

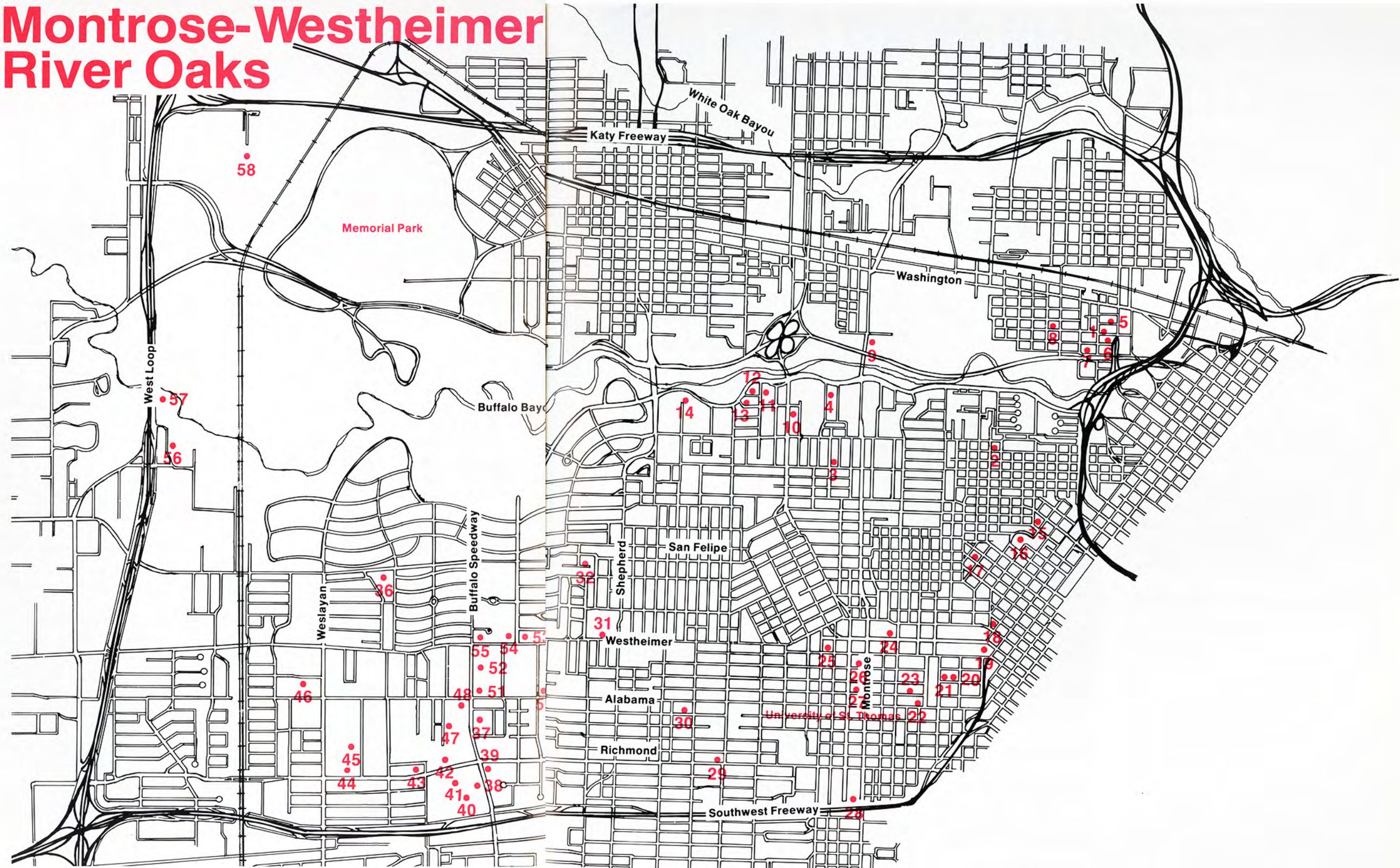
Area Eight

Montrose-Westheimer River Oaks



1/2 1 miles

Scale

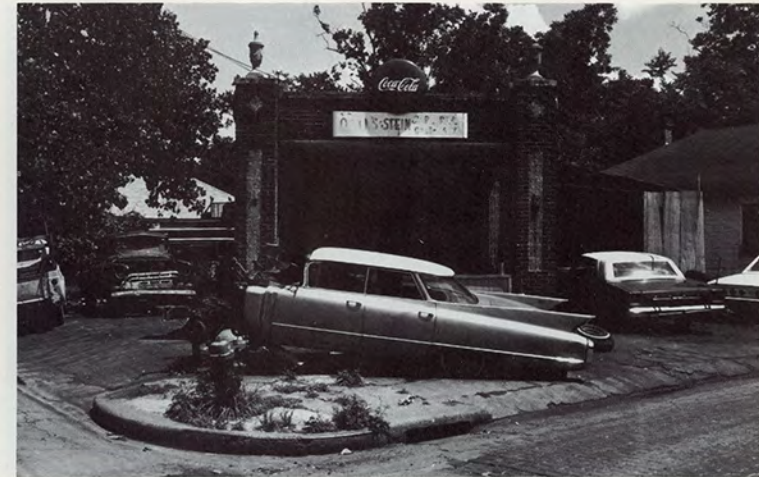


Montrose-Westheimer/ River Oaks

If juxtaposition and discontinuity may be said to characterize evolving cities such as Houston, in no area are they so dramatic and intensified as in this one. While some of its parts date to the very beginnings of the city itself, others represent the scale of the future. Both layers of growth and change are near and interspersed between one another.

The area closest to Downtown is still known as the Fourth Ward, although wards as political entities disappeared in 1906. In the 1830's most of what is now southwest Houston was purchased by Obedience Smith, who subsequently sold land to several other families. Founder's Cemetery in the center of the ward was the first in Houston and contains various unmarked graves resulting from the Hanging Tree which once stood at its entrance. Behind Founder's lies the oldest Jewish graveyard in the city, still maintained by Congregation Beth Israel.

After the Civil War several families gave or sold their truck farms to freed slaves and Freedmanstown sprang up where the public housing of Allen Parkway Village is located. The settlement grew such that