

# architecture

TM

**MARK ROBBINS:** Are the **P/A awards** about

innovation or what's going on  
right now? **HANI RASHID:** Aren't we really saying  
they're about provocation?

**BRAD CLOEPFIL:** I think we're endorsing nine  
different aspirations. **MR:** That's a good  
way of putting it. **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** It's funny  
that we didn't choose a good mall  
or skyscraper...



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# Architects Should Support The NEA's Design Program

By Reed Kroloff

Mark Robbins, jury chair of the 48th annual P/A Awards program, is one of this profession's national assets. If you don't know who he is, you should (page 85): Robbins has spent the last two years doing us all a tremendous favor by resuscitating the dormant Design program of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in Washington D.C. Under his direction, the program once again very visibly promotes architecture and design (including fashion, graphic, industrial, and interior design, landscape architecture, planning, and preservation) through research grants and specialized initiatives like the Mayor's Institute on City Design (January 1997, page 39).

The Design program has been around for years, but was essentially in a state of suspended animation after 1996, when the Republican "culture wars" gutted the NEA. As with the other areas of the Endowment, Design's programs were greatly reduced, its staffing cut from 14 to two. "It was like visiting Ostia," recalls Robbins of his first days on the job in early 1999, "There were shadows of great structures that once existed; the project became one of reconstruction."

Robbins has not rebuilt the program to its former size—his staff now numbers three, including himself—but he has made remarkable progress. Last year, Design funded nearly \$2 million in research and special initiatives, and Robbins barnstormed the country lecturing about the value of design in our public and private lives. \$2 million may not sound like much in today's world, but it can make a real difference. For instance, through an initiative called New Public Works, \$500,000 of that total will help underwrite design competitions in 10 communities for projects ranging from schools to assisted housing to

parks. Another \$500,000 will be distributed in more traditional grants to museums, schools, and non-profit organizations to support research, education, and program enrichment.

Robbins credits much of his success to the efforts of NEA Chairman Bill Ivey, and indeed, most observers agree that Ivey has broken through partisan lines to restore congressional faith in the agency: The calls for its elimination that were so common in 1996 have all but disappeared. George W. Bush has not yet articulated a specific position on the NEA—or on the arts in general. Neither has Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, whose purview includes the NEA. Absent that, Robbins, Ivey, and their colleagues must demonstrate to the President and his appointees that their programs dovetail nicely with his stated interest in education.

That persuasion will take more than passionate speeches from agency heads. Architects and their schools and professional organizations—direct beneficiaries of the NEA and its Design program—must offer their support as well. Call or write your congressional representative, or contact the NEA directly at [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov) for more information. Mark Robbins is helping this profession demonstrate its value to the nation. Let's give him some help in return.

## Debating the P/A Awards

As Raul Barreneche points out in his summary of this year's awards program (page 83), every P/A Awards jury has its own character. Some are contentious, some are conciliatory; some are theoretical, some pragmatic. Watching the jurors wrestle with the question of what their choices will represent is an exhilarating experience. Unfortunately, that debate largely has been restricted to the people in the room; due to magazine space limitations, published jury comments typically have been brief.

Not this year. For the 48th annual awards program, we have greatly expanded our reporting of the jury comments and positioned them before the images of each project. We hope this demystifies the jury process somewhat, and reveals the battle of ideas that characterizes it. Welcome to the front row.

Finally, my thanks to Raul Barreneche, a former staffer, for guest-editing the awards program coverage. This was his fourth year working on P/A. I think the experience shows. ■



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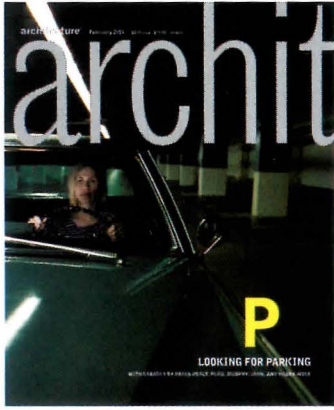
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## Let the Sun Shine In

The opening paragraph describing Edison Schools' prototype classroom states there are "no windows through which to ponder drifting clouds and daydream" ("Pretty Cool for a School," February 2001, page 39). Thus, one would assume, no natural daylight. Their concept comes "from the philosophical belief that if you don't have technology, you won't be able to function in American society."

The Hescong-Mahone Group studied 21,000 students in the mid-1990s. Student performance in naturally daylighted classrooms averaged 20 percent higher than students in non-daylighted rooms. Other studies have shown a relationship between natural daylight and improved health, retail sales, and employee job performance. Maybe one's ability to function in American (or any) society hinges on simple "low technology" like natural daylight.

Mike Kilgore  
Spokane, Washington

## Degree Decree

The dialogue "Revival of the Fittest" (February 2001, page 56) fails to mention what may have been one of the more significant events of the 1970s. This was the decree that, henceforth, an accredited degree would be required for entry into the profession. It was this that provided

a secure financial basis for the growth of architectural discourse.

It also led to the confusion about degrees which you deplore in your lead editorial. The proliferation of degrees has much more to do with the promotion and tenure politics of universities than with health, safety, and welfare. It is regrettable that the public is confused about this, but the saddest aspect of the requirement is that the cost of the policy, in both money and time, is borne entirely by students.

You should consider that Mr. Kipnis was able to escape from your dialogue only because he already had a diploma.

Jack Hartray  
Chicago

## Model Professional

I have read all the praise you received concerning the article on the eToys architect doll (February 2001, page 56). I would like to say that I am very disappointed in those two "professional women." The doll they designed is just a bad stereotype. And for me, it does not look any different from Barbie. What makes those women think that a female architect should look this way? I myself am in the profession, and I am black. Also, they should have considered that a lot of women architects are above college age and may not still have that figure. I think it is already hard enough for women out there without some of our own adding to the list. If I ever have a daughter, I will never let her think that she should enclose herself in a box.

Edith Guerendo  
Indianapolis

## Show Me the Money

It was with eager anticipation that I opened the February issue devoted to parking structures, as I am about to begin schematics for a new project that incorporates a large garage. There were several very handsome projects illustrated, but alas, as nice as they

look, they will ultimately have little value for me.

Why? One little phrase that crops up at the end of each article: "COST: Withheld at owner's request." Translation: Owner likes what he got but is too embarrassed to admit what he had to pay to get it.

I can understand the coy demurral for high-end residential work, where a client might not want to advertise the price of his new home, but a parking garage? Please. If I were to share this issue with my new client and suggest a sleek metal scrim or crisp fritted-glass façade to lighten the massing of the project, how would he react? Not, "I really like the way it dematerializes the bulk of the structure." It would be, "That's nice. How much is it gonna cost?" Alas, I couldn't tell him, based on this issue.

It's no crime to spend money on design. It's a good investment over the long term. But we need good data to convince our clients that good design is worthwhile. You should require cost information for all projects published in your magazine.

Jonathan Gyory  
Boston

## CORRECTIONS

The Disney Resort, Guest Parking Structure (February 2001, page 66) was a joint venture between Wolf Architecture and Widom Wein Cohen (now WWCOT). From WWCOT, Adrian O. Cohen was the principal-in-charge, Jesus Fondevila was the project director, and Phil Antonelli and Herb Yuki were project architects.

Stan Allen should have been credited with the image on page 31 in the February 2001 issue.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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## Seattle Needs Retrofit Now

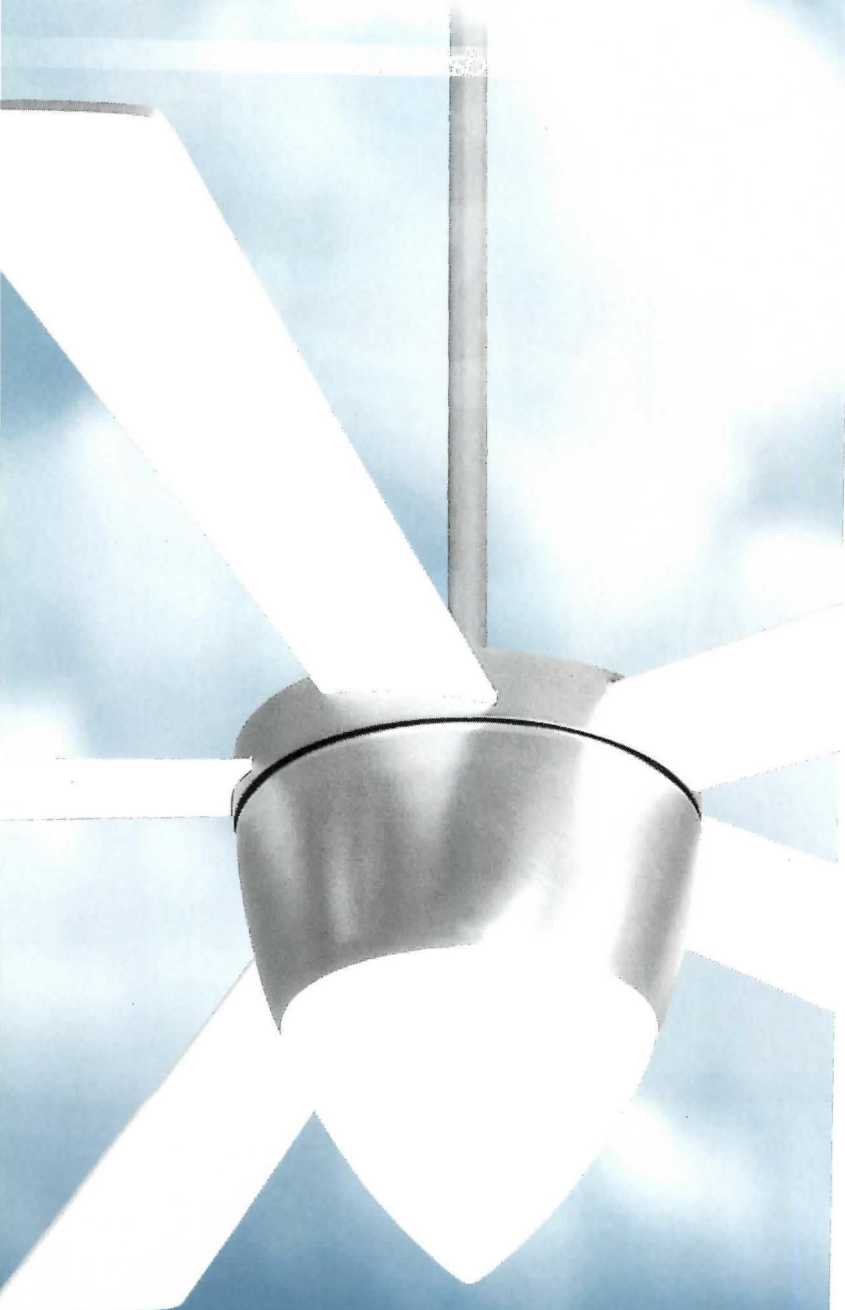
**Urban Planning** Washington State may have taken as much as a \$2 billion hit from the earthquake that rattled Seattle February 28, but architects, geophysicists, and public officials have all emphasized that this wasn't yet the big seismic bullet the region will have to dodge. It was merely a magnitude-6.8 warning shot. A cataclysmic quake that rips open the coastal subduction zone is expected every 300 to 500 years. The last one, confirmed by radiocarbon dating of tree roots and records of the tsunami that rolled across the Pacific to Japan, occurred January 26, 1700.

"What this quake showed us was that more retrofit is badly needed," said Peter Steinbrueck, an architect and Seattle city councilman. "And now's the time to review and consider tightening our codes, while it's fresh in everyone's minds and the damage is still self-evident."

The state's computer model generated an early \$1.9 billion guess at damage to public and private structures, though an accurate accounting will take months. There were about 320 reported injuries, and the only attributed death was that of a 66-year-old woman who suffered a heart attack. In Seattle, the most visually dramatic damage occurred in Pioneer Square, where unreinforced masonry buildings dating from the 1880s dumped tons of bricks onto the streets.

The magnitude-6.8 earthquake that hit Washington State has caused architects and designers to reflect on the region's building standards.

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Thousands of Starbucks employees enjoyed an equally dramatic example of the value of seismic upgrades when the nine-story 1912 office building that houses their corporate headquarters rode the quake with no structural damage and no injuries to anyone. Three years ago the building's owners undertook an \$8.5 million retrofit including steel X-bracing. "It felt like a big typhoon coming through," said a Starbucks vice president, Rick Arthur. "The floors rose in big waves. The lights were swinging in big arcs." Arthur said his first thought was, "Thank you, Terry," meaning Terry Lundeen, who managed the retrofit for the Seattle structural engineering firm Coughlin Porter Lundeen. The building took cosmetic damage that may run into the tens of million of dollars, reported property manager Angi Davis.

Near the top of everyone's worry list is the Alaskan Way Viaduct, an aging two-mile, two-deck downtown freeway residing uneasily in a liquefaction zone. It's also a widely despised visual blight, walling off the waterfront. It survived without structural damage, but Steinbrueck said this warning offers the opportunity to look at all options for upgrading it, "including dropping it partly below grade and recapturing some of the waterfront." But the cost, he said, will run into the "hundreds and hundreds of millions."

Seattle has already spent some \$50 million since 1994 retrofitting public buildings and bridges with help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Coincidentally, the quake struck on the same day the Bush administration proposed killing that FEMA program. *Lawrence W. Cheek*

## Buzz

Like prime real estate in some cosmic Monopoly game, some of Manhattan's most renowned properties are being auctioned off. **Rockefeller Center** and the **Citigroup Center** were the first to go. Now the **Chrysler Building** and **World Trade Center** are up. TMW, a German investment group, is reportedly paying \$300 million for a 75 percent stake in the Chrysler, while Vornado Realty Trust has gained control of the WTC from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for \$3.25 billion over 99 years. Note: The big green lady with the torch in her hand is not for sale. Yet.

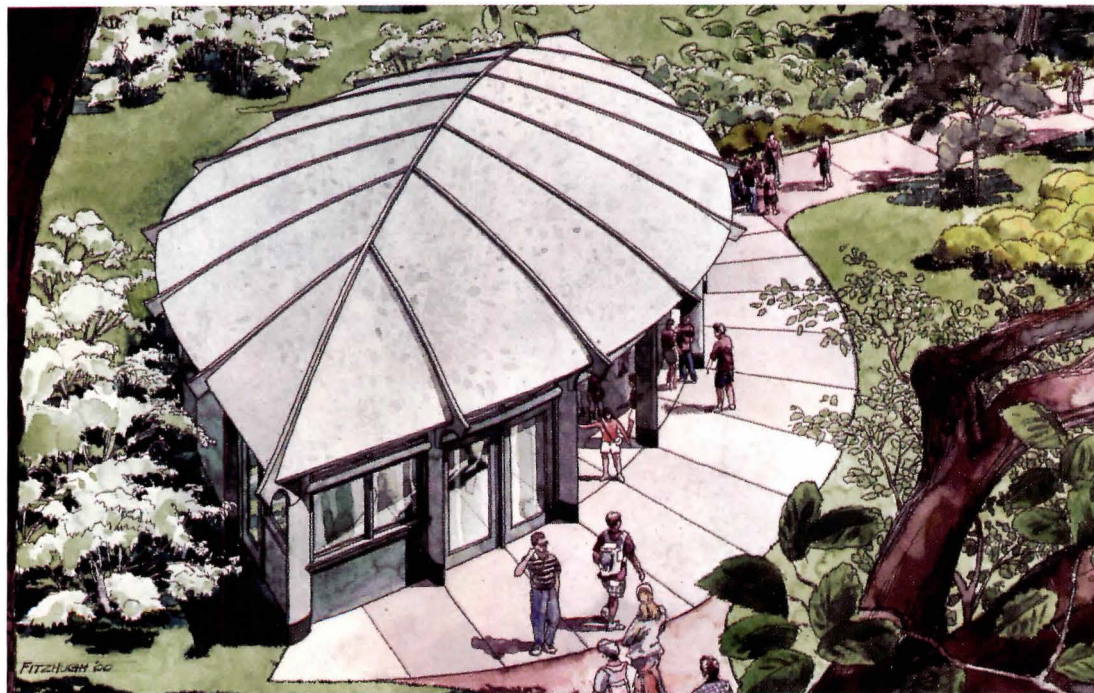
Yale University has selected **Cesar Pelli Associates** of New Haven, Connecticut, to design the school's new engineering building.

The Wadsworth Atheneum in Connecticut has chosen **Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos of UN Studio** of the Netherlands for an expansion to their Museum of Art.

Trinity University in Texas has chosen **Robert A.M. Stern** to design the school's new Northrup Hall.

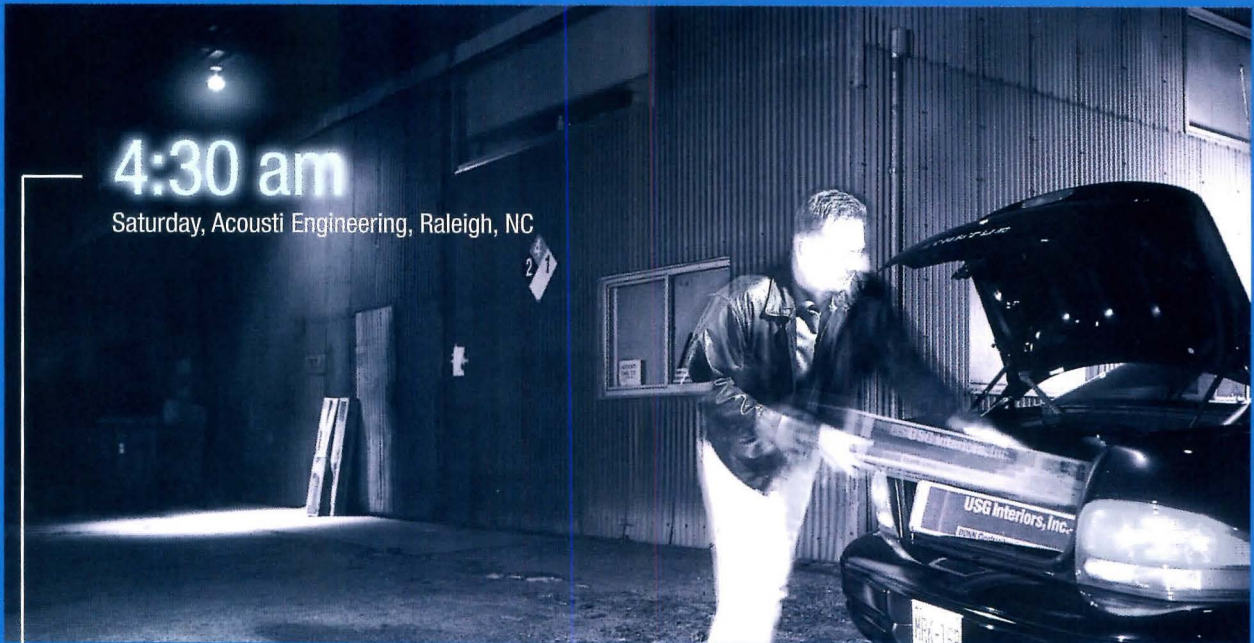
**Mies van der Rohe's** Farnsworth House, outside of Chicago, is up for sale. The 50-year-old structure has simply been too much of a headache for its owner, **Lord Peter Palumbo**. The nearby Fox River floods the house every other rainfall. Rumored asking price: \$4 million.

**Renzo Piano** has been awarded the Wexner Prize by the Wexner Center for his contributions to architecture. This marks the first time an architect has won the prize, now in its ninth year.



## Education Center Proposed for Vietnam Memorial

**Remembrance** Every other year or so, someone tries to tack on some sort of addition to the subtle genius of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Now Congress is doing its share to keep trying to explain the inexplicable. In February, Congressional Vietnam veterans—like Senator Max Cleland (D-GA), who lost his legs and an arm during the war—introduced legislation proposing a \$2.5 million "temporary" education center to replace an information kiosk currently occupying a parcel of land about 300 feet away from the memorial. Supporters are counting on overflow from the Wall's 4-million-plus visitors per year to make the project worthwhile. Wall designer Lin—who, as of this writing, was not even aware of the proposal—declined comment. *A.M.*



4:30 am

Saturday, Acousti Engineering, Raleigh, NC

At 5:30 Friday night, Monday's grand opening of the North Carolina Aquarium looked anything but grand for the contractor. Short three boxes of Centricitee™ two and four-foot tees, he made several calls but was unable to locate the cross tees he needed. At 6:30, he called USG Sales Rep Pat Lawson. Pat's live voice on the phone this late on a Friday evening was cause for optimism, but Pat's initial attempts failed to turn up any additional cross tees. Then Pat remembered another contractor was using the same material. He called the contractor at home. Paydirt – the contractor could spare the tees, if they were replaced by the following week. So Pat arranged to pick up the tees at the contractor's site. At 3:00 am he was up and on the road. Some quick thinking and four hours of driving made the opening very grand indeed.

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Law

## ADA Ruling Signals Continued Federal Inaction

On February 21, in *University of Alabama v. Garrett*, the United States Supreme Court ruled against Patricia Garrett, a university employee who had sued the state for discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act's first title, which covers employment. Although lower courts sided with Garrett, the Supreme Court refused to help her collect, citing a lack of federal authority to make states liable to individual employees for monetary damages under the ADA.

Although Title I of the ADA usually doesn't affect architects, the Garrett decision suggests that the Supreme Court and the Bush administration are backing away from getting involved in local ADA issues of any kind—and that could harm the profession. Architects usually sweat the act's second and third titles, which cover public services and private buildings, respectively. Typically, lack of federal

action in the refinement of ADA policy has made the act more burdensome to architects. Take the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Standards Board, for example, which helps the Departments of Justice and Transportation coordinate design standards for accessibility. The board has been diligently refining ADA standards for architects since 1973, but the DOJ and DOT are often years behind in implementing the board's proposals. "The architect is left trying to understand how one set of guidelines is 'best practice,' but another is the one enforced," says Harold Kiewel, a member of the AIA's Accessibility Task Force, which formulates the AIA's position on the ADA. Kiewel and others fear that the federal inaction endorsed by the Supreme Court's February decision will mean the ADA remains a primitive set of guidelines, and that practicing architecture will thus remain a minefield of possible litigation. *Jacob Ward*

The **Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority** will be auctioning off corporate naming rights to its four most-traveled stops. Downtown Crossing, Back Bay, Sullivan Square and South Station are the hot commodities in question. Most Bostonians are enraged. They say they will continue calling said stops by their traditional names, no matter how pervasive the attendant advertising is.

**Frank O. Gehry** of Gehry Jefferson and Glymph is busy. The Dallas Museum of History has just selected him to design its new building. And the architect has also recently unveiled his plan for the new Ohr-O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi, which will comprise five separate buildings huddled together along a swath of trees, according to the master plan.

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*Acqua alta*, or high water, has been threatening Venice's buildings for centuries.

## Soggy Sites in Venice

**Acqua Alta** Water has been bubbling up through the stones of Venice for centuries. Residents and tourists walk on raised planks during the ever more frequent *acqua alta*, or high water, and shops often must close. After seeing water levels top off at 57 inches above normal

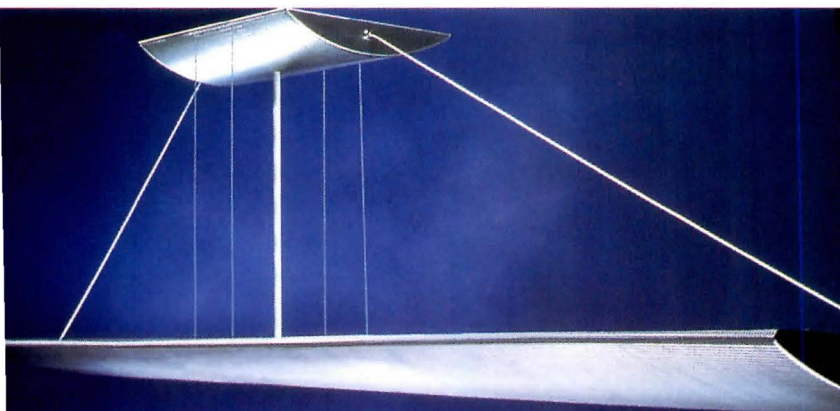
one day last November in Piazza San Marco, the heart of the city, Venice Mayor Paolo Costa finally approved a plan to build an 8-inch-high, canal-side slope around the square that may stem the flooding.

In contrast to the current imbroglio caused by a large dike proposal for the entire lagoon known as "Project Moses" (and the inaction of the previous mayor who purportedly threw up his hands and said, "Let them wear boots"), the new mayor's approval of a plan to shore up the sagging piazza indicates a willingness to confront Venice's watery burial.

"We have a long history of not standing idly by watching the sea reclaim the city," says Costa, although some would argue that past artificial intervention—dredging the canals, redirecting the River Brenta's flow—have brought the city to its current drenched state. Saltwater now corrodes Piazza San Marco's Byzantine basilica (built in 1094), Campanile (built originally in the 10th century but rebuilt in 1912 after it crumbled), Doge's Palace, and other historical buildings, like the Museo Correr and the Marciana library.

With construction set to begin on the square next month and scheduled to last a year and a half (progressing in about 5-foot sections of torn-up stone at a time), Daniel Berger, the Venetian advisor for cultural affairs cautions: "Once the ground is opened you never know what you'll find. Things could slow down. This is Italy, not Manhattan."

*Lauren Wolfe*



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# New York City Begg Stock Exchange, "Don't Go!"

**Paid to Stay** New York City is the financial capital of the world, and is willing to spend the money to keep it that way. The city has promised the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) a sweet piece of land (across from the facility's current location) and financial bene-



fits that will commit the NYSE to remain on the island for at least 50 more years.

The package will include the acquisition (by purchase or condemnation) of the land and the construction, funded by a private developer, of a 50-story office tower. The entire project should take about five years. Designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill to blend in with adjacent constructs, the tower will preserve the nearby Broad Street view corridor. In all, the city and state will top off \$480 million worth of real estate assistance with \$160 million in tax breaks, including energy discounts.

Even though corporate watchdog Ralph Nader has dismissed the agreement as corporate welfare, New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has said that the generous investment "is easily justified by the returns it will create for the city." The city has not yet found a developer or tenants for the space. *Shonquis Moreno*

New York City expects, among other things, an annual \$10 million in rent from the New York Stock Exchange to compensate for the city's beneficence.

**Dawn Barrett**, former head of the Department of Design at the Jan van Eyck Akademie in the Netherlands, has been appointed Dean of Architecture and Design at Rhode Island School of Design.

Five of the biggest names in architecture are vying for a shot at designing a 5-million-square-foot mixed-use project along New York City's East River. The five teams include: **David Childs of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill**, with **Richard Meier and Peter Eisenman** with **Hugh Hardy; Henry Cobb** and **James Ingo Freed of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners** and **Machado & Silveti Associates; Christian de Portzamparc** and **Gary Edward Handel & Associates; HOK** and **Schuman Lichtenstein Claman Efron**; and

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## No New Development on South Michigan, Chicago Says

The Chicago we all see on postcards may be stuck in the early 20th century forever. In a public hearing last month, the Chicago Landmark Commission made a recommendation for the city's beloved South Michigan Avenue to become a historic district. The proposed district is home to many of the city's most famous buildings and cultural institutions, including Louis Sullivan's Auditorium Building, Daniel Burnham's Railway Exchanges (Santa Fe) Building, and a number of buildings by Holabird and Roche. The decision comes after six months of wrangling between preservationists and landowners fearful of perceived infringements on their development rights.

Landmark Commissions usually designate districts in areas where historic architecture is


in danger of being lost, or if the area is economically challenged. South Michigan Avenue fits neither of these criteria, as it is home to half a dozen hotels, major department stores, and the museum district, making it an important tourist hub. "The landmarking process works," says Gunny Harboe, one of the leading preservation architects in Chicago. A past president of the American Institute of Architects' Chicago chapter, Harboe says landmarking improves the value of the land, both economically and socially. "It benefits the surrounding buildings, and the city's committed to not only protecting but also improving Michigan Avenue."

Further, many of the famous buildings on the avenue are already national landmarks. "No one disagrees that we should preserve the context of these buildings," says Chicago archi-

tect Don Hackl. Still, rather than a sweeping restorative landmark ordinance Hackl says he would like to see special zoning which would prevent unscrupulous development, allow construction on empty lots and bring much needed renovation to some older buildings.

While there is no fear that historic buildings will be torn down, there is concern that the historic district will effectively prohibit any new construction.

"There is a way of doing this without freezing the buildings for all time," says Jack Guthman, attorney for the Central Michigan Avenue Association, which opposed the ruling. "Why are we going to [landmark buildings that have already been landmarked] instead of having the opportunity to do something great?" *Andrew Yang*



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# Today Show Asks Public to Help Design House

**Architainment** NBC's *Today* show is spending 12 weeks outside Tampa, Florida, filming the construction of a house designed and being built by David Weekly Homes. But this isn't just any house—its design elements, from the overall house plan to the landscaping, are being chosen by *Today* show viewers. These TV watchers—perhaps the ultimate embodiment of the popular aesthetic—are having their voices heard by casting votes online at [www.today.msnbc.com](http://www.today.msnbc.com). Unfortunately, the poor souls are limited to a neotraditional ballot.

The series began in February and will end in May. So mass designing is already under way. Pastiche won over banality when voters picked their house plan. With four bedrooms and three baths, a \$250,000 center-hall Colonial, The Bordeaux, beat out the The Lenox, The Blakely, and The Brampton. The series, according to *Today* spokesperson Allison Gollust, generates about 100,000 votes per week.

When completed in May the house will be auctioned off by cosponsor OurHouse.com with the proceeds going directly to Habitat for Humanity. *Bay Brown*

Thanks to popular consensus, the *Today* show will be building and auctioning off for charity a Colonial house.



Kohn Pederson Fox, Rem Koolhaas, Davis Brody Bond with Toyo Ito.

Ian L. McHarg, landscape architect and University of Pennsylvania emeritus professor, died last month at the age of 80.

Influential theorist Ignazi de Sola Morales died last month at the age of 58.

Word has it that Phyllis Lambert's handpicked successor as director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, Kurt W. Forster, is stepping down after only two years in the position. It's rumored that Forster, who was the founding director of the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities in Santa Monica, is returning to academia.

