

# Agriculture building style still impressive



DETAIL FROM SCOATES

Without a doubt, the most distinctive architecture to be found on the A&M campus is that of the agriculture buildings of the 1920s and 30s.

The observer can discover a multitude of animal heads and skulls, ears of corn, sheafs of grain, cornucopias overflowing with fruits and vegetables and assorted boll weevils, bees, owls and rodents, each carefully carved on the buildings' facades.

Agriculture buildings originally dominated the eastern part of campus, the "outback" as it was called when A&M's main entrance faced the railroad tracks. Barns and other animal shelters were clustered on what is now the golf course and polo field.

That situation has since been reversed and the barns, stables and farms now stretch west to Easterwood Airport and the Brazos River. The stark, new concrete structures of the West Campus will soon comprise the agriculture department's academic center on campus.

Still standing, however (fortunately), in the middle of the main campus is the Animal Husbandry Pavilion, built in 1917 at a cost of \$49,000. Now used mostly for warehouse and storage purposes, its 9,600-square foot arena still hosts animal judgments and livestock auctions. Most of the building's prop-

osed architectural details were omitted for lack of funds, but a few columns and arches give it a hint of the Romanesque style.

The Agriculture Building, located east of the Library, was constructed in 1922 as the crowning jewel in the developing agriculture quadrangle. It was designed in the classical order that was the faddish architectural mode of the era.

Limestone Ionic columns were tacked to the front of the gray brick building and other classical pediments and details found their way into the design.

In the early 1930s, two buildings—Animal Industries and Scoates Hall—were constructed across an open green space from each other, east of the Agriculture Building along Spence Street.

It was in these two buildings that Ag-architecture flourished.

The exterior trim and entranceways are decorated with various agrarian features. The pests of the farmer—boll weevils, rodents and assorted insects—are depicted in concrete, crawling around near the base of the building.

The "good guys" of agriculture, such as owls, horses, cattle and sheep, can be found higher up on the buildings' facades. Pediments over the doorways feature corn, grain and other field products, along with sculpted serving platters and Latin phrases.

Large WPA-like murals of agricultural scenes dominate the labs and classrooms inside. The doors, lamps and stair railings are crafted of detailed ironwork. Ceramic tiles can be found throughout the buildings.

Rather than imitating the Greek, Roman and Chinese styles of millenniums before, these buildings reflected agricultural education at the A. & M. College of Texas. Its "southwestern motif" was not one contrived by a New York designer.

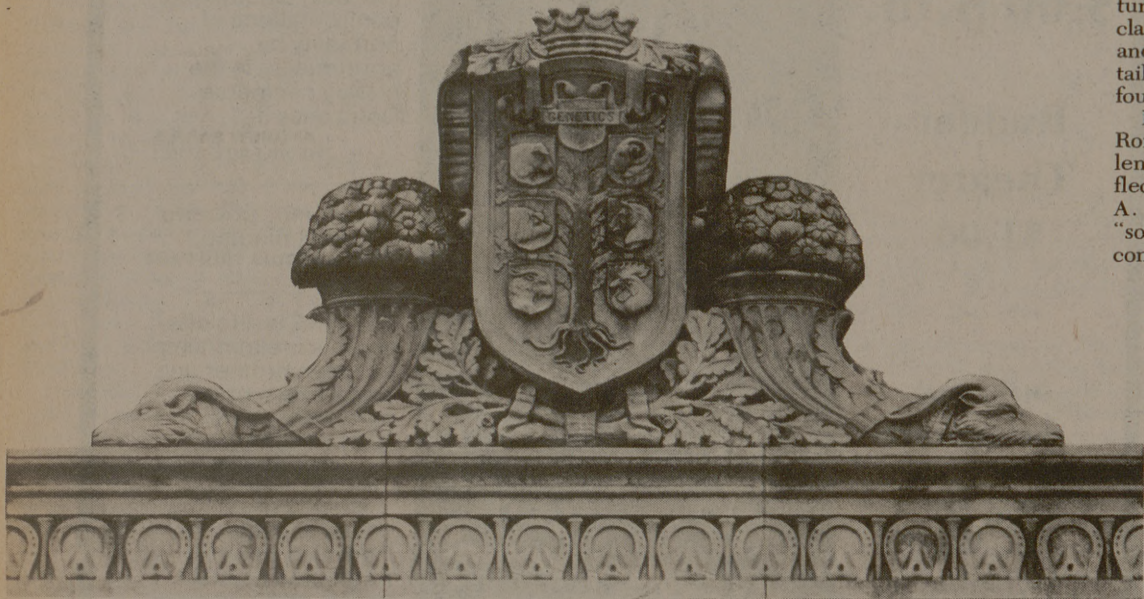
— Jim Peters



ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PAVILION



SCOATES SOUTH ENTRANCE



AGRICULTURE PEDIMENT FROM ANIMAL INDUSTRIES BUILDING

Photos by Douglas Winship

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