

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2015-0658
3800 BALCONES DRIVE**

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1957 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One- to one-and-a-half story, roughly L-plan, shallow-gabled frame and stone-veneered house in mid-century modern design; the house has a long wood-clad section running along the crest of the hilly lot with single and double wood-frame sash windows, and a large bay perched on the slope of the hill overlooking the front yard, which has divided floor-to-ceiling glazing in wood framing and a prominent rectangular stone chimney piercing the front-facing gable of this section of the house; stone veneer along the projecting bay section.

RESEARCH

The house is an excellent example of mid-century Modern residential architecture in Austin, and is located in the Balcones Drive section of the city, which has a number of architect-designed mid-century Modern homes. Mid-century Modern architecture stressed several things – a long, one-story, horizontal profile with large expanses of glass and use of natural materials. Innovative construction techniques were integral to the philosophy of mid-century Modern architecture, and allowed for the use of large spans of glass, structural steel beams and joists, and cantilevered rooms.

Austin was blessed with a number of notable mid-century Modern architects, including the architect for this house, Roland Gommel Roessner. Roessner was a native of Indiana, educated in Ohio, and worked briefly in Florida before joining the faculty of the University of Texas School of Architecture in 1948. Roessner continued his architectural practice while teaching classes at UT, and began the school's Architectural Residency program, where students worked in the field to gain the knowledge beyond the classroom walls of how to address problems in architecture, meet with clients, and work out practical designs.

Roessner applied his philosophy of practicality in architecture to his residential designs in Austin, all of which reflect mid-century Modern goals in integrating a house into its natural landscape, and blurring the division between the outdoor and indoor spaces. Mid-century Modern houses in Austin have been built on hilly lots, with the houses perched on ledges or other topographical feature to allow this integration with the natural environment. Mid-century Modern architects used large expanses of glass so that the outdoor environment became part of the indoor environment – and the outdoors was always a part of the experience inside a mid-century Modern house. However, Roessner also prized his clients' privacy, so while he used large sections of glass on a house, the glass was positioned so that the privacy of the inhabitants was maintained, while still achieving the goal of blending the outside and inside environments.

This house, at 3800 Balcones Drive, embodies all of the distinguishing characteristics of mid-century Modern design: it is a low-slung composition, perched on the slope of a hilly lot with a long, winding driveway that actually traverses an arroyo; the most prominent feature of the house is its large, glass bay that overlooks the slope down the front part of the lot, and this is really the only part of the house that is visible from the street below.

The long-time owners of this house were Seldon and Jewell Baggett, who bought the house in 1957 and lived here for the rest of their lives. Seldon Baggett was a native of Austin, and

graduated from UTMB in Galveston in 1938. He returned to Austin and set up a general and family practice, and on the staffs of St. David's and Brackenridge hospitals.

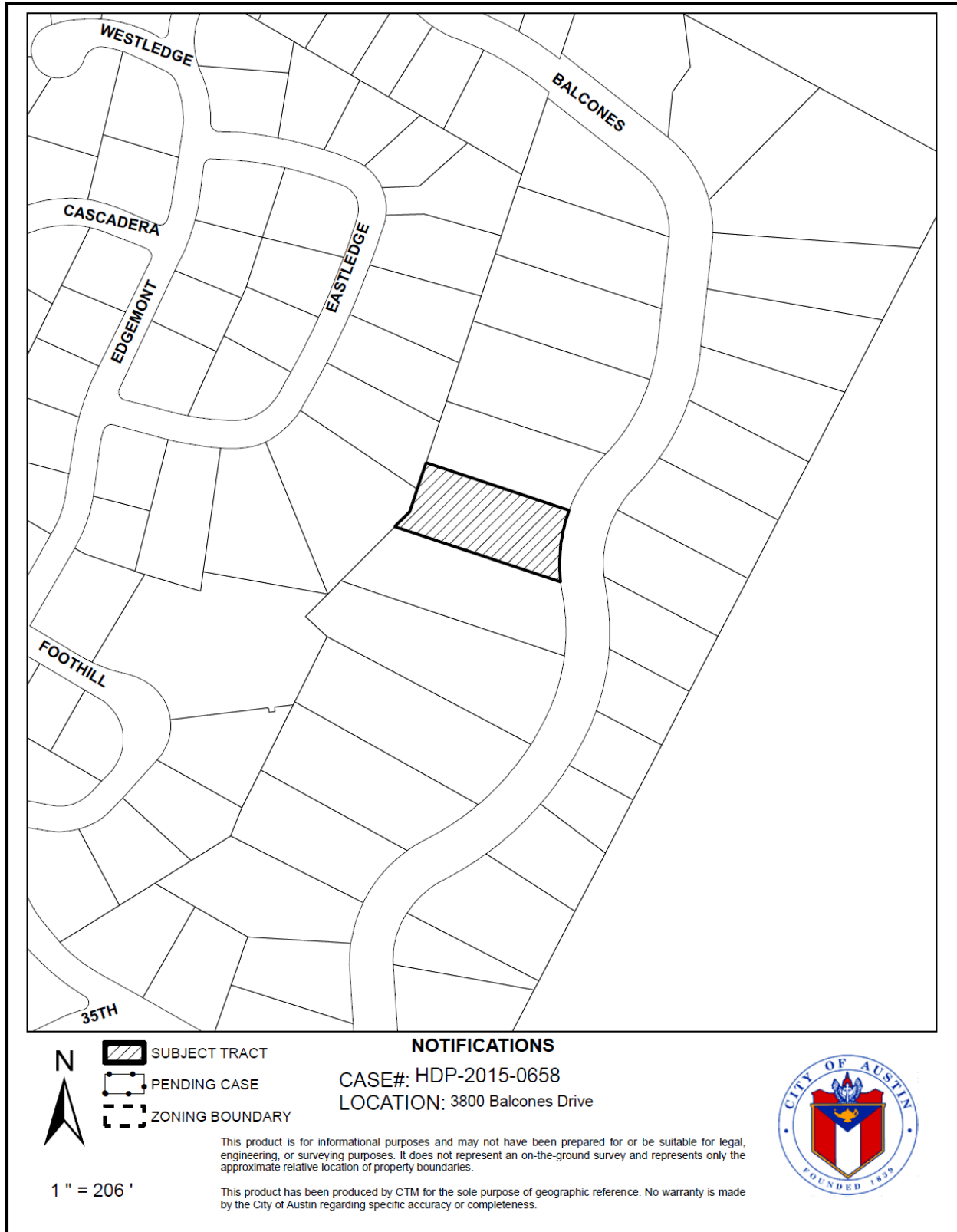
STAFF COMMENTS

The house is not within the bounds of any City survey.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Postpone to October 26, 2015. The applicant has submitted evidence of foundation failure in the most architecturally-notable section of the house. Foundation failure was also a cause for the demolition of two other Balcones area houses designed by Roessner, so it seems like there is a trend. However, staff recommends postponement to fully evaluate the cost of maintaining and preserving the most architecturally significant portion of this house, which is the large bay which overlooks the front yard and street below. The house is built into the side of a rather steep hill, and it is clear that the original foundation for this house has suffered deterioration and failure. However, staff would like the applicant to further explore the possibility of rehabilitating the foundation of the front of the house, and building an addition behind.

