

# CHICAGO ARCHITECT

SEPTEMBER // OCTOBER // 2020

## UNTAPPING THE POTENTIAL // 24



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# Color Takes Flight



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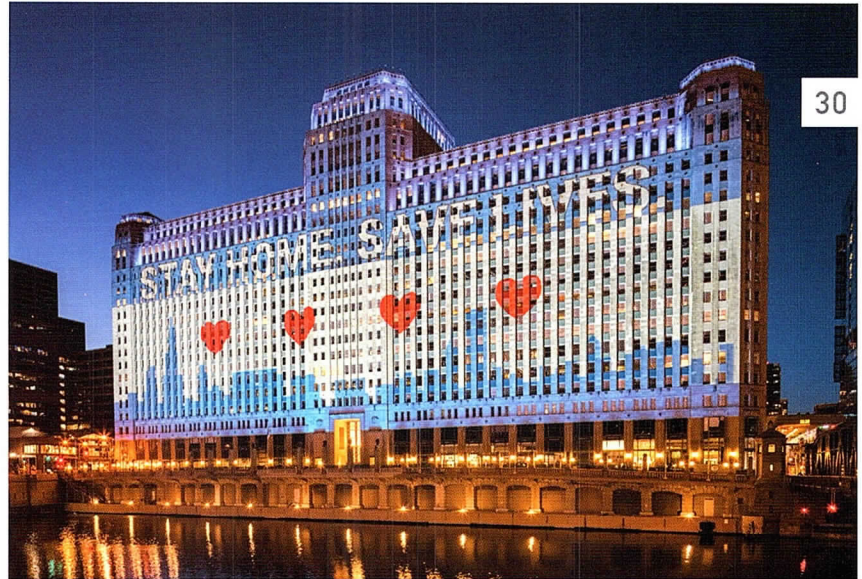
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ON THE COVER

**Osito's Tap** by Brininstool + Lynch

Credit: Brenda Bermudez



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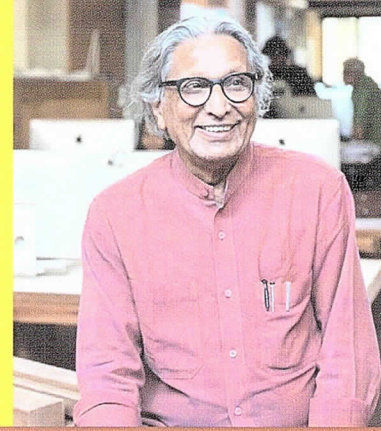
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The exhibition is a project by the Vitra Design Museum and the Wüstenrot Foundation in cooperation with the Vastushilpa Foundation.

IMAGE CREDITS – LEFT: Balkrishna Doshi, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, 1977, 1992, © Vinay Panjwani India. ABOVE: Balkrishna Doshi at Sangath Architect's Studio, Ahmedabad, 1980, © Iwan Baan 2018.



# BRING IT ON HOME

THE STORIED SILVER ROOM HAS A NEW LOOK FOR ALL ITS MANY NEEDS



ALL PHOTOS BY ROSS FLOYD

Chicago-based architecture firm Future Firm, collaborating with Norman Teague Design Studios, has led the comprehensive redesign and renovation of The Silver Room, a 1,500-square-foot Southside Chicago boutique and community space in Hyde Park that

champions local artists, designers and Black-owned businesses. The team created a flexible design system that supports The Silver Room's ever-evolving display of products and vibrant programming schedule that sees the space shift almost daily from a

boutique into a theater, storytelling space, gallery, classroom, dance floor or hub for their annual block party.

Founded by Chicagoan Eric Williams in 1997, The Silver Room has changed locations and undergone more than 10 redesigns over the course of its

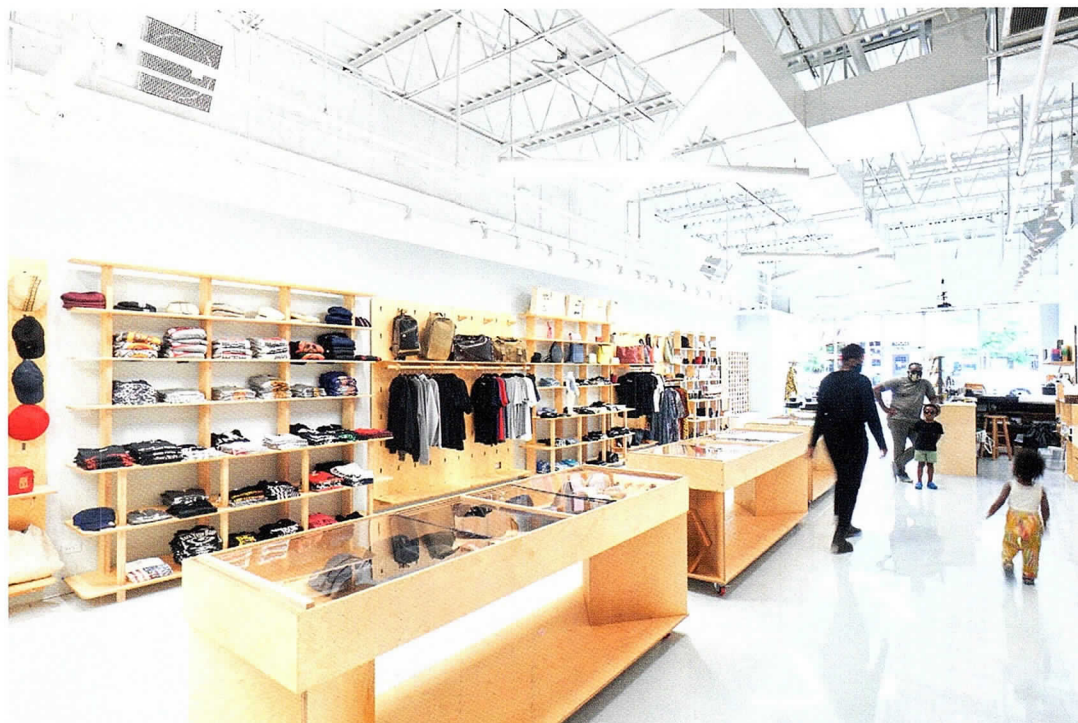
22-year history. These included its inaugural space in Wicker Park, a pop-up boutique in Wicker Park and the current Hyde Park location. The latest renovation marks the first time Williams engaged a full team of architects and designers who applied research,



collaboration and connection to the storied business.

Designed by Future Firm, the team began with a design strategy centered on flexibility, simplicity and a unifying aesthetic that transforms the space into a quiet backdrop. Other strategic design measures included the application of behavioral science and flow of traffic to the layout, according to a strategic plan completed for The Silver Room by Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Williams also brought his own ideas to the table: "From Berlin and Hong Kong and New York, LA and Mexico, Eric travels a lot to curate the content for the store. He wanted The Silver Room to be a space that represented design at an international level with a curated store experience," said Future Firm Principal Ann Lui, AIA. "Eric always brings us this huge range of references to the table, and the collaboration brought his ideas to a team that could make these global references and honor The Silver Room's local culture."

According to Lui, the team was looking to these international references and local-centric values — from Scandinavian millwork to local neon — while also designing for the store's constantly changing use. The result: a simple, minimalist environment that can be reconfigured easily. All armatures of the exposed ceiling are painted white, while the walls are coated in a



**"WHILE WE'VE BEEN TRAINED TO SEE ARCHITECTURE AS A TOP-DOWN PROCESS, THE SILVER ROOM'S RENOVATION WAS MORE LIKE BEING IN A BAND."**

— ANN LUI

two-tone scheme of white and gray. Four custom X-shaped neon lights run down the center of the room. This monochromatic backdrop highlights and accentuates the custom plywood display systems, designed in collaboration with Norman Teague Design Studios, founded by local designer and educator

Norman Teague. Display cases throughout the space are mounted on wheels, providing flexibility when the interior layout requires adjustment for larger events.

The design team was comprised of Southside-based vendors and trades, continuing The Silver Room's community-focused mission and commitment to supporting Black-owned businesses. Lighting and electricity were facilitated by Gravity (Andrew Kirkland), who has worked with Williams since the 1990s, while digital fabrication processes for the CNC plug-and-play woodwork system were developed by local fabricator Max Davis. All construction was adapted to accommodate COVID-19

restrictions, simultaneously minimizing on-site work and accelerating implementation.

"While we've been trained to see architecture as a top-down process, The Silver Room's renovation was more like being in a band," said Lui. "So many of the individuals involved have deep connections to the community and to each other — it was an honor to be brought into The Silver Room family." As a testament to the renovation's collaborative spirit, Future Firm is beginning a second project for Eric Williams, which grew from their experience working together on The Silver Room. They are currently in the initial stages of designing a restaurant on Chicago's Southside, in Bronzeville. **CA**



# ORDER UP: OUTDOOR LIVING FOR CHATHAM

75TH STREET IS OPEN FOR SOCIALLY DISTANT DINING AND PLAY



Chatham’s 75th Street corridor is food heaven — from Lem’s Bar-B-Q serving up perfect rib tips and hot links, to Brown Sugar Bakery, just down the road, making a rich, pillowy caramel doughnut that will live in your dreams. Two blocks west, stop into Original Soul Vegetarian for vegan soul food, including a spicy “chicken” sandwich, greens and cornbread. All these legendary eateries have been operating during the COVID-19 pandemic, but with one major issue: Indoor eating is out, and outdoor seating is limited by sidewalk width and permit challenges.



This is where Architects Restoring Chicago (ARC) has stepped in. ARC is an informal group of designers who came together following the citywide protests and, under the challenging environment of COVID-19, decided to volunteer their skills to bring outdoor living to life in several of the commercial corridors also targeted by the City of Chicago's INVEST South/West program. Ernie Wong, FASLA, laughed that his choice of working with the 75th Street corridor was influenced by his love for barbecue. "You can't do better than Lem's. I could get in line right when they opened," he joked.

Wong, principal of Site Design, and RaMonna Westbrook, AIA, principal of Brooks Architecture, teamed up to reimagine the 75th Street corridor (between Calumet and Indiana avenues) as a vibrant space for outdoor dining. "I had spent some time in Montréal where I visited the Rue St. Denis, where there had been a big boardwalk created with seating, games and sandboxes for kids," commented Wong.

Inspired by the boardwalk idea, he and Westbrook took to creating a boardwalk that would run along 75th's parking lanes. "RaMonna and I grabbed Vladimir Radutny, AIA, who had just started building an outdoor pavilion at IIT, and brought in colleagues at Booth Hansen," said Wong.



The two priorities that the team had, he explained, were first, to reuse the plywood that had been installed over the windows on 75th Street businesses during the recent protests, and second, they wanted to employ contractors and youth from the neighborhood to build and install the boardwalk.

Westbrook, having been raised within the neighborhood, worked with the Greater Chatham Initiative (GCI) to bring in local contractors and youth, with assistance from I-NOMA's Project Pipeline program. "I believe that if you know how to cut wood and hammer a nail, then you know

**"WE BUILT SOMETHING TEMPORARY BUT CONNECTING PEOPLE TO ONE ANOTHER WAS MAGNIFIED AND SOLIDIFIED. AND THAT'S THE BEST SEED WE PLANTED."**

— RAMONA WESTBROOK, AIA



how to fix your house. And when you fix your house, you're investing in your community," explained Westbrook. "We worked with GCI to find funding to pay the youth for their labor and to help program the boardwalk spaces."

The resulting installation includes a two-block-long promenade, with parklet "booths" that are programmed with socially distant restaurant seating, games like bean bag toss and oversized Connect Four, and an exercise area. The plywood booths are painted a neon green that creates a bright, fun ambiance and also produces traffic calming. On the far east end of the boardwalk, sculptural bench seating by Kreuck + Sexton with a circular canopy provides some sheltered outdoor space.

Though the installation is temporary and will likely come



down in November, Westbrook sees her work as having a lasting impact. Westbrook stated, "My son was one of the leaders on the build crew,

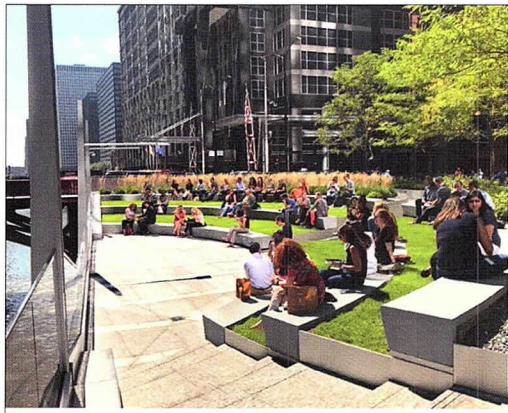
and he said, 'When I go to the site and people are asking me what I'm doing there, I'm proud to say I'm investing in this community.' We built

something temporary but connecting people to one another was magnified and solidified. And that's the best seed we planted." CA

75TH STREET PARTNERS:







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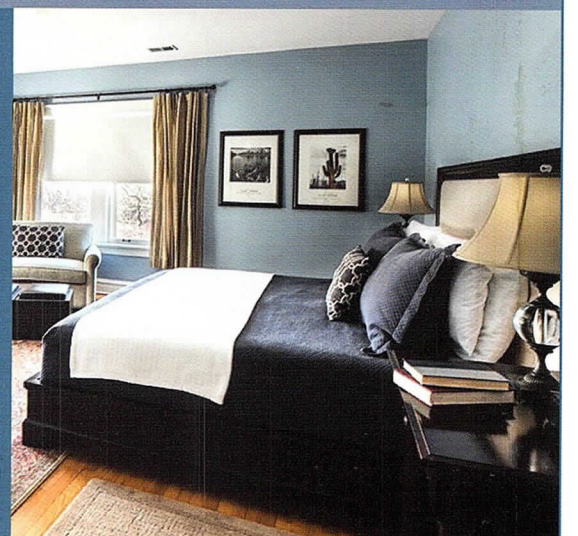


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## TRIUMPH AT FIFTH AVENUE

A NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN MAYWOOD  
IS A TEMPLATE FOR THE POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF AFFORDABLE SUBURBAN HOUSING

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF HED



National conversations in this tumultuous political climate have swirled around suburban affordable housing; for many architects, developers and suburban residents, the question is not about “if” it belongs outside of cities’ inner cores, but how they can make it happen. For HED, a new project opportunity in Maywood creates a prototype for high-quality, simple and sustainable affordable housing options called Fifth Avenue Apartments. But building this type of sustainable density isn’t without its challenges, and the team has triumphed over the bumps and detours that can arise when building affordably in suburban environments.





According to Susan King, FAIA, principal of HED, the 72-unit affordable housing project — developed by Interfaith Housing Development Corporation — began in 2011 in uncertain circumstances. “Right before the Great Recession, the village had torn down existing buildings on the tight site across from the Maywood Housing Authority offices with hopes for a market-rate development. But the area was very depressed after the recession, and unfortunately our affordable development proposal was rejected by the village’s Plan Commission,” explained King. After some time passed, the project site was revisited. “The political will wasn’t there initially, but with a regime change at the village

level, we were able to gather funding, and it sailed through.”

In 2018, the project was selected to participate in the Living Building Challenge’s affordable housing pilot program — the only one selected in Illinois. The homes were designed to achieve the program’s criteria, though they were ultimately not able to achieve the certification due to financial and regulatory barriers. “We searched for solar partners, including a nearby high school and reuse depot. A big whammy was not getting incentives to pursue Net Zero seriously,” said King.

The design team continued to push for green features: “The Living Building Challenge is the most extreme green program out there. When you hit a barrier, it becomes an advocacy tool,”

explained King. “We are in advocacy mode now. We hit two main barriers, and we are now working to remove them for future projects in Illinois.” The building is energy-efficient and electricity-centric. Despite the tight budget, the building was conceived as solar ready, and they have been able to incorporate a 24 kW photovoltaic array from contingency dollars.

“We’ve done so much to enhance cost efficiency; we’re using precast for the exterior, but we did not sacrifice durability when it came to the windows, which are wood with aluminum cladding. We seriously considered polished concrete floors as a cost saving measure, but in the end, the developer was concerned about the institutional perception of exposed concrete

for this population,” explained King. The first floor will include commercial space that the city hopes a small grocer could move into, helping to solve food accessibility issues prevalent in the area.

Despite difficulties at every step, HED and Interfaith have turned “advocacy mode” into a working project that will bring much-needed diversity of housing to the neighborhood. “I’ve been promoting what I call ‘diversity in density,’” said King. “In a neighborhood, there should be a mix of housing. We know diversity builds resiliency; in planning, it should make for better neighborhoods. Maywood needs everything. They need housing, stores, walkability. And this is one dent in the need for housing.” CA



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4:15 PM – Awards  
Honoring the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient,  
Phillip C. Johnson, FAIA**

Phillip Craig Johnson, Johnson & Lee Ltd., has 44 years of experience in a variety of architectural areas prior to and since co-founding the firm in 1983. Johnson served on the Board of The American Institute of Architects Chicago as an advisor to the Board of the Illinois Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (I-NOMA). As one of Johnson & Lee's design principals, Johnson earned the Chicago AIA Chapter Design Excellence Award and also the Driehaus Neighborhood Design Awards. Johnson & Lee Ltd. is one of a small number of Chicago-owned, Black architectural firms to achieve such prestigious awards as lead designers. He is a member of the Art Institute of Chicago Leadership Advisory Committee, Business Leadership



Council (BLC), Trinity United Church of Christ and Omega Psi Phi fraternity (founder, Psi Gamma chapter). Johnson formerly served on Boards or was a member of: Chicago Architectural Club, Newhouse Architecture Committee, Near South Planning Board, Archeworks Board, City Club of Chicago, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Master of Fine Arts Program, Advisory Board for Columbia College Art & Design Department, AIA Chicago Board and the Chicago Historical Society Architectural Alliance. He was also a task force member with the Metropolitan Planning Council for the Chicago Housing Authority Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Study, as well as an AIA Charette participant for New Housing for North Kenwood Development.

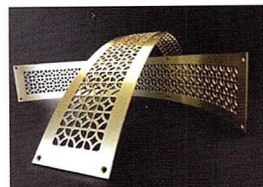
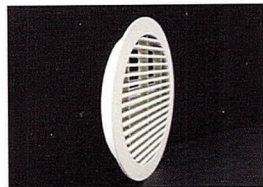
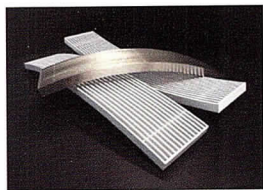




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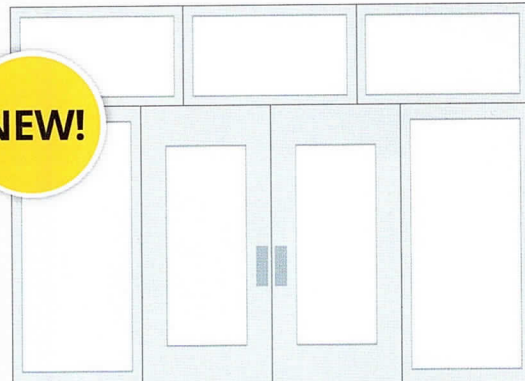


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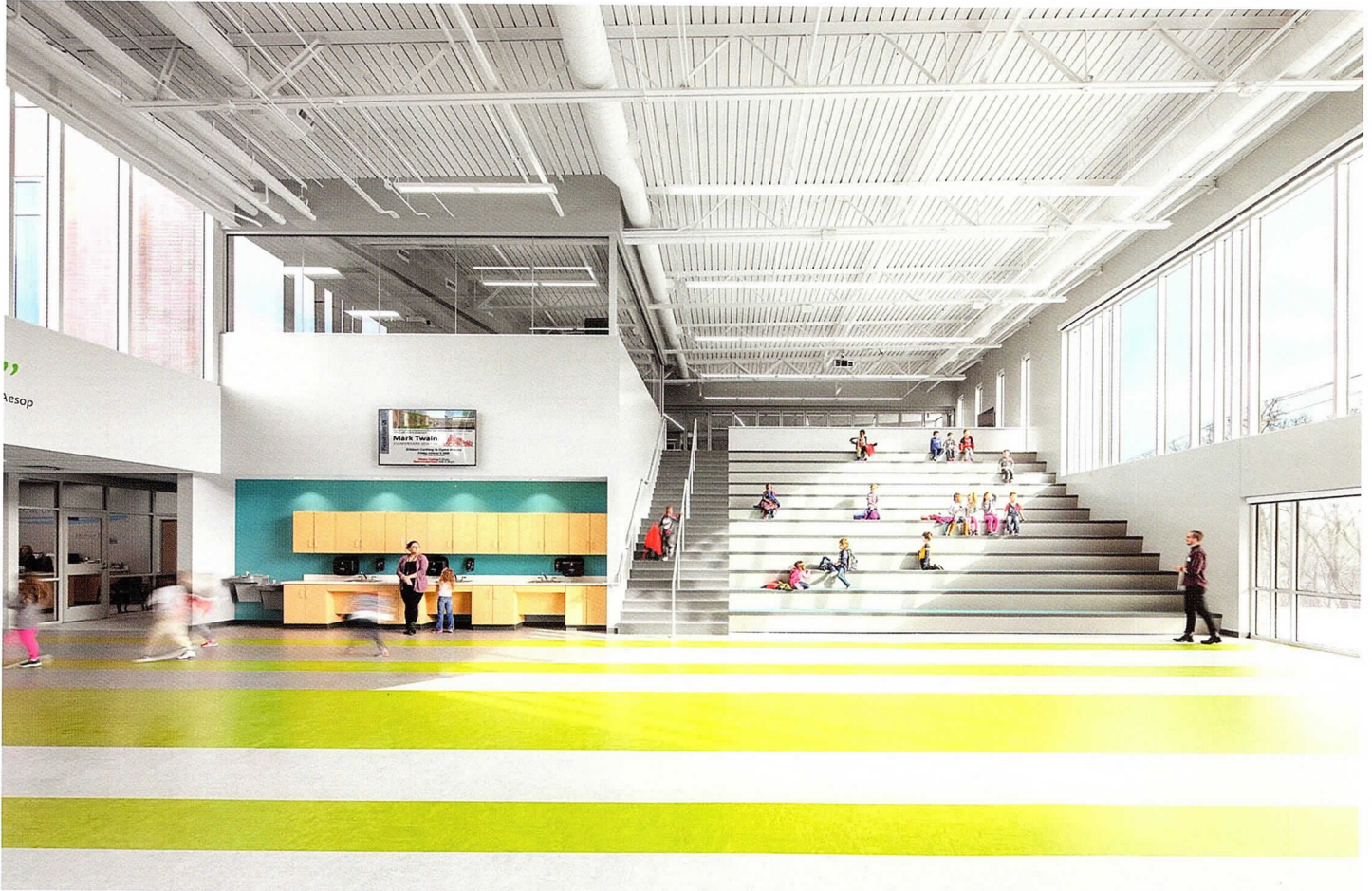
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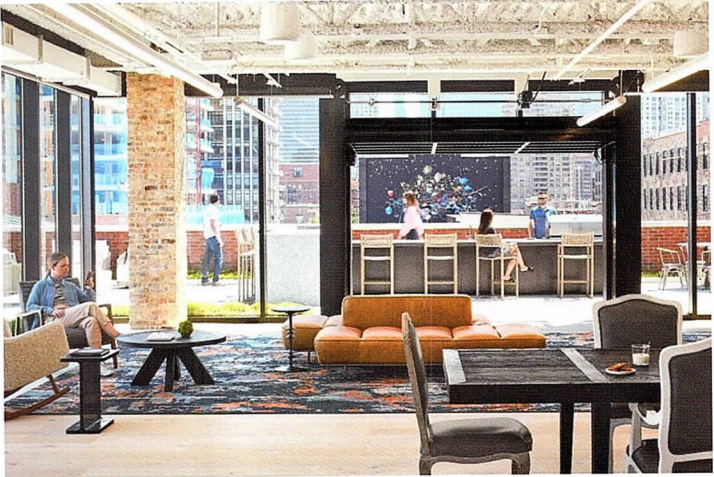
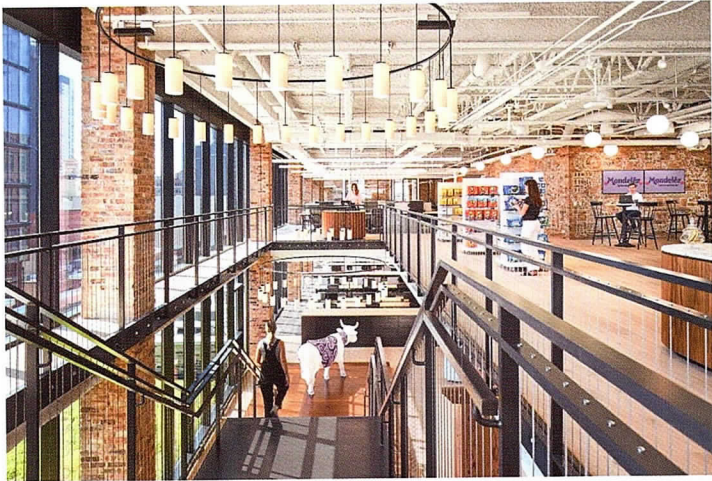
**Legat Architects** designed the new Mark Twain Elementary School in Bettendorf, Iowa. The 65,800-square-foot facility features a learning stair and a media center/library that overlooks a tributary of the Mississippi River.



The Village of Arlington Heights Police Station, designed by **Legat Architects** and built by Riley Construction, has earned a 2020 Project of the Year Award from the American Public Works Association (APWA).

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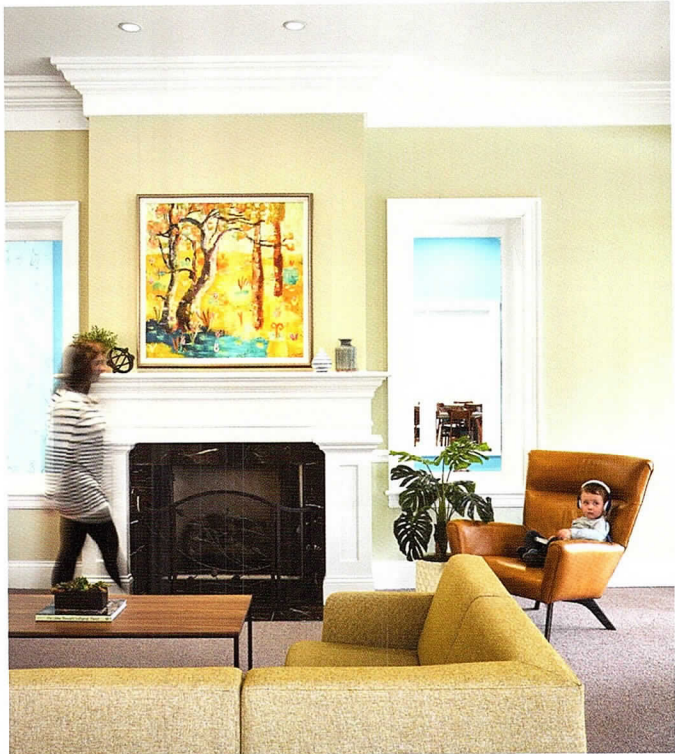




SCB recently completed the new headquarters for Mondelēz International Inc., one of the world's largest snack providers and home to many well-known brands such as Oreo, Cadbury, Triscuit and Nabisco.



Dirk Denison, FAIA, of Dirk Denison Architects, completed a yearlong renovation to the Illinois Institute of Technology's historic Mies van der Rohe-designed residential building, George J. Kacek Hall.



Gensler recently completed and photographed the restored Comer Ronald McDonald House; the firm helped them rebuild after a devastating fire.



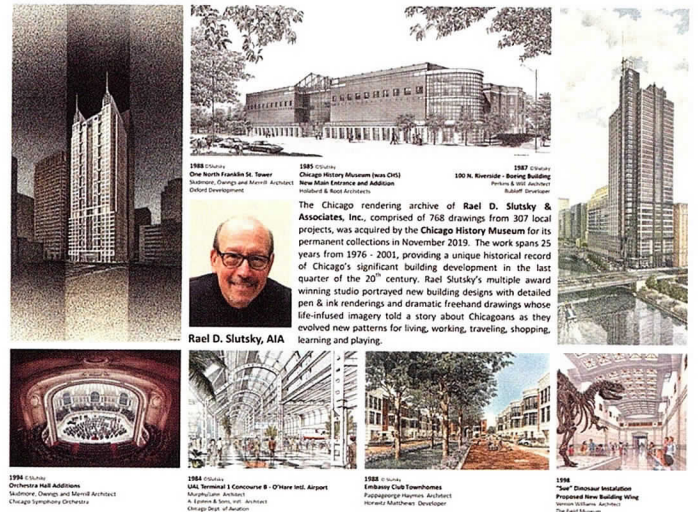
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Gensler unveiled the design for the Prairie Shores Apartments amenities clubhouse, with interiors by Stanton Interior Concepts.



Drew Roskos, AIA, was named a "2020 Design Champion" by Environments for Aging.



Renderings collected by Rael Slutsky, AIA, were acquired by the Chicago History Museum as an archive of Chicago-area projects.



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The image shows the interior of a restaurant or bar. The walls are covered in a dark, patterned wallpaper with a repeating geometric or floral motif. The ceiling is ornate with a repeating pattern. There are several wooden tables and dark chairs. A long, tufted leather booth runs along the wall. In the background, there is a bar area with stools and a menu board. The lighting is warm and ambient, with pendant lights hanging from the ceiling.

# *Untapping the Potential*

Architects Collaborate with Neighborhood Opportunity Fund Grantees

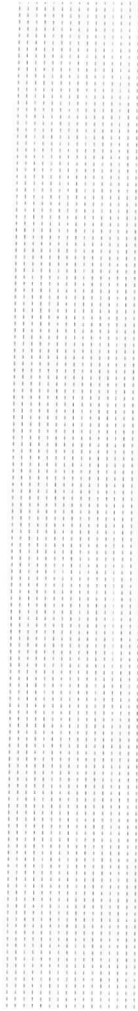
BY LEIGH KUNKEL



PHOTO CREDIT: BRENDA BERMUDEZ







**S**ome people might be surprised to learn that the City of Chicago helped fund the construction of a craft cocktail bar, but there's more to Osito's Tap, the new Little Village speakeasy, than just drinks.

"Mike wanted a neighborhood bar to energize the younger crowd," explained Jennifer Park, AIA, friend of Osito's owner Mike Moreno Jr. and the architect who helped him bring it to life. "His generation, they're going off to college and they don't come back. But his family has deep ties in the neighborhood going back decades, and he wanted to make it somewhere that people stay."

It was through Moreno that Park, now a principal at Brininstool + Lynch, was introduced to the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF), the City of Chicago program from which the pair eventually received funding for Osito's. Founded in 2016, the NOF is a financial tool for businesses that uses money generated by development in affluent neighborhoods to spur growth in the city's underserved South, Southwest and West Sides, awarding grants to projects that "have a catalytic impact on the neighborhood" and revitalize publicly accessible spaces. Thus far, the NOF has committed approximately \$57 million to 225 projects, 23 of which have been completed.

"We believe that this renewed emphasis on design excellence can help achieve everyone's revitalization goals for the South and West

Sides," said Peter Strazzabosco, deputy commissioner for the Department of Planning and Development. "There's always substantial work that needs to be done in terms of contracting and build-outs and business plans, so we've sought out Chicago-based architects to help these small businesses as they move forward with their projects."

Strazzabosco is referring to a new aspect of the program offering applicants help from a group of pre-qualified architects to navigate the complex and sometimes daunting process of project proposals and, ideally, execution. More than 100 firms applied to be on the pre-qualified list, from which NOF program administrator SomerCor selected 23. The firms join an existing technical assistance team that includes construction managers and lending coaches.

The team was developed in response to difficulties that early applicants faced when seeking NOF funding, said Katherine Darnstadt, AIA, founder of Latent Design and someone who has worked with the NOF since its inception.

"Many early projects didn't go through due to additional financing issues, extended timelines or finding out that the project was going to be more costly than anticipated," Darnstadt explained. By giving applicants the option of working with firms that are familiar with the process, their chances of being successfully funded increase.

And the advice applicants need isn't always strictly design-related. "We've been providing a lot of information around the cost of construction and how to pull together a proposal," said Monica





PHOTO BY PETER RANVUSTEL

Chadha, AIA, of architecture firm Civic Projects. “So we may help with conceptual design, like early plans or renderings, but really it’s all that front-end material you need to actually get the grant.”

For Jaime Torres Carmona, AIA, founder of design firm Canopy Architecture + Design, the projects he’s worked on through the NOF are personal: He grew up in Chicago and has lived or spent time in many of the neighborhoods the fund serves. “At Canopy, we’re building a spirit of diversity and camaraderie as an architectural practice, and the NOF is congruent with that,” said Carmona, adding that his team members speak 11 languages fluently between them.

Carmona’s first completed NOF project was the Enlace community center in Little Village, a ground-up construction that provides everything from public computers to violence-prevention outreach. The \$2.5 million project received funding from multiple sources, Carmona said, but the NOF grant was essential for the center’s rooftop healing garden. He’s currently in the process of working with Latinos Progresando in Marshall Square on a similar proposal to convert a vacant library into a community hub. “We’re hopeful now that we’re on the pre-qualified list that other, similar projects come up,” Carmona said.

Working with vetted architects is invaluable for applicants, as

“OSITO’S TAP IS BRINGING BACK A YOUNGER ENERGY TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND MAKING IT COOL TO BE THERE. IT’S ALREADY POPULAR WITH THE LOCALS. BUT PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE WILL ALSO COME TO IT AS A DESTINATION, WHICH IS GREAT BECAUSE IT THEN ATTRACTS ATTENTION TO THE COMMUNITY.”

— JENNIFER PARK, AIA

many do not have the specialized knowledge necessary to navigate the complicated ins and outs of the process and may turn to friends of family members who are well-intentioned but not used to working within the city’s system.

“I don’t think the applicants always realize how much work it takes to get through the process

and make it go smoothly,” said Park. Moreno noted something similar: “Mike has always told me he felt very lucky to have a friend who was not only an architect but had the right kind of knowledge and experience. And even then, it still took longer than we had expected.”

Despite the challenges, the fund’s impact on underserved



communities has been immediate and noticeable.

“The fact that small businesses are getting funded in these neighborhoods means that there’s a build-up of community wealth,” Chadha said, referring to studies showing the dramatic impact of buying and investing locally.

Park has witnessed it firsthand. “Osito’s Tap is bringing back a younger energy to the neighborhood and making it cool to be there,” she said. “It’s already popular with the locals, but people from outside will also come to it as a destination, which is great because it then attracts attention to the community.”

Last year, Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced the INVEST South/West initiative, a community-based revitalization strategy intended to ensure equitable investment in the South and West Sides. At least \$750 million will be distributed across 10 neighborhoods to shore up infrastructure and rebuild local business communities that have been neglected for decades.

The NOF is one of several city resources that support INVEST South/West, said Strazzabosco. Others include partnerships with planning and development entities like Main Street America to coordinate best practices for specific corridor improvements. Like NOF, INVEST South/West has a list of pre-approved architects, including Carmona.

Carmona is excited to work with the new group of applicants, but he’s already looking forward to what might come next for the initiative.

“If city officials could think uninhibitedly about geography, I know there are lots of neighborhoods on the North Side, like Rogers Park and Edgewater, that didn’t fit the bill for INVEST South/West,” Carmona said. “There are always untapped areas that could benefit from the help. Ultimately, an even more balanced distribution would be the wish.” CA

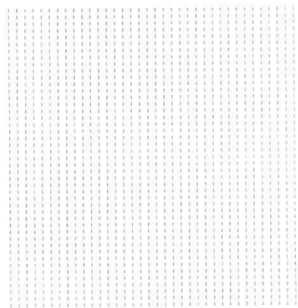


PHOTO CREDIT: SARAH CROWLEY





Enlace's new headquarters by Canopy Architecture + Design



### NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY FUND

Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) is a financial tool for businesses that uses money generated by development in affluent neighborhoods to spur growth in the city's underserved South, Southwest and West Sides.

Thus far, the NOF has committed approximately:

- \$57 MILLION
- 225 projects
- 23 completed projects











# Art

## IN ARCHITECTURE

### DESOLATION ROW – LIFE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

PHOTOS AND STORY BY WAYNE CABLE

*Photographer Wayne Cable began the project “Desolation Row – Life During the Coronavirus Pandemic” shortly after the quarantine lockdown order began in Chicago and the rest of Illinois in mid-March. He started out going for daily walks in Humboldt Park, near his residence. He decided to take a camera with him in case he saw anything pertinent, and this practice developed into his project documenting the city during this unprecedented time.*

There was a certain poignancy to the vision of isolation in evidence everywhere as the city froze in place with the lockdown. I have attempted to convey that sense through expression in my photographs, all the while being doubly aware that this is a unique and unprecedented time, and one worthy of having a quality documentation.

The preoccupation with the pandemic has evolved, and the repeated exhibitions of police brutality have laid bare for all to see the ill effects of racial inequality throughout our country more than a century and a half after the Civil War. Though I have not documented the rioting per se, I have been present at protests, and have sought to also convey the frustration borne out by Black people and so many marginalized minority groups.

It has been interesting to see things constantly morph as we reopen Chicago and the rest of the country. Though I don't know where this will go, I am happy to be contributing what I can to the documentation of these times. **CA**



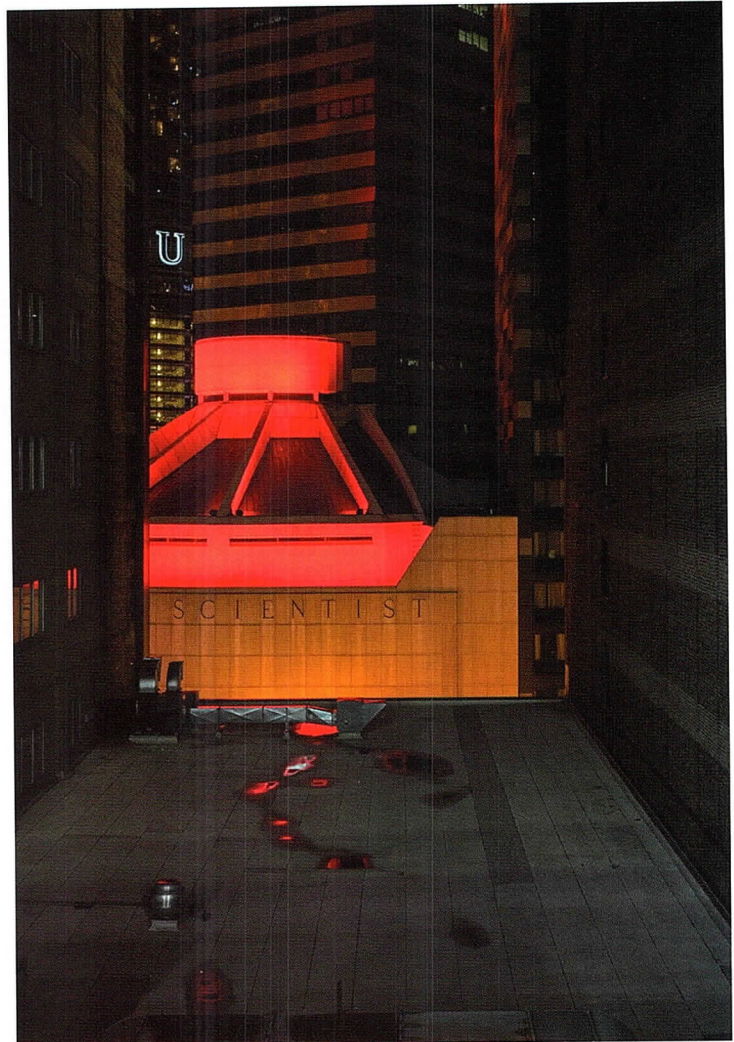
*Wayne Cable is a lifestyle and architectural photographer based out of Chicago, Illinois. Cable's photography has been featured in numerous publications including Architectural Digest, Architectural Record, Bon Appetit, Interior Design and The New York Times Magazine. See more of Wayne's work at: [www.waynecable.com](http://www.waynecable.com) and on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/wayne\\_cable/](http://www.instagram.com/wayne_cable/)*



Art IN ARCHITECTURE







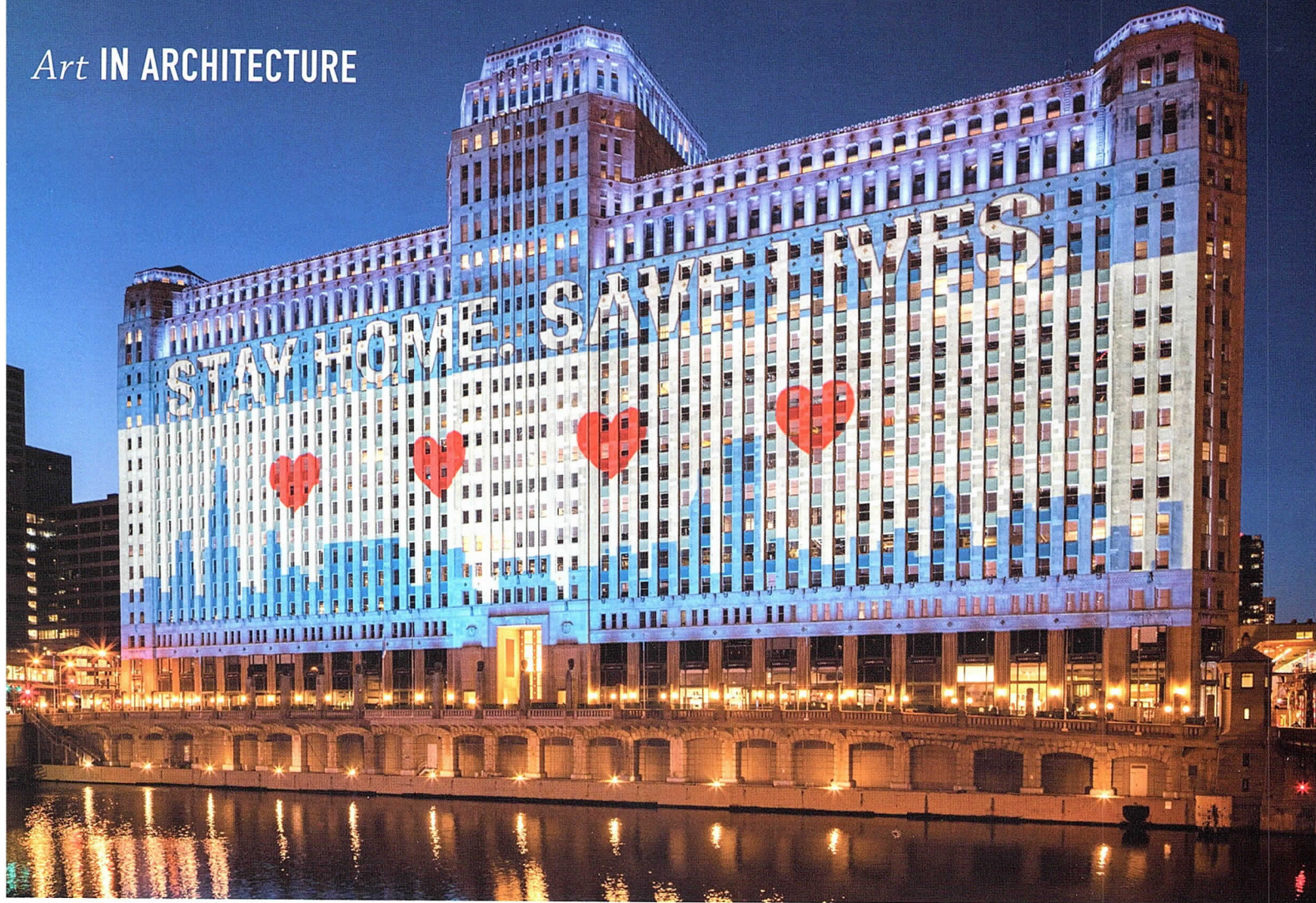
ABOVE LEFT: A family marches in the protests that followed the murder of George Floyd. Months after quarantine began, the Black Lives Matter protests drew thousands of people out of their homes and back outdoors.

ABOVE RIGHT: Buildings in the Loop continued to light up the skyline. Cable captured the Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist.

AT LEFT: While parks and public spaces emptied, Cable captured Crown Fountain which continued to play its iconic videos.



## Art IN ARCHITECTURE



ABOVE: The Mart continued "Art on the Mart" even while pedestrian traffic downtown dwindled. Facilities designed by Valerio Dewalt Train Architects projected Chicago's "Stay Home Save Lives" campaign to encourage residents to stay home and socially distance.

AT RIGHT: The Chicago Theater sends a message of love on their marquee.





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Glass entrance, Terrace 16 Rooftop Patio at Trump International Hotel and Tower. One-half-inch tempered glass walls, tempered laminated roof, architectural/commercial hardware.

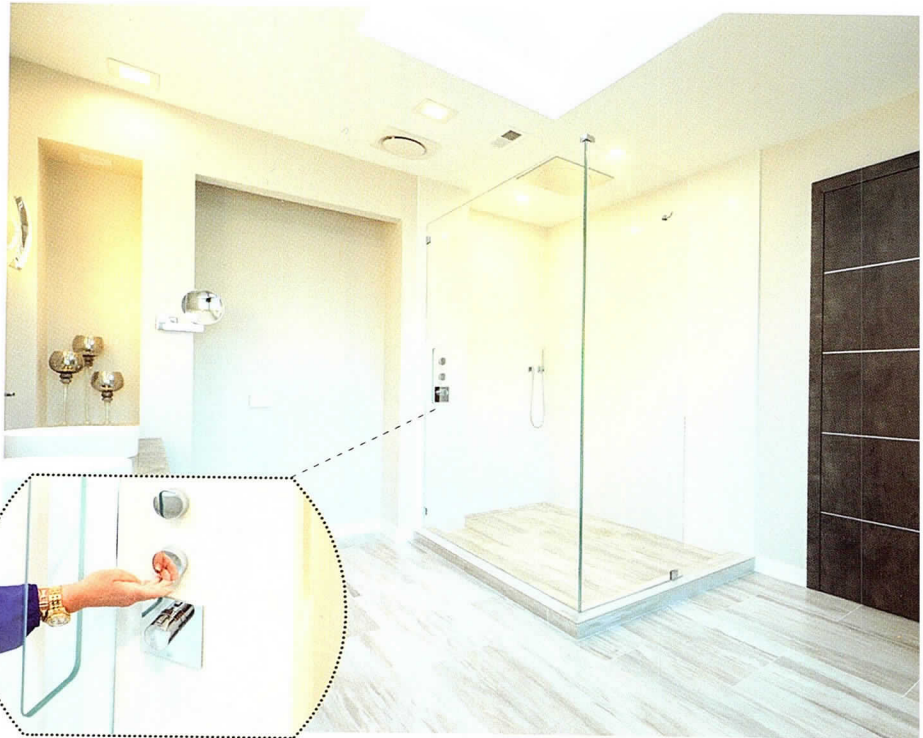
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