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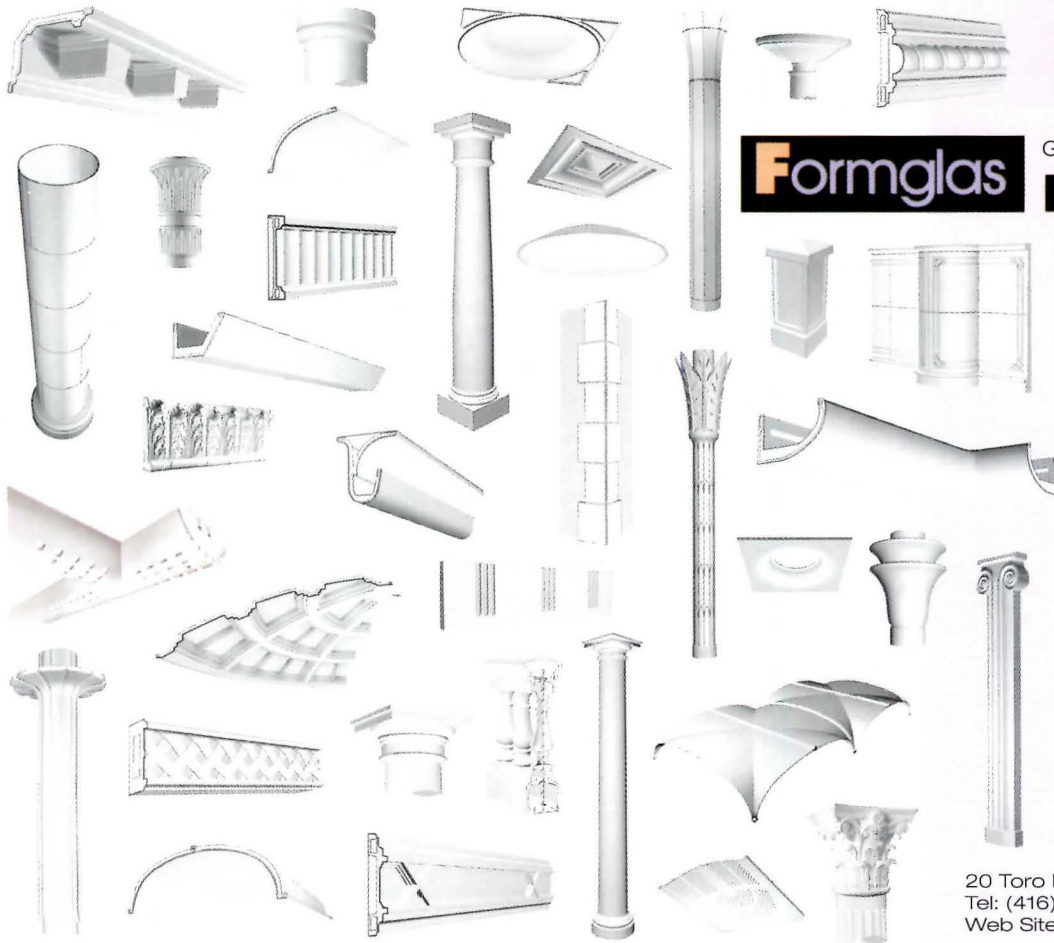
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## Calendar

## Exhibitions

**Basel, Switzerland**

Art 32 June 13–18 +41 61-686 20 20

**Bologna, Italy**

Massimiliano Fuksas: *Eyes Wide Shut* at the Pavilion Esprit Nouveau through April 23 051-2912517

**Chicago**

Building Images: *Seventy Years of Hedrich Blessing Photography* at the Chicago Historical Society through June, 2001 (312) 642-4600

Golf Around Chicago mini-golf event that features models of Chicago architectural landmarks, at Navy Pier's Crystal Garden through April 18 (312) 939-8622

**Los Angeles**

Shaping the Great City: *Modern Architecture in Central Europe, 1890–1937* at the Getty Museum through May 6 (310) 440-7360

**New York**

Aluminum by Design: *Jewelry to Jets* at the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum through July 15 (212) 849-8400

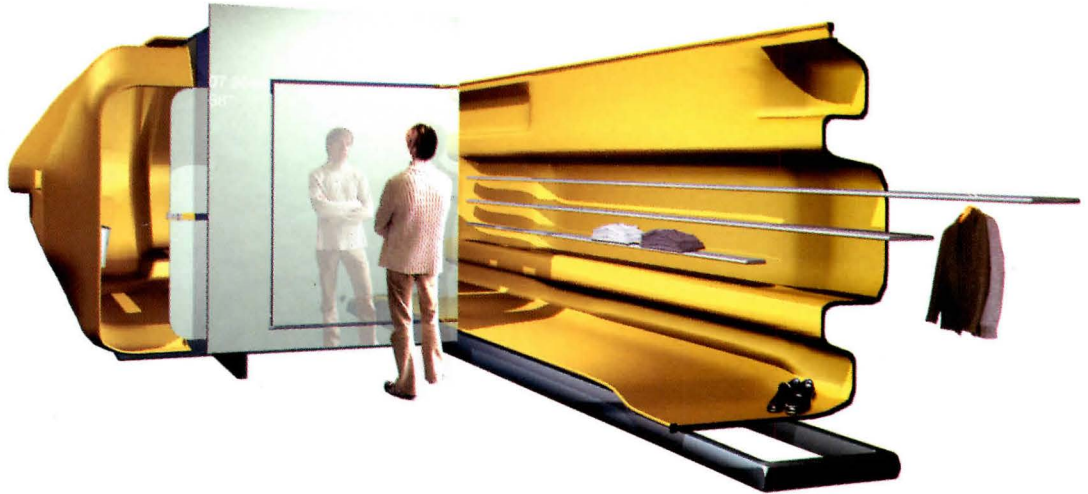
Dreams and Disillusion: *Karel Teige and the Czech Avant-Garde* at New York University's Grey Art Gallery through July 7 [www.nyu.edu/greyart](http://www.nyu.edu/greyart)

Merchants, Mayors and Magnificence: *Manhattan's Civic Center* tour by the Municipal Art Society on April 20 at 1 p.m. (212) 935-3960

SOFA (Sculpture Objects & Functional Art) New York at the Seventh Regiment Armory from May 31 through June 4 [www.sofaexpo.com](http://www.sofaexpo.com)

**Philadelphia**

John Blatteau Associates at the AIA Gallery through April 28 (215) 569-3186



Joel Sanders wants us to spend less time in the john. The architect's *Five-Minute Bathroom* is a brief symphony of wall folds and open floor space that in its efficiency looks to quash any aspirations to dilly-dally. Like every piece in *Folds, Blobs, and Boxes: Architecture in the Digital Era*, at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, *Five-Minute Bathroom* wouldn't have been possible—either as construction or design—as few as 10 years ago, before computers revolutionized architecture and every other aspect of our lives as well, right down to the toilet seats. The show runs until May 27, 2001, at the museum's Heinz Architectural Center; (412) 622-3131 or [www.cmoa.org](http://www.cmoa.org).

**Out of the Ordinary:**

The Architecture and Design of Robert Venturi at the Philadelphia Museum of Art opens June 11 (215) 763-8100

**San Francisco**

Capp Street Project: Karim Rashid at the California College of Arts and Crafts from April 20 through May 12 at the college's Logan Galleries (415) 703-9500

**Seattle**

Creating Perfection: *Shaker Objects and Their Affinities* at the Seattle Art Museum through April 29 (206) 625-8900

**Stockholm, Sweden**

Cultures of Creativity: *The Centennial Exhibition of the Nobel Prize* at the Nobel Museum through August 31 +46(0)8-519 542 80

**Washington**

The Architecture of Reassurance: *Designing the Disney Theme Parks* at the National Building Museum through August 5 (202) 272-2448

## Conferences

Light in Architecture and Art: *The Work of Dan Flavin* at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, on May 4 and May 6 (915) 729-4362

Territories: *Contemporary European Landscape Design* at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, April 19–21, with accompanying exhibit, April 19 through May 24 (617) 495-4784

Finding Room for Work in Your Life by *Women in Design* at the Architects Building in Boston on April 25 (617) 951-1433 ext.: 221

Defining American Modernism at the soon-to-be opened Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Research Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, July 12–14 (505) 995-0785

Urban Waterfronts at the New York Marriott in Brooklyn; September 20–22 (202) 337-0356

## Competitions

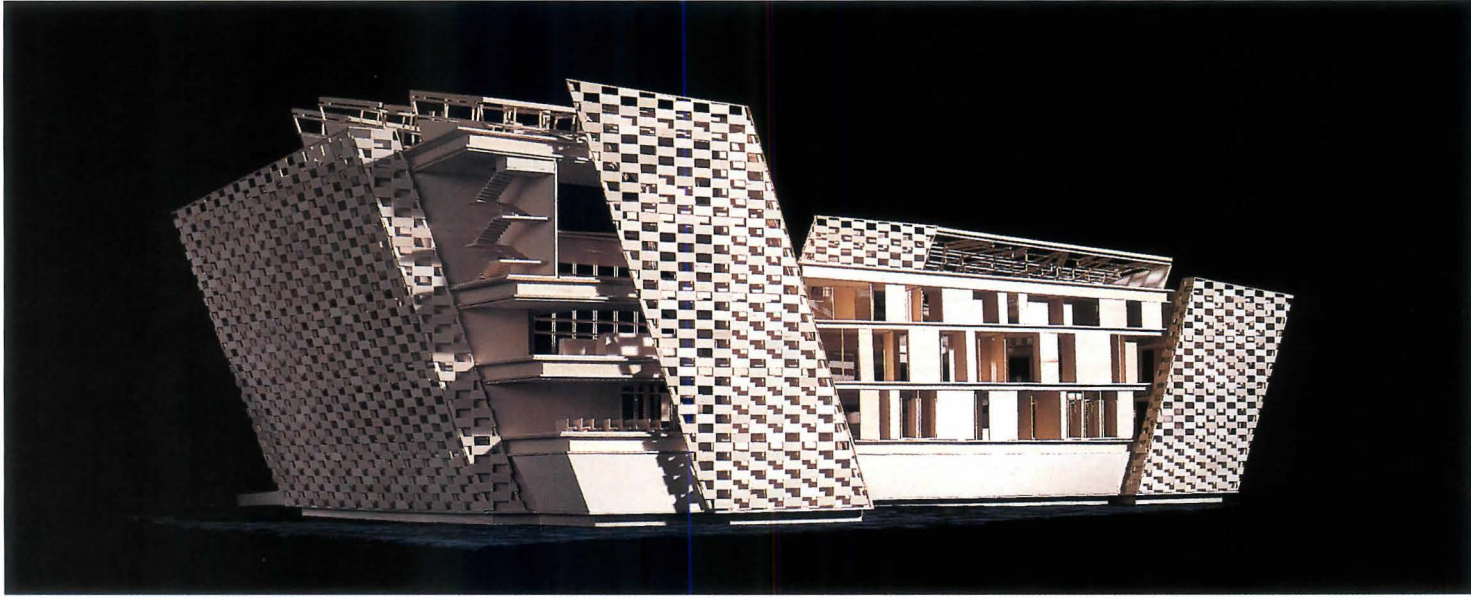
New England Biolabs Competition Submission deadline is May 4 (978) 468-4345

Boston Society of Architects 2001 design awards. Submission deadline for urban design awards is April 9 (617) 951-1433

Changing the Face of Orange County by AIA Partners with Orange County. Submission deadline is April 13 (714) 966-9220

Flemington Jewish Community Center in New Jersey. Submission deadline is May 15 [www.flemington-jewishcenter.org/competition](http://www.flemington-jewishcenter.org/competition)

National Preservation Honor Awards Submission deadline is May 1 (202) 588-6125



# On the Boards

**Karen Bausman + Associates,**  
Hamlin Chapel and Library,  
Hamlin, Pennsylvania

Hamlin, Pennsylvania, is a small enough town that questions about the separation of church and state sometimes have to take a backseat to more pragmatic ones regarding space and money: The public library is currently located in the parish house of the local Episcopal church. By all accounts, the arrangement works well, so much so that the two organizations have decided to continue it in a new building commissioned from Karen Bausman + Associates of Manhattan. An 80,000-square-foot chapel

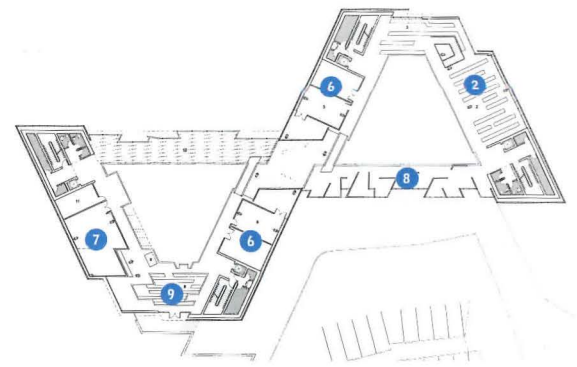
and library, scheduled to begin construction in 2002, will allow the two to share basic services like parking, a cafeteria, and meeting rooms while maintaining distinctly different services. Together, the library and chapel will hopefully become a real community center in a town bounded on one end by a Wal-Mart and on the other, a Rite-Aid.

Pragmatics aside, chapels and libraries have distinctly different requirements, and Bausman had to figure out a way to give each its own identity. Her solution was to make

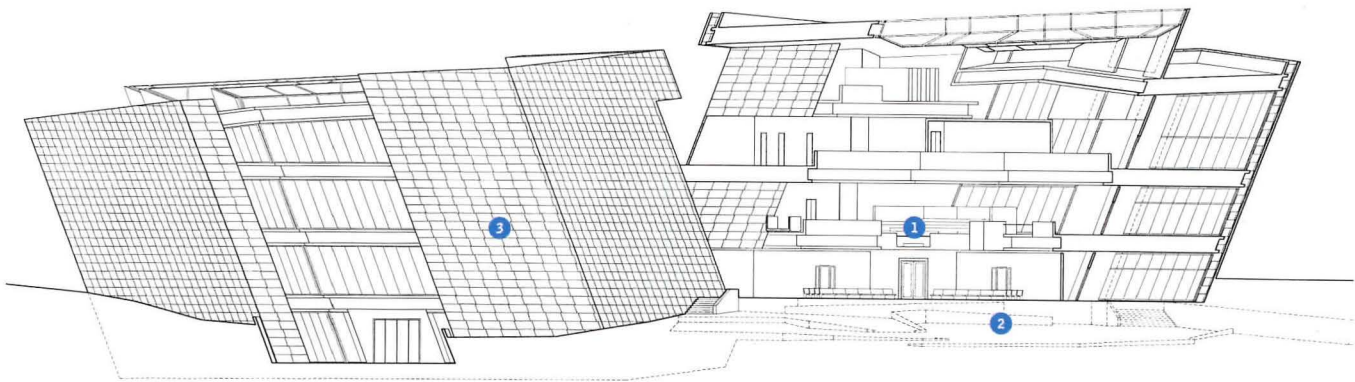
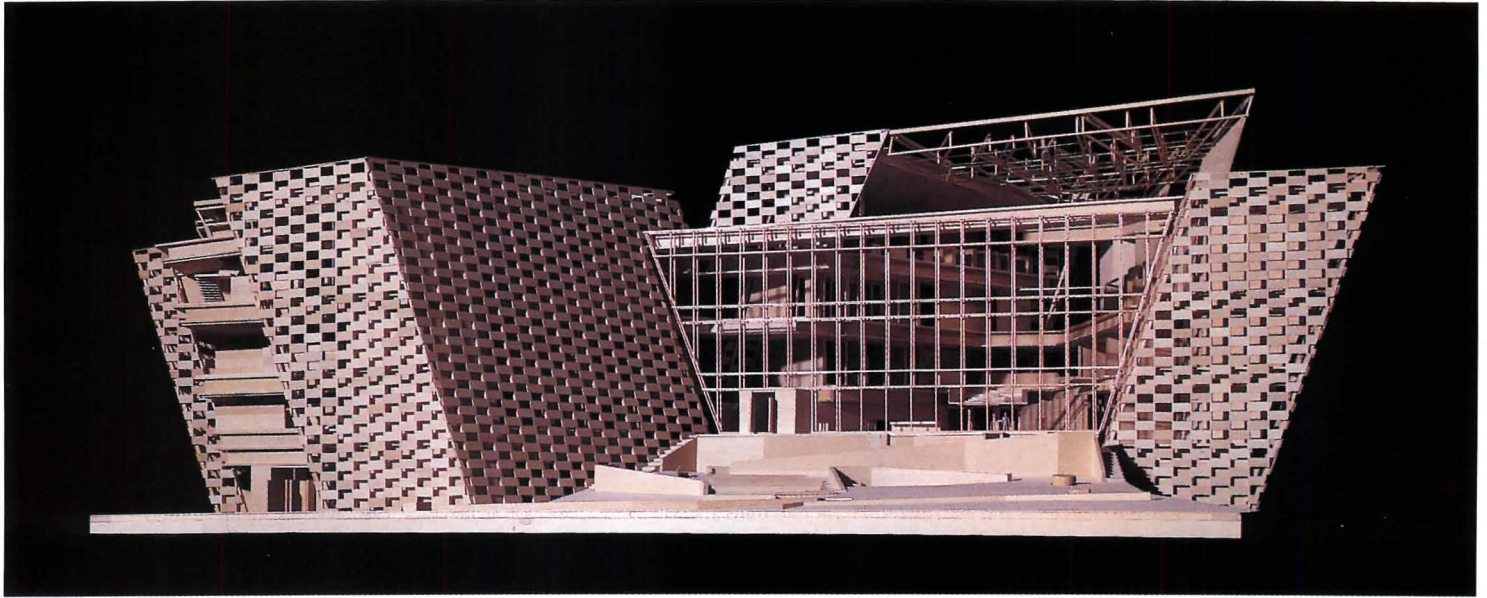
- 1 lobby
- 2 book stacks
- 3 chapel
- 4 altar
- 5 meditation garden
- 6 offices
- 7 classrooms
- 8 reading rooms
- 9 choir loft



First-level plan 41'



Second-level plan



Northeast-southwest section through chapel 19'

1 choir loft 2 library elevation 3 meditation garden

two connected buildings—in plan, an angular figure eight—that take the form of two wedges tucked into the hillside site. The library volume faces the parking area off the main road, while the chapel occupies the same form, but is flipped and offset so that it opens up to the hillside and stream beyond. A public meditation garden lies just below the chapel walls, acting as a buffer between the more social space of the chapel and the open farmland.

Inside, the two facilities are scaled quite differently. Bausman wanted the library to

have “the scale of the book, of reading,” which led her to create a series of ever smaller and more intimate spaces as one moves up through the building. The chapel, on the other hand, is wide open on the ground floor, ringed by offices, as well as lit by a dichroic glass skylight above a glazed wall overlooking the meditation garden. The hinge point between the two volumes can be opened or closed as needed, depending on the time of day and the amount of space circumstance may require. “Ideally,” says Bausman, “It will be open and

people will use one and then the other.” The steel-frame structure is clad in what the architect calls a “stone veil”—2-foot-by-4-foot limestone panels set on steel bracing—that lets light in and ensures that the building’s mass is not overwhelming from the exterior. The material choices—Pennsylvania stone and steel from nearby Bethlehem—will undoubtedly help fund-raising efforts for the \$22 million building and also show that Bausman shares the local trait of practicality. *Anne Guiney*



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# practice

“One of the issues at SOM was never being fully in charge...I didn’t have the control I needed.”

**Business, page 60**

“The museum site lay right beneath Giuliani’s desk—an invitation not just to train and architecture lovers but also to terrorists.”

**Preservation, page 64**



## Mixed Parentage

A fight with design firm Holt Hinshaw forced the Lake Superior Center to put its project in foster care with Hammel, Green and Abrahamson. **Bradford McKee** asks: Who gets the credit?

**Controversy** Architect Marc Hinshaw found himself thinking hard about the Lake Superior Center again recently, after six years of trying to forget about it.

The reminder was a set of photographs. A friend of Hinshaw’s, photographer Richard Barnes, had recently gone to shoot the center, a 63,000-square-foot freshwater aquarium and ecology exhibition hall on the Superior lakefront of Duluth, Minnesota. The building, which opened in July 2000 after more than a decade in the works, is the \$33 million centerpiece to Duluth’s waterfront revitalization plans. In January, at Barnes’s San Francisco studio, Hinshaw finally saw pictures of the project his firm had conceived but did not see to completion.

The Lake Superior Center began life in the early 1990s as the first major public commission won by Hinshaw and his partner Paul Holt, along with their now ex-partners, Peter Pfau and Wes Jones. The commission had helped to put Holt Hinshaw Pfau Jones (HHPJ) out in front. Despite a change of architects, the Lake Superior Center retained its geometric form.



Holt Hinshaw's design (top) involved a series of jagged bays and a striking cantilevered exhibit hall. For budgetary reasons, HGA simplified the design, and, to appease critics, lightened the exterior colors (bottom).

as young West Coast modernists to watch. In 1991, HHPJ was formally selected to design the center over the more established designers Antoine Predock, Frank Gehry, Morphosis, and Lohan Associates. They also edged out the large Minneapolis firm Hammel, Green and Abrahamson (HGA), which would ultimately wind up reconfiguring and completing Holt Hinshaw's design.

HGA inherited the job when the center's board of directors fired Holt Hinshaw in the fall of 1995, just after the San Francisco architects had finished design development. The center bought the rights to the work, and took the scheme to HGA. By the time HGA began work on the center, says partner Loren Ahles, the building was too large, construction estimates were too big by half, the program was considered overly complicated, and the locals in Duluth, 2,200 miles from Holt Hinshaw's offices, were growing impatient.

Now that the project is finished, bearing Holt Hinshaw's general massing and siting but HGA's revisions, the question is one of authorship. Hinshaw wants to know: What sort of credit do he and his partner get? Who, after all, designed the Lake Superior Center?

"You can imagine what it was like for us when we got the work," Hinshaw reflects from his San Francisco home. "It was the first inkling that we would be able to put together a practice that could win a major commission."

Holt Hinshaw signed on to be the Lake Superior Center's prime designer. "We were pretty confident that we were going to be embraced," Hinshaw remembers, "even though the building was pretty wild for Duluth."

Wild, indeed. HHPJ's original plan called for a cubist collision of two highly articulated volumes, a larger black-clad shed intersected by a boomerang-shaped set of smaller pavilions bearing flashes of maritime

## As more of the budget went to Holt Hinshaw, the firm was becoming a political embarrassment.

colors. Exaggerated bays and cantilevered extrusions were to pop out at nearly every angle. Atop the shed would loom three severe-looking monitors, which would shine light down on the exhibits.

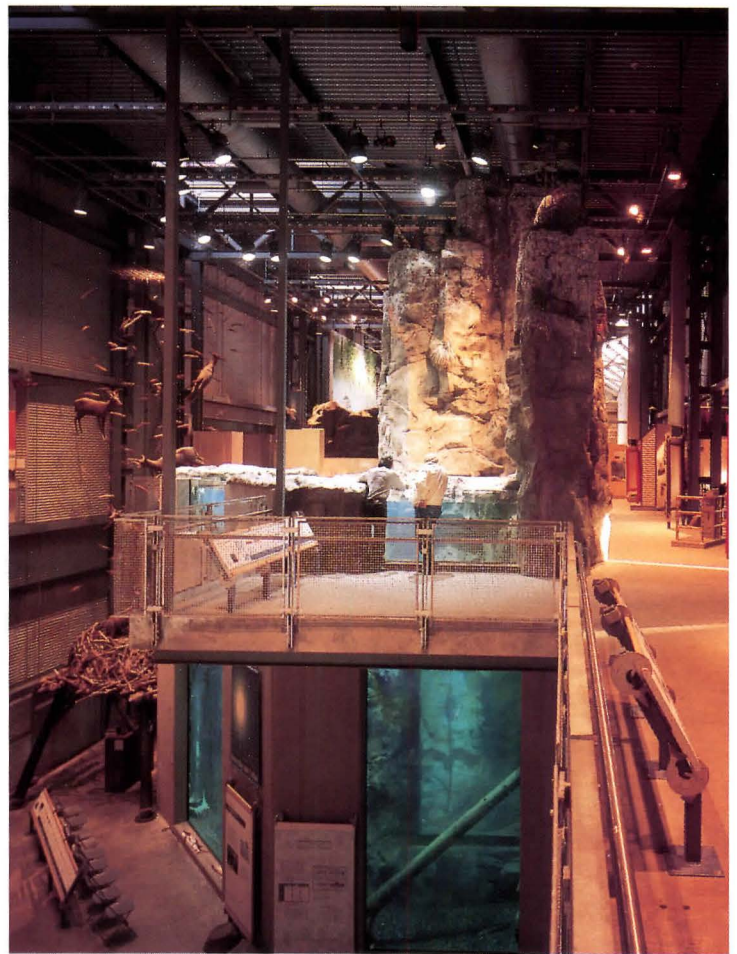
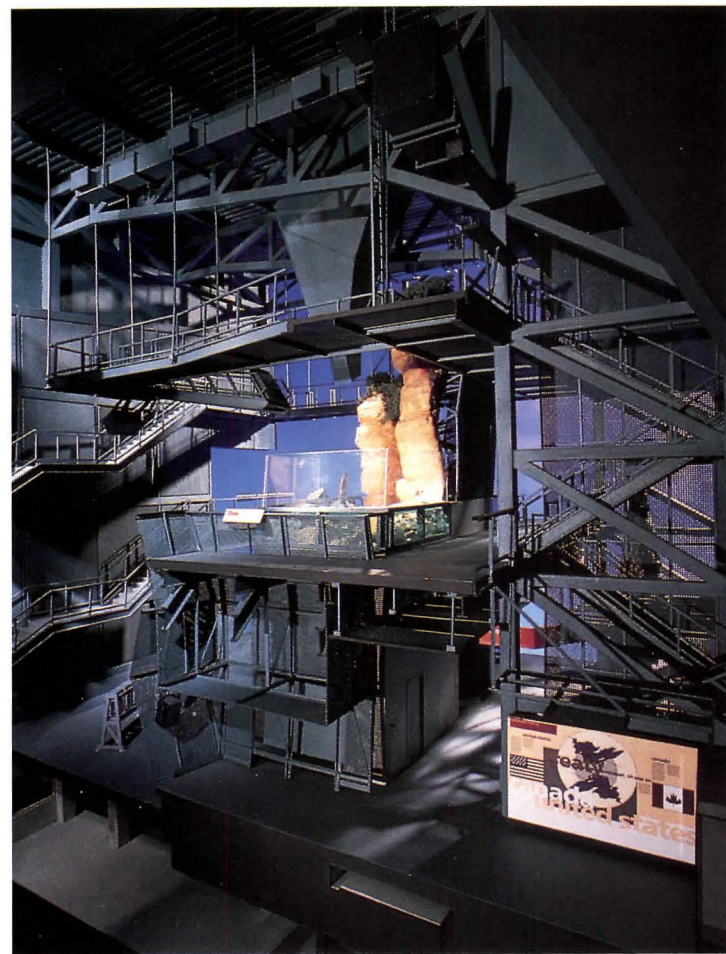
It was not a simple design. HHPJ had built a cult following on its complicated ideas, and the firm won several Progressive Architecture awards for theoretical designs in the 1980s. When his firm won the aquarium project, Hinshaw was 33, and his partners a couple of years older. They hadn't had much built work to show the center's board.

Nor, it turned out, did they know each other very well. Not long after the center's selection committee chose HHPJ in the fall of 1991, the partnership began to splinter. Peter Pfau left in 1991. By late 1993, Jones was out the door, leaving Holt and Hinshaw to move the project forward as, simply, Holt Hinshaw. "The personalities shook themselves out," Hinshaw says of HHPJ's dissolution. "We [four] just couldn't keep it together emotionally."

The project, Hinshaw says, experienced a couple of false starts between 1991 and 1994, owing to confusion about the size and availability of the harbor site. Holt Hinshaw spent the lag time developing the exhibitions, working closely with Bob Bruce, then the center's executive director. "We had strong feelings about narrative and how it might drive the parti," says Hinshaw. The Lake Superior Center Authority approved Holt Hinshaw's work at the end of the design-development phase and adjusted the \$30 million budget to \$33 million.

As Hinshaw remembers it, however, shortly after his firm won approval for their developed design, "all hell broke loose."

A conflict arose over the firm's retroactive adjustment of their fees and those of subcontractors, according to Hinshaw, but the aquarium's former executive director, Bob Bruce, and the client representative,



Chuck Koosman, both say the board's displeasure with the architects had been building for some time. "It was their business practices," explains Bruce, now a Duluth-based consultant. "They didn't pay their subcontractors. The subs were starting to put liens on the project, and as a publicly funded activity, that added a new level of discomfort for the board," Bruce says. "We were paying out huge sums of money."

At the same time, the exhibits themselves fell into dispute. The designs Holt Hinshaw showed the center early in the project were "wonderful," Bruce recalls. "But then it all just went away. We [the center] were trying to make the lake drive the exhibits. Marc wanted them to be architectural elements in space, and have the message fit those elements, rather than the other way around."

Koosman remembers it similarly. "While the overall concept was moving in a good direction, there were some troublesome details that wouldn't go away," Koosman says. "There was concern about the ability to pull off the exhibits as we moved forward."

But if the center's board had problems with the firm's performance, Hinshaw contends, nobody told him directly. "The record shows that

Holt Hinshaw's design (above left) led visitors through a complicated set of pathways on three levels. HGA removed the third story, and simplified internal circulation (above right).

[the board] approved design development, including the increased budget," he argues.

The request for a fee adjustment pushed the board over the edge. "Mark is correct that as the budget expanded, they were claiming additional fees for earlier work, but they didn't have to go back and revisit that work," says Bruce. "That stuck in the craw of the board."

In addition, the center felt that as more of the budget went to Holt Hinshaw, the firm was becoming a political embarrassment. The state legislature had put up roughly \$16 million for the project, about half its eventual cost. As some people saw it, Koosman says, Holt Hinshaw had begun to absorb a larger amount of the work than expected, and local leaders cringed at the notion of so much money going to an out-of-state architect. The board and local officials, he suggests, thought "there was going to be a pretty broad team, and that Holt Hinshaw would be doing the architecture and bringing in a lot of support" *continued on page 142*

# The Outsider

Ken Brown, GE veteran, had much to teach SOM as its president. **Jacob Ward** learns the first of many lessons: Get the money now, not later.

**Business** In June 1999, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill did the unthinkable: it hired a non-architect, an outsider, to be president of the firm. Forty-six-year-old Kenneth Brown, a former engineer and General Electric executive, showed up at the fabled firm's Manhattan headquarters and took the reins, under the watchful eye of SOM's 27 partners, and the rest of the profession. On January 31st of this year, he handed in his resignation.

Gossips pounced on how quickly Brown had departed—19 months struck many as a suspiciously short length of time, suggesting irreconcilable differences between Brown and the firm. Not so, counters SOM partner David Childs: Brown was “an absolute savior to us. He fulfilled all our expectations.”

Then why the quick divorce? Both SOM and Brown insist the separation was amicable, characterizing their time together as a “wonderful experience.” Brown is moving on to a high-tech battery company, which plans to ride the incoming wave of cell phones, laptops, and electric cars to glory. SOM says it hopes to replace Brown with another management specialist, probably a non-architect. But beneath all the goodwill, Brown's whirlwind romance with SOM raises deeper questions about the culture of architectural management and its future in a ruthlessly competitive market.

Architects have long lamented a lack of good management in their profession—most rise through the ranks for either their design skills or their client-management skills, neither of which qualify an employee as a manager in other professions. And those who do pursue management positions are often saddled with the stigma of being inadequate designers.

Lou Marines, founder of the Advanced Management Institute, which teaches business skills to architects, has been trying to make architects into better managers for years. His list of common management problems reads like a physicians' manual: “We often enter multidiscipline firms and discover there's an absence of trust and collaboration between disciplines,” Marines says. “We see intra-office competition, which kills collaboration. We see an inability to deliver on time or under

budget. There's often confusion about roles and responsibilities.” As Marines sees it, there's lots of room for improvement.

SOM has been trying to improve its management system since 1992, when recession forced the firm's partners to lay off hundreds of employees and plead with creditors. It was then that the firm created the position Brown would eventually come to occupy. Three partners filled the CEO post—Childs, Adrian Smith, and finally John Winkler—before the partnership decided it needed a seasoned professional to bring the firm's operations up to par. “We wanted a leader who could take care of things while the partners took care of the art,” says Childs.

In 1998, as SOM looked for a leader, GE was replacing its expatriate international managers with native executives, and after being transferred home, Brown was interviewed by a search firm for the SOM position. In his businesslike way, Brown decided the firm had an “outstanding brand reputation,” and “massive global opportunities.”

“This industry is highly deregulated,” he says. “It hasn't paid much attention to how it focuses as a business.” He saw an opportunity to put his imprint on uncharted territory.

In seven years at GE, Brown held four successive “national executive” positions in which he ran thousand-person operations on three continents, learning an entirely new sociological structure each time. GE is to the field of management what the Navy SEAL program is to the marines—Jack Welch, GE's legendary CEO, is widely regarded as the greatest manager American capitalism has ever produced, and GE remains a dominant company in industries ranging from broadcast media to power plant equipment. A *New York Times* reporter once asked Welch what the number one task of any successful leader should be. “Growing other leaders,” Welch replied.

Brown quickly discovered that the architectural community is not in the business of growing leaders as he defined them; visionaries, yes, but not managers. Brown harbors no ill will for his former colleagues, but he seems to feel a vast gulf stood between him and SOM when it came to understanding basic business practices. “It's amazing how little time





people have to spend on this stuff," Brown says of the design industry. "Things just haven't changed much over the years."

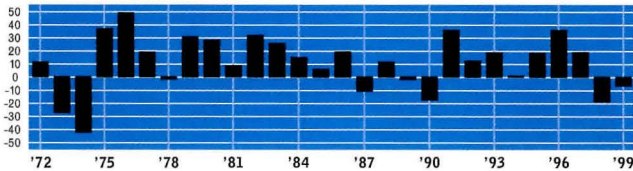
After looking at both SOM and the industry as a whole, Brown zeroed in on a few key issues. "The accounts-receivable problem is a big one," he says. "The outstanding payments agreed upon in this industry are so much greater than what good industrial practices would deem acceptable." Translation: Architects let clients owe them too much money for too long. Problems arise, Brown observed, when payment arrangements aren't standardized. "You must structure the contracts up front," he says. "It's no good to bludgeon clients for payment after the fact." "We

Stranger in a strange land: Ken Brown left SOM after only 19 months, when a technology company made him a better offer.

had no idea we were that different from other industries," Childs says. SOM has now tightened its contract system.

As part of his push for standardization, Brown looked to other industries to find appropriate management systems for SOM to imitate. "Any contract-revenue operation is a useful model," Brown says. He was particularly interested in parallels between architecture and management consulting, and from that industry he borrowed the notion of a "risk committee"—a standardized group of partners and principals who quickly

Annual Total Returns for the NAREIT Composite Index (Percent, 1972–1999)



**Economy**

**REIT Between the Lines**

As the economy dips and shudders, architects may want to keep their eye on the performance of one of the building economy's newer bellwethers: Real Estate Investment Trusts. REITs are collections of investors which buy, develop, and sell real estate—from multi-family dwellings to office spaces to self-storage facilities—on behalf of investment groups and shareholders. They avoid corporate taxes by meeting certain IRS conditions, and trade on major stock exchanges. As a result, the work of architects becomes, through REITs, one of the market's most flexible and liquid investment opportunities. While the recession of the early 1990s was pounding architects, REITs kept a few in business by banding owners together, and have subsequently rebounded in a big way.

Over the last few years, in fact, REITs have seen explosive growth—the 300-odd publicly traded REITs in the U.S. now own 8.3 percent of the \$1.3 trillion dollar commercial real estate market. Their market activity has quadrupled in three years to

a volume of \$260 million per day. And REITs are adapting to the times. This year, Congress will allow REITs to move into related business areas—telecommunications, travel, concierge services—which they were previously forced to outsource for antitrust reasons. If REITs grow, so could the number of new projects for architects.

Unlike technology companies, REITs don't depend on debt, and have therefore kept their heads above water this year. While the Nasdaq, S&P 500, Dow Jones Industrial and Russell 2000 all ended last year with negative returns, REITs had a 26.8 percent total return in 2000. "Our REITs haven't missed earnings," says Matthew Ostrower, an analyst with Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, although he cautions that REITs aren't beating estimates, either.

