

# ArchitectureBoston

MAY/JUNE 2003 CLASS



0 74470 98499 3



Get the advantage

# WALLTITE™

engineered  
building envelope  
system

Durability

Energy efficiency

Occupant comfort

Design freedom

Buildability

Qualified applicators



[www.basf.com/spray](http://www.basf.com/spray)

[WALLTITE@basf.com](mailto:WALLTITE@basf.com)

1-800-547-4004

*BASF engineered urethane construction materials provide insulation and air barrier system continuity throughout the building envelope. Our WALLTITE system meets or exceeds all the new air barrier codes. It also contributes to improved durability, energy efficiency and improved occupant comfort, health and safety.*

HELPING MAKE PRODUCTS BETTER™

**BASF**



# Architecture Boston

May/June 2003

C l a s s

**Nobody wants to talk about class.** Toss “social hierarchy” into Google, and you’ll learn all about class structures in India, Indonesia, ancient Babylonia, and medieval England — not to mention the social hierarchies of chimpanzees, puppies, and kittens. Why is it easy to talk about the class structures of others — other cultures, even other species — but so hard to talk about our own?

One answer is that Americans are taught that it’s neither necessary nor nice to talk about class, because we are a classless society — an assumption that we all instinctively know to be ridiculous. Because we don’t talk about class, we are woefully ignorant of the subtle ways it influences our lives, our judgments, and our personal and professional choices.

And yet class references are all around us — even little kids are quick to discern social distinctions. Adults are equally quick to embrace pop-sociological labels — Yuppies, DINKs, Bobos — that slice our society into ever finer designations, even though a number of recent studies indicate that most Americans identify themselves as “middle class” whatever their actual income level. Politicians thrive on discussing class, using class terminology as code for various ideologies. But even they fail to explore the nuances of class structure in this country.

In recent years, a few books have emerged that suggest that we are witnessing a shift in class structure. *Bobos in Paradise*; *Snobbery: The American Version*; and *The Rise of the Creative Class* identify an accelerating trend away from the vestiges of aristocracy toward meritocracy, especially a meritocracy that values creativity.

This represents both good and bad news for architects. The good news, of course, is that in a creative meritocracy, architects emerge near the top of the heap, trading status for what they may lack in financial reward. The bad news is that they may soon start to behave as does any group that finds itself at the top of the heap. Protective of their privilege, such groups frequently become self-important and, literally, exclusive — excluding ideas, influences, and people. We frequently apply the terms “Brahmin” and “mandarin” (lifted from class structures of other societies) to the privileged classes; only rarely do the terms carry positive connotations. What then are the implications of an architectural profession all too eager to serve as the new mandarin class?

We already see disturbing signs of elitism in our ranks — of disdain for the public, of distance from real-world constraints, of apathy for social conditions that beg for our attention and for the special skills that architects can offer. Architects have long traded on their tenuous associations with the upper class (not unlike the sniveling Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*), despite the fact we are legally and ethically charged with the protection of the public interest.

Many architects enter the profession because they have caught the idealism virus — they have a sincere desire to do good work that makes a better world. Idealists are especially reluctant to discuss class issues. But, like discussion of other dirty words — money, sex — an open examination of class might be a healthy, productive endeavor.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA  
Editor

## 6 Life After 40B:

### **Anti-snob zoning and the dilemma of affordable housing**

A roundtable discussion with:

Mark Beale; Howard Cohen;  
Charles Euchner; Bonnie Heudorfer;  
Elaine Lazarus; Elizabeth Padjen FAIA;  
Jason Talerman; Alfred Wojciechowski AIA

## 16 Class Dismissed:

### **The unexamined bias**

by Ted Landsmark, Assoc. AIA,  
MEvD, JD, PhD

## 20 Takin’ It to the Streets:

### **The geography of public protest**

by Max Page

## 24 As Seen on TV:

### **Television and the design of class distinction**

by Robert David Sullivan

## 26 Bill Owens: Suburbia

by Elizabeth Padjen FAIA

## 32 The Great Equalizer:

### **Moisture in New England Houses**

by Stephen Smulski, PhD

## 38 Class Act

Michael Pyatok FAIA talks with  
John King

## 47 Covering the Issues:

### **Periodical roundup**

by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA

## 48 Books

## 51 Index to Advertisers

## 51 Site Work

### **Web sites of note**

## 52 Other Voices:

### **The Nantucket Airport**

by Tom Congdon



ArchitectureBoston  
Volume 6: Number 3

Class  
May/June 2003



# The Boston Society of Architects/AIA

## Editorial Board

Wilson F. Pollock FAIA  
Matthew Ali  
Phyllis Andersen  
Bill Clegg IIDA  
Leland Cott FAIA  
Antonio G. Di Mambro FAIA  
James Dunn, Assoc. AIA  
John Fernandez  
Tom Keane  
Matthew Kiefer  
Andrea Leers FAIA  
Tim Love AIA  
Kyra Montagu  
Rachel Munn AIA  
Hubert Murray AIA  
Jeff Stein AIA  
Nader Tehrani

## Officers

David Dixon FAIA, President  
Brian Healy AIA, Vice President  
Carol Burns AIA, Secretary  
James Dunn, CPA, Assoc. AIA  
Treasurer

*ArchitectureBoston* is  
published by the Boston  
Society of Architects/AIA  
52 Broad Street  
Boston, MA 02109  
Tel: 617-951-1433 x221  
Fax: 617-951-0845  
www.architects.org

*ArchitectureBoston* explores the  
ways that architecture influences  
and is influenced by our society.  
We hope to expand professional  
and public understanding of the  
changing world of architecture by  
drawing on the rich intellectual,  
professional, and visionary  
resources of our region.

We invite story ideas that connect  
architecture to social, cultural,  
political, economic, or business  
trends. Editorial guidelines are  
posted at: www.architects.org

The views expressed in  
*ArchitectureBoston* are not  
necessarily those of the  
editorial staff or the  
Boston Society of Architects.

Editor  
Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA

Managing Editor  
Nancy Jenner

Editorial Assistants  
Mark Ruckman  
Janine Soper

Art Director  
Judy Kohn

Contributing Photographers  
Bob Kramer  
Steve Rosenthal  
Peter Vanderwarker

Publisher  
Richard Fitzgerald  
The Boston Society  
of Architects

## Advertising

Richard Vendola  
BSA Sales Office  
1645 Falmouth Rd #1A  
Centerville, MA 02632  
Tel: 800-996-3863  
Fax: 508-790-4750  
rvendola@capecod.net

## Subscriptions

*ArchitectureBoston* is mailed  
at no charge to all members  
of the Boston Society of  
Architects and the AIA New York  
Chapter, and to all registered  
architects in New England.  
Subscription rate for all others  
is \$19 per year. For more infor-  
mation, call 617-951-1433 x228  
or e-mail inquiries to  
architectureboston@architects.org

## Reprints

Jessica Nonnemacher  
Reprint Management Services  
800-494-9051 x157  
jnonnemacher@reprintbuyer.com

Postmaster, please  
send changes of address to  
*ArchitectureBoston*  
52 Broad Street  
Boston, MA 02109

ISSN 1099-6346  
© 2003 The Boston Society  
of Architects.  
All rights reserved.

# Letters

**Your January/February 2003 issue** continues  
to impress. Clearly you are producing the  
best architecture periodical in the nation:  
interesting, attractive, intelligent, insightful  
and a pleasure to read.

Roger M. Lang, Senior Vice President  
Turner Construction Company  
New York City

**Thomas Keane's lead article** ["Architecture  
2002," January/February 2003] reviewing  
architecture in 2002 contains an unsus-  
ported, harsh, and inadvertently ironic assess-  
ment of the Community Arcade on Boston's  
City Hall Plaza as "much reviled." This com-  
ment comes up in the context of Mr. Keane's  
contrast of Boston City Hall as "still lauded"  
(he fails to note this is a view almost exclusive  
to architects) with the difficulties entailed in  
trying to redesign the Plaza.

This judgment is offered with no further  
elaboration enumerating the many people  
that Mr. Keane apparently believes share this  
view or why it is so obviously justified on  
aesthetic grounds as to require no further  
discussion. Not that such a bold literary device  
isn't sometimes appropriate — the Plaza as  
a whole could, I think, be fairly described as  
"much reviled," full stop.

The Community Arcade was conceived as  
the first step in the reconstruction of one  
edge of the 11-acre Plaza. The arcade was not  
intended to be a large enough intervention  
on its own to transform the Cambridge  
Street edge of the Plaza, much less the Plaza  
itself. No matter what you think of its appeal,  
the public regards the arcade at worst as an  
architectural gesture and, more generally, as a  
welcome refuge from the expanse of the  
Plaza without much regard to its architectural  
merit. (My own judgment is based on hang-  
ing out there and watching people.) Revulsion  
suggests a greater level of engagement than  
most who pass by experience.

The irony is that a year ago, this "much  
reviled" arcade was featured on the cover of  
this magazine as an attractive and positive  
image to set off the magazine's theme of  
architecture and spectacle, entertainment,  
and theater.

Kelley Brown AICP  
West Newton, Massachusetts

**Your issue on landscape architecture** and its  
relationship with architecture is most welcome  
[March/April 2003]. As one who has prac-  
ticed both, I think your call for architects to  
learn more about landscape can only help to  
improve the quality of architectural design.

However, your roundtable discussion might  
have included a wider assortment of  
landscape architectural practitioners, not just  
academics and city folk. I was shocked by  
how all your participants seemed appalled at  
the thought of using planting to help improve  
City Hall Plaza. I've admired Boston City  
Hall since before it was built, but the Plaza  
always seemed to me a barren, windswept,  
lifeless place. While I think a multi-faceted  
approach to improving the space and its  
vitality, including major efforts by surround-  
ing businesses, the City, and arts institutions  
will help, it seems perverse to me to rule out  
planting as contributing to making this place  
somewhere that people want to be.

Strange as it may sound, too many landscape  
architects neither like nor know much  
about plants. I have long noticed an almost  
pathological defensiveness among landscape  
architects worried about being confused in  
people's minds with gardeners and feeling the  
need to assert their professional superiority.  
I remember my old professor at Harvard,  
Norman Newton, proudly telling his students  
that his favorite work of landscape architec-  
ture, the Piazza San Marco, was devoid of  
plants.

Nearly all the landscape architects your  
panelists refer to (except Olmsted) represent  
that segment of the profession that has little  
use for plants. Perhaps this is in part because,  
as one of the panelists notes, "It's also an  
imageability issue." Good planting design is  
too subtle to show well in sketches, much less  
on a site plan. Maybe this is why landscape  
plans usually look so diagrammatic (and  
unfortunately get built diagrammatically as  
well, with trees arranged like bollards and no  
shrubbery since it doesn't register well on a  
drawing). Even with their flamboyant  
patterns, the gardens of Roberto Burle-Marx  
or Wolfgang Oehme don't look like much on  
paper, whereas a pavement decorated with a  
geometric array of plastic doughnuts knocks  
them dead, at least in professional journals  
and academia.



A generation ago I worked for Larry Halprin (where I, an architect, was the plant materials expert in his New York office). His work was more architectural than most landscape architects and not particularly known for planting, but he more than compensated for this omission by his creative designs using water. If landscape architects want to get rid of their professional inferiority complex, wouldn't it make more sense for them to become really masterful with those elements of their field that they do not normally share with building architects, namely earth, water, and vegetation?

G. Mackenzie Gordon AIA  
Gordon & Gordon Architecture &  
Landscape Design  
Lakeville, Connecticut

**Compliments** to *ArchitectureBoston* on the skillful work of the March/April issue on "Land." Given the need for greater collaboration between our aligned professions, landscape architects throughout the city should be very encouraged that *ArchitectureBoston* did such a thorough (and thoughtful) job taking on "our" issues.

While the roundtable discussion on historic versus cutting-edge design was interesting (in fact, the topic is hotly debated among many landscape architects) to me the debate is old hat. Any good landscape architect continually strives to balance the need for contemporary artistic relevance with the civic responsibility that comes with building in the public realm. The answer to the debate is actually quite simple: what is appropriate depends upon the project. Both historic and cutting-edge design perspectives are perfectly valid; the trick is knowing why, where, and how to use them. Unfortunately, designers often get it wrong.

Perhaps this choice about "style" is actually simpler for architects than for landscape architects. Many architects actually define themselves as "deconstructivists" or such. If you work for, say, Richard Meier, your client has a very good idea of the "product" before signing the contract. For most landscape architects, it's often not as straightforward. Not all clients should be looking for an Olmstedian design, but not all clients should be doing bagels in the landscape, either. Over the years, a landscape architect in a mainstream firm might very well get to work in every kind of landscape imaginable, from urban plazas to true wilderness, using materials ranging from stainless steel to bark mulch. Fun! To consistently achieve high-quality design and an appropriate site response, a good landscape architect must approach each project as unique, and must be facile in a very wide range of styles.

To illustrate the issue, the fact that Post Office Square isn't contemporary doesn't bother me one bit. It's popular. That was its main purpose, and it is an undeniable success. However, it cannot be our only model for great park design. Boston needs a great, contemporary park design for the Wharf District Parks on the Rose Kennedy Greenway and, admittedly, we are having a very hard time embracing contemporary landscape ideas. With the blight of City Hall Plaza confronting our collective psyche, can you really blame Bostonians for being gunshy about designers who talk about "challenging landscapes"?

On the other hand, "the Rose" offers a rare opportunity to breathe new urbanity and, yes, new life into our too often provincial city. It's not just another park. We put a mile of highway under the city, and people across America will be checking in just to see what they all paid for! What we build will reflect who we are. It will reveal things about our civility and culture. It should enthusiastically embrace our true identity as a multicultural city and it should embody the genius of Boston's artistic community. Do we have the courage, wherewithal, and creativity to achieve something unique and inspired, and which meets its potential to be the defining icon of 21st century Boston? This ain't your grandfather's park design.

JP Shadley, ASLA, President  
Boston Society of Landscape Architects;  
Principal, Carol R. Johnson Associates  
Boston

**While innovative new landscape design** is important in our city, there are more appropriate opportunities for it beyond the historic Emerald Necklace ["Lessons from the Little Dig: The Problems of Landscape Preservation," March/April 2003]. Although changed as a result of age, deferred maintenance, roadway intrusions and the like, Olmsted's Emerald Necklace is nonetheless enjoyed by over one million visitors each year. What most people value about these parks is that they continue to do what their designer intended: "To bring peace and refreshment to the city dweller," and to serve as places that bring people together from different neighborhoods, cultures and economic means. They remain "contemporary" in that, over 100 years post-design, they are well-loved and used; they have not been abandoned for our "newer" parks or those with a different landscape design aesthetic.

In our plans for renewal of the Necklace, we must acknowledge that in addition to being a public park system that must respond to the

needs of current-day users, the Emerald Necklace is an historic landscape of national significance, reflected in its listing on the National Register of Historic Places and its designation as a Boston landmark. In addition, there are masterplans for the parks' renewal, adopted by the City of Boston and Town of Brookline after broad discussion by their citizenry.

In terms of the Muddy River Restoration Project, our focus as stewards should be on reconnecting pieces of the parks separated by auto traffic and restoring the flow, wildlife habitat, and pastoral beauty of the Muddy River and its surrounding landscape. One of the opportunities presented by the project is to restore the "missing link" in front of the Landmark Center by "daylighting" the river and by providing more than the current swath of green grass, including plantings, seating, lighting and improved pathways.

Simone Auster, President  
Emerald Necklace Conservancy  
Brookline, Massachusetts

**Landscape Architecture** magazine committed the original sin by publicizing Martha Schwartz' purple-graveled bullshit as a cover story 23 years ago. Its publication gave it a life of its own; a life it didn't deserve then and doesn't deserve now. I presume — I hope — that Ms. Pressley's mention of it as a Boston work of Ms. Schwartz was tongue-in-cheek ["Burying Olmsted," March/April 2003]. Your photographic reproduction of it demeans the profession of landscape architecture, especially in the eyes of the other design professionals who read *ArchitectureBoston*. Ms. Schwartz has created many outstanding works of landscape architecture. It is unfortunate that you saw fit to highlight her most controversial effort rather than a more socially significant one in an article about a man whose works will never be characterized by adjectives similar to those that apply to the Bagel Garden.

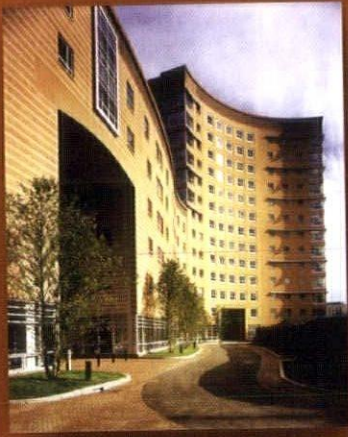
Nelson Hammer, Landscape Architect  
Hammer Design  
Boston

**Editor's note:** The photo of the Bagel Garden was included for the benefit of readers who might struggle to imagine how bagels grow. Other images of Martha Schwartz's work were included in an interview with her in the same issue ("Land Marks," page 32).

We want to hear from you. Letters may be sent to:  
epadjen@architects.org or  
*ArchitectureBoston*, 52 Broad St., Boston, MA 02109.

Letters may be edited for clarity and length and must include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Length should not exceed 300 words.

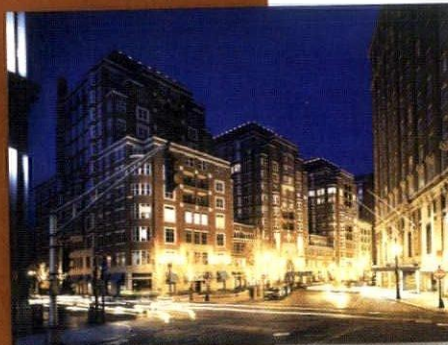
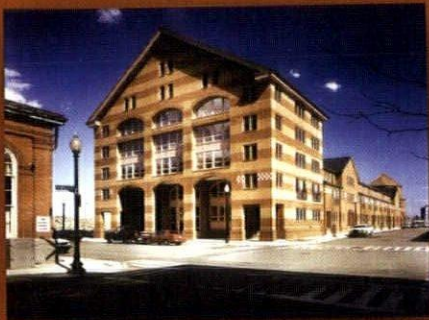
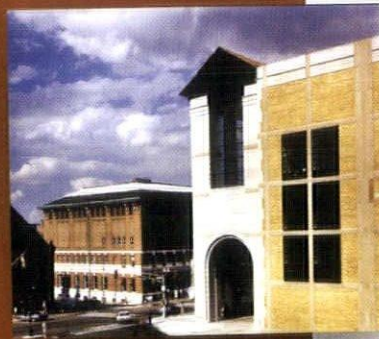
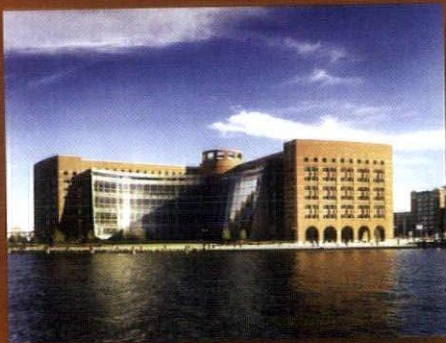




# Brick...

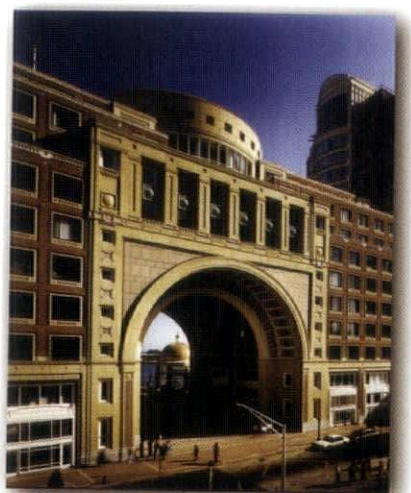
---

## Enhances Modern Design



Photography: © Steve Rosenthal





# Brick, Limited only by the Imagination!

Boston is Home to Some of the Finest Brick Structures in the Nation

Brick brings to the Design:

- Outstanding Value
- Proven Durability
- Compatibility and Sensitivity
- Elegance and Quality
- Timeless Beauty



The International Masonry Institute commends the architectural community for their outstanding designs in brick and for giving our union masonry craftworkers and contractors the opportunity to show the pride in our craftsmanship.

Building Identification and Credits from Opposite Page (from Top to Bottom, Left to Right):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Northeastern University West Campus Residence Halls<br/>Architect: William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc.</p> <p>2. Carl J. Shapiro Clinical Center - Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center<br/>Architect: Rothman Partners Incorporated<br/>Consulting Architect: Chan Krieger &amp; Associates</p> <p>3. John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse<br/>Architect: Pei Cobb Freed &amp; Partners Architects, LLP in<br/>Association with Jung/Brannen Associates, Inc.</p> <p>4. Hynes Convention Center<br/>Architect: Kallmann McKinnell &amp; Wood, Architects, Inc.</p> | <p>5. Charlestown Navy Yard Rowhouses<br/>Architect: William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc.</p> <p>6. The Heritage on the Garden<br/>Architect: The Architects Collaborative</p> <p>7. Rowe's Wharf (Pictured Above)<br/>Architect: Skidmore, Owings &amp; Merrill</p> |
|---|---|



# Life After 40B

## Anti-snob zoning and the dilemma of affordable housing

### What is 40B?

Chapter 40B is a statute enacted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1969 in order to promote the development of low- and moderate-income housing across the state. The law requires that at least 10 percent of the housing stock in each municipality be "affordable" as defined by established guidelines. If a community does not meet this standard, a qualified residential developer may request a "comprehensive permit," which overrides most local zoning and building restrictions, as long as 25 percent of the proposed dwelling units are set aside as affordable units. Developers who are denied a permit may appeal to the State Housing Appeals Committee. Only 30 of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns meet the 10 percent standard.