LOCATION MAP



3800 Balcones Drive
ca. 1957





OCCUPANCY HISTORY 3800 Balcones Drive

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
September, 2015

1992	Seldon O. and Jewell S. Baggett, owners Physician, 7 Medical Arts Square
1985-86	Seldon O. and Jewell S. Baggett, owners Physician, 7 Medical Arts Square
1981	Seldon O. and Jewell S. Baggett, owners Physician, 7 Medical Arts Square
1977	Seldon O. and Jewell S. Baggett, owners Physician, 7 Medical Arts Square
1973	Seldon O. and Jewell S. Baggett, owners Physician, 7 Medical Arts Square
1968	Seldon O. and Jewell S. Baggett, owners Physician, 7 Medical Arts Square
1962	Seldon O. and Jewell S. Baggett, owners Physician, 7 Medical Arts Square
1959	Seldon O. and Jewell S. Baggett, owners Physician, 7 Medical Arts Square
1955	The address is not listed in the directory. NOTE: Seldon and Jewell S. Baggett are listed at 1519 Mohle Drive; he was a physician with his office at 1506 Guadalupe Street.

IN MEMORIAM

ROLAND GOMMEL ROESSNER

Roland Gommel Roessner was born November 19, 1911, in Terre Haute, Indiana. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Miami in 1935 and received a master's degree in architecture from the University of Cincinnati in 1942. He served during World War II, achieving the rank of lieutenant commander in the navy's civil engineering corps. During his tour of duty he had the opportunity to build numerous large-scale air bases in the South Pacific, an experience that oriented him towards construction and exceptional architectural detail for the rest of his career.

Recruited by Hugh McMath, chairman of the Department of Architecture, which was

at that time lodged in the College of Engineering, Roessner began teaching at The University of Texas at Austin in 1948, becoming professor of architecture in a career that spanned over 30 years. According to Professor Martin Kermacy, his longtime colleague and friend, Roessner's familiarity with professional practice and real life experience made him a particularly appealing figure to postwar students in the early 1950s, who were both mature and eager to enter the profession. Throughout his teaching career, Roessner presented himself to his students as a model practitioner and a dedicated studio teacher. His early teaching coincided with the years when the so-called Texas Rangers, the young group of radical teachers, including Colin Rowe, Bernard Hoesli, and others, came to the School of Architecture. They emphasized the theoretical side of architecture while Roessner pursued a more pragmatic approach. Over time, Roessner maintained an emphasis on teaching principles rather than style and on connecting learning with practice by involving local practitioners in the academic reviews at the School of Architecture. His pragmatism also prompted him to found the first Architectural Professional Residency Program at the University. It placed students in private practice as part of their educational experience, thus giving them an essential link between the world of academia and the world of the profession. Beginning with professional practices in Texas, the program expanded nationally and, eventually, internationally.

Always known to his students, even long after graduation, as "Mr. Roessner," he was respected as a consummate design instructor. Roessner passionately believed in the Beaux-Arts model of architectural education, and he taught his studios, which students eagerly anticipated, and conducted his practice within the constructs of Beaux-Arts education and ideology. He typically taught Fifth Year Design Studios and Undergraduate Thesis Studio; thus students were generally able to have a close association with him only as a studio instructor in their fifth year in the undergraduate program. Despite the subsequent advancements in architectural education and strategies for teaching architecture, many of Roessner's students still felt fortunate to have had an undergraduate education based on the model of the *Pcole des Beaux Arts*.

Student projects produced in Roessner's studio were expected to demonstrate the same rigor, with special attention to strong conceptual underpinnings and technical resolution, as the projects in his professional office. Excellence in design and technical communication were always required in his studio and lack of performance brought failing grades. His reviews of student projects were extremely thorough, extending from the idea, the organization, and the clarity of the concept, on through the development of the project down to the minute details. One valuable studio experience was that of designing projects in school that were similar to projects on the drawing boards in Roessner's office, then driving with him to visit those projects, some of which were in construction and others complete, thereby learning firsthand about the process of design and construction.

Few, if any, architect-teachers at The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture tied professional practice as close to studio teaching as Roessner. He was only one of a very few faculty practitioners achieving significant architectural work to which students could aspire. Several other faculty members during that time

were beginning to establish small practices with work that was meaningful in terms of intellectually-driven design strategies, but Roessner presented the highest standards for his practice and projects. His student and faculty colleagues always described him as "an architect's architect."

He perceived the academic studio not only as an extension of his architectural practice but his architectural practice as an extension of his academic studio. In Roessner's small private practice in Austin he typically hired one to two of the top design students in the school who were in their last two years of the undergraduate program. He ran his office practice like an academic design studio and directed his studio at the school like an architectural practice. It was indeed a privilege to be among those select few students who were fortunate to be employed by him. The true benefit of working in his practice, especially while simultaneously having him as a studio instructor, was the opportunity to learn design and technical skills from a master architect and, perhaps more importantly, to learn valuable lessons from his expectations for high standards of ethics and morals. Students in his employ then were placed in a hands-on learning environment under the close scrutiny and tutelage of an internationally-recognized designer. Lance Tatum, one of his students, worked for Mr. Roessner in his architectural practice from his fourth year in the architectural program until he graduated with a bachelor of architecture degree. Some years later, Roessner urged Tatum to return to Austin to teach at the University, which he did at Roessner's insistence. He began a teaching career at the School of Architecture in 1977 that reflected Roessner's values.

Roessner's practice was essentially driven more by motivations of intellectually-based design excellence in significant projects for worthwhile clients than motivations of profit. Most of his projects were constructed by one contractor who demonstrated excellence in craftsmanship and attention to details and finishes. His projects were not "trendy" or "flashy" but rather demonstrated an understanding of well-founded lessons of architectural history, composition of elements, and an understanding of the scale of spaces occupied by humans. His successful architectural practice spanned from Ohio and Florida to Texas, and his projects were premiated and published throughout the United States and abroad. [Architectural Record, (May 1955) 117, pp. 155-186; Architect and Building News, (February 1966) 229: 7, pp. 291-306.] Among the most noted buildings were The Oaks Apartments, one of Austin's most significant examples of urban housing. The project was cited for an international design award, but sadly demolished when the University acquired a vast tract of land east of Memorial Stadium. The Glen Foster residence was a distinctive town house and the Wilson residence utilized a 180 degree view of the Colorado River. Despite the differences in scale and site, Roessner used a similar palette of materials and similar zoning considerations for each of these projects. He also designed numerous other projects in Austin from the 1950s through the 1970s, including, among others, the Foster House, the Goehrs House, and the Whittington House. He received numerous awards for design excellence from the American Institute of Architects, and was elected a Fellow of the professional organization in 1968.

During his time at the University, Professor Roessner served in numerous capacities

and worked on several boards and committees, including the UT Campus Planning Board, the Athletic Council, the University Co-op Board of Directors, the Family Center Board of Directors, the Swimming Natatorium Planning Committee, and the Student Union Board. An avid sports fan, he followed teams with great enthusiasm and even attended UT baseball spring training in Florida.

Prodigiously well-rounded, Roessner also contributed to his community. He was a board member of the Trustees of Tarrytown Methodist Church, the West Austin Optimist Club, and the Westwood Country Club, and he was a charter member of Tarry House Country Club. He supported various swimming organizations and received love and appreciation from the many children and coaches touched by his efforts.