by the turn of the century one-third of Houston's population was Black. Centered around Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, the community prospered even through Reconstruction and the KKK. Until the middle of the 1880's, ownership belonged to the people of the ward, but after that much of the land was bought up and subdivided by



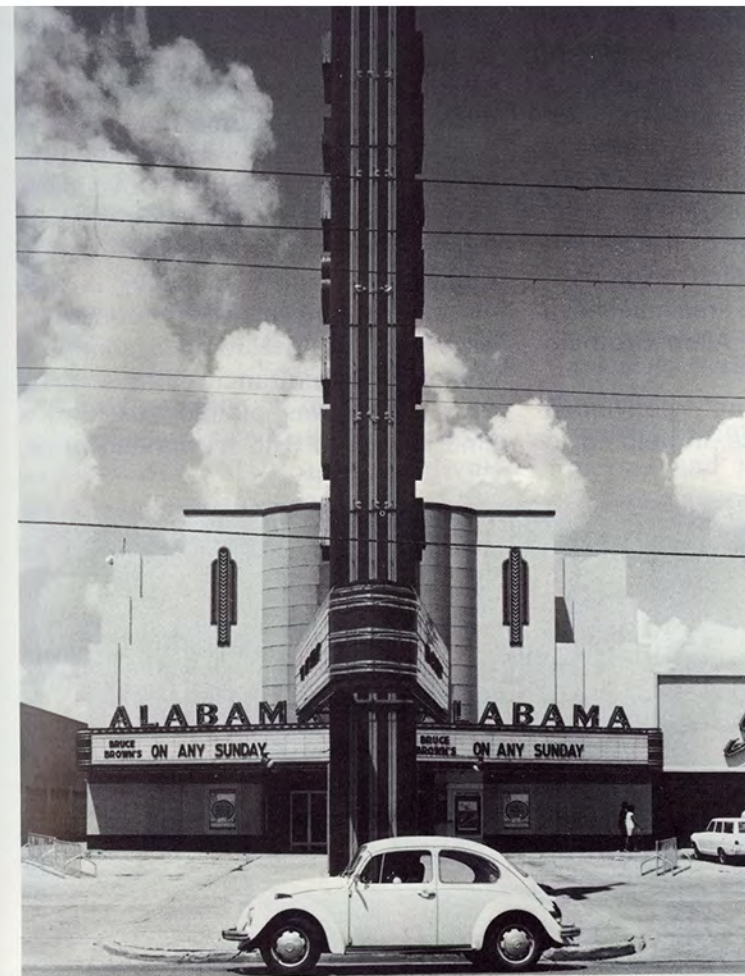
W. M. Baker, mayor of Houston at the time. From that point on conditions worsened, and the ward presently is on the brink of complete disintegration as a social organism.

It is easy to travel on the routes defining Downtown and miss the 75-block neighborhood; a good part of the ward's life was severed by the Gulf Freeway which split off half of the original section, including proximity to the Antioch Baptist Church, now a part of Downtown. The church had been built when the congregation moved from "Baptist Hill" where the

Music Hall is now located, to the site on Robin Street. Among the flimsy buildings of the ward the house built by the first pastor of Antioch still stands in good condition at 1204 Wilson off Gray. Jack Yates was a dynamic force, even sending children from the ward to school with his own resources; Jack Yates High School in the Riverside area stands in his honor.

