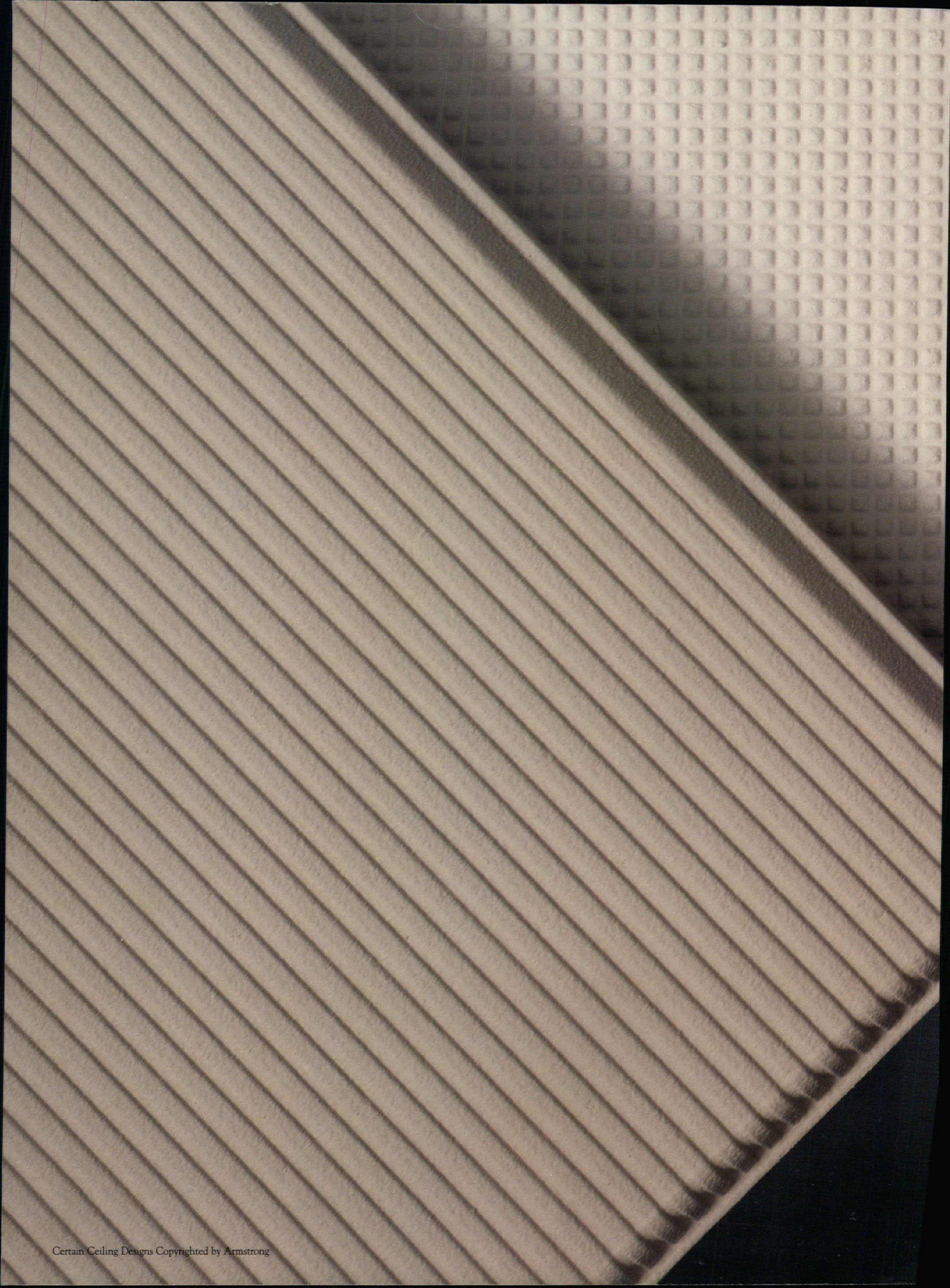


# RENOVATIONS

SUPPLEMENT TO ARCHITECTURAL RECORD JULY 1987 ISSUE





# Re-using older buildings continues to make sense

This special issue celebrates the simple economic fact that in the near future architects will continue to be significantly involved in preservation, recycling, and adaptive re-use. As McGraw-Hill economist and editor Joseph Spiers points out in his article "Market forecast: Rehabilitation and adaptive re-use" (pages 10-11), "When times are tough, expenditures for additions and alterations typically rise relative to those for new construction." And times *are* tough. Contracts for new work are down for 1987-88. The good news, however, is that, while the plotted lines on the charts for new construction tend to move upward or downward in cyclical fashion, the graph indications for renovations, rehabilitations, additions, and alterations move steadily upward every year. At a given point in the cycle, manufacturers may not be building new plants, but they will be upgrading the facilities they have, and although housing starts may be down, housing rehab continues upward.

Historic/old-building rehab tax credits have been cut but, as Spiers points out, these are still one of the few tax breaks left. Furthermore, the historic-preservation market, in spite of the attention it receives, is but a small segment of the total market for nonresidential and residential additions and alterations. And because the total market is up, architects can expect to be doing a lot of renovating in the near future, if less preserving and restoring.

The following pages present a gathering of some of the most outstanding rehab projects completed in the United States and published in RECORD in recent years. The first group (pages 27-55) includes a renovated museum for Santa Fe, a recycled landmark church in Boston, a prep-school addition in Connecticut, and an office-building addition and remodeling in Cambridge. Also featured (pages 59-75) are adaptive re-uses of industrial loft interiors in New York City, Seattle, and Denver. Three new dwelling places (pages 79-89), two of which were once schools, complete the collection.

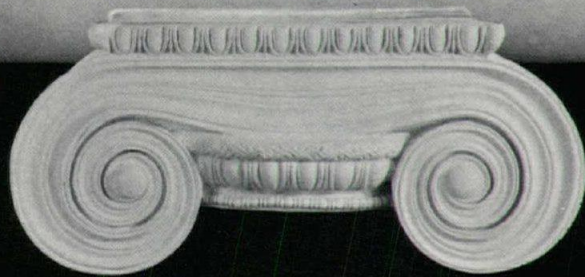
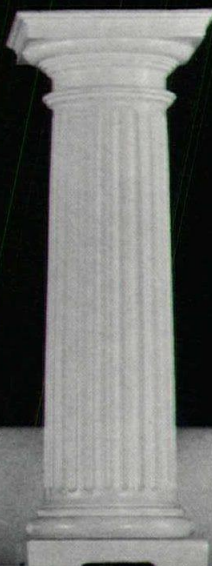
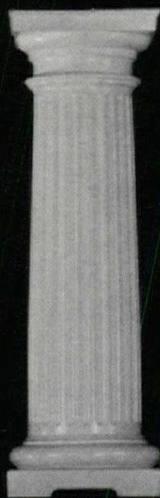
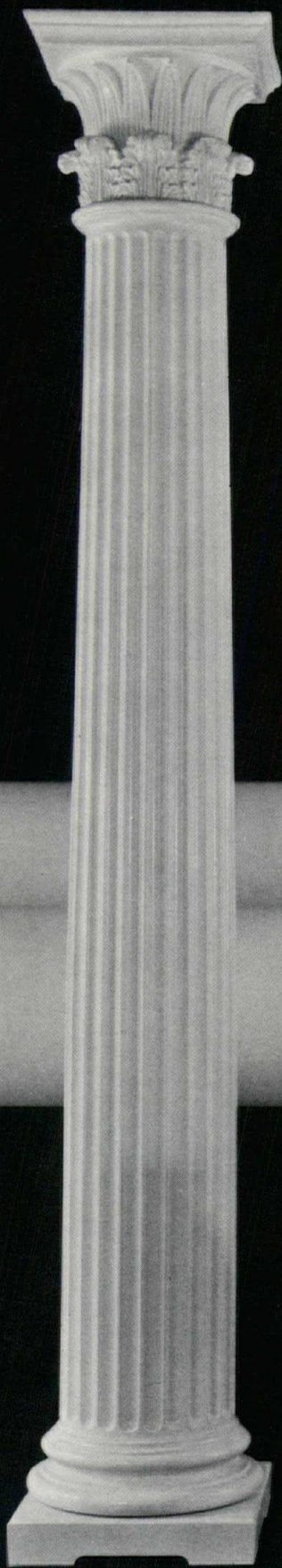
Additionally, because the movement to restore and preserve our nation's most important architectural monuments continues to be strong, we include a survey of the outstanding conservation work of Swanke Hayden Connell Architects (pages 18-21). This firm has rehabbed the Bowery Savings Bank in New York City, the United States Senate Chamber in Washington, D. C., the main terminal of New York's Grand Central Station, and the Statue of Liberty. Current work includes West Virginia's deteriorated State Capitol designed by Cass Gilbert.

This special issue should help put to rest the simplistic notion that the United States is a nation exclusively devoted to architectural novelty and built-in obsolescence. Joseph Spiers's figures prove otherwise. So do the distinguished renovations we have chosen. *Mildred F. Schmertz*

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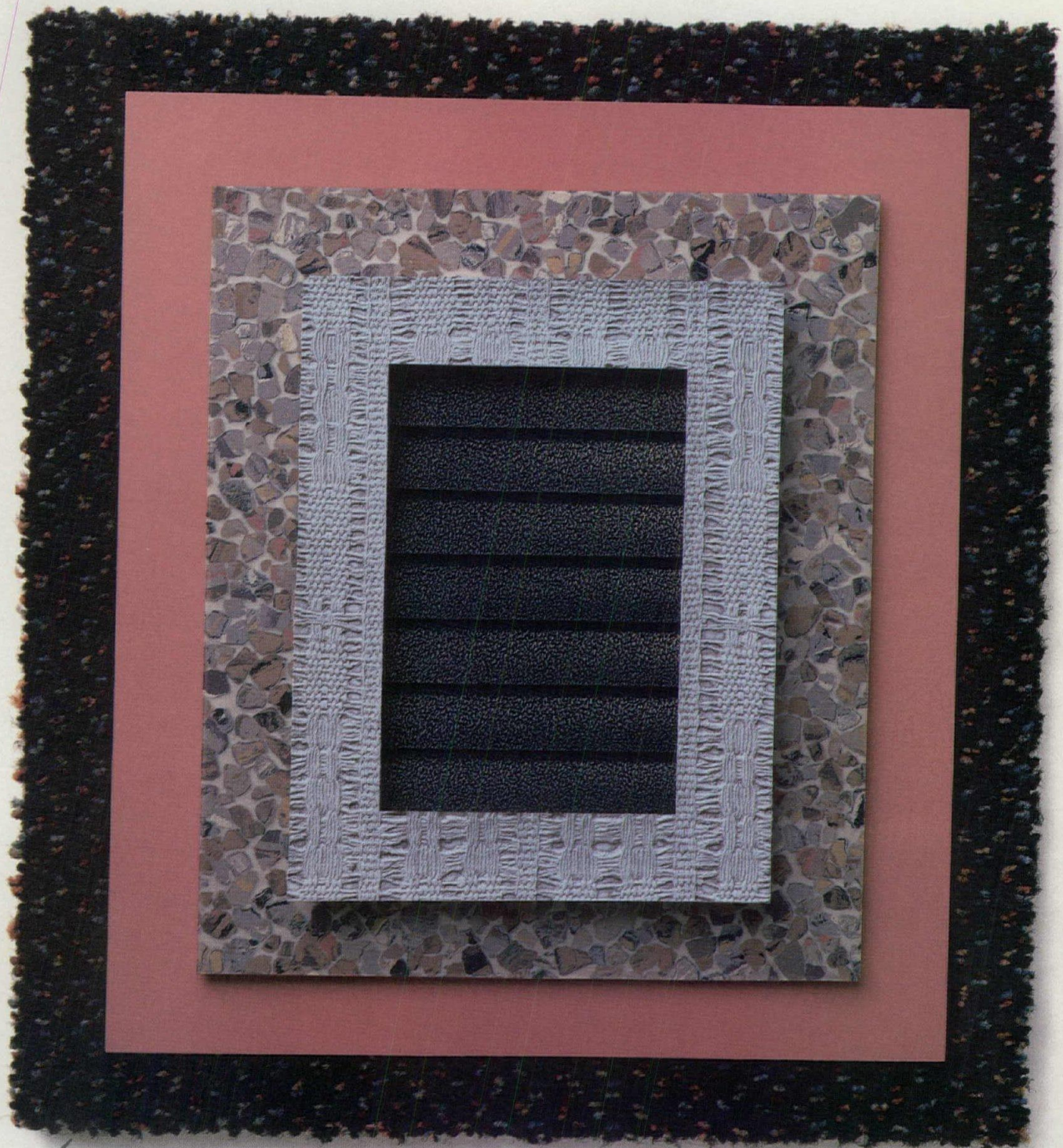
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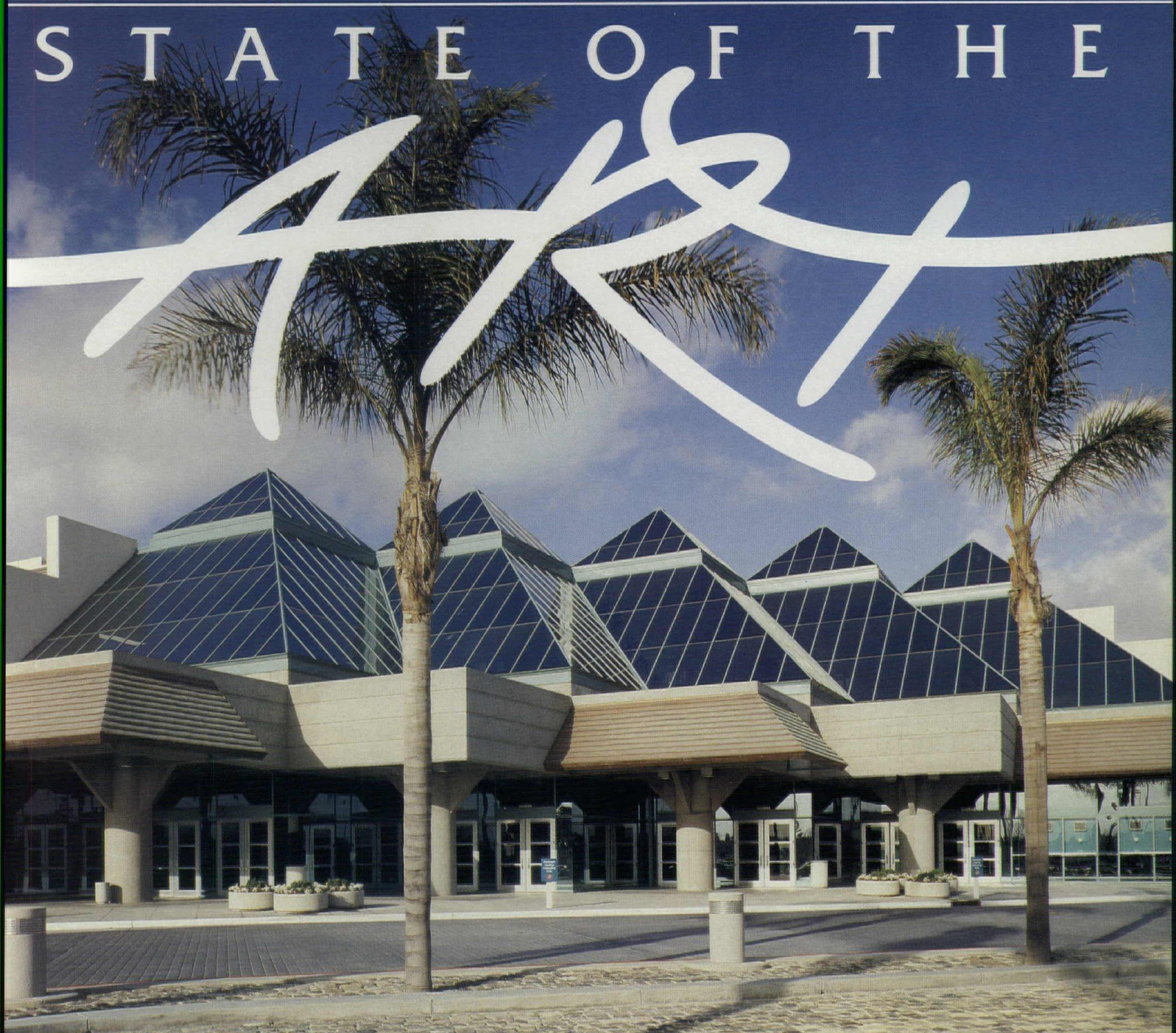
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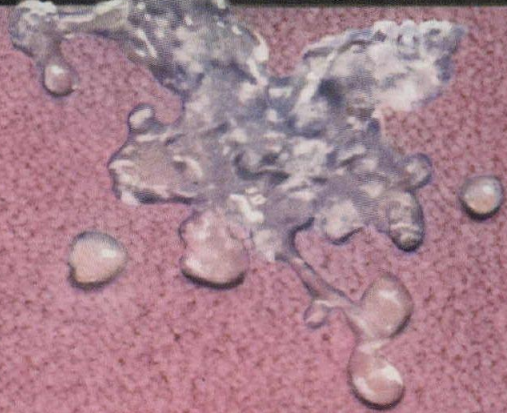
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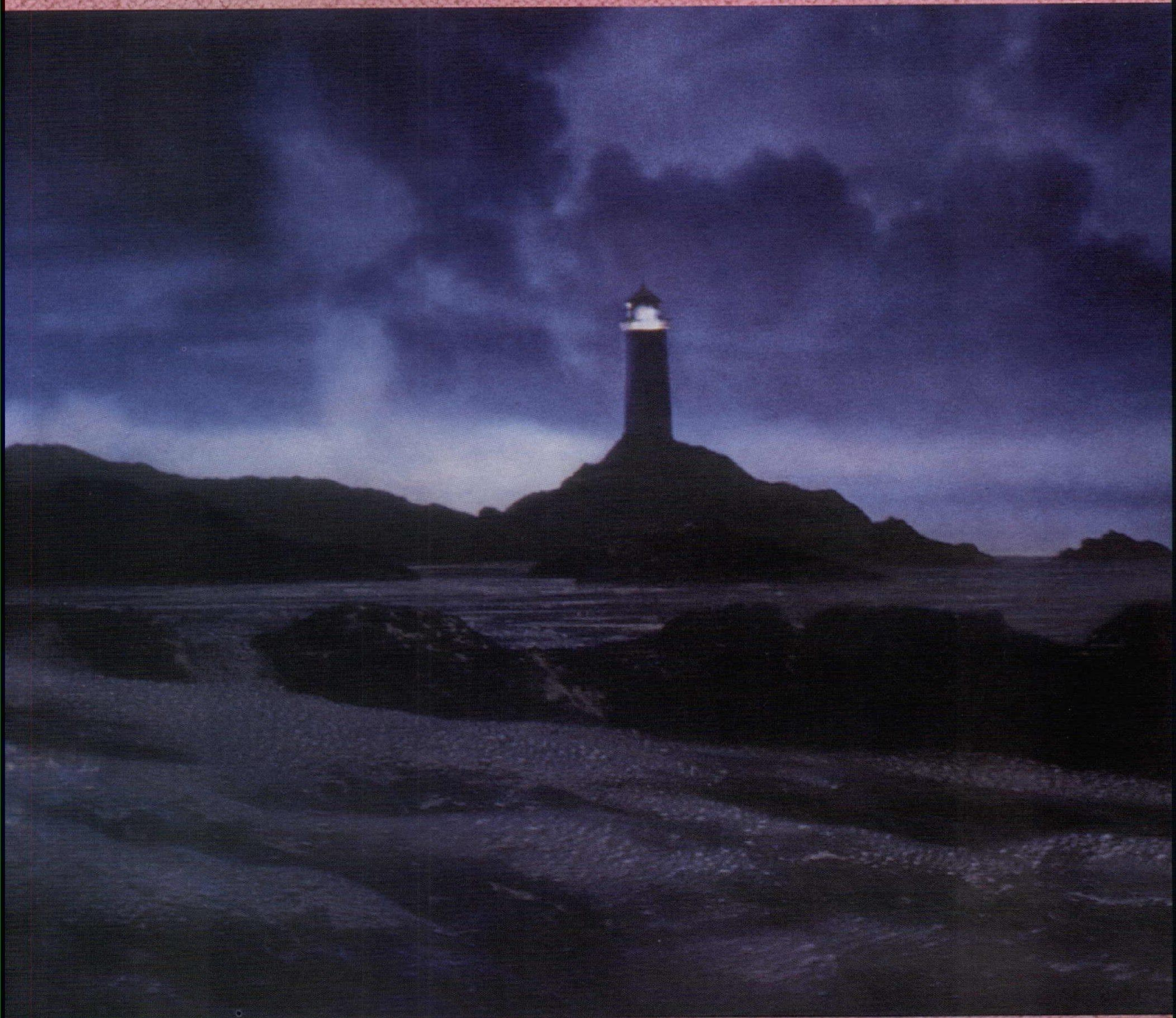
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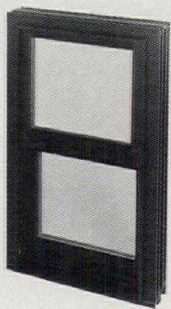


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## Market forecast: Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse

By Joseph Spiers

It's no secret that the building business is in for a rough period. Signs of a slowdown abound:

- The value of contracts for nonresidential buildings fell 2.6 percent last year to \$81.9 billion. Early in 1987, contracts trailed last year's by 7 percent.
- Construction put in place for private nonresidential buildings has been falling sharply for months.
- Contracts for multiunit housing dropped more than 5 percent in 1986, and construction of apartments early this year plunged 11 percent from early 1986.
- Surveys by McGraw-Hill and the U. S. Commerce Department show that company budgets for new plants and equipment are stagnating.

Underlying these figures are events and conditions that point to further problems in 1987 and beyond—namely tax-law changes, overbuilding of offices and other commercial structures in many U. S. cities, and economic hardship in the Southwest. Because of these factors, forecasters are agreed that construction will continue to slide. F. W. Dodge, for example, predicts a 5-percent drop in the value of nonresidential building contracts in 1987, and an 18-percent plunge in multifamily housing contract value.

Tax-law changes that became effective last January 1 are hitting the construction business from various angles. Depreciation schedules under the new law provide smaller writeoffs than prior law. Losses from tax-shelter investments are tougher to deduct. The investment tax credit was eliminated retroactive to January 1, 1986. And the credit for renovating historic and other old buildings was reduced. All in all, even if inadvertently, the construction industry was a target of tax reform.

But what the tax bill taketh away the tax bill hath helped to give. Thanks in part to generous tax provisions, construction boomed in recent years. Office construction contracts soared from \$17.7 billion in 1982 to \$25.4 billion in 1985. During the same period, contracts for stores, restaurants, shopping centers, and commercial warehouses more than doubled to \$20 billion. In fact, construction boomed too much, leaving super-high office vacancy rates in many cities, especially in the Sunbelt.

The problem is particularly bad, of course, in energy-producing states. And even though crude-oil prices have stabilized in the \$18-per-barrel range, that price isn't high enough to fire up the economies of

Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. The unemployment rate in Texas, for example, was recently 9.8 percent, or 50 percent above the U. S. average. And office-vacancy rates in Dallas and Houston are well over 20 percent—again, far above the national average. Meanwhile, as the energy economy sputters, the rest of the economy is not exactly a ball of fire. Many economists predict the economy will grow around 2.5 percent in 1987, about the same as in 1986.

In short, the evidence from all sides says the construction industry in 1987-88 will take one of its periodic spills into the soup. If you're an architect looking for business, the obvious question is: What to do? One possible route is to look more closely at the market for renovations, rehabilitations, additions, and alterations. The reason: When times are tough, expenditures for additions and alterations typically rise relative to those for new construction.

Consider the nonresidential building market in 1986. F. W. Dodge's value of contracts for new construction fell to \$54.8 billion from \$57.5 billion in 1985. But contracts for additions and alterations rose to \$27.1 billion from \$26.6 billion.

Similarly in 1982, when the economy was in deep recession and interest rates were gargantuan, new contracts skidded more than \$3 billion; meanwhile, contracts for additions and alterations rose nearly \$2 billion. This "counter-cyclical" behavior is shown in Chart 1 (opposite top). Another way to look at it is that new construction is highly cyclical, while the improvements market usually keeps increasing every year.

Construction permit data from the Commerce Department show the same kind of pattern. In 1982, for example, the value of permits issued for nonresidential buildings plunged 11.5 percent while permits for nonresidential additions and alterations edged up 3.7 percent.

Another set of numbers, referring to manufacturers alone, reinforces the fact that in hard times business reins in its expansionary tendencies, but still spends money to upgrade and modernize. The DRI/McGraw-Hill surveys of U. S. plant and equipment spending show that manufacturers' investment for replacement and modernization, as opposed to investment for expansion, averaged 52 percent of total investment in the late 1970s, when profits were strong. The replacement and modernization share jumped to 60 percent by the mid-1980s, when disinflation and severe foreign competition were putting U. S. manufacturers

through the wringer. With manufacturing still using only some 80 percent of capacity, it's likely that capital spending will continue to focus on modernization rather than expansion.

Residential construction behaves similarly to nonresidential. According to Commerce Department statistics, outlays for residential additions and alterations totaled about 16 percent of total residential construction, when housing starts were strong in the late 1970s. Interest rates subsequently skyrocketed and recession gripped the economy, causing housing starts to plummet to about 1.2 billion per year on average in 1980-82 from nearly a 2-billion annual average in 1977-79. As starts plummeted, the share of additions and alterations in total residential construction jumped to more than 21 percent from the earlier 16-percent share. In fact, despite the depression in new housing starts, dollars for residential additions and alterations actually increased.

Since 1982, the market for new housing has been fairly robust, and the share of spending on additions and alterations has again subsided to about 16 to 17 percent. Nonetheless, because the total market has grown, the number of dollars spent on additions and alterations has continued to grow, reaching \$35.6 billion in 1986. Recently, mortgage rates have begun to rise sharply, possibly leading to another slowdown in new housing outlays, accompanied by another spurt in renovation work.

The message in these statistics is that, under the surface, 1987 and 1988 look a bit better for architects and builders than at first glance.

Granted, forecasters assert that new nonresidential construction will be hurting, and that construction of new apartments will be something of a disaster for awhile. But history suggests that expenditures for major improvements will continue to rise. So while construction as a whole will be a distinctly cool market during the next year or more, the additions and alterations market should be lukewarm.