Professor Roessner died Monday, February 26, 2001, in Austin, Texas.

<signed>

Larry R. Faulkner, President
The University of Texas at Austin

<signed>

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

Apartment Unit Wins US Praise

A University of Texas professor and private architect has won national recognition for a low-cost, three-unit apartment designed and built here recently to provide the owner a "back yard" income.

The cleverly planned building, with three housekeeping units, carports, individual entrances, and air conditioning, cost the owner \$10,200.

It was designed by R. Gommel Roessner, professor of architectural engineering at the University of Texas, who operates his own architect business in the den of his spacious home on Foothill Terrace.

National Recognition

The apartment—built by Austin contractor Paul Toungate—is located on property belonging to Mrs. Florence Feuston at 3010 Fruth Street.

A picture of the three-unit affair was displayed in the March issue of "American Builder," a national building magazine. Roessner has also been notified that a book called "Best Buildings of the Year," published by Meredith Publishing Company, publishers of "Better Homes and Gardens" magazine, will also feature an article about the Austin apartment in its 1955 edition.

Each unit of the apartment has its own private entry. In the case of two upper units, this was made possible by use of rustic wood stairs and a cantilevered balcony enclosed with one-by-12-inch boards.

Two-by-ten-inch rafters are carried out for a five-foot-four-inch roof overhang which shades large windows and protects the balcony.

Construction is of straightforward wood framing throughout, with heavy beams carrying much of the second floor load. The beams are supported by three-inch pipe columns. Extra-size steel windows are used and the interior is finished in natural pine.

Air Conditioned

Since all three units are air conditioned, the building is insulated with a three-inch mineral wool batts throughout.

The individual 17-foot by 19-foot housekeeping units are skillfully laid out to provide adequate kitchen and bath facilities and a livable room. Built-ins add to its workability and include book shelves, drop-leaf table, ironing board, laundry and linen storage.

The building is at the extreme rear of a 50-foot by 125-foot lot and has through driveways from front to alley.

The bottom portion of the building is divided into halves, one for one of the housekeeping units, the other for a three-car carport.

The American - Statesman
4-24-55

THE HOUSE YOU LIVE IN

Pure Texan Is R. G. Roessners' Nature-Inspired Home

By FLOESSIE PETERS

Although originally from Ohio, the R. G. Roessners are real Texas folks with a real Texas house—one that Mr. Roessner designed himself.

Mr. Roessner, who is associate professor of architecture at the University of Texas, decided these must be some typically Southwestern styles of architecture—some of the traditional rambling ranch houses that have sprung up with damaging similarity in new

residential additions of every Texas town. Although a Texan of only six years, he had the "feel" of the Lone Star State that he wanted to translate into architecture, and his home is evidence that he did just that.

Using largely native materials, he designed a home that expresses the "wide open spaces" and for lighting and heat in the winter, employs natural air conditioning.

In the summer, it also looks very much at home in the foothills of Austin. KEYNOTE OF the whole house, particularly the living area, is lots of space, light and airy. The floor-to-ceiling living room looks even more expansive because of the floor-to-ceiling glass windows that line the north and west walls which slide back to make what is very nearly a screened-in outdoor living porch.

These same windows afford one of the most picturesque views of Mount Bonnell to be found anywhere in Austin. The dining area and kitchen are included in the living area, but the kitchen is walled off from the main area by paneling which does not extend to the ceiling, thus leaving an opening all around the top of the kitchen.

Because of the opening at the top of the kitchen, Mrs. Roessner has all the advantages of a step-down stair work area with the ventilation of a much larger room. Shuts trouble makes it possible for Mrs. Roessner to live in an air-conditioned house. So her husband included natural "cooling system" in his design.

THERE IS almost always a brisk breeze blowing through the house. The low overhanging eaves give protection from the sun at almost any angle, eliminating the need for awnings. Hot air rises up to the high ceiling, leaving the living level cooler than in a lower-ceilinged house.

Actually, there is no ceiling except the roof. The exposed rafters and beams are plainly visible, showing the carriage bolt with which the house is put together almost entirely.

Several walls are of stone—another cooling device. The native Austin stone is more roughly cut than usually found in houses and the effect is recessed to give the effect that the blocks are joined without any mortar, just "stacked" upon each other.

The interior is as warm in the cold months as it is cool in the summer. Located behind a grove of cedar trees, the house is protected from "blue norther" by this natural wind barrier.

A SPECIAL heating system designed by Mr. Roessner keeps the house comfortable during warm Austin winters by forcing warm air into the rooms where the floor is dangerous draft near the floor where their 15-month-old son often romps with the family's prize-winning black and white Pampoo.



A REAL TEXAS HOUSE — Architect R. G. Roessner designed his house to fit in with the Texas way of life and local countryside despite its modernistic appearance.

At far left is a sundeck which opens off the master bedroom and the garage is located under the house. The front landscape uses native shrubs, flowers and trees. —(Neil Douglas Photos by Julian Hovey).

Mr. Roessner's studio is the only artificially air-conditioned room. It is located as a separate little

"house" off the living room, but it is connected with the main structure by a covered breezeway.

Throughout the house, texture and natural colors are featured with added color used only occasionally in upholstery and slipcovers.

Draperies are made of buff-colored theatrical gauze, brown flannel and off-white nubby Itasca cotton. Upholstery is rough textured cotton.

THE INTERIOR walls of the living area, built-in furniture and bedroom woodwork is done entirely of natural-finish fir. The bedroom walls are painted white.

To keep the fir from darkening and yet give the appearance of unfinished wood, it was rubbed with white fume finish, and two coats of sath-lac were used to close the wood's pores, making it washable.

The exterior of California redwood (one of the few "foreign" materials in the house) already has a weathered look, although the house was built a little over a year.

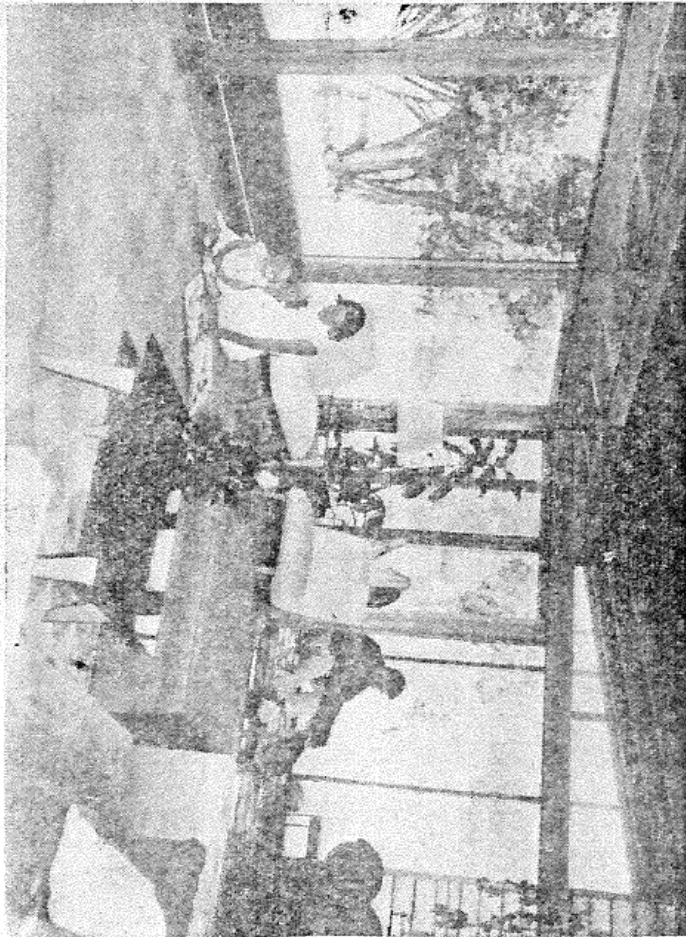
And Mr. Roesner is none too pleased when friends ask, "When are you going to make them understand that he wants it to look that way. He even concocted a special formula to age the redwood to its present silver-gray color, a process which normally takes 10 years, but he accomplished it in a few months.