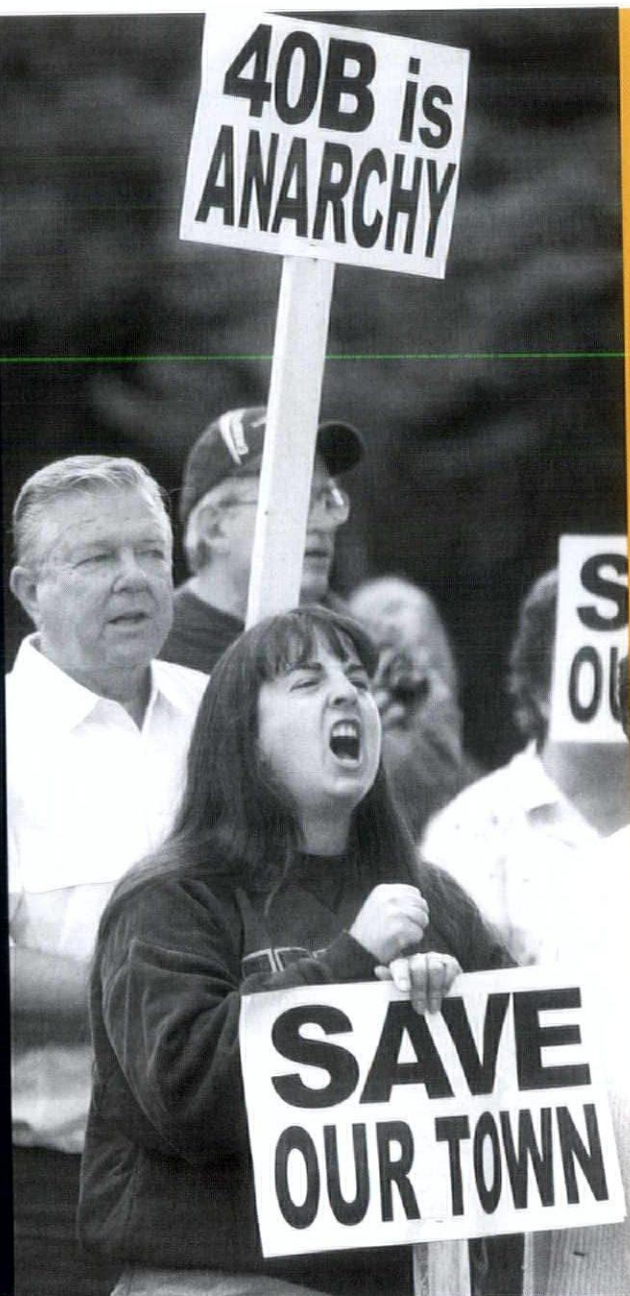


photo: Amelia Kunhardt for *The Patriot Ledger*

### PARTICIPANTS

**MARK BEALE** is the chair of the Nantucket Planning Board and past chair of the Nantucket Zoning Board of Appeals.

**HOWARD COHEN** is the president of The Beacon Companies in Boston, a housing developer, and chairs the 40B Study Committee for the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA).

**CHARLES EUCHNER** is the executive director of the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is also the author of "Getting Home: Overcoming Barriers to Housing in Greater Boston" (2003), a report of the Rappaport Institute and Pioneer Institute.

**BONNIE HEUDORFER** is a housing and planning consultant based in Harvard, Massachusetts. She is co-author of *The Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2002* and, most recently, of *Taking the Initiative*, a guidebook on affordable housing strategies for suburban communities. She is the chair of the Harvard Housing Partnership.

**ELAINE LAZARUS** is the town planner of Hopkinton, Massachusetts.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN FAIA** is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

**JASON TALERMAN** is a land-use attorney with Kopelman and Paige, PC, in Boston.

**ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI AIA** is a principal of CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares Architects in Boston and is the chair of the Boston Society of Architects' Housing Committee.



Dubbed "the anti-snob zoning act" at its birth in the 1960s, the Massachusetts statute known as "40B" has been under fire lately. Proponents claim that it encourages the production of desperately needed affordable housing; opponents claim that it allows rapacious developers to flout local planning and zoning controls. Both sides agree that changes are on the way.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** Let's start by establishing the context for "anti-snob zoning" when 40B was enacted in 1969. What were some of the social and economic issues at that time? Where did the "anti-snob" label come from?

**HOWARD COHEN:** I think the anti-snob thing was a part of a battle between the urban and the suburban. There were attacks by suburban legislators on city issues having to do with busing and racial balance. At the legislative level, issues of race, probably more than class, dominated discussions at the time. And 40B was a way for the city to fight back by saying, if you shared our problems, maybe you'd have a little more sympathy. This was at the height of the civil-rights movement, and there was an explosion in the growth of minority populations in the cities. The need to create broader opportunities for minority populations to live in the suburban areas was clearly one of the issues. There was a sense of opening the gates.

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** Also, the Vietnam War was in progress and there was concern over how the state would house returning veterans. The cities had traditionally housed returning veterans, but job growth and opportunities were shifting to the suburbs — communities that had not been hospitable to earlier public housing programs. We had new federal and state subsidy programs to stimulate privately owned housing, but we didn't have the zoning for it.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** And yet 1969 was still an era when there wasn't a lot of broad public sympathy for the veterans. Were there other issues as well?

**JASON TALERMAN:** I think the Mount Laurel decision may have had something to do with it as well.

That was the famous Supreme Court decision coming out of New Jersey that stated that every municipality has to do its part to accommodate all classes of people — in effect, mandating that New Jersey municipalities take steps to ensure the development of affordable housing. But the returning veterans were also a factor.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** In many ways, the whole region, like other regions across the country, was undergoing a churning process. The city of Boston itself was in many ways in a free fall. The city was losing population at a very steady rate. It's not as though you couldn't build housing in Boston, or even that there wasn't enough housing stock to handle people. It was a very different situation from what we have today, when we've in effect readjusted our physical space to fit a population of 600,000 as opposed to a previous population of 800,000 — which creates a greater imperative for housing outside the city. But certain groups of people — not just the middle class, but many working-class residents, too — were leaving the city. That always creates tension in whatever community is affected by it. Some urbanists use ecological terms to describe those kinds of changes: "invasion" and "succession." That really does capture the feel of the process for people who are in the middle of it.

**ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI:** You get another view if you talk to the folks who were living in the outer suburban communities. If you are living in a small town and you know the local farmers, the person who does the cleaning at the school, and people who are just barely making it, you see a pretty broad cross-section and you don't see a homogeneous community. When larger groups of people started to come in, there was indeed the sense that an invasion was occurring. But many people didn't perceive themselves as snobs because they considered their communities to be quite diverse.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** The irony is that many of the suburban towns — towns like Woburn, Arlington, Milton, and Quincy — had zoning codes then that were much more accommodating of multi-family housing than they are now. One of the early responses to the churning process I mentioned was that towns started to downzone, using zoning to cap their potential growth. For example, Arlington's build-out in 1975 was about 75,000 — that was how much population the town could accommodate if everything was

There were 119,117,000 housing units in the United States in 2001. Approximately 106,261,000 were occupied as principal residences and 12,855,000 were vacant or seasonal.

Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001



### Average per unit construction cost, 2001

#### SAN FRANCISCO

\$200,382

#### NASHVILLE

\$149,650

#### BOSTON

\$129,143

#### INDIANAPOLIS

\$124,408

#### HOUSTON

\$92,965

#### DENVER

\$90,918

#### LOS ANGELES

\$89,577

#### PHILADELPHIA

\$74,332

#### CHICAGO

\$71,507

#### MANHATTAN

\$63,967

Source:  
U.S. Census Bureau, 2001 Building Permits  
(available online at <http://censtats.census.gov/>)

developed according to the existing zoning. When they re-zoned that year, their build-out dropped down to about 45,000.

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** During the '70s, we were producing about 30,000 housing units a year in this state, almost half of them multi-family, five or more units. That number has dropped dramatically — we're now down to about 17,000 per year, fewer than 3,000 multi-family. That's a tremendous shift. The 1970s was the period of great federal and state programs to expand the supply of affordable housing, but it was also a time when the private market was working fairly efficiently to get affordable, unsubsidized units built.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** What percentage of income went to housing at that time compared to today? I'm curious about some of the motivations behind 40B back then. How much was due to social engineering — redistributing populations or solving larger social issues — and how much was a response to the concerns about affordability that drive the discussion today?

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** Housing was a lot more affordable back then. I can only take you back to 1980, when the ratio of average home value to average income was about 2:1. Ten years later in 1990, it was over 4:1. In greater Boston today, it is over 5:1. I think 40B was intended as a tool for shuffling and directing housing, but it's evolved into something different.

**MARK BEALE:** And of course the mortgage guidelines used to cap allowable housing costs at 25 percent of your income.

**ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI:** Now they allow up to 50 percent of your income.

**HOWARD COHEN:** In the beginning, 40B was the tool for determining where subsidized housing would go. And at that time, we had a number of visionaries in the state, among them Bill White, the director of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, who said he wasn't going to put all of the subsidy money into the cities; he was going to spread it around the state. He wanted to have diverse opportunities for people.

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** Remember, too, that substandard conditions and overcrowding were still problems across the country at that time.

Those problems have disappeared in most areas, and now it's become entirely an issue of affordability.

**ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI:** The high cost of housing has fundamentally changed the problem, but it's also changed who the players are. National developers have entered this market in just the last few years. They build luxury housing under 40B, because the return on the luxury units more than covers the costs of making 25 percent of the units "affordable."

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** Another difference in the players today is the network of community development corporations and other grassroots housing advocates. Many of them were just starting out 30 years ago, but they are very professional now.

**JASON TALERMAN:** I don't want to diminish the importance of all these comments, but I really think that the whole issue is about money. Land ran out. You couldn't do conventional development on what was left. Partly because some of the land was lousy, partly because of what really was snobby zoning. I think towns are guilty of snobby zoning in a lot of circumstances. Prices went up because the stock went down. Developers have to make money somehow. They got hold of 40B, because this is how you can still make money when there is no land that's left to develop in a conventional manner. And these guys are making money.

**HOWARD COHEN:** That's exactly right. What happened was that our real-estate industry, including residential development, was terminated in the downturn of the early '90s. People were walking around saying there would never be another new building here in their lifetime. In the meantime, national developers, who had a much broader perspective, had developed a new luxury rental-housing product that was targeted to young professionals and empty-nesters. The national developers saw Boston as a market not served by this product. Because of the down-zoning that had occurred, they also saw the only way to find land was to use 40B. I think that some of them used 40B in a way local developers would not have. They used it much more as a club because they were outsiders and didn't have the reciprocal relationships. They didn't think they'd have to come back to town.



But then local developers started saying, "Wait a second, if these guys can do it, we can, too."

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** That sounds like 40B was turned on its head, from a tool for anti-snob zoning and providing affordable housing to a tool for providing luxury housing. What is the legal definition of affordable housing?

**JASON TALERMAN:** Housing for households making 80 percent of the median income for a particular region, which is usually defined by county.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** And what does that typically translate into in terms of income?

**JASON TALERMAN:** Well, for a town like Mendon, 80 percent of the median household income is now listed as \$64,000 which, oddly, is the same as Dover and Medfield. For towns on Cape Cod, it's listed as \$47,000. Andover is listed as \$59,000. And in Easton, it's \$56,000.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** I think 40B is still on its head in a lot of cases. I'd like to underscore one point, and that is the idea of land shortage. You hear all the time that we don't have any land left in Boston or in greater Boston. That's exactly wrong. The problem isn't that we don't have land; the problem is that we don't dispose of it very efficiently, and we don't zone it so that it is possible to use for housing.

**JASON TALERMAN:** I agree that there is a lot of land out there that is potentially available for housing. But there is a lot of land that people think is buildable that really isn't. The fact that it is open land doesn't mean that it should be built on, or that it should be built on in a certain way. And that's something that towns are angry about — 40B undercuts massive planning initiatives by the towns. Let's say a town does everything right by smart-growth standards — they do small-lot zoning in the center of town, and some mid-lot zoning in other parts of town, and some big-lot planning in a rural alcove, and then even set aside some other land for recreational use. Why should money-driven private interests supersede that? It's a home-rule state. The town says, "We decided what is good for ourselves, we followed the rules, we did our part, and now we are getting kicked in the teeth over it?"

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** In my mind, 40B has at least a good intent, but it's blind to the circumstances of communities. There's nothing in 40B that tells developers that this parcel of land is more appropriate for housing than that one.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** Let's ask Mark and Elaine to talk a bit about the point of view of the communities — how the residents feel about some of these issues, and how you are contending with changes. Nantucket is probably the great petri dish of housing, economic, and social forces contained in one environment.

**MARK BEALE:** Nantucket has a quirky zoning code. We have 5,000-square-foot lots up to 10-acre lots. The quirky part is that in order to get zoning passed, we had to add an addendum in 1972 that allows every lot to have two dwellings on it. And that adds a lot of density. Right now there are 8,000 houses. We did a build-out analysis, and there could be 24,000 dwellings on Nantucket, which includes many second dwellings. We've had several proposals for 40B developments, but none have been built so far. There is a current proposal that will probably go ahead — a 40B project in a three-acre zone, where the guy has bought a small lot and is going to put in eight units, two affordable and six that will sell for over \$2 million each. The neighbors are not thrilled — it's in a rural setting.

The biggest complaint on Nantucket is from the local community, the year-round community. They ask, "Where will our children live?" Their kids can't move to a neighboring town of lesser housing quality. We're an island — there isn't one. We have people now who commute every day on either the "fast boat" or by air. We have plumbers, electricians, carpenters who commute every day. It offends many of our native population that their children can't live on Nantucket. We in the planning world have a strong sympathy for that, but we have not been able to do anything about it. We can't legislate who gets to buy a house for what price. How do you keep the houses from going into the hands of off-island summer residents, who later rent out those houses for a season and make much more than they would for a year-round rental?

**JASON TALERMAN:** The issues are the same on both of the islands. The Vineyard is really close to the breaking point. And yet there's a 355-unit 40B plan that's going ahead that not a single person on the island is in favor of despite the fact that it will provide at least 100 units of affordable housing.

**MARK BEALE:** It is my reading that people are offended by the idea that the developers can totally avoid zoning.

In 2001, approximately 72,265,000 or 68 percent of all units nationwide were occupied by owners. Approximately 33,996,000 or 32 percent of all units were occupied by renters.

Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001



### Home prices by metropolitan area 1991 vs. 2001

#### BOSTON

1991	\$214,400
2001	\$300,200

#### PROVIDENCE

1991	\$160,800
2001	\$167,100

#### ROCHESTER

1991	\$104,900
2001	\$93,900

#### LAS VEGAS

1991	\$129,200
2001	\$131,900

#### SAN FRANCISCO

1991	\$335,200
2001	\$458,900

Source:  
"The State of the Nation's Housing 2002,"  
Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** What if 40B were modified so that the state tells towns that everybody has a burden, but they can decide where the burden will be borne?

**MARK BEALE:** That's a good start.

**ELAINE LAZARUS:** Part of the problem with 40B is that it assumes all zoning is snob zoning, and that is not the case. Not all towns have two-acre lots. You have to look at the individual community. There is a lot of good planning and zoning going on out there, and every town wants to control its destiny and believes it's unique. Towns want to keep their character, and they want development that is consistent with that character. People are most concerned about simple things like setback and heights. The density, if you design it well, can often work. I find that most people are concerned about appearance — making the development fit in. It's unfortunate that design is often a casualty of 40B developments. It is the part that's cut out to save money.

**HOWARD COHEN:** I think there are two issues. One is that we've had this social experiment over a 30-year period when somewhere around 30,000 units have been built. From the first day, 40B was controversial. The world hasn't come to an end. Where are those horrible examples of 40B projects diminishing value? We don't see much data on that. I think we have to ask that question because it ties to the next question. A couple of years after 40B was passed, the state's Housing Appeals Committee turned down a 40B proposal because the community had a local plan. The Housing Appeals Committee said that if there's a local plan and the town is really building affordable housing, it would not override local zoning. So the ability of a town to take control of the 10-percent requirement was there. Maybe 10 percent is an arbitrary number, but lots of numbers in society are arbitrary. If you have a local plan and you're making progress, you can have control. I know of only one town — Lincoln — that affirmatively pursued that tactic.

**JASON TALERMAN:** Barnstable was another. Lincoln, by the way, has fallen under the 10 percent target and is now fighting 40B like mad.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** Howard's point is connected to another oddity of Massachusetts town government and planning. When towns do plans, the plans don't get linked to the zoning

codes. And so you have this strange world where the zoning says one thing and the planning says another, and nobody really knows what to follow as a default. Plans start to look meaningless.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** Can you give an example of that kind of conflict?

**MARK BEALE:** I can. Nantucket just spent four years drawing up a comprehensive plan for the island. A wonderful plan — we passed it at the town meeting two years ago. We approved the concept of having village centers — some that already exist, like Sconset and Madaket, as well as a few new ones. We encouraged developers to pay attention to those village areas and to stay away from those areas that were called country areas. Well, it made no sense relative to our zoning code. Our zoning code says, here's a three-acre lot and here's a 5,000-square-foot lot. They didn't match up.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** You see that kind of misfit between planning and zoning in pretty much every city and town. One of the tensions that's always under the surface in 40B is that there is no fit between the big ideas that people can embrace to serve their communities' needs and the rules of the road that the developers follow.

**JASON TALERMAN:** None of the towns that I represent that are involved in legislative initiatives on 40B think that we should kill 40B — but they think it should be changed so it returns to the days when it was more of an incentive and less of a club. There are a lot of predatory developers out there who are using it the wrong way. I agree with Howard — towns did have an opportunity to take some control and they didn't do it. Now it's too late to hit that 10-percent target in many of those towns, unless there is some sort of fundamental change in the way we count units. Howard's right — 10 percent is an arbitrary number. But if it's an arbitrary number, then we should change it because it really doesn't work as a number. And as Elaine was saying, the towns that are getting hit the hardest with 40B right now are not the snob towns. I'm working on five 40B proposals right now in Chelmsford. Chelmsford is not a snobby town. By and large, it's the middle-income towns that are being hit, because a developer can still get the land for a price that makes it work.



**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** Elaine, what is the situation in Hopkinton in terms of housing and new development?

**ELAINE LAZARUS:** The town grew very fast in the last 10 years. The population went up 40 percent. The percentage of affordable housing went down. Actually, the total number of affordable units went up, but the percentage declined because there was such fast growth. We had some 40Bs, maybe one every couple of years. We haven't seen any multi-family 40Bs that exceed the density that we currently allow. But developers are applying under 40B to get by local wetlands regulations and to get access to municipal water and sewer that they normally couldn't get because the town is at capacity. So we are seeing fights over those issues.

**HOWARD COHEN:** Let me put this in a little bit of context. AvalonBay is one of the nation's great multi-family developers. It is a company that I do business with, so I'll disclose that. In every market it's in, its product gets the top rent from people with discretionary income, so presumably it's building a good product. In the last four or five years, AvalonBay has probably built 4,000 40B multi-family units here, not one of which would have been built without 40B. Of those units, 1,000 are affordable units. So AvalonBay, pursuing its self-interest as a publically held company, is probably the largest developer of affordable housing in the state. That is why some of us who are pro-40B really want to fight, because we care about this. Without 40B, none of those affordable units would have been built.

**JASON TALERMAN:** But you are looking at housing in a vacuum. Housing doesn't exist only to give people a place to eat and watch cable TV. They have to put their kids through school; there has to be sewer and water for all of those people. Towns have zero money this year. Town schools are bursting. Town sewer systems are outdated. Town roads are terrible. Where is the money going to come from to provide this?

**HOWARD COHEN:** I can tell you one answer. If we don't grow our economy — and that means growing our population — it's going to get worse. You are not going to do it by chasing 20-year-old college students out of the state because they can't afford to live here.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** That gets to a bigger issue, which is that we need a whole lot more production than you are talking about. And 40B is not going to get you a whole lot more production in and of itself.

The problem is that our system discourages housing at every single stage in the process. If we are ever going to really deal with the affordable-housing crisis, which means housing for more than the people who qualify because of some income cut-off, we need to produce a lot more units, many more than 40B proponents can ever dream of producing. I actually have a lot of sympathy for both sides of this argument. I don't see a whole lot of interest in the communities in setting aside land for multi-family housing.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** Why do you think that is? Is it a fear of a physical change because multi-family housing makes a community look different? Is it schooling and the attendant property-tax issue?

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** I think it's both. One is that it costs a lot of money to pay teachers and firefighters and police and so forth. It's expensive to provide basic services, more expensive than most new housing provides for in terms of new property taxes. But the other thing is that people buy into a town. They are buying the community, not just the unit. And anything that upsets the product that they bought is going to raise concerns.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** There was an article in a local newspaper recently about the town of Boxford, which is considered a relatively wealthy town. The town is cracking down on the use of so-called in-law apartments. The chairman of the Boxford ZBA [Zoning Board of Appeals] was quoted as saying that the fact that Boxford is a single-family-dwelling town is what makes it the beautiful town that it is today. This was apparently the source of his concern about the apartments. There are many ways to think about housing production. One is turning on the spigot full blast in terms of some of these large developments. But imagine the town of Boxford, where there are a hundred or so in-law apartments of which apparently 70 or so are illegal because they are not rented to relatives of the homeowners. Boxford could easily be hit with two or three 40B projects — 20 or 30 units each — that would have this town up in arms, when in fact they have an equivalent number of housing units in the form of apartments over people's garages. These kinds of units, whether you call them in-law apartments or accessory apartments, seem to make sense socially on a variety of levels for not only the elderly parent, but also for young adults, the schoolteachers and firefighters, even the elderly longtime residents on fixed incomes who can use the income to pay property taxes and stay in town. With proper design and zoning controls that would protect

In 2001, the median value of owner-occupied homes was \$123,887. The median owner-occupied home was 30 years old in 2001.

Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001



the town's physical character, I would think that these kinds of units would alleviate a lot of housing concerns.

**MARK BEALE:** Let me expand on that. In Nantucket, we have a zoning code that allows two dwellings per lot. It started out as being for Grandma and Grandpa and for the kids when they come home and need a place to live. For years this was a wonderful vehicle for keeping our own families on the island. For keeping elderly parents on the island. And now it's an investment vehicle.

**JASON TALERMAN:** You rent out your guest house or you move into your guest house and rent your principal residence.

**MARK BEALE:** Worse than that. You build two and rent two — and live in Boston. You're on island for maybe a week a year.