This argument is hardly flawless, however. In the factory market, for example, it's true that corporate budgets will likely continue to focus on modernization, because the sinking U. S. dollar has yet to spur a clear turnaround in U. S. producers' fortunes. Hence, manufacturers will keep trying to cut costs by operating more efficient plants. But after all the modernization investment of recent years, manufacturers have started to scale back plans.

*Mr. Spiers, an economist and editor at McGraw-Hill, writes frequently on the construction industry.*

*"The message in these statistics is that, under the surface, 1987 and 1988 look a bit better for architects and builders than at first glance."*

Another damper on the additions/alterations market is the reduction in the tax credit for rehabilitating historic and other old buildings. Congress first enacted rehab tax credits in 1976. Legislators then boosted incentives in 1981 as part of that year's major tax overhaul, kicking off a boom in preservation work. The number of historic rehab projects using the tax credit surged from 614 in fiscal year (FY) 1980 (October 1, 1979-September 30, 1980) to a peak of more than 3,200 in FY 1984. From 1980 to 1985, dollars invested in such projects soared sevenfold from \$346 million to \$2.4 billion, as shown in Chart 2 (left). Investment eased to \$1.7 billion in 1986. Even more money was invested in rehabbing old, but nonhistoric buildings.

Under the 1981 law, outlays for rehabilitating a historic building qualified for a 25-percent tax credit, if the building was for nonresidential or rental residential use. Rehabbing old, but nonhistoric, buildings for nonresidential use qualified for 15 percent or 20 percent credits, depending on the building's age.

Besides these regulations specific to preserving old buildings, another aspect of prior law played a very big role in stimulating rehab work: Investors who took no management role in projects—so-called limited or passive partners—could deduct losses from those projects against active (e. g., salary) or portfolio (e. g., interest or dividend) income. This rule gave rise to the huge tax-shelter industry, which contributed to the commercial and apartment/condo construction boom in the first half of the 1980s.

As evidenced by all the empty office space throughout the country, tax-shelter syndicates often build projects strictly to cut investors' tax bills, and with little concern for fundamental economic rationale. With historic preservation, however, investors could do good while also doing well. In addition, tax-incentive proponents point out to members of Congress that historic rehabs often anchor downtown renewal projects, saving areas from urban blight.

The historic rehab tax incentives have "proven to be one of the most successful urban revitalization programs ever implemented, encouraging substantial private investment in older, declining neighborhoods," says the National Park Service in its FY 1986 report on the tax-credit program.

Even in a report that was looking for ways to eliminate tax breaks, the Congressional Budget Office granted that the rehab credit "may lessen the outflow of jobs from urban areas."

But despite the esthetic and economic arguments, Congress last year reduced rehab tax incentives. Beginning in 1987, the historic tax credit fell to 20 percent from 25 percent, and the nonhistoric credits of 15 and 20 percent fell to 10 percent. Depreciation writeoffs were also reduced.

These changes alone may not have been devastating to the historic rehab market. But to the consternation of groups fighting to keep the benefits, Congress's attack on proliferating tax-shelter syndicates may have left historic preservation a casualty.

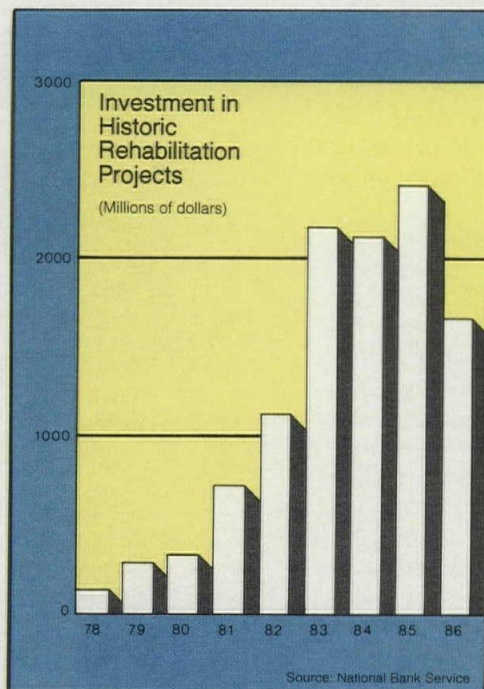
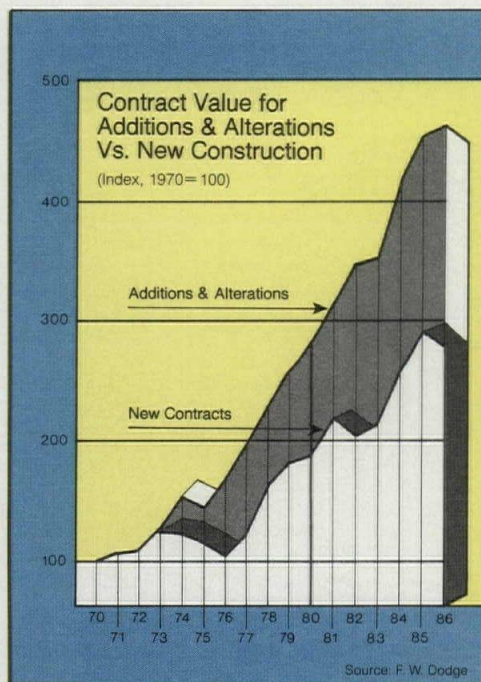
Specifically, the law that became effective last January 1 sharply limits the losses and credits that passive investors can write off against active and portfolio income. There are a couple of exceptions to the new rule:

- Active managers with less than \$100,000 income can deduct up to \$25,000.
- Passive investors with income under \$200,000 can use the rehab credit to offset taxes owed on up to \$25,000.

This major curtailment of tax benefits will hurt rehabbing of historic and other old buildings because these projects do not generate profits in their early years, according to the Committee for Future Investment in America's Past. The Park Service says the new tax law has already hurt. For even as the shape of the tax bill started to become clear, applications for rehab projects began to fall significantly as developers and investors anticipated the adverse financial consequences. Indeed, six out of seven respondents to a Park Service questionnaire said they would not have undertaken their historic preservation projects without the tax benefits. In addition, the U. S. Office of Management and Budget projects a substantial decline by 1988 in credits declared for rehabbing old, nonhistoric buildings.

Nonetheless, rehab credits are one of the few tax breaks left. As *Business Week* noted recently in its Personal Business column, "getting anything off your taxes these days can make rehabs worth doing." *Business Week* also quoted a rehabber who said people restore historic buildings for more reasons than taking tax credits.

What's more, the historic/old building rehab market is small compared with a total of \$27 billion for nonresidential and \$36 billion for residential additions and alterations. So even if there are problems facing segments of the renovations market, near-term business opportunities promise to be a lot better here than anywhere in the new-construction market.



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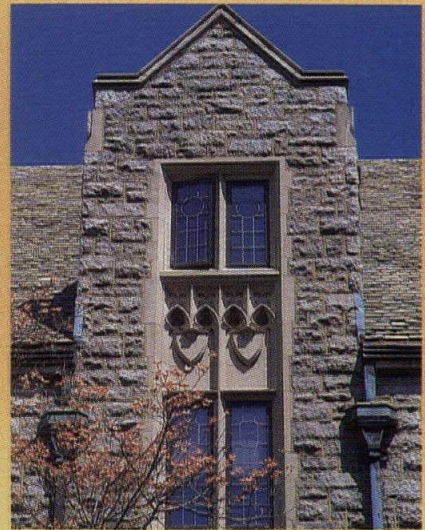
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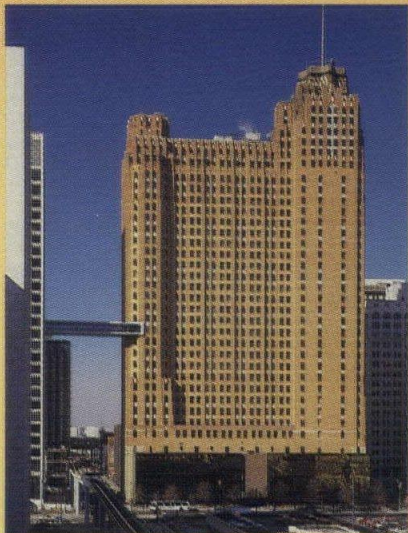


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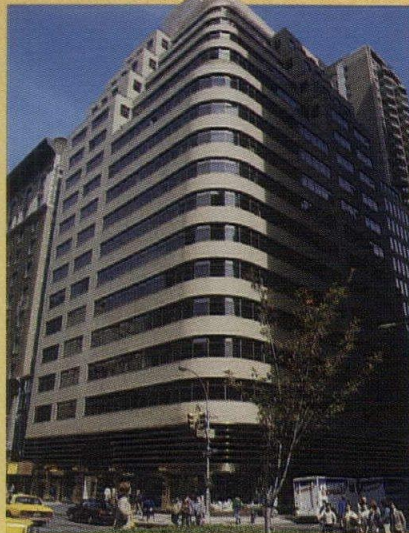
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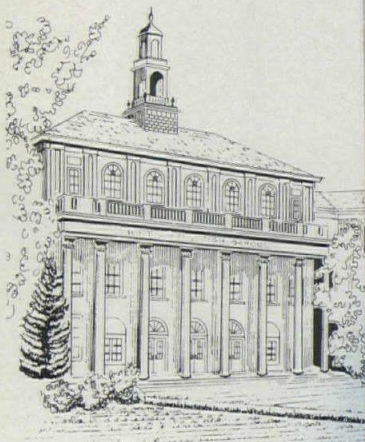
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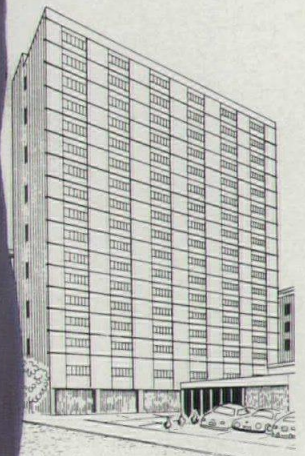
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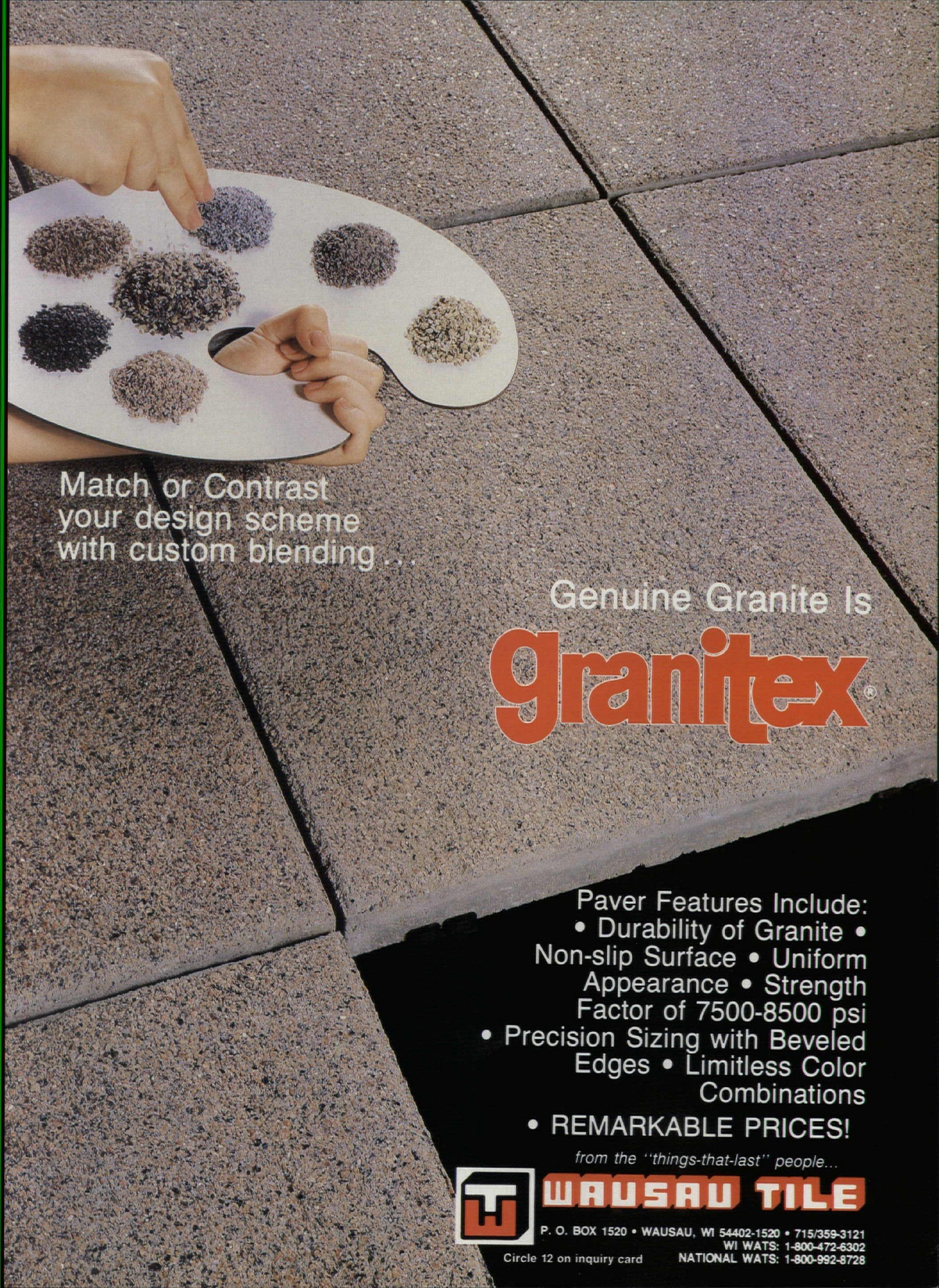
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# Restoring our nation's monuments

By Scott Gutterman

When Alfred Easton Poor opened his architectural practice in 1925, restoration was hardly the first order of business. America was still in the flush of its second century, and building was the principal matter at hand. By the time Albert Swanke joined the firm in 1946, the country had been tempered by a war and a depression. But the economy rose to ever-greater heights, and America's fascination with the new far outpaced its reverence for the old. It was not until 1958 that the firm restored its first building, completing its earliest significant restorations in Washington, D. C., where the country began to show a sense of national identity. The firm restored buildings throughout the bulldozing '60s (when Richard Hayden came aboard) and the overgrown '70s (when Edward Connell joined in). Now that the moment cries out for a firm that understands the intricacies of restoring the buildings which define our heritage, Swanke Hayden Connell Architects is ready. But that still doesn't mean that restoration rules the roost.

"I'd say we're about 40 percent new building, 40 percent interior design, and 20 percent restoration," declares Hayden, the managing partner of the firm. But that 20 percent has included such prestigious projects as the Statue of Liberty (RECORD, July 1984, pages 128-135), the Senate and Supreme Court Chambers, Grand Central Station, the Bowery Savings Bank, and many others. In the field of restoration, experience clearly pays. "We've been around so long," says Swanke, the retired principal, "that we've had the luxury of taking a second crack at a project that passed through the office 50 years ago." Yet, as much as experience has provided a deepened understanding of an ancient field, it is research that has been the cornerstone of the firm's success. "We use Viollet-le-Duc's definition of restoration: using the best available knowledge of what was there or was intended to be there," explains Hayden. For the Statue of Liberty project alone, Swanke Hayden Connell—in association with a team of French architects and historians—conducted research in places as diverse as Paris, Washington, New York, and Colmar, France, the birthplace of the statue's chief designer, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi. Hayden's team sought not the mere reconstruction of the monument, but a thorough understanding of its place in history. Says Hayden, "We wanted to get to know the spirit of the enterprise."

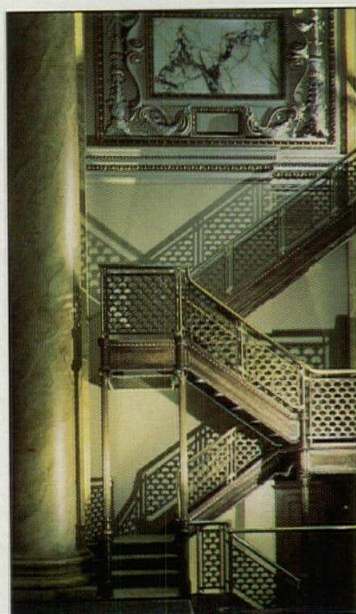
The search to reclaim that spirit can lead to unexpected places. In the case of the restoration of the Senate chambers, it led to an attic outside Washington. Swanke recalls the story: "The clerk of the Senate back in 1859 would go home after dinner and write down everything that happened that day. For instance, he'd write 'Today, we got new drapes.' He'd describe the material, the color, the whole thing. Or, 'Today we

got new spittoons in the order of 12 inches in diameter and six inches in height with a wide mouth, all in brass.' And we found boxes of his diaries in his granddaughter's attic. She even returned the drapes that had been stolen from the chambers!"

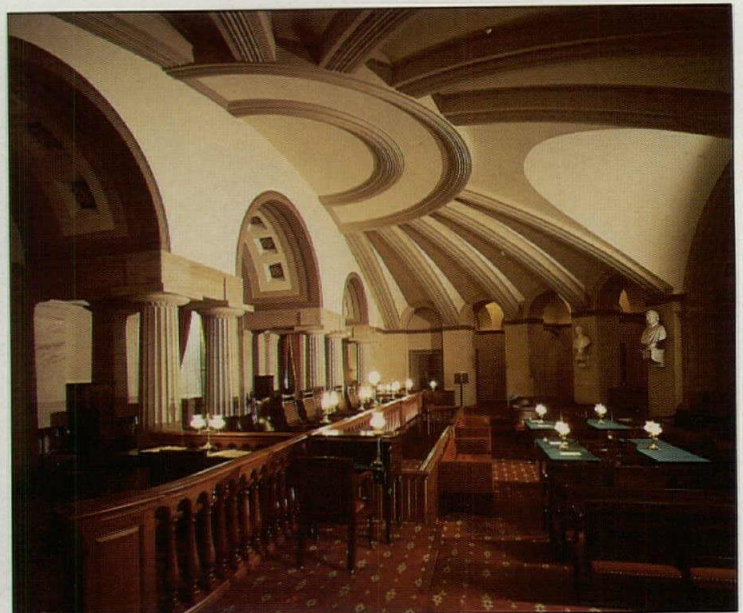
Swanke terms this type of renovation "monumental"; total historical accuracy is the goal. But the firm undertakes many smaller-scaled restorations, which often raise the difficult question of whether to preserve or modernize. Says John Peter Barie, a principal of the firm, "You look for the elements of the building that are worth retaining. Just because something's old doesn't mean that you want to retain it." Swanke points to the American Savings Bank in Washington as an example: "All of the architectural ornament had been painted over. Now, had that been a truly historic restoration, we would have laboriously taken all the paint off, layer by layer, gotten back to what was originally there, and then restored it. We took a different course. We restored it to a suitable color scheme that was of that period. The project didn't warrant the kind of research that went into the Senate and Supreme Court Chambers." Such decisions are dictated, in large measure, by budget. Questions of money might seem anathema to the restorer seeking historical accuracy and esthetic distinction. But Swanke Hayden Connell's approach to restoring old buildings is the same as its approach to new work: essentially pragmatic. Says Swanke, "The client should come to us and say, 'I have a building. What is its potential?' We analyze whether it is better economics to tear it down or recycle it. We try to show them the ultimate that can be achieved."

By combining a commitment to research with an understanding of modern building needs, Swanke Hayden Connell has emerged as one of the most capable firms doing restoration today. Although the firm's work is widely regarded as striking the necessary balance between old and new, the architects are no strangers to criticism. They, in fact, encountered it on their first major restoration job on Capitol Hill. "We had been hired to extend the East Front of the Capitol Building by about 28 feet. Historic groups were up in arms about the changes," recalls Swanke. Nonetheless, the work was completed and the firm was hired to renovate the Senate and Supreme Court Chambers. Money to produce contract documents was provided in the early '60s, but it was not until 1972 that the project received the necessary funding for construction to begin. Once it did, new facts about the structure were revealed. "When we took up the floor, we found there was a crack 1 3/4 inches wide that followed the curvature of the ceiling configuration of the floor below." The architects traced it to a gas explosion that had occurred in 1900. The finding helped explain why previous, smaller

Scott Gutterman, a former Helena Rubenstein Fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art, is a contributing editor to the British magazine, *Art & Design*, and writes on art and architecture for *RECORD*, *Metropolis*, and other magazines.



Otto Baitz



Alexandre Georges

*Swanke Hayden Connell Architects began restoring older buildings at a time when developers were more interested in tearing them down. During the past 30 years, the firm has moved to the forefront in the burgeoning field of restoration.*

renovations had encountered a variety of problems. Working with an initial budget of only \$1.3 million (and for a fee so low that the project became "clearly a labor of love"), Swanke began searching for workmen who could do the jobs required. He turned to a third-generation German craftsman to recreate the slender cast-iron columns found on the second-floor balcony of the Senate Chambers. He contacted a firm in New Orleans to make plaster models. He even found a shop in Belgium with the two-needle sewing machine needed to remake the drapery. The goal was accuracy; but that too had its limitations. For instance, the original chandelier was lit by whale oil. The architect's sensible solution was to modernize the lighting but retain the chandelier as decoration.

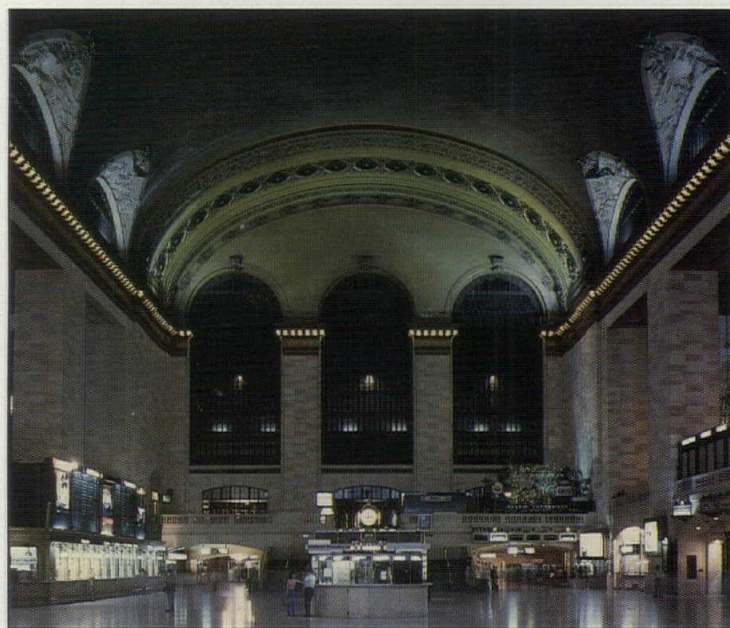
The problem of relighting Grand Central Station was not so easily solved. "The first job was to clean off 75 years of cigar smoke that had built up, just so we could see what we had," recalls Swanke. In studying why the great terminal had become so dim, the architects found that the Pan Am building and other neighbors were blotting out much of the intended clerestory light. But the previous solution—of setting bright lights along the cornice—was distorting the overall balance within the space and making it impossible to see the great ceiling. Through an arduous process of trial and error, the proper balance was finally achieved. It required the design of new fixtures combining different kinds of illumination, which were then set back from the cornice. Bronze column-mounted urns were added to provide uplighting for the ceiling. In all, the job took about three years to complete, and was informed by Swanke's respect for the marvelous structure, which was derived, in part, from use: "I took the 5:17 to Larchmont every day for over 40 years. I was so familiar with that building. I even had a key to the fire escapes, so I could go right from our old office at 277 Park Avenue and into the terminal!"

Every restoration involves solving a host of difficulties, ranging from technology as broadly complex as lighting to a craft as painstakingly exact as woodworking. The Bowery Savings Bank project, begun in 1979, demanded work running the gamut of modern restoration techniques. It was further complicated by the dearth of historical material regarding the original McKim, Mead & White structure. "There was hardly anything in the archives," recalls Fanny Gong, an associate principal who, along with Barie, oversaw the restoration with initially only one ground-floor plan, one elevation, and one half-finished drawing at their disposal. In order to document the building, the team used a technique that has served the firm remarkably well in recent years. They employed Jan Staller, a well-known architectural

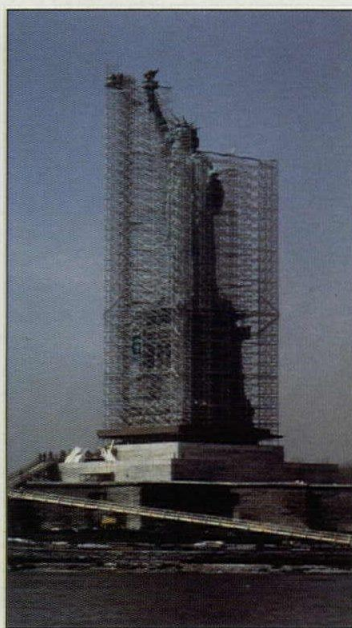
photographer, to take black-and-white shots of every aspect of the building. The photographs were then blown up to 8 by 10 inches and reproduced on sepia paper. (In addition to providing a clear visual record of existing details, the resulting document has the advantage of being translucent, so the architect can make notations on the back of the photograph and have them illuminated on the front. The architect represents the different architectural elements with symbols, and thereby uses the photograph as a map for the several artisans involved in the restoration.) Because of the number and variety of items that needed to be remade for the 90-year-old building, Barie and Gong chose to work closely with long-time associates, the Rambusch company, a traditional design atelier. Among the problems solved by the combined crews: recreating the original faux-marbling pattern on the columns, cleaning and regilding the capitals that crown them, cleaning 20 or so layers of paint off the elegant bronze staircase grille, replacing portions of the coffered ceiling and repainting the whole thing with a graduated color scheme, refinishing the original oak check-writing stands, sealing the damaged skylight and designing fixtures that bounce light off its white-painted interior, adding new lighting behind the columns "to give the room a certain floating quality," and incorporating old cabinetry in new containers. Semimiraculously, the bank remained open for business throughout the restoration. Gong notes, "It's a very common request. You just have to stagger the work very carefully."

