

# The Design Partnership, Inc.

There are four senior partners — Bruce Beck, Hayward Blake, Lindell “Bud” Mabrey and Henry Robertz — in The Design Partnership. Jack Weiss is an associate partner and Ken Kaiser is a junior partner. The total staff numbers 26 and they operate out of offices in Chicago and Evanston.

With that much description, The Design Partnership sounds like a normally-structured design firm with the capability of handling very large projects. Sometimes they do. But there is something unique about the organization. It is also four more modestly-sized firms that can operate individually or in tandem: Bruce Beck Design Associates, Blake & Weiss, Mabrey/Kaiser Design, and Henry Robertz Design.

All four are highly reputed Chicago design groups with histories that range from nine to twenty-nine years.

Between them they have expertise and experience in every area of design with a considerable overlap in most areas. Applying a little math to the individual biographies, one comes up with a total of 131 years of design experience for the six partners, not counting education time. Each of the four senior partners is a member of the prestigious *27 Chicago Designers*.\*

The Design Partnership was formed in November, 1968. Each of the partners had already been operating out of space in the same building on West Wacker Drive. They had become friends and were used to bouncing ideas off each other. No one takes credit for first suggesting they form the partnership. “It just seemed a natural evolution from being friends to being partners.”

Their first group venture was the designing of a complete social sciences program, “Investigating Man’s World,” for Scott Foresman. It was a multidisciplinary program exploring the complex interrelationships of geography, history, anthropology, economics, political science and sociology. Many systems of orientation and relationship had to be conceived to organize the material. The Design

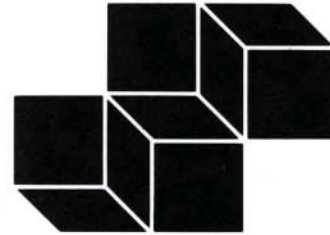
Partnership did the covers, page layouts, art and photographs (locating and selecting existing photography as well as original photography) for three complete books. The publisher executed the balance of the series following the format developed by the partners. The success of this project led to other assignments from educational publishers.

Being in neighboring offices allowed a workable participation in mutual projects and a fairly free exchange of ideas and critiques, but it was sometimes short of the ideal aspired to in their founding concept. They began considering a more integrated working arrangement with shared space and facilities. A shift from Chicago to Evanston was also deemed desirable since all of the partners lived to the north and commuting could be minimized. For some it could be cut to a walk or a bike ride.

They found an interesting location, a whole floor of a triangular-shaped building that was primarily one large open space. The former tenant was a clothing store. It had 6,000 square feet and a 16-foot ceiling. A carefully thought-out interior design plan turned this into a really handsome, functional working space with all of the amenities an artist/designer could want. (A floor plan is shown on page 32.) They share photographic

