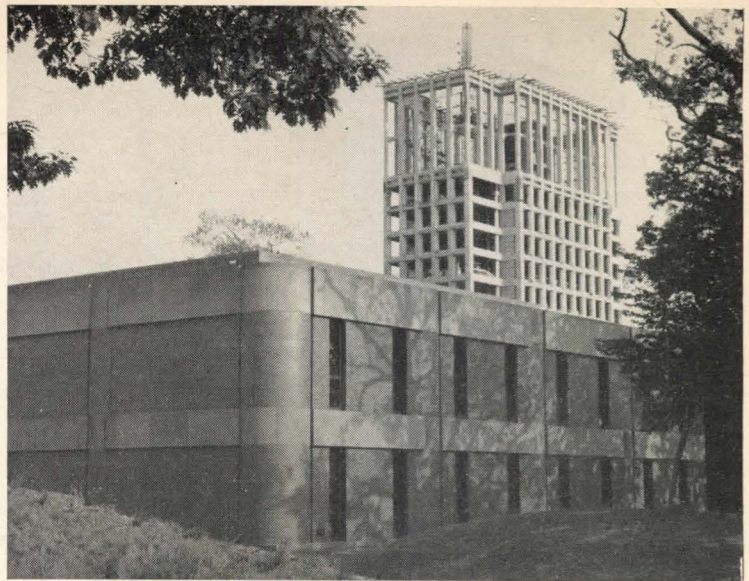
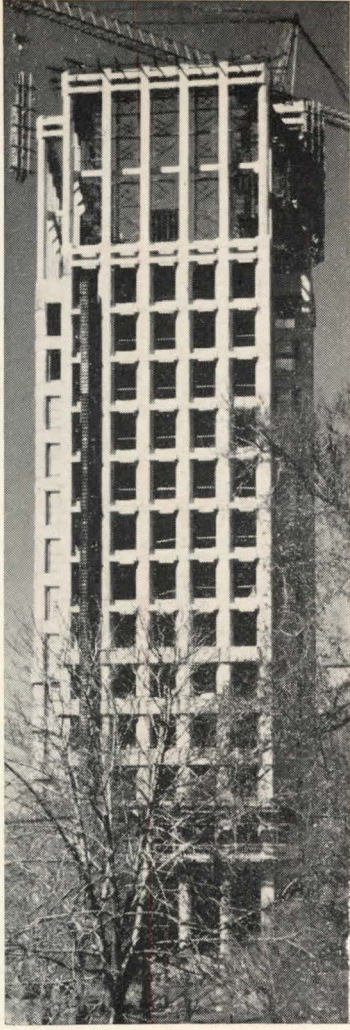
**ADVENTUROUS ADDITIONS**

Harvard's reputation as an adventurous and permissive client is reinforced by the two newest additions to its changing campus. Nearing completion is Larsen Hall by Caudill, Rowlett, Scott, a startlingly punctuated seven-story brick mass. Recently occupied was William James Hall by Minoru Yamasaki (below), the most self-assertive structure on Harvard's once gentle campus.



**ACADEMIC GIANT**

The hefty giant at left stands guard over the new Chicago campus of the University of Illinois, shown from the air in the April issue. The strikingly varied facade is a diagram of the tower's structural needs, according to Walter Netsch, the Skidmore, Owings & Merrill partner in charge of the project. Housing the university's administrative offices, the tower is a gateway as well as a landmark: the curving ramps in the foreground lead to an elevated walkway through the campus core.



**JOHNSON'S SKYLINE**

Philip Johnson has become sole owner of the New Haven skyline. His Kline Science Center tower at Yale is not only the city's tallest building, but gains additional prominence by being sited on a knoll. At the moment, the tower's skeleton seems almost delicate. In its final form, however, it will have much of the same fortress-like character as do the earlier Johnson buildings which are its neighbors: the Kline geology laboratories down the hill, and the recently completed chemistry wing

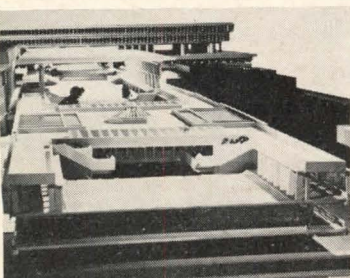
shown in the foreground of the photo above. Its columns will be stout and rounded, and its cladding will be dark iron-spot brick.



**CASCADING UNITS**

The first units of the new Simon Fraser University, by Architects Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey, will be in a single, multi-level concrete structure stretched along the top of Burnaby Mountain in British Columbia. Erickson and Massey's competition-winning scheme has other build-

ings cascading down the mountain's slope from this central concrete spine. The university, scheduled to open this fall, eventually will accommodate 18,000 students on its 1200-acre campus.

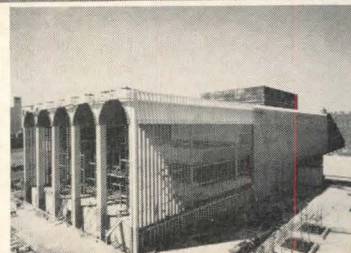




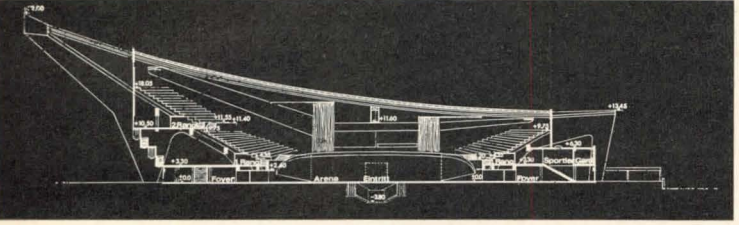
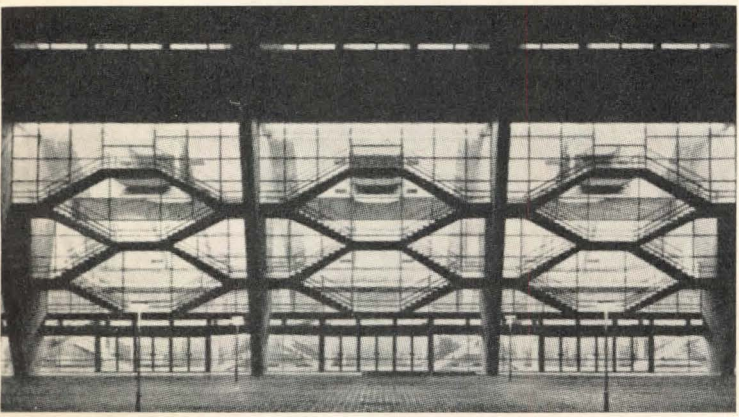
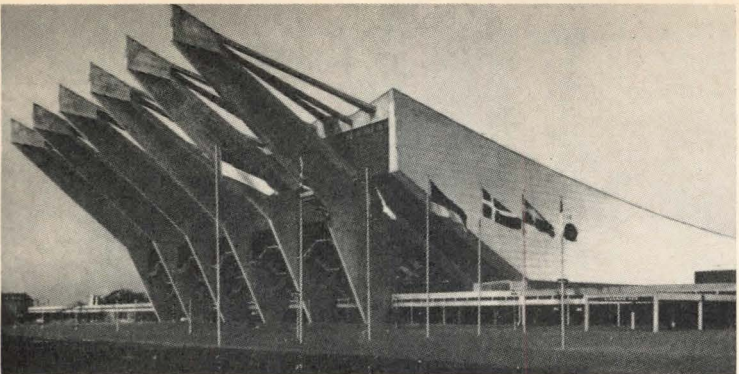
**PLUGGING GAPS**

New York's Lincoln Center, also viewed from above in April, now can be seen as a substantially completed composition. The Vivian Beaumont Theater and Library and Museum of Performing Arts—all a single building, the handsome one in the top photo—is

preparing for a fall opening. The Center's main plaza is now enclosed, the last gap having been plugged by the arches of the new Metropolitan Opera House, opening in 1966. The Met is by Wallace K. Harrison, the Beaumont by Eero Saarinen & Associates, the Library-Museum by SOM.

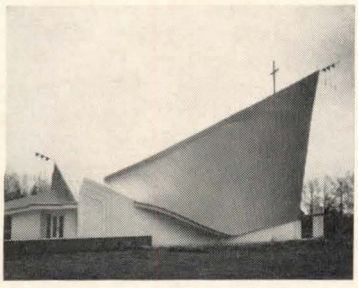
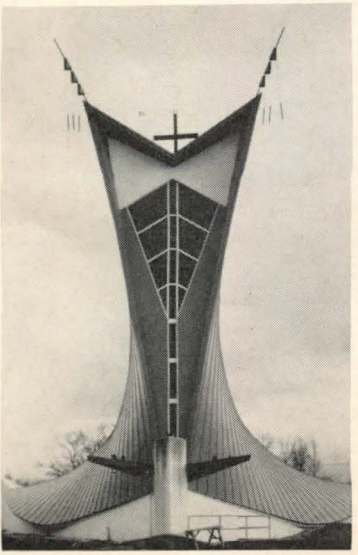




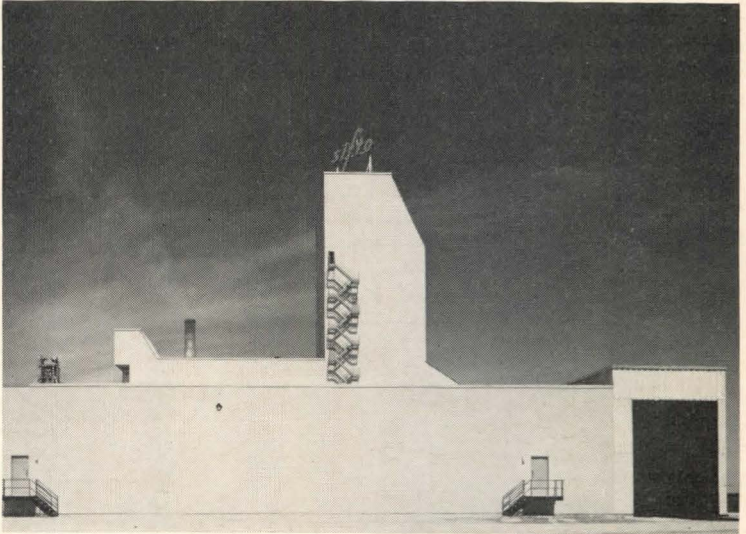


**GERMAN GYMNASTICS**  
 Sharply pointed outriggers (top), and silhouetted stairs (center) looking like a giant beehive, give the *Sportpalast* in Bremen, Germany, a powerful structural character. The outriggers, 100 feet high at one end and 45 at the other,

serve both as anchors for the suspended, aluminum roof and as supports for the bleacher tiers inside (section, above). The design, by Roland Rainer of Wien, Austria, with the late Max Säume and Günter Hafemann of Bremen, won an international competition.

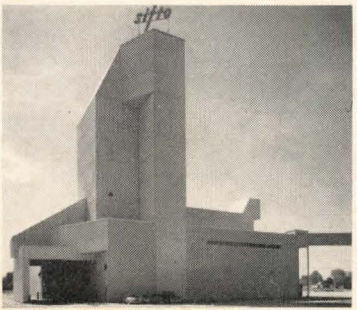


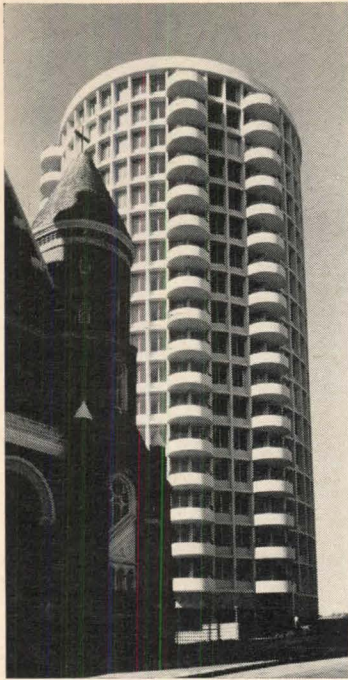
**IMAGERY UNCHAINED**  
 This small church in Rocky Point, N.Y., suggests a number of similes, both biological and aeronautical, all of which are best left unstated. The spire is supported by reinforced concrete buttresses and roofed in exposed wood trusses. The church was designed by Architect Edward W. Slater.



**CANADIAN CAPERS**  
 The Toronto-based firm of John B. Parkin Associates, architects and engineers, is busy studding the Canadian landscape with boldly handsome structures serving a variety of functions. Two notable examples are the control tower at Toronto International Airport (top) and the Sifto salt mill and warehouse at Goderich, Ontario

(above and below left). The airport tower's control cab is elevated 100 feet on three massive concrete legs which house the duct, stair and elevator shafts. Sifto's irregular form is the outward expression of its industrial flow pattern, from screening to packaging to shipping. It is a particularly effective piece of industrial sculpture.





**CIRCULAR COMPARISON**

A comparison between Chicago's Marina City and San Francisco's new "Carillon" (above) is inevitable, but Architect Donald Powers Smith, of Archistructure Inc., points out that design began on the 19-story co-op "over a year before we heard of Marina Towers." The cleanly lined Carillon contains 103 wedge-shaped apartments, each with a balcony, and a ground-floor community room.



**JUDGMENT IN NEW JERSEY**

This is the new office and laboratory center for the New Jersey Departments of Health and Agriculture at Trenton; Alfred Clauss, architect. It was judged the state's "outstanding concrete construction completed in 1964" by the Portland Cement Association.

*PHOTOGRAPHS: Pages 20, 24, 25; Orlando Cabanban. Page 21: Bruce Cunningham-Werdnigg, Erickson-Massey. Page 22: Bob Serating. Page 23: Hermann Ohlsen, Gil Amiaga, Panda, H.R. Jowett.*



**CHICAGO STANDOFF**

The final ground-level look at an April aerial subject involves a return to Chicago. Facing each other across Washington Street, at the intersection of Dearborn, are two nearly completed towers of similar height but quite different design: the 37-story Brunswick Building by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (above) and the 31-story Civic Center by C. F. Murphy Associates with SOM and Loeb, Schlossman & Bennett (right). Brunswick is a trim, travertine-

faced concrete tower distinguished chiefly by the expression of the great base girder on which its bearing mullions rest. The Civic Center is all metal—russet-colored, controlled-corrosion steel—with 48 by 87 foot bays. It occupies only a third of its site, leaving the wide plaza shown in part below.





# Good Grief! Now they're knocking Good Taste!

In the past six weeks, the FORUM has unearthed increasing evidence of an alarmingly widespread conspiracy against good taste. The evidence, moreover, has been found in some unexpected places:

—The Philadelphia chapter of the American Institute of Architects conducted a multi-disciplinary seminar entitled "Who Are the Philistines?" The result was an outright denigration of good taste by some speakers coupled with a shocking whitewash of Philistinism on the part of others, which the assembled architectural audience failed to rebut.

—The generally reliable *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* gave space to an article extolling weekly magazines, lace curtains, pink plaster geese on chimneys, the Beatles, and even Coventry Cathedral, which, of course, has been soundly put down by all the best British critics. At the same time, the author wrote disparagingly of culture, and suggested that architects have something to learn from the designers of detergent packages.

—The former editor of the FORUM, we are pained to report, told a group of impressionable students at the Harvard Graduate School of Design that "we must get along with popular taste as it is," and referred not unkindly to automobiles and signboards.

—Finally, and perhaps most jolting of all, a number of the participants in Harvard's annual Urban Design Conference last month questioned the relevance of the architect's role as arbiter of good taste in buildings. One speaker (an architect himself!) went so far as to claim that the architect's responsibility "transcends the satisfaction of himself or of the individual client."

The significance of this conspiracy is not to be underestimated,

as the Harvard conference clearly showed. For if the dissidents should prevail, more and more architects could be drawn from their standard-setting position at the edges of urban development into all the messy and complicated problems at the center.

## Up with Philistinism!

The Philadelphia seminar on Philistines started well enough, with a showing of the kind of slides of urban disorder which architects use to demonstrate where unguided public taste can lead. Dr. Rex Clements, an official of the United Presbyterian Church, expertly defined Philistines as "people who put their faith in money and their trust in war; people who were uninterested in culture, if not, indeed, antagonistic to it."

But then Dr. Nicholas Padis, a physician, said that the seminar theme indicated "a state of psychosomatic confusion, if not a state of guilt, in the ranks of present-day architecture." The continued existence of Philistines, said Dr. Padis, seems to be "a disturbing factor to the mental and physical health of modern architecture."

Worse yet, Dr. E. Digby Baltzell, an author and University of Pennsylvania sociologist, apparently liked the pictures! He found in them "a tremendous amount of spontaneity . . . self expression, even if it was chaotic." He was reminded of a remark by a Russian sociologist: "We social scientists and city planners are important because there is no spontaneity in our culture and everything has to be planned."

Dr. Baltzell claimed there was a similar "drive for totalitarianism" in American society, "a yearning for authority and for order . . . a desire for planning and for

doing away with bad taste." The pictures, he said, had "all the terrible qualities of democracy, all the terrible qualities of bad taste, and yet they had all the qualities of a civilization that is also creative. I think it is no accident that in America we are leading architecture, and we are leading in vulgarity at the same time."

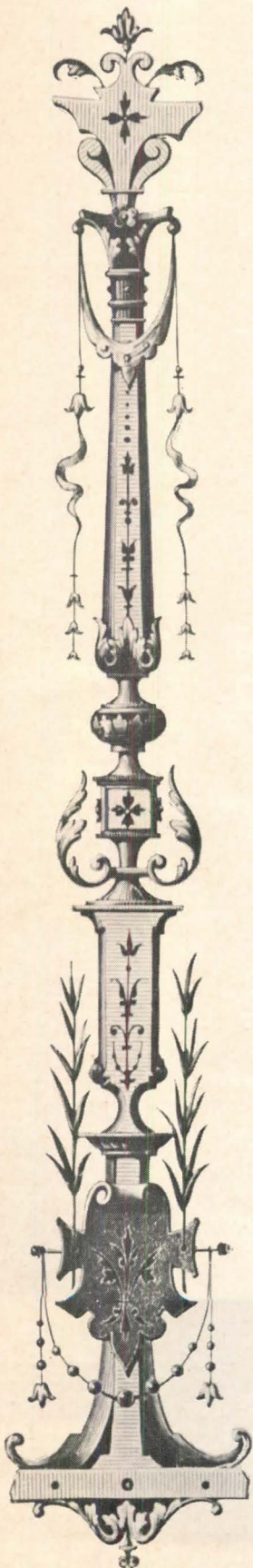
As if this glorification of vulgarity weren't enough, Dr. Evan Turner, director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, took as his theme "the incredible danger of good taste." Said Dr. Turner, "More harm is done in the name of good taste to the cause of intelligence and virtue in our society than any other single thing. We want originality and enterprise . . . we don't want that emasculating dominance of good taste right across the board."

## Pop architecture

The other side of the coin, the defense of popular taste, was the theme of both Douglas Haskell's Harvard lecture and the *RIBA Journal* article, thus demonstrating the international impact of the conspiracy.

The *Journal* article, written by Geoffrey Broadbent, and illustrated by the photo at right, was titled "Towards a Pop Architecture," of all things. Broadbent took pains to point out that he was not talking in terms of Pop Art ("all very self-conscious, and it's not real Pop at all") but the kind of Pop that sells.

Sometimes, Broadbent wrote, real Pop occurs when "a highly skilled operator assesses the mass demand and then makes himself very rich by catering to it. The architectural profession has something called 'analysis of user requirements' which ought to do the same for us, only we aren't very thorough about it.



"More often," Broadbent continued, "the smooth operator of the Pop world is a very ordinary person indeed, who identifies himself extraordinarily closely with the customers and pleases them enormously because all the time he is really pleasing himself. This could never happen in architecture because as a profession, we pride ourselves on our cultured 'otherness'... We sneer at the pink-footed pot geese on suburban chimney breasts and talk about 'taste' and 'refinement.'"

Broadbent had only begun. "Always at the back of the argument," he said, "is the arrogant assumption that as Pop is the antithesis of highbrow, then it must be wrong, that the whole point of being 'cultured' is to have none of it. . . . There will always be those who bemoan the 'lowering of standards' when cultural barriers are removed. In reality, they bemoan the fact that their own positions as exclusive arbiters of taste have been overwhelmed. The game becomes more difficult when you must not only love the highest, because it is known to be good, but also know enough about Pop to be able to distinguish between good and bad."

"Architects," said Broadbent,

"have a lot to learn from the applied psychologists employed by the cynical manipulators. If the color of a detergent package is known to encourage impulse purchasing, how much more does the color of a wall affect the well-being of those who live with it? . . . Too many 'cultured' people believe it rather shameful to try and understand basic human motives and desires in this way. They are usually the ones who prefer to spend their leisure hours in splendid quietude—and then have the arrogance to plan for other people's mass needs."

Well!

#### The public as partner

Douglas Haskell was somewhat less outrageous in his Harvard lecture, but his message was no less distressing to those who place some value on refinement. He took the defense of popular taste a step further, in fact, by relating it to the architect's increased concern with the broad problems of the environment.

"The minute architects begin to talk about architecture as the art of all physical surroundings made or controlled by man," said Haskell, "why, then besides getting everything that there is into archi-

ture, you get everybody that there is, too . . . We have laid down a claim on everybody's habitat, and so we get everybody as our architectural associate . . . Popular action goes confidently on the attack, and the attack does not spare all the supposedly 'completed' masterpieces like those urban squares we pin up in our drafting rooms.

"Nor are our new partners just a simile when it comes to our new creation," Haskell went on. "They step into it and all over it. They act as our clients, our contractors, our labor force; our realtors, our lenders, the insurers of our lenders; they act as our building inspectors, fire marshals, zoners, and FHA inspectors. They are our governors, legislators, and mayors.

"And beyond all this, the public has one more mask that it wears: that of mass consumer. In view of the massive impact of popular taste, it is no wonder that the architectural profession goes in for a lot of escape and evasion."

Automobiles, signboards, detached suburban houses, even junkyards will be with us for some time to come, Haskell told the students. If these things represent popular taste, then "we shall have to understand it well enough to

do something nice with it—and not only in spite of it.

"To sum up," he said, "when the spokesmanship of architecture declares—as it must—that all man-made surroundings must be considered as a setting and as a statement of human aims, as architecture, then a new obligation falls upon the architect. He must discard from his esthetic approach those elements that are nothing but snobbery in disguise, and must take up seriously with the neighbors. This does not mean that he accepts every illiterate standard as his own, but it does involve serious and considerate analysis of the neighbors' desires."

In view of Mr. Haskell's connection with the FORUM, we hesitate to suggest that he is a conscious member of the anti-taste conspiracy, but these words make him at the very least a fellow traveler.