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** Some communities are taking a different approach. Barnstable has an amnesty program for bringing illegal accessory apartments up to code and renting them on a year-round basis to people who are income eligible. And those units can count toward the 10-percent requirement. I think for every town like Boxford that says, "No, we don't want that," there are others that are saying, "Wait a minute — the appearance of the town is important, and diversifying the housing stock is important. These goals aren't mutually exclusive." Accessory apartments can provide an invisible means of diversifying the stock, but it's a lot tougher to qualify them as affordable housing on the state's subsidized housing inventory. In many towns, though, diversifying the stock is itself an important goal, towns where the predominant housing form is a four-bedroom, 2,800-square-foot house on 3.5 acres. One of the most striking statistics to have come out of the last census for my town is that 56 percent of the houses had four or more bedrooms, and half of the households are one or two people.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** I assume the general trend is toward one- and two-person households?

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** Yes, and increasingly so in many suburbs. There is an aging population in many communities. The kids have grown, some of whom want to stay in town but have no alternatives. A lot of communities are interested in increasing the affordability and diversifying

the housing stock for their own employees or for existing residents.

**MARK BEALE:** How do you legislate that?

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** Well, you can't exclude people, although a number of communities allow accessory apartments for family members only.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** To me that is kind of insane. I thought we got rid of primogeniture and entail hundreds of years ago. It is totally ridiculous — if a unit is good enough for your own family, and if it meets certain minimal standards of health and safety and access, then why in the world would you put any limit whatsoever on renting it to anyone you see fit?

**ELAINE LAZARUS:** I have heard people say, "We don't want renters because we don't know who these people are — they are transients." I hear that a lot. Hopkinton has a similar bylaw for family members or people over 60 whether they are related or not, and we went to town meeting last year to try to allow accessory apartments for affordable housing. I was amazed at what I heard, and it was shot down.

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** In terms of what is getting built under 40B, there are really two discussions. One is the discussion of ownership housing — new three-bedroom units that make housing affordable to families. The other discussion is of rental housing. Massachusetts has done poorly in terms of building new multi-family rental housing over the last decade, although the pace has started to pick up in the last five years. Roughly 10,000 new rental units received building permits in the last five years in greater Boston; about 12 percent of those were considered affordable. Nearly a third of those new units and 70 percent of the affordable ones came through 40B.

**JASON TALERMAN:** I am currently sifting through about 50 40B applications. By and large, they are from small, local developers who want to do four-bedroom single-family houses. One of the first questions many ZBAs [Zoning Board of Appeals] ask is if the developers would consider doing an apartment building. Many of these towns don't need any more four-bedroom houses. But a lot of developers say, "No, I build single-family houses. It's what I want to do. I can probably get \$50,000 to \$100,000 more a piece."

### Rental affordability by metropolitan area:

#### Fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment, 2000

##### BOSTON

\$942

##### PROVIDENCE

\$667

##### BUFFALO

\$510

##### SAN FRANCISCO

\$1,362

#### Percent of income needed to pay fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment, 2000

	Teacher	Janitor
BOSTON	29%	54%
PROVIDENCE	19%	42%
BUFFALO	17%	37%
SAN FRANCISCO	43%	79%

Source:  
"The State of the Nation's Housing, 2002."  
Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University



**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** Currently, there are approximately 70 bills that have been filed in the legislature to fix 40B. What are some of the specific things that are wrong with 40B that have people upset enough to create this momentum for changing the status quo?

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** One that we've already discussed is whether 10 percent is the right target. Another one is how to show progress toward that target. Another one has to do with what income levels are included.

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** Another has to do with the percentage of the units in a 40B project that should be designated as affordable. The early developments were closer to 100-percent affordable, and now it's typically 25 percent. The bills that have been filed generally fall into several categories. One category looks at what counts toward the target. For example, do you count mobile homes?

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** Or jail cells?

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** The second category tries to ease the impact of 40B by limiting the size and pace of the developments. Another gives communities more control over how to get to the 10 percent.

**JASON TALERMAN:** Another category asks what land-use controls the town still gets to employ to make sure these developments are directed at the right chunk of land. It's maintaining a certain level of home-rule and protection of the environment.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** Are we addressing the right questions? It seems that 40B today addresses two extremes of the housing issue. We have affordable housing and we have luxury units at \$2,500 a month. Should diversity of housing product, to use Howard's word, be a goal?

**HOWARD COHEN:** We have a bigger problem, which is simply producing housing. It's not clear to me what the underlying reason is. You would think that if the effects of growth were the problem, then towns that have grown the most would have the worst financial situation. But a study by the University of Massachusetts has shown that growth and financial distress don't correlate. Yet there is this anti-growth sentiment that seems to pervade the discussion. It gets articulated around schools. The towns know they are saying something that is not terribly logical when they say they don't want to educate any more kids. But where are the kids supposed to go?

**JASON TALERMAN:** I disagree 100 percent with that. It's not a matter of not wanting to educate children. In fact, I think you could say the hallmark of all the towns that are run well is how good their school systems are. And they love building schools. What they can't do is build them year after year and have them burst at the seams.

**BONNIE HEUDORFER:** It is worth underscoring again that 40B went from being the vehicle that enabled other housing subsidy programs to work to being the only way of getting any development through. Not all towns are exclusionary, not all zoning is bad. Clearly there are sites that should not be built on at all. But what is different between now and the '80s is that in the '80s there was a surge of development to meet demand. Supply now is way down because development has been constricted across the board.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** One of the ideas that's in vogue these days is that of the "tipping point." It's not that we don't want new housing, but when housing development comes in such big chunks, it throws everything out of equilibrium. We have to build new schools and they have to fit the state specs — which are unbelievably ridiculous — we have to invest in vast new infrastructure, and so on. It is an all-or-nothing thing for many communities. Faced with an all-or-nothing proposition, I think it is understandable — and regrettable — that people push back. Ultimately the answer has to be that we create a system that lets development happen easily in appropriate spaces rather than this battering ram, all-or-nothing approach. I think nothing less than an overhaul of state regulations on housing is going to enable that to happen. One positive step forward would be to give any community that wants to get out from under 40B a challenge to identify where multi-family housing can be built.

**ELIZABETH PADJEN:** Is the conversation now being skewed by the fact that the large developers took such an interest in 40B? Is there a way to target the smaller producers again?

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** It's hard, because the affordable units are being financed by the "unaffordable" market-rate units. The large-scale developers are financing the program, unlike 30 years ago, when it was federal and state dollars. This underscores a fundamental problem with 40B, but a problem that is not 40B's fault. There is a massive misfit of the different actors and the different rules guiding the actors. Towns are overwhelmed. Many of them are

In 2001, nearly 12 million households (34.8 percent) carried a heavy rent burden, defined as spending more than 35 percent of household income on housing.

Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001



## Life After 40B

run by dedicated amateurs who are putting in long hours on their own time without compensation. None of this development fits into the context of any kind of plan; none of this fits into the context of zoning, and of course, it is meant to override zoning. None of this, at any stage of the process, asks or answers the simple question: if we wanted to build  $x$  number units of housing, where would be the most appropriate place to put that? None of this tries to connect the various dots. And that is the fundamental flaw underlying all of this. Alfred came up with a proposal three or so years ago as a thought piece — how can we build housing near transit stations? He came up with a vision which I found very compelling for the Forest Hills section of Boston, which really has lots of capacity for housing and is exactly the right place to do it.

**ALFRED WOJCIECHOWSKI:** The site was a very simple piece of industrial land at a confluence of roadways and park systems, located at the edge of a neighboring community. We did a model based on three- to seven-story buildings, with 1,000 square feet per unit. We came up with 3,000 to 7,000 units of housing, including ground-floor retail and parking above ground. We've talked about AvalonBay doing 4,000 units over the last five years; it could come in and do 4,000 units in Forest Hills.

**CHARLES EUCHNER:** One of the reasons 40B is so frustrating is that it displaces the main issue, which is: where should we build housing? Instead, the question with 40B becomes, where can some people build housing? The point is that if you want to do something about the housing crisis, there are lots of appropriate places to do it — places where you are not building on wetlands, you are not threatening the environment, you are not threatening the character or the integrity of the community, you are not going to overwhelm people with traffic. If we don't build housing, we are going to lose population, we are going to lose businesses, and we are not going to be the economic dynamo that we've been in the last 10 years. There are lots of ways to solve the problem, but somebody has to decide to do it. ■ ■ ■

Between 1973 and 2001 median family income rose at an annual rate of 5.3 percent, while gross rents grew at a rate of 5.7 percent.

Source: American Housing Survey for the United States in 2001

*Dreams to scale...*



*TJX Companies, Inc.  
9/11 Memorial Garden*



**GPI**  
models

a Marino Graphics Inc., Co.

79 Prospect St Somerville MA 02143  
617.628.1900 [www.gpimodels.com](http://www.gpimodels.com)

## MICRODESK. . .

PROVIDING SOUND, HONEST ADVICE  
WITHOUT ALL THE HYPE

- Software Evaluation
- Systems Implementation
- CAD Standards Development
- CAD Management Services
- Onsite, Phone and Web-based Technical Support
- Onsite, Classroom and Web-based Training
- Onsite and Web-based IT Consulting Services
- LAN and WAN Specification and Design
- Network License Management
- Network Migrations and Upgrades



**Microdesk**

autodesk  
authorized reseller

1.800.336.DESK [www.microdesk.com](http://www.microdesk.com)  
Locations in: Waltham, MA Bedford, NH Jersey City, NJ

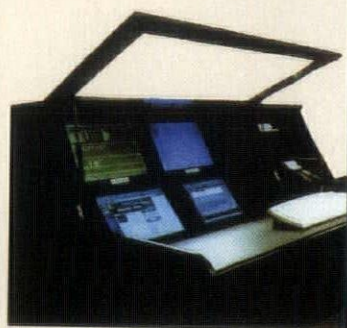


## THE MODULAR ALTERNATIVE TO MILLWORK

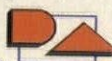
We Design & Furnish:

**MAILROOMS  
COMPUTER ROOMS  
SECURITY STATIONS  
SATELLITE MAIL STOPS  
FORM STORAGE AREAS  
COPY CENTERS**

With Adjustable & Ergonomic  
**HAMILTON SORTER FURNITURE**

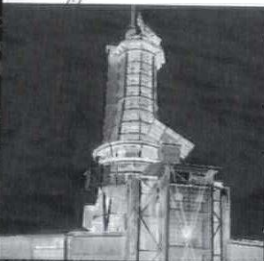
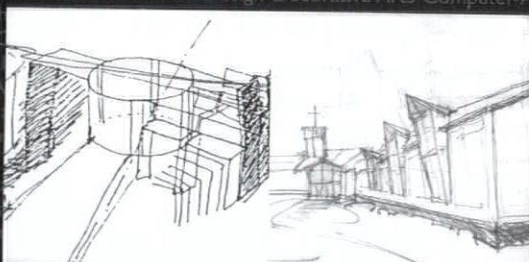


[www.designadvantage.net](http://www.designadvantage.net)



**DESIGN  
ADVANTAGE**  
(617) 364-7719

## From concept to design career



**BOSTON ARCHITECTURAL CENTER**  
320 Newbury Street • Boston MA 02115  
[www.the-bac.edu](http://www.the-bac.edu) • 617-585-0100

## Wheaton College Beard Residence Hall

ESTABLISHED 1981  
**W**  
RICHARD WHITE SONS  
CONSTRUCTION MANAGERS  
GENERAL CONTRACTORS



Architect: Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott

**RICHARD WHITE SONS, INC.**  
70 ROWE STREET, AUBURNDALE, MA 02466 • T 617 332-9500 • [WWW.RWSONS.COM](http://WWW.RWSONS.COM)



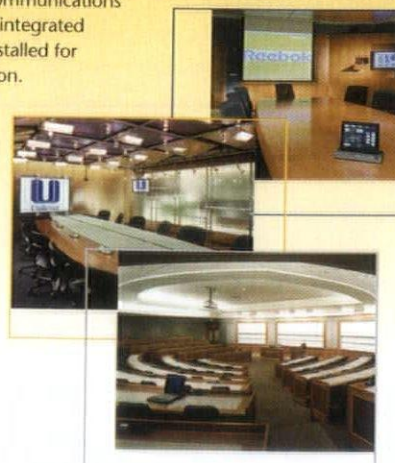
Photos by Bruce Martin

## Harness the Power of Connectivity.

### Your Designs...Our Technical Expertise.

If you're looking to make a statement for your client, the professionals at HB Communications can provide a seamless blend of integrated A/V technology designed and installed for practicality and effortless operation.

- ▶ Boardrooms
- ▶ Conference Rooms
- ▶ Training Rooms
- ▶ Classrooms
- ▶ Auditoriums
- ▶ Houses of Worship
- ▶ Entertainment Display



HB has developed the highest standards for system fabrication in the communications industry.

Visit our web site to view a gallery of our most prestigious installations.

**HB COMMUNICATIONS INC.**

North Haven Connecticut | Waltham Massachusetts  
1.800.243.4414 | [www.hbcommunications.com](http://www.hbcommunications.com)

Dynamic Display | Control Systems | Collaboration Tools



# Class Dismissed

## The unexamined bias

by Ted Landsmark, Assoc AIA, MEdD, JD, PhD

photo: Constantine Manos



**Do architects discriminate** on the basis of class? Recent books by Kathryn Anthony and Melvin Mitchell FAIA question perceived gender, racial and implied class bias in the design profession. In 1970, Urban League president Whitney Young chastised the American Institute of Architects because only 1 percent of America's registered architects were African-American. Anthony, Mitchell, and Young have argued that more diversity would encourage a broader range of clients and provide empathetic professionals as role models for those currently underrepresented.

Today, African Americans are still only 1 percent of registered architects, Hispanics represent 2 percent and Asians 3 percent. Women, who represent about half of our architecture school graduates, still constitute only 11 percent of registered architects; there are fewer than 250 African-American women architects. While there is little legal evidence of overt racism or sexism by design educators and practitioners, the design professions (unlike law and medicine) have shown little demographic change over the past quarter century. Could *class* distinctions play a role in shaping perceptions of who can become an architect?

**"Class"** is an informal, society-wide grouping of people according to political or economic similarities, social status, or shared ways of life. America's class-consciousness has evolved from the Founding Fathers' incorporation of slave ownership into the Constitution, to Marxist descriptions of divisions of labor between underpaid workers and wealthy owners, to 20th-century economic policies that created the perception of a significantly larger "middle class."

Throughout, we have espoused that America is an economically democratic society in which anyone can rise to the top purely by dint of hard work.

Scholars are divided on how permeable our class hierarchy really is. Cornell sociologists David Grusky and Kim Weeden argue that efforts to characterize Americans by income alone

indicate little about individual consumer or cultural patterns. Group similarities tend to be determined more by professions, shared work experiences, or educational training. Paul Kingston, a sociologist at the University of Virginia, similarly argues that similar economic positions "do not significantly share distinct, life-defining experiences," that economic inequalities alone do not denote the existence of classes, and that there is more generational mobility today than 50 years ago. Conversely, Purdue's Robert Perrucci writes that since 1970, a lack of access to key social, credential, income, and investment capital has stagnated American social mobility. Perrucci believes that 80 percent of Americans, most of whom define themselves as "middle-class," actually constitute a new working class lacking real job security and high wages.

Race often conflates with measures of access to social class and professional achievement. Although the black middle class nearly doubled over the past two decades, about 30 percent of blacks, as compared to 8 percent of whites, remain "poor" by government standards. Erik Olin Wright, a sociologist at the University of Wisconsin, argues that discrimination stymies black economic mobility, as does the perception that people of color have different values and behaviors from whites. The permeability of America's class structure is debatable. But the fact that there *is* a class structure (that most Americans believe they are in the middle of) is beyond dispute.

**Architecture provides** sound design ergonomics, pleasing aesthetics, solid engineering, and skillful management without regard to the affluence of our clients. Yet architects have had little success overcoming the perception that we focus primarily on satisfying an upper-class taste for signature buildings. From Frank Lloyd Wright to Frank Gehry, architects are presented as serving upwardly mobile, status-conscious clients, rather than addressing the spatial needs of the poor or middle classes. Design-firm principals are represented more as the Gary Cooper stereotype in *The Fountainhead* (1949) than as Wesley Snipes'





## Could class distinctions play a role in shaping perceptions of who can become an architect?

"2020 Vision," a diversity conference for design professionals, will be held in Boston on November 19-20, 2003. For more information, go to: [www.architects.org/diversity](http://www.architects.org/diversity)

For more information about diversity in the architecture profession, go to: [www.aia.org/diversity](http://www.aia.org/diversity)

architect in *Jungle Fever* (1991) or Matthew Perry's character in *Three to Tango* (1999). Our leading publications largely celebrate architects as erudite males with good breeding, well-mannered appearances, *noblesse oblige*, and quietly assertive demeanors honed in Ivy League universities. Such stereotypes glide confidently among corporate and second-home clients, fluent in aesthetic linguistics that exude northern European design sophistication — successful practitioners apparently have the social acumen and *class* necessary to work comfortably with affluent and influential clients. No one expressed surprise at the homogeneity of the architects selected to submit proposals for rebuilding the World Trade Center — Sam Mockbee and David Adjaye would have been aberrations in this pantheon.

How can we overcome this perceived upper-class homogeneity? First, there is no evidence that women, minorities, and people from working-class backgrounds do not want to be architects. Yet most of our design schools are startlingly complacent in their efforts to diversify their faculties and student bodies. Architects entering the profession often knew an architect when they were young. Yet few middle-class or poor Americans have any concrete idea of what a practicing architect contributes to civic betterment. Better outreach and cultural training by our schools would result in a more diverse range of work performed by a more diverse range of designers.

Second, better management of our internships — to nurture minorities, women, and others under-represented by class — could also draw more diverse practitioners. Internships provide advanced design and construction management training, but

also winnow out minority and women architects who are unable or unwilling to accommodate their personal styles to those of firm principals. Some aspiring architects believe they are being steered toward the professional fringes of design during their internships. Carefully mentored internships could support the achievement of professional goals and assist in developing networking skills, such as those provided in the Boston Society of Architects' young professionals programs.

Third, architects are grossly underpaid based on their levels of knowledge and the responsibilities they carry, despite being thought of as well-compensated, upper-class voices for design excellence and aesthetic discernment. Architects are themselves likely to identify culturally with the upper class. In our awards and publications, we perpetuate myths that architects belong to an elite social class that exhibits the presumed discernment and values necessary to survive in competitive private-practice environments. We could usefully examine our schools, firms, and forums and ask who we really are and whom we really serve. We might conclude that a more diverse profession focused on the needs of the majority of Americans would result in real diversity — of aesthetics, skills, and markets.

We may be uncomfortable confronting allegations of racial or gender discrimination, but perhaps classism does play a role in reducing our professional diversity. As our market share shrinks in a global economy, now may be the time to address how our maintenance of social distinctions bars us from talent and markets that are more diverse than we are — and very much in need of our services.



### Bibliography:

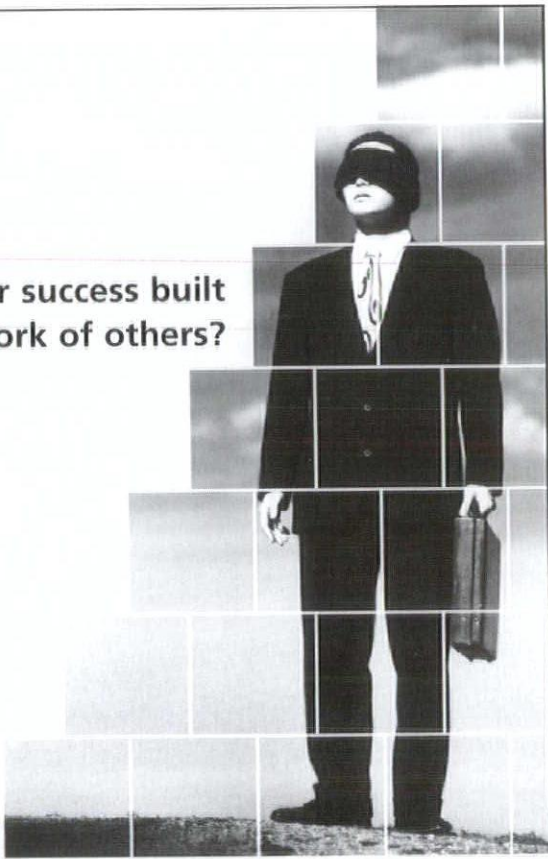
Kathryn H. Anthony  
*Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession*  
University of Illinois Press, 2001

Kevin Phillips  
*Wealth and Democracy: Political History of the American Rich*  
Broadway Books, 2003

Melvin L. Mitchell FAIA  
*The Crisis of the African-American Architect: Conflicting Cultures of Architecture and (Black) Power*  
Writers Advantage, 2003

Ted Landsmark, Assoc. AIA, MEvD, JD, PhD, is a graduate of Yale University and is president of the Boston Architectural Center, New England's largest accredited architecture and interior design college. He is chair of the AIA Diversity Committee.





Is your success built  
on the work of others?

**You didn't become a successful  
architect by wearing a blindfold.**

You stood up for your vision, and you realized it with cutting-edge software.

You want others to respect your creativity.

Software developers deserve the same respect.

Stand up for them. Fight software piracy.

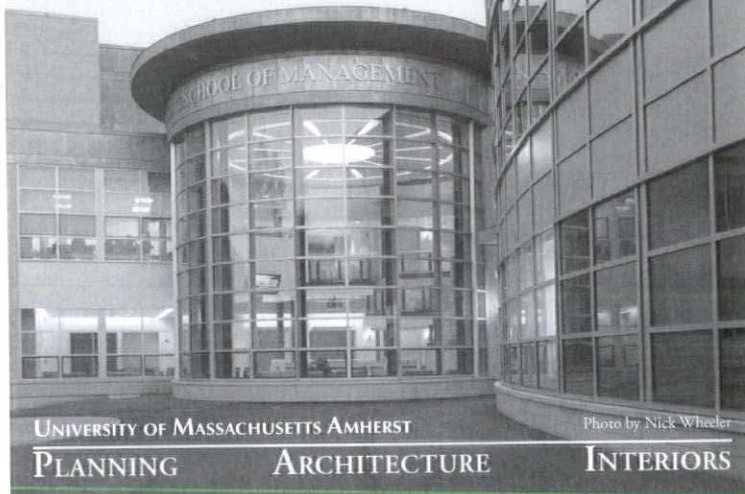
Report software theft. Learn about proper software management.