HIS SPECIAL aging stain was composed of leaching oils, whiting and other paint compounds and applied to the boards to create the silver gray which blends in so well with the natural vegetation the Roesners have used to landscape their front yard.

Grounds at the back of the house near the large areas of glass are devoted to St. Augustine grass and green shrubbery because the greenery will not absorb the sun's rays and therefore do not radiate heat into the house.

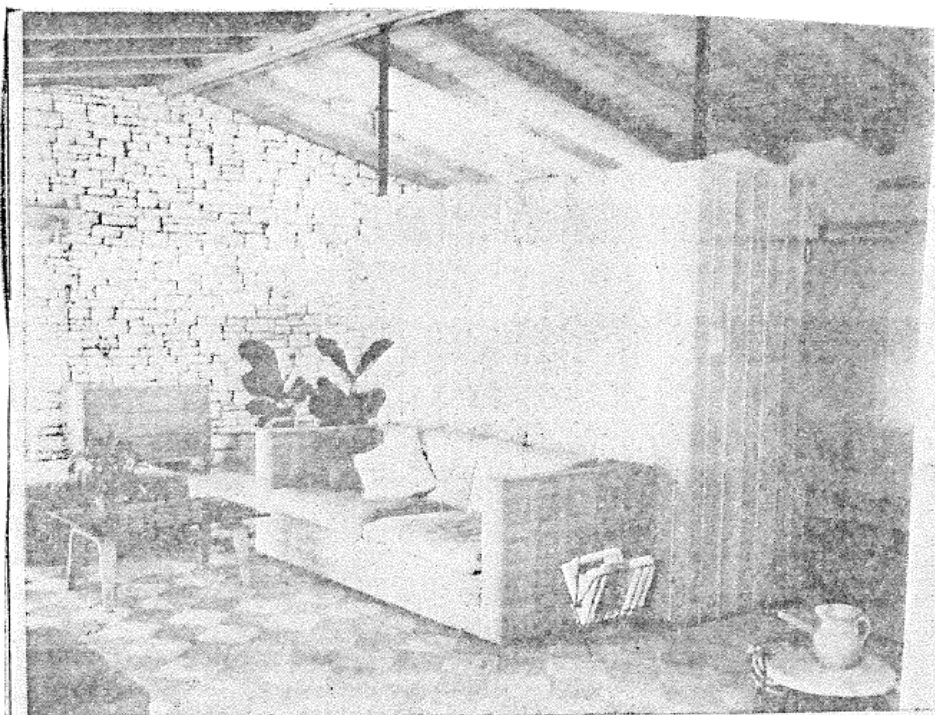
The Roesners make it very clear that they are Texans, for they no longer claim any other heritage.

"We've tried to make our home as Texas as we are," they say, "because we're here to stay for a long time."



ALMOST-OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM—Here are the Roesners in their spacious living room which becomes a screened-in porch when sliding glass panels are pulled back.

The wooden "trough" around the walls contains light bulbs which cast a soft, indirect glow over the room at night. The black concrete floor is covered with sea grass matting. Notice bare rafters of the ceiling.



HALF-HIDDEN KITCHEN — Behind the three-quarter height wall is the Roessner's kitchen. Natural ventilation is encouraged by the high ceiling and low walls. The old fashioned saloon-type kitchen doors screen

kitchen activities from the living area. In the main ceiling beam carriage bolts are visible. The bolts were used almost entirely throughout the house rather than screws or nails. —(Neal Douglass Photos by Julian Hovey.)

sunday real estate **Austin History Center**

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Professor R.G. Roessner, faculty member of The University of Texas School of Architecture, has been selected as one of the five ~~xx~~ most outstanding graduates of the Miami University School of Architecture at Oxford, Ohio.

Professor Roessner has served as chairman of the architecture school's Design Committee for more than a decade.

In addition, he is a member of the University Co-Op Board of Directors and a member of the UT Athletic Council.

One of the architect's most recent works is the \$40 million Collins Radio Corporation plant to be built in Los Angeles, Calif.

The April edition of the Miami Alumnus Magazine cites Professor Roessner and includes photographs of two of his most famous creations -- the Thorne home, featured as Home of the Year by Newsweek Magazine and chosen one of the six best homes of 1965 by the Architectural Record, and the Holmes Apartment

in Austin, winner of the First Honor Award of the House and
Homes Magazine and AIA National competition in 1965.

Other of Roessner's work includes 65 schools, federal
buildings, department stores and auditoriums throughout the
Midwest.

Texas Society of Architects
 Suite 1607 -- 211 North Erva
 Dallas, Texas 75201

Austin History Center

Nov 1964

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Hand
Bury

DALLAS, Tex., Nov. -- R. Gonnell Roessner, Austin architect, will receive one of three top recognitions for his work when "Texas Architecture 1964" Awards are presented at the 25th annual convention of the Texas Society of Architects at the Sheraton-Dallas Hotel here November 4, 5 and 6.

Roessner, 3414 Foothill Terrance, Austin, will receive the "Award of Honor" from the Texas Society of Architects at the awards luncheon Thursday, November 5. The presentation will be made by George F. Pierce, Jr., Houston, president of TSA. The award to Roessner is for the design of the Oaks Apartments in Austin. John B. Holmes, owner of the Oaks Apartments, will be present for the presentation.

Three "Awards of Merits" will be presented at the same time to San Antonio architects. They will be as follows:

O'Neil Ford and S. B. Zissman, 528 King William Street, for the Library at Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma.

Chris Carson, 528 King William Street, for the La Quinta Apartments in San Antonio.

O'Neil Ford and Associates, and Howard Wong, project architect, 528 King William Street, for St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in San Antonio.

The objective of "Texas Architecture 1964" is to promote public interest in architecture by acknowledging those outstanding works completed by Texas architects during the past five years.

. . . more . . .

A total of 99 entires were received from all parts of the state.

The jury for the Awards selection was composed of Vernon DeMars, F. A. I. A., of Berkley, California; Roger Montgomery, A. I. A., of St. Louis, Missouri; and George Qualls, A. I. A., of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

April 1968

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Name: R. Gommel Roessner, A.I.A.