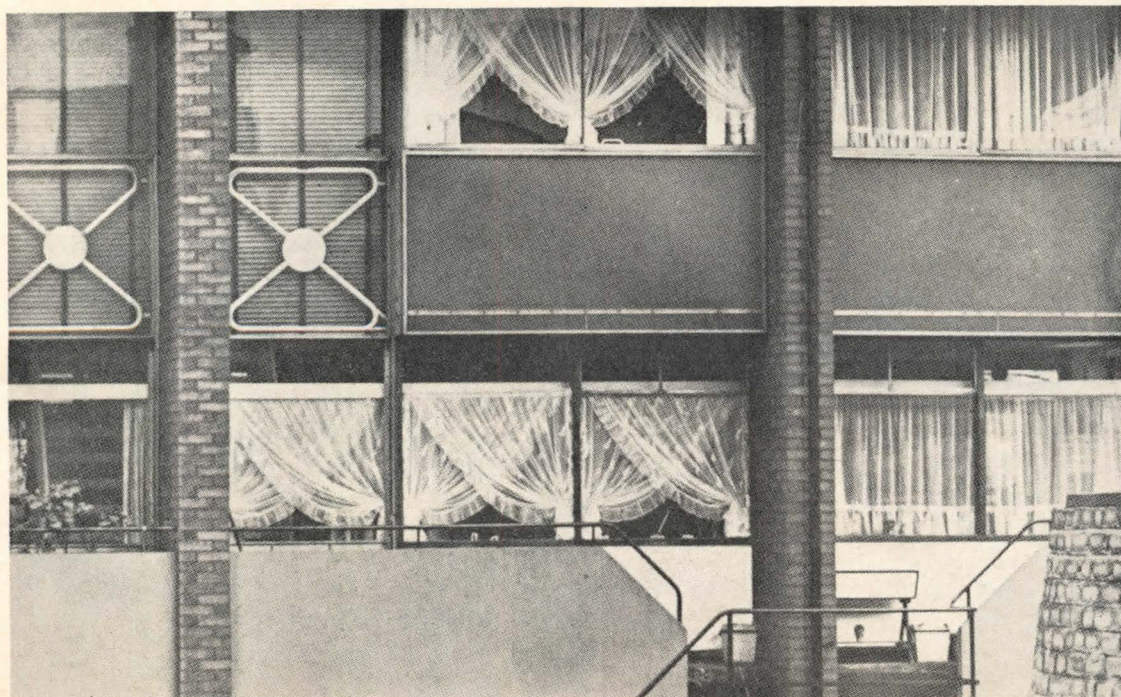
#### Unrest at Harvard, too

If one were to seek a last bastion of good taste, surely one would look first to the red brick and foliage of the Harvard University campus. That is why the goings on at this year's Harvard urban design conference were so unsettling.

Ostensibly, the conference was to be about education for urban design, which is a perfectly respectable theme. For the most part, however, the speakers insisted on talking about such depressing matters as the economic problems, the political problems, and especially the social problems of the city. Some of them seemed to be saying, in fact, that these problems were more pressing than the need to impose some acceptable standards of order and taste on the urban scene.

Take the young New York architect Richard Hatch, for example. Hatch is executive director of an organization called ARCH—the Architects Renewal Committee in Harlem—which should have been adequate warning to the Conference sponsors.

Hatch began by questioning the whole basis of urban design. Perhaps the schools are talking about creating urban designers instead of architects "because architects have done so little to create the environment that we all want,"



Hatch opined. "But I'm not convinced that planning five or six buildings at a time instead of one is the answer to the problems that face us. The problems really don't lie in the formal means of treating buildings in groups, but in our inability to respond to the needs of people who live in the central city—our inability to respond to the needs of the poor."

Hatch suggested that graduates of architectural schools be required to do "clinical work, to go into the neighborhoods of the poor and work with them as some lawyers and legal aid societies do," and that architects take a Hippocratic oath "to make it impossible for them to put up some of the public housing structures they have in the past or to work for certain kinds of clients."

"It is basically a question of priorities," Hatch said. The ordering of the environment "is extremely important, but it's not the immediate priority. It's not even the thing which architects should apply themselves to at this time." The pressure to create public programs "giving us as urban designers the tools to make an environment worthy of man" must come from the mass of city dwellers, from whom all meaningful political pressure comes. It is the job of urban designers to stimulate this pressure, Hatch said, "to become the determiners of policy."

#### The future architect

If Hatch wants to make street-corner radicals out of architects, Robert L. Geddes, the new dean of the Princeton school of architecture, apparently wants to turn them into scientists of some sort. It is hard to say which is the more dangerous thought.

"Architects have isolated themselves from the evolution of the future," Geddes bluntly told the Harvard conference. "They still support the romantic 19th century idea that each architect should only express his own autonomous personality, giving personal 'character' to each work . . . The attempt to characterize each kind of building in its own way can only be justified if the building is a meaningful part of a larger context. Otherwise, it is a kind of

self-love, in which every building is merely an advertisement for itself."

Geddes blamed "the present chaos" on the architect, the client and the public. "The client," he said, "often defines the building tasks on the basis of narrow and short-term interests. The public often discovers too late that actions in one direction destroy those in other directions. The architect often indulges in an arbitrary play with shapes, without the necessary understanding of the cultural tasks, of the meaning of buildings, or of the planning order.

"The chaos," he continued, "means that architects must basically reorganize their work, and must demand more of themselves. The architect must understand that his responsibility transcends the satisfaction of himself or of the individual client. The functional and symbolic order he should create does not allow his task to be seen in isolation."

In his suggestions for the reorganization of the architectural process, Geddes sounded suspiciously like a member of the Space Age branch of the anti-good-taste conspiracy. He advocated things like "scientific method" and "systems theory," and all too obviously skirted around the use of the term "computer."

"The job of a designer," he said, "is to capture forces that form our society, and to give form to these forces. The forces can be dealt with in a systematic way, by a systems analysis of the needs and of architecture itself. We can learn to make 'public' the intuitions that create the conceptual model, the form, and we can learn how to minimize error by developing techniques of evaluating our designs after-the-fact. We can increase the likelihood of making correct hunches, better intuitions. The designer must know coherent systems of need, systems of forces that form the real world.

"We must accept the complexities of the world about us," he went on, "and seek more powerful decision systems as a basis for design. We are learning something of the powerful tools for ordering knowledge, and we are learning

how to reconcile the growth of information and the making of judgments. The future architect is very much in need of direct experience in scientific method, as well as deep awareness of the humanistic roots of his culture."

#### Wait 'til next year

Fortunately, the present-day architect was not without his defenders at the Harvard conference. One was Edmund N. Bacon, executive director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, who was obviously irritated at the way things had gone.

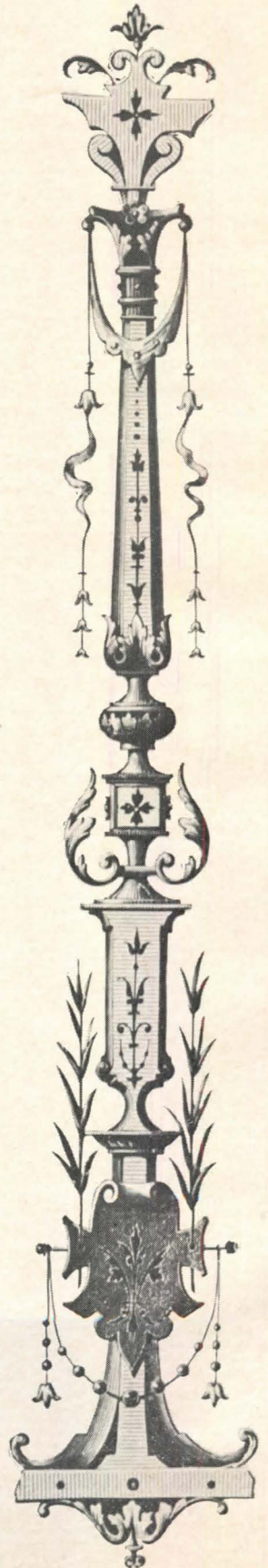
"A political scientist has said we must know about political science; a systems analyst has told us we must know systems analysis; a handmaiden of private enterprise has told us we must learn about handmaidenship of private enterprise," Bacon said. "What we ought to teach is design!"

"The only way the design profession will have the slightest effectiveness is for people with commitment to take full responsibility for everything that happens on any given parcel of land," Bacon declared. "This is not the quintessence of arrogance—this is the quintessence of humility." Bacon did not expand on this remark, but it certainly proved that *he* was on the side of taste.

José Luis Sert, dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design, clearly indicated that he was not entirely pleased with the proceedings either. "The visual side of design was not given enough emphasis in this conference," Sert said flatly. "I hope we can give it more next year."

Sert then addressed himself to the students in the audience. "Don't consider these observations too seriously," he said of the conference discussion. "Do not let them curtail your own impulses, your ideas of design, your wish to work and produce and create."

The conference can be thus dismissed, but not the entire anti-good-taste conspiracy. Architects, now that they are alerted to the conspiracy, cannot dismiss it. They can guard against it, fight it, or even—if *that's* the way they want to be—join it and face all the complications that such a rash act would entail. —DONALD CANTY





## **CENTURIES BEFORE THE SPANIARDS CAME,**

before the first colonists landed to the north, civilizations flourished in the regions that were to become Latin America. Centuries ago these civilizations waned, but they left behind persistent traditions and impressive ruins. It would be an exaggeration to say that this heritage has been influential in shaping the civilizations that followed: the European explorers, conquerors, and immigrants have had much greater impact on the present societies—and the current architecture—of the Americas. But an increasing number of architects, from both the north and the south, have been seeking inspiration in the ancient cities of the Western Hemisphere. On the occasion of the XI Pan American Congress of Architects, meeting this month in Washington, the FORUM presents a portfolio of pre-Columbian architecture with photos and commentary by **VICTOR LUNDY, AIA.**



**MACHU PICCHU** in Peru is enveloped by clouds, 8400 feet in the sky. Looking out from it across the fantastic terrain, one understands how the whole city could have remained undiscovered for nearly four centuries after the Spaniards occupied Cuzco, only 50 miles away. The first impression of the architecture here is almost disappointing. But then one becomes absorbed in the stonework—the patterns of joinery, the delicate relief of surfaces. They must have grown out of the innocent involvement of artisans—turning weaknesses and faults in the material into meaningful form. The decay of the roofs has left the stonework exposed to both sky and setting.





the gray granite one can see hues of violet, purple, and earth colors, overlaid with the blues and siennas of lichen. When the stone is wet, the colors become more vivid. The culmination of a visit to Machu Picchu is the sun observatory at the uppermost point in the city (facing page), most of it carved out of the living rock. Its scientific meaning may be lost today, but its meaning as sculptured survives. Like many ruins, these have been helped by the nature and time—both subtle sculptors. But the hand of man can be seen on them, too. In the details of its ancient walls Machu Picchu transmits the timeless sculptural messages of its stoneworkers.

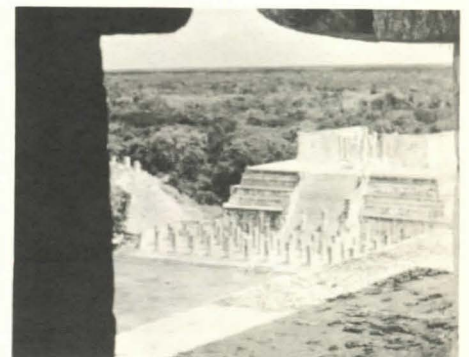




**CHICHEN ITZA** in Mexico is a place of stone masses, not of enclosed spaces. Its drama is in the *scale and imagery* of these masses and in the bold way they reach vertically so that the Mayans could rise above the surrounding jungle. Their arrangement seems random at first, but as one wanders among them purposeful vistas and avenues of approach become evident. Climbing up on any of the pyramids is a revelation; the higher one goes, the more significant relationships unfold. The major structures here date from the late tenth century and show strong Toltec influences superimposed on Mayan traditions. The result may lack refinement and consistency,



But it shows an almost brutal, hybrid vitality. The Pyramid of Kukulkan (facing page), which dominates the scene, is surfaced with roughly cut dark gray stone—very masculine in its effect. Proportional reduction of the surface pattern as the terraces rise makes the over-all height (75 feet) hard to judge, creating an illusion of indefinitely greater height. The lower pyramid is known as the Temple of the Warriors (right); less brutally sculptured. It culminates in a superb colonnade (above) whose rectangular piers are covered with battle scenes in delicate relief. Although originally sheltered by a roof, these reliefs respond powerfully to the Yucatan sunlight.

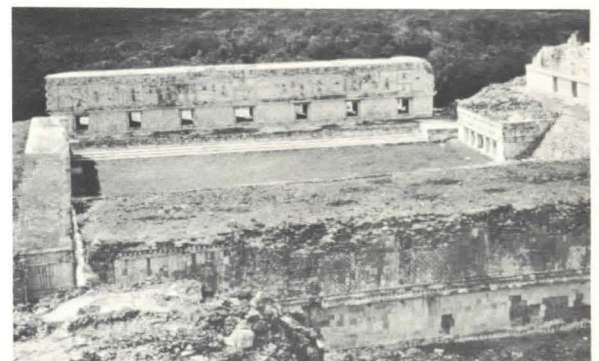


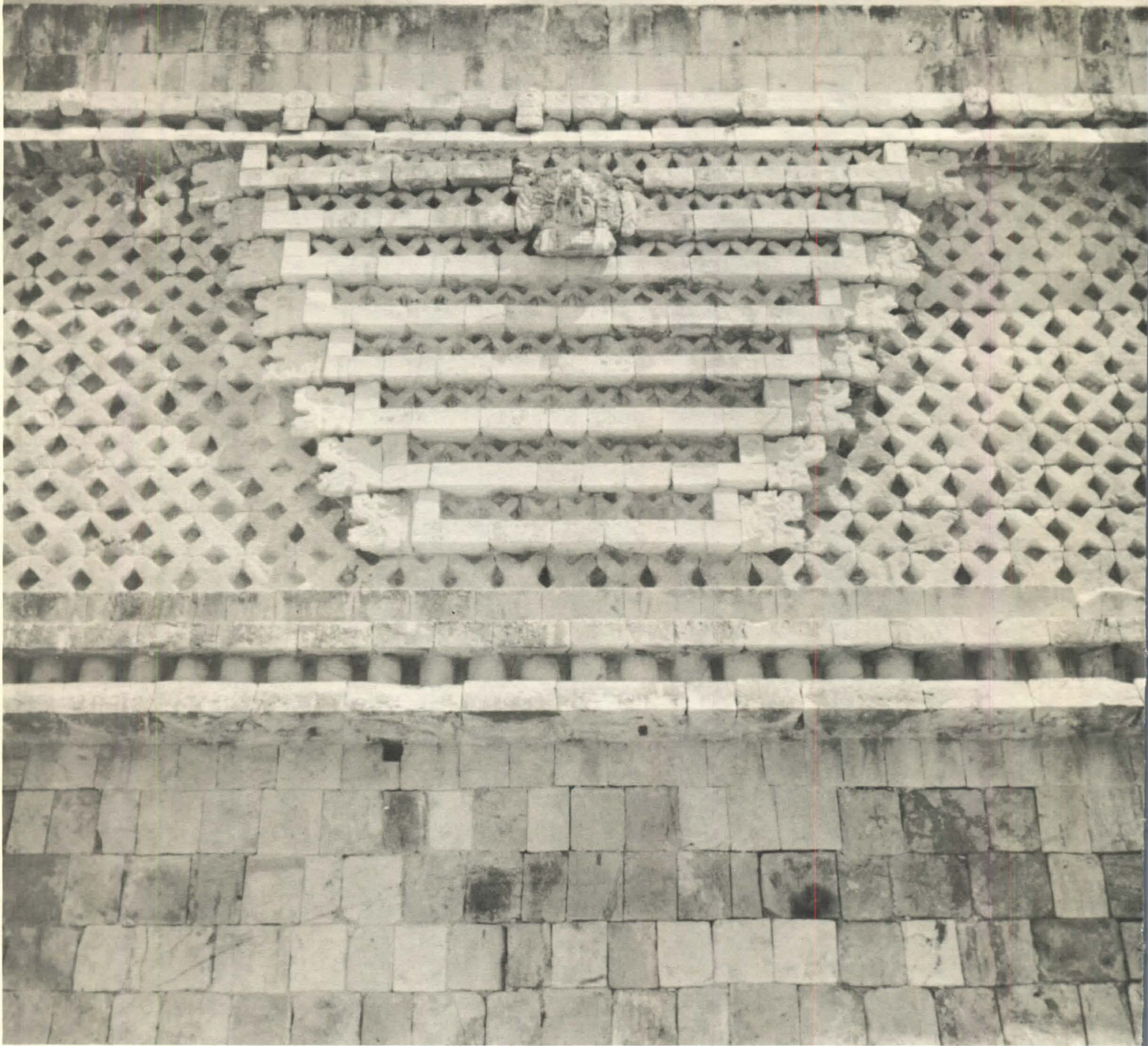


**UXMAL** in Mexico is situated on a group of hillocks—leveled to create platforms—rising above a carpet of treetops that stretches to the horizon on all sides. These platforms are windswept and sun-drenched, and here is an almost constant movement of clouds. One end of a building may be brilliantly lighted as a violet shadow races toward it from the other end. Most of the buildings here are contemporary with those at Chichen Itza, but very different in style. Their simple forms and consistent detailing represent the Neoclassical Mayan approach, with hardly any Toltec influence. The Nunnery Quadrangle (far right) is a *spatial sculpture of exquisite*



proportion and detail. Four buildings at varying elevations surround its bright green courtyard. The north building is the highest and is flanked by neighbors at equal heights to the west (above) and east (following page). The south building is set low so that one can look over it to the Palace of the Governors, rising from a higher platform in the distance (facing page). Each of the buildings has a highly sculptured frieze above a simple base that is punctured by dark entries. The reliefs are composed of innumerable small stones—the stone here vivid white with overtones of pink and amber. These sculptured bands are adjusted to the terrain