Visit [www.bsaarchitect.com](http://www.bsaarchitect.com)



ARC

ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge Inc  
140 Mount Auburn Street Cambridge MA 02138  
T 617 547 2200 [www.arcusa.com](http://www.arcusa.com)



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

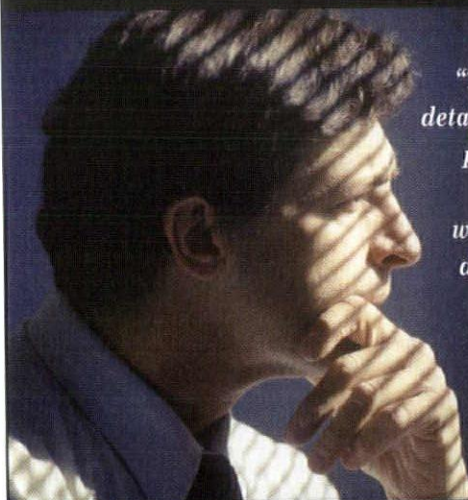
Photo by Nick Wheeler

PLANNING

ARCHITECTURE

INTERIORS

**ONCE IN A WHILE, WE'RE ACTUALLY  
GRATEFUL FOR LIP SERVICE.**



*"The attention shown to  
details, the quality of work  
performed, prompt and  
thorough service, all  
while staying on budget,  
demonstrated Vantage's  
commitment to being  
the best in its field."*

— Roger Campbell  
Director of Manufacturing  
for Temptronics Corporation

It's difficult for a new company to believably  
cite 15 years of experience. It's much easier  
to build a credible argument for core  
competency through the words of a  
satisfied customer.

For more information call John Connor  
at 508-651-3183, or visit our website,  
[www.vantagebuildersinc.com](http://www.vantagebuildersinc.com).

**VANTAGE**  
**BUILDERS, INC.**  
COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

89 Washington Ave., Suite K  
Natick, Massachusetts 01760



## THE STORY OF A KITCHEN INSPIRED BY A YACHT.



Not long ago, a couple walked into the Water & Fire Design Center and told us they had a vision – and they wanted us to make it a reality.

In loving detail, they described a stunning 56-foot yacht – the kind that immediately grabs your attention. Stately, classic, majestic, as its highly polished teak decks and brass finishings glisten in the sun. Every day, after exploring yet another idyllic deserted Caribbean island, they would find themselves below deck, basking in the luminous glow and comfort of the yacht's hand-polished, high-gloss mahogany interior.

Wouldn't it be nice, they thought, if they could take this beauty home with them? But, because a 56-foot yacht takes up slightly more living space than most people have, they did the next best thing: They turned to Water & Fire and worked with our design team to develop detailed drawings and renderings of the kitchen they had envisioned. Today, the inviting space, with its hand-polished, custom-made quartered mahogany cabinets,



*Shingle style house in Manchester By-the-Sea, Massachusetts*

is a faithful remembrance of that glorious Caribbean adventure.

Needless to say, a Water & Fire kitchen isn't the kind you pick out of a catalog or find at a typical showroom. There are no limits at Water & Fire. Our highly skilled and talented design staff makes sure you get what your heart desires. No matter what the inspiration – even if it's a 56-foot yacht glistening in the Caribbean sun – we help you realize your dreams.



**WATER & FIRE**

Inspired European Kitchens and Baths



# Takin' It to the Streets

## The Geography of

by Max Page

**Back in the '70s**, the Doobie Brothers offered up a ballad of despair, announcing that soon the poor would be "takin' it to the streets." Lucky for the Doobies: they didn't have to write lyrics about takin' it to private roads, gated communities, and that ubiquitous, radio-free downtown — the shopping mall.

Almost a decade before the Doobies were celebrating the liberating power of the streets, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall issued a warning about the dangers to public life posed by the growing number of private shopping malls in America, where free speech was exercised at the whim of the owners. "The shopping center," he wrote in a 1968 opinion, "is clearly the functional equivalent of the business district" where protests had traditionally taken place. In a series of cases before the Court, in which various groups claimed the right to leaflet, march, and protest in shopping malls, he argued passionately, although largely unsuccessfully, that free speech must be guaranteed even if it means stepping on the toes of private owners. Most of his colleagues disagreed and today, in the vast majority of the "business districts" of the United States — that is, shopping malls — there is no right to free speech.

Marshall argued so passionately in the so-called "mall cases" of the late 1960s and 1970s because he understood that the very character of speech in public places has a power all its own and must be protected and even cultivated. The face-to-face meeting of citizens promotes solidarity among participants and respect (however begrudging) from the audience, who can witness the dedication of the participants to their ideas. Radical ideas often require radical methods of gaining attention. The public forum is the only setting where a group can gain attention to minority ideas by disrupting the normal routine of city life. The success of the civil-rights movement was due in part to masterful use of public forums, through marches, sit-ins, and other acts of civil disobedience. "All in all," legal scholar Thomas Emerson observed, "the public assembly has a dynamic quality achieved by no other form of communication." (Emerson called television, radio, and journalism "middle-class" forms of communication.) In an era of sound-bites, handlers, and spin-doctors, public protest can provoke invigorating debate.

Without public protest, we are faced with a future in which social hierarchies will find fewer and fewer challengers.

Marshall was prophetic. There are some 45,000 shopping malls today, 10 times the number there were in 1968. There are now thousands of private gated communities housing some 30 million Americans that offer no rights of public protest or free speech at all. With the ascendancy of television and now the Internet, the communication of ideas in our society through face-to-face encounters in the public spaces of cities seems increasingly like a quaint remainder of an earlier time.

The Court always assumed that there would be enough public places where even the most disempowered could have their words heard. The only problem would be the clashing of multiple state interests — the right to free speech versus the rights of private property owners.

The irony of the mall cases is that the Court majority were the only participants in the cases who did not see the malls as public forums. Certainly citizens recognize malls as the "downtowns" of their suburbs. And mall owners cultivate the notion that they are building the "new" downtowns and community centers because they know that notion brings in customers. Indeed, malls are often expressly designed to recreate the physical appearance of the downtowns that suburban residents left behind. Malls also promote activities — such as football rallies, legislative candidate speeches, community meetings, senior walks — that bolster their claim to be the new downtowns, and thus endear themselves to their shoppers. Malls have been willing beneficiaries of their role as public forums; they just refuse to assume all of the obligations.

But increasingly, even our cities and towns are shedding these obligations and responsibilities. "Traditional" public forums — parks, streets, and sidewalks — are virtually disappearing from suburban communities. Take, for example, Bedminster, a typical suburban community in New Jersey, which has no public parks for recreation or gathering because its three-acre-lot zoning regulations makes those spaces seem "redundant." And in our



photo: Devin Asch

# Public Protest



big cities, the sidewalks, city-hall steps, plazas, and public parks that have traditionally been used for protest have been transformed from relatively unpoliced public places to carefully watched districts. Jeremy Bentham's 1787 Panopticon — an influential vision of a prison where inmates could be watched in their every movement — is no longer influencing institutional design. But the electronic panopticon is under construction in buildings and cities across America.

September 11 has only sped along changes that have been taking place for two decades. We can expect in the coming years that defensible design will be a growth industry. The most important public spaces of our cities will be recorded and restricted with ever greater vigilance. Access will be curtailed (as happened to the symbolically powerfully front steps of New York's City Hall under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani). Police barricades to "protect" objects of protest — such as during the anti-war protests at the United Nations in February of this year — will become more common.

Given the continued growth of suburbs and the increasing privatization of formerly public functions, is it not possible that there may be a time when the United States is dotted with cities where the ideal of free speech will remain a hollow principle? We are creating a perplexing paradox: at one time, public forums existed without completely free speech. Now we are now faced with the opposite problem: we can say anything, but there is nowhere to speak.

This might be our future. But there is much evidence flowing against Marshall's prediction of the inevitable decline of traditional places of protest in cities and the inexorable rise and dominance of the "functional equivalents" of town centers in the suburbs. Despite threats by governments all too eager to limit raucous dissent, public protests in our cities have had a renaissance and are becoming increasingly important to contemporary political debate. Despite regular predictions of the imminent destruction of public life in cities due to the growing dominance of the computer, many

of our most volatile political issues are being aired in public spaces. We need only think of the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in 1999, parades concerning the fate of Elian Gonzalez in Miami, demonstrations in New York against police brutality, and the massive anti-war protests in Washington, New York City, and dozens of cities across the country this past year. The news of the death of public protest in the city, it turns out, has been exaggerated.

In fact, despite the suburbanization and "wiring" of American life, despite e-mail petitions and the proliferation of political Web sites — those impersonal and mediated exchanges of ideas across the information highway — public protest in urban places has surged back to become a significant factor in the political life of the nation. Indeed, the very explosion of the Internet and increasingly private ways of being political have provoked a healthy backlash, a return to loud and confrontational public protest. As it turns out, you can flame your legislator online, but it doesn't yield the same satisfaction — or political effect — as a little face-to-face yelling.

But the renaissance is precarious. If the encroachment on the free use of public space continues, and courts refuse to turn back restrictive laws on public assembly, the decline that Thurgood Marshall foresaw might yet become reality.

E.B. White, who got most things right, once said of New York that "it offered the gift of privacy." But truly, our great cities first and foremost offer the gift of crowds. Crowds can be chaotic, but sometimes they walk in the same direction and for the same purpose, finding political strength in public protest on public streets. ■ ■ ■

Max Page is an assistant professor of architecture and history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He is the author of *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), winner of the 2001 Spiro Kostof Award of the Society of Architectural Historians. He is also co-editor of *Building the Nation: Americans Write about Their Architecture, Their Cities, and Their Environment, 1789 to the Present* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).



# NAC

North Atlantic Corp.

North Atlantic Corp.'s  
Architectural Services Group offers:

- Cad Support
- CNC Technology
- Products on CD Rom
- Box Lunch Presentations
- AIA/CEU's

We service Lumberyards  
through Namco...

and Builders through  
Horner Millwork....



www.namco1.com



www.hornermillwork.com



Cooper  
stairworks

Custom  
windows & doors

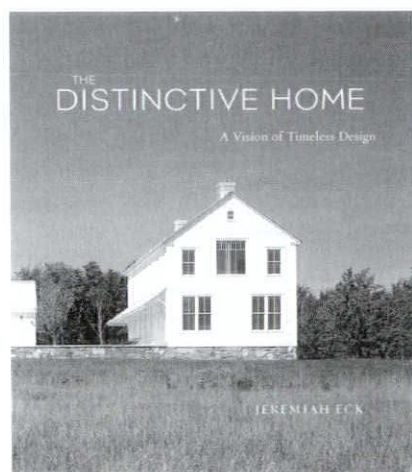
www.northatlanticcorp.com

new england • florida • georgia

windows • doors • kitchens • stairs

508-235-4265

## "The best book on domestic design since Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language*."



**The Distinctive Home:  
A Vision of Timeless Design**

By Jeremiah Eck

ISBN: 1-56158-528-9

\$40.00 hardcover.

WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI, AUTHOR OF *THE PERFECT HOUSE* AND *THE LOOK OF ARCHITECTURE*

"Jeremiah Eck is a gifted architect who has thought long and fruitfully about how people today really use their houses and about how a house may best be fitted to the land, the view, the sun, and the neighbors, while retaining the enduring qualities that make a house a home."

ROBERT CAMPBELL, PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING ARCHITECTURAL CRITIC, *BOSTON GLOBE*

Passionate advocate for better designed homes, Jeremiah Eck, FAIA, presents a fresh, personal look at 50 distinctive homes in this collaborative publishing debut of the AIA and The Taunton Press.

Eck deftly explores character and presence, comfort and convenience in the sensuous and spiritual context that makes a house satisfying.

**BSA**

Order online at [www.architects.org](http://www.architects.org)  
and click on "BSA Store"



# ASPHALT DRIVEWAYS & PARKING LOTS



• LANDSCAPES •

DESIGN • CONSTRUCTION • MAINTENANCE • IRRIGATION

Specialized in all types of:

- Masonry
- Imported European Stones
- European and Irish Style Gardens
- Lawn Sprinkles
- Site Development — Excavation
- Spring and Fall Clean Up



1-866-60 MASON (62766)

617-828-2733



508-958-2733

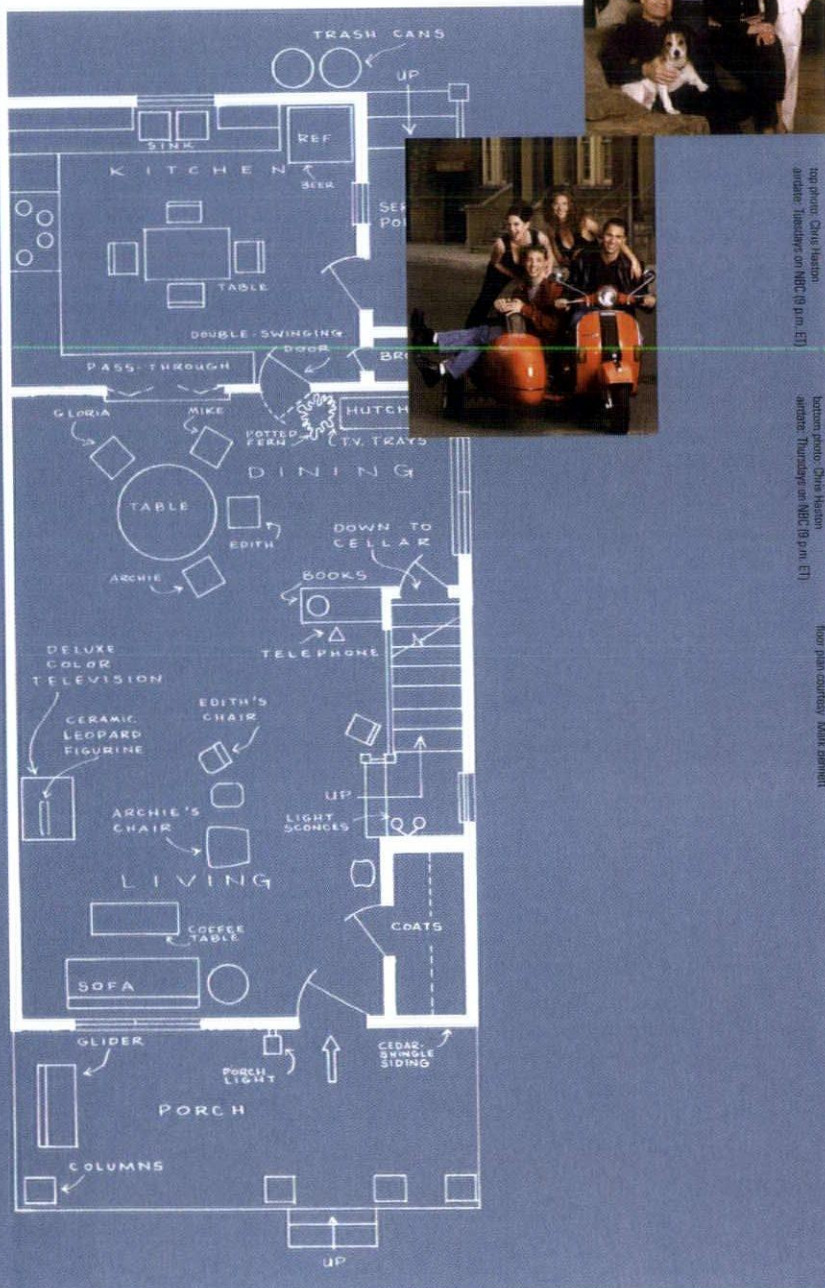
w w w . m a s o n w o r k s . n e t



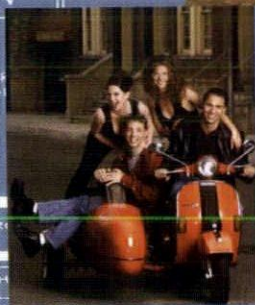
# As Seen On TV

## Television and the design of class distinctions

By Robert David Sullivan



top photo: Chris Hanson  
architect: Twinkl on NBC (8 p.m. ET)



bottom photo: Chris Hanson  
architect: Twinkl on NBC (8 p.m. ET)

floor plan courtesy: Mark Bennett

On television sitcoms, the rich have nothing to hide. They don't need shades on their windows or walls around their kitchens. Leave it to the lower classes to worry about privacy. It makes sense when you think about it. After all, we know from all those British dramas on PBS that the rich have a tradition of servants wandering in and out of their lives.

Television gives us cues about how to cultivate an appearance of success — most overtly in commercials, but also in the sitcoms we watch weekly (or nightly, thanks to reruns). Many of us are more familiar with the dwellings of TV characters than those of our neighbors, and it's tempting to see *Friends* or *Frasier* as a standard for the good life.

There are occasional views of working-class households. During the 1970s, *All in the Family*'s Archie Bunker railed at "pinkos" and minorities from his tattered brown armchair, which was next to a table just large enough to hold an ashtray and a can of beer. But the living-room sets on most current sitcoms are centered around couches — large enough for romantic partners, obnoxious friends, and the occasional guest star involved in some 30-minute misunderstanding. Think of the Bunker furnishings, which *All in the Family* creator Norman Lear deliberately limited to sepia tones, and you think of life's similarly limited possibilities. Now think of the set on a current popular sitcom, *Will & Grace*, which includes a chrome refrigerator, a glass-topped coffee table, and — front and center — a sleek gray couch with bright pillows. Gay attorney Will Truman's apartment is not the home of someone with income problems, and it doesn't suggest someone pining for the morals of the pre-hippie era.

The title character of another long-running sitcom, *Frasier*, is a psychiatrist and condo owner who loves his view of the Seattle skyline and his "eclectic" furnishings. ("This sofa is an exact replica of the one Coco Chanel had in her Paris atelier," he brags.) In the first episode, his father, a retired cop, moves in and brings along a recliner with gaudily striped upholstery. Dad points out that the Barcalounger makes the decor even more eclectic, but Frasier is appalled by any change in his carefully ordered home. Frasier allows the chair to stay, but then he *has* to for the viewer's benefit: It's a reminder of one of the show's main themes, the tension between upper-income and working-class mindsets.

*Frasier*'s mild satire of class values is unusual among contemporary sitcoms, most of which dazzle us with bright, airy apartments and expensive furniture. *Friends* is more typical of the genre. When the series began in 1994, most of the action took place on two sets: a large



Manhattan apartment inhabited by Monica and Rachel, two young women with low-paying jobs but apparently large bank accounts, and a smaller apartment across the hall inhabited by bachelors Joey and Chandler and dominated by two brown recliners. Eventually, Chandler married Monica and moved his recliner across the hall, but to Monica's relief, it broke a few episodes later. The upward economic mobility of the couple — Monica was now an acclaimed chef — was symbolized by the triumph of the couch. (Not surprisingly, the Barcalounger company seems a little defensive these days. Its Web site claims: "The reclining chair business isn't what it used to be. It isn't Archie Bunker" — even though Archie's chair was not a recliner at all, let alone a Barcalounger.)

Monica's apartment on *Friends*, like Will's on *Will & Grace*, combines the living, dining, and kitchen areas. There doesn't appear to be much closet space, but the characters don't mind putting their possessions on display. An obvious influence on the set designs is the 1990s hit *Seinfeld*, in which the title character stored his extensive collection of cereal boxes in kitchen cabinets with glass doors. *Friends* goes even further: Monica has no kitchen cabinets at all, just shelves that put all of her possessions on view. It's as if she lives in the showroom of a Pottery Barn.

Are such apartments becoming more common in real life? About a year ago, looking for a new apartment in Boston, I noticed that almost all of the recently renovated units lacked walls between the kitchen and living room. (One management company confirmed that walls were coming down throughout its properties.) Perhaps it was my time watching *Friends* that made these apartments seem so appealing — and made me forget the cleaning demands associated with having the stove in the same room as a sofa.

I don't want to suggest any conspiracy here. Hollywood isn't necessarily trying to persuade us that loft-style apartments are more fashionable — and *sexier* — than suburban houses. It's simply easier to choreograph farcical situations when characters can open unlocked apartment doors and see things they shouldn't see. The comedy-drama *Ally McBeal* took this rule to an extreme: The title character, a Boston attorney, worked in an office with a unisex bathroom — ridiculously large and full of gleaming chrome — that helped along all kinds of sexual liaisons.

Sitcoms with financially strapped characters seem to follow a different model. *The King of Queens* and *The Drew Carey Show* feature separate kitchens, traditional cabinets, curtained windows, and relatively colorless furniture. There are also striking differences between

the two main sets on *Everybody Loves Raymond*, set in a Long Island suburb. A successful sportswriter with a wife and three kids, Raymond has a house similar in size to that of his parents, but only Raymond has glass kitchen cabinets, and he doesn't have a door between the kitchen and living room. The walls in the older couple's house represent secrecy and shame, while the more open atmosphere in Raymond's home represents his (only partly successful) attempt to transcend his parents' puritanical attitudes.

If TV sitcoms represent our daydreams (fun friends, comfy couches, no-strings sex), TV dramas are more likely to represent our nightmares (dead bodies, contagious diseases, flings that turn into remakes of *Fatal Attraction*). So it's telling that a violent mobster drama, *The Sopranos*, is one of the few shows to feature the fastest-growing type of housing in America. It's also one of the few dramas that include frequent scenes in the main character's home. That home is a McMansion in New Jersey with all the conveniences of modern living, including an entertainment area with a big-screen TV. There's also a long winding driveway that helps to hide the house from the street. The first episode of each season opens with Tony Soprano treading his way down that driveway in his bathrobe to get the newspaper, warily wondering what he'll encounter in the outside world that day. Tony's castle-on-a-hill suggests paranoia and suspicion, a mood that is obviously strengthened by his penchant for killing people with his bare hands. While few viewers can identify with Tony Soprano in terms of his line of work, part of the show's appeal may be in the way it conveys the limitations of suburban life. There are anecdotal reports of young professionals moving back into large cities and trying to create a safe but exciting neighborhood like the one seen on *Friends*, but census figures show that the world of *The Sopranos* is growing much faster.

