

Architect Colorado

A publication of The American Institute of Architects Colorado Component

The Faces of Architecture

**Changing the Façade of
Architectural Practice:
Three Leaders Pave the Way**

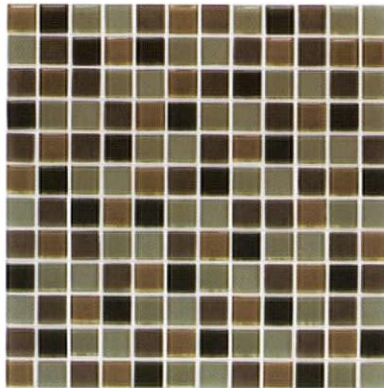
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**Background and Foreground:
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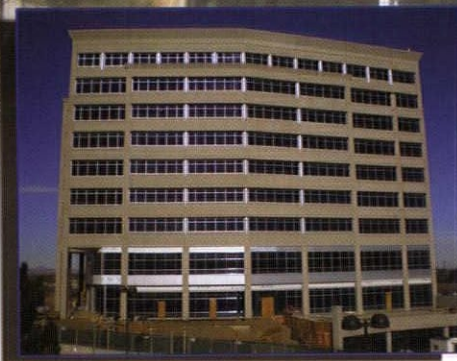
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Correction Notice

In Volume 5, Issue 1 of *Architect Colorado* (Sacred Spaces: A Look at Religious Architecture), the image on page 38 from Imagine: 2005 Young Architects Awards Gala should have been credited to Nicole Stibrany, Assoc. AIA, who was the designer.

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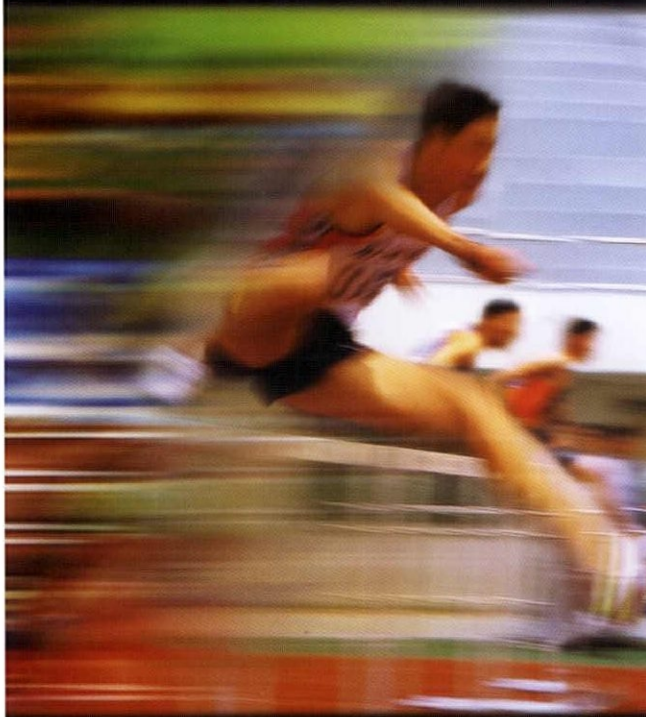
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On the Cover:

Elizabeth Wright Ingraham, FAIA
Solaz House, Manitou Springs

Photography by Ron Pollard

The primary mission of *Architect Colorado* is to inform AIA Colorado members about architectural news, trends and developments occurring throughout the state and about our members' work in our region and beyond. The publication also serves as an outreach tool to educate the community about the value of architectural excellence and the contributions of AIA Colorado architects.

 **AIA** Colorado
A Component of The American Institute of Architects



This issue of *Architect Colorado* focuses on the diversity of the world in which we live and work. Our nation has elected its first African-American president, and he has nominated an Hispanic woman to the country's highest court, following in the footsteps of other minority nominees and justices. Are we slowly moving to a post-racial, post-gender world? And what does that have to do, specifically, with us?

As you will read in this issue, AIA Colorado is leading the way in taking advantage of the many opportunities that arise from this diversity. One aspect of particular interest to me is the advancement of opportunities for women, or better put, women grabbing the ring.

As many will recall, the theme of the AIA Western Mountain Region (WMR) conference in Scottsdale a few years ago was, "What's Missing?" The conference brochure featured the photos of many prominent architects, all white males, and the keynote sessions and seminar topics focused on asking why the profession has so little diversity and what to do about it. AIA National strongly encourages programs and policies to help make the profession more reflective of the constituencies that we serve. Our own strategic plan likewise calls for increasing the diversity, in all senses of the word, of AIA Colorado.

We run the risk, however, of simply filling positions versus truly empowering professionals who don't look like those WMR brochure photographs. I believe women, in particular, suffer from a patronizing attitude. You may have heard the term, "the soft bigotry (or racism) of low expectations" (which I have seen ascribed to both a white past U.S. president and various black newspaper columnists). I submit to you that there is also a soft *chauvinism* of low expectations. I have heard more than once about firms, in their zeal to see women in responsible positions (or maybe to assuage some sort of guilty feelings), excusing poor performance in female employees in ways they never would for men. Far from empowering these women, such actions actually hold women back. I know a group of women, however, who need no such misplaced "help." They endeavor to gain respect for who they are as professionals and as people. They have a mission to perform, and seek support and appreciation for their ideas and accomplishments.

I refer, of course, to the women who help lead AIA Colorado: Mary Morissette, AIA, president-elect; Rhonda Boger-Linder, AIA, secretary; Cyd Pougiales, AIA, West Chapter president; Whitney Churchill, AIA, North Chapter president, Heather Ludwig, Assoc. AIA., associate director; Angela Tirri Van Do, Assoc. AIA., associate director-elect; and Kristin Stroh, AIAS, AIA student president (who was also recently appointed to a role on the QBS Colorado Committee). That's seven of 17 voting members, not to mention Sue Zen, SDA/C, the SDA liaison, and ex officio members Sonia Riggs and Robin Hickey. And don't forget Tania Salgado, AIA, AIA Denver president-elect, who is also one of the national AIA Young Architects of the Year. None of these women were selected because of her gender; each of them was selected for her intelligence and drive, and they each provide invaluable energy, experience and wisdom to your board of directors. They are among our best, regardless of gender. To be sure, they have each overcome obstacles that I have not, but they are not defined so much by what they have overcome as by what they do and who they are. I am proud to serve with each of them and look forward to a day when the discussion, in our firms and in our Institute, is simply about character and competence.

As stated earlier, this issue explores the diversity of the profession from several angles ... beyond gender to background, nationality, and body of work ... and showcases how diversity enriches both the process and the results of our practice. I believe we should both celebrate our differences and build on the best of our traditions and commonalities, learning from each other all along the way. We are not "there" yet, but let's keep walking.

Stuart Coppedge, AIA
AIA Colorado 2009 President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart Coppedge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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MEMBER NEWS

Bennett Wagner & Grody Architects was recently awarded a Citation in Modernization by the General Services Administration (GSA) for the renovation of the Byron Rogers U.S. Courthouse located in Denver, Colo. The courthouse renovation was one of the first 50 projects designated for the pilot project for the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Existing Buildings (LEED EB) program. The GSA honors projects that contain examples of integrated work, and projects are chosen not only on the basis of architectural design, but also on the integration of design, art and construction. The biennial awards are given to those projects deemed "the best of the best" of GSA's work.

sun power will completely sustain the community's energy needs and replace all fossil fuels. The neighborhood is intertwined with natural systems, stormwater-fed landscapes and civic places. Rain and snow melt feed street tree rain gardens, percolation parks, plazas and community gardens. Geos received final development approval from the City of Arvada and will begin construction in 2009.

To see the neighborhood design visit: <http://www.asla.org/2009awards/462.html> or <http://www.michaeltavelarchitects.com/GEOS%20Presentation.pdf>

RNL has been named among the top five sustainable design firms based in the United States. RNL is the only Colorado firm to make the top 10

ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS CHANGING THE WORLD

Renée del Gaudio, Assoc. AIA, in collaboration with the World Leadership School, will be donating services to help design and build a primary school for girls in the remote village of Oloika in southern Kenya.



Photograph of an existing building at The Shompole School for Girls.

The Shompole School for Girls, currently in the preliminary design phase, will employ local materials and culturally appropriate building technologies. They plan to utilize compressed earth block (CEB) wall construction using on-site soil, and locally harvested cane to create sun-shading devices. Studio NYL will be donating their structural engineering services to the school. The roof will be designed to collect and store rainwater and will house a solar panel array donated by the Ensworth School in Nashville.

In August, del Gaudio will work alongside Oloika community volunteers to build the school. Upon her departure, she will donate a compressed earth block press in hopes to spur continued infrastructure development.



The Geos Checkerboard Blocks integrate passive and active solar and stormwater percolation into a dense urban layout.

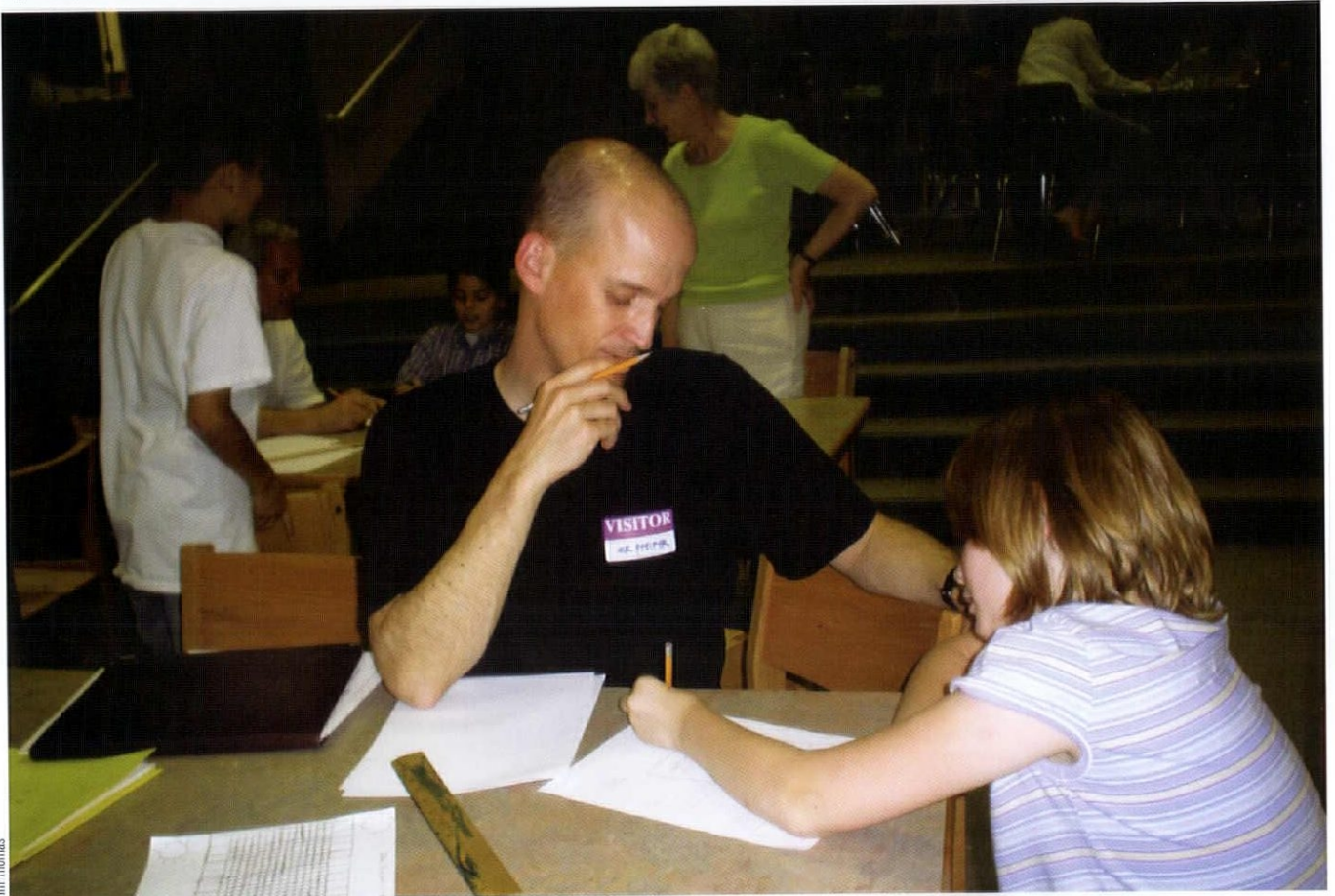
The American Society of Landscape Architects in Washington, D.C., has announced that an Honor Award has been bestowed on the *Geos Net Zero Energy Neighborhood* planned for Arvada, Colo.

Designed by **David Kahn Studios of Eldorado Springs, Colorado** and **Michael Tavel Architects of Denver, Colo.**, Geos will be the largest net zero energy, urban mixed use neighborhood in the United States. Earth and

sustainable firm list as published by *Architect* magazine in its May issue. The rankings were based on several variables from the survey, such as percentage of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) projects and LEED-accredited professionals on staff in 2008 as well as green policies, to come up with an overall score. The top 10 list is available online at http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/hanleywood/architect_200905/#/52.

CAL Projects Builds Appreciation for Architecture in Young Minds

By Chryss Cada



Tim Thomas

Above: David Pfeifer, AIA, AndersonMasonDale Architects, working with a Wyman student on plan view.

Cindy Sanchez, Cassandra Nunez and Gabriela Garcia are on the job site, just about to top off their new hotel and spa when they realize that the roof is too big. They huddle to discuss possible solutions and then emerge with a plan. "We're going to cut it down," Garcia announces.

Now that a decision has been reached, Heidi Spaly moves in to help — not only because she's the only person from an architecture firm in the group, but because she needs to supervise the use of the knife.

Sanchez, Nunez and Garcia are only in fifth grade and their roof is made of foam board. They have built their small-scale hotel and spa as

participants in the Cleworth Architectural Legacy (CAL) Project, which promotes student performance through the study of architecture and related fields such as engineering, interior design, landscape architecture, construction and environmental studies.

A collaboration between the Denver Architectural Foundation (DAF) and Denver Public Schools (DPS), the goal of CAL is not only to improve academic performance, but also to teach team building, community service, problem solving and creative thinking.

"We aren't in the schools to recruit architects; we're helping future clients understand what we do," said Dennis Humphries, AIA, of Humphries Poli Architects PC and chair of the DAF. "Our intention is to instill in future leaders of the community an appreciation of what architects do. When these kids grow up to be on a church board, school board or in some other decision-making role, they will have an expanded awareness of great design and its role in the community."

The program began when Tim Thomas began using architecture in a single gifted-and-talented class in a DPS elementary school. "I thought architecture was a great vehicle for student learning, because it is 'hands on' and activity-based, blended the practical and creative, was interdisciplinary, had a subject matter of its own and didn't infringe on the domain of the grade-level teachers, yet applied their classroom learning," Thomas explained.

After experiencing success in his own class he contacted the DAF, which in turn connected him with design professionals who helped him develop a variety of curriculum material, activities and approaches. Pleased with the direction the program was going, the DAF approached Thomas about expanding the program to other schools.

Since starting in that single DPS site in 2002-2003, CAL has been implemented in 25 other schools. Architects and design professionals from firms throughout Denver volunteer their time and talents, visiting classrooms weekly for a six-to-eight week curriculum each spring for a three-year period. The program is utilized by third to eighth grade students.

"Our numbers fluctuate a bit from year to year, but we tend to stay around 18 schools, adding roughly six schools each year for a three-year partnering," said Thomas, who is now director of the CAL program.

Jointly planned and presented with the teachers, the built environment becomes the students' classroom. Citywide participation reflects DPS demographics with 81 percent of CAL schools falling into "average" or "low" performing categories and 68 percent of the schools having more than one half of their student population qualifying for subsidized lunch programs.

Originally called "Architecture is Elementary," the program was re-named for one of its greatest champions, Cal Cleworth.

"I remember talking with Cal after one of our Foundation board meetings where we had been discussing which programs to support," said Ted Halsey, AIA, of Heery International, who has been involved with the CAL program since its inception. "We said at almost the same time that the school program is the one we should really get behind and make it our focus."



Tim Thomas

Above: Heidi Spaly, BRS, discussing design project with Swansea students.

Below: Sarah Ponko and James Runczy, AIA, of BY Group oversee shop drawing constructions with students at McKinley Thatcher.



Tim Thomas

Cleworth died shortly after the DAF made the school program its focus. “He left a memorial gift to the program that showed what a believer he was in it,” Humphries said. “We all agreed that the program should be named after him.”

Cleworth and the DAF members were not the only architects who believed in the program. Each year, volunteers from more than 20 design firms help develop resource materials, plan curriculum and co-teach the weekly, one-hour classroom lessons.

“With the CAL program, we’re constantly impressed by how forthcoming architects have been about volunteering their time,” Halsey said. “We’ve often had more volunteers than we had schools. It’s the kind of program people just don’t say ‘no’ to.”

Halsey had to step aside one year so other architects would have the opportunity to participate in the program. Because of a wealth of volunteers, Halsey is “sharing” his current class with architects from Davis Partnership Architects.

“The architect meets with the teacher in advance and discusses what study areas she or he would like to fortify with the program,” he explained.

His project last spring was building a greenhouse with a group of fifth grade students who are studying sustainability. “In a project like that, architecture allows them to understand scale, the environment, plan making, site planning, model building and building of the actual structure,” he said. “And because it offers a break from the traditional classroom and is very hands-on, the kids are very motivated.”

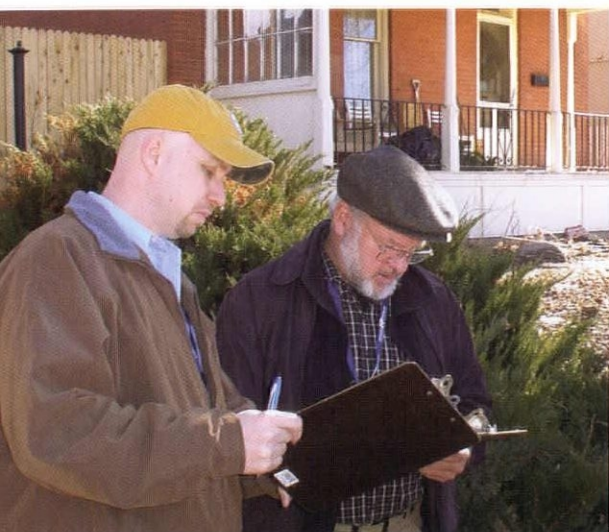
Involved in the CAL program for the past three years, Swansea Elementary teacher Natalie Chacon has seen that motivation first hand. “As a teacher what I like about incorporating the CAL program with my students is that I’m able to integrate the concepts into so many content areas,” she said. “I can tailor the program to the strengths and interests of each class.” Since the first year’s participating group was already high in math, she integrated math activities that reinforced and extended the depth and complexity of their mathematical thinking.

Her current fifth grade group of gifted-and-talented students, of which hotel and spa designers Sanchez, Nunez and Garcia are a part, has been with the program two consecutive years. Since the students needed more reading-and-writing skill development, Chacon’s focus of instruction was on reading-and-writing research along with a strong collaborative team component for weekly team challenges.

“The team challenges allow for creative, deductive-reasoning tasks, which engage the students with hands-on activities,” she said.

In addition to building scale buildings for “Box City,” an annual event where children are invited to build an entire city from recycled materials, the class wrote profiles of the architects of their choice, built model bridges, did a landfill experiment and role-played different people in the building industry.

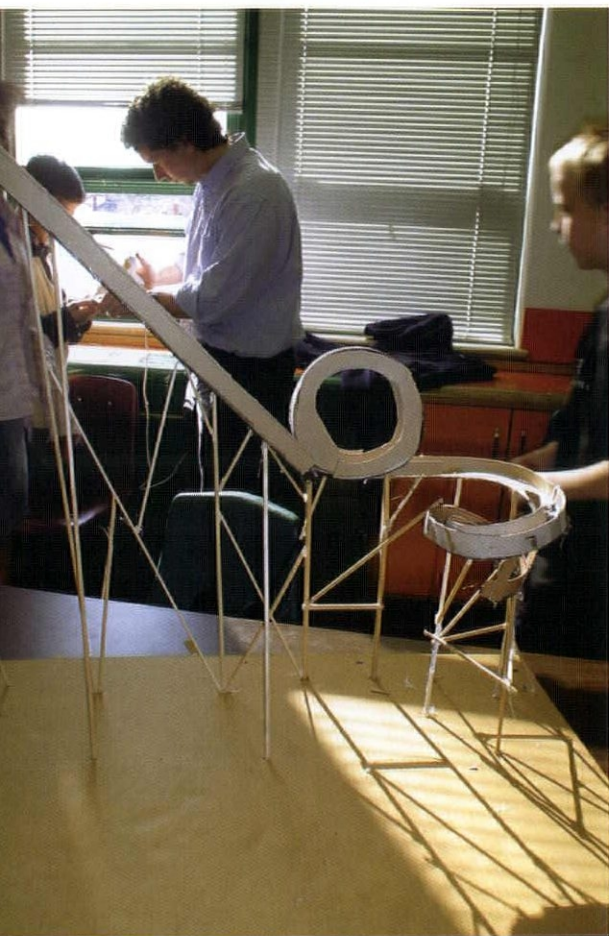
“What I’ve enjoyed most about the architectural program is actually constructing a façade and studying about different elements of architecture,” Garcia said.



Tim Thomas

Above: Bill Tracy, AIA, right, of Building Area Measurements (DAF treasurer) leading teacher training walking tour.

Below: Grant Middle School roller coaster physics design with Matt Porta, AIA of SlaterPaull.



Tim Thomas

Before the program all she knew about architecture was that architects designed buildings. "What excites me now is how architects get to be very creative in designing a building and how there are different people in different professions that form part of architecture," she said. "Participating in the CAL program has inspired me to be a civil engineer."

Although the program was not designed to "recruit" future architects, it seems to be having that effect. Of the eight other students in Garcia's class, seven want to be architects. The eighth wants to be a wrestler, but said the CAL program has inspired him because "people in architectural careers take risks and so will I as a wrestler."

Anisa Fay Ashley Procter says the program has inspired her to become an architect because she likes to be the one in charge of things. "I would be so ecstatic to design a building," she said. "Also to be a part of a team, to accomplish something that I can say I did."



Tim Thomas

Above: Kerrie Kannberg of Hutton working on stained glass shapes with students at Dora Moore.

It is the participants' enthusiasm that has made the program so rewarding for Spaly, the associate architect with Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture who has been with Chacon's class for the past two years.

"They are excited about architecture, about going out and identifying the different elements of architecture in the community around them," she said. "They are very observant."

Spaly received a warm welcome when she returned to the classroom this spring. "They were really excited and had questions about things we talked about last year," she said. "I was amazed by the amount of detail they remembered."

Chacon said she measures the success of the program by the students' motivation and enthusiasm. "Kids in elementary school don't get a lot of opportunity to think big and this program gives them that," she said. "As a result they are engaged and learning — even if they don't notice because they are having fun getting their hands on a project." ■

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"Alumni Schools"

Barnum Elementary, Columbine Elementary, Cory Elementary, Dennison Montessori, Ebert Elementary, Ellis Elementary, Force Elementary, Grant Middle School, Holm Elementary, Howell K-8, Kaiser Elementary, Knight Academy, Kunsmiller Middle School, Lowry Elementary, McKinley-Thatcher Elementary, Newlon Elementary, Steck Elementary, Steele Elementary, University Park Elementary and Wyman Elementary

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"To increase public awareness and appreciation for the impact of architecture on our quality of life through education, participation and advocacy for excellence."

Changing the Façade of Architectural Practice: Three Leaders Pave the Way

By Sarah Goldblatt, AIA



Three modern pioneers in Colorado have bridged the gap of women and minorities practicing architecture. Their stories contain struggle, yet they are full of accomplishments and contributions to the field. These individuals have established standards of practice and levels of civic engagement that are relevant to all practitioners — regardless of gender or race.

Elizabeth Wright Ingraham, FAIA, is one of them. At 85, she is full of vitality with architectural vision that remains 20/20. She is not only among the 14 percent of licensed women that comprise AIA Colorado members, but probably the only one in her age bracket. What keeps her going? A quest for knowledge ... and there is no end in sight. Her advice to anyone interested in participating in the conversation? Speak up! That is not to say speak louder, but take a stance on social issues and make a difference. She urges architects to use their ability to transcend boundaries to be a catalyst for change. This has been her lifetime objective and she encourages others to follow her lead.

Ingraham's contributions to the field of architecture are substantial, let alone her sheer ability to be in continuous practice for more than 60 years. She prevailed over the usual limitations seen for women in the field early in her career and established a thriving practice where, even today, she continues to push the design envelope. For example, she recently designed a glass house in a forest setting while all the time being mindful of prefabricated building components and alternative energy sources.

She cites the establishment of the Wright Ingraham Institute at the 640-acre Running Creek Field Station in Elbert, Colo., as one of her most significant achievements. Between 1970 and 1982, college students and

Above: Elizabeth Wright Ingraham, FAIA.

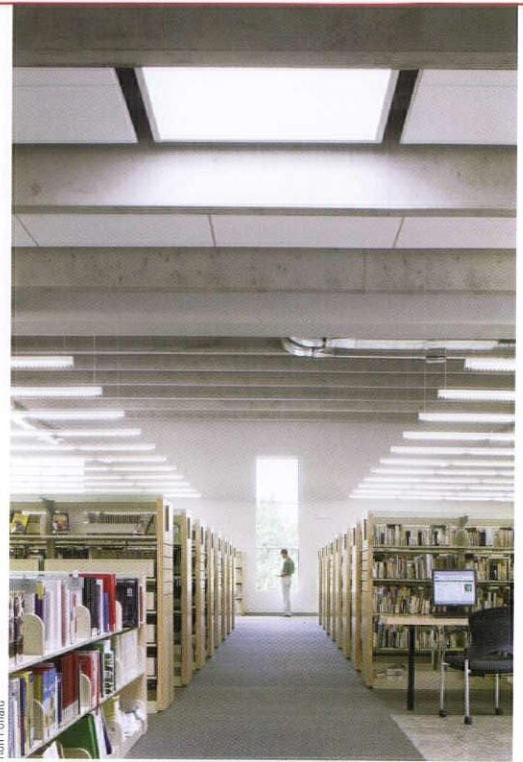
Courtesy of Elizabeth Wright Ingraham Architects

professors from universities throughout the country developed and participated in a program that Ingraham conceived as “integrative studies using land and the environment as reference points for study and research.”

“The goal of the program,” she explains, “was to counter the fragmentation found in education.” Although the program was multi-disciplined, the basic elements of shelter were used to symbolize the composite nature of education which Ingraham describes as “the foundation for design ... and without a foundation you have no structure for life.”

Recently, Ingraham received an inquiry from a 16-year-old girl who asked, among other things, how much money architects make. Ingraham politely responded that the question was irrelevant. Instead, she recommended that the teen learn everything about biology, sociology, ecology and art, among other disciplines, and do a great deal of reading and studying of math and physics and build a foundation. “When you’ve done that, then move on to architecture,” she advised, then added: “Once you’re in, however, you can’t get out — it’s a powerful force.”

Harold Massop, president of Harold Massop Associates Architects, exhibits the same tenacity as Ingraham in the pursuit of meaningful contributions to the built environment, but he would likely take exception to the idea of approaching the profession without a concern for the business end. He cites the emphasis that architecture schools place on design excellence over the practical knowledge of running a practice as perhaps the weak link to professional success. Referencing a statement that he attributes to Mies Van Der Rohe, Massop says, “It doesn’t matter how great a designer you are, you have to have something to design. Without a client, you’ll never be able to manifest your great knowledge.”



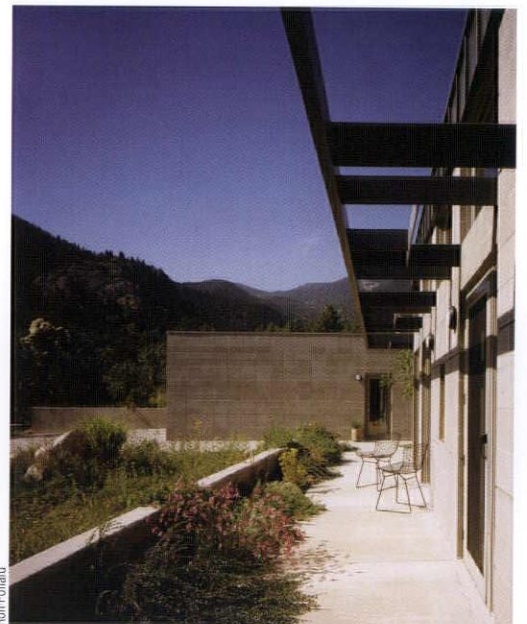
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Ron Pollard



Ron Pollard

Top and center: Fountain Branch Library, an AIA Colorado South 2006 design honor award-winning project by Elizabeth Wright Ingraham, FAIA.

Bottom left and right: Ingraham’s geometric Solaz house in Manitou Springs won a 1999 AIA Colorado design award.



Jonathan Shoup

Above: Harold Massop.

Right: Interior view of the Montclair Recreation Center in Denver, Colo., designed by Harold Massop.

Massop describes his architectural career that spans nearly 40 years as an “extraordinary journey” that has taken him from his native Jamaica to New York, Houston and Denver. His perspective is unique. Statistically, he is among the approximately 11 percent of minorities practicing architecture and the 1.5 percent of blacks that comprise the licensed professionals in the country. In Jamaica, Massop explains, “being black does not disqualify you from attaining your highest professional goals.” In the United States, he experienced otherwise. Coming to study architecture at the Pratt Institute amidst the civil right’s movement was confounding. He recalls, when he first arrived at school, the admissions officer asked, “Are you sure that you are at the right place? This is not a black school. Are you sure this is what you want to do?” Massop was sure.



Jonathan Shoup



Jonathan Shoup



Jonathan Shoup

Top: Exterior view of the Montclair Recreation Center in Denver, Colo., designed by Harold Massop.

Bottom: Sanctuary of the Scott United Methodist Church in Denver, Colo., designed by Harold Massop.

He excelled in school and upon graduation was pursued by the top architectural firms led by Paul Rudolph, Marcel Breuer and Philip Johnson among others. Massop went on to work for SOM to fulfill his desire to work on high-rise buildings and to gain experience in all aspects of the profession. But when he inquired about partnership in the firm, they responded, “We’ve never had a black partner — Harold, why don’t you be patient?” He replied, “What does being black have to do with this? I just want to be at the top of my profession.” Unable to penetrate the racial barrier at that time, he left SOM for Colorado where he eventually established his own practice. He has been involved in shaping many civic projects throughout the city including Denver International Airport, the Colorado Convention Center, the Denver Justice Center and other local projects, such as the Montclair Recreation Center and Scott United Methodist Church. He doesn’t see himself as a pioneer in the field, but he does recognize his fortitude to overcome the obstacles that the profession places in front of him, including the challenges of establishing a business as a minority.

Massop’s enthusiasm for the profession has not diminished. He often attends high school career days to expose students to architecture who might not otherwise consider it as an option and to emphasize to them that the “sky is the limit!”



Courtesy of HMA Architects

Ron Abo, AIA, president of the Abo Group, Inc., is a third-generation Japanese-American who is among the 2.4 percent of licensed AIA members in Colorado with Asian-Pacific ethnicity. As a child, his family preferred not to identify with their Japanese heritage. It wasn't until the late 1960s when he was studying architecture that he experienced an "awakening in terms of social responsibility" that caused him to embrace his own background and recognize that everyone has a right to his or her own voice and identity.

A pivotal experience in his fifth year of architecture school reinforced this belief and it remains a cornerstone of his practice today. Instead of doing a traditional thesis project, he and a few other students were given the option to participate in a Community Design Center experience. The students were placed in an inner-city setting and asked to apply their design skills to mediate for a neighborhood that was being negatively impacted by a proposed road-widening project. Abo asserts that, "back then, there was no participation or community involvement in the process." Although unsuccessful in their efforts to change the Department of Transportation's course of action, the exercise taught him that people "needed to be involved in the process of designing and controlling the destiny of their communities." After graduating from architecture school, he started a non-profit organization, Environment Inc., with other graduates of the Community Design Center to put the resources of architecture in the service of the public interest.

Abo continues to believe that community involvement and engagement in social issues is a fundamental obligation, not only of those in the architecture profession but all members of society. Many of his firm's projects are with non-profit agencies that address issues surrounding low-income housing, community center development and revitalization of neighborhoods. In each of Abo's projects, the end users are part of the design conversation early in the process.

Elizabeth Wright Ingraham, Harold Massop and Ron Abo recognize that the diversity of architectural professionals has not kept pace with the demographic changes in American society. Additionally, they agree that there is a need to expose students of all backgrounds to the potential of the profession, so that it may more clearly reflect society in the future. ■

Left: Ron Abo, AIA.

Top: Bruce Randolph Avenue Townhouses in Denver, Colo.: five affordable, sustainable townhouses for a non-profit housing developer designed by The Abo Group Inc.

Bottom: The Curtis Park Hope VI project in Denver, Colo., designed by The Abo Group Inc., disperses public housing tenants in a market rate development. The project received a 2002 Congress of New Urbanism Award of Merit.



Michael Park Studios

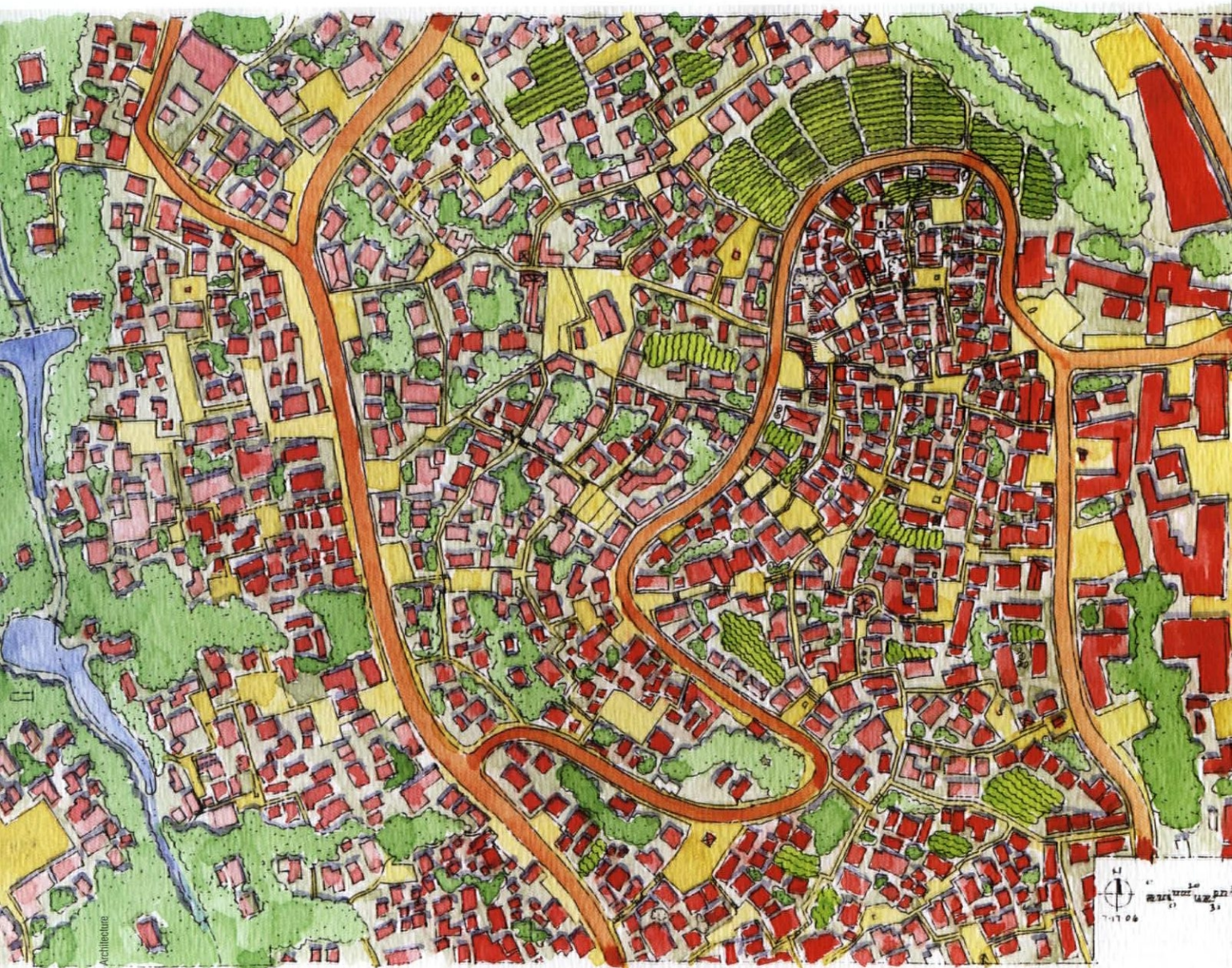


Courtesy of HMA Architects

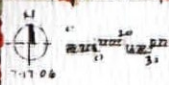
Kigali: Master Plan for Sustainable Growth

Denver firm creates design for peaceful, prosperous African city

By Mary Lou Jay



Oz Architecture



The development of a conceptual master plan for Kigali, capital city of Rwanda, represents the determination of the country and its president, Paul Kagame, to move beyond the civil war and genocide of its recent past to a future of peace and economic prosperity. Two members of the Denver firm of OZ Architecture — Carl Worthington, AIA, ASLA, and Steve Brooks, AIA, LEED AP — are leading this transformational effort.



Opposite page: The master plan addresses the need for services in existing areas of the city. At left, the Gitega neighborhood as it exists today; at right, the plan's suggested improvements.

Above: Community centers will serve as a place where area residents can obtain services and meet with neighbors.

Below: The master plan encourages clustering of schools, church, retail, police, shopping plaza and marketplace, creating a walkable city.

Worthington's work with developer John Dick on the Denver Tech Center led to OZ's involvement. In 2003, when Kagame visited the United States, Dick invited him to view the Center and asked Worthington to give a presentation. "After telling me about his dream, the president asked, 'Will you come to Rwanda and help me rebuild my country?'" recalls Worthington. He became design director. After a career focused on planning at an international level, he was attracted to the opportunities represented at this scale. Brooks, who had spent time teaching architecture in nearby Uganda and had several ties to Rwanda, became the project manager.

History and geography impact design

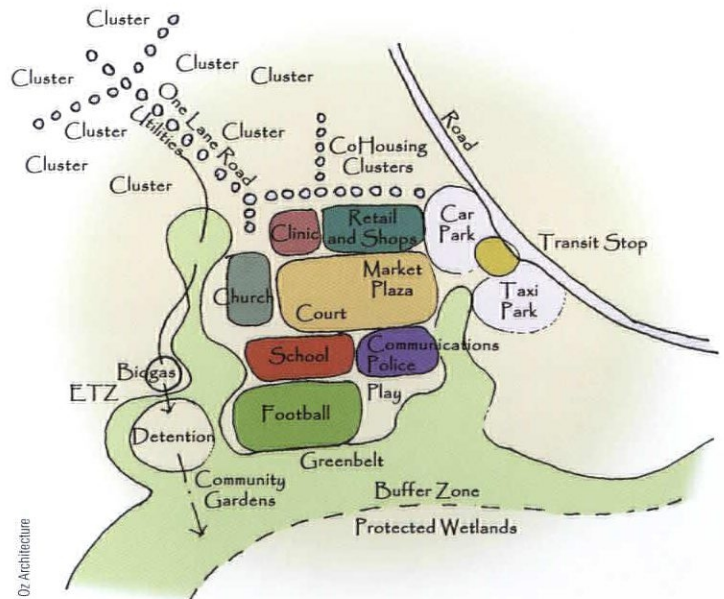
In creating the Kigali Conceptual Master Plan, the designers were working with an almost blank slate — a new city center located over a hill and south of the existing city in a basin with almost no development. This new area will link the existing city with the planned international airport to the south.

But Kigali presented some unique challenges. The first was landform. Rwanda is known as the country of 1,000 hills, "almost like San Francisco on steroids," says Worthington. Since wetlands lie at the bottom of those hills, development is done on their slopes and at the top.

The country's recent history and strife between ethnic groups also impacted design. "Rwanda has the residual effects of the genocide ... the social context is a challenge as it would be with any country that has had a major conflict in the past," says Donna Rubinoff, Ph.D., a planner, urban designer and geographer who helped direct the OZ project team. She points out that the physical nature of space and place is linked very much to social relations and power.

"Re-establishing community is one of the most important aspects of our design work, as well as recreating communities that get the ethnic groups back together," says Brooks.

Because of the genocide, more than 70 percent of Rwandans are under 30 years of age. "When you design a city where you have a normal population pyramid, it should look different from a city where more than 50 percent of the population is under 25," says Rubinoff.



Architects and Allied Professionals Change the World

By Mary Lou Jay



Courtesy of Andy Stewart

Building Opportunities for Education

Ten years ago, Andy Stewart, PE, LEED AP, traveled to Uganda as part of a church group building a school in the village of Mityana. "I developed a passion for the people there, but my heart broke at their needs," says Stewart, business development manager for Saunders Construction, Inc. of Denver. So when he received a request from some Uganda residents asking for help to build a school in Nkonya, Stewart was ready to help.

"Nkonya is a small fishing village that had no school. Most boys grew up to be fishermen, and most girls became subsistence farmers," he explains. "We wanted to give the kids an opportunity for education that they did not have before." Stewart and his wife Susie raised \$15,000 by sending out letters to friends and co-workers, and traveled to Nkonya with two of their children to help lay bricks for the first four classrooms. In 2008, after a few more years of more fundraising, Stewart returned with his family — now with three children — to help build the second half of the school.



Courtesy of Andy Stewart

Left: Stewart 3 Taken in March 2009, this picture shows Stewart, his son Arik (on the ladder) and a friend with the staff and students of the school in Kigalama. Above: Andy Stewart of Saunders Construction, Inc., (in orange shirt with sunglasses) and the other members of his volunteer team pose with Ugandan construction workers during construction of the orphanage building in Naama.



Dr. Architecture

Opposite page: The Kigali Conceptual Master Plan provides a framework for the city's development over the next 50 to 100 years. The existing city is to the northwest of the new city center, and the planned international airport will be south of the Nyaborongo River.

Above: Developing the master plan was a participatory process; the team made many presentations to Kigali residents and invited their comments.

Creating a master plan for a country where 60 percent of the people live below the poverty line of one to two dollars a day is a dramatically different economic context from planning and urban design in the United States, Rubinoff adds. "You have to think about how the plan is going to support a major economic shift in a country where people are barely surviving. It is not just building buildings. We want to support and change those dynamics, contribute to poverty alleviation and improve people's livelihoods."

"They are morphing from what has essentially been an agrarian culture into high technology, education, medicine and finance," adds Worthington. "All of these things will completely transform the country."

Creating sustainable solutions

The master plan, approved by the Rwanda government in June 2008, establishes the framework for Kigali's expected population growth from 1 million to 3 million people over the next 50 years. The plan bases that framework on social, economic and environmental sustainability.

"We are trying to use sustainable, environmentally based solutions for all of the work we are doing," says Brooks. The plan employs gravity to harvest rainwater and to extract waste. It includes locally available materials such as granite cobbles for paving, which are not only less expensive than

"The school became the first permanent building in the entire community, and now has 150 kids attending it. It also serves as a community center for the village," Stewart says.

Stewart has worked on several other school projects in Uganda through Maranatha, a Christian missionary program. In 2006, he helped build a 4,000-square-foot orphanage in the village of Naama. "It will hold up to 80 kids, although there are just 14 living there now," he says. "This has had a major impact

on their lives. These are children who were orphaned by AIDS, living with guardians, looked down upon socially. Now they are able to live in a beautiful new dormitory, in a secure building with full-time adult supervision and not subject to molestation." Stewart is currently trying to find sponsors so additional children can live in the orphanage.

Stewart says his service is faith-driven.

"The way I love God is by loving others, and there's such a great need there," he says. He admires the spirit of the Ugandan people. "They are happy and content even though they're impoverished."



Courtesy of Andy Stewart

Health Care Architecture in Viet Nam

John Hoelscher, AIA, of RTA Architects, lectures to Vietnamese architectural students through the Resource Exchange International — Vietnam program. "Its purpose is to provide training and education in the professional fields for the Vietnamese, with a primary focus on training in the medical field," Hoelscher explains. He started volunteering after a trip to Vietnam in 2006. "After we visited the health-care facilities in Hanoi and Hue, it became very clear that Vietnamese architects needed assistance in designing good health-care facilities."

Hoelscher has traveled to Vietnam four more times, presenting lectures on health-care design to students and faculty at architectural schools in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. "The goal is to bring the skill level up so that Vietnamese architects can take a larger role in designing their health-care facilities." One of the key ideas that he tries to impress upon them is an understanding of where they want to be headed in their

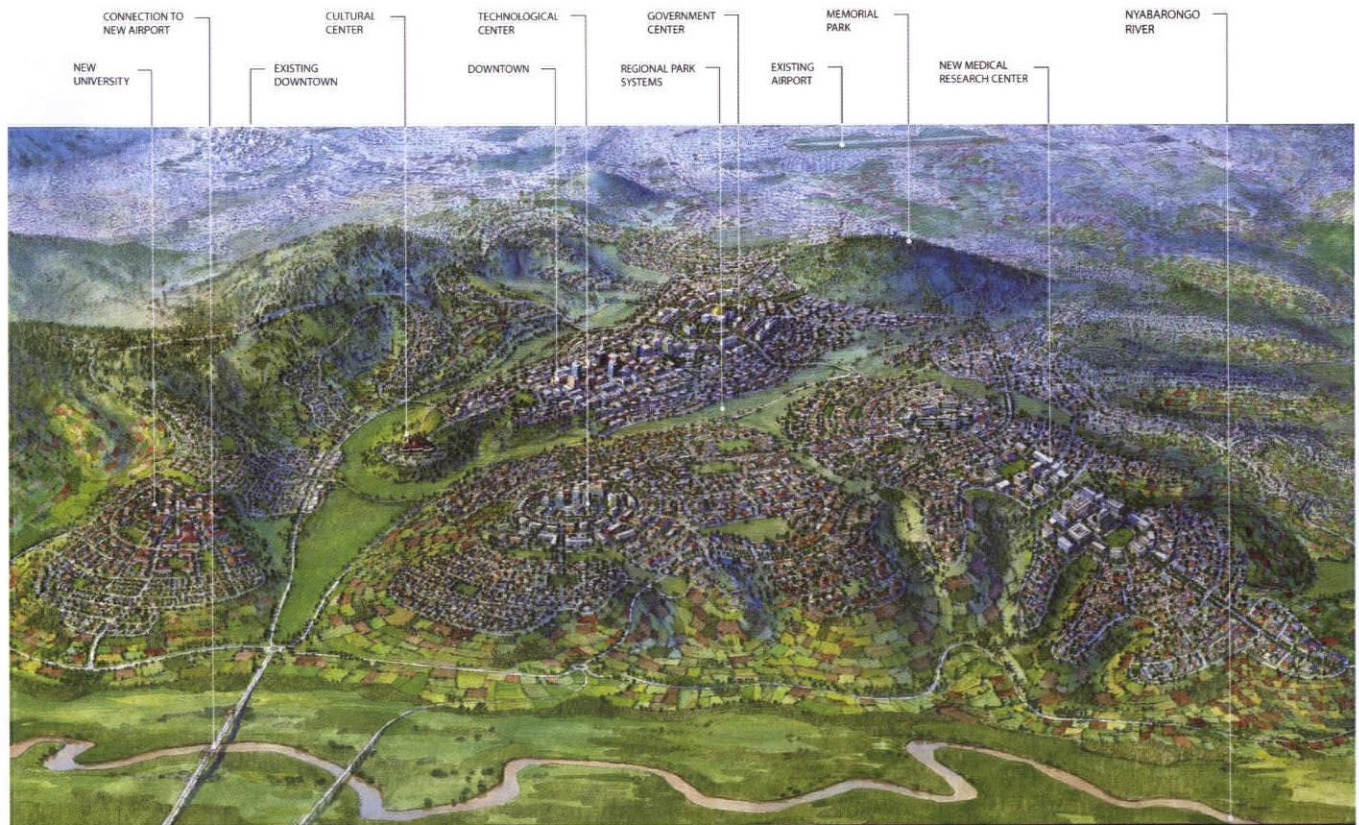


Courtesy of Andy Stewart

Above: Stewart and his family in Nkonya in front of the school which they helped build.

Right: Children at play outside the Naama orphanage that Stewart helped build.

by loving others, and there's such a great need there," he says. He admires the spirit of the Ugandan people. "They are happy and content even though they're impoverished."



Kigali Conceptual Master Plan

New City Center Vision

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health-care system and of the monetary and skilled professional resources they will need to get there.

Currently Hoelscher is working with a private investor who wants to build a hospital in Hanoi. As part of that project, he has agreed to host two Vietnamese architects in his office in Colorado Springs, volunteering his time to assist them with the design of the facility.

Left: The great need for better design of health-care facilities in Vietnam inspired John Hoelscher, AIA, of RTA Architects, to give lectures to Vietnamese architects and architectural students on the topic. Right: A scene outside a Vietnamese hospital: nursing units are large dorms with balconies, where family members hang out patients' clothes to dry.



Courtesy of John Hoelscher

He appreciates the opportunity to give back in a meaningful way at this point in his career. "I have the expertise, and there's a ready-and-willing audience that needs what I have to offer."

Home and School for Zambia's Orphans

Always a traveler, Scott Lindenau, AIA, first visited Africa 10 years ago. Now he has another reason to travel there, thanks to the bat mitzvah project of a friend's daughter that evolved into the Hope for Education program. With the support of that program, Lindenau, a design principal at Studio B



Above High, screened windows let light in and hot air out in Scott Lindenau's design for a school and orphanage in Zambia.

Hoelscher sees a great thirst for knowledge among the Vietnamese architectural community. "I've found they are very intrigued, perhaps because I'm not telling them how to design their hospitals, but trying to partner with them and help them ask the right questions and then develop the answers from there." He recalls one student who told him, "The day I heard you lecture in Ho Chi Minh City was the most important day in my life."

asphalt or concrete, but also slow and absorb water runoff. This eliminates the need for large storm drainage and storm-water-management systems.

"For wastewater, we are developing environmental treatment zones, where waste can be used to create biogas and fertilizer. This will mean smaller systems that are local to neighborhoods rather than the big trunk systems for water and wastewater treatment that we use here," Brooks adds.

Small town centers in the plan create the space required for community sustainability. "The plan encourages clustering of schools, churches, retail, police, shopping plaza and marketplace as the heart of each neighborhood," says Worthington. "You create walkable neighborhoods that are not dependent on the automobile. Eventually there will be bus transit throughout the city and bicycle ways that run along the greenlands (the wetlands)."

Developing the plan was a participatory process that included people who live in squatters' slums in the existing city, areas the team terms "informal housing settlements" to give them more legitimacy. "There are social networks there that are really important to social sustainability," Brooks says. The plan calls for renovation and renewal of these areas by bringing water in, taking waste out, and building roads, schools and basic services.

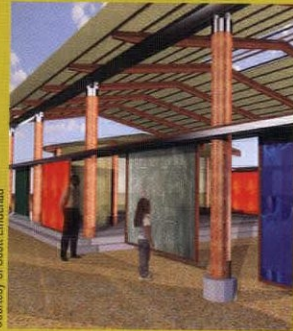
"We think it is a win-win in the beautification of the city and in preserving the social fabric of the residents here," Brooks says.

in Aspen, Colo., has helped develop a master plan for a school and orphanage that will help more than 600 children near the small Zambian city of Livingstone.

The facility will provide a home and an education for children orphaned by AIDS. "Zambia is one of the countries hardest hit by this disease," says Lindenau. He created a campus master plan that included a school, student and teacher housing, medical facility, labs, chapel and gathering room. Funding came from the Aspen community, which contributed \$1 million in just six months.

The campus design includes a central courtyard that reflects the Zambians' use of outdoor space during their daily living routines.

Buildings will be constructed primarily from clay mud blocks, and involve plastering techniques rooted in indigenous textures and textiles. Lindenau has traveled to Livingstone several times to oversee the project, checking out materials with local artisans and contractors and arranging for shipments of windows, doors and structural steel from South Africa.



Courtesy of Scott Lindenau

Work has already started on some of the campus' 28 buildings. They will incorporate sustainable design elements such as roofs tilted to trap rain water, screened clerestory levels in classroom buildings to encourage air circulation, and solar water heaters, composting toilets and waterless urinals for orphan housing.



Courtesy of Scott Lindenau

Left: The design reflects the Zambians' use of the outdoors during their daily living routines. Above: Solar collectors on the roofs will heat water for the school and orphanage facilities, which are located near the small Zambian city of Livingstone.

"Providing the children with a sense of belonging is an important aspect of the project," says Lindenau. "What's really interesting about Africa is that people still identify themselves by the village that they come from. The orphans have lost that, and this campus gives them a new identity as part of a group."

The project appeals on several levels, Lindenau says. "It allows me to give back as a design professional to a good cause, to people who have no one else helping them. It allows me to continue to travel and help people.

"Africa really gets into your blood," he adds. "It's dramatically different from any of the other places I've ever been."

Planning growth for a great city

For the people of Rwanda, the Kigali master plan represents a concrete step on the way to realizing their dreams of a prosperous, peaceful city. In an introduction to the plan, Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, the Kigali mayor, wrote "As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Kigali, we are rapidly developing and urbanizing ... We, however, realize that in order to get the full benefits of development in the long run, planning must be used as a primary tool. In line with this, one cannot stress enough the importance of the Kigali Conceptual Master Plan and its lead role in Kigali realizing its development goals."

Since the completion of the master plan, the OZ project team has been working on master plans for several sub-areas: two 200-acre town centers within the city, a new 100-acre, resort-and-conference complex and a 100-acre business center with a new convention center.

These smaller area designs will allow the team to focus more closely on the specific needs of Kigali residents. To serve the youth population, for example, the Kinyinya sub-area will include a large youth leadership center. It will offer college, vo-tech and leadership programs and will link to an enterprise zone with small business incubators and major sports facilities. "We want not only to help Rwanda educate their young people, but also to show them how they can take the reins once they have their education," says Rubinoff.

Below: The upgrades to existing homes in Kigali suggested in the master plan would improve living conditions for the city's current residents.



Oz Architecture

KIGALI MASTER CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Architecture/Urban Design OZ Architecture
(Carl Worthington, AIA, ASLA, and Steve Brooks, AIA, LEED AP)

Location Kigali, Rwanda, Africa

Scope Conceptual master plan for entire city of Kigali, as well as plan for several sub-areas.

Purpose To guide Kigali's expected growth from 1 to 3 million people over the next 50 years based on a framework of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Owner Government of Rwanda

Landscape Architects/Planners EDAA/AECOM, Denver

Environmental and Civil Engineering TetraTech, Denver

Engineers Without Borders USA, Boulder, Colo.

3-D Modeling Winston Associates, Boulder, Colo.

Socio-Economic Analysis ERA/AECOM, San Francisco, Calif.

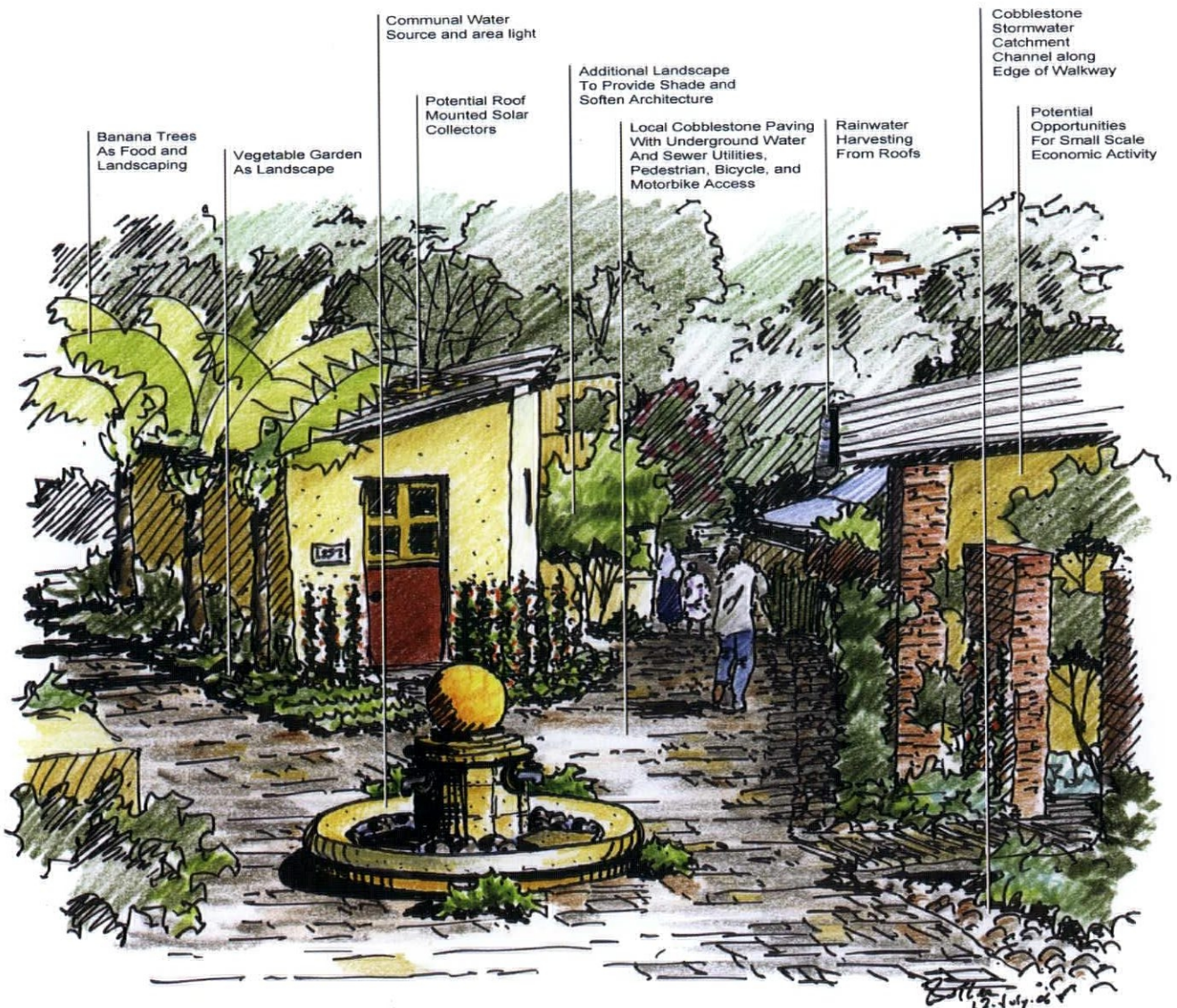
Other International Projects of Note by OZ Architecture

- Mizin Villas, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- Patan Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The Kigali master plan, which has won awards from the AIA, the American Society of Landscape Architects and the American Planning Association, is just one of several projects that OZ is undertaking for the Rwanda government. The firm is also working on master plans for Kigali's new international airport, for the city's King Faisal Hospital and for the adjacent city of Rwamagana.

Worthington appreciates the unique opportunity offered in Kigali. "We are helping to create a 50- to 100-year vision of what could become one of the most important parts of Africa," he says. "We are trying to do it right instead of in a haphazard way.

"Kigali is really the epitome of environmental, sustainable planning," he adds. "It will allow the city to grow incrementally and be a greater city at the end of the day, not one that gets more and more degraded." ■



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Background and Foreground: Four Colorado Architects Discuss Cultural Influences on Their Designs

By Sarah Goldblatt, AIA



East to West

In his book, *Buildings of Colorado*, noted historian Tom Noel observes that “Colorado’s expansive, high, dry, sunny environment warrants a special architecture, but Coloradans generally have borrowed styles from elsewhere that are no match for the climate or the setting.” There are, however, architects with diverse cultural backgrounds practicing throughout Colorado who seem to naturally grasp the unique conditions of the place and achieve the special design that Noel refers to.

Hisa Ota, AIA, is one of them. Though born in the congested city of Tokyo, his childhood home was surrounded by gardens with ponds and hills that made him feel as though a bit of the countryside had seeped into an otherwise confined urban setting. His rare experience attending summer camp near Yosemite National Park forever cemented his love for the expansiveness and freedom of the West and he promised that he would return. And he did, initially to complete high school, then college, and then graduate school at Columbia where he earned his master of architecture.

After college Ota still longed to distance himself from his Japanese roots, but he needed a green card to remain in America. So he took a job as a curator at the Japan House Gallery in New York City. He was disdainful of the old-fashioned nature of the exhibits until one day the director made him sit in the gallery space and not leave until he saw “something.” He was shocked, first at how close-minded he had been, and second, to discover the level of creativity in Japanese art.

The revelation caused a career shift and Ota enrolled in architecture school. After graduation, he joined Isozaki’s office and later pursued a

Above: A view towards the entrance of Hisa Ota, AIA’s home located on the western slope of the Sierra Blanca range. The project received a 2008 AIA Colorado South Merit Award.

Opposite page top: Photovoltaic panels on Hisa Ota, AIA’s home in Mosca, Colo., supply 97 percent of the home’s electricity requirements.



Hisa Ota

speculative business venture in southern Colorado. During his first visit to the San Luis Valley he observed the starkness of the landscape and wondered, "Who would want to be here?" To him, coming from Japan and the East Coast, the place seemed like a "wasteland ... nothing was growing." But similar to his experience at the gallery, he learned to find beauty in something that he previously could not see. The vastness was captivating, and he chose not to leave.

Today, he designs buildings and homes throughout the San Luis Valley. While he notes that his designs are not a direct reflection of his Japanese heritage, the influence permeates through in subtle ways, such as his use of a module to organize spaces and to create an unseen, but palpable sense of order, similar to the purpose of the tatami mat in Japanese homes. Flow and connection between the inside and outside are also important elements that draw upon the relationship of the traditional shoji screens and exterior spaces. But beyond applying these principles, he believes that in any given design opportunity, "you need to look at what the context dictates ... and what the client wants. ...The building really is already there, you just have to find it."

Where Earth Meets Sky

Gopal Shrestha, AIA, grew up in a remote river valley in Nepal. Like Ota, he references the potential of the place as a point of departure for his projects. When he was 10, he was recruited to attend school in Katmandu with other promising students from throughout the country. Dur-



Hisa Ota

Above: In the Macaulay house, designed by Hisa Ota, AIA, the stair has modern detail and color but alludes to the tradition found in Japanese folk houses.



David Kross (RB+B Architects, Inc.)

Above: A view towards the sky from the center of the Westfield Park Pavilion in Fort Collins, Colo., designed by Gopal Shrestha, AIA.



Free! Fuhrmeister Photography

ing a sixth-grade English class he was introduced to the word *architect* and began his quest to understand its meaning. A visit to Kahn’s Kimball Art Museum during his architectural studies fueled his appreciation for the built environment, particularly the integration of landscape, light and the poetry achieved in the composition of just a few select materials. Because Nepal is one of the poorest developing countries, he was taught at an early age not to waste anything. In response, he aspires to tread lightly on all aspects of a project. “I wouldn’t put something in that isn’t necessary — I want to make full use of the materials.”

As a result, his projects at RB+B Architects in Fort Collins are uncomplicated and thoughtful with clear deference to the site, views and context. He also has an affinity for outdoor spaces that he attributes to the dependence on rooftop

Above: Outdoor space was integral in Gopal Shrestha, AIA’s design of Kinnard Junior High School in Fort Collins, Colo.

Below: The structure of the Fossil Creek Lake Pavilion in Fort Collins, Colo., designed by Gopal Shrestha, takes cues from the fossils found on the surrounding site.

spaces in Nepal for eating, sleeping and praying. This respect for the sky subconsciously appears in projects such as the Westfield Park Pavilion in Fort Collins, where the structure reaches for the sky like a Native American council circle that establishes the whole and defines the center. The pavilion at Fossil Creek blends the sky and water by framing views of both. Shrestha explains the roof form as having some connotation of the wing of a bird, with the exposed structure making reference to fossils found on the site. The timeless elements of his projects clearly demonstrate his command of the word architect.



GSC Photo

Natural Expression

Michelle Lopez Orsini, Associate AIA, describes her native Puerto Rican homeland as “lush and very green ... with winds that cool the hottest days. Nature is integral to design and you rely on the sun and the elements in a very direct way. There is great attention paid to bringing the exterior to the interior and a respect for the land. You wouldn’t demolish the mountains and then build in place of them, rather you would design something that would feel part of the land, rather than the land being subservient to the building.”



Orsini credits her architectural education for teaching her about expression through form, and she brings these influences and the love for color to the design table in her work at Humphries Poli Architects in Denver. In her experience, she has found that some of the firm’s clients, like those planning jails and work-release centers, flat-out reject the notion that buildings should open into the landscape or be light-infused and colorful. Though she finds these projects to be very program-oriented and often not receptive to new ideas, she works hard at finding ways to infuse the justice-related projects with a strong civic presence and with elements that will be welcoming to the community.

The sweeping canopy in the foreground of the Fort Collins Police Station illustrates this approach. Functionally, it provides direction to visitors while its expressive form and substantial sandstone supports project a strong identity and sense of place where the public will feel secure and welcome. The use of locally quarried stone at the building base and the seemingly natural distribution of boulders around the site give the impression that the structure is emerging from the earth. Although Orsini asserts that her involvement in library projects affords more opportunities for expression, she does find ways to integrate her culturally infused design sensibility into each project.

Above: The Fort Collins Police Station, designed by Michelle Lopez Orsini, Assoc. AIA, includes a sweeping canopy that establishes a civic presence and provides direction for visitors.



Computer rendering by Ugljesa Janjic

Above: Rendering of Meeker Elementary entry canopy.

Below: Rendering of Meeker Elementary in Meeker, Colo., designed by Ugljesa Janjic, AIA. The school, which is currently under construction, responds to the natural setting and climate with its orientation, sloped roofs and building materials.

Tabula Rasa

Ugljesa Janjic, AIA, is another architect whose work successfully fuses with Colorado's landscape, though he takes exception to the notion that his designs are influenced by his ethnic background. He considers himself more of a cultural hybrid, moving between his native Serbia and Venezuela multiple times before settling in Colorado. He now works for the Neenan Company in Fort Collins. For him, the project location and client needs are paramount.

As for Janjic's design process, he maintains a tabula rasa approach. "I start with a blank page for each project and evaluate each individually." He looks to the site context for inspiration, and often finds that an agricultural structure or outbuilding helps shape a concept. One such project, Meeker Elementary School, is currently under construction and demonstrates this approach. Janjic explains that the school's design "reflects elements of the mountains and surrounding ranching community. It also plays with the joyfulness of color – an element that is borrowed from the adjacent neighborhood." Although not a LEED-certified project, the building is sensitive to the climate and natural conditions. For example, the orientation optimizes sun exposure and, in combination with high windows and light louvers, daylight will project deep into the classrooms.



Computer rendering by Ugljesa Janjic

Janjic does concede that he may have been influenced by his parents, both of whom were architects, who were ensconced in the Modernist Movement when he was child.

He cites this transformative time as a cause of the dissolution of cultural memory in architecture. As an offspring of the movement's disciples, he finds his own design philosophy to be culturally neutral.

With or without direct reference to their own cultural backgrounds, it is apparent that these four architects approach design with a unique sensitivity to the relationship of a building to its natural context. The result is architecture that is rooted in place. ■

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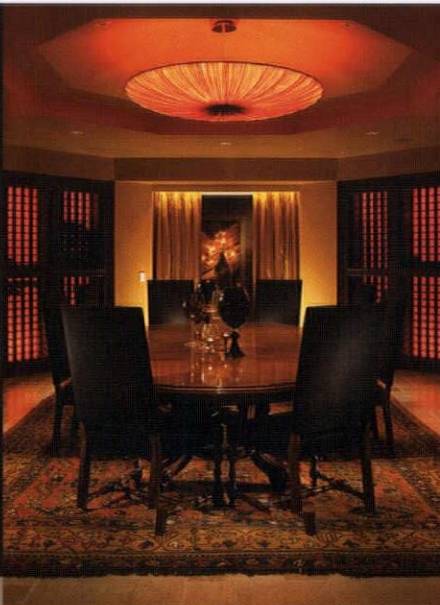
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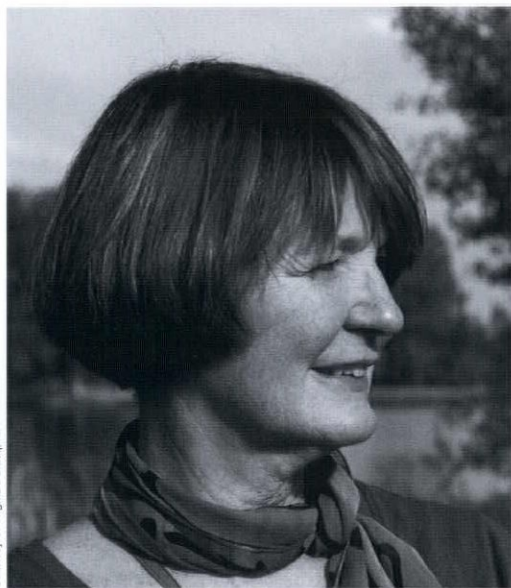
DENVER BERKELEY DES MOINES MINNEAPOLIS

Gender Differences?

Local Female Architects Reflect on Their Careers

By *Brianne Sanchez*

She owns her own firm. She juggles visits to construction sites with her family's schedule. She has won a YAAG award. She has designed her own home. She is a mentor. She has been made principal. An ever-expanding portfolio of projects bears her seal. Have women in architecture finally arrived?



Courtesy of Virginia DuBrucq, AIA

Virginia DuBrucq, AIA, has owned her own self-titled firm for 40 years.

In the pioneering state of Colorado, a place where women have historically bent gender barriers, it is important to recognize and celebrate the struggles and achievements of female architects who helped pave the way in the profession. Women are now graduating from the University of Colorado at Denver's Architecture and Planning program at one third the rate* of men, but the ratio of female architects still lags behind. Nationally, women made up 17 percent of American Institute of Architects members in 2008, up from one percent in 1973*.

Drafting her own plans

Virginia DuBrucq, AIA, knew she wanted to be an architect since she was a second grader. Accepted to the Rhode Island School of Design, DuBrucq did well, but as one of only five women in a class of 75, she was encouraged by her advisors to pursue interior architecture instead. "There was such a push to get us out of architecture because they were so afraid we wouldn't succeed," DuBrucq said. Still, she joined the AIA and studied on her own to pass the licensing exams. Despite her struggle at the start, DuBrucq, a sole practitioner, has worked for herself for 40 years. She's worked in commercial, residential and product design. "I got my license through a different door," she said. At age 66, DuBrucq has no plans to retire.

Establishing her practice

Ownership of her own practice is what allows Cynthia 'Cyd' Pougiales, AIA, to pull together her different inspirations and live out her vision as "master architect." "Once upon a time, the architect was the master builder, the engineer, the landscape architect," Pougiales said. Although many of these roles have been disseminated to contractors, electricians and developers, running her firm, Thira, keeps Pougiales involved in the whole process. "We have to fight for every little piece of a project," she said. "With Thira, I wanted to get back to the art of science and construction. Being that master builder was the goal."

In order to reach her goal, she had to first gain trust, not an easy thing for a woman to do at a construction site. So she shortened her name to the more masculine 'Cyd,' her college nickname. "I show up (at a construction site) and sometimes they go, 'Oh!,' which I love," Pougiales said.

Working as a female business owner has had its benefits, too. Being classified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise can open doors to different municipal project types, like a Denver International Airport congress, a ticketing booth for Eldorado Canyon State Park and buildings on the Colorado Mountain College campus. (Note: Cyd is currently serving as the president of AIA Colorado West).

Discovering her niche

Lisa Haddox, AIA, is enamored with public work. Entering the field in the late '70s, she focused on earning her license as quickly as possible. At that time, Haddox said men were still "skeptical" of female architects, so she made an effort to become comfortable on construction sites and learn how products work. Now, as an architect for the National Park Service (NPS) Intermountain Region, Haddox is putting all her skills to good use, doing her own drawings, cost estimates and technical specifications. Since the department is short a structural engineer, she's been stepping in to do some of that work, too. "The difference I noticed when I went to work for the NPS is the federal government had been much more active about integrating women into the workforce," she said. "There were more women proportionately and in leadership positions."

There's less ego in Haddox's work — designing so new projects will blend into their surroundings — than a more macho architect would enjoy. Haddox thrives on the blend of sustainability and contextualism, taking the task of re-roofing a 900-year-old Aztec ruin and making it her own.

"I wanted to make sure I had a job where I liked what I did eight hours a day, but that I would also feel good when I retired," she said. "This meets my needs of day-to-day enjoyment and also feeling like you've accomplished something at the end of your career."

Envisioning her project

"We run into some clients who want a female architect," said Christa Plaza, AIA, principal at Essenza Architecture, an emerging female-run firm in Boulder. "I didn't think that would ever happen." Plaza finds most of the people who seek out a female architect are women who own businesses themselves. Plaza doesn't think women necessarily make better architects than men (she'd like to mix in a few at the currently all-female firm), but she does think there's a special communication between herself and co-principal, Lisa Fletcher, AIA. It is reflected in the all-ears approach they take with their clients.

"It's important to listen to everything," Plaza said. "I love to listen to people and their ideas and create that vision." She likes to let the client dictate the form and function of his or her project.

Other women think there is a difference between how men and women approach a space. During her career, DuBrucq heard an observation about the difference between the way men and women in architecture approach a project.

"For a number of years I did work as a consultant with Cab Childress, FAIA," DuBrucq said. "He told me what he thought about women in de-



Courtesy of Cyd Pougiales, AIA

"I love the word architect," Cyd Pougiales, AIA, of Thira Inc. says. "I love to say it. I knew when I was very young that I would be in this field for some reason."



Nellie Sparks

Lisa Haddox, AIA of National Park Service (NPS) Intermountain Region



Courtesy of Christa Plaza, AIA

Christa Plaza, AIA, is principal at Essenza Architecture, an emerging firm in Boulder.



Mar Sundarapura

Martha Bennett, FAIA, principal at Bennett Wagner & Grody Architects PC

sign versus men in design: Men look at the big picture — they look at the lifetime. Women live from day to day and they're far better at details."

DuBrucq never tires of detail, she says. That's why she was so attracted to furniture design. "Where I get my pleasure is looking at the big picture and having the detail look like the big picture as well."

Meeting her peers

Networking is a significant component of career satisfaction and advancement, but women in male-dominated fields are divided in how they feel about gender-specific networking. Some espouse the "we're good architects who happen to be female" approach and others thrive in women-only organizations.

"I was the first woman to be hired as an intern or architect in every firm I ever worked in, so it was a completely new experience for me to be in a room full of women in the architecture or design field," said Martha Bennett, FAIA, principal at Bennett Wagner & Grody Architects PC, the largest woman-owned architectural practice in Colorado. Bennett organized and became the first woman president of Denver Women in Architecture in 1976, a group that re-emerged in 2005 as Women in Design. "I think it's natural to want to be around people with whom you have things in common, and I think it's natural to look for mentors and mentees who look like you," Bennett said. "I didn't really know any female architects until I got involved in the Women in Architecture group." Bennett has worked to grow the numbers of women in the AIA by serving on and subsequently chairing the Women's Task Force for the National AIA Affirmative Action Committee in the 1980s.

The future of women in architecture


The same allure of left brain/right brain creativity that drew decades of women before her into architecture is interesting high school junior Betsy Haddox, daughter of Lisa Haddox. "I definitely think that watching my mom do her job has had an impact on my choice to investigate architecture as a career," Haddox said. Going to work with her mom recently, she got to experience some of the "unusual" assignments, and put her problem-solving skills to practice. "I got to experiment with how different spaces would interact on multiple floors, and the lighting requirements for an exhibit space, and I really liked that," she said. "Of course, it's a little scary because you're designing where people will live and work every day, and I think architects have a huge responsibility to make comfortable places."


Although Haddox has taken classes where men have outnumbered women, she's never felt limited by her gender. Having the full support of her teachers and family helps, too.

"I think she'll be able to concentrate on the broader aspects of the profession," Haddox says of her daughter's potential career path. "I remember thinking 'I need to become licensed as soon as I can because it will show that I'm serious about the field.' Her decisions might be based on general interest rather than having to achieve milestones." ■

*According to the AIA Journal

** In May, 2008 the program awarded Master of Architecture degrees to 62 men and 31 women.






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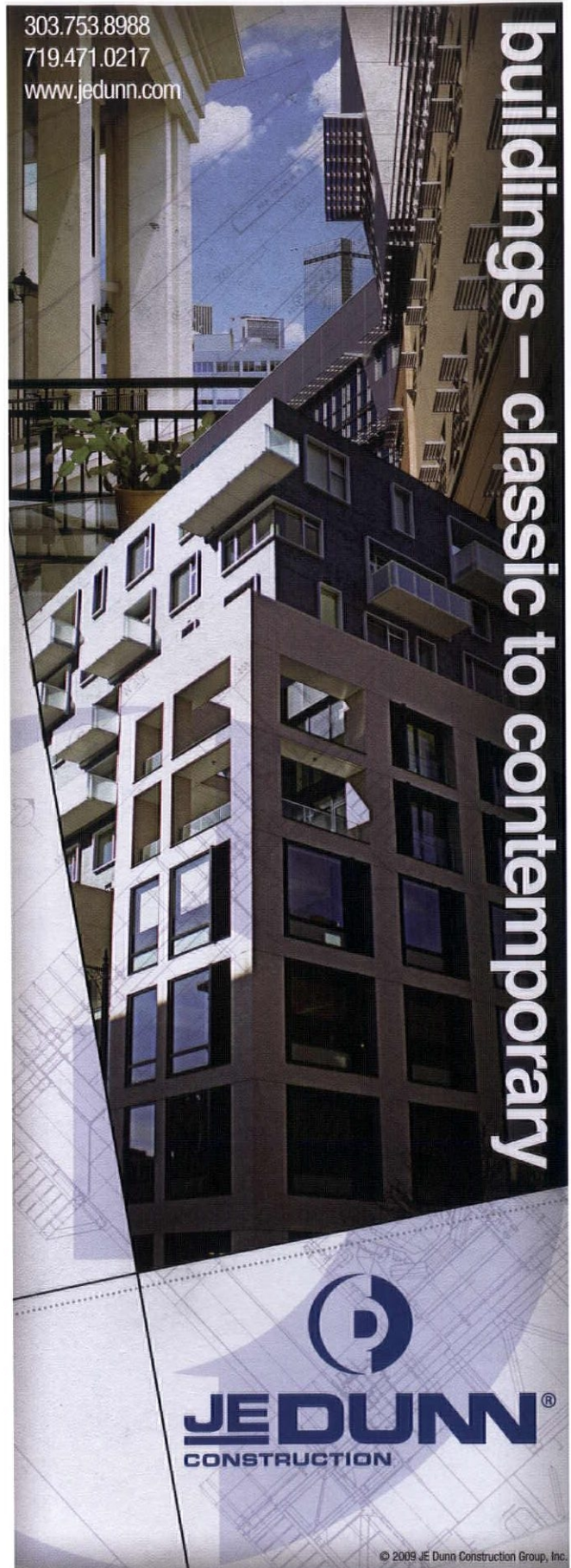
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An Architect in the Statehouse

Newly elected representative Cheri Gerou, AIA, capitalizes on her design and construction skills as well as her lifelong passion for giving back.

By Kelly Roberson



Courtesy of Cheri Gerou, AIA

The road from Casper, Wyo., to the Colorado Statehouse in Denver runs about 270 miles, give or take. There's a gentle easterly bend to it, through plains and ranching land in southeastern Wyoming, before the craggy tops of the Rocky Mountains come into view in north central Colorado.

If you had asked Cheri Gerou, AIA, when she was a little girl if she'd make that trip, you might have gotten a quizzical look. Sure, she could take the highway on a sightseeing mission, but would she make the journey as a member of the Colorado legislature? To a young girl raised in a Wyoming ranching family, it probably would have seemed a mildly far-fetched thought.

But make the trip she did, from family ranch to higher education to practitioner and then to state representative. As the only member of the Colorado legislature who is an architect, Gerou brings with her a skill set that no other representative in the state can claim. The road that led her from Wyoming to Colorado is an interesting one. But to those that know her, it is no surprise that Gerou is devoting her days, nights and weekends to serving the needs of others.

Beginnings

It had all the makings of an idyllic, albeit hardworking, childhood: school weeks spent in Casper and weekends at a family ranch in Douglas, Wyo. That was how Gerou — the only girl in the middle of two older and two younger brothers — spent her growing-up years. "While the ranch belonged to my grandparents, my brothers, cousins and I spent almost every weekend and a portion of every summer working — well, mostly playing — at the ranch," Gerou says.

It was work and leisure guided by the outdoors — hunting every fall for game that the family would eat during the winter, camping and backpacking in the summer. A self-described "enthusiastic" Brownie and Girl Scout, Gerou also played the trumpet, piano, soprano bugle and mellophone.

Her default indoctrination into the boys' world of her brothers gave her a practical understanding of the lives and interests of the people around her. The daily and seasonal rhythms would, by necessity, always be bound by hunting, fishing and ranching. It didn't hurt that she mastered the art of compromise at an early age. "You learn to negotiate well when dealing with four brothers who love to tease and pester their only sister," says Gerou.

Professional Leanings

Even with her background and family history, Gerou's interests pulled her toward creative fields, especially after a high school job as a secretary for a small architectural firm in Casper. "The architect I worked for had graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, and was very active in the community," Gerou says. "I fell in love with architecture while working in his office. In those days the firm drew the drawings, wrote the specifications and printed the specs in-house. It was common for the whole office to work through the night before a project was let to bid."

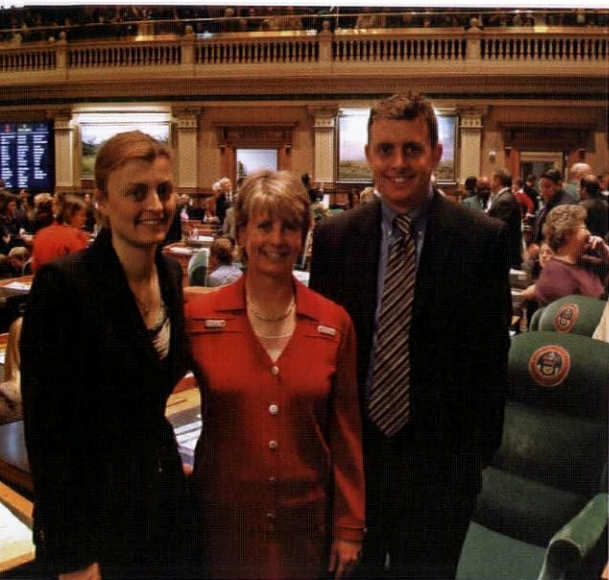
She worked her way through college, and by the time she graduated with a degree in art history, she had been employed by at least 10 architects, married another architect, Phil Gerou, FAIA, and started a firm with him, where she first worked in interior design.

"Public policy decisions are often influenced by emotion, but emotional responses sometimes lead to the wrong long-term results. The best decisions are governed by reason and logic. They must take into account not only what is good right now, but also what will be good in the future."

Rob Witwer, former state representative.



Opposite page and above: Cheri campaigns with supporters in the Evergreen Rodeo parade. Longtime friends credit her intelligence and preparation with her win.



Courtesy of Cheri Gerou, AIA



Courtesy of Cheri Gerou, AIA

Top: Cheri's children Sara and Greg join her for her swearing-in ceremony to the Colorado Legislature on January 7, 2009.

Above: Cheri Gerou, AIA, one of only seven architect-members of state legislatures across the country and the only one in Colorado.

By a young age, Gerou had distilled a number of lessons that would continue to prove valuable to her over the course of her career: Although she worked for larger national firms — Kaplan/McLaughlin and SOM among them — the atmosphere of a small firm was to her liking; while there were fewer women in the field, she felt no difference in practice because of gender; and the greatest control for her would come from owning her own firm. “Architecture is this amazing mix of art and reality,” Gerou says. “I can think of no other profession where an individual can leave such an indelible signature of involvement. Cultures influence architecture, but beauty truly belongs to the designer.”

Personal Balance

Two architects, one firm: With any other couple, the push/pull and hectic demands of the profession might show its strain. But Gerou and her husband made it work, creating a successful portfolio of commercial, retail, interiors, historic and design/build projects. “Phil has been my greatest mentor in architecture,” Gerou says. “I can’t adequately express how much he has taught me about practice and construction.”

The pair have been married 30 years and have two children—Greg, 27, a software engineer in Denver; and Sara, 25, a writer in Chicago. It doesn’t surprise Gerou that neither child chose to follow her or their father into the profession. “Both Greg and Sara are incredibly talented and creative in their own professions,” Gerou says. “When people find out that both Phil and I are architects, they often ask if the children decided to enter the field. We tell them that two parents who work together, who never stop talking about architecture, live for architecture and even vacation to architecture tend to be a bit overwhelming.”

That whole-life absorption doesn’t mean that Gerou has lost the little bit of magic she feels surrounds the profession. “I enjoy watching the clients as their dreams and, in a sense, their identity becomes reality,” she says. “The delight and joy they experience through the process is very rewarding. Clients whom we have worked with over the years have become friends; I can think of no greater satisfaction.”

Public Leadership Begins

Gerou’s motivation and intelligence were natural precursors to her leadership in the Colorado and Denver chapters of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Gerou began with the Denver chapter as an associate director and worked her way up the ladder, finally serving as AIA Colorado president in 2006. For those who volunteered with her, Gerou’s enthusiasm was contagious. “You get drawn in with the energy and passion she has for what she does,” says John Yonushewski, FAIA, principal with Buchanan Yonushewski Group, LLC, in Denver. “She uses her great personality to befriend people and get her point across on what she’d like to do in a way that takes you beyond volunteer work.”

From high school jobs to AIA leadership: In hindsight, each one is a natural steppingstone to the next in the progression of Gerou’s career.

But the impetus to volunteer comes from even further back in her personal history. “My drive to give back to the public and profession was a gift from my grandmother,” she says. “Living and working on a ranch is a very solitary life, but making certain the community is strong is vitally important. My grandmother was a schoolteacher in 1917 in a one-room schoolhouse on the plains of eastern Wyoming. She and my grandfather worked hard to build their ranch and raise their family, all the time participating in their community. Barn-raising, brandings, caring for the sick — it was all part of the community.”

It would be Gerou’s interest in and concern for the architecture community that would lead her path to the Colorado Statehouse, completing the circle that began with her grandmother’s inspiration. Her AIA leadership position led her to testify on behalf of the profession at the state legislature, and that testimony got her a governor’s invitation to join the State Licensing Board of Architects, which led to a request to run for the State House of Representatives. “I think more than anything, my involvement in AIA has led me to public involvement,” says Gerou. “It was because in large part of the incredible support and help I received from the architectural and construction industry that I was able to win my seat in the legislature. It is a circle of involvement; it grows larger and is enriched, but it keeps growing.”

A Run for the Statehouse

Gerou calls her involvement in politics “an act of blind faith,” but others who watched her see it a little differently. Rob Witwer has known the Gerous for more than 20 years, and when he decided to retire from the state legislature, he contacted Gerou to gauge her interest. “She approached her candidacy in a systematic way,” says Witwer. “Instead of jumping in willy-nilly, she spent time doing due diligence. She talked to knowledgeable people, learned what she needed to do, developed a plan and executed the plan. She was the best first-time candidate I’ve ever seen, and I’ve seen quite a few.”

She has taken the same approach to office: talking, thinking, learning, planning. Each of the five bills she has sponsored was passed unanimously out of committee and on the floor. “I believe that speaks to an architect’s ability to build consensus — that’s the best way to solve a problem. That’s what we do best, and that’s also why I firmly believe we need more architects in public office. We are good at what we do and we can do much good for the people we serve,” says Gerou.

Again, her success is not a surprise to those who know her well. “Public policy decisions are often influenced by emotion, but emotional responses sometimes lead to the wrong long-term results. The best deci-

“Cheri brings analytical rigor ... she breaks down complex problems into manageable components, which she then solves one at a time. The result is better public policy.”

Rob Witwer, former state representative.



Courtesy of Cheri Gerou, AIA

Above: Cheri has practiced with her husband for over two decades and credits him with much of her architectural success. Here, Phil joins Greg and Sara.



Courtesy of Cheri Gerou, AIA

“Cheri has a need to serve and a desire to make a difference, and with those architect traits, it’s a powerful combination.”

John Yonushewski, FAIA

sions are governed by reason and logic. They must take into account not only what is good right now, but also what will be good in the future,” says Witwer. “Cheri brings analytical rigor ... she breaks down complex problems into manageable components, which she then solves one at a time. The result is better public policy.”

Those in the profession agree that the rigorous training and practice make her well suited to the ins and outs of the legislature. “Architects are natural problem solvers ... and they understand quality of life issues, too,” says Yonushewski. “Cheri has a need to serve and a desire to make a difference, and with those architect traits, it’s a powerful combination.”

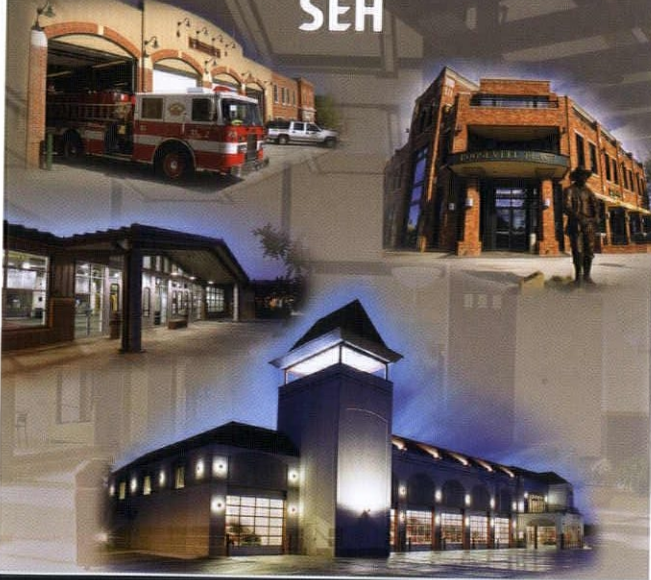
Gerou credits her background with her ability to seamlessly make the switch from architect to legislator, too. “I am used to process-oriented problem-solving, or studying a problem in search of a solution without preconceptions,” she says. “Many of the programming processes we use in architecture can be applied to sponsoring and researching legislation. But mostly, the ability to take a long view of a problem and proposed solutions has been of the most value in the legislature. Just as with each part of a design solution, each piece of legislation impacts the whole and produces either a better or worse quality of life for the user. There is a very direct and immediate correlation between architecture and legislation.”

A Look Ahead

Gerou has found that as many hours as she works, as much as she listens, there is always more to do: 120 non-stop days in the session, hundreds of daily emails to answer, public events to attend, committees that meet constantly, votes to be cast. Making a positive impact on her state is a humbling and daunting aim. “My goal is to do no harm,” says Gerou. “Understanding the unintended consequences of legislation is a minefield. That is what will keep my attention steady in a seven-and-a-half-hour committee meeting when we are listening to public testimony. What we do does make a difference and it is that difference that worries me most.”

But no matter the challenges for the state or profession or mistakes she might make — “I love to learn and I’m good at making mistakes,” she says with self-deprecation — Gerou looks at it all with a characteristic upside. She believes that everyone can and should get involved, that everyone has the responsibility and the power to help make the state a better place, that she is grateful for the chance to serve, and that the future is bright for architects. “The profession is made up of smart, well-meaning, hardworking, talented people, and the tools we learn will continue to make the world a better place,” Gerou says. “Our training makes us more observant and therefore more empathetic. Most of us don’t ever put down our mantle of problem analysis and problem solving. We love to solve puzzles.” ■

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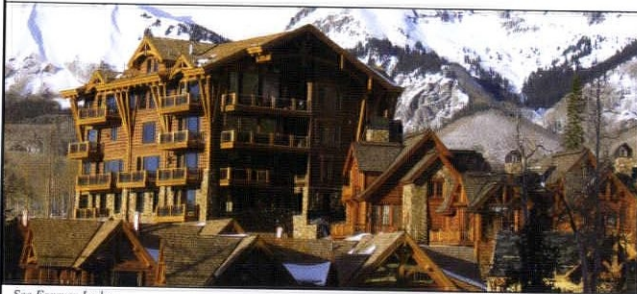
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On the Boards

By Mary Lou Jay

University of Colorado at Boulder Center for Community

Davis Partnership Architects,
Denver

Architects Brit Probst, AIA

Curtis Cox

Centerbrook Architects

Centerbrook, Conn.

Architect James Childress, FAIA

Location Boulder, Colo.

Client University of Colorado

Construction Cost \$68 million

Scope Davis Partnership Architects, in association with Centerbrook Architects and Planners, is providing design services for architecture, landscape architecture, interior design and furniture for the new Center for Community.

Purpose Centerpiece building for student life on campus with space for food service, housing and student services.

Completion August 2010

The University of Colorado selected Davis Partnership Architects, in association with Centerbrook Architects and the Baker Group, to design a new \$68 million centerpiece for student life in the heart of Boulder's historic campus. It will replace two outdated dining halls with a 900-seat dining facility, a commissary and central bakery, dining food service operations and centralized housing, all designed to serve a large volume of students, faculty and staff.

Located at a busy campus crossroads, the Center for Community will include 54,000 square feet of new space on its upper level. Sixteen student service programs currently situated in various adjacent residential buildings will be relocated into a new information/service hub there. Departmental office suites overlooking the dining facility below will wrap a central lightwell to increase daylighting opportunities. The 375 underground parking spaces included in the design will position this building to be the new front door for prospective students seeking admissions, financial aid and counseling information in the adjacent Regent Hall.

Design work began in March 2008 and construction started one year later. The center, which will be complete in the summer of 2010, is expected to achieve LEED Gold certification.



Davis Partnership Architects



Davis Partnership Architects

**Town of Parker Police
Headquarters**

AndersonMasonDale Architects
Architect Gerardo M. Salinas, AIA,
LEED AP

Location Parker, Colo.

Client Town of Parker

Construction Cost \$16 million

Scope A 53,500-square-foot police
headquarters in Parker's
commercial district

Purpose Replace an outdated
existing facility

Completion Fall 2010

The new Parker Police Headquarters will be built on a 10-acre site centrally located in the heart of Parker's commercial district. The state-of-the-art facility will replace the existing 16,000-square-foot bank building the department currently utilizes.

The new L-shaped, single-story building will front two main arterial roads. One wing will serve as home to the administrative, records, investigations and patrol-type functions, and the other wing will house the suspect processing, evidence intake, crime lab and evidence storage. The building's configuration and street frontage help screen a motor court designed for a large volume of staff and fleet vehicles. The administrative wing terminates in a welcoming public lobby that captures dramatic Front Range views from Pikes Peak to Longs Peak. A tall light monitor runs the length of the building, bringing daylight into all of the central spaces during the day.

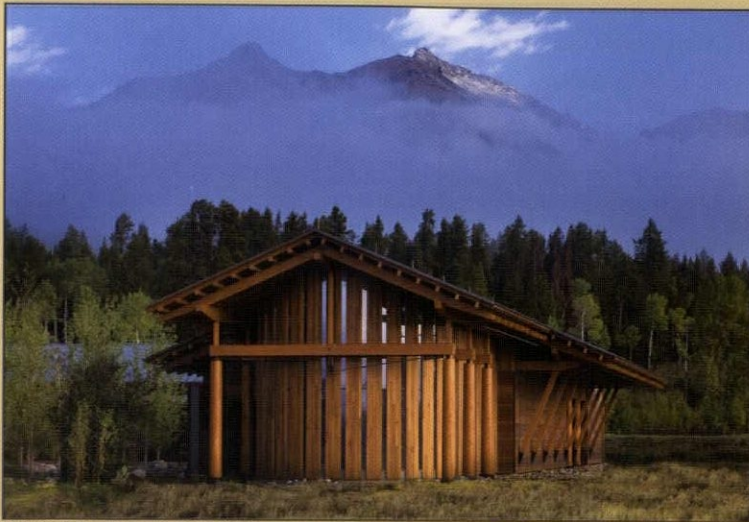
The material palette consists of stone, concrete and clay masonry with generous clerestory lighting, exposed steel framing and wood. The durability of the masonry provides security and a sense of permanence. The lighter and more transparent materials make the building more open and inviting.



Anderson Mason Dale Architects



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LSR Preserve, Teton County, Wyoming – LEED Platinum

Photo by David J. Swift

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Looking Ahead



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Mark your calendars now to be part of the AIA Colorado and AIA Western Mountain Region 2009 Design Conference on Oct. 15-17 at the Keystone Resort and Conference Center in Keystone, Colo. The conference will include speakers Deborah Berke, FAIA; Rob Rogers, FAIA; Craig Hartman, FAIA; Ambassador Richard Swett, FAIA; Stefan Behnisch, Hon. FAIA, Monica Ponce de Leon; Bryan Yuji Walker; and Coleman Coker.

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Please note the following dates for the AIA Denver, AIA Colorado North and AIA Colorado South 2009 Design Awards Galas. Entry and registration forms are available at www.aiacolorado.org.

AIA Denver Design Awards Gala on Sept. 11 at
The Pepsi Center (Denver, Colo.).

AIA Colorado North Design Awards Gala on Sept. 25 at
The Stanley Hotel (Estes Park, Colo.).

AIA Colorado South Design Awards Gala on Dec. 4 –
location to be announced shortly.

Navigating the Economy Resources Available on www.aiacolorado.org

AIA Colorado knows that the economy has put a strain on many of its members; therefore, it has created several ways to assist them during this difficult time. In addition to the steps that AIA National has taken to help members “navigate the economy,” AIA Colorado offers the following:

- Job board
- Office space classifieds
- Use of AIA Colorado conference room for business meetings
- Marketing collaborative connections
- Special programming
- Free and discounted continuing education programs for members

Visit www.aiacolorado.org for more information about how to take advantage of these offerings.

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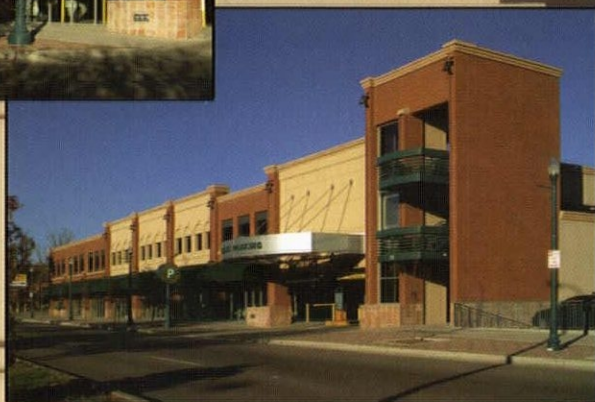
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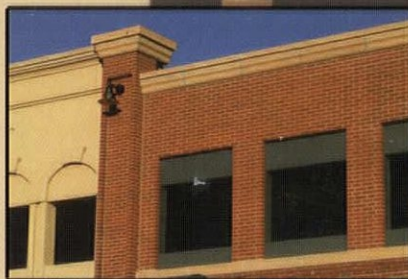
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