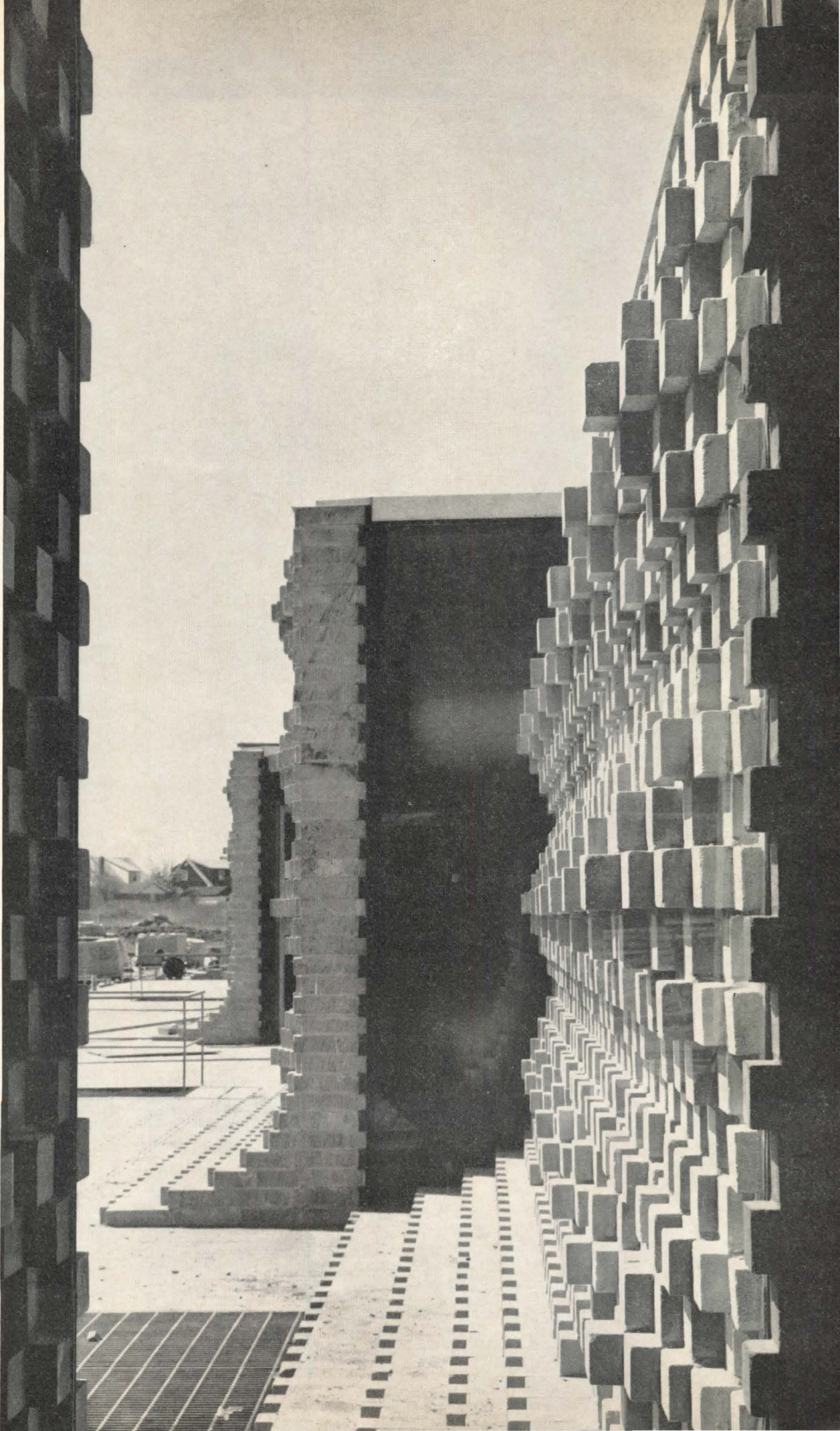


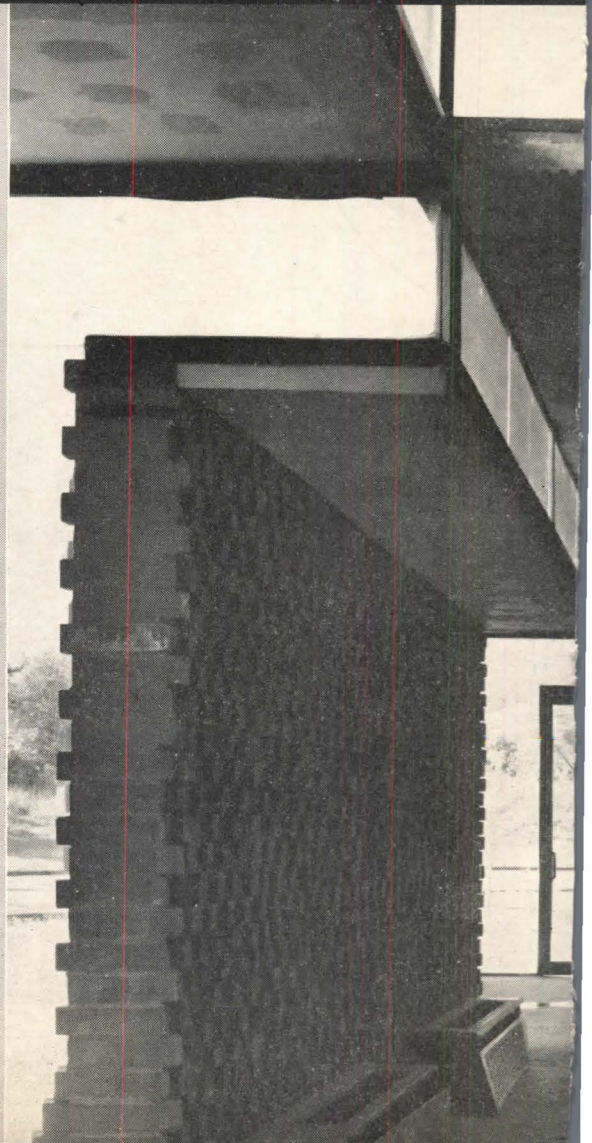
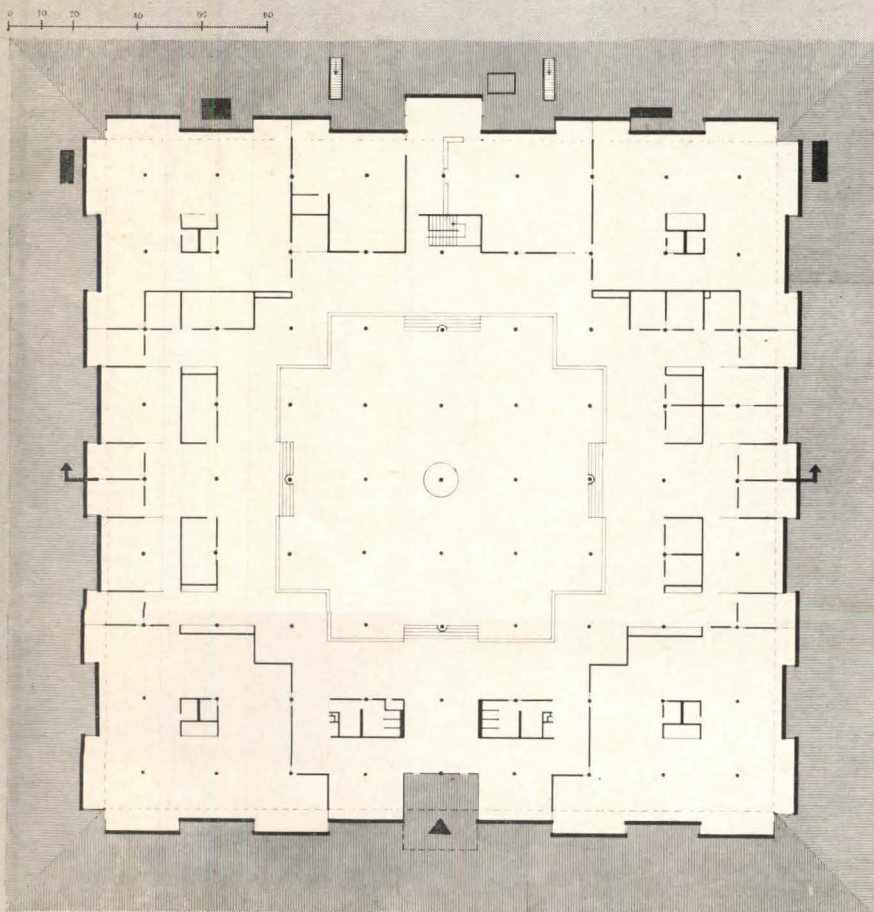
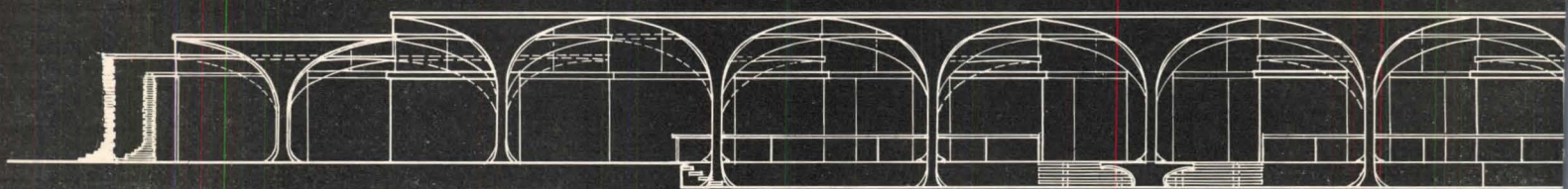
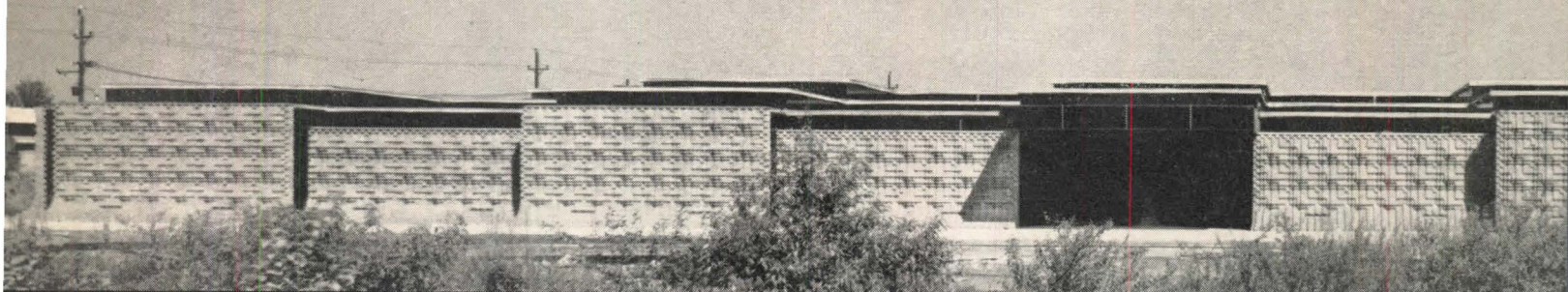


so that the frieze of one building lines up with the base of its higher neighbor—maintaining a *continuity* or horizontal lines around the quadrangle. As at Chichen Itza, the interior spaces are insignificant, limited by the span of the Mayan corbeled arch. Walking into one of the dark cubicles, one sets loose hordes of little bats that flit around in the bright sunlight, then dart back in when the intrusion passes. No matter what the weather conditions, the walls at Uxmal are receptive to the light cast on them. In strong sunlight, under overcast skies, with cloud shadows moving across them, or in the rain, these facades remain alive and beautiful.

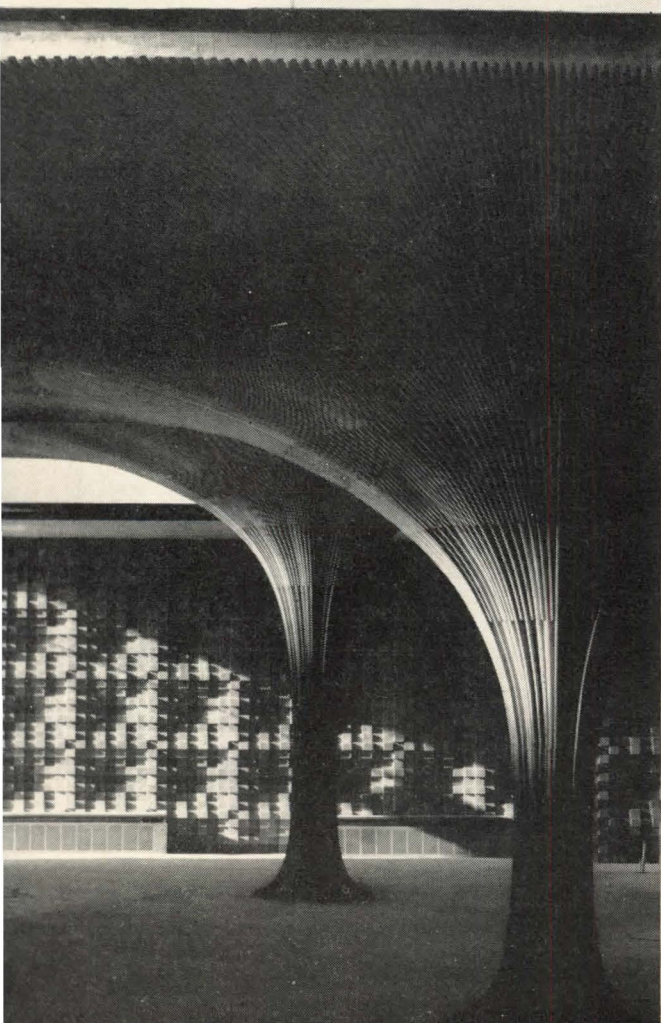
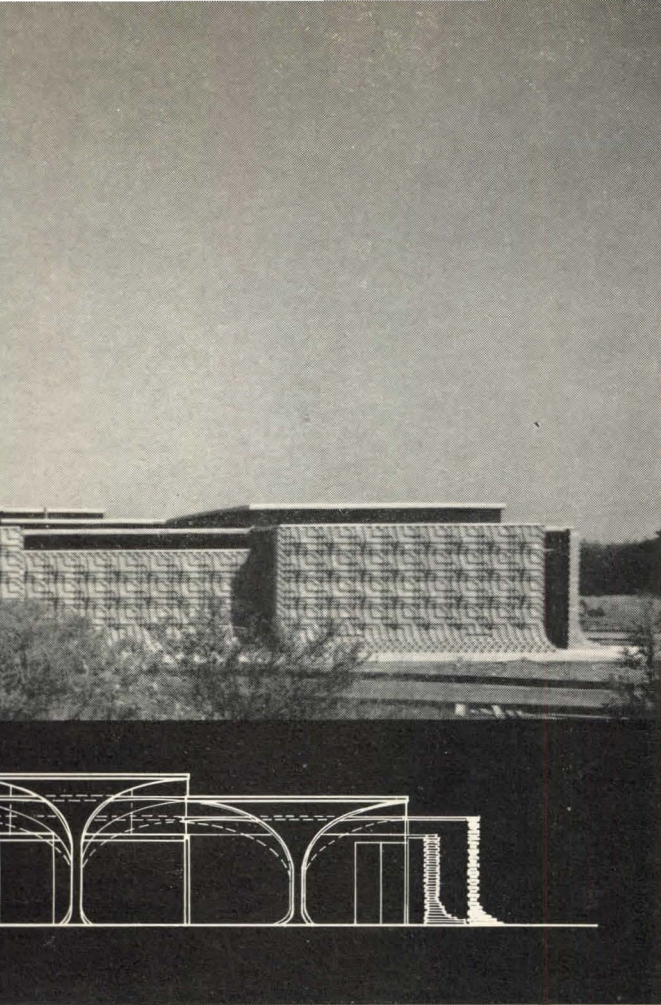


**FROM  
UXMAL  
TO  
IBM**









**VICTOR LUNDY** belongs to a generation of American architects that has returned to historical example as a source of inspiration—not to the Carcassones and Seviles of their professional grandfathers, but to Mykonos, Isfahan, and Kanarak. From his own wide travels, Lundy has drawn convictions about the virtues of heroic scale and “purposeful beauty.”

His nearly completed branch office for IBM on the Garden State Parkway at Cranford, New Jersey, evokes the spirit of Uxmal (page 35), the apparent source of its monumental symmetry and its wall reliefs.

But the similarity is only wall deep—and even the wall reliefs here are different: repetitive patterns in structural concrete block, rather than applied stone mosaics as at Uxmal. Concealed behind the walls is a thicket of poured concrete structural “trees” reminiscent of nothing so much as Lundy’s own past work. The trees are low over the small rooms along the perimeter (left) and rise in steps to the height of the broad central space (next page).

The ups and downs of the 22-foot-square trees are echoed in the ins and outs of the 22-foot wall segments to produce corresponding “erenellations” in both section and plan. The gaps left by these dislocations are filled in with bronze-tinted glass to form the building’s only windows. The result may be the world’s most complicated one-story office building.

Functionally, IBM branch offices are standardized outposts of the computer empire. Each one is programmed to start with an area of at least 25,000 square feet and expand by stages to 50,000 square feet, after which a new branch will be split off. Often, as in this case, the buildings are designed to IBM’s requirements, but owned by others. The company’s design manual for these branches suggests a four-story scheme, with one or two of the floors rented to others initially.

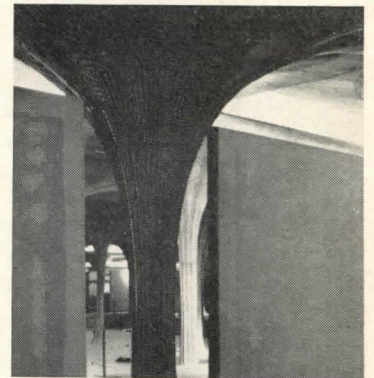
The site for this branch, however, imposed a set of conditions unforeseen by the manual-drafters. It was in open country, in the flat basin of a brook that had been made into a shallow hole by the parkway embankment on one side.

When Lundy considered placing a small four-story building in this depression, he concluded that it would look like a “sawed-off tower.” He finally arrived at a one-story scheme, which allowed him

to manipulate the roof form, bringing natural light to the interior spaces and presenting “the bravest possible image” from the heavily traveled parkway.

The one-story solution also permitted him to organize the interior in a way that expressed the cohesiveness of the office. Lundy had found that, notwithstanding the impersonal image of IBM, the typical branch office had some of the closeness and stability of a family—the employees celebrating holidays together and knowing each other’s business. Another family characteristic of the office is that the main breadwinners—the data processing salesmen—“go out” to work. To emphasize their pivotal role, Lundy grouped their desks in the open central area, reserving the perimeter for the stay-at-homes.

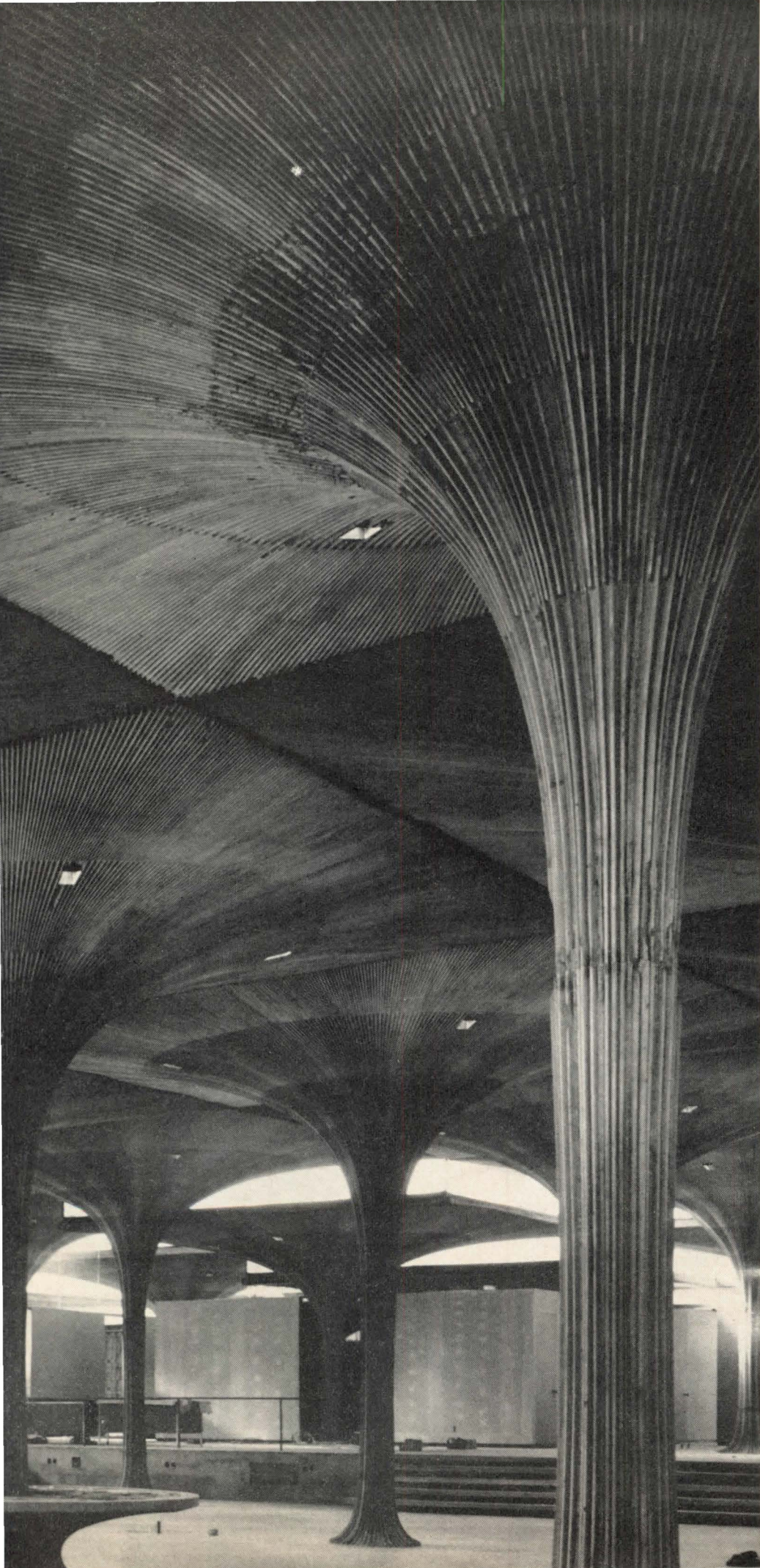
Four office suites at the corners of the building will be rented to others at first. Their private corner entrances—made equally accessible by surrounding paved terrace and the dispersed parking layout—are adequately articulated, but can be converted to secondary exits gracefully as IBM



expands into these spaces. The main entrance to the IBM office, which faces the parkway, is the only point at which the masonry barrier is breached to reveal the tree structure within.

To preserve the unity of the interior and leave the flaring trees unencumbered visually, Lundy has terminated all opaque partitions—even those around the tenant spaces—at a uniform height with clear glass above. Where partitions intersect columns, he has inserted other strips of glass—clear or frosted. At the toilet rooms, where even frosted glass wouldn’t do, he has flanked the trees with panels of mirror (above)—functional on the inside and illusionistic on the outside (like the mirrors that visually complete the wooden trees at his earlier I. Miller store in New York.)





**THE CENTRAL SPACE** was originally designed as a "garden room". To avoid the bleak "sea of gray desks" he had observed in other branches, Lundy proposed to intersperse special salesmen's desks with planters, so that the space would remain attractive and "alive" even if unoccupied. Its roof was to rise in steps up to a peak of 15 feet at the center.

When the building was in the working-drawing stage, however, IBM management decided to tighten the budget. Off came the top layers of the ziggurat; out came the custom furniture and the planters. While the truncated space may be more unified and more serene, the return to an expanse of empty desks below will be regrettable (one reason why the FORUM is showing the building unoccupied).

The texture of the concrete trees reproduces that of the wood-strip originals on which the reusable glass-fiber forms were molded. The subtle curvatures and undulations in the section are visible in the finished trees—reproducing the appearance of wood with disturbing accuracy—but the effect is marred by conspicuous pour lines and broken arrises.

Lundy is enthusiastic about the possibilities for "purposeful beauty" in concrete and scornful of the popular interest in "accidental effects", which he considers false to our advanced technology.



He attributes the flaws in his trees to a tight budget, which limited preliminary testing and on-the-site precautions, but the frequency of blunted concrete edges these days argues against his contention. The critical prerequisite for precise forming of concrete is not advanced technology, but reliable craftsmanship, a rare and expensive commodity in our society.

Lundy was wise enough not to bet everything on precise forming, however. He made his tree forms so powerful that a few missing teeth do not destroy them.

**THE EXTERIOR WALLS** of IBM have a remarkable richness, achieved without straining the limits of current New Jersey building technology. They have been constructed entirely of identical concrete blocks of a pinkish white color, close to that of the stone at Uxmal. The dimensions of the blocks,  $3\frac{1}{8}$  by  $3\frac{1}{8}$  by  $11\frac{1}{8}$  inches, were determined by the limitations of the block-maker's equipment: he couldn't make them quite square in section.

The relief pattern is based on the original pyramidal form of the roof. Because the blocks go all the way through the wall, great variation in depth was possible—a total projection of 8 inches in six steps, which increase in size as they come forward. The same pattern in reverse is exposed on the interior, where it looks appropriately less rugged since the "valleys" form the most prominent layer.

From this simple pattern of laying up block—executed by ordinary union masons using sets of templates—a great variety of visual effects is produced, depending on lighting and angle of view. In full shadow the walls seem to undulate softly; under side light the salient points bristle; in fuller light shadow lines appear—sometimes symmetrical like the actual relief, sometimes strongly asymmetrical (below).

The way the walls grow up out of a terrace of the same block, laid in the same direction, establishes a firm link between building and site, but the form of this link suggests a lateral thrust or massive bending moment, when in fact the walls support little except themselves.

Lundy's apparent fascination with surface textures, however interesting the textures may be, gives the building a somewhat overwrought look, a feeling that nothing (except the gypsum board partitions) has been left alone. The unrelated textures of the walls and trees, moreover, widens the disparity in

form between these two major elements.

When it came to fitting in the serviceable parts of the building—partitions, lighting, air conditioning—both the trees and the walls raised problems. The glazing at windows and above partitions has to follow irregular curves. The sheer number and complexity of glazing joints invites maintenance troubles.

Since there was no room for overhead air-conditioning ducts, other places had to be found for supply outlets: the tops of mechanical closets around the central space, the edge of the sunken floor area, an air fountain at the foot of the centermost tree. Perimeter rooms have individual units that draw fresh air from openings punctured through the exterior wall.

The concrete trees also had to be pierced, so that incandescent lighting fixtures could be recessed in them. These downlights provide even—if not brilliant—lighting at desk level; the diffused light reflected back to the trees articulates their delicate striations without making their forms overwhelming.

As a place to work, the building is bound to be exciting, even by the standards of past IBM buildings. The great virtue of the interior is its sense of organization, its spatial expression of the working relationships that will exist within it. Each space will have its own height, lighting, degree of enclosure, and visible relationship to all other spaces in the office. Only the frustrating limitation of windows around the perimeter mars this grand scheme.

