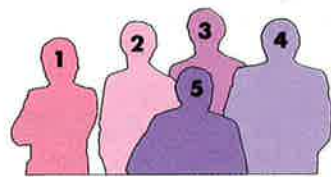


POWERNAUTS

Houston architects consolidate their power base as the sunbelt's capital regroups to design The Next Economy.



Above: Designers based in Houston whose work is shown in this issue. 1. Hossein Oskouie, Urban Architecture, Inc. 2. Richard Keating, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. 3. Barry Moore, Barry Moore Architects. 4. Frank Douglas, 3D/International. 5. Arthur Jones, Lloyd Jones Fillpot Associates. Not shown here: Taft Architects.

Happily, it now appears that, to paraphrase the perennially quotable Mark Twain, rumors of the death of Houston have been greatly exaggerated. It is true that flamboyant overbuilding in the golden years before 1983 results in an office vacancy rate that is the nation's highest. The Wall Street Journal recently equated the available square footage to 19 Empire State Buildings.

Yet, reports from Houston confirm that, despite adverse times, its pulse is still strong, and it still leads the nation in a combined science, engineering and technology environment. The spirit of enterprise, optimism and high style that built the handsomest downtown in the United States, now confronts with confidence the changed circum-

stances embodied in what author Paul Hawken calls "The Next Economy." Houston, indeed, may be the first of the great American cities to experience the challenge of the shift from the "mass" economy to the evolving "informative" economy. Hawken defines information in this sense as "the quality and intelligence that it takes to make a product more useful and functional, lighter, stronger, and less energy consumptive."

Although the overall vacancy rate in Houston is enormous, a reverse trend is noted in the case of quality buildings in prestigious locations. Real estate experts observe that large corporations now take advantage of long lease availability in important "image" buildings to consolidate operations formerly dispersed in

less desirable areas. Opportunities for designers and space planners are actually on the increase, offering the possibility of performing creative services within the parameters of less extravagant budgets than heretofore, but maintaining quality levels.

Significant architecture continues to bloom. The unveiling of the Houston Design Center by The Cambridge Seven is a vote of confidence in the economic muscle of the city as well as an affirmation of quality building. Nearing completion, Renzo Piano's wood clad Miesian structure for The Menil Collection and John Burgee and Philip Johnson's Ledoux inspired School of Architecture for the University of Houston bring further distinction to a city which is truly "informative."

I N T E R I O R S

FOR THE CONTRACT
DESIGN INDUSTRY

MARCH 1985

COVER STORY:
CAMBRIDGE SEVEN'S
CHARLES REDMON
GIVES HOUSTON A
NEW DESIGN CENTER

THE NEXT
GENERATION OF
OFFICE SYSTEMS