Ostrower has yet to hear of anyone scaling back their plans for new development. "Most income statements have slowed down," he says. "But plans haven't changed. If a company has a building in the works, even if they haven't broken ground yet, they'll keep that project going." *Jacob Ward*

and systematically evaluate the suitability of potential projects in terms of financial risk, legal accountability, and employee resources. "You must deem some projects too big to be handled by one partner," Brown says.

Those within SOM like the idea. "In the mid-1990s, millions were lost by partners misjudging clients," says an SOM employee. "They were only punished after the fact, because no one was riding herd on it."

"We used to look at projects that we suspected could turn out to be very costly," Childs says, "and deny our instincts and take them anyway." Now, Childs says, at Brown's urging the risk committee helps make decisions about which competitions SOM enters and why. "Having a group take a dispassionate look at a possible project is much better than leaving the decision to the one partner interested in doing it," he explains.

Another major concern was the organization of offices and practice areas. "Running an effective multi-office practice is a matter of distributing your resources across the firm," Brown says. He reorganized SOM

**In the end, Brown feels he made a handful of adjustments to SOM's business, little more.**

so that no one practice area would be centered in only one location. "SOM now organizes by practice [i.e. engineering] and market sector [i.e. health care] across all offices," Brown notes.

As a result, certain SOM practice areas are stronger than they were. One principal, whose practice area "hadn't been very successful" at the firm, says that Brown "convinced the partners how important we were, and unified our practice. Now there's strength in numbers—we have more of a voice because of him."

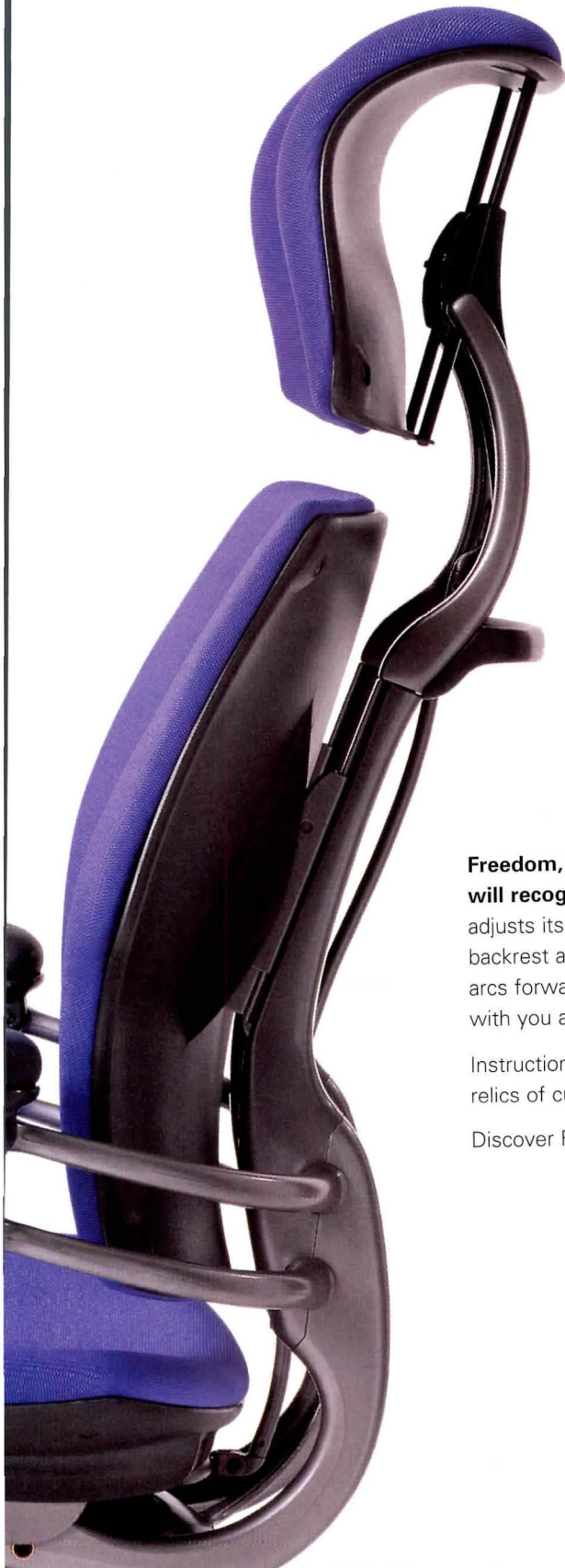
Brown also concentrated on creating stable internal processes that SOM lacked, like a strong system for human resources, accounting, and information technology. "Historically, we had next to no human resources department," says one SOM staffer. Another says that two years later, SOM has "better HR, better internal organization."

"The team Ken set up for our internal systems," Childs says, "is one of the great legacies of his time here."

While he worked to refine SOM's processes, Brown simultaneously analyzed SOM's lines of business and tried to find new ones. To understand his analysis, clear from your mind all notions of design production for a moment, and think instead of the act of planning, designing, and building as what business-development specialists call a "value chain." Imagine a timeline. At one end is a client's decision to build or refurbish a structure. At the other is the demolition of that completed structure after decades of service. Each link in the intervening chain of events is an opportunity for a company to step in and make itself valuable to the overall process. In Brown's analysis, architects occupy a narrow, early section of that chain, when clients have already determined their building needs, and are looking for specialists *continued on page 145*

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# Underworld

City Hall paranoia is keeping a subway landmark buried. **Nathan Ward** goes underground.

**Preservation** These days, only the motormen of the number six train can show you the hidden landmark beneath Manhattan's City Hall Park, and even they aren't supposed to. The MTA's Transit Museum used to give periodic tours of the space for train buffs, but no more. If you can convince the driver to let you stay on the downtown local, however, after it goes out of service at Brooklyn Bridge Station and rumbles off to turn around in the horseshoe-shaped tunnel under City Hall Park, you'll pass through the queen of the "ghost stations"—a remarkable example of what subway architecture once was.

Out of the screeching dark the train's headlamps pick up a dozen low-

lit chandeliers suspended from Guastavino vault arches, glass and mosaic tile, skylights, and leaded stained-glass ceiling panels as the number six loops past the disused 1904 City Hall IRT station on its turn back uptown. It's a grand effect—part church and part Oyster Bar. This isn't just a quaint underground relic but the former showcase station of the New York subways: The system was christened here almost a century ago, on October 27, 1904, when, using a silver control lever, Mayor George McClellan himself drove the first eight-car train uptown. On the wall of the flagship station, *designed by the firm of Heins & LaFarge* (the original architects of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and, later, of six animal houses at the Bronx Zoo), the original 1904 brass plaque commemorates "The First Municipal Rapid Transit Railroad of the City of New York."

"It was the showcase of the subway, to be used by politicians and other dignitaries visiting City Hall," explains David Pirmann, an independent historian who maintains a Web site devoted to subway history ([www.nycsubway.org](http://www.nycsubway.org)). Pirmann toured the space several times before the current hiatus, and recently recalled the experience for *Architecture*.

“Stepping onto the long-disused platform, and looking up into the high, arched ceiling, you could imagine the brass chandeliers ablaze, lighting the orange, green, and cream arch tile, red brick walls, and glass arch ceiling,” Pirmann explains. “A second vaulted chamber, up a short flight of stairs, was formerly used as the ticket sales and collection area, and a flight of stairs on each side of this chamber led up to the trademark kiosk sidewalk entries.” The station was given landmark status in 1979.

Other “ghost stations” are scattered throughout the New York system’s 722 track miles; they fly past disfigured by rust or water or spray paint. The City Hall stop, on the other hand, has been sealed off since December 31, 1945, after IRT trains outgrew its short, curved platform. Aside from some water damage, the station’s seclusion has kept it eerily intact. But sneaking a ride on an out-of-service train will remain

## Security around City Hall has been dramatically tightened, squelching any efforts to reopen spaces beneath it to the public.

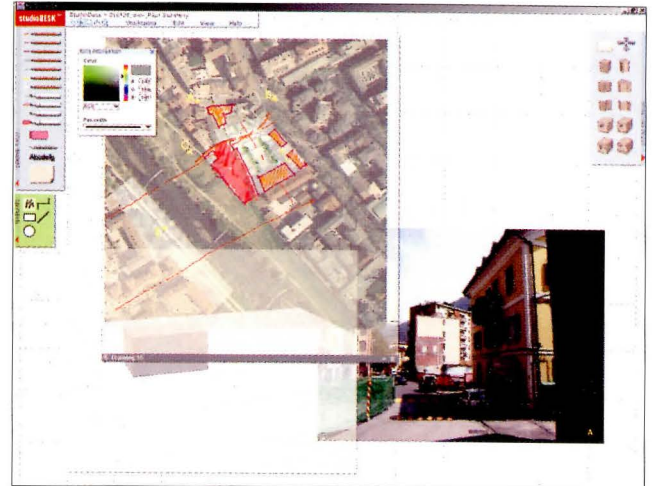
the only way to see the old station unless a plan to make it an annex of New York’s Transit Museum is revived by a new mayoral administration.

The new underground museum might have opened as early as 1998. The Metropolitan Transit Authority announced in 1995 it had raised \$1 million for refurbishing the historic space, and it was then promised millions more in state and federal funds by 1997. But in the spring of 1999, after doing some rehab work on the station, the MTA’s plans for reopening the space were suddenly cancelled.

The problem was not a lack of funds, but rather the space’s proximity to the security-conscious mayor’s office, which, in the climate of the World Trade Center bombing trials, worried that the museum site lay right beneath Giuliani’s desk—an invitation not just to train and architecture lovers but also to terrorists. (The station’s platform tunnel actually cuts a swath just in front of City Hall.) Over the last several years, security all around City Hall has been dramatically tightened, squelching any efforts to reopen spaces beneath it to the public, and protestations from the MTA have grown steadily quieter since.

This is Mayor Giuliani’s final year in office. When asked if a new administration might revive the annex idea in time for the subway’s 100th anniversary in 2004, the MTA’s Lisa Schwarz is cautious, answering “I can’t say that will happen.” For now, the City Hall station, which has been admired from afar for decades, will continue to tantalize until the election of a less bomb-minded mayor. ■

*Nathan Ward, an editor at Library Journal, has written for The New York Times Magazine, The Village Voice, Time Out, American Heritage, and The New York Review of Books.*



### Technology

#### The Next Level

After ceding the early lead in architecture’s race toward the online world, Autodesk is closing the gap. After two recent product introductions, the evolution of a third—StudioDESK, a new online collaboration tool—offers a new, clearer vision of Autodesk’s future. And make no mistake. With 70 percent of the market for architectural CAD software, Autodesk’s future is yours as well.

At first glance it is a sophisticated viewer and red-lining tool. But in fact, StudioDESK a full-fledged CAD package in its own right.

“It’s gone from being a research project to a releasable product,” says Phil Bernstein, Autodesk’s vice president of the AEC market group. “We hope to have it ready by the second half of the year.”

The StudioDESK prototype is Web-based, allowing

pilot users to experiment with a new set of tools: an animation engine, freehand sketching, 2-D drawing and 3-D viewing. Autodesk will store your workspace on servers at the StudioDESK Web site, while computation and other processing activity occurs on your desktop. Users will be able to unplug from the Internet and continue working, and when they reconnect, changes will automatically sync.

The program is still limited by the inherent flaws of the Web: It’s not the “global intergalactic databased” model commentators have been predicting, and users may be unable to reach their drawings on a collaboration Web site due to network congestion. But it will help finish projects faster, keep clients happy—and get us home in time for dinner with the kids. *Steven S. Ross*



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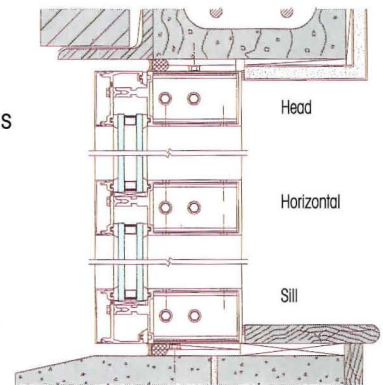
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# culture

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## Reynolds Wrap

Reynolds Metal Company sponsored a postwar housing development that would showcase new uses for aluminum. **Bradford McKee** finds the project still gleaming after all these years.

**History** A peculiar optimism resides in the River Park Mutual Homes, a 518-unit cooperative housing development in Southwest Washington, D.C. It seems to reflect off the pavement and blow through the oaks and elms in the neighborhood's simple, spacious plazas. Who could look at River Park's transparent modern forms, metal façades, and distinctive barreled roofs and not feel a certain faith in a pacific future?

It turns out, 40 years hence, that the optimism that gave rise to River Park was a dated emotion. There will not soon be another cultural moment, another flash of social and economic inspiration, like that which prompted the Reynolds Metals Company to commission D.C. architect Charles M. Goodman to design these dwellings using, largely, aluminum. The River Park Mutual Homes were completed in 1962, with all its units selling quickly at market rate.

The 1960s housing development River Park showcases aluminum's versatility as a building material, with such inventive details as cut-out screens (above).



River Park was a design experiment, and a successful one—albeit inside the failed experiment of Southwest D.C. itself. Many of the neighborhoods in Southwest, the city’s smallest quadrant, were razed in the 1950s and 1960s to make way for a more modern urban design. The city hired William Zeckendorf and his staff architect I.M. Pei, along with Harry Weese of Chicago, to reconfigure its grid as a set of superblocks scattered from just south of the National Mall to the Anacostia River. Colossal government buildings by Marcel Breuer and Edward Durell Stone rose between the Mall and the new elevated freeway that barricaded Southwest from the rest of the city. Stark apartment slabs sprang up across the cleared slate of the old waterside communities.

*Goodman*, whose archive is now housed at the Library of Congress, lived a glorious career in Washington and also abroad to a fair degree. His

affiliation with Reynolds, and also, around that time, with Alcoa, arose out of a mutual interest in applying materials in new ways to domestic architecture. From Goodman’s deep affinity for the generic functionality of standard factory parts flowed his remarkably edited designs for the terminal building at Washington (now Reagan) National Airport, the U.S. Embassy in Iceland, his Hollin Hills subdivision in Alexandria, Virginia, his Alcoa research houses, and, of course, River Park.

The metals companies, meanwhile, had a product to sell—and a lot more of it since World War II had ended. Aluminum had been a strategic metal during the war, and restricted for private uses. As the war drew to a close in 1945, there were three competing aluminum producers, Reynolds, Kaiser, and Alcoa, which “realized there was going to be a real problem” of oversupply, explains Sarah Nichols, chief curator at the



Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. Nichols recently mounted the exhibition *Aluminum by Design* (January 2001, page 58) at the Carnegie. “The companies had to maintain levels of employment,” Nichols says. “When aluminum workers weren’t thinking about the war effort, they were supposed to be thinking of what would be possible with aluminum after the war, and engineer it down to earth.”

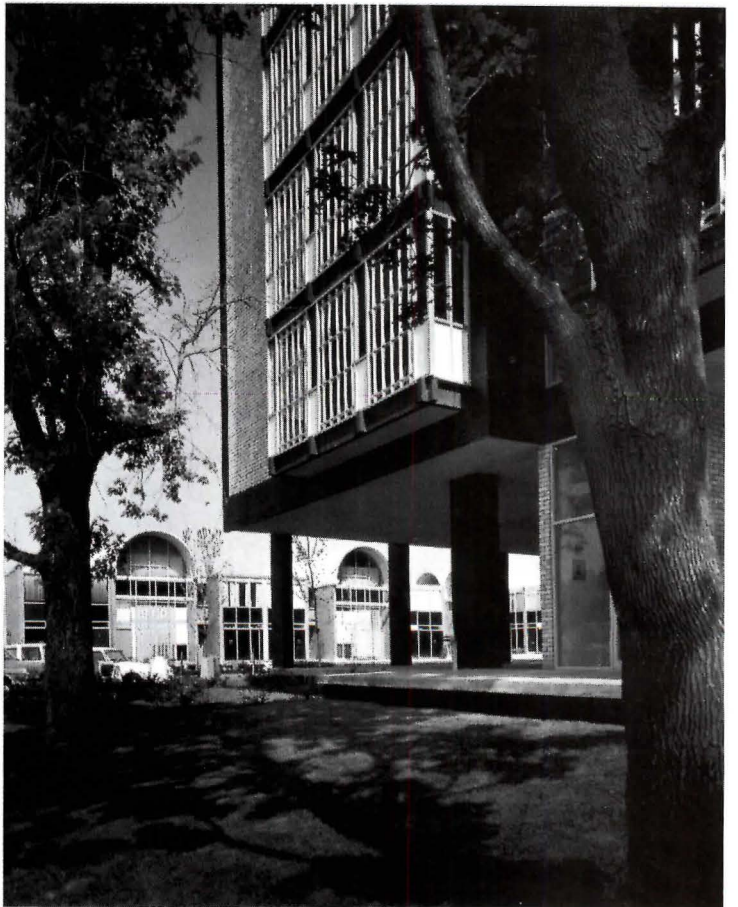
That is where Goodman came in. He applied, for instance, patterned aluminum screens to the façades of River Park’s two nine-story apartment towers, as well as to the three-story barrel-roofed townhouses, and aluminum surrounds to the doors and windows. His massing and surfaces both are lyrical inventions of light and shadows, solids and voids. The 1962 promotional packet for the River Park extolled its “inti-

## Who could look at River Park’s modern forms, metal façades, and distinctive barreled roofs and not feel a certain faith in a pacific future?

mate streets and places scaled to human dimensions [which] recall the serene villages of the Greek islands.” Families bought into this forward-thinking mandate in droves, finding the neighborhood an island of calm in the chaos of the city around it.

The idealism of River Park lives on today, though this has not always been the case. The development began to fall into disrepair during the 1970s and 1980s, so much so that owners could not sell their units and instead had to rent them to non-owners, which brought down the general level of care to the buildings and grounds. After watching windows literally fall out and metal surfaces rust and fall apart, the co-op’s elected board has recently undertaken a resident-funded restoration effort, cleaning and refurbishing the buildings’ exterior aluminum screens, re-covering the barrel roofs, shoring up soffits, and replacing the colored exterior panels that give River Park its singular character. The board is also trying to preserve the original condition of the airy lobbies in the high-rise portion of River Park. The lobbies are precious early-1960s period pieces, finished in black terrazzo, cobalt blue tile, and a surfeit of glass trimmed—of course—in aluminum mullions.

With yet another generation of working families, young singles, and retired folks living at River Park today, the experiment continues decades later, and the quiet radicalism of the neighborhood’s design is both a comfort and a reproach: What happened to the boldness of the culture that spawned this place? In the 1950s and 1960s, heavy industry cooperated closely with architects to find new ways to build. Today, though European architects continue to amaze us with their expository housing prototypes, most demonstration-housing in the U.S. relates either to sustainability or to New Urbanism, where the kind of aesthetic, technical, and social innovation pursued at River Park rarely enters the picture. ■



Shared common spaces contribute to the community spirit of River Park (facing page). Aluminum appears everywhere, from the patterned exterior screens to the window mullions (above). Period photographs by Robert Lautman.



# Gimme Shelter

One's home is one's castle—or missile silo, cat haven, tech fantasy, boat, or tree house.

**Glen Helfand** reviews a film on five homeowners and their idiosyncratic dwellings.

**Review** The success of Home Depot and Ikea, as well as the plethora of home product lines of both budget retailers (Target, Kmart) and high-end fashion designers (Ralph Lauren, Donna Karan) suggests that more and more Americans are bringing prefab do-it-yourself modernist style home. Though potentially homogenizing, these forces have also generated deeper interest in domestic creativity. *Home Movie*, Chris Smith's hour-long documentary, a favorite at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival (scheduled for general release in the fall), centers on people's strong desires to express their individuality through their homes.

It's something of a live-action version of *Nest* magazine's studies of interior eccentricity. It celebrates design not so much of the everyday as of the peculiar and loveable. (Interestingly, the film was produced by the online home-improvement store, Homestore.com, which originally intended it to serve as material for research and development, or commercials to sell its merchandise.)

The film looks at five unusual homes and the people who live in them. These aren't architectural showcases, but idiosyncratic acts of remodeling, reuse, or adaptation. In one sense, the film subverts the role of architects and designers: Self-help buildings-on-a-budget can be inventive, indeed. Ed and Diana Pedan, for example, are a New Age couple who had the gumption to renovate a missile silo near Topeka, Kansas, into a family home. It's a vast subterranean space with 18-inch-thick concrete walls that can withstand a single megaton blast. Their hands-on rehabilitation job had the resourcefulness of a barn raising. The pair, for example, explain that they carted out, literally, tons of sludge in wheelbarrows in order to carve out inhabitable rooms and clear long

The deadpan documentary *Home Movie* features (top to bottom) a James-Bond-wannabe in his motorized chair; a houseboat owner enjoying his "front yard;" a maze of catwalks; and a converted military bunker.

tunnel corridors that lead from one section to the other. Ed also admits in the film that their launchpad-turned-living room had some “heavy energy” that needed dispersing. Periodic drumming circles, lots of Oriental carpets, and a purple lava lamp do the trick.

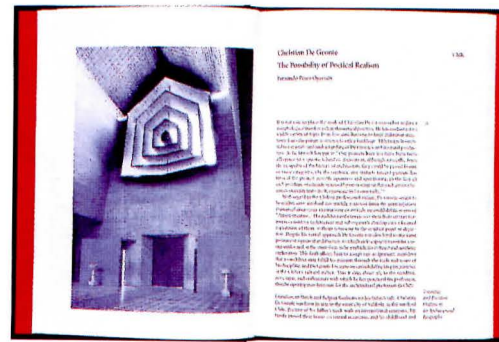
At a foreclosure sale in the 1960s, Ben Skora, a tinkerer/inventor/spiritualist, bought a house outside Chicago with the intent of making it into an “all-electronic” home—fitting, in some way, in the ongoing architectural tradition of trying to make buildings more efficient and smart. But Skora is driven mostly by his compulsion for customization and his eagerness to apply his jerry-rigging engineering skills. The result is a space-age suburban Winchester Mystery House. It’s a continual work-in-progress with moving walls, hidden toilets, revolving floors, and retractable appliances reworked from the prefabricated Sears kitchen that came with the place. Many of the elements are controlled via telephone, from the comfort of a motorized modernist easy chair. The tangles of wires (which sometimes cross) are hidden in the linen closets. Most of the features aren’t exactly efficient, but they do have their charm: He creates these low-rent James Bond larks simply because he can.

The director, Smith, who also made *American Movie* (1999), the revered documentary about the making of an extremely independent horror flick in the American heartland, is apparently interested in charting the artistic pursuits of “outsiders,” in deadpan documentary form. In *Home Movie*, he exalts unique visions—of the sort usually punished by neighborhood associations. Another of his homeowner subjects, Bob Walker and Frances Mooney, who’ve painted their interior walls bright colors and customized the rooms with a maze of catwalks for the comfort and entertainment of their many kitties, admit that they’ve put \$10,000 into their home, but probably decreased the property value by twice that. Like everyone else in this film, they’re fiercely attached to their building.

Elderly yet sprightly Linda Beech (who as an American teen was a Japanese TV star and later became a doctor of psychology) has a very livable tree house in a remote corner of Hawaii. She hugs trees and swims with dolphins, but her building is sensibly powered by hydroelectricity harnessed from a paradisiacal nearby waterfall. She concedes that she’s sharing the place with nature, as does Bill Tregle, who lives in a 25-by-34-foot houseboat on a Louisiana bayou (“It sleeps nine or ten,” he says in a sultry Cajun drawl). Though his houseboat is the least flashy structure in the film, Tregle’s indoor-outdoor lifestyle rethinks concepts of the house along the lines of many landmark works of domestic architecture. The house has always been a testing ground for architects, allowing them to experiment on a small scale with ideas that are not only about how to build, but how to live. Here, the question for them is: Would the homeowners in *Home Movie* be dream—or nightmare—clients? ■

**Home Movie**, directed by Chris Smith.

Bay Area art critic and curator Glen Helfand writes for the San Francisco Bay Guardian, Nest, Salon, and Wired.



### Bibliofile

**Latin American Architecture: Six Voices**, edited by Malcolm Quantrill, preface by Kenneth Frampton (Texas A & M Press)

Latin American architectural theory is virtually absent from current English-language architectural discourse. Regrettably overlooked is a period of critical introspection that addressed Latin America’s postwar regional modernism. *Latin American Architecture: Six Voices*, edited by Malcolm Quantrill brings attention to this period and the ideas that shaped the work of six of the continent’s most accomplished architects: Argentina’s Clorindo Testa; Colombia’s Rogelio Salmona; Chile’s Christian De Groot; Mexico’s Ricardo Legoretta; Uruguay’s Eladio Dieste; and Venezuela’s Jesús Tenreiro-Degwitz.

*Six Voices* is most insightful in its introduction, where the late Argentinean critic Marina Waisman maps modernism’s importation into Latin America—a scene of sharply contrasting traditional and modern existences. Though

perhaps not in so many words, Waisman and the volume’s various contributors essentially classify this body of work as “critical regionalist,” which should be no surprise given that Kenneth Frampton assisted in organizing this anthology and also supplied its preface. Waisman skillfully unpacks this term, however, turning our attention to other nuanced interpretations of regional specificity. For Waisman, Latin America’s search for identity has had a catalyzing effect on its building practices, leading to an “architecture of divergence,” or work that departs from “familiar territory in search of new courses of action, leaving aside the pressures and the enchanting siren’s songs of the postmodern architectural system.”

Though *Six Voices* appears to fit in the genre of the monographic anthology, with its easy division of Latin America into one chapter per nation/architect, it commendably elevates that approach to a scholarly level. *Robert Gonzalez*



### (Obe)City

#### Bigger, Not Better

Of the many ills that can be blamed on the city, can obesity be one of them? Yes, according to a recent report by the Worldwatch Institute, an environmental watchdog group. Obesity has been scientifically related to a range of causes, from genetic to psychological to environmental. But statistics show that obesity—a growing trend worldwide—is concentrated in cities. In both China and Indonesia, the number of people who are obese in cities is double that in the countryside. In the Congo, obesity is six times higher in cities.

Apparently, as cities are metabolizing, people are not. To understand obesity as an urban plague is to recognize its direct relationship with two features of city life: a sedentary lifestyle and a modern diet. Increased dependence on autos, work hours spent sitting in offices, and leisure time devoted to passive activities add up to a decrease in exercise. (A U.S. survey shows that 57 percent of Americans exercise only occasionally or not at all; and a study in the

UK, found that obesity correlated most closely to two lifestyle variables—automobile ownership and television watching.) Meanwhile, modern diets are rich in fat and sugar, much of it in prepared food. As developing nations modernize, they are rapidly adopting the inactive lifestyle and convenience-driven, unhealthy diet of Americans.

This paints a frightening picture of the world to come: One in four adult Americans are obese; the obese are twice as likely to die prematurely as average-weight people; and obesity cost Americans 13 percent of its health-care expenditures in 1998.

What can be done? One recommendation in the Worldwatch report: restoring exercise to our daily lives through sustainable urbanism. “The challenge is to redesign communities, making public transportation the centerpiece of urban transport, augmenting it with sidewalks, jogging trails, and bike-ways...[and] replacing parking lots with parks, playgrounds, and playing fields.” If our cities are healthy, evidently, we will be too. *Cathy Lang Ho*

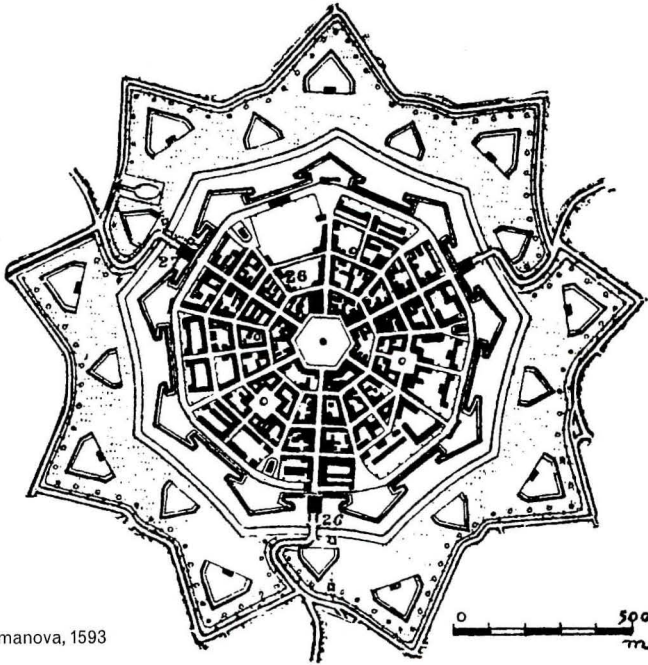
## Seduced and Abandoned

What is it about cities we love—and hate? Joseph Rykwert attempts answers, and **Michael Sorkin** dissects them.

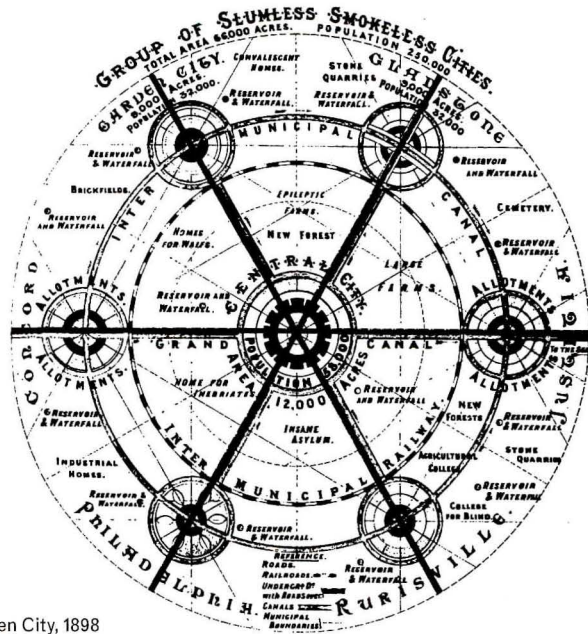
**Bibliofile** Back in college I took a number of courses with the philosopher Richard McKeon, whom many may know via his appearance as “the Chairman” in Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. McKeon was a daunting figure but not without humor. When I asked him to autograph a copy of an anthology of the works of Aristotle that he had edited, he was obliging and signed the book “Aristotle,” appending “per Richard McKeon” in parenthesis. This confirmed a widespread suspicion among us undergraduates that he actually was Aristotle or, at least, was channeling the mighty Greek.

Like McKeon, Joseph Rykwert’s immersion in the past is uncanny. He has a remarkable eye not simply for the structure of building but for the architecture of thought. He bores deep into the minds of many of the modern city’s intellectual progenitors, assigning tremendous generative power to ideas, almost Platonic in his feeling for the way in which the order of space descends from ideology. But he describes the aim of his latest book, *The Seduction of Place*, differently, seeking to depict the city “as it presents itself to our senses.” To be sure, Rykwert’s writing elegantly and frequently evidences his love for the quiddity of cities, their qualities of art, touch, and experience. But the Rykwert we know and revere—for the erudition of works like *The Dancing Column* or *On Adam’s House in Paradise*—is a great historian, whose genius lies in his keen etymologies, his adeptness in tracing origins. His readings are most powerful when he shows routes of thought through generations of object-making and, reciprocally, the special capacity of forms and objects to harbor ideas.

*The Seduction of Place* is, not surprisingly, best when its author is securely in the role of historian. In particular, his account of the assembly of ideological constructs that flourished in the wake of the Enlightenment is both rich and succinct—the account of Jean-Nicholas-Louis Durand’s influence, for example, is a wonder of concision—and Rykwert offers as good a summary of that remarkable brew of optimism, populism, and power as one could hope for. This strong narrative spine is embellished with fascinating asides, ranging from an account the origin of the word *fiacre* to the relation of the height of 19th-century Berlin apartment buildings to the length of fire-engine ladders. One feels Rykwert’s deep affection for the subject here, his identification with it. Like those undergraduate fantasies of McKeon in Attica, it almost seems that Rykwert is describing his own times.



Palmanova, 1593



Garden City, 1898

Rykwert links the shape and logic of cities to a wide range of ideas. In the 16th century, European cities were organized within star-shaped fortifications, allowing for cannon emplacement (above left). Ebenezer Howard's idealistic Garden City plans were strictly schematic, and not intended to translate literally to form (above right).

Indeed, there's a remarkable moment in the book when—writing about William Morris—the tense of the narrative, up to then the historian's steady past, suddenly shifts to the present, a device to quicken the pace, certainly, but also a signifier of the immediacy of the subject's concern. I was reminded of the passage in *Anna Karenina* in which Tolstoy is describing a foxhunt, the point of view shifting rapidly from rider to rider until suddenly—shockingly—it shifts to the perspective of the fox. In Rykwert's case, it is the patient hedgehog who suddenly finds himself the fox, seduced by the excitement of his own narrative.

In the introduction to the book, Rykwert lets us know that he is no driver, that he's a carless urbanite, and I certainly responded sympathetically to the stately charm of his perambulation—and the idea that the city is a place to be consumed slowly, carefully, and traditionally. The walker's pace—like the historian's—is one that registers detail, and Rykwert decodes and depicts walking cities with grace. But, as the book itself drives into the 20th century and beyond, one gets the sense that it increasingly lacks a suitable vehicle for analysis and observation. Primed for nuance and tactility, Rykwert seems unable to penetrate to the core of the blandness and vulgarity that stand in such risible contrast to the places he holds dear. In particular, the narrative falls off badly when Rykwert confronts the character of contemporary urbanism, especially its dissolution into megacities and sprawl controlled by the anonymous networks of global capital and its oppressive protocols of space.