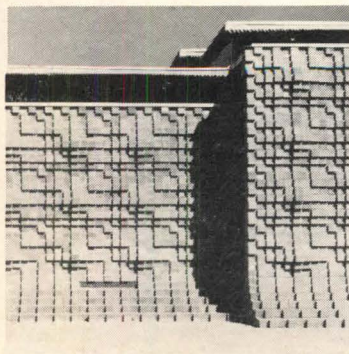
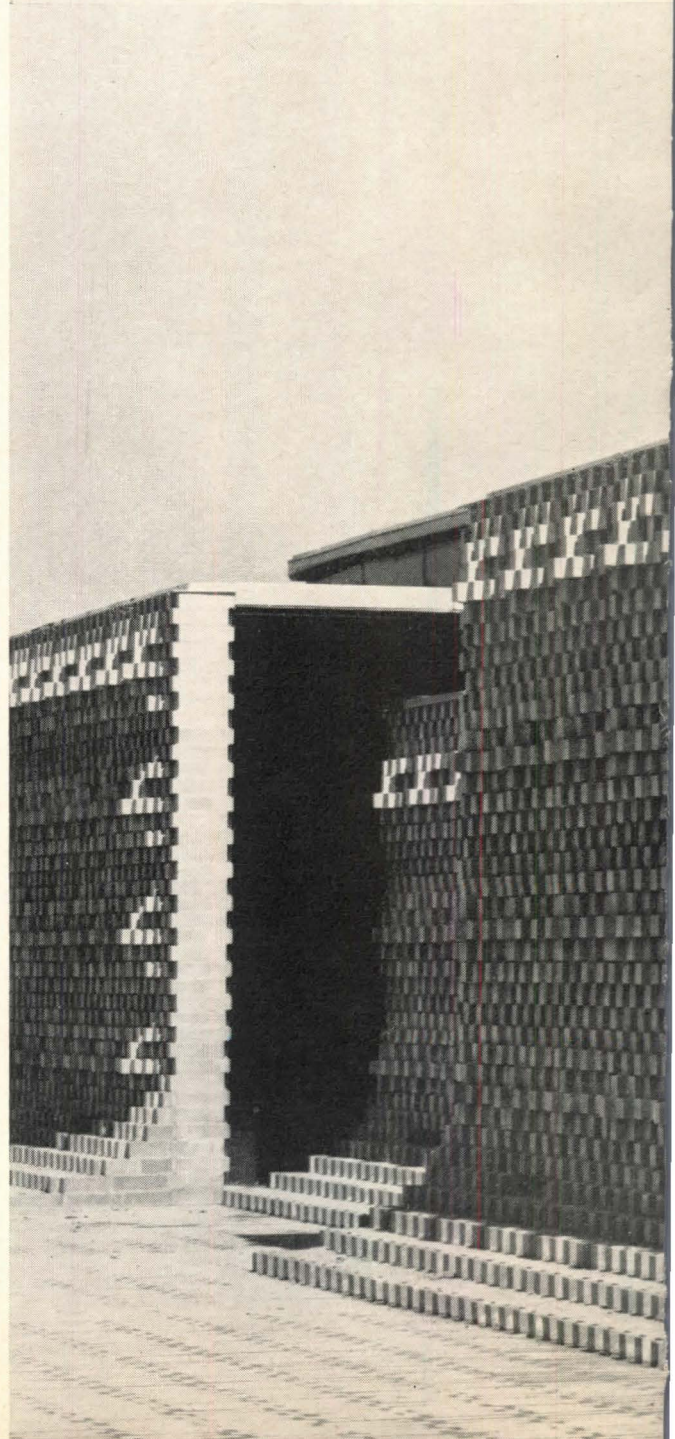
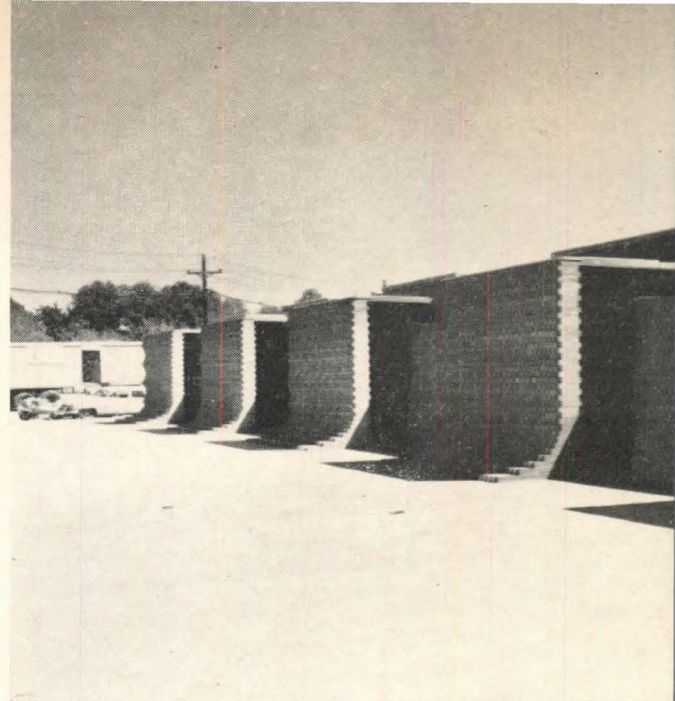
One major question remains after all the complex facets of this building have been examined: Is such a small building—of such unexceptional purpose—worth the expenditure of so much ingenuity, so many textures, so many complicated details? Lundy himself has spoken of the architect's temptation to "make something of a building that wasn't meant to be something." This time he himself may have succumbed to it.

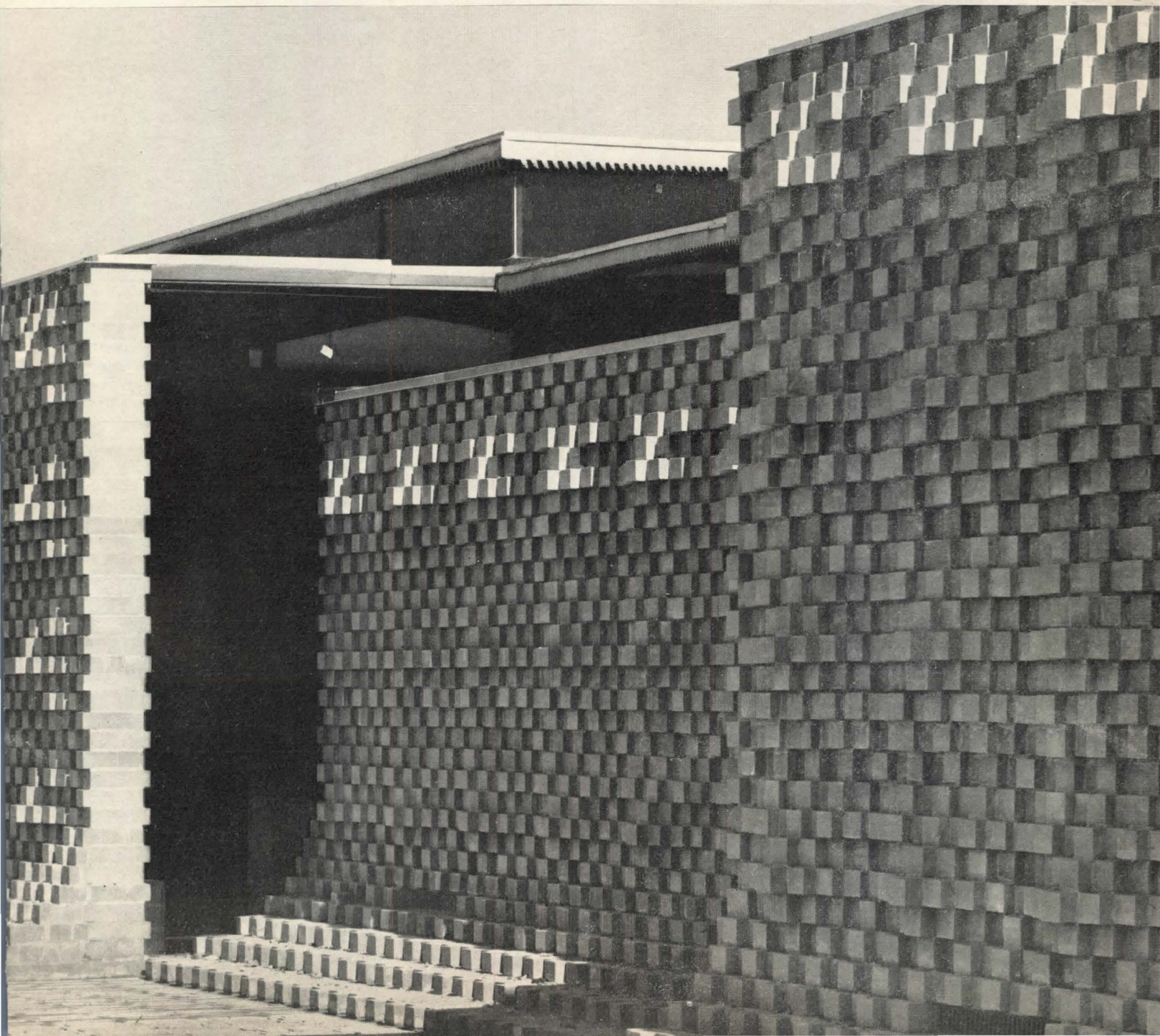
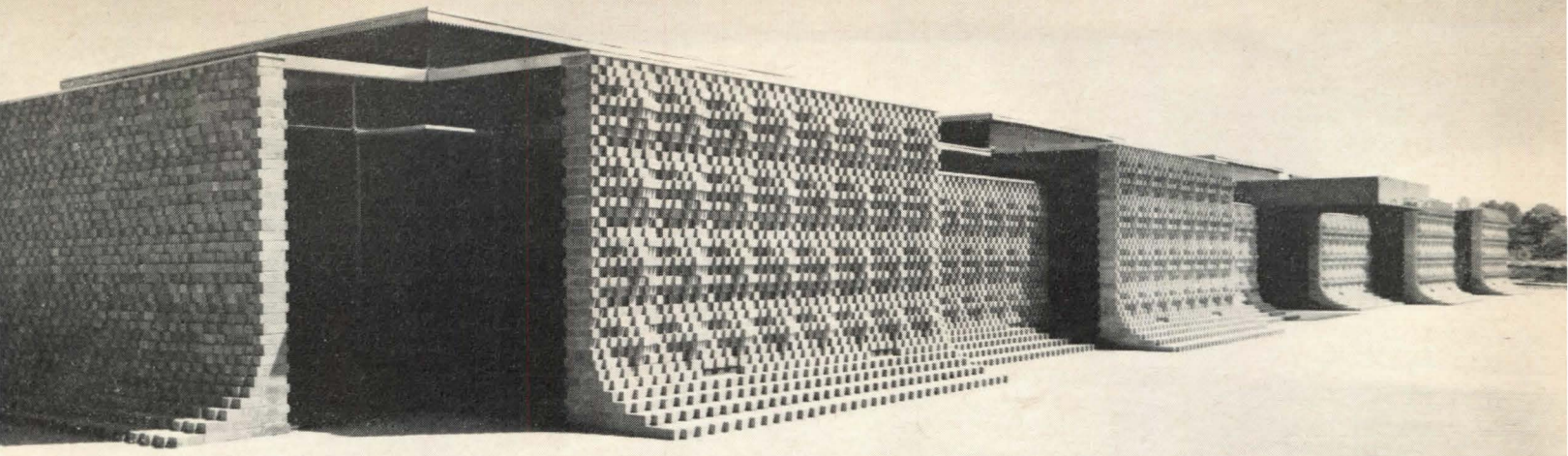
—JOHN MORRIS DIXON

#### FACTS AND FIGURES

The IBM Garden State Office Building; Owner: Benderson Development Company; Architect: Victor A. Lundy; Structural Engineers: Severud Associates; Mechanical Engineers: Jaros, Baum & Bolles. Gross Area: First Floor, 43,300 square feet; Basement, 6,550 square feet.

PHOTOGRAPHS: George Cserna.





# Detroit and the vision of Charlie Blessing

*There is nothing in this world so powerful as an idea whose time has come. —VICTOR HUGO*

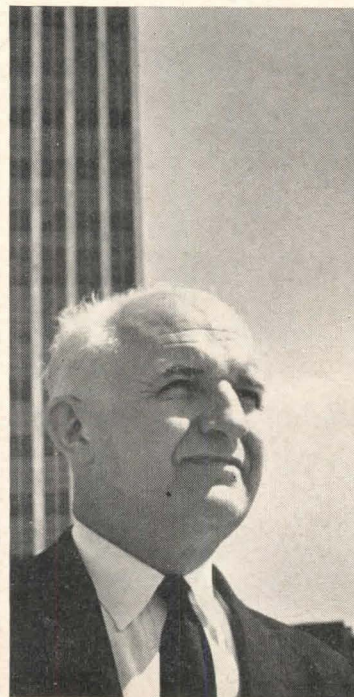
**C**HARLES ALEXANDER BLESSING is fond of mining literary nuggets, and the above is, quite naturally, one of his favorites. Blessing has an idea for Detroit, and he is sure its time has come.

Stated simply, the idea is that Detroit can become a great city—in fact, as he puts it, “the first great city truly planned to satisfy all the requirements of the people and the automobile.”

That his idea is far, far from realization (see aerial photo) doesn't particularly bother Charlie Blessing. What's important to him is his conviction that Detroit *wants* to become great. As its city planning director, Blessing feels he is in a unique position to give shape to the Motor City's wish.

To Blessing, Detroit's comprehensive plan is “the vessel into which all the goals and hopes for the city are assembled in a significant whole.” The fact that it has been a particularly useful vessel has been underscored by both the American Institute of Planners, which voted Detroit's planning the nation's best in 1962, and the American Institute of Architects, which in May awarded its first “citation of excellence in community architecture” to Detroit.

Under Blessing, planning in Detroit has taken on a strongly three-dimensional, urban-design quality—to an extent matched only by Philadelphia (Aug./Sept.



'64). And Detroit's 3-D achievements, like Philadelphia's are to a considerable extent the result of one man's convictions.

Charlie Blessing brings to his role of urban pied piper a scholar's thoroughness, an evangelist's zeal, an artist's imagination, and a folk hero's demeanor. He is a voracious reader, an inveterate traveler and a loquacious, homespun talker. He has the rare ability to find in all he sees, reads and hears some relevance to the subject that is most important to him: the urban environment.

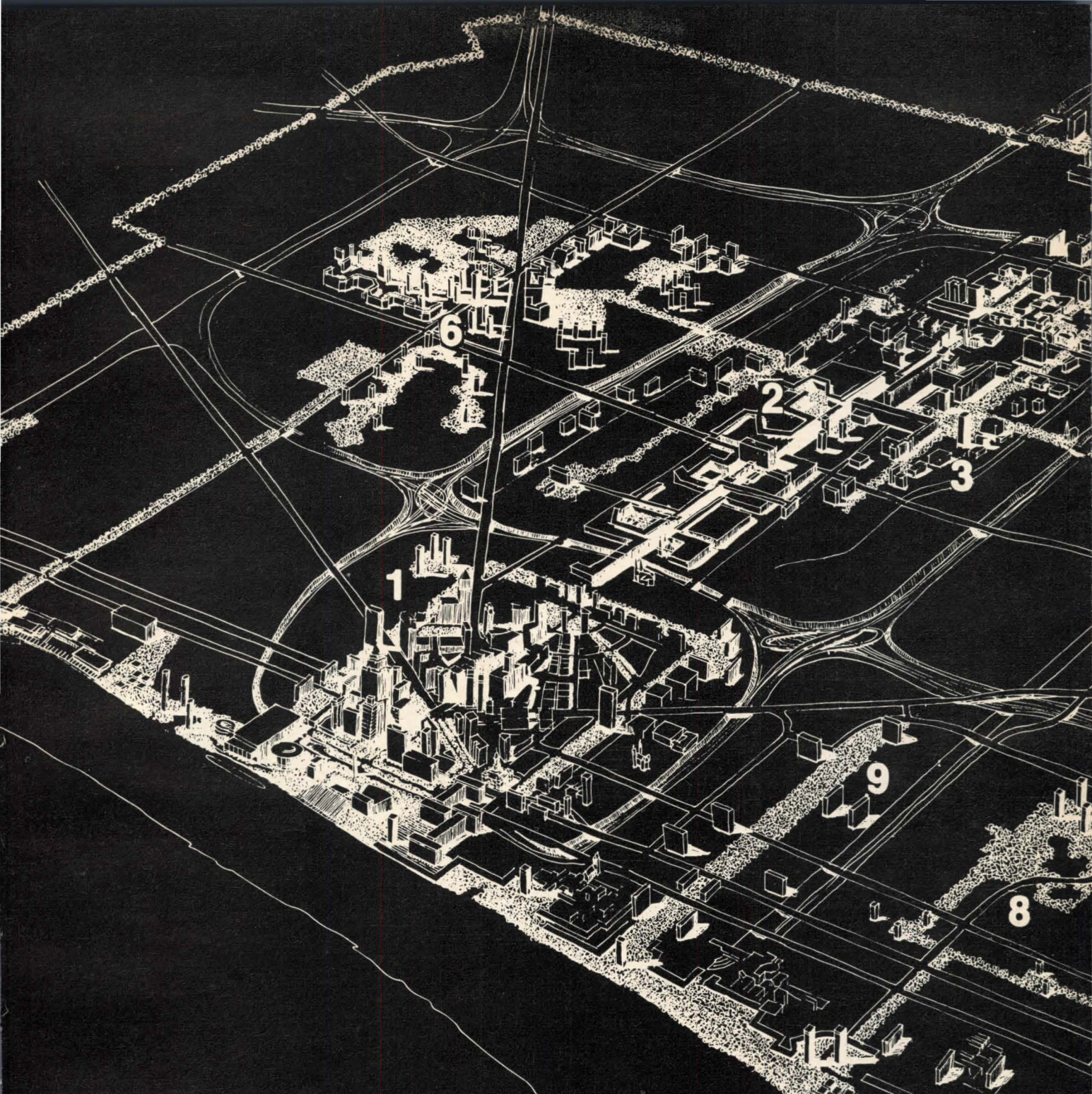
“An essential point of beginning for anyone who would be a designer of cities,” he once said in a speech to his fellow planners, “is the acquisition of a vast and rich store of knowledge about form and space in all of the great cities in the world. This knowledge can best be acquired through personal observation and study, through sketching and photography and experiencing directly the compelling sense of place.”

Blessing practices what he preaches. He has a first-hand knowledge of the world's great cities. (The two major gaps are those in India and China; the first he hopes to fill one day, but it worries him that he may never see Peking.) He also feels that raw nature has urban lessons to offer. He has long been awestruck by Monument Valley, Arizona, where nature's own highrise towers—the buttes—are sensitively distributed in the landscape. After listening to his rationale and looking at his many slides comparing Monument Valley with Detroit, one actually begins to see some parallel between the two.

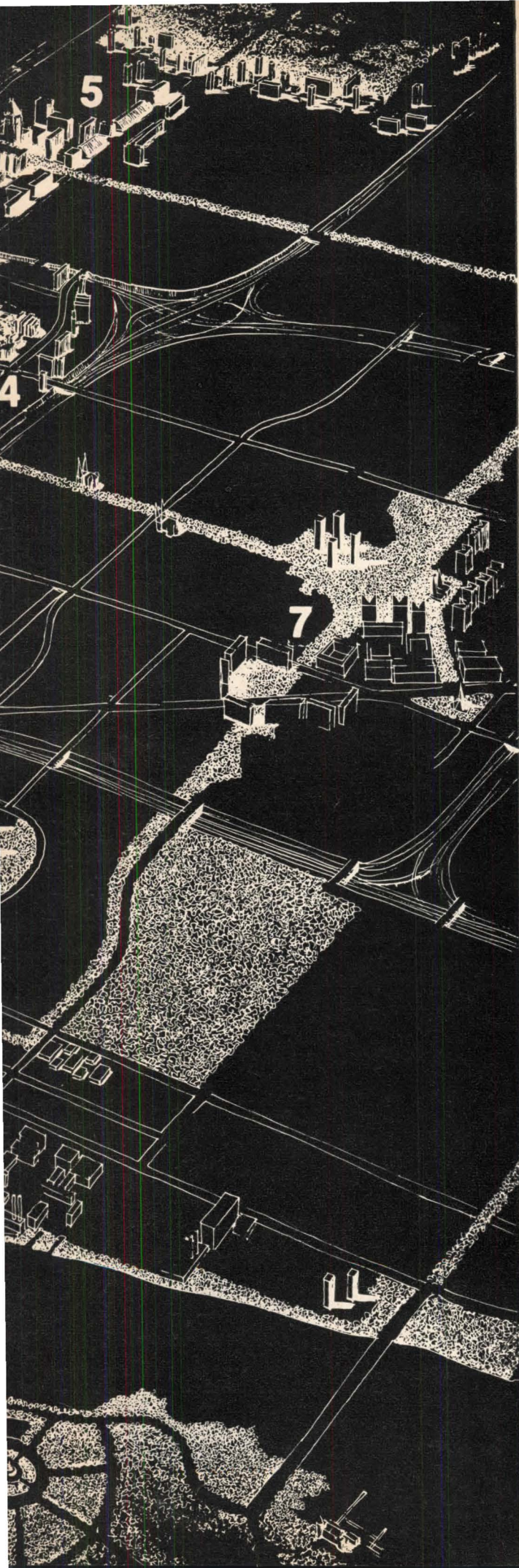
Nominally, Blessing is a planner, but he finds the title too confining. Too many planners, he feels, are “too circumscribed, too modest, too narrow in scope, and perhaps too limited to technical surveys, technical procedures, technical logic, and technical goals.” It is too easy, he says, to settle into “the more comfortable role of competent technicians making competent use of wellworn tools.”

Blessing is an architect as well as a planner, so it is natural for him to express his planning goals in terms of design. “Planning must be three-dimensional,” he says, “because people live—and dream—in three dimensions.” The skeletal design for Detroit's future development at right is Charlie Blessing's three-dimensional plan—and dream—for the Motor City.





Charlie Blessing's vision for a great Detroit encompasses 30 square miles, mostly contained within the circumferential Grand Boulevard. The skeletal design "concept" above identifies and relates the city's major visual elements, existing and proposed. The downtown core (1) terminates at the civic center on the Detroit River, along which is planned a 14-mile development of residential and recreational facilities. The Woodward Corridor (2) is envisioned as the institutional-retail-educational-cultural "spine" of the community. It contains the Medical Center (3), now underway, and the proposed Cultural Center (4). Straddling the Grand Boulevard (5) is the New Center, dominated by the pointed Fischer tower. Studded around the central city are four giant residential developments: University Park (6), Forest Park (7), Elmwood Park (8), and Lafayette Park (9).



