

# AGGIElife

## Aggieland Architecture

### A&M campus buildings display both uniqueness and uniformity

By **STUART HUTSON**  
*The Battalion*

For the first 10 years of its existence, the college now known as Texas A&M University was composed of only two Victorian-style buildings and a series of crudely built wooden shacks.

Back then, the two red-bricked buildings held all the functions of the college — from dormitory residences for students and faculty to the kitchens and classrooms.

Today, A&M comprises more than 100 buildings and boasts a series of architectural designs ranging from early Victorian to modern, yet still maintains a simplistic and somewhat "bland" atmosphere that screams back to its early beginning as a military based institution.

"The A&M campus is unique in its overall atmosphere," said Guillermo Vasquez de Velasco, coordinator for A&M's master's degree program in architecture. "There are buildings with different design aspects, but it has almost an entirely uniform feeling that is low-key."

Vasquez de Velasco said the campus, with its uniform color scheme and lack of exterior design, follows the "rational" idea that often accompanies military-style architectural planning.

"Almost all of A&M was built during the modern era of architecture, which began at the beginning of the century," Vasquez de Velasco said. "This encompasses ideas such as 'less is more,' but also allows for some deviation for fun. For example, Norman Rockwell had these wonderful cantilevered buildings that worked, but didn't need to be that way. A&M kept the down-to-earth ideas, which are often related to militarism, but very rarely incorporates the extras."

David Chapman, Texas A&M archivist, said the "institutional tan" coloration of A&M buildings was probably first used around the time the Academic Building was built.

"They were first going to build just a quadrangle where all the buildings were close to the same color," Chapman said. "From there, they just kept branching out."

Vasquez de Velasco said that A&M has what he calls a "good human or pedestrian scaling," meaning that the buildings are shorter and spaced well apart with a lot of foliage to mask the buildings.

"This basically means that you can feel comfortable walking near the buildings," Vasquez de Velasco said. "They do not overshadow or tower dominantly over you. You feel comfortable around them and walking next to them. In a big city where everything around you is huge and close together, you are fine driving in your car. But the moment you get out, you feel dwarfed."

The low-key presence of the A&M campus, while not as immediately impressive as other campuses with outrageous build-

ings, may serve important functions for the students and faculty of A&M, as well as for the surrounding community.

"Bryan and College Station are smaller communities to begin with," Vasquez de Velasco said. "So, a university as big as A&M may just overwhelm both of them with its tremendous size. The low-key construction of the campus doesn't impose itself on the landscape, and thus helps it blend in better with the surrounding area."

Ultimately, the University has taken on its present incarnation because it follows the needs and wants of its residents.

"One of the most important rules of architecture is that the form of the buildings follow the functioning of those inside them," Vasquez de Velasco said. "The faculty and students here are probably most comfortable with the design. It reflects them and who they are. I purposely am avoiding the word 'conservative,' because that is not what the students and faculty are. But they are rational and traditional."

Although they may all be the same color, Chapman would like to remind students that the buildings are definitely not identical.

"The architectural design of A&M is anything but uniform," he said. "A&M never kept with a single style. They built whatever was popular at the time."

These styles include the ultra-modern layout of the new library annex, to the Beau Arts (a French combination of classical and Victorian) design of the Academic Building, to the Romanesque design of the Pavilion.

"All you have to do to tell the ages of

the buildings is to walk around the campus and take a look," Chapman said. "Some have been around since close to the beginning, like the Academic Building, while others scream '70s, like the biochemistry building."

Two buildings with design differences that are probably apparent to everyone are the Student Recreation Center and the Langford Architecture Center.

"The Rec Center is probably the most impressive example of architecture recently build on the campus," Vasquez de Velasco said. "The elements on the massive entryway are carried from the outside to the inside, creating a sense that you are not completely in an enclosed environment."

Vasquez de Velasco said the architecture building itself also holds many interesting design features.

"This building was actually designed to be a learning tool to those inside of it," he said. "It contains many features of architecture not found elsewhere on the campus that students may observe and learn from. One of the more interesting features is the large atrium that you don't really find in any other campus building."

