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# Redstone took his knowledge to the bank, air terminals, malls...

By SHERRY KAHAN

"Knowledge of the building trades has been advantageous to me," smiled Louis Redstone, the architect whose firm recently completed a new brick headquarters for itself nestled among the trees on a deep lot on Eight Mile, near Inkster Road, Livonia.

He was recalling an incident that happened a number of years ago. "Our firm designed the Wonderland Shopping Center in Livonia, and I was visiting the building site," he continued. "I noticed a bricklayer was not doing his work the right way. When I spoke to him about it, he said, 'Well, if you know better, then show me.'"

"It surprised him when I went up the scaffold and showed him how to do it. He got so mad he threw off his overalls, went off and got drunk." Today president of a large architectural firm bearing his name, Redstone began his career in brick, stone, steel and concrete in a country then called Palestine.

Born in Poland, Redstone went as a pioneer to Palestine in the 20s, where he soon received an education as a mason in all phases of building. "In Palestine, we were involved in the growth of the country," he said. "Digging ditches, mixing cement and being taught by an Egyptian master mason was an exciting challenge."

**HE CAME TO THIS COUNTRY** first in 1923 and studied architecture at the University of Michigan, supporting himself as a bricklayer. He returned to Palestine, but then came back to Detroit for good and opened an office. From these beginnings have come a long parade of buildings. Think Redstone when you shop in the Livonia, Westland, or Somerset shopping malls, or in Northville Square. You can also think Redstone as you pass the huge Allied Supermarket headquarters north of Plymouth Rd. in Livonia (the firm did the interior), or bank in the branch office of the Manufacturers National Bank in Birmingham or drop in at the Beech-Wood Park Ice Rink and Pool in Southfield.

Hamlin Hall, at Oakland University in Rochester was planned by Redstone Associates, as was Congregation Beth Achim in Southfield and the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit in West Bloomfield Township.

Houses are not planned by Redstone, but libraries, schools, hospitals, shops, and interiors are. The International Terminal at Metro Airport was done by Redstone's firm, and is one of the architect's favorites. He thinks it's a little more intimate and friendly than your average terminal. Then too, he likes the art work facing the front and built into some of the supporting columns.

Redstone is a painter (watercolors) and has written a book on the subject. He stresses the use of art in the company's work. The result has been an award from the Michigan Foundation of the Arts in 1977 for the firm's contribution to the advancement of the arts in the state.

"ART FOR ME is a prerequisite for a building," said Redstone. "It should

be integrated into it. At the Manufacturers Bank building in Detroit we had a sculptor design 24 pre-cast concrete bas relief panels that were 18 by 24 feet."

"Art became one of my primary interests because I realized that what a building is, has an influence on human character. A building should be secondary to the environment."

It was so important to Redstone to preserve the environment that when their one story brick headquarters was constructed on a wooded acreage off Eight Mile, they sacrificed as few trees as possible.

It is Redstone's hope that he and his associates could some day have a part in helping the city they have chosen as the location of their headquarters to have its own character and identity, but he didn't say how.

The Livonia headquarters location was chosen, reported Daniel Redstone because of its central location. "Basically, we're in the middle of everything," he said. "And it's gorgeous property."

**THE YOUNGER REDSTONE**, son of the founder, is controller of the firm, and lives in West Bloomfield. A nephew, Samuel Redstone is secretary. Leo G. Shea is executive vice-president and Alfred Gittleman is director of production.

Touring the building, Daniel Redstone pointed out the various departments of the company which has 67 employees. These include sections involved in structural, electrical and mechanical engineering, and others wrapped up in interior design and specifications.

"Our work is very detailed requiring a patient personality," he explained. "An error in a drawing, for example, might lead to a leaking roof or window."

"Design is very important. But it is just as important or more so to make sure the structure is put together properly. The owner wants a building that is as maintenance free as possible, economical to operate, doesn't leak and serves his functional and aesthetic needs."