## Blessing has made design an integral part of Detroit's planning program

Detroit's planning and urban design efforts are largely directed to what is felt can be realistically achieved over the next 30 years or so. Even so, they are enormously ambitious. They have as their goal, Blessing says, "the transition from 10,000 acres of blight, obsolescence, mixed uses, congestion and decay into a new center city of some 20 safe, attractive and model residential neighborhoods, bounded but not traversed by major thoroughfares, with efficient local street patterns, abundant and well located parks and playgrounds, sites for all essential neighborhood facilities, and an environment in which each building, each project, and each neighborhood becomes an element in a consciously contrived total concept for the new city."

Detroit already had an impressive planning program when Blessing went there from Chicago in 1953. In 1950, a master plan had been completed and officially adopted by the city. It is still being used, though it has been updated several times and broadened considerably.

Using the master plan as their basis, Blessing and his staff, which currently numbers about 85, conducted a series of block-by-block, area-by-area studies designed to weave planning more completely into the fabric of the city's social, cultural, transportation and economic patterns. All of this work was leading up to what Blessing considers planning's most important single mission: the development of a comprehensive urban design concept for the city embracing, he says, "all the inputs from a vast complex of social, economic and physical analyses of the city's present characteristics, anticipated needs and future potentials."

### Design resources

He got his chance to do this in 1963, when the Urban Renewal Administration approved an urban design study as part of Detroit's new community renewal program. As a first step, Blessing sent teams of staff architects out in the field to find and record whatever struck them as having visual significance. They came back with some 400 items, ranging in size from individual houses and small spatial enclosures to the entire Wayne State University

campus, which they felt were worthy of retention in the new design for the city.

Working with this newly gained knowledge of the city's visual assets, the 10-man design division, headed by Charles McCafferty, drew up a design "concept" (left) encompassing the 30 square miles of central Detroit contained mostly within the circumferential Grand Boulevard and incorporating the area's existing and potential design resources.

Blessing based the urban design study on his strong belief that esthetics, which he broadly defines as all visual characteristics in the makeup of the city, "must be considered as fundamental elements and not as elements to be resolved after the so-called practical, functional problems have been met." To make sure that urban design would not be overwhelmed by the practical problems of planning, he ordered his design division to develop its own, independent approach, free of specific limitations.

### Running liaison

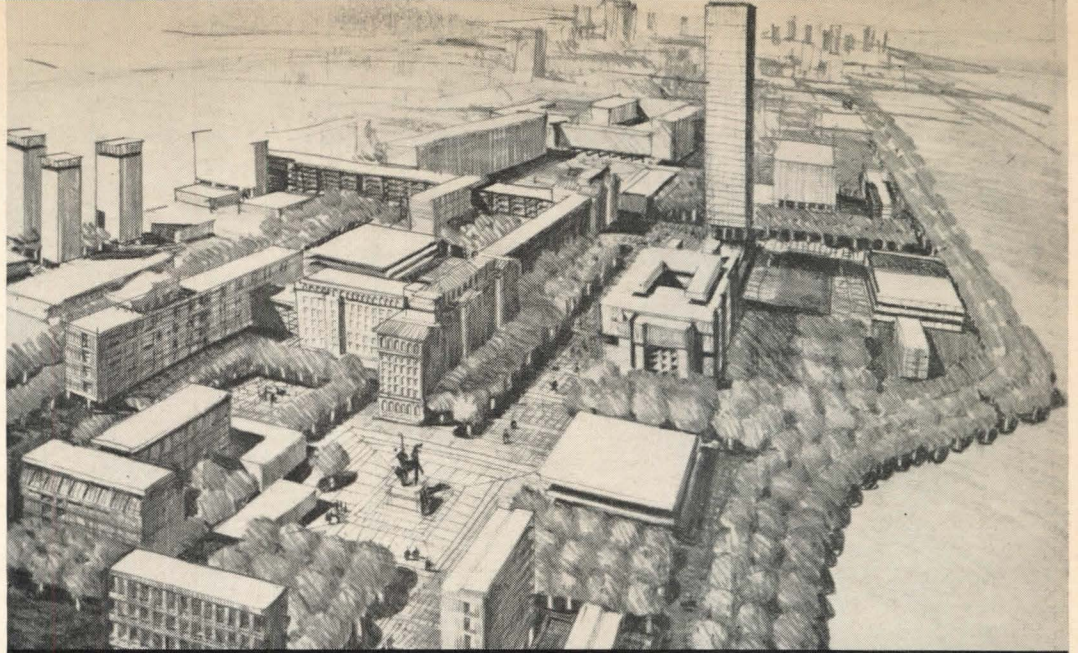
The design division carried on a running conversational liaison with the comprehensive planning division during the development of its scheme, but otherwise it worked independently until its concept of an ideal solution was worked out. Only then was it tested against the comprehensive plan and the differences resolved. By handling it this way, Blessing feels that urban design was able to exert its share of influence in the give and take of working out planning solutions.

The urban design study is predicated on the assumption that the core of the region—the central business district and the Woodward Corridor (1 and 2 at left)—will strengthen their role as the regional focal point. It also assumes that the Grand Boulevard area, through the infusion of well designed, well related residential, cultural, commercial, institutional and educational complexes like those at right, will become a vital, intense center of activity for the city, the metropolitan area, and the region.

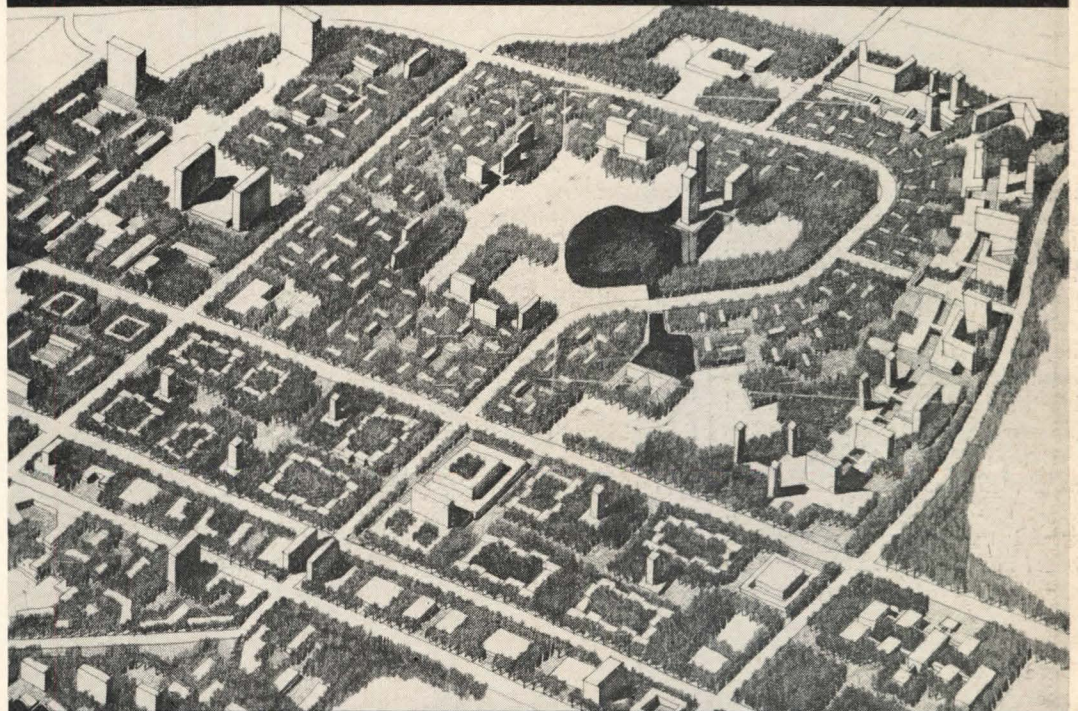
Already Blessing is casting his sights beyond the center of the city. He would like to see accomplished a three-dimensional urban design plan for the entire region, and he is searching for the money and help to do it. Charlie Blessing thinks the time has almost come for this idea, too.



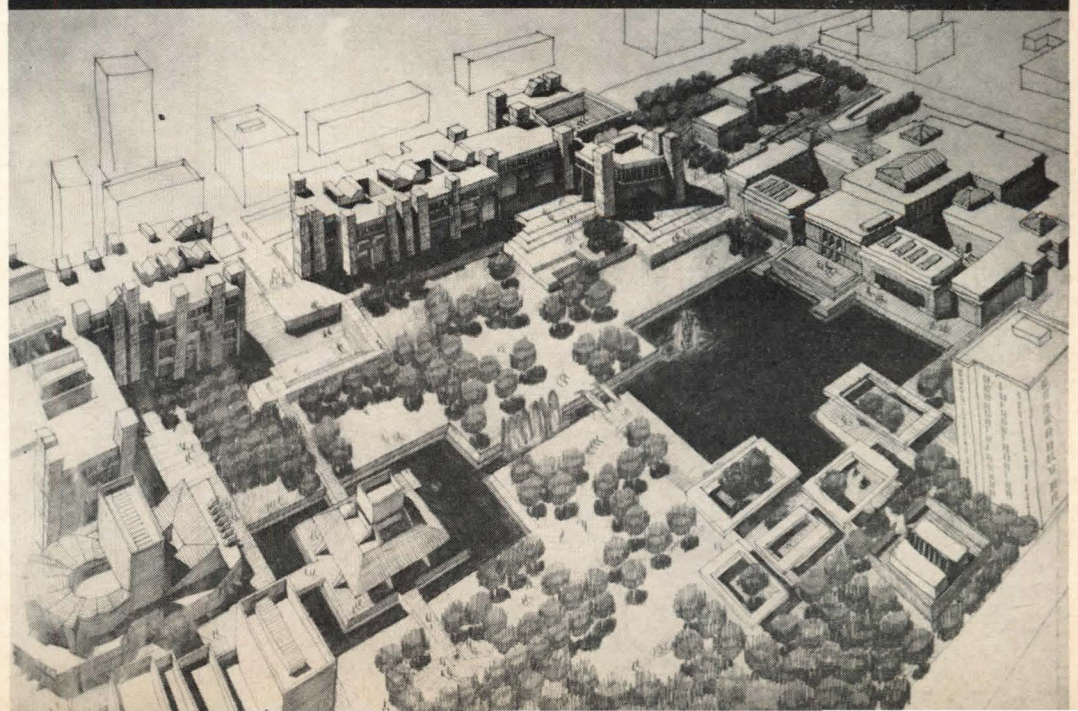
Detroit's 250-acre Medical Center is well underway. When completed it will contain three existing hospitals plus a new children's hospital and Wayne State University's school of medicine. The center will be ringed by residential buildings, a shopping area, churches, schools and commercial buildings. Fifty acres of the project have been cleared, three major buildings are completed, two more are under construction, and a number of others are in design.



Elmwood Park will be Detroit's second large-scale residential development. Its site is adjacent to the first, Lafayette Park (upper left in drawing). Its predominant feature will be three apartment towers beside a man-made lake in a park setting. The first stage of construction is about to begin on the 350-acre site.



Detroit's proposed 200-acre Cultural Center would be, as Mayor Cavanagh proudly points out, "greater than New York's Lincoln Center or any other cultural development." It would incorporate the city's existing main library, art institute and historical museum, adding a hall of man and natural history, a museum of science and technology, a theater arts center, a musical arts center and a planetarium. All would be sited among huge reflecting pools, a large fountain and parkland. It would take an estimated 25 years to complete.



## So far, Detroit has little to show for its efforts, but Blessing is undismayed

In Detroit's quest for a "great city truly planned to satisfy all the requirements of the people and the automobile," it is the automobile that has thus far received the most attention. It has been a matter of first things first: traffic congestion was Detroit's most easily defined problem, so it received priority. Also, Detroit has an acute sensitivity to the urban problems caused by its products.

As a result, Detroit has one of the nation's most efficient freeway and thoroughfare systems. And thanks to its careful integration into the master plan, it has been relatively free of disruptive side effects. But for all the Motor City's concern, its planning program contains no startling new ideas for resolving people-car conflicts.

As for people, progress in meeting their needs has been painfully slow but relatively well ordered. Detroit suffered violent relocation problems when slum housing was cleared for its early renewal projects, but it quickly learned from its mistakes and set up a well managed, smoothly operating relocation procedure which is ranked among the country's best.

Detroit's Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh, who took office nearly four years ago and now is seeking a second term, expresses a strong belief in what he describes as "the coordination of physical renewal with social renewal." He has set up a Social Renewal Council composed of the heads of several city departments—including Blessing—and has charged it with developing a program of attack on Detroit's social problems.

### Upgrading the spirit

In the meantime, Cavanagh put his ideas to the test in six of Detroit's rundown neighborhoods. For each, he provided the residents with a heavy dose of city services—street relighting and resurfacing, tree maintenance—and set up a "miniature city hall" where residents could come for a variety of social, health and building-improvement services.

"In effect," Cavanagh said, "we were trying to not only physically upgrade the neighborhood, which I think we did to a considerable degree, but . . . to upgrade really the flagging spirits of the people in that area." The program has

been so popular, Cavanagh reported, that "we have had to literally fight off organizations" which want it in their neighborhoods.

The attack on the city's physical problems is beset by two paradoxes. One involves quantity: Detroit was one of the first U.S. cities to undertake a large-scale renewal program, yet has long since been surpassed by other cities in the number of projects actually completed. The other involves quality: Detroit, with one of the nation's most design-minded planning departments, has seldom achieved architectural excellence in completed projects.

### Private renewal

Downtown, for example, the only major public development has been the big civic center complex on the Detroit River (see aerial photo). Except for the split-level City-County Building, all the development on the other side of the expressway has been left to private enterprise.

So has architecture. The civic center is more impressive in size than design, and whatever brightness Detroit's core has acquired recently has been contributed by private developments like Minoru Yamasaki's Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. tower and the new First Federal Building by Smith, Hinchman & Grylls (1).

In the neighborhoods, the 196-acre Lafayette Park, planned in 1947, is the city's only large residential renewal project to rise aboveground, and it is still far from completion. Lafayette Park contains the sole architectural landmarks of Detroit's renewal program—the Mies van der Rohe apartments and townhouses (center of photo 2) have been joined by Birkerts & Straub's fine 1300 Lafayette East Tower—but they are surrounded by vacant land and less distinguished neighbors.

Most of the conditions which created these problems are being overcome through a combination of better economic conditions and better design control. When the Detroit program was getting underway, developers were hard to find, and the city had to take what it could get. Now developers are scrambling for new land as fast as it is cleared, and the city can be more selective.

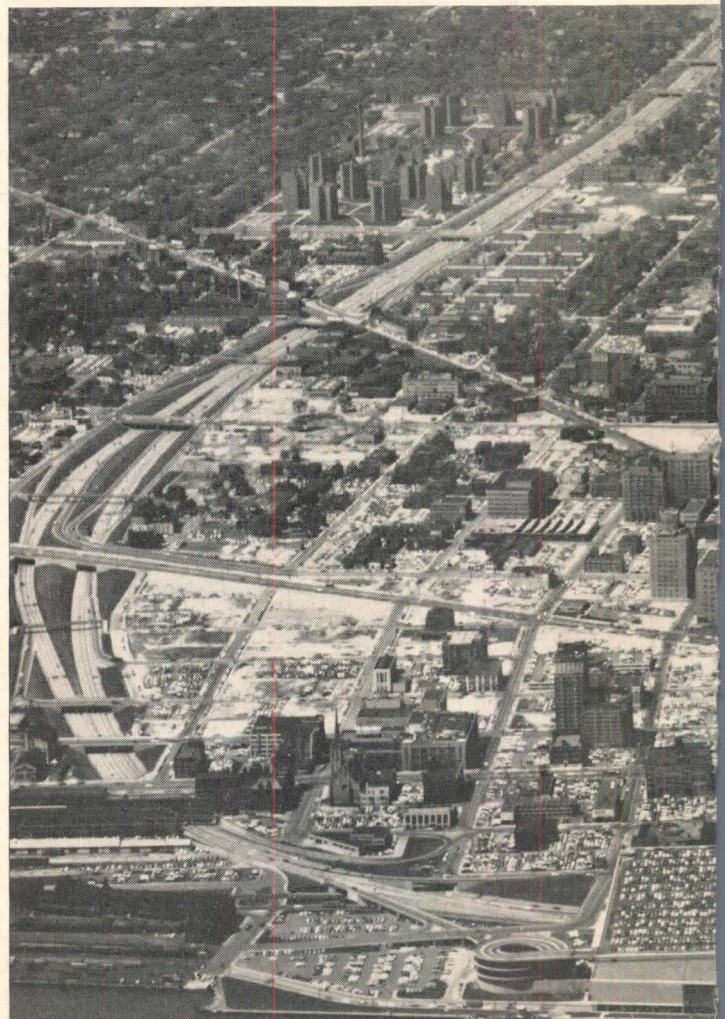
Says Charlie Blessing, confidentially: "There is a tremendous opportunity for accomplishment in the years immediately ahead."

—JAMES BAILEY



1.

3.





2.

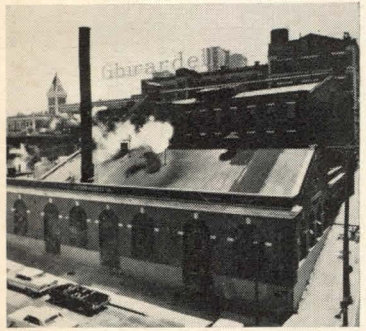
PHOTOGRAPHS : BALTHAZAR  
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS : AIRPIX





**"N**o matter how much it costs" Catherine Bauer Wurster used to say of the work of Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, her husband's firm, "it will never show." In the North Beach bars in San Francisco these days, there is animated discussion of an attitude called "think rich." The prime architectural exponents of this attitude turn out to be the very same Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, in their recently completed Ghirardelli Square. Somewhere in the tension between these two attitudes lies the considerable charm and (I suspect) enormous importance of this very San Franciscan undertaking.

A group of red brick factory and office buildings with a large sign over it reading "Ghirardelli" (a brand of chocolate sold in the West) has long dominated the view north over the bay from the swank slopes of Russian Hill. One of the buildings (the simple one on the skew, below) is among the oldest in San Francisco, dating

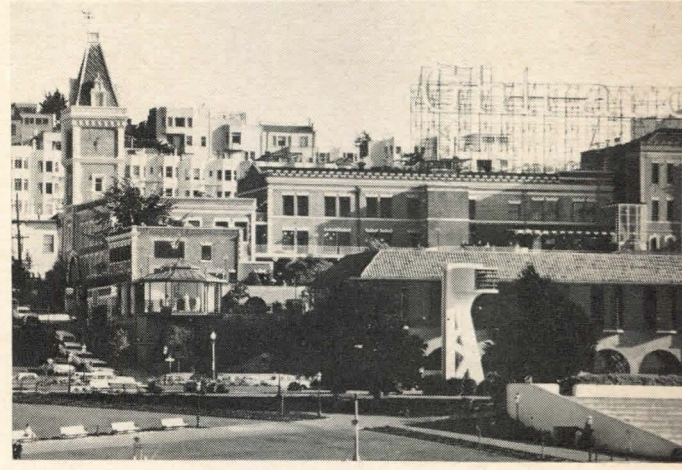


from early in the last half of the century. Another, the tower at the corner, was designed in 1907 by William Mooser, who was to be responsible a generation later for that most powerful of all western monuments, the Santa Barbara County Court House. But more prominent than these visual delights (and the reason, I suppose, why nobody ever objected to there being a factory in the middle of the view) was the smell of chocolate that lingered around the premises—and still does.

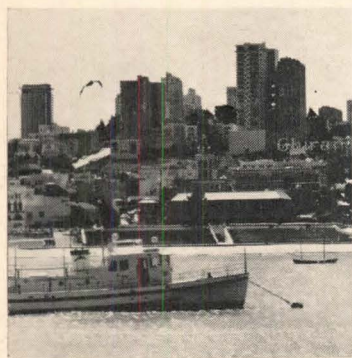
Times changed, and with them came the opportunity to do something else with all this red brick. It would have been easy to tear it down, but a great loss to San Francisco, which highly prizes its short past. It was much more difficult, and certainly must have been far more expensive, to use the old buildings, to play on them, and in them, to make a very special place.



1. Clock Tower (office, broadcasting station, crafts museum).
2. "Mustard Building" (shops, restaurants).
3. Apartment Building (restaurant).
4. Information Kiosk (gifts).
5. International Child Art Center.
6. Garden shop.
7. Book shop.
8. Dress shop.
9. "New Box Factory" (first-floor shops, second-floor restaurant).



**T**HE chance to create this kind of place was provided by a single public-spirited citizen. He is William Roth, civic leader and ex-president of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, now serving in the State Department in Washington. Roth bought the landmark without a specific use in mind, but with the sure knowledge that the public interest would be better served by keeping the brick buildings instead of sweeping them away for more high-rise apartments like those crowding the hill behind.

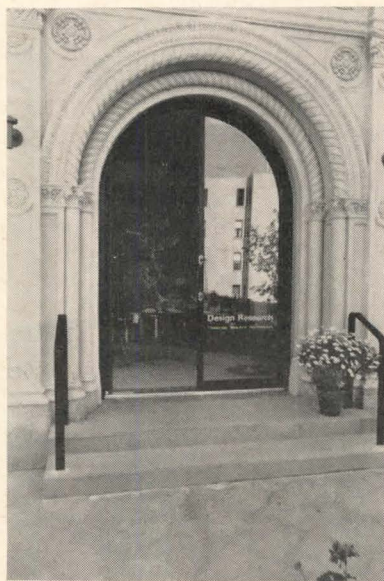


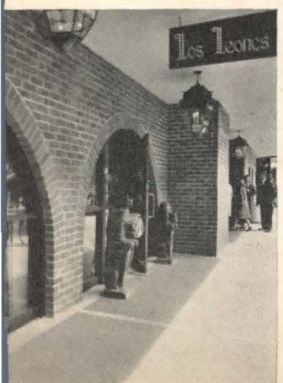
WB&E were retained to do a study on possible uses of the property, and they and Lawrence Halprin came up with a scheme very much like the present one (but with a motel where the winding entry steps are now). Half of it was executed: Ghirardelli still makes chocolate on the western portion of the site, but one day soon will move out for the Square's expansion.

There was courage in the execution, as well as in Roth's initial investment. The layout of the Square flies in the face of everything that shopping center proprietors hold dear. It is not just a matter of not being led inexorably past every shop in the place on the way to every other. There is high adventure in even *finding* some of the upper floor enterprises.

It is mostly here that the opulence lies, the "think rich." This is a particularly impressive kind of opulence, rising above those economic urgencies which have boxed in every other recent structure in San Francisco, of whatever level of elegance.

Happily, the details, though they must have cost plenty, never let it show. More happily still, for Roth and the Square's designers, it all seems to be working. Ghirardelli Square has what William Wurster calls "the aura of success."





