

NorthPark-Houston to include art, theater

Architect plans giant 'mall of the future'

United Press International
DALLAS — The shopping center of the future will have museum-quality art and live theater entertainment. It will have a central package pickup point so customers won't have to carry merchandise around with them. It will have an electronic parking control system to direct motorists to the nearest available parking spot. Above all, it will have sales personnel who are helpful and friendly. These ideas — and many, many more — come from

the fertile mind of Raymond Nasher, who moved to the forefront of shopping center developers in the 1960s when he put up the extremely successful NorthPark center in Dallas. NorthPark, completed in 1965, won the "Design of the Decade" award from the American Institute of Architects and is one of the most frequently copied shopping malls ever built. Over the years, Nasher has been involved in the development of about a dozen shopping centers. Now he is in the planning stage of NorthPark-

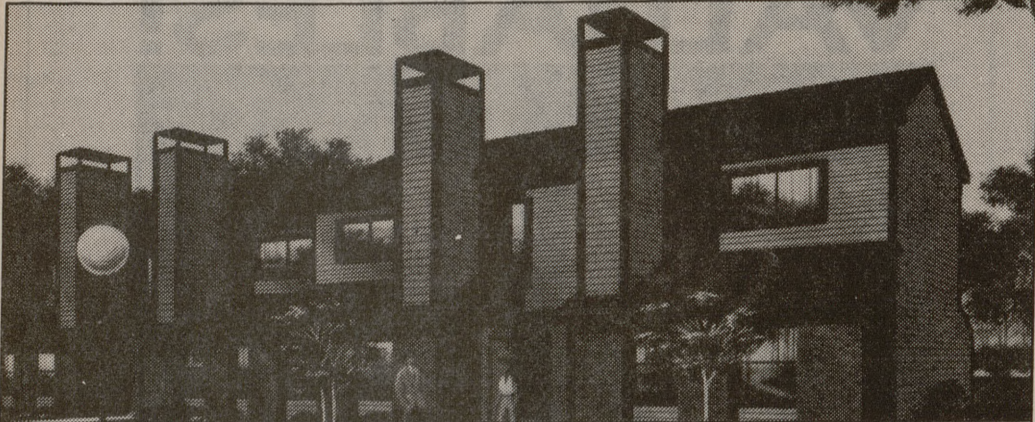
Houston, a big new center that will have more than 150 shops around four department store anchors. NorthPark-Houston will be a 73-acre part of Greens Crossing, a \$910 million development at the intersection of Interstate 45 and North Belt that will include 4.2 million square feet of office space, two high-rise luxury hotels, 4,000 garden apartment and condominium units, and 300,000 square feet of service-distribution facilities. Friendswood Development Co., the land development subsidiary of

Exxon Corp., is putting the project together and picked the Raymond D. Nasher Co. to do the shopping center. Planning for the project, Nasher said, is based on the needs and requirements of consumers, and what should be done to make the development more pleasing to consumers. Nasher's many ideas on how new shopping centers should fit into the life of the consumer may make NorthPark-Houston the most customer-oriented shopping center in the world by the time it is opened in 1985. "It will be an entertainment and cultural center, which normally shopping centers have not been," Nasher said. "Theater will be an important ingredient. In NorthPark we created the

Dallas Repertory Theater. In Houston we should have not only a repertory theater, but I think it's time to make a linkage and connection with the New York theater." Nasher envisions stage shows opening in his NorthPark-Houston for tryout runs before they open on Broadway, much as they do now in Hartford and Boston. The center will also contain movie theaters. In addition to theater, Nasher wants his new center to house a meeting hall for public forums and debates. He grew up in Boston and he recalls the role of that city's Jordan Hall. "Every Sunday night there was either a speech or a debate between two of the great minds of the world," he told an interviewer. He believes in live entertainment and thinks such live performances can add vitality to a shopping center. "There is still a heck of a lot of difference between seeing a play in New York in person or seeing