Married to Virginia G. Humberger (Miami '39)
 Deceased 1955. One son born 1952, Rollie *(Dustin H. Swann T.E.D.M.)*

EDUCATION: Miami University, Oxford, Ohio
 Bachelor of Architecture, 1935
 University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio
 Master of Architecture, 1942
 Subject of Thesis: Modern Elementary School Design

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:A. Academic Experience

1. Twenty years on the Faculty of the School of Architecture of the University of Texas.
2. Chairman of the Design Committee of the School of Architecture for twelve (12) years.
3. Served as member of graduate faculty; having served as design critic for advanced architecture courses. Chairman of Graduate Studies Committee.
4. Undergraduate work, teaching advanced architecture design and professional courses. (Thesis)
5. Graduate work, teaching advanced design and graduate thesis. The Chairman of Graduate Studies Committee and Graduate Advisor.
6. Member Scholarship Committee, School of Architecture.
7. Member of Graduate Faculty.
8. Member of Budget Council, School of Architecture.
9. First Professor to be pledged by the Students to Alpha Phi Chi Fraternity, Honorary and Professional Fraternity, 1955.
10. Chairman of Board of Directors of University Cooperative Society.
11. Member of the Naval Scholarship Committee, University of Texas (Former)

1. Member of Student Publications Committee, University of Texas (Former).
- a. Former Member of Athletic Council, University of Texas.
- n. 1965 - Reappointed to a Second four (4) year term on the University Co-op Board.
- e. 1966 - Building Committee - appointed to the New Class Room & Office Building Committee.
- p. Appointed to a Special Committee on all University Housing.
- q. Serving as Special Consultant to the Athletic Council.

2. Professional Experience

- a. Engaged in practice of architecture for over 30 years.
- b. Registration in the following states to practice architecture:
 1. Ohio Certificate No. 1325
 2. Florida Certificate No. 1423
 3. Texas Certificate No. 1192
 4. Member of National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (Certificate No. 1249.)
- c. Practiced architecture as a principal in St. Petersburg, Florida prior to my coming to the University of Texas campus.
 1. Designed many housing projects; apartments, motels, etc.
 2. Designed numerous commercial, public and medical buildings.
- d. Served in U.S. Navy as Lt. Comdr. in the Civil Engineering Corps for four years.
 1. Officer in charge of Construction Battalion in Pacific area, constructing naval installations, etc.
- e. Prior to military service, was employed at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, on highly complex and detailed design projects.
 1. Jet propulsion laboratories
 2. Wind tunnel
 3. Torque stands, etc.

- E. Seven years after my graduation from college, my professional career was in the Cincinnati area.
 1. Designed hundreds of varied buildings throughout the midwest.
 2. Over 65 schools; 10 federal and state buildings; 15 auditoriums; 5 office buildings; department stores; institutional, banking, financial buildings.

HONORS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITIONS (1953 to present)

A. Honors

- a. Designed the Raymondville High School, Raymondville, Texas. Selected to represent Texas at the N.E.A. Convention in Miami, Florida, and also at Peabody College in 1953, displayed for excellence in school building design; published in INSTITUTIONS Magazine in 1955.
- b. Designed the residence for Mr. and Mrs. Millard Rund. Hon merit award from the Texas Society of Architects for excellence in design.
- c. Designed the Feuston Apartments that won acclaim as "Outstanding in design and economically Planned"; AMERICAN BUILDER Magazine, March 1955.
- d. Residence of Dr. and Mrs. Clifford Thorne was awarded a citation as the best residence designed in the South-Central states and one of the six best designed homes in the United States in the year 1955; sponsored by the architectural professional magazine, ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, which was invitational for architects throughout the United States. This same residence was selected by the Minneapolis-Honeywell Corporation as Excellence in Residential Design in the U.S. and featured in the NEWSWEEK Magazine in 1955 as the Home of the Year.
- e. A complete scientific case study in climatic control in residential design by R. Gommel Roessner and published in the AMERICAN BUILDER Magazine June, 1955.
- f. The ARCHITECTURAL RECORD Magazine published the Shelby Medical Clinic of Gonzales, Texas, and also the Rund residence of Austin which was designed by myself and showed photographic detailed studies of both projects. Outstanding in design, April 1954.

- g. SINKENTIKE, the leading professional architectural journal of Japan, featured a large portion of their magazine to the work of R. Gommel Roessner in December, 1955.
- h. The leading professional architecture journal of Argentina, NUESTRA ARQUITECTURA, published the following work of R. Gommel Roessner: The Thorne, Ruud, and Roessner residences, also the Shelby Medical Clinic, November, 1954.
- i. In June of 1957, the entire issue of NUESTRA ARQUITECTURA was devoted to the creative work of R. Gommel Roessner.
- j. One man show featuring the work of R. Gommel Roessner at the Laguna Gloria Art Gallery, Austin, Texas, August 1956.
- k. One man show featuring the work of R. Gommel Roessner at the Ains Museum, Applied Arts College, Cincinnati, Ohio, December 1956.
- l. Exhibit at the School of Architecture, University of Texas, in 1956.
- m. Work was shown at Architects Week in Austin in 1959; Texas Architecture Exhibit in Dallas Museum in 1955 and 1958.
- n. The publication for outstanding residential design throughout the U.S. in a book titled TREASURY OF CONTEMPORARY HOUSES, published in detail the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Millard Ruud, 1957.
- o. The book entitled OUTSTANDING HOSPITALS AND CLINGS IN THE UNITED STATES published in detail the Shelby Medical Clinic, 1958.
- p. NUESTRA ARQUITECTURA, published the homes of Dr. and Mrs. Addison Lee, Mr. and Mrs. A. D. New, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Allen, and Dr. and Mrs. Burns, residences, giving a complete background and expose of the philosophy of the designer, R. Gommel Roessner, April, 1957.
- q. Two homes featured in the magazine NUESTRA ARQUITECTURA published the residences of Mr. and Mrs. Robert McGinnis and Dr. and Mrs. Donald Pohl of Austin, Texas, designed by R. Gommel Roessner, April 1957.

- s. An apartment house designed by R. Gommel Roessner which was constructed in Dayton, Ohio, with a considerable amount of interest being shown in this project by architects of that region; the School of Architecture of the University of Cincinnati has used the project as a field trip for the study of modern contemporary apartment design, 1959.
- t. Served on a panel for the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture of the Southwest discussing Modern Trends and Theories of Design in Architectural Education, 1953.
- u. September, 1960, the Milwaukee Chapter of the American Institute of Architects selected 20 of the outstanding architects of the U.S. to exhibit their work at their convention. The exhibit was titled "New Directions in Architecture" which was shown at the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center after which the entire show went on a National tour throughout the United States. Mr. Roessner was invited to show his work along with the work of such world famous architects as Walter Gropius, Frank Lloyd Wright, Minoru Yamasaki, Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum. One of Mr. Roessner's works was published along with Frank Lloyd Wright's comparing the two varied philosophies of architecture in new and different directions in architecture.
- v. Holmes Apartment (The Oaks), Austin, Texas won 1st Honor Award of the House and Homes Magazine and the American Institute of Architects National Competition, (over 600 entries) at the A.I.A. Convention, St. Louis, Missouri, 1965. Photos and text appeared in May 1964 issue of House and Homes. Appeared on cover of House and Homes, August 1964 edition.
- w. Holmes Apartment (The Oaks) won 1st Honor award from the Texas Society of Architects Competition, Excellence in design.
- x. Featured residential work by R. Gommel Roessner in SO Magazine (A Texas Publication) July 1964.
- y. Work featured in the February 1965 edition of Texas Architect (also on cover Magazine, by Texas Society of Architects.
- z. Work won merit award for Outstanding Design (by the A.I.A.) in Washington, D. C. 1965. Chosen from all classifications.

