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14th Street in Transition

What's New & What's Ahead

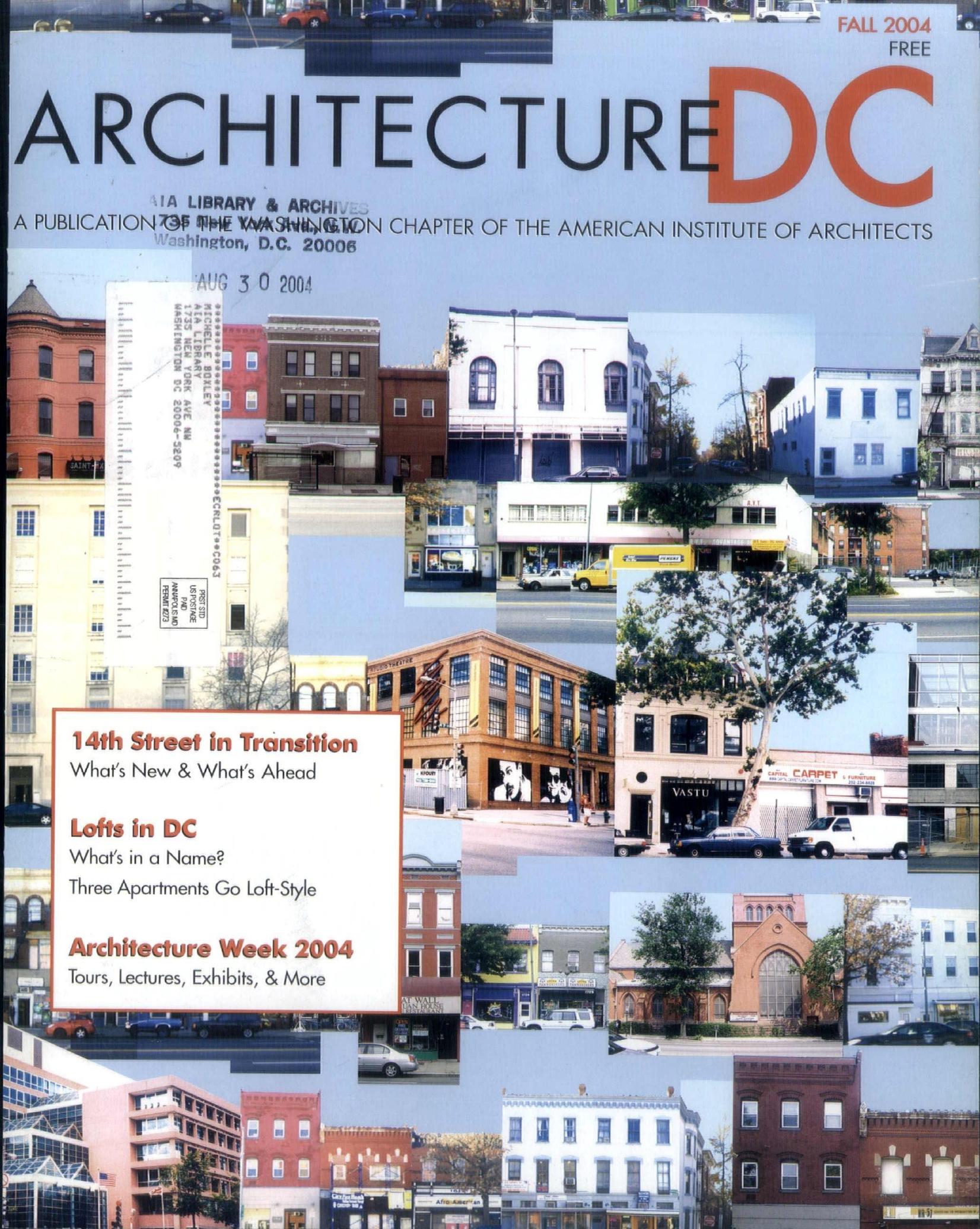
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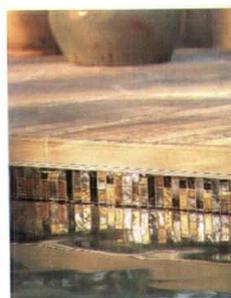
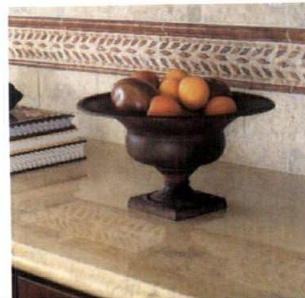
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This issue of *ARCHITECTUREDC* tells you about a neighborhood in transition—the 14th Street Corridor—and invites you to be part of that transition through Architecture Week, September 6th through 18th.

Welcome

Read about the history of 14th Street, and then go there and tour it with our knowledgeable guides. Read about Washington's loft phenomenon, and then tour the Langston Lofts (designed by Shalom Baranes Associates) that are under construction. Read about how several local apartment-dwellers improved their spaces, and then learn how to work with an architect to renovate your own home.

A complete guide to Architecture Week is located on page 50. Although this celebration comes but once a year, we hope it will inspire you to keep an eye on all the new projects coming to Washington and see how our city is evolving. In addition, we hope it will encourage you to be an active participant in your community. The design of a neighborhood reflects the care of its residents. Whether you are a new resident or one who experienced the turmoil before the transition; whether you own or rent; whether you live in Washington, Virginia, or Maryland; you can make a difference in your community.

Mary Fitch, AICP
Publisher
ARCHITECTUREDC

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Daniel Emberley is the founder of Emberley Streamlined Office Systems, providing office management services to growing firms. He has been writing about Washington architecture for over a decade.

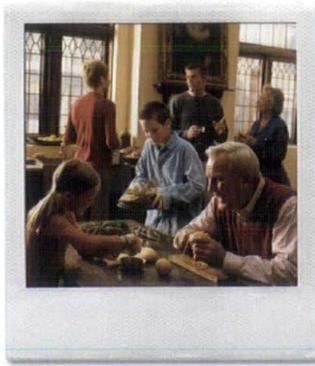
Eric J. Jenkins, AIA, NCARB, is an architect and professor at The Catholic University of America's School of Architecture and Planning. His research in the past few years has focused on the relationship between freehand drawing and the acquisition of architectural knowledge.

Tabitha Kenlon has a BA in English and an MA in Theatre. She is currently the studio assistant at Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects in Washington DC.

Denise Liebowitz, an occasional contributor to *ARCHITECTUREDC*, grew up in a Gropius-inspired house where minimal was a way of life. She works at the National Capital Planning Commission.

Robert L. Miller, FAIA, a Washington architect and writer, is president of Robert L. Miller Associates, a corporate and marketing communications firm serving the design professions.

Ellen Sands is an architectural designer working with Clarke Architecture, LLP. She has written about architecture for *The Washington Times* and *Architectural Record*. 



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DetailsDC: Products for the Home

by Mary Fitch, AICP

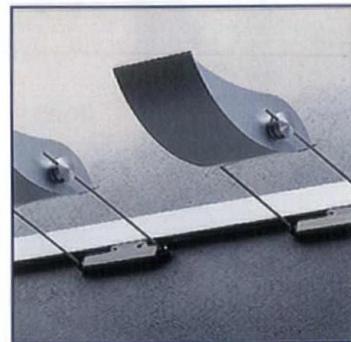
This issue's offerings would fit both a minimalist loft on 14th Street and a classic mansion in Middleburg. "Good design is good design," as an architect of my acquaintance always says without a trace of irony. The simple lines of the pieces shown here will feel at home in any location.

Thos. Moser creates wood furniture with a timeless quality. Starting as a one-man operation in the 1970s, the company now has over 60 cabinet makers and 200 different handcrafted pieces. The **Wing Collection** offers a subtle updating of the classic Queen Anne chair—bringing what the company calls "fresh relevance to an old form." Available in fabric or leather, the chair is ergonomically designed and crafted from solid cherry. The Collection includes the chair and footrest, settee and sofa, and ranges in price from \$2,900 to \$6,000. Visit **Thos. Moser** at 3300 M Street, NW (near Cady's Alley) or www.thosmoser.com, or call 800.708.9061.

Muleh is a year-old store on 14th Street that sells design of all kinds: furniture, clothing, and artwork. Owner Christopher Reiter wants to show Washington that design doesn't have to be mainstream. A current example: the **Croissant** chair designed by Kenneth Cobonpue. The Croissant looks light enough to be French pastry but sits firmly on a powder-coated steel frame. Woven with a natural fiber called buri, which is made from coconut leaves, the edges are handstitched with abaca rope, the strongest natural fiber in the world. A version of the Croissant will soon make its debut in David Rockwell's new space for of-the-moment restaurant Nobu in New York. Muleh shows many other pieces by the Pratt-trained Cobonpue, whom Reiter believes is "tomorrow's design superstar." The Croissant line includes the chair at \$1750 and sofa at \$3390. Visit **Muleh** at 1831 14th Street or www.muleh.com, or call 202.667.3440.

How to create the well-lighted loft? **Illuminations** owner John Seward recommends **lightlight** by buschfeld design. This is an extremely flexible track system that includes very low-voltage fixtures. It mounts on the ceiling or on the wall. In its wall-hung configuration, it can also hold artwork. Why would you care that it's low voltage? Lower voltage means

smaller lamps, so you won't have guests banging their heads into klieg-size lights. Lower voltage also means precision. You can carefully position your lamps to make the most of your art collection. Lamps are small chrome fixtures with a frosted diffuser for even light. The lighting is so perfect, according to Seward, and the fixtures so light, that he's used the system in a more traditional home, running the track just below the crown molding. A 78-inch track with three lights and picture hangers runs between \$1,500 to \$2,000. Visit **Illuminations** at 415 8th Street, NW, or its new location at 3323 Cady's Alley, or www.illuminc.com. Or call 202.783.4888.



Top: Thos. Moser's Wing chair is a new twist on a classic form.

Above: lightlight provides flexible illumination for any space.

Below: The light and durable Croissant chair is at home in any setting.





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14th Street's Architectural Evolution

by Daniel Emberley

Luxury loft condominiums on 14th Street are selling out faster than developers can put them up. Studio Theatre is in the midst of a major expansion. The 14th and U corridor is a hot retail neighborhood. For so many years, 14th Street was a place to avoid; why has 14th Street suddenly become the place to be?

ORIGINS

14th Street developed as a trolley-car-served commercial strip for elite Logan Circle residents in the 1880s. By about 1920, the area was fully built up as a mixed neighborhood on the L'Enfant plan, with mansions on Rhode Island and Vermont Avenues and the Circle, middle-class housing on the grid streets, and housing for the poor on alleys and smaller streets.

Retail on 14th followed the social dynamic of the area. Buildings opened as elite grocers and tailors and then changed hands as the neighborhood changed. Before World War II, cars were luxury

goods sold downtown, with sales floors on multiple levels and offices above. From about 1900 to the early 1950s, 14th Street was "Auto Row," the primary place to buy a car in Washington. Auto sales required a new architecture of display windows, open floors, reinforced upper floors, and generous elevators to move cars within the buildings. Older retail buildings were replaced by or modified to serve as auto showrooms, garages, and service stations. This was especially pronounced on the 1500-1600 blocks of 14th, P and Church Streets, and Johnson Avenue.

The 1950s shift of auto retail to suburban parking lots condemned Auto Row. The showrooms left first; in the 1970s, their open spaces were converted into theaters and nightclubs. Service businesses closed more slowly; some garages only closed in 2004. Buildings that had opened as elite grocers and tailors moved downward to undertakers and construction trades, and most recently they housed

The original Trew Motor Company building at 14th and P Street in the 1920s. Now it's the Studio Theatre, currently being renovated and expanded by Bonstra Architects PC and Russell Metheny, theatre designer.

pawn shops and services for the poor. Decline took about a century, from initial construction in the 1880s-'90s to a low point in 1968.

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4th, 1968, sparked a fire that would affect 14th Street for the next 30 years. Upon learning of his death, some began calling for stores to close out of respect for Dr. King. The small group quickly grew to an angry crowd, and polite requests turned to shouts. In the confusion, a storefront window at 14th and U was broken, igniting the looting and destruction that would continue for four days.

Fourteenth Street was greatly damaged by the riots, not only because buildings were burned, but because it changed the way people looked at the street. It was no longer a place to visit; it was a place to avoid. Businesses closed and boarded-up storefronts remained that way, in some cases, for almost 30 years.

Even in its darkest moments, however, 14th Street managed to remain active. Incremental change had allowed property owners to adapt to declining incomes and increasing density through World War II and the suburban flight of the 1950s and '60s. The riots in 1968 forced a response as dozens of individual property owners took steps to protect their buildings. Large display windows were obscured by security gates, and burned-out buildings replaced with barbed-wire-secured parking lots. Broken windows were filled in with masonry, and wooden walls with much smaller openings. The riots did not completely stop new construction; indeed, many building sites were opened up and rebuilt. The new structures, however, responded to the changed dynamic with a language of "Fortress Modernism." Single-story and single-use structures, solid masonry walls, irregular and small windows, and security doors replaced pedestrian-friendly, glass-fronted, multi-story and multi-use buildings. Examples of this trend are on



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Right: Original auto showrooms of the 1930s have evolved into high-design home furnishing stores like Muleh and Vastu.

the west side of the 1700 block of 14th, and the T Street Station Post Office. The changes meant that fewer people lived above stores, and the streets became more dangerous. 14th Street was no longer a pleasant walk, but a place to get something and leave.

Architects who wished to build on 14th after World War II had to deal with this built texture. Unlike in Southwest or the area of Georgetown under the Whitehurst Freeway, large-scale demolition did not take place. Instead, Modern buildings were inserted into the fabric piecemeal, as developers assembled parcels to be redeveloped. The apartment buildings on Rhode Island Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets are good examples of this. These classic International Style structures would feel equally at home in Los Angeles or Chicago, and contrast markedly with the brick rowhouses they replaced.

Social agencies took advantage of the inexpensive rents to locate along 14th Street, serving the increasingly poor population. Once established, they built new structures specifically designed to fulfill their missions. A combination of Fortress Modernism and Brutalist trends in architecture and restricted budgets, the results were massive concrete buildings that diminished the streetscape. The Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind dominated P Street with a major window-free service center

(recently replaced by the Hudson condominiums). The Frontier housing development at 14th and Corcoran replaced the former D.C. Orphans Asylum; its rows of townhouses look inward to a parking lot, walled off from 14th Street by brick, fencing, and landscape.

Modern architecture and social services do not have to detract from the neighborhood. The Reeves Center anchors the 14th and U intersection. It marks the spot where the 1968 riots commenced and creates an urban plaza that has potential for giving back to the neighborhood. The United Supreme Council 33 building for the Masons is *suis generis*—it may not be beautiful, but its small scale allows its remarkable features to be a positive addition to the streetscape. The Elizabeth Taylor Building of the Whitman Walker Clinic is a respectful rehabilitation of existing space; its welcoming corner entry offsets the coldness of its street frontage. Better, the National Minority AIDS Council beautifully retrofitted a rowhouse next to the U Street Metro station to serve as offices and housing.

A NEW AGE

It could be argued that the catalyst for the greatest change on 14th Street was the arrival of the theaters. In the late 1970s, attracted by the low rents and



Riot-torn 14th Street in 1968.



Library of Congress

open spaces of former auto showrooms, Washington's experimental theaters moved in. Beginning in 1977 with the Source Theatre, followed the next year by the Studio Theatre and the Woolly Mammoth, the stages have anchored 14th Street for more than 20 years. Not only did these institutions provide live theater, they also made a great effort to be a resource for the local community.

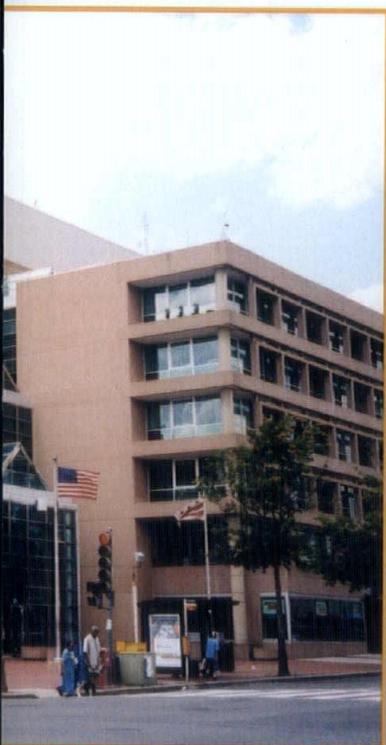
Studio Theatre's building is an old auto showroom; its current expansion is taking over three former garages to its north. On lots once occupied by garages, a row of 1980s townhouses (part of the Bishop's Gate condominium project) backs onto Johnson Avenue. Empire Lofts replaced other Johnson Avenue garages as the first loft residential building in Washington in 1997. New loft apartments are following the footprint of the old auto structures in massive developments on P and Church Streets. Their architects are embracing the industrial aesthetic of the old buildings.

There is an architectural freedom here. Developers are experimenting with different kinds of apartments: raised ceiling heights, movable walls, and other very un-Washington elements are becoming the norm. While this is happening in

other parts of town as well, the sheer amount of new building on 14th Street makes it a kind of laboratory for new trends in modern multi-family living.

The Whole Foods Market on P Street near 14th Street marked a turning point in the area. Opened in 2000, this market attracts shoppers from as far west as Dupont Circle and as far north as Adams Morgan. It would be easy to say that its construction was the catalyst that started it all, but Whole Foods really just emphasized what was already underway. Its success has encouraged small shops and restaurants to locate nearby. The block of 14th Street between S and T includes new businesses that cater to the neighborhood: Garden District, Pulp, Home Rule, Go Mamma Go, Vastu, and Muleh all reinforce the downtown style of 14th and U. Like a tiny version of New York's Greenwich village, 14th Street is gradually becoming the place to check out the new and different.

Fourteenth Street is no longer a place described by a single use—an automall or social service center, or even a theater district. It is a brand new neighborhood in DC, adding to the vitality of downtown life. 🍷



Reeves Municipal Center at 14th and U, a joint venture of Devroux & Purnell Associates Architects, Robert Coles, and VVCR.



New stores on 14th and S Streets, NW.

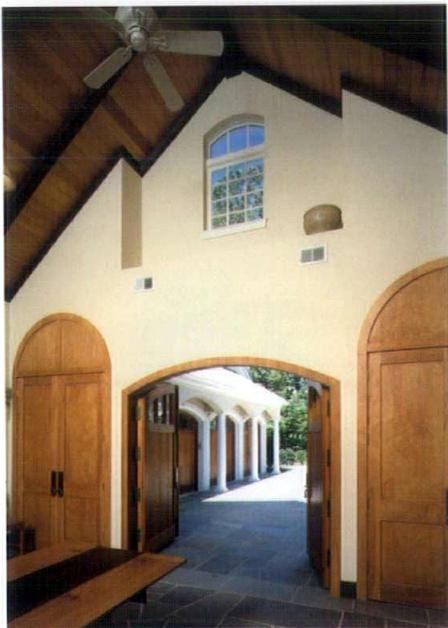
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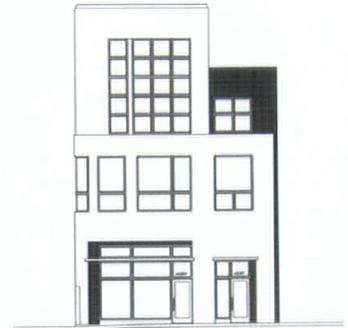
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What's in a Name:

The True Story of the Washington Loft

by Mary Fitch, AICP

Washington has gone loft-happy. There are more than 1,000 new housing units calling themselves lofts within the 14th Street corridor alone. But why, in a city with almost no industrial base, has the idea of living in what looks like a converted factory become so popular?

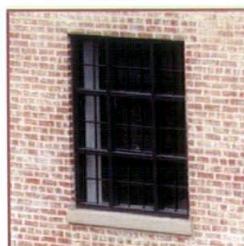
The loft apartment originated in New York City when artists took over abandoned industrial buildings and turned them into housing. Because Washington's lofts are often new construction, some people find the term confusing and worry that "loft" just means gentrification dressed up in industrial clothing. For the 14th Street corridor, however, "none of these projects has displaced one human being," says architect Eric Colbert, AIA. By reusing old auto body shops and offices, Colbert's projects—the Hudson, Saxon Court (developed by PN Hoffman), and Rainbow Lofts (developed by Walnut Street Development)—are adding 151 units to the District housing stock, all within a one-block area.

The essential features that make these spaces lofts are abundant light and high ceilings. A high ceiling is not such an easy thing to achieve in Washington. Land values are one issue, and the city's height limit keeps most loft projects in this area at seven or eight stories. And those special features that make new units look like lofts—exposed sprinklers and ductwork—actually add to the price. When

these elements are visible, they have to be built to a higher, and thus more expensive, standard. Sprinklers, for example, must be encased in steel pipe if they are exposed. If they are covered by drywall, plastic piping can be used at a much lower cost.

Because it's all new construction, the Washington loft has finishes and amenities that a real loft conversion might not have. Some even have separate bedrooms. The kitchen is also transformed. People don't cook as much as they used to, so the kitchen has become, in Colbert's words, "a little jewel." The kitchen is open to the rest of the apartment and the finishes are much higher-end, with stainless appliances and granite countertops.

So what does "Washington loft" really mean? It's actually more of a marketing category that describes spaces with interesting design. "For years, the relatively few multi-family units that came on line were [ugly] white boxes with 8'2" popcorn ceilings," says Metropolis Development President Scott Pannick. While a familiar product might work in a rental market, most buyers are looking for what Pannick calls "the wow." "What I wanted to build were buildings where space is the primary feature. The kinds of construction methods we use in DC—basically poured concrete—are abundantly flexible."





Saxon Court designed
by Eric Colbert and Associates,
built by PN Hoffman.

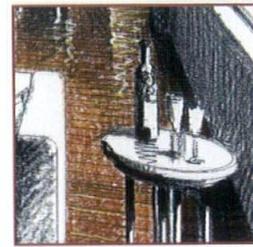
Although these new units are marketed to the hip, young crowd, it turns out that there is no typical loft buyer. Singles, couples, young, old, gay, straight are all moving into the neighborhood. For now, at least, children don't seem to be part of the picture. "The perceived safety isn't there yet," says Pannick.

Will the enthusiasm for lofts wane in the next few years? Unlikely, says architect Colbert. The ceiling height is really the key. People want tall ceilings. But he does see a change in the way things may look. "One way to mitigate low ceilings is to add windows," says Colbert, and

his latest designs push this to an extreme—using curtain wall, a typical window system for office buildings, for a new kind of apartment. Some spaces are becoming even more flexible: Cunningham + Quill's new Alta project for PN Hoffman, at 14th below Scott Circle, features movable walls so that the apartment can be completely open when it suits the owner.

It could be argued that the term "loft" in Washington is completely meaningless. It might also be argued, however, that its popularity shows the public's interest in light, open design. Lofts have expanded the notion of beautiful space in Washington. 🏠

Rendering of Lofts at 14 designed by RTKL, under construction by Metropolis Development.





Lofty Ambitions

New loft buildings are going up all over town, but some apartment-dwellers are choosing to transform what they already have into loftier spaces. They're knocking down walls, stripping out finishes, and hiding clutter. Enter light and open space. These three apartment renovations bring extra breathing room to city living.



Gregory Hargison

FORMA's design transforms the 1970s condo into a loft-like space. In the new living/dining room, doorways extend up to the ceiling for a more streamlined look.

The traditional fireplace is replaced with a clean-lined mantel.



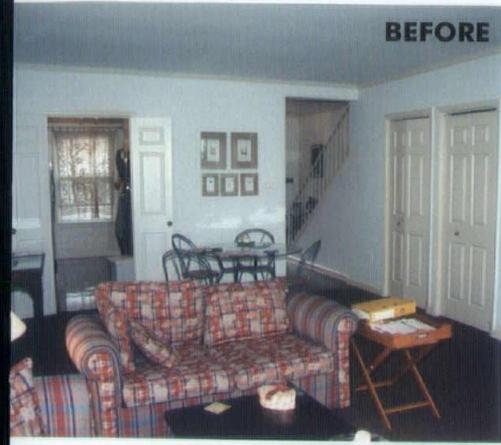
Upstairs, Downstairs:

A Successful Collaboration

by Denise Liebowitz

The loft phenomenon has moved south from Manhattan, sweeping through Washington neighborhoods and turning up in some pretty unlikely places. Like Beekman Place, an enclave of bland, 1970s Colonial-style row houses just off 16th Street, NW, a stone's throw from Meridian Hill Park. In this conveniently located, if architecturally uninspired setting, Andreas Charalambous, AIA, and his client have brought a tired and dated interior into the 21st century, banishing crown moldings, paneled doors, and dingy hallways, and leaving in their place clean-lined, wide open, loft-like spaces.

BEFORE



BEFORE



Gooffrey Rodgigon

Meral Karasulu, a Turkish-born economist with the International Monetary Fund, moved into her two-bedroom duplex five years ago as a renter. Almost immediately, she began to dream about transforming the apartment into something more elegant and European. “I wanted the space to be as open as possible—uncluttered and simple. I knew all the things I wanted to get rid of, but I didn’t know what to do after that.”

Help was close at hand, in the downstairs apartment in fact. As luck would have it, architect Charalambous, principal of FORMA Design, had bought the duplex unit below Karasulu and embarked on a total renovation. “I was so impressed by what Andreas was doing,” says Karasulu. “It was neutral and understated, and I admired it immediately.”

Once Karasulu purchased her upstairs unit, architect and client set to work. “Meral had been living in the apartment and had been thinking very carefully about what she wanted, so the planning phase moved quickly from a starting sketch,” Charalambous explains. “It was an exercise in elimination,” says the homeowner.

Charalambous began by reconfiguring the entry foyer to open up the space and bring in more light. Because Karasulu is an accomplished cook, a state-of-the-art kitchen was a top priority. Out came the dark ‘70s cabinets and linoleum floor. In went sleek Silestone quartz counters, Poliform cabinetry, and sandblasted glass backsplashes and cabinet fronts. Karasulu insisted on a clean, horizontal kitchen design, and her architect delivered. She was also determined to banish clutter. “I wanted a kitchen that had a place for everything,” the homeowner says, showing off an efficient and space-saving pullout pantry.

Charalambous replaced the hodgepodge of flooring materials with a unifying sweep of maple hardwood that begins in the kitchen and extends through the dining and living areas. Raised-panel doors were either eliminated or switched with flush seamless ones that almost disappear from view. A clean-lined mantel replaces the traditional fireplace treatment, and doorways and hallways now extend up to the ceiling for a more streamlined look.

The top floor of the duplex with two bedrooms and two baths continues the clean modernist sensibility. Silestone counters reappear in both baths, and the maple floors and neutral colors echo those found on the first floor.

As an IMF employee, Karasulu worked for extended periods in Korea, and she admires the Asian design aesthetic. This influence is most clearly seen in her bedroom, where custom-designed Shoji screens extend across one wall of closets. On the opposite wall, Charalambous designed a simple but dramatic wall treatment featuring cutout niches for strategically placed tea lights.

Furnishings—mostly Italian—are spare and complement the modern envelope. “I was so happy to clear out all the old stuff,” says Karasulu. “Plus it was a good excuse for furniture shopping trips to Milan!”

“Andreas gave me courage,” says the homeowner in describing the collaboration with her architect. “He always took my ideas a step further. For instance, he really had to talk me into that bedroom wall, but now it’s one of my favorite things. And on my own I never would have thought of extending the doorways up to the ceiling for this open look.”

For his part, the architect says of Karasulu, “Meral is the kind of client who is very informed. She had done all her homework in advance, and all I had to do was give her some options.”

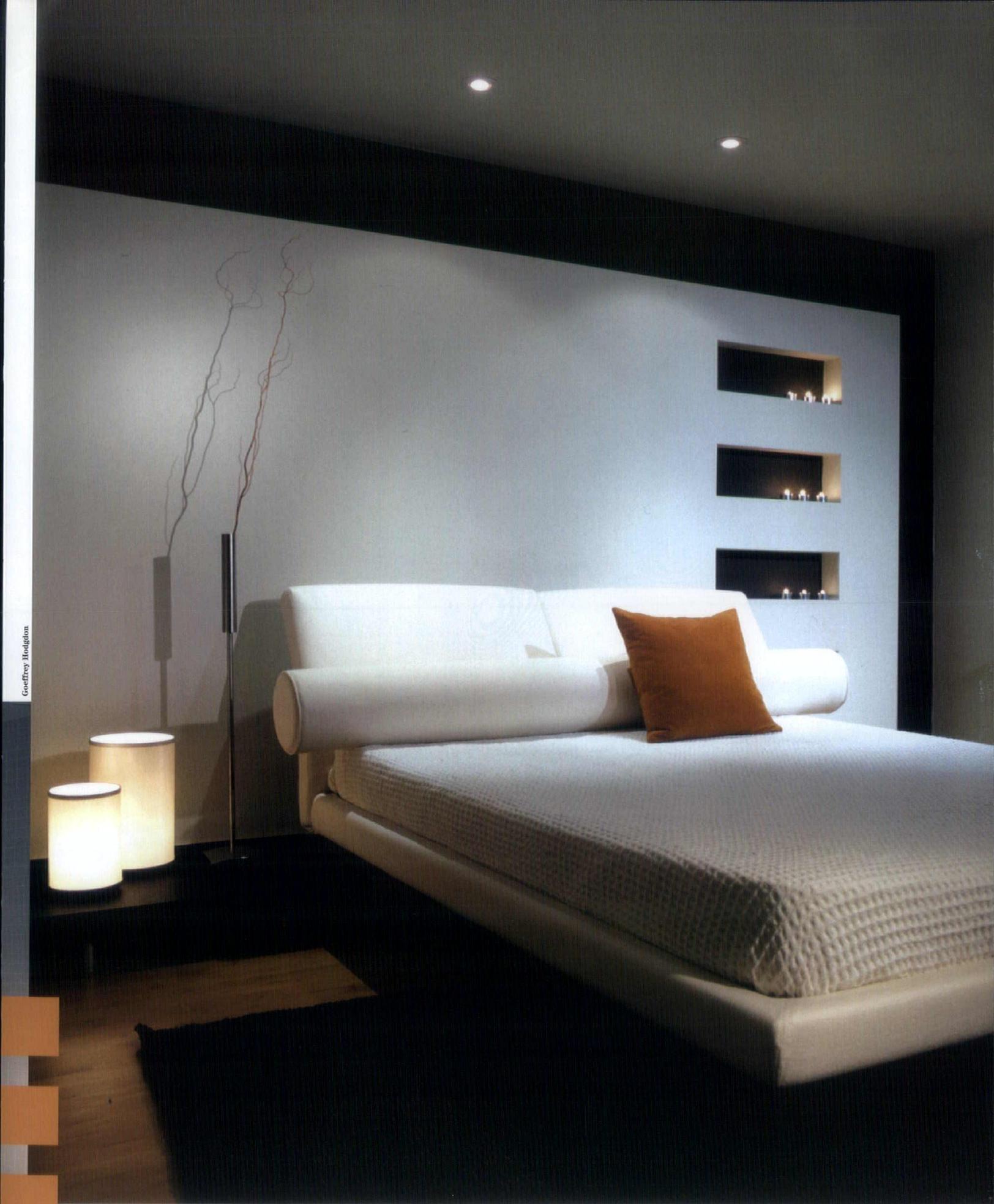
“Listen to your architect,” is Karasulu’s advice to those embarking on a renovation project. “I didn’t take Andreas’ advice in selecting a general contractor. It turned out to be a mistake that added several months to the job.” The homeowner also reports satisfaction with the project’s budget; the final cost came in 25 percent below the maximum she had anticipated.

Charalambous has spent most of his career in Washington and tracked the growing sophistication of his clients over the years. “Too many developers still think it’s all about American Colonial. But Washington has become such an international city; it’s not middle America. Americans today travel abroad frequently, and there are so many more international clients. The standard, traditional product just doesn’t appeal to them. They know good design, and their expectations are higher.”

As the next generation of Washington renovators surveys the city’s large stock of dated, traditionally styled housing, they can be inspired by the modern and elegant space Charalambous and Karasulu have created in Beekman Place. 🏡

A Silestone counter graces the renovated bathroom. In the master bedroom, architect Andreas Charalambous, AIA, designed a wall with cutout niches for tea lights. “It’s one of my favorite things,” owner Meral Karasulu says of her new bedroom wall.





Everything in Its Place

by Hannah McCann



Sequit: Moroz Company





Boris Feduliyum Photography

“L” around the corner. Underneath, a freestanding cart on castors carries three pieces: a 18-inch-wide Miele dishwasher; a custom-made “hotbox” that holds an 18-inch Broiler King convection oven, one drawer for cooking utensils, and a shelf where the plug-in electric burners are stored when not in use; and an 18-inch Kenmore under-counter refrigerator.

Finding someone to make the custom pieces was not easy. “I must have called 300 people,” Rubbo recalls, each lead referring him to another. For the most complicated piece, the sink/countertop, Rubbo found Triton Metals, Inc., a laser-precision shop in Hollywood, Maryland, that usually works for the Navy and Air Force. The fabricator looked at Rubbo’s drawings and said, “You’re going to have to explain this to me, because I’ve never seen anything like it.”

Rubbo described the unique design. The countertop goes right through the sink, which in turn supports the countertop. There is no drain in the middle of the sink; instead, the bottom slopes to a perforated drop-off where water drains away. The fabricator’s

interest was piqued: “This is really neat. We’ll stop production for a day and build it.”

Another fabricator, Metal Magic in Ocean City, made the hotbox, which has wheels set in the top to help level the countertop. (Ally says the counter “tended to bend, every so slightly. You wouldn’t notice it...” she begins, “but we noticed it,” she and Rubbo say in unison.) When Ally and Rubbo put in the hotbox, they discovered that it was a quarter-inch too tall. So they took it back—100 pounds of steel hauled down the stairs, loaded into the car on a snowy day, and driven back to the fabricator in Ocean City to get it right.

Where are the pots and pans, spice rack and recipe books, dishes and flatware? Smartly and discreetly stored nearby. Dishes are in the credenza. A former coat closet serves as a pantry, with rolling carts that hold every necessary piece of the kitchen. When Ally is making a large meal, she wheels out the carts so they surround her as she cooks.

“What more do you need?” Ally asks rhetorically, but it’s a question well posed to new-home builders with

ever-expanding kitchen plans. “When you live in the city, you get used to living in a small place,” she says. Rubbo adds, “There’s a nice efficiency when you know where everything is. Rauzia does things so quickly, it blows my mind.”

A professional chef recently approached Scout with a special compliment after he saw photos of their kitchen published with other award-winning projects in the *Washingtonian*. “There’s a term we use in cooking school: *Mise en place*. It’s a French phrase that means, ‘Everything in its place.’ I think of that phrase when I see this kitchen.”

Ally and Rubbo’s exacting standards extended beyond the kitchen to the rest of their apartment’s renovation. They rebuilt the stairs leading to the unit, mitering each tread and riser to fit snugly with the brick party wall. They took apart the chimney, making new flues and a fireplace for their unit. They stripped down their bedroom and bathroom to create clean, white spaces with a few key details,

such as a custom-fabricated soap holder. They created a new wall between the bathroom and the living area, inventing the sophisticated support structure that holds up their kitchen sink and countertop.

Ally and Rubbo did the renovations at night and over the weekends while working full-time. Rubbo runs the day-to-day operations of Scout Motor Company, which currently has several residential renovations and additions underway, and he often serves as the general contractor for Scout’s projects. Ally works at the architecture firm SmithGroup, where she is a project architect on large buildings such as law schools. She also teaches architecture at Catholic University. And she is co-principal of Scout.

In addition, Ally makes it to Silver Spring every Sunday for family dinner, usually an all-day affair. “I’m from Guyana,” Ally says, recalling her childhood lessons in cooking. “We make these huge meals—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—with just a little fire and a mud-built stove....I guess it just rubbed off on me.”

Rubbo grew up helping fix cars and tractors in his grandfather’s garage in Pennsylvania. That hands-on experience with machines, gears, and tools is part of the inspiration behind Scout Motor Company’s aesthetic.

“Even though a lot of our designs can be thought of as high-tech, there’s also always the idea that it’s touched by the hand,” Ally points out. “There’s a sense of craft in our designs,” Rubbo adds.

The couple chose the word “Scout” in their firm’s name to conjure several associations. “A scout really observes the world and sees things without prejudice or judgment or preconceptions,” Rubbo says. “Plus we have a Scout,” Ally says, referring to the early utility vehicles. After their firm’s first project was complete, the couple bought an antique 1970 Scout to celebrate. “It’s very utilitarian, very much what we stand for, about only the essentials,” Ally explains.



Boris Feidbyum Photography



Boris Feidbyum Photography



Scout Motor Company

Scout Motor Company's exacting standards extend to key details in the apartment, such as the custom-fabricated sink and soap holder.



Scout Motor Company



Scout Motor Company

Ally and Rubbo bought a 1970 Scout to celebrate the completion of their first project. Its utilitarian design is part of the inspiration for the name of their firm.

Mise en place. Rolling carts in the pantry store cooking essentials.

Scout Motor Company has won acclaim for the apartment renovation, which Ally and Rubbo designed and built for about \$35 a square foot (including the custom-made kitchen pieces, which cost about \$8,000 total.) Like any home, there's always more on the to-do list. Slate is coming for the fireplace hearth. Ally and Rubbo have a piece of glass for their dining table but no base, though they've designed one. And they plan to eventually take over the first-floor apartment, joining it with their unit upstairs.

Does that mean their new kitchen will go? Probably not. Ally and Rubbo say they'll transform the first floor into a living space and keep the kitchen/dining area upstairs. It will be phase two in the transformation of this 1870s rowhouse into a lean, modern loft. 🍷



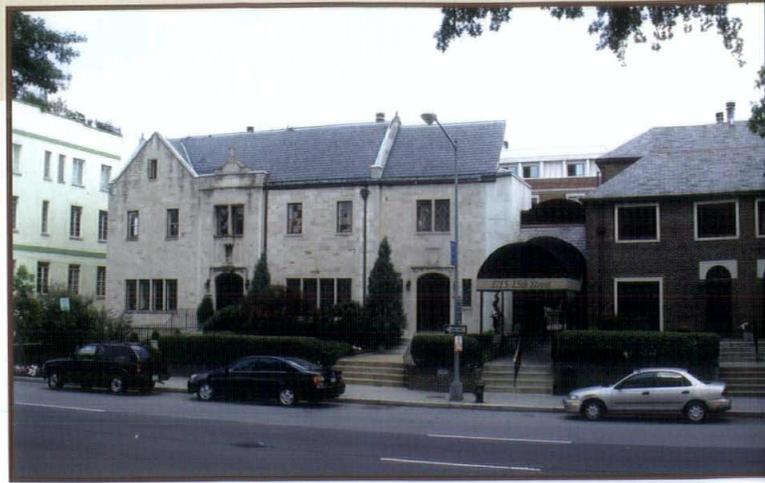
Remodeling

A Capella

by Robert L. Miller, FAIA

HGTV came to look at the kitchen, exquisite in oak and granite and stainless steel, and compact in less than 8 by 15 feet. And then they noticed the living-dining room's 30-foot-plus ceiling—actually, over 45 feet where the floor suddenly drops away where the altar had been. The producers worried for a time over the shallow niche of the apse, and how some viewers might feel about the Warhol portrait in the place where once had hung, probably, a crucifix. In the end, however, the Vermeer light, shifting and reflecting through the day as it comes through the panes of tall, narrow, pointed-arch windows, decided everything. It's a space you have to come back to.

U.S. General Service Administration preservation director Rolando Rivas-Camp, AIA—the architect in charge of historic buildings for the country's largest landlord and no pushover when it comes to adaptively reused courthouses and post offices and the occasional desanctified chapel—couldn't get it off his mind. Having missed one chance to buy the apartment in the Bishop's Gate condominium on 15th Street, NW, near S, Rivas-Camp and his partner settled for renovating a Capitol Hill rowhouse. But soon afterwards, Rivas-Camp happened to meet someone who



Washington's oldest Catholic parish school for African-Americans was expanded to become Bishop's Gate condominiums in the 1980s. Rolando Rivas-Camp, AIA, and his partner live in the former chapel.

knew the owner of the ex-chapel. He made a deal and prepared to move again, planning a six-week renovation.

It took five months. Rivas-Camp is convincing when he says the difference was mostly intentional. "We did things in stages. I travel a lot, and since I was my own general contractor, each stage needed time. The advantage is that your preconceived ideas change; you come back and see things you missed, new possibilities."

Scheduling and other problems led the architect to tackle some renovating on his own. Rivas-Camp braved ladders and scaffolds to paint, and repaint, the vertigo-inducing ceiling white. He recalls, "The previous owner had a blue ceiling, yellow walls, and Mission furniture," meant to complement the original inlaid oak floors, decorative iron radiator grates, leaded and stained glass, and marble and granite wainscoting. Rivas-Camp characterizes his own approach as more European: preserve the original building fabric carefully, but make any new elements clearly modern and, preferably, minimal.

The new owners inherited an already somewhat stripped-down version of the circa 1930 chapel. It had been built to serve students and nuns of Washington's oldest Catholic parish school for African-Americans, chartered in 1865. In the 1980s, the small

From the exquisite kitchen to the light-filled living area, the apartment is a captivating space.



Boris Feidibiyun Photography

campus of brick and limestone English Gothic buildings was adapted and expanded to become Bishop's Gate condominiums. The basement of a large, never-finished church on the site became underground parking topped with a brick courtyard. After considering the chapel for a community room, the developers finally marketed it as an apartment, adding steel spiral stairs to the basement (now main bedroom) and choir loft (second bedroom) plus a basic kitchen, baths, and a tiny but charming entrance courtyard.

Beginning with lots of white paint, plus the gilding and indirect lighting of the deep cornice at the top of the former sanctuary, Rivas-Camp's interventions add both order and drama.

The all-new, doughnut-plan kitchen is custom-made oak with black and gray stone and metal accents and scarcely a door-pull in sight. Like an elegant hotel bar, one long counter opens to the dining area through a granite-trimmed opening. The ceiling drops to form a lighting cove, with a small stainless steel and mirror vault above. Italian chrome and black leather upholstery, and a second, on-axis Warhol, finish the main living space with unobtrusive richness.

Downstairs, the surprisingly high-ceilinged, column-free, 900-square-foot crypt—a former student lunchroom—really felt too big for a bed, says Rivas-Camp. His solution is a set of central dividing elements in white gypsum board: a television kiosk that separates the soaring sitting area from the low sleeping space; a headboard wall with subtly

Baris Feldhym Photography



Rivas-Camp used dividing elements in white gypsum board to set off certain areas, such as the sleeping space, in the former student lunchroom on the lower level.

protective wing walls and a pair of vertical bedside light tubes; and, behind that, a compact office and a twin system of closets, dressing areas, and sinks going back to a shared tub, stall shower, and toilet compartment—all in crisp charcoal and white. Two large pastel copies of Sistine Chapel ceiling figures that Rivas-Camp commissioned in Rome (where he studied preservation after stints at the University of London, the University of Florida, and a childhood interrupted by a wrenching escape from Cuba in 1962) flank the bed and warm the room's center.

The choir loft, finally, with its little gothic-arched, oak-shuttered interior windows still in place, is in transition from weight room to occasional guest room with the addition of a Murphy bed, out of sight (like the front coat closet) behind vertical blinds.

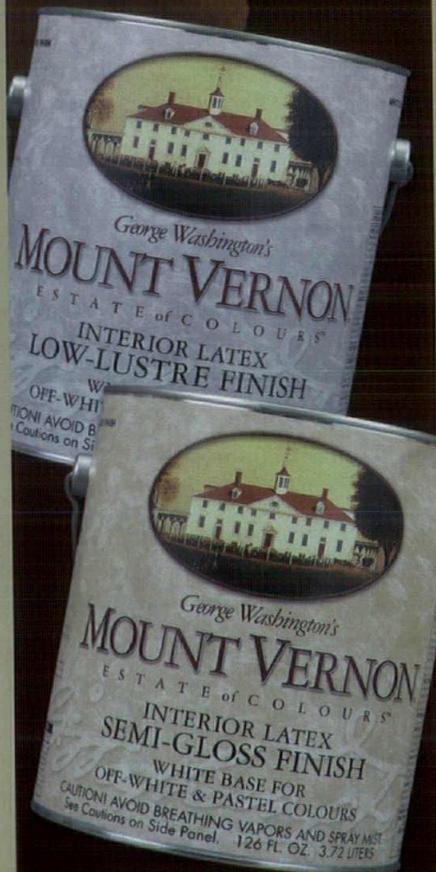
One more addition is Tosca, an American Staffordshire Terrier. She is not, as Rivas-Camp explains with a historian's patience, the pit bull she is sometimes mistaken for, but the same breed as the Our Gang Comedy dog and Nipper, the "His Master's Voice" Victrola fan. Tosca at first needed a trainer to learn how to go down the spiral stairs. She now roams happily in the changing, almost outdoor light. And she fits perfectly: an all-American dog who could have stepped right out of Depression-era Washington, but always chic in black and white. 🐕

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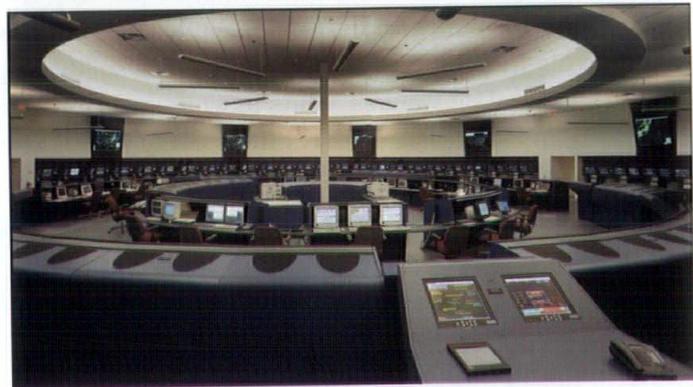
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Beauty In the Box

How Empty Became Art

by Tabitha Kenlon

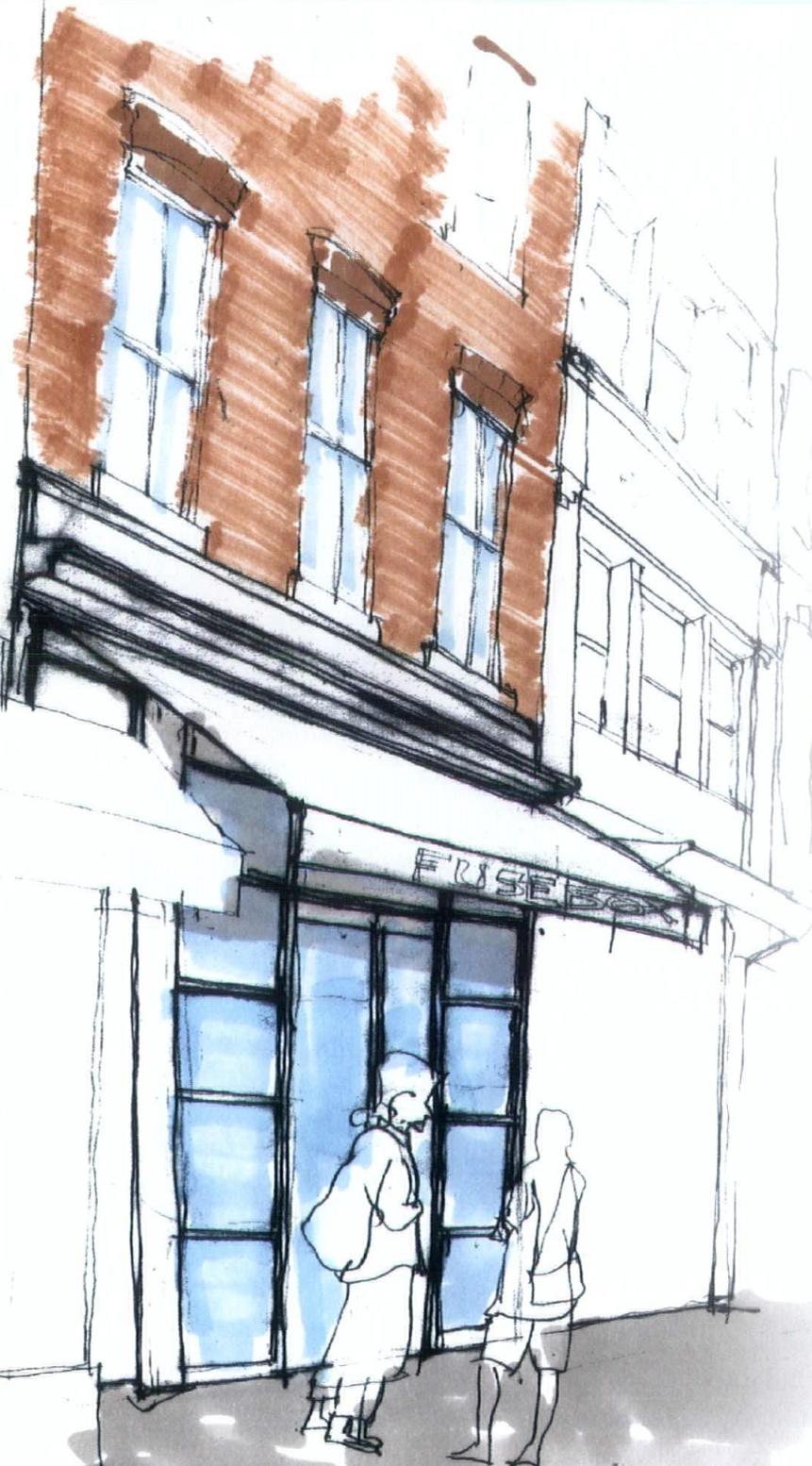
Knowing what you want can be liberating or limiting. The trick is to find a balance, keep the goal in sight, and maybe let someone else worry about the details. For Sarah Finlay and Patrick Murcia, owners of the Fusebox art gallery, that someone was a team of architects at CORE led by Peter F. Hapstak III, AIA, IIDA, ISP

After Finlay and Murcia decided to open their own gallery, they spent about a year hunting for the right venue. Finlay knew exactly what she didn't want: a narrow rowhouse with tight corridors and no room for visitors to congregate. She wanted an inviting space that would encourage mingling and dialogues, one that would respect the work of the artists and the needs of serious collectors while offering an accessible introduction for the more casual visitor.

When they could find no warehouse space in Washington, they focused their search on the old auto dealerships along the 14th Street corridor in Northwest. Finally they found what they were looking for at 1412 14th Street. The pull-down grate over the storefront would have to go, and the dropped ceiling could be removed to provide the warehouse aesthetic Finlay and Murcia wanted. All they needed was someone to build what they were imagining.

Fortunately, by the time Finlay and Murcia found a home for Fusebox, they had already hired CORE to redo the interior. They met with numerous firms, but a friend introduced them to Peter Hapstak, and, as Finlay says, they knew "he got it," so the team was ready. The advance planning was invaluable: Fusebox opened for business a mere two months after Finlay and Murcia signed the lease.

The architect team went to New York and toured loft galleries in SoHo. They had endless conversations about the space and how it could best be



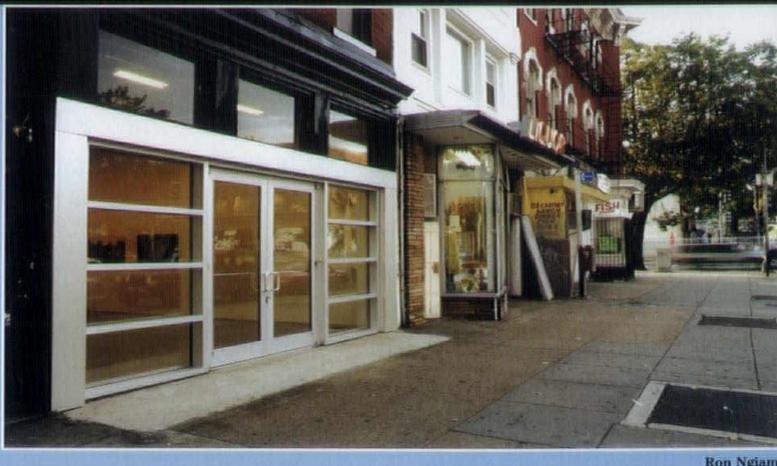
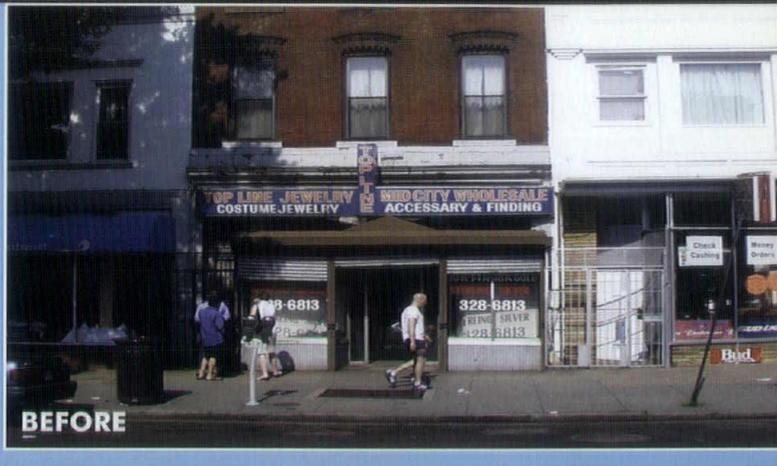
adjusted to suit the different needs of different artists. Hapstak observes that “the client talks in a broad scope, and it is our job to fine-tune, to take care of the details.”

The two months of renovation were unsurprisingly hectic. Finlay and Murcia remained involved throughout the process. They had a strict budget, and the CORE team found ways to stretch the money without compromising the overall look. While they splurged on custom-made display shelves for the office, they economized on cabinets from IKEA. Hapstak admits the budget was a challenge, but points out that such constraints can force a team to think even more creatively. Since the space was going to have a slightly bohemian look anyway, some less polished materials worked just as well—if not better than—their higher-priced alternatives.

Hapstak also commends Finlay and Murcia’s willingness to take risks. The floor, instead of the hardwood Finlay had originally envisioned, is made of cement tiles that are typically used for walls. They were placed upside down to create more texture; look closely and you’ll see the manufacturer’s name stenciled in neat rows throughout the gallery. It’s a detail that Finlay once feared but now loves, just as Hapstak promised she would.

The water-damaged dropped ceiling was pulled down to reveal sturdy pine beams. They remain untouched, still bearing faint marks of the ceiling material rather than the white paint Finlay and Murcia had intended. Leaving them alone saved time, labor, and money, and proved Hapstak right once again. Finlay and Murcia can’t imagine those beams any other way.

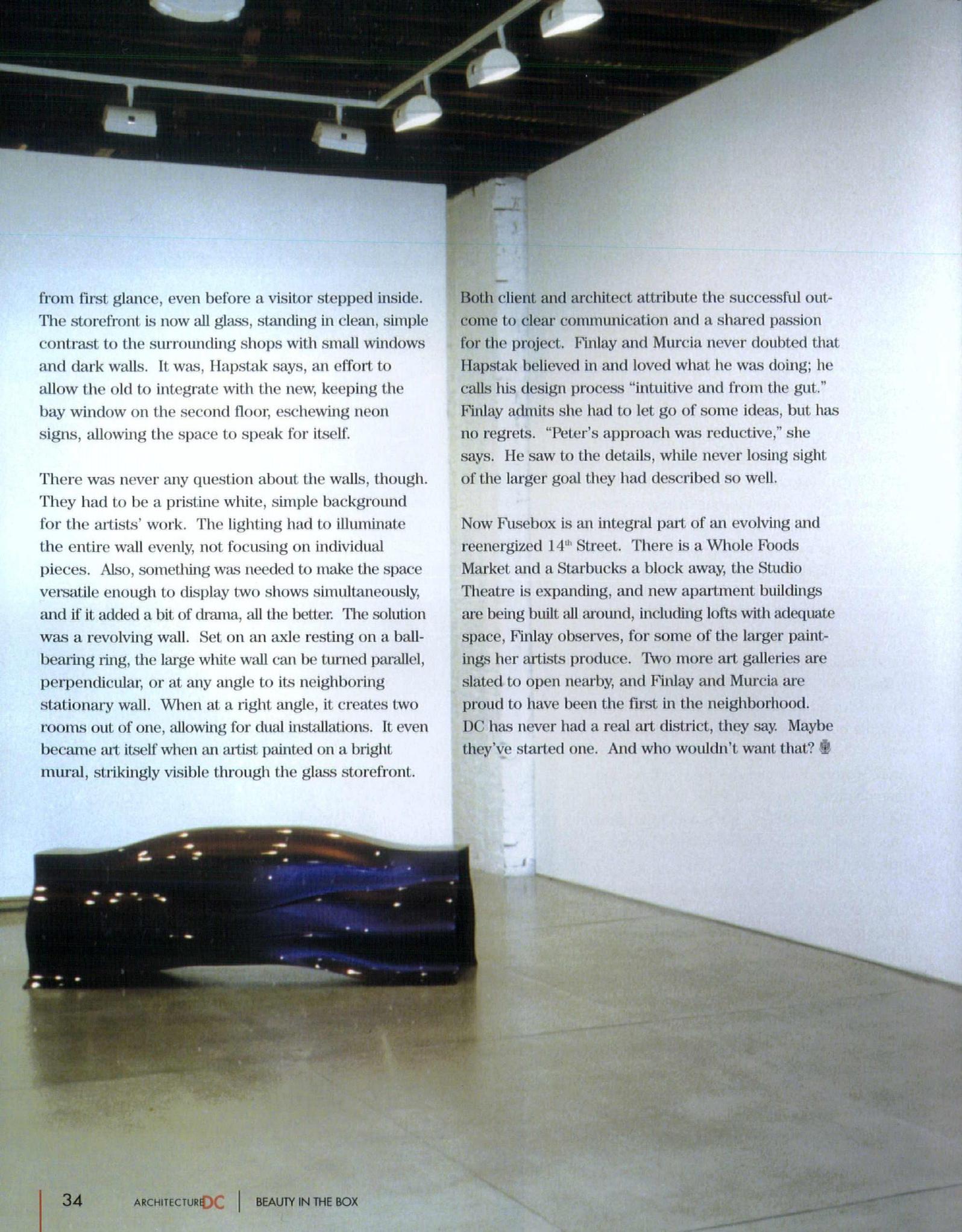
Since the mission of Fusebox was to be open and inviting, that atmosphere needed to be apparent



Ron Ngiam



Ron Ngiam



from first glance, even before a visitor stepped inside. The storefront is now all glass, standing in clean, simple contrast to the surrounding shops with small windows and dark walls. It was, Hapstak says, an effort to allow the old to integrate with the new, keeping the bay window on the second floor, eschewing neon signs, allowing the space to speak for itself.

There was never any question about the walls, though. They had to be a pristine white, simple background for the artists' work. The lighting had to illuminate the entire wall evenly, not focusing on individual pieces. Also, something was needed to make the space versatile enough to display two shows simultaneously, and if it added a bit of drama, all the better. The solution was a revolving wall. Set on an axle resting on a ball-bearing ring, the large white wall can be turned parallel, perpendicular, or at any angle to its neighboring stationary wall. When at a right angle, it creates two rooms out of one, allowing for dual installations. It even became art itself when an artist painted on a bright mural, strikingly visible through the glass storefront.

Both client and architect attribute the successful outcome to clear communication and a shared passion for the project. Finlay and Murcia never doubted that Hapstak believed in and loved what he was doing; he calls his design process "intuitive and from the gut." Finlay admits she had to let go of some ideas, but has no regrets. "Peter's approach was reductive," she says. He saw to the details, while never losing sight of the larger goal they had described so well.

Now Fusebox is an integral part of an evolving and reenergized 14th Street. There is a Whole Foods Market and a Starbucks a block away, the Studio Theatre is expanding, and new apartment buildings are being built all around, including lofts with adequate space, Finlay observes, for some of the larger paintings her artists produce. Two more art galleries are slated to open nearby, and Finlay and Murcia are proud to have been the first in the neighborhood. DC has never had a real art district, they say. Maybe they've started one. And who wouldn't want that? 🏡

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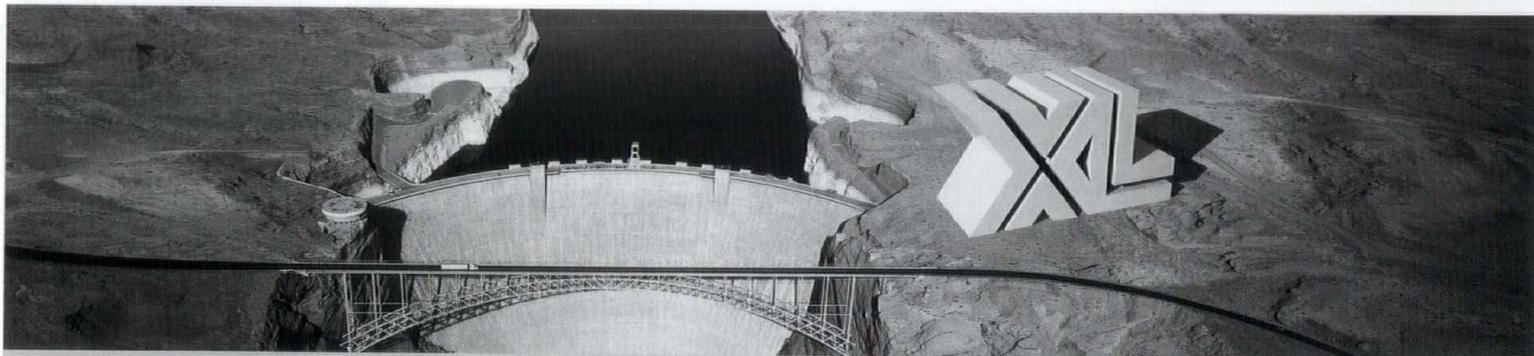
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"Banks just shuddered" when developer Jim Abdo decided to bring new condos to the 1500 block of P Street in 1998. A year later, the CEO of Whole Foods stood in the bay window of one of the handsome new units and envisioned his store in the next block.

Home\$ense How to Think Like a Developer

by Hannah McCann

Wishing you had bought a house near 14th Street before the boom hit? You're not the only one. Aspiring homeowners across the Washington area are discovering that the city's rebirth makes house-hunting nearly impossible. Just when your real estate agent has convinced you to look in the newest up-and-coming neighborhood that you never heard of before, that neighborhood is too expensive. "This is one of the hottest markets in the *world*," points out Mark Stahl, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at PN Hoffman, one of the developers helping to transform Washington with projects such as the Lofts at Adams Morgan (designed by Eric Colbert & Associates) and the DeSoto at 14th and P Streets (designed by SK&I Architectural Design Group). "It's not just nationally—it's internationally, too."

Developers like PN Hoffman know where to buy before the name of the neighborhood is part of a real estate agent's lexicon. If you're shopping for a home, condo, or investment property, it might be useful to borrow developers' crystal ball. How can you get into the next hot neighborhood before it's too hot to touch? And what Washington neighborhoods are next?

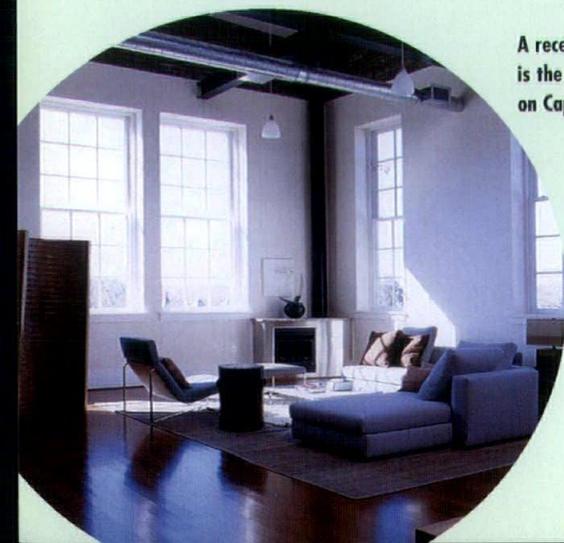
A recent Abdo project is the Bryan School Lofts on Capitol Hill.

Clue #1: Intrinsic Value

Jim Abdo, President of Abdo Development, remembers his first bold move as a DC developer: he bought on the 1500 block of P Street, one block east of 16th Street. It was 1998 and "banks just shuddered," he recalls. No one went east of 16th. Abdo bought a crack-house and the vacant lot next door for two reasons. First, "I've always had a passionate attachment to beautiful old structures," Abdo says, and the house was a grande dame fallen on hard times. Second, Abdo believes that "if something of a significant quality of design is created, there will be a market."

Abdo has architects on staff, who designed the respectful renovation of 1517 P Street and the handsome new building next door, creating seven condos total. The condos sold for record-setting highs in price per square foot in 1999.

Abdo asked one of the new condo owners if he could borrow his keys for an afternoon. He invited the CEO of Whole Foods to fly in from Texas and meet him there, where they sat on the sofa in the bay window of the graciously appointed unit. "This is the kind of clientele that's coming to this neighborhood," Abdo said. The CEO looked around



and peered out the window up and down P Street, west towards Dupont and east to 14th.

A year and a half later, the Whole Foods a half-block away was built, open, and busy. People say the store transformed the neighborhood almost overnight. Abdo recently saw the CEO from Texas. "He gave me a hug and a handshake and said, 'You were right. It's one of our top stores in the entire country.'"

It's a terrific success story—both for Abdo and DC—but also an illustration of Abdo's approach to development. "What I did was to focus on the buildings first, if they spoke to me. You can exhaust yourself if you take a purely analytical approach," he says.

Looking at the quality of a neighborhood's architecture—it's history and character—is a good way to gauge the development potential of a neighborhood. Buildings may be run down, but were they built to last? Echoing Abdo is Christopher Donatelli, President and CEO of Donatelli & Klein developers, who built Harrison Square in Shaw (designed by The Lessard Architectural Group) and the Ellington on U Street (designed by Torti Gallas and Partners), among other projects. "Good housing stock" is the first clue he says to look for before investing in a neighborhood.

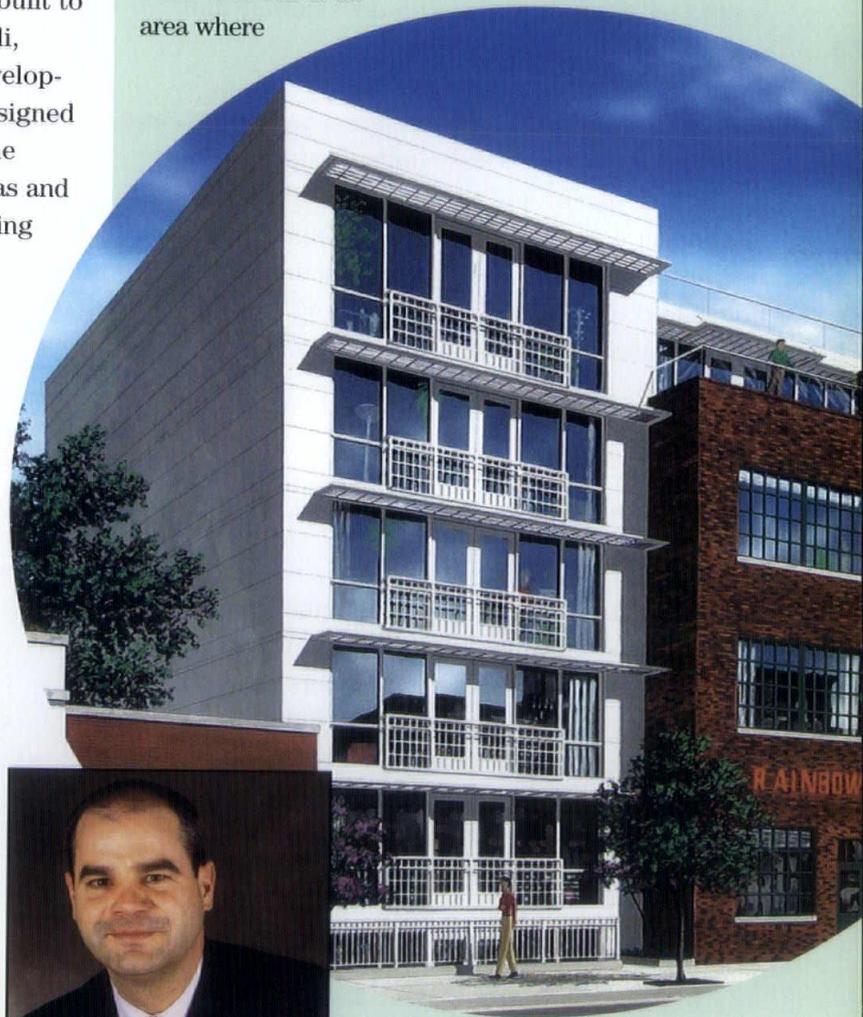
Next, look for what Stahl at PN Hoffman describes as "the hub." You want to see a natural area of congregation, he says. "If you can walk several blocks and be at some type of hub—even if there are 10 liquor stores there—the potential exists."

The most promising type of hub is a Metro station. Stahl says with certainty, "There will be a significant increase [in value] over the next 20 years wherever there's a Metro station." Donatelli has noticed that about half of the people moving into his company's buildings don't have cars. (In fact, Donatelli & Klein is signing a deal with Zipcar to keep short-term rental cars on site as an amenity to residents.)

There are other innate characteristics of a community that can indicate its potential for redevelopment. Pamela Bundy, President of Bundy Development Corporation (whose projects include the Sixth Street Flats in Chinatown and ICON near Logan Circle, both designed by Eric Colbert & Associates), looks for "the stability of churches—how do they contribute to the neighborhood?" She also reminds investors of the importance of a good political infrastructure. "Some people didn't want to be in Washington 12 years ago," Bundy recalls. "They were not comfortable with who was running the city."

Clue #2: Pride of Place

Explore the neighborhood where you're considering investing. Check the pulse of the community. "If you're seeing ladders and permits, you can get a sense that this is an area where



Developer Robert Montagne of Walnut Street Development advises home shoppers to get off the beaten track. A rendering shows Walnut Street's Rainbow Lofts (designed by Eric Colbert & Associates), now under construction on Church Street between 14th and 15th.

investment is taking place; there's pride of ownership," Abdo says. "Frequent the location not just at four or five in the afternoon—go there at midnight, two in the morning, the weekend. Get a feel for the energy and activity."

"This is what good developers do: they drive around a lot," adds Robert Montagne of Walnut Street Development, who is currently building the Rainbow Lofts on Church Street between 14th and 15th (designed by Eric Colbert & Associates).

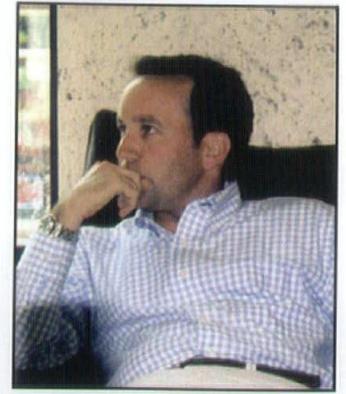
"I probably put 40,000 miles on my car a year; I rarely go the same way twice. You discover neighborhoods you never knew existed because you get off the beaten track. In DC—even better—walk! Learn who's walking on the sidewalk and who's shopping in the stores."

Another sign of pride of place are active neighborhood associations. "Community groups are very important," according to Donatelli. "They've been instrumental in the U Street area, bringing together neighborhoods concerns and interacting with police and city commissioners. They'll review ABC licenses; they'll coordinate cleanups.... That builds on itself."

Clue #3: Tide Tables

"If you want to participate in the renaissance of Washington DC, look ahead of the wave," suggests Abdo. Where are developers spending their dollars? That can be a good indicator of what neighborhood is next. For instance, Abdo recently spent \$24 million to buy the Capitol Hill Children's Museum site at 3rd and H Street, NE. You figure that with that kind of investment,





Christopher Donatelli, President and CEO of Donatelli & Klein, plans to bring condos and retail (designed by Torti Gallas and Partners) to the area surrounding the Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro station.

Abdo has done his homework. “I’ve looked at a lot of areas all over the city,” he says. “I’m convinced H Street’s time has come.”

“Go downtown and look at the master plan,” urges Bundy. “Does it show a Metro in 10 years? Look at zoning—have they changed the zoning, or are they planning on changing the zoning? These are clues as to what’s about to unfold.” Donatelli adds, “Changes could be brewing that you don’t know about, and they could be substantial.”

Tax records are also a good indicator of the tide in a neighborhood. “Look at property values a couple years ago versus today,” says Donatelli. “You want to see a positive trend, but if it’s gone up too rapidly, the appreciation might have run its course—although in the District these days we haven’t seen too many neighborhoods slowing down.”

Donatelli also gives a plug to *ARCHITECTUREDC* magazine. “Read Architecture Ahead!” he says, referring to the annual on-the-boards issue that

comes out every spring, providing a first glimpse of projects that are coming to sites across the city in the months and years ahead.

Predictions

So what neighborhood is next? Abdo, Donatelli, and Bundy all mention the H Street Corridor. Abdo suggests looking “even further out the corridor, towards RFK stadium... there’s good potential in rowhouses.” Georgia Avenue/ Petworth is getting a lot of attention; Donatelli & Klein recently secured the contract to build condos and retail (designed by Torti Gallas and Partners) over the Petworth Metro. “It a good time to buy there and live there for the next 10 years and find your value skyrocket,” says Stahl.

“Right now, I don’t think you can go wrong in any neighborhood,” Bundy says. “There’s a positive upswing across the board.”

Pamela Bundy urges home shoppers to look at master plans and zoning to gauge the future of a neighborhood. Recent Bundy Development Corporation projects include the Sixth Street Flats in Chinatown (designed by Eric Colbert & Associates).

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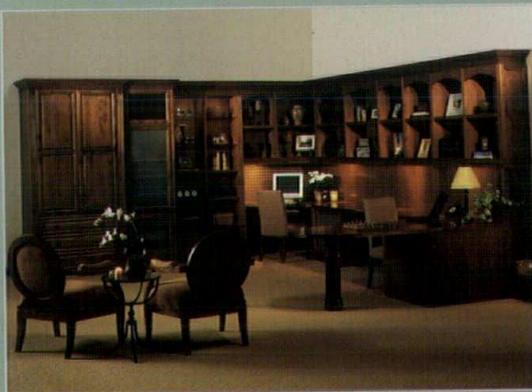
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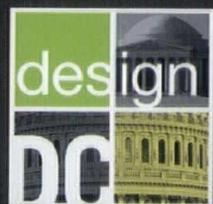
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Architecture Ahead

A First Look at Six Projects Coming to 14th Street

by Ellen Sands

Langston Lofts

14th & V Streets, NW

Shalom Baranes Associates

Expected Date of Completion: Spring 2005

The Langston Lofts, named in honor of writer Langston Hughes, will be a strong new anchor at the corner of 14th and V Streets, NW, and what Robert Sponseller, AIA, Principal at Shalom Baranes Associates, calls “a contemporary loft building, not a nostalgic one.” The project is across the street from the Reeves Center, while the rear property line abuts the green space of Harrison Park. Accordingly, the building offers two faces to the public.

The bolder 14th Street elevation will recognize the larger scale of the nine-story Reeves Center, the hub of DC's local government. The construction will be metal panel and brick, and the language will be a crisp late modernism. Pieces of the building—the

glass bays and the brick piers that support them—will be simple yet bold. The design shows minimal ornament other than the elegance of the materials themselves and their juxtaposition to each other.

The interiors of the condominium units will be spacious and loft-like, with double-height spaces and industrial-look finishes, such as exposed ducts. On the flip side of the site, the design will take on a smaller, more intimate scale to create a relationship with the park. Lower than the front piece, these duplex units will still have double-height, loft-like spaces. Residents will have direct access to the park. A second-floor open-air terrace will run along the south side of the project, connecting front to rear and providing residents with additional outdoor space. In addition to the architectural challenges of these two fronts, the architects had to confront some more prosaic, but very demanding, site constraints, including accommodating two Metro subway tunnel shafts.

Dance Institute of Washington

3400 14th Street, NW
Shinberg,Levinas

Expected Date of Completion:
Fall 2005

The Dance Institute of Washington will be lighting up Columbia Heights in more ways than one. Sitting opposite the historic Tivoli Theater at the corner of 14th and Monroe Streets, NW, the new home of the Dance Institute will feature spacious second-floor dance studios, visible to the street, a ground-floor childcare center for families in the neighborhood, and a rear garden.

After bouncing around a series of shared and community spaces, this is the first permanent home for the Dance Institute. "This is a building that will serve all kids well," enthuses Dance Institute Executive Director Ramien Pierre. "It's about our program and our work and setting ourselves up for the future. It's about permanence."

Permanent doesn't, however, mean staid. The dance studios will appear as cubes of glass sitting perched above the masonry base of the childcare center. Double-height windows will be divided into two sections. The lower, clear sections allow passersby on the street to observe the dancers practicing. The upper sections will be etched glass, where images can be projected from the inside and viewed on the street. "The building becomes dynamic," notes Principal Architect Milton Shinberg, AIA, of Shinberg, Levinas. "Dance is a very fluid, dynamic endeavor, and we wanted the architecture to go with that." It will be particularly striking at night when the building—and films—enliven the street. When not in use, the etched panels will appear as translucent pieces within a composition of clear glass.

In deference to the historic Tivoli Theater, the Dance Institute's entrance will be angled to match that of the theater. The Institute's large two-story glass atrium, enlivened with students and staff coming and going to the dance studios and offices, will reinforce the idea that dance is about motion and movement. The entrance to the childcare center, on the other hand, has been located close to the middle of the building to keep young children safe from cars at the busy corner. Noting the significance of arts along this stretch of 14th Street and the Dance Institute's commitment to the neighborhood, Ramien concludes, "This is our part of the cultural anchor."

NOW



AHEAD



Phaeton on 14th Condominium

1529 14th Street NW

Eric Colbert & Associates

Expected Date of Completion: Fall 2005

When it's done in 2005, it may be tough to discern what is new and what is not at the Phaeton on 14th Condominium, and that will be intentional. The centerpiece of the three-building triptych will be a 1916 Classical Revival Nash automobile showroom.

The Phaeton Condominium is named after the Nash automobile company's 1930s car of the same name, which Volkswagen recently resurrected for a luxury sedan. (That automobile manufacturers name their products after a mythological half-god who totaled his dad's vehicle, even if it was a chariot, is open to question for those with boys of their own approaching driving age.) The historical aura of the Phaeton name is reinforced in its architecture.

The original Nash showroom was three stories. Two new floors will be added, albeit setback from the original, for a total of five stories. Principal Eric Colbert, AIA, and Project Architect Steven Dickens, AIA, worked with the District's Historic Preservation Review Board to create the additional square footage while trying to make it appear visually separate from the historic structure. Vacant lots on either side of the Nash showroom will be filled in with new buildings. Each is a different, recognizable, and traditional style. All the façades, even the alley sides, are consistent and historically accurate. They are all brick and stone, but there is a variety of sizes, textures, and patterns in the material. The new buildings will be a comfortable fit with the older buildings in the neighborhood. "The thing about historicism," notes Dickens, "is the simple fact that it is very enjoyable to look at."

On the interior, though, the spaces are more modern. The condominiums within the existing Nash showroom are "true SoHo-style lofts," according to the architects, with open soaring spaces. Units in the newer construction are "loft style," featuring exposed structure and mechanical elements, but with a more traditional sense of rooms.



NOW

AHEAD



1638 14th Street, NW

Sorg and Associates

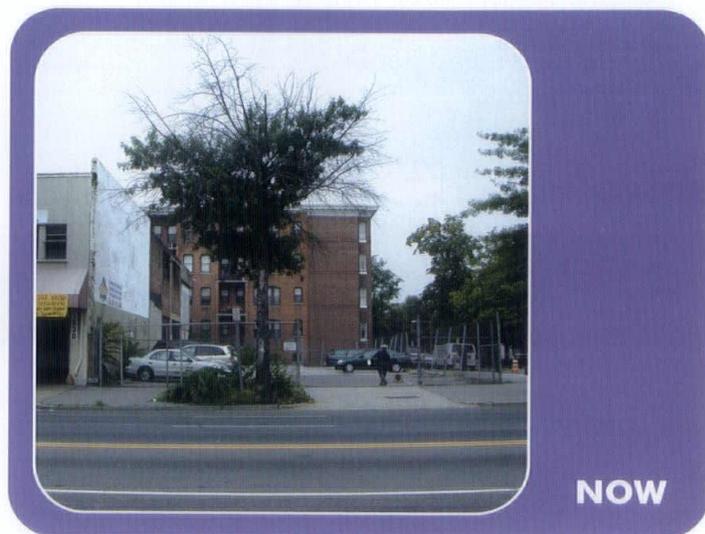
Expected Date of Completion:

Winter 2005

This new, seven-story, mixed-use project will feature a bold composition of abstract forms with a hint of cubism. Grey precast-concrete panels will be punctuated with matt silver aluminum-sash windows. Slender precast piers will allow wide expanses of clear glass, within which a grid of frosted glass will create another layer of detail. The overall composition, with its grids and subsets, will look something like a Mondrian painting.

Chunks of the building will pop out of the main façade as cubes of space that contain rooms of the condominiums. Recessed balconies and several open terraces will offer another layer of the composition, while providing outdoor space for residents. The interplay of projecting bays and receding balconies provide sculptural interest, creating a Dr. Dolittle-like “push-me-pull-you” effect.

The entrance to the single retail tenant on the ground floor will have a split-level foyer, so that shoppers on the street can peer down to the lower level or upwards to the half-level above the sidewalk. Rising above will be five floors divided into only seven penthouse-type condominiums. “We want this building to be truly unique,” says Paul Robertson of Robertson Development, “the kind of place people will know by its appearance. . . . We think this will be a prestige address.”



NOW

1525 14th Street Condominiums

Sorg and Associates

Expected Date of Completion: Fall 2006

This project transforms a former Hudson automobile showroom into an art space with three floors of galleries and a garden roof terrace. Springing up behind and alongside the old, a new building will provide retail space and 34 residential units in a cascading design of overlapping forms.

Developer Giorgio Furioso of Furioso Development has clear ambitions in undertaking the project.

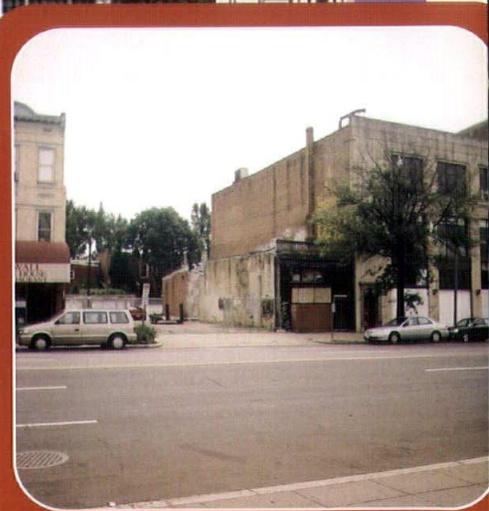
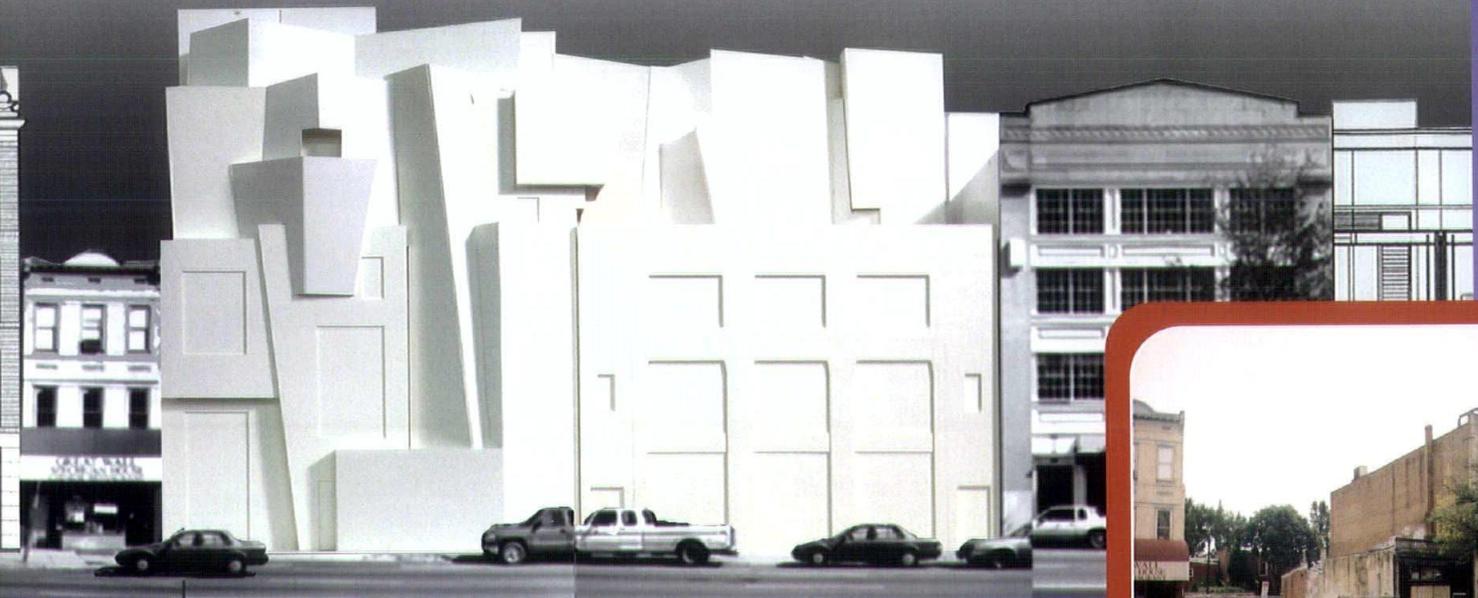
"I felt like we needed to be a flagship building," he says. "14th Street is such a dynamic area, and I want to be cutting-edge. I want clients to say 'I'm in a unique building.' I don't want a pale revisiting of the past."

The building will be much more modern in appearance than many of its neighbors, and even most of

Washington, a distinction Furioso will enjoy. "There's so much housing, and it all looks alike," he explains, noting that throughout much of Europe, with historic cities older than any place in the States, there is not such a reverence for the past. "In Europe they can do modern, and it's unique and it's fitting. I love the idea of creating a place and identifying the place by its architecture, rather than its address."

Working with a palette of materials already present in the historic building, the new construction will be built of masonry veneer and metal panel. It is planned that the street level will be a glass storefront set in stone or precast concrete. The upper portions of the building will be a light metal cladding such as titanium, brushed stainless steel, or zinc. Windows will appear as large expanses of glass rather than individual units. These differences will separate the new and the old, serving as what Greg Bordynowski, AIA, of Sorg and Associates refers to as a "counterpoint" to the existing.

AHEAD



NOW

Union Square

14th & V Streets, NW

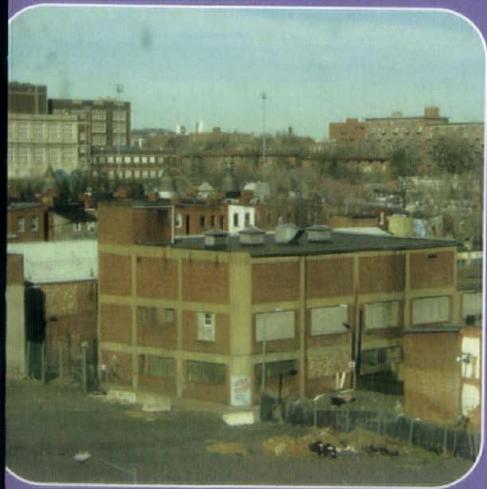
SK&I Architectural Design Group, LLC

Expected Date of Completion: Fall 2006

This project preserves two existing warehouses, develops several vacant lots, and acknowledges that the site has long been a shortcut for students on their way from the Metro station to school. Union Square will invigorate the entire block by creating a pleasant passage throughout its length while offering a retail component on 14th Street and new condominiums. "The main concept," according to SK&I Design Principal Sami Kirkdil, AIA, "was to create an integrated development with an emphasis on establishing a unique, urban feel."



NOW



People will be moving across the full width and breadth of the site, not just around the perimeter. "We were going after a real presence," says developer PN Hoffman's Mark Stahl. "We looked to a model like Union Square in San Francisco, something that will become a whole element of living."

The two warehouses currently straddling the block will be renovated into condominium units that Stahl calls "true lofts": existing brick walls will be left exposed; as the mechanical systems are refurbished or installed, ducts will be left exposed; the spaces will be as open as possible, with very few interior walls. Set back above the warehouses, two new floors will feature units Stahl calls "loft style": tall spaces with mezzanines, rough finishes, but more walled rooms than the open spaces in the warehouse lofts below.

The space between the warehouses will be developed as an open-air passage with extensive landscaping. Bridges that the architects call "landscape promenades" at the third floor will connect the two warehouses. The western edge of the property, along 14th Street, will be a larger commercial building with upscale retail tenants at street level. 🏛️

Try Your Hand at Architectural Sketching

by Eric Jenkins, AIA

If you've ever seen children drawing, you've probably noticed how they become completely engaged with their imagined world. Like children, architects draw an imagined world—a world yet to be realized. To better form these yet-to-be-realized works of architecture, many architects study the existing buildings around them. Sketching helps reveal underlying principles that inform the architecture designed today.

By sketching, you, too, can take apart buildings to find their underlying principles. Focus on what you like. What are the building's proportions? How is it divided into zones or areas? How are lines and rhythms continuous or discontinuous?

Here are a few things you need to get started sketching:

The Sketchbook

Buy a small, simple white paper sketchbook you can carry in a briefcase or coat pocket. Avoid 8.5" x 11" or larger sketchbooks—the large sheets can intimidate even the skilled artist. The paper should have a medium texture or tooth so that the pencil or pen you use will have something cling to.

The Classic #2 Pencil

I suggest starting simple: a #2 pencil is an inexpensive yet extremely versatile drawing device providing a range of lines, thick to thin, dark to light. When you go to the art supply store, you'll see nearly endless pencils types, from 3B to F and 4H to E. Don't be intimidated. Go right for the classic #2 pencil with its good, medium weight lead. You probably already have one in your desk drawer.

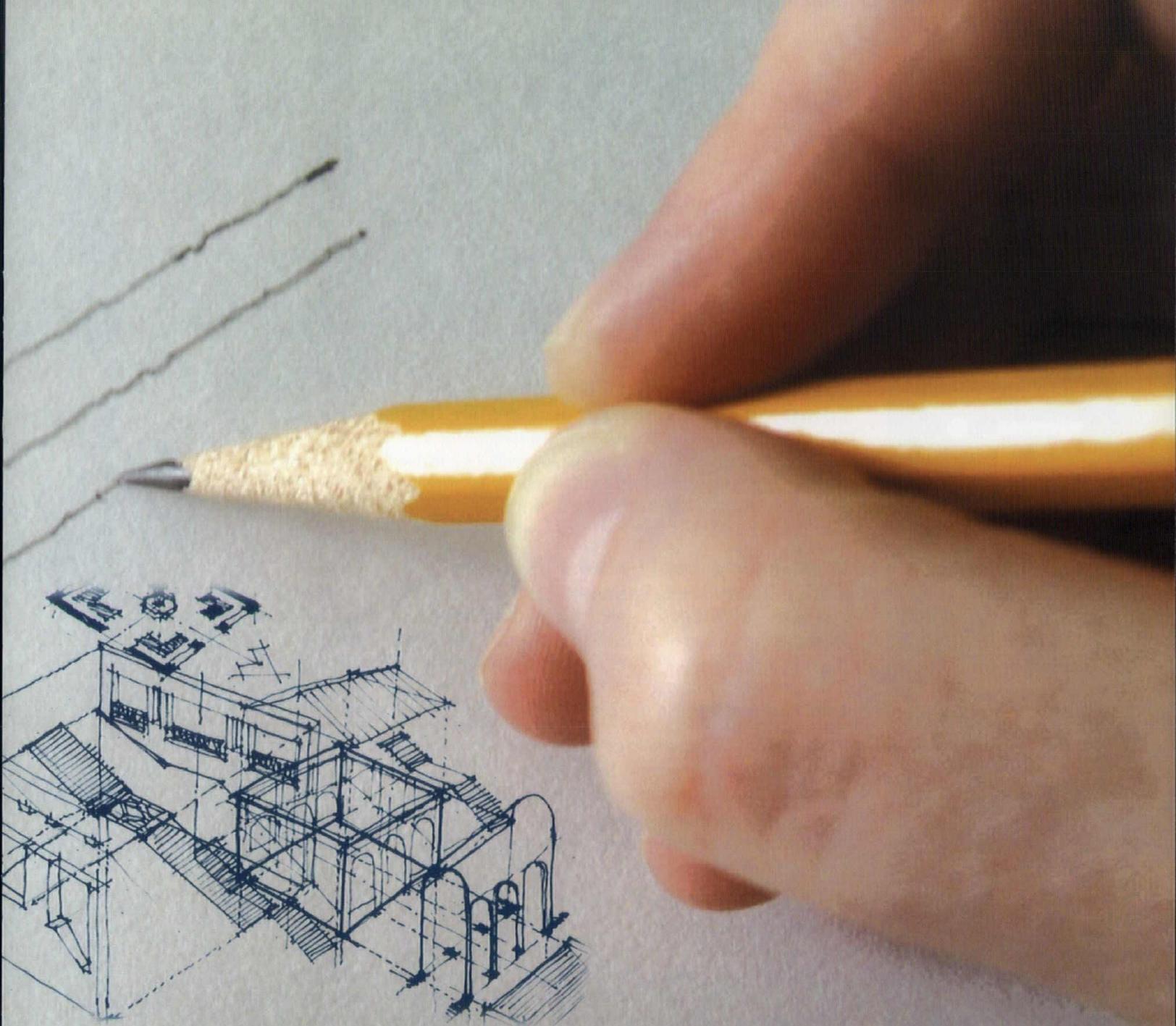
Training Your Hand

"Do, or do not. There is no try."

Yoda, Jedi Master

Begin with some simple hand-training techniques:

- 1) Sharpen the pencil; don't draw with a dull point. Bring along a pencil sharpener.
- 2) Quiver the line. As you draw a line across the sheet, quiver or wiggle the line like small vibrations on polygraphs or seismographs. This simple technique does two things: first, it keeps you in control of the pencil by automatically self-correcting the line; second, the wiggly line gives an optical illusion of straightness.
- 3) Begin and end the line deliberately. Go backward and then forward again when starting. This gives the line definition, which is an important part of good sketching. The more hesitant you are to put down strong lines, the less likely you are to develop sketching skills.
- 4) Draw one line. Avoid the propensity to draw a long line with a series of small, tentative scratches. Chicken-scratches reinforce insecurity. A confident line shows a confident thinker.
- 5) Plant your hand; don't try to use your entire body to draw. I plant my hand on heel and move my fingers and fist only. The resulting line is only about four inches long, but I am able to control it.
- 6) Doodle in meetings. Draw boxes and series of parallel lines on a page. Just sit on the Metro or at lunch filling the page. This exercises and trains your muscles and mind for the next event: sketching what you see and what you think.



Drawing to a Close:

After a time, you'll feel confident enough to explore other media like color pencils, collage, and even watercolors. Ultimately, if you stick to it and don't worry about impressing anyone, you'll develop and learn from what you see.

Further Reading:

If you're interested in reading more about sketching, I suggest Norman Crowe and Paul Lessau's *Visual Notes for Architects and Designers* (Van Nostrand Reinhold) or Iain Fraser and Rod Henmi's *Envisioning Architecture: An Analysis of Drawing*

(Wiley). Frank Wilson's book, *The Hand* (Knopf), is an absorbing study of the human hand and its relationship to thinking. Lastly, Betty Edwards's book, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (Tarcher), has been extremely helpful to many adult learners and may be worth reviewing for her exercises and words of encouragement.

Whatever you do, just remember that sketching is probably something you did as a child and can continue to do as an adult—if you give yourself the chance to do it. Today at lunch, sit outside and draw what you see. Bon Appetit! 🍴

Architecture Week

AIA/DC presents the 6th annual ARCHITECTURE WEEK September 6th through 18th

Monday, September 6th Student Architects' Charrette

Stop by to watch the next generation of architects—students from the architecture programs at The Catholic University of America, Howard University, the University of Maryland, and Virginia Tech—tackle a design challenge in one day. Awards given on September 9th. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. National Building Museum, 401 F Street, NW. **Free.** No reservations required.

Tuesday, September 7th Langston Lofts Construction Watch Tour

Due for completion in 2005, the Langston Lofts will be a modern landmark and strong new anchor at the corner of 14th and V Streets, NW, across the street from the Reeves Center. Join architects from Shalom Baranes Associates to tour the construction site. 4 p.m. Meet at the southwest corner of 14th and V streets, NW. **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Wednesday, September 8th Office Tour: Georgetown

See architects at work in some of the best-looking offices in town—their own! Five Georgetown firms open their doors to the public for a self-guided tour, followed by a reception in Cady's Alley, Washington's hip home décor shopping district. 5 to 7 p.m. Pick up map at CORE, 1010 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 405. **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Thursday, September 9th Student Architects—Winners

Toronto architect Brigette Shim leads a jury selecting the best work by local architecture students. Reception at the offices of architecture firm HNTB follows. 5:30 p.m. HNTB, 421 7th Street, NW. **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Friday, September 10th Jurors' Roundtable

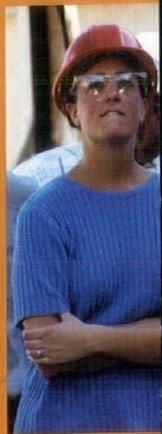
"And the winners are...." After a long day of deliberation, a jury of distinguished visiting architects announces their picks of the best new Washington architecture. Reception follows. 5 p.m. AIA/DC Chapter House, 1777 Church Street, NW. **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Saturday, September 11th Memorial Tree Planting

Last year, we dedicated a garden memorial at Leckie Elementary School to honor the lives of the student, teacher, and parents who perished in the attack on the Pentagon on September 11th, 2001. This year, we plant a new tree in the garden to continue its life-affirming mission. 9:30 a.m. M.V. Leckie Elementary School, 4201 Martin Luther King Avenue, SW. **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Saturday, September 11th CANSTRUCTION Build-Out

Watch teams of architects build giant structures from canned goods. The CANSTRUCTIONS are on exhibit for one week before being dismantled for donation to the Capital Area Food Bank. Vote for your favorite by donating canned food "ballots." Build-Out: 6 p.m. to midnight. Exhibit: Open daily 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Shops at 2000 Penn, 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. **Free. No reservations required.**



Tours, Lectures, Exhibits, & More



Sunday, September 12th Walking Tour of 14th Street, NW

For so many years, 14th Street was a place to avoid; how has it become the place to be? A walking tour with writer Daniel Emberley and AIA/DC Executive Director Mary Fitch, AICP, explores 14th Street's evolution. 1 to 3 p.m. Meet at the statue of Martin Luther at Luther Place Memorial Church, 1226 Vermont Avenue, NW. **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Sunday, September 12th Architectural Sketching Class

Try your hand at architectural sketching in a one-day class for novices led by Eric Jenkins, AIA, and others from The Catholic University of America's School of Architecture and Planning. 3:45 p.m. Meet at the U Street/Cardozo Metro across from the Lincoln Theater. **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Monday, September 13th Golf Tournament

As a special benefit for the Washington Architectural Foundation, architects and the public are invited to mingle for an afternoon of golf, lunch, and dinner. 11 a.m. Springfield Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. \$150. **Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 for more information.

Monday, September 13th How to Work with an Architect

This popular workshop covers what to expect from the design and construction process, how to avoid common misunderstandings, and how Washington architects vary in style and practice. 6:30 to 8 p.m. at AIA National, 1735 New York Avenue, NW. **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Tuesday, September 14th German Embassy Tour

The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany graciously opens its doors to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the German Ambassador's Residence by architect O. M. Ungers, the 40th anniversary of the Chancery building by Egon Eiermann, and the 100th anniversary of Eiermann's birth! Get an insider's view of these spectacular Washington landmarks. 4 p.m. 4645 Reservoir Road, NW. \$20. **Prepaid reservations with social security number and birth date required.** Visit www.aiadc.com.

Friday, September 17th Architecture Untethered

Contemporary artists explore fictional architectural space, using the latest technology to create heretofore unimaginable buildings. Join us for an exhibit opening and panel discussion with the artists, including Scott Anderson, Isidro Blasco, James Casebere, Joanne Greenbaum, Robert Lazzarini, and Adam Ross. 7 to 9 p.m. Numark Gallery, 625 E Street, NW **Free. Reservations required;** call 202.667.1798 or email reservations@aiadc.com.

Saturday, September 18th Festival of the Building Arts

Want to build a brick wall, thatch a roof, climb aboard a concrete mixer, or play "House of Cards," a game about sustainable design? Come to the National Building Museum's Festival of the Building Arts, where adults and children can explore the art of building. 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. National Building Museum, 401 F Street, NW. **Free. No reservations required.** For more information, call 202.272.2448.

Saturday, September 18th CANSTRUCTION Awards

"Best Meal," "Structural Ingenuity," "People's Choice," and other awards are given to giant structures made from canned goods. Reception follows. Lend a hand in de-constructing the CANSTRUCTIONS for donation to the Capital Area Food Bank. 12:30 p.m. The Shops at 2000 Penn, 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. **Free. No reservations required.**





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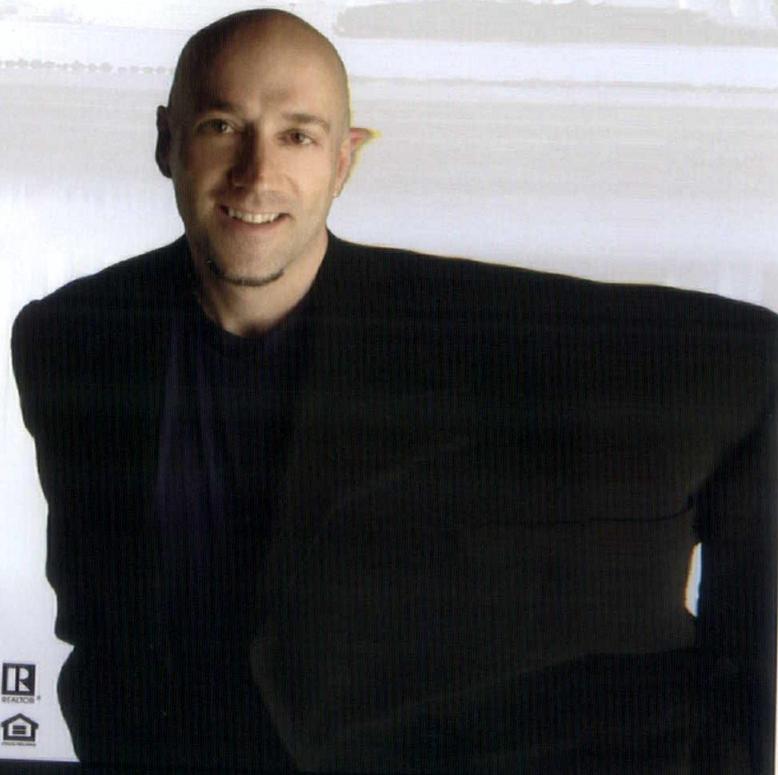


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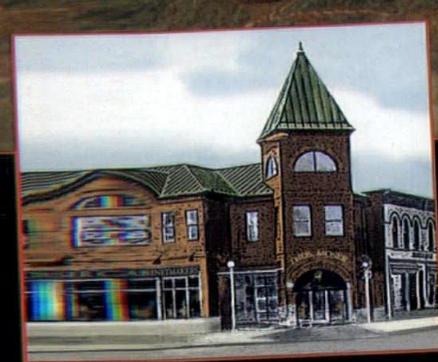
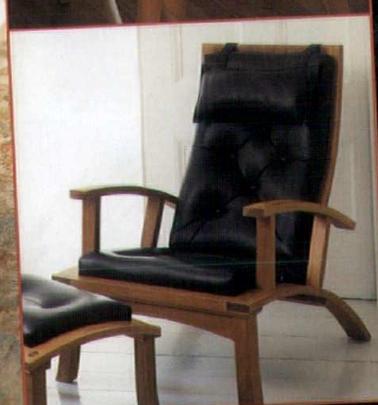
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