Such projects can be seen as mere warm-ups for what is now known simply as "The Statue." Hayden prefers to see it another way. "You fall in love with a building," he says, "you do your best work for it, and you move on. Of course, the statue is special; it's a precious reserve and I hope it lasts as long as freedom itself. But we've moved on." Now tackling such New York projects as Cartier's, the University Club, and ongoing work at St. Patrick's Cathedral, the firm is also opening its first international office in London. The branch will handle massive new financial-services projects, as well as the restoration of such structures as Wren House, a modest-sized building opposite St. Paul's Cathedral. "I think we're being given attention in a place like London because we understand the importance of context," explains Connell.

Swanke Hayden Connell's mixture of curiosity and expertise extends even to its partners' personal projects. Connell is restoring a white clapboard house in Connecticut. Swanke recently restored the Capitol building in Savannah (he grew up nearby) and was awarded the key to the city. Hayden's latest project can be found sitting on the window sill of his office. "I've taken apart my watch," he says animatedly, "and I'm having a heck of a time putting it back together again."



Norman McGrath



©Dan Cornish/ESTO

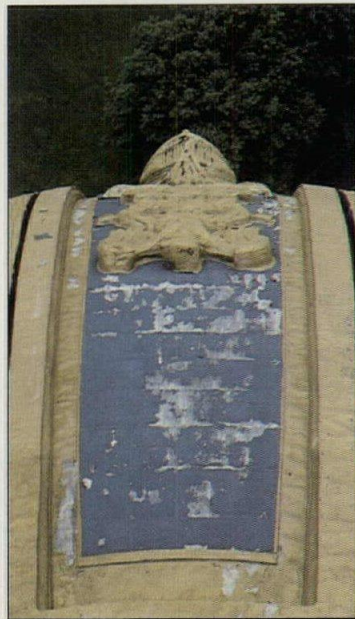
*An overview of restoration projects by Swanke Hayden Connell Architects includes, from left, the interior of the Bowery Savings Bank in New York City; the second-floor balcony of the United States Senate chambers in Washington, D. C.; the main terminal of New York's Grand Central Station; and the Statue of Liberty.*

## Returning the dome to gold



David E. Fattaleh photos

*Situated on the banks of the Kanawha River in Charleston, West Virginia, is Cass Gilbert's elegant but deteriorated State Capitol building, a bracing reminder of the vital need to preserve and restore the nation's architectural treasures. The dome (Gilbert's original drawing is shown opposite), with its distinctive color scheme executed in blue paint and gold leaf, has been especially problematic to maintain. Swanke Hayden Connell's David Pitches, in conjunction with Washington University Associates' Pat Rice, recommended that the dome be stripped, sealed with a newly designed coating system to prevent moisture from reaching its lead base, and completely gold-leafed. "We don't think the blue is going to hold," explains Pitches, "and if we recommend keeping it and it doesn't, we'll be right back where we started."*



When the Statue of Liberty was unveiled on July 4, 1986, after two years of extensive restoration work, people were able to look at the monument with renewed pride. But when Governor Arch Moore of West Virginia looked at it, he was particularly impressed with something much more specific: the gold-leafing on the statue's flame. Moore took a special trip to see it again in the autumn of that year and came away convinced that Swanke Hayden Connell Architects ought to tackle the restoration of West Virginia's Cass Gilbert designed State Capitol dome. The building, with its distinctive blue and gold color scheme, had been fraught with problems almost from the start. Over the years a number of attempts were made to keep both the blue paint and gold leaf from deteriorating, but none had succeeded. The most recent solution—covering the gold portion with permagild (a paint with traces of bronze in it)—had failed miserably.

According to David Pitches, project manager for Swanke Hayden Connell's analysis of the building, lack of money and shoddy workmanship had contributed to the failures. "Up to now, it has been the Capitol maintenance staff that has made most of the changes. Much of the work has been of a very superficial nature—sort of, 'Hey Joe, go on up to the roof and paint the damn thing.'" Taking a more thorough approach to the project, Pitches began researching the building's history. He found, to his dismay, very little. Some basic metallurgical tests proved more informative. The most telling fact to come out was that the dome had been coated, not with copper or some steel alloy, as might be expected, but with lead. Pitches could find no regional precedent for this type of construction but, through more research, he ascertained that the design of the dome had been based on that of Les Invalides in Paris. It, too, had a lead-coated dome, but, unbeknownst to Gilbert, it had also failed to maintain its original surface.

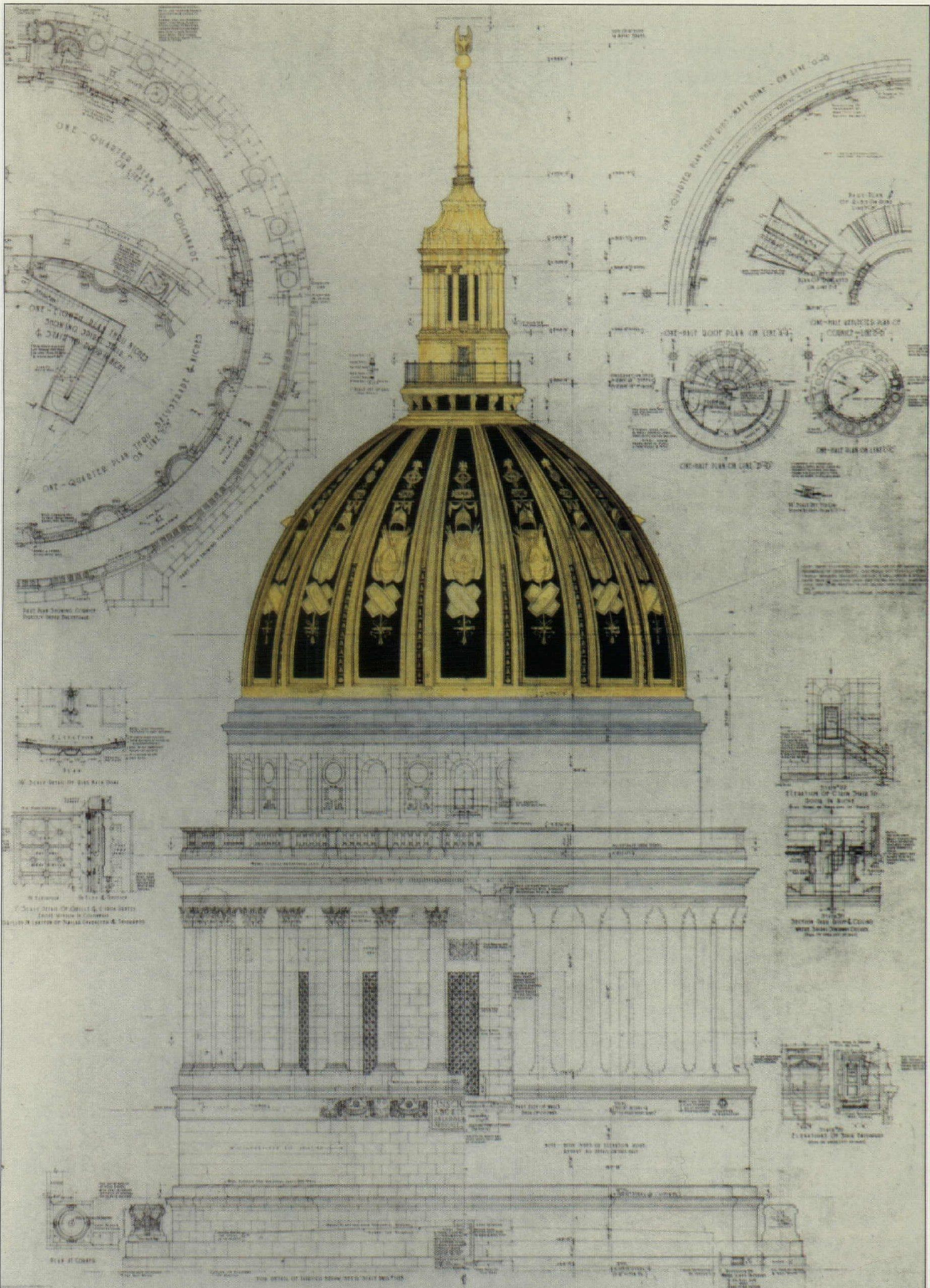
The complexity of the problem compelled Pitches to contact the firm of Washington University Technology Associates, in St. Louis, for additional research capabilities. "I chose the firm because of its background in both chemical analysis and fine-art restoration," recalls Pitches. "The input turned out to be crucial."

The first question it set out to answer was how moisture could be prevented from getting to the dome's lead coating. After extensive analysis, which included accelerated aging tests for potential

coatings, the team came up with a formula. "It's a long-linked, alkalid-based system that has a great deal of flexibility," explains Pitches. "It has a texture that actually encourages cohesion."

Once this basic restoration question was answered, Pitches, along with Patrick Rice of Washington University Technology Associates, made a series of recommendations to the Governor; his office will bid the job out in the coming months. The first recommendation calls for the dome to undergo an acid cleaning and water wash, and receive two coats of primer and one of the specially designed coating before the gold-leafing process even begins. (The cleaning process itself is arduous and somewhat unusual. "Walnut shells and glass beads have proven to be very effective as abrasives," comments Pitches. "The problem is, where the paint comes off, it stays off, and where it's stuck, it stays stuck.") The pair further suggested that the blue in Gilbert's original color scheme not be reapplied at all, and that, instead, the entire dome be done in gold. "True, blue is the ground for the detail work," concedes Pitches. "But it has endless problems. It absorbs heat. It fades. And there's just no way of making it stick." Realizing that the cost of the suggested restoration might be prohibitive, the team made an alternative recommendation that the dome simply be stripped and cleaned. "Unfortunately, there is no paint that looks like gold. So it's got to be gold leaf or nothing."

The question of whether or not the state of West Virginia should undertake such a project is one to which Pitches has given much thought. "It really is a moral question, as much as an economic one. A lot of people think that the money could be better spent on snow plows. I disagree. I feel that preserving great architecture, such as this building, is costly, but necessary. It deserves to be maintained." S. G.



1/4" SCALE DETAIL OF DOME,  
 DRUM OF DOME AND LANTERN  
 (SEE PLAN & SECTION DETAILS  
 ON THIS SHEET)

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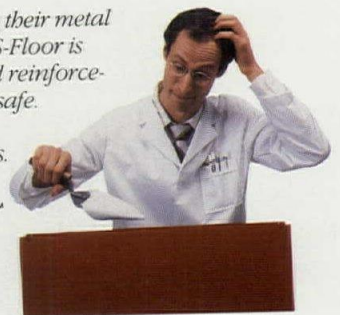
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# Leaving a personal mark

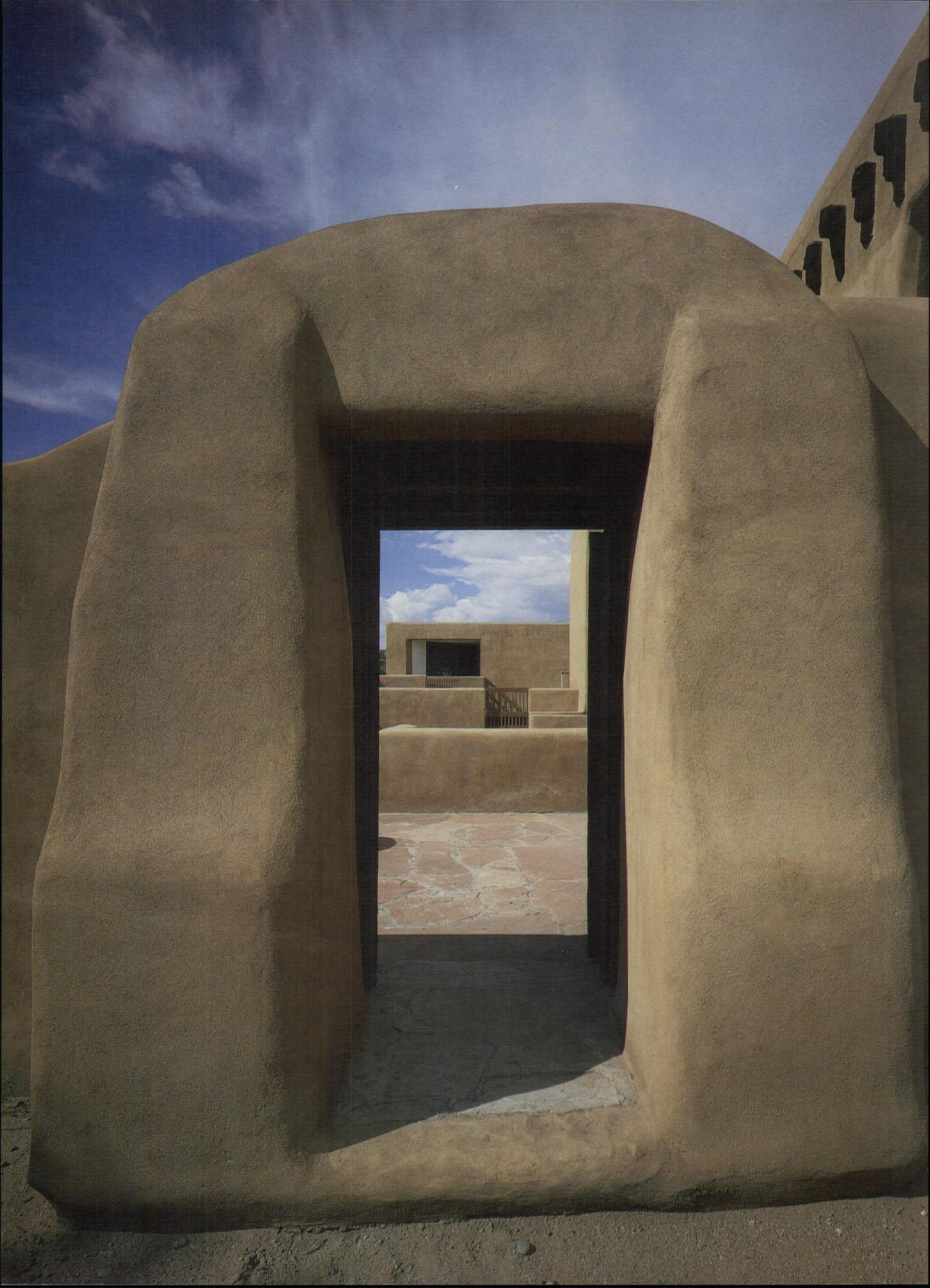
*"An environment that cannot be changed invites its own destruction. We prefer a world that can be modified progressively against a background of valued remains, a world in which one can leave a personal mark alongside the marks of history." What Time Is This Place? by Kevin Lynch. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1972.*

The four renovations that follow have in common only the high quality of the means by which they have been given new life. The Museum of Fine Arts/Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe, New Mexico, (pages 28-33) consists of a 1917 structure in the adobe style meticulously renovated by Antoine Predock, with a small addition by Edward Larrabee Barnes. If the architects can be said to have left a personal mark, it is a virtually invisible one in deference to the character and strength of the original structure.

The restoration and recycling of the Charles Street Meeting House in Boston, Massachusetts, by John Sharratt Associates Inc. (pages 34-39) consists of its transformation into an architect's home and office, plus commercial space and ground-floor shops for rent. This eminent landmark church's marks of history have been completely preserved. The exteriors are restored and the original interiors—columns, caps, arches, window reveals, ceiling, etc.—remain intact, ready to become a church again or something else in the unlikely event that this progressive modification eventually proves unsustainable.

The additions to the Westover School in Middlebury, Connecticut, by Gwathmey Siegel & Associates (pages 40-49) have been skillfully designed to co-exist within a background of valued remains, namely the original campus complex designed at the beginning of this century by Theodate Pope Riddle. Gwathmey Siegel's visible additions recall Riddle's arch forms, general proportions, and uses of materials. An extended arcade screens buildings, including Gwathmey Siegel's own contribution—a combined library-science building—whose functions called for an architectural expression antithetical to Riddle's scaled-up Cotswold style.

In the case of the Hastings-Tapley Insurance Building in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by Fred Koetter and Susie Kim (pages 50-55), the background of valued remains consisted of several handsome neighboring buildings rather than the to-be-renovated little office building itself, which began as an insignificant one-story "colonial" brick box. Upgraded to three stories in an assured style that pays homage to Le Corbusier's Villa Schwob, this example of renovation as total transformation now more than holds its own with its distinguished neighbors. *M. F. S.*



# In deference

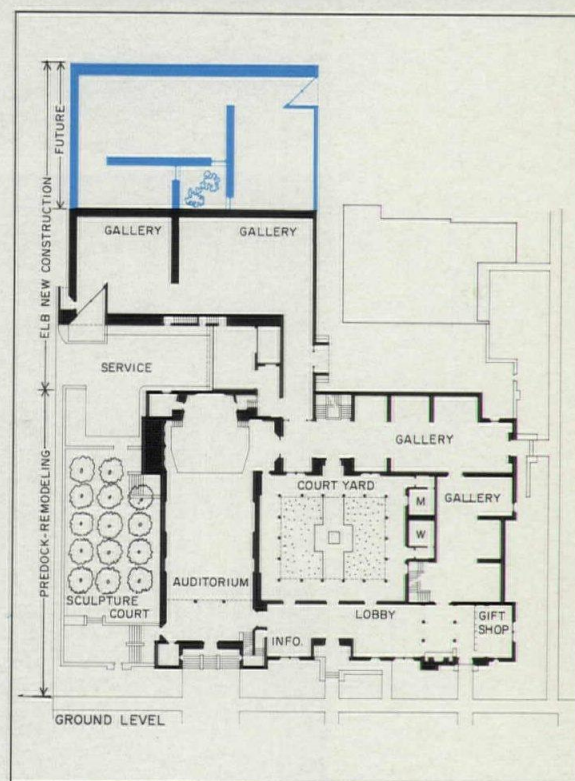
Museum of Fine Arts/Museum of New Mexico  
 Santa Fe, New Mexico  
 Edward Larrabee Barnes Associates, addition  
 Antoine Predock Architect, renovation

The air of freedom and tolerance that has long made Santa Fe an oasis for outcasts and artists does not extend to matters architectural. And though some may find fault with the city's save-but-one-style mandate, the rigid policy toward building design (which dictates not only the forms and materials but even the cornice-line of all new construction) is a local tradition that is not without its reward. The powerful Historic Styles Committee, current warden of Santa Fe's remarkably consistent vernacular mien, traces its moral roots as far back as 1915 when, in response to the area's burgeoning artistic community, the Second State Legislature agreed to help fund an art museum, provided that the building be "substantially a replica" of the New Mexico Building at the 1913 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. While the heavy hand of a state legislature would probably be unwelcome on the drawing board of any self-respecting contemporary architect, architects I. H. and W. M. Rapp—recipients of the museum commission—were happy to oblige; but then the Rapp brothers were, after all, being mandated to imitate their own work in San Diego, which itself was an almost archaeological reproduction of the historic Mission Church at Acoma, with additional borrowings from churches at the San Felipe and Cochiti pueblos. That the museum was neither original in design nor authentic in construction (stucco over brick instead of adobe) was of no concern, as the replica of the reproduction looked at home.

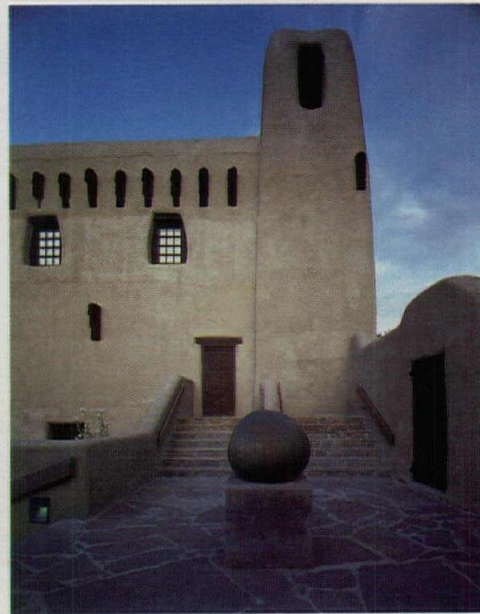
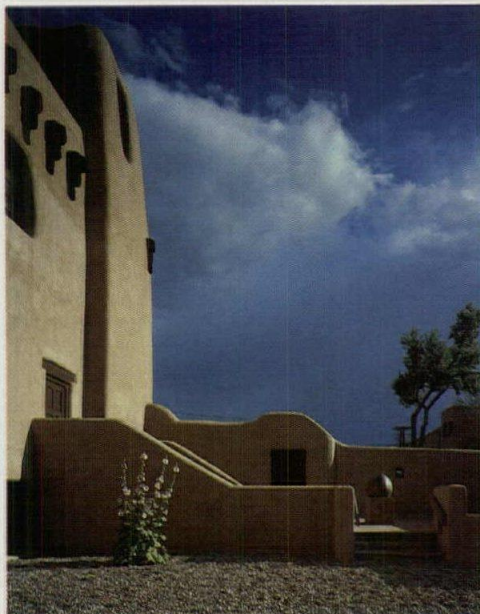
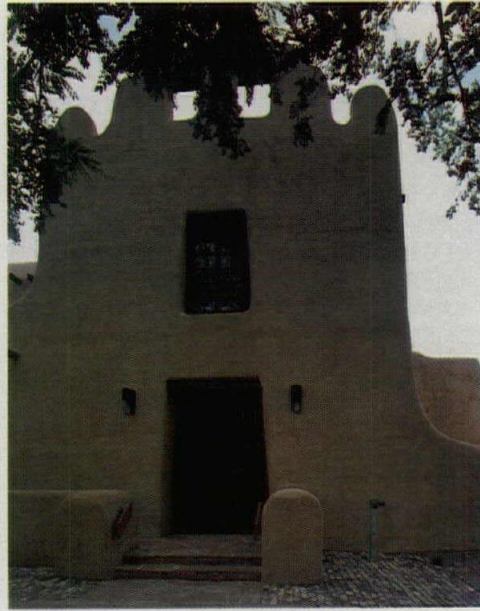
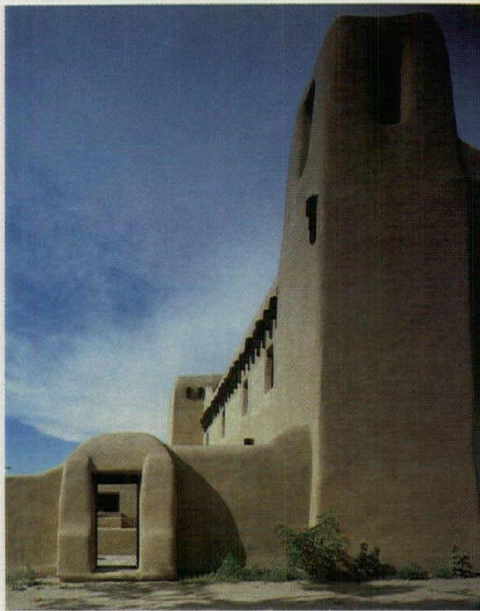
If decades of New Mexican sun endowed the museum with a patina of venerability, it also riddled the building with cracks and leaks. Add to that the growing demands of Santa Fe's constantly expanding community of artists, and the staff's vain attempts to meet those demands with ad hoc modifications, and by the early '70s Santa Fe was the not-so-proud home of a deteriorated, inadequate, and abused museum that stored the bulk of its collection in a basement affectionately known as "the dungeon." Fortunately, however, the museum's Board of Regents counted one Nathaniel Owings among its members, and though Owings was retired from architectural practice, he still prided himself in wielding the kind of influence that made Skidmore, Owings & Merrill the firm it is. At Owings's recommendation, Edward Larrabee Barnes was summoned to Santa Fe. After reviewing the New York architect's portfolio, and duly noting his experience at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and the Scaife Museum in Pittsburgh, and his penchant for quiet, restrained architecture, the board confirmed Owings's recommendation. Barnes was presented with a two-part program that called for the renovation of the 1917 building and the construction of a 13,000-square-foot addition. In compliance with a museum request, Barnes selected Albuquerque-based Antoine Predock as his joint-venture partner.

The fact that there is nothing overtly spectacular about Predock's renovation or Barnes's addition proves not that the two architects were having an off day, but rather that both designers understood and respected the job they were invited to do. The Rapp brothers could have asked for no more respectful treatment of their contribution to Santa Fe's cultural life than Predock's meticulous facelift, which ranged from completely re-roofing and re-stuccoing the old museum to reinstating its natural lighting system and reproducing the hand-painted beams, or *vigas*, that project through to the exterior. The building was made accessible to the handicapped, double-glazed and insulated to comply with current energy standards, and the basement was completely redesigned to free curatorial, library, and staff functions from their cramped, dungeon-like gloom. If much of Predock's work is invisible—prompting more than one viewer to puzzle over what's new and what's old—Barnes's addition appears to aspire to a similar goal. To date the new building is only half complete—awaiting the demolition of an adjacent structure—but the simple stucco box with the slightly battered walls and gently rounded cornice, deferentially lodged behind the old museum, is architecture reduced to a barely audible whisper. Which is precisely the volume Santa Feans prefer. *Charles K. Gandee*

©Timothy Hursley/The Arkansas Office photos



*Despite an extensive \$2.7-million building program, the Santa Fe Museum of Fine Arts still presents the same indigenous face architects Rapp and Rapp gave it in 1917 (top). Looking through the Palace Avenue gate (facing page), however, one glimpses the new addition deferentially half-hidden behind the now-renovated museum.*



*Of the many qualities to be admired in the Rapp brothers' Santa Fe museum, perhaps the most welcome is the building's informal relationship with nature. In contrast to the hermetically sealed rooms of contemporary museums (dictated by conservation requirements), the windows and doors are always open in Santa Fe, with visitors and breezes free to drift in and out between the galleries and the central courtyard*

*(plan previous page). In an effort to extend that tradition, architects Predock and Barnes transformed a parking lot at the western edge of the museum site into a walled-in sculpture court (photos above); by cutting doors into the adjacent museum auditorium they also made the terraced plaza (adorned with a Juan Hamilton sculpture) an open-air lobby for intermissions.*









As museum-goers move from the old galleries (facing page) to renovated rooms (above) and on to the newest spaces (top), they will notice a gradual decline in textural richness; yet each of the galleries adheres, in its way, to the traditional local palette of mud floors (here concrete), white-washed walls, and wood ceilings. Predock's renovation work ranged from simply peeling off decades of abuse and refinishing time-ravaged materials and details to replacing the museum's 1917 state-of-the-art natural lighting system (perennially leaky glass-block skylights in gallery alcoves) with laminated, protective glass. The subtle grid in the integral-color concrete floor was deepened and new wood slats were introduced to the corridor ceilings (above) to humbly recall the grand, hand-painted vigas in the lobby (facing page). Though Barnes's new gallery addition is

more introverted and insular than Santa Feans are accustomed to, the controlled environment enables the museum to host traveling shows.