- 2-a Featured with history and background article of professional experience, honors and awards, with photos, in Miami University Alumni Magazine 1965.
- 2-b Article in Alcalde, University of Texas Magazine on honors and awards.
- 2-c Work exhibited in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida 1965.
- 2-d The projects of The Oaks Apartment and Foster Residence were the two contemporary projects on the Architectural tour for the Texas Society of Architects Convention 1965.
- 2-e 1965 - Miami University, Oxford, Ohio - Honored as one of the five (5) most outstanding graduates in The Architectural and Urban Regional Planning Department of the University.
- 2-f 1966 - The Architect & Building News; London, England published photos and write-up on Oaks Apartments.
- 2-g 1966 - The Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission (Minnesota) have requested permission to publish examples of my work on Single and Multi Housing.
- 2-h 1966 - THE FOSTER RESIDENCE received an Honor award for Excellence in Design by the Texas Society of Architects in TEXAS ARCHITECTURE 1966 - Fort Worth, Texas, November 1966.
- 2-i 1966 - Designed the new Lyndon B. Johnson Room in the Headliners Club, Austin, Texas.

SCHOLASTIC PUBLICATIONS

- A. Have written a series of six articles on School Design published by the American School Board Journal entitled:
 - 1. "The Planning of the Classroom as the Basis of a School Plant."
 - 2. "The Planning of the Group Instructional Units, Part I."
 - 3. "The Planning of the Group Instructional Units, Part II."

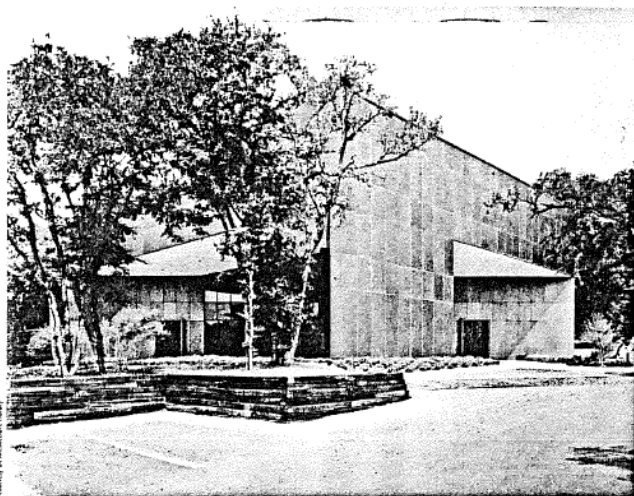
4. "The Planning of the Group Instructional and Servicing Elements".
5. "Locating the Various Elements in the School Plant Proper."
6. "The Architectural Design and Construction of a Modern School."
3. Have published articles pertaining to the profession and study of architecture in the Journal of the American Institute of Architects entitled:
 1. "Are we Preparing Future Architects for the Profession of Architecture?"
 2. "We are Preparing Future Architects for the Profession."

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- A. Member of the American Institute of Architects
- B. Member of the American Concrete Institute
- C. Member of American Military Engineers
- D. Member of the Texas Society of Architects
- E. Member of the Ohio Society of Architects
- F. Member of the Florida Association of Architects
- G. Special Professional Advisor to the Commodity Standards Committee of the U.S. Department of Commerce.
- H. Member of Board of Trustees of Tarrytown Methodist Church Austin, Texas
- I. Member of the Executive Committee of the Wesley Foundation (former)
- J. Member West Optometrist Club
- K. Member Westwood Country Club
- L. Member of Naval Reserve Research Unit, University of Texas (Former)
- M. Adviser in design to the State Board of Architectural Registration (former)

- M. Member of the Forty Acres Club
- O. Member of the Headliners Club
- P. Little League Activities
- Q. Vice President Austin Aquatic Club (former)

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Left: Roland G. Roessner's
RGK Building in Austin
(1980)

TEXAS 50

TEXAS ARCHITECT
Nov. 1989

Roland G. Roessner

ROLAND GOMMEL ROESSNER (b. 1911) received his bachelor of architecture degree from Miami University in 1935 and his master's from the University of Cincinnati in 1942. After serving in World War II, Roessner practiced in St. Petersburg, Fla., before joining the faculty of the UT School of Architecture in 1948. Roessner, who successfully combines teaching with a professional career, realized the importance of integrating practical experience with a strong theoretical foundation. He was responsible for establishing the school's Professional Residency Program, which provided the students with on-the-job training within the profession before the completion of their degrees. Roessner's early use of computers to augment teaching included a project for teaching management processes in architecture.

Roessner's ability to create spaces that preserved the client's privacy while maintaining an openness in plan garnered for him numerous design awards. His graceful design for the George Thorne House (1953) received *Newsweek's* 1955 House of the Year Award. His talent for flexible planning on restricted sites is perhaps best illustrated by The Oaks Apartments (1962) which provided each apartment, grouped around an intimate, secluded courtyard, with its own private balcony and view. This sensitive project, which carefully preserved the site's beautiful oak trees, received an AIA Award of Merit in 1965. Roessner's other projects include the Foster Residence (1963), the RGK Foundation Building (1980) and the Southwestern Bell Telephone Building in Corpus Christi (1981). Roessner was named professor emeritus in 1983 and an endowed Centennial Professorship was established in his name at UT. He is an AIA Fellow.

Lila Stillson

ARCHITECTURE/BY LISA GERMAN **Austin History Center**

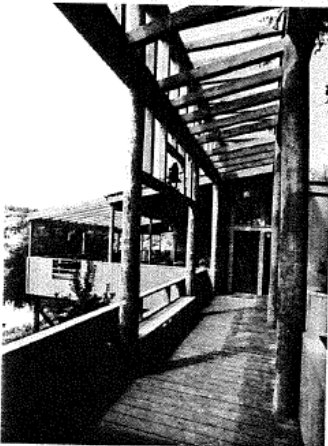
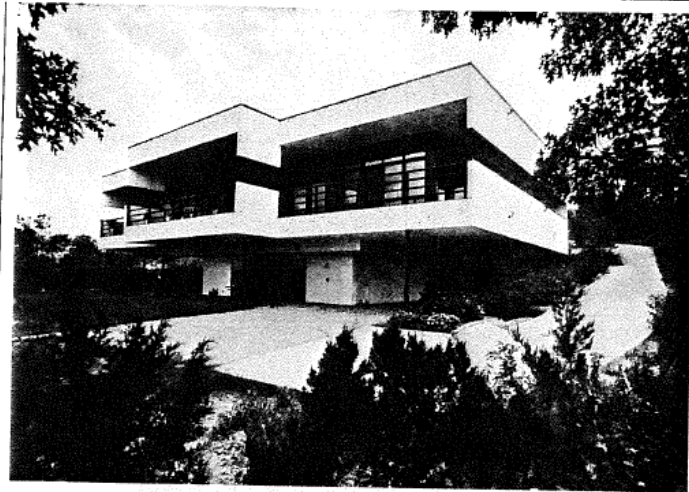
Roland Roessner: modern iconoclast

When Roland Roessner thinks back upon 1948 and his first few months as head of the design department at Austin's University of Texas architecture school, he sees himself as a kind of early hippie. "I came here from Florida, and I wore huarache sandals and a bright-colored shirt," says Roessner. "They still had a lot of classic Beaux Arts-style drawings hanging on the walls, and I took them all down one weekend and put up the modern stuff that the kids were doing."