Unfortunately, those who turn on the tube for tips on decorating for success may soon need to find new inspiration. TV sitcoms have been a bit less popular recently, crowded out in the ratings by "reality" game shows such as *Joe Millionaire*, which equate success with ruthlessness and deception, as well as gruesome murder mysteries such as *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. A few years ago, I might have decried the banality of sitcoms and their glamorized depictions of city life. They're no more authentic today, but now I see them as the most civilized programs on television. ■ ■ ■

Robert David Sullivan is an associate editor of *CommonWealth* magazine ([www.massinc.org](http://www.massinc.org)). He is a former television critic for *The Boston Phoenix*.

Facing page:

Background:  
*All in the Family*  
set floor plan

Top:  
cast photo,  
*Frasier*

Bottom:  
cast photo,  
*Will & Grace*



# Bill Owens: Suburbia

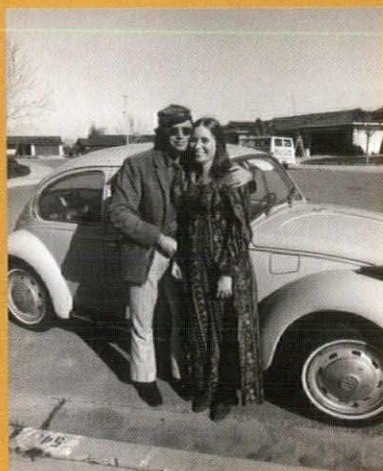
by Elizabeth Padjen FAIA

In the late 1960s, photographer Bill Owens became intrigued with the growth of the suburbs and, more significantly, with the people who lived in them. The result of this fascination was *Suburbia*, the 1973 book that quickly became a cult classic.

Recently re-released ("New & Improved"), *Suburbia* has by now acquired the stature and gravitas of authentic cultural history. But its focus on people is what makes it still compelling, at once comic and poignant. It's fun to smile at the big hair and big cars. It's fun to recognize the goofy clothes, just now coming back into style. It's fun to peek at the mirrored ceilings and hot tubs of a generation that imagined it was reinventing sex.

But there's poignancy, too, in the dreams of an expanding middle class that Owens managed to capture with an appealing combination of ironic distance and empathetic engagement. People struggle to pay bills, worry about their kids, try to contribute to their community. They take pride in their houses, in well-tended lawns, in family dinners. They anguish over divorce, gender roles, alienated kids, war.

In short, strip away the period accoutrements, and *Suburbia* inadvertently offers a reflection of today's suburban middle class — the mirrored ceiling of a generation that imagines it's reinventing life in the suburbs.



**Bill and Janet Owens, 1970**

A former newspaper photographer, Bill Owens first published *Suburbia* in 1973, followed by *Working*, and *Our Kind of People*. The recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1976, he later founded and operated a brew pub in Hayward, California. Today he is the publisher of *American Brewer Magazine* and is working on a new book, *Leisure, Americans at Play*. His Web site is: [www.billowens.com](http://www.billowens.com)

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.



The best way to help your city government and have fun is to come out on a Saturday morning and pull weeds in a median strip.



People throw away a lot of good things: clothes, toys, broken toasters, record players, and in the newer areas they throw out tables and chairs that don't fit in their new house. The ecology movement doesn't matter.

I make over \$250 in Coke bottles. People here can't realize there are poor people in the world. They can't think about the needs of other people.

All photos on pages 26-29,  
© Bill Owens, 1973 and 1999

Reproduced with permission  
from *Suburbia* by Bill Owens  
Fotofolio, 1999



I believe organized sports make better citizens of children. I have four boys and they all play baseball and soccer.

They learn to cooperate with others... and that winning isn't always the most important thing to do.

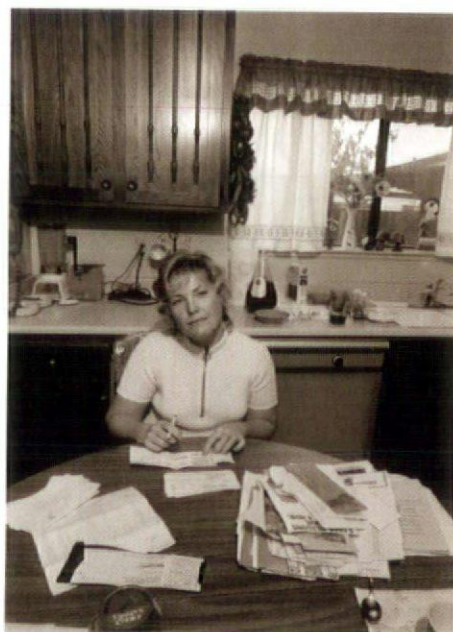
My husband, Pat, has a theory about watering our newly seeded lawn.

The water has to trinkle from heaven and fall like tender rain drops...otherwise the lawn won't grow properly.

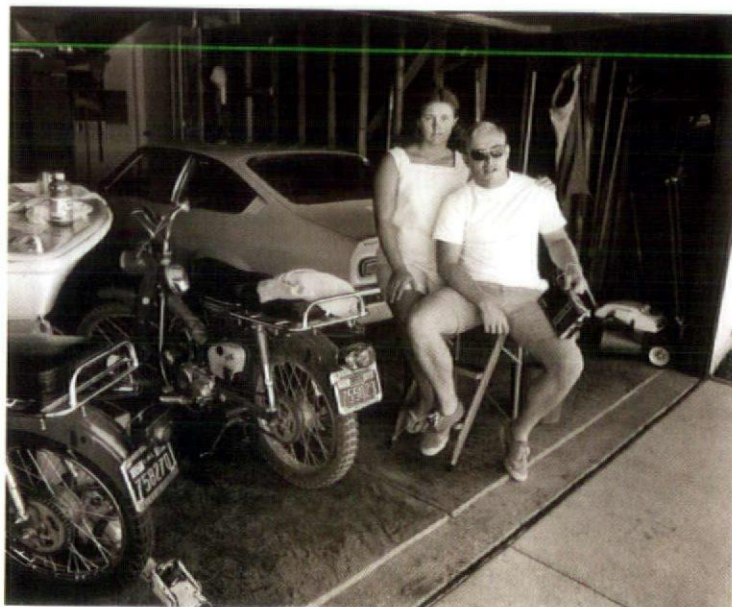


# Bill Owens' Suburbia

If Bank of America knew the truth...



I find a sense of freedom in the suburbs... You assume the mask of suburbia for outward appearances and yet no one knows what you really do.



We enjoy having these things.



This isn't what we really want — the tract house, the super car, etc.... But as long as we are wound up in this high-speed environment, we will probably never get out of it!

We don't need the super car to be happy; we really want a small place in the country where you can breathe the air.



We've been married two months and everything we own is in this room.



The furniture is worn out. Don and Tom have grown up and soon will leave for college. Pat will have to cook for two.



There is nothing to do in Suburbia.



# Walls Really Can Talk. This One Speaks 15th Century French.



You'd think so by looking at it. That's because Weathered™ Mosaic® Retaining Walls look like natural, hand-hewn stone. Something you'd see by an old English cottage. Or firmly rooted in the French countryside. *Oui, monsieur.* For more information, call the 800 number or visit our web site.

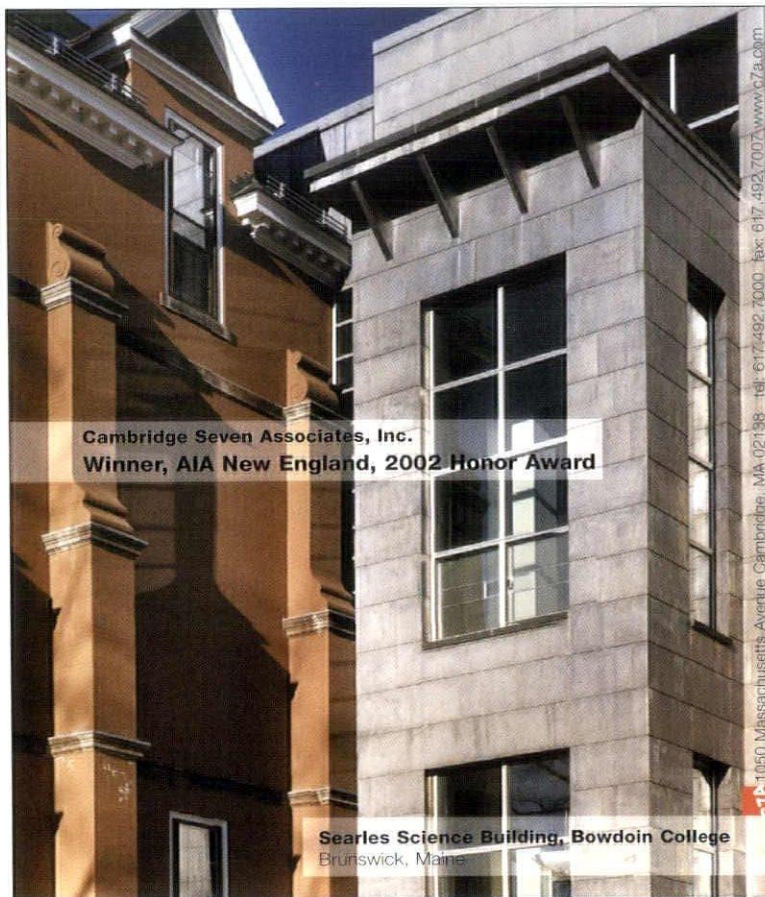


Weathered™ Mosaic®

**VERSA-LOK®**  
Retaining Wall Systems  
*Solid Solutions.™*

1-800-770-4525  
[www.versa-lok.com](http://www.versa-lok.com)

© 2003 VERSA-LOK and Mosaic are registered trademarks of Kille Corp.

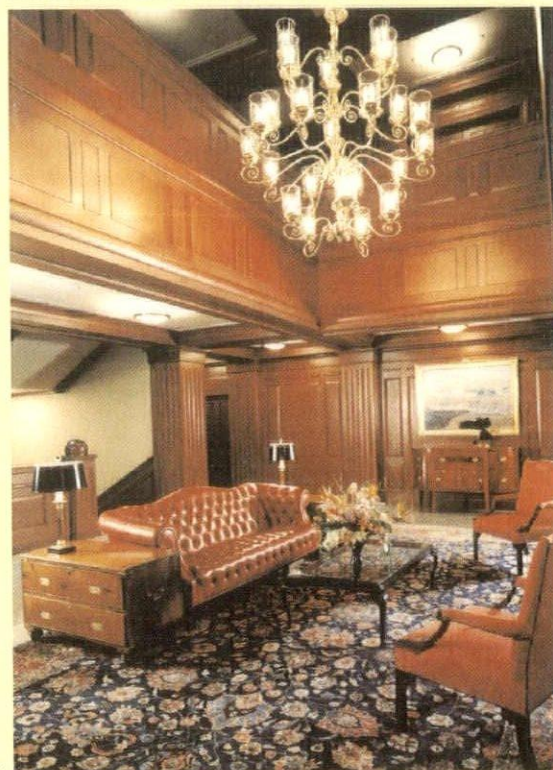


Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc.  
Winner, AIA New England, 2002 Honor Award

Searles Science Building, Bowdoin College  
Brunswick, Maine

11-1050 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge, MA 02138 tel: 617.492.7000 fax: 617.492.7007 [www.c7a.com](http://www.c7a.com)

visit us on the web at [www.erland.com](http://www.erland.com)



**Erland**

Building Solutions Through Commitment and Teamwork

83 Second Avenue | Burlington, Massachusetts 01803 | t:781.272.9440 | e:[dprince@erland.com](mailto:dprince@erland.com)



**Whether you're a corporate mogul** or a struggling wage-earner, if you've built or bought a new house recently, chances are that you have more in common with your counterpart at the other end of the economic spectrum than you realize. The occurrence of moisture-caused problems in New England's energy-efficient wood-frame houses has skyrocketed over the past 20 years. Owners complain of window condensation and mold indoors; of mildew and peeling of exterior coatings; and of rot in windows, doors, trim, siding, sheathing, and framing — all within a few years of construction. Water passes in and out of all wood-frame houses according to immutable laws of physics. It shows no deference to the occupants' social standing and makes no accommodation for selling price or aesthetics, as the residents of condos and custom McMansions alike can attest.

### Tighter walls, colder walls

Historically, and perhaps unwittingly, the architects, builders, and occupants of New England's wood-frame houses relied upon natural leakage of air as a means of controlling indoor relative humidity and keeping walls dry and relatively problem-free. The rapid evolution of building materials and construction practices in the 20th century, however, occasioned the creation of houses whose walls became progressively tighter and colder.

The 1920s brought the addition of insulation, and the 1940s and '50s brought the switch from lath-and-plaster to gypsum board and from lumber sheathing to plywood — all reducing the passage of air and heat through walls. The introduction in the 1960s and later of low-draft furnaces and power-vented, sealed heating appliances killed the active chimney which formerly expelled large volumes of moisture-laden indoor air and caused drier outdoor air to be drawn inside. Innovations such as vapor retarders, air-infiltration barriers, caulks, and gaskets in the 1970s and '80s produced further tightening. The upshot is that the walls of New England's older houses — those built before the energy crisis of the 1970s — tend to be leakier, warmer, and more forgiving of getting wet, while those of newer houses tend to be tighter, colder, and less forgiving.

### Water from within

The benefit of tight walls is a marked increase in energy-efficiency and occupant comfort. The downside is a reduced rate of natural ventilation. An older house often has 3 to 5 or more air changes per hour; a newer house might have only 0.5 to 1. As a result, water vapor generated by occupants' activities and released from other interior sources lingers longer indoors and is carried into walls, floors, ceilings, attics, basements, and crawl spaces on convection currents of air flowing through joints and penetrations. When warm, moist air entering into these spaces is cooled below the dew point, the excess moisture is deposited as condensation on framing, sheathing, and other cold surfaces, creating conditions favorable to mold and wood-rotting fungi. Ditto for water vapor diffusing into these spaces.

In New England, condensation inside houses can occur during both the heating and cooling seasons. Condensation on windows and within walls, floors, ceilings, and attics happens mostly during the heating season, and usually because of excessively high indoor relative humidity (above about 40 percent). In summer, water vapor held in hot, humid outdoor air entering basements and crawl spaces, especially those under air-conditioned houses, can condense on framing and subflooring, creating conditions irresistible to fungi.

Condensation-caused problems are kept in check by lowering indoor relative humidity by: minimizing moisture sources; sealing air leakage paths; placing vapor retarders on the inboard side of walls, ceilings, and floors; venting clothes dryers, heating appliances, and kitchen and bath exhaust fans directly outside; and by providing the needed ceiling insulation and roof and attic ventilation. The treat-the-symptoms-only approach of dehumidification is a last resort.

### Water from without

Siding, trim, windows, doors, and other exterior wood products are routinely exposed to dew, rain, and melt water. Because their faces are typically finished with a film-forming coating such as paint or a solid-color stain that repels liquid water, the underlying wood is generally wetted only superficially. However, liquid water can be driven by wind or drawn by capillary suction into uncoated wood inside joints and overlaps to wet products internally from the ends or back. Because water

photos: courtesy Stephen Smulski



**The buyers of these New Hampshire condominiums were stunned to find mold (below) growing inside the firewalls between units only two months after moving in. Delay in closing-in the roof is to blame.**





## The Great Equalizer



**Chronic peeling paint on this Massachusetts Colonial signals a hidden moisture problem. Lack of back- and end-priming on cedar siding allowed rain to be drawn into the overlap between courses by capillary suction. Water vapor from the siding passed through the housewrap and wetted the sheathing.**



For more information:

Energy & Environmental  
Building Association  
[www.eeba.org](http://www.eeba.org)

Northeast Sustainable  
Energy Association  
[www.nesea.org](http://www.nesea.org)

National Association  
of Home Builders  
[www.nahb.com](http://www.nahb.com)

*Moisture Control Handbook*  
by Joseph Lstiburek  
and John Carmody  
(Van Nostrand Reinhold,  
1993)

enters wood as a liquid, but exits as vapor, exterior wood products get wet much faster than they dry. Exterior wood products on energy-efficient houses take even longer to dry because of the reduced airflow through tight walls and their generally lower temperature.

Paint and solid-color stains on the face of exterior wood retard the escape of water vapor into the air. Housewrap and sheathing behind exterior wood slows its movement inward, while the vapor retarder deeper in the wall essentially stops it altogether. Rather than drying out exterior wood completely, heat from the sun drives some of the water to the back of the product. The sun can propel water vapor through the housewrap, where it is absorbed by sheathing and transferred to framing. Through repeated wettings, enough water eventually accumulates in exterior wood to raise its moisture content to the point at which the coating mildews, stains, blisters, and peels, or the wood rots. Sheathing and framing behind exterior wood can temporarily store only so much water before they, too, become susceptible to mold and rot.

Precipitation-caused problems are avoided by installing siding according to the rain-screen principle. This involves creating a vented air space between the housewrap and siding into which water driven by the sun to the back of the siding can harmlessly evaporate. The gap is formed with furring strips or a three-dimensional plastic mesh. This same principle is employed for wooden shakes and shingles.

The recent prevalence of questionable architectural trends such as the narrowing of eaves and a reluctance to use gutters has left many houses vulnerable to precipitation-caused problems. Devolution of the roofed porch into the open deck and the popularity of complicated roofs with multiple intersecting planes, valleys, and dormers, for instance, promote the wetting of walls by splashing.

Design features that promote water-shedding include steep roof pitches, flashing at roof/wall intersections and in valleys, chimney crickets, wide eaves, door and window flashings with drip edges, and beveled horizontal trim. The ends and backs of siding, trim, windows, and other exterior wood products should be finished with a water repellent or primer. Gutters prevent water running off a roof

from cascading down walls and minimize the amount of water that splashes back onto walls from a lower roof, deck, or the ground.

### Water from below

Soil surrounding a house's foundation and floor slab always contains water. Liquid water seeps into basements and crawl spaces through shrinkage and settlement cracks, joints, and penetrations in foundation walls and floors. It is pulled by capillary suction through the micropores inside concrete and masonry. Water vapor in soil diffuses inward. Once inside a basement or crawl space, water raises the ambient relative humidity, which in turn, can elevate the moisture content of framing and subflooring to mold-susceptible levels.

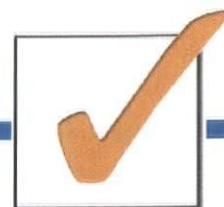
Liquid water is kept out of basements and crawl spaces by installing perimeter drains, sealing cracks and penetrations, applying waterproofing to the exterior of walls, backfilling with free-draining soil, grading soil so that it slopes away from the foundation, and by mounting gutters along eaves. Control of capillarity and diffusion involves applying dampproofing to the exterior of walls and installing a vapor retarder under the floor slab or over exposed soil in a crawl space. Rising damp — capillary migration of water from the soil through the footing into the base of a wall — is mitigated by placing polyethylene over the footing before walls are built.

**The consequences** of moisture problems range from mild inconvenience to — in cases of significant structural damage or severe health reactions to molds — personal catastrophe. The rush to new building products and practices — and in some cases, simply the rush to build — have created a range of problematic conditions, some well-intentioned, others due to simple shoddiness. A house still represents the largest single investment for most Americans. The value of that asset will always be subject to economic forces but, rich or poor, homeowners should not need to risk durability as well. ■ ■ ■

Stephen Smulski, PhD, is president of Wood Science Specialists Inc. in Shutesbury, Massachusetts, a consulting firm that specializes in solving performance problems with wood products.



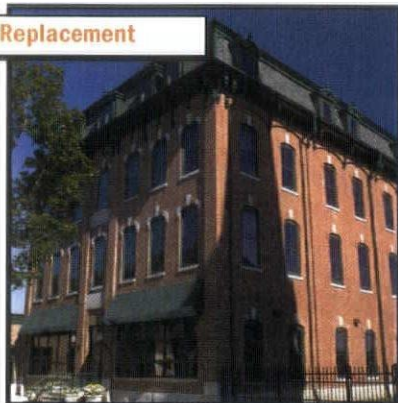
# ANDERSEN IS COMMERCIAL!



**True**

Yes, it's true. Andersen Products perform flawlessly in more than just houses and we can prove it – just look at the projects below. If it's new construction, renovation or replacement, we'll deliver innovative solutions to your commercial building using windows and doors of quality, performance, reliability and value.