*Museum of Fine Arts/  
Museum of New Mexico  
Santa Fe, New Mexico*

**Owner:**

*State of New Mexico*

**Architect:**

*Edward Larrabee Barnes Associates (new gallery addition)—Dimitri Sarantitis, project architect; Antoine Predock Architect (renovation)—Geoffrey Beebe, project architect*

**Engineer:**

*Randy Holt and Associates (structural); Coupland Moran and Associates (mechanical); UHL and Lopez Engineers, Inc. (electrical)*

**General contractor:**

*John R. Lavis General Contractors, Inc.*



# Finding new functions to save a landmark form

Restoration and recycling of the Charles Street Meeting House  
Boston, Massachusetts  
John Sharratt Associates Inc.,  
Architects

© Steve Rosenthal photos

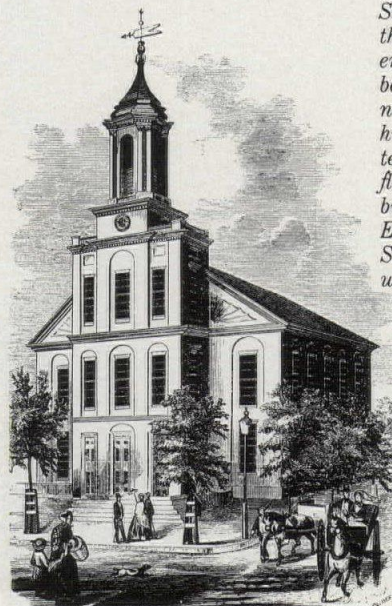
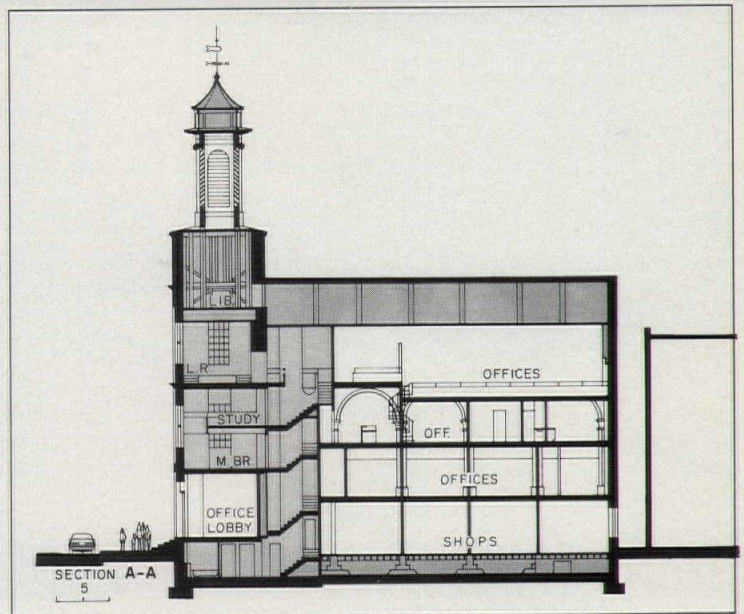
Boston's Mt. Vernon Street has been called by Henry James "the only respectable street in America." For James, evidently, only a virtually unbroken row of magnificent houses could make a street "respectable." The wonderful walk down Mt. Vernon to the Charles River begins at Charles Bulfinch's glorious Massachusetts State House near the summit of Beacon Hill and on past houses by Bulfinch, Alexander Parris, Edward Shaw and Richard Upjohn. At the foot of the hill is the Charles Street Meeting House, designed in 1807 by Asher Benjamin, a gifted follower of Bulfinch. Were James to return to the corner of Mt. Vernon and Charles Street today, he would be pleased to note that this lovely Federal church is in excellent repair. Looking up at a tower clock (one on each face of the rectangular base for the cupola), he would discover that it keeps accurate time. Only if he attempted to enter the nave would James discover that all was not as respectable as before. The church is now a church in exterior form only. The interior has been turned into an architect's home, his office, space he rents to top-quality tenants, and, on the first floor—shops. Would Henry James cry "sacrilege"? Perhaps not, if he could somehow hear the story.

The Charles Street Meeting House, a landmark of sufficient note to be included in the National Register of Historic Places, had been owned, in the 171 years of its religious life, by several different congregations. The last was the Unitarian-Universalist Association Congregation, which dissolved in 1978. Between 1975 and 1980, the meeting house was used only sporadically and it fell into serious disrepair. The church's owners had to find a buyer who could afford to restore it in a manner that would conform to local preservation standards. But when the Beacon Hill Civic Association, a group with no legal authority, just clout, held a public hearing to review presentations by different groups who aspired to purchase the building, Boston architect John Sharratt, in joint venture with a dance company, was considered more of a risk than a developer who proposed to fill the church with condominiums. Piqued at being turned down, he began to think harder.

At the time, Sharratt needed the dance company or a similar organization because of a deed restriction that the building could be used only for religious, educational or cultural purposes. So the first step was to try to get this deed restriction changed. He recounts: "The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities had a wrench on the deed restrictions. I explained to the society's director that I intended to preserve the outside of the building and to keep the fabric of the interior intact. Columns, caps, arches, the ceiling etc. would remain. If everything I would install were taken away, the interior of the meeting house could become a church again.

"The director gave me a verbal promise that they would rewrite the deed restrictions to allow me to use the building for commercial and residential purposes as long as I did all these things. So based upon that, I just went out and bought the building. It was for sale in the right location at the right price, very cheap for the area. I got it for so little because I took an enormous risk. Every rule book says don't buy the building until you have your variances, until you have the legal right to do what you want to do. But I broke the rules. Then I went back to the Beacon Hill Civic Association and told them that I was the new owner of the Charles Street Meeting House."

Sharratt's battle had just begun. There were zoning and FAR change approvals to be won, along with the right to install modest signs along the shop facade. It was the architect's genuine commitment to preservation that caused him to prevail, finally winning the support of Boston's three major preservation organizations as well as its public agencies. Sharratt suffered one defeat. He was not allowed to put modest, flat skylights in the roof of the church to brighten his drafting room and stair hall. The Beacon Hill Civic Association, now that it is all over, is delighted with the outcome. John Sharratt was appointed to its board of directors. *Mildred F. Schmertz*



*Sharratt's home, shown shaded in the section above, consists of the entire tower and most of the first bay of the nave. The church's narthex is now the entrance lobby to his architectural office and the tenant space. Two antique shops, a flower store and an ice cream parlor bring in revenue at the street level. Except for modest signs, the Charles Street facade (photo top) remains unaltered.*

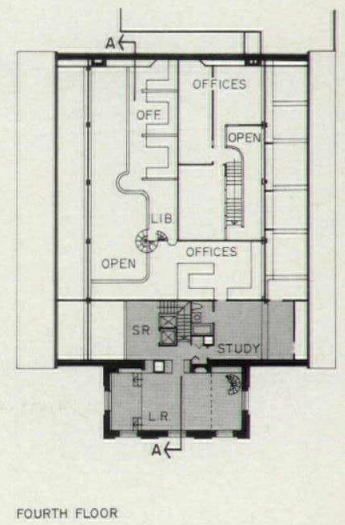
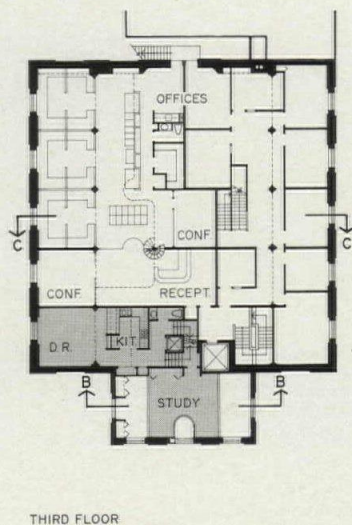
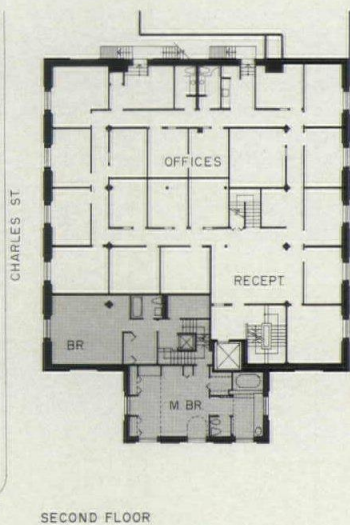
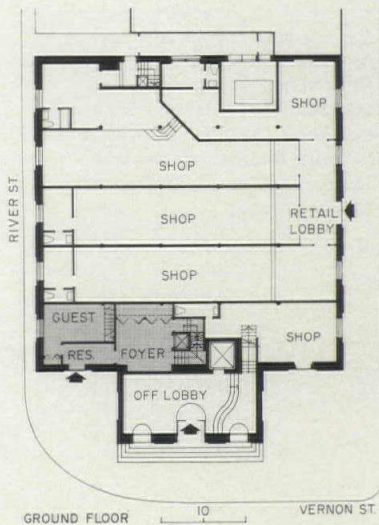
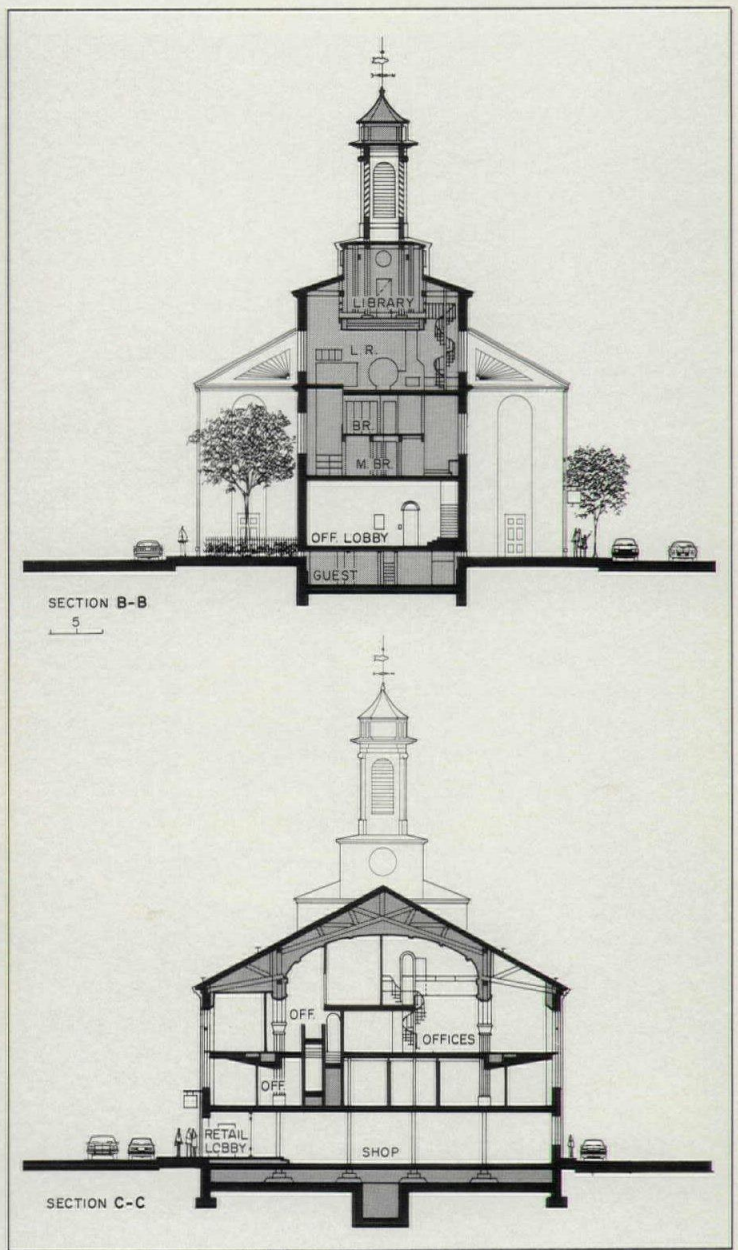
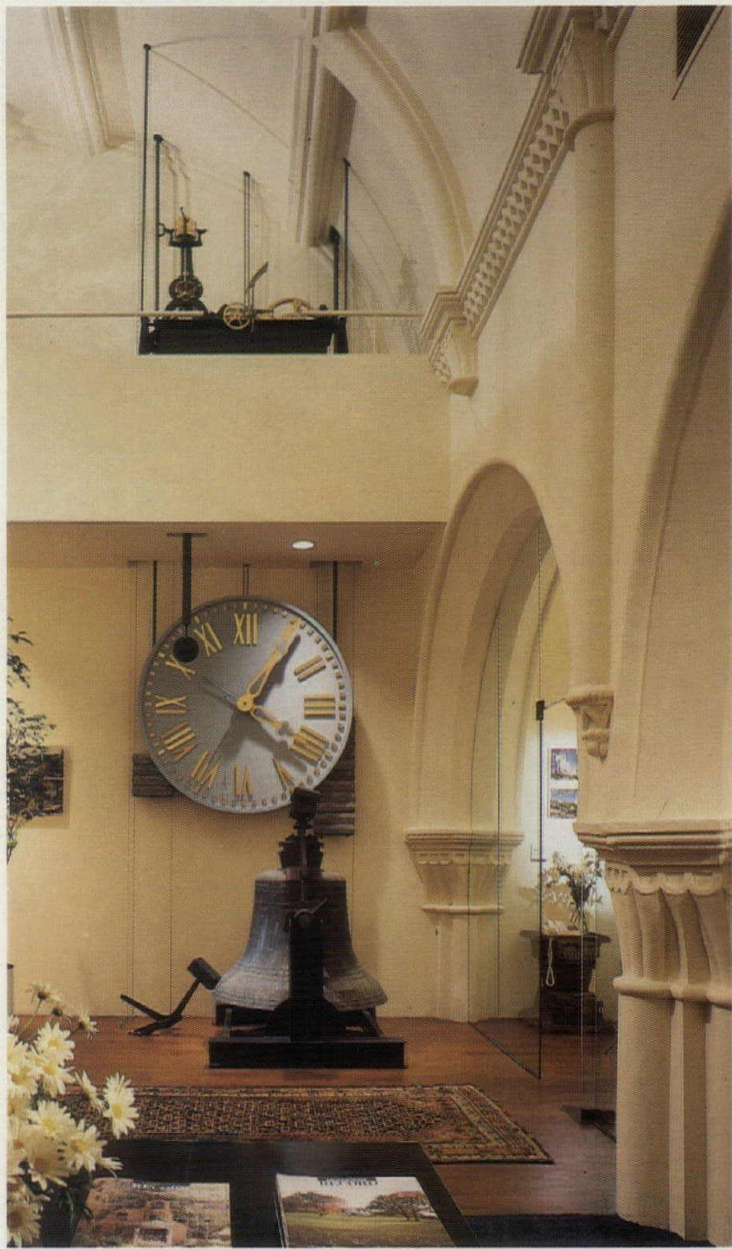
Sharratt's top floor office (photos below) occupies a little more than half the width of the four remaining nave bays. The new floor is an extension of the existing balconies (section opposite page bottom), and is level with the top of the balcony railing. Sharratt and his tenants on the opposite side of this floor enjoy the upper half of the church's beautiful arched windows, just as the members of the congregation

who sat in the balcony once did back in the days when the church was a church. This floor can be taken out, should the building ever become a church or auditorium again—not as unlikely a possibility as it may seem, for the building is a truly eminent landmark and 20, 40 or 60 years from now some benefactor might offer to take it back to what it was. The existing windows were restored and new windows were



placed on the inside. The ceiling, arches and column caps were refurbished, and a mezzanine installed in Sharratt's office space. One of the original church clocks and the bell (below) adjoin Sharratt's conference room and are rigged to keep time and toll the hours, but softly. The ground floor plan shows the street level with the main office entrance in the narthex. Sharratt's tiny garden and the front

door to his home are to the left of this entrance. Sharratt found that because of the desirability of his location he has been able to charge office rents equivalent to what tenants must pay to occupy the best of the renovated older buildings downtown. He also found that he had no trouble attracting the level of shops he wanted.

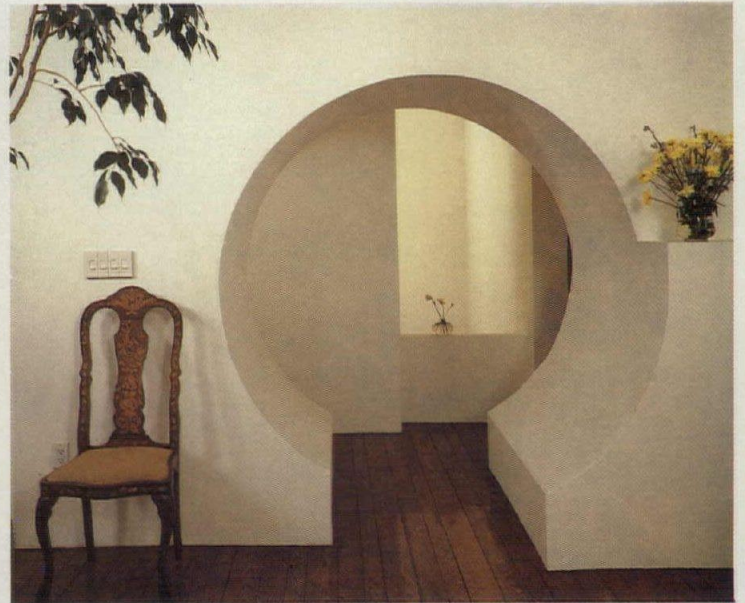
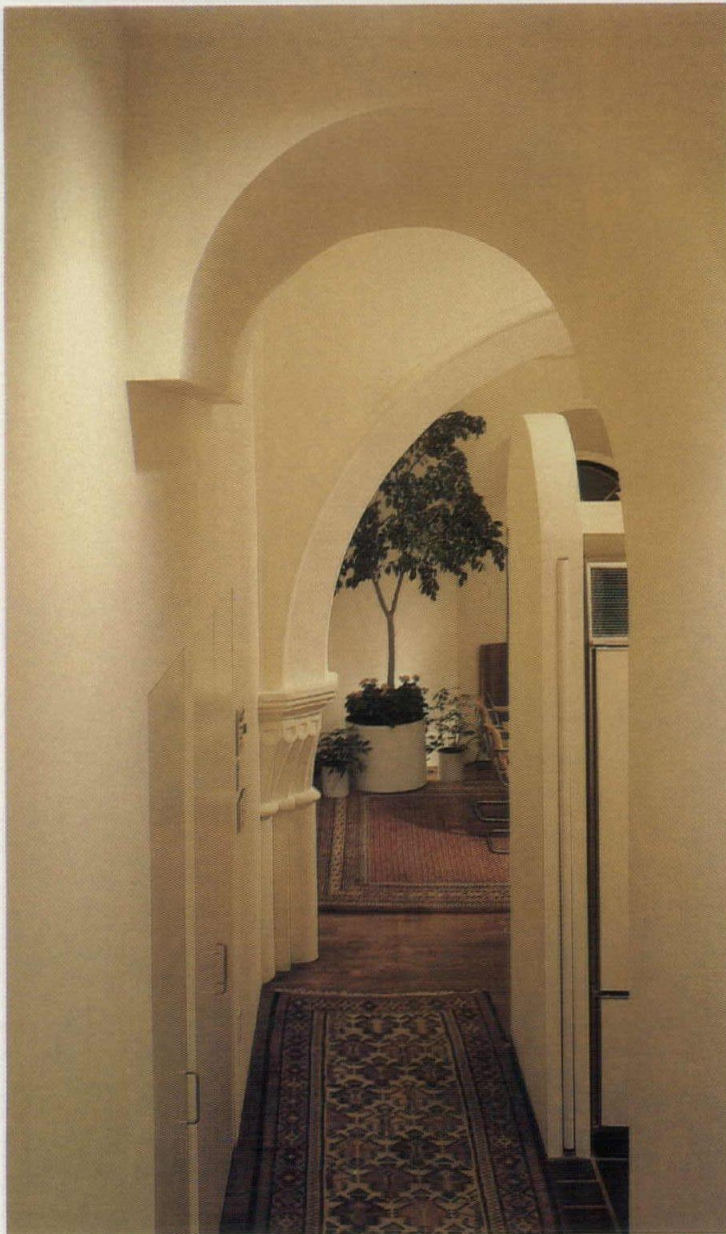




*Sharratt's dining room (above) is at the balcony level in the first bay of the nave. The window panes are very old, and the texture of the glass causes the light to shimmer instead of glare, so no shades are needed. The corridor (opposite left) connects the dining room and kitchen to the stair and the elevator which ascends one floor to the living room. This space (above opposite right) completely fills that level of the tower and is*

*entered through a moon gate. A spiral stair (not shown) at the corner of the living room leads to the library above, which is in the space once occupied by the church's bell (now in Sharratt's office). And a ship's ladder from there to the cupola will soon make it the family lookout. Tower floors below the living room serve as bedrooms and a weaving studio.*





*The Charles Street Meeting House  
Boston, Massachusetts*

**Owner:**  
*Charles Street Meeting House  
Associates*

**Architects:**  
*John Sharratt Associates Inc.;  
principal-in-charge—John A.  
Sharratt*

**Engineers:**  
*Brown, Rona Inc. (structural); Sam  
Zax Associates (electrical);  
Environmental Design Engineers  
(mechanical)*

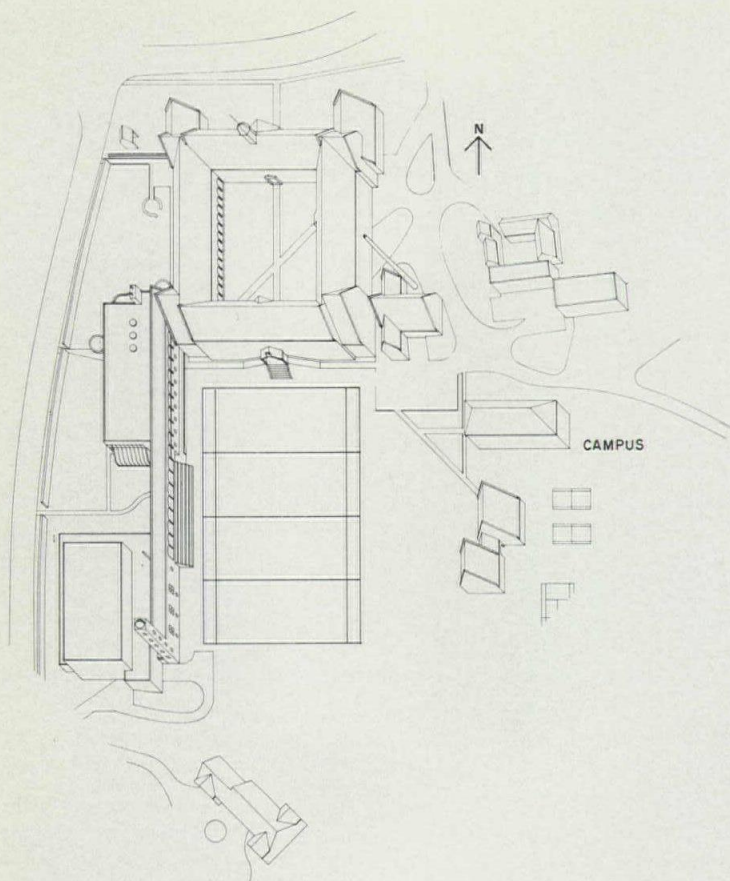
**Contractors:**  
*Sid Kumins, Inc. and Gentel  
Construction*

# A lesson in deportment



Additions to Westover School  
Middlebury, Connecticut  
Gwathmey Siegel & Associates, Architects





©Timothy Hursley/The Arkansas Office photos



Behind the southernmost portion of the 395-foot-long arcade that Gwathmey Siegel & Associates extended from Theodate Pope Riddle's 1909 Westover School lurks the 1962 gymnasium that heretofore destroyed the pastoral view from the sallyport of the original cloistered megastructure (top). But not only does the new arcade provide the unfortunate (and now renovated) late addition to the campus with a handsome face to almost hide behind, it redefines the western edge of the adjacent playing field (above). The redefinition was necessary because the gym, sited as it was, created an awkward gap—now closed—between itself and the original school building. The grandstand suspended from the base of the arcade offers a perfect vantage point from which to cheer Westover's killer hockey team (facing page).

"The rap on modern architects," according to modern architect Charles Gwathmey, "is that they can't design buildings that co-exist—in a positive sense—within traditional contexts." Although it is fair to infer that Gwathmey is intimately acquainted with the "rap" to which he refers, it is also fair to infer that he is now committed to beating that rap. The opportunity to do so came eight years ago, when Gwathmey and partner Robert Siegel were summoned to Middlebury, Connecticut, by the trustees of Westover School. Skeptics of Gwathmey's implied commitment to positive co-existence could devise no better test for the 48-year-old architect, who made his reputation by adhering to the principles of the High Modern, neo-Corbusian school, than the one posed by Westover. It is a "traditional context" of the first order. The school was founded in 1909 by Miss Mary Robbins Hillard, who, like a character from *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, sought to "impress her girls with a sense of the real values of life." The grand cloistered megastructure crowning the campus's 90 idyllic acres was designed by Connecticut's first woman architect, Theodate Pope Riddle. While times have changed at Westover—Headmistress Hillard's "girls" are now scrupulously referred to by Headmaster Molder as "young women," and those young women no longer aspire to Jane Austen-style happy-ever-afters but rather to Yuppiedom by way of the Ivy League—the school still retains the rarified air of a breeding ground for debutantes. But the administration now regards the school as "college preparatory," not "finishing," and an academic self-evaluation in the late '70s concluded that the science department was suffering from cramped accommodations. Enter Gwathmey Siegel & Associates.

