

CHICAGO ARCHITECT

SMALL PROJECTS

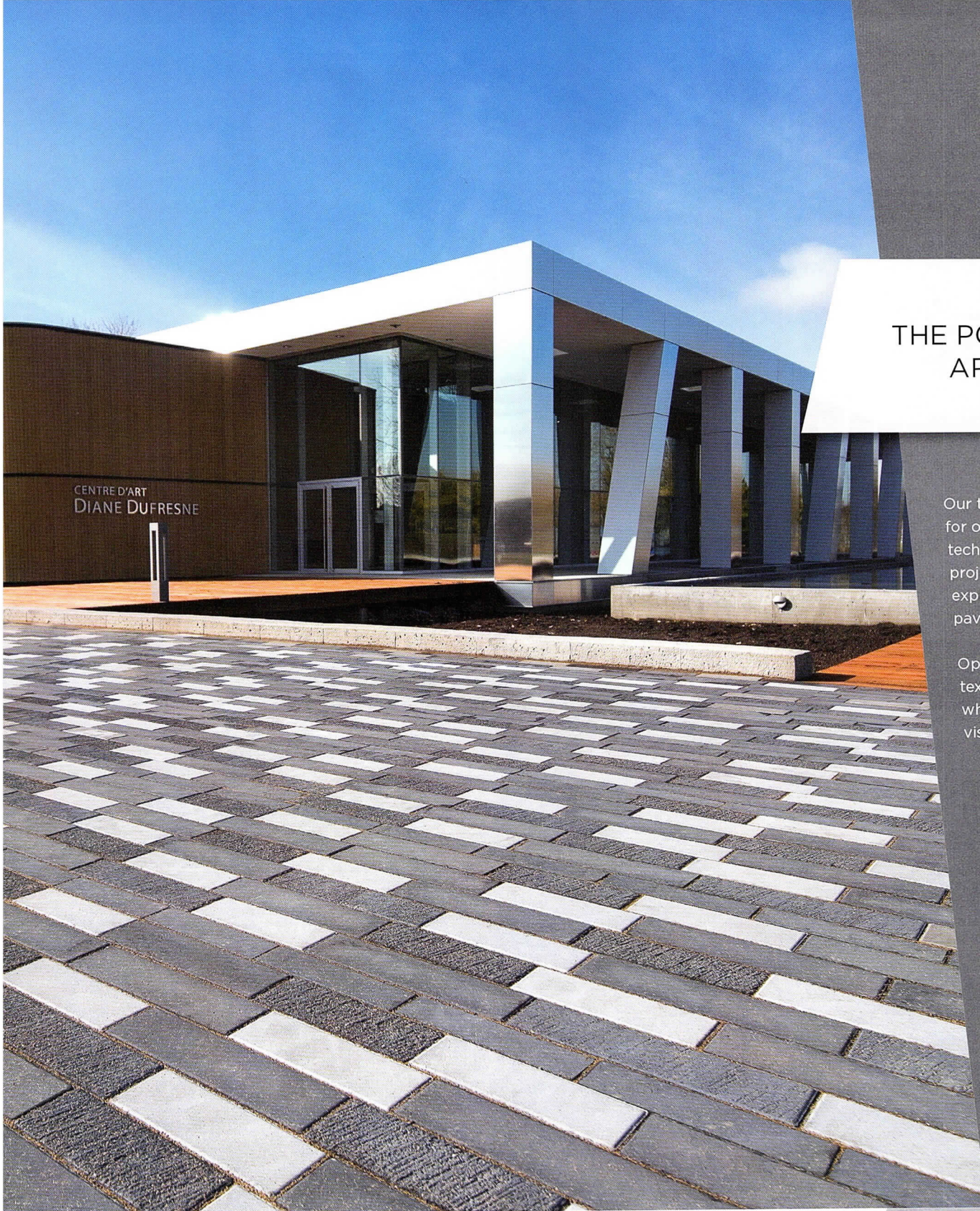
AWARDS // 27

**SOCIAL IMPACT AND
COMMUNITY BUILDING**

KATHERINE DARNSTADT, AIA // 42

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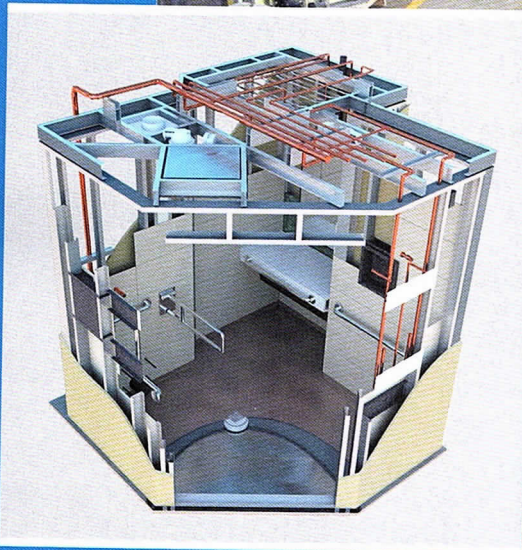
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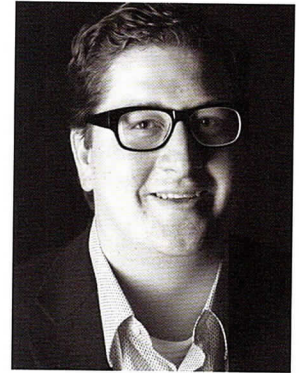
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Chicago Architect, the primary outreach tool of AIA Chicago, is published six times a year as an authoritative resource for architects, the larger design community and the public about architecture and related issues of interest to Chicago architects. The magazine communicates industry trends, the value of high-quality design and the role of AIA Chicago and members in the world of architecture.

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SIZE MATTERS?

Chicago architects practice at all scales, typologies and geographies, but we share a common passion for design excellence and creating better communities. I am always inspired to learn from the broad cross section of your practices, experiences and interests. AIA Chicago aims to serve this diverse constituency by advocating on behalf of the profession, providing educational programming and connecting the design community.

The Small Practitioners Group (SPG) is one of our most active Knowledge Communities serving a supportive peer group of small firms consisting of fewer than nine licensed architects. The SPG promotes professional development, practice resources and advocates for small firms. This vibrant group organizes an annual Small Project Awards program to "raise public awareness of the value that architects bring to small projects and to promote small practitioners as a resource for design excellence" in residential, commercial and institutional architecture and functional objects.

This issue celebrates the 2017 AIA Chicago Small Project Awards and our Small Practitioners Group. There is a remarkable range in work that the jury recognized this year, including both traditional and modern residential projects, a vibrant outdoor classroom/playground, and beautiful "Pot

Holder" vessel for a marijuana dispensary in Chicago. Several of the winning projects experiment with materiality to define space, such as an undulating, wrapped fitness center by Vladimir Radutny Architects, sculptural stacked paper tube gateway by Wrap Architecture, and a fresh new brewery taproom clad in wood panels with custom wood and steel furniture by RANGE Design & Architecture. While these projects differ in program and style, they are consistent in their quality and craftsmanship, so it's clear there is no size limit for good design.

Looking ahead, AIA Chicago is proud to support NeoCon, and we are pleased to welcome John Ronan, FAIA, as the keynote speaker on June 14 at the Merchandise Mart. We will also celebrate our new members and recently licensed architects at the New Members Reception planned for June 22. Please visit www.aiachicago.org for a full calendar of member programs. I hope you are able to join us at an upcoming event.

Matthew Dumich, FAIA

MARTIN FELSEN, FAIA
FOUNDER, URBANLAB



Category One: Design, Urban Design, or Preservation

Martin Felsen, FAIA, founded UrbanLab as an alternative practice aiming to synthesize diverse methodologies, technical innovation and hybrid vocabularies drawn equally from architecture and its complex urban and natural contexts. Martin's projects seek beauty in the unexpected at all scales and encourage greater public and professional engagement and deeper, more productive collaborations with partners and clients.

UrbanLab's work is strengthened by this confluence of art and science. Martin's designs routinely incorporate and formalize hydrology, ecosystems, biodiversity, public health, energy and transportation, among other factors, which led to UrbanLab's reconceptualization of the Chicago tradition of "no small plans" — the "Eco-Boulevard" — which earned Martin and his team the 2009 AIA College of Fellows Latrobe Prize.

RANDOLPH GUILLOT, FAIA
DESIGN DIRECTOR, GENSLER

Category One: Design, Urban Design, or Preservation



Randy Guillot, FAIA, has designed a compelling body of work, creating new models for healing, learning and working by truly understanding the multidisciplinary nature of these activities. They are celebrated not just for their critical design success but also for how they have changed access to healthy, dignified and engaging environments for all.

He is a design director in the Chicago office of Gensler and has been a design leader for studios in Los Angeles and Chicago for Gensler, CannonDesign, among others. Randy has been recognized with over 40 local, national and international design awards to date, published

extensively and has designed buildings on five continents.

Randy also acts as a studio critic and lecturer and has expanded the profession's commitment to partnerships with universities through enabling unique "in-residence" studio programs for students.

CHARLES HASBROUCK, FAIA
DIRECTOR, BKL ARCHITECTURE



Category Two: Education, Research, Literature, or Practice

Charles R. Hasbrouck, FAIA, is currently a director at bKL Architecture, where he oversees the architect of record's services for the 95-story Wanda Vista Tower, designed by Jeanne Gang of Studio Gang Architects, which will be Chicago's third-tallest building when complete. Prior to joining bKL Architecture, he was a director at Skidmore Owings & Merrill and a founding principal of Gonzalez Hasbrouck.

As his career evolves, he spends more time mentoring young managers and sharing his experience through civic engagement. He currently sits on the Boards of Directors of the Cliff Dwellers, the Glessner House Museum and the Friends of Downtown. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois and earned a Master of Architecture degree from Yale University.

RICHARD MASTER, FAIA**SENIOR MANAGER, USG SUSTAINABILITY****Category Two: Education, Research, Literature, or Practice**

Richard C. (Rik) Master, FAIA, is a research architect with over 40 years building science experience and is currently senior manager, sustainability at USG Corporation. While at USG, Rik spent 18 years in corporate sustainability/building science and 17 years at the USG Research Center in the development of building systems. Rik is known in the construction industry as the "Plaster Expert" and is often called on for plaster consulting by both architects and contractors worldwide.

Rik is active in several professional organizations and committees, including AIA Professional Interest Areas and former chair of AIA's Specifications and Building

Technology, AIA Educational Advisory Committee, founder and former chair of the Building Envelope Council of Chicago, among others. He is a past president of AIA Chicago, the current president of AIA Illinois and serves on the AIA National Strategic Councilor from Illinois.





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Scott Delano, IIDA, NCARB, has joined **Wright Heerema Architects** as the new design director.



Joshua Sacks, AIA, has been promoted to associate at **Myefski Architects**.



Patricia Rotondo, IIDA, has joined **Antunovich & Associates** as senior principal and director of interior design.



SENGA ARCHITECTS INC. is a new architecture firm serving the Chicago area, focusing on producing residential and small to medium commercial projects. The firm is founded and managed by **Firmin Senga, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD +C**.



The **Gettys Group** recently completed two Chicago interior projects, providing procurement services for the new Robey Hotel in Wicker Park, and curating the interiors of River North's new SafeHouse (pictured) spy-themed bar — the latter involving producing a series of designed pranks and memorabilia organized by their PULSE team.

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David Lillie, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, has been promoted to associate principal at **Goettsch Partners**.



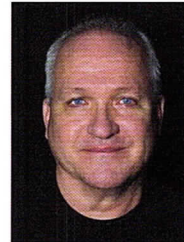
Jason Smith, AIA; Larry Wilson, PE; and Kay Wulf, IIDA, have been promoted to principals at **SmithGroupJJR**.



Rusty Walker, AIA, LEED AP, has been promoted to principal at **Olabird & Root**.



Cameron Trefry, LEED AP, has been promoted to **Ware Malcomb's** Chicago office. Trefry will be responsible for the overall growth and management of the firm's Chicago operations.



William Kissinger has joined **Krueck + Sexton Architects** in the newly created position of development director. Bill comes to K+S from **Kahler Slater Architects** in Milwaukee.



Heeler Kearns Architects' Lakeview Pantry received the first-place award from the Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards. The award recognizes the top real estate development and architectural design projects in the city's neighborhoods.



Bailey Edward has redesigned the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy laboratory space. Originally built in the 1960s, the firm upgraded the lab to create flexible work spaces that provide students with real-world simulated experiences.

PEOPLE + PROJECTS



Griskelis Young Harrell (GYH) recently completed the new home for Beacon Academy, a Montessori-based high school in Evanston, Illinois. Each floor of the two-story school centers on a multi-use forum that allows daylight and views to penetrate the large floorplates.

PHOTO BY CONNOR STEINKAMP, STEINKAMP PHOTOGRAPHY



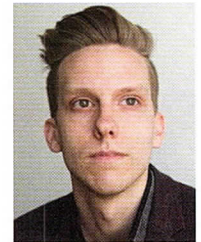
Legat Architects transformed an unfinished office space into its new Lake County studio in Gurnee, Illinois. Spaces like “the backyard,” “the grille” and “the shop” give a nod to the studio’s suburban location.



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Andy Totten, AIA, has been promoted to vice president at **James McHugh Construction Co.**



Ryan Gann, Assoc. AIA, was spotlighted as a part of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)’s 60th anniversary celebration.



Priya Kalidindi and **Celilito Penas** have joined **Bailey Edward**: Kalidindi as architectural designer and Penas as an electrical engineering designer.

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Len Bailey Dickson, FAIA, (Bailey Award) was featured in a chapter of the new book, *Above and Beyond the Glass Ceiling: Compelling Stories of 25 Women Who Shattered the Barriers to Their Ascension in the World of Business* by writers Kathy Tracy, Greg Potter and Michael Caldwell, edited by Deborah Clifton (Creative Classic Publishing, Inc.).



Woodhouse Tinucci Architects has introduced WoodTin Build, a new division dedicated to architect-led design/build projects. They completed their first project, The Eastman Egg Company, in 2014.



Timothy Hill, AIA, and **Timothy Connor, AIA**, have been promoted to principals at Sheehan Partners, Ltd.



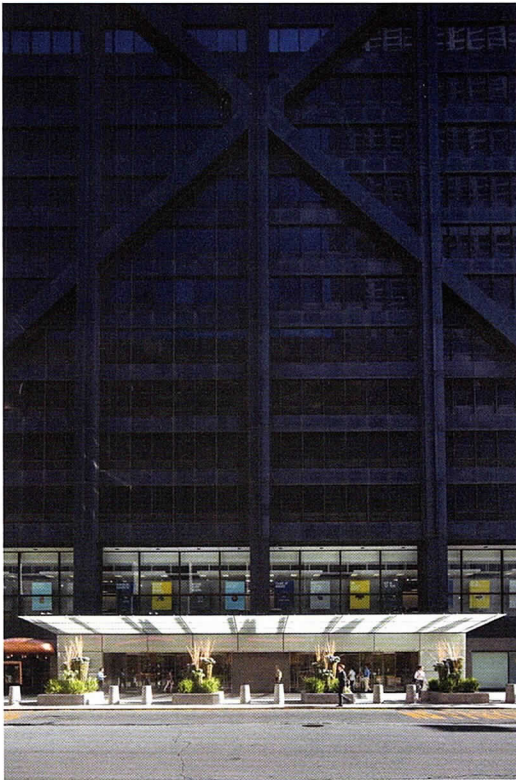
Cierine Nicolas, PE, LEED AP BD+C, has joined **ARUP** as new office leader.



Gia Biagi and **Margaret Cavenagh, AIA**, have been promoted to design principals at Studio Gang, joining Juliane Wolf in Chicago and Weston Walker in New York. The studio has also added **Yasmin Spiro** and **Adrienne Peñaloza** to their marketing team.

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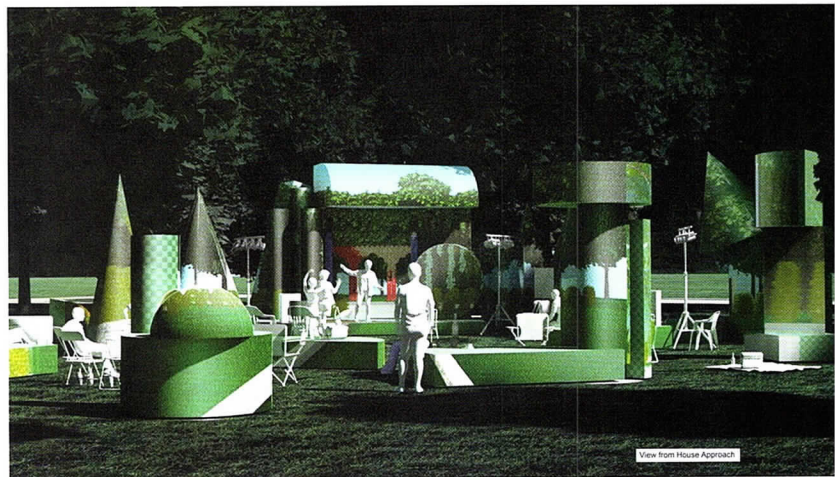
PHOTO BY TOM ROSSITER



Solomon Cordwell Buenz (SCB) has been awarded the CTA contract to provide professional consulting services for the Red and Purple Modernization Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) plan. This plan will leverage CTA's investments in the Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) Phase One project. SCB also recently completed the repositioning of the office lobby and entry to the iconic John Hancock Center on Michigan Avenue (pictured).



Rivetna Architects completed a Fulton Market/West Loop penthouse rehab project highlighting the apartment's vertical spaces by incorporating a hanging mezzanine.



The 2017 Adrian Smith Prize for the Ragdale Ring competition has been awarded to Ann Arbor-based **T.E.A.M.** The prize is sponsored by Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture and includes \$15,000 to fund the winning project. T.E.A.M.'s project, **LIVING PICTURE**, will open to the public mid-June.

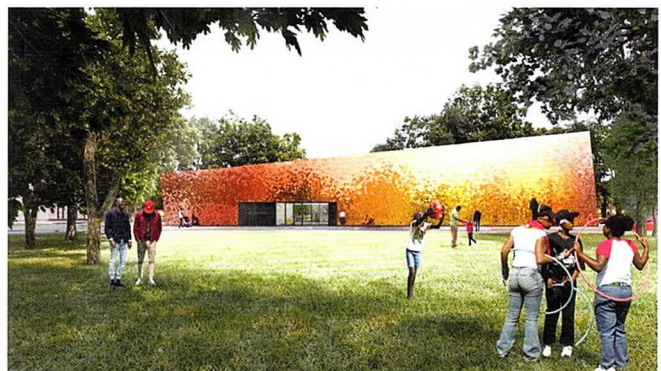
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Rath, Rath & Johnson, Inc. (RRJ) was selected to be the building enclosure consultant for the new MercyHealth Women's and Children's Hospital in Rockford. The project is one of the largest health care construction projects underway in the Midwest.



Liberty Gardens Apartments, designed by Landon Bone Baker Architects, opened in Chicago's Near West Side. The new sustainable, mixed-income community offers 76 apartments in seven three-story buildings, and it is organized around a large internal courtyard with green features and amenities, community gardens and gathering spaces.



STLArchitects designed a new field house at Williams Park in Chicago. The design includes a gymnasium and two multipurpose spaces that can accommodate programming offered by the Chicago Park District. The building's façade also features iridescent stainless steel scales, which provide different chromatic and reflective expressions throughout the day and the seasons.

WHY THE STATE OF ILLINOIS BUILDING SHOULD REMAIN A PUBLIC ASSET

BY ED KEEGAN

It seems that the proposed destruction of the James R. Thompson Center might be just the sort of issue that can bring Gov. Bruce Rauner and Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan together. That would be a symbolic coming together of two political leaders who haven't found much to agree on in recent years. But it's the wrong symbol, even if it might be an ironically appropriate one for our dysfunctional political age.

Rauner just can't stop trying to get a real estate deal for the structure. It is, after all, a prime piece of real estate in the heart of the Loop. And Helmut Jahn's design has reached the point in its life when it requires major upgrades. And its 17-story height is considerably less than what a private real estate developer would consider putting on the property today.

But it's important to realize why it's such a low building in a high-rise part of town. And why it leaves a considerable portion of the block an open outdoor plaza. And why a considerable part of its enclosed building envelope is utilized as an open-air atrium — with considerably less rentable office space than a similarly sized building.

The James R. Thompson Center, its atrium and its plaza represent high ideals — about the people who paid for it, who visit it and who occupy it.

The floor plan is open because it intended to send a message about government employees occupying a transparent space, one where they were accessible (and accountable) to the people who visit the building. In 1985, that was a radical idea. But almost every new office space today is similarly open —

because private industry has realized that such an arrangement can be more efficient, while promoting collaboration — and yes, transparency — across previously hierarchical organizations. Jahn and Gov. Thompson's vision may not have transformed Illinois' state services, but it's still a good idea. Let's not be distracted by the fading colors and stained carpeting — that's a maintenance issue requiring periodic updating.

And that big hole in the middle of the building? It's Jahn's 1980's reinterpretation of a rotunda, which is featured under the soaring dome of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., and is reprised in most states' capitol buildings. It's a reminder of this tradition of public spaces inside public buildings — places that are meant to inspire citizens and visitors alike. "Look around you," it says, "this is OUR space, and we all belong here together." I wouldn't suggest putting a food court in the U.S. Capitol, but I find it uplifting that a contemporary architect would want my neighbors and me to sit and eat in a proud and soaring space.

And the plaza, which is inflected toward the corner of Clark and Randolph, intentionally ties the building together with a

pair of government structures, symbolizing architecture's earlier takes on local government — the 1911 City Hall (by Holabird & Roche) and the 1965 Richard J. Daley Center (by a consortium led by C.F. Murphy's Jacques Brownson). The Thompson Center has to be considered as

an essential part of this collective series of three civic structures (where the other two are already protected as Chicago landmarks

This building and its plaza should not be privatized. Period.

Both government and architecture have essential roles in our republic — open, inviting and

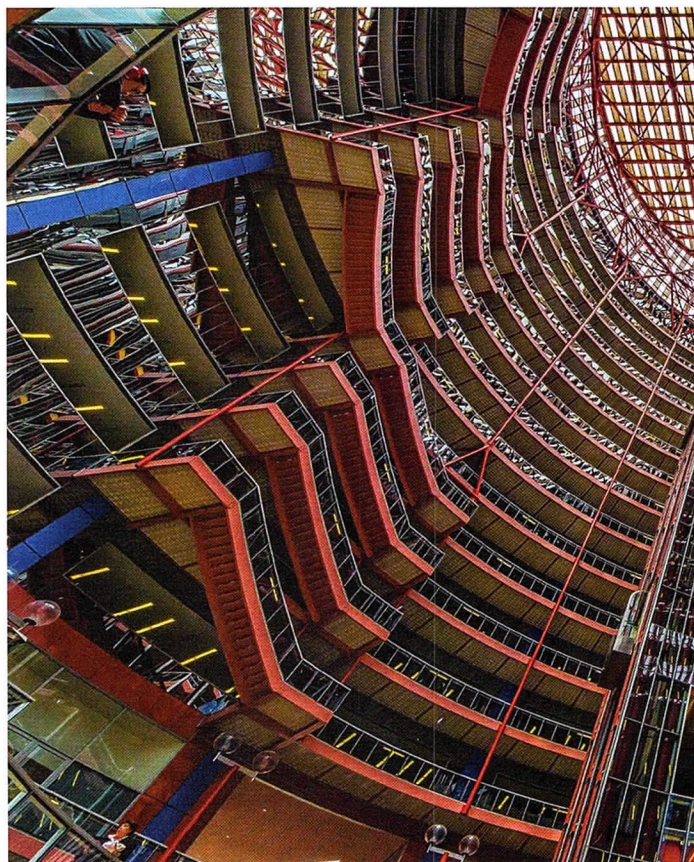
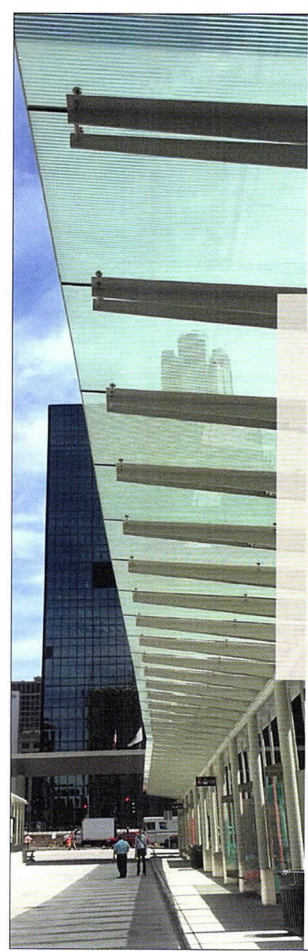
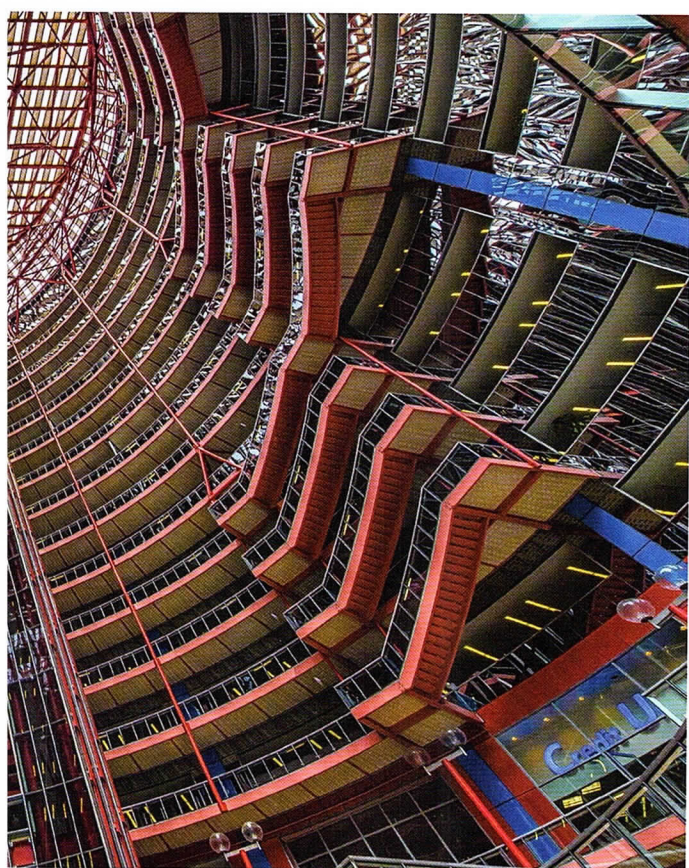


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useful to the many rather than the few. Jahn nailed it on this point, even if the design might seem a little tired now. Let's spruce it up, maintain it better, and we'll see that this building can stand the test of time, if only we won't let a passing fashion of public privatization snatch it away from us. We need more buildings like this to be the legacy of our time — in part, because it speaks to the best practices that have sustained us throughout our history. Will it cost more money in this year's (and next year's) budget to repair and remodel the building as a public building? Yes, of course, it will. The state estimates a sale could net \$220 million to its coffers and save another \$326

million necessary to mitigate deferred maintenance. But that's not a short-term savings that fails to account for the continuing need to maintain state offices in the pricey Chicago Loop. Most importantly, public buildings are not just about the bottom line. They represent us — not just our jobs and economic contributions to society but also our dreams and aspirations. This is where design is most important. We should not be seriously considering the sale of buildings that embody our best — even if not always fully attained — aspirations. The James R. Thompson Center is an investment that's well worth keeping — because selling it won't compensate us for the soul that we will give up. **CA**



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2017 SMALL PROJECTS

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and Interiors*



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*Liederbach and
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Elissa Morgante, AIA
*Morgante Wilson
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Josh Shelton, AIA
El Dorado Inc.



Andrea Mills, Editor in Chief
*Modern Luxury
Interiors Chicago*



HONOR AWARD

OBJECTS



Pot Holders

Perimeter Architects

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Means of Production

GLASS BLOWER

Talisman Glass – Sharon Gilbert

CLIENT

The Cannabis Group



PHOTO CREDITS: ANA MIYARES PHOTOGRAPHY



In many states where medicinal or recreational marijuana is legalized, the industry has called upon designers to create spaces and experiences that satisfy narratives of comfort, healing and safety, without sacrificing security needs. Perimeter Architects designed a space for The Cannabis Group in 2015 — Dispensary 33, located in Chicago’s Andersonville neighborhood — with a clean, modern palette. After a successful opening, the client came back to the architects with a new challenge: to design a custom display vessel for medicinal products.

Typical marijuana pharmaceutical packaging can often allude to prescription drug bottles or sterile, vacuum-sealed bags that clash with the dispensary’s unique textured minimalism. Perimeter, a firm that has designed beautiful displays and whimsical objects, responded with a solution that meets all the client’s needs.

The vessel had to be sealed yet maintain visibility of the product. Perimeter Architects worked with their glass blower, Sharon Gilbert Talisman Glass, and fabricator through multiple prototypes to achieve a functional yet simple pressure locking mechanism. The jury was ecstatic about the final product. “It’s so clever!” one juror exclaimed. “It is fine for this purpose], but I can see it being

used for anything — jewelry, plants — it’s versatile.” So far, 60 vessels have been produced for the dispensary and contribute to maintaining the group’s patient-focused brand.

Custom-molded glass and layers of laminated wood allow the bowl to sit upright or at an angle for display and are secured to maintain a seal with a gentle twist of the wrist. The contrast between glass and two to three milled and stained wood creates an earthy but modern solution. Stated one juror, “Often, things that are thought through and well-crafted lack the playfulness that contemporary spaces need. This is a nice antidote.”



Citation of Merit



Ancona Playground

UrbanLab

Chicago, Illinois

General Contractor: Intrinsic Landscaping

Client: Ancona School

Located in Chicago's Hyde Park/Kenwood neighborhood, the Ancona School's mission is to educate students to become creative problem-solvers, confident risk-takers and independent, lifelong learners. This playground designed by UrbanLab embodies that mission by providing physical and sensory experiences where children can interact, create and imagine via free-play structures defined as "dynamic" by the jury. "It's different from any other kind of playground," one said.

The playground contains an undulating ground (manifested in exaggerated hills) and a "ribbon" made of two continuous tubes with a net stretched between them culminating in a small amphitheater, which can also be used as an outdoor classroom. Four play-based principles informed the design: climbing, overhead play, swinging and collaborative space. Jurors were drawn to the relationship between the ground mounds and play structures, one noting, "The hills make it so that kids can duck and dive, hide under equipment like caves. It would be a different experience every day."



Citation of Merit

Unit 9C

Vladimir Radutny Architects
Chicago, Illinois

General Contractor: J5th Detail Custom Renovation
Associate Architect: Fanny Hothan

Jurors were taken with this rehab project by Vladimir Radutny Architects. Located in an iconic high rise on Lake Michigan, clients imagined their second home with few boundaries between them and the exterior views. By removing all of the opaque walls and introducing “floating” volumes and space-defining planes, the firm created independent living zones.

The integration of a seemingly continuous glass plane provides privacy between the two primary living zones. However, its true function is to create a backdrop of illusion, capturing the expansiveness of the exterior, as well as the dynamic mood changes of the lake. Jurors enjoyed the use of glass and floating masses to guide the resident through the space. “The reveals are perfect,” one said. In re-orienting the plumbing-dependent elements of both the kitchen and bath toward the lake, architects physically and visually connected them with adjacently shared zones. “The drawings and floor-plans are beautiful,” one juror exclaimed. “But the execution is fabulous.”

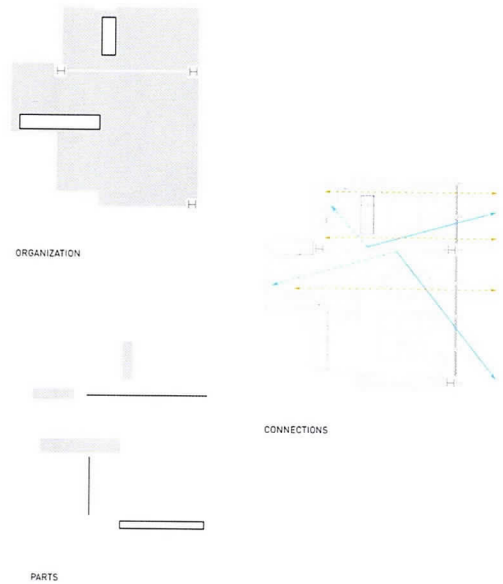
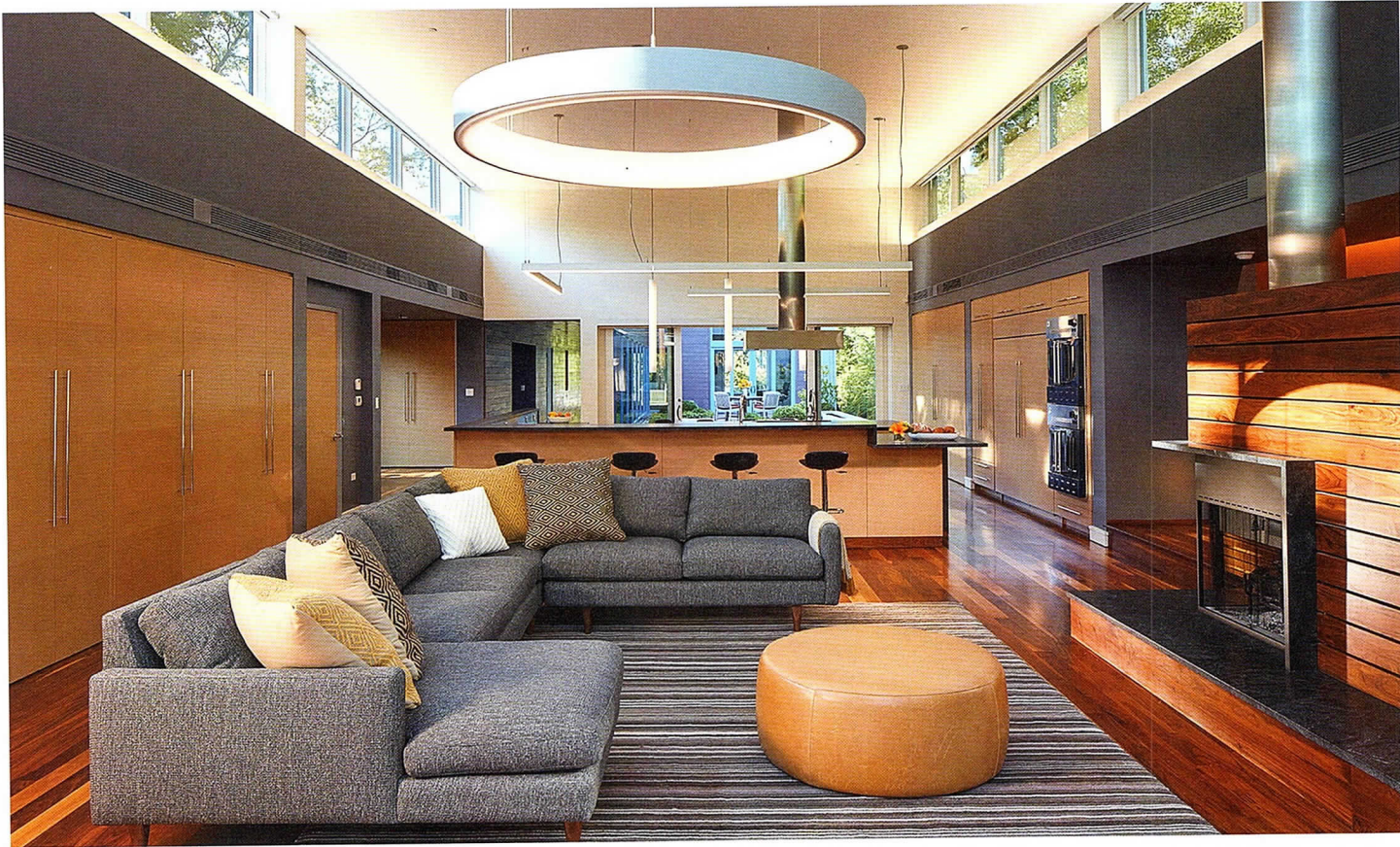


PHOTO CREDIT: VLADIMIR RADUTNY ARCHITECTS



Citation of Merit



Courtyard Residence

Kuklinski + Rappe Architects

Downers Grove, Illinois

Landscape Architect: Barker Evans Landscape Architecture

General Contractor: Roberts Design Build

SE: Senffner & Associates

MEP: dbHMS-Sachin Anand

PE: Rose Winter, AIA

This new one-story home by Kuklinski + Rappe Architects was designed to accommodate the special needs and limited mobility of two children with the hope they will live there through adulthood. The design seeks to enrich the girls' lives by creating a variety of spatial experiences animated by the constant movement of natural light.

The linear plan alternates clusters of living spaces with three courtyards, arranging them along a 125-foot circulation spine. The generous perimeter offers every major space direct access to the exterior while a series of roof monitors bring additional light in from above, allowing daylight to enter every space year-round from dawn to dusk. The home addresses the children's health and well-being as well: indirect in-slab geothermal radiant heating ensures their comfort when engaged in



activities on the floor, materials were selected to minimize off-gassing, whole-house fans supplement operable windows to provide fresh air and energy-recovery ventilators ensure indoor air quality during cold weather. Although these are complicated systems, jurors found the home to be "effortless"-looking.

"There are some really lovely moments in this project," one juror said. "But it isn't trying too hard; it's not doing handstands."

Citation of Merit

The Orchards

Tigerman McCurry Architects

Three Oaks, Michigan

General Contractor: Dunes Development

This collection of outbuildings in rural Michigan was created by Tigerman McCurry Architects to compliment the previously designed main house and remodeled historic farmhouse from 2007. (The cluster of structures winning this award were completed in 2014.) All structures take their cues from the vernacular clapboard painted cottages along the lakeshore and white-washed barns inland in orchards and vineyards.

The white corrugated metal siding and heavy timber framing reinforce the agrarian metaphor. “The play of white is so perfect in this setting,” one juror commented. The pool house harbors equipment on the lower level and heaters in ventilated compartments above at the rear of the changing rooms.

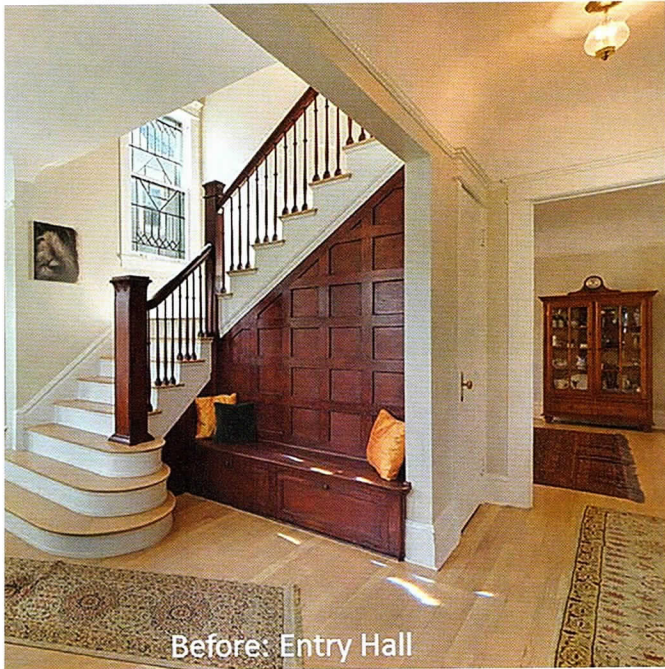
Spaced clapboard siding ventilates the storage shed with its attached triangular shade house. A triangular cedar work table doubles as family dining as does its counterpart in the garden. Inside the garden, raised beds of untreated cedar accommodate a multitude of produce and flowers. Picket-fenced benches designed by the architect encourage gardeners to “watch your garden” grow while compost bins reinforce sustainability.

“This is the kind of project that might make an architect crazy,” one juror said, “but this is done with such qualitative thinking. The consistency of each element is pleasing; there’s a confidence about it.”

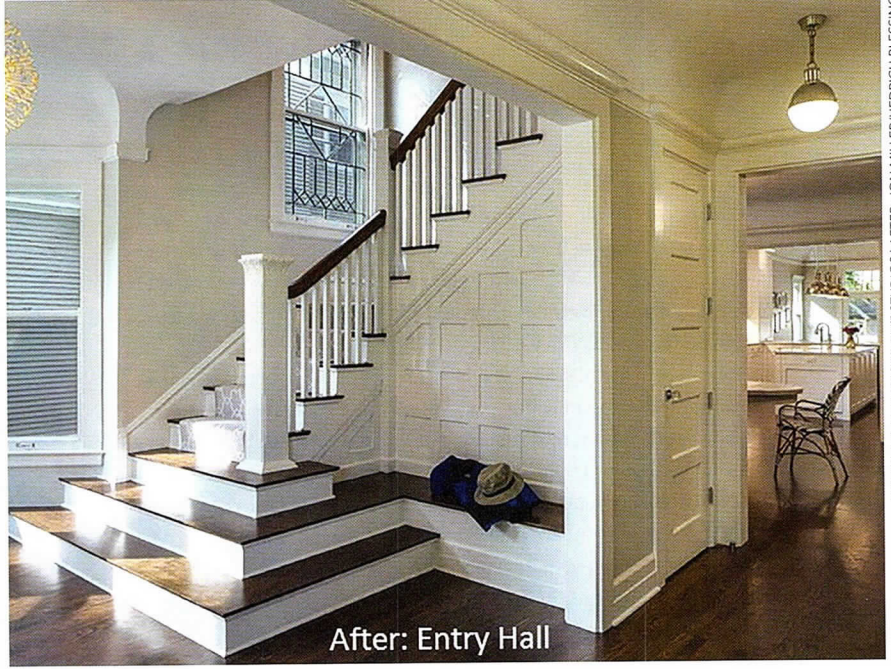


PHOTO CREDIT: MARGARET MCCURRY, TMA

Citation of Merit



Before: Entry Hall



After: Entry Hall

PHOTO CREDIT: BEFORE: VHT STUDIOS | AFTER: JONI MILLER/HEDRICH-BLESSING

Victorian Redux

Stuart Cohen & Julie Hacker Architects LLC
Evanston, Illinois
General Contractor: Windsor Builders Inc.
Interior Designer: SuzAnn Kletzien Design

This 1890s Victorian house located in Evanston was badly remodeled in the 1980s. The living room and front parlor were combined into a single awkward space and a prefab fireplace was added in the corner of the living room.

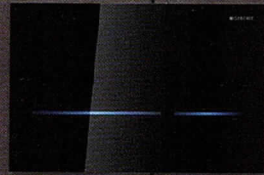
When Stuart Cohen & Julie Hacker Architects took on the project, they had the opportunity to transform the home — modernizing while gently restoring iconic moments within the house. Inside, the front parlor was recreated and the metal prefab fireplace was removed. The opening between the living room and the dining room was enlarged. The butler's pantry and powder room were relocated. This allowed the kitchen to open directly to the dining room on one side and the remodeled family room on the other, providing views through the house from front to back. On the second floor, the master suite was reconfigured and all the bathrooms were redone.

“There were a lot of interventions in this house, but each is a positive one. Throughout, they’re thorough and well-proportioned, truly advancing the house’s style,” a juror said. **CA**



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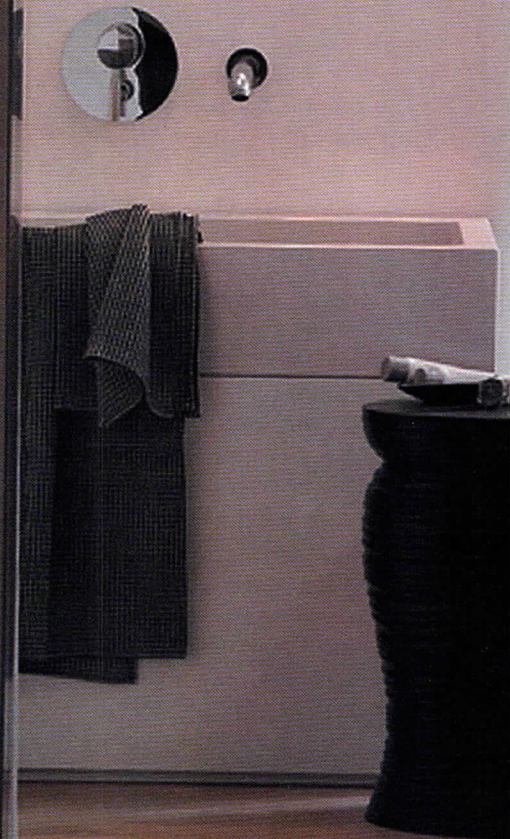
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TAKING THE RED TAPE OUT OF PERMITTING

BY ABBY CALLARD

Firms of all sizes are always looking for new ways to economize their time and energy, especially time spent with administrative paperwork. A hugely important but detail-oriented task of completing permitting documents can often be repetitive and daunting. A new app developed by a local group is looking to shake up the entire process.

John Joyce, AIA, the owner of John Joyce Architects, who has nearly two decades of experience, is currently working on a residential project using self certification, which allows the architect of record to take responsibility for a project being code compliant and skip city certification. This can save time on the project but increases the number of forms that need to be filled out for the city permitting process. The residential project required about 15 forms, Joyce said, and completing those would require filling out some information over and over again. There's the base building form, a form for the environmental department, an electrical permit and the additional forms because the project is self certified.

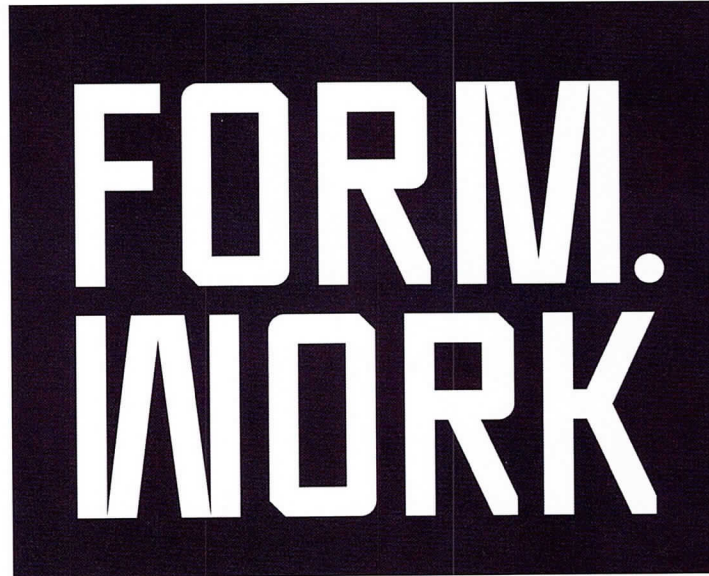
But a new software saved Joyce from filling out duplicate info on forms. FormWork, a web-based application developed by MAPS Strategies, cuts down on the work of filling out forms and decreasing the duplicate information architects have to provide. For Joyce, nine of the 15 forms he had to fill out for that residential project were covered by FormWork. "FormWork

has got a great idea behind it," he said. "It really streamlines the output and all the extra forms we have to do."

MAPS Strategies is a full-service compliance partner for architects, engineers, contractors and developers. MAPS originally developed FormWork as a way to streamline its own work, said MAPS President Heather Morrison. "The idea behind this was in a way selfish," she said. "We wanted to make our work more effective. Then we decided to make it public after realizing we could help our community. FormWork takes our collective experience and expertise and puts it into an app."

FormWork scopes out the project by asking questions to determine which permit type is needed and then using those answers to fill out the necessary forms. The software also allows the user to send the completed PDF forms to the appropriate parties to be signed — something most often done now by printing, signing and scanning.

One of the key features of the app is its ability to cut down on entering duplicate information. For example, most of the nec-



essary forms go to different departments so information such as the architect of record is needed on every form. With FormWork, the user enters that information once, and the program fills it in on every form.

MAPS launched the beta version of FormWork in March, and the first version was officially launched in April. FormWork currently includes 11 forms, but the MAPS team is working to

add additional forms to the app in the future. More integration is something Joyce would welcome. "I definitely see a lot of potential for it," he said. **CA**

Join AIA Chicago for a special reception and presentation on how FormWork can work for you on Tuesday, May 23, from 5:30 until 7:30 p.m. at AIA Chicago's offices, 35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 250.

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SOCIAL IMPACT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Katherine Darnstadt, AIA, is using her career and position in the architecture community to affect communities across Chicago. The principal of Latent Design joined Zurich Esposito at the boombox pop-up in Englewood, 833 W. 63rd Street, to talk about her practice.

PHOTO CREDIT: DARRIS LEE HARRIS



structure we developed for plazas in Wicker Park and Englewood.

ZE: How is a boombox used in a plaza?

KD: Transformed from upcycled shipping containers that we've completely retrofitted, these small buildings can accommodate a variety of functions: retail, cultural programming or social services.

ZE: Will Chicago have more boomboxes?

KD: Yes, grants for the city's Neighborhood Opportunity and Retail Thrive Corridors will make more boomboxes possible, especially on the South and West Side, on sites not just limited to the city's public plazas. Boomboxes provide affordable space to vendors who would otherwise be blocked without the financial access to conventional vacant retail space.

ZE: How does this benefit Chicagoans?

KD: The Activate program has employed individuals in need of opportunities, including ex-offenders and re-employed formerly homeless. A construction job training program provides skills that can lead to future opportunities. And more than 25 unique Chicago businesses have launched or expanded through the program. No one's really supporting these constituents and very small businesses in terms of their needs in the built environment and access to space, funding and design. We're designing a new system that's serving as one more solution. **CA**

ZE: What is your firm's mission?

KD: We create urban environments and social impact within the built environment.

ZE: Is there an event or experience that compelled you to use your career in architecture for social impact and community building?

KD: When I was earning my degree at IIT, the nearby Robert Taylor Homes were being demolished, but there was no conversation about housing in our studios at the time. We had urban transformation happening across the street from Crown Hall, but for the most part, we weren't discussing it in an architectural sense. It wasn't a topic of interest, and the absence of that interest piqued my interest in affordable housing. After graduating in 2005, I went on to work at

Fitzgerald Associates, a firm with an affordable housing portfolio. There I was able to work on some of the buildings in the Legends South mixed-income housing development that was constructed on the Robert Taylor site.

ZE: When did you establish Latent Design?

KD: In early 2010, after working for a few architecture and development firms, and motivated by the recession.

ZE: Your firm is getting a lot of attention for your ongoing work in existing public plazas associated with the Activate Chicago initiative. How does the program work?

KD: The program is designed to create a framework for public space and placemaking by activating the

city's 48 existing public plazas. The Chicago Department of Transportation administers the program, and Latent Design is charged with activating 10 plazas per year. We have directed the activation of 20 plazas to date and going into the third year of our contract we'll activate 10 more.

ZE: How are the plazas activated?

KD: The plans vary by plaza from cultural programming to some level of installation or beautification, which could include seating, public art or temporary structures. Through direct community engagement, working in tandem with community groups and aldermen and women, we develop the public space design for each plaza. The largest installation we've done is a boombox, a retail pop-up



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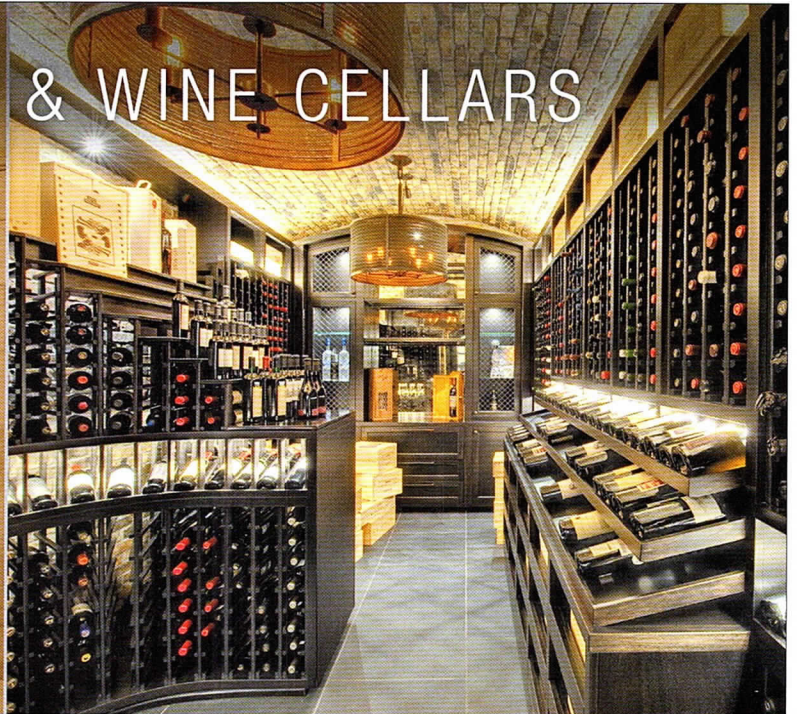
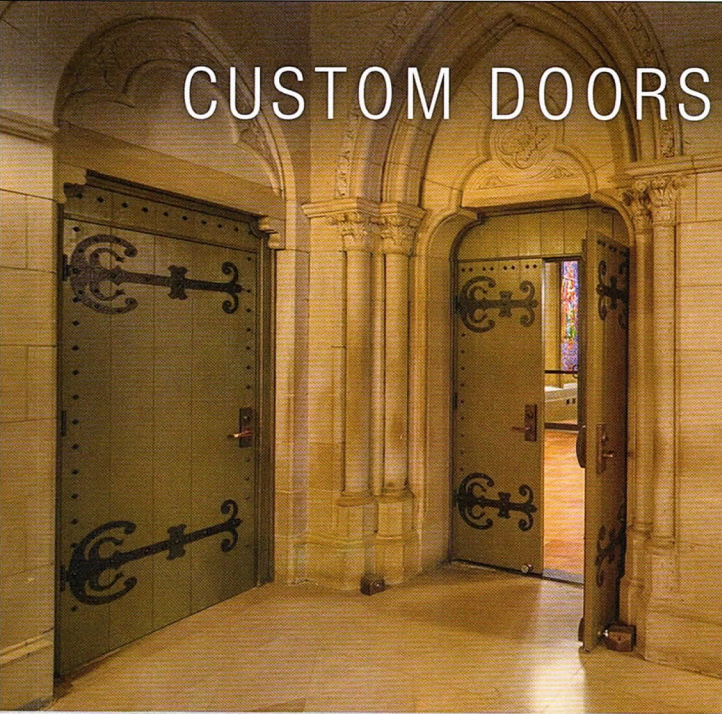
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