## Replacement



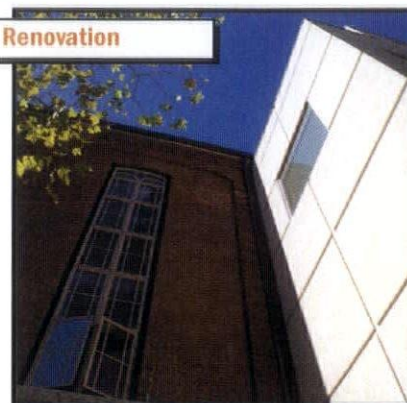
**Savers Co-operative Bank – Southbridge, MA**  
Architects: Dixon Salo Architects, Worcester, MA  
Gen Contractor: Builders Systems, Inc., Auburn, MA

## Renovation



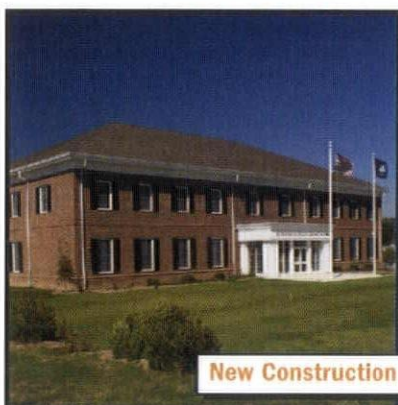
**Sakonnet Bay Manor – Tiverton, RI**  
Architects: The Salisbury Group, Providence, RI  
Gen Contractor: O. Ahlberg & Sons, Cranston, RI

## Renovation



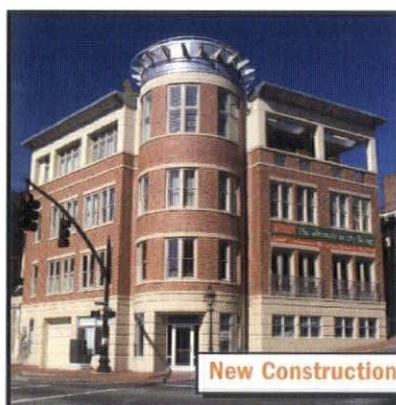
**The Sanctuary – Somerville, MA**  
Axis Design & Construction

## New Construction



**Stonington Police Station – Stonington, CT**  
Architects: Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC, Newington  
Gen Contractor: Uplands Construction Group LLC, W. Mystic

## New Construction



**2 Thomas Street Luxury Condos – Providence, RI**  
Architects: Connyingham Assoc. Architects, Cambridge, MA  
Gen Contractor: Pascack Builders, Inc., N. Kingstown, RI

## New Construction



**Mayo Elementary School – Holden, MA**  
Architects: Lamoureux Pagano Assoc. Architects, Inc.  
Gen Contractor: R. W. Granger

**Contact the Brosco Commercial Group for complete project support.**



[www.brosco.com](http://www.brosco.com)

**Brockway-Smith Company**  
Brosco Commercial Group  
800-225-2232

Mark Daley  
SE MA, Cape Cod  
Ext. 7440

Pete Kodys  
RI, Central MA  
Ext. 7470

Sean Graziano  
Connecticut  
Ext. 7432

Steve Lavigne  
Maine, No. NH  
Ext. 7443

David Kern  
Boston, Northshore & So. NH  
Ext. 7403

Jim Stall  
NY, VT & Western MA  
Ext. 7428



Matt Quinn  
Andersen Commercial Account Representative  
New England & Eastern NY

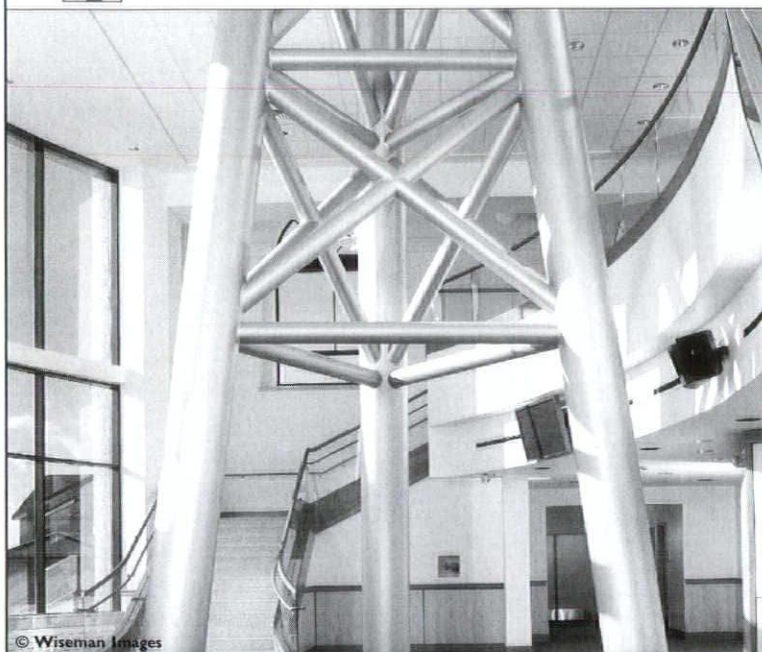
781-934-5195 Fax: 781-934-5196  
e-mail: [mquinn@andersencorp.com](mailto:mquinn@andersencorp.com)

[www.andersenwindows.com](http://www.andersenwindows.com)





**C.E. Floyd Company, Inc.**  
construction manager/general contractor



© Wiseman Images

9 DeAngelo Drive, Bedford, MA 01730-2200

Design Architect: Alan Schoenegge  
Architect: Mount Vernon Group

phone: 781.271.9006 fax: 781.271.9045

www.cefloyd.com



## Service Point

Formerly **Charrette ProGraphics**

- Large Format Bond Printing
- Copying Services
- CAD Plotting
- Scanning & Archiving
- Color Presentation Graphics
- On-Site Repro Services
  - Equipment, job tracking and expense recovery in your firm
- Web-Based Services
  - File Transmission
  - PlanLink: the Internet Plan Room
  - Document Management

(800) 747-3776 ■ [servicepointusa.com](http://servicepointusa.com)

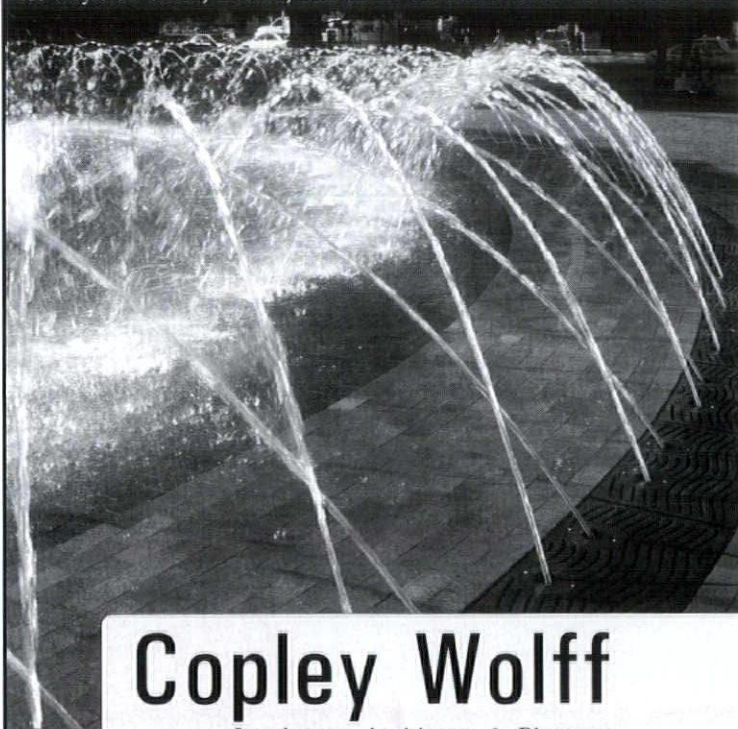
CHRIS NOBLE  
AND  
JAY WICKERSHAM

HAVE OPENED A NEW LAW OFFICE  
TO SERVE DESIGN PROFESSIONALS AND  
TO PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTAL AND LAND USE LAW:

**NOBLE & WICKERSHAM LLP**  
1280 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138  
TELEPHONE: 617-491-9800  
FAX: 617-491-9818

THEY ARE ALSO  
PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT  
**CARL M. SAPERS**  
HAS JOINED THE FIRM AS OF COUNSEL.

160 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116 tel 617.654.9000 fax 617.654.9002



**Copley Wolff**

Landscape Architects & Planners

**Design Group**

Photo by Jerry Howard



# You're Only 2 Blocks Away From A More Impressive Project.

Count on Clayton's cost-effective solutions for your next project!

## *Architectural Polished Block*

Marble-like appearance • High performance masonry  
Array of natural colors and multi-blends  
Superior durability • Cost-effective maintenance  
Exceeds requirements of ASTM C-90



### **Spectra-Glaze® II**

FACTORY-GLAZED CONCRETE MASONRY UNITS

Smooth semi-gloss surface • Versatile applications  
Unlimited colors, scales and patterns  
Excellent fire, stain and graffiti resistance  
Long-term durability and low maintenance • Qualifies as sanitary walls



## **CLAYTON**

CONCRETE • BLOCK • SAND  
American Owned

1-888-452-9348

Visit [www.claytonco.com](http://www.claytonco.com)

P.O. Box 3015  
Lakewood, NJ 08701

Clayton Block is a licensed manufacturer of Spectra Glaze® II



# Class Act

Michael Pyatok FAIA talks  
with John King

Design:  
Pyatok Architects Inc.

East Oakland, California

Affordable housing  
above street-level offices



photos: courtesy Pyatok Architects Inc.

**Michael Pyatok FAIA** is the principal of Pyatok Architects Inc. based in Oakland, California, and Seattle, where he is also a professor of architecture at the University of Washington. A former Loeb Fellow and Fulbright Fellow, Pyatok is one of the nation's leading advocates for affordable housing and community-based design.

**John King** is the urban design writer for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and a frequent contributor to *ArchitectureBoston*.

**KING:** As an architect who has been concerned for decades with issues such as affordable housing, community revitalization, and supporting community-based businesses, what is your reaction to the current architectural world? Arguably the most discussed project last year was a Prada store in Soho, and the most important architectural trend is cities trying to allure celebrity architects to somehow put them on the map.

**PYATOK:** Well, the issues you mentioned have occupied my thoughts for 40 years. I went to architecture school from '61 through '67, during the Vietnam War and the civil-rights movement, and got drawn into those protests and all those concerns. I mapped that back into my personal life and career and began asking myself how I was going



to live my life so as not to perpetuate those wrongs — how could I develop a career as an architect in a world where most of the commissions are dictated by wealthy or powerful folks interested in things other than social and economic justice? I came from a working-class background, a welfare family, and grew up in the tenements of Brooklyn. When I came out of school I worked for RTKL because it was considered an up-and-coming firm integrating urban design, architecture, and landscape architecture into a team approach. We were working on a lot of central business districts and with the stroke of a Magic Marker, we were wiping out entire neighborhoods. They were like the neighborhood that I grew up in. I wondered, what am I doing here? So I quit.

**KING:** And then what?

**PYATOK:** Fortunately, I got a teaching position at Penn State and that's when I started experimenting with studios — linking students and community groups who needed help, usually at the scale of urban design, neighborhood revitalization, and new central business districts, but who generally had limited funds and were based in low-income communities. I found that there are ways of providing a service to these communities and developing methods of analyzing problems and engaging the residents so that there's real participation in decision-making. So decisions are not made only by developers and local officials. That's a functional description of what I was trying to do in practice, but at the same time, I was always thinking about our culture. I had a friend who was a neo-Marxist, who turned me on to the literature of the Frankfurt school, a kind of cultural critique from the Marxist perspective. I found it very useful to try to understand the cultural impacts of economic disparities, how they affect the invention of ideas, and then their flow and distribution in the larger society.

**KING:** You could apply that concept to parallel universes in the design field. One is the universe of "high design" and its almost relentless pursuit of the "new look" year after year. And then there is another universe of economic disparity and the associated problems that you're talking about. How do you cope with the difference? Do you just look for the isolated victory, or do you despair the larger picture?

**PYATOK:** If you focus solely on the larger picture and on the all-encompassing influence of power and money and the way it is distributed in our culture, you feel like it's a pretty hopeless task. So you focus on the day-by-day. The small victories. We as a society under a capitalist system tend to be idealistic in that we really believe that ideas get invented by individuals, by great minds, isolated from involvement in the real world. That's a very good justification for having a class of people who are not engaged, who are not breaking their backs and working with their hands, but whose labor and time and intellectual capacity are free to invent. The more

you are detached from the real world, the more likely you are to be creative and inventive and, therefore, useful to society. It's a very convenient model. It thrives on the mind/body split — anything associated with the mind and intellectual activity is superior to any activity that is immersed in the everyday mundane world of survival. And it reinforces a class society. It tells us that there are only a few at the top who really know what's going on and as for everybody else — well, you're just going to have to go along for the ride because you're too distracted by the mundane to really reach the heights of great intellectual creativity.

**KING:** In other words, Renzo Piano or Rem Koolhaas or Daniel Libeskind can fly into town and impart knowledge that is beyond the abilities of mere working architects.

**PYATOK:** Right. Those from the local area could never possibly understand the condition fully because they're too immersed in it. They have not reached the heights of Parnassus to be able to look down on it all and understand it from the global view.

On the other hand is the view that if you are immersed in reality, you are in a much better position to develop a knowledge of how the world works. And there's truth to that position as well. Taken to the extreme, though, it means anybody who is freed from real-world tasks is useless. We saw that in the purges in China, and we saw that with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia — anybody who had participated in math, science, literature, anything of intellectual importance for the future of their country, was killed. These two extreme positions are equally damaging to a well-balanced society. So you somehow have to integrate the two. I know that seems easy to say.

**KING:** You've been immersed in a lot of reality and know a lot about how the world works. What have you learned from working with community groups? Or to take it to a more subtle level, what have you learned about the ways buildings shape self-image?

**PYATOK:** It comes down first to the question of engaging people in the process. What you're doing is taking people like myself who have received an advanced education, who've been granted the privilege of detaching themselves from the working world for six years to hone their skills, and asking them to give shape to what people desire. That's usually relatively easy to do with people who want to build their own house — the high-end custom folks. But how do you do that with a neighborhood when there are 100 participants? My firm has developed three-dimensional modeling techniques. If we have 80 people, we break them into groups of ten. We build a model of the larger neighborhood context and another of the site as an insert so they see all the physical conditions. And then in a series of workshops those small groups begin to discover ways of fitting things on the site.



"...there are ways of providing a service to these communities and developing methods of analyzing problems and engaging the residents so that there's real participation in decision-making.

So decisions are not made only by developers and local officials."

— Michael Pyatok FAIA



It engages them in a physical activity instead of having them listen passively to a series of options that we present. They get a chance to see the consequences so they have a sounder base for making judgments. I should say that we do lots of preliminary studies in our office, so we know what the range of options is before we start. After two or three workshops, there generally is a pattern that emerges that everyone can agree to. It's always something that we can never predict. And of course it reflects that particular mix of those people at that time. But at least it reflects a broad consensus from a host of people and not just some preconceptions by professionals who may in fact have been driven by cultural preferences inherited from God knows what source.

**KING:** And once that's done, do you take it from there?

**PYATOK:** Not yet. The next round of discussions is about the units themselves, how the dwellings themselves get organized within this site plan. One group might start

out with kitchen, dining, living, and sleeping areas upstairs. So we make sure another group reverses that. Or we'll suggest moving one of those bedrooms downstairs — you might want to rent it out and get some income, or have a home business, or have the grandparents living there. We try to throw in ideas like that to upset whatever cultural predispositions they might have. Sometimes they come up with ideas that are new for us as well. Someone says, "You know, we never had rooms where we came from in the old country; we all lived as one happy family in one big room. This is going to fragment us if we have to have all of these separate rooms." So we have to explain how all the funding sources, particularly government ones, are expecting only two kids per room and that after the age of five, they can't be the same sex in the same room. It's a good airing of what their concerns are, even if we can't always accommodate them.

**KING:** So you're not just parroting what they assume is the way to do it.

**PYATOK:** Right. And then the third and last set of workshops is, "What's this place going to look like?"

**KING:** And do people really care about that?

**PYATOK:** Oh, yeah. They want it to fit the neighborhood. Most of the time they don't want a weird-looking place. They certainly don't want "a project." I can remember one group — a Latino group in San José — and the way we handled it. There were about 60 people involved in six groups. We gave them each 28 images that were organized into seven categories. The seven categories were typical California styles — Victorian, neo-Victorian, Craftsman, Mission, and so on, including contemporary styles. We asked them to pick their favorite image.

**KING:** So have you found an all-embracing image of the good life?

**PYATOK:** No, it varies from group to group. What was interesting about this group was that they all chose the same image! It was a street view, sidewalk view, looking down a row of townhouses that had been articulated enough to look like separate houses. They all had porches and bay windows. It was what we called a contemporary interpretation of a Craftsman feel. And they loved it. Remember, this is in San José. They are surrounded by stucco buildings. And they said, "These stucco buildings are fake. They pretend to be Mission, which is some interpretation of our adobe in Mexico, but you're not building them with two-foot-thick walls, you build them with four-inch walls. But we've seen houses like this Craftsman style that were designed and built here."



**KING:** It sounds like you're talking about ways people's aspirations are reflected in architecture. But are these tastes in effect imposed from above? If you let people work from the bottom up, are we likely to see more variety?

**PYATOK:** I do believe that. If people are shown their choices, they may not always take the experimental approach, but at least they had a chance to see it. Often they don't even get to see what's possible. And that's one of the benefits of the architecture profession. We can invent things that are different from what is produced by those who have found a profitable formula and just keep repeating it. But I'd be quick to add that a lot of the novelty that our profession generates is pretty frivolous, silly stuff. That's usually because we're under the employ of a segment of society that is out of touch.

**KING:** Isn't that novelty in itself a subtle expression of class? You might argue that it's the equivalent of the person with the good income who wants a nice mock Tudor house in the suburbs because that shows they've made it. Someone else with the same income level buys the loft in the Leather District with a stark, retro, 1927 look because it's Modern. But it also shows they've made it.

**PYATOK:** This is one of the reasons why for so many years in my own development as an architect I could not even get myself to use the term "style." I refused to accept it as a legitimate concern of a serious architect. We have social problems, we have economic problems, and that's what we should be addressing. This whole question of style comes from the superficial world of fashion. It invents novelty for its own sake and is not really making useful, creative changes to the basic problems of our society. But as I did more and more buildings, and worked with community groups, there was always that question — "What's this going to look like?" And in the end, the answer is not based on social and economic concerns.

**KING:** You've written a lot about some of the disquiet you feel with the execution of urbanism, the doctrine that there is an accepted style, that there is a good style as opposed to a bad style. How does this shake out? You're saying appearance does count for something.

**PYATOK:** You know what is interesting? I told you what the Latino group in San José liked the most. I didn't tell you what they liked the least. What they liked the least was buildings by Legoretta and Barragán — this Modernist interpretation of Latino roots and Mexican roots, which we architects love because it distills everything down to the purest forms of pleasure — simple shapes and textures and light and color, and no need for unnecessary decoration. But they couldn't identify with that at all. It was so cerebral that they hated it. You can say it's a class thing, but it can get to a point where architects want to strip out so much of the

exuberance of life to create an effect — whether it's Barragán or Andres Duany's New Urbanism — that they create straitjackets for what really goes on in everyday life. We all look at those architectural photographs of interiors of houses and scratch our heads and wonder, who the hell lives like that? The world doesn't look that way. I spend most Christmases with my wife traveling through third-world countries. We want to see how people are surviving under marginal conditions. These cities are incredibly intense, thriving, throbbing-with-life places. And every inch of street frontage is in use with workshops or retail outlets or eateries. No piece of the ground floor of a building is ever empty, because everybody is hungry, literally, looking for ways of surviving and using that opportunity to grab onto the life on the street to earn a few pennies. We in this country struggle to find ways of reactivating our own streets because of the Wal-Marts and the Home Depots and all the others that have sucked it all away. Which, by the way, then causes architects and urban designers to come up with new theories of how the city ought to look in order to adjust to an economic system that has deprived us of these true urban opportunities.

**KING:** You wrote an interesting article back in 1993 — "Architecture in a Commodity Culture" — that relates a bit to this, but I'd like to push the idea a little more. You talked about how people are conditioned to define their self-image, not only by what they do for a living, but also by the things they consume and possess, and the things in which they enclose themselves. How does architecture reinforce this?

**PYATOK:** If you look at the way private developers market housing, whether it's multi-family or single-family, they'll talk about the sizzle and the curb appeal. Gestures that are built purely to sucker in people. There are obvious cases of it — the grand soaring ceiling in a space that no one will ever really use. At that income level, you would think the buyers deserve more — more choice. And given the choice, you'd think they would want better design, better detailing, and better materials, not more space.

**KING:** You work with community groups. You work in a thicker of regulations. Is there a part of you that would love to have some multi-millionaire call and say, "Build me a house!" "Build me a little bistro"?

**PYATOK:** There are times when I'm on an awards jury when I see materials and methods of construction we could never do, because we don't have the client base, and I start drooling. We generally have avoided working with private developers. But if you're doing non-profit rental housing, you'll get 12, 15 takers for every unit. You can experiment and it will still rent out. It's different when a person is making a choice about an investment in a house. The pressure to be more conservative is greater.



## Class Act

Design:  
Pyatok Architects Inc.

East Oakland, California

Mixed-use solution:  
ground-floor retail and  
social services; buildings  
with elevators for smaller  
households; townhomes  
grouped around courtyards  
for larger families



photos courtesy Pyatok Architects Inc.

**KING:** That seems to fold back into the idea that communities have expectations, and that style at some level reinforces self-perceptions about class. The neighbors each say, "This is my investment, and you will do nothing under any conceivable circumstances to affect my investment."

**PYATOK:** And that's the difference I see in third-world countries where a home is a working organism, not only for raising a family but also for earning an income. It becomes whatever it has to in order to suit all those needs. No one thinks about a house as about something you sell in the future as a commodity, and therefore no one is particularly concerned about meeting the criteria of some future buyer. You just decorate it and change it as you need to, and it gets a bit messy because of the kids, and messy because my husband is repairing cars here, and my mother is selling her shawls here, which she weaves out back. And I'll decorate it

with flowers and paint it some colors. Here, no one goes outside the rules because it might hurt the sales base.

**KING:** Let's look at cities like Boston and San Francisco, the two most expensive areas in the nation to live. Both pride themselves on trying to come up with inclusionary housing rules. Both have a wealth of established non-profit housing organizations. Yet housing prices keep climbing. You've been working in this field for 30 years. Why haven't these well-meaning communities figured out a way to make housing work?

**PYATOK:** That's a really big question. In a market-driven economy, when something is desired and there's only so much of it, it's going to cost more. And the irony of the Bay Area and Boston is that as much as we complain about how things go wrong or aren't being done well, they're two beautiful cities. And we keep making them more and more beautiful. And that in turn just makes those cities that much more desirable to people who have money to spend. So then we have to triple the effort to make a little bit of room for people whose incomes don't allow them to participate in the market. Andres Duany sometimes says that the only way to make sure you'll get affordable housing is to make it ugly. In a market economy, this is true. But from the viewpoint of the families or the neighborhoods, you want it to be as good as or better than the housing around it.