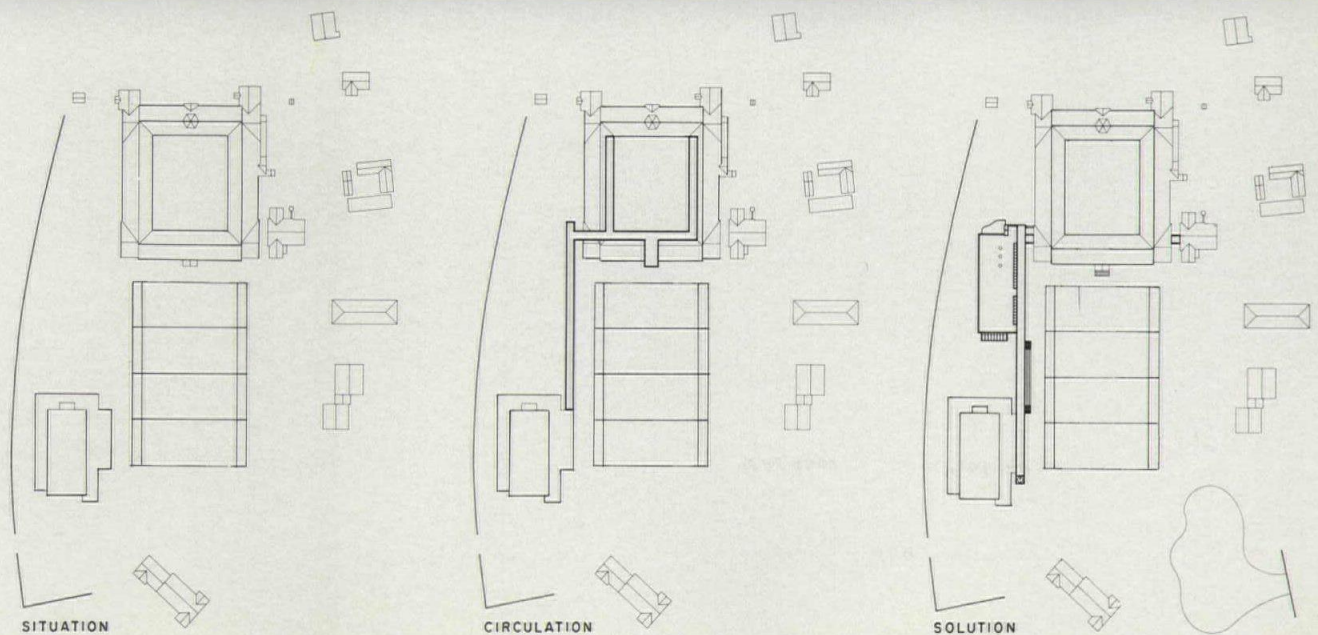
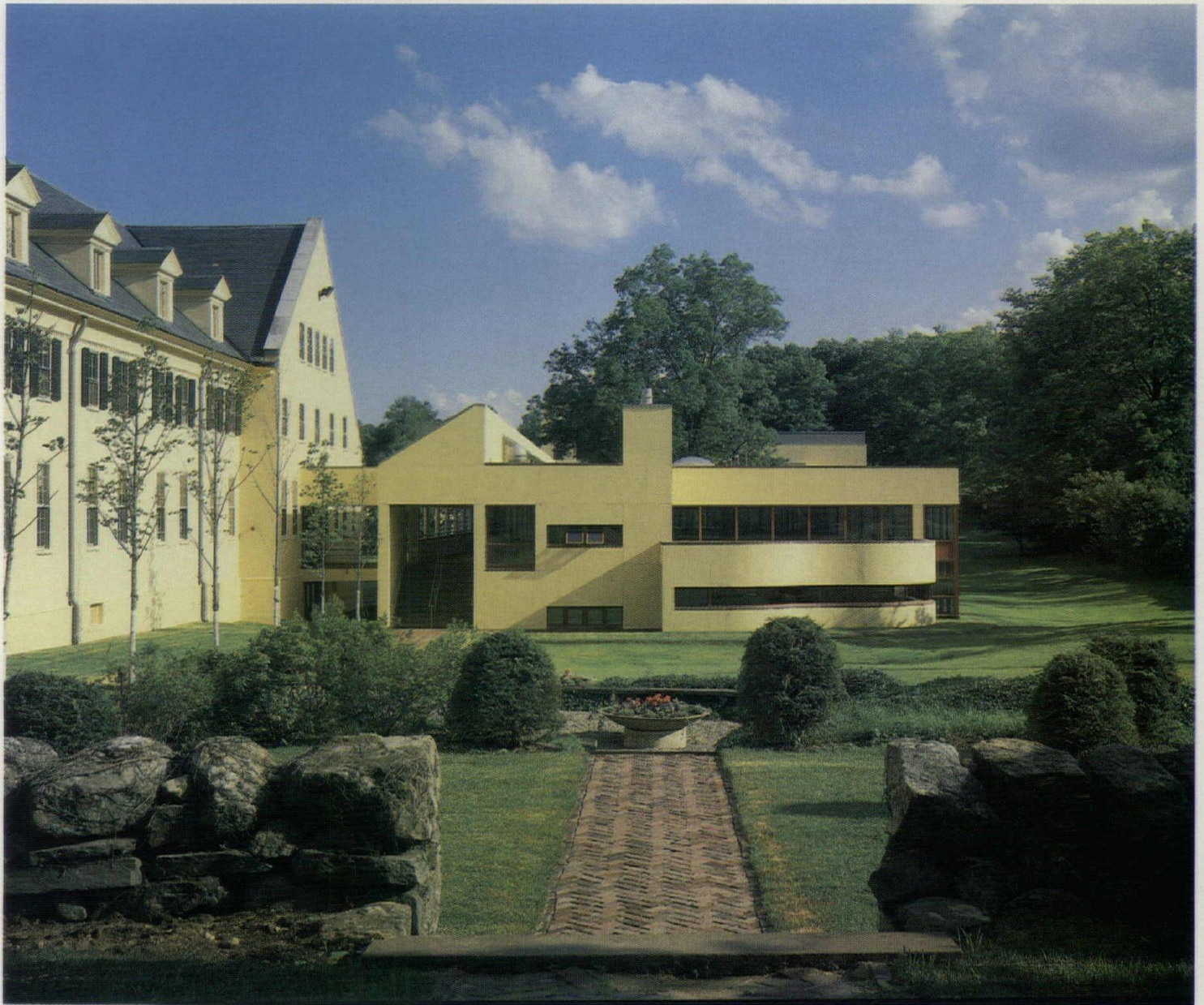
The original program presented to the New York-based firm called for the transformation of an existing infirmary into the needed science facility. But before the architects' renovation plans could be implemented, an enlightened trustee suggested that Theodate Pope Riddle's architectural legacy deserved better than ad hoc renovations. He further suggested that Westover would be wise to look not only to present but future needs, and, as if to underscore his points, volunteered to spearhead a more ambitious fund-raising drive. The building committee agreed, and attached a soon-to-be-necessary new library to the architect's brief. With the program and budget thus expanded, Gwathmey Siegel returned to their drawing boards—this time with the campus plan in tow. For though Miss Riddle's cloister had never been tampered with, a big bland box of a student activities building had been beached at the southwest corner of the playing field in the early '60s, and the architects saw hidden in their commission the opportunity, if not the obligation, to right the wrong done by the grossly out-of-scale and conspicuously out-of-style structure, i.e., to add campus planning to their architectural agenda.

Whether attributable to fortuitous timing (the late '70s), or to the sheer auspiciousness of the venerable context, the \$4-million arcade, library, and science center Westover dedicated May 1984 is a clear—and appropriate—departure from Gwathmey Siegel & Associates' well-known *oeuvre*. The scheme bespeaks the firm principals' fairly recent preoccupation with the formal and material "enrichment" of their work, which they now situate along "that line between abstraction and representation." Maintaining one's poise on the aforementioned line requires considerable agility—it is, as they say, a delicate balance. At Westover that balance was achieved not by simply mimicking Theodate Pope Riddle's English Cotswold-inspired cloister, but by not-so-simply extending many of the elements contained within; the ecrustucco, the Pennsylvania slate, and the herringbone-pattern brick employed by Gwathmey Siegel will all be familiar to generations of Westover alumnae. But more notable, perhaps, are the arches modulating the arcade that reaches out from a new bridge at the southwest corner of the cloister to embrace the 1962 gymnasium. Though the architects proudly point out that the 1984 arches are volumetric, whereas the 1909 arches encircling the cloister are two-dimensional, the point is made. The observatory tower terminating the new arcade adds an exclamation point, insofar as it "refers," hopes Gwathmey, to the cupola above the cloister entrance (left). For those who fear that Gwathmey Siegel have abandoned the rigorous discipline and complex spatial and planning strategies that have distinguished the firm for two decades, a look behind the arcade to the "loft" building containing the new library and science laboratories will be reassuring.

"I think we handled ourselves in a most discreet fashion," concludes partner Siegel. To which Headmistress Hillard would have undoubtedly quipped: "As well you should have, young man." *Charles K. Gandee*

*If the eastern view of Gwathmey Siegel & Associates' addition to Westover School is all contextual sweetness and light (previous spread), the northwestern view presents quite a different image (photo below). The building that houses the new library and science facility is as formally distinct as it could be from the building to which it is attached by covered bridge. The architects refer to the structure as a*

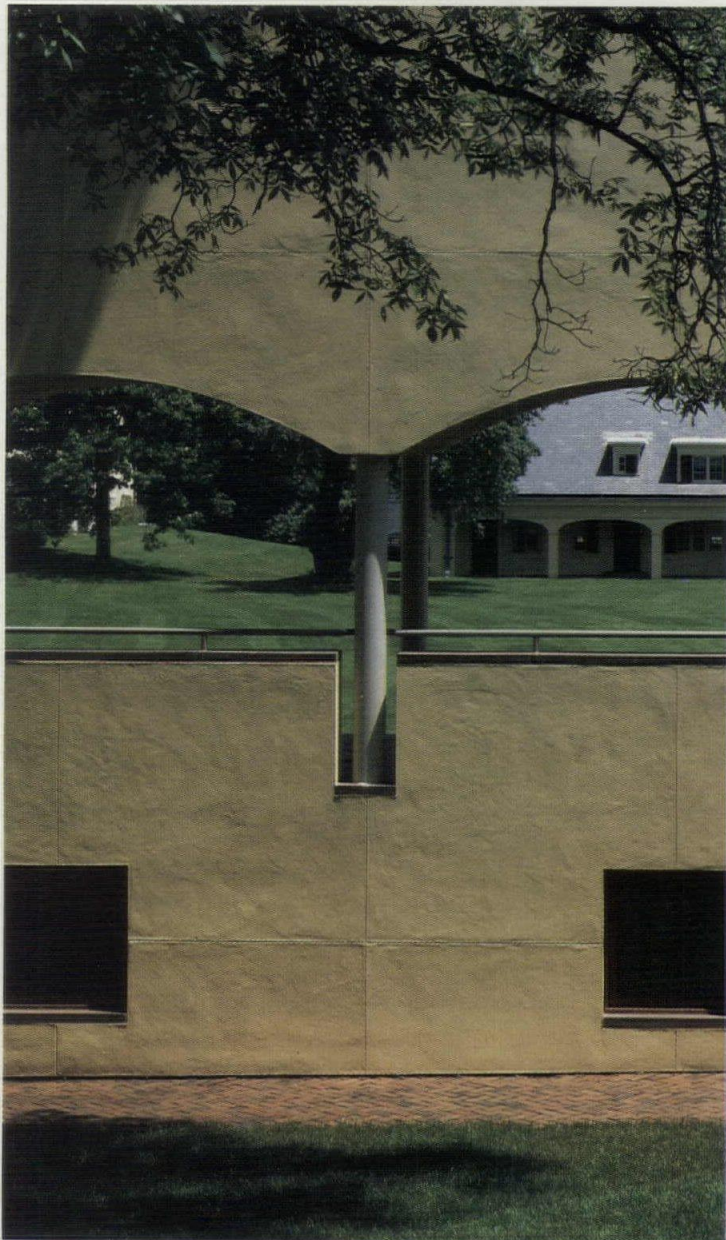
*"loft"—a designation perhaps inspired by a flat roof, a high ceiling, and a simple rectangular form. Yet if it is a loft it is an extraordinary one, owing to the intricacy of the planning moves taking place within. Those moves are partially revealed on the north elevation (photo below), where the building's horizontal and vertical layering is articulated in the irregular fenestration. What at first appears to be a simple stucco box,*





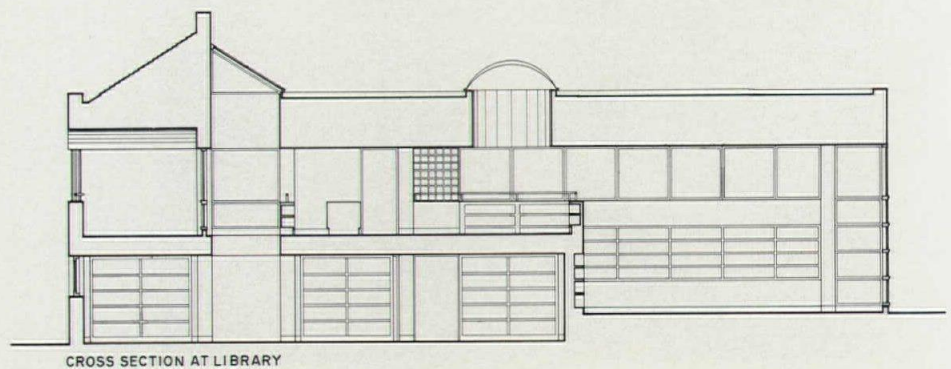
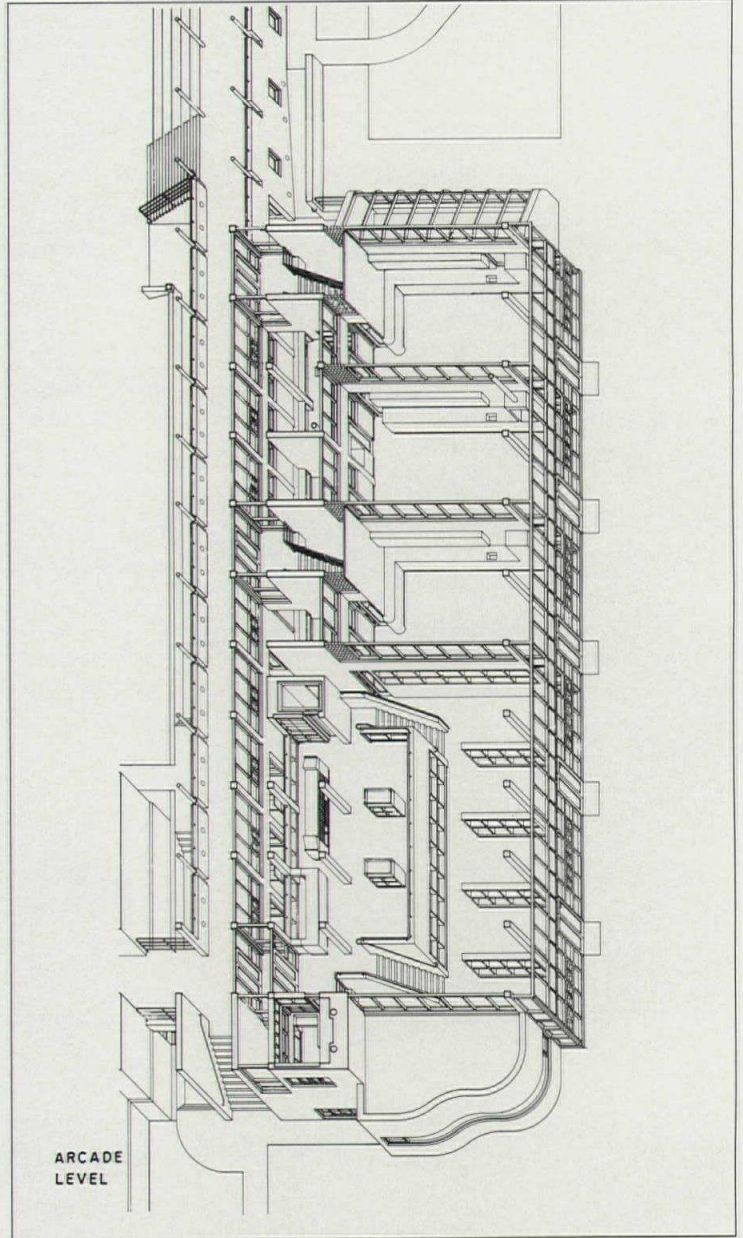
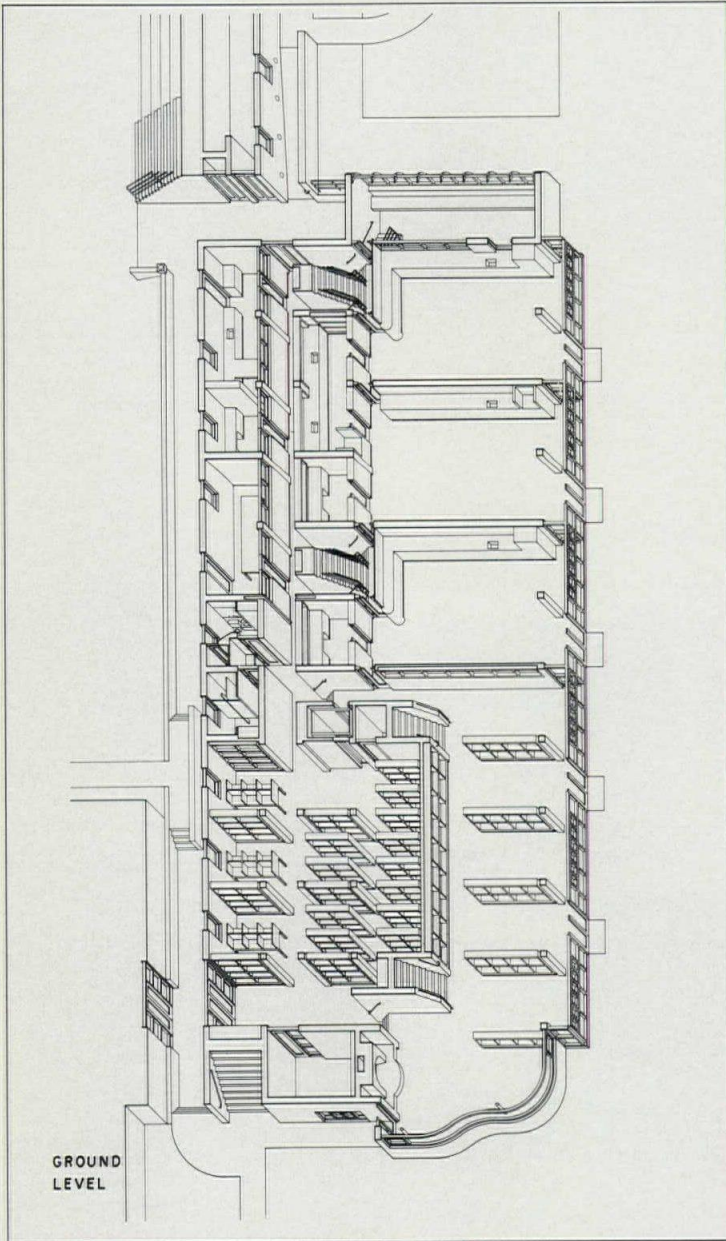
hidden—not unlike the gymnasium—behind the arcade, soon becomes very complex: as you penetrate the building you move from layer to changing layer. The sequence develops incrementally, from the arcade's fairly solid public playing field elevation to the library/classrooms' fairly transparent private garden facade (photo right). Note the piano-shaped periodical room attached to the

midsection of the "loft"; it is a "bay window" in the garden, according to Gwathmey Siegel, "the object in the space." (A counterpart "bay window/object in the space" greenhouse takes its place on the south.) Standing in the new arcade looking north (photo bottom), one can neatly contrast the old Westover School with the new Westover School. And the inspiration for all those arches? Photo below.



Just as the transparent faces of those first Accutron watches revealed the awesome intricacy of the watchmaker's craft, the ground- and arcade-level aronometrics reveal the adroit planning skills of Gwathmey Siegel & Associates' craft (below). And though the complex organizational puzzle of the Adams Library and Whittaker Science Center may at first appear

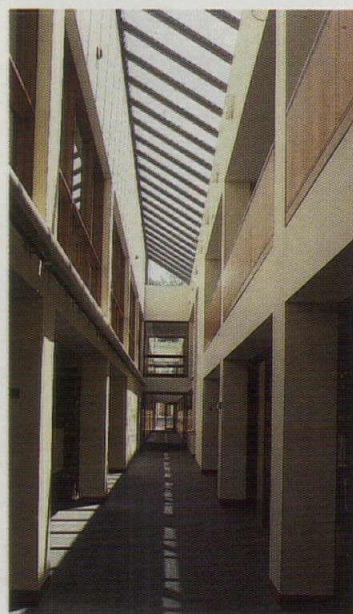
wisdom contained within. Since the new academic structure was to be discreetly lodged behind the new arcade—and since the arcade, to better relate to the scale of Theodate Pope Riddle's original building, was to have a relatively solid 10-foot base—Gwathmey Siegel & Associates were concerned that students in the new building not be left in the dark. Toward that end, the architects separated the library/classroom





building from the arcade by a two-story skylit gallery (section facing page and photos bottom). As the primary internal circulation route, the sun-filled gallery not only offers ground-level access to the library at the south and the three classrooms at the north, but to the stacks, study carrels, lavatories, and special education rooms opening from it. At arcade level, access to the three classrooms is by a pair of bridges

that leads to a pair of stairs, and to the library by way of another bridge that leads to the skylit mezzanine reference area (photo below). (The library's main reading room is 6 feet below, at garden level.) And at arcade level, access to the most impressive north-south and east-west vistas is supplied by an omnipresent band of sometimes transparent interior clerestories (photo below).



"How does an architect engender respect for place in a new building?" asks architect Charles Gwathmey, and then he instantly supplies the answer: "With materials, craftsmanship, and detail." Though rhetorical, Gwathmey's point is well taken, for students, like the rest of us, can be counted on to respond to the physical evidence of care and concern in architecture. At Westover, Gwathmey Siegel & Associates sought to garner that frequently elusive respect by stretching the \$125-per-square-foot budget as far as it would go. What the architects, and the students, gained (in addition to the ne plus ultra construction that has characterized this firm's work for at least a decade) was mahogany furniture, fenestration, and cabinetry. Crafted by a local woodworker, and installed under the watchful eye of project architect Paul Aferiat, the woodwork provides the new building an almost instant venerability, or at least a material richness all too rare in institutional buildings. The benefit of that richness can be gleaned by looking west across the glazed shelving units dividing the classrooms from the faculty offices and prep areas (facing page), southwest toward the cabinets and cupboards lining the classroom walls (bottom right), or south along the perfectly assembled grid composing the window wall (top right). "Students treat mahogany paneling and cabinetwork differently from painted gypboard and metal door bucks," adds partner Siegel. Which is but one of the lessons taught at Westover School.

*Additions to Westover School  
Middlebury, Connecticut*

**Owner:**

Westover School

**Architects:**

Gwathmey Siegel & Associates—  
Jacob Alspector, associate-in-charge;  
Paul Aferiat, project architect;  
Howard Goldstein, David Knowlton,  
Thomas Wittrock, project team

**Engineers:**

Geiger Berger Associates  
(structural); Flack & Kurtz  
Consulting Engineers (mechanical)

**Consultant:**

Glen Fries (landscape architect)

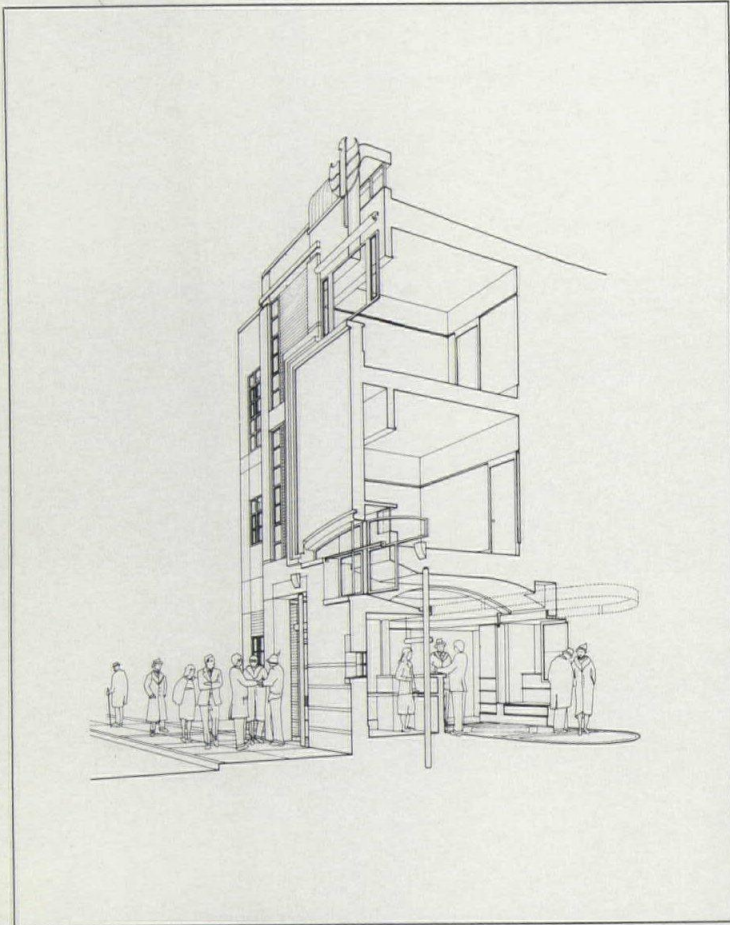
**General contractor:**

F. B. Mattson Company





## Déjà vu



Why is there a big blank panel set squarely into the center of the Hastings-Tapley Insurance Company Building in East Cambridge, Massachusetts? (Be careful. This is a test.) A) The contractor underestimated the brick, substituted with stucco, and hoped no one would notice. B) An angry gang of hot-blooded teenagers smashed the original plate-glass window and threatened to do so again if the owner tried to replace it. C) The sign painter is on his way. D) It's a "quote" from Charles-Edouard Jeanneret's 1916 Villa Schwob.

