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# ARCHITECTUREDC



## Glowing Reviews:

Winners of the 2013  
AIA | DC Chapter Awards



### Inside:

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Civic Design Works: Places for Learning and Playing  
Small Wonders: Little Projects with Big Impacts



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Tale of the Tongs, a project by Travis Price, FAIA, and students from the Catholic University of America.

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ON THE COVER: Nighttime view of one the Washington Canal Park Pavilions, by STUDIOS Architecture.  
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## AWARD-WINNING ARCHITECTURE

Maria Carey



This issue brings you the results of our annual chapter awards competition. As always, this was a blind competition—we brought in jurors from well outside the DC area, and they judged the submissions without knowing who did them. The use of a blind competition helps to level the playing field. The jury won't know, for example, if a project was done by a well-known architect—only whether it is worthy of merit.

It's a lot of work for the juries to go through the submissions—there were more than 200 this year—so I want to thank them all for taking time out of their busy lives to come here and carefully review a huge body of work. Their names are listed to the right.



# Welcome!

We don't run award programs simply to create opportunities to pat ourselves on the back. Very importantly, we do it because they give us an indication of where the profession is headed—of what the current state of the art is. What, right now, constitutes modern or innovative design? What does it mean for a design to be compatible with its historic context? How is sustainability being incorporated into design? Award programs can provide current and merit-based answers to these important questions and others.

We've grouped this year's 38 winners by project type. When you finish reading the magazine, you'll be able to learn more about the projects in two ways. First, we've posted additional images and plans for them on [architecturedc.net](http://architecturedc.net). We wish our articles could include plans and sections to give readers a better understanding of the projects we're presenting, but limits on space usually prevent us from doing that. At [architecturedc.net](http://architecturedc.net), however, you'll be able to see the plans for most if not all the projects in each issue of the magazine, starting with this one. A big thanks to architect John Viglianti for suggesting this idea.

Second, come to the SIGAL Gallery at the District Architecture Center to see an exhibition of the 38 winning projects that will be on display through February 4. As with nearly all our exhibitions, this one will include a video component. We'll also have one or two public programs related to this exhibition, so keep your eye on our calendar at [aiadc.com](http://aiadc.com).

As we go to press on this magazine, I'm finishing up my fifteenth year with the Chapter, and one of the things I am most proud of is this magazine. So I want to thank all the people who help make it possible, including:

G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA  
Jody Cranford  
Jim Hicks  
Steve Dickens, AIA  
Denise Liebowitz  
Ronald O'Rourke  
Melody Harrison  
Jay Goldscher

Here's to another 15! Happy Holidays.

Mary Fitch, AICP, Hon. AIA  
Publisher  
[mfitch@aiadc.com](mailto:mfitch@aiadc.com)

## Contributors

**Steven K. Dickens, AIA, LEED AP** ("Legal Constructs") is an associate with **Eric Colbert & Associates**.

**Denise Liebowitz** ("Office Intrigue" and "Thinking Universally"), formerly with the National Capital Planning Commission, is a frequent contributor to **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

**G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA** ("Building for Business," "Apartment Living," and "For the People") is an independent curator and writer, as well as senior curator at the **National Building Museum**. He is the editor of **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

**Ronald O'Rourke** ("Civic Design Works," "Houses in the Now," and "Small Wonders") is a regular contributor to **ARCHITECTUREDC**. His father, Jack O'Rourke, was an architect in San Francisco for more than four decades.

## Jurors

### Architecture

**Iñaki Alday**  
Charlottesville, Virginia

**Thomas Beeby, FAIA**  
Chicago, Illinois

**Jaquelin T. Robertson, FAIA, FAICP**  
New York, NY

### Interiors

**Randy Brown, FAIA**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Patricia Conway**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Marc Tsurumaki, AIA, LEED AP**  
New York, New York

### Historic Resources

**Fran Gale**  
Austin, Texas

**Robert Loversidge, Jr., FAIA**  
Columbus, Ohio

**Don Swofford, FAIA**  
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# Room with a View



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# Civic Design Works:

## Four Projects Where Local Residents Can Learn and Play

by Ronald O'Rourke



One of the pavilions at Washington Canal Park.