Unfortunately, this pedestrian quality colors the latter part of the book both in its analysis and emphasis. For example, it would seem crucial that a book seeking to come to terms with the city in the 21st century take a long and sanguine look at the growth, character, and future

of the suburbs. Although he devotes considerable ink to various arguable conceptual prototypes, such as the Garden City, the American suburb receives but a single paragraph. Rykwert simply cannot overcome his obvious distaste for the phenomenon he is discussing and, in a sense, becomes the prisoner of his own (albeit sympathetic) nostalgia.

Given his devotion to ideas, one of the unusual qualities of this book is Rykwert's skepticism about more recent notions of space, as developed by, for example, philosopher Henri Lefebvre, dissed anonymously in the introduction and figuring not at all in the book's text or index. It's a striking omission, one that precludes the most vital contemporary

## Rykwert bores into the minds of the city's intellectual progenitors, assigning great generative power to ideas.

stream of urban theory and analysis, refined with urgency and bite over what is now almost half a century by David Harvey, Manuel Castells, Ed Soja, and their cadre of neo-Marxian, postsurrealist bent.

Of course, there's no requirement that Rykwert take this line of thought seriously, but the lack of a persuasive alternative position about the etiology of contemporary forms of the city ultimately leaves Rykwert in a conceptual quandary. The result is a compendium, in effect, of histories that have already been more deeply written by Christine Boyer, Dolores Hayden, and Margaret Crawford, among others. And, by denying himself the tools of more recent theory, Rykwert is forced to analyze the contemporary city almost purely as architecture, unable to consider that the keys to understanding the phenomena he seeks to explain may simply not lie in the considered urbanism of the past.

I left this book thinking that Rykwert had laid a sturdy groundwork but had, finally, failed to deliver the goods. The *continued on page 144*

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# architecture

Every P/A Awards jury has its defining moments—like the year that jurors discovered they'd given Thom Mayne of Morphosis three awards, or the time when judges Zaha Hadid and James Cutler nearly came to fisticuffs after hours of philosophical arguments. The jurors of the **48th Annual P/A Awards** will be remembered for one particular moment of the two days they spent reviewing over 400 entries: their impassioned argument about the merits of Kolatan/MacDonald Studio's Raybould House.

Devotees of computer-generated “blob” buildings pin many of digital design’s future hopes on this much-touted house addition, which was designed—and will be fabricated—with the aid of computers (September 2000, page 103). Juror Hani Rashid went so far as to call the project the “poster child” of the blob movement. Rashid initially recused himself from voting on the project since he teaches at Columbia University with architects Sulan Kolatan and William MacDonald, knows a thing or two about the project, and is himself one of blob design’s leading lights. But when other jurors eliminated it in early rounds of debate, he threw propriety to the wind and began a passionate defense of the project. “This is a bad moment for architecture,” Rashid pronounced when the Raybould House was initially voted down. “I think we need to make some dramatic statements about the future of architecture.” “I’m fine with making dramatic statements, but I don’t think that building is it,” countered Deborah Berke. “I don’t think this is the blob,” agreed Brad Cloepfil. “It’s not a good one.”

For the jurors, the brouhaha over the blob wasn’t so much a battle about the merits of one particular design methodology or style versus another. Rather, it brought to light their mission as arbiters of the P/A

**“I just think about the vast turf that we haven’t recognized,” Robbins persisted. “This is not a chastisement of the jury; it’s just a recognition of what a small bandwidth is represented here.”**

program, a role they questioned aloud. “Are the P/A Awards about innovation or what’s going on now?” asked jury chair Mark Robbins. “Are we supposed to offer up an example of the best of each genre, or should it be about putting things out there that may be problematic for architects around the country?” Rashid implored that the awards “should really be about questioning the future and not about just *establishing* a survey of what’s going on in architecture.” Furthermore Rashid believed that the Raybould House was worth honoring because of its provocative inquiry into computer-generated design and construction, even though he admitted it’s not the best example of digital design—or necessarily even a good building, as he says in the extended comments on page 108.

In fact, Rashid and his fellow jurors had so much to say about their choices that the editors changed the presentation format of the awards issue to allow longer, more complete jury comments for each

project. They tried to translate the back-and-forth dialogue that goes on behind closed doors onto the page, rather than settle for quick sound bites on each project. Hopefully, this longer dialogue will give a more complete sense of why and how projects were selected.

This year’s jurors had more than just blobs on the brain. They worried about what kinds of buildings they were and were not recognizing, and wondered if they had been enamored by one too many tiny, lyrical projects or community-minded programs. As Nathalie de Vries suggested, “It’s easy to do small, delicate, beautiful things. But it’s funny that we didn’t choose a good mall or skyscraper.” Robbins agreed: “We didn’t select any commercial buildings or towers, because we didn’t see very compelling examples of client-driven or market-driven stuff. Is the idea of retail incompatible with an idea beyond retail?” De Vries countered, “But that was also largely due to the fact that nobody sent in those kinds of projects.” “I just think about the vast turf that we haven’t recognized,” Robbins persisted, “which points out how partial our own discourse is in looking at architecture, and viewing what position architecture has within culture. This is not a chastisement of the jury; it’s just a recognition of what a small bandwidth is represented here, given how diverse the built environment is.”

Are the clients of large commercial projects to blame for a lack of risk-taking and provocative design in those categories? Rashid argued

that the sponsors of the winning projects demonstrate a laudable willingness among clients to commission edgier designs. “Which is great,” affirmed Robbins. “And I would like to think that there are other, larger clients with more market force behind them that also could be convinced to take the risk that these projects represent.”

The jury had other thoughts about projects they didn’t award. “There was so much self-conscious, purely gratuitous composition, as if to say, ‘If it’s complex and has 14 different materials, it must be architecture,’” remarked Cloepfil. “I think that’s the key criticism,” agreed Rashid. Berke observed that the projects that “we hoped would have been simple failed because they were simplistic, not simple. And others failed because they were complicated, rather than complex.” As de Vries summed things up, “There was a lot of pointless complexity.” For Cloepfil, the reliance on complex 3-D imagery in the presentations spelled disaster for many hopeful entries. *continued on page 144*





HR

NDV

BC

MR

DB

**Deborah Berke** is principal of the Manhattan practice that bears her name, and that she founded in 1982. Some of her firm's earliest work was at the now-iconic town of Seaside, Florida, where she designed three public buildings and 16 houses. In the following years, Berke has gained a reputation as a minimalist; her appreciation of quiet, workaday buildings is documented in the book *Architecture of the Everyday* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), which she coedited with Steven Harris. More recently, she explored her penchant for clean lines and volumes in her design for the Schools of Art and Drama at Yale University, a project that combines renovation and new construction.

Since 1987, Berke has been an associate professor (adjunct) at Yale. She holds both Fine Arts and Bachelor of Architecture degrees from the Rhode Island School of Design as well as a Master's in Urban Planning in Urban Design from the City University of New York.

**Brad Cloepfil** is principal of Allied Works Architects, based in his native Portland, Oregon. Cloepfil's firm has won two P/A Award citations since its founding, including one for the Portland headquarters of the advertising giant Wieden + Kennedy Agency (June 2000, page 104).

After attending Pratt Institute's School of Architecture in Brooklyn, New York, he received a Bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Oregon and a Master of Architecture from Columbia University. Cloepfil founded Allied Works in 1994. He has taught at the University of Oregon's School of Architecture and Design, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and New York Institute of Technology.

Allied Works is now completing the design for St. Louis's new Forum for Contemporary Art, adjacent to Tadao Ando's new Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts building.

**Nathalie de Vries** is one of the founding members, along with Winy Maas and Jacob van Rijs, of MVRDV, the architecture office they launched in Rotterdam in 1991.

Among MVRDV's better-known built projects are the headquarters of the VPRO Public Broadcasting Company in Hilversum, the Netherlands, and the Dutch pavilion at the Expo 2000 in Hannover, Germany (August 2000, page 92). De Vries and her partners are currently designing government and university buildings in Arnhem and Nijmegen, both in the Netherlands; a large office building in Munich; and a 300-unit residential project in Vienna. MVRDV's work has been exhibited around the world; two houses in Amsterdam were included in the Museum of Modern Art's 1999's *Un-Private House* show.

De Vries has taught at the Berlage Institute in Amsterdam and Akademie voor Bouwkunst in Arnhem, as well as at the Technical University in Delft, which is her alma mater.

**Hani Rashid** and partner Lise Anne Couture founded in 1989 New York-based Asymptote, a multidisciplinary firm that designs sculptural installations, computer-generated environments, buildings, and urban plans. Asymptote's breakthrough project was the West Coast Gateway Monument in Los Angeles, commissioned that same year. Since then they have received awards in international competitions and have been involved in projects in Europe, Japan, and the United States. Most recently, Asymptote designed a large-scale computer-generated environment for the New York Stock Exchange and an accompanying physical space that extends the trading floor of the NYSE in Manhattan. Asymptote is presently designing the Guggenheim Virtual Museum for the museum's SoHo branch in New York City, as well as other projects in New York; Kyoto, Japan; San Francisco; and Lille, France.

**Mark Robbins** is Director of Design at the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., where he is leading a program to strengthen design in the public realm. In addition to expanding grant opportunities, he has launched New Public Works, an initiative that will support national design competitions. Before arriving at the NEA, Robbins was Curator of Architecture at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, from 1993 to 1999.

Robbins studied film and anthropology at Colgate University before taking up architecture at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, and at Syracuse University. He worked in the offices of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Polshek and Partners, and Emilio Ambasz before starting his own practice in 1986. He has received a Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome and fellowships from the NEA, the MacDowell Colony, and the Graham Foundation. Currently, Robbins is on extended leave as an associate professor in the Knowlton School of Architecture at Ohio State University.

# Changi International Airport Terminal 3

## Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

### Award

**HANI RASHID:** The images are phenomenal as a proposition. But why didn't the architects continue? Did they just hire a consultant to do the roof? **DEBORAH BERKE:** I think it's the other way around. I think they hired a totally normative consultant to do the airport and the architects just put a hat on it. **HR:** Deborah's right. What happens in these kind of projects is that consultants do the planning, and as the architect, your hands are tied. **MARK ROBBINS:** Could we give a building-part award? Like if you had really nice shoes? **BRAD CLOEPFIL:** You know what's disappointing—look how it's built. I mean it truly is decorative; it's just a bunch of decorative skylights. The rest of the building is some kind of really nasty convention hall. **HR:** Are the louvers triggered by computers or something? Does something happen up there? **DB:** You see it from the air, as you're landing. I think it's very cool. **BC:** The quality of light underneath is fantastic. **MR:** Did you ever see those things during World War II when they were trying to do camou-

flage, and they would put this mesh with a false ground on top of the airplanes? It's fantastic stuff. And that's what this looks like when you fly in. **HR:** Do they actually pivot? And what causes that? Is it an algorithm? **DB:** It doesn't say. **HR:** What they should've done is create an algorithm that sends a flock pattern right across the ceiling every time a plane lands. **DB:** It's totally magnificent. **BC:** It's a one-liner. **DB:** Oh, I don't think so. **BC:** But it's the most beautiful one-liner we've seen. Besides, what is in an airport? Lousy amenities, bad fast food... **DB:** I don't think it is decoration. I think if it modulates the sunlight, it's also not a one-liner, because it changes over the course of the day. **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** I think I've had it with these space frames on airports. This is a nice change. **DB:** Also, I think the experiential sequence of flying over it and then passing back out under it would be quite extraordinary. **HR:** In terms of a large-scale building, it's interesting. Imagine that on a skyscraper.

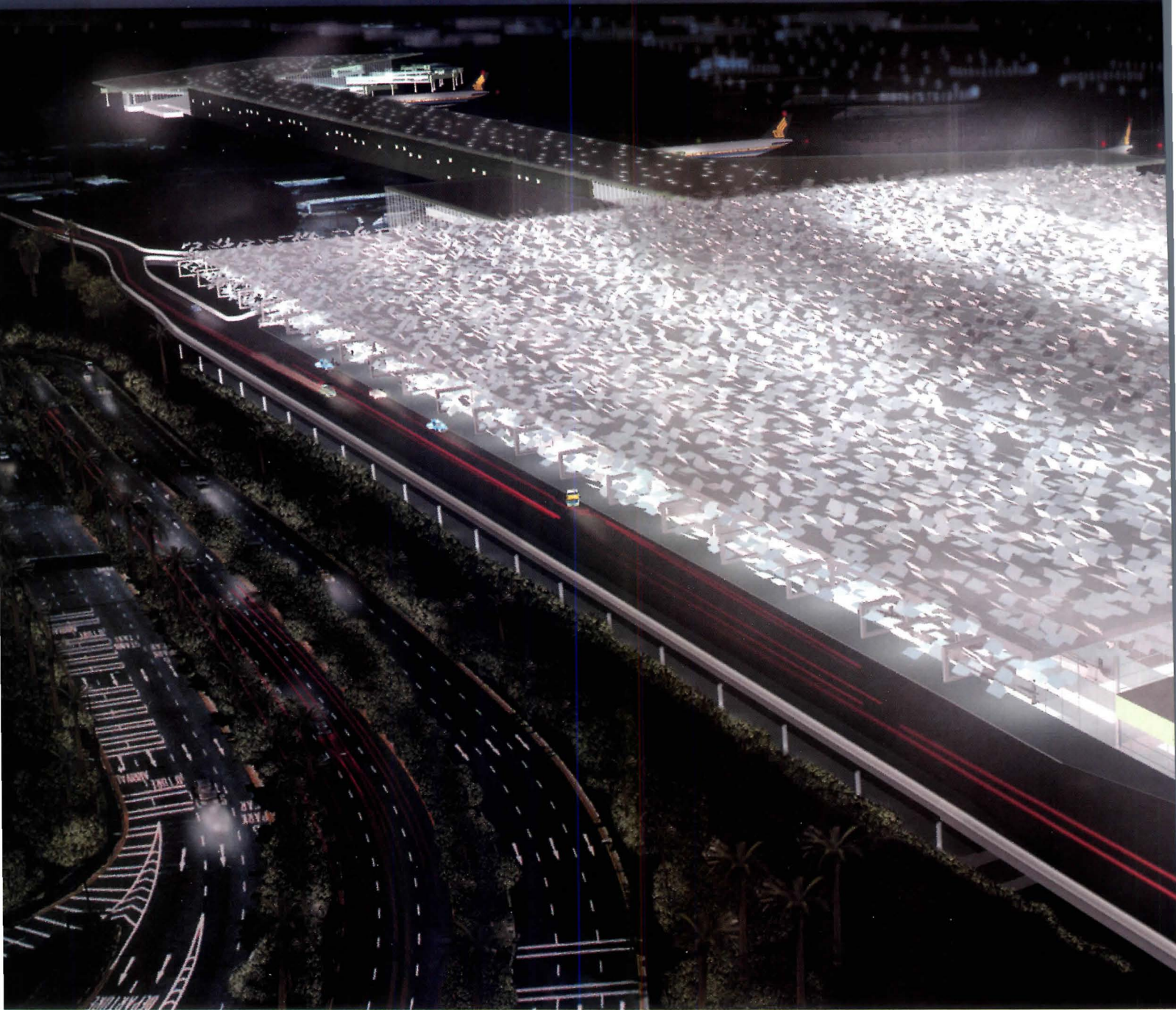
**PROJECT:** Changi International Airport Terminal 3, Singapore

**SITE:** A 200,000-square-foot plot at Singapore's airport.

**PROGRAM:** A new international arrivals and departures terminal. The terminal completes a three-phase master plan developed in the 1970s by the airport authority.

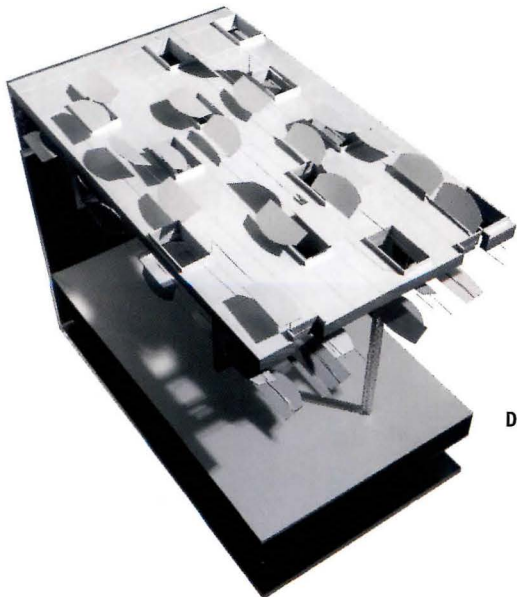
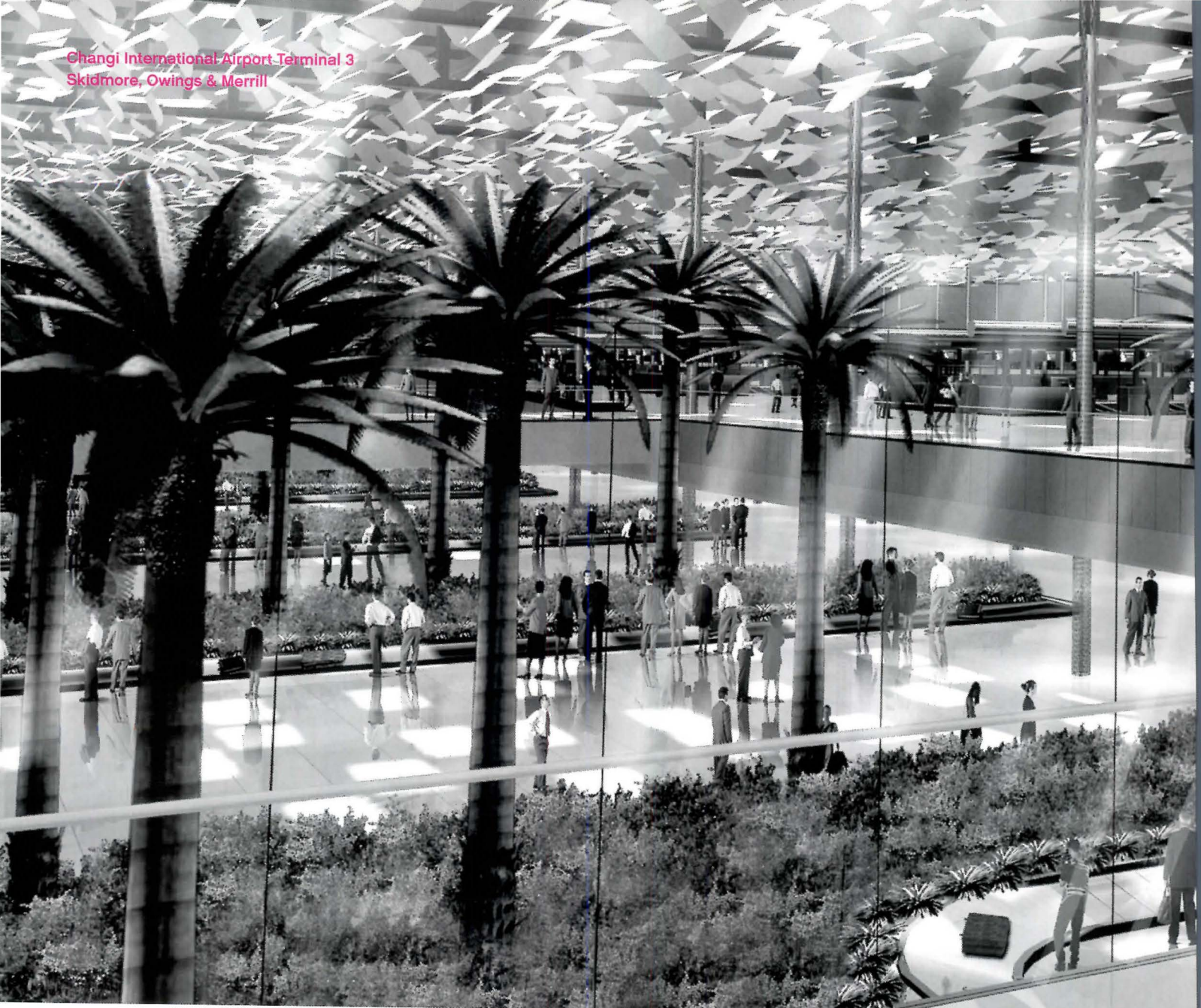
**SOLUTION:** The distinguishing feature of this otherwise straightforward, two-level terminal building is its shimmering roof and ceiling. From the curbside drop-off area, the roof extends over the ticketing and departures hall to the boarding lounges, boasting 215,000 perforated-aluminum louvers suspended on steel cables above and below the steel-truss structure. (The cables also help stabilize the trusses; the roofs over the concourses and the connections to existing facilities are lower

and less elaborately articulated.) Aside from creating a lyrical, abstract ceiling texture and roof pattern, like a mad flock of metallic birds, the louvers help diffuse tropical sunlight that enters through 1,100 skylights in the roof; they also temper acoustics in the cavernous hall. The terminal will be completed in early 2004.



View of the new terminal from the east





Detail model of the roof



Arrival sequence through the ticketing and departures hall (above); view from the upper level



baggage claim area (top)

**CLIENT:** Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore—Ho Beng Huat (director general); Fong Kok Wai (director, engineering)

**ARCHITECT:** Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, New York City—David M. Childs (design partner); Marilyn J. Taylor (planning partner); Ross Wimer (senior designer); Hamid Kia (project manager);

Scott Duncan, Samer Bitar, Masha Dobrovolskaya, Michael Fei, So Young Kim, Ursula Schneider, Sven Schroeter, Tran Vinh (design team); Sarah Dodson, Simone Pfeiffer, Bill Wunder (model builders)

**ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT:** PWD Consultants

**CONSULTANTS:** Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Chicago (structural engineering); Bartenbach Licht Labor (lighting); Pixel x Pixel (rendering); Roy Wright (model photography)

**COST:** Withheld at client's request

# Detroit Community Pavilion

## Mark Anderson and Andrew Zago

Award

**BRAD CLOEPFIL:** It's so damned pretty. **DEBORAH BERKE:** I think this is wonderful. **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** It's delightful. **HANI RASHID:** Again, a project with a sociopolitical edge. It seems to be our way of apologizing. **NDV:** At the same time, it's very beautiful. **BC:** I think we're all drawn, frankly, to the extremely powerful aesthetics of it. That's what's interesting. **NDV:** It works on so many levels. **MARK ROBBINS:** It would be a shame for me if there were a polarity reinscribed between social engagement and progressive work. I think it's unfortunate to frame it that way, as if it has to be either this or that. **HR:** Well, it's avant-garde on its own merits, dealing with the materials and the budgets, although I have to question the line between architecture and public art. That's really where this falls into a kind of strange crevice, within the spirit of Gordon Matta-Clark and certain sculptors who've worked with this medium. We're giving it an architecture award, which is a pretty interesting statement. And I think we're giving it an award because of its sociopo-



litical trappings, as well as its tectonic and formal ones.

**MR:** I don't know if you could say we're privileging one over the other. Were you first attracted to its beauty, its appearance, or its power—the gestalt of burnt wood? And then did you later read through and say, ah, this is going in Detroit, in a burnt-out landscape, on a site where there used to be a house? This now becomes a gathering space with a very strong layer of history, this strata literally above your head, which is a very powerful metaphor. **BC:** I'm not just endorsing it as a fancy public canopy. I also think that at least what I see possible in both the clarity of the conception and the rigor, and the singularity and boldness of the execution is that you can make a museum that good, too. That's what I want people to see in this project.

**PROJECT:** Detroit Community Pavilion, Detroit, Michigan

**SITE:** A vacant lot filled with the charred remains of a single-family house. The surrounding city neighborhood, known as the Near East Side, is filled with derelict and similarly burned houses.

**PROGRAM:** A 1,200-square-foot community pavilion for informal neighborhood gatherings. The pavilion is inspired by the impromptu seating found throughout the area, where neighbors gather to chat.

**SOLUTION:** The pavilion is a simple shelter made of burned timbers from the house that formerly stood on the site and other debris salvaged from the area. The proposed construction technique is a seeming contradiction, an orderly building up of a jumble of old materials. The existing basement will be emptied out and filled with parallel, 12-inch-deep rows of debris. The foundation will be built up by placing additional rows perpendicular to those underneath, and concrete poured into the cavity. A dense grid of columns made from salvaged lumber will be inserted into the mix.

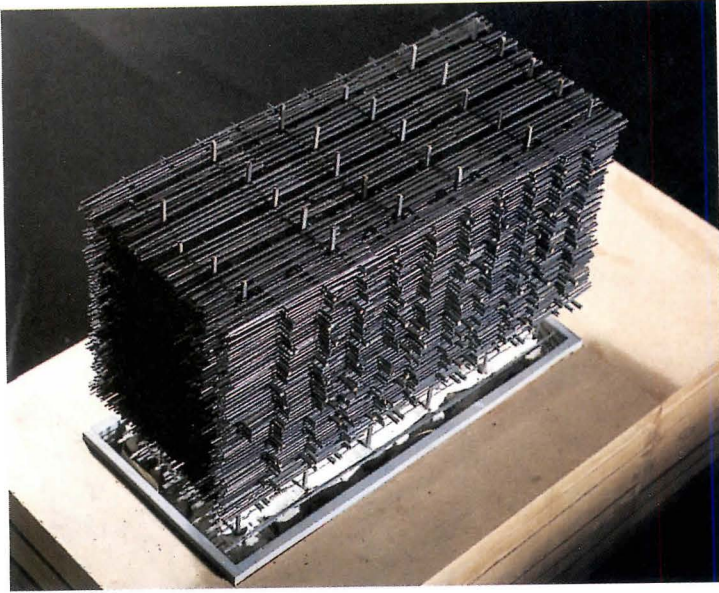
Above ground, the pavilion's enclosure will be made of 4-foot-by-4-foot bundles of charred

wood laid in alternating directions within a bolted structural frame of the salvaged wood columns and beams. The pavilion will extend roughly two stories above grade, equaling the mass of the previous house. Its simultaneously rough and fine wooden filigree will let light pass through the gaps between the bundles of wood.

Since most of the materials are salvaged refuse and volunteer laborers will build the pavilion, the architect expects the structure to cost just \$4 per square foot.

Detroit Community Pavilion  
Mark Anderson and Andrew Zago

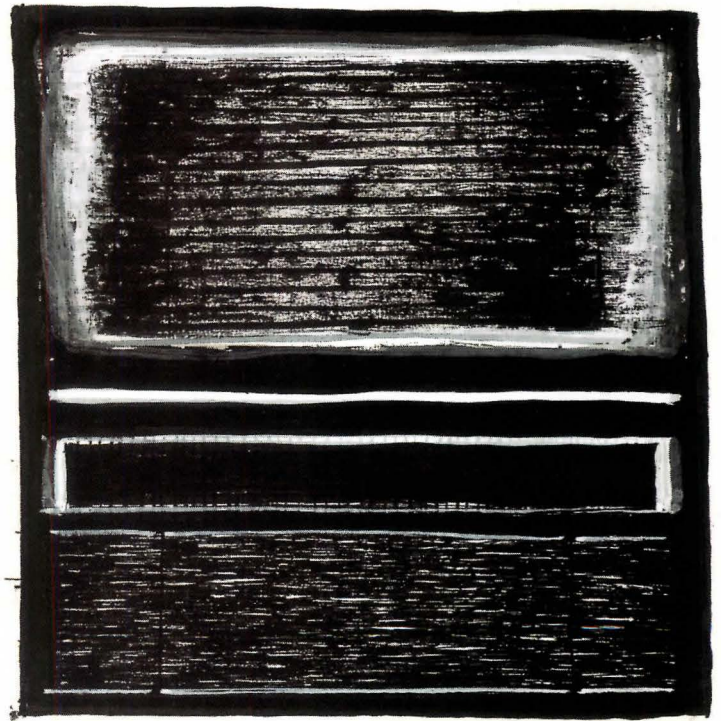
Section and elevation study



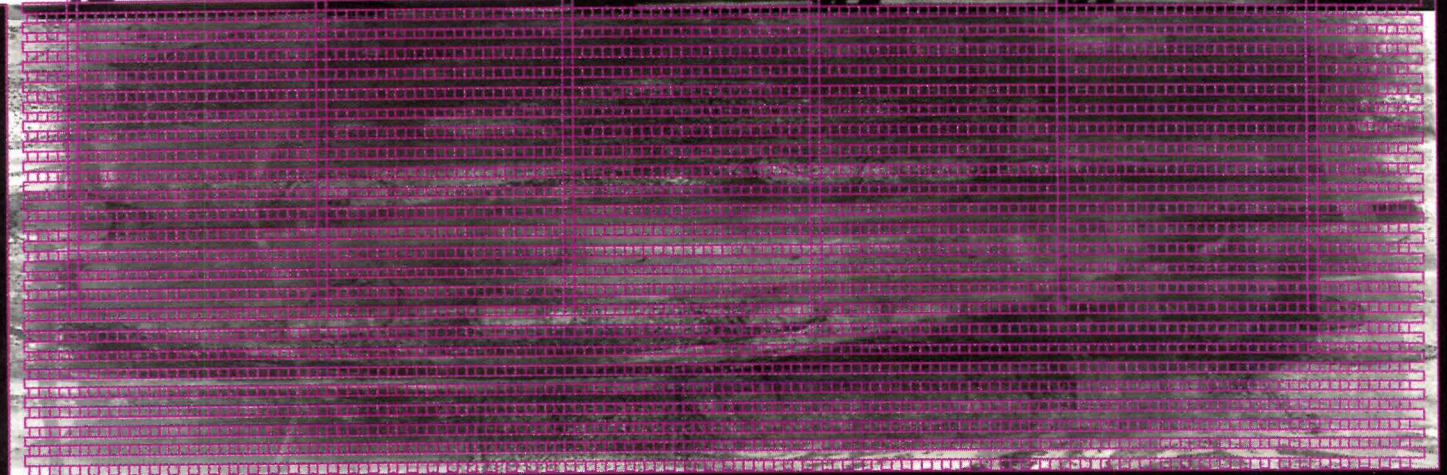
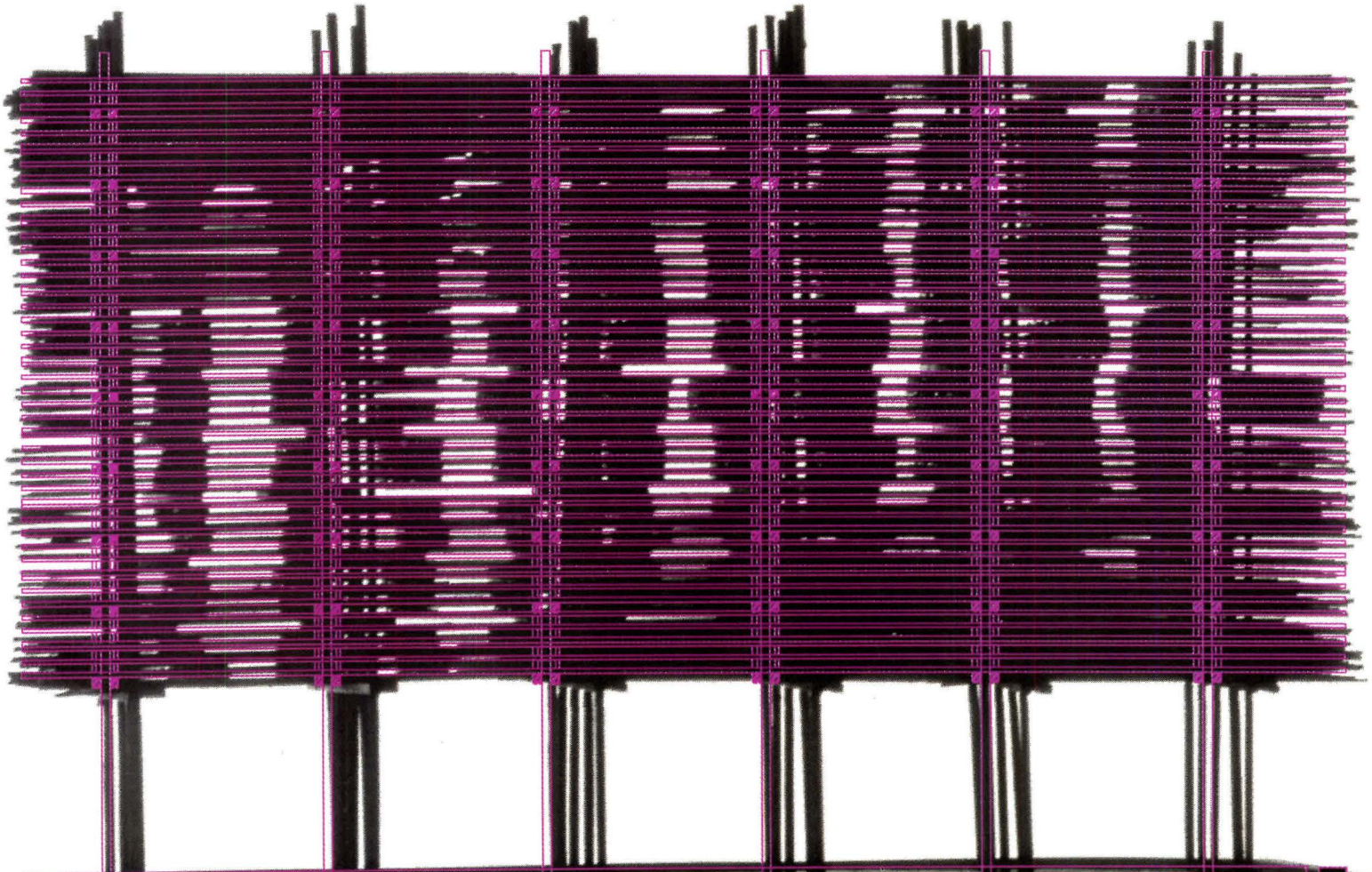
Aerial view

**CLIENT:** Heidelberg Foundation,  
Detroit—Jenene Whitfield  
(executive director)  
**ARCHITECT:** Mark Anderson and  
Andrew Zago, Detroit—Mark  
Anderson, Andrew Zago (project  
architects); Brendan Canning,  
Michael Letvin (project team);  
Kathrine Collier, Martin Fenlon,  
Jason Haigler, Roberto Jimenez  
(project assistants)  
**COST:** \$4,800

3.24.1999 · DETROIT



Sectional study



# Kentucky Heritage Center

## Gil Rampy Architect

### Award

**HANI RASHID:** The plans are a little disappointing, but the envelopes are interesting. **BRAD CLOEPFIL:** It looks like a piece of architecture, for crying out loud. **MARK ROBBINS:** I like this notion of the large mask with small holes, with the object inside. It's one of the few projects that looked at historical precedents without making them into clichéd icons.