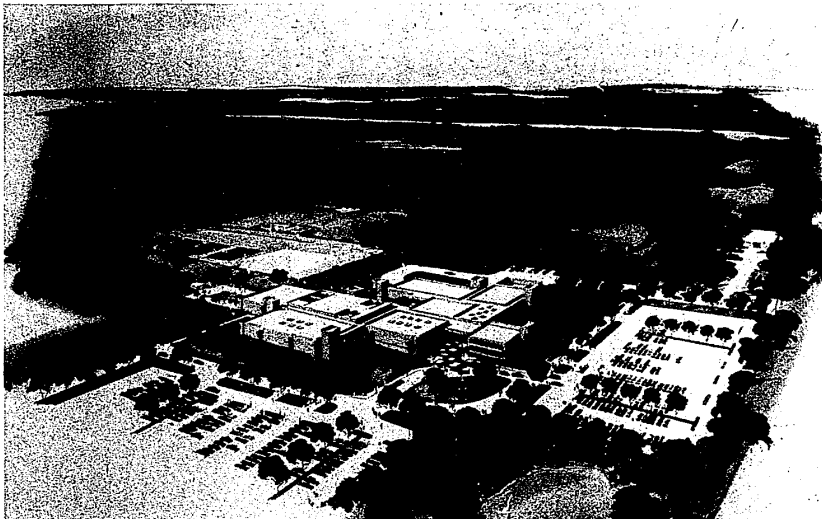
When clients first come in they are seen by one of the firm's officers. Later a team is assembled with a director to oversee the project. Since the use of space is different in a hospital than in an office, space is a major architectural point.

In time, simple, then complex, schematic drawings are produced by skilled people sitting at inclined tables. Drawings not only include the big picture, but little ones as well, including things like windowsills and plumbing fixtures.

Attention to detail is the name of this game.

**ARCHITECTS HAVE TO PUT** themselves into the minds of their clients, and today's clients are not only thinking about space, but the best insulation to save energy and the most efficient way to protect their building from vandalism.

Some may find themselves in need of more flexible office space, as did Allied Supermarkets Headquarters in Livonia after the Redstone group introduced into the building one of the newer concepts in inside design.



Redstone, who attributes part of his success as an architect of large projects to his knowledge of the building trades, designed the

Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit in West Bloomfield.



Shown here is the vision of Louis G. Redstone Associates, Inc. for the Congregation Beth Achim Synagogue in Southfield. Redstone be-

gan his career in brick, stone, steel and concrete in the 1920s in the country then called Palestine.

Called office landscaping it means that to a great extent interior walls have been eliminated, leaving one huge room that can be manipulated as needed with the help of moveable partitions.

If two offices are needed instead of a moderate-sized meeting room— presto, change, it can be quickly done.

"This system proved its worth at Allied," explained Daniel Redstone. "They had a lot of changes there in the past three years. This plan allowed them to alter the inside of the building to meet their new requirements."

**NOW IN HIS EARLY 70s**, the founder of this firm which plans structures costing from \$50,000 to \$20 million is still as active as ever.

That may be because Louis Redstone considers "architecture the most creative and challenging of professions."

He added: Every new commission is a new experience for me, requiring close contact with the client and an understanding of his needs.

"I also like the excitement of the new role architecture is being called upon to play in revitalizing the urban environment in keeping with the rapidly changing needs of our time."

In addition to the new International Terminal at Metro Airport, Redstone mentioned two other favorite designs, the Manufacturers Bank Operation Center at Lafayette and Cass and the 333 W. Fort building.

"But the best building is always the next one," he laughed.



This is a view of a portion of Congregation Beth Achim Synagogue not shown in the architect's rendering above as it appeared upon completion.



In addition to community centers and synagogues, Redstone has designed and planned shopping centers, air terminals and banks, such as the Manufacturers National Bank office at Woodward and Hunter in Birmingham. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)