In the 1920's the ward functioned in a manner like New York's Harlem. The obvious center of the Black community, there were many restaurants,

jazz spots and nightclubs frequented by whites as well. In 1917 the ward saw part of Houston's worst race riot, and in 1929 a survey made by the National Urban League found that city services were not being extended to Blacks and that the pattern of segregation in schools was preventing its residents from moving out to better jobs and housing. In the same year the official report of the City Planning Commission asked for strict segregation by zoning Blacks to the Second, Fourth and Fifth Wards; while this proposal did not pass, it in effect



operated through housing restrictions.

The Ward is now in a limbo as a result of economic forces. With the coming of integration, many residents began to move toward Texas Southern University, then to Studewood, South Park, Riverside Terrace, Kashmere Gardens and Acres Homes. Many of its stores along West Dallas, the Ward's main street, are closed or run-down and land prices are rising to three dollars a square foot up to six dollars along West Gray. Its residents are caught in speculation and the absentee property owners are

having buildings condemned rather than initiating improvements, waiting for the time when the land can be sold for big building.

South of the Fourth Ward is an equally evolving area known as Montrose, although it consists largely of several independent suburban developments dating from the same time. In 1902 W. W. Baldwin organized the South End Land Company to develop the Westmoreland Addition, which along with still-fashionable Courtlandt Place came to be called the South End. In 1910, J. W. Link

began the larger Montrose Addition, characterized by its broad Boulevard once lined with palm trees. The grand neighborhood which was once Houston's finest may still be seen, but it contains few of the fine homes developed during this period and followed in the 1920's by the Fairview Addition and Glendower Court. Montrose is in transition because of similar forces as are at work on the Fourth Ward.

Many older residents remain in Montrose, but the grain of the old neighborhood is being changed

through the addition of commercial development on certain streets while socially the area has absorbed an influx of hippies, students, young families, Blacks, Mexican-Americans, gypsies, homosexuals and even Cuban exiles. All groups coexist and the only social reality is one of uncertainty because land values are rising and the neighborhood does not belong to any one group. At present the area ranges from Westmoreland and Courtlandt Place, to the small Catholic University of St. Thomas whose administration is housed in J. W. Link's

old home on Montrose, to the established residential areas north of Richmond, to the freak community east of Montrose and north of Westheimer.

This mix of people and uses provides a genuine bohemian atmosphere for the city of Houston. Completion of the Southwest Freeway off-ramp at Brazos brought easier access into the Montrose area, such that this section of Westheimer is enjoying a burgeoning of antique shops and small, colorful restaurants converted from the larger old homes lining the street. Ultimately, the development of the

area may become self-defeating, and the more attractive it becomes the more feasible further development becomes. As this happens, property values rise further and the crazy mix of people which made it what it is will have to leave.

By the 1920's other parts of the area were being developed. The northwest quadrant had been assigned as Camp Logan when the United States entered the First World War in 1917 and while the camp was being constructed it was guarded by a Black unit from Illinois. One day a dice game was

raided in the Fourth Ward and two soldiers were beaten and arrested. One soldier returned to camp to tell his story and a mutiny was initiated as the final reaction to resentment the northern troops felt in Houston. The troops raided the ammunition dump and marched down Washington Avenue towards the city. Total casualties reached seventeen persons before the arrival of a Coast Guard detachment from Galveston and infantry from San Antonio. As a result of the incident, the Army was asked to leave, and in 1923 a movement was begun by citi-

zens to create a small park as a memorial to the veterans of World War I. In the following year the Hogg brothers suggested that a larger park be established and helped work out long-term purchasing. Today Memorial Park is 1503 acres and one of the ten largest parks within city limits in the country. A fair portion of it south of Memorial Drive still retains the character of what much of the area must have looked like when the Allen Brothers first arrived in Texas.

One cannot be entirely convinced that the Hogg Brothers, in helping to

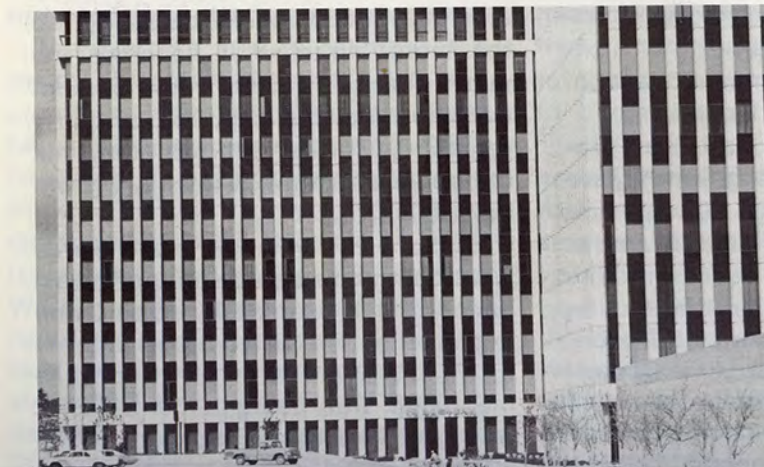
establish Memorial Park, were not thinking about the future of their unique suburban development in River Oaks to the south. At the same time they had optioned some 1200 acres to plan an exclusive residential community a short drive from Downtown. Its main road is River Oaks Boulevard, terminating on axis with the Country Club, the second to occupy the site. All aspects of this fine community were planned, including a shopping center at the entrance gates at West Gray which was planned to form a kind of piazza with its curving arms.