**T**HE success of Ghirardelli Square is partly due to the San Franciscan's urban self-consciousness. This corner of the urban scene seems mostly to be filled with San Franciscans (an example below) and not tourists.



Tourists wear sport shirts and thin print dresses and talk loudly.

The rest of the credit is widely distributed. Much of it goes to the designers, who walked the thin line between gaiety and coyness: to WB&E for their buildings; to Barbara Stauffacher for her graphics; to Halprin, who was instrumental in the invention of the whole project, for his bright and cheerful plants and lights and surfaces and fountain.

A minimum amount of credit might be begrudged the 10-level garage which underlies the whole and adds economic feasibility to it, but introduces tensions of its own (below) less pleasurable than

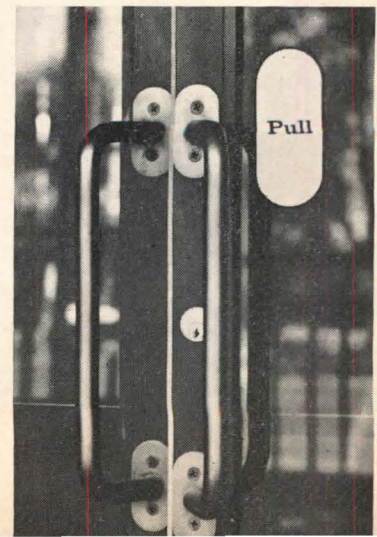
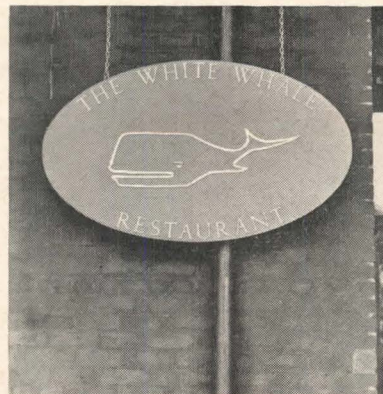


those above ground. Far more goes to the distinguished merchandise that is to be seen in the shops, and to the supporting activities that are most carefully and unspontaneously arranged (like the Cinco de Mayo celebration shown in progress here).



Finally, perhaps the largest share of all should go to San Francisco Bay. The great triumph of Ghirardelli Square is that it makes the most of being on it.

—CHARLES W. MOORE







PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED LYON





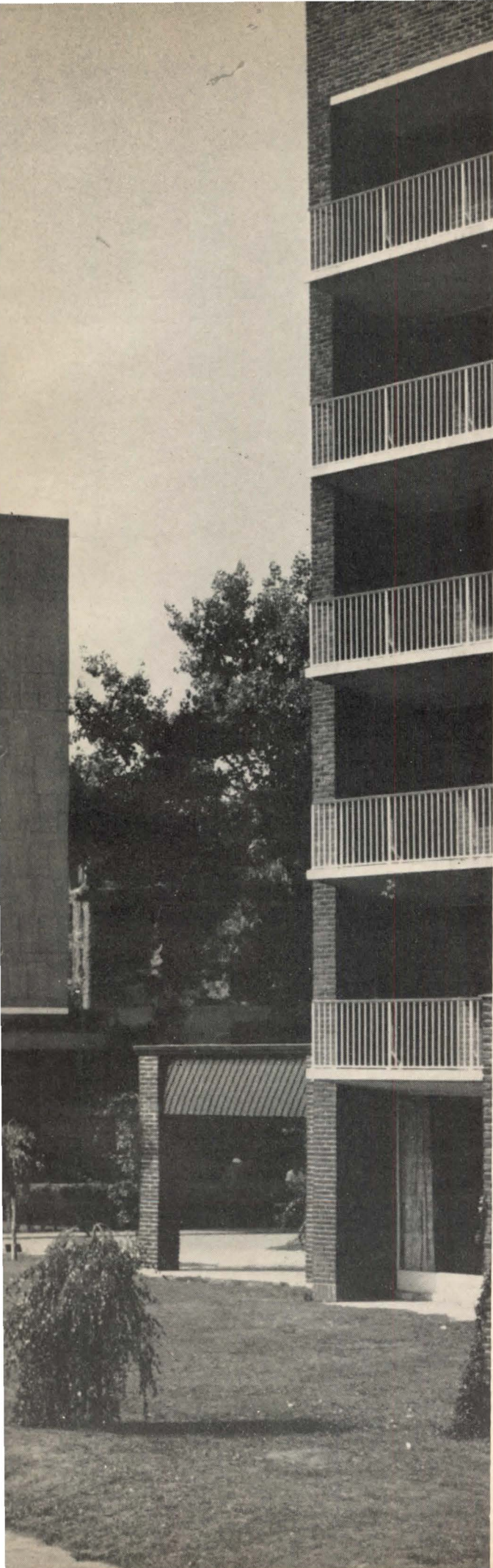
Above: 1932; opposite: the same today. Norwegian Pavilion is at right.

Some months ago, we felt that the time had come to "revisit" the Swiss Pavilion, designed and built in 1930-32 by Le Corbusier and Jeanneret, for the "University City" in Paris. (The last such "revisit" conducted by us was to the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society Building—see May 1964 issue.)

Our reason for picking the Swiss Pavilion is obvious: few other buildings of the past fifty years seem to have had a comparable influence on architects everywhere and few other buildings of those years have withstood the ravages of time—and of renovation—so well.

Then, early this year, we decided that the best man to "revisit" the Swiss Pavilion was Shadrach Woods, an American architect who knows Le Corbusier—and Le Corbusier's work—extremely well, having once worked in his office, and who now practices out of his own offices in Paris and Berlin. Mr. Woods agreed, and this article, including Mr. Woods' own headline (but not the picture-captions), is the result. We feel that the article is not merely a review of a significant building; but it is, in itself, a very significant contribution to current thinking on architecture and urbanism.—THE EDITORS.





# WHY REVISIT “LE PAVILLON SUISSE”?

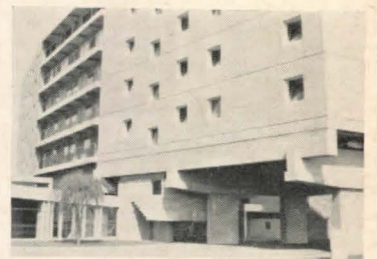
BY SHADRACH WOODS

In view of the fact that a preoccupation with the mysteries of “Architecture” seems to be disappearing at last from the foreground of the environmental design scene, the revisiting of recent monuments appears to be a footling, gently nostalgic pastime. However, we may gather some hints about the ways in which our attitudes to design have been developing as we examine our reactions to such relicts of the recent past as the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society building and the Swiss Pavilion at the *Cité Universitaire* in Paris. Both of these are brilliant examples of modern monumentality, one a monument to money, the other a monument to youth.

The Swiss Pavilion is monumental because a national student hostel is a typically unreal (monumental) problem, but it rises above its program in a much more satisfactory fashion than the regional pastries which surround it in that student ghetto along the southern edge of Paris. It has a more profound intention than they. It announces a style for a new society, the society of the machine age: rich, rational, healthy and sensitive. The style of such a society was to be simple, pure, lyrical, above all humanist. Unfortunately for architects the new society hasn't yet materialized and the building remains remote.

Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret at first refused the commission to design the Swiss Student Hostel. They were, quite justifiably, angry at the lack of reaction of the Swiss authorities and the Swiss public to their having been bilked out of the League of Nations competition award. However, they were prevailed upon and they accepted the mission to design the Swiss contribution to the Paris University's collection of monu-

mental hostels. They succeeded, to a greater extent than any other of the *Cité Universitaire's* architects, in producing a beautiful, beautifully clear, statement of Architectural monumentality for the period between the two world wars. They succeeded also in making a quite comfortable hostel for forty-odd students, preferably Swiss. (The *Cité Universitaire* is composed of student hostels which were built by various national groups. The rooms are not necessarily let on the basis of nationality, however. It is not unusual to find Greeks in the Danish hostel or Moroccans in the Dutch building. But the Swiss hostel seems to be most at ease when accommodating Swiss students. It has successfully achieved a regional atmosphere, cool, quiet, and creamy-rich, in which the Swiss character seems at home. The contrast with the warm rugged atmosphere of the Brazilian hostel of 25 years later is striking—see photo below).



Unlike all of the more recent buildings of Le Corbusier, the Swiss Pavilion shows little of his preoccupation with humanism, although we find it in the generosity of the common spaces, and the scaling and detailing of the interiors. However, as is the case with most of Le Corbusier's and Jeanneret's buildings, the construction of the Swiss hostel was an occasion for validating certain ideas and

Shadrach Woods was born in Yonkers, N.Y. some 40 years ago. He is one of the least known American architects of his generation—in the U.S., anyway. One reason is that he has practiced abroad ever since the end of World War II, first in the office of Le Corbusier, then in association with the architects Candilis and Josic.

In Europe, the work of this group has had a profound impact. Their two most recent projects are the new city of *Le Mirail*, near Toulouse (June 1963 issue) and the new campus for the Free University in West Berlin (January 1964 issue). Both were won in competitions, and both are now in the works.

demonstrating a philosophy which Le Corbusier had been advocating since just after the first world war. The philosophy was Rousseauist<sup>1</sup>, the ideas were machine age, the buildings were given polemic content. New building materials and technologies, simplified forms, freedom from purely and uniquely short-term financial considerations in the use of land, freedom from the established or academic criteria; a return to man and his dimensions: these were the conditions which would give rise to a new architecture. And each building they built, or designed, was to fit into a bright vision of the new civilization which had at its command all the fantastic techniques of the machine age. The Swiss student hostel commission was accepted in the spirit of their crusade for an environment fit for the machine age. They made it a prototype building for Le Corbusier's vision of the built world, an assemblage of pure forms in space, making: "*une fabuleuse poésie, le lyrisme des temps modernes.*"

The building was to be outstanding in every way: as a model for the New Architecture and as a piece of the New City, a harmonious composition of carefully balanced masses. It comes from and points the way to *La Ville Radieuse*. Although it still fascinates us, as would any well made artifact, we may consider it, in the light of the development of society in the second machine age, **a failure in its polemic intention.** It would be more exact to say that society has failed, so far, to rise to the level of sanity and sensitivity which this building required and expected of it.

In many ways the Swiss Pavilion is like the Savoye house, a celebration of the kind of perfection which could be achieved through the machine. We have since seen the lengths to which architects can go, at first in search of this same perfection, then because they

thought the perfection was achieved and became ineluctable. Now there is no part of celebration in our curtain-walled prisms where the machine is no longer a tool but an infernally strait jacket.

In search of the clean line the antiacademic architects sought to rid buildings of superfluous decoration. We may assume that they did not intend to make buildings a new decoration, still merely the work of the plastic artist. **We think it likely that the building as decoration is as insignificant as the building with decoration, both being the province of the visual idiot.** In any case we now understand that the first half of the 20th century was not, after all, the doorstep of a golden age, where perfection would be reached, after which no new problems would arise. To the Pioneers of Modern Architecture, as to their 19th century antecedents, buildings were still essentially things to be gazed upon. The deliberate schematization of the prism, with all six sides on show, was but another way to drive home the point: Architecture is made of beautifully proportioned, simple, perfect masses.

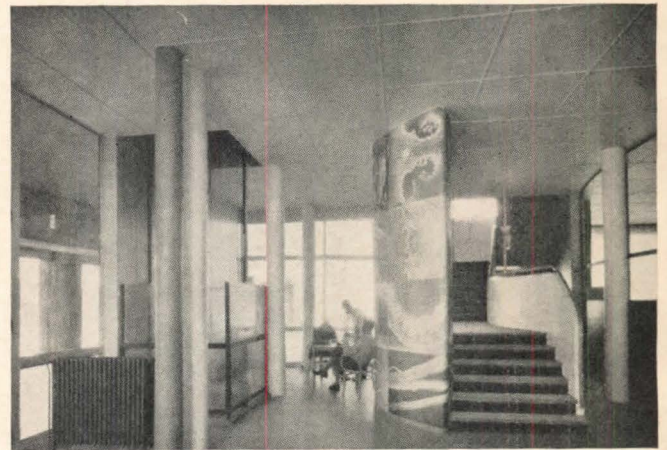
At the time when this building was being made, Le Corbusier and Jeanneret considered that they had five essential contributions to make to Architecture: the free plan, the free façade, the curtain wall, the *pilotis*, the roof terrace. The Swiss Pavilion then, existed also as a vehicle for these illuminations of the period, which were more than simply stylish clichés. They derived from a careful analysis of the nature of building with the new technologies. In those years of the twenties and early thirties the academy, ancient guardian of plastic truth, was routed. The contribution of Le Corbusier and Jeanneret to the rout was considerable. It is to such efforts as theirs that we owe our present freedom from misconceptions and preconceived ideas about

<sup>1</sup> Si je pense architecture "maison d'hommes", je deviens rousseauiste: "L'homme est bon". Et si je pense architecture "maisons d'architectes", je deviens sceptique, pessimiste, voltairien, et je dis: "Tout est pour le plus mal, dans le plus détestable des mondes". Voilà où conduit l'exégèse architecturale, l'architecture étant le résultat de l'état d'esprit d'une époque.

(If I think architecture "home of man," I become Rousseauist: "Man is good". And if I think architecture "homes of architects," I become sceptical, pessimistic, Voltairian, and I say: "All is for the worst, in the most detestable of worlds." That is where the architectural exegesis leads, architecture being the result of the state of mind of a certain epoch.) AMERICAN PROLOGUE, 1929



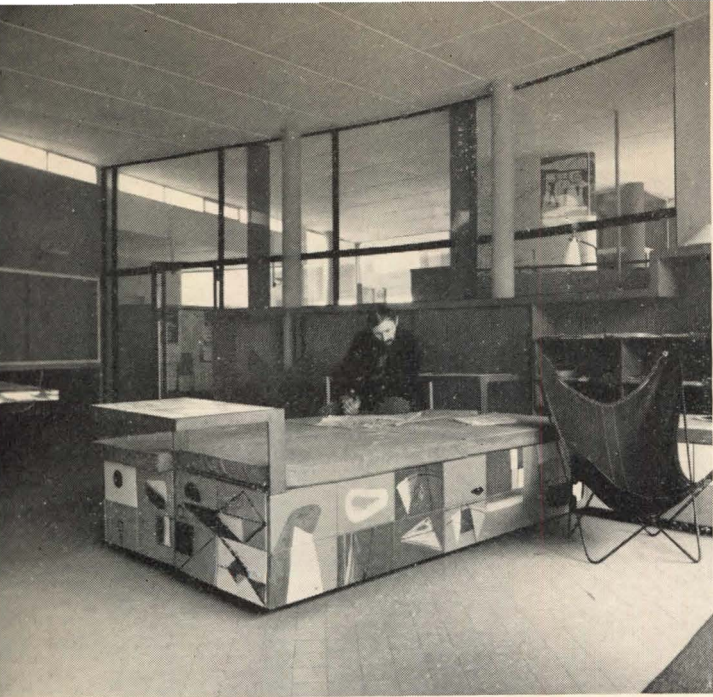
Above: student lounge; opposite: lounge now, mural by Le Corbusier.



Above: entrance hall before; opposite: same view today, with montage of various urban design projects by Le Corbusier.

*Mesurez alors l'importance capitale du lieu où vous ouvrez une fenêtre; surveillez la manière dont cette lumière est accueillie par les murs de la pièce. Ici, se joue, en vérité, une grande partie architecturale, ici prennent appui les impressions architecturales décisives.—Précisions sur un Etat Présent de l'Architecture et de l'Urbanisme, 1930.*

*(Realize then the primordial importance of the location of a window; watch the manner in which the light is received by the walls of the room. Here occurs, in reality, a great architectural challenge, here the decisive architectural impressions are born.)*



PHOTOS: PIERRE JOLY-VERA CARDOT



building. Structures like the Swiss Pavilion demonstrated conclusively that Architecture could be made from new building technologies and materials, using simplified forms.

The question as to whether Architecture as the glorification of individual buildings was still a valid pursuit in the new world did not arise. Had it arisen it is quite conceivable that the rout of the academy would have been final and complete. Le Corbusier's and Pierre Jeanneret's five (or several) contributions should logically then have led to the end of academic architecture.

Perhaps they have, although judging from the superficial influence that such buildings as the Swiss hostel have had, it may seem rather that they could lead to a new, rehabilitated academy. New freedoms come about when they are necessary. We needed to break free from academic architecture because we were feeling our way towards a society in which everyone could participate on a roughly equal basis. The opposite was true for the bureaucracies who needed to re-establish the academies. In the first case, it was assumed that this new society meant that everyone should have the "best." All buildings should be palaces, in the process which is called *le nivellement par le haut*. It was hoped that the house of the least of us would be as significant architecturally, as beautiful, as the palace of the greatest. The idea of least and greatest are of course crystallized through this pious hope. Since **progress, or change, cannot be arrested, this** process of raising standards meant only that the least would inherit the worn-out, cast-off Architecture of the greatest, while the greatest got the latest and highest in style. The result in the case of the bureaucratic regimes was the same. The academies triumphed. The only criteria were visual, of course. By missing the point, or deliberately masking it, we lost "*le lyrisme des temps modernes*." Le Corbusier was talking about a new architecture. He has been interpreted invariably in the sense of a new representational Architecture.

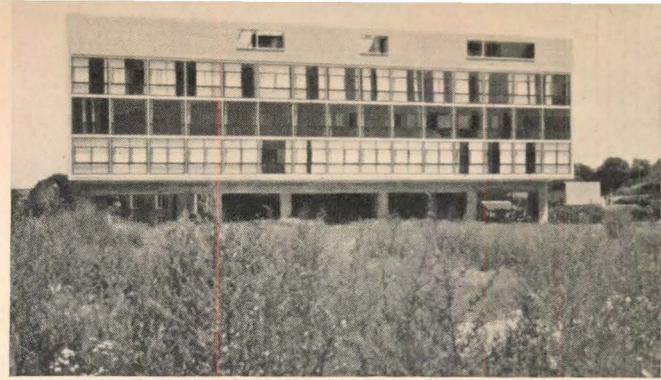
The very idea of a zone of student housing is repugnant to a society which considers the years of formal education as at least equivalent in social value to any other form of productive labor. The work that students do—intensive learning—and the specialized

places where they do it, produce an already dangerous isolation in an exaggeratedly parochial atmosphere. To go further, willfully to increase this isolation through segregation is folly. To dress such folly in Architectural Splendor represents at best a return to the allegories of another age. When we visit the Swiss Hostel today, it seems to mean that students are special people, to be isolated from the world (where leveling is never to the top, even when it exists), and to be represented architecturally. It becomes part of a beautiful but inaccessible world where men, as well as volumes and spaces, are pure. We are more interested today in making a world where buildings tend to lose their special visual significance (representing what?) and men are free to participate at all levels.

We only look at buildings when they call attention to themselves, usually by being bizarre in some way. Although we may revisit the "good" buildings of the recent past with a view to assessing their architectural significance, we can only judge by our own standards. Our business here is not to reiterate praise for what was accomplished in 1932 (that is unnecessary) but to seek example for what remains to be done in 1965.

By our standards today the Swiss Pavilion seems significant chiefly on a purely esthetic level. It becomes to us then meaningless and this is because its program, a residence for students, seems today even less realistic than it was at the time. In fact, that program appears to us to be in direct conflict with the spirit of reform which we thought that Le Corbusier and Jeanneret were helping to introduce. They were aiming at a world in which the old hierarchies and divisions would be reassessed, and presumably abandoned if they failed to stand up in the cold light of reason.

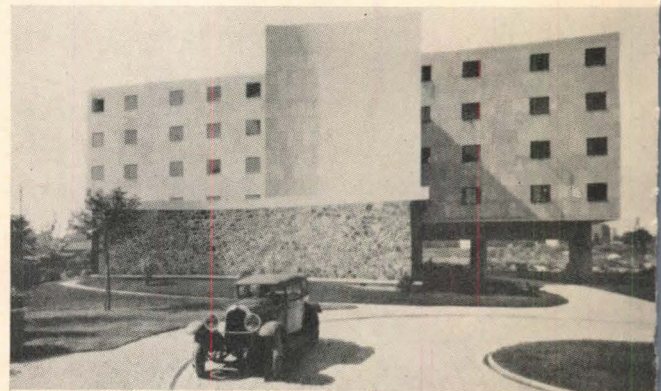
If the Swiss Pavilion seems to us to be remote, it is because our view of the programs and solutions of building has been entirely transformed since it was built. A careful re-examination of the ideas and theories developed by Le Corbusier over the last 50 years may lead us to a more fruitful conclusion: **there are no typical solutions, only a profound conviction that the problem is always new, constantly changing, and that man, not mystification, is the essential preoccupation of architecture.**



Above: old south façade; opposite: new façade, with exterior blinds added.