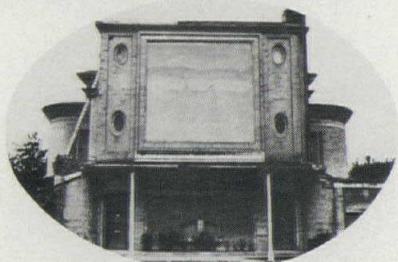
If you answered A, B, or C (and you know who you are) it's back to the history books. You might try Charles Jencks's *Le Corbusier and the Tragic View of Architecture* (Harvard, 1973), where, on page 43, you will find not only the big blank panel but the projected bay, the two front doors, the spindly steel columns, the arched window, the overscaled cornice. . . where you will find in other words, a facade remarkably similar to this one. Boston architects Fred Koetter and Susie Kim explain: "We don't mean to be arcane, but we do deal with certain ideas that are interesting to us. It is the prerogative of the architect." Obviously Koetter and Kim are interested in the idea (as well as the fact) of Le Corbusier. Though residents of East Cambridge may not necessarily share (or even appreciate) that interest, Koetter and Kim are undeterred: "We are not pure servants of society. We are not just putting up a building for the simple need of space. There are a lot of fine developers who can do that."

The "simple need of space," however, is what prompted Fred England, Jr., one of the partners of Hastings-Tapley, to seek architectural counsel in long-time friend Kim, when his company threatened to burst the red-brick seams of its one-story "Colonial" home office on Cambridge Street. England's program was straightforward: "add as much space as possible." After an archaeological tour of the then 14-year-old structure, Kim and colleague Koetter concluded that the 3,000-square-foot space could be tripled by stacking two floors onto the flat-roofed box. (Selective reinforcement of the existing steel column grid satisfied the engineers.) But with the additional floors, Hastings-Tapley moved substantially up in scale, and the company executives concurred with their architects—a nobler facade (to register a new, more prominent profile on Cambridge Street) was in order.

For Koetter and Kim, the problem was solved with a single bold move intended to bring the building figuratively up to speed with its grander neighbors—most notably the Byzantine Revival East Cambridge Savings Bank directly across the street (RECORD, April 1979, pages 97-102), and Bulfinch's 1814 Middlesex County Superior Courthouse diagonally across the street (recently transformed by Graham Gund Associates into speculative office space). Which is where Corb and the Villa Schwob come in. As a link between past and present, the Villa Schwob offered a compelling prototype—combining, as it does, reminiscences of Byzantium (notably the Hagia Sophia) in its cubic and apsidal massing; academic classicism, in the rigorous proportional scheme of its bilateral symmetry; forthright dependence on modern frame-and-infill construction (*concrete* and brick in Corb's case); and even the possibility of American influence, from Frank Lloyd Wright (second hand, via his Dutch admirers). Koetter and Kim back up their historical homage with a memorable esthetic and pragmatic rationale: the projected bay maintains the line of the street, the two front doors anticipate an additional future occupant, the arched window welcomes southern light into the lobby. . . . Yankee businessmen feel right at home here, and we know that somewhere in that Radiant City in the sky, Le Corbusier is smiling. *Charles K. Gandee*



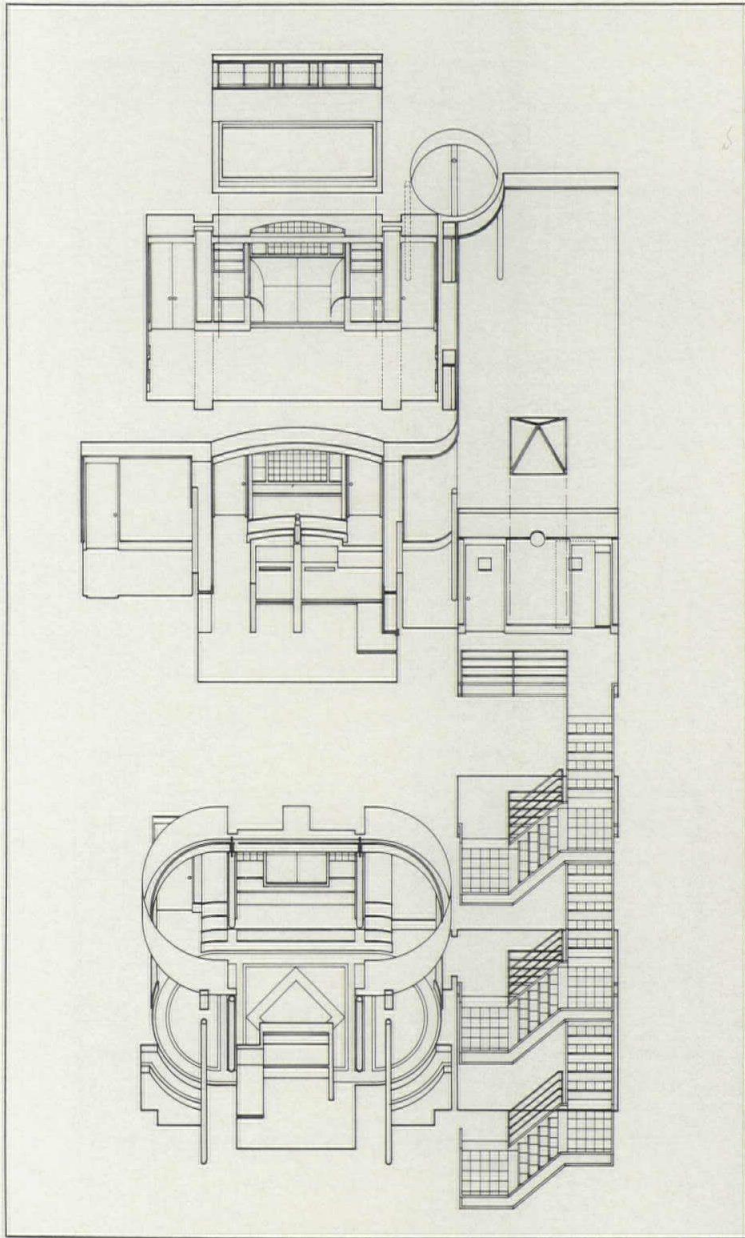
Paul Warchol photos



The Villa Schwob, 1916 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland





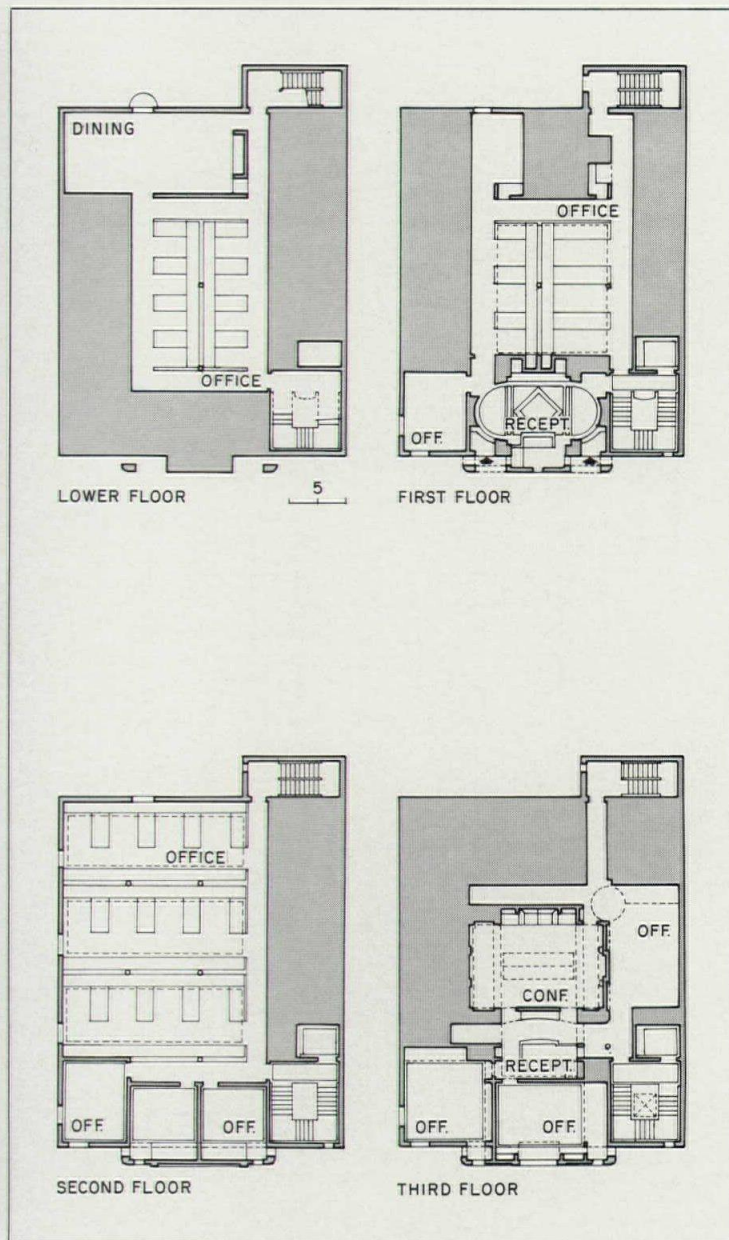


*"It really should have been all stone," laments architect Susie Kim, referring to the lobby of the Hastings-Tapley Insurance Company Building. And though the budget dictated a more modest material palette—linoleum, gypboard, plywood—Kim and partner Koetter nonetheless attempted to recreate the "public character" of a grand hall in the classical tradition from which the*

*young Jeanneret drew much of his own esthetic discipline. A boldly geometric pattern on the floor, and a celestially luminous vaulted ceiling up above, define an apsidal space within the rectangular lobby. (The interstices between curves and rectangle recall Beaux-Arts "poché.") The banquette opposite the reception desk (left) is crowned with an etched-in-glass eagle appropriated from the company logo.*



Though architect Fred Koetter felt the third-floor conference room should have the "feel" of a venerable men's club, he had "a problem with dark wood...it tends to become overbearing." The question then became, "If you want to have the look of wood panels, how much wood do you really need?" Not much, as it turned out. The desired effect was achieved through mahogany colonnettes and trim; add dark carpeting, built-in bookshelves, and flame-stitch fabric on the banquette cushions...and you have it. Susie Kim designed the mahogany conference table, which can be pulled apart for small conferences, with the freestanding end leaves placed against the walls as side tables. (Koetter and Kim did not assume design responsibility for any of the clerical staff work areas, which are on all three floors.)



*Hastings-Tapley Insurance Building  
Cambridge, Massachusetts*

**Owner:**  
*Hastings-Tapley Insurance Company, Inc.*

**Architects:**  
*Fred Koetter & Susie Kim—  
Fred Koetter, Susie Kim, designers;  
James Kent Knight, job captain;  
George Lovely, Michael Hayes,  
Mark Chen, team; James Kent  
Knight, drawings*

**Engineers:**  
*John Born & Associates  
(structural); Progressive Consulting  
Engineers (mechanical); Blair  
Metcalf (electrical)*

**General contractor:**  
*Richard Martin Development Co.*







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# Yesterday's loft, today's office showroom

*"The key to . . . preservation successes is imagination. Asking the question 'What could this building become?' may reveal more possibilities than 'What has this building been?'"* James Biddle, Foreword, *Built to Last: A Handbook on Recycling Old Buildings* by Gene Bunnell. Washington: Preservation Press, 1977.

James Wines and his collaborators at SITE Projects, Inc. asked and answered the right questions when they chose to transform the high-ceilinged second floor of the only building by Louis Sullivan in New York City into offices for themselves (pages 60-63 and cover). Their renovation included the painstaking restoration of 21 columns with Sullivan-ornamented capitals and the refurbishment of the Chicago-style windows. In order to preserve the sense of spaciousness afforded by the loft's generous dimensions and wide column bays, they invented a new kind of translucent partition made of white painted metal lath sans plaster. The result? A highly contemporary interior workspace in which Sullivan still lives.

An 80-year-old warehouse in Seattle's historic Pioneer Square District has been recycled by a local architectural firm, the NBBJ Group, into its own headquarters (pages 64-69). The outstanding feature of the renovation is a remarkable stair that moves from bay to bay in the horizontal plane as it rises five stories to the roof. This design *tour de force* was accomplished while keeping the building's handsome wood-frame structure and its brick exterior facades intact.

Denver also has its share of fine old warehouses and light-industrial buildings, many of them clustered in an area known as the "red brick district." In recycling an old paint factory into a showroom for Corporate Interiors (pages 70-75), Cabell Childress Architects elected to leave the exteriors intact, but to rid the interiors of almost every vestige of their 19th-century industrial look. Once inside the old plant, the visitor finds himself in a Postmodern version of 17th-century Rome, a luxe, curvilinear stage set for contemporary furniture. Backstage is allowed to appear here and there, the old handmade brick walls in effective juxtaposition against new marble and carpet.

In each of these three renovations, alterations to the exteriors were kept at a minimum, while the interiors reveal widely differing degrees of physical and esthetic transformation. Given the architectural quality of the Sullivan building and its importance as a New York City landmark, the minimal and subtle adjustments by SITE were well chosen. The Seattle and Denver projects are bolder renovations which take greater advantage of the spatial opportunities large loft bays can offer. *M. F. S.*

# A new site for SITE

©Peter Aaron ESTO



On Greenwich Village's almost legendary Bleecker Street is the only building by Louis Sullivan in New York City—an industrial loft structure that, even if decidedly lower cost, is still discreetly bedecked with some of Sullivan's vigorously sculptural ornament. The building has been cited as a landmark and gently restored.

SITE has moved its offices into the building's commodious, high-ceilinged second floor. One was prompted to ask, "Why Sullivan for SITE?" (For the firm's repute rests on sometimes startling themes of "unbuilding," as they call it, rather than on restoration.) "But I'm a Chicago boy," responded SITE's James Wines. "I grew up admiring Oak Park, Sullivan, and Wright. This is the only Sullivan here, and this is the most charismatic floor."

The floor's "charisma" rests in large part on 21 tall columns with Sullivan-ornamented capitals—which SITE has painstakingly restored—and on broad banks of "Chicago Style" windows. These have become a major focus for the design of the new offices, with partial partitions to expose the columns, and different intensity uplights to direct the eye.

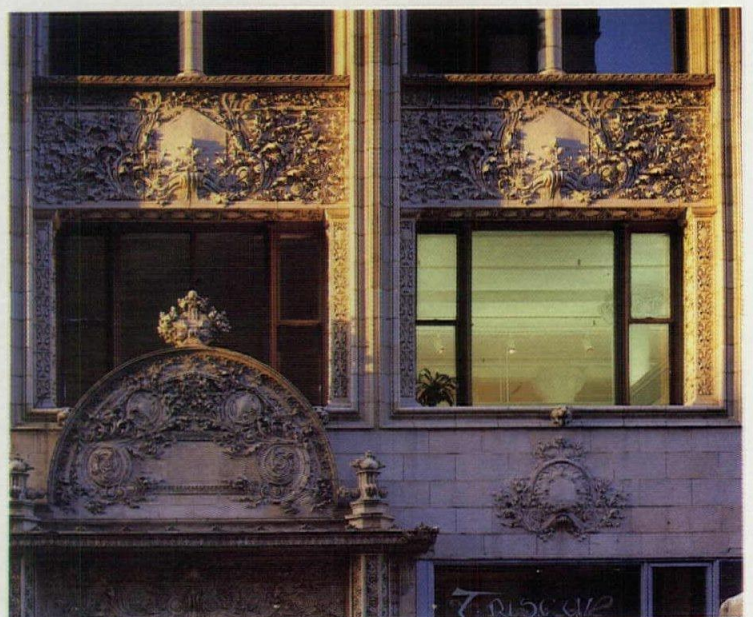
But, not to lose their image of "unbuilding," the partial partitions are made of unplastered, metal plastering-lath—an intellectual joke that also provides an extremely interesting, semi-transparent screen to define and separate activities, yet promote a greater sense of space and "democracy" among the 20 people on the staff (see cover). Needless to say, extreme care was required in the installation of lath, fasteners, and conduits to give the elegant result.

To emphasize the original function of the building, a monochromatic industrial look has been stressed—from the use of simple industrial shelving and work tables to exposed ducts. Everything has been painted white, including a white stain "frosting" on the sturdy wood floors. Wines adds, "We also did a number of 'Sullivan' things—with linear motifs in moldings, cornices, ducts hanging light boxes." Old doors and hardware of the period were used. The furniture is either institutional turn-of-the-century pieces they were able to find, or units they design and make themselves. A big conference table is of steel legs fastened with hefty studs, and a glass top over squares of fragments or plaster casts of Sullivan decorative motifs.

The plan is fairly simple and straightforward: a big gallery for the spotlighted display of SITE's work; offices for the principals and a conference room ranging the front windows; a very ample adjoining space for general design; and back rooms for model and craft shops. Surveying it all, Wines muses, "We have a deep lesson to learn from Sullivan. He had a dynamic, sculptural energy, and made decoration an intrinsic part of structure." *Herbert L. Smith, Jr.*



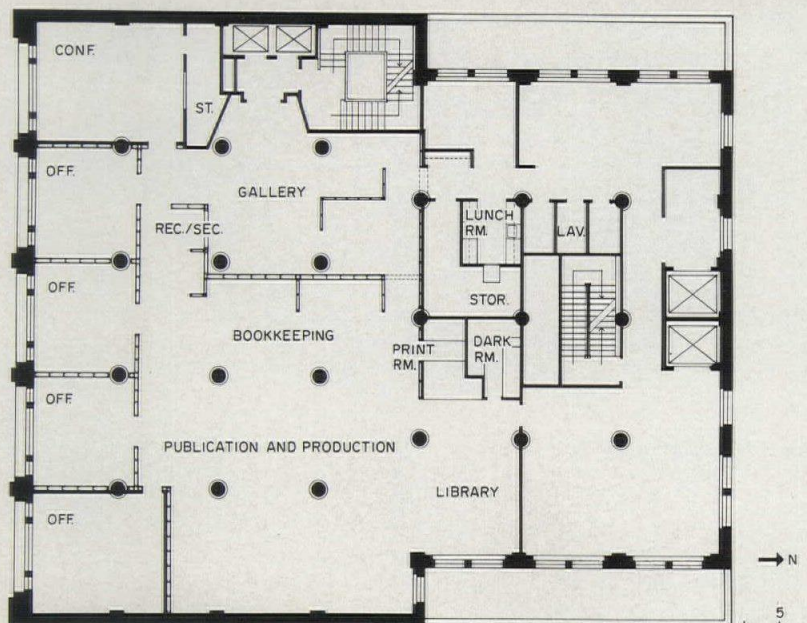
*A dramatic entrance to the SITE offices is a gallery for the display of current work (see overleaf). Displays continue along the partitions of the principals' offices (top photo), where they are augmented by works by various artists (photo above). The sculpted capitals of Sullivan's columns are visible throughout the office, and the sculpted back of the front door pediment (right) is a feature of the conference room.*



SITE Office  
 New York City  
 SITE Projects, Inc., Designers



*SITE Office  
 New York City  
 Designers:  
 SITE Projects, Inc.  
 Alison Sky, Michelle Stone, James  
 Wines, principals; John de Vitry,  
 architect, director of architecture;  
 Joshua Weinstein, architect,  
 director of design development;  
 Wendy Tippets, job captain  
 Engineers:  
 Mariano D. Molina, P. C.  
 Lighting consultant:  
 Diane Berrian Viola, IALD  
 Contractor:  
 Gordon Construction  
 Corporation—John Denninger,  
 field supervisor*











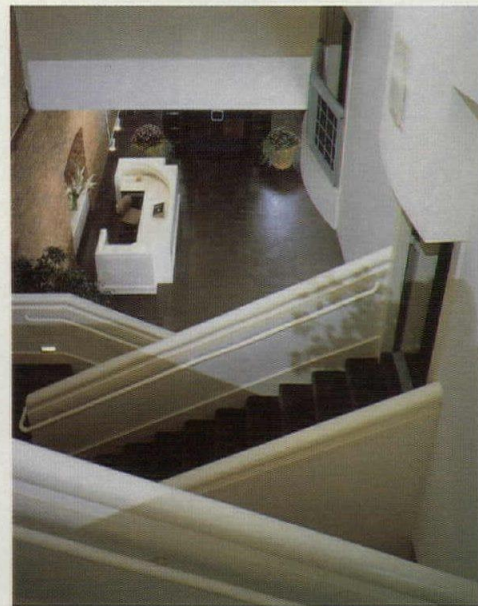
# Scaling the office landscape

The NBBJ Group Headquarters  
Seattle  
The NBBJ Group, Architects

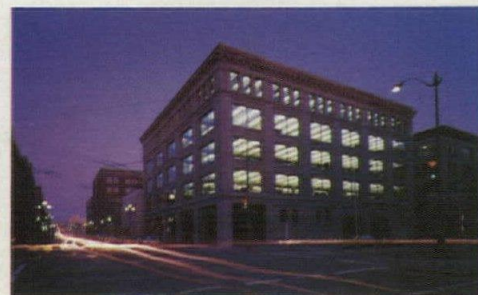
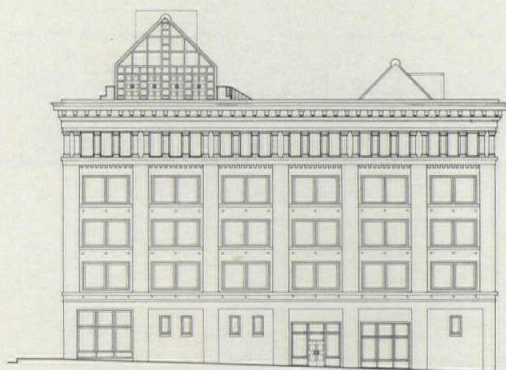
Visitors to Seattle seldom complain that the city's seven hills aren't worth the climb, given the scenic prospects they command. Most visitors to the headquarters of Seattle architects The NBBJ Group feel similarly rewarded by the manmade incline that zigzags up the core of the firm's offices (opposite and right), even if the landscape it surveys is open-plan rather than open-air. The dramatic five-story skylighted staircase is only the most obvious component in NBBJ's \$2-million remodeling of an 80-year-old warehouse in Seattle's historic Pioneer Square district. To passers-by, meticulously restored facades belie the extensive transformation carried out within the 65,000-square-foot interior to accommodate a 235-person staff. Except for the discreet addition of a new entry vestibule, solar-tinted window panes, the skylight, and a roof-top greenhouse, the turn-of-the-century exterior stands virtually intact (sandstone walls were acid-cleaned and altered fenestration restored).

NBBJ's previous headquarters "uptown" was a low-rise International Style pavilion designed by the firm in the 1940s. It was a classic building of its era, but as NBBJ prospered and grew, the old headquarters became woefully cramped. A series of extensions was tacked on over the years, and by 1980 personnel were scattered among three locations. Staff communications suffered, and the odd conglomeration of physical surroundings hardly conveyed the image of "sophistication" and "corporate yet humane architecture" that NBBJ sought to project.

The warehouse they found downtown was more than large enough to house the entire firm, and the regular bays of the 1904 wood-frame structure proved eminently adaptable to diverse functional requirements (plans overleaf, section page 69). To define conference rooms and other specific program spaces, NBBJ deployed crisply painted partitions, keyed into the exposed shell of timbers and brick bearing walls but contrasting with their rugged surfaces. Open work areas serve the changing needs of 15- to 20-person design teams and support groups. This multilevel layout also comprises a basement gym and locker room, street-level retail shops, and a lunchroom-cum-meeting-place in the penthouse (photos pages 68-69). The unifying focus for the entire complex is the grand stairway, whose diagonal course honors and enriches the extant bay structure. More than a compelling symbol of organizational community, the stairway also reminds clients that when skillful architects don't find a spectacular view in place, they can build one. *Douglas Brenner*



©Dick Busher photos

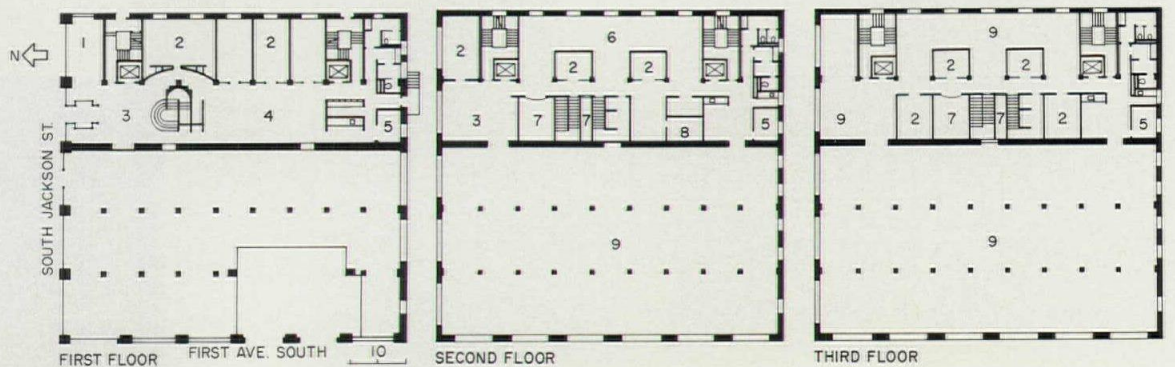


Despite the dazzling virtuosity of the stairway and the picturesque counterpoint of textures and colors, both the parti and details of NBBJ's headquarters are governed by pragmatic concerns as well as by esthetics. Shallow balconies not only reinforce the visual connection of the central stairwell to adjoining spaces (photo upper left), but encourage communication among offices on all floors. As channels in

the jambs and lintels of the balcony apertures indicate, all openings onto the central shaft are fitted with sliding fire shutters. Sprinklers and other fire-protection devices are installed in furred compartments between the central purlins of each bay. The furred interstices also house branch-line feeder supplies and returns attached to exposed trunk lines that flank the shear wall. Air handlers

permit floor-by-floor control of air distribution from a roof-mounted chiller. Other energy-saving devices include an economizer cycle and night setback for air conditioning and an automatic sunshade for the stairway skylight. Sensitive to solar intensity, the shade can screen out as much as 80 per cent of radiation. Fortuitously, the stairwell acts as a seasonal chronometer. During the spring and fall equinoxes, sunbeams

strike the lobby floor, rising up the stairs toward the summer solstice and across the ceiling during the winter. Within the open offices, task lighting is built into movable furniture systems, which are also acoustically effective. Exposed purlins help to interrupt sound transmission across the ceiling, and fiberglass batts laid into every four-purlin bay absorb noise.