Complete with its own police force and society newspaper, River Oaks marks the ultimate life-style of the area.

The urban forces that are at work may best be seen through an examination of the traffic arteries which run through the area. Memorial Drive properly belongs to the adjacent Memorial section of the city and really symbolically connects it to Downtown through a finely landscaped part of Buffalo Bayou which it shares with Allen Parkway on the south side. Allen Parkway remains a boulevard as it arcs through River Oaks and then becomes one of Houston's lively commercial strips. Paralleling Kirby running north-south is Shepherd, another neon experience and a route running through other parts of the city. Running east-west, Gray emerges from the edge of Downtown through the Fourth Ward and terminates in the River Oaks Shopping Center at the gates to Inwood Drive. West Alabama runs as far as the West Loop and consequently consists of marginal com-

mercial and franchises serving the immediate area; many of these are crudely-converted old houses and a jolting juxtaposition is provided by the hamburger stand on Alabama which lies at the end of the University of St. Thomas' mall. A major east-west street is Richmond on which is developing a new urban mode where it intersects Buffalo Speedway. Here is a cluster of office buildings from the early 1960's, in various demonstrations of pavillion architecture, dwarfed now by the evolving Greenway Plaza. Greenway fronts onto the Southwest Freeway and is the most extensive of office developments feeding off that artery. In a sense it represents an extension of downtown and threatens the residential character of the area, for its eventual extension covers the equivalent of 95 city blocks in a 127-acre, \$450,000,000 development. The Southwest Freeway itself has become one of the most congested arteries in Houston in recent years, and its hourly traffic approaches the never-ending

movement of Los Angeles' freeways. Yet the best symbol for the changes in this area is Westheimer Road. More than any major street in Houston, this arterial shows a chronicle of Houston's growth and change as a series of rings along its length. Beginning with the old houses of Montrose on the east, it chronicles the scale and spatial relationships between buildings which accompanied developments in subsequent decades. Infill of even more contemporary development is also occurring along its length and the changing character of the area is thereby dramatized in a vivid way.