**DEBORAH BERKE:** Where do you see all this happening? **MR:** This whole thing is predicated on a narrative about the Shakers. And it talks about a mask, the plain mask that hides the ritual behind; this is a paean to the circular Shaker barn in Hancock, Massachusetts. **BC:** There's a big Shaker community in Kentucky, too, isn't there? **MR:** Yes, in Pleasant Hill. **HR:** Actually, I think this is more for the movers than the Shakers. **DB:** You make a very interesting point, Hani, because it is a building totally in the round, freestanding on a gigantic meadow off of an interstate. **HR:** It's like a billboard, some kind of roadside motel typology. But it seems that since everything is so steeped in

typologies and forms and histories, it's odd that it hasn't found its own presence. **BC:** Well, I think it's skillfully overwrought. **MR:** Looking at parts of it, I think it's a little close to its precedents. On the other hand, there are pieces I like. I do like the skin. I think it's kind of cloying and compositional, at first view. On the other hand, when I look at the plan and understand this wrapper with a big event inside, I imagine it being actually quite nice to go through and discover that large round space. **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** It's very formalistic, but you have the feeling that you will make a nice promenade through it, and experience some nice spaces. **HR:** It could've benefited from some editing. **MR:** Sort of like Mahler. **DB:** It could've benefited from some better drawings, too. Because, in fact, I think some of the most compelling things in the portfolio are the photographs of what's around it. **MR:** But for all of the referential work that we've seen, work that's trying to play off of regional forms or vernacular forms,

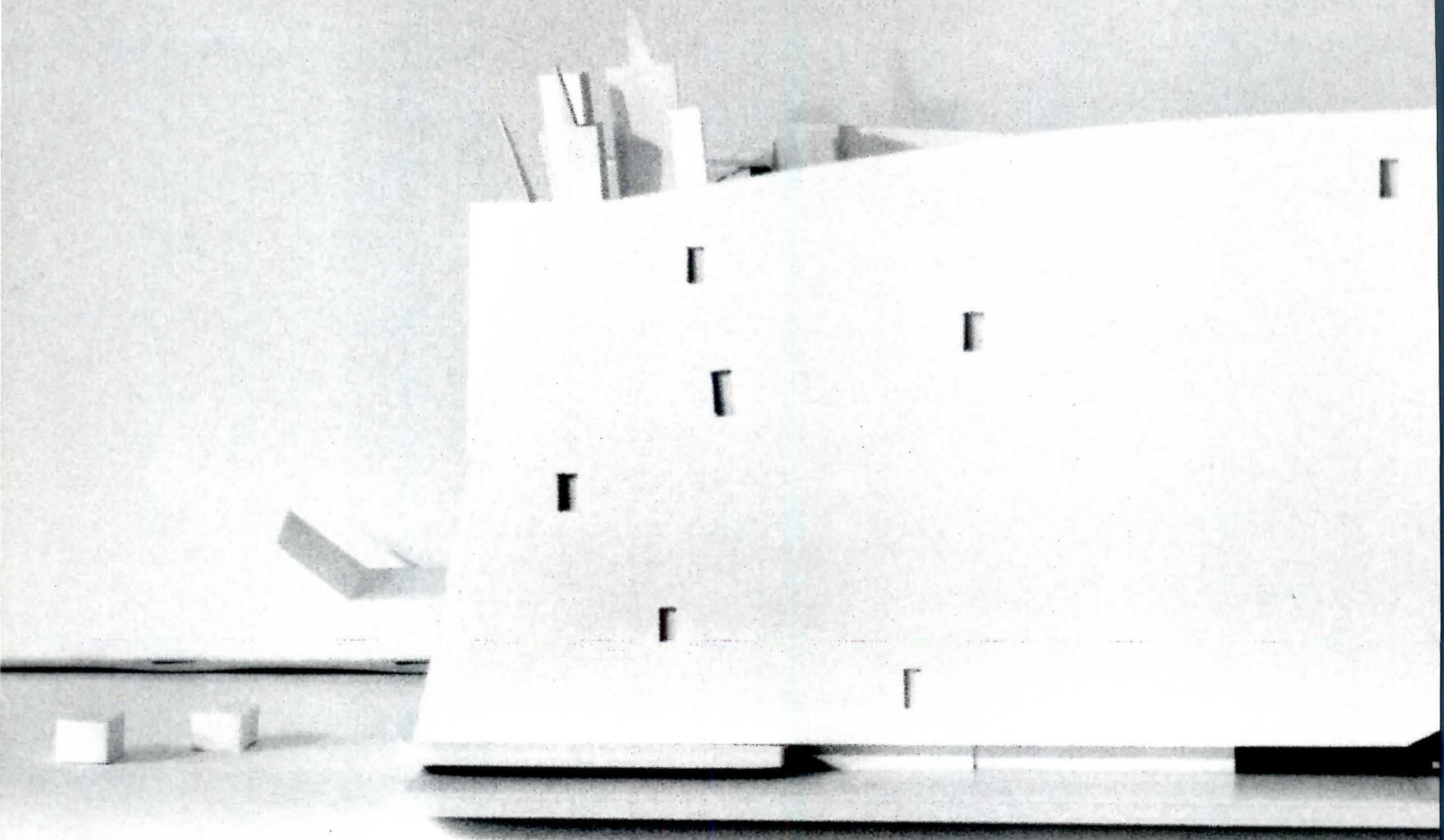
**PROJECT:** Kentucky Heritage Center, Park City, Kentucky

**SITE:** Undeveloped land fronting an interchange along Interstate 65, near Kentucky's Mammoth Cave National Park.

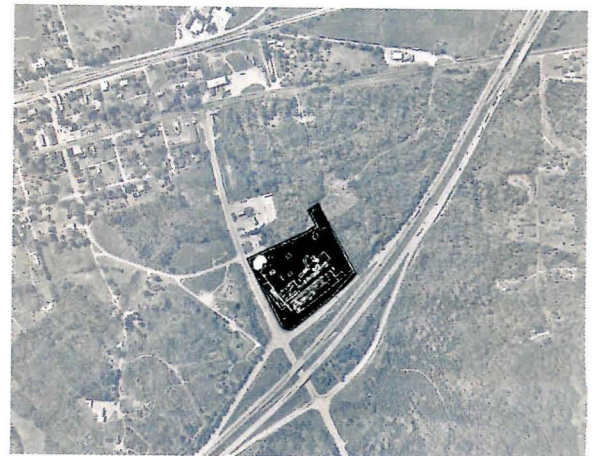
**PROGRAM:** A 20,000-square-foot museum displaying local art, crafts, and photography; a 20,000-square-foot welcome center including a bookstore, a gift shop, a 300-seat theater, three classrooms, a library, and offices; a 24-hour highway rest area with concessions, restrooms, and a travel information center; and a small park with picnic areas.

**SOLUTION:** The architect considered the building's interior and exterior to be fundamentally independent and gave them distinct formal and material qualities. Sited parallel to the interstate off-ramp, the white, siding-clad shell is inspired by the barns, churches, and Shaker meeting houses of rural Kentucky. The interiors take their spatial cues from a different local precedent: the caves found throughout southwestern Kentucky. Tiny casement windows in an irregular pattern admit light into upper-level galleries—some small and cellular, others open and loftlike—which will be finished in a straightforward palette

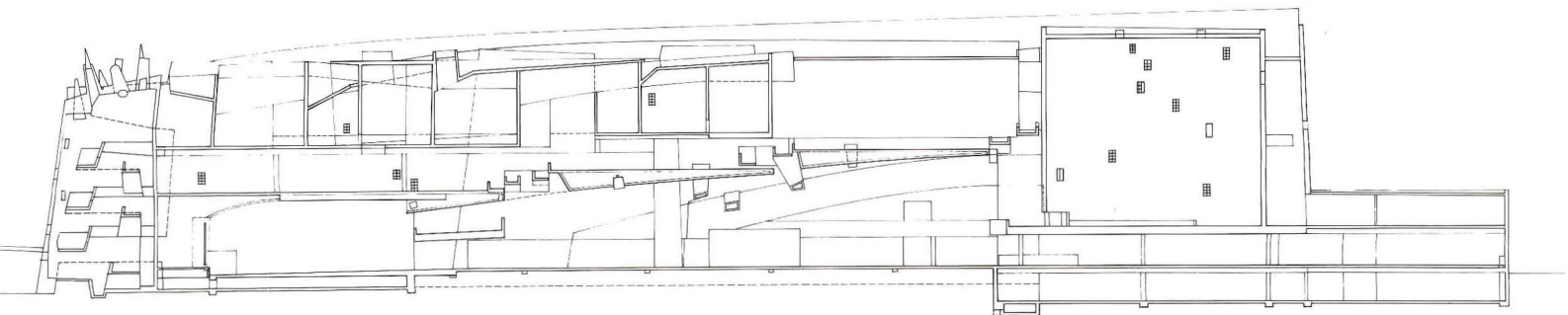
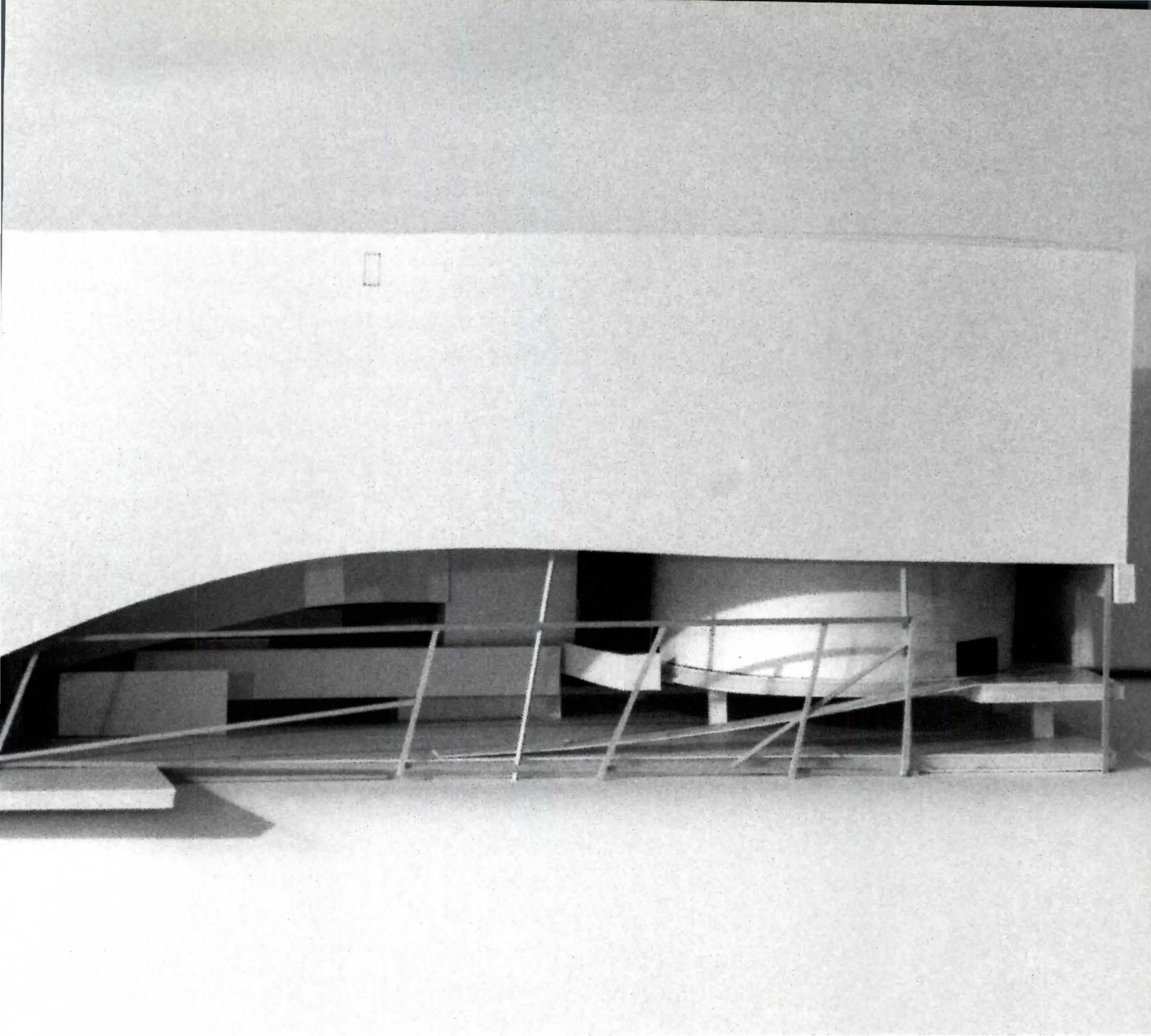
of concrete, wood, and drywall. One of the building's signature elements is a drum-shaped gallery extending four stories above a ground-floor gathering space, which gives access to the gift shop, classrooms, auditorium, and rest-stop vending area. In another nod to the country vernacular, local craftspeople exhibit their wares along a covered porch outside the classrooms.



View from the northwest



Site plan V



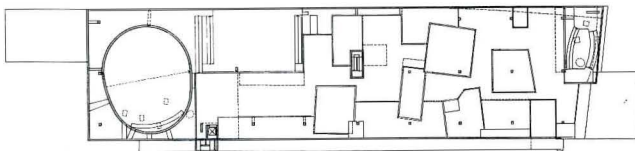
Southwest-northeast section

this seems to me to be the most transformed, and to stand as a building in and of itself. **DB:** I would say it's the best distillation of vernacular architecture I've seen.

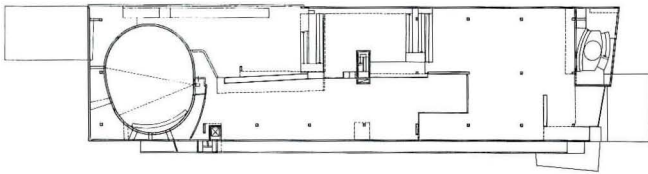
**NDV:** This project could've gotten an award in 1986, and maybe in 2005. That's what's strange about it. **DB:** The lack of a materialization of it is a huge disappointment to me. Because when you take this form and you clad it, it's either going to damn its relationship with the vernacular by being too coy, or enhance it by dealing with the scale of the highway. But we don't know. **NDV:** Hani pointed to this beautiful sketch. There you actually do see what it would be like. You sense how it would be made. **HR:** It has an Art Brut tension. But I'm really nervous about the execution.

**DB:** I think one of the things that's a little hard to understand is how big or not big it is. It's situated right up against the edge of a highway, and if it's too small it'll just be sadly diminutive. **BC:** The other thing that's disconcerting to me is that these people are very self-conscious about making sure this looks like architecture. It's really composed and complex.

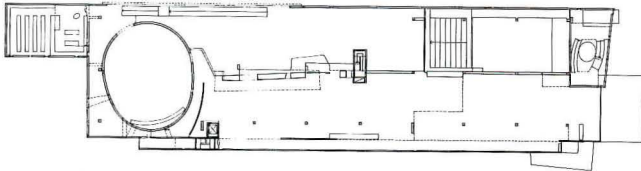
**HR:** That's what makes me nervous. **BC:** I think you're right, actually. There's a self-consciousness. **NDV:** We are giving awards to non-built projects, and that will always be a problem. **HR:** What makes me nervous is that there is a fetishistic approach to the building, as if to convince us that it really is architecture.



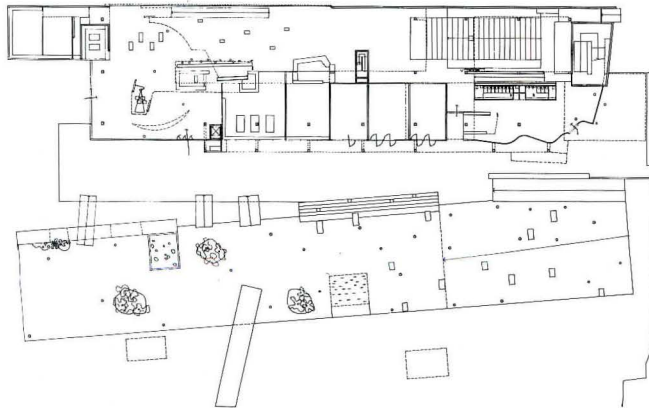
Fourth-floor plan



Third-floor plan



Second-floor plan

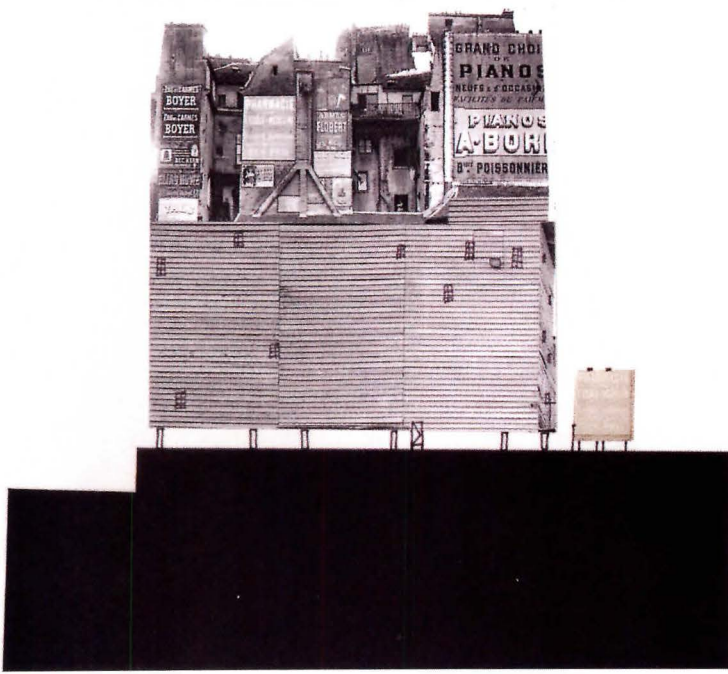


First-floor plan | 50' ^

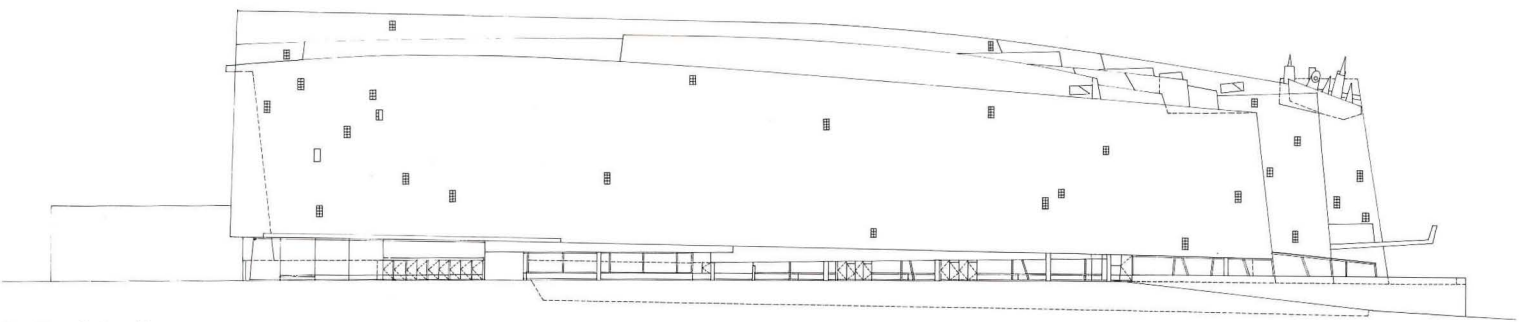


**CLIENT:** Louisville-Nashville  
Heritage Corridor, and "Vision  
2010"—Bill Dearman (chair);  
Gary Berdeaux; Gary Madison  
(mayor, Park City)  
**ARCHITECT:** Gil Rampy Architect,  
Princeton, New Jersey—  
Gil Rampy (principal); Jennifer  
Schade, Monica Friday,  
Steve Zimba (project team)  
**COST:** Under development

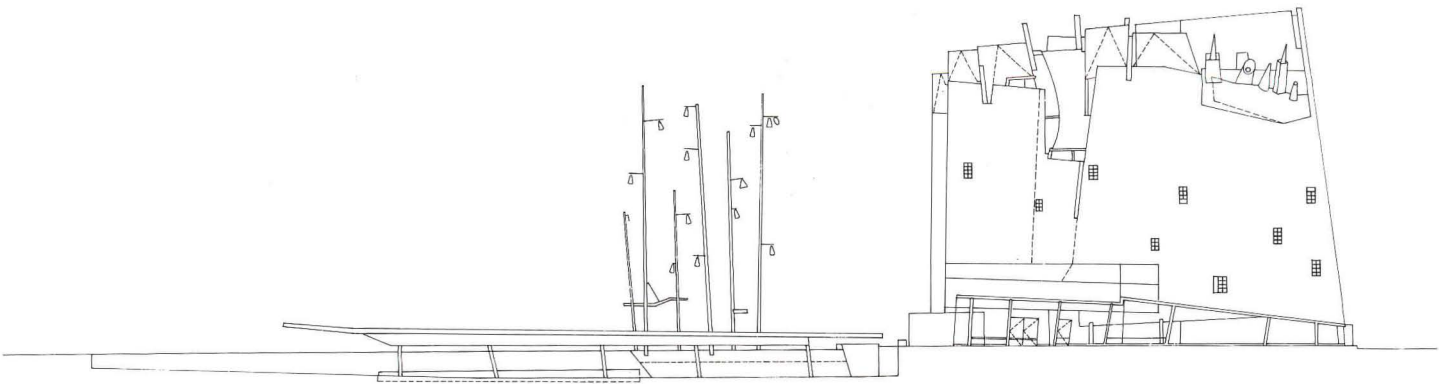
06



Collage study



Southeast elevation



Northeast elevation

# Casa Familiar: Living Rooms at the Border

## Estudio Teddy Cruz

Award

**DEBORAH BERKE:** I think it's a darned project. **BRAD CLOEPFIL:** With a possibility for weaving together different forces and different factors in the city. The open-endedness of it is very nice. **MARK ROBBINS:** It also makes some propositions about different types of units that would feed off of streets and subsidiary alleys. **DB:** Is it housing or urban design? **MR:** I think it's a combination. **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** It's also a mixture of public and private. It's about how you use the in-between spaces. **MR:** That's right. The interstitial spaces are much more interesting. **NDV:** The project's deliberately ambiguous, because they don't want to predict how it's used. **DB:** Part of the appeal of this scheme is that it does offer a technique—perhaps not totally fleshed out—for knitting back together, or making insertions without the bombast of the master plan as we understand it. It's little and it's assertive. **MR:** But it's somewhat problematic that the best that we can come up with are these kinds of small-scale pieces. And you think

in a country like ours that we can't generate larger-scale schemes for remaking large sections of the city, that it always falls to church groups or nonprofits to get 20 units of housing built here, three units of housing there. That isn't a critique of this project; it's a critique of the general environment, the culture, and the lack of funding that we don't see larger-scale remaking of whole quarters of cities. I think this project brings a kind of hopeful ray. But then I look at its small scale, and I would like to see this kind of work being done at a much more expansive scale, getting greater support.

**DB:** This kind of planning, unlike New Urbanism, is not about blank-slate creation, but about accepting the richness of the city and building on it. **HANI RASHID:** They've done a very good job, which is rarely the case in these kind of things, because people don't usually go into this kind of detail as to what the environments really would be like. And there's a lot of attention paid to the micro-sections and micronuances of the program.

**PROJECT:** Casa Familiar: Living Rooms at the Border, San Ysidro, California

**SITE:** The streets of San Ysidro, California, located across the U.S.-Mexico border from Tijuana.

**PROGRAM:** A three-stage, eight-year plan for improving the urban core of this dense border city, undertaken for the local nonprofit social-services organization Casa Familiar.

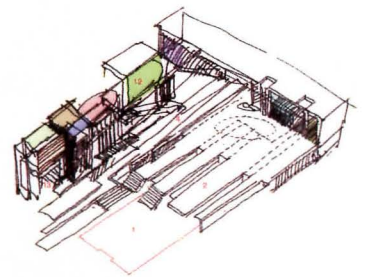
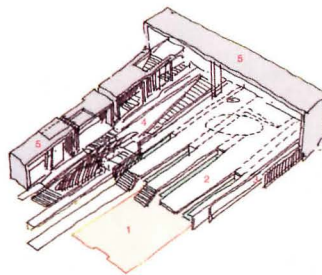
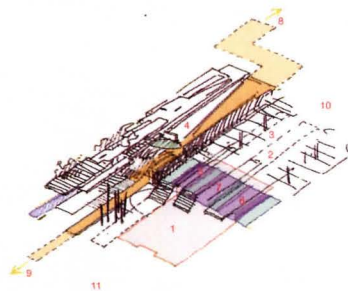
**SOLUTION:** The project is essentially an organic, incremental plan with the aim of changing San Ysidro's existing zoning to promote higher density, mixed uses, and affordable housing. The first phase comprises the renovation of a historic church into a community center and offices for Casa Familiar, and the addition of a public garden. The second phase will see the construction of a concrete-frame "arbor" in the garden; it will act as a shaded walkway connecting the street and alleyway, or as a public place where new uses, such as a com-

munity market, can occur. The concrete frame will ultimately serve as the infrastructure for stage three: affordable housing built atop, under, and around the frame. The dwellings will therefore be highly flexible, accommodating the different requirements of San Ysidro's residents. The units might house single-parent families, for instance, or serve as transitional homes for the underprivileged.

Casa Familiar: Living Rooms at the Border  
Estudio Teddy Cruz

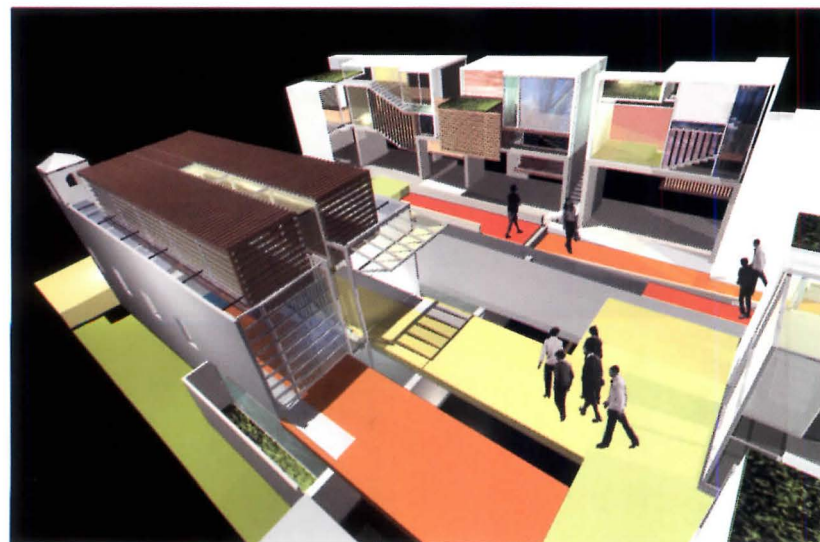
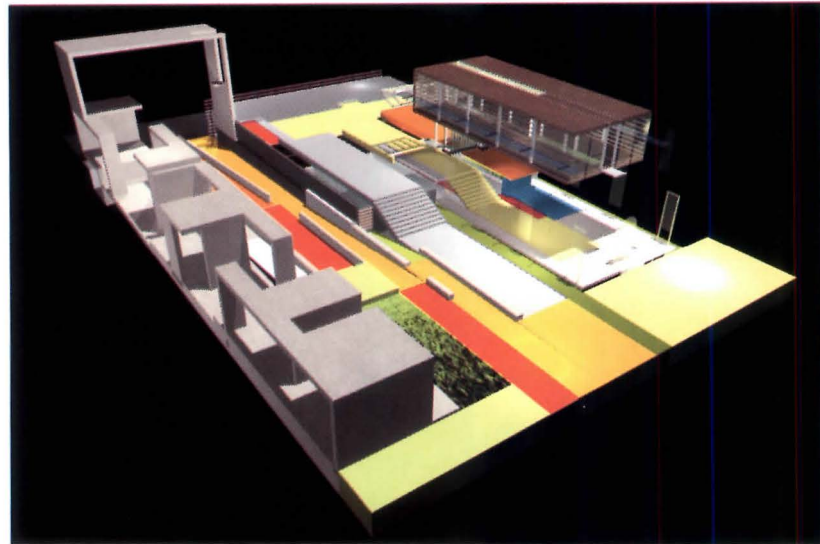
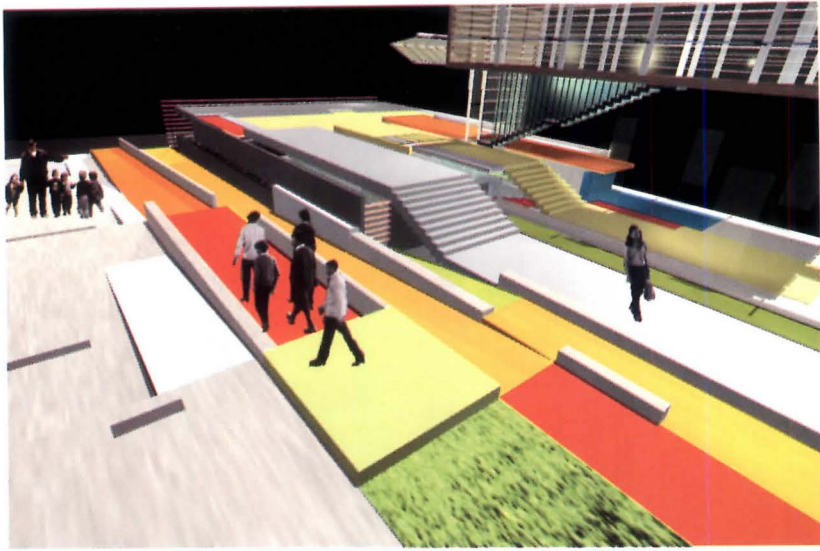


View of the existing alleyway (top left), and three successive proposed phases of development



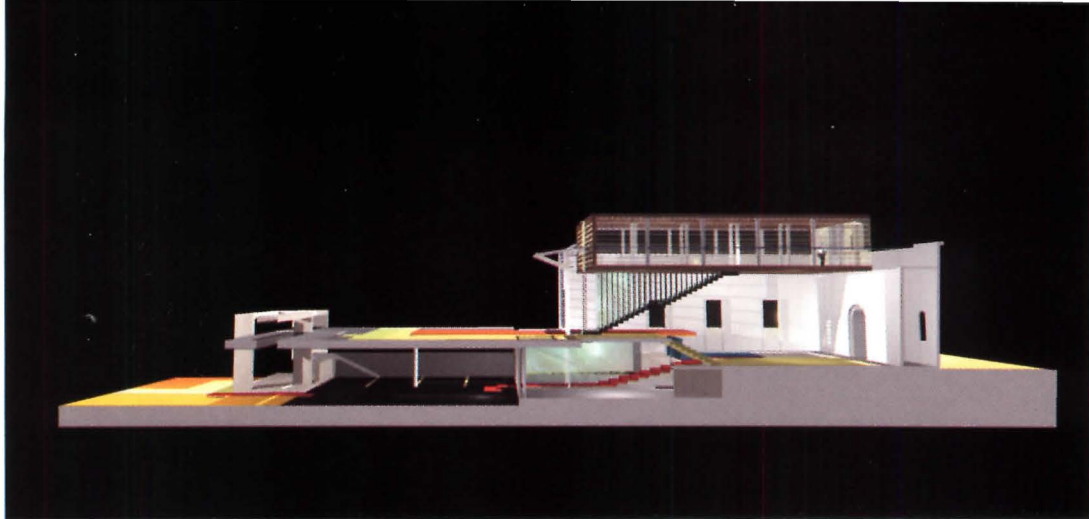
Studies of the project's three development phases

Casa Familiar: Living Rooms at the Border  
Estudio Teddy Cruz



**CLIENT:** Casa Familiar, San Ysidro, California—Gustavo Bidart (president, board of directors); Andrea Skorepa (executive director); Luz Camacho (assistant director)  
**ARCHITECT:** Estudio Teddy Cruz, San Diego—Teddy Cruz, Adriana Cuellar, Jose Jaime Samper Escobar, Kathleen Roe, Alan Rosenblum (design team)  
**COST:** Withheld at client's request

Different views of the interior garden at the three phases of development



Section through the renovated church with the Casa Familiar offices on the upper level

View of the housing in the third phase



# Raybould House and Garden

## Kolatan/MacDonald Studio

Award

**BRAD CLOEPFIL:** If we have to do one globby project, this one has a certain integrity to the globbiness. **DEBORAH BERKE:** It looks like it's going to eat the house. **BC:** So, we're discussing aesthetics. What makes a beautiful house? **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** I think if you do shapes, I would like to see nice shapes. **BC:** What constitutes nice shapes? **HANI RASHID:** I don't see a reason why they should do all these shapes. But as far as these kinds of projects go, I think it is one of the more compelling ones. But I should abstain from voting on this one, since I know the architects and the project. I shouldn't argue for this one. **DB:** Are you abstaining? **HR:** What I know is that this architect figured out a way to manufacture these forms and surfaces through computer-generated techniques and tied it into the manufacturing process. They know what they're doing. **BC:** If they can make this thing the way they think they can, then it will change a lot of architectural production. Granted, it raises all kinds of issues of whether or not it's beautiful. **MARK ROBBINS:** The model



is seductive. It's pretending the earth is warping up into these forms, but in the end it's going to be a big aluminum thing parked on some grass; but I think the technological aspect is interesting. **DB:** Absolutely. But I don't think this is the best example. **MR:** I think there's too much hype. **HR:** There has to be. Can I say this? No, I can't say this. **DB:** Why not? **HR:** It's so biased, what I'm about to say. Well, the fact is that it's become a kind of poster child for that business. **MR:** And it has to carry the whole weight of the blob movement. **HR:** But it has a client, it has a budget. **DB:** It's a case study house. **MR:** This is not exactly the first of its kind. Maybe in the U.S. it is, but we've seen examples in Europe. **BC:** It's unfortunately being a bit romantic about technology. **MR:** This technology could be used to make molded furniture, or a number of things. Why this is an inevitable challenge to domesticity, I'm not sure. **HR:** Oh, I don't think it is a challenge to domesticity; that's not the point. **BC:** The planning is not that sophisticated. It's actually a relatively conventional house.