*La façade est un pan de verre. Mais, comme il n'y a nul besoin à ce que les quatre faces de la maison soient de verre, je construirai des pans de verre, des pans de pierre (placage, briques, produits artificiels de ciment ou autres) et des pans mixtes (petites fenêtres ou vitrages) clairsemés comme des hublots dans les pans de pierre.—Précisions, 1930.*

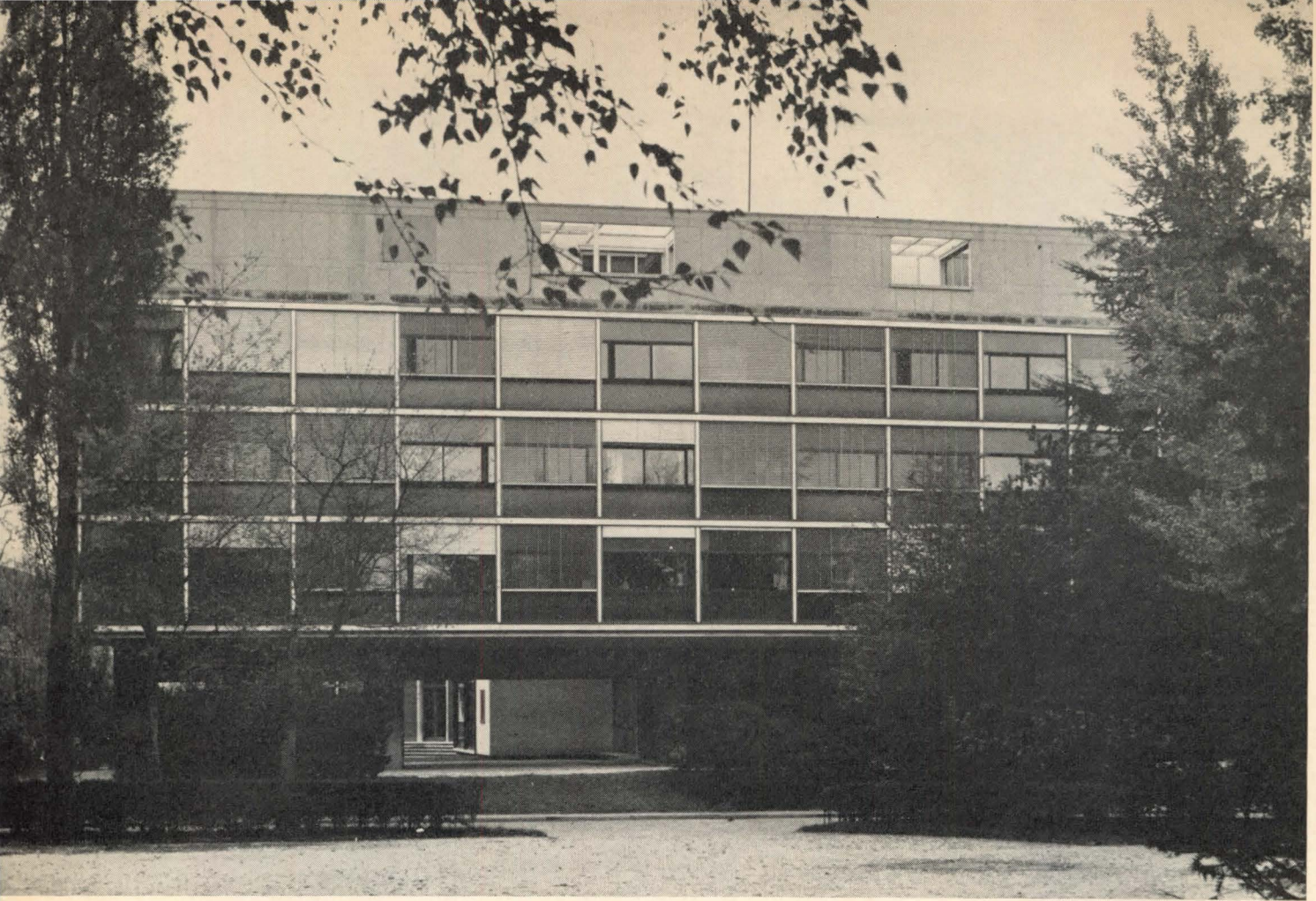
*(The façade is a span of glass. But, because there is no need for the four sides of the house to be in glass, I will build panels of glass, panels of stone [veneering, bricks, artificial products of cement or other material] and mixed panels [small windows or panes] scattered like portholes in panels of stone.)*



Above: north façade is largely unchanged, except for new foliage.

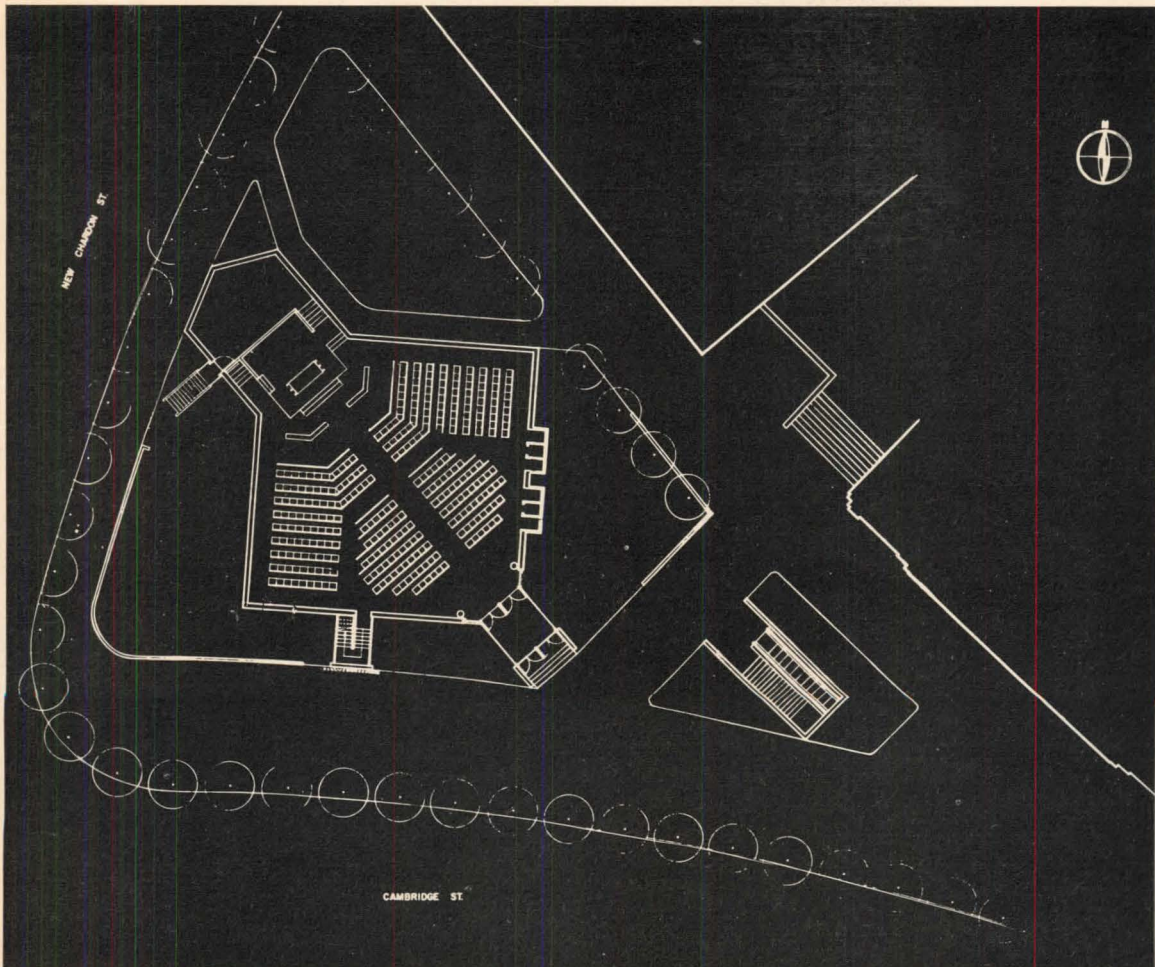
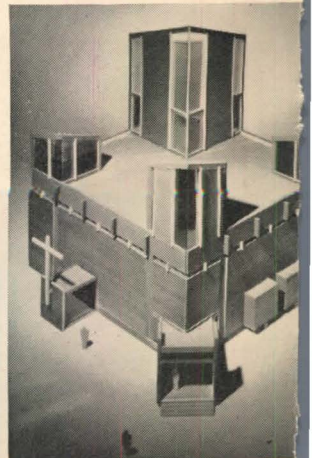
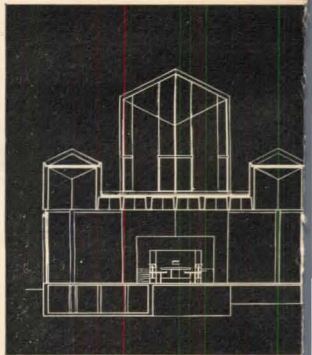
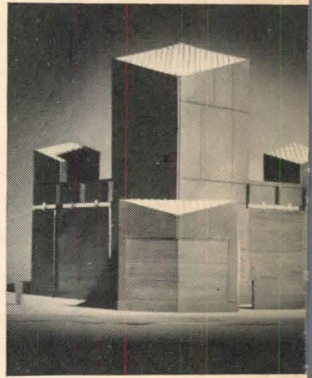
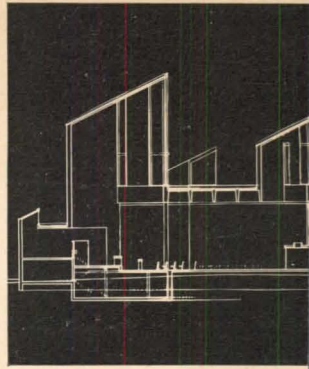
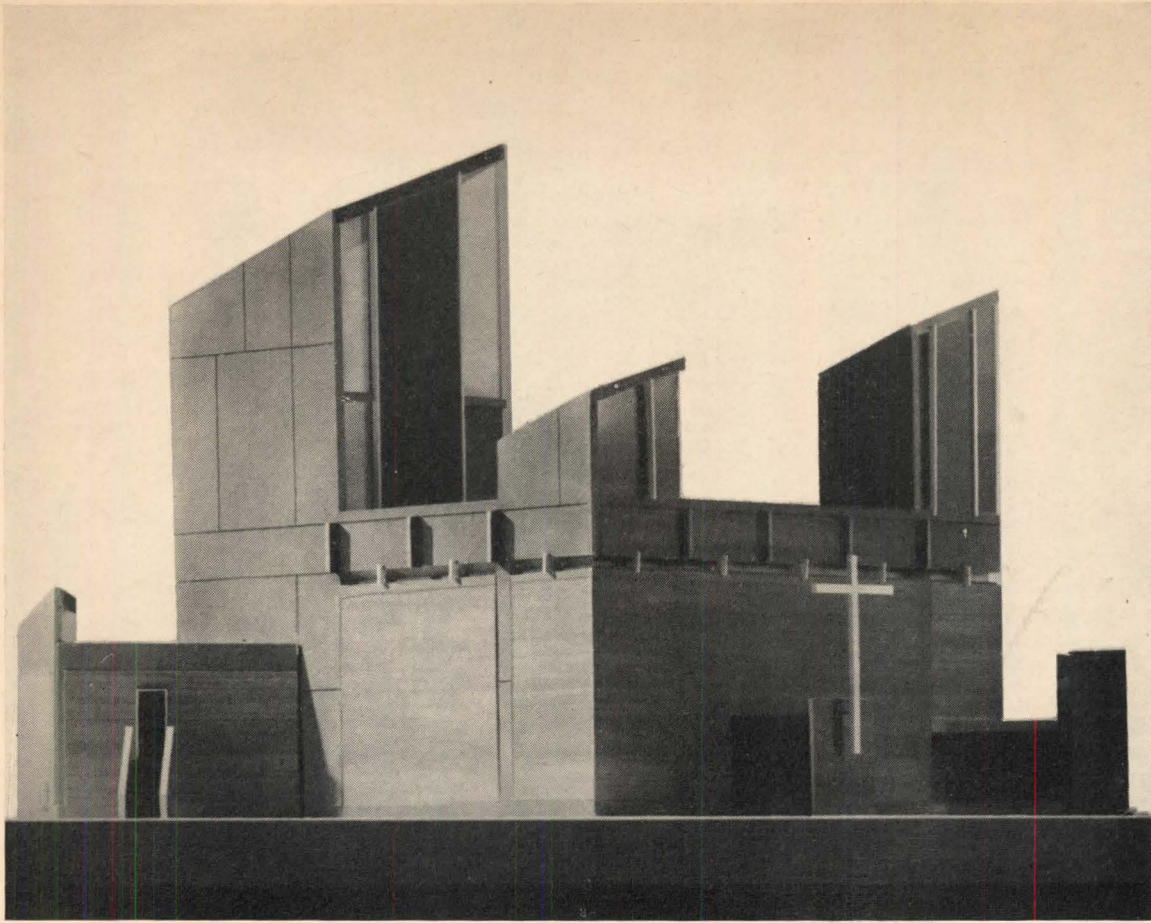
*On rétrécira d'autant plus la surface du sol bâti, on s'éloignera d'autant de la rue, que les techniques modernes nous permettent de monter haut avec nos bâtiments. . . Le sol de la ville sera retrouvé. La vie moderne en a besoin.—Précisions, 1930.*

*(The higher we will be able to raise our buildings, thanks to modern techniques, the more we will be able to reduce the ground covered by them and the farther from the street we will be able to build them. . . The soil of the city will be rediscovered. Modern life needs it.)*



PHOTOS: PIERRE JOLY-VERA CARDOT







# FORUM CONT'D

but Morristown, Tennessee (population 21,267) is doing something about it. By the end of summer, three blocks of downtown Morristown will sport a second-story sidewalk (right).

The \$139,000 project, part of a \$5 million urban renewal program, is being paid for entirely by Morristown's merchants and business district property owners. The elevated walkway will be landscaped, electrically heated, and suffused with "background music." It will lead to second-story store entrances, and also serve as a canopy over the existing sidewalk at street level. Our congratulations to Morristown, Tenn.—and we suggest that your downtown drugstores stock up on ear-plugs!

## MR. AGLE'S ANSWER

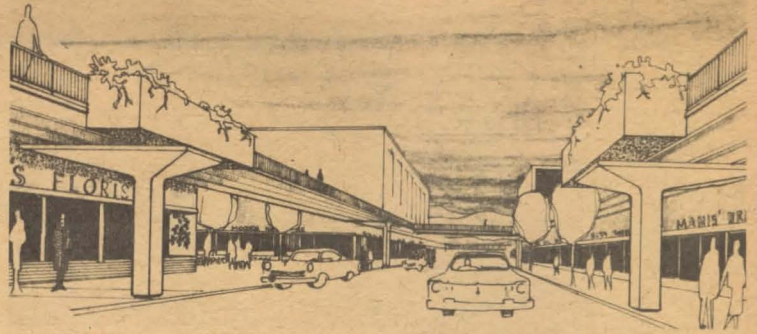
Charles K. Agle is an architect and planning consultant, and the former director of planning of the Federal Housing Authority. He is also a brave man.

Mr. Agle wrote an article on urban transportation for the spring issue of *Traffic Quarterly*. It begins with a section entitled "Summary of the Problem," in which he ticks off the limitations of current modes of travel in and around cities. Mr. Agle follows with a section entitled simply "Solution."

In it he advocates use of a hybrid vehicle that is part bus and part subway car, able to operate on highways or rails, individually or coupled in trains. There would be doors in its sides and ends.

This versatile creature would travel a circulation system consisting of "(a) local bus routes on existing streets in collection areas, (b) intermediate major or collector streets or tracks, (c) a major artery such as a rail track or turnpike lane between cities or between areas within an overall regional city pattern, (d) dispersion arteries, and (e) local bus routes on existing streets in distribution areas."

The system would work like this: "Let us assume that one bus circulates in a residential area of Trenton and that half its passengers are bound for Wall Street and the other half for the Grand Central area of Manhattan. A second bus circulates through the residential areas of Princeton and picks up passengers, half bound for the City Hall area half for Radio City.



"While in motion, the two buses meet and couple either on the turnpike or on a Pennsylvania Railroad track. The rear bus is then designated downtown and the head uptown . . . The passengers regroup themselves en route, depending on their destinations.

"Beyond Newark the buses uncouple, return to individual operation, and take to the highways. One . . . stops at Radio City and nearby Grand Central. The other stops at the City Hall and nearby Wall Street." The network, Mr. Agle assures us, "can become more elaborate and the same process can take place in lengthy trains serving diverse collection and distribution areas."

The system, he concludes, "can make the most efficient use of everything we have." It sounds to us as if Mr. Agle may be as sensible as he is brave.

## SAVING THE BAY

San Francisco, it has been said, would look just like every other U.S. city if it weren't for its hills and bay (below). The hills are in no danger of being leveled, but the bay is another matter. Already a series of fills for industrial, resi-



dential and other purposes has shrunk the size of the bay by a third, and many other fill operations are being planned.

Conservationists have sounded the alarm for years, but until now the state legislature has rejected all proposals for dealing with the problem. Last month, the state senate acted. By a surprisingly

one-sided vote of 29 to 3, it approved a bill introduced by State Senator J. Eugene McAtteer which would create a Bay Conservation and Development Commission to prepare a comprehensive plan for conservation of the bay and development of its shoreline.

In the meantime, the Commission would be empowered to approve or veto all fill or dredging projects not begun before September 17. The bill now goes to the state assembly where opposition is expected to be strong.

## AFFLUENCE FOR SUBURBIA

The Prince Georges County (Md.) Economic Development Committee last month released a report showing that high-rise apartments provide a substantial tax windfall to local government.

A study of the year 1963-64 on which the report was based showed that each high-rise apartment unit in the county produced an average tax surplus of \$65.51 above the cost of county services.

According to the study, apartment dwellers generally return more in taxes than they get in services, while double and single family structure dwellers cost the county more in services than they pay in taxes. This, the study explains, is because the apartment dwellers have far fewer children of school age.

## AUTO LAND

### THEY'VE GOT US ON THE RUN

At the current 1965 rate of production, Detroit will manufacture, on every single working day, a line of automobiles 140 miles long, bumper-to-bumper (which is their pre-, as well as post-natal position).

This staggering fact (140 miles—that's the equivalent of two complete round-trips from Baltimore to Washington to Baltimore to Washington to Baltimore, in case anyone cares or should be crazy enough to take that particu-

## PREVIEW

### CHURCH AND STATE IN BOSTON

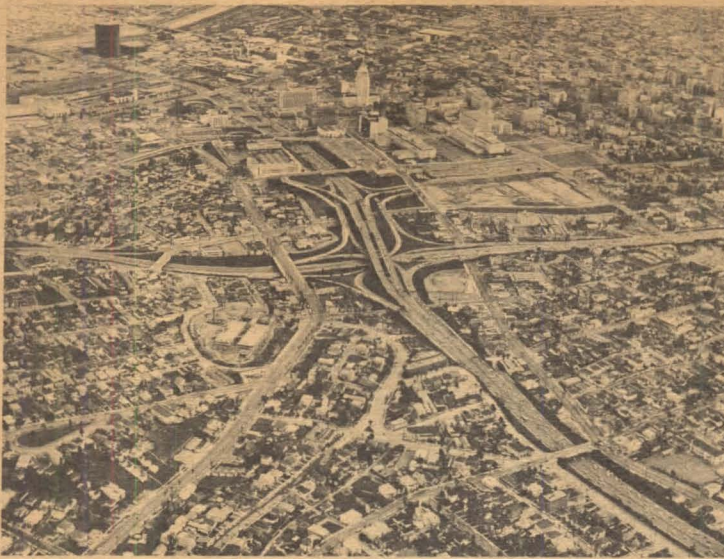
The latest announced element of Boston's Government Center is this powered little chapel by Sert, Jackson and Associates, whose nearest new neighbors will be the Kennedy Federal Office Building (The Architects Collaborative) and the State Service Center (Paul Rudolph and others).

The chapel is somewhat more regular in form and surface than most of the recent output of Sert and Jackson, placing its reliance on light, volume, and the skillful accommodation of the reformed Roman Catholic liturgy. The towers are light traps, prisms which bathe each corner in a different color: purple at the entry, blue and green at the sides, gold at the altar. The nave is a windowless brick cube with a simple two-way slab of deep concrete ribs as its roof.

The plan aims the 300 seats directly at the simple stone altar, placed so that Mass can be said facing the congregation. The altar will be flanked by the ambo and candlestick, with the tabernacle against the sanctuary's rear wall. To either side, stairs will lead up to a secondary chapel and down to the depressed sacristy, both behind the sanctuary.

The form seems as strong as a building this size could support. There is, nevertheless, some danger of an architectural conflict between church and state: the Rudolph building will not provide the chapel with the quietest of backgrounds.

Photographs: Phokian Karas



lar tour)—this staggering fact influences the shapes of our cities more profoundly than almost anything else we might mention. (The daily production of new Americans, bumper-to-bumper, is piddling by comparison).

Here are a few case-histories of the manner in which the "U.S. of Autoland" is being transformed, daily, by pressures emanating from Detroit:

- Los Angeles County cannot tax autos to pay for a projected \$1.5 billion rail transit system—unless the county's voters, who own 4 million autos, approve. That is what the State Legislature says.

The Southern California Rapid Transit District wanted to levy a half per cent tax on cars to raise planning money for the system. Later, the district hoped to issue bonds backed by a full one per cent vehicle tax after voter approval.

The state legislators (led by Senator Randolph Collier of rural Yreka, the California motorist's staunchest champion) said even the initial half per cent would have to go on the ballot for approval. County supervisors so far have hesitated to take the risk.

Meanwhile, 320 miles of new freeways and highways for Los Angeles and neighboring counties were approved at a public hearing called by the State Chamber of Commerce (samples above).

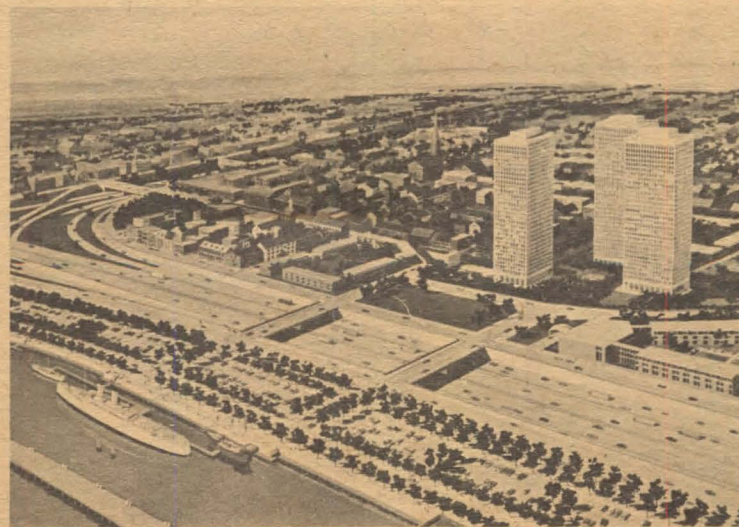
- In Morristown, N.J., a judge ruled that work on a six-lane superhighway, Interstate 287, could proceed despite a 10-year battle by the citizens of the town against its construction, and despite an hour-long sit-down protest on a bulldozer shovel by five Morristown ladies cheered on by other

protesters. The highway will mean the destruction of several homes and trees, and the side-swiping of a historical site.

- The Delaware Expressway which will run between Philadelphia's waterfront and "Society Hill" was originally planned to rise just a little above grade.

It wasn't till last fall that the unveiling of a three-dimensional model of the road revealed the true effect the Expressway would have upon "Philadelphia's Historic Gateway" on the Delaware River. Now it suddenly turned out that the thing would create a "Chinese Wall" between Society Hill (with I.M. Pei's apartments) and the traditional harbor.

Aroused citizen's groups, including the AIA Chapter, began to pressure federal and state highway authorities, the city's mayor and planning commission, Pennsylvania's senators and congressmen, and anyone else available. As it turned out, Philadelphia's desire for civic beautification is so



strong, and Washington's official eye for beauty is focusing so fast, that the highway department readily agreed to study, and then agreed to build, a depressed version of the road at an additional cost of \$10.5 million. The city will pick up the extra maintenance cost of pumping water off the low-lying road (below).

Aiming always for the best, the "Committee to Preserve Philadelphia's Historic Gateway" gratefully accepted the improved design, but hired a consultant to study the feasibility of covering the entire stretch of highway from Arch Street to Pine Street. Whatever his conclusions, it seems unlikely that there will be further changes; the impetus of outrage has been weakened by partial success, and a number of the combatants feel the present solution is the best they can reasonably expect.