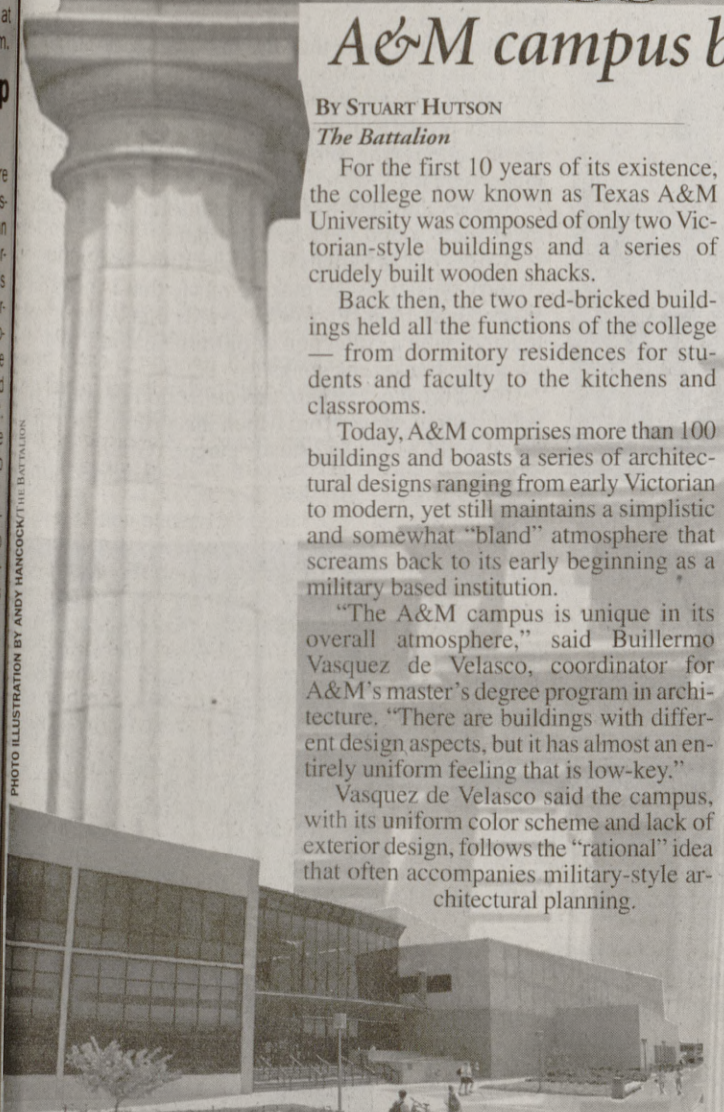


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ANDY HANCOCK FOR THE BATTALION

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JITTERBUG I	SUN	7-8:30
JITTERBUG I	SUN	5:30-7
C&W II	SUN	7:30-9

\* Dates/times will be determined by Open House - Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>  
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**What time:** anywhere from 7:30-9:30  
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**News in Brief**

**Student Senate**  
begins today

marks the first filing day for members interested in vying for election on the Student Senate. Interested freshmen must have their student I.D. to the Student Center, where a table will be set up for the hopefuls to fill out an application and pay a \$20 filing fee and a \$20 deposit. The election will be set up in the MSC from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday.

**Senior elections** will be held on Sept. 5 and 27. The winner will be announced on Sept. 27 at 10 p.m.

**Scholarship**  
established

and friends of Bonfire Jim Kerlee Jr. have established the Timothy Doran Leadership Scholarship at Texas A&M. Funds provided by his parents, Tim and Janice Kerlee, total more than \$25,000. The \$25,000 will be matched by scholarships provided by H.R. Bright '43, bringing the total scholarship endowment to \$50,000.

Scholarship will be available to incoming freshmen who are members of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, with preference given to out-of-state students majoring in engineering.

Bright '17, was the youngest member of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire. A member of the 16 in the Corps, Kerlee earned several high honors in Germantown, Pa. that helped him earn the cadet's Leadership Award at A&M.

Bright '16 raised money for events such as a date and donated \$1,000 to the scholarship fund.

According to a University release, the Kerlees plan to establish the scholarship as a permanent memorial to their son that would reward values and spirit.