**PROJECT:** Raybould House and Garden, Fairfield County, Connecticut

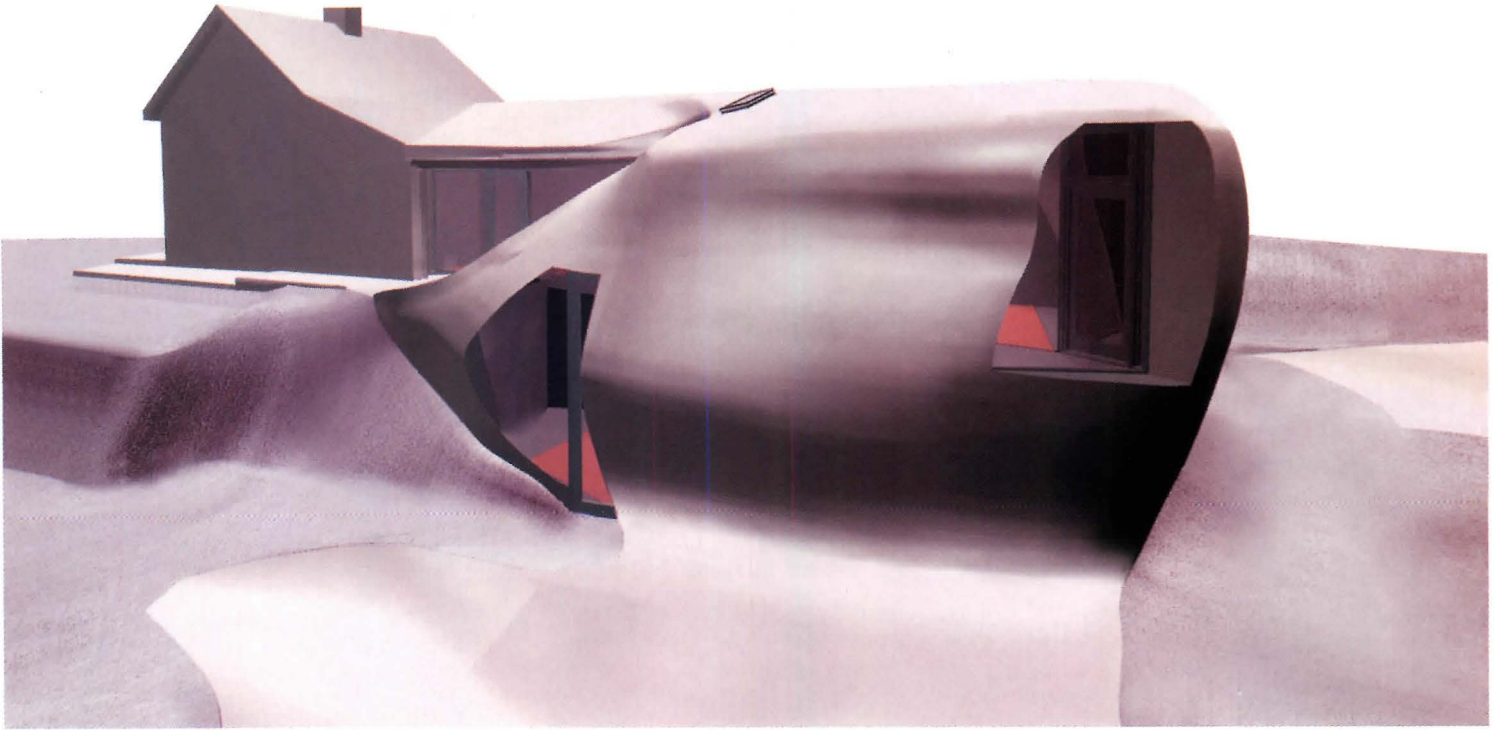
**SITE:** A 5-acre residential compound in rural Connecticut.

**PROGRAM:** A 1,600-square-foot addition to an 18th-century saltbox house previously expanded in the 1930s. The new two-story structure will add a new living suite—with a sitting area, bedroom, and bath—on each of the two floors.

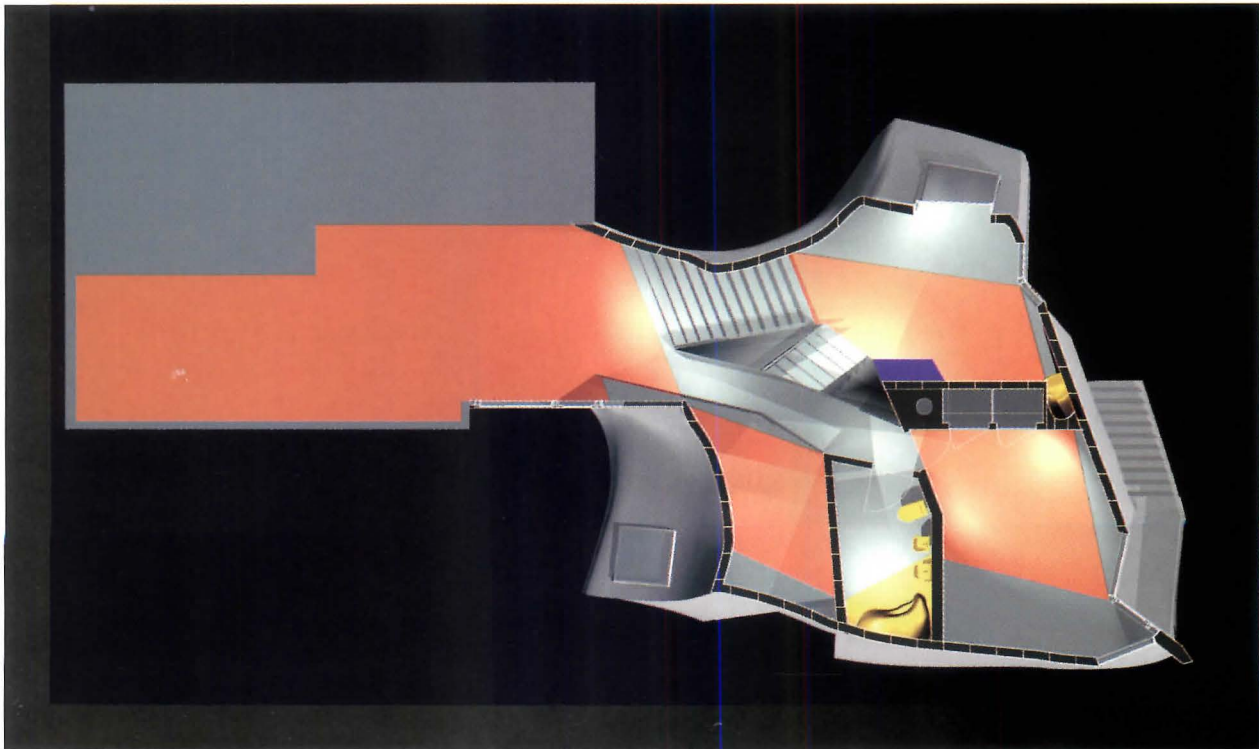
**SOLUTION:** The addition, which is grafted onto the existing house, is a composite shell that combines structure and skin, allowing the architects to generate fluid, non-orthogonal forms. The shell is made of 1-inch plywood ribs—cut with CNC (computer numerically controlled) machinery—that are separated by standard 2x4s. Foam insulation is applied over the wooden skeleton, and then capped by a shell of custom-colored aluminum that provides weatherproofing and additional

strength and stability. The designers placed doors and windows in the flattest parts of the bulbous structure.

Inside, the addition features wood floors with radiant slab heating inlaid into an epoxy floor system. Terraces and portions of the exterior are also finished in an epoxy-based material, typically used in playgrounds.



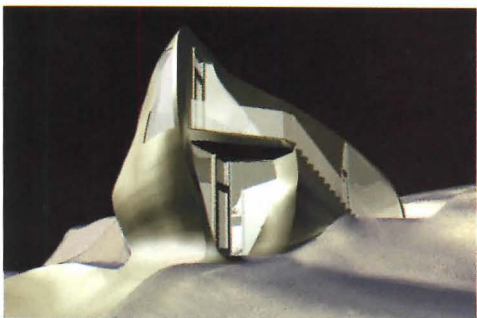
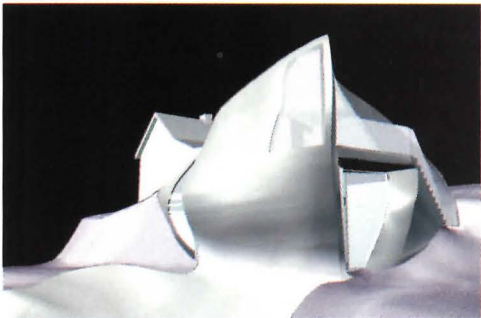
View of the existing house and addition from the east



Second-floor plan  4'  $\Delta$



View of the terraces from the south



Views from the northeast and north

**MR:** Do we think the shape and the technology of making that shape are that vital?

**DB:** I think the problem with it is the section: I wish the geometry of the interior were challenging in the same way the form is. But it doesn't even pretend to do that.

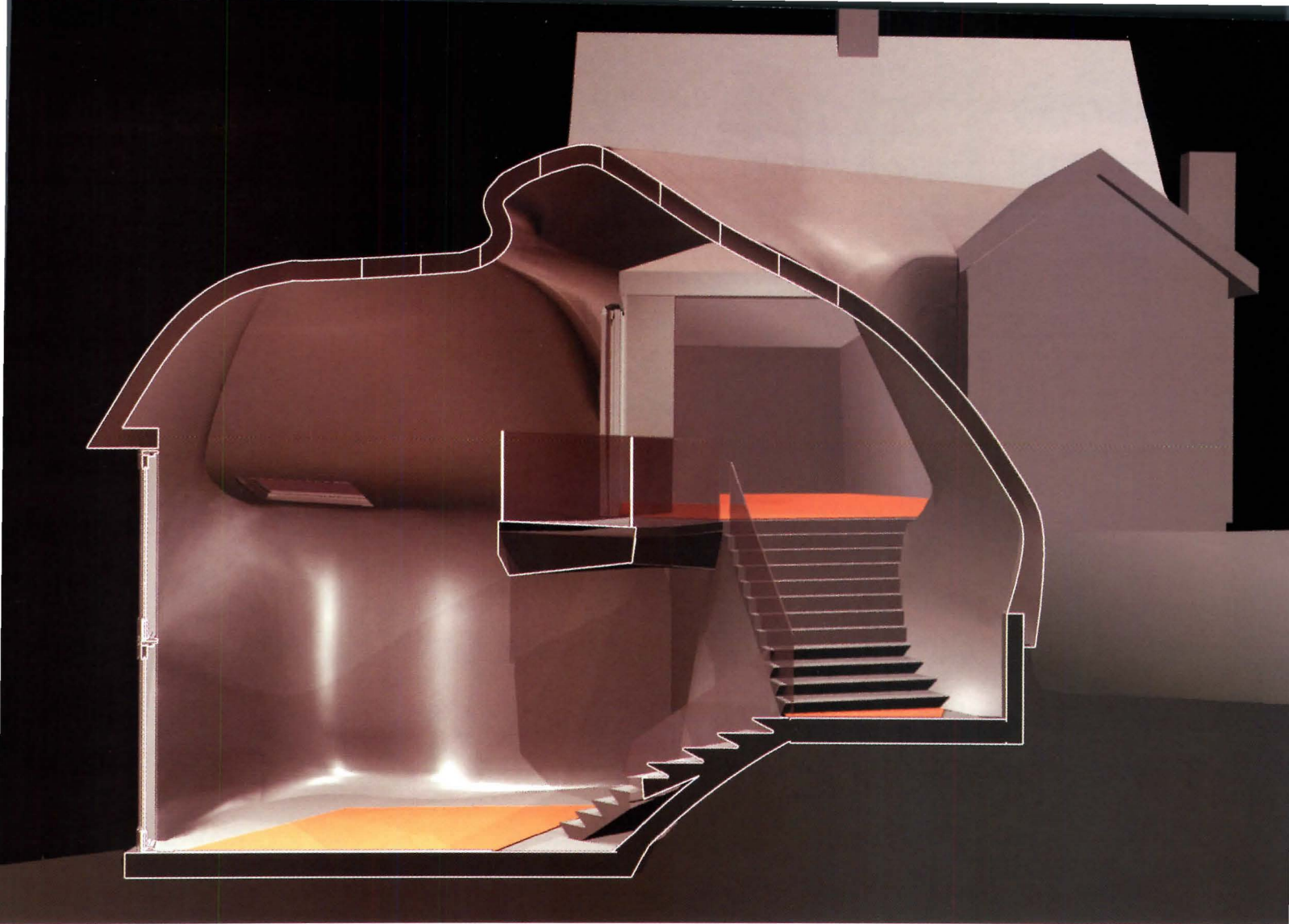
**MR:** We know this vocabulary: It existed with Keisler. **HR:** Where in these projects are digital technologies implicated, and what are they doing to shift our perception of the way to build these kinds of spaces? It's such a powerful tool in our daily lives as architects. You've got countless students of architecture out there using these machines every day. **DB:** Right, and if they copy this house, we're really dead. **BC:** I'd be more than happy to see new technology explored and really pushed, but this project doesn't do that. Are we just going to make a symbolic endorsement of various ways of thinking? **HR:** There has to be a signal sent out there about what we do with the technology. Granted, this may not be the most rigorous project. But there's at least an effort to get the thing built. **BC:** I think we need to be critical of it, too, though, Hani. **NDV:** Where is this technology leading us? Is it leading to better bedrooms? **BC:** What's driving that form?

**HR:** A desire to understand and push the parameters of digital technologies in form-making and tectonics. That's what's driving a lot of us these days. **MR:** Is that enough?

**BC:** That's the problem. Digital technology is a fantastic tool and because of it now we can plot these complex geometric forms

and translate them directly to laser-cut forms. But it has to serve something else other than the digital technology. This house is not serving anything. It's just pure aesthetics. **HR:** Projects like this need to be recognized for the envelopes they're pushing. **BC:** We have to put it in a really careful critical context if we do that, though. We've really got to bracket why we're doing it. **HR:** I have the same kind of hesitancy. But I really think that given the scope of what we're seeing, and given the state of American architecture at the moment, we need to make some kind of provocation.

**DB:** This is on the table because you've convinced a lot of us of the potential of this technology, not only to render but to generate built objects. And that needs to be recognized and encouraged. But I think that this project is not good enough in its total execution to be an award. **BC:** Or in its vision. There's no vision to it—other than that the computer can generate those forms. **DB:** Both in terms of rendering them and creating them. **HR:** But essentially it's a bad building. **NDV:** Spatially, it's a bad building. **BC:** Or it's an average building. **NDV:** We would've given it a P/A Award if it were a public toilet, if it were a museum. As a house, it's not interesting. **MR:** If it were oppositional in a larger, more public way. **HR:** But isn't there a client here who wants to live in this house? **DB:** And we want to give him a citation. God bless him. **NDV:** It would've been nice if this client would also have gotten a spectacular living room.



East-west section through the stair and sitting area

**CLIENT:** Robin Raybould, Fairfield County, Connecticut  
**ARCHITECT:** Kolatan/MacDonald Studio, New York City—Sulan Kolatan, William MacDonald (principals); Erich Schoenenberger (project architect); Jonathan Baker, Sung Kim, Seungki Min, and Jose Sanchez (project team)  
**ENGINEERS:** Andre Chaszar and Angus Palmer of Buro Happold Engineering  
**CONSULTANTS:** William C. MacDonald (building technologies); Kevin Dyer and Russ Blackledge of InterPro Technologies (prototyping)  
**COST:** Withheld at client's request



Interior view from the landing

# Winter Gardens

## Pierre Thibault, Architect

### Award

HANI RASHID: I think it's refreshing. NATHALIE DE VRIES: I liked it very much.

DEBORAH BERKE: What's not to like? HR: It also makes a big bid for people sending in small portfolios with quality. OTHERS: Yes!

HR: So we are endorsing a land art project? MARK ROBBINS: Yes.

DB: If it's made by an architect, what we're also endorsing is the fact that architects can look to make their speculations and interventions beyond the limits of buildings.

MR: I think it's important to look at where our training as architects goes. It's a very powerful symbiosis between man-made technologies and these beautiful natural landscapes. It's just really nice. It's interesting that, in some ways, it's a very mild approach, and yet the fact that the jury has found it so compelling speaks to the strength of the project. DB: One of the reasons it has this light hand and evocative beauty is because one of the constraints was that it not impact the ecosystem in any way. So, it's "walk gently and leave a lovely, delicate intervention behind you." BRAD CLOEPFIL: The temporality is exciting.

**HR:** And, yes, it does borrow a lot from different sources...  
**MR:** ...like Michael Heizer and early Mary Miss, focusing on the horizon and the landscape. **HR:** When architects do it well, they can quote artists in a compelling way.  
**NDV:** It's not arty, because it actually investigates architectural stuff—like perspective and scale—and it's not so much about metaphors. **MR:** Whether this was done by artists or architects doesn't change our apprehension of the work and how it gets us to think about the seasons. These are always odd kinds of boundaries to define. **HR:** I think the blind boundaries thing is important for the whole awards program. We were asking earlier, why are there no parks; where does urban design start and end? And here we have it in buildings and landscape. **BC:** It's really just about the conceptualization of the piece. It's a really beautifully conceived piece, whether it's done by architects or not.

**PROJECT:** Winter Gardens, Charlevoix, Quebec  
**SITE:** The Parc de Conservation des Grands-Jardins, a nature reserve in rural Quebec's mountainous Charlevoix region. The park contains seven large lakes and a recreation trail that extends over several kilometers through the mountains.  
**PROGRAM:** Six temporary winter installations, commissioned by the park's program of public activities.  
**SOLUTION:** Using a palette of ephemeral materials such as ice, snow, and light, the architect created a series of vignettes atop the frozen

lakes that fill the park. The constructions are varied, as are their duration; some installations will last just a few nights, others several weeks or even months. Ice blocks illuminated with blue light will be lined up across the width of a lake. Every night for 10 nights, groups of 50 people will light a grid of 2,000 candles on the frozen lake, each protected by a small well of snow. Large rectangular plaques of ice will be cut from the lake and set in a sculptural field; during the week that the project is expected to last, the newly cut holes in the lake will freeze over again, while the slabs will begin to melt. A grid of 750 large

flutes installed across the frozen lake will create a sound sculpture as the wind blows through the musical instruments; attached to rotating heads atop the flutes will be canvas sails that flutter in the wind. In a one-night project, campers will shine flashlights in 50 domed tents stretched along the lake at 20-meter intervals, creating a ribbon of illuminated tents. A series of plywood boxes will be mounted atop tree trunks burrowed into the frozen lake.



Rectangular slabs of ice set in a circle on the frozen surface of the lake

**CLIENT:** Parcs Quebec / Parc des Grands-Jardins, Charlevoix, Quebec—Marc Deschamps (director)

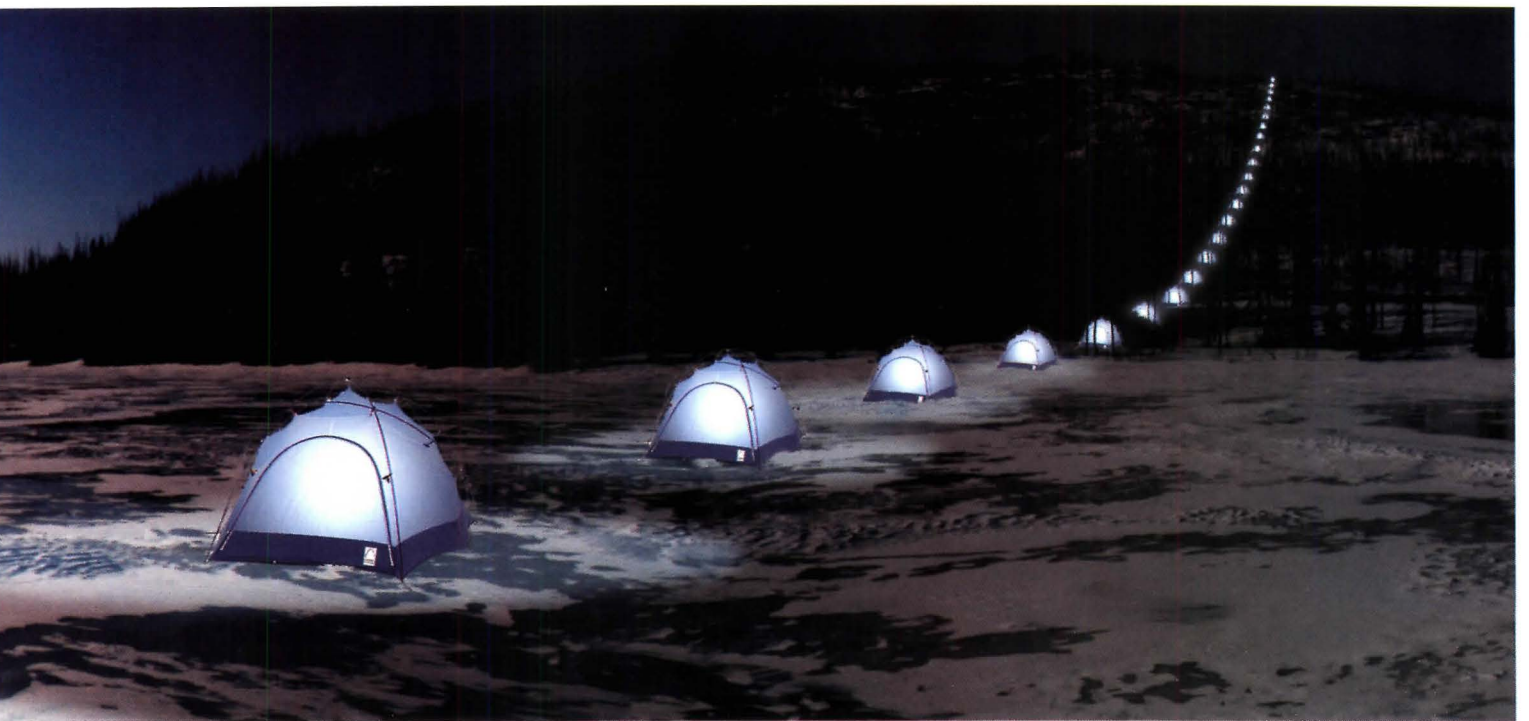
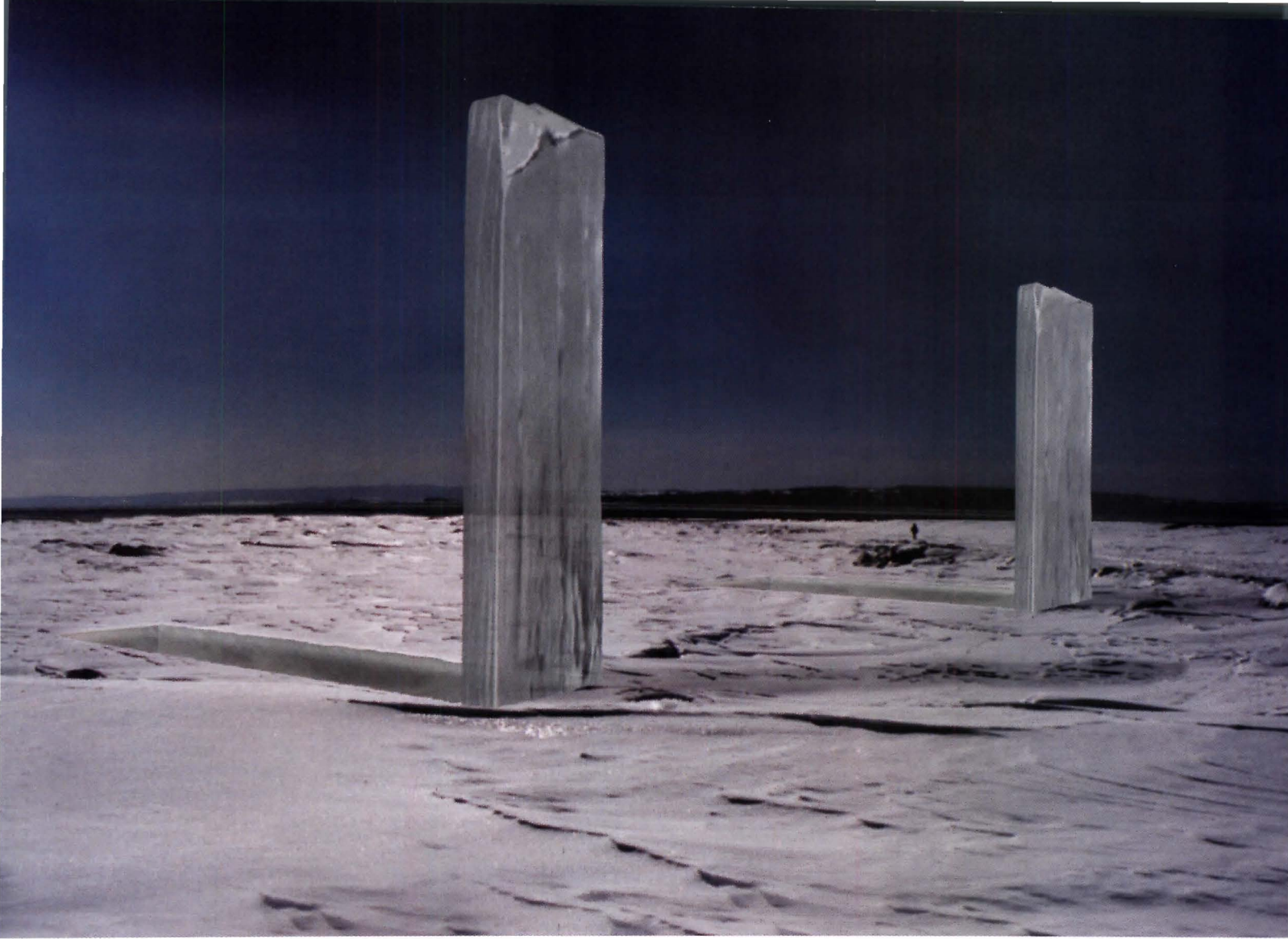
**ARCHITECT:** Pierre Thibault, Architect; Quebec—Pierre Thibault (principal designer); Vadim Siegel, Katerine McKinnon (design team)

**COST:** \$194,000



A one-night project consisting of 50 domed tents placed at intervals across the lake and hills





# Glass House @ 2°

## Michael Bell Architecture

### Award

**DEBORAH BERKE:** This is the “affordable house.” Quote, unquote.

**HANI RASHID:** This project, as I understand, is tied to the economic and political situation of where it is located and it actually does a very, very good job. **MARK ROBBINS:** This is

being built in one of the most challenged wards in Houston and was an outgrowth of a study project. It’s very heartening to see this kind of work actually move into the real world. **HR:** Look at the advisory committee.

Look at the amount of backbone and city endorsement and so on. And that’s one of the reasons why the house deserves an award, because the architects have to “architect” this. It’s amazing. **MR:** Do you know how amazing

it is to get anything like this built in the public realm? It’s nearly impossible. **HR:** But I think for a lot of architects who just really are kind of trying to hone their—I’ll

use the word “craft”—it’s sending out a signal which is essentially that these awards only go to this kind of juggling act. **MR:** The dedication it must’ve taken to move

a piece of architecture like this through the official decision-making process, to actually get it built by a housing authority is remarkable. **HR:** I think it's interesting that we're still fighting to get midcentury modernism built. I mean, that's what's really interesting about this house. **MR:** If you play Stravinsky to somebody, which was written in 1906, 1908, it's still radical, and they still can't get it. **HR:** Well, maybe after a hundred years they shouldn't be getting it, and we should be playing something else. **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** I think we can also look at it leaving out the style. We probably would've given it an award if it had a slightly different style to it, with shingles, or some kind of curved shape. Maybe it's more a prototype, a skeleton to which people may be able to add on different types of materials, or furniture, or whatever. It would work if it had a slightly different envelope around it as well. That might be the next step for the project, actually. **DB:** What's happened with the revival and interest in midcentury modernism is that it's primarily

**PROJECT:** Glass House @ 2', Houston  
**SITE:** A narrow urban lot in the Fifth Ward of Houston, one of the city's poorest areas.

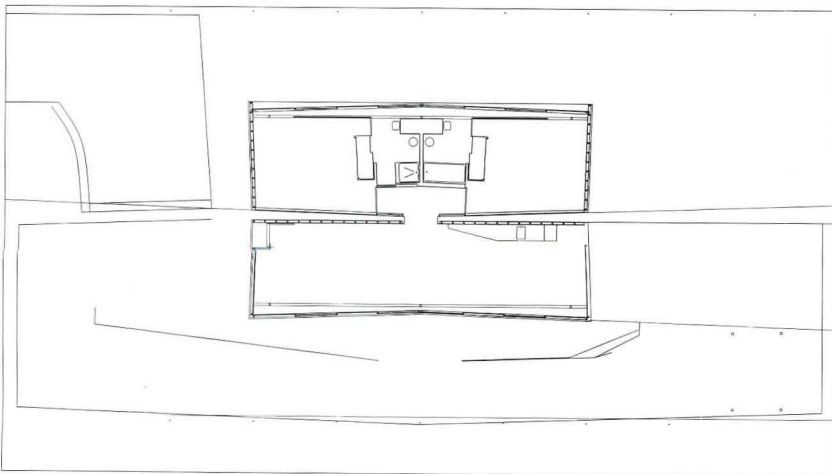
**PROGRAM:** A 900-square-foot, single-family home designed to meet the economic requirements of Homes for Houston, a federally funded housing-voucher program. The total budget for the house, which will be constructed by a nonprofit builder, is \$87,000.