Enlightened business leaders recognize that the more that families can find housing that easily fits their income, the less pressure there is on employers to push up wages to keep up with escalating housing costs. The more that wages have to go up just to feed the local housing industry, the less competitive local businesses are on the national or international scene. And then they are forced to move to less expensive cities. They don't want to do that, because their executives would be less happy in Missoula than they would be in Boston or San Francisco. We have to find a way to cream off the top and feed it back in because we need those workers and we want those industries. A lot of conservatives see affordable housing as a handout to lazy people. Until we can get beyond that, we're going to have a crisis in each of our successful cities. ■ ■ ■





*Washington Hall, center stage for theatre and cultural events at Notre Dame. Built in 1881, this modern Gothic structure was named by Father Sorin himself, Notre Dame's founder, in honor of his great hero, George Washington.*

**You've got to be good  
to go into Notre Dame and  
leave with a victory.**

When the University of Notre Dame decided to replace the windows in two of the more historic buildings on its storied campus, all the major manufacturers wanted the job. But as they learned more about the size and scope of the project, the list began to dwindle. Since both buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places, Notre Dame wanted windows with wood interiors that matched the appearance and profile of the originals. To minimize maintenance,



The wood interiors of Marvin's windows are virtually identical to those installed a century ago. For the exterior aluminum cladding, an appropriately-named custom color was created: Irish Bronze.



**MARVIN**  
Windows and Doors

Made for you.™

another demand was aluminum clad exteriors. Marvin Windows and Doors emerged victorious. And designed and built 310 windows for the project, not one of which was a standard size. Not only that, but the casings were factory applied and a custom color for the exterior cladding was developed to replicate the 100 year-old originals. If you have a challenging commercial project, contact the company that has a reputation for winning the tough ones.

#### In Connecticut:

Ed Herrington, Inc.  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showplace  
Lakeville, CT • 800.432.2561

Sanford & Hawley, Inc.  
Unionville, Manchester, CT • 800.433.7941

The Marvin Showcase at  
Branford Building Supplies  
Branford, CT • 203.488.2518

#### In Maine:

EBS Building Supplies  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
Ellsworth, ME • 800.244.7134

The Hancock Window Store featuring  
Marvin Windows  
Portland, ME • 207.874.0852

#### In Massachusetts:

A & A Windows, Inc.  
Malden, MA • 781.322.9282

Cape Cod Lumber  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
Mansfield, MA • 800.698.8225

Chandler Architectural Products, Inc.  
West Springfield, MA • 413.733.1111

J.B. Sash & Door Co.  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
Chelsea, MA • 800.648.9339

Littleton Lumber  
Littleton, MA • 800.698.4343

MacLeod & Moynihan Window & Door  
Watertown, MA • 617.923.1480

Marvin Window and Door Showcase by GLC  
Danvers, MA • 978.762.0007

Sanford & Hawley, Inc.  
West Springfield, MA • 800.433.7941

#### In New Hampshire:

Millwork masters, Ltd.  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
Keene, Nashua, NH • 800.352.3670

Oakes Brothers  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
West Lebanon, NH • 866.214.3131

Selectwood  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
Portsmouth, NH • 800.922.5655

#### In New York:

Ed Herrington, Inc.  
Hillsdale, NY • 800.432.2561

Harbrook Fine Windows & Doors  
Albany, NY • 518.437.0016

#### In Rhode Island:

Humphrey's  
Marvin Window and Door Showcase  
Middletown, RI • 800.423.4235

#### In Vermont:

Oakes Brothers  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
Bradford, VT • 800.455.5280

r.k. Miles  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
Manchester Center, VT • 802.362.1952

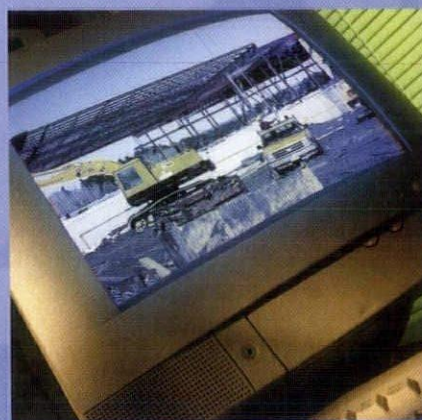
Windows & Doors By Brownell  
Marvin Windows and Doors Showcase  
Williston, VT • 800.773.4803



## Structural Engineering for New and Rehabilitative Construction

Daigle Engineers is committed to providing quality  
**COMMERCIAL**  
 structural engineering services for our clients, using  
**INDUSTRIAL**  
 innovative yet practical ideas. The basis for our continued  
**INSTITUTIONAL**  
 success will be technical knowledge, ingenuity, and integrity.  
**MUNICIPAL**

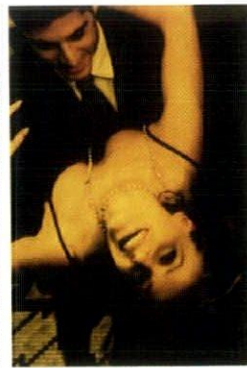
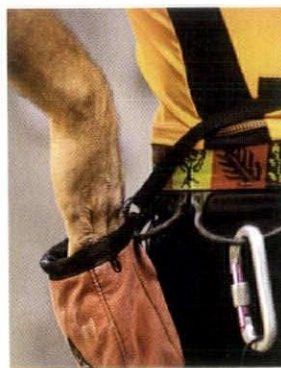
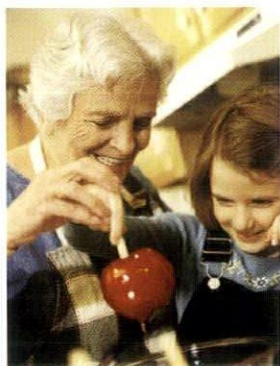
Daigle Engineers, Inc. 978 . 682 . 1748 [www.daiglepe.com](http://www.daiglepe.com)



**Daigle**

Over 20 Years in Business  
 Est. 1979

## There are times in life when dipping can be great...



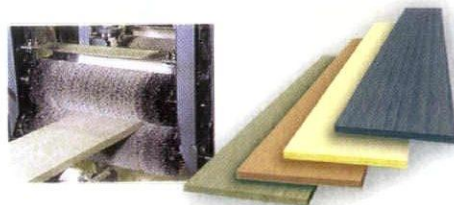
You can dip your candy apple, or dip your pork satay . . . you can dip for more chalk on your climb, or dip the night away !

## Dipping your shingles isn't one of them.

**Fraser Cedar.**

The ultimate in wood care and protection.

[www.frasercedar.com](http://www.frasercedar.com)



Our shingles are coated  
 on all sides, edge to edge !



*A natural blend of tradition and technology*



# SEDIA



Since 1975,  
the most extensive  
source for quality  
20th-century  
and contemporary  
furniture

**NEW ADDRESS**  
535 Albany St.  
Suite 405  
Boston, MA  
02118-2428  
1.800.BAUHAUS

N.E. contract sales  
GPM Marketing, Inc.  
800.476.2758

WWW.800BAUHAUS.COM



## build with care

## truant

CONSTRUCTION  
MANAGERS

Respectful collaboration  
you can count on.  
[www.mtruant.com](http://www.mtruant.com)

*Bringing Our  
Architectural  
Heritage Back  
to Life...*

AYER MILL CLOCK TOWER  
LAWRENCE, MA



**MUCKLE & ASSOCIATES, Inc.**  
433 Market St, Lawrence, MA 01843  
tel: 978.683.8700 • fax: 978.683.8778  
[www.muckleinc.com](http://www.muckleinc.com)

*Providing  
Superior Solutions<sup>sm</sup> to the  
Architectural Community*



Accounting,  
Auditing &  
Taxation

Construction Cost  
Reviews

Employee  
Benefits

Human  
Resources

Lender &  
Investor Services

Personal  
Financial Planning

Turnaround &  
Interim  
Management  
Consulting

Valuation &  
Litigation Services

CAMBRIDGE  
NEW BEDFORD  
[WWW.TOFIAS.COM](http://WWW.TOFIAS.COM)  
888.761.8835

**TOFIAS** PC

350 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139





## WE DO COMMERCIAL!

*Dedicated to providing product and design solutions that meet every challenge.*



### PROJECT SPECIALTIES

- New Construction
- Renovation
- Historic Restoration
- Health Care
- Retail
- Education

### ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

- Factory Trips
- Box Lunch Presentations
- Aia/Ceui's
- Cd-Rom
- Cad Support
- Project Consultation

### PELLA® WINDOWS & DOORS INC, BOSTON

45 FONDI ROAD • HAVERHILL, MA 01830

TEL: 978-521-7100 • FAX: 978-373-8084

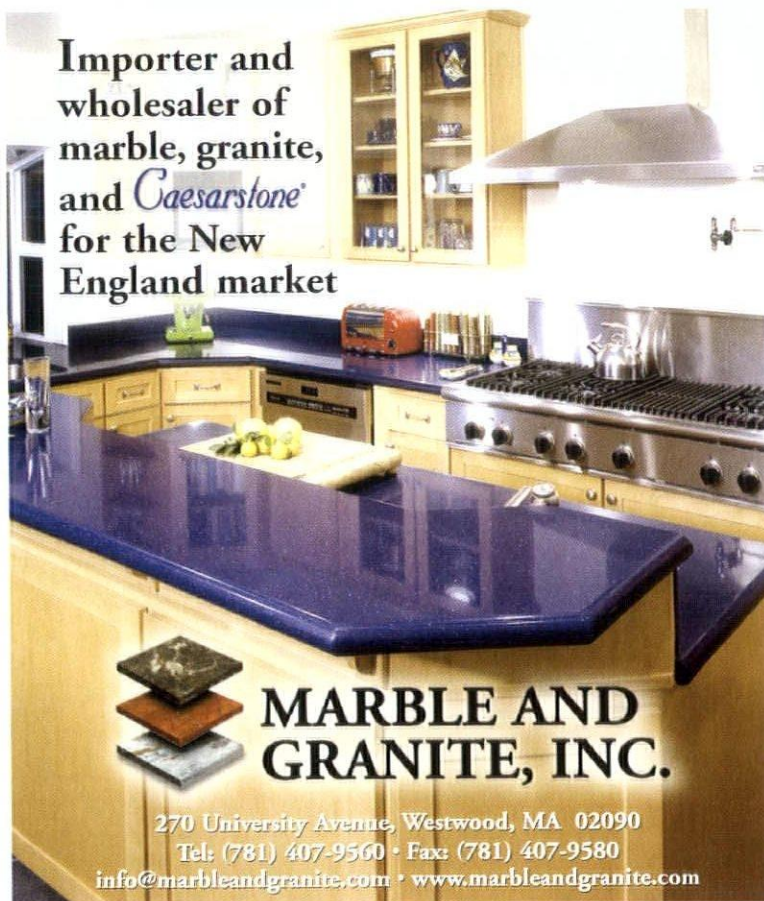
TOLLFREE: 800-866-9886 X134

Vice President of Sales: Jack Needham • [jneedham@pellaboston.com](mailto:jneedham@pellaboston.com)



COMMERCIAL  
DIVISION

Importer and  
wholesaler of  
marble, granite,  
and *Caesarstone*<sup>®</sup>  
for the New  
England market



## MARBLE AND GRANITE, INC.

270 University Avenue, Westwood, MA 02090

Tel: (781) 407-9560 • Fax: (781) 407-9580

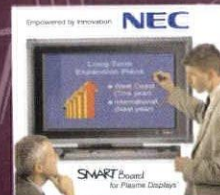
[info@marbleandgranite.com](mailto:info@marbleandgranite.com) • [www.marbleandgranite.com](http://www.marbleandgranite.com)

## A/V Integrated To Your Vision



- ❑ Auditoriums
- ❑ Board Rooms
- ❑ Classrooms
- ❑ Conference Rooms
- ❑ Retail/Entertainment
- ❑ Training Facilities

Plasma Displays with Interactive  
Overlays, just one example of the  
unique audio-visual collaborative  
solutions Crimson Tech provides.



Ask how Crimson Tech can design  
and implement an integrated  
presentation system for effective  
delivery of your vision.

## CRIMSON TECH

Audio Visual, Networking and Digital Media Solutions



Wilmington, Massachusetts  
Putnam, Connecticut

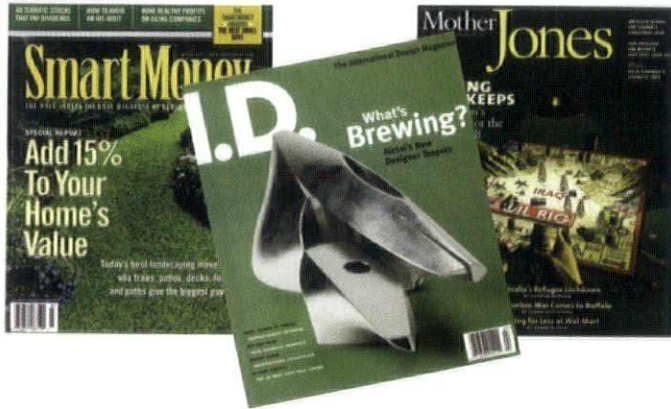
800.868.5150  
[www.crimsontech.com](http://www.crimsontech.com)



# Covering the Issues

## Periodical roundup

by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA



**The color of money...** The best way to boost the sale price of your client's home may not be those granite countertops or that new triple-height entryway, but all that green stuff outdoors. As one Massachusetts realtor suggests in *Smart Money* (March 2003), investing 5 percent of a home's value in new landscaping yields a 150 percent return. *Smart Money's* cover story features a "special report" outlining the financial incentives of design options. Did you know that hedges raise property values 3.6 percent? A landscaped curb adds 4.4 percent? And a patio boosts values by 12.4 percent? Forget about making a house a home. It's an investment. You're not an architect, you're a financial planner.

**Remember when?...** Before there was Target, there was Michael Graves. Italian design giant Alessi introduced Graves and 10 colleagues to the wonders of product design by commissioning them to create a new teapot, thus giving birth to those knobby blue handles and the bird whistle, as well as to alternative directions to many architectural careers. In *I.D.'s* April cover story, "Pot Shots," guest editor Aric Chen reports that Alessi is revisiting this project 20 years later, this time commissioning 22 of today's stars for coffee- and tea-service prototypes. Invited participants range from Greg Lynn to MVRD, Zaha Hadid to Shigeru Ban (not using cardboard).

**Collection agency...** With much too little irony, Tom Vanderbilt questions the value of assembling brand-name architects in "Collector's Addition," in the same issue of *I.D.* Vanderbilt reports on the 36 Houses at Sagaponac, "the 100-acre Richard Meier-curated modernist subdivision," each house designed by a different architect. Claiming this "suburban subdivision... will represent the greatest concentration of architectural talent

on the planet," Vanderbilt predicts the inevitable "Star Maps" and visitor tours. He recalls the origins of such high-profile collaborations at Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition, while questioning the current university fad of "collecting" hot designers as if they were Beanie Babies and pondering the extraordinary amount of energy the architectural profession spends on projects never realized. Which, of course, might explain the teapots.

**Needs more work...** With its March 2003 issue, *Sculpture* magazine launches an initiative to explore often overlooked relationships between sculpture and architecture. Both in practice and product, the magazine suggests the disciplines are the most public of arts, sharing as much today as they have for



centuries. The magazine poses good questions: How does sculpture interact with architecture to shape the experience of a space? Where do the practical differences between the disciplines create

friction, and how can that friction spark better work? Can the public charrette process guide these collaborations, too? Disappointingly, the magazine's pages so far offer little new dialogue. Let's hope the discussion is just warming up.

**Been there, done that...** What is the role of preservation in a contemporary, changing city? Unfortunately, Chinese cities are not asking, laments Orville Schell in *Mother Jones* (March/April). Bulldozers demolish traditional neighborhoods by the dozens, leaving high-rises in their wake that look more like Houston or Singapore. "Beijing was perhaps the most fabled and adored 'living' ancient city in the world," recalls Schell. Not anymore. "What is unrivaled is the single-minded, myopic way in which China has gone about reinventing itself," he argues, leading one to wonder: does progress always require erasure? Haven't we demonstrated that this is not really progress? James Wiltlow Delano's accompanying photo essay shows haunting, ethereal views of Chinese cities in dramatic transition.

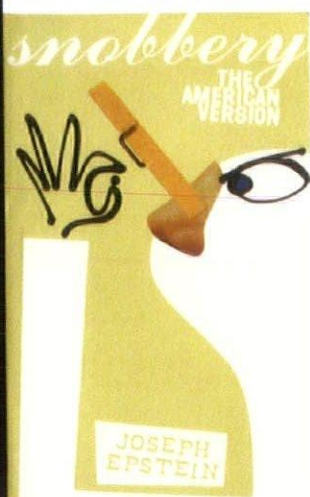
**Calling Big Dig watchers...** Congressman Barney Frank once suggested that instead of burying the Central Artery in tunnels, Boston should have just raised the city. Turns out, Chicago has beat us to both ("Chicago's War With Water" by Daniel E. Capano in *Invention and Technology*, Spring 2003). In its centuries-old battle with storm water, sewers, and really big lakes, not only did Chicago once reconstruct 1,200 acres of downtown eight feet higher, but now it's building a gigantic tunnel, too. Copycats. Started in 1975, the 109 mile-long tunnel is slated for completion in 2010. ("Yeah, right," we say.)



Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and maintains a practice in Boston.



# Books



## Snobbery: The American Version by Joseph Epstein

Houghton Mifflin Co., 2002

Reviewed by  
James McCown

"I don't mind snobbery as long as I'm the snobber and not the snobbee," a late architect uncle of mine used to say. Such is our collective ambivalence about social class. Who has not felt the rush of being in the company of the glamorous and good-looking, and thinking, "I belong here"? By contrast, who has not felt the sting of that party invitation not received, that phone call not returned, that bid to join an exclusive club not proffered?

Joseph Epstein has written a wonderful, engaging book, one of piercing social observation, deft writing, and honest self-examination. He writes about growing up Jewish, attending an academically but not socially prestigious university, his many years on the fringes of the American literati. He peppers the book with his own experiences and shows himself enough of an outsider to speak objectively. A book on this same subject by a member of the august Aldrich family appeared in the late 1980s, but the writer was so inextricably a part of the American aristocracy that his attempt to chronicle it was rambling and fog-bound. Not so with Epstein, who gleefully skewers everyone and everything, not just the clichéd

Bostonian Lowells and Cabots, but also the aristocracies that replaced them — the "diverse" Ivy League meritocracies, the Yuppie strivers, the celebrity-obsessed motion-picture industry.

There are many funny anecdotes and trenchant musings. What can be made of a country whose most successful fashion designer is a guy from Brooklyn who lives amidst the most opulent accoutrements of Anglophilia? Or of our Yankee blueblood president who prefers cowboy boots and fajitas to any suggestion of his Andover-and-Yale patrician background? A chapter on name-dropping is hilarious, including the author's relating of a story involving an American living in a French chateau: "Cooper delighted in telling friends, 'The Onassis woman tried to invade my house, but I sent her packing.' Now here is prime-quality name-dropping." My only disappointment with the book is its lack of geographic specificity. In other words, there's no look at Southern snobbery versus Yankee snobbery, or Eastern hauteur versus its Western equivalent.

"'Tis only noble to be good, and kind hearts are more than coronets," said Tennyson. And on this note, Epstein ends, reflecting on how difficult it is "to be reconciled to oneself, to be oneself and nothing more. This is especially difficult if doing so means conceding that one is not extraordinary, unusual, powerful, great, and shall in fact disappear tomorrow without leaving a scratch on the earth... Is there something in our nature that prevents us from cultivating this difficult but useful objectivity about our true standing in the world?"

James McCown is the director of communications and marketing for Schwartz/Silver Architects in Boston.

## The Rise of the Creative Class by Richard Florida

Basic Books, 2002

Reviewed by  
Jeffrey Stein AIA

Why isn't a new Fenway Park under construction in Boston right now? Read this book! In this snapshot of "how it is now" in American culture and economy, Richard Florida, the John H. Heinz Professor of Regional Development at Carnegie Mellon, documents the values and attitudes of 30 million members of America's rising Creative Class. One value is the pursuit of a life packed with intense, high-quality, multidimensional experiences, a value at odds with watching professional baseball. Baseball is pretty much a one-dimensional experience that consumes a lot of resources — it's expensive and takes a big chunk of time. Not for the Creative Class!

Who are the Creative Class? Architects and designers, urban planners, artists, educators, engineers, entertainers, scientists, media-types, computer people, mathematicians, hairstylists all make up the "Super-Creative Core" of the current culture and economy. Further out on the creative limb are managers, business specialists, healthcare workers, high-end sales people, lawyers — the professionals who make up 38 percent of the American workforce. Then why are so many creative solutions regularly missed in every area of endeavor from world diplomacy to vehicle design to the design of cities and buildings? What are these people creating?

The Creative Class are not Biblically creative: "God created the world..." The basis of their creativity is economic: *how* people work creatively and *where* these people get together. "Creativity" is an act of synthesis. To create and synthesize, we need stimuli — bits and pieces to put together in new and unfamiliar ways. We need to meet people, see possibilities, access an

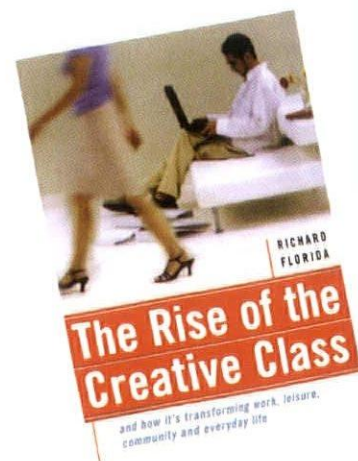
environment that maximizes choices. We need cities with streetlife. (Jane Jacobs lives in this book.)

Florida's core argument is about the power of place in the current economy. Millions of workers are attracted to places where you can "have a life, not just a job" — creative centers like Boston, which is third on the Creativity List, just after San Francisco and Austin, Texas. These cities are centers of "technology, talent, and tolerance." (Although Boston ranks number 22 in "tolerance.")

"Tolerance" is the most widely discussed aspect of Florida's assertions: indispensable to the creative economy is tolerance of the gay community. Where gay people live predicts not only the concentration of high-tech industries, but also their future growth. But the book points out a negative correlation between concentrations of high-tech/professional firms and the percentage of non-white population. The result is that racial tolerance isn't so important to the Creative Class.