River Oaks

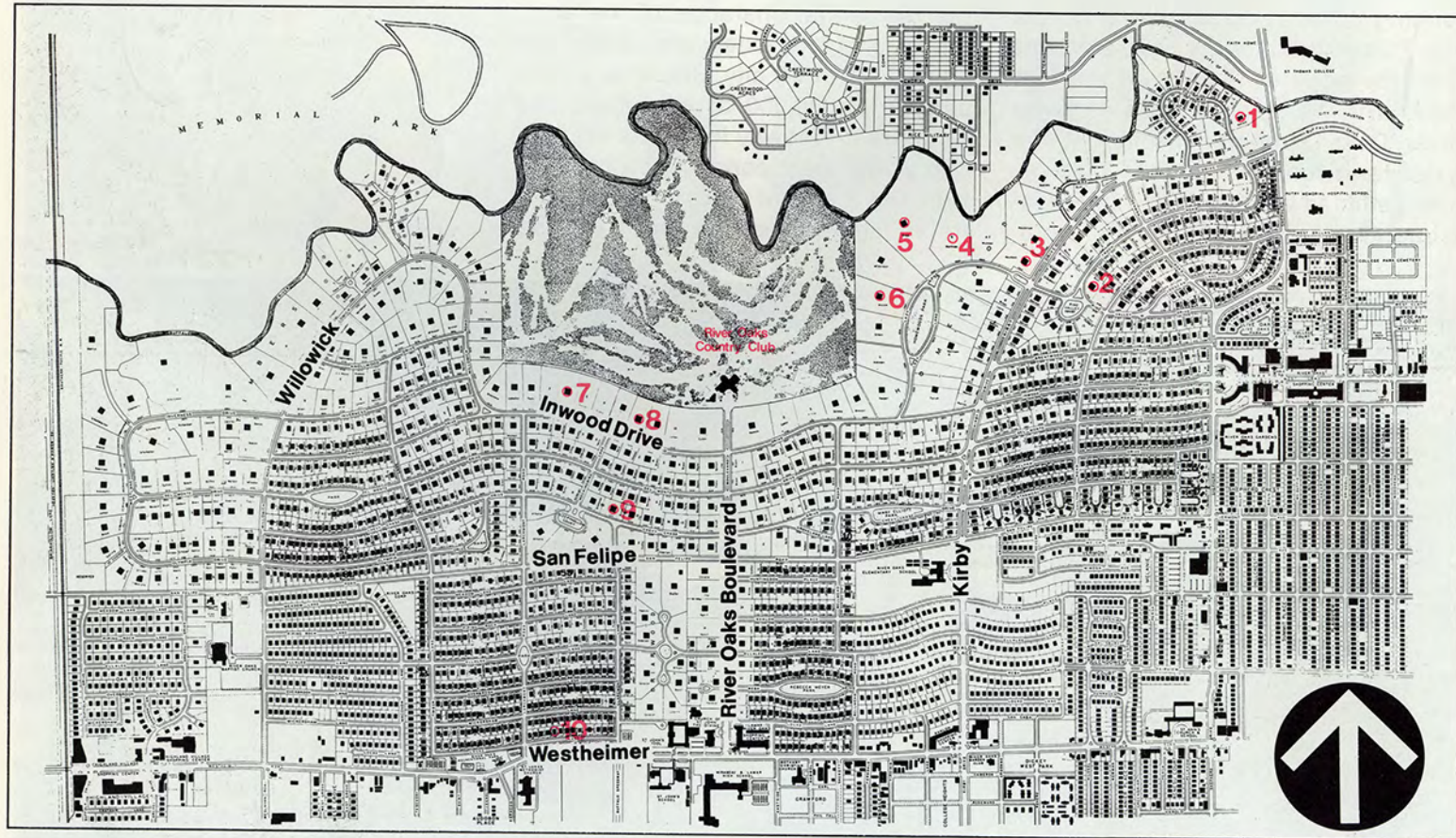
Perhaps nothing can describe the elan of Houston's most exclusive residential subdivision better than the words of a limited edition book issued on the occasion of its fifth anniversary in 1928: "...if you had sensed the completeness with which architecture and landscape have been harmonized, had caught the color from flowered esplanade or sunflecked roof, had paused to quietly survey a stretch of marching green acres with the eye of one who appreciates peace and permanence in his place of abode, then you would have realized to some extent the far-flung design of River Oaks."

The development maintained strict architec-

tural control in offering a complete service to the potential property owner, and at the same time exercised nearly every possible option on site planning of detached housing. A drive through River Oaks illustrates the broad range of possibilities in suburban patterns, from the expansive estate to the denser clusters of houses arranged around courtyards off the street.

Property is still being bought and sold in River Oaks and the subsequent development has resulted in a near-catalogue selection of architectural styles, a representative collection of which is shown on the following page. A testi-

mony to the viability of the development is surely demonstrated as ever so often an \$80,000 house will be torn down to make room for a new one costing \$200,000.



1
Karl Kamrath House
8 Tiel Way
1951/MacKie and Kamrath, arch.



2
Mrs. Harmon Whittington House
2416 Pine Valley Drive
1935/John F. Staub, arch.



3
Hugo V. Neuhaus, Jr. House
2910 Lazy Lane - Homewoods
1951/Cowell and Neuhaus, arch.



4
John F. Maher House
2930 Lazy Lane - Homewoods
1964/Howard Barnstone & Partner, arch.



5
"Bayou Bend"
2940 Lazy Lane - Homewoods
1928/John F. Staub, B. P. Briscoe, assoc. arch.

6
J. Robert Neal House
2960 Lazy Lane - Homewoods
1930/John F. Staub, arch.



7
Cleveland Sewall House
3452 Inwood Drive - Country Club Estates
1925/Cram and Ferguson (Boston), arch.
William Ward Watkin, assoc. arch.



8
Will L. Clayton Summer House
3376 Inwood Drive - Country Club Estates
1924/Briscoe & Dixon, arch.



9
David Picton House
3374 Chevy Chase Drive - Country Club Estates
1926/John F. Staub, arch.



10
William Fleming House
2064 Timber Lane
1971/Charles Tapley and Assoc., arch.



University of St. Thomas

Its very location in the heart of the Montrose area characterizes an essential quality of the University of St. Thomas as one of accommodation. This operates not only on the level of it as an institution, but also with regard to the evolution of the campus and the manner in which it relates to its neighborhood.

