

Building copies a classic

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suggesting Gothic architecture already reclaimed in the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Corporate headquarters in Pittsburgh, also by Johnson/Burge.

Cylindrical, pavilion-like corners mediate the four sides of the building. Thankfully they relate to the central tower of the Renaissance Center two blocks away, creating some contextual venue that brings the Renaissance Center visually closer to the central business district.

As exciting an addition One Detroit Center is to Detroit architecture, it does not represent anything new in terms of local architectural vernacular. Right across Congress Street to the north is the original Vinton Building done by Albert Kahn in 1917. Only a 12-story building, it has the clarity and simplicity of Kahn's industrial buildings that first expressed the metal-reinforced concrete frame, the early "bones" of 20th century American commercial architecture later espoused by Mies van der Rohe.

The piers have a vertically accentuated by recessed spandrels and are terminated with a gabled roofline.

This One Detroit Center is an amplification of an adjoining building making it a kindred spirit, or sort of a big brother or sister. Perhaps the Spirit of Detroit statue to the south was instrumental in exercising some zeitgeist on John Burgee.

AN ENGLISH writer, John GLOB, exclaimed upon viewing the World Fair of 1933 in Chicago: "... that (something) is always slightly bewildering to an English mind advanced to the belief that in America new ideas have a better chance of life than anywhere else." He also relabeled the fair, which was called "a Century of Progress" to "Century of Safety First upon Progress."

In a similar vein, architectural precedent has again repeated itself in the automobile center of the world, the reputed purveyor of public taste. Post-modernism has been described as artistic novelty or gimmickry by critics. Perhaps they were right. In our aerodynamic, industrial technological society we are deserving of newer forms.

Dale Northup is a college professor and architectural historian.

By Robin Gaines
special writer

The state is no longer accepting applications for participation in its Home Ownership Savings Trust program because of the volume of applications.

Since January, the state treasurer's office has received more than 2,000 applications, according to Lynn Ryeus, public affairs assistant.

"We don't know how many participants in the program we actually have until we start receiving payments, but the response has been fantastic," she said.

Proposed by Gov. James Blanchard last year, HOST will allow a savings program to provide a down payment toward the purchase of a house for a first-time buyer. Buyers will be able to pre-select the value of the home they wish to purchase and the amount of down payment they want to save for in a specified number of years. Once the figures are determined, participants will make monthly payments to the state. The

state, in turn, will invest the money in state-backed bonds.

The bonds will have a variable interest rate guaranteed to equal or exceed the annual increase in Michigan housing prices, and the interest income is tax-exempt. Participants can withdraw their savings at any time without penalty.

The program is similar to the Michigan Education Trust, which allows residents to save for their children's college education.

ONE OF THE chief criticisms leveled against HOST when it was introduced was that Michigan taxpayers would have to bail out the program if the treasury department's predictions about housing inflation and rates of return on bonds were incorrect.

The state is anticipating a 5-percent yearly increase in the cost of a home and an annual rate of return on the bonds of 7.5 percent. Some real estate experts believe housing will increase more than 5 percent per year, thus using up the \$40 million in bonds the state has set aside

HOST applications placed on hold

for the HOST program sooner than expected.

In 1988, Michigan voters approved the issuance of \$800 million in bonds for environmental cleanup and recreational purposes. A portion of these bonds, about 5 percent, are reserved for participants in the HOST program.

The treasurer's office is compiling statistics from the 2,000-plus applications it has received to get a better

idea of whom the program should be targeted toward in the future, Ryeus said. So far, it does not seem that applicants are concentrated in any one section of the state.

After current applications are processed and payment schedules are begun, the treasurer's office will decide when the next application process will begin.

For more information, call the HOST hotline at 1-800-642-4178.

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