**SOLUTION:** The house is exactly the opposite of what one would expect to find in a high-crime urban area: a pristine glass-and-steel box. The parti is, in fact, two conjoined rectangles separated by slender light wells that are inflected (like many of the exterior surfaces) at 2-degree angles. One volume contains an open living room, kitchen, and dining room; the other holds two bedrooms separated by a pair of bathrooms and closets. The house is placed at the center of a long, rectangular site,

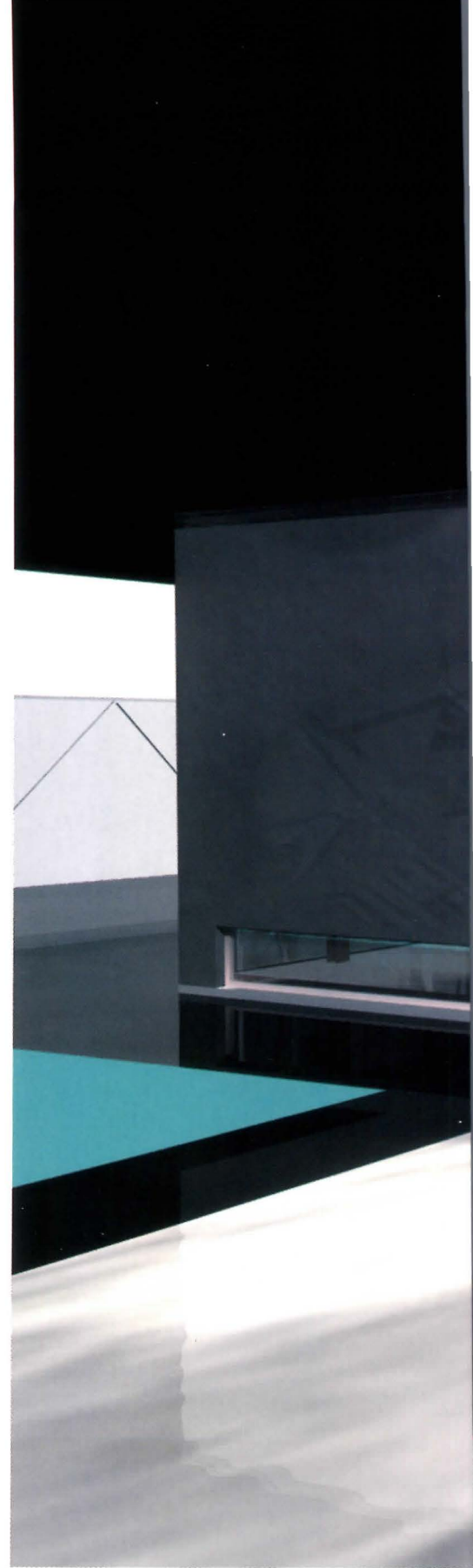
with a driveway along one side leading to a carport at the rear.

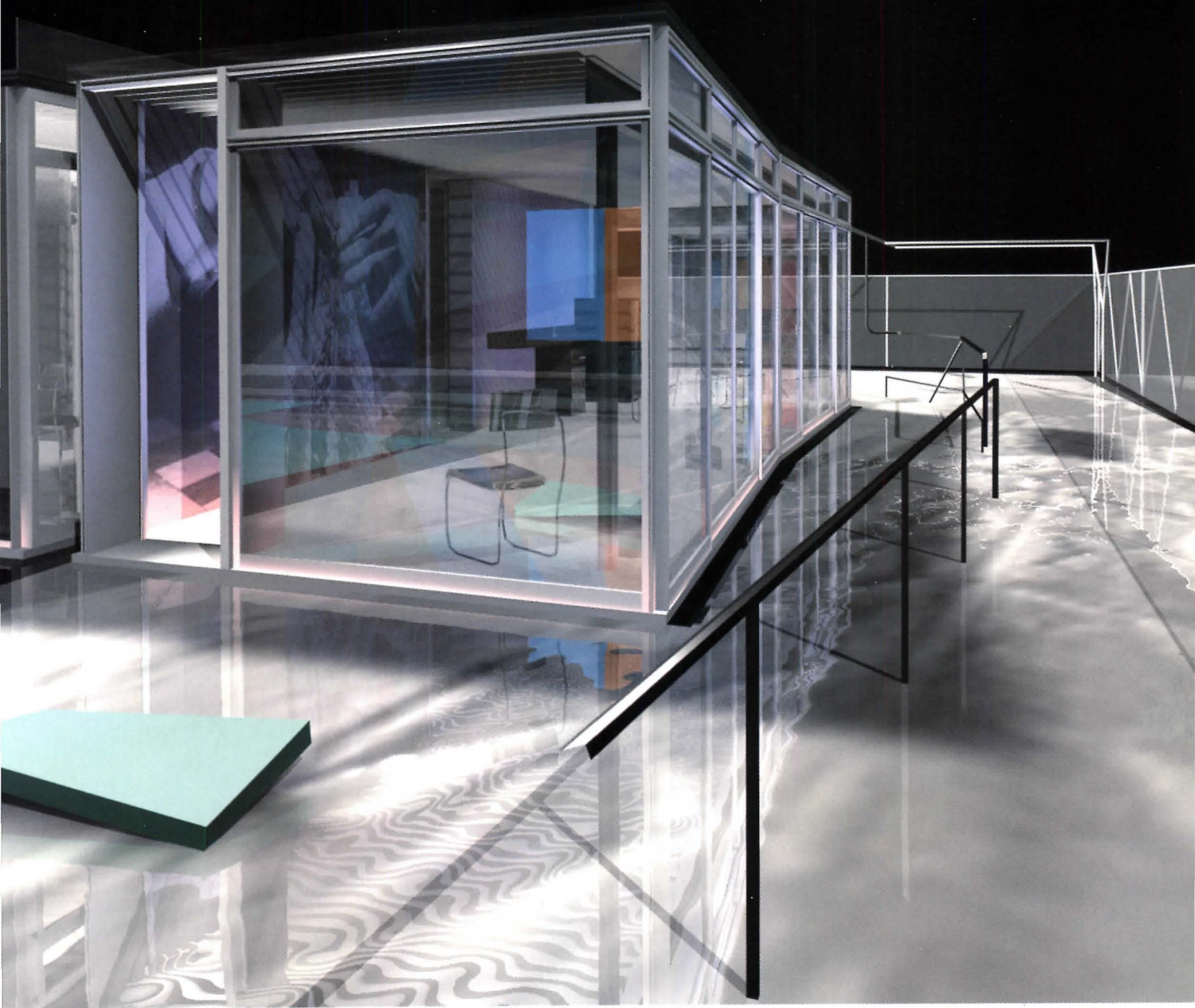
The steel-framed volumes will be wrapped in off-the-shelf sliding glass doors and fixed panels of aluminum-framed glass, with interior partitions of 1/4-inch plate steel. The roof will be made of insulated metal decking.

*retardataire* nostalgia. This style is primarily associated with a much higher cost of construction and a higher-income-level consumer. And I think the fact that the vision for these houses, for these people, is that it can be produced at this cost and in this environment is also very much a credit to that product. **HR:** But I have a sneaking suspicion, given the vernacular of housing and what people in fact feel is desirable as housing, that it may not be so successful from the point of view of the inhabitants. It's going to be very, very interesting. It's like these utopian visions that have been built and abandoned.

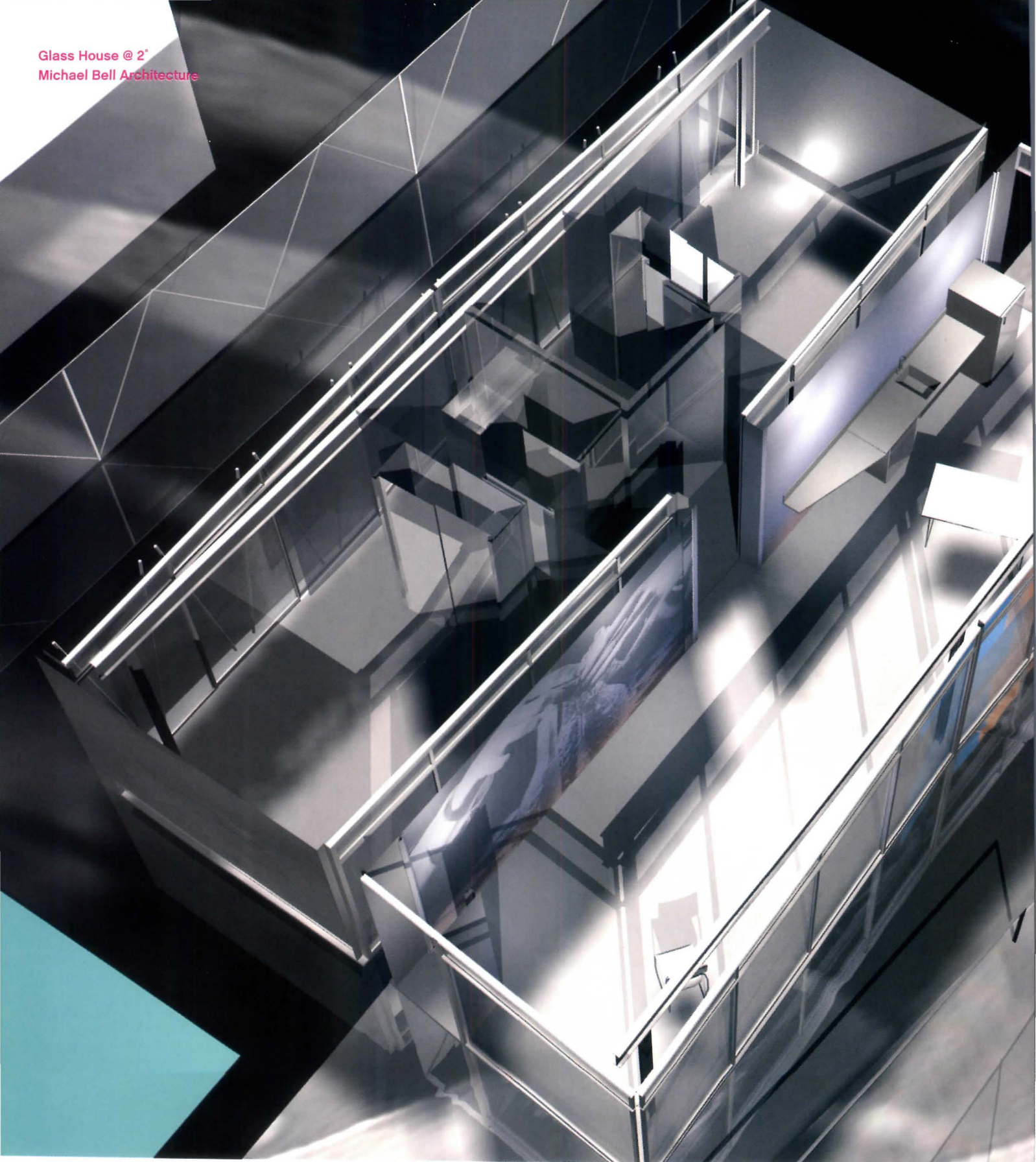


Site plan 10' V





View from the street, with public spaces on the right and bedrooms on the left

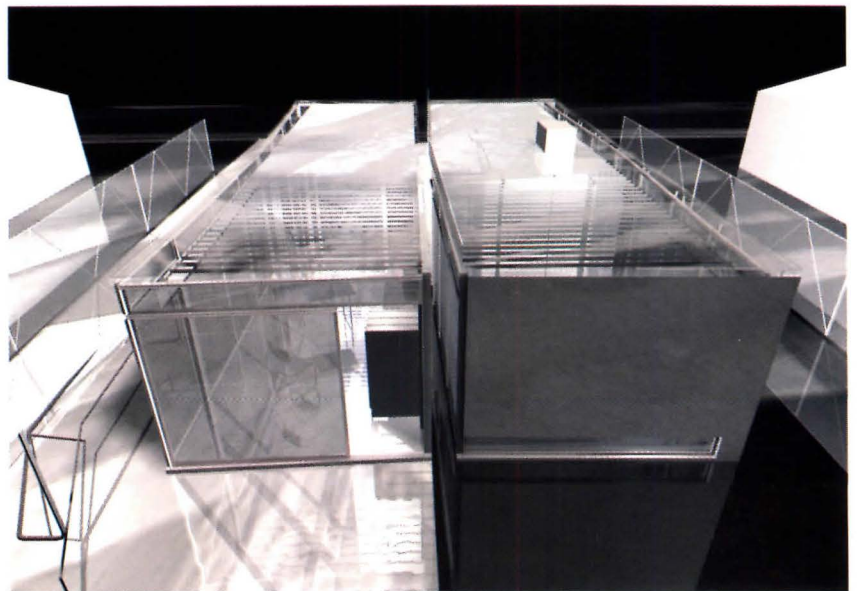
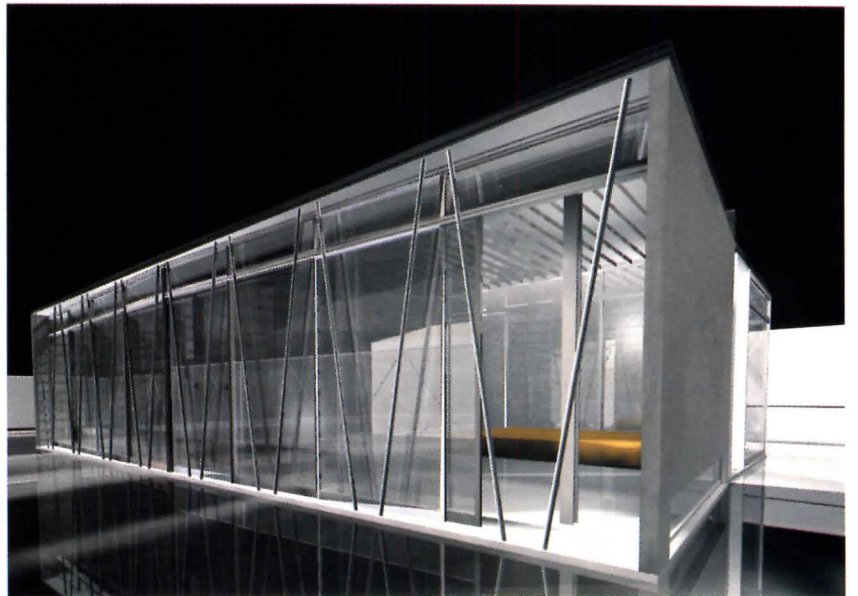


View from above



**CLIENT:** The Fifth Ward Community  
Redevelopment Corporation,  
Houston—Mardie Oakes, (project  
manager FWCRC; Harvard  
Business School); Stephan  
Fairfield (executive director);  
Kathy Payton (deputy  
director); Anna Modd (FWCRC)  
**ARCHITECT:** Michael Bell Architecture,  
New York City—Michael Bell  
(project architect); John Mueller,  
Todd Vanvarick (design team)  
**ENGINEERS:** Metalab (structural)  
**CONSULTANTS:** Metalab—Joseph  
Meppilink, David Sisson  
**GENERAL CONTRACTORS:** FWCRC and  
Metalab  
**COST:** \$87,000

View from the south



View from the west

# Crosby Hall Accessible Route

## Eric Sutherland and Kent Kleinman

### Award

**BRAD CLOEPFIL:** I love it. It's a beautiful little project. **HANI RASHID:** Intriguing.

**MARK ROBBINS:** It's kind of nice. It has a light hand. It's very precise about detailing and trying to accomplish the needs of accessibility in a less abject way than these things are usually done. **HR:** One of the dangers of this program is that there's a number of these very nice, subtle, small schemes in the face of larger, more troublesome projects. And I can see us leaning in this direction. **BC:** ...just being seduced by them. **HR:** Because they are subtle and they're simply put. But this one has some merits conceptually. I'm concerned about the small scale, because it's easy... **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** ...it's easy to do small, delicate, beautiful things. **HR:** My big issue with this project is that it's very nice, very beautiful, very interesting, and mathematically kind of intriguing. But why couldn't they have done a little bit more with it? Like maybe a master plan or something? It seems meek. **MR:** I have to say I sort of know this project and have seen this site. It's actually



an interesting proposition. **BC:** The only reason I like it is because it's a bridge between some of the really conceptual pieces and something that's actually solving a really specific problem. **HR:** Is there no intention for there to be insertions all over the campus? **DEBORAH BERKE:** It seems to be totally site specific, because it fills half of this space in front of the building. **MR:** It's actually about making this building, which is not accessible, into an accessible building without it looking as abject as those kind of retrofits generally look. **DB:** What I like about this project is, although it's about one site, it offers a potentially positive solution to this ongoing problem of accessing buildings in a way that's creative, rich, evocative, and not just another plywood ramp with 2x4 railings. **HR:** I think it's a very, very compelling way to deal with that issue.

**PROJECT:** Crosby Hall Accessible Route, State University of New York at Buffalo

**SITE:** A 32-foot-by-33-foot portion of the yard facing Crosby Hall, a neoclassical academic building on the Main Street campus of the State University of New York at Buffalo.

**PROGRAM:** The construction of a permanent handicap-accessible entrance to Crosby Hall, to replace an existing, temporary wooden ramp.

**SOLUTION:** Instead of a single ramp, which segregates users in wheelchairs from pedestrians, the designers proposed a gently sloping landscape leading up to the entrance of Crosby Hall. Echoing the building's symmetrical façade, the architects divided the slope into two different areas bounded by existing retaining walls on either side of the entrance. To the east, the surface is covered in a gridded pattern of lapped, hand-cast bronze tiles, with benches made of the same material; to the west, the surface is grass-covered, with

wooden benches. The texture of the tiles is adapted from the terra-cotta skin of Louis Sullivan's landmark 1895 Prudential Building, located in nearby downtown Buffalo. The overall pattern of the tiled area—lapped and subtly curving—derives from a mathematical formula that distorts orthogonal grid lines into curves.

Crosby Hall Accessible Route  
Eric Sutherland and Kent Kleinman



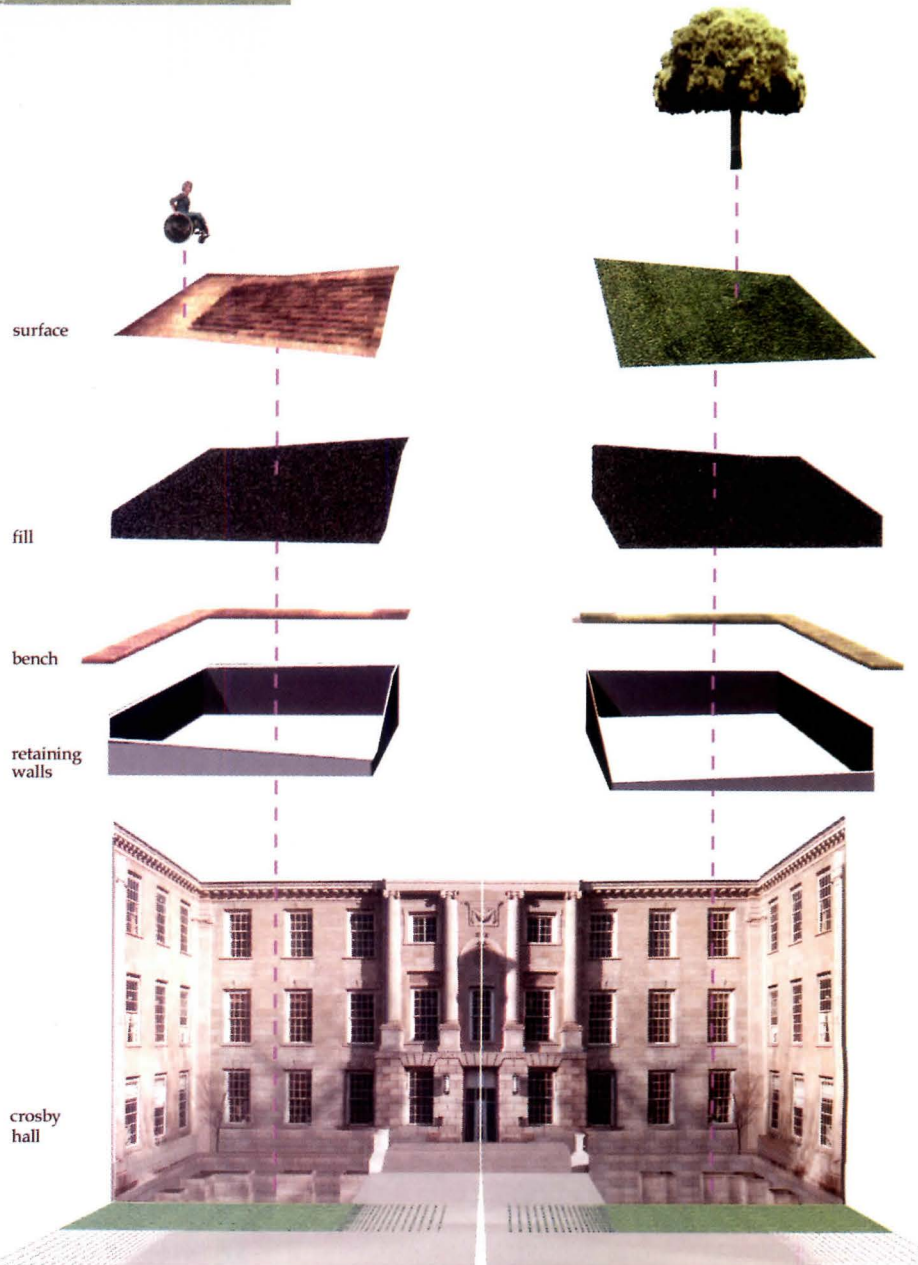
Cast of original  
Louis Sullivan tile

Plan with bronze-tile and grass surfaces

**CLIENT:** State University of New York  
at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York—Ann  
Newman (director, Office of Space  
Planning)

**ARCHITECT:** Eric Sutherland and Kent  
Kleinman, Buffalo, New York—  
Eric Sutherland, Kent Kleinman  
(principals); Christopher Paa,  
Thunyalux Hiransaroj (design  
team)

**COST:** \$36,000



View of Crosby Hall with landscape layers

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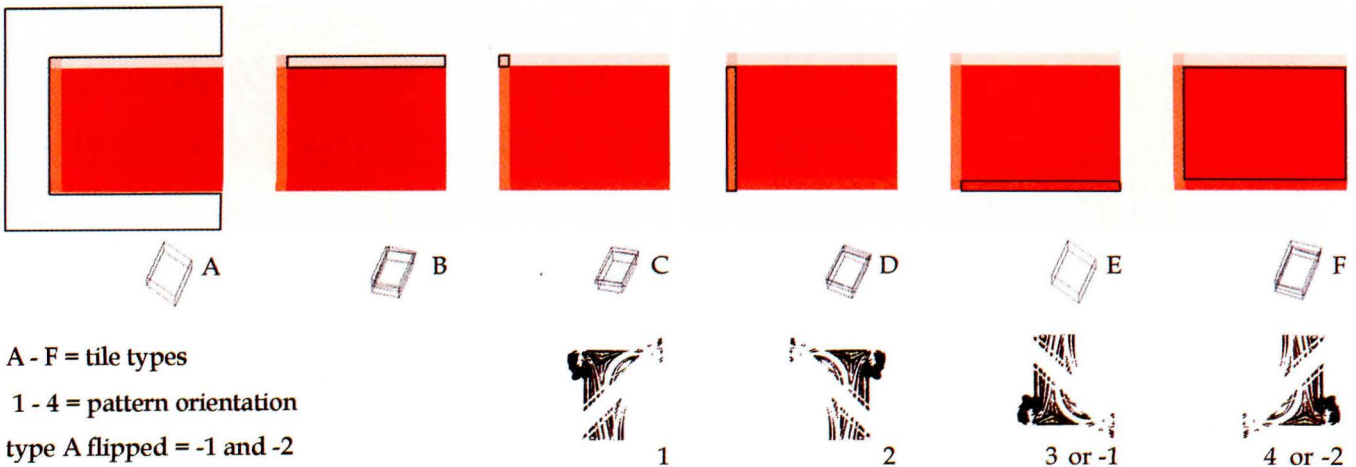


Diagram of tile layout, with overall pattern achieved by using six different tile shapes, each of which can be rotated in four ways

# Cable Natural History Museum

## Vincent James Associates with Salmela Architect

### Award

**BRAD CLOEPFIL:** We should talk about the cables relative to the aesthetics and style, because I wonder, are these just ornamental? Are they just fancy glass windows?

**HANI RASHID:** They're light wells. **MARK ROBBINS:** Why wouldn't the architects have made these kind of complex geometries a little more compelling and torque them? Why are they repetitive all the way through? You're right, they're somewhat ornamental. **HR:** They're still beautiful. **MR:** Each one of them is like a firefly cage. **NATHALIE DE VRIES:** It is nice that the interior of the museum and the architecture and the exhibition display are all together, and not different things. **HR:** It's nice to see that it's just kind of exhibition design... **DEBORAH BERKE:** ...integrated to the structure. **HR:** I still think, though, that these things could be much more playful. **DB:** You're probably right. Still I don't think that's a reason to eliminate the project. **MR:** I also wonder what they'll be like as display spaces. **DB:** When they're filled with stuff they might actually be pretty playful all by themselves,

if there are weird things inside them. **MR:** It looks like a duodenum or something. **DB:** That's a horrible image! It does look Fibonacci-esque. **MR:** They also look like Three Mile Island. **HR:** I just wish they'd played a little bit more with the mathematics, because they could have torqued those things, they have could done all kinds of stuff. **NDV:** It's simple but it's not sublime. **MR:** It could look like a bad facilities management building from the 1960s, or an airport concourse with industrial displays in the center. The materiality and the way it's actually achieved as a building is going to be very, very important, since it's such a minimal plan. **DB:** The most successful part of the building is the penetration of nature. **HR:** But nature is much more organic and haphazard, and this is what's a little disconcerting. **MR:** Hani keeps wanting those helixes to be whacked. **DB:** I think that wouldn't hurt it. **BC:** This is probably one of the most complete presentations. We really see the whole thing conceptually and as a building.

**PROJECT:** Cable Natural History Museum, Cable, Wisconsin

**SITE:** A wooded, 13-acre parcel located outside the small town of Cable in northern Wisconsin.

**PROGRAM:** The museum, currently housed in a 4,000-square-foot building, focuses on the geology and biology of the Great Lakes region. This 20,000-square-foot replacement building will house galleries, a theater, classrooms, offices, and research areas for scientists.

**SOLUTION:** The new museum is a single-story bar structure punctured by a series of six hyperbolic light wells open to the sky. These translucent openings admit light into the galleries and collect rainwater, rendering them pores in the building's skin, or, to the architect's mind, petri dishes.

Framed in tensed steel cables clustered around steel masts, the atria are the primary support for the roof, which is made of wood-laminate panels. The cable structures also

help stabilize the building laterally, allowing a more delicate exterior cladding of glass, insulated wall panels, and vertical wood louvers.

In keeping with the museum's environmentally friendly mission, the new building will feature an exposed water purification system that will recycle septic wastewater as well as rainwater collected through the building's light wells.

Cable Natural History Museum  
Vincent James Associates with Salmela Architect



View of the entrance facing south

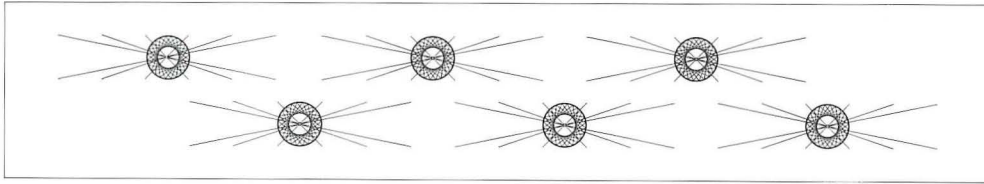




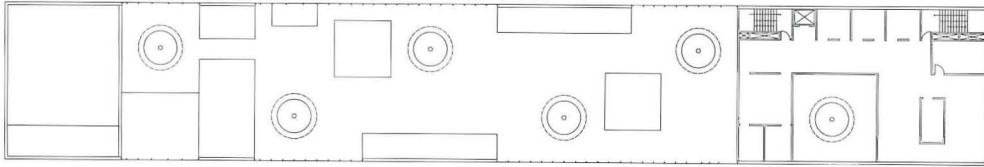
View looking southeast



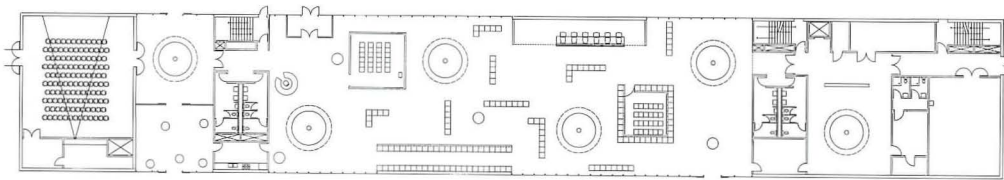
Cable Natural History Museum  
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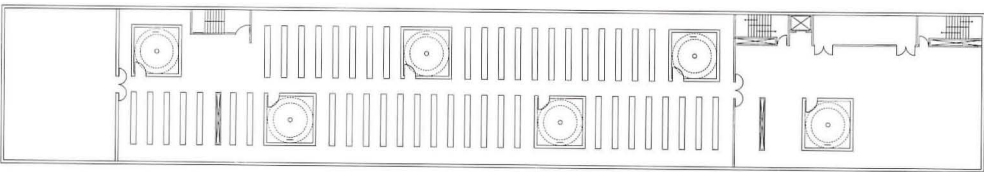
Roof plan



Second-floor plan

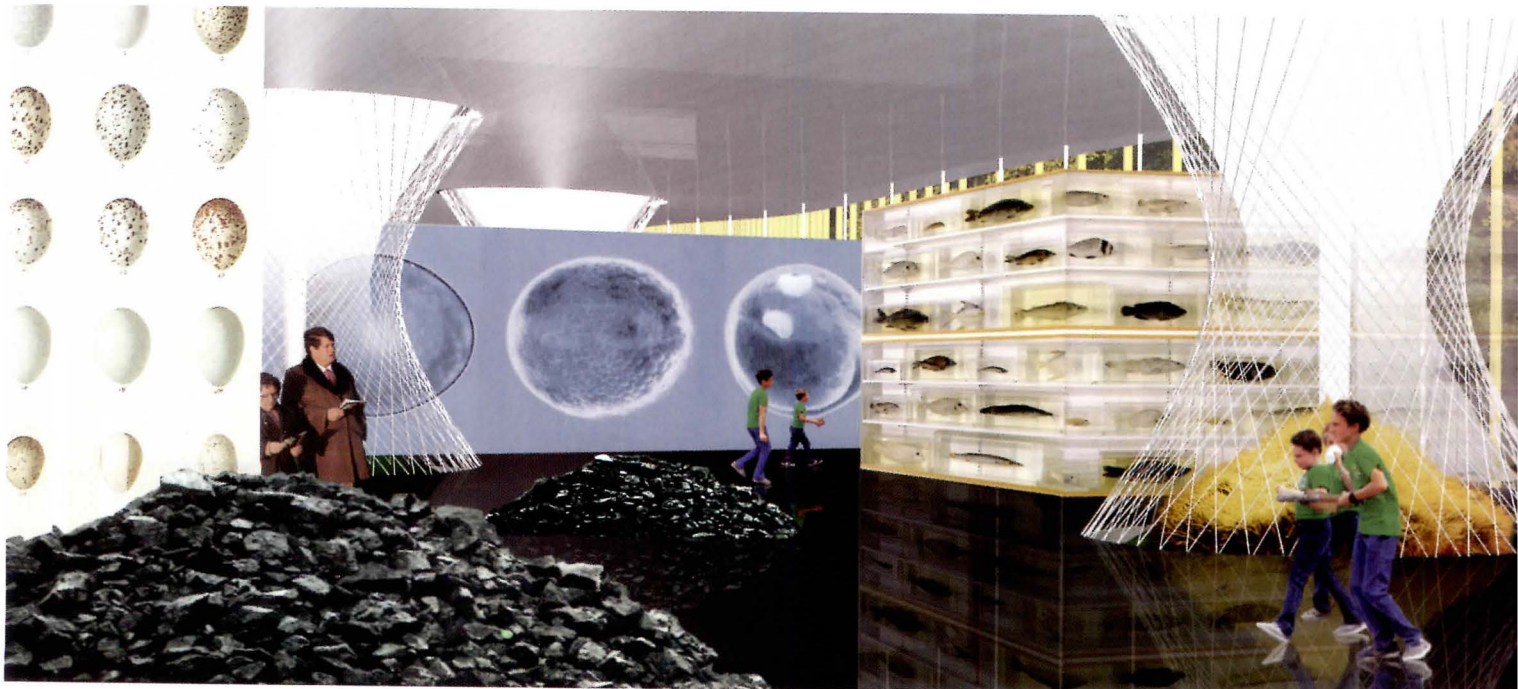


First-floor plan



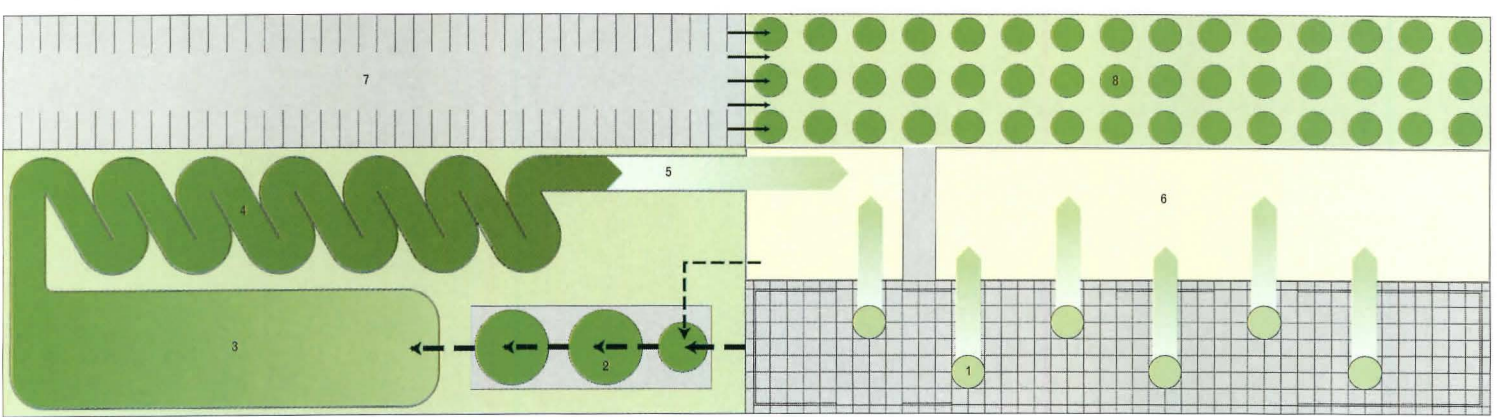
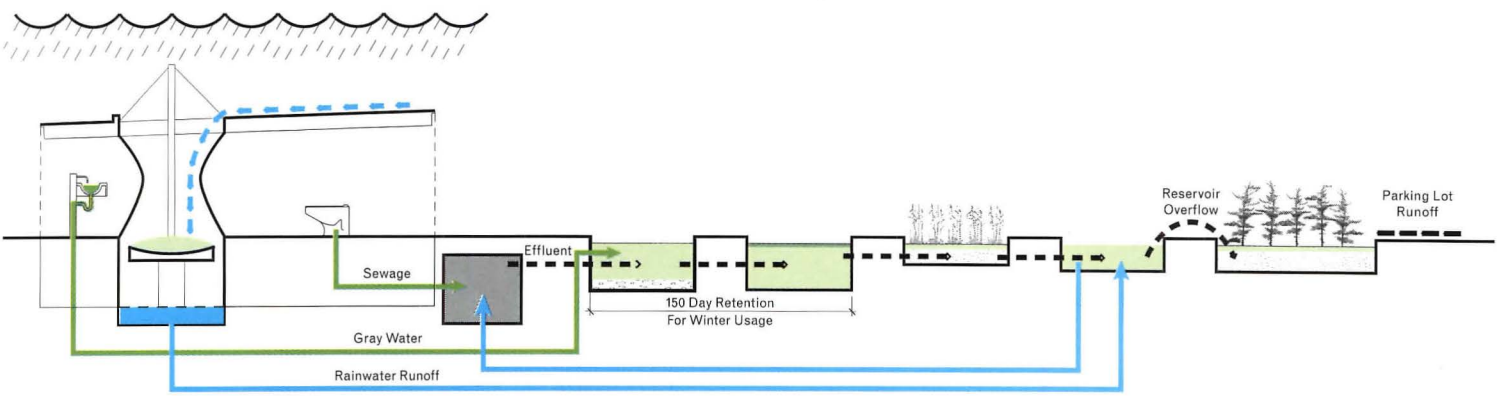
Basement plan 128' ^