In 1916 J. W. Link sold his Montrose mansion to oilman T. P. Lee, in whose family it was retained until mid-1946 when it was sold to Basilian Fathers of Toronto as the first building to be part of the new university founded by the Bishop of Galveston, the Most Reverend Christopher Byrne. Adult education classes were opened in the old mansion the same year and in 1947 the first group of undergraduates entered the University with eight faculty. By 1954 St. Thomas was fully accredited and it now offers a liberal education to over 1,000 students. While a very small school, particularly among universities of

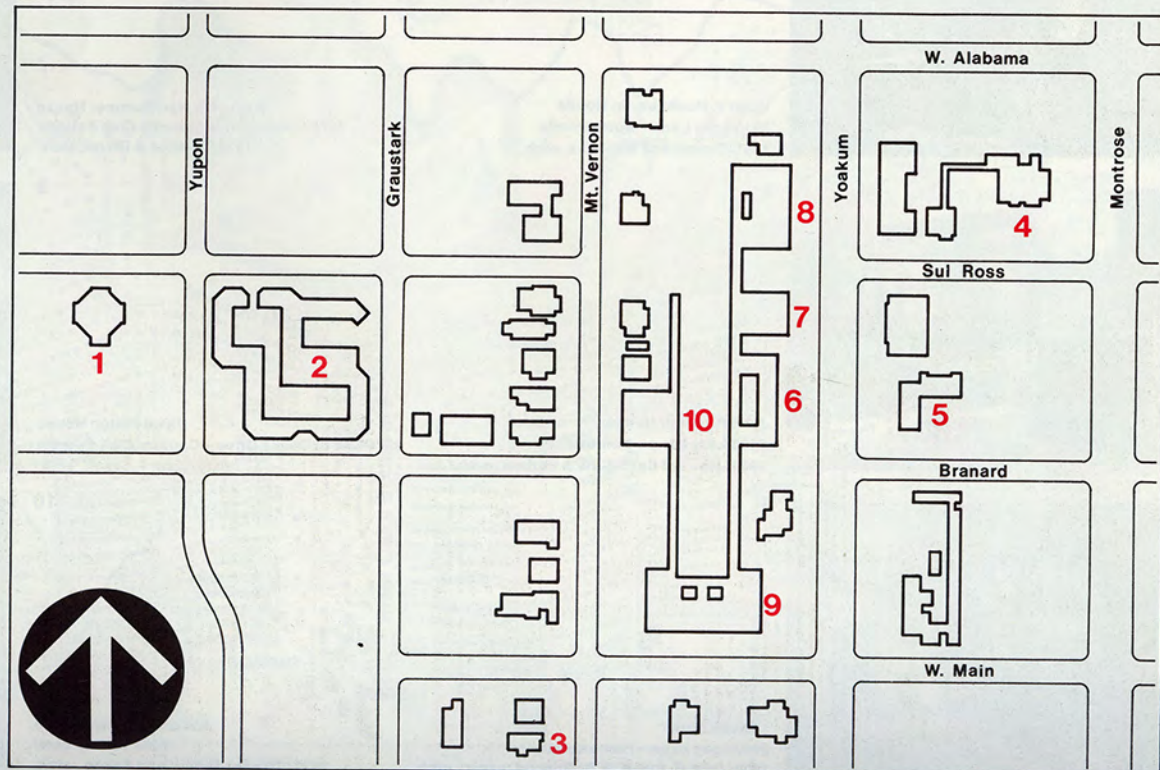
the Southwest, St. Thomas nonetheless has achieved its own distinction in certain areas and has become a serious working partner with the three senior universities in Houston. Its ultimate size is predicted as 2,000 students, thus allowing the University to concentrate on its strengths. These include the uncommon Institute for Storm Research where students study meteorology and where high school dropouts are reintroduced to schooling and trained for a career.

Initial campus building consisted of the conversion of several old Montrose houses and the construction of several new buildings in 1947. The campus generally was strung along Yoakum Boulevard and evolved as a series of city blocks until Sul Ross Street was closed recently, allowing for the main campus to develop and achieve separate identity. In the mid-1950's Philip Johnson was retained to develop his master plan for the campus and design several buildings.

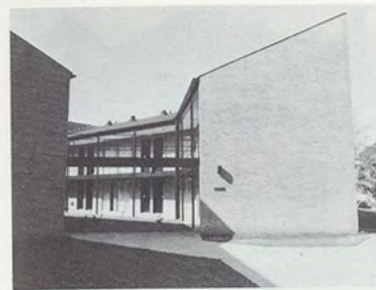
Modeled along the lines of Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia, his plan also described a central mall. In the intervening years not all of these intentions were realized, certainly not in the pure way it was originally proposed. However, Johnson's two-level arcade will eventually achieve a unified appearance as it dominates the mall. In a sympathetic manner in tune with the grain of its neighborhood St. Thomas has produced an accommodation through a continuing use of old houses, as in the student chapel tacked onto the old Howard Hughes home on Yoakum, or more recently in the near-residential scale of new buildings such as the student dorm and Rothko Chapel.