While this action may have been a little bold, it wasn't particularly iconoclastic for the time. Roessner had spent 10 years practicing architecture, and like many of his generation, he had fallen under the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and the German Bauhaus architects who are known for creating the box-like forms that are the cornerstones of Modernism. But in 1948, The University of Texas was not ready to say goodbye to the classics. Roessner recalls that the following Monday morning was "quite disastrous."

It certainly was an inauspicious beginning for a man who was eventually to succeed not only in exposing his students to Modernism but also, over the course of his 34 years of teaching, in becoming an established and respected presence in Texas architecture. The architects in Texas and elsewhere who can claim him as a former teacher are a distinguished—and very appreciative—community. Last year, when Roessner left teaching to work full-time as a design consultant for the Austin firm of O'Connell, Probst & Grobe, he received the rare honor of having an endowed professorship proposed and subsequently established in his name.

For Roessner, it was crucial that the teaching of architecture coexist with the actual doing of it, so before accepting the job at The University of Texas, he stipulated that he must be allowed to continue his practice. Although it is now common for professors of architec-



"My designs aren't fragile. I like to do things big; I don't pussyfoot around."

—Roland Roessner

ture to accept private commissions, in 1948 the arrangement was frowned upon by many universities. But The University of Texas agreed to Roessner's request and thus opened the way for his staggeringly busy career as both an academic and a professional. He has designed dozens of schools and public buildings as well as corporate structures, but it is as a residential designer that he is perhaps best known.

As Roessner's Modernist style developed, the Austin countryside began to influence it more and more. In the manner of Frank Lloyd Wright, Roessner's houses fit unobtrusively into the landscape, often with cantilevered living

From the striking box-like Gautschi house on the shores of Lake Travis to the award-winning Roessner-Kozmetsky ranch house, Roland Roessner's Modernist designs emphasize pure, linear form without excessive ornamentation.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL PATRICK

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ARCHITECTURE CONT'D

rooms or balconies jutting out over a hillside. These houses were generally of wood—meant to weather—and native stone, and over the years they won numerous awards. The Thorne house in Austin became *Newsweek's* House of the Year for 1955; others have won the prestigious prizes offered by *Progressive Architecture*, *Architectural Record* and the local and national branches of the American Institute of Architects.

Roessner has kept track of these honors in a series of black ring binders. But also in these binders, tucked carefully into plastic page protectors, are letters from students and administrators thanking him for his kindness and commitment to teaching. Teaching is where Roessner's heart really was; in all the years he taught, he never missed a class, although this often meant hectic lunch-hour trips to check on the construction

of his various projects.

Roessner liked to take his students to the job sites of his houses, believing it did them good to observe how ideas were transformed into reality. He wanted his students to understand that architecture, however grand its intentions, ultimately must be a place where a man can hang his hat, where people can sleep or work.

Outside of the architecture department, Roessner found time to serve on a variety of important university committees, including the Texas Student Publications Board, the UT Building Committee, the Co-op Board and the Athletic Council. A widower since the death of his wife, Virginia, in 1954, Roessner had the additional responsibility of rearing their son.

Given all these extracurricular activities, Roessner says that his old buddy, the late and often cantankerous San Antonio architect O'Neil Ford, used to tease him, saying, "Why don't you retire, Roland? You've never done anything anyway." But Roessner appears to be no closer to retirement now than he has ever been. Not only does he currently have two houses on the drawing board (each of which he estimates will cost more than \$1 million to build), but in the last couple of years he has seen a handful of his home designs reach completion. One of these, a weekend house for Karl and Lotty Gautschi of Houston, is a striking white box on the shores of Lake Travis. Another, a ranch house designed as a retreat for himself and his friends George and Ronya Kozmetsky, won the Texas Society of Architects' design award last year.

The Gautschis, who are Swiss by birth, felt strongly about building a house in the International Style, so Roessner designed a white stucco, box-like structure supported by a steel frame. The whole thrust of the design is directed toward the lake, with the axis of the house established by an entrance bridge that spans a drop-off on the Gautschi property and leads through a large living room to a central protruding section of the balcony. Walls and windows are outlined in black anodized steel, and the overall effect is as formal and pristine as the buildings of famous Bauhaus architects Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius.

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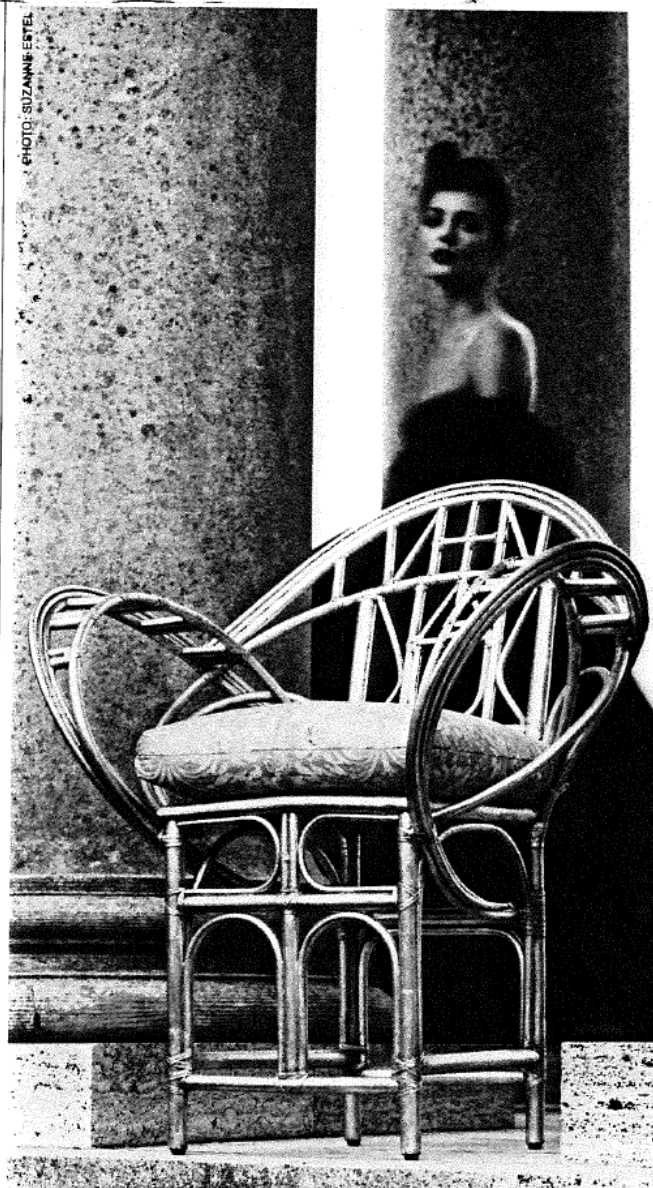
Austin History Center
M C G U I R E

From the exterior—where the roof and floor fold downward and upward to protect the balcony from the western sun, giving the structure the appearance of a partially opened box—the Gautschi residence resembles Le Corbusier's famous Villa Savoye of 1928-29, which was also a rectangular white house supported by steel piers and distinguished by dark, centrally placed windows.