**CLIENT:** Cable Natural History Museum, Cable, Wisconsin—Allison Slavick (executive director)  
**ARCHITECTS:** Vincent James Associates, Minneapolis, Minnesota—Vincent James, Jennifer Yoos, Nathan Knutson, Andrew Dull, Carl Gauley (collaborators); Steven Phillippi, Dzenita Hadziomerovic, Donovan Nelson (project team); with Salmela Architect, Duluth, Minnesota—David Salmela  
**COST:** Under development

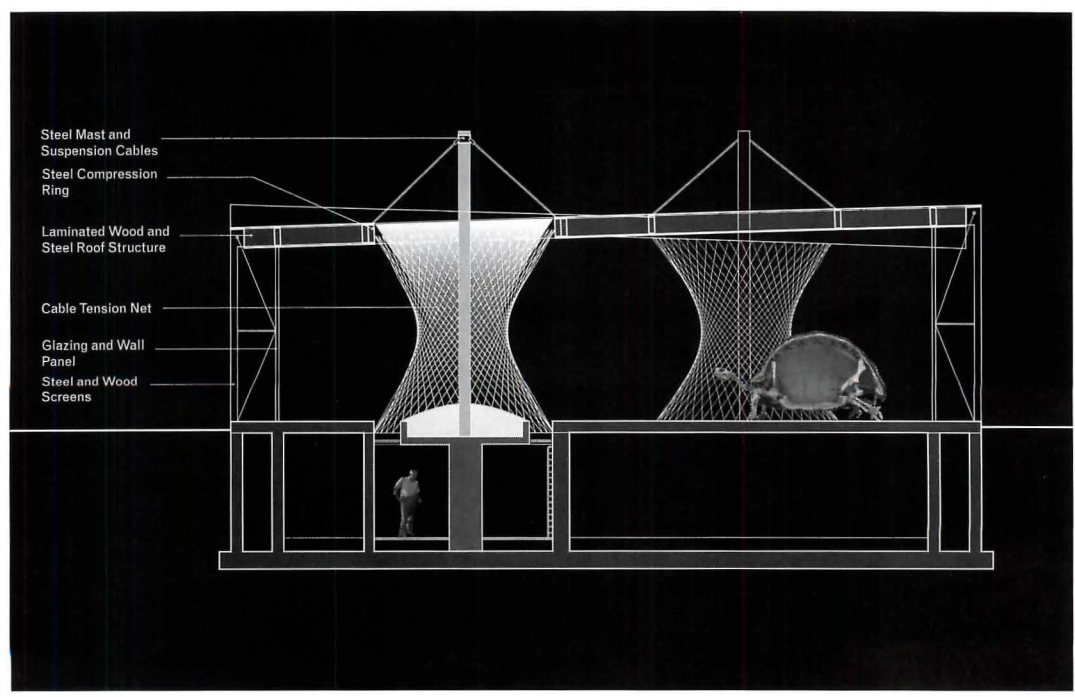


View of the interior showing light wells and displays

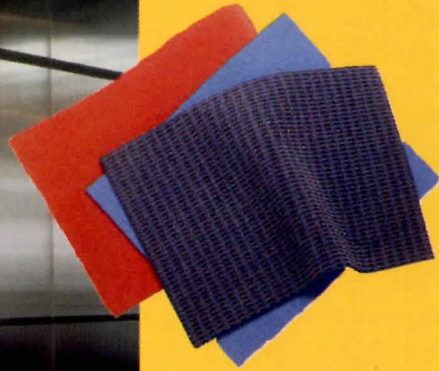




Plan diagram (above) and sectional diagram (top) of the building's biological filtration system. Rainwater and gray water pass through ponds that purify it (3,4,5). Once cleansed, the water collects in the Water Lily Reservoir (6); overflow and parking lot runoff (7) is directed into the Tamarack Wetland (8).



North-south section with turtle



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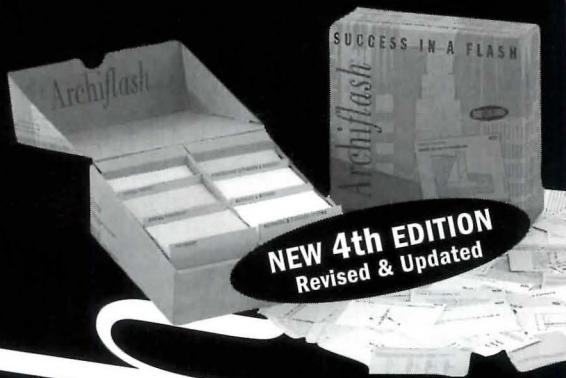
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## Mixed Parentage

*continued from page 59*

for the exhibits.” Instead, “there was the perception that the work was landing in Holt Hinshaw’s lap.”

The Lake Superior Center project enjoyed very little continuity between the architects who designed it and the architects who built it. HGA’s Loren Ahles is not especially pleased that Marc Hinshaw has come back to reclaim his glory. “I feel great about the project, but I’m separating that from the reappearance of Holt Hinshaw and all that crap,” Ahles says.

Hinshaw first met and spoke to Ahles this past December, when he visited HGA’s office in Minneapolis. Hinshaw gathered

from the conversation that at the time, HGA thought they had signed on to execute working drawings, “only to find out that they were going to have to do a post-mortem job” to bring the project under control.

When they entered the project, HGA’s first step was to bring the building back under budget. “We more or less abandoned the specific dimensions of the building, and did a little bit of tightening everywhere,” Ahles explains. HGA lopped off a third floor planned as an all-purpose meeting space, and changed the building’s circulation: The visitor queuing area moved inside from outdoors, as the center is open year-round and “this is Duluth, not San Jose,” as Ahles points out. Holt Hinshaw had spec-

ified two room-sized elevators to take large groups of visitors to the upper level to start their tour downward through the center, but Ahles deemed the special elevators “extremely expensive,” and replaced them with escalators.

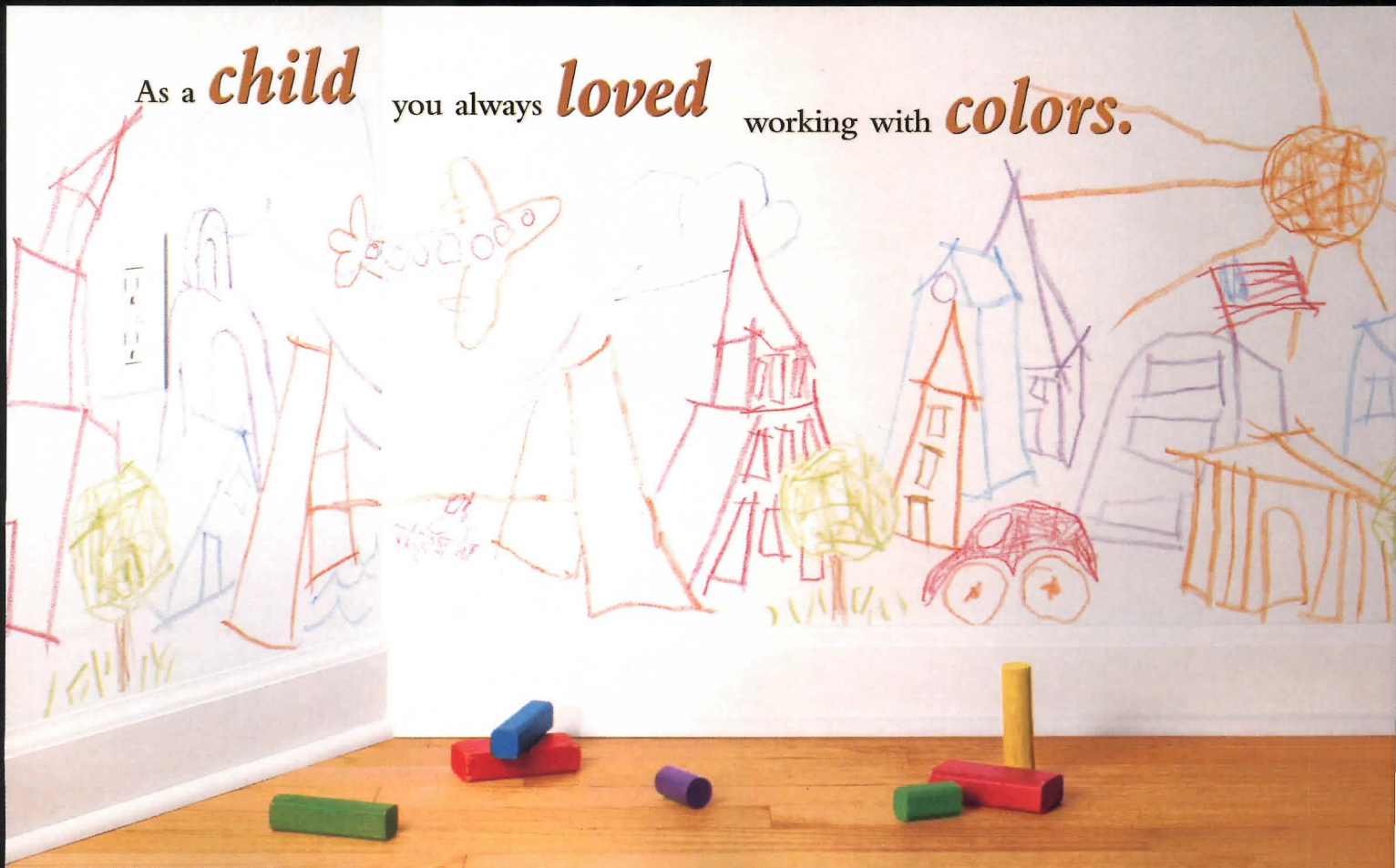
The exit pattern, Ahles adds, also seemed incorrect by museum standards. “You want people to pass by the gift shop, or through it, on the way out,” he says. “It was in the wrong spot.”

On the exterior, says Ahles, HGA preserved Holt Hinshaw’s massing and site plan—but did try to lighten up the building’s exterior personality. “Some of the criticisms we heard was that this was a dark building, spooky and Darth Vader-esque.” The finished design has a brighter,

friendlier appearance.

“The bold moves had been made,” says Cara Hill, HGA’s project designer for the aquarium. “We were left to think about the human scale, about what people want to touch, the materials, the play of light and shadow.” In the end, Hill says she’s proud of the figurative details HGA was able to bring to the project. “But I wouldn’t want to step into this role every time, absolutely not.”

James Polshek, founding partner of Polshek Partnership Architects, which was handed Douglas Cardinal’s scheme for the National Museum of the American Indian (July 2000, page 60), says that entering a project midway through the design process is common. “I get calls a few times a year from





The Lake Superior Center was to be the flagship of Duluth's plans to revitalize its waterfront.

clients who had an architect, but who now aren't happy with the design, and want to shop around." The key, he says, is to show solidarity with the originators of the design. "We'll go to an interview like that, but not before knowing who the architect was and calling them to make sure they were paid in full." All in all, Polshek says, being handed someone else's work for completion isn't terribly rewarding. "You don't really get to put your mark on a project."

But the experience can be instructive. "You learn a lot working on someone else's project," Hill says. "What irks you about it can teach you what's truly important to you about design."

So, who can take credit—or blame—for the way the Lake

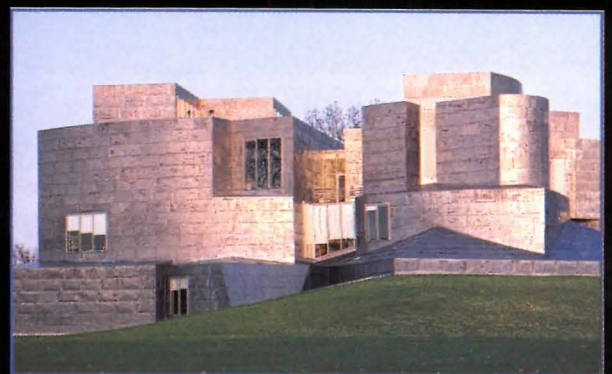
Superior Center turned out? It's been a difficult issue for HGA since it accepted the project. Ahles recalls thinking at the time, "If we do anything, it can be seen that we screwed up Holt Hinshaw's work. And if it turns out well, then it was Holt Hinshaw's doing all along."

For now, it appears that HGA will receive credit as "architect" of the Lake Superior Center, and Holt Hinshaw will get credit as "design architect." That solution, on paper, seems reasonable to all those concerned, but the building's true lineage remains unsettled. Hinshaw calls the Duluth experience a "collaboration in evolution." "And you can judge how successful that was," he says. "My guess is that there are better forms of collaboration." ■

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## Seduced and Abandoned

continued from page 73

book is marvelous where Rykwert deploys his vast learning to dilate on objects of his own fascinations. But the narrative falls off precipitously when he switches roles from historian to critic and attempts to come to terms with objects and tendencies that exceed his sense of sympathy. Here, the analysis becomes pat and perfunctory, muddled about causes and effects that architecture cannot explain. Indeed, as critic, he becomes a poor historian. There are howlers, like the attribution of Eero Saarinen's Dulles Airport to Minoru Yama-

saki, misunderstandings, like his description of Archigram as a "movement," and an almost foggy narrowness, like his description of Archigram's work as displaying "an absence of social or political implications."

Whatever the missed implications, though, Rykwert is one of the profession's treasures and a writer of both sobriety and dash. *The Seduction of Place* is a very good read, even if it speaks far more eloquently of the urban past than its future. ■

*Michael Sorkin is a New York-based architect and critic.*

**The Seduction of Place: The City in the 21st Century,** by Joseph Rykwert (Pantheon)



This 1893 woodcut depicts the mayors of Brooklyn and Manhattan linking hands and mimicking the Brooklyn Bridge—symbolizing the wish to consolidate the cities into Greater New York, which did not occur until 1898.

## 48th Annual P/A Awards *continued from page 84*

"There was so little investigation into the nature of the construction, structure, or technology," Cloepfil complained. "It's as if to say, 'If I can do a not-so-good perspective in Form Z, then I don't need to do sections, the third plan, and the other three elevations.'"

Another worry that plagued jurors was their decision to give out only awards, not the usual mix of awards and citations. (The distinction is equivalent to that between prizes and honorable mentions; the way in which jurors choose to recognize projects and the number of prizes they elect to give is completely at their discretion.) Confronted with a group

**Confronted with a group of nine "finalist" projects, the jury realized they found difficulties with all the entries, and worried that perhaps none of them deserved full awards.**

of nine "finalist" projects, the jury realized they found difficulties with all the entries, and worried that perhaps none of them deserved full awards.

Rashid first proposed giving citations to those projects that were "pregnant with possibilities but half-baked," and awards to the rest. De Vries was the first to suggest giving awards to all nine finalists. "That would say we found a compelling kernel in each one that should be recognized," thought Robbins, prompting a relatively sudden consensus despite some reservations about the implications of bestowing nine awards and no citations. For Rashid, this unorthodox decision became a momentous occasion, a "resituating of the idea of a P/A Award. We're saying that the awards are about provocation and potential, as opposed to completion. And I think that's an interesting statement." "But it needs to be said that it's about the intention and

possibility, despite the incompleteness of all the projects," Cloepfil cautioned. "We're not giving nine awards because there are nine completely amazing projects."

For all their apparent grouching and despite a few bumps in the road to consensus, the jurors recognized a strong mix of projects worthy of the P/A Awards' visionary charge. They awarded relatively unknown architects, including first-time P/A winners Gil Rampy of Princeton, New Jersey; Buffalo, New York's Kent Kleinman and Eric Sutherland; Mark Anderson and Andrew Zago of Detroit; and Teddy Cruz of San Diego.

They recognized two firms best known in academia, Michael Bell and Kolatan/MacDonald Studio, both of the Columbia University Architecture School. And, to be sure, they picked a few familiar

faces from P/A programs past, including Vincent James Associates of Minneapolis and Quebec's Pierre Thibault. The jury also recognized a project by another perennial winner, the corporate giant Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, whose inclusion never fails to raise a few eyebrows. They recognized projects large and small, from an impromptu grassroots gathering space in Detroit and a graceful handicap-access ramp in Buffalo, to a mammoth airport terminal in Singapore. "In the end, I think we recognized nine different aspirations," Cloepfil mused. "Aspirations," added Berke, "that further the discourse and the discipline of architecture." ■

*Raul A. Barreneche is a former senior editor at Architecture, and a contributing editor at both Metropolitan Home and Travel & Leisure.*



## The Outsider

continued from page 62

to efficiently meet them.

Brown wanted to move SOM, with its sterling reputation, into earlier sections of the timeline. To Brown's thinking, SOM could provide strategic consulting to help clients decide when and why to build. "We could properly qualify sites and get them zoned for building" at little cost to the firm and for sizeable consulting fees, Brown thought. This could help SOM's architects gain influence in the building process, and make the firm more profitable along the way.

It was a radical proposal, expanding SOM's business into areas very different from design-

ing buildings, and he bumped against the glacial pace of firm leadership: Brown says the concept is "still in-process."

Childs says that Brown's ideas in this area were invaluable, but have not been turned into action. "We don't have a specific plan," he says. "But we're moving in that direction."

As his time at SOM wore on, Brown began to realize that he had limited autonomy. "One of the issues at SOM was never being fully in charge," he says. "Maybe it's unreasonable of me, but I was working with 27 partners, so I didn't have the degree of control I felt I needed."

Childs is sympathetic, but adamant that SOM's way of making decisions must remain intact.

"In a corporate structure, you have a line system that's much more efficient and determinate. I'm sure our process was frustrating for Ken," Childs says. "But we cannot assign larger strategic matters to a small committee without touching base with each of the partners."

In the end, Brown seems to feel he made a handful of adjustments to SOM's business, little more. "What I introduced to SOM was a new set of processes," he says, "and a little bit of cultural change."

Should other firms emulate SOM and hire non-architects to run their businesses? "I question the ability of an outsider, without a huge process of immersion, to get what we do," says Gensler CEO Ed Friedrichs. In order to

complete projects successfully, Friedrichs says, "we have to be well thought of by everybody, and those relationships"—with clients, contractors, colleagues—"take years to build." A non-architect, in Friedrich's view, would have difficulty learning the subtleties of an architect-client relationship.

Brown believes being a non-architect at SOM had its practical advantages, however, and that it may be a particularly useful qualification for the firm's future executives. "SOM can benefit enormously from an outsider's perspective," he says. His advice to the next outsider president? "Don't abandon the role of strategic coach to the partners. Challenge them on how the world is changing, and how not to be overrun by it." ■

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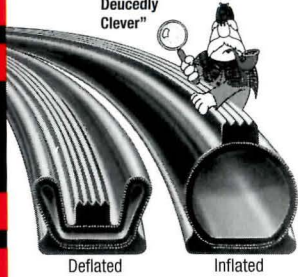
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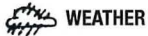
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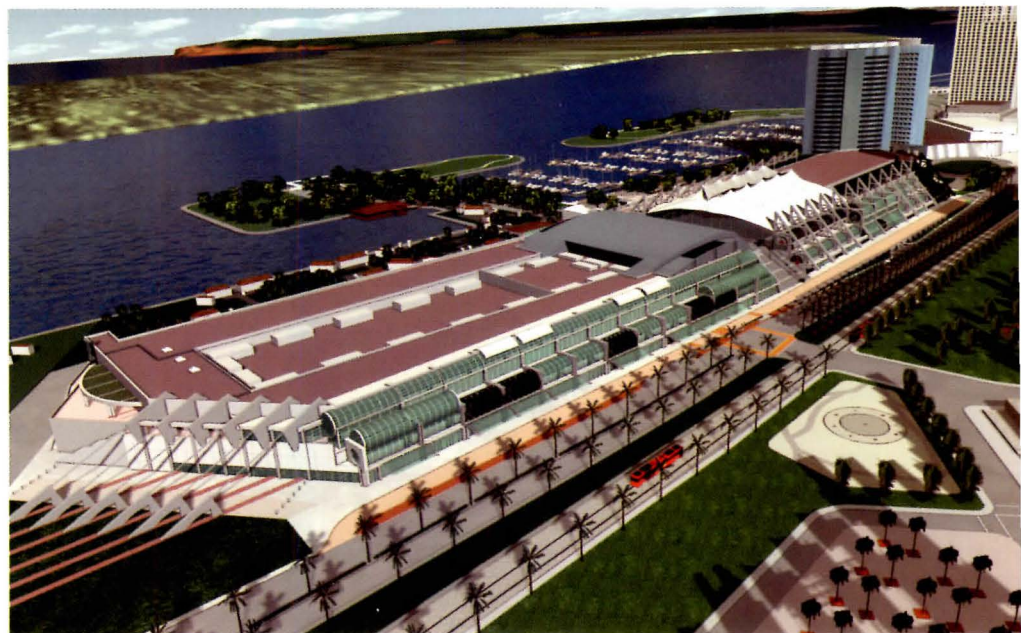
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# Bay Today, Gone Tomorrow

An addition to the San Diego Convention Center extends its already discourteous bulk. **Ann Jarmusch** surveys the effects.



When the San Diego Convention Center opened in 1989, it brought both pride and misery to the city's urban waterfront—pride in the center's glass-enclosed, nautical-inspired design, misery because it formed a half-mile-long wall separating a lively part of downtown from the bay.

Now the center is being doubled in size and length to stretch a full mile along the panoramic harbor. The new half matches the original in scale and transparency, but not in architectural quality and spirit.

This bay blockade, exacerbated by adjacent hotels, is so dense and alienating that some residents don't even realize that beyond the wall lie lovely public amenities: two large, grassy waterfront parks, wide promenades, and upscale marinas.

Like the existing convention center, the \$216 million linear expansion is wedged between Harbor Drive (an increasingly ironic misnomer) and the bay, crisscrossed by fishing boats, yachts and Navy and commercial ships. But when the expansion opens in September, the new half will only faintly echo the spirited, airy original, designed by Arthur Erickson Architects of Los Angeles, with San Diego architects Deems Lewis McKinley.

The existing center is a robust building with acres of vaulted glass. It makes the best of a picturesque but horribly ill-suited site, given the introverted, captive nature of conventions.

Erickson designed the \$165 million center for the city and San Diego Unified Port District, with references to cruise ships expressed in port-hole shapes, stepped concrete terraces reminiscent of decks, and white, sail-like tents over a roof terrace.

The city and Port District could not afford to duplicate Erickson's design for the three-block-long expansion. Its sheer length (1,200 feet) and monotonous façade of identical glazed bays, designed by Tucker,

Sweeping across the bay, the San Diego Convention Center hogs the scenery.

Sadler & Associates of San Diego with HNTB, only compound the mistake of using this site to insert a major building between the Gaslamp Quarter, a thriving historic district thick with pedestrians, and the harbor.

The convention center's halves are joined in the middle by a steep, grand outdoor staircase and a funicular that we're told will entice people to ascend to an upper-level promenade to take in city sights and bay views that would otherwise be reserved for hotel patrons. Pedestrians can also scale the center's bay-front side via landscaped terraces to reach the ground-level public promenade and parks. We shall see how much people and goats have in common.

The expansion's end wall is angled in an effort to preserve one of the Gaslamp Quarter's last remaining view corridors down a city street to the bay. The resulting triangular open space is being outfitted as a public plaza. In reality, however, this plaza will be merely quasi-public. Whenever conventioners schedule special events there, locals will have to move along.

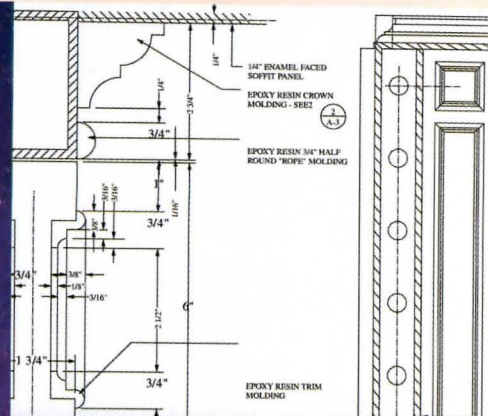
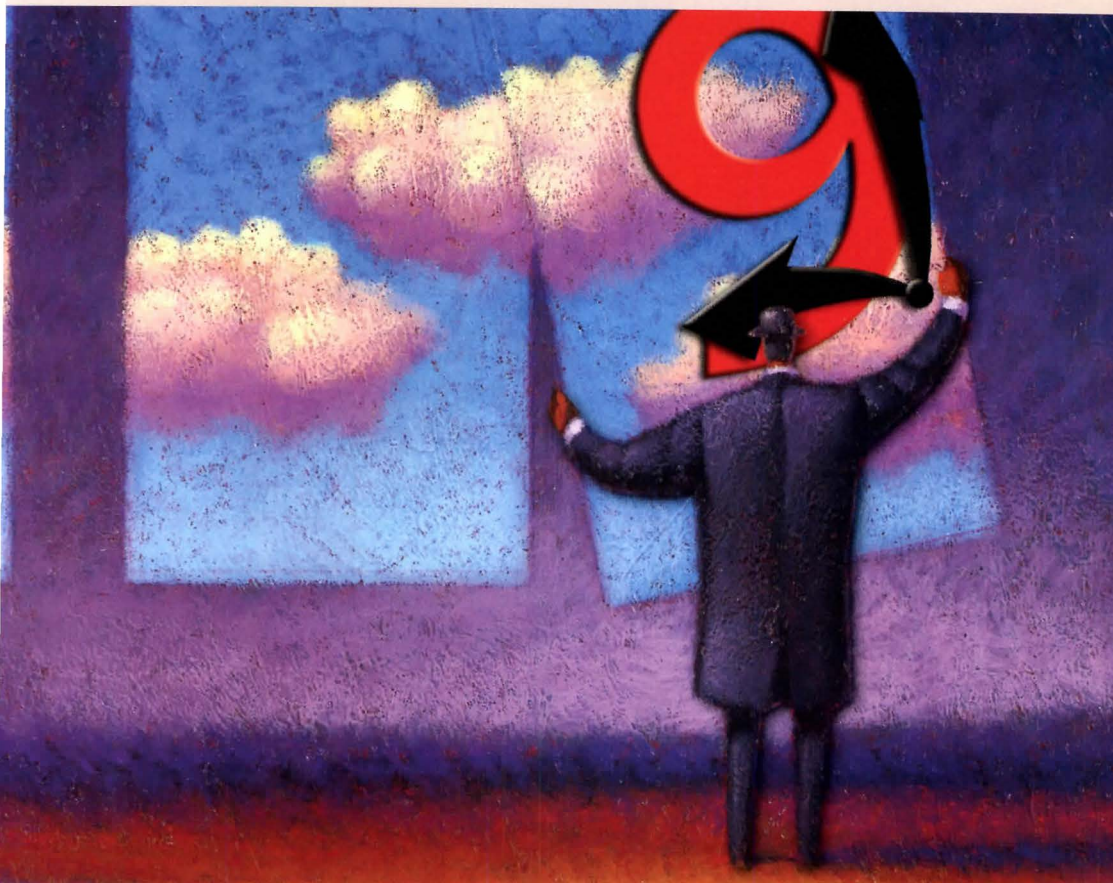
Another unconscionable offense of the Port District, and, to a lesser extent, the city, in this linear expansion fiasco is an eagerness to embrace highly visible, noncontroversial public art projects. Prominent artists and their monumental works are being used as Pied Pipers to lure pedestrians to the inconspicuous waterfront or to help conceal design and planning mistakes.

In all, a more egregious example of failed urban planning and an exploitation would be difficult to find. ■

*Ann Jarmusch is the architecture critic of the San Diego Union-Tribune*

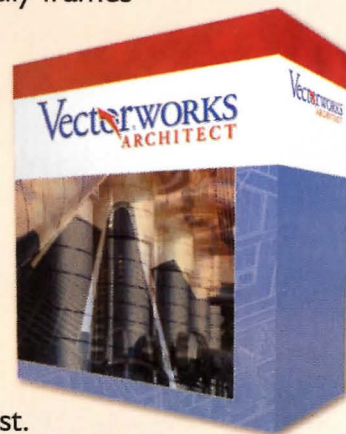
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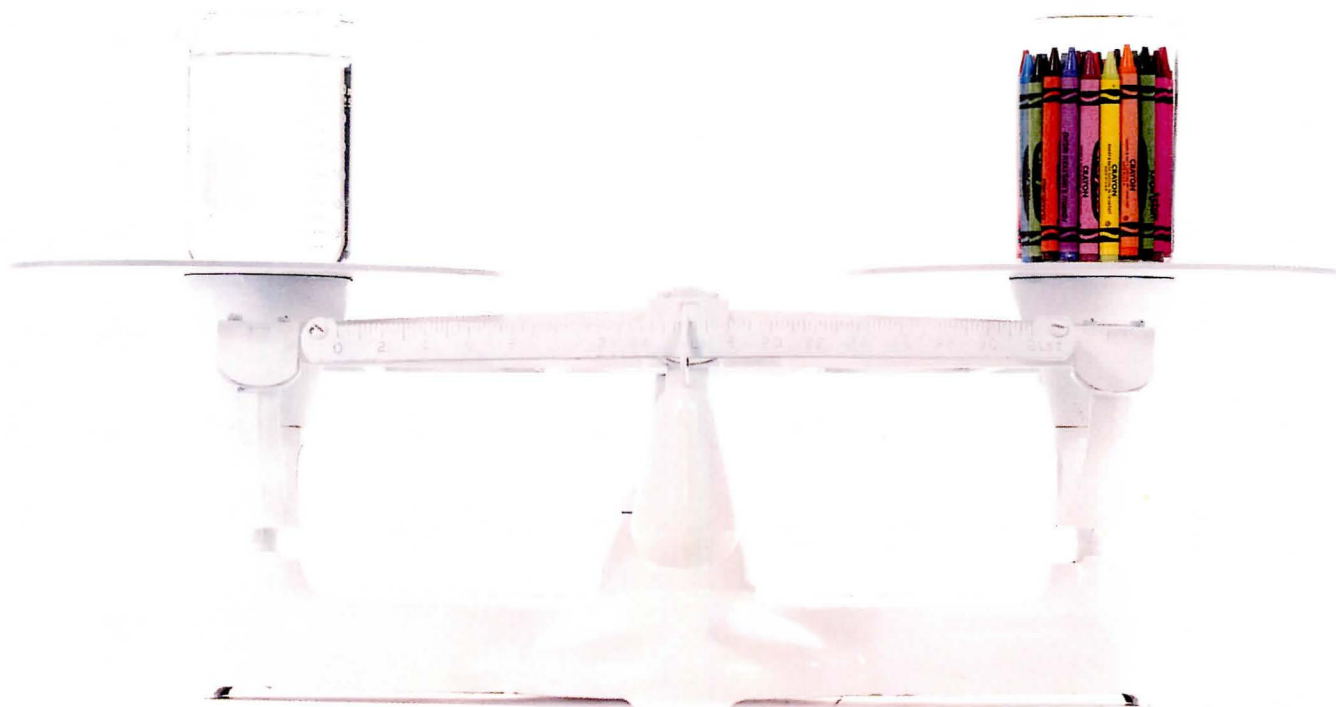
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