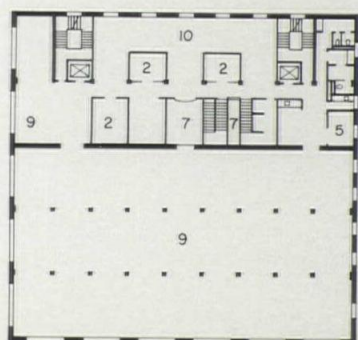


Conference rooms on each of the five main floors offer more private alternatives to open work areas, whether for casual retreats from the office landscape (opposite right), or for scheduled meetings and presentations. Varied dimensions and degrees of enclosure provide a choice of environments—ranging from the 4,16-square-foot conference room behind a niche off the ground-floor lobby (below), to smaller

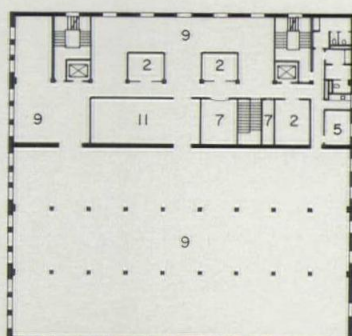
“storefront” meeting spaces alongside an in-house exhibition gallery (opposite lower left). The most sought-after conference room is on the fifth floor, beneath the skylight at the head of the stairs. Diagonals, stepped profiles, and gables echo the configuration of the focal stairway as well as the silhouette of the penthouse pavilion (inverted gable forms in the conference rooms house circular

air-return ducts). As throughout the building, grid patterns link modern inserts to the proportional scheme of the 1904 warehouse structure, though the juxtaposition of sleek painted surfaces against the patina of time-worn wood and brick heightens the contrast between new and old. Besides the introduction of fire stairs, elevators, and direct access for the handicapped, the existing fabric was brought up to

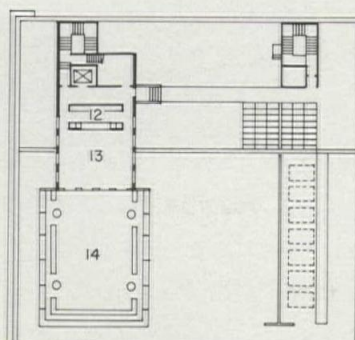
seismic standards. Improvements include steel beams between purlins and a new plywood diaphragm for each floor, strapped to the exterior walls by bolts with neoclassical rosette-patterned heads.



FOURTH FLOOR



FIFTH FLOOR



ROOF

1. Waiting
2. Conference
3. Reception
4. Gallery/display
5. Hvac
6. Business Space Design (interiors)
7. Open
8. Computer
9. Work area
10. Library
11. Technical library
12. Kitchen and vending
13. Lunch room
14. Deck



The glazed penthouse opens onto a deck with views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains. This airy belvedere is a lunchroom and all-purpose getaway from the offices by day, and a starlit pavilion for parties and receptions at night. Entirely solar-heated throughout the winter, the greenhouse is naturally ventilated during the warmer seasons. Windows at the peak are

electronically operable. Landscape plans for the deck comprise potted trees, a hedge rooted in planters, and an ivy-clad Corinthian capital brought from the garden of NBBJ's former office uptown.

*The NBBJ Group Headquarters  
Seattle*

**Owner:**

*South Jackson Street Associates*

**Architects:**

*The NBBJ Group—Stuart Charles, principal-in-charge; Dennis Forsyth, project manager; Mark Helenius, technical architect; Patrick James, designer; Rysia Nowaczyk-Sucecka, interior designer*

**Interior design:**

*Business Space Design*

**Structural engineers:**

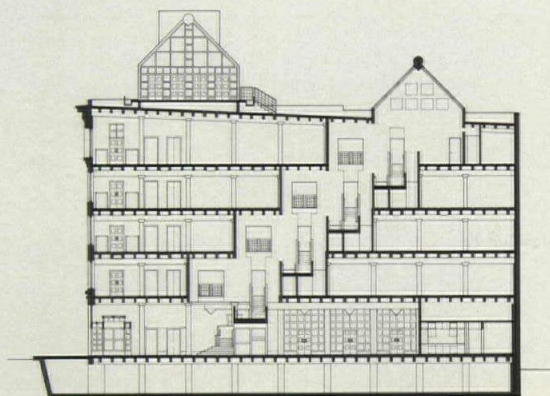
*Ratti/Fossatti Associates*

**Contractors:**

*J.M. Rafn Company (general); Air-Con, Inc. (hvac); Phoenix Mechanical (plumbing/sprinkler); Collins Electric Co. (electrical)*

**Custom furniture:**

*Tallahan/Loop Corporation*



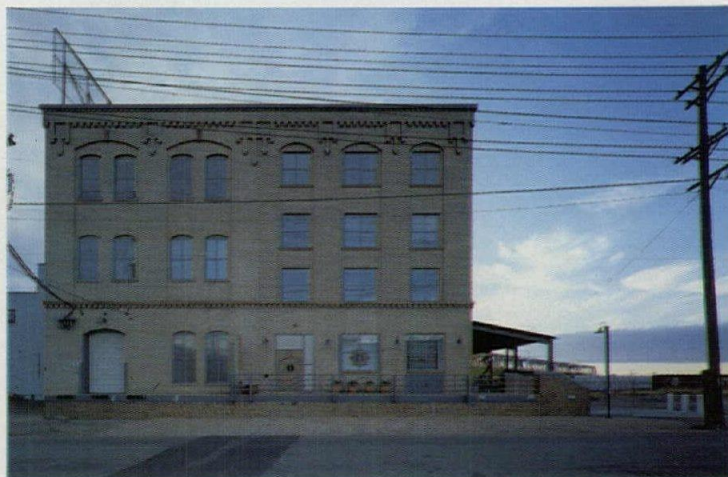
# Corporate baroque

Corporate Interiors Show Room  
Denver, Colorado  
Cabell Childress Architects

Though Denver was dubbed the "mile-high city" because of its altitude, a decade of wildfire high-rise construction might just as easily have inspired the sobriquet. And though some may rue the proliferation of Manhattan-scale skyscrapers here in the Colorado capital, others—for example, the local purveyors of contract furniture and systems—do not. Case in point: Corporate Interiors Inc.

With an eye toward the soaring Denver skyline, the management of Corporate Interiors determined that their 10,000-square-foot show room was appreciably short of the marketing task at hand. To avoid the rents being charged in the buildings they hoped to furnish, they looked to the western edge of town for more commodious accommodations—to a fringe area known locally as the "red brick district," in honor of an impressive stock of turn-of-the-century warehouses and light-industrial buildings. Although the company was a few years too late for the first wave of revitalization that swept the formerly blue-collar neighborhood in the late '70s, it found the old McFarland Paint and Varnish Company Building (which was then, some six blocks shy of the renovated district) amenable not only to the purpose but to the pocketbook. And although the 44,000-square-foot building had been called into service as an aviary by Denver's considerable pigeon population, it was, thanks to solid steel and masonry construction, none the worse for wear. The task of transforming the building fell to Denver architect Cabell Childress, who opted to break with his own distinctly "modern" tradition and "do contemporary."

Since we now understand that "contemporary" actually means "historical," we are not surprised when Childress reveals that his inspiration for the \$23-per-square-foot renovation came from 17th-century Rome—from Francesco Borromini to be precise. If the allusion eludes all but the most perspicacious furniture specifier, no matter; for whether or not the ornately patterned stone runway (photo right) bisecting the northern half of the top-floor show room (where Corporate Interiors displays its premier furniture lines) is a direct or oblique descendent of Borromini, is of less concern than how successfully the gentle scallops and graceful geometry of the gray and white marble axis guide us through what is essentially a warehouse. By leaving the paired structural columns intermittently exposed along the central axis, Childress effectively framed cross-axial bays that not only break the potential bowling-alley effect, but allow for typical seating and office arrangements as well. Reinforcing the axis, and adroitly taming a ceiling plane that drops from 13 to seven feet, is a sky full of drywall "clouds." *Charles K. Gandee*

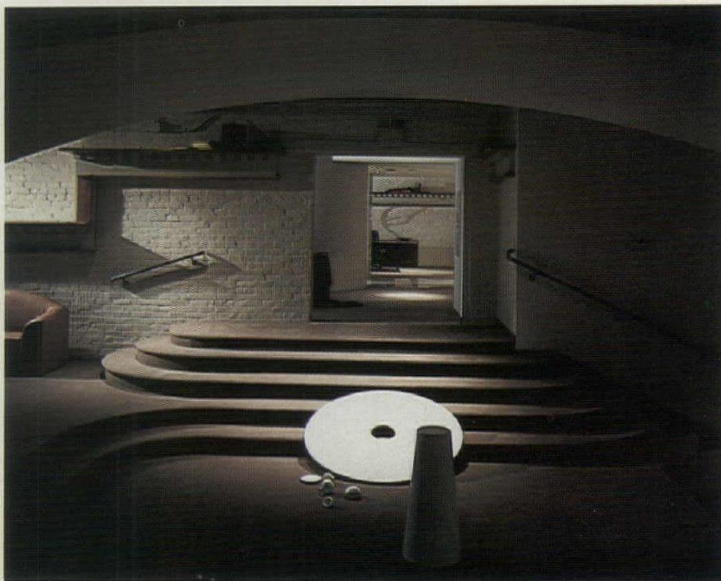


*Timothy Hursley photos*

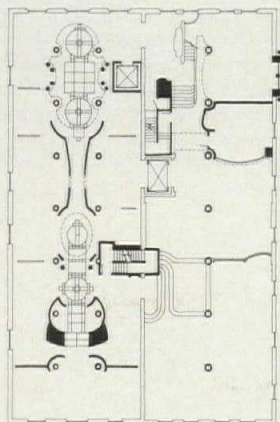
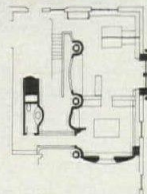


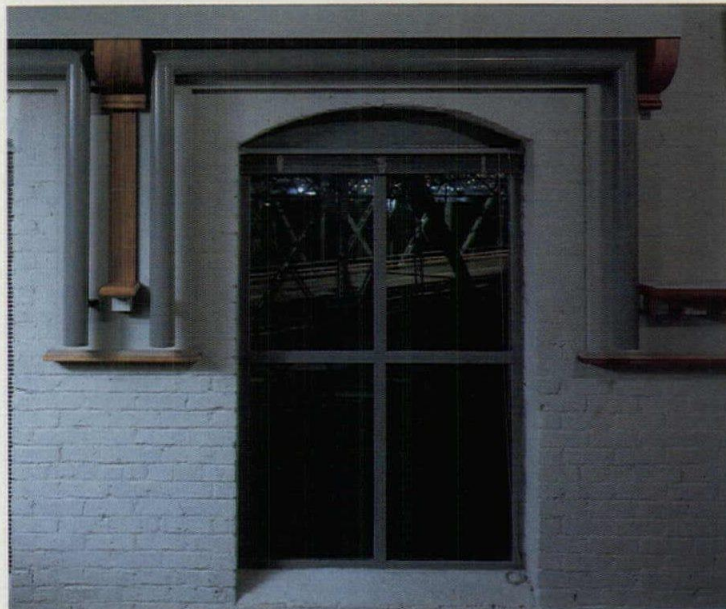






*The overscaled oculus looking out from the mezzanine-level library above the presentation room (photo left) offers a bird's-eye view of Corporate Interiors' expansive south show room, which is almost entirely given over to office systems. The cascading steps spilling into the south show room acknowledge the fact that the old McFarland Paint and Varnish Company Building is actually two structures—a four-story north building and a three-story south building.*





Although the bulk of Corporate Interiors' budget went to mechanical and electrical work, architect Cabell Childress displayed great dexterity with the relatively small portion allocated for "architecture." The show room bottom line was \$102,000 for drywall, \$16,000 for marble, and \$60,000 for cabinetry and trim. (The last went almost entirely to a decorative cornice that rises and falls relative to window and ceiling heights.)

Corporate Interiors  
Denver, Colorado

**Owner:**

Apple Peddlers

**Architects:**

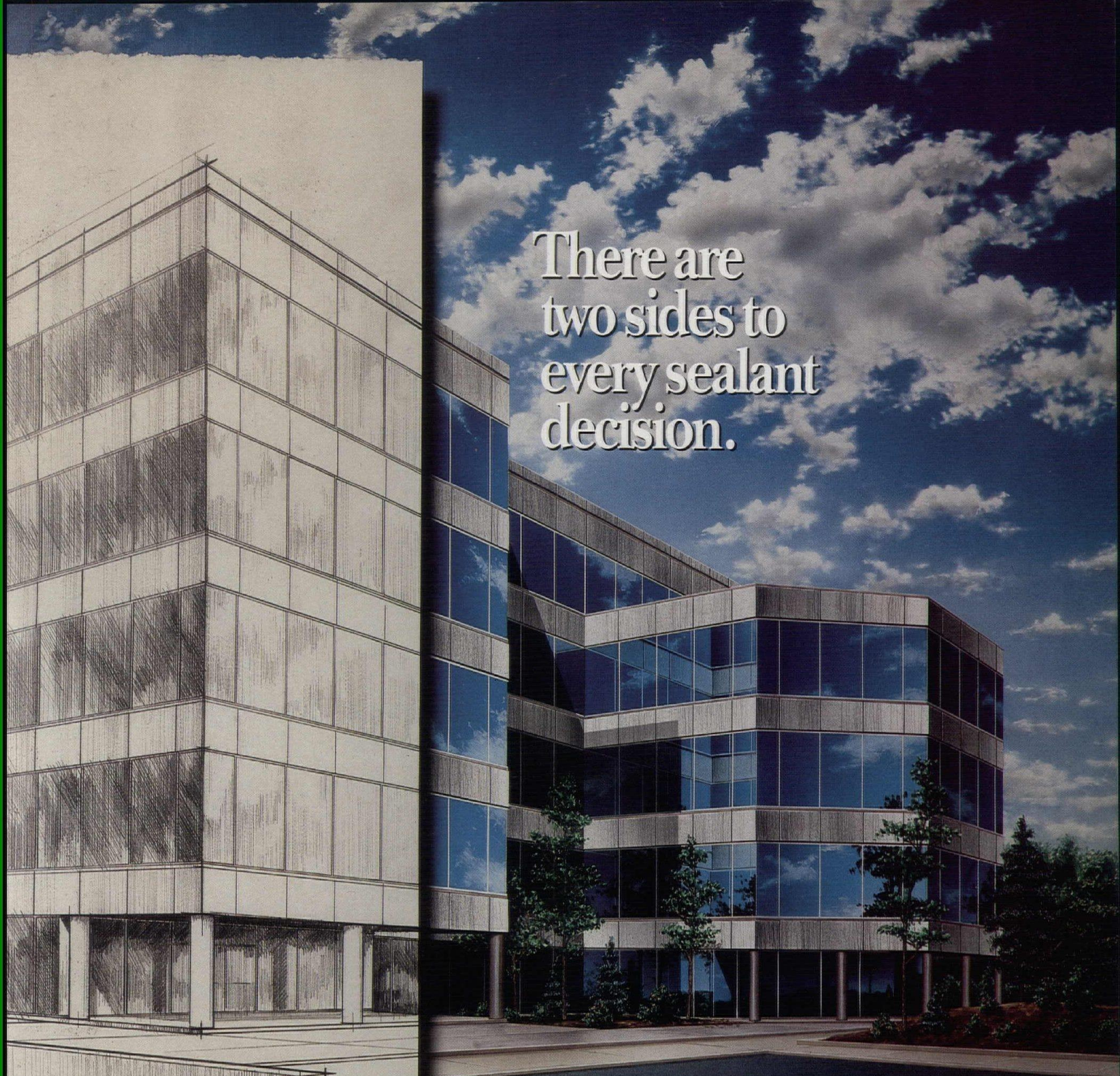
Cabell Childress Architects—Cabell Childress, FAIA, and Jeff Burselson

**Engineers:**

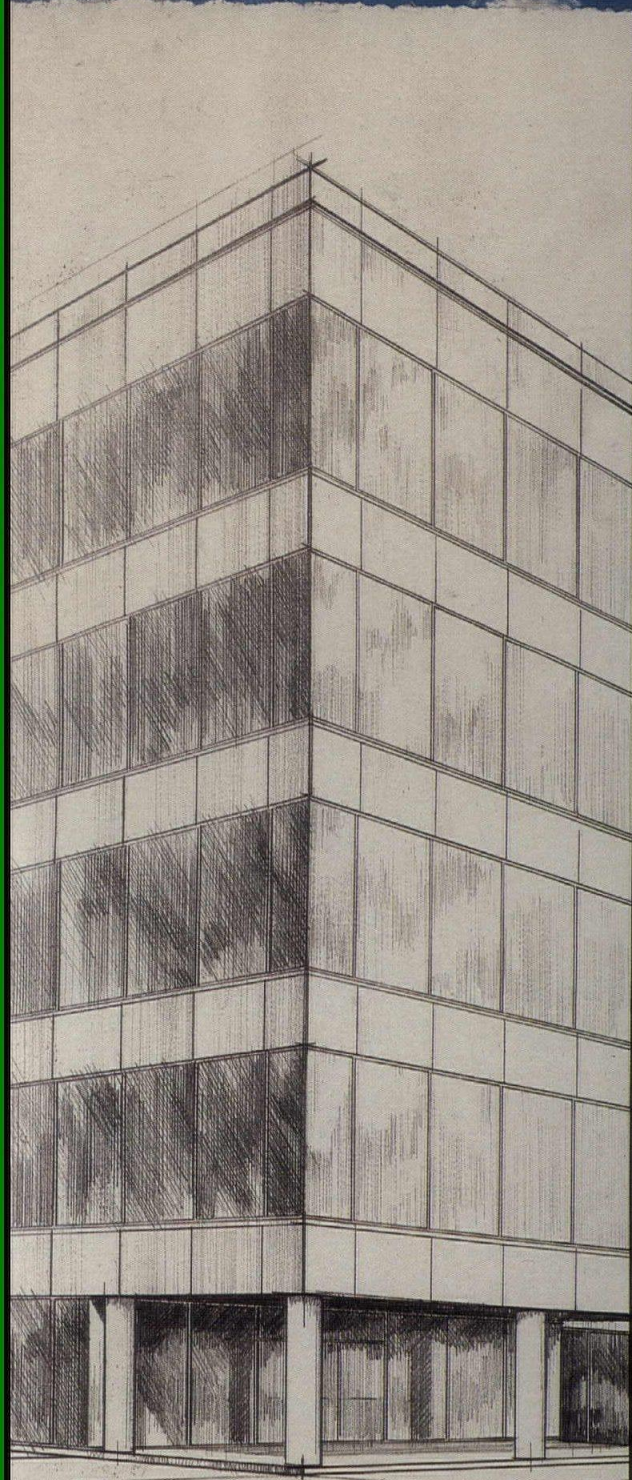
Anderson and Hastings (structural); McFall, Konkel and Kimball (mechanical); Garland D. Cox Associates (electrical)

**Consultants:**

Maryann Kipp (interiors); Thrim Paulsen (lighting)



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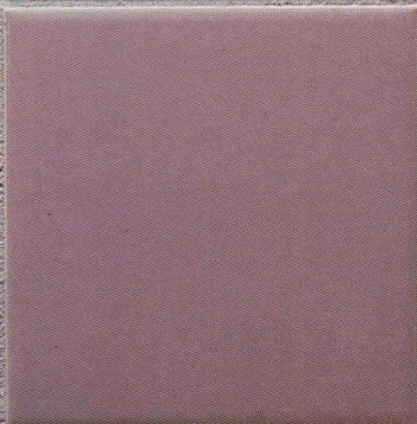
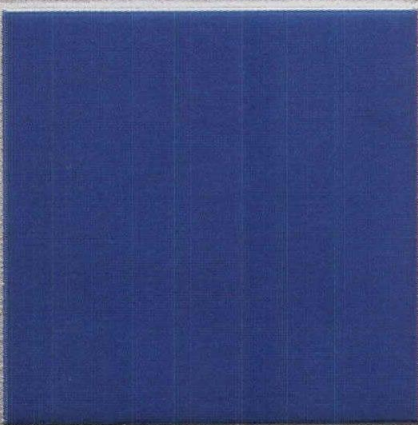
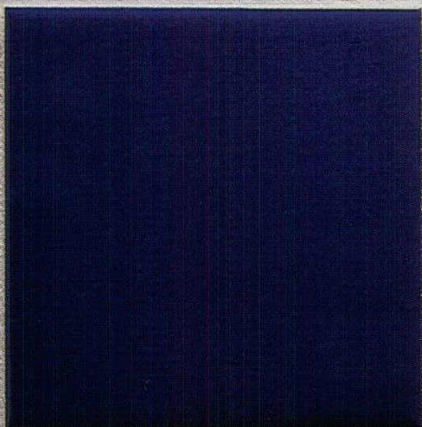
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# Bringing them back alive

*"The best hope of saving our cities' landmarks is to find new uses for them . . . . We have no patience with simply embalming a building that is dead. The job is only worth doing if it creates a more interesting environment than the one that is there now. We come not to bury these buildings, but to bring them back alive."* *New Life for Landmarks*, by Gordon Gray. New York: American Federation of Arts, 1966.

The three buildings in this section have been brought back alive as dwellings. The first, Punta Alegre in Key Biscayne, Florida, (pages 80-83), always was a house, but in its first guise a much more modest one. Starting life as a 1950s-vintage ranch house, it was expanded by architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk into a 4,469-square-foot Pompeiian villa to meet their clients' demand for atrium-centered absolute privacy. It was all done by additions carefully placed both to conceal and enhance.

Newtonville, Massachusetts, like many other communities across the country, has been recycling some of its depopulated public schools into housing. Soon after the 80-year-old Claffin Park School closed down as such, it was transformed by Sasaki Associates, Inc., into a container for 13 condominium units, tucked within its shell and inserted under its eaves (pages 84-87). Ingeniously planned duplex penthouse apartments take advantage of the high-ceilinged space that formerly belonged to the top-floor school auditorium and make the most of the pitches and valleys of the turn-of-the-century roof.

And, lastly, little abandoned country schoolhouses can be transformed into weekend retreats (pages 88-89). Architects Thomas and Kirsten Peltzer Beeby found a late 19th-century, 600-square-foot school building in Wisconsin dairy country, made simple repairs, added basic utilities, and framed the windows on the interior with Pennsylvania Dutch stencils applied to the wooden walls. From the outside, however, it still looks like a one-room schoolhouse, especially when the Beebys raise the flag. *M. F. S*

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**“Villa by the bay”**





Punta Alegre  
Key Biscayne, Florida  
Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Architects

*Steven Brooke photos*



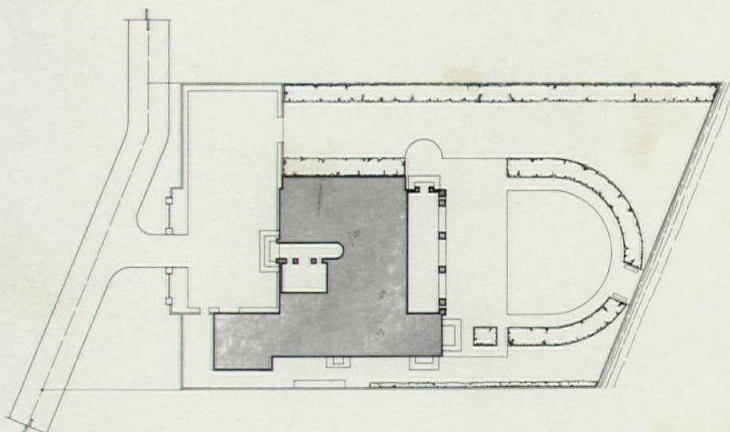
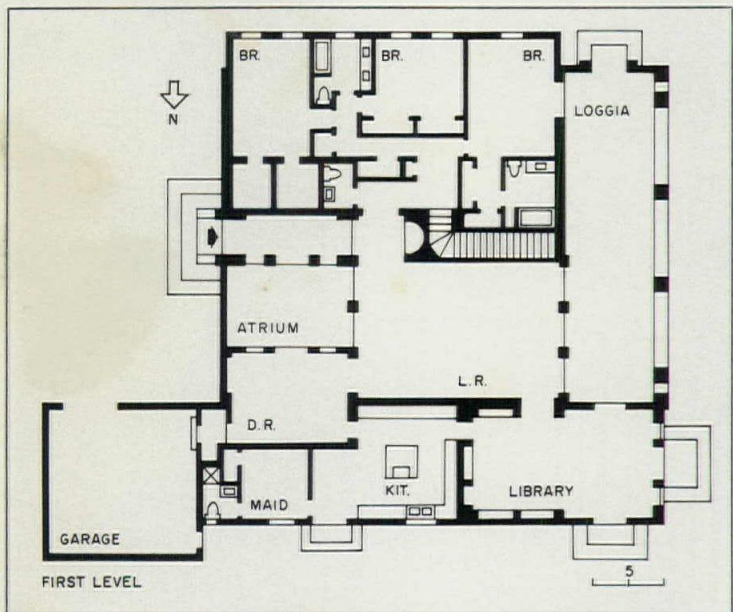
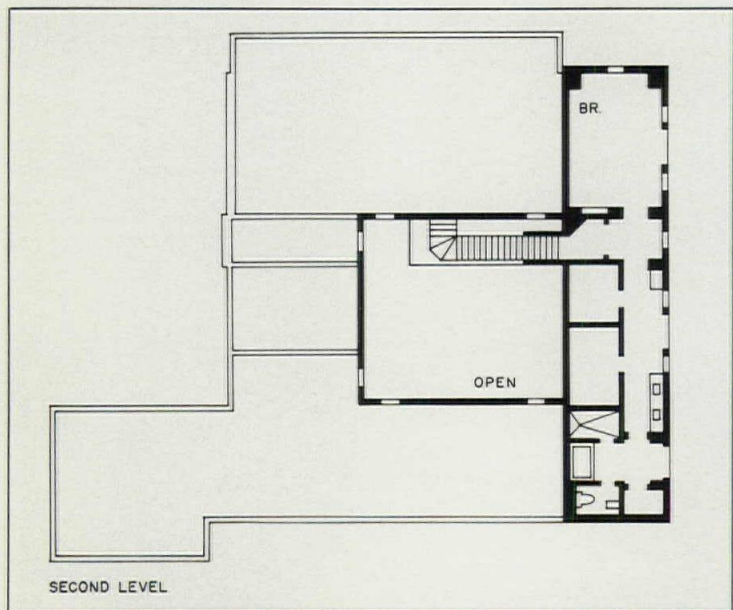


It might be called, without hyperbole, the remodeling job of the year. For although the coolly elegant residence on a winding road in Key Biscayne appears to be totally new construction, it is actually a reworking of the 1950s-vintage ranch house pictured above. When the owners bought the original structure in 1983, they were taken primarily by its site overlooking Biscayne Bay and the Miami skyline; the house, they knew, needed work. What they probably never foresaw even after engaging Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk to carry out the task was that the young Miami firm would literally raise the roof of the ranch and create the serene two-story Roman villa now named Punta Alegre.