"Class is a dirty word in America," says Richard Florida. But for the Creative Class, more class awareness is required. Natural leaders for the 21st century, due to their numbers and control of our culture and economy, they should take seriously the obligations of leadership that accompany their position as the new standard-bearers.

Jeffrey Stein AIA is the architecture critic for *Banker and Tradesman* and winner of a New England Press Association Award for 2002.





## Serendipity Green

by Rob Levandoski

The Permanent Press, 2000

Reviewed by  
Julianna Waggoner

Who does Mr. Levandoski know, that *The New York Times* so favorably reviewed this poorly edited sitcom of a book?

A satirical glance at the politics of taste and class in small-town America, allegedly rife with humor and uproarious characterizations, *Serendipity Green* is instead cloddish in style, inconsistent in tone, and peppered with embarrassing typographical errors that make it difficult to discern editorial oversights from Levandoski's stylistic choices. Although this lampoon of aesthetic fads, small-town festivals, suburban sprawl, and ethnic grudges is lightly entertaining, the author's uneven approach obscures moments of genuine comic revelation.

Howie Dornick's dingy abode is the only house in Tuttwyler, Ohio, not painted "soapy white." When pressed to conform by librarian Katherine Hardihood, he mixes second-hand yellow and blue paints with flammable liquids and slathers his home, making it Tuttwyler's first truly *green* building. Hugh Harbinger, famous color consultant, exclaims, "Oh, Momma!" and proceeds to make Serendipity Green the darling of every designer's palette, giving politically malevolent D. William Aitchbone a bone to pick with antihero Howie.

Levandoski assigns these characters a gaggle of actual and alliterative "h" names as eccentric as any in an Annie Proulx novel — interviews reveal him as a fan of *The Shipping News* — but he doesn't color in their personalities.

Each entity is allotted approximately one adjective for the duration of the story. Historic homes on millionaire's row are "soapy white." Everyone who is physically attractive is "appetizing." Everyone physically unattractive is "unappetizing." Howie and Katherine are unappetizing

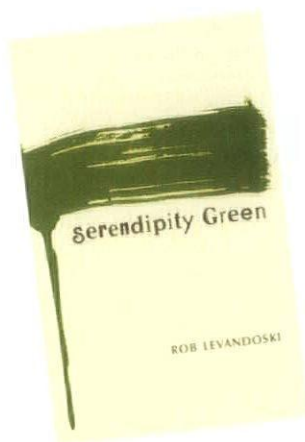
together. They also "copulate," a singularly unappetizing verb used throughout the book.

Gosh, does this intentional dearth of terminology herald a sophisticated comic style in which the repetition of language hilariously reinforces the repetition of everyday life? Or is Levandoski simply too danged lazy to stretch for another word? Who cares? The copulation between typos and stingy language reads as sloppy, not funny, and keeps the reader so distanced from the characters that it is difficult to laugh at them or with them, or to engage with the story without feeling taken in. Katherine and Howie are parodied so flatly that their eventual humanity and tenderness leaves the reader confused.

The lone juicy character is Dr. Pirooz Aram, the Persian psychiatrist who shrinks everyone in town. He sings, smiles, quotes Rumi, and possesses more than one adjective to his name. Pirooz appears to be a fully fleshed visitor from another, funnier, richer story. Levandoski unfortunately needs the doctor as much as any of the characters do, to add substance and heart to an otherwise tepid book.

This parody of American aesthetic values inadvertently skewers itself: is this American taste, that we are willing to accept slipshod craftsmanship, cardboard characters, and crude parody as stylish comic entertainment?

Julianna Waggoner is the marketing director for Dietz & Company Architects, Inc. in Springfield, Massachusetts.



## The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities

by Richard L. Bushman

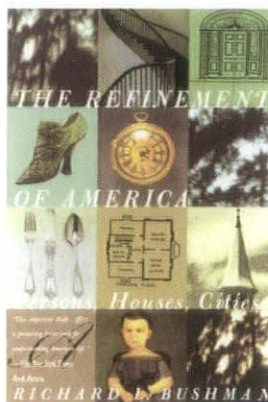
Vintage, 1993

Reviewed by  
Elizabeth Paden FAIA

OK, maybe your bookshelves aren't stuffed with volumes about "refinement." But if you're fascinated by the all-too-rare genre of books that offer elegant explanations of seemingly unconnected phenomena, then *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* belongs in your library.

Written by Richard Bushman, a history professor at Columbia, *Refinement* grew out of his effort to understand the sudden change in the lifestyle of early Americans who in only 30 years moved from dark, medieval, two-room dwellings in which they ate with their fingers to airy Georgian mansions in which they served tea from silver services.

The change that drew colonial America out of the darkness of the 17th century was the introduction of the culture of gentility, which Bushman describes as an intellectual, aesthetic, and social movement that had its roots in 16th-century Italian courts before spreading to France and England. A complex system of behaviors and tastes, gentility in this country combined with other forces such as emerging republicanism and the need for social structure to form a common culture that reached across economic strata. The lifestyles of the English rich and famous ultimately provided the foundations for the growth of the American middle class.



With the introduction of gentility, Americans learned to manipulate their physical environment in order to express their status, their houses becoming as rich with connotations about their personal aspirations as are college and prep-school bumperstickers on SUVs today. Their fervor to transform their environment extended beyond individual structures. Urban neighborhoods and even entire cities such as Charleston, Philadelphia, and New Haven were designed to reflect the order and beauty that characterized genteel culture.

Genteel culture might have become a brief aristocratic anomaly in a budding democracy, except for two essential characteristics: gentility was spread by emulation, and wealth was not required. Refined behavior and intellectual improvement cost little, and even those of limited means could acquire some material symbols of genteel tastes. By the early 19th century, the culture of refinement had spread to poorer rural areas, where New Englanders painted their houses white, and occasionally even realigned their town greens, in order to provide the outward beauty that they had come to associate with inward grace. Gentility brought economic stability, creating a consumer appetite for goods in the new industrial era. Soon, signs of gentility could be found everywhere — across geographical boundaries, across classes, and even across races.

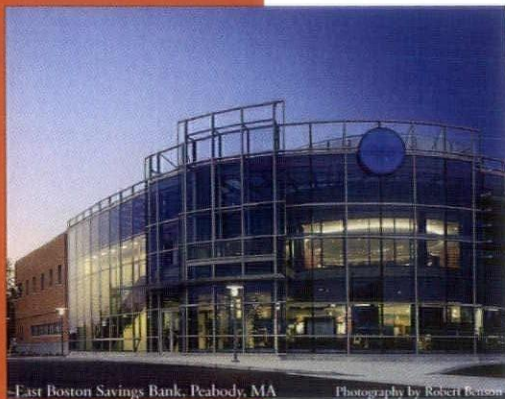
The shock of Bushman's fine, immensely readable book, is that so much of what he describes is so familiar — not only in historic artifacts but also in behaviors and tastes that still characterize the modern middle class. Still, gentility is only a puddle in today's turbulent cultural landscape. Nowadays, the notion that every change in the built environment is an opportunity to express a common cultural ideal, to achieve an even greater level of beauty and refinement, seems downright radical.

Elizabeth Paden FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.



# Bergmeyer

Commercial  
Corporate Interiors  
Food Service  
Housing  
Retail



East Boston Savings Bank, Peabody, MA

Photography by Robert Berman

Architecture and Interiors  
Bergmeyer Associates, Inc.  
286 Congress Street  
Boston, MA 02210  
Phone 617 542 1025  
[www.bergmeyer.com](http://www.bergmeyer.com)

## INTEGRATED BUILDERS

From the Ground-Up



Pharm-Eco Laboratories  
Devens, MA 160,000 SF

Depuy/Johnson & Johnson  
Raynham, MA 40,000 SF

Control Delivery  
Watertown, MA 40,000 SF

Central Place Apartments  
Malden, MA 75,000 SF

Black Rock Golf Community  
Hingham, MA 52,000 SF

Clair Mercedes  
Westwood, MA 60,000 SF

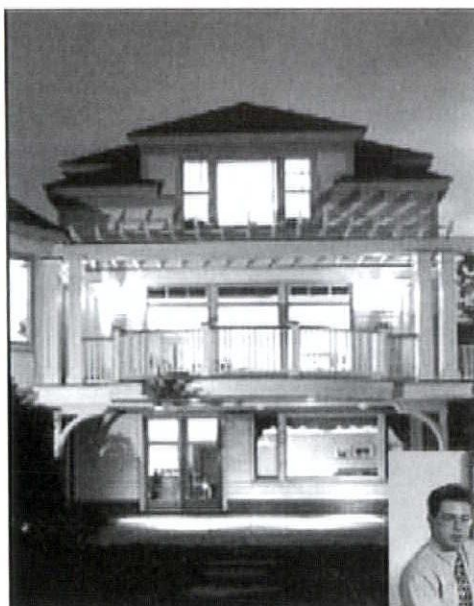
Winchester Place Condominiums  
Winchester, MA 37,000 SF

Castle Storage  
Weymouth, MA 45,000 SF

*New "east" building addition at Johnson & Johnson facility for DePuy AcroMed division includes laboratory space.*

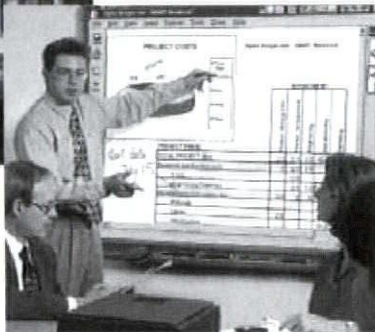


1515 Washington Street,  
Braintree, Massachusetts 02184  
Phone (781) 356-3838  
[www.integratedbuilders.com](http://www.integratedbuilders.com)



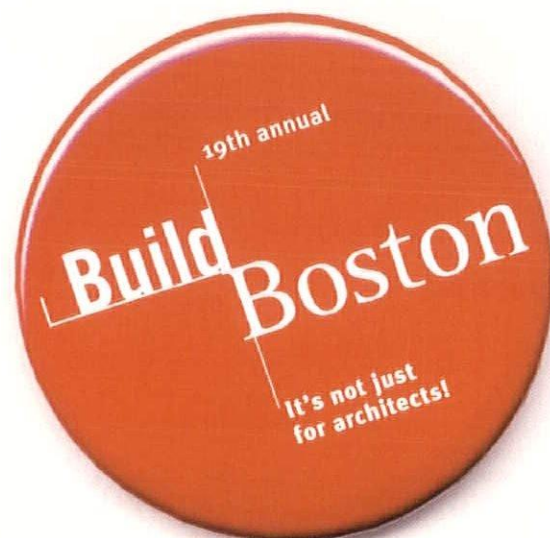
We invite you  
and your client to  
our new showroom  
to experience  
residential and  
corporate electronics  
in real applications.

Your Resource for  
High-quality  
Architectural  
Electronics<sup>SM</sup>  
Since 1973.



Audio  
DESIGN  
Video

Audio Video Design  
877-999-1900  
[www.avdesigns.com](http://www.avdesigns.com)



**Don't miss it!**

The convention and  
tradeshow for  
design, building and  
management  
professionals

**November 18-20, 2003**  
**World Trade Center Boston**  
[www.buildboston.com](http://www.buildboston.com)  
**800-544-1898**



# Site Work

## Web sites of note

Architectural Resources Cambridge, Inc.	www.arcusa.com	18
ArcLinea Boston	www.arclineaboston.com	inside back cover
Audio Video Design	www.avdesigns.com	50
BASF Polyurethanes Spray Foam Group	www.basf.com/spray	inside front cover
Bergmeyer Associates, Inc.	www.bergmeyer.com	50
The Boston Architectural Center	www.the-bac.edu	15
Brockway-Smith Commercial Sales	www.brosco.com	35
Build Boston 2003	www.buildboston.com	50
Business Software Alliance	www.bsaarchitect.com	18
Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc.	www.c7a.com	30
Clayton Block Company	www.claytonco.com	37
Copley Wolff Design Group	www.copley-wolff.com	36
Crimson Tech	www.crimsontech.com	46
Daigle Engineers	www.daiglepe.com	44
Design Advantage	www.designadvantage.net	15
Erland Construction	www.erland.com	30
C.E. Floyd Company, Inc.	www.cefloyd.com	36
Fraser Cedar	www.frasercedar.com	44
GPI Models	www.gpimodels.com	14
H.B. Communications	www.hbcommunications.com	15
Integrated Builders	www.integratedbuilders.com	50
International Masonry Institute	www.imiweb.org	4-5
Marble and Granite, Inc.	www.marbleandgranite.com	46
Marvin Windows and Doors	www.awhastings.com	43
MasonWorks Landscapes	www.masonworks.net	23
Microdesk of New England	www.microdesk.com	14
Muckle & Associates	www.muckleinc.com	45
Noble & Wickersham LLP		36
North Atlantic Corp.	www.northatlanticcorp.com	22
Oldcastle Precast, Inc.	www.oldcastleprecast.com	31
Pella Windows and Doors, Inc.	www.pella.com	46
Sedia, Inc.	www.800bauhaus.com	45
Service Point/Charrette ProGraphics	www.servicepointusa.com	36
The Taunton Press	www.taunton.com	22
Thoughtforms Corporation	www.thoughtforms-corp.com	back cover
Tofias PC	www.tofias.com	45
Marc Truant & Associates, Inc.	www.mtruant.com	45
Vantage Builders, Inc.	www.vantagebuildersinc.com	18
Versa-Lok Retaining Wall Systems	www.versa-lok.com	30
Water & Fire	www.waterandfire.com	19
Richard White Sons, Inc.	www.rwsons.com	15

### Inequality.org

www.inequality.org

Almost everything you ever wanted to know about the stratification of income, wealth, and health in the United States today. The name may sound strident, but the site is fascinating.

### The Center for a New American Dream

www.newdream.org

The Center for a New American Dream helps Americans consume responsibly, to avoid their obsession with "more." As the Center notes: "What does this 'more is better' version of the American dream leave in its wake? Less contentment and less free time." The Center assumes you still have enough free time to visit the site.

### MassINC.

www.massinc.org

The Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth is a nonpartisan organization that promotes the growth and vitality of the middle class; it's also the publisher of the highly respected *Common Wealth* magazine.

### Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

www.chapa.org

CHAPA is a non-profit umbrella organization that encourages the production and preservation of low-income housing in Massachusetts. The go-to site for reports and research on statewide housing issues.

### Marshfield Action Inc.

www.marshfieldaction.com

Wondering what all the fuss over 40B is about? The good people of Marshfield will be glad to tell you. They may be angry, but they do have a sense of humor: check out the "40B Song," sung to the tune of "Let It Be."

### The Affluenza Project

www.affluenza.com

"Simply defined, affluenza is a dysfunctional relationship with money/wealth, or the pursuit of it. Globally it is a back up in the flow of money resulting in a polarization of the classes and a loss of economic and emotional balance." The founder of this site is in a position to know: her grandfather was the president of General Motors.

### Filoli

www.filoli.org

The official site of the house that was used as the Carrington mansion for the filming of *Dynasty*, the 1980s prime-time soap opera that revealed the secrets of the rich and the key to success: shoulderpads.

We're always looking for intriguing Web sites, however clueless the connection to architecture. Send your candidates to: [epadjen@architects.org](mailto:epadjen@architects.org)



## Other Voices by Tom Congdon

## The Nantucket Airport



photo: Bob Weiskopf, Nantucket Express

**Once upon a time** there was a low, fuzzy little island 30 miles out to sea off Cape Cod. It was peopled by a hardy band of Quakers who took pride in their modesty and had a knack for converting whale fat into money. It was not a place anyone ever went to for the fun of it, especially when the wind blew — and the wind blew a lot. When the whaling industry collapsed, the little island starved for a while, until pleasure-seeking outsiders discovered its beaches and pronounced it quaint.

Jump to the present. Nantucket has become hyper-popular. The very rich have decided they must build huge houses there. The average real-estate transaction is about \$1.2 million. The rudest shack costs half a million and really showy places go for \$10 million and up. The 1,200 acres occupied by the airport are worth about half a billion.

The Nantucket airport epitomizes boom-time Nantucket. The staid little once-Quaker community that until 1918 banned automobiles now boasts the second-busiest airport in Massachusetts after Logan, with runways long enough for Air Force One. The humble shed that had served as the terminal has been replaced by a swollen new structure trying to pass as a gray-shingled cottage. With its white, marble-like floors and its obsequious automatic doors, it represents commercial grandeur of a sort that many Nantucketers had hoped would never come to the island.

Like the airliners themselves, the horde that throngs the airport is divided into classes. First Class is the rich, both old and new. The significant difference between the two is not in their money but in their attitude toward simplicity.

The old rich were attracted to the island by its New England unobtrusiveness, the understatement and harmonious proportions of its 18th- and early 19th-century structures, its resistance to change. The new rich like this atmosphere too, but once they pay their millions for an unchanged house, they set about changing it. "It just isn't me," they tell the architects and decorators they bring up from the city. So the beautiful old interiors are gutted and massive kitchens and media rooms are created. The town's Historic District Commission struggles to keep the noble exteriors from being Aspenized, but no one has authority over the interiors. Behind the serene façades, visual depravity runs amok.

At the airport, the contrasting attitudes become visible. The old rich wear clothing; the new rich wear "outfits" and have knock-'em-dead luggage. The old rich are so eager not to call attention to themselves that they murmur instead of speak, whereas the new rich tend to broadcast their presence and to chew out the clerks behind the check-in counters. When the new rich greet houseguests at the gate, they seem to be playing a role, actors in a miniseries scripted by Ralph Lauren. They seem nervous as hell. It's an old, old story, but not to worry — it will all come right in the next generation.

Economy Class is the people with worrisome credit-card balances who, whether summer residents or year-rounders, are trying to stay alive financially in a very expensive place.

The Proletarian Class has been created by contractors putting up the zillion-dollar homes of the new rich. Faced with the problem of finding labor on an island where working people can't afford to live, they hire workmen on the mainland and fly them in and out every day. At dusk, dozens of tired, homeward-bound carpenters and plumbers and roofers in soiled work-clothes — their tools hanging like weapons from their wide, studded belts — mingle unapologetically among the clusters of elegant richies waiting for their flights to be called.

And then there is Supra Class. These travelers are the avatars of corporate America, the Jack Welches and Dennis Koslowskis and Roger Penskes, who can thrive on the thin air at the highest pinnacles but come down to sea level now and then for a little R&R. Their private jets scream in over the shingled roof-tops, fracturing the tranquility of earlier-arriving moguls who ask only for the chance to have a peaceful martini by their rimless swimming pools.

The Supras have their own terminal. Their sky chariots stand in long, gleaming rows, an impressive display for the benefit of the folks arriving in the oil-spattered, rackety, nine-seat turboprops of the local airlines. The security in the Supra terminal is unusually strong — not to foil terrorists but to fend off gawkers and the importunate.

Scientists warn that in about 600 years, the Atlantic Ocean will have washed the island away. All the pricey real estate and all the attendant fantasies will be slurped down into a realm where what counts is not how wealthy you are, but how well you swim. Going, going, Nantucket gone. ■■■

Tom Congdon is a writer and book editor. He lives on Nantucket year-round.



# The Arclinea Collection



Sleek, innovative, functional. Exquisite Italian design. The Arclinea Collection provides elegance and versatile technology in the kitchen, tailored to your every movement. Italy's finest kitchens are now available in New England.

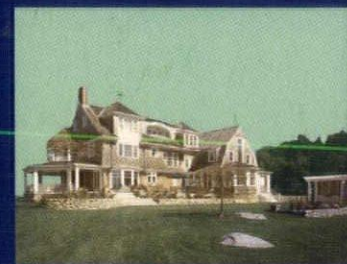
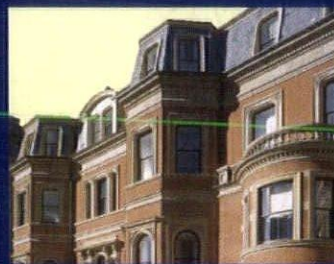
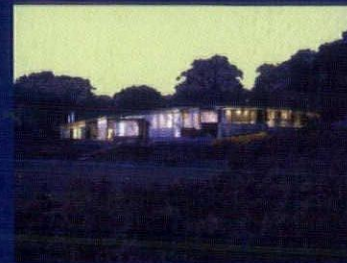
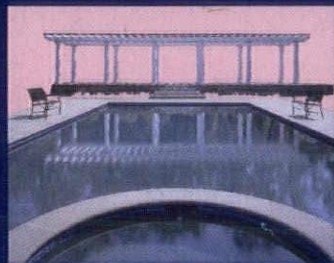
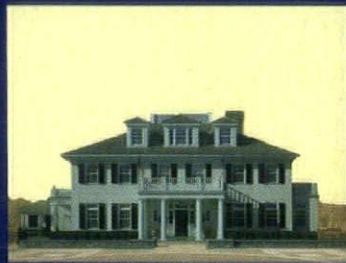
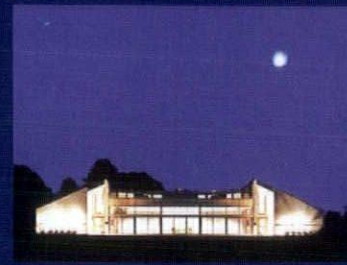
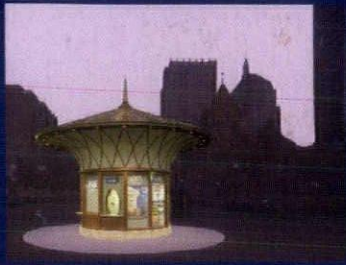
Come visit us and learn how Arclinea can revolutionize your kitchen experience.

**Ginger**, kitchen from  
The Arclinea Collection  
designed and coordinated  
by Antonio Citterio

**Arclinea Boston**  
2014 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
Tel: 617.876.9888 Fax: 617.876.1050  
info@arclineaboston.com www.arclineaboston.com

**Arclinea**   
tecnologia creativa





Custom Builder of the Year 2003

- Custom Home Magazine

Thoughtforms 978-263-6019 [www.thoughtforms-corp.com](http://www.thoughtforms-corp.com)