a version of a play on the tube," he said. "Or seeing a Henry Kissinger in a live debate with a William Buckley or someone." Furthermore, Nasher believes debates and speeches given in his performance hall could be sent by cable television to other parts of the city. And closed-circuit screening facilities would exist to show audiences in NorthPark-Houston events going on elsewhere in the world. "We would have the type of staging and filming facilities so if Yves St. Laurent is having a showing in Paris, we could have a direct connection with that in NorthPark-Houston," he said. If a performance at another theater or hall is sold out, Nasher said, it could be shown by closed circuit television at his facility. Nasher is planning three exhibition areas in NorthPark-Houston. One would be for permanent display of museum-quality art. Another would be a greenhouse, offering shoppers a restful area amid flowers and trees. A third would be for changing exhibitions of almost anything that happens, whatever is interesting. Nasher has strong feelings about the quality of service customers get in retail establishments. "We've defaulted on services, meaning the relationship between the customer and the clerk has evaporated," Nasher said. He feels that, as merchandising technology has expanded, the old customer-first atmosphere of retailing has diminished. "One of the things we will say to tenants is that we would like you to explore with us, research, on the education of employees," he said. Nasher thinks research can be done on how to create a sense of rapport between clerks and shoppers. "We hope to get retailers to

understand that this is a thing that we are doing. NorthPark-Houston is being done at Galleria shopping centers," he said. "We're thinking very frankly that major retailers are hungry ideas." To make shopping NorthPark-Houston, Nasher will relieve customers of the burden of carrying packages. Instead, a delivery or concierge team will take packages throughout the center to a central pickup point. Customers can drive to this point and packages will be loaded in the car. "Now, when you go to a store and buy something, you become a carrier," Nasher said. "If the purchase is large, the customer will carry it. Once the customer gets home, he or she may drive home rather than take shopping, Nasher said. Nasher thinks the same conveyor system can be used by tenants to handle trash. Trash can be compacted and sent to a central pickup point. Nasher also is the ally of a shopper who avoids shopping centers because of parking problems. He is developing an electronic system that will direct each car to the nearest available space. Traffic controllers in towers to oversee the situation and the control also will provide constant monitoring lot security so customers can check for their cars. "We'll try to make it a place where people won't lose their hiccups," he said. New ideas in interior design now are being developed into the center. "Most shopping centers are Xerox copies of one another," Nasher said. NorthPark-Houston will



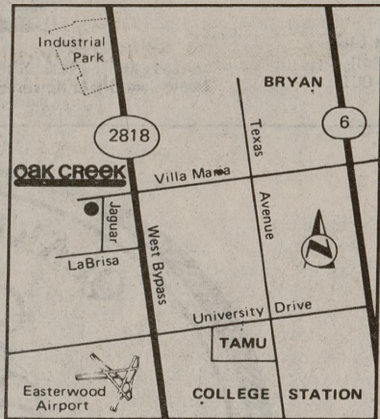
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San Antonio gays plan panel, picnic

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — Gay Pride Week will be observed by the city's gay community for the first time, the San Antonio Gay Alliance has announced. However, officials of the group said Monday that the activities will include a panel discussion and quiet picnic instead of marches like those in larger cities.

In years past, San Antonio gays have joined marches in Dallas and Houston, but decided this year that the number of acknowledged homosexuals and lesbians in San Antonio is large enough to celebrate at home.

Three thousand gays marched in Dallas Sunday and another march is planned in Houston this weekend to observe Gay Pride Week, commemorating three days of rioting that broke out when a gay bar in New York was raided in 1969. "We're very fortunate in San

Antonio that the gay community is not officially and oppressed by the government," said Michael Stevens, who publishes a newsmagazine for the city's five military bases. They are terrified of discrimination, Toby Johnson of the Alliance said. Stevens said, however, more and more San Antonio gays are making themselves known, especially in the professional ranks. His newsmagazine publishes a list of businesses owned by gays, including estate and insurance offices. Names several doctors interested in gay health care.

"San Antonio's gay community, like the rest of San Antonio, wants to build a better, livelier city," Stevens said. "We don't feel it's necessary to have public demonstrations of anger."

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