Although the ranch house, with its cedar siding and shed roof, appears very different from that designed for the Gautschis, it is clearly a product of the same architectural sensibility. Like the Gautschi residence, the entrance is on a higher section of land, and the house itself is perched above a sloping hill on piers made of telephone poles. Roessner calls the structure a "binuclear living environment," another way of saying that it is a kind of sophisticated duplex. Two completely separate sets of living quarters are connected by a common porch and what Roessner calls the spine, a truncated fence-like form running the length of the house. Both apartments of the ranch house have large, straight-forward spaces that open onto porches overlooking a spring-fed creek below. Roessner's son, R.G. Roessner, Jr., who is employed by the architecture firm of Morris Aubrey in Houston, collaborated with his father on the project.

The Gautschi house is the most overtly Modern of Roessner's long career, but the ranch house, too, is a natural outgrowth of the regional Modernism that characterized his early homes. Because both houses emphasize the purity of unadorned forms in the landscape and the elegance of straight lines (there are few curves in Roessner's work), they provide an interesting counterpoint to Post-Modernism.

The Post-Modern movement has emerged in the past 20 years as a reaction against the rigidity of Modernism, with its austere spaces and emphasis on "starting from zero" with each project. Color plays an important role in Post-Modernism, and so does historical form. Classical drawings like those that Roessner took down early in his tenure at UT are beginning to be studied again. As a result, architecture has once more become full of associations. Houses tend to look like the conventional idea of a house, with steeply pitched roofs and



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ARCHITECTURE
CONT'D

multipaned windows; they may even boast details that refer to Renaissance or Gothic architecture. To an architect like Roessner—whose houses consist of forms for their own sake—Post-Modernism seems a little weak. His most common word for it is "cutesy."

Although Roessner went through architecture school in the '20s studying the kind of historicist touches generally associated with Post-Modern architecture—Classical columns, Palladian arches and so on—he invariably prefers details that are purely architectural. For instance, the spine of the Kozmetsky house can be seen from the interior through a series of narrow skylights that also run the length of the structure. From this vantage point, the slats of the spine seem to interact not only with the light from the sun outside but also with the lines of interior beams, which cross the skylights just beneath the spine as they move downward across the ceiling.

Detail in Roessner's work, however, is not to be confused with ornamentation. For all his attention to the fine points, he remains primarily interested in making a strong architectural statement. This emphasis on form and overall avoidance of extraneous design elements probably reflect the influence of Dutch architect William Dudok, a lesser-known Modernist who worked mostly in brick and played various sizes of facades against one another. "I like to do things big," concedes Roessner. "I don't pussyfoot around."

In the 1950s and '60s, when Modernist designs like Roessner's were all the rage, it was relatively easy to tell when a building was bad. The style's large, simple forms were impossible to hide, and details depended on perfect proportion and placement to be effective. By contrast, much more is going on now in Post-Modern architecture; there is a greater possibility for complexity and richness, but there is also more room for error. Applied historicist forms and bright colors can obscure imitative designs and sloppy construction.

Roessner says he would design a Post-Modern house if a client was seriously interested in doing what he would consider "a good one." But it's not likely that this is going to happen soon. He's too busy building second houses for clients he has already satisfied once. □

Longtime Austin resident Jewell Sparks Baggett, a descendant of one of Texas' first families, passed away peacefully at a local hospital on June 21, 2007, surrounded by several generations of her family. Her death was the result of a fall at her residence. She was a loving and devoted wife, mother and grandmother, and matriarch of her extended

family. Jewell was born in Christine, Texas, near Breckenridge, on November 8, 1915. She graduated as a RN from St. Joseph's School of Nursing and met her husband to be, retired physician Seldon Baggett, while he was attending medical school in Galveston. Throughout her life, Jewell is described by her family as loving, faithful, loyal, energetic, vibrant and determined. She devoted her life to her family and friends. Her interests were wide-ranging including: cooking, reading, gardening, entertaining, gifting, decorating, history, all the arts and many more. Until her death she was involved with her bridge group, sewing club, investment club, University Christian Church and other organizations. She was very proud of being a member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and the "Old 300". She is survived by her loving husband of 68 years, Seldon Baggett, MD, brother Hugh Sparks, daughters: Judy Nerf, Susan Edols, Patricia Adam and Barbara Baggett; grandchildren: Sherri Cochran, Miranda Barham, Paul Adam; great grandson Ian Cochran; nieces: Sydney Seavers, Pamela Wyatt, Jan Glasgow, Marsha Recknagle and their children. The family would like to thank her physician Dr. Steven Booten and her personal assistant Cynthia Arterberry for their years of caring for Jewell. Funeral services will be held at Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home, 3125 North Lamar, 1:30 p.m. Sunday, June 24 with Rev. Dr. Charles Kutz-Marks officiating. Burial will be at Austin Memorial Park, followed by a reception at the family home. Flowers or memorial contributions may be directed to the Macular Degeneration Foundation, American Cancer Society or Hospice Austin. Obituary and guestbook online at wcfish.com

Obituary of Jewell Baggett

Seldon Osborn Baggett, M.D. died peacefully at his home Wednesday morning, December 10th, 2008, at the age of 96. Born March 4, 1912 in Austin Texas, he attended Austin Public schools, the University of Texas, graduating with a B.A. in 1935, and with a Doctor of Medicine from U.T. Medical School, Galveston, in 1938. His General and Family Practice was devoted to serving patients in the Austin community for 44 years. During this period he served on the staffs of Brackenridge and St. David's hospitals. Dr. Baggett served on the Medical Board of the Teachers Retirement System of Texas, and was Board Chairman for a number of years. Over the years he received many honors recognizing his contributions to the medical community. During World War II, as Major in the U.S. Army, he was commander of the 46th Portable Surgical Operations Hospital in the China Burma Theatre. The Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek, awarded him the highest distinction for meritorious service, the "Yun Hui" award. The U.S. Army awarded him a Bronze Star. In 1939 he married Jewell Sparks; they celebrated 68 years together. To this union were born four daughters: Judy Friedberg-Nerf, Susan Baggett Edols, Patricia Adam and Barbara Baggett. Grandchildren are Sherri Cochran, Miranda O'Gorman and Paul Adam; Great Grandson is Ian Cochran. Nieces are Sydney Seavers, Pamela Wyatt, Jan Glasgow and Marsha Recknagle; brother-in-law is Hugh Sparks. He was preceded in death by his wife Jewell, his sister Margie Recknagle, and parents Lillie and James Osborn Baggett. All family members are proud to have shared his life and are grateful at having been blessed by his love; we will miss him deeply. He was a kind and gentle man, devoted to medicine and his family. He was richly loved, and enjoyed a contented life. His daughters wish to thank those "angels" who cared for him during the last years of his life. Their devoted service allowed him to

remain in the home he loved. Thank you Cynthia Arterberry, Jean James, Kannis Miles, La Juander Smith, Delores Garcia , Debbie Pearson, and the Hospice Austin team. Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, December 13th at Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home, 3125 N. Lamar Blvd., Rev. Dr. Charles Kutz-Marks officiating. Burial will follow in Austin Memorial Park. Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of your choice.

Obituary of Seldon O. Baggett

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Building permit to Dr. Seldon O. Baggett for the construction of this house (1957)