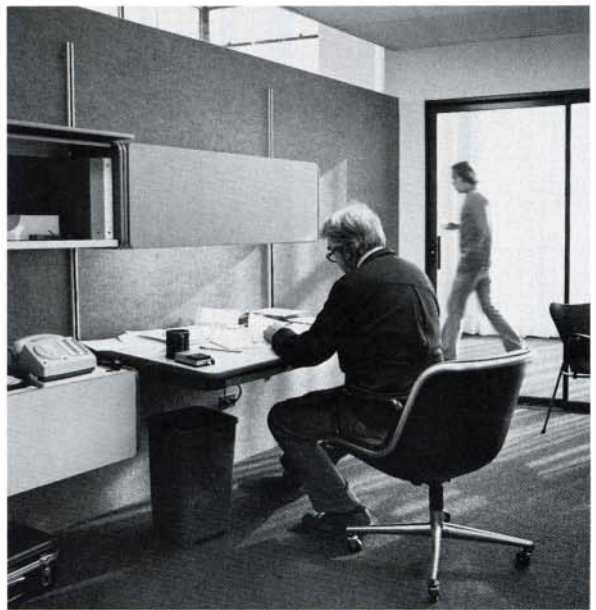
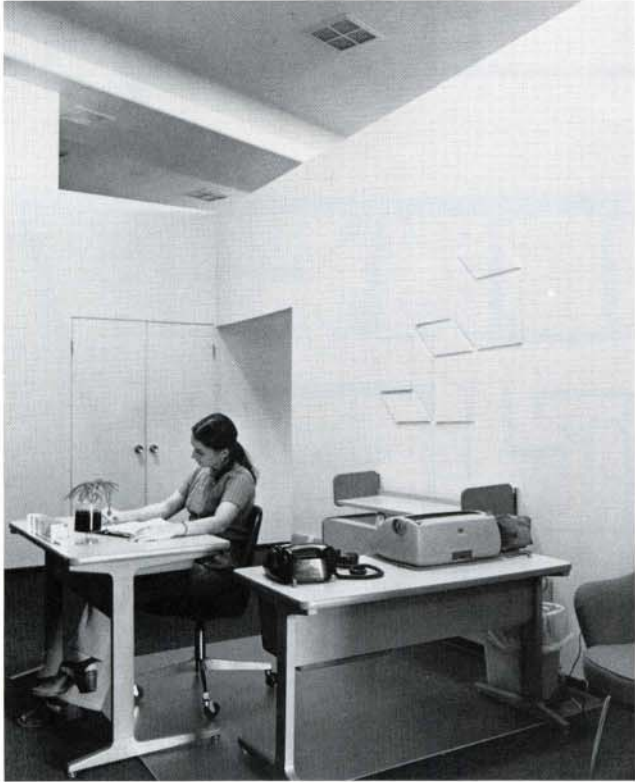
\**27 Chicago Designers* was formed in 1935 when a group of artist/designers got together and decided it was wasteful for everyone to send out promotional literature individually. Instead they each prepared and printed a piece to standard size and bound them into a book for distribution. This procedure has been repeated annually and the 30th volume is now in circulation. There were 27 involved in that initial mailing and the number has been held to that figure. When a member dies or leaves the Chicago design scene, the remaining members elect a successor.

This works out well with the ethical standards that prevail in Chicago. You may respond to a request from someone else’s client, but it is frowned upon when a designer solicits business where a known client-designer relationship exists.

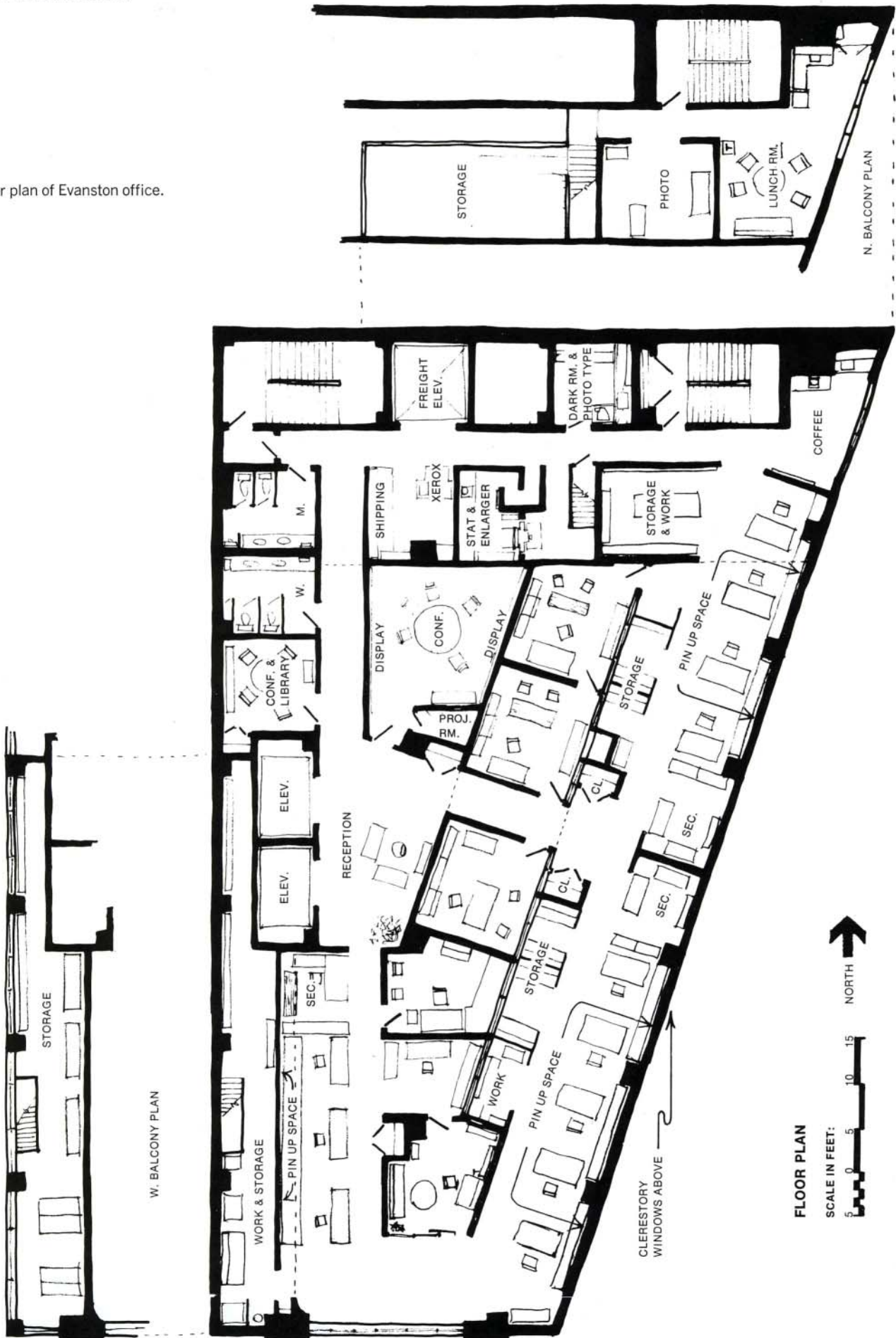


Mark for The Design Partnership designed by Henry Robertz.

Right: Evanston office.




Floor plan of Evanston office.



First project of The Design Partnership, a program of multidisciplinary studies developed by Scott Foresman. It is a conceptually-structured approach to the social sciences designed to create more understanding and meaning for the subjects by exploring the complex interrelationships of the different disciplines. Organizing the material required systems of orientation and relationship such as color codes established for each discipline. Consistent position and typographic style was established for unit divisions, headings and marginal outline notes all applied within a grid system. The partnership did three complete 400-plus-page books including cover design, page layout, art and photography. The publisher executed the remainder to the established format.

**EVENTS IN COMMON**

**Did all of the cantons of Switzerland become part of the nation at the same time?**




Flag of Switzerland

Like the states of the United States, the cantons of Switzerland did not all become part of the nation at the same time. In the year 1291, people from three mountain areas met beside Lake Lucerne and took an oath to protect one another. These areas, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden, formed the first three cantons of the Swiss nation. Later, people in areas around the first cantons formed other cantons and joined the nation. Around these newer cantons, still others were formed at later times. Today, there are 22 cantons in Switzerland.

Did the first three cantons of Switzerland have a coastal location, like the location of the first states of the United States? Do the cantons that were admitted to Switzerland during each time period form regions of cantons? What is the relative location of the other regions to the original region of cantons?

Switzerland—Historical Regions



Key

- Three original cantons 1291
- Joined confederation from 1332-1353
- Joined confederation from 1481-1513
- Joined confederation from 1803-1815

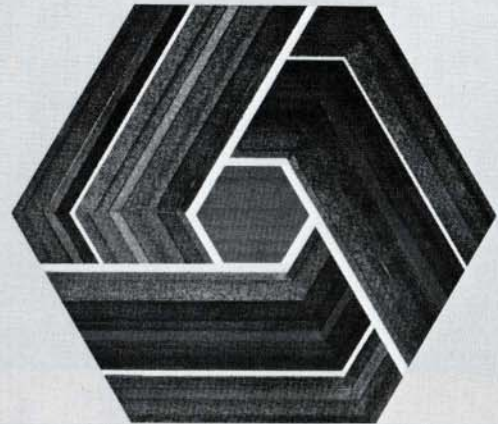
scale of miles 0 20 40  
1 inch equals 40 miles

306 Study of a Foreign Region: History/Concept: Events in Common

Investigating Man's World

anthropology  
economics  
geography  
history  
political science  
sociology

**Regional Studies**



**A STATE'S NATURAL SETTING IS A FACTOR IN ITS HISTORY**


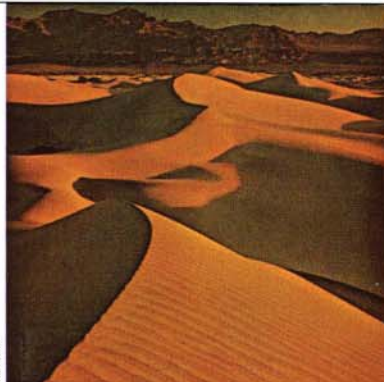
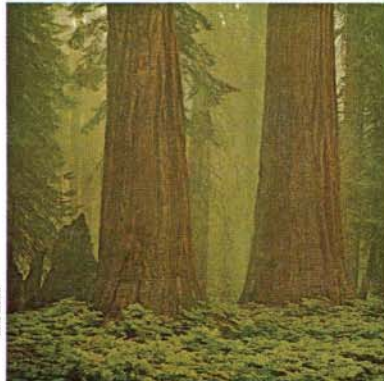
The natural setting is a factor in the history of every state. It may have been a factor in the growth of a state's population or the kinds of occupations that are carried on in that state.

The history of California is an example of the way a state's history can be related to its natural setting. The natural setting of California differs widely from place to place. It is made up of mountains, plains, and rolling hills. It has forests and deserts. It has fog in some places, and sunshine in many other places. Some places in California are cool and moist, and others are hot and dry.

In the early 1900's moviemakers were attracted by the natural setting of California. They wanted to make use of the sunny climate and different kinds of scenery for their films. In California, the moviemakers could find many kinds of scenery that looked like places in other parts of the world.

The motion-picture industry has continued to be important in Southern California. Hollywood is still the motion-picture capital of the world. The picture below shows a movie being filmed in California. The moviemakers are taking advantage of the natural setting.

Has the natural setting of your state been an important factor in its history?

The climate and natural vegetation of California differs widely from one place in the state to another.

Death Valley is very hot and dry. It receives less than two inches of precipitation each year. Only a few desert shrubs grow in this area.

In the redwood forests along the northwestern coast of California, it is very cool and moist. Precipitation averages almost 80 inches each year. The forest floor is thick with ferns and mosses.

168 Study of a State: History/Concept: Natural Factors

## DESIGN PARTNERSHIP

Bud Mabrey, Hank Robertz, Hayward Blake.  
Seated: Bruce Beck, Jack Weiss. (Ken Kaiser not shown.)

Chicago office.



and reproduction facilities containing all new equipment. The furniture is some of the best of available contemporary design or it has been custom built. The tall ceiling is soundproofed. Coupling that with carpeting over all the floor, they have eliminated any potential noise problem. In some areas the carpeting continues up the wall for pin up space. Lighting is excellent. There are reception, conference and library areas. There's even a kitchen and dining area for entertaining or for restful lunches. And there's a separate coffee area that is also excellent for girl watching as coeds hurry up the street to Northwestern.

The spaces for each of the partner's production staff are located in a way that it is easy to blend forces for a mutual project, or one to work with members of another's staff to relieve the pressure of peak workloads.



At the time the move was being planned, Henry Robertz faced a difficult decision, one that he admits caused him to change his mind several times. Though he actually lives farther north than any of the partners and would benefit from the shortened commute, virtually all of his clients were located in the opposite direction. Another problem was that, if all four partners moved to the new space, some of the facilities would have to be located on another floor of the building with a resulting decrease in the overall working efficiency. He decided to remain at West Wacker, but he also embarked on a remodeling program utilizing part of his former space and a part of what was vacated by the other partners. He now has 2200 square feet for his staff of seven. Though the flow of personnel and projects to and from Evanston is not as easy, it still can be accomplished. One positive aspect of the decision is his conference room that is available for the other partners and their Chicago-based clients.

R. S. C.