Campus Key

1. Institute of Religion/Rothko Chapel
2. Student Dormitory
3. Institute for Storm Research
4. T. P. Lee House/Administration
5. Student Chapel
6. Strake Hall
7. Jones Hall and Theatre
8. Welder Hall Cafeteria
9. Doherty Library
10. Anderson Hall



1
Rothko Chapel
1964-70/Barnstone and Aubry, arch.



2
Dormitory
1970/Barnstone and Aubry, arch.



3
Institute for Storm Research
1969/Barnstone and Aubry, arch.



4
T. P. Lee House
1910/Sanguinet, Staats & Barnes, arch.



5
Student Chapel
1965/Glen Heim, designer



6
Strake Hall
1957-59/Philip Johnson and Assoc. (New York), arch.
Bolton and Barnstone, assoc. arch.





1

St. Joseph's Church
1505 Kane St.
1900



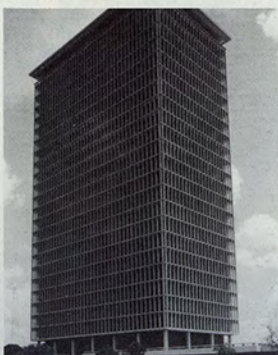
2

Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church
1402 West Saulnier St.
1929/J. J. Hawkins, arch.



3

Clarke & Courts Printing Co.
1210 West Clay Ave.
1936/Joseph Finger, arch.
The Moderne at its height.



4

American General Life Insurance Co.
2727 Allen Parkway
1965/Lloyd, Morgan & Jones, arch.



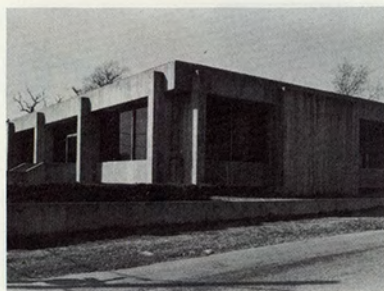
5

Knapp Chevrolet Co.
815 Houston Ave.
1940/Newell Waters, arch.



6

Residence
603 Houston Ave.
circa 1890



7

Houston Police Federal Credit Union
1600 West Capitol Ave.
1967/Kenneth Bentsen Assoc., arch.



8

Residence
1910 Kane St.
circa 1890



9

Blue Ribbon Rice Mills
3000 Butler St.
1925



10

Carnation Co.
701 Waugh Dr.
1947/Finger & Rustay, arch.



11

Star Engraving Co.
3201 Allen Parkway
1930/Alfred C. Finn, arch.



12

Gulf Publishing Co.
3301 Allen Parkway
1928/Hedrick & Gottlieb, arch.



13

The Rein Co.
3401 Allen Parkway
1928/Howell & Thomas (Cleveland), arch.
All three buildings are in a unifying style embracing the "craft" district of the 1920's.



14

Harris County Center for Retarded Children
3550 Allen Parkway
1967/Barnstone & Aubry, arch.



15

Old Mexico Restaurant
210 West Gray Ave.
1933/William Knorbin, owner & designer



16

"The Oaks"
2310 Baldwin St.
1910/Sanguinet & Staats
Only the stables remain from this handsome estate.



17

De Pelchin Faith Home
2710 Albany St.
1913
A graceful Italianate villa that served Houston's first child-care center.



18

Bailey Swenson House/Office
3106 Brazos St.
1956/Swenson & Linnstaedter, arch.
The four-story apartment replaced the garage.



19

James G. L. Autry, Sr. House
5 Courtlandt Place
1913/Sanguinet & Staats, arch.



20

Frank B. Weeks House
215 Westmoreland Ave. —
Westmoreland Place
1905



21

J. P. Waldo House
201 Westmoreland Ave. —
Westmoreland Place
1896

Built in downtown Houston, it was moved to the then-fashionable suburb of Westmoreland Place at the turn of the century.



22

Ewart H. Lightfoot House
3702 Audubon St. — Montrose Place
1921



23

Kipling Village Apartments
615 Kipling St.
1964/Clovis Heimsath Assoc., arch.



24

John Hamman House
802 Lovett Blvd.
1925



25

Villa Maria Maternity House
1111 Lovett Blvd.
1971/Clovis Heimsath Associates, arch.



26

W. W. Fondren, Sr. House
3410 Montrose Blvd. — Montrose Place
1923/Alfred C. Finn, arch.

One of the last great houses remaining on what was once Houston's most elegant thoroughfare.



27

Parc IV & Parc V
3600/3614 Montrose Blvd. —
Montrose Place
1963-1966/Jenkins & Hoff, arch.



28

Governor Ross S. Sterling House
4410 Rossmayne Blvd. — Rossmayne
1915/Alfred C. Finn, arch.

A mixture of Italianate and Mission components for one of Texas' few outstanding governors.