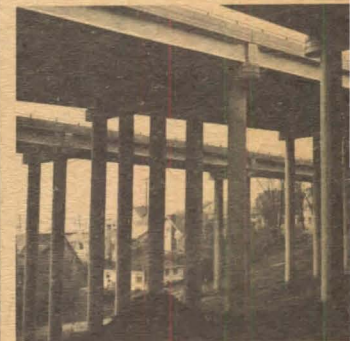
Although the Bureau of Public Roads denies that this is a "breakthrough", it is admittedly pleased with the happy outcome of this battle. Credit goes to the Bureau's Rex Whitton, to Secretary of Commerce Connor, and to LBJ, for a refreshing switch in the aims and philosophy of dispensing the taxpayers' money.

- Seattle is fighting against highways, too, not to preserve trees or landmarks, but to save its very life. The villain of *this* piece, according to an article in the April issue of the magazine *Seattle*, is John K. Mladinov, head of the Puget Sound Regional Transportation Study. Mladinov has been described as "one of those dangerous technical people"—he is supposed to be brilliant but unable to see beyond his field, which happens to be highways.

Under his direction the entire study, which has cost over \$2 million since 1960, is said to have given only the most cursory consideration to any kind of mass transit, and has biased its projections in favor of more highway. The growing group which feels that mass transit has been given short shrift by the study includes the downtown business association, a number of University of Washington planning experts, an increasing number of civic groups, and much of the city government.

The *Seattle* article foresees a concrete jungle of four or five freeways squeezed onto the narrow isthmus on which downtown is located, with the result that 60 per cent of the area will be devoted to streets and parking (sample Seattle freeway below).

Mr. Mladinov's study report has been repeatedly delayed, and the latest delay is reportedly due to the furor caused by the *Seattle*



article. In the meantime, the pendulum of interest is swinging toward rapid transit, and this has not been lost on Seattle's leadership. The examples of San Francisco, Toronto, Montreal, Cleveland; the availability of Federal funds from the HHFA for the study of balanced transport systems; the Mass Transportation Bill; all have been noted by the mayor and many others. When the report does come out, a lot of people will be just waiting to pounce on it, and since it almost certainly won't include a fair and effective provision for mass transit, there'll be lots of excitement in Seattle this year.

## UPS & DOWNS

SALUTE TO BILL ZECKENDORF

We are sad about the plight of William Zeckendorf, whose rambunctious wheeling and dealing in real estate across the continent last month lead him into federal bankruptcy court. We are sad because, among other things, Bill

# COMPETITIONS

## SAN FRANCISCO PLAZA

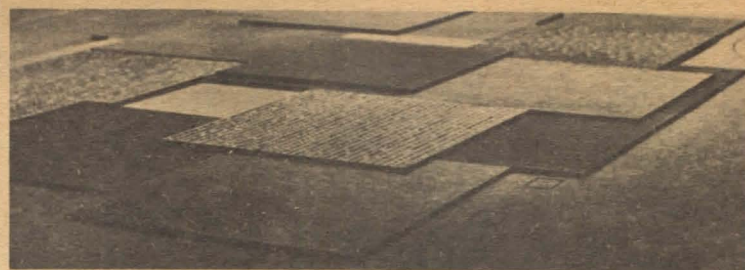
Two young architects working in Paris—Ivan Tzvetin and Angela Danadjieva—have won the International Competition for the Civic Center Plaza in San Francisco. The winning design (right) is spectacular in conception, but not in the way that word is normally employed: for these architects demonstrated a sense of proportion that lead them to a design which will give the Civic Center's buildings the importance they deserve, instead of trying to compete with them.

The winning scheme consists of a series of terraces of different surface and color, each of which measures about 100 feet square. The changes in level between these terraces is so slight that their edges can be used as seating areas; and a central pool will enliven the plaza by reflecting the sky, the sun and the clouds. Although the proposal is still schematic in its present stage, it conveys a sense of nobility not often found in comparable, recent proposals of this sort. We fervently hope San Franciscans will build this plaza; they have nothing to lose but the existing one!

## DESIGN: NO. 1 IN LOUISVILLE

Design has been getting increased emphasis in urban renewal lately, but perhaps never quite the extent it received in Louisville, Ky., last month. There, design was the prime criterion used in selecting a scheme for redeveloping a 34.4-acre parcel of land in the West Downtown Urban Renewal Area.

Rather than putting sale of the land on a competitive basis, Louisville's Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency set



a fixed price on the land and a fixed rental on the middle-income housing. Then it conducted a two-stage architectural competition for development of the site. To qualify for the competition, an architect only had to certify that a solvent developer had agreed to build the project as designed. (It was reported that some of the announced developers weren't really serious, and also that some time between the competition's two stages the rental limits were raised, thus increasing the developer's income potential.)

Last month, the agency unveiled the winning design, a handsome composition of 712 apartments, shopping center, professional offices, bowling alley, elementary school, parking areas, tree-lined walkways (below). The winning team includes McCulloch & Bickel, Louisville architects; Wittenberg Engineering & Construction Co., Louisville contractor; Taylor-Hurley Associates, Inc., New York urban renewal specialists; and David Rosen Associates, Inc., New York financiers.

# PEOPLE

## DEATHS

• DAVID SMITH was a riveter and welder on an automotive assembly line before he became a sculptor. He always considered the experience good preparation for the remarkable, massive welded iron and steel constructions which he later

produced. When his one-man show opened at the Museum of Modern Art in 1957, Andrew C. Ritchie of Yale's fine arts department commented: "Smith takes chances and he has the courage to fall flat on his face. He's the best—the oldest and the best." At 59, David Smith died May 23 from injuries suffered in a car accident.

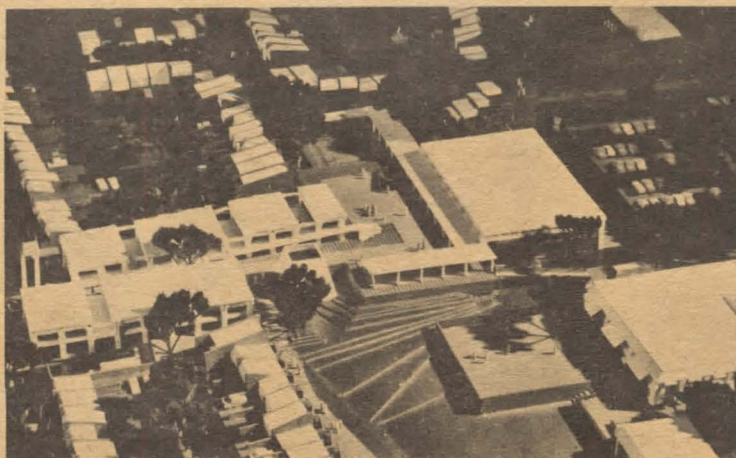
• ALFRED M. FRANKFURTER was a keen and perceptive critic of pomposity and sham in all the arts, including architecture. When he took over as editor of *Art News* in 1936, he quickly transformed the magazine into a strong and effective voice of the arts. Once, for example, he called Washington's pre-Kennedy Fine Arts Commission "a unanimous roster of conservative, eclectic architects: it is as if the President appointed an advisory committee on foreign policy composed exclusively of isolationists." He died May 12 at the age of 59.

## AWARDS

• The New York Chapter, AIA, presented its highest award, the Medal of Honor, to MARCEL BREUER for his achievements in design. The chapter also announced two other awards: to NORVAL WHITE, assistant professor of architectural design at Cooper Union and a director of the Municipal Art Society, the Harry B. Rutkins Memorial Award "for his creative leadership and devoted service to the chapter, the profession and the community," and to CHARLES ABRAMS, housing consultant and author, an honorary associate membership for his "contribution to architecture through his endeavors to provide better human shelter."

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Three architectural schools had newly appointed deans last month: KENNETH SMITH at Columbia, LAWRENCE ANDERSON at MIT, and JOHN HEJDUK at Cooper Union. Columbia also announced a reorganization into three divisions with new heads: ROMALDO GIURGOLA (architecture), CHARLES ABRAMS (urban planning) and MARIO SALVADORI (technology).



Zeckendorf, more than any other U.S. developer, has contributed considerably to raising the level of urban design in America.

The bankruptcy petition was initiated by the Marine Midland Trust Company, trustee for a fund to retire bonds on which a half-million dollar payment was due. Marine Midland's action followed close on the heels of a series of blows to Mr. Zeckendorf, including suspension of trading in his Webb & Knapp stock by the American Stock Exchange and the Securities & Exchange Commission, a tax lien slapped on his Greenwich, Conn. estate, and a move on his personal funds by the wife of an ex-partner to cover a \$150,000 debt.

On May 18 the court named Mortimer N. Caplin, former Commissioner of Internal Revenue, to carry out the formidable job of reorganizing the Zeckendorf empire, whose status is unknown, apparently, even to Mr. Zeckendorf, as the firm is too broke to hire an auditor. The Marine Midland's guess is that the firm's assets are \$69.7 million and its debts \$68.6, a long way from the estimated \$300 million assets in W&K's banner year, 1959.

Zeckendorf's present difficulties should not obscure his very considerable contribution to the American city. Though he frightened conservatives (and possibly stepped on more toes than necessary), he revitalized the entire real estate market. Among the projects he dreamed up or helped realize are the U.N. and Chase Manhattan Plaza sites in New York, urban renewal projects such as New York's Kips Bay Plaza, Philadelphia's Society Hill (opposite), Chicago's Hyde Park, Washington's Southwest. In Montreal, *Place Ville Marie* is a Zeckendorf monument, as are Denver's Mile High Center and Los Angeles' Century City. Without Zeckendorf's broad vision, a lot of our cities' proudest new architecture might not be here today.

This is in no sense intended as Bill Zeckendorf's fiscal obituary. Real estate reporters in the popular press have written such obituaries many times before, only to find that they had to eat their words. We asked one New York realtor recently what he thought of Zeckendorf's chances this time, and he answered: "With Bill, you can never tell! He might still fool all of us." We wish him well, and a pox on the gloaters!

Walter McQuade

## THE CITY AS MOVIE STAR

*"Men have loved cities. Loved them for their beauty and power, for their variety and animation; loved them as one loves old friends, for their own sakes, despite their many historic shortcomings. What makes a city almost a living personality, an image people smile at in their dreams . . . or even remember in their prayers?"*

This musing question by critic-historian Lewis Mumford is answered skillfully by cameramen around the world in a set of six short motion pictures available from the National Film Board of Canada, titled *Lewis Mumford On the City*. The half-hour films are an arresting analysis of urban problems and prospects.

The films are credited to Mumford's monumental 1961 book, *The City In History*, but the book actually is less the source of the film scripts than the mountain from which writer-director Ian MacNeill took a long view. Where Mumford amassed historical information about the rise of cities, and laced his prose with eloquent outbursts of anger against the faceless forces of their decline, MacNeill's camera eye roams with calm detachment and finds the same problems almost everywhere: non-planning, too many automobiles, breaking-down mass transit, missing or meaningless spaces, disorganization of land uses. The stars of the films are New York, Copenhagen, Montreal, Stockholm, Rotterdam, Coventry, Toronto, Madrid, Amsterdam, and other urbs, but most are not heroes—certainly not most of the U.S. cities. Hope is found in The Netherlands, where the very weight of the overhanging ocean and the high density of population have enforced shrewd planning.

The films are held back from diatribe by the many sequences of people using cities hard: groups of deaf mutes in animated hand-conversation on Berlin sidewalks; two young boys exploring the wonder of the old-world city of Arles; a group of feeble old men and women in Sweden playing children's musical instruments—flutes and triangle—together in in-

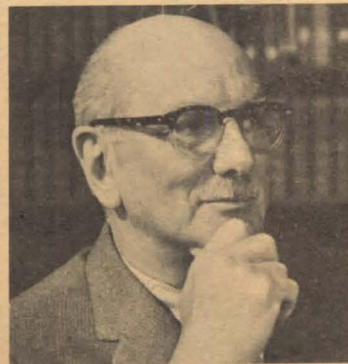
firmity and pleasure; the maddening, yet still joyous, jam of trucks, vegetable crates, people and gesticulating *gendarmes* in Les Halles, the old Paris marketplace; physicians grouped tensely over a surgery case in a New York hospital; great symphonies; ballets.

### People together

The camera is sometimes present when the people are absent touring the baroque splendors of Paris by early morning light before the populace stirs; spying after dark as trailer loads of those urban assassins, automobiles, are impersonally unloaded. You watch the cars' headlights switch on; then they roll down the ramps from the trailers like sinister monsters from Mars, come to conquer.

The camera pounces not only on problems, but on solutions. One beautiful sequence filmed from airplanes documents clearly the constructive order of the Netherlands landscape, catching the superbly balanced—and meticulously used—transportation system, in which canals, roads and railroads all carry the appropriate cargo, and all prosper. The wonder to an American, of course, is that a country so densely packed as Holland (where population density is almost 20 times that of the U.S.) can still preserve so much lyrical landscape.

Mumford himself frequently comes on camera—or, rather, the camera comes on Mumford, seated—and he lectures, helping pace the six episodes: I. The City—Heaven and Hell; II. Cars or People?; III. The City and Its Regions; IV. The Heart of the City; V. The City as Man's Hope; VI. The City and the Future. Mumford has been better; here he is evidently following a



teleprompter, and his diction becomes somewhat sonorous. But the point is that he has authority. He has earned it. An indefatigable lecturer, he has spent a lifetime trying to lead urbanites to the sane vision. At 69, he himself

lives in a hamlet 80 miles north of Manhattan, where he keeps a hearty garden patch in summers and works at his desk five hours per day year 'round, when not on the road to teach or talk.

He began his career shortly after World War I. Besides his numerous books, he has written scores of magazine articles; has been one of the outstanding composers of indignant letters to the *New York Times* of this century; and has conducted *The Sky Line* column for the *New Yorker* for 25 years in which he has mastered many issues but has been a little less sure, I think, as an eye of architecture. His tone, often lofty, sharpens when he is angered. He called Jane Jacobs' book *Death and Life of Great American Cities* a home-grown cure for cancer.

Well garnished with honors, the rarest of which was from President Lyndon Johnson, the Medal of Freedom, Mumford himself recently stepped briskly down as president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the U.S. Establishment establishment. The AIA has honored this sage, as it is doing again this month, but its gold medal has not yet come his way. Many think it should, and will. He was given the medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects a year ago in London, and in recent years the AIA has been taking its cue from the RIBA in these matters, a year or two in the English wake. True, it took longer than that for the AIA to recognize Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright got the British Society of Architects' medal in 1941 but the AIA did not find him digestable until 1949, when the old man went to the convention in Houston to tour the brand new Shamrock Hotel ("Green is a very unpleasant color," he commented) and accept the AIA award ("I am grateful," he said, and a rather nervous audience of architects relaxed a little). American architecture's attitude toward Mumford remains a little nervous too, perhaps a higher compliment than a gold medal.

### Wright on Mumford

Frank Lloyd Wright once spoke of Lewis Mumford's "essential manliness and nobility seen in the man as seen in his work . . ." Mumford, this man with this handsome mind, once told an interviewer his feeling about the future of the city: "I'm pessimistic about the probabilities but optimistic about the possibilities."

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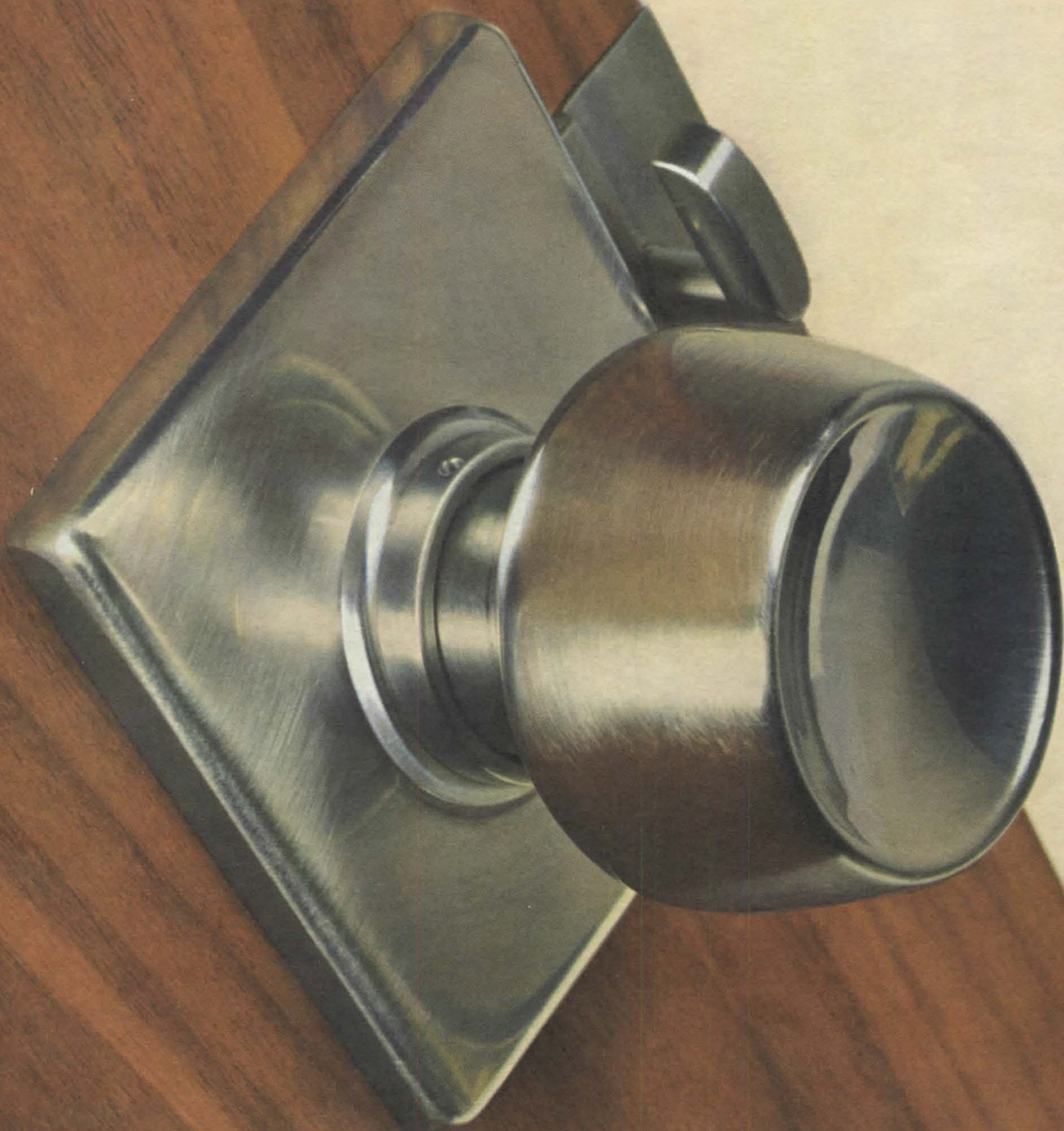
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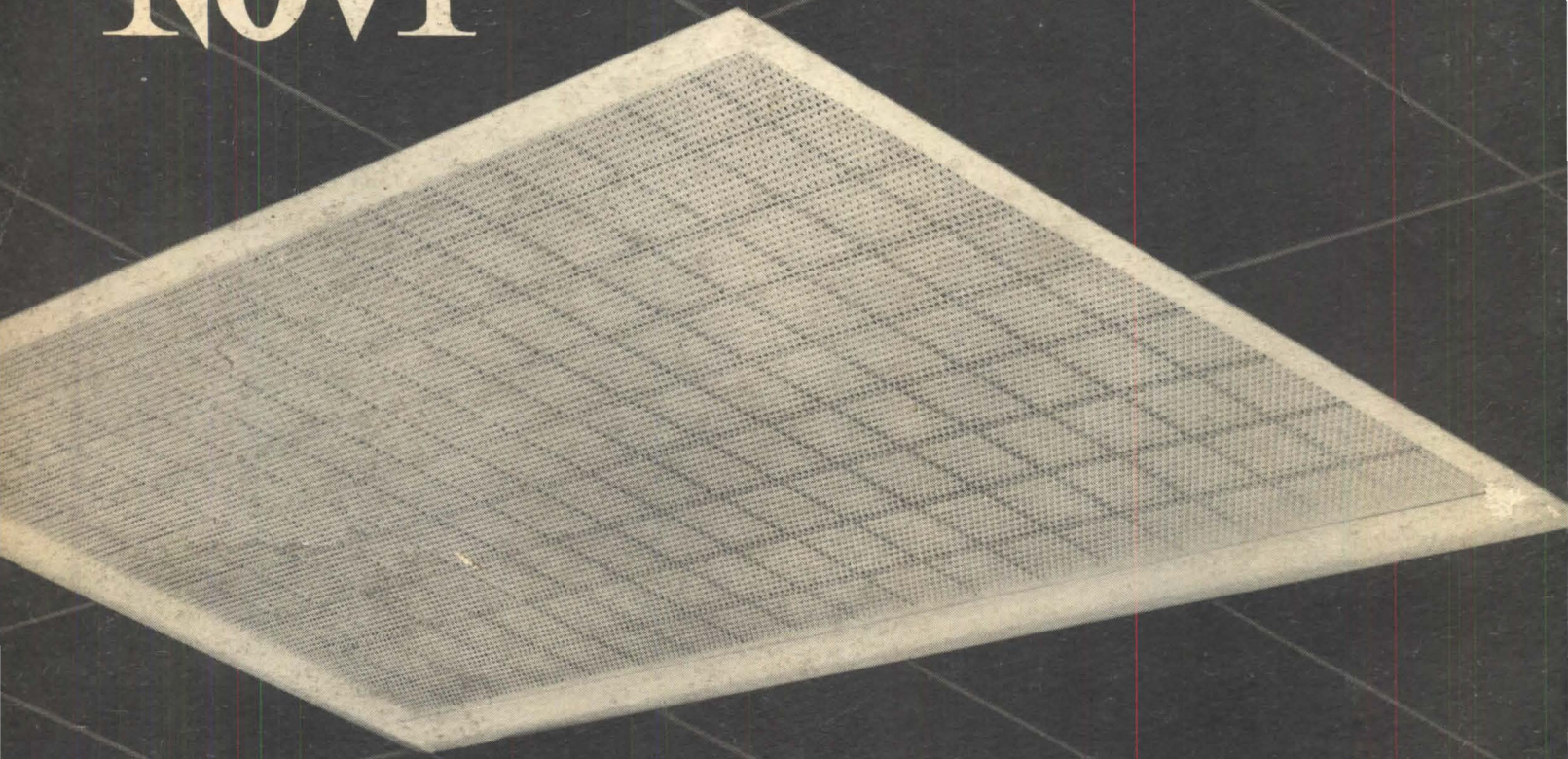
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