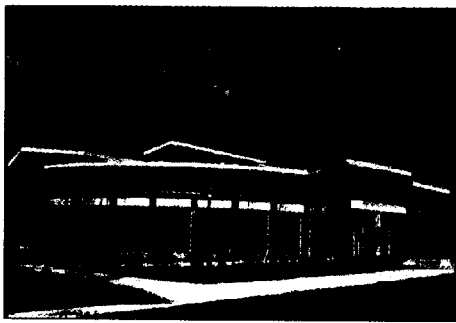


Accent



Frostburg State University's Performance Arts Center is among the governor's many academic projects.



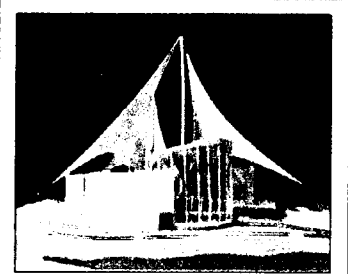
Oriole Park at Camden Yards, which has been universally applauded, tops the list of Governor Schaefer's projects.



Light rail has earned mixed reactions from riders and critics.



The University of Maryland Performing Arts Center is still in the planning stage.



Sailwinds Visitor Center in Cambridge shows an interest in whimsy.



The "bounty of Maryland" fountain is adjacent to the Governor's Mansion.



The \$16 million science center at St. Mary's College is called William Donald Schaefer Hall.

Schaefer's ideas of how buildings should look dot state's landscape

By Edward Gunts
Sun Staff Writer

When William Donald Schaefer leaves his job as governor on Wednesday, he'll also relinquish a second job he carved out for himself — master architect of Maryland.

Although the governor has taken considerable ribbing for having an "edifice complex," few people know how deeply involved he has been in making design decisions that shape the buildings Marylanders see and use every day.

Few have observed the zeal with which he scrutinizes plans for the latest municipal plaza or rest stop or bike path, or his visceral reactions when he doesn't like what he sees.

After reviewing a de-

signer's plan last year to adorn the plaza leading to the World Trade Center in Baltimore with a giant globe, for example, he couldn't contain his displeasure. "That's about as exciting as a bucket of warm spit," he fumed afterward.

The result, unveiled on New Year's Eve, was a \$341,000 lighting system that turned the entire building into a beacon.

Aesthetic confrontations can be unpleasant, but they get the point across: For eight years, Governor Schaefer has been the man in charge, the one to please.

Since taking office in January 1987, he has blanketed the state with hundreds of buildings, bridges and other structures, representing an



Mr. Schaefer's term ends Wednesday.

See GOVERNOR, 5D

The Cornerstone of his Administration

GOVERNOR: One Schaefer legacy to Maryland is a matter of (mostly

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investment of more than \$1 billion in public funds. And state buildings planned during his tenure will be opening around Maryland through 1999 — at least.

It could be argued that the buildings created during the Schaefer era constitute his most lasting legacy. More than any of his predecessors, he has changed the face of Maryland.

"Every corner of the state, we touched," he boasts. "We took a state that had been sort of sitting still for eight years and enlivened it."

Tangible symbols

Any list of Mr. Schaefer's greatest achievements in the realm of design would be headed by Oriole Park at Camden Yards, the fan-friendly ballpark that wiped out 50 years of bad stadium design and launched a national trend toward center city ballparks. It would also include some of the sophisticated academic buildings that have appeared on state campuses, such as Peter Bohlin's crescent-shaped student housing at St. Mary's College. The Schaefer administration completed Interstate 97, one of the most beautiful and fun-to-drive roads in the state.

There have been disappointments, too: the U.S. Naval Academy Bridge over the Severn River, three times higher than a span leading into historic Annapolis ought to be; the controversial makeover of the Governor's Mansion, in which rooms of priceless Maryland furniture and artifacts were dismantled in favor of a low-brow, Archie Bunker look; and the flawed central light rail line, which nearly finished off Howard Street in downtown Baltimore by eliminating cars from key portions of it.

But mere lists of best and worst can't come close to capturing Mr. Schaefer's architectural influence. Despite his reputation as a bricks-and-mortar politician, Mr. Schaefer's greatest impact lies in the ideas he promoted and themes he stressed about the urban landscape, rather than with any individual structures that took shape during his watch or bear his name.

What sets Mr. Schaefer apart as a politician-builder is the way he views construction projects of all kinds. To him, buildings are never constructed merely to meet functional requirements. He believes they also have symbolic value. Inherent meaning that could help him move ahead with his agenda.

"He always understood that people need to see things — that in order for people to respond to a vision they need a tangible manifestation of that vision," said Sandy Hillman, an advertising executive and former promotions director for Baltimore. "Otherwise, it may be too abstract for people to understand."

Baltimore precedent

Much of this thinking was clearly ingrained in him during his years as mayor of Baltimore, when he developed a reputation as the mayor who fills potholes. When he went to Annapolis in 1987, he took that activity one step further. Instead of filling potholes with asphalt, he filled vacant land with new state-funded buildings. The sense of gratification was the same. Only the scale and nature of the project had changed.

Baltimore served as a precedent in another way. Mr. Schaefer's greatest triumph as a builder came with a series of blockbuster projects

that opened in rapid succession during the late 1970s and early 1980s: The Convention Center, Harborplace, the National Aquarium, the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, the Metro subway system.

That string of openings showed how physical development can alter not only the look of a city or region, but its psyche. In many respects, Mr. Schaefer's career as a builder has often seemed to be a continual effort to return to that summer day in 1980 when half a million people turned out for the debut of Harborplace.

On the state level, though, Mr. Schaefer couldn't pull off the same feats. Concentrating on one area with that level of intensity would lead to criticism that he was neglecting others. So instead of focusing on structures for a particular part of the state, he adopted themes he could promote statewide, often involving issues that required new structures to be built. Those included:

■ **Encouraging tourism.** The \$150 million Baltimore Convention Center expansion is the leading example of Governor Schaefer's desire to draw visitors.

■ **Rediscovering the waterfront.** A new municipal building for state office workers supported Frederick's efforts to turn Carroll Creek into a regional amenity.

■ **Preserving history.** Clocker's Fancy in St. Mary's City and the Odorite Building and President Street Station in Baltimore, are among the historic structures saved.

■ **Improving connections.** The Reach the Beach campaign, with its new bridge over the Kent Narrows, was one of many transportation projects designed to link the state's attractions.

These themes allowed him to continue his two-step strategy of setting an agenda for progress and then giving it a physical form that constituents could understand and applaud. The buildings constructed during his years in office, in turn, stand as a record of his vision for Maryland.

The essence of Schaeferism

But for Mr. Schaefer, it was never enough just to carry out projects that embody certain themes. They had to be carried out well. That's where his personal opinions about design came into play.

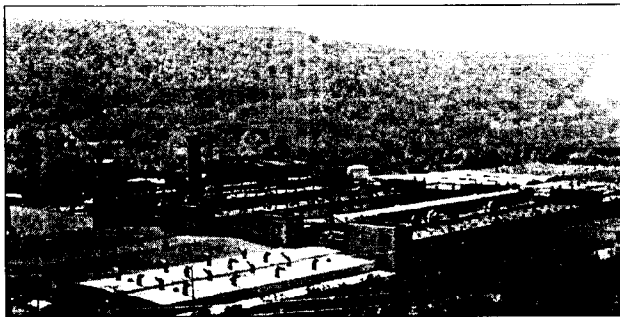
What did he consider good? Certainly not subtlety or elitism. He wanted projects to have popular appeal, to be larger than life. They had to make people happy, excited, proud, or they weren't worth doing.

Mr. Schaefer's views on design have not been shaped by formal education or any known school of thought about the subject. He has always been devoid of intellectual pretension. Rather, he seems to have a sixth sense that tells him what will make people respond.

He is Everyman waiting to be pleased. He doesn't know modernism from classicism. He doesn't concern himself with who's in or out of fashion in the design world. But he knows what he likes. And he figures that if he likes something, others will, too. That's the essence of his style of architecture: Schaeferism.

This from-the-gut approach had both advantages and drawbacks for the design quality of state buildings during the Schaefer era.

In general, the state seemed to fare best when the governor let talented people flourish. Savvy planners for some state-owned college campuses got exceptional work out of local firms such as Ayers Saint



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The former Kelly-Springfield tire plant in Cumberland which once employed hundreds of workers, is now the Riverside Industrial Park.

Gross, Cho Wilks & Benn, and Graham Landscape Architecture, and many out-of-state experts as well. Just about every public campus of higher education is in better shape now than when Mr. Schaefer took office. The programs of Maryland's architectural schools at College Park and Morgan State have improved dramatically as well.

This quest for quality was apparent well beyond college campuses. Mr. Schaefer improved the climate for good design by encouraging agencies to seek out the best possible talent. From the new research labs in Solomons to the Sideling Hill visitors center near Hancock, they did so.

Tight timetables

But the results were sometimes uneven, and the state seemed to fare worst when the governor demanded too much too fast. In many cases, agencies were done in by his Do-It-Now edicts, the tight timetables he set for certain projects.

For months before the Severn River bridge was built, protesters warned that it was out of scale for tiny Annapolis. They proposed neo-traditional design alternatives that were far more in keeping with the

spirit of the state capital. But the governor forged ahead on the grounds that the state could lose federal funds for the project if it waited too long.

Similarly, Maryland's central light rail line falls short of its potential — largely because the state took the short cut of using an existing right-of-way rather than tackling the tougher job of designing a better route.

Sucker for schmaltz

One disconcerting aspect of the governor's reliance on his Everyman instincts is the alarming degree to which he can be a sucker for schmaltz.

He is drawn to kitsch, glitz, whimsy, corn pone — all the superficial frills and doodads that aesthetes consider tacky. This tendency first became apparent during his days as mayor, when the city painted street curbs pink to celebrate "Pink Positive Day." It has always been his way



THE ALMANAC

THIS DATE IN HISTORY:
JAN. 16

In 1547, Ivan the Terrible was crowned czar of Russia.

In 1920, Prohibition began as the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution took effect. (It was later repealed by the 21st Amendment.)

In 1942, actress Carole Lombard, her mother and about 20 other people were killed when their plane crashed near Las Vegas as they were returning from a war-bond promotion tour.

In 1944, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower took command of the Allied Invasion Force in London.

In 1964, the musical "Hello, Dolly!" starring Carol Channing opened on Broadway, beginning a run of 2,844 performances.

In 1979, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi departed Iran for Egypt; he never returned.

In 1991, the White House announced the start of Operation Desert Storm to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. (Because of the time difference, it was early Jan. 17 in the Persian Gulf.)

Associated Press

of creating excitement about public projects.

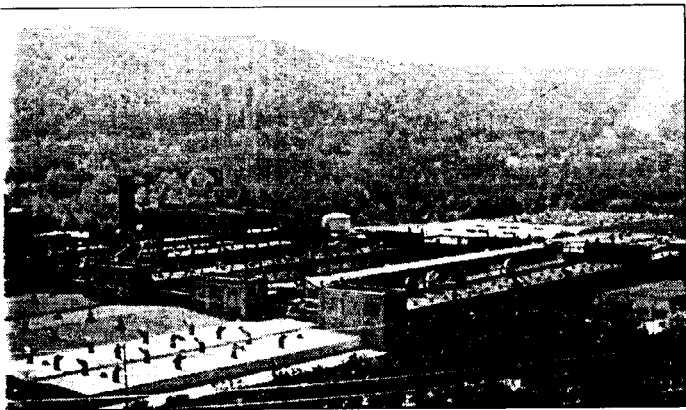
Designers and agency heads eventually figured this out and came in with the geegaws before he even asked for them — a sail-like canopy for the visitor center at Sallwin Park in Cambridge; palm trees and shopping mall atmosphere for a Homer Gudelsky hospital wing in West Baltimore; photos of lacrosse players and black-eyed Susans beside the airport. Even state park garages got banners and bright graphics. Planners knew they were more likely to win funding for a project if it had a Schaeferesque hook.

Yet in the end, the populist instincts that so defy analysis or critical discourse weren't always weaknesses. When it came to winning legislative support for some of the grandest projects, they may have been his greatest strength.

Governor Schaefer figured early on that government was really just an extension of the entertainment business. Others may have pioneered festival markets; he invented festival government.

That's why he wanted a distinctive scoreboard at Camden Yards and new lights on the World Trade Center. That's why he pushed the flock-of-geese sculpture at the airport and the "bounty of Maryland" fountain at the governor's mansion. He wanted to make people think they were someplace special, whenever they happened to be in it.

Why to Maryland is a matter of (mostly) grand design



ASSOCIATED PRESS

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state. And then maybe they'd feel better about state government — and the job he was doing, too.

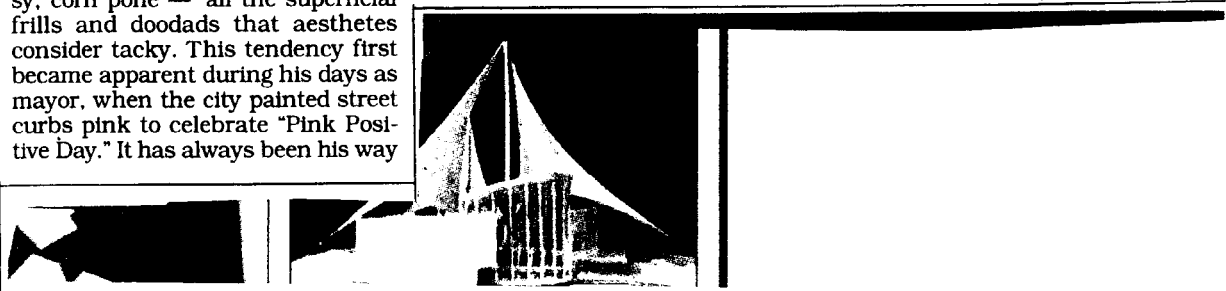
In his efforts to make Maryland festive, Mr. Schaefer paid little attention to architects' resumes or whether a certain commission would cause a stir in the design world. Architects were certainly encouraged to do their best work, but he didn't care if they were acclaimed by their peers.

His indifference was exemplified at a black-tie banquet in Washington in 1990. The American Institute of Architects held it to honor Great Britain's Prince Charles, who had flown to the States to give an address about modern architecture. Anybody who was anybody in the field was in attendance at the National Building Museum that night.

Governor Schaefer and companion Hilda Mae Snoops shared a VIP table in the front with movie star Tom Selleck and his wife, Jillie Mack. Mr. Schaefer and Mrs. Snoops made it through the salad course and entree.

But just as Prince Charles marched into the room to deliver his speech, they ducked out. Mrs. Snoops had had a long day, the governor explained on his way to the limo. Her feet hurt and she wanted to go home. So much for architectural edification.

Mr. Schaefer didn't need some prince to tell him what to think. He had a long drive ahead. Big day tomorrow. Time to move on.



THE ALMANAC

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3

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