

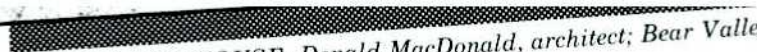
Coming of Age in Architecture

Sooner Influence Emerges as Uniquely American

By DONALD MacDONALD

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SNOW FLAKE HOUSE: Donald MacDonald, architect; Bear Valley, California.

In this article, we are trying, in a rough but sensitive way, to articulate what appears to be a new architectural school, probably the only indigenous one in the United States. One reason why no one has verbally described this school in any detail is that it hasn't been thought of as a totality with relation to all of the projects of all of its architects. Yet, as

soon as two of these architects are published in the same place, one begins to notice certain similarities. To date, no one that we know of has articulated these similarities, and, in part, it is the intention of this article to do so.

Another reason the school appears to be new is that many of the architects have not produced a great

many projects in a short period of time; rather, they have produced projects incorporating both intensive and extensive design studies. In the design process, the articulation of the main considerations comes first; then refinement begins; the more refinement, generally speaking, the better the building.

Despite our hurried society filled

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GREENE HOUSE: Herb Greene, architect; Norman, Oklahoma.

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HENDERSON HOUSE: Arn Henderson, architect; Norman, Oklahoma.

with many deadlines, many of these architects have chosen not to get wrapped up in the rush and have put a considerable amount of time into their building designs; therefore, these buildings have a great deal of depth at every level. Partially because of their intensity and depth, these architects now are beginning to reach their maturity at a relatively youthful age for architecture (the youngest of the group represented here are in their late thirties, the oldest in their mid-fifties).

They have begun to receive more

exposure through publication of their work and have become, consequently, interesting *as* a group. We believe their work as a group expresses a truly *American* ethic which is being formulated without the usual influence of European or Asian architectural forms and methodologies common on the East and West coasts of the United States, an ethic which will come to its maturity within the next ten years.

The true Americanness of this ethic shows up in the democratic willingness of the individual architects to let

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*AUTUMN RESIDENCE: Violeta
Autumn, architect; Sausalito, CA.*

**"Their work as a group
expresses a truly
American ethic."**

the indigenous terrain and materials guide their designs, and their willingness to let the spaces that result, labyrinthine though they be, define the project rather than more rigid Cartesian notions. The ideas of labyrinthine and Cartesian space appear and reappear in the essays of these architects, as does their reliance on intuitive knowledge. We think these ideas are actualized in the works represented here, as is the design process most of these architects learned from Bruce Goff and Herb Greene during their years at the University of Oklahoma.

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**The indigenous
terrain and materials
guide their designs . . .
the spaces that result
define the project.**

*OYAMA HOUSEBOAT: Robert K
Overstreet, architect; Sausalito, CA.*

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*SOUVERAIN WINERY: John Davis,
architect; Mendocino, California.*

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Broader professional goals dominate thinking in Goff's old school

The School of Architecture which Bruce Goff found in the OU College of Engineering when he joined the faculty in 1947 was in the traditional mode of schools throughout the United States, seeking national recognition by winning design awards for student work from the New York juries of the Beaux Arts Institute of Design. An abrupt change in design philosophy characterized the Goff era, which drew heavily on the American tradition of romantic individualism, setting as its goal the development of imagination and creativity within a professional curriculum.

Although design has remained the primary teaching goal in OU architecture, a broader view of professionalism began to take over in the 1960s, leading to the establishment in 1970 of a separate College of Environmental Design with the School of Architecture as its dominant element. A fully developed college has been slow to materialize but at last seems to be within the grasp of its academic planners.

The bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture are well established, as is the increasingly popular four-year bachelor of environmental design. This non-professional pro-

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN AT OU

gram can be used as a terminal degree for those who do not intend to become licensed architects or as preparation for the two-year master of architecture curriculum. Two new degrees, a bachelor's and a master's in construction science, are being offered, and a new program in interior architecture was initiated last fall. A proposed master's degree in landscape architecture is awaiting final approval.

Total enrollment for the college, under the guidance of 32 faculty members, was 650 for the fall semester, 255 of them in architecture. A concentrated effort to relieve the college's chronic underfunding has more than doubled its budget in the past five years, but even more significant is the increase in dollars per full-time student, an increase of 164 percent.

Some time in the next few months, the current national search will have been completed, and a new dean will arrive in Norman to head up the College of Environmental Design. That new dean will find an academic program which Bruce Goff scarcely would recognize, but the challenge and opportunity he or she will face will be very similar. 