29

John Zemanek House
1723 Colquitt St. — Lancaster Place
1968/John Zemanek, arch.
Modest materials made elegant in a carefully articulated design.



30

**St. Stephen's Church,
Episcopal & School**
1805 West Alabama Ave.
1941/Hiram A. Salisbury, arch.
1962/school addition, Neuhaus & Taylor, arch.



31

St. Anne's Church & School
2120-2140 Westheimer Rd.
1930/school, Maurice J. Sullivan, arch.
1940/church, Maurice J. Sullivan, arch.



32

**George Pierce-Abel B. Pierce
Professional Building**
2217 Welch St.
1964/George Pierce-Abel B. Pierce



33

Holland Mortgage & Investment Co.
2701 Kirby Dr.
1961/Neuhaus & Taylor, arch.



34

Penguin Arms Apartments
2902 Revere St.
1950/Arthur Moss, designer
An ebullient example of "Modern"
architecture, circa 1950.



35

River Oaks Bank & Trust Co.
2001 Kirby Dr.
1970/Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson, arch.



36

Inwood Manor
3711 San Felipe Rd.
1966/Neuhaus & Taylor, arch.



37

Great Southern Life Insurance Co. Building
3121 Buffalo Speedway
1965/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
(New York)
Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson,
associated arch.

Unusual fenestration permits blind East-West walls to be used as return-air ducts.



38

Buffalo Tower
3700 Buffalo Speedway — Greenway Plaza
1971/Denny & Ray, arch.



39

Texas Instruments Co.
3609 Buffalo Speedway
1957/O'Neil Ford (San Antonio)
Richard S. Colley (Corpus Christi),
assoc. arch.
The first of a series of famous T.I. plants by
the architects.



40

Kellogg Building
3800 Greenway Plaza Dr. — Greenway Plaza
1971/Lloyd, Morgan & Jones, arch.



41

Union Carbide Building
3600 Greenway Plaza Dr. — Greenway Plaza
1970/Lloyd, Morgan & Jones, arch.



42

3616 Richmond Building
3616 Richmond Ave.
1966/Caudill Rowlett Scott



43

Central Presbyterian Church
3788 Richmond Ave.
1962/Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson, arch.



44

**Houston Independent School District
Administration Building**
3830 Richmond Ave.
1969/Neuhaus & Taylor, arch.



45

Houston Teachers' Credit Union
3310 Cummins Lane
1971/McKittrick, Drennan,
Richardson & Wallace, arch.



46

Essex-Houck Office Building
3917 Essex Lane
1962/Burdette Keeland & Assoc., arch.



47

Robert W. Maurice House & Office
3222 Mercer St.
1959/Robert W. Maurice, arch.



48

Humble Car Care Center
3102 Buffalo Speedway
1970/Kendrick/Cate Assoc., arch.
Houston's "prestige" service station.



49

2990 Richmond Building
2990 Richmond Ave.
1968/Neuhaus & Taylor, arch.



50

Pontiac Motors Division Building
3127 Richmond Ave.
1961/Neuhaus & Taylor, arch.



51

Jefferson Chemical Co. Building
3336 Richmond Ave.
1965/Neuhaus & Taylor, arch.



52

Houston Contracting Co.
2807 Buffalo Speedway
1956/MacKie & Kamrath, arch.



53

River Oaks/Lamar Shopping Center
Westheimer Rd. @ River Oaks Blvd.
1948/William G. Farrington Co.
A strip commercial development done with
care.



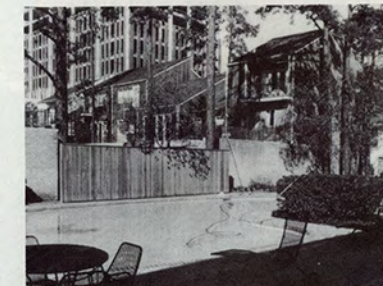
54

St. John the Divine Church, Episcopal
2450 River Oaks Blvd.
1940/chapel, Hiram A. Salisbury,
MacKie & Kamrath, associated arch.
1953/church, MacKie & Kamrath,
Hiram A. Salisbury, associated arch.



55

St. John's School
2401 Claremont Lane
1948/North Campus, Hiram A. Salisbury,
arch.
1953/South Campus, MacKie & Kamrath,
arch.
1971/additions to both campuses,
Neuhaus Assoc., arch.



56

Post Oak Park Apartments
1317 Post Oak Park — Post Oak Park
1966/Charles Tapley & Assoc., arch.



57

Caudill Rowlett Scott Professional Building
1111 West Loop South — Post Oak Park
1970/Caudill Rowlett Scott, arch.



58

Bayou Club
8550 Memorial Dr.
1940/John F. Staub, arch.
1967/additions, Neuhaus/Wingfield
Associates, arch.