



Pelli at Rice: Part Two

It's not often that an architect gets a return engagement relating to his own previous work. Cesar Pelli & Associates followed completion of the Jesse Jones School of Public Administration (Herring Hall) on the Rice University campus in Houston (see *P/A*, April 1985, pp. 86-97) with a commission to expand the adjacent Rice Memorial Center for student services and activities. Known as the Ley Student Center Expansion, Pelli's project increases the facilities from 50,000 square feet to 75,000 square feet.

The scope of this expansion provided enough program "meat" to reform edge conditions of the Center so that it might visually relate to Herring Hall and shape the campus space which both buildings bound.

The original Center was constructed in 1958 for a student enrollment half the present size, and the expansion will permit centralization of services into one main building from dispersed offices across the campus. The program comprises activity offices for the student newspaper, radio station, and year book, a large student lounge, multipurpose room, two private dining areas, and recreational areas. The building is reorganized, its entry shifted from north to west, where a corridor spine acts both as a unifying element linking the old and new wings, and as a covered porch for the new "front." This strategy, with its pragmatic connection to off-campus student parking, also points to a potential future expansion of the campus to the west, as suggested in planning studies by Pelli.

While the existing Center provided only a token acknowledgment of the architectural vocabulary of the pre-World War II campus (see critique by David Gebhard, *P/A*, Dec. 1981, pp. 60, 61), Pelli has suggested a treatment more sympathetic to the old Rice in terms of both massing and surface detail, while effectively tying into and extending the present building. While the *parti* of long, parallel blocks running east/west continues the campus pattern (as does Herring Hall), Pelli also introduces a new element in the form of the octagonal multipurpose room. This original element, moreover,



Pelli's Ley Student Center at Rice (Herring Hall at right, top).

extends a secondary feature of the Rice campus: that of subsidiary spatial features developed off the east/west axis. The new garden, defined by elements of the expansion plugged into the corridor spine, creates a more intimate space in relation to the major campus quadrangle.

Currently under construction, the Ley Student Center Expansion will be completed in time for the fall semester, 1986.

Peter C. Papademetriou ■

Improving NEA Competitions

The competition has had its partisans and its detractors, and now, as the "boom" continues unabated, it has its pedagogues. During the month of April, the National Endowment for the Arts sponsored a series of four workshops for sponsors.

After five years of experimentation and 80 grants, the NEA's commitment to competitions is thus reaffirmed. Despite modification of grant program themes and a change in administration (with Adele Chatfield-Taylor replacing competition champion Michael Pittas), the competition continues to represent an important target for NEA funding.

There is new direction, acknowledging that the enthusiasm of proselytizing years led to mistakes. Workshop discussions revealed that selecting a competition type appropriate to a given program and assuring equitable, fair results for both competitors and sponsors are now paramount concerns for the NEA. In practice, this means that ideas competitions, when funded, are expected to have a specific foreseeable influence on public opinion, and that there will no longer be first prizes with no monetary value beyond the commission, or contests for sites that are not already secured.

The workshops and the excellent textbook prepared for them, *The Planning and Administration of Design Competitions* by Jeffrey Ollswang and Lawrence Witz-

ling, reflect a growing tendency to provide help for those who promise to help themselves. Although the NEA pointed with pride to places now on the map because of their competitions, like Roger Williams College, Escondido, Calif., and Newport News, Va., they have recently invested in competitions like the no-risk, invited contest between highly qualified experienced designers of arts centers for the Arizona State Fine Arts Complex. Designers and sponsors can only applaud competitions with good prospects for a realized building; nevertheless, there must remain room for the occasional Cinderella contest. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., perhaps the most important built competition design of the past 25 years, if not the century, started out as a \$5000 grant to a group of volunteers.

Helene Lipstadt ■

The author writes frequently for *P/A* from Boston.

Osborn Named P/A Publisher

Robert Osborn has been named Publisher of *Progressive Architecture* magazine. Prior to joining *P/A*, Osborn served as Vice President and Group Publisher of the Penton publications *Heating/Piping/Air Conditioning* and *Chemical Engineering Catalog*.

Osborn joined HPAC in 1952 in an advertising sales capacity. Since that time, he has held a wide variety of positions with the company, including Marketing Director of Reinhold Publishing Co., an operating division of Penton Publishing.

Osborn is a member of the American Society of Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Engineers and the American Society of Plumbing Engineers. He replaces Peter J. Moore who has moved to the position of Advertising Sales Manager for Penton's Executive Network. ■

Proposals to House the Homeless

The Homeless at Home, at the Storefront for Art & Architecture in New York, March 2-29, was an exhibit that addressed the difficult topic of homelessness, and what architects can do about it. This subject, of much current interest to many architectural professionals, was explored in four days of meetings, seminars, and workshops last fall in Washington, sponsored by the AIA's Housing Committee (*P/A*, Jan. 1986, p. 40).

Fifty artists and architects participated in the New York show, organized by Glen Weiss and Rosemary Cellini, beginning with an open call for entries last April. Surprisingly, none of the artists' pieces captured the emotional resonance of the subject; the work by architects is much more successful, mainly because it seems more practical and more germane.

The show was not visually oriented; ideas prevailed over images, with a few exceptions. Architect Christopher Egan, of Austin, Texas, for example, designed a mobile shelter for two people that was practical yet jaunty and resembled a gypsy caravan. Other pieces fell into the utilitarian but worthwhile category; there's no room for design frills in the budgets of the nonprofit organizations that actually commission housing and shelters for the homeless.

The pieces in the show that seemed the most useful and yet troubling were those stopgap measures that accept the problem as permanent. Proposals that social spaces should be reorganized to accommodate street people, with more public amenities available, and comfortable street furnishings provided are last-ditch efforts; so too the mobile shelters that fit into unused spaces between buildings

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Christopher Egan, Mobile Shelter.