

Bright festival . . .

By DAN McCOSH

One facet of good architecture is the ability to turn mundane, necessary details into a part of an aesthetic whole.

In 1967, the Perkins and Will partnership, in association with Giffels and Rossetti, took the mundane problem of finding your keys in a darkened parking lot and created a landmark in the northwest Detroit suburbs.

They designed 975 glittering gas lights, illuminating the acres of asphalt necessary to serve a new commuter college. The result was a shimmering summertime display for passing motorists on I-696.

Short of gas, with the display unnering an energy-conscious public,

half of the lights have been turned off.

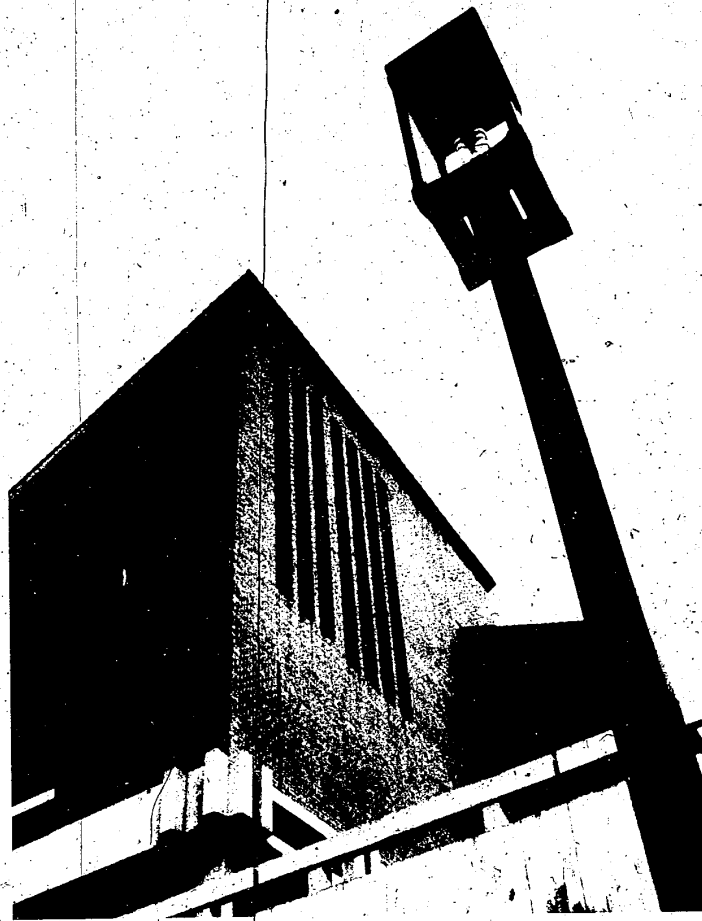
BUT THE campus still holds a "gas light festival" once a year. Beginning May 17, and continuing for three days, there are concerts, films, theater, carnival and helicopter rides.

This year, the university will feature a Farmington sesquicentennial theme.

Built on a 154-acre site, with nearly a half million square feet of building area, the university accommodates 7,000 students.

Aesthetic gestures such as the gas lights may be disappearing as the public belt is tightened.

But at OCC, the spirit behind them remains.



photos by

John Vavrek, of OCC