Duany notes that he and Plater-Zyberk initially had envisioned "a brooding Otto Wagner-type house" with an open courtyard and heavy cornices. The client, however, wanted absolute privacy in the densely settled neighborhood, and the contractor balked at the prospect of installing ornate decoration. "We looked around," says Duany, "and we found the low classical vernacular architecture of Pompeii," a style of residential construction characterized by tight, walled atriums, simplified ornamentation, and open loggias that seem ideally suited to the subtropical Florida climate.

The 4,469-square-foot house is essentially an enfilade of carefully sequenced "public" spaces whose formalized planning contrasts with the more pedestrian layout inherited from the ranch. Circulation actually begins in a gravel carpark and moves through eight-inch-thick concrete block and stucco walls into a short loggia and an atrium open to the sky. Scented by jasmine and animated by the splash of a fountain, the atrium leads into a 23-foot-high, gallerylike living room that in turn gives way to an impressively proportioned rear loggia, a semicircular lawn and, finally, a small beach fronting the bay. Like its Etruscan ancestors, the inviting rear elevation is an antithesis to the hermetically sealed street facade.

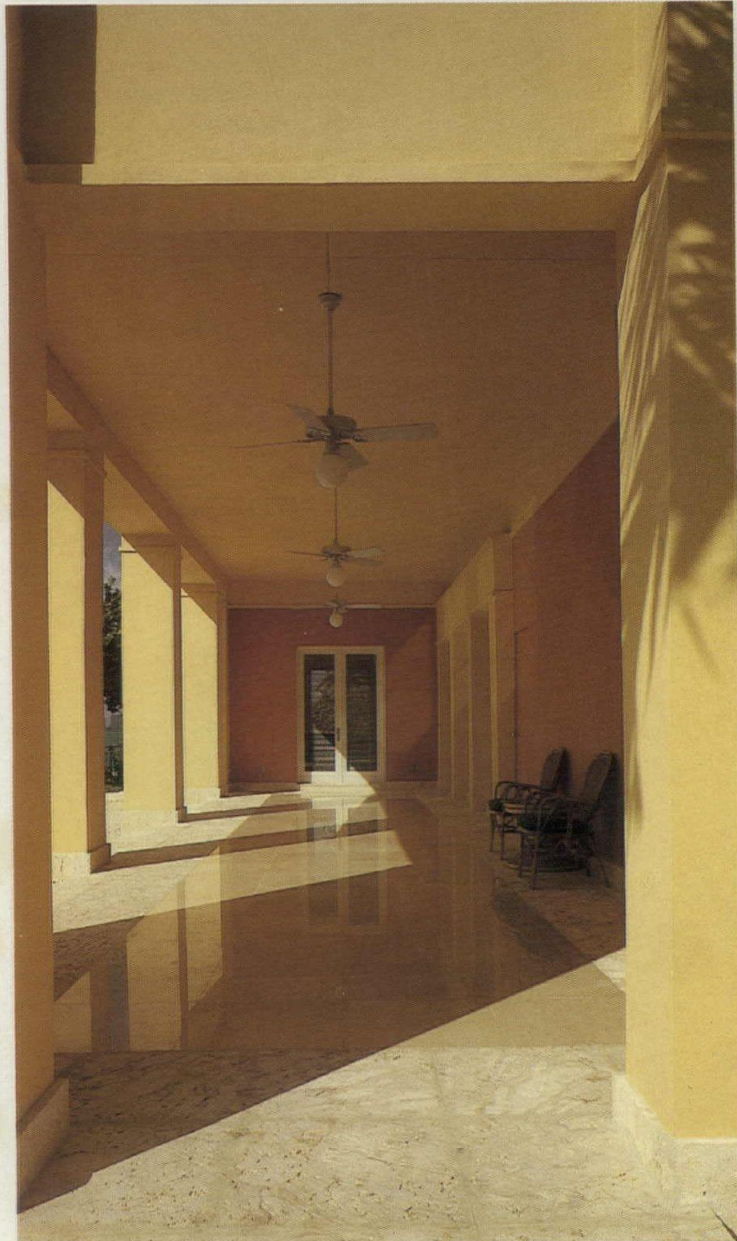
Throughout the residence the architects have utilized what they call "the power of paint" to clarify their sought-after concept of thickness. The edge of the pink loggia wall is overlaid with a swath of yellow to simulate two-foot-deep piers. Decorative firring strips are painted the same color as the walls to give depth to the drywall. Clearly, the illusion works: Punta Alegre looks like a serious architectural alternative to the glitz of Miami Beach just a few miles across the bay. *Paul M. Sachner*



The unusually tall front doorway (overleaf) exemplifies the architects' affection for the "imperfect" ornamentation of vernacular Roman houses. Leaving the bedrooms and kitchen of the existing house (shown on first level plans opposite) virtually intact, Duany and Plater-Zyberk inserted their courtyard/atrium/gallery/loggia progression and added a second story to accommodate the

master bedroom suite. The red, pink, and yellow hues used on the loggia elevation (below left) and elsewhere in the house are dubbed "Vizcaya colors"—so called because they were found at the Renaissance-style house-museum of the same name located near the architects' office. The loggia itself has a "carpet" of Spanish marble trimmed with keystone, a coral building material indigenous to

Florida (bottom left). A niched stair enclosure marks the transition between the new living and old bedroom wings (below right), while a classical pavilion crowns the stair and looks out, like an acropolis, over the gallery (bottom right). Although pyramidal uprights running along a continuous celadon frieze appear custom, they are actually \$20 fixtures from Conran's.



**Punta Alegre**  
 Key Biscayne, Florida  
**Architects:**  
 Andres Duany and Elizabeth  
 Plater-Zyberk, Architects  
 Thomas Christ, project manager;  
 Manuel Fernandez, Patrice  
 Marbin-Barrocas, Derrick Smith,  
 project team  
**Engineers:**  
 Santiago and Associates  
 (structural/electrical/mechanical)  
**General contractor:**  
 Myobi Construction Company

# Living in a schoolhouse

Sam Sweezy photos except as noted



Notwithstanding the demographic and industrial setbacks it has suffered in recent years, the Northeast still has its share of advantages. One of the smaller, happier pluses turns out to be the region's depopulated public schools. Too solid for casual demolition, handsomely if not stylishly built, and familiar landmarks in their residential neighborhoods, any number of these have been converted to apartments.

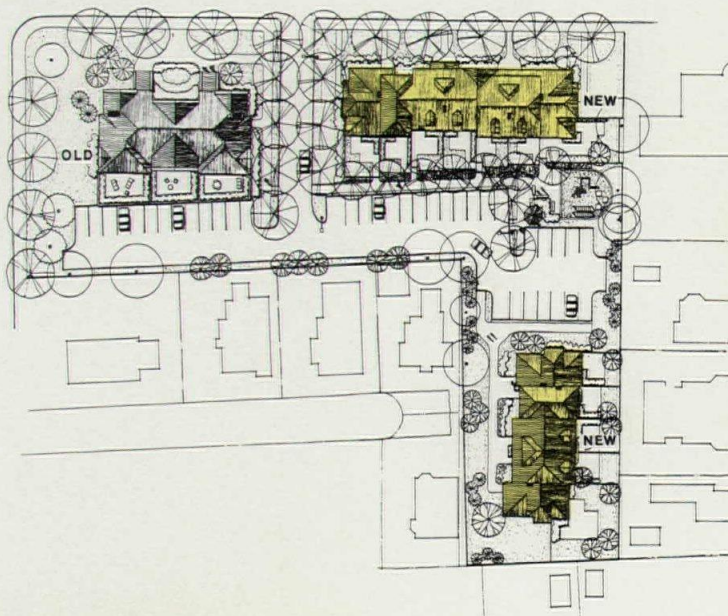
At the 80-year-old Clafin Park School, 13 condominium units designed by Sasaki Associates have replaced classrooms. In addition to gutting the building and starting over, the architects had to cure some ill-advised alterations that had accumulated over the years. The most offensive eyesore was a 700-square-foot concrete stair assembly and new doorway for the front entry. The two original stairways and doors—one for boys and one for girls in the early days of coeducation—were reconstructed. An iron fire stair that used to climb the building was removed, necessitating the installation of brownstone lintels over windows to match those elsewhere. And, as often happens in older buildings, new contents would not fit without some tricky detailing: new copper-lined balconies were dug into the roofs, for instance, but could not be as deep as the architects hoped because of intervening beams, and other beams required unexpected, if rather charming, changes in floor levels.

On the other hand, old buildings can offer serendipitous pleasures that most architects either could not or would not include in a new design. High ceilings and tall windows they would have if they could. But who would build a brick bearing arch as portal for a basement bathtub? Who would think of a small stained glass window above three larger windows in a dormer? Who would waste the entire corner of a building for a square emergency stairway in an atrium gloriously lighted by large windows?

To complete the Clafin Park complex, Sasaki Associates designed two new buildings for 12 town houses. The notion of building these with brick to match the schoolhouse was discarded as impracticable almost as soon as it was thought of. Instead, the houses have taupe clapboard walls to complement their capacious Victorian neighbors, all painted in soft colors. The slope of the asphalt shingle roofs parallels that of the slate roof on the older building, and rows of scalloped shingles on the gables recall the school's rough-dressed brownstone lintels and fancy brickwork cornices. *Grace Anderson*



The condominium complex at Clafin Park combines a renovated schoolhouse (top and opposite) with two new buildings of row houses (directly above). The row houses, with their clapboards, front porches and manicured lawns, continue the residential ambiance created by neighboring Victorian houses. The old building got new copper-lined balconies in the slate roof.

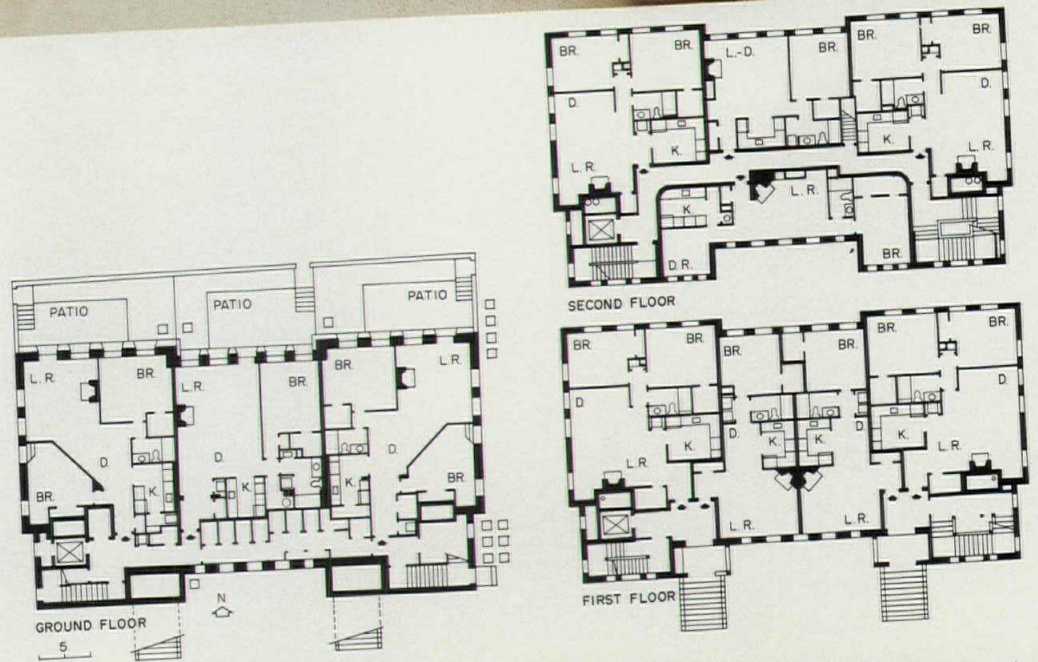




The tall space under the roof at Clafin Park School once accommodated an auditorium. Its height allowed the insertion of an extra floor to turn the two penthouse apartments into duplexes, which take full design advantage of architectural givens like heavy timber supports and tall arched windows. The older building's shape and fenestration permitted, indeed demanded, an

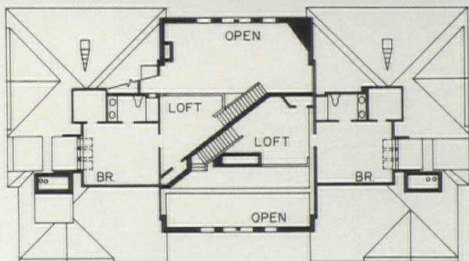
assortment of apartment plans (at bottom), involving private access to patios on the ground floor, a long corridor on the second for circulation from the elevator (housed in an old chimney), and a diagonal partition in the penthouse to give the two apartments on that floor equal area and access to the elevator—as well as the benefit of the large living room windows. The interiors of the town houses (far

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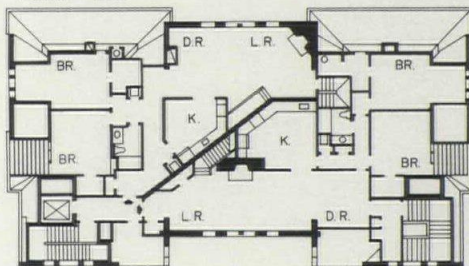


right), despite their external protective coloration in the Victorian neighborhood, are definitely non-Victorian. Stairways and living rooms get daylight from skylit atriums that extend the full height of each house.

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FOURTH FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

*Clafin Park  
Newtonville, Massachusetts*

**Owners:**

*Clafin Park Associates, a subsidiary of Pioneer Financial & Cooperative Bank*

**Architects:**

*Sasaki Associates—Kenneth DeMay, principal-in-charge; Peter Thomas, project architect; Michael K. Kaufman, project manager; Mark McDonough, John*

*Rutherford, David Peterson, Philip Sheldon, project staff*

**Engineers:**

*Eugene Hamilton, P.E. (structural); Environmental Design Engineers (mechanical); Verne Norman Associates (electrical)*

**Landscape architects and site engineers:**

*Sasaki Associates, Inc.*

# Earthly delight

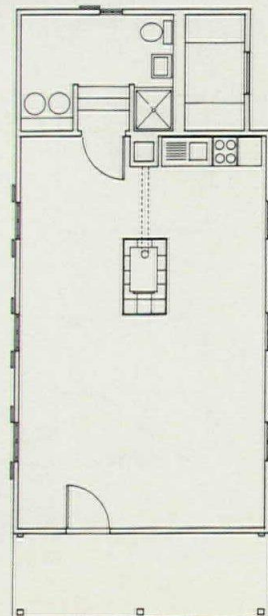
Beeby House  
Argyle, Wisconsin  
Thomas Beeby and Kirsten  
Peltzer Beeby, Architects

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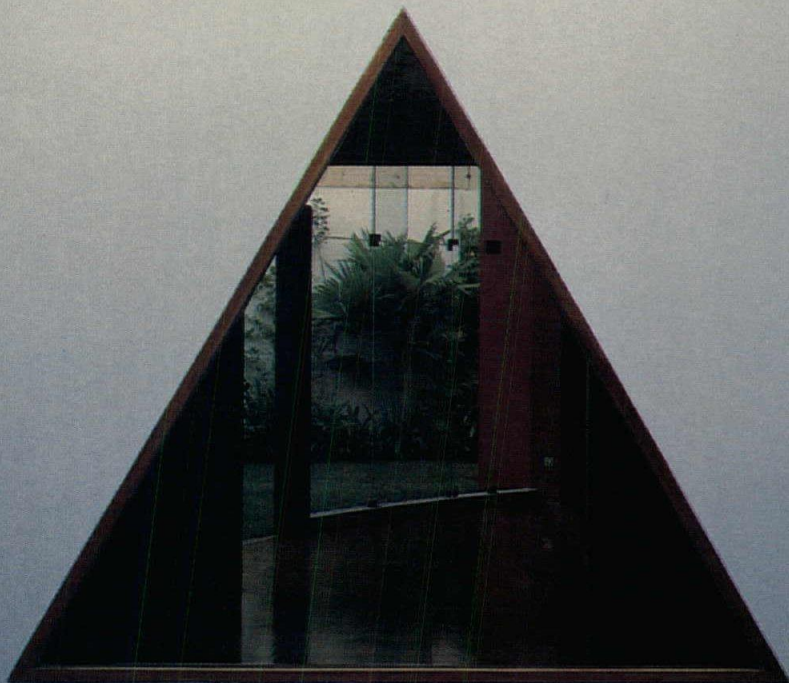
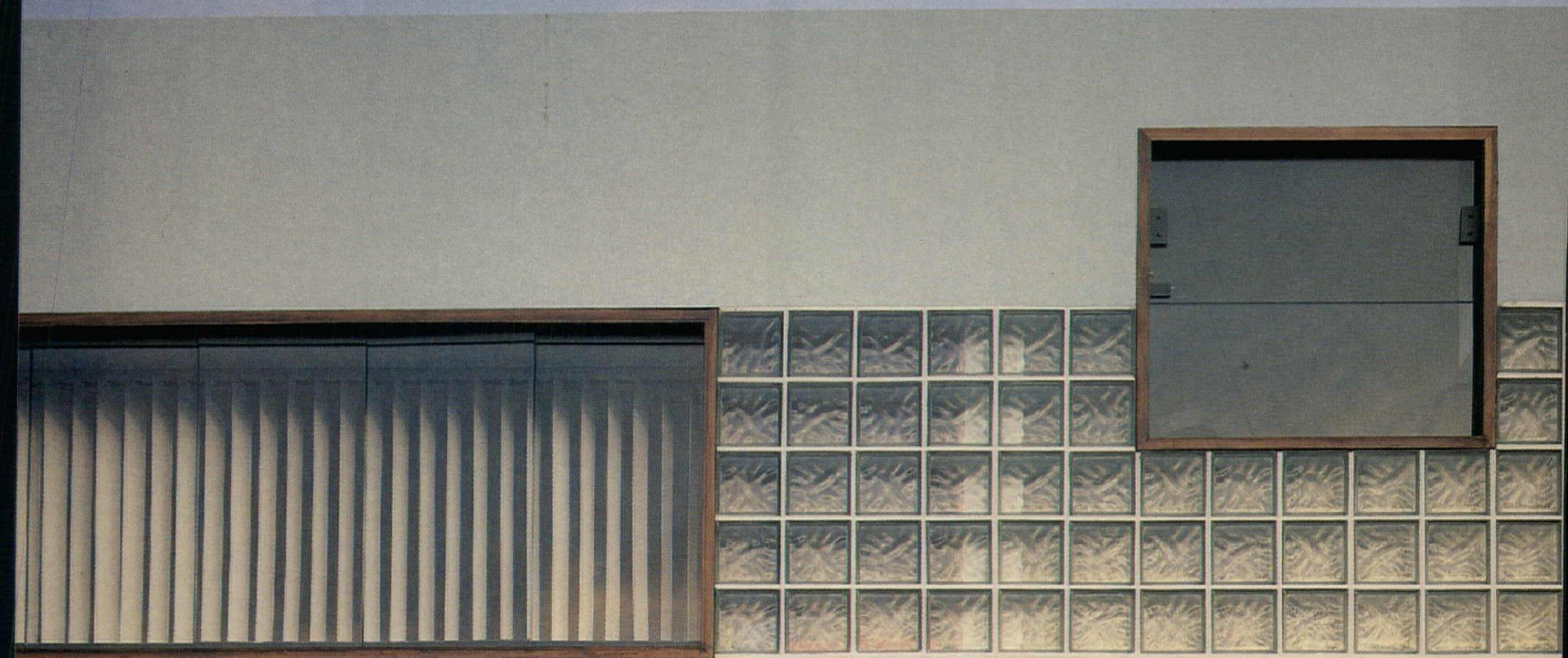
"Admire a large estate," wrote Virgil, "but work a small one." Chicago architects Tom and Kirsten Peltzer Beeby heeded these wise words when they purchased a former one-room schoolhouse in 1976 and slowly proceeded to convert the late-19th-century structure, which since 1961 had been used by a local farmer as a calf barn, into a country retreat. Although the tiny 600-square-foot building lies on just one acre of land, its hilltop setting provides expansive, estatelike vistas across the rolling dairy farmland of southwestern Wisconsin. After they had opened up an enclosed porch, laid a new plank floor, and replaced some bead-and-board wainscot damaged by the resident cows, the Beebys decided to retain the single-room configuration of the interior (plan below) and set out to embellish the wood-paneled walls with an elaborately stenciled paint job, a task that took three years' worth of weekends to finish. Clearly inspired by both the brightly colored handwork of local Swiss- and German-descended craftspeople and the vernacular patterned art of the Pennsylvania Dutch, the stenciling consists of stylized carnations, lilies, thistles, roses, sunflowers, grapes, and birds—an abstraction of nature depicted beneath a deep sky-blue ceiling and standard industrial light fixtures enameled, appropriately, sun yellow. Green-painted trim and a collection of rustic furniture purchased within a 20-mile radius of the site complete the pastoral effect. Tom Beeby notes that when he and Kirsten initially saw the place, it seemed like the ideal complement to the family's year-round apartment at Mies van der Rohe's 900 Lake Shore Drive. Claims Beeby, "It's the perfect house." *Paul M. Sachner*

*Beeby House*  
Argyle, Wisconsin  
**Restoration architects:**  
Thomas Beeby and Kirsten  
Peltzer Beeby  
**General contractor:**  
Kuhne Construction Co.











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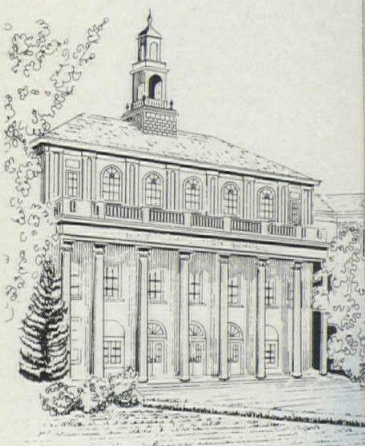
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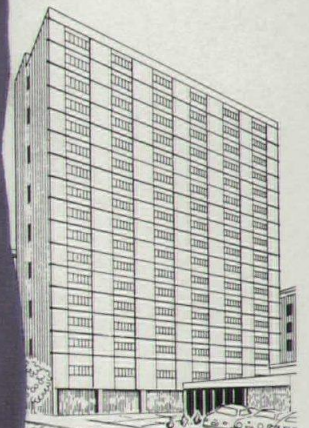
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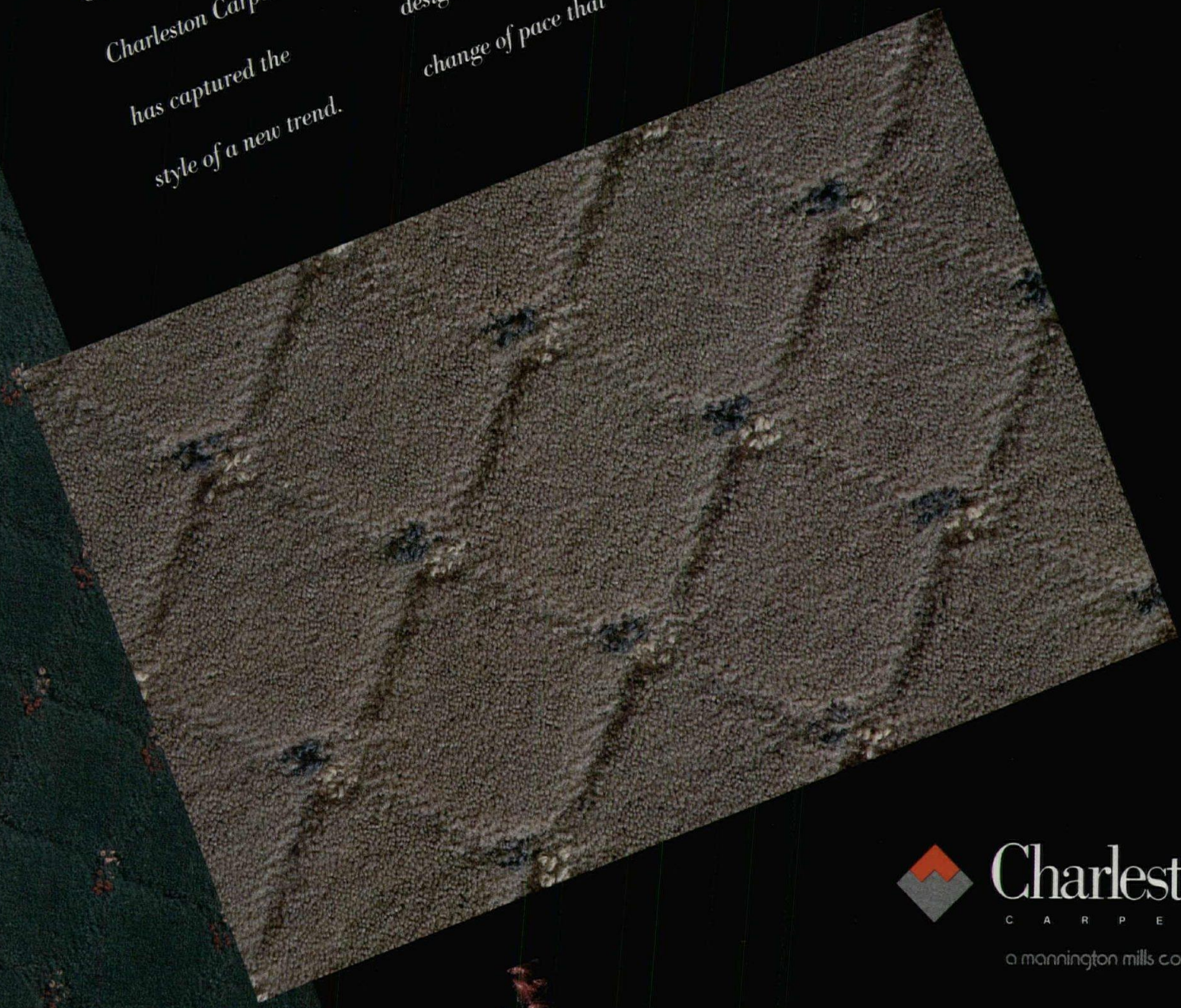
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