

# UC Berkeley

## Places

### Title

Allied Bank Tower at Fountain Place [The Inhabited Landscape: An Exhibition]

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4xd643x1>

### Journal

Places, 4(4)

### ISSN

0731-0455

### Author

Kiley, Daniel Urban

### Publication Date

1988-01-15

Peer reviewed

# Allied Bank Tower at Fountain Place

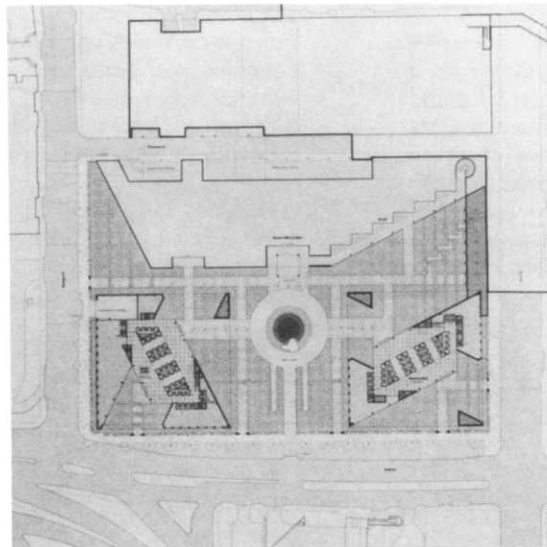
## Jury Comments

The development of American cities is characterized at present by a sharp decline in the construction of publicly funded outdoor spaces. The task of creating vibrant, elegant, and civil streets, parks and plazas has fallen, to a large extent, to the private sector.

Allied Bank Tower at Fountain Place in Dallas thrusts a world of Magritte strangeness into the center of Dallas, commenting in a sophisticated way on the total disruption of the natural order in that place and creating a fantasy of waterfalls, isolated trees and bubbling geysers that is as hard to locate in the world of commonplace reality as are the shimmering mirrors of the building from which it withdraws our attention. Its world of disconnected make-believe is perhaps more bravely reflective of our financial institutions, and the public life they afford us, than most of us can bear realizing.



A



B

**A Fountain Place**  
Photograph by Wes Thompson

**B Fountain Place, site plan**

**C Fountain Place**  
Photograph by Wes Thompson



c

### Architect's Statement

The Allied plaza combines elements of a pond and a European public garden. Seventy percent of its surface is water, so that from above, the office tower appears to be floating. Some areas are dark and tranquil, like the surface of a swamp, while others froth and roar with bubblers and cascading waterfalls, like miniature upland landscapes. A dramatic computerized fountain sits in the center of the plaza, surrounded by

hundreds of bald cypress trees in soldierly rows and interlaced with a grid of walkways. It is a rigorous classical design, a downtown version of a Le Nôtre landscape, in which building and site come together as one. The plaza lures us in with a glimpse of water and trees, only to reveal something beyond, and then something beyond that. Our imagination does not stop at the edge of the site; the cypress trees, planted 15 feet on center, could go on

forever, like the horse chestnut trees in the Tuileries. And as we walk among the trees and beneath the legs of the building—the Eiffel Tower again—interior and exterior spaces merge. The outdoor plaza is the real lobby of the building.

Allied currently stands midway between a fledgling arts district and a revitalized warren of warehouses and commercial buildings known as the West End Historic District. Unrelated formally

to either, it nevertheless acknowledges its urban responsibilities through its grand plaza, which may be the key to unifying this entire area as a kind of garden office district, unlike anything else in the city.

In the meantime, Allied balances skyline bravura with urban sensitivity. If it is unapologetically open to the future, it also provides an illustration of how to live civilly in the present.