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# Texas Architect

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2004

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**PLUS**

Cy-Fair College Campus

UT-EI Paso Student Housing

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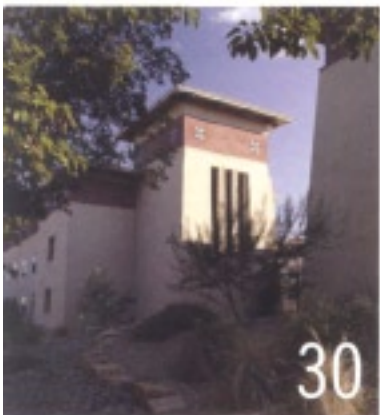
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Trustee Hall at St. Edward's University, Austin, by Andersson-Wise Architects; photo by Timothy Hursley.

Cast-in-place concrete conveys a timeless quality while directly referring to the adjacent, 100-year-old Main Building. (opposite page) Nicholas Clayton's Main Building, shown at left, and his Holy Cross Hall, in center, preside over the campus and comprise a formidable context for new campus structures. Trustee Hall is on the right.





# BALANCING ACT

by ELIZABETH DANZE, AIA

ST. EDWARD'S University in Austin last year marked the centennial anniversaries of two campus landmarks, both designed by Nicholas Clayton, the prolific architect best known in Texas for the Bishop's Palace in Galveston. Even after 100 years, those two grand structures – Main Building and Holy Cross Hall – still dominate the St. Edward's campus, a Catholic school with about 4,500 students. Other campus buildings, most constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, are less than distinguished when compared to Clayton's edifices.

Trustee Hall is the first building completed at St. Edward's since the 2001 implementation of a new campus master plan. Designed by Andersson-Wise of Austin, Trustee Hall is all the more

significant because it initiates a building campaign expected to accommodate an eventual doubling of the school's current enrollment. Future improvements include other academic facilities, dormitories, a chapel, a theater, and athletic fields. Therefore, the architectural character of the campus is at a critical crossroads, with each new building and outdoor space becoming a crucial element in helping to create a comprehensive campus experience as unique and captivating as found at any American university.

According to the master plan, Trustee Hall eventually will become part of a quadrangle bounded on the east by Clayton's Holy Cross Hall and neighboring his Main Building. That prox-

**PROJECT** Trustee Hall at St. Edward's University, Austin

**CLIENTS** St. Edward's University

**ARCHITECT** Andersson-Wise Architects

**CONTRACTOR** VRW Construction Company

**CONSULTANTS** Architectural Engineers Collaborative (structural); Baker-Aicklen & Associates (civil); Aguirre Corporation (MEP); Richardson Verdoorn (landscape); Rider Hunt Levett & Bailey (specifications); JEAcoustics (acoustics)

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Timothy Hursley

**RESOURCES** CONCRETE MATERIALS: Capitol Aggregates; CONCRETE FORMWORK: Peri Formwork System; MASONRY UNITS: Ladrilleras El Fuerte; LAMINATES: Wilsonart; SHINGLES: Berridge; MEMBRANE ROOFING: Siplast; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: Steelcraft; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: Kawneer; WOOD AND PLASTIC DOORS AND FRAMES: Mohawk Door; GYPSUM FABRICATIONS: USG; PAINTS: Sherwin-Williams; HIGH-PERFORMANCE COATINGS: Sherwin-Williams



(above) The architects created numerous intimate settings both inside and outside the building. (opposite page) Seen from the north, the entry portal to a future quadrangle is flanked with elements punctuated by varied fenestration.

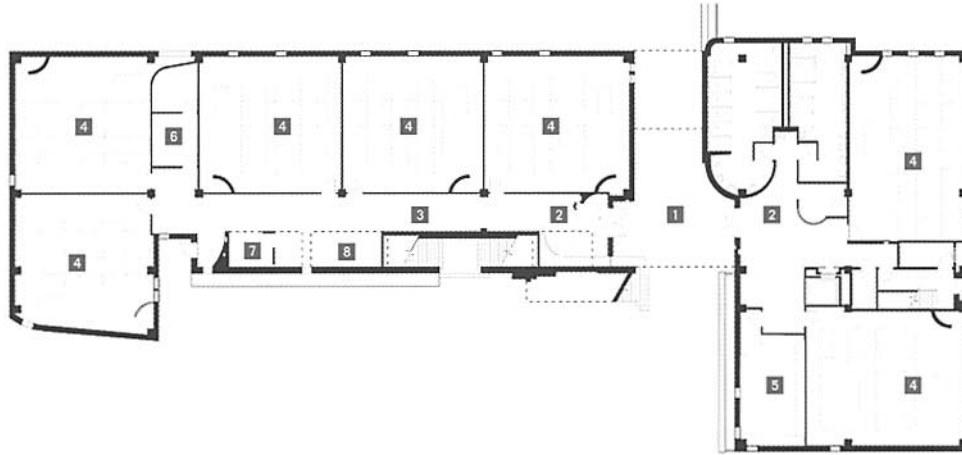
imity posed a challenge for Andersson-Wise: how to sensitively translate Clayton's idiom while simultaneously expressing a modern sense of construction? The Clayton buildings each have a definitive integrity and stand alone like eminently iconic monuments, which further challenged the architects with designing a new building that would not compete with the existing landmarks yet would project an authenticity all its own.

Ideally, Trustee Hall would function both as foreground and background, seemingly contradictory demands intended to effect a dynamic yet quiet and stately building. As foreground it needed to express qualities exceptional for our time while as background knitting itself into the small but powerful existing campus fabric. In this context, the resultant design for Trustee Hall straddles a fine line. While being perhaps a

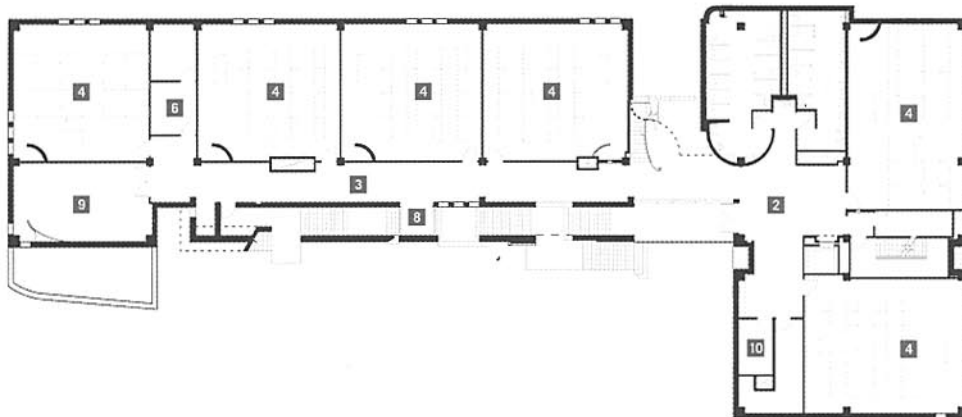
bit overly referential and eclectic, the skillfulness of the design ultimately wins out.

The material palette is carefully balanced between brick, which ties gracefully into the vernacular of the two Clayton buildings; red metal roof tiles, which satisfies the master plan requirement for red roofs; and concrete, which boldly introduces a new material. The cast-in-place concrete is massed and manipulated to assert its essential ancient, permanent properties. The arch, however, split in a way that mimics Clayton's structures, reduces the material to a decorative motif, both mannerist and referential. But the idea of this monolithic exterior wall of circulation and gathering spaces of balconies, stairs, and deep porch is beautiful in the way it opens the building to public view. This eclectic approach allows for multiple opportunities to create small-scale moments, such as a

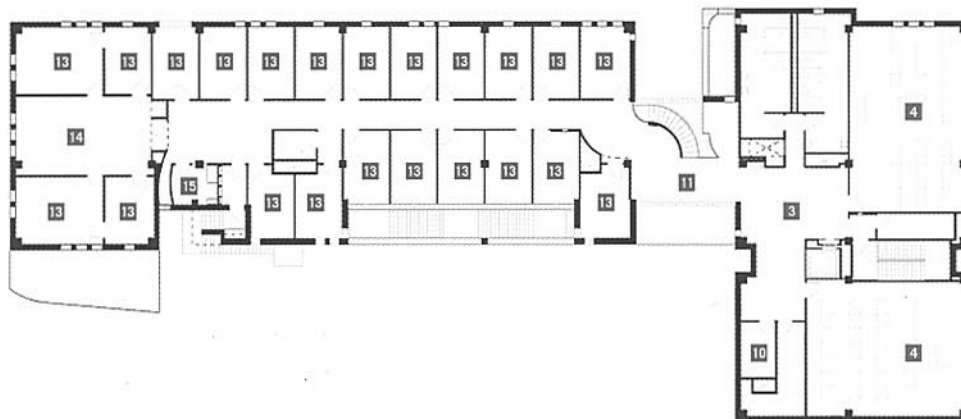




FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

FLOOR PLAN

- 1 LOGGIA
- 2 ENTRY
- 3 CORRIDOR
- 4 CLASSROOM
- 5 COMPUTER LAB
- 6 STORAGE
- 7 COPIER ALCOVE
- 8 SEATING ALCOVE
- 9 WORK ROOM
- 10 DATA CLOSET
- 11 LOBBY
- 12 RECEPTION
- 13 OFFICE
- 14 SECRETARIES
- 15 KITCHENETTE



cast-concrete bench for solitary reflection or an impromptu chat among classmates.

The building's entry is underplayed, and almost unclear. There is no lobby to speak of; instead the two parts of the building frame a passage. As future buildings are erected, this strategy will make more sense as the passage itself will delineate entry into a quadrangle, rather than into the particular building. Currently, the ambiguity of what is inside and out – and how those spaces might be occupied – works as one of the building's strengths.

Arthur Andersson's late partner Charles Moore freed a generation of architects from rigid adherence to modernist design principles—freeing them to the point where one might criticize their work for lacking a similar kind of rigor. Vestiges of this post-modern sensibility are apparent in Trustee Hall's massing, fenestration, and interior circulation. Roofs are concave and convex, hipped and truncated

pyramidal, metal tile and copper. Openings are rectilinear, slits, deeply beveled recesses, and pointed arches. Stairs and some elements of circulation are curved in curious, and perhaps too willful, ways. These elements sometimes seem at odds with the overall integrity of the design. However, in the best tradition of Moore's work, the building is successful in the ways it creates compelling spaces at a variety of scales, from the intimate to the most public, which all have character and quality so frequently lacking in many institutional buildings. The outdoor places created by Trustee Hall are significant not only in ways particular to its own circulation and spatial logic but also in the way the building will participate as part of a larger campus fabric. The landscaped open space works in concert with the building to organize, extend, and connect the campus.

With the completion of Trustee Hall, St. Edward's has a new building that successfully

contributes to an overall environment conducive to academic life in the fullest terms. What remains to be seen is how the next building slated for construction will participate in this rapidly growing campus. That building, a natural science facility, is now being designed by another of Charles Moore's former partnerships, Moore Ruble Yudell of Santa Monica, California. ■

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**In place of a traditional lobby, Trustee Hall accommodates circulation and entrance with a theatrical flourish.**

