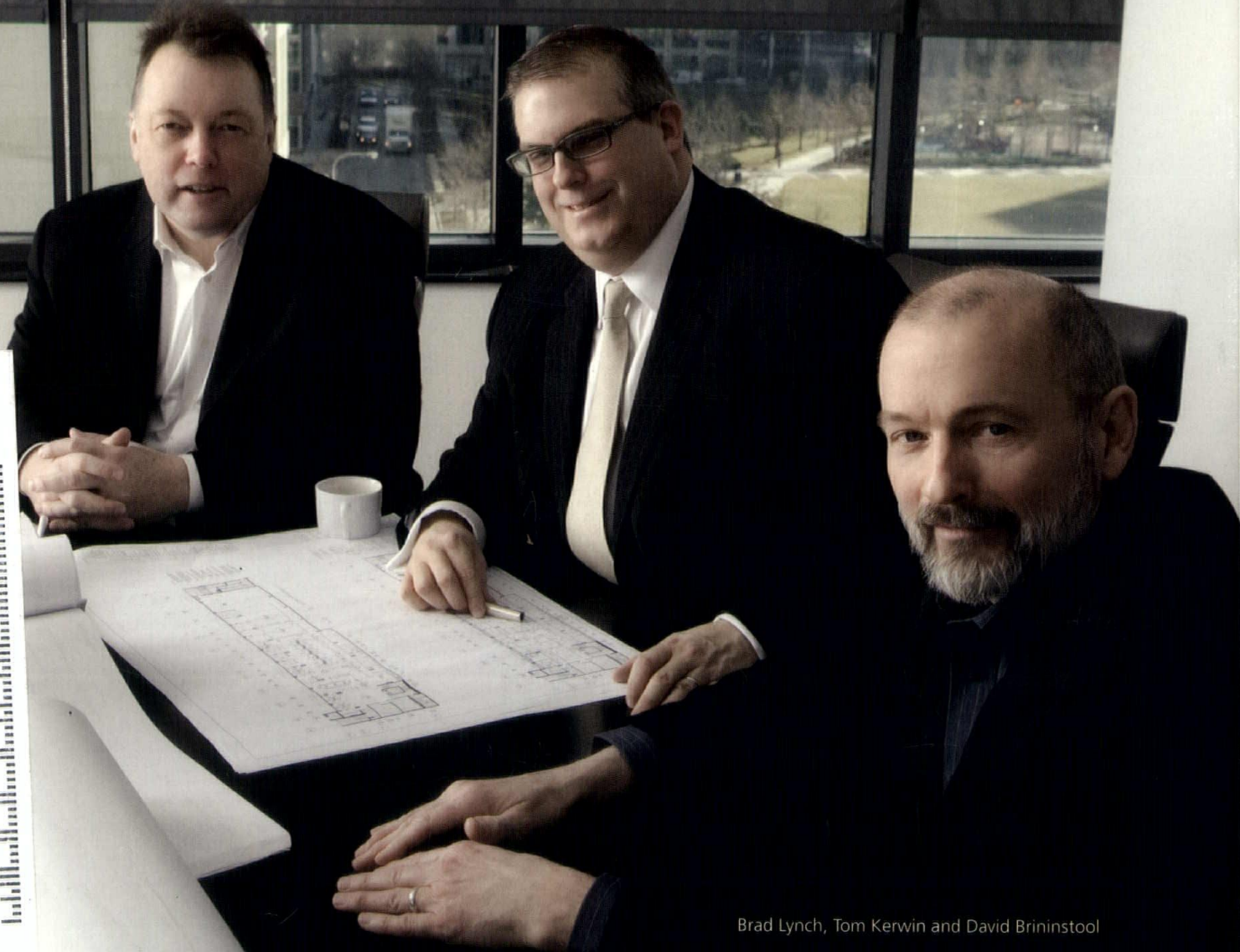


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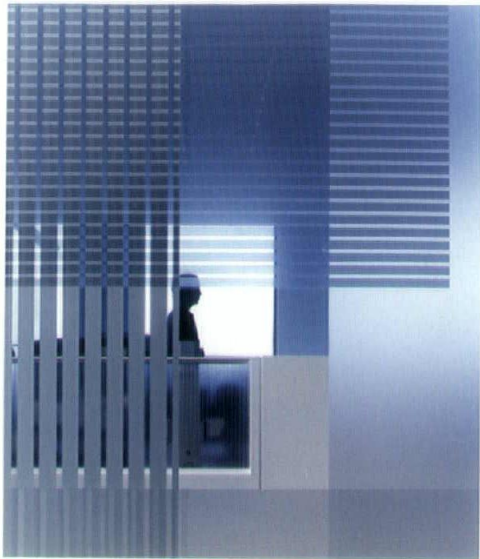
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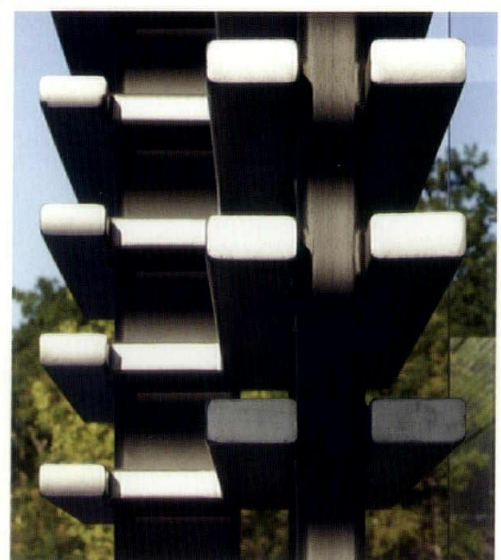
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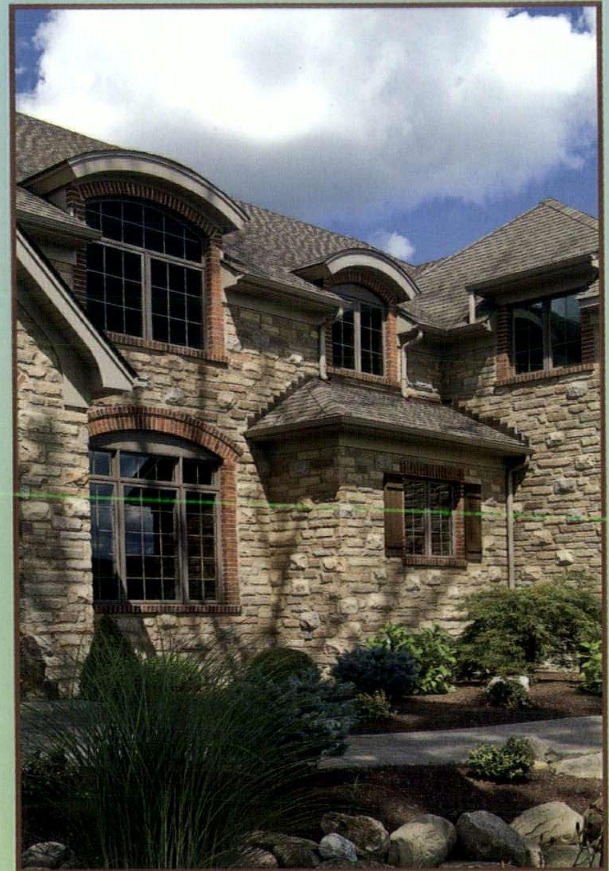
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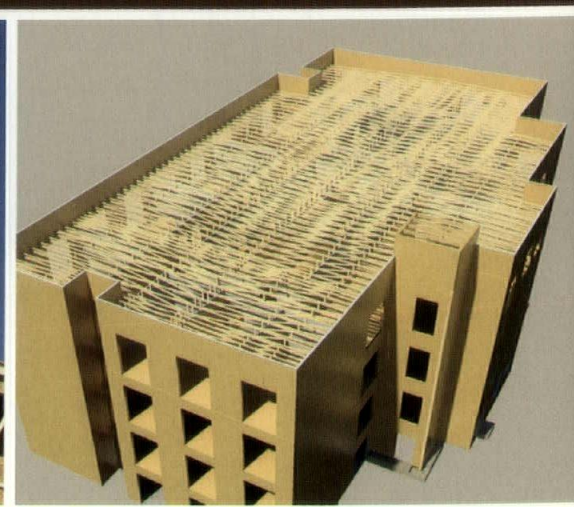
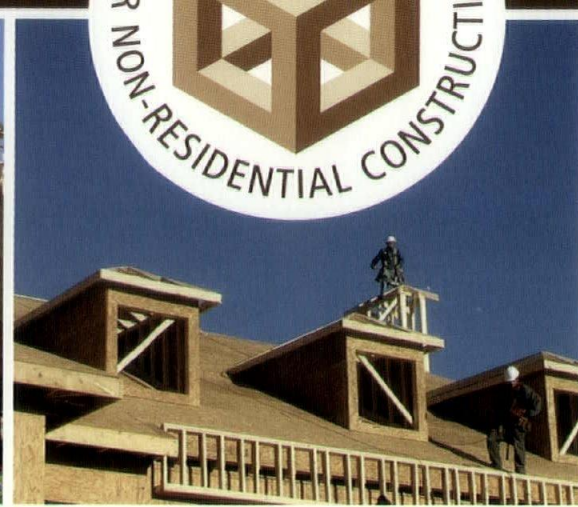


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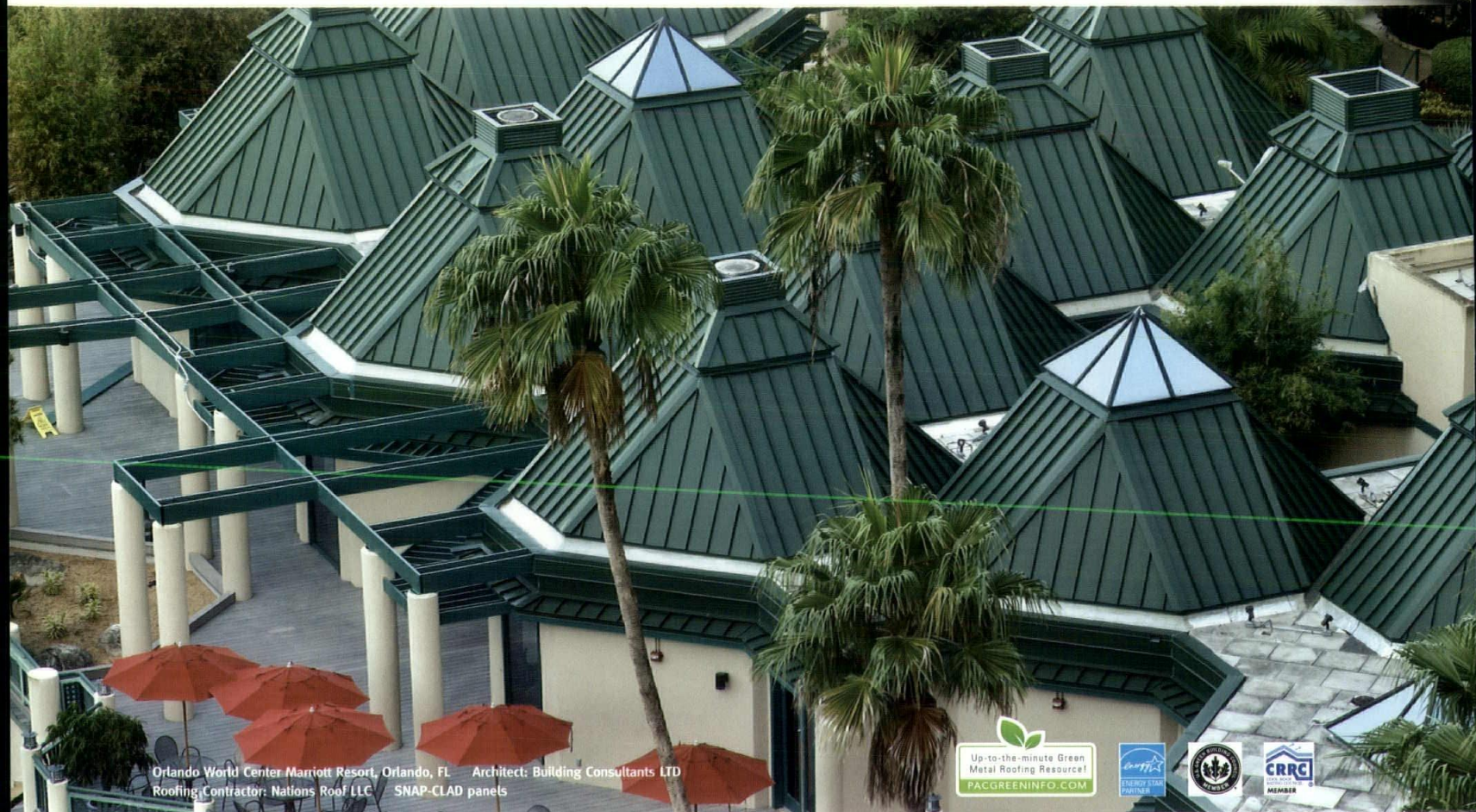
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## President's letter

The devastation of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Jan. 12 might seem to be far away now with the passage of a few months. There have since been similar earthquake events in Chile and Turkey. Yet Port-au-Prince will be deeply affected by its catastrophe given that the nation and society started from a condition of historic and continual deprivation. Inadequate infrastructure, overcrowding in poor housing, and a wildly unregulated building environment are some of the elements contributing to a disaster of unfathomable magnitude.

Almost immediately the response to the disaster by the architectural community locally, nationally and internationally was extremely heartening and gratifying. We in the architectural and design communities can take heart in the generosity, compassion and commitment to assist our neighbors and fellow citizens in the work.

A local example of generosity was to be found in the Chicago community with Chicago's participation on February 20 in Global PechaKucha for the sole purpose of raising funds for Haitian relief. Our own PechaKucha champion, Peter Exley, FAIA, along with partners Sharon Exley and Thorsten Bösch facilitated the contribution of the Chicago creative community to the worldwide effort. (For more on PechaKucha, see p. 10.)

Architects and designers can ask ourselves: What can we do? What will we do? The process of recovery and building will go on for years and, probably, decades. The hope is that we will not forget and, typical of the nature of our profession, we will commit for the long term.

There will be opportunity to contribute to a revitalized society worthy of the Haitian people. There are those within the Haitian community who are seizing out of the catastrophe an opportunity to reconstitute their society and nation to reflect the hopes and dreams at the birth of their young republic.

Please do your part to help this historic effort, or if you have other equally urgent priorities, continue to lend your emotional and spiritual support to those groups that are focused on Haiti's future.

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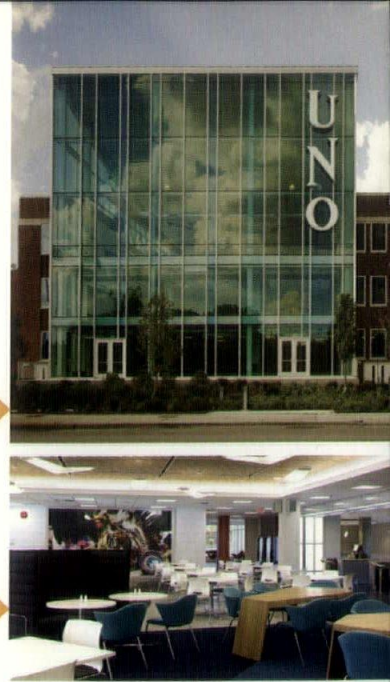
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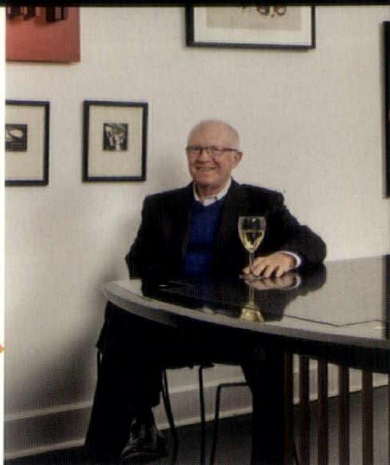
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Image by Gabriel Dziekiewicz | DesignBridge

New pedestrian plazas would encourage public use and help create a visual rhythm along the boulevard.

## LOGAN'S HEROES

A plan brings parking and parkland to the boulevard

One Chicago firm is proposing to simultaneously solve two typically oppositional problems: more parking for our car-dependent society and more eco-enhanced green space. Victor Dziekiewicz, AIA, and his team may get a chance to realize some hefty design improvements for the 12-block stretch of roads and islands along Logan Boulevard that ends at the Illinois Centennial Monument in Logan Square.

“We’re dealing with the negative side of making a city more livable: cars. What can you do to allow better use? Where do you put the parking?” asks Victor Dziekiewicz, AIA, president and principal in charge of design at DesignBridge, a seven-person firm at 1415 W. Grand Ave.

Logan Boulevard is home to multiple-use buildings and a notable variety of greystone residences, many built in the first decade of the twentieth century. The William Le Baron Jenney-designed street was paved and electric lighting was installed in the early 1900’s. The main roadway runs between a pair of median strips 30 feet wide, and beyond each median are peripheral lanes that carry one-way local traffic.

But long-term neglect and scanty design interventions—like the installation of a few benches on the sidewalk—left the area with irregular plantings, disconnected green spaces, and a consequent lack of visual rhythm. And a modern-day increase in the neighborhood’s popularity has left drivers often circling blocks looking for parking.

The residents and visitors to this landmarked area may soon be in luck: DesignBridge’s Logan Boulevard Embellishment Plan would add parking and green space with aesthetically

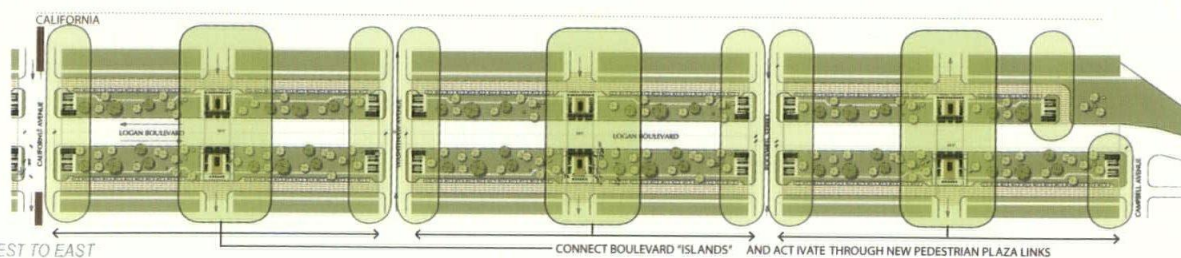
pleasing results. Their plan calls for the elimination of sections of six through streets, to occur every other street, in order to reconnect portions of the median strip. Those streets—Willow, Richmond, and Mozart Streets and Fairfield, Talman and Maplewood Avenues—would gain plazas in the vacated intersections. The former street space would become park space that incorporates permeable paving, landscaping, and wooden-slat-and-concrete benches. Rain water channels would be built into the ground and funnel water to bioswales.

If implemented, the proposal will create 228 new parallel parking spaces along Logan Boulevard while inserting 24 new pedestrian plazas that will increase pedestrian park space by over 86,000 square feet. The architects hope the pedestrian park-like nodes “create a rhythm and encourage public use,” says Gabriel Dziekiewicz, LEED AP, associate and senior designer at DesignBridge, who has worked on the proposal with his father Victor Dziekiewicz. “A place where people can connect,” the senior Dziekiewicz chimes in.

Last summer the architects met with Logan Square residents, including preservationists, to get feedback on possible improvements to the street. “Their concern was less with parking,” Victor Dziekiewicz says. “They remember the boulevard when it was a much grander place to pass through. Now there’s just a random series of plantings and people just bullet through there.”

His son explains that the plan would unite the park areas. “New permeable paths would be designed to weave between existing trees to further connect the new boulevard parks,” Gabriel Dziekiewicz explains. The

By eliminating sections of six through streets, occurring every other street, portions of the median strip are reconnected by green space.



team also believes there could be a place for public art in the area.

“DesignBridge was awesome in creating a proposal that would revive the boulevard and let the community get more use out of it,” said Maria “Toni” Berrios, Illinois State Representative for District 39. “We reached out to active community members and Victor met with them. He got all of their ideas and was able to put those down on paper.” Berrios acknowledges implementation challenges, namely state budget constraints, but she believes that if implemented, the embellishment plan would lead to a “more beautiful, vibrant, community-user friendly” space.

Both architects cite the park off Grand Avenue near Navy Pier as inspiration for their proposal. They like the park’s ground surfacing—the textures and colors—and variety of plantings. The firm understands the challenge of maximizing green space while incorporating parking; DesignBridge did work for the Public Building Commission, studying library sites and designing reading gardens and additional parking, like the garden at the Chicago Public Library’s Brainerd Branch at 1350 W. 89th Street.

The firm designed the Logan proposal pro bono, and funding, as of press time, is “in limbo,” Victor Dziekiewicz says, as the plan awaits approval from the State’s Department of Commercial Development and Department of Transportation. A thumbs-up on the proposal would result in functional, aesthetically pleasing, eco-conscious design that is worthy of the grand boulevard as it enters the 21st century.

→ **Lara Brown**

## CHITCHAT FOR CHANGE

**PechaKucha has worldwide reach and a Chicago presence**

Chitchat has long been an underrated pursuit. But no longer, thanks to PechaKucha, a mesmerizing program that raises the pursuit from idle and underappreciated to organized and rewarding. Born in Tokyo seven years ago, the program has since spread to dozens of cities around the globe, including Chicago.

Japanese for “the sound of chitchat,” the challenging-to-pronounce yet amusing-to-utter term (which does mimic the murmured tones of chitchat when pronounced correctly) sums up the essence of the program. It is a verbal “swap



Organizer Peter Exley, in his characteristically understated wardrobe, is surrounded by participants at a recent PechaKucha event.

meet” for designers to network, exchange ideas and share their work.

In theory, the event follows a loosely organized 20/20 format—each presenter has 400 seconds to showcase 20 images on a subject of his or her choice. That means there’s 20 seconds to explain each one. In practice, PechaKucha has given chitchat a professionally meaningful mantle thanks to the intriguing and often dazzling mini-lectures it inspires.

A sampling of the dozen or so presenters at a recent PechaKucha gathering here illustrates the point. Architect Peter Exley, FAIA, who initiated the program here, waxed poetic about his quirky yet prescient childhood obsessions with design, rock ‘n’ roll and football (that’s soccer for us Americans); architect Katherine Darnstadt, AIA, gave a compelling report on Architecture for Humanity’s Chicago efforts; musician Jon Langford of The Mekons and Waco Brothers fame fêted the accomplishments of his iconic fellow Welshman Tom Jones; and event producer Andy Warfel from downstate Champaign presented the dazzling sets he created for official ceremonies of the Gay Games.

As U.S. cities go, Chicago was an early adopter. There were about 30 PechaKucha chapters worldwide, but only San Francisco had initiated the program stateside. Exley, a co-founder of Architectureisfun, staged the first PechaKucha night here in 2007 at the behest of Tokyo co-founder Mark Dytham, his classmate

and close friend from their undergraduate days at Newcastle University in England.

“Mark kept promising he would come to Chicago for the day if we did one, so we did. And he really did come just for a few hours,” laughs Exley, who had help staging the first event from artist Andy Hall, digital maestro Nick Glazebrook and architects Thorsten Bösch and Yamani Hernandez, who remain organizers of the event to this day.

Though PechaKucha happens in almost 300 cities, it would be hard to imagine any more vibrant than Chicago’s, where the events are consistently filled to the 350-person capacity at Martyrs’ Pub, “the first place that said yes when we were looking for a venue,” Exley says. That is due to the organizers’ vision; they deemed a hip “rock ‘n’ roll venue” most appropriate from the start because “the 400 seconds is like a pop song” and broadened the agenda to include creative types from every discipline “to ensure the evening is about cross-pollination. Can you imagine what an evening of just architects would be like?” Exley deadpans.

The result has been a series of quarterly programs (which cost \$10 to cover staff and insurance) at Martyrs’ and ad hoc events that have popped up to address special issues, such as PechaKucha events to mark the 100th anniversary of the Burnham Plan, celebrate NeoCon and raise funds for Haiti. These latter ones do double duty, for they both elucidate and entertain.

And with such an imaginative group at the helm, PechaKucha is sure to get more inspired and engaging with age. "The presentations are about content and passion, not necessarily portfolio. It's about speaking from the heart," Exley notes.

To join PechaKucha's mailing list, visit the web site at [pecha-kucha.org](http://pecha-kucha.org), where those who have "something to say from the heart" can also put their names on the wait list, before each event the organizing committee chooses presenters. "We strive for balance, diversity in terms of age and range of topic, and try to choose things that we assume people will want to talk about," explains Exley.

Most importantly, to learn how to pronounce PechaKucha correctly, get a 20-second lesson at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdghID66kLs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdghID66kLs). → **Lisa Skolnik**

## 11 THINGS ABOUT Urban Works' UNO School Project

→(1) Vacant for seven years, the building at 4700 S. Kildare Ave. in Archer Heights had housed a bakery for A&P grocery stores.

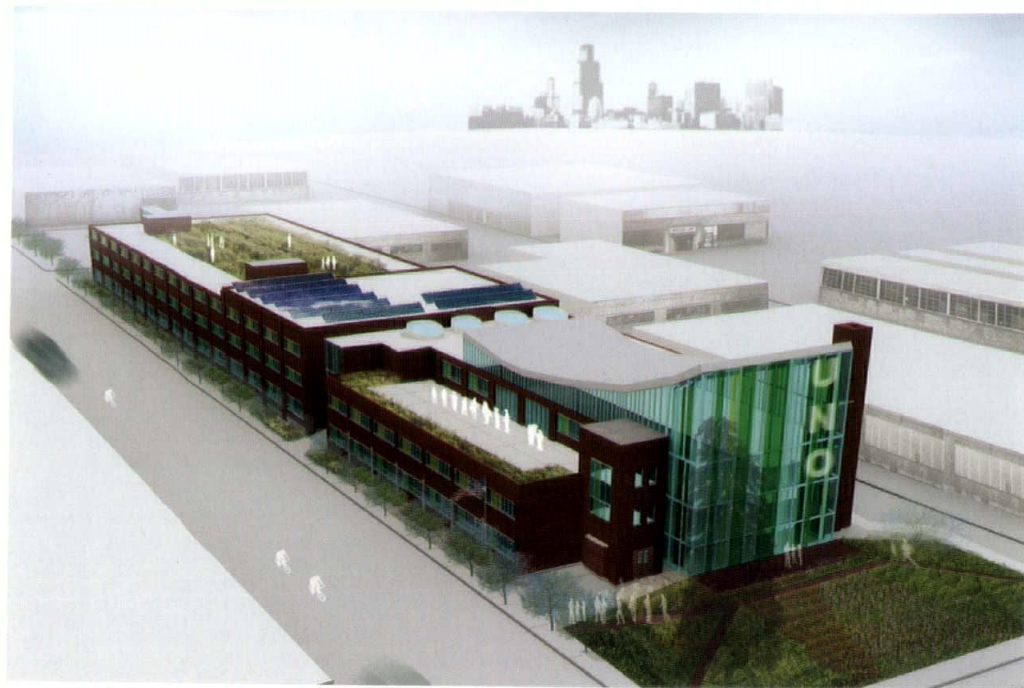
→(2) United Neighborhood Organization (UNO), which operates charter schools, planned to fill it with two elementary schools and a high school.

→(3) UrbanWorks won a competition among five firms with its plan to divide the school horizontally, putting each school on a different floor.

→(4) The gym, cafeteria and library are clustered at the south end, where they can be used as a community center after-hours without heating, cooling or lighting the rest of the 175,000-square-foot structure. Putting the gym at the top was possible because the floors had originally been built to support heavy baking equipment.

→(5) The extant column spacing allowed for extra-wide corridors. How to use the space strategically? Planning meetings with teachers resulted in a design that put teacher offices along the hallway, with classrooms behind them. "You don't have all the offices together at one end of the school in an administrative area," notes Patricia Saldaña Natke, AIA, UrbanWorks' founding principal. "The teachers' offices are connective tissue between the classrooms, and there's a lot of glass so students can pass along the corridor and see their teachers working on curriculum. The teachers are a second set of eyes on the corridor."

→(6) The notion of transparency guided other aspects of the project, notably the huge glassy addition that projects south from the original building. "This is a working-class neighborhood with a lot of immigrants and first-generations," Saldaña Natke says. "It's important that [they] can see education going on inside this building."



A green roof (above) and an upswept, glassy southern facade helped transform an old bakery into a three-school complex. The lobby (below) has its original bare concrete revealed on the right, new finishes on the left, and glass walkways overhead.

→(7) Double-pane glass in the addition mitigates noise from the Midway Airport flight pattern overhead and the industrial district in which the building sits.

→(8) While the three floors are largely separate to keep students of differing ages apart, "we wanted the [main] entry to have a dramatic impact, so we blew out the three stories between the school space and the public common spaces and punctured it with glass bridges and skylights," Saldaña Natke says. "You see all the remains of the bakery facility, the old brick and the flared columns" on one side. The other, where the wall was too decrepit to keep visible, was drywalled and then punctuated with a fun vertical pattern of lights.

→(9) UNO dubbed the school its Veterans Memorial Campus, in honor of Latino war veterans who sometimes get scant recognition. Eleven classrooms have been named for individual veterans, mostly from the neighborhood. More are to come, and a small museum honoring Latino

veterans is planned for a space on the first floor.

→(10) The elementary schools were completed in 2009, followed by the high school in January 2010. The \$31 million project, \$180 per square foot, now serves 1,500 students and has a capacity of 1,800; the school is projected to fill that in fall 2011.

→(11) In February, the campus received a Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Award for Architectural Excellence in Community Design. "We were proud that we took a building that had been a vacant eyesore and made it into a transparent community asset," Saldaña Natke says. → **Dennis Rodkin**



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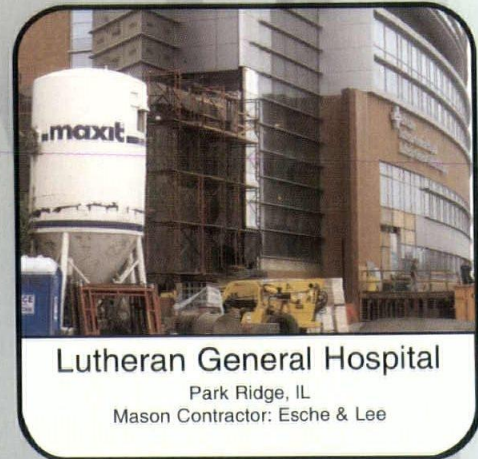
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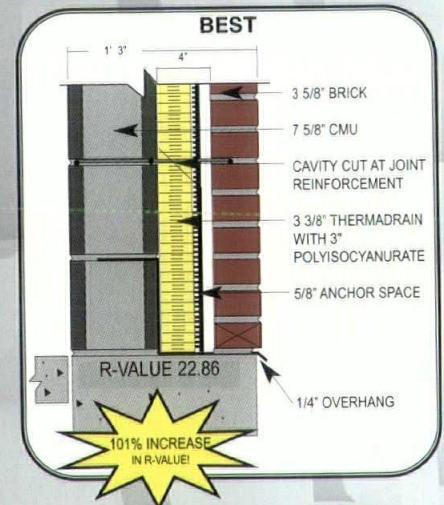
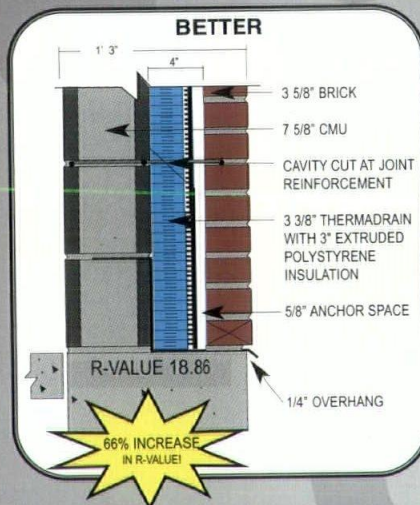
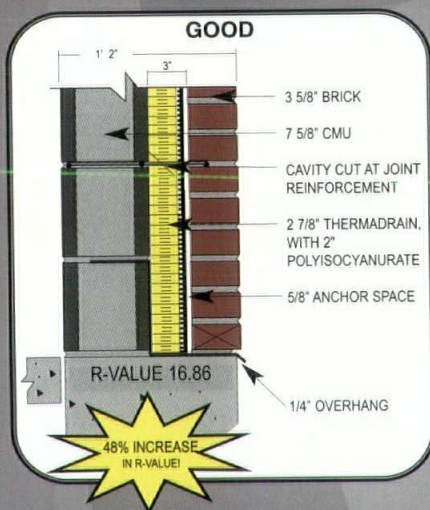
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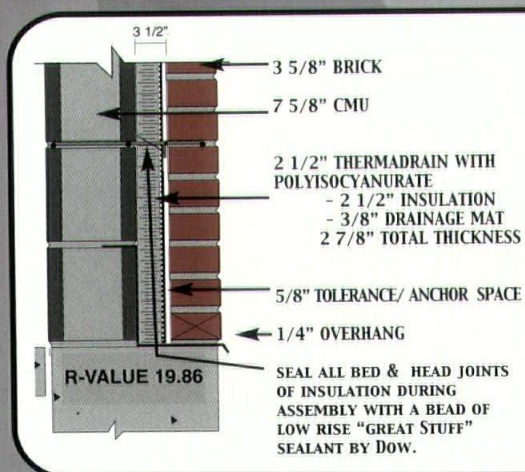
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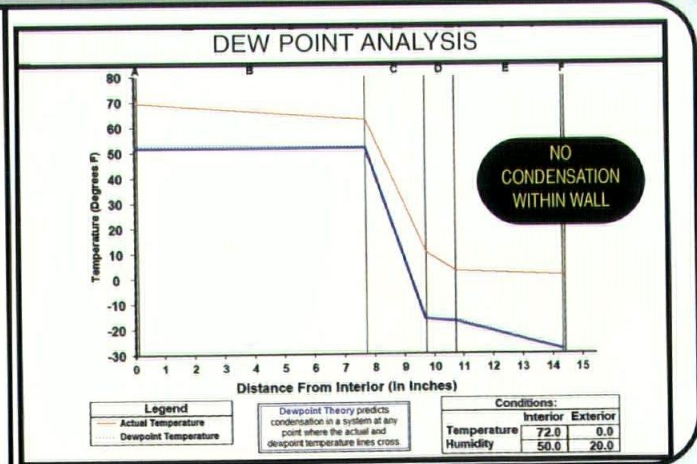
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Project ID: 08-LBH:  
Project Name: Long Beach Harbor  
Manager: MK

## INVOICE

Phase	Phase Description	Contract Amount	% Complete	Prior Billings	This Invoice
08-LBH:01SD	Schematic Design	\$8,000.00	50%	\$0.00	\$4,000.00
08-LBH:02DD	Design Development	\$4,000.00	30%	\$0.00	\$1,200.00
08-LBH:03CD	Construction Documents	\$16,000.00	10%	\$0.00	\$1,600.00
08-LBH:04CA	Construction Administration	\$12,000.00	5%	\$0.00	\$600.00
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<u>\$40,000.00</u>		<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$7,400.00</u>

**Consultant Fees:**

Description	Date	Units	Cost	Amount
Structural Engineer Progress #1	6/25/2008	1.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
			<b>TOTAL:</b>	<u>\$8,000.00</u>

**Reimbursable Expenses**

Description	Date	Units	Cost	Amount
Fedex	6/24/2008	1.00	\$29.00	\$29.00
Plans/Drawings/Sketches	6/25/2008	80.00	\$3.50	\$308.00
			<b>TOTAL:</b>	<u>\$337.00</u>

**Total Amount Due:** \$15,737.00

This Invoice is due upon receipt

**Account Summary**

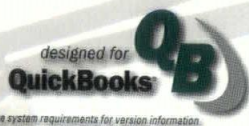
Billed To Date	Paid To Date	Balance Due
\$ 15,737.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 15,737.00

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## Bruce Graham, 84, Dies

Photo courtesy of SOM | Stuart Rodgers Photography



Bruce Graham, FAIA, the designer of many noteworthy 20th-century buildings in Chicago, Hong Kong, London and other cities, and a pillar of the global renown of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, died in March at age 84. AIA Chicago extends its condolences to Graham's family, friends and colleagues.

While his buildings were supremely functional, he also embraced the pursuit of beauty in architecture. "We cannot explain every spatial move except that they must exist for the poetry to exist," Graham once said, "and for that purpose does the artist in us live?"

Graham "was the Burnham of his generation," an architectural historian told *Chicago Tribune* architecture critic Blair Kamin in an article at the time of Graham's death. Kamin went on to say that "Graham's best designs lent a Chicago-style muscularity to the lean, crisp modernist look brought to perfection by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe."

Graham's four most iconic contributions to the Chicago skyline are the Willis (formerly Sears) Tower, the John Hancock Center, the Inland Steel Building, and the Richard J. Daley Center (originally the Chicago Civic Center). All are exemplars of that muscularity. On each, he had stellar collaborators; most notably Fazlur Khan on Sears and Hancock, and Walter Netsch, FAIA, who left the Inland Steel project to work on the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

In *The New York Times* obituary of Graham, Joseph Rosa, the Art Institute's chairman of architecture and design told William Grimes

that with his Hancock and Sears projects, Graham "singlehandedly put Chicago back on the map. Without them, Chicago architecture would have been frozen in time. They expressed the optimism in Chicago and pointed toward what the future could be."

Many of Graham's buildings are still marvels, but of course none sprang from the earth fully formed. In a 1997 interview for the oral history archives of the School of the Art Institute, Graham recounted how Inland Steel's now-beloved stainless finish was just one of a few exterior looks that were considered.

"There were three schemes for Inland Steel, but not as different as you might think they were," Graham told Betty J. Blum in a conversation at his home in Hobe Sound, Fla. "One was with all the steel in black. Another was black, but with stainless-steel mullions. The other one was all stainless steel. I liked [that] combination because of the distinction of the structures and changes in proportion."

In the same interview, he rejected a notion, attributed to SOM founder Nathaniel Owings, that during the period when Graham was at the helm, the firm was no longer led by creators but by "order-takers" who cranked out standardized modernist buildings: "Standardized? Baloney! I liked Marc Goldstein's work, but it was nothing like mine. I liked Chuck Bassett's work, but it was nothing like mine. The same with Roy Allen or Gordon Bunshaft or Walter Netsch. My work and Walter's were not alike, and we were in the same city. Owings is full of baloney. Standardized, that's baloney. He was a big blabbermouth in many ways."

Graham was also the channel through whom important works of public art came to Chicago. Among them are landmark pieces by Alexander Calder (at the Federal Plaza) and Joan Miro (near the Daley Center) and Henry Moore (on the University of Chicago campus).

Born in 1925 in Bogota, Colombia, Graham served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He then went to the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated in 1948 with a degree in architecture. He worked for a few years at Holabird, Root & Burgee in Chicago, moving to Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in 1951 as chief of design. He became a partner in 1960, later headed the firm, and retired from it in 1989.

Graham's wife, Jane, died in 2004. He is survived by three children and six grandchildren.

Photo courtesy of SOM



Graham, second from left, with a model of the Hancock Center and (from left) Fazlur Kahn, Albert Lockett, Lou Bruner and Richard Lenke



## High Five

### Five Chapter Members Elevated to Fellows

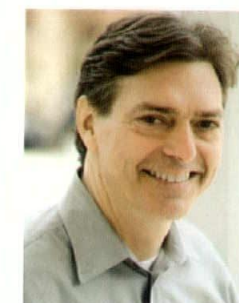
AIA Chicago congratulates the five members elevated into the College of Fellows, an honor awarded to architects who have made contributions of national significance to the profession. Martha Bell, Philip Castillo, Gunny Harboe, Jim Loewenberg and Peter Weismantle have all been distinguished with the honor of fellowship.

→ **Martha Bell, FAIA**, is a managing partner at Tilton, Kelly + Bell, LLC. Bell has spearheaded a broad range of design efforts in her community that have left lasting improvements in culture, art, education and overall quality of life. She also pioneered two national AIA initiatives: a groundbreaking study that introduced Building Information Modeling (BIM) in a 1988 *Architecture* magazine article; and the creation of the Architectural Billing Index (ABI), which is now a key resource for national economists.

→ **Philip Castillo, FAIA**, is an executive principal at Murphy/Jahn. Castillo's focus for the past 35 years has been on large-scale urban development projects throughout the world, including the Sony Center in Berlin, Germany, the Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok, Thailand, and the Tokyo Station Development in Japan. He is currently researching and developing new sustainable design concepts and technologies for several urban areas in the Middle East.

→ **Gunny Harboe, FAIA**, is the president of Harboe Architects. Harboe has developed an international reputation as an architect specializing in preservation of 19th- and 20th-century landmarks and has worked on projects including the renovation of the Reliance Building/Hotel Burnham in Chicago and Crown Hall at the Illinois Institute of Technology. He served as AIA Chicago's president in 2000 and AIA National's regional director from 2001 to 2004. He currently serves as vice president of the International Council on Monuments and Sites' Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage.

→ **Jim Loewenberg, FAIA**, is the president at Loewenberg Architects, co-CEO of Magellan Development Group and chairman of NNP Residential. Loewenberg has achieved international recognition for his creative innovation in residential architecture and development. He has revitalized



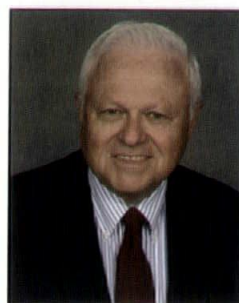
Gunny Harboe, FAIA



Martha Bell, FAIA



Philip Castillo, FAIA



Jim Loewenberg, FAIA



Peter Weismantle, FAIA

neighborhoods in Chicago, making downtown living more enjoyable. An example of this is Lakeshore East, a 28-acre, mixed-use community in Chicago that is believed to be one of the largest urban developments in the country.

→ **Peter Weismantle, FAIA**, is the Director of Supertall Building Technology at Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture. Weismantle has worked on large, mixed-use development projects internationally, including the 88-story Jin Mao Tower in Shanghai, China, and the 160-story Burj Khalifa (the world's tallest building) in the United Arab Emirates. He is currently Chairman of the Height Committee for the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat and Vice Chairman of the Chicago Committee on High Rise Buildings.

## Walk the Walk—and Track It

You are invited to attend "AIA 2030 Commitment – Part 2: Project Tracking and Reporting Requirements," on Tues., May 18, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at AIA Chicago. Earn 1.5 LUs

The Committee on the Environment has gathered a panel of Chicago-based sustainable design experts, who will provide an in-depth review of AIA 2030 Commitment project reporting requirements, tools developed for easier project tracking, and share their experiences in implementing energy-efficient building design.

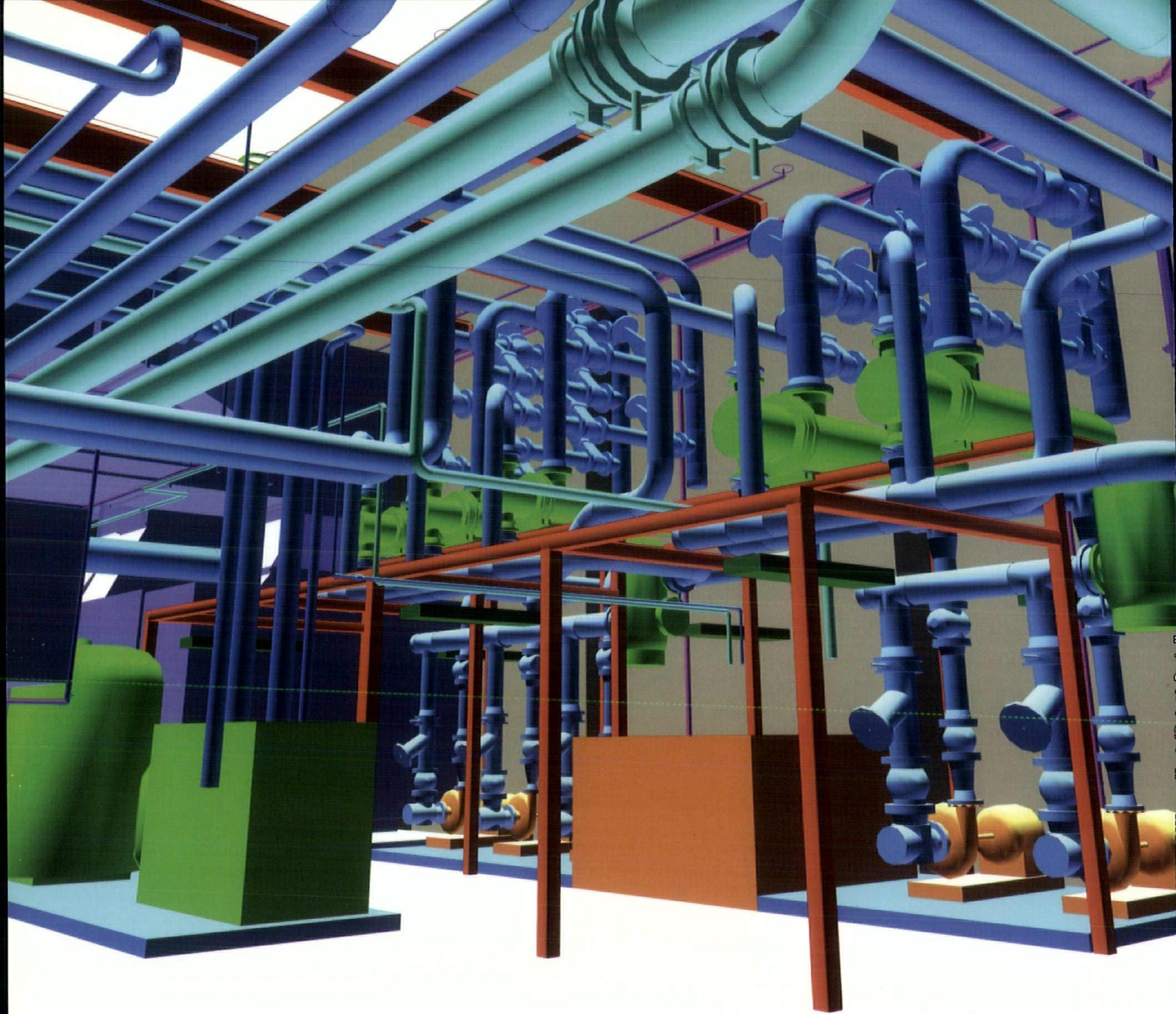
The presenters will discuss how building energy modeling can inform and guide architectural design and help design firms successfully reduce the energy consumption in the Chicago built environment.

The tracking tool is part of a national initiative to collect data from firms participating in the 2030 Challenge. The tool will be available to download at [www.aiachicago.org/cote.asp](http://www.aiachicago.org/cote.asp)

## Professional Development Conference

Save the date – Thurs., Sept. 16

The Professional Development Conference returns on Thurs., Sept. 16, at the Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel, 1 W. Wacker Dr. The full day of learning will offer three general sessions: morning, noon and an after-work program. Breakout sessions on a variety of topics will complete the program.



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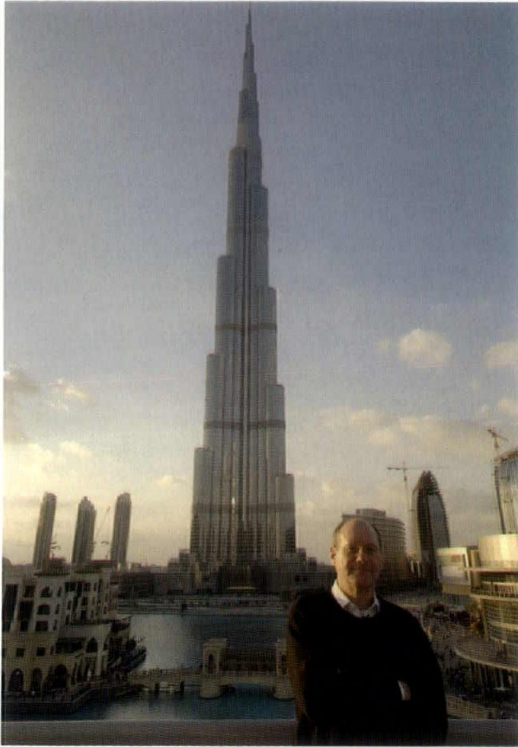
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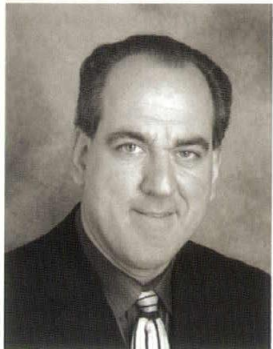
Bill Baker

On May 13, Bill Baker, the SOM structural engineering partner whose innovative work on tall buildings contributed to the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest manmade structure, will receive a gold medal from the Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE) at a meeting in London.

The 'buttressed core' that Baker developed, helped make possible the construction of supertall skyscrapers like the Burj Khalifa (Sophisticated wind engineering also played a part in the Burj Khalifa). Two other supertalls completed in 2009—the Nanjing Greenland Financial Center in China, and the Trump International Hotel and Tower here in Chicago—also benefited from Baker's expertise.

"I am quite overwhelmed by the honor of receiving the Gold Medal," says Baker, who will address IStructE's Institute of Directors at the London meeting. The gold medal is the organization's highest individual award, given for "exceptional and outstanding contributions to the advancement of structural engineering."

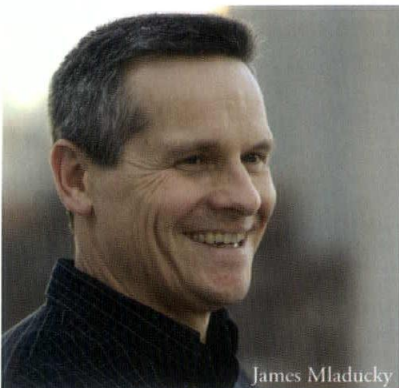
→ In other news of SOM: in February, the magazine *Fast Company* named the company one of the world's 59 most innovative companies. The firm was number 32 on the magazine's top 50 for 2009, and this year earned a spot among the 59 Innovation All Stars. The magazine mentioned SOM's role in the Burj Khalifa and the Digital Media City Landmark now under construction in Seoul, Korea, as important notches in its belt.



Gary Miciunas

Gary Miciunas joined Perkins+Will as principal of the firm's planning and strategies practice. He had been senior managing director at the design and consulting firm Nelson, and has 25 years' experience in advisory services and practice management.

Design work began this spring on a 120,000-square-foot arts instructional center at Rock Valley College in Rockford. The Illinois Capital Development Board tapped Booth Hansen and associate architect Studio Gang to design the facility, which will bring together the college's arts, drama and music departments into one building. It will include a 600-seat music performance hall, a 350-seat black box theater, an art gallery, classrooms and other spaces. Construction on the project, which will aim for LEED Gold certification, is expected to begin in summer 2011.



James Mladucky

After seven years with OWP/P (now OWP/P Cannon Design), James Mladucky, AIA, has moved to Northwestern Memorial Hospital, as the director of planning and design.

Mladucky notes that his new position will put him "in the forefront of directing the planning and design of facilities that support the NMH patient-first philosophy." NMH's vision statement says the hospital hopes to be among the nation's top 10 academic medical centers by 2020. "Getting there will be a challenge," according to Mladucky. "How facilities support and enable that goal will rest with me and my new staff."



Vermilion

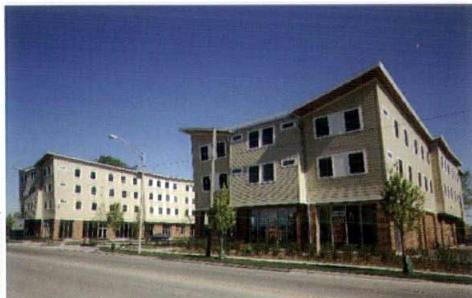


Brix

Searl Lamaster Howe Architects has completed appetizing projects for restaurant clients on both coasts. Both entailed re-invigorating existing venues.

Vermilion in New York has a menu built on strong combinations of Indian and Latin cuisine and the space demanded a potent look. Reusing materials that were already in place made meeting the six-week construction schedule and limited budget feasible.

A classic Napa, Calif., restaurant on 16 acres of vineyards, Brix renewed its focus on farm-to-table dining. Working with restaurateur and chef David Gingrass and interior designer JeAnne Ettrick, Searl Lamaster Howe created a new palette of finishes that reflect the Napa Valley wine-growing region.



The Whistler Crossing project entailed mixing new construction (left) with existing structures (right) to revivify the walkable community (center).

Farr Associates' rehabilitation of 90 townhouse units originally built in 1960 in south suburban Riverdale earned a Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus 2009 Preservation Award for Rehabilitation.

The townhouses were built in 1960 as part of the Pacesetter Gardens District, innovative at the time for its attached single-family homes in a suburban setting. With two new mixed-use buildings, they make up a 10-acre project called Whistler Crossing, a mixed-income development that is the first project in Illinois to be certified under the Stage 3 category of LEED for Neighborhood Development criteria. (Stage 3 is for projects that are fully built; Stages 1 and 2 are for projects in planning stages.)

The project also received the award for Outstanding For-Profit Neighborhood Real Estate Project from the Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards, giver of the Landmarks award named above. Holsten Real Estate Development was the developer.

Along with being a walkable, previously developed site with schools, jobs and public transportation nearby, Whistler Crossing has dark sky-compliant outdoor light fixtures and lighting strategies that minimize impact on bird migration and reduce sky glow. The new mixed-use buildings contain ground-floor retail space to enhance the life of the neighborhood, and throughout the project, energy-saving and stormwater-managing technologies have been deployed.

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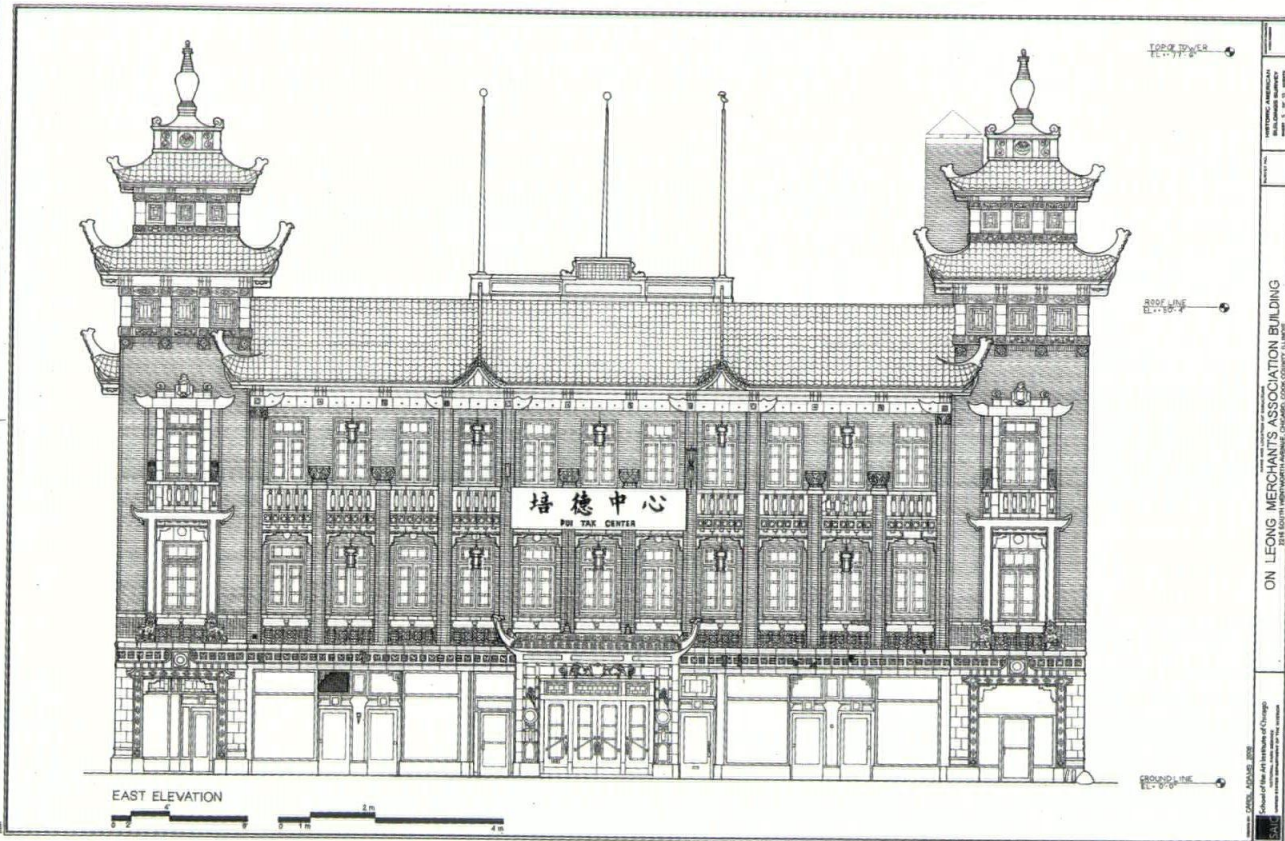


Victory Centre of South Chicago

The Victory Centre of South Chicago, a supportive living facility designed by Harley Ellis Devereaux's Life Enhancement Studio, received LEED Silver certification and is the first building certified as part of the city of Chicago's South Chicago LEED for Neighborhood Development pilot program.

Developed by Pathway Senior Living, Victory Centre has 112 affordable studio units for seniors who have fixed and moderate incomes and need some assistance with daily living. Sustainable features include the redevelopment of the site from a brownfield, extra-tight insulation and windows, and low-emitting paints and sealants.

The firm's Life Enhancement Studio focuses on planning and design for senior living and special needs residences that integrate supportive services.



A team of School of the Art Institute of Chicago students took first prize in an annual competition that requires measured drawings of a historic structure not yet recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).

The group, students in a Physical Documentation course taught by Charles Pipal, AIA, in SAIC's historic preservation department, prepared a precise document of the elaborate Pui Tak Center, aka the On Leong Chinese Merchants' Association Building, the landmark structure

built at 2216 S. Wentworth Ave. in Chinatown in 1928. The students are Carol Adams, Ginny Way, Mitch Brown, Frank Butterfield, Ceylan Celebiler, Tianyi Jiang, Pam Pietrowsky, Sussannah Ribstein, Kathleen Shanley, Noel Weidner, and Christine Whims. Emily Spreng was the teaching assistant.

The Charles E. Peterson Prize, presented jointly by the HABS of the National Park Service, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, and the AIA, is in its 27th year. Student groups from Pipal's class had received honorable mentions or other prizes five times prior to this first-place win.

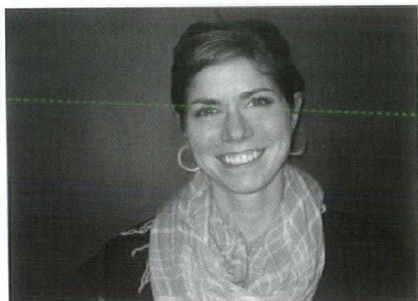
A mid-February groundbreaking began work on what may become the first LEED Platinum industrial facility in the country, a corporate headquarters and produce distribution center for Testa Produce.

Epstein designed the 91,200-square-foot facility, whose sustainable features include a wind turbine 167 feet tall, and landscape, solar and water features. A rounded, vegetated roof that covers about 50 percent of the roof area and helps prevent stormwater runoff from the site will curve down and appear to spill over the edge and become a green wall at the front of the building. Permeable paving on the site lets rainwater drain into bio-swales, and the roof is fitted out for future installation of photovoltaic panels.

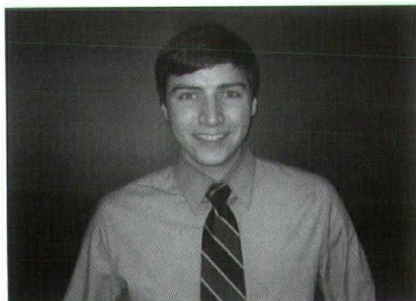
The complex is being built on an old brownfield site at 4555 S. Racine Ave. that formerly housed meat processing facilities.



Rael Slutsky, AIA, who headed Epstein's design team, credits the client firm and its chief, Peter Testa, with "a vision to create a facility that was the ultimate in sustainability."



Angela Spadoni



Charles Arko, Assoc. AIA

Two intern architects have joined Eckenhoff Saunders Architects.

Angela Spadoni was at Zoka Zola Architecture as a competition team member on prototype preschools and kindergartens in Croatia.

Charles Arko, Assoc. AIA, came to the firm from Pappageorge/Haymes, Ltd., working on mixed-use towers in Chicago and other cities.



In February, Columbia College opened its first newly constructed building, the \$21-million Media Production Center, a 35,500-square-foot facility designed by Studio Gang Architects.

In its 120-year history, Columbia had only occupied previously existing buildings. The Media Production Center at 16th and State Streets was the result of extensive collaboration between Studio Gang and the college's faculty, according to its president, Dr. Warrick L. Carter.

Studio Gang made the building's façade an outsized reference to media: a run of individually colored glass panels that *Chicago Tribune* architecture critic Blair Kamin likened to "the color parts of a television test pattern."

The 40,000-square-foot site is a former brownfield that the city of Chicago sold to Columbia. The new facility includes two soundstages; a motion capture studio for the creation of 2- and 3-Dimensional film and gaming; an animation lab and other media-specific spaces. In the lobby is a restored terra cotta arch from a now-demolished office building nearby that housed Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, a precursor to Paramount Pictures founded in 1916 when Chicago was a prominent center of movie production.





Abigail Clary, AIA LEED AP

Mark Nichols, AIA, LEED AP

## Two healthcare principals at Loeb Schlossman & Hackl have received national plaudits.

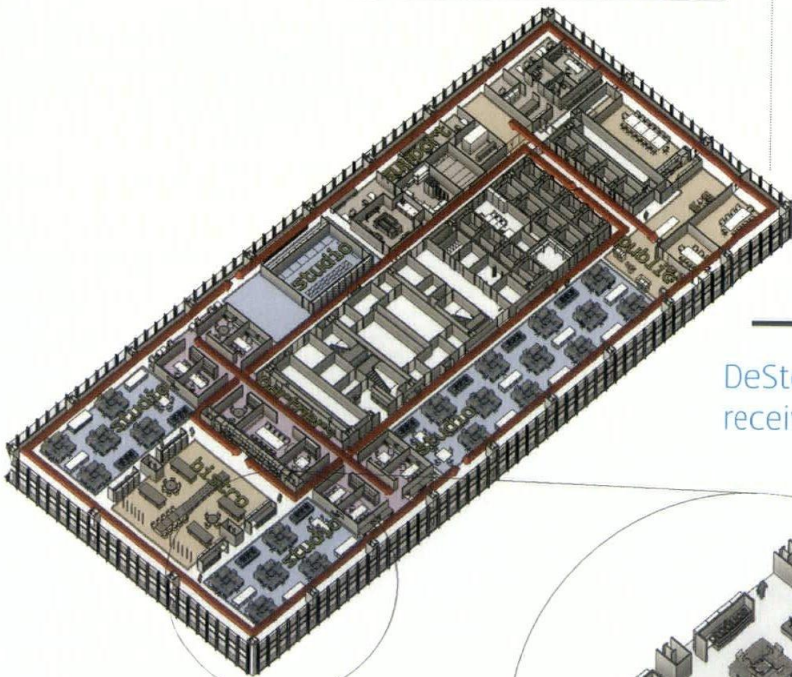
→ In its January issue, *Building Design & Construction* magazine named **Abigail Clary, AIA LEED AP**, to its annual “40 Under 40” list, a salute to accomplished young professionals in the architecture, engineering and construction industry. Clary, who co-leads the firm’s Healthcare Market Sector, is the youngest woman to be named principal in LSH’s 85-year history.

→ The American College of Healthcare Architects tapped **Mark Nichols, AIA, LEED AP**, for its Board of Regents. Nichols has a 25-year track record that includes leading major expansion and renovation projects at six of Chicago’s largest hospitals.

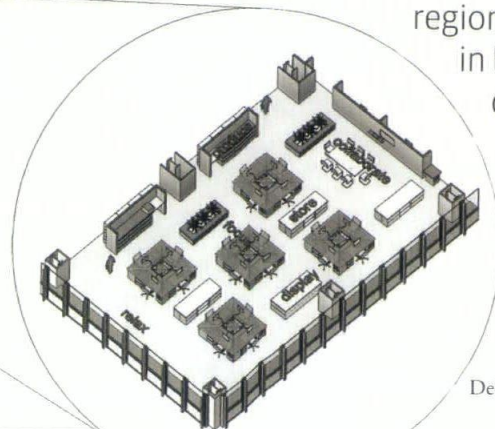


On Roscoe Street, at the site of its own former office, Wilkinson Blender designed a three-unit mixed-use condominium structure. The street-level unit has retail, and above are one one-story and one two-story unit. The duplex unit has a green roof/rooftop yard that contains 48 tons of soil. There are also solar thermal panels on top of the building.

The law firm Baker & McKenzie has tapped Goettsch Partners to design its new offices on seven full and one partial floor at 300 E. Randolph. The offices, slated for completion in the second half of 2011, will occupy 237,000 square feet in the new 24-story vertical addition that Goettsch designed for the building, the home of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois. Baker & McKenzie will move its Chicago practice and global services division into the space.



DeStefano Partners’ new office at 330 N. Wabash received LEED Gold for Commercial Interiors certification. Credits came for such features as regional materials, high recycled content in building materials, high levels of daylighting and access to public transportation options.



DeStefano Partners interior

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## ROAM IF YOU WANT TO

Wright Heerema project puts workstations everywhere and nowhere



Photo courtesy of EdWhitephotographics.com

HSBC Bank Global Software Development Center lounge

Thanks to mobile technology, work no longer describes where you are, but what you are doing. It's evident in the cafés, the airport lounges and even on public transportation: Work and its workers no longer need to be in a fixed location.

Josh Tremblay, principal and director of interior design at Chicago-based Wright Heerema Architects, explains that workplace mobility, which was once mostly an employer's strategy to keep employees happy, has evolved into something that works for both sides—employer and employee. "Office mobility reduces the occupancy cost of real estate as well as an organization's environmental footprint."

A mobile workplace strategy was central to the project Tremblay directed for the 146,000-square-foot HSBC Bank Global Software Development Center in Burnaby, a suburb of Vancouver, Canada.

HSBC's mobility agenda is driven by a flexible work policy called HSBC@Work. The program offers employees the option to work from home, which reduces carbon emissions from daily commutes, gives them greater flexibility in balancing their personal and professional lives, and reduces the amount of required office space.

"HSBC's mobility agenda allowed us to think differently about the nature of office work and reduce the organization's square footage by redistributing workspaces," Tremblay notes. About 20 percent of HSBC's employees opt into the program and work from home, while the remaining 80 percent when not on the road, will choose to work at one of the many non-dedicated workspaces within the Burnaby facility.

The ground floor and roof of the five-story building (which is LEED Platinum for core and shell, and anticipating LEED Gold for the interiors) contain a variety of amenities for the staff including a café, a game room, a quiet lounge and a roof garden. All the amenity spaces are multipurpose and include private work zones, shared workspaces and lounge seating outfitted with tablet arms.

Workers who prefer a more traditional work setting can grab an available workstation on the remaining four floors, which have non-dedicated open workstations, coffee bars and conference and production facilities.

Tremblay points out that in today's economic climate, many organizations are looking to lower their occupancy costs. But, he says, what makes the HSBC project successful is the coordinated effort that starts with a clearly stated corporate strategy. Upper management, a thoughtful real estate acquisition team and HSBC's human resource department closely managed the entire project process. "This team effort is critical and it's what makes this program work," he says. → **Cindy Coleman**

# TREAT ME WRIGHT

Iconic Robie House turns 100 amid a slow renovation

By Pamela Dittmer McKuen



All images courtesy of the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust

Emphatically horizontal and with all the hallmarks of Wright, Robie House has become one of the architect's best known works and a Hyde Park treasure.

The Frederick C. Robie House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and long heralded as the forerunner of architectural modernism, is turning 100 years old. To celebrate, the home's guardian, the Frank

Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust, is hosting an array of guest experiences including programs, tours, concerts and soirees. The guest of honor, however, isn't quite dressed for the occasion.

That's because the \$10-million restoration program, intended to return the structure to its original grandeur in time for the 2010 Centennial Celebration, has stalled. The Trust undertook the project more than a decade ago and so far has spent about \$6.7 million. The money flow has become a trickle, said architect Karen Sweeney, the organization's director of facilities and restoration.

"We've had really bad luck with fundraising," she said. "Our first big kick-off gala was scheduled for the Saturday after 9/11, and our biggest sponsor was someone with four floors of people in the Twin Towers, so we had to cancel. We had to start over and get the energy going again, and then the economy tanked."

The Robie House, 5757 S. Woodlawn Ave. in Hyde Park, is one of the last of Wright's Prairie-style homes. Completed in 1910, the three-story, red-brick building sits long and low on a corner lot, facing south, and is easily identified by iconic sweeping horizontal lines, dramatic roof overhangs and banks of art-glass windows. Over the decades it has gained national, state and city landmark status as well as a listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Robie House had numerous owners before being donated in 1963 to the University of Chicago, which used it for offices and programs. It headquartered the alumni associa-



Repetition and symmetry are taken to their ultimate in Wright's light-bathed living room for Robie House. The art glass panels (below left) are incomparable.

tion in 1997, when the University approached the Trust with a partnership in mind. A deal was struck. The University retains ownership and leases the building to the Trust for pocket change into perpetuity. The Trust, which also restored and operates the Wright Home and Studio in Oak Park, opened the home as a museum and took over its operations, restoration, preservation and funding. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a co-lessee.

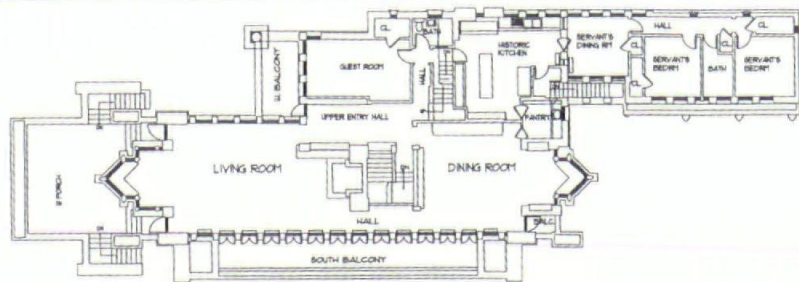
By the time the lease was signed, the home had fallen into serious disrepair. Water and termite damage was greater than anyone imagined. Forty percent of the built-in cabinetry and other woodwork had disappeared. Bathrooms had been gutted to make offices.

"The University made a couple of efforts to make the building stable, but nobody ever had enough money to really get in there," said Sweeney. "And it's always problematic when you have spaces that are filled with people."

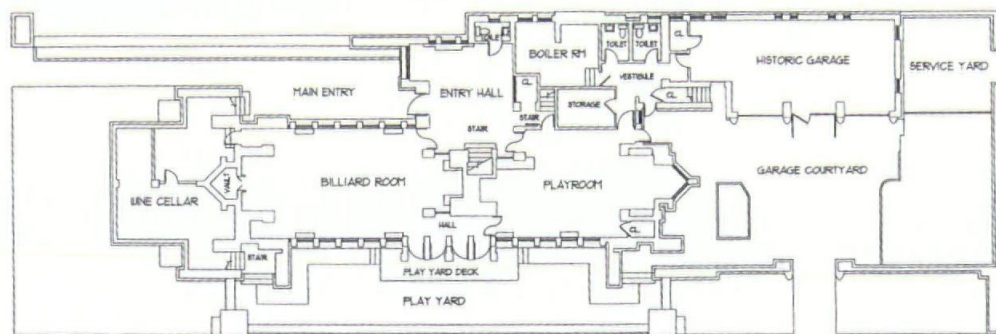
Sweeney and a restoration committee comprised of staffers, architects and historians created the program. They worked with historic records and architectural drawings, which were plentiful, and photographs, which were not. They analyzed existing materials and components and hunted for clues such as dust marks and hidden samples of wood and paint.

First came the structural stabilization and exterior restoration, a three-year process. Major projects included historic roof replacement, wall and balcony reconstruction, masonry repointing, conservation of 22 art-glass doors and windows,





MAIN LEVEL



GROUND LEVEL

The plan of the house shows Wright's genius for arranging spaces for maximum visual effect and for separation of functions. The long, secluded entry channel along the north side of the house compresses a visitor's perception, so that upon entry, the sensation of opening up is enhanced.

were fabricated and mounted. The mechanical systems were updated, and climate management and sprinkling systems were installed. The building also was checked out to make sure it could withstand the rigors of assembly occupancy. Here, Wright's construction proved hardy. Only one non-original steel beam had to be replaced to support the weight of visiting throngs to the museum.

These early projects were boosted by two large grants, \$250,000 from Save America's Treasures and \$2 million from the State of Illinois.

"That's the easy money," said Sweeney. "It's to keep the water from pouring in."

The next phase, the interior restoration, has been creeping along as funds are available. So far, every room has received some degree of attention. Two bedrooms and bath in the servants' wing, the third-floor bedrooms and baths, and the second-floor guestroom and bath are nearly completed. The work is detailed and tedious.

"It's the kind of thing where people say, Why does it cost so much?" said Sweeney. "One of the most expensive items is paint stripping. It should be simple, but we're leaving the wood undisturbed and stripping all the plaster between it and having to remove three or four coats."

Also, because of increased foot traffic, the wood floors need to be hand-stripped and hand-sanded to avoid diminishing their thickness, she explained.

On the To-Do list are re-creating interior finishes and paint colors, conserving historic plaster and custom-matching missing plaster, conserving 118 art-glass windows and sashes, and custom-fabricating 70 brass light fixtures, numerous built-ins and five immense carpets. Very last are the hardscaping and landscaping.

"I've been able to get enough smaller grants to feel we're still moving forward," Sweeney said. "If we weren't, I'd be worried about it."

One example is the Underwriters Laboratories' grant to clean, restore and UL label 29 original light fixtures so they can be installed.

"We're on our final (fundraising) push for the interior, but we're in our quiet phase, where you're going out face-to-face asking for dollars," said Sweeney. "It's too bad we're not going to be ready for the 100-year anniversary, but we're celebrating programmatically. We're getting a lot of people in here and telling them the story of the Robie House and why it needs what it does."

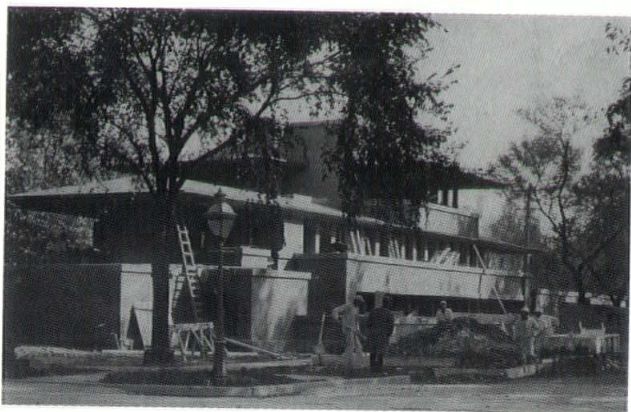
Mike Jackson, FAIA, acting chief of the Preservation Services Division of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, understands what the Trust is going through. He served as project manager

when the Wright-designed Dana-Thomas House in Springfield was restored in 1990.

"This isn't an uncommon problem," he said. "We promote the centennial of a building as being a point in time to do a restoration, but it depends on fundraising. It's symbolically nice, but missing by one or two years isn't an issue within the relative long term of a resource. Getting it done is what's important."

Fortunately, the only penalty for not finishing the Robie House this year is the emotional one. The one deadline came from the University, which required building stabilization as a condition of the lease, and it was met years ago.

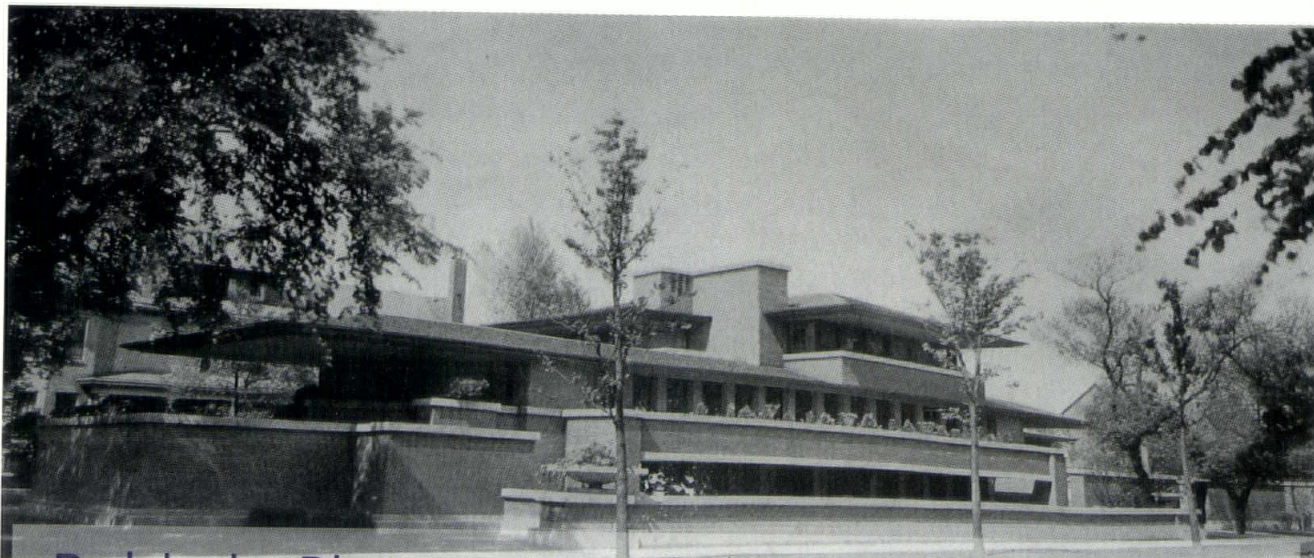
Sweeney is optimistic that the delay won't significantly impact the final cost, which was calculated at somewhere



Historical photos of Robie House (above and left) show how it nestled into its setting on a tree-lined residential street. In the decades since, the character of the street has become more urban and collegiate. Today Robie commands respect; the far larger business school building across the street—the design of Rafael Viñoly—tips its hat to Wright's creation, with a series of horizontal masses projecting toward and reflecting the master's work.

between \$10 million and \$11 million. Nor is she expecting any serious surprises. But she won't speculate about when the project will be entirely finished.

"We're pleased," she said. "We would have loved to move ahead with faster fundraising. In some ways there is advantage to not having the money. If we had all the money upfront, time can push you to make the wrong decisions. The more time you have, the more thoughtful decisions you can make." CA



## Robie in Pictures

In July, the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust will release an extended photographic essay about Robie House in book form. *Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House*, with photos by architecture photographer Tim Long, showcases the interior and exterior design elements of the house that many scholars calls Wright's declara-

tion of indigenous American design. The book will also include historical photos of the structure. Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic Paul Goldberger wrote the book's foreword, in which he explores the way Wright's philosophy is made manifest in Robie House. *Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House* will be available for \$19.99 at [www.shopwright.org](http://www.shopwright.org) and at the Preservation Trust's stores in Oak Park and at Robie House.



# ALL FOR **THREE**, AND **THREE** FOR ALL

The new-model firm BKL is a collaborative designed for a new era

By Thomas Kerwin, FAIA





Photography by Jill Pader | www.jillpader.com

Three entities came together to birth BKL. At far left are developers Jim Loewenberg (left in photo) and David Carlins of Magellan. At near left are architects David Brininstool (left in photo) and Brad Lynch, whose firm folded into the new organization. Seen alone is Tom Kerwin, formerly of SOM. Joining all of them in the large group photo is David Carlins (bottom left in photo), a top Magellan executive.

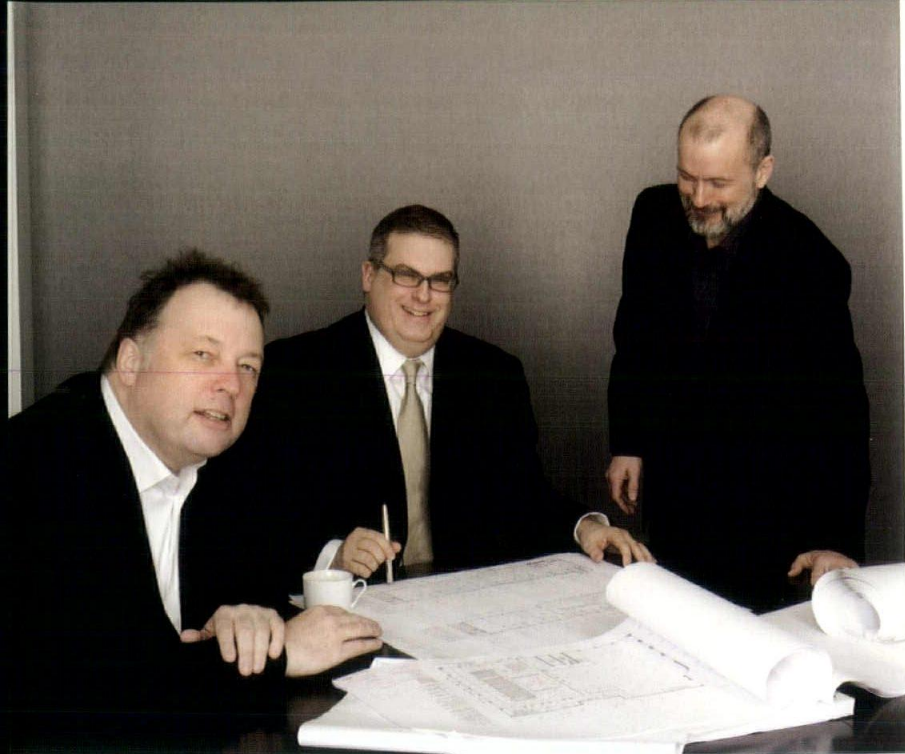
The groans were audible from Copenhagen to Daley Plaza that day last October when the International Olympic Committee eliminated Chicago from contention to host the 2016 Summer Games. At the time it didn't seem like much good could come out of the crushing defeat. There was no way around it. The spirits of those of us, who spent years to win the right to host the games and traveled thousands of miles to be part of the celebration, were as flat as week-old champagne.

Over time, the gloom has dissipated, especially as it became clear that good things were coming out of Chicago's Olympic quest. For one thing, a generation of Chicago professionals found strength in their ability to successfully collaborate, liked the way the pieces fit, and discovered what turned out to be new multidisciplinary ways of getting things done.

During the run-up to the Olympic bid, I had grown close to two exceptional Chicago-based architects: David Brininstool, AIA, and Brad Lynch. I also found a remarkable number of powerful ideas coming from the team at Magellan Development, co-CEOs Jim Loewenberg and Joel Carlins' multidimensional Chicago-based firm. Together, we have done

some exceptional work on plans for a lakefront Olympic Village and other innovative housing options. When Chicago wasn't picked for the Games, it seemed a shame not to carry on what became an increasingly exciting business conversation. Our talks took us beyond the Olympics and on to a series of innovative business models particularly as they related to large-scale, high-end development. These ongoing talks between Lynch, Brininstool, Magellan and me, were taking us toward a strategic teaming that could collectively give us the ability to scout, bid, design, permit, finance, build and sell the high-end residential components that are becoming an increasingly important part of successful worldwide urban developments.

This collection of powerfully complementary skill sets led us inevitably, it now seems, to a decision to take our post-Olympic dreams and turn them into something tangible: the January 2010 announcement of a new Chicago-based firm



Among the architects, Kerwin (center) provides a solid network of international contacts, while Lynch (left) and Brininstool supply the high-style design expertise.

called Brininstool, Kerwin and Lynch. What is unique about BKL goes beyond great architecture and a powerful understanding of the business of architecture. It also draws strength from a strategic alliance with the powerhouse Chicago real estate developer Magellan, which has enabled us, in a remarkably short time, to bring to life a highly competitive architecture and design firm. Here, we collectively feel, is a new design model uniquely shaped to match the difficult requirements of as tough a business climate as we have witnessed in our professional lifetimes.

My role as BKL's managing principal is an evolutionary step beyond my near quarter century at SOM as architect, project manager and managing partner. One area of development and design that I can claim to have fostered at SOM is a deeper understanding and broader vocabulary involving a number of design business-related issues. These took form in my decision to enroll at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. Kellogg teaches a wide range of strategic business skills that help close the seemingly unbridgeable chasm between great architecture and design business survival. These include sophisticated modeling methods and the ability to apply macroeconomic principles to the establishment and running of a global architectural practice.

As a part of the Kellogg program, I learned to use many of the corporate tools used by sophisticated business clients, learning how various kinds of financing and types of staging could be invaluable to the decision-making process. Ultimately, as a part of reckoning with the business of design, I came to understand how an architect speaking the language of business could provide a crucial advantage in helping clients formulate their own programs, as well as achieve the comfort levels capable of maximizing project value and extending the life of professional relationships. The latter is particularly

useful for overseas projects, particularly in China and other parts of Asia, where a deeper business vocabulary enables enhanced communication as well as the ability to successfully navigate critical economic cycles and often-difficult, time- and cash-consuming negotiations.

Here, not coincidentally, was the same kind of developmental nimbleness that was easy to recognize in projects such as Chicago's various Lakeshore East developments, and in so many of the luxury mixed-use projects that made Magellan Development an acknowledged leader. These were the kinds of core strengths that, from our earliest discussions, led us to recognize how drawing on Magellan's expertise and financial solidity could help our new firm sidestep the current downturn in the American building market.

It came to us that there might be a new model that included Magellan's developmental expertise with my own architectural business experience leavened by an important design talent packaged together and taken global. It seemed logical that the intelligent application of sound development principles would allow us to compete in the plethora of geographies where the transition from agriculture-based economies to a manufacturing- and service-based model had created an enormous niche for the kind of high-end, mixed-use projects for which Magellan is renowned.

Not that there's anything simple about taking a business global. What did help sort things out was a series of conversations with Jim Loewenberg, FAIA, and his partner at Magellan, President David Carlins. Very prolific in Chicago, Magellan possesses a unique talent in construction, development and financing, which made it hard for me to resist an offer from Magellan to help fund an innovative new firm that would enable them to export their strengths in luxury mixed-use development. My own take on the offer was that rather than recruit employees, I should look for true design partners whose architectural strengths could amplify Magellan's and my own.

As a fan and close observer of Chicago-style architecture and development, I had come to recognize Brad Lynch and David Brininstool as two of our region's most talented designers. Their two decades of work around Chicago are rooted in modernism and represent the kind of outstanding level of work that was always the bottom line at SOM. Lynch and Brininstool's work is, in fact, as exciting as anything I've seen anywhere in the world, suffering only from the fact that it hadn't reached far beyond eastern Wisconsin, where their 2003 Racine Art Museum is recognized as one of the nation's great new civic spaces.

It seemed to me that this lack of exposure was a problem that we could overcome. My initial task, therefore, became to find ways to package the work of Lynch and Brininstool within the context of the developmental genius of Magellan, and take the result on the road to places where the need for high-end mixed-use development was the greatest.

For me, the BKL model is a dream come true. After 23 years working in one of the world's largest design firms, I was hungry for an environment that was less corporate and more entrepreneurial. It seemed to me that here was an opportunity to set in motion the kind of nimble business model that gives us room to move and an ability to recast ourselves at the blink of an economic upturn.

As great an idea as it was, the BKL deal took time and could easily have foundered. The fragility had more to do with the delicate balance that needed to be struck, one in which all three entities, Magellan, Brininstool+Lynch and I, felt that terms were favorable and in all of our best interests. As business and civic leader Pat Ryan eloquently advises, every successful deal has symmetry, and finding symmetry among the three parties was crucial. From a business standpoint we were on terra incognita; there was no real industry model for the kind of multifaceted organization we were trying to create. We needed to come to terms with big issues like corporate governance, the capital structure of the firm, our compensation model, and what resources would be retained by each of the three entities. In the end, everything was handled in a spirit of fairness, smoothed out by the exceptional chemistry that had drawn us together in the first place. The outcome is a business model that is new and designed expressly to slice easily through today's rough economic seas.

It is also, importantly, an inclusive model that is open and welcoming to collaborations with other developers and architects. The quest for the Olympic Games taught us that bringing together the best minds and talents is generally more rewarding than each of us working alone. At its core, the business

world is defined by competition. At the same time, collaboration with our sometime-competitors is often the place where real rewards are possible. Nor are we necessarily talking about a financial payday, but rather an opportunity both to make great urban environments and to reap the interpersonal rewards of a successful collaborative effort.

These days I am traveling a lot, spreading the word about BKL in potential markets in Asia, Europe, North America and beyond. Having learned long ago that an ongoing on the ground presence is essential for offshore architectural success, we are in the process of forming strategic local alliances in places like China, Korea and Vietnam. We have already won projects with a Dutch-based developer and have formalized a three-way strategic alliance with Magellan and Korea's Hanwha E&C. The former is in Chicago, and the latter illustrates an important strategic consideration: As long as U.S. capital markets remain tight, it is essential to uncover opportunities to work with international developers who have more ready access to capital than their American counterparts.

But whether it is a project in Asia or one here in Chicago, BKL will first of all be the showcase for an "all for one and one for all" business philosophy. When we compete it will be with the powerful competitive advantage of Magellan's financial backing, my own hard-won international business expertise, and the spectacular design talent that Lynch and Brininstool bring to the architectural table. CA

*In January, Tom Kerwin, FAIA, left SOM after 23 years to launch Brininstool, Kerwin and Lynch. He is the firm's managing principal.*



The mix of abilities and styles that the three parent firms brought together spawns a new firm that blurs conventional boundaries between architects, developers and builders.

DeStefano Partners' Joseph Gonzalez, FAIA, designed the Metropolitan Park apartments in Grand Rapids, Mich., to bring a flourish to a neighborhood known as 'Avenue of the Arts.' Masonry at the base roots the structure in its traditional surroundings, while zinc and cement board speak of the contemporary goals for the project.



# NOT YOUR FATHER'S MODERNISM

Three affordable housing programs are both contextual and contemporary

By Laurie Petersen

All images courtesy of the firms

Until recently, if the terms “modernism” and “affordable housing” were used in the same sentence, there was usually a negative modifier. The disastrous fate of the CHA’s massive projects created an indelible image of soulless slabs looming over forbidding expanses of asphalt. As these projects began to come down in the 1990s, both public and nonprofit developers of affordable housing vowed to recreate traditional neighborhoods. Concrete and punched windows were out; gables, bay windows and front porches were in.

The traditional idiom that was in favor throughout the housing market has been giving way to a more modern expression—but with a respect for context that was often lacking in the era of urban renewal. These three projects demonstrate that shift. Rather than creating isolated objects, they respect and reinforce the scale and proportions of the neighborhood streetscape and the city grid. “We try to make them contextual and modern at the same time,” says Peter Landon, FAIA, of Landon Bone Baker. He adds that residents of affordable housing want their buildings to “fit in” but “want to feel like they are moving forward in the world, too.”

Landon’s Rosa Parks Homes and Johnson & Lee’s Dr. King Legacy Apartments are both under construction in Chicago, where city government has eased its insistence on traditional design elements. Philip Johnson, AIA, says “the success of Millennium Park made Mayor Daley look at modernism again.” In Grand Rapids, Michigan, the government expressly wanted a “cool” contemporary design to lure people back to the city, and Joe Gonzalez, FAIA, was happy to comply. Whether encouraged or merely tolerated by local governments, this new modernism—contemporary in appearance, but hewing to time-tested urban design principles—is changing the face of affordable housing.

### Honoring a Legacy

The client for the Dr. King Legacy Apartments, the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, has taken on the unusual task of creating a historic district without any physical landmarks. Development of the Martin Luther King Memorial District will honor the intangible substance of the site’s history even though the buildings are no longer there.

The exterior of the King apartments updates the neighborhood’s traditional rows of greystones and brick multi-flat buildings. The multi-colored brick is a metaphor for unity among people of different races.



The Dr. King Legacy apartments are part of a planned memorial district honoring Dr. Martin Luther King’s work in Chicago’s ghettos. The U-shaped plan is intended to restore commercial and pedestrian vitality to a one-time shopping district, and provides parking in the rear. King and his family lived in an apartment at about where the word Hamlin is at the bottom of this image.

In 1966 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought his crusade for social justice to the North, choosing Chicago’s overcrowded Lawndale neighborhood as a base for protests against segregation and urban slum conditions. He and his family moved into a three-flat at 1550 S. Hamlin and lived there for several months; it was the only place he ever resided in the North. His activities in Chicago marked his elevation from a regional to a national leader.

The Dr. King Legacy Apartments will anchor the King Memorial District with a mixed-use complex on 16th Street that provides 45 rental units above six commercial spaces. The retail spaces will be leased at affordable rents to local businesses, except for 1550 S. Hamlin, which will be the Martin Luther King Fair Housing Center, featuring permanent and temporary exhibits. Pylons outside the building will describe the historic significance of this address. Other features planned for the four-acre, three-block-long district are a memorial park, a job training center, a library and new trees lining 16th Street.

The parti is essentially a series of connected six-flats wrapping around both side streets to form a central



courtyard that includes parking, bicycle racks and a tot lot. With a module size of 35 by 70 feet, the units are shallower than traditional Chicago six-flats. Each unit has both a front and back door, the latter leading to a small balcony or terrace. The variety of plans includes two-, three- and four-bedroom layouts. Johnson prefers the six-flat configuration to a long shared corridor because “there is less anonymity”—and therefore more security—when only six units share the public spaces. The units will be a mixture of affordable and market rate, with 10 of them designated for Section 8 tenants.

The exterior appearance was driven in part by the client’s desire for, in the words of executive director Kim Jackson, “an important piece of architecture for the neighborhood, with a modern-day twist that takes it to the next level.” Multicolored bricks are a metaphor for King’s message of interracial harmony.

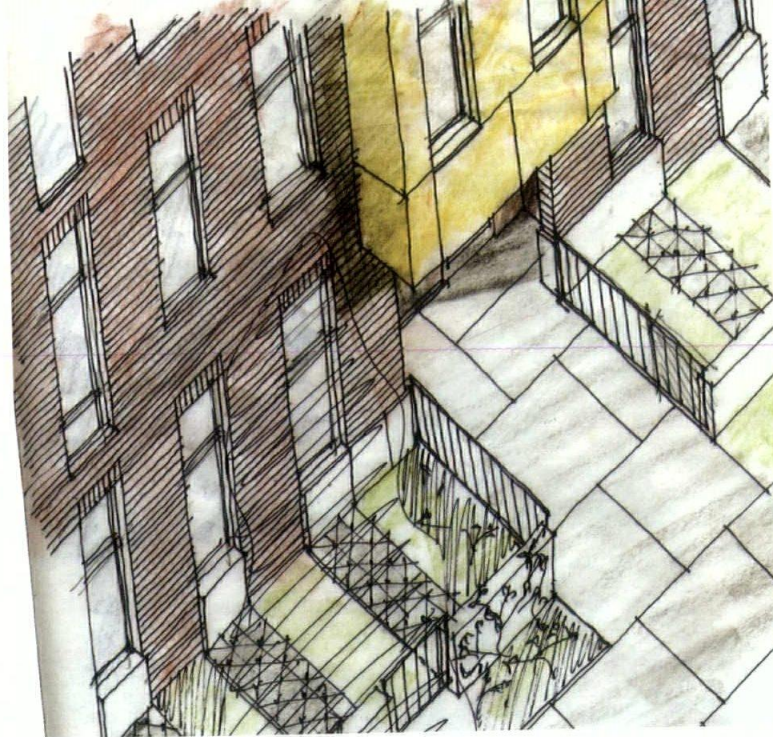
“Green” is also a symbolic color for the project. It will be certified Energy Star rather than LEED Silver, partly to avoid the expenses of paperwork and of commissioning. As a planned development, over 50% of the roof surfaces must be vegetated. Rain barrels at the base of most downspouts provide water to common green spaces at ground level. Tankless water heaters and Energy Star appliances and mechanicals will minimize utility costs, which are paid by the tenants. Jackson points out that housing affordability means “not only the amount of the rent, but how much it costs to stay there.”

### Getting Tenants to See Green

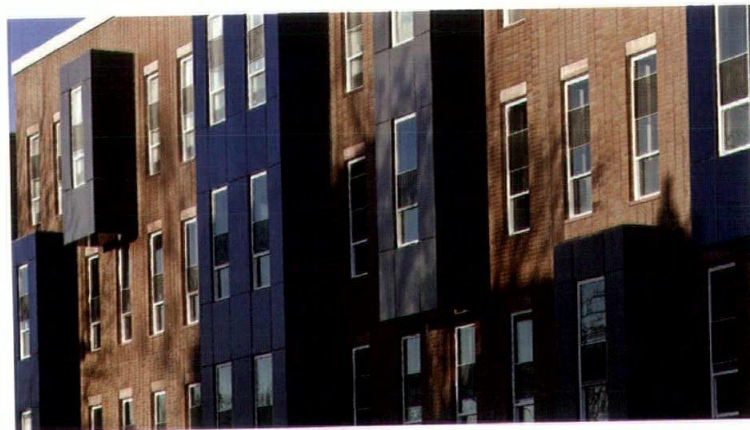
Another project named for a civil rights icon, the Rosa Parks Homes consists of eight buildings on scattered sites in the West Humboldt Park neighborhood. There are a total of 94 units, all of them affordable rentals available to households of varying income levels. The majority have two or three bedrooms, to address the scarcity of inexpensive rental apartments suitable for families.

Peter Landon says, “Our firm is trying to figure out how to do a building that is super-green, super-efficient, and affordable—when you put all that together, you get a contemporary building.” The

The design of the Rosa Parks Homes, seen in three images on this page, also updates familiar neighborhood exteriors. Brick faces with bays are typical of the neighborhood, but here the bays take on a more contemporary rhythm and cladding.



process is facilitated by the fact that client Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation has its own construction company, especially regarding the key goal of energy efficiency: a tight building envelope. Landon states categorically: “the base building is 95% of being green.” He adds that with improvements in insulation and other construction techniques, it has actually become more difficult to get grants for green technology such as geoechange because they now have a relatively smaller financial payback. Landon says that all of the buildings at Rosa Parks are functionally equivalent to LEED Silver, although they are only undertaking the certification process for one of them. That building will include a solar hot water system and eight geoechange wells that supply heat pumps.



Bickerdike manages all its own properties, giving the organization a holistic perspective of sustainability issues. Executive director Joy Arugete points to the need to educate both maintenance staff and residents about green products and technology used in the buildings. Staff must not only learn to operate new equipment, they need to know about appropriate updates when units turn over, such as low VOC paints and carpeting. “Green is not a snapshot in time,” Arugete says. “Where it really counts is over the years.”

Bickerdike has a multipronged approach to educating tenants. A DVD was filmed at the Rosa Parks homes when the first building opened, with the site manager touring residents through the units, showing them the

green features. Newcomers meet with the green tenant organizer to learn everything from how to clean bamboo floors to why the bathrooms have fans with timers rather than on-off switches. Arugete says the emphasis is less on saving the planet than on conveying that “this is a healthy place for you and your kids.”

Their efforts in this area are being aided by Daniel Splaingard, who recently began a 3-year-long Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellowship with the firm. An alumnus of Auburn University and the Rural Studio, Splaingard is updating and improving the tenant manual to include more drawings and graphics.

Splaingard is also Bickerdike’s liaison to archi-treasures, which hopes to conduct community workshops that will result in public art for the buildings. Possibilities include a mosaic depicting Rosa Parks next to one of the front doors or a series of custom-designed posters for the common hallways. He describes the process as “not about ‘making stuff’ but about social engagement through the vehicle of ‘stuff-making.’”

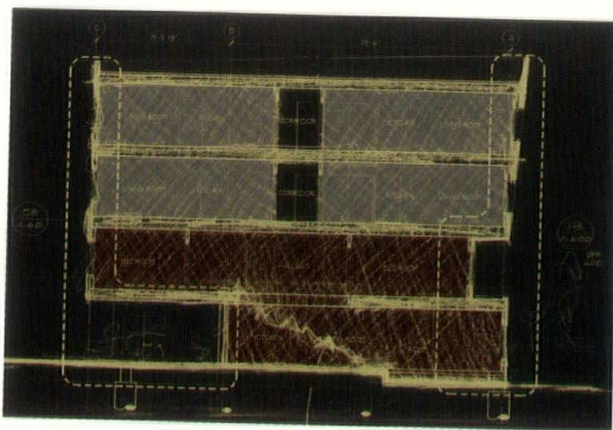
### Scaling Up a Michigan Module

In cities that lack Chicago’s vibrancy, affordable housing can be a tool to attract new residents. Under Governor Jennifer Granholm, Michigan launched a “Cool Cities” program to make some of the state’s urban areas appealing to young knowledge workers and creative professionals. The Metropolitan Park Apartments were developed in downtown Grand Rapids to provide distinctive modern housing that is affordable for students and artists, among others.

Designed by Joseph Gonzalez, now a Design Principal at DeStefano Partners, the four-story building has eight three-bedroom townhouses on the first two floors and 16 two-bedroom apartments above. Parking at the back includes covered spaces tucked under the second floor of the building that provide direct access to back doors of the townhouses. The planning module was developed from the 19-foot-6-inch width required by two parking spaces. “The car is often overlooked in planning affordable housing,” Gonzalez says.

The building creates a fresh new image for a neighborhood that has been renamed the “Avenue of the Arts” district. Material choices were guided by the trinity of sustainability, aesthetics and cost. A masonry base provides traditional grounding while horizontal bands of zinc and unadorned planes of cement board convey a modern sensibility. The zinc panels are cost-effective because their width is that of a standard coil. Kalwall is used for the vertical circulation zone to provide natural light to the common areas.

Thoughtful massing creates a lively street façade at minimal cost. The townhouses have individual entries that engage the sidewalk, and recessed terraces above. Bright red vertical panels separate each pair of two-story units, providing an inexpensive shot of color. Further interest is provided by the angled profile of the upper floors and by the recessed “slot” of the common entrance. Working with the developer and contractor from the outset, construction costs were held to \$90 per square foot.



Gonzalez envisions the Metropolitan Park model being adapted to different settings and configurations. The design (seen in section) calls for retail or commercial space on the two lower levels.

“With the success of Metropolitan Park, we thought of other places we could apply this modular plan, and realized it lends itself to the standard Chicago block,” Gonzalez says. He developed schemes for full, half or quarter blocks with different heights, parking arrangements, façade designs and ground floor options that include retail. The height could be increased and additional parking provided underground; by going down half a level, green space would be created on the roof of the parking deck. If the first floor was commercial space, the floor above could be an office or studio, or combined into a double-height venue for a restaurant or gallery.

The scheme could even be expanded to create an entire neighborhood. Gonzalez developed a concept for the proposed Olympic Village on the site of the former Michael Reese Hospital. Similar to the 2016 plan, his proposal maintains Chicago’s street grid but replaces the series of residential towers with buildings of varying configurations and heights, creating a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. Education, retail, library, park and sports functions complement the housing component to create a comprehensive community environment. His plan is designed as individual blocks that could be developed by different entities. CA

Between modules at Metropolitan Park, Kalwall panels allow natural light into vertical circulation areas. Red panels that divide one home from another provide a dash of bold color.



# MAKING THE HAND-OFF

Impact of the economy on cashing out and buying in

By Paul M. Lurie

Owners of architectural firms will someday depart either voluntarily or involuntarily. How will they fund their retirement? Who will lead the firm and preserve its legacy in future generations? These are questions addressed by ownership transition planning.

Since the publication in 2002 of the third edition of my book, *Ownership Transition: Options and Strategies*, uncertain economic times have created the need for a new way to look at ownership transition planning. Here are some points to consider:

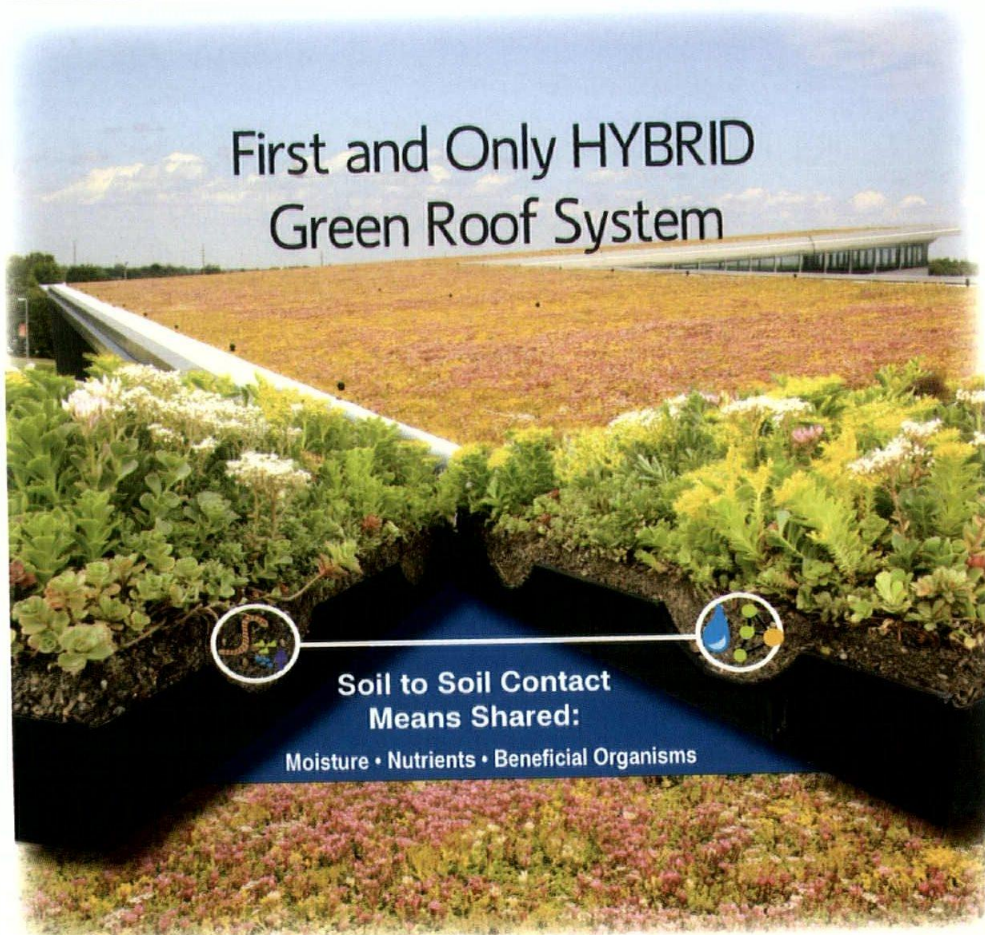
**Owners incorrectly assume that they will fund their retirement through a cash buyout of their equity over a short term.** Cash sales to outside firms are usually unattractive to most owners of architectural firms. Most buyers are unwilling to buy anything other than hard and depreciated assets unless there is a predictable cash flow—a difficult requirement. Further, outsiders compensate former owners usually based on performance—a requirement inconsistent with someone thinking about slowing down.

**The owner's firm is also seldom a source of retirement cash.** Most firms distribute their excess cash over working capital in the form of

compensation such as year-end bonuses. Maintaining cash as reserves for retirement is unusual. Unless the firm is growing, continued draining of cash to compensate owners may not leave enough cash to satisfy key employees.

**The best sources of retirement cash are tax qualified plans and agreements of key employees to purchase equity.** Key employee purchases are usually based on an assumption that the firm will finance such purchases from bonus monies. For marginally profitable firms, this can be a problem if there is not enough compensation cash for both selling owners and purchasing employees.

An excellent source of retirement funds are qualified corporate plans such as 401(a)s, managed by the firm or through individual IRAs in various forms. Many firms offer 401(k)s as their primary retirement vehicle with no employer contributions. The choice of plan manager often is made with little analysis on fund performance or the fees charged by such managers. In these "off-the-shelf" plans, there are minimal opportunities for the investor to influence the investment holdings. As a result, many architects are disappointed by the amount of retirement funds



  
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created by such plans. Now more than ever, owners need to establish these vehicles early enough to take advantage of their tax savings compounding. Firm cash flow should be managed to fully fund those plans every year. Choosing the right plan and investment adviser and watching performance should be carefully considered and discussed with the firm's trusted advisors.

**Older owners need to understand that "retirement" today may involve working in a changed environment.** Older owners need to understand that "retirement" today may involve a need to continue to work, but without the same degree of management control and with their management responsibilities having been transferred to others. Sales to outsiders seldom provide this flexibility. Planning for this scenario requires constant attention, long before retirement is contemplated to occur. "Maintaining control," long an excuse used at architecture firms to avoid transition planning, can be poorly understood by owners. As part of planning, persons who controlled their compensation by reason of corporate control can liquidate their equity and use contracts to protect their compensation.

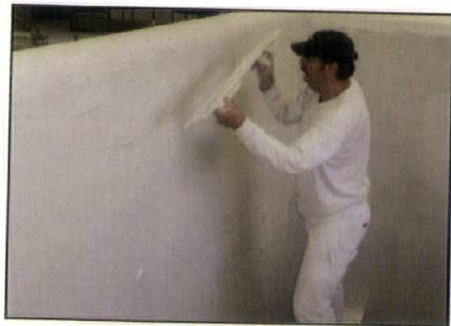
**The need for insurance funded buy-sell agreements.** A standard requirement of any closely held business, such as most architectural firms, is life insurance on the lives of owners and a buy-sell agreement using this insurance to finance a purchase of their ownership interests in the event of death. If there is no insurance-funded buy/sell agreement requiring equity redemption for death or disability, those events will cause ownership to pass to the estate of the owner or to a disabled owner. If the owner does not have a will or trust agreement, then the ownership interest will be divided among the surviving spouse and children or their guardians. These situations can interfere with critical firm decision-making, which can be traumatic for the firm and the affected families, especially if insurance is inadequate.

**Employees must understand the meaning and timing of equity ownership.** If key employees are to stay and to buy equity, owners need to sell employees on the reasons why buy-in is a good investment. Does ownership of equity give enhanced job security? Increased compensation? Participation in profit and loss? Does it give a right to participate in management? When will the employees be able to obtain equity and what will be the terms? How long do existing owners intend to remain in control? Poor communication on these issues can lead valuable employees to leave because their future is not clear.

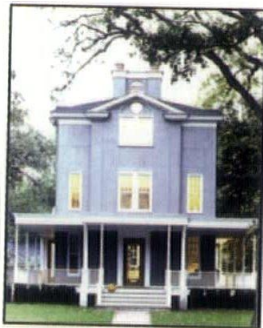
**The most important task in transition planning is not valuation, but reaching planning consensus on financial goals, including acceptable prices and terms.** Many architects wrongfully believe that a formal valuation of the firm is the first step in planning. While such valuation may be interesting and expensive, it seldom is very useful because the value opinions of most firms are so subjective and conditional because their cash flows are difficult to predict. The most important task in ownership transition planning is reaching consensus on financial issues among the stakeholders who often have different financial needs. An experienced transition facilitator, with skills in group dynamics, can help speed the process and create a win/win solution. These persons are often lawyers, accountants or management consultants. CA

*Paul M. Lurie is a partner in the law firm of Schiff Hardin LLP's Construction Industry Group's ownership transition practice. He is an ownership transition facilitator in a practice that also includes attorneys experienced in benefits and tax planning, estate planning, and architecture firm registration issues that affect ownership.*

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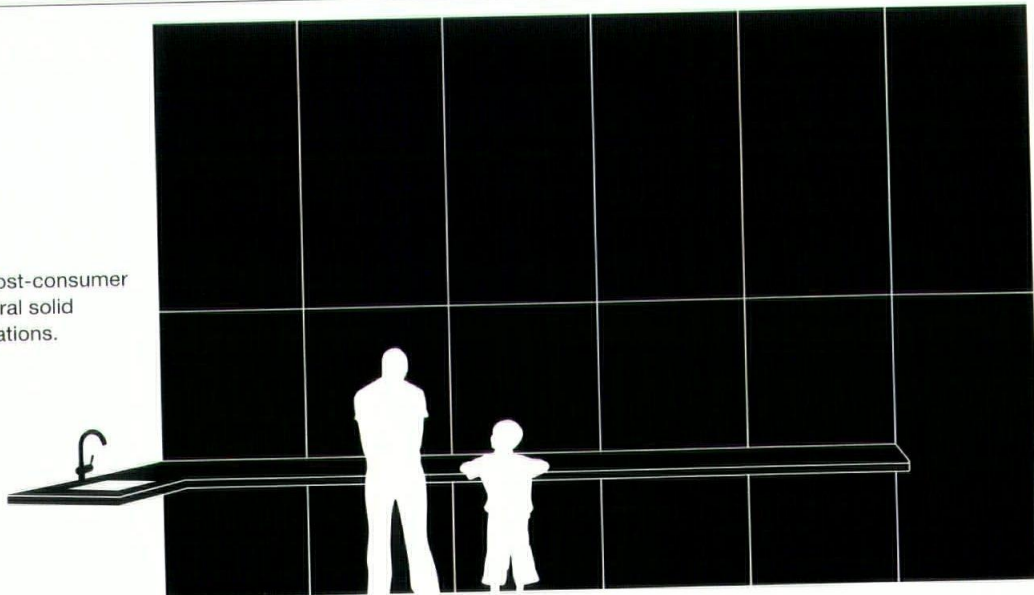


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# ARCHITECTS' TOP MODEL

## A look at how one firm made its biggest model ever, fast

**MARK J. FRISCH, AIA, and CAROLINE A. WOLSKE**

As architects, we are accustomed to a structured linear timeline punctuated by a series of milestones. A project starts with an idea, winds its way through the design development process, and eventually leads to the construction of a building.

In the fall of 2009, my firm, the architecture, planning and interior design firm Solomon Cordwell Buenz, was commissioned to translate our design for a new airport city in Al Ain, UAE into a presentation model. The phasing and workflow of this project were anything but customary; the conceptualization, design and construction of the model followed a series of overlapping lines rather than a single linear path.

The model took six weeks to construct from conceptualization to completion. It was a multifaceted effort requiring a model maker, two urban planners, five architects, a host of consultants and a collection of integrated design techniques. Eventually this became a firm-wide effort in a hurried pursuit to build the largest physical model in the firm's history.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

Directed by SCB's model studio, the organizational challenges entailed a variety of issues. Multiple consulting firms contributed from around the city and country, requiring real-time information in order to complete their tasks. Given the size (13 feet x 26 feet) and scale (1:2500) of the model, the materials and supplies were sourced from multiple vendors, reflecting a "just in time" assembly line approach. The logistics of developing workflows, staging materials and scheduling manpower added to the complexity of producing a highly detailed model. Developing new digital modeling techniques "on the fly" was required to meet tight timelines and demanding detail. Air freight requirements necessitated that the model be broken into 21 modular pieces, each measuring 4 feet-3 inches x 3 feet 9 inches.

### SOFTWARE

Maintaining a very high level of quality was critical to the client. In order to overcome the time limitation imposed by the schedule, a plethora of software and modeling techniques was utilized during the design and production process. A significant portion of the model was covered by vast sand dune valleys that are inherent to the region, and modeling these accurately was a challenge for the team. There is no simple modeling



The extra-large model, measuring 13 ft. by 26 ft., depicts Al Ain, a planned new airport city in the United Arab Emirates.

technique to represent these land features, so new methods to create this undulating landscape had to be developed.

As part of a multistep process, the sand dunes were identified in an aerial satellite photo to determine their approximate size and composition. Black and white images were then exported from Google Earth and manipulated in Adobe Photoshop to determine the high and low points of the topography. The image was translated into 3D Studio Max, where a three-dimensional manipulation of the light and dark values (k-values) of the satellite image was created to form the individual contours of the dunes. Eventually, the file was exported from the 3D software and translated to a "numerical code" recognized by the Computer Numerical Control (CNC) router. High-density foam was routed to reflect the exact configuration of the dunes at the time of the image.

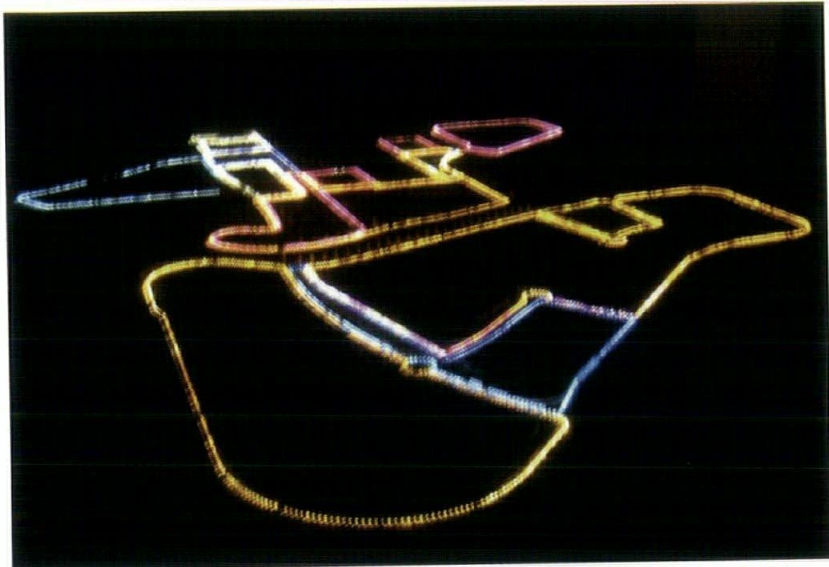
### RAPID PROTOTYPING

While the dunes were being created, modeling techniques had to be developed prior to the finalization of the design. In order to construct certain pieces of the model, three-dimensional drawings were created in AutoCAD and Google Sketch-Up. They were then exported to rapid prototyping software to produce three-dimensional objects. The process

## Architects' Top Model

continued from page 41

is similar to an ink jet printer in which layers of a fine powder — in this case, resin — are selectively bonded by laying down an adhesive from a printer head in the shape of each cross section of the 3D file. Ultimately, these bits and pieces added a critical level of detail to the model.



An Auto CAD layout plan helped the designers determine where to position the assorted colored fiber optic cables that denote different zones on the model.

### FIBER OPTICS

Because the model was to be used to illustrate a city of varying components, it was important to consider how these elements were going to be described in its final format. Key sections of the model were illuminated by varying colored fiber optics to help distinguish one zone of the model from another. Lighting concepts were developed creating a layout plan in AutoCAD to determine where the fiber optics were to be placed on the model.

Eventually 3,562 holes for the light points were laser cut into the acrylic bases, through which fiber could be strung by hand. Each fiber was 8 feet in length, resulting in the use of approximately 28,000 feet of fiber for the entire model. The dimension that the fibers extended about the surface of the model was tested to ensure that the signage would work. Thirteen of the 21 modules had a bundle of cables which terminated into 15 individual light sources. The light sources were coupled together via quick release cables. Since many of the lighting areas bridged multiple modules, the control panel had to be designed to recognize this complexity.

### WHAT IT ALL MEANS

The final product foreshadows the move our profession is making in delivering architecture through integrated design processes facilitated by robust software platforms. In the end, the model became a testament to the ability of a large network of collaborators working side by side and contributing to the construction of an intricate piece of work. CA

*Mark J. Frisch, AIA, is a principal and Caroline A. Wolske, LEED AP, is an intern architect at Solomon Cordwell Buenz.*

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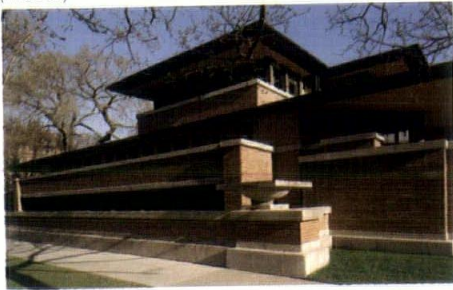
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STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: ROGER H. RECKERS-TGRWA, LLC, CHICAGO, ILL.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: BULLEY AND ANDREWS LLC, CHICAGO, ILL.

MECHANICAL ENGINEER: MARK NUSSBAUM-ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTING ENGINEERS, OAK PARK, ILL.

### SUB CONTRACTORS

MILLWORK: BERNHARD WOODWORK LTD., NORTHBROOK, ILL.

WINDOW AND DOOR CONSERVATION: RESTORATION WORKS, KANKAKEE, ILL.

HARDWARE RESTORATION: AL BARR WILMETTE, WILMETTE, ILL.

PLASTER: JP PHILLIPS, FRANKLIN PARK, ILL.

CERAMIC TILE: DEARBORN TILE, CHICAGO, ILL.

FLOOR REFINISHING: HERITAGE FLOORING INC., DEERFIELD, ILL.

ROOF: JAMES MANSFIELD AND SONS, LYONS, ILL.

PAINTING: NATIONAL DECORATING - OAKBROOK, ILL.

PLUMBING AND MECHANICAL: FETTES, LOVE & SIEBEN, CHICAGO, ILL.

ART GLASS CONSERVATION: COLORSMITH, RIVERSIDE, ILL.

### CUSTOM FABRICATORS

ROOF TILE: LUDOWICI TILE, NEW LENOX, OHIO

BRICKS: BELDEN BRICK, CANTON, OHIO

MORTAR: US HERITAGE, CHICAGO, ILL.

CERAMIC TILE: AMERICAN RESTORATION TILE, MABELVALE, ARIZ.

## NOT YOUR FATHER'S MODERNISM

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DEVELOPMENT TEAM: LAWDALE CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, SAFEWAY COMPANIES, THE WEST SIDE FEDERATION

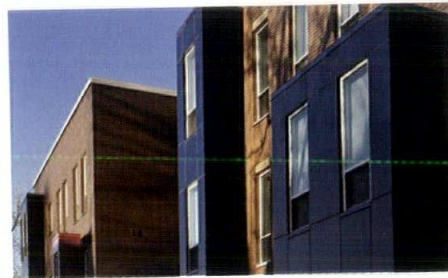
ARCHITECT: JOHNSON & LEE ARCHITECTS/PLANNERS

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: SAFEWAY COMPANIES

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: PERRY & ASSOCIATES

MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL/PLUMBING: GALLOWAY, LTD.

CIVIL ENGINEER: PRISM ENGINEERING, INC.



### ROSA PARKS HOMES

OWNER/DEVELOPER: BICKERDIKE REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ARCHITECT: LONDON BONE BAKER ARCHITECTS

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: HUMBOLDT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: GFGR, INC.

MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL/PLUMBING: JT. KATRAKIS & ASSOCIATES

CIVIL ENGINEER: PRISM ENGINEERING, INC.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: MCKAY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

### MANUFACTURERS/SUPPLIERS

PRE-CAST COMPANY: PRESTRESS ENGINEERING CORP  
METAL COMPOSITE CLADDING: ALPOLIC (SUPPLIER: G & L ASSOCIATES, INC.)

SOLAR EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATION (AT BUILDING 7): SOLAR SERVICES, INC.

GEOTHERMAL EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATION (AT BUILDING 7): MEADOW WELL & PUMP, INC.

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### METROPOLITAN PARK APARTMENTS, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

OWNER/DEVELOPER: BROOKSTONE CAPITAL

ARCHITECT: JOSEPH GONZALEZ, FAIA; DESTEFANO PARTNERS

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: ROHDE CONSTRUCTION

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: GRAEF-USA INC.

MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL/PLUMBING: CLASSIC ENGINEERING, INC.

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CEMENT BOARD EXTERIOR WALL PANELS: CEMBONIT CLADDING

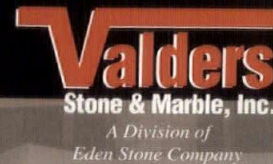
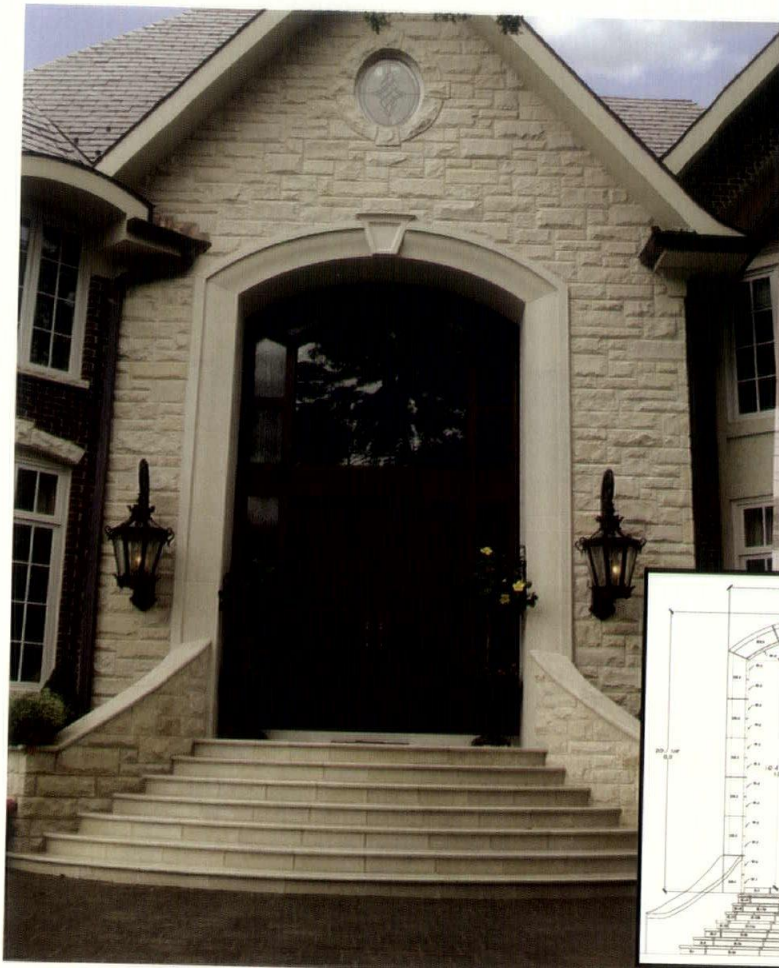
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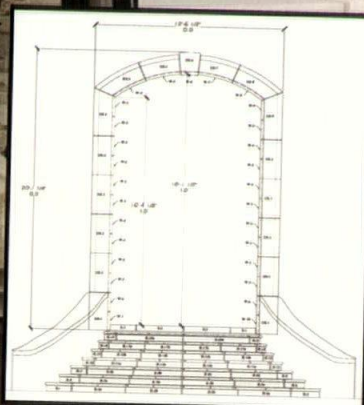
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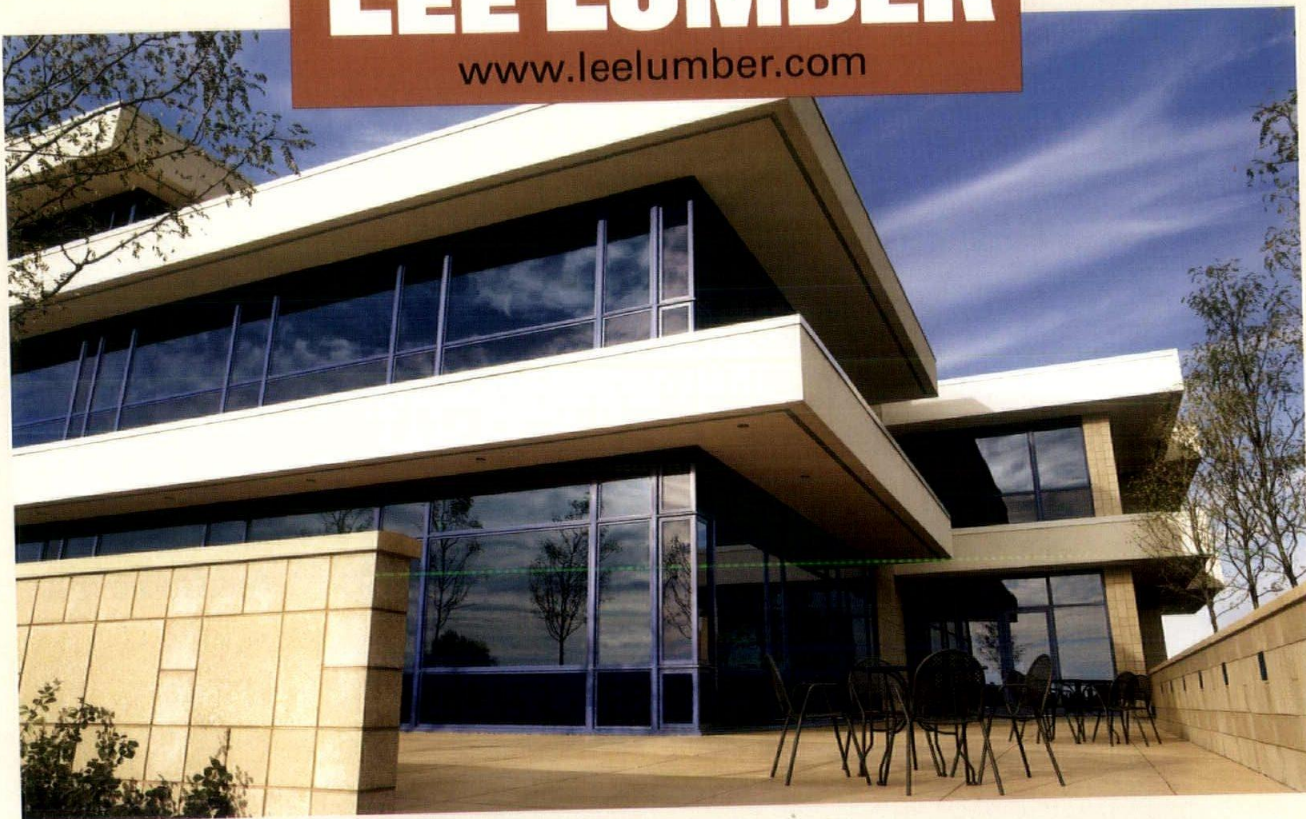
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Soon after, Harley Ellis, a Detroit-based national firm, came calling on Chicago firms. They were interested in having a Chicago office. By merging with Harley Ellis, our firm would achieve about 80 percent of the goals we had established in our strategic plan. From a business and personal growth perspective, my partners and I decided to pursue the merger. I became the managing principal of the Chicago office of Harley Ellis Devereaux.

So in one form or another, I've been with the same company now for 30 years.

**ZE:** Why are you retiring now?

**JN:** Our company has a policy that says when you turn 65 you are to relinquish 50 percent of your ownership. Each consecutive year after that, another 25 percent. I'm not 65 yet, and I think if the economy had been booming, I may have chosen to hang around a couple more years.

But given the current economic climate, last fall when I was doing our forecasting, I felt that now was a better time to move on. To respond to today's economic realities, we recognized a need to trim. It was my decision to trim at the top as well as at the bottom. So although I had initially planned to retire a year from now, it seemed best for me to move aside now and avoid being top-heavy.

I encouraged my colleague in charge of our Detroit office to do the same. We both are retiring one year early. We are both very comfortable with this plan.

**ZE:** Has your retirement helped to avoid further layoffs at the firm?

**JN:** Yes, but it's also about balance. You can't have all chiefs and no Indians. Sometimes the ownership feels their positions are sacred, but that perspective doesn't contribute much to a firm's future success.

Our firm's transition plan compels leaders who are around 60 years old to begin to identify people who could potentially be their replacement, so that by 63 you should have developed a short list of viable potential replacements. And if these people are not already with the firm, it's time to begin looking outside the firm.

We had everything planned and in place to make these changes. We've just accelerated the process by a year.

**ZE:** And who will replace you as leader of the Chicago office?

**JN:** Enrique Suarez. We've worked together for many years.

**ZE:** How does it feel to retire?

**JN:** I'm feeling mixed about it. I've always had a lot of interests in and out of the office. So even though I'll be doing some architecture-related consulting work, I'm happy to have time to pursue some of those interests.

I got a kick out of writing a chapter in Lambda Alpha's recent publication, "The Plan of Chicago @ 100." I'd love to do more projects like that.

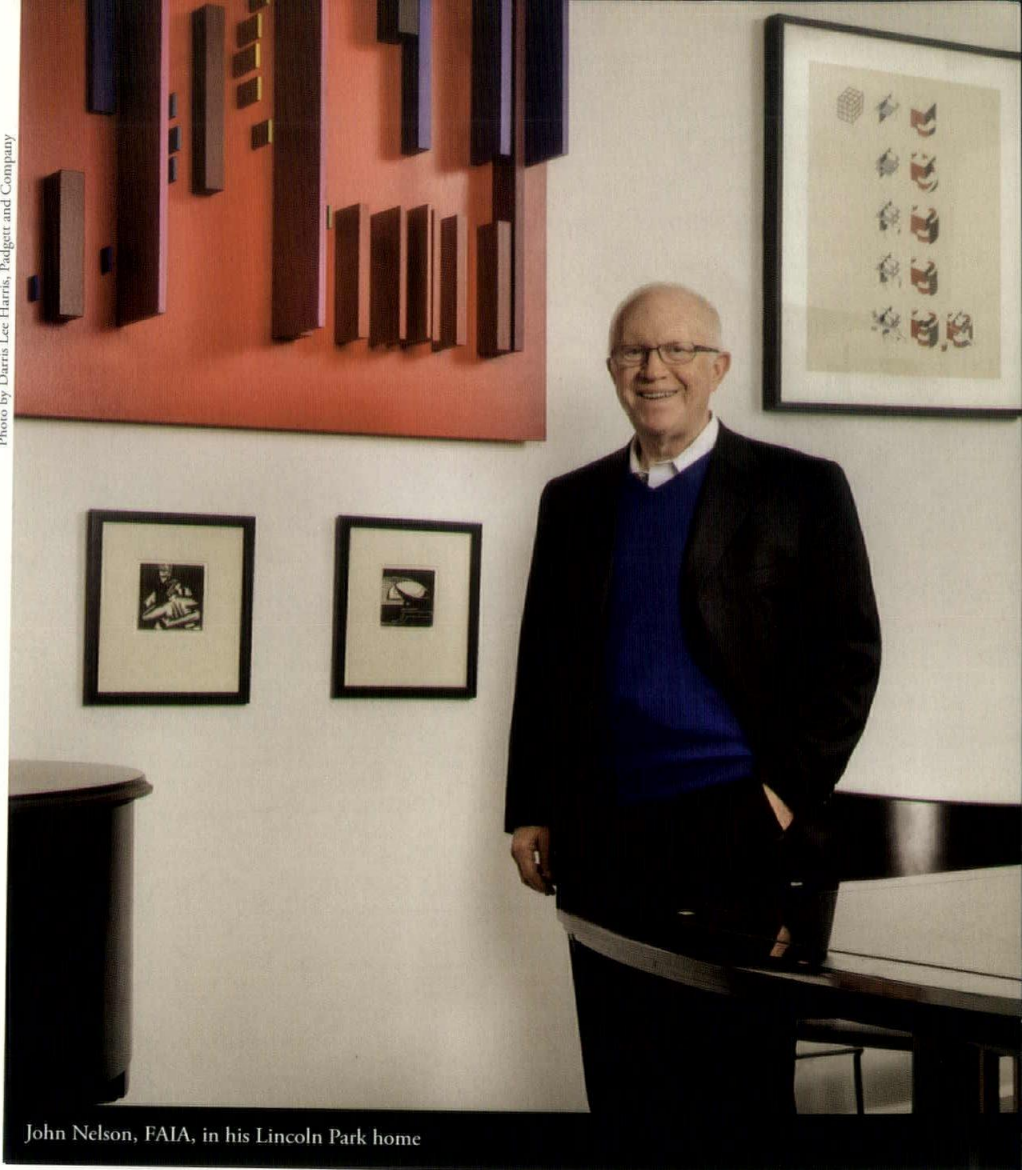
I'm really active in attending music performances in Chicago, but I've neglected Chicago theater almost completely, and here we are one

of the theater capitals of the world. I live about three blocks from Steppenwolf Theatre, but I had to go all the way to New York to see "August: Osage County."

The time is right for me. Some architects work forever and think the world can't live without them. If you are a single-name practice, like Nelson Architects, when Nelson is gone the firm dies. When I started Environ I intentionally left my name out of it; I wanted to establish a firm that would outlast me. It wasn't about me; it was about a team that would always be changing and evolving.

The greatest satisfaction in my career has not come from receiving national AIA awards. I haven't won them. Maybe working with others and trying to be a good mentor is what I was always best at. CA

Photo by Darris Lee Harris, Padgett and Company



John Nelson, FAIA, in his Lincoln Park home

# The Full Nelson

**John Nelson, FAIA**, shares his thoughts on his career in architecture and his recent retirement from Harley Ellis Devereaux—and a couple bottles of wine—with Zurich Esposito

**Zurich Esposito:** Anything about your experiences growing up that would indicate your future lifetime career in architecture in Chicago?

**John Nelson:** I grew up in Chicago, in the neighborhoods. First in the Beverly/Morgan Park area, then in Washington Heights. But my sights were always on downtown. I used to go up to the top of the toboggan slides at the Dan Ryan Forest Preserve with my telescope. From there, you could see the loop, the Board of Trade and Prudential building. In my heart I thought that's where I'm going.

**ZE:** And looking at those buildings drew you to architecture?

**JN:** I didn't take any architecture-type courses in high school. But in a way I was sort of always an architect. Just like every kid, I drew houses, but I never stopped. I was always drawing buildings in my spare time. I would make Christmas cards for my grandmother, and on them would be a house I'd designed for her. A new house for Grandma every year.

**ZE:** Where did you get your formal architecture training?

**JN:** I went to UIC—I started at the Navy Pier campus. I graduated in 1969. Many other architects in town were my classmates, like Ed Uhlir, who has become a lifelong friend. [Ed Uhlir, FAIA, and John own a Lincoln Park two-flat together, with Ed and his family liv-

ing on the second floor, and John on the first.] Sam Scaccia [FAIA], who has been with Helmut [Jahn, FAIA, of Murphy/Jahn] for a long time now as the senior VP, and Adrian Smith [FAIA] were classmates; quite a few others, too.

**ZE:** How did the Chicago office of Harley Ellis Devereaux and your career there develop?

**JN:** I started a firm called Environ in Chicago in 1980. Years later, when we had grown to about 55 people, my partners, Andy Jaworski [AIA], Bob Robiczec [AIA] and Enrique Suarez [AIA], and I initiated a strategic planning process using a consultant. She grilled us all independently and jointly to ferret out the direction we wanted to go. Ultimately a long list of things we had to do to achieve our long list of goals was developed.

*continued on page 47*



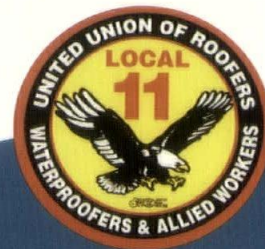
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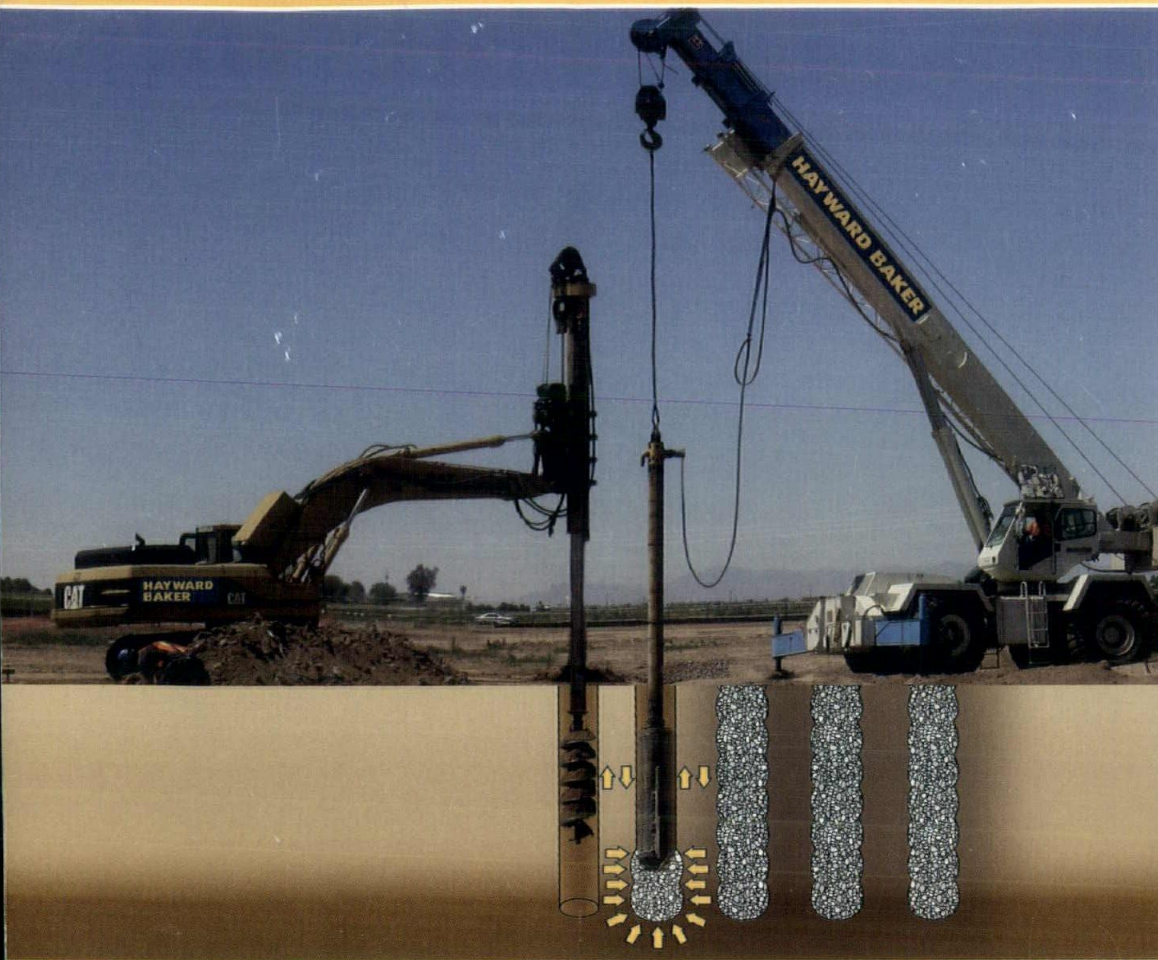
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