Photo © Bruce Damonte

Good design is often best demonstrated to the public through well-done civic and institutional projects that are used by large numbers of people on a daily basis. Four such projects in the Washington area—two of them learning-oriented, the other two for play and relaxation—were singled out for awards this year.

Washington Canal Park—the city's first new urban park in more than 20 years—pays homage to the city's past, but does so with a startlingly modern design by **STUDIOS Architecture**, in association with the Philadelphia-based landscape architecture firm **OLIN**, that helps pull the park's rapidly developing neighborhood smartly into the future.

Conceived as a series of pavilions on a rain garden, the linear park runs for three blocks along 2nd Street, SE, on land that once formed part of the Washington City Canal, a waterway that cut through the southern part of the city from the early 1800s until it was paved over at the turn of the 20th century.

"Almost 200 years after the first barges navigated the Washington City Canal, Canal Park opened, recalling

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### Washington Canal Park Pavilions

Washington, DC

#### **STUDIOS Architecture**

**Landscape Architects:** OLIN

**Artist/Sculptor:** David Hess

**Structural Engineers:** SK&A Structural Engineers

**MEP Engineers:** Joseph R. Loring & Associates

**Civil Engineers:** VIKI Capitol, Inc.

**Geotechnical Engineers:** Soil Consultants

**Consultants:** Atelier Ten; The Design Theorem; ETM Associates, Inc.; Lynch & Associates; Nitsch Engineering; Richter & Associates; Shen Milson & Wilke;

Stantec/Bonestroo; Jeff Wilson

**Cost Estimators:** Davis Langdon/AECOM

**Contractor:** James G. Davis Construction Corporation





The Mt. Pleasant branch of the DC Public Library, with the existing building at left and the addition in the background.

Photo © Maxwell MacKenzie

the site's history of both recreation and infrastructure," said **David Burns, AIA**, a principal at STUDIOS. "The park's pavilions reference the barges that once floated here."

The park's northern block offers an open lawn, flexible seating, and a storage pavilion. The central block is a children's zone with a play lawn and a small performance stage. The southern block, which fronts onto M Street, SE, the area's busy central artery, supports an active program with a restaurant, outdoor seating, an interactive fountain, and an ice rink. The pavilions at either end of the park are illuminated at night, turning them into lanterns that define the ends of the park and serve as beacons for the community.

"The park is designed as a canvas for art and civic activity," Burns said. "The lantern on the south block has integrated LED lighting and a trio of rear-projectors which are centrally controlled with the fountains and the park speakers. Outdoor movies are shown at the north block, and the stage on the second block has puppet shows and music."

Storm water falling on the park is collected in underground cisterns. The water is filtered through the large rain garden and reused for irrigation, the fountain and ice rink, and toilets in the pavilion. Additional sustainability features include geothermal heating and cooling, vegetated roof surfaces, recycled content, and systems for monitoring energy and water use.

"Canal Park is intended to be a model of sustainability, exploring the creative, cutting edge of energy efficiency with the goal of being a zero-energy park," said **Brian Pilot, AIA, LEED AP**, a principal at STUDIOS. In addition to pending LEED Gold certification, the park is a candidate for certification under the Sustainable Sites Initiative, a new certification program now in the pilot phase that is similar to LEED but intended for landscapes.

## Merit Award in Historic Resources

### Mt. Pleasant Library

Washington, DC

#### CORE

**Landscape Architects:** Oculus

**Lighting Consultants:** MCLA | Architectural Lighting Design

**Structural Engineers:** ReStl Designers, Inc.

**MEP Engineers:** Allen & Shariff

**Civil Engineers:** A. Morton Thomas & Associates, Inc.

**Library Programming:** Henry Myerberg, AIA

**Contractor:** Smoot Construction

As noted in prior issues of this magazine, Washington's award-winning DC Public Library (DCPL) branches have emerged as a source of civic design pride. The latest DCPL branch project to receive recognition—the Mt. Pleasant Library, designed by **CORE**—included both the renovation of an existing historic library building and the construction of a new wing.

"The main goal of the project was to increase usable space in the historic library and open up spaces that had become inaccessible due to previous renovations, utility functions and space limitations," said **Dean Hutchison**, project architect at **CORE**. The existing building's first floor was restored to its original grandeur, and large stacks and an elevator shaft were removed to make more space available for reading rooms. An entire floor is now devoted to a children's space that includes a large story-time room.



**Merit Award in Historic Resources**

## Meridian Public Charter School

Washington, DC

### Bowie Gridley Architects

**Structural Engineers:** SK&A Engineers

**MEP Engineers:** Potomac Energy Group

**Civil Engineers:** A. Morton Thomas & Associates, Inc.

**Cost Estimators:** Faithful+Gould

**Contractor:** Forrester Construction

The new wing was placed at the rear of the existing building and molded to help frame a wedge-shaped space for a new accessible entry area. The entry's garden path allows visitors to experience both the older building's limestone exterior and the new building's terra cotta exterior. The changing shades of the terra cotta panels on the new wing—which reflect the transition from limestone walls to terra cotta roof tiles on the older building—received particular praise from the jury.

The new wing houses staff space, mechanical equipment, and a 100-person meeting room for the community. The old and new buildings are linked by a two-story glass atrium, and the entire project was designed to LEED Gold standards.

The design, according to Hutchison, “responds to the oddly shaped site, an active and engaged community, and numerous required agency reviews.” The result is “a library for the 21st century that embraces its grand historic past and complements it with a modern addition.”

**Bowie Gridley Architects’** work to create a new home for the Meridian Public Charter School, like CORE’s work at the Mt. Pleasant Library, involved renovating a historic building and adding a new wing.

The historic building in this case was the former Harrison Elementary School in Washington’s Shaw neighborhood. The unused school building, consisting of two wings built in 1897 and 1935, respectively, is within the U Street Historic District. The structure had good classroom and circulation spaces, but lacked other features needed for a modern school. Bowie Gridley’s solution adds a 12,000-square-foot, three-story wing at the building’s rear, between the two existing wings. The addition houses a cafeteria, a media center, and a half-sized gymnasium that can also be used as a performance and assembly space.

The addition matches the width of the two historic wings, extends the older wings’ existing horizontal brick trim lines, and uses materials that respect the character of the surrounding neighborhood. These elements, however, are combined into a modern design that clearly sets the new wing apart from the existing building.

“The addition was conceived to be an obvious counterpart to the historic masonry structure, allowing for a clear and striking contrast between old and new, and a playful expression of the character of the elementary school,” said **Bill Gridley, FAIA**, a principal at Bowie Gridley. Compared to the heavy brick of the existing building, “the new addition introduces a lighter touch—a glass façade in front of the library that incorporates wood screens for privacy, and a curving metal panel façade covering the gym addition above.”

The project, which has received LEED Silver certification, “is an example of how a historic school can be respectfully updated for modern use,” Gridley said. The jury especially liked the contrast between the old and new wings.

The addition to the Meridian Public Charter School, with existing wings visible in the left foreground and right background.

**Photo © Paul Burk Photography**







The new Somerset Pool Bath House.

Photo © Julia Heine/McInturff Architects



Photo courtesy of McInturff Architects

The previous bath house structure, which was demolished.

## Merit Award in Architecture

### Somerset Pool Bath House

Chevy Chase, Maryland

#### McInturff

**Landscape Architects:** Lila Fendrick Landscape Architects

**Structural Engineers:** Robert Silman Associates

**MEP Engineers:** BKM/Burdette, Koehler, Murphy & Associates

**Civil Engineers:** VIKI

**Sustainability Consultants:** Gabrielli Design Studio

**Contractor:** Therrien Waddell, Inc.

The small incorporated town of Somerset, Maryland, located a few blocks north of the Friendship Heights Metro station, offers its residents several community amenities, including a pool and bath house that were originally built in 1968. After more than four decades of use, the bath house was failing structurally, and the town also wanted a facility that meets current ADA and environmental standards.

McInturff Architects' design for the new bath house retains the footprint of the original structure while reconfiguring the interior space and introducing a more graceful design aesthetic.

"The original roof was low, heavy and oppressive," said Mark McInturff, FAIA, the firm's principal. "The new one, built of wood trusses, is high, light, and airy, forming a giant porch. Every effort was made to respect the beautiful wooded site while providing a contemporary, naturally ventilated building composed of airy porches, shuttered walls and outdoor pavilions."

The project includes two newly constructed wetlands and a bio-retention area to capture and manage surface water runoff. Open decking and porous pavers are used in place of impervious surfaces. The project reused the original building's foundation up to the perimeter steel frame on three sides. Large timber roof frame members were salvaged from the old building and reused for an entry sign and a new shade pavilion. The new roof consists almost entirely of small-dimension lumber. The open design admits abundant daylight and promotes natural ventilation, eliminating the need for active heating or cooling systems.

The jury praised the project for its floating roof and management of scale. The project, one of them noted, "is much more complicated than it initially appears." 🏆





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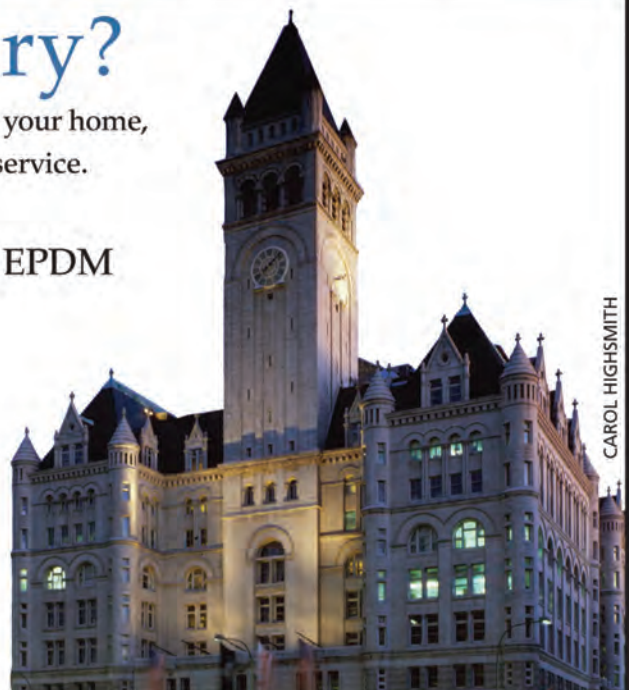
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**Merit Award in Architecture**

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**MEP Engineers:** Joseph R. Loring Associates

**Fire Protection Engineers:** AON Fire Protection Engineering Corporation

**Exterior Skin Consultants:** Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

**Development Managers:** DRI Development

**Building Managers:** Transwestern

**Contractor:** Forrester Construction Company

# Building for Business:

Commercial Projects  
Reflect Diversity of Uses

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

Photo © Ron Blunt Photography



The 1960s office building at 815 Connecticut Avenue, just a block and a half from the White House, had come to look dated, and its precast concrete façades and outmoded mechanical systems wasted a great deal of energy. Eager to convert the building into a “trophy” property worthy of its prestigious location, the owners commissioned **VOA Associates** to refresh its look and dramatically improve its environmental profile. Execution of these improvements was unusually challenging because the client required that the existing tenant spaces remain fully usable during construction.

The primary vehicle for achieving all of those goals was a dramatically more modern, high-performance glass curtain wall, which was erected over a temporary perimeter enclosure that protected the office space from the elements. While admitting up to 85% more natural light, the curtain wall provides better insulation from heat gain and loss than the precast panels and older windows it replaced. Coupled with upgrades to HVAC systems and the introduction of a computerized building management system, the new skin enabled the building to obtain LEED Platinum certification.

The architects also took the opportunity to extend the floor slabs at the previously chamfered northwest corner of the building, thus creating a tier of dramatic, acutely angled corner offices. A vertical fin, accented by variable-color LED lighting, punctuates the Connecticut Avenue façade and indicates the location of the main entrance. At the line of the roof parapet is a modern “cornice” of blue glass panels, which cast colorful shadows on the upper portions of the façades on sunny days and create a distinguishing crown for the thoroughly revamped building.

#### Merit Award in Architecture

## 2345 MLK

Washington, DC

### Höweler + Yoon Architecture

**Structural Engineers:** MGV Consulting Structural Engineers, Inc.

**MEP Engineers:** MEPTech, Inc.

**Civil Engineers:** CAS Engineering

**Consulting Engineers:** Hillis-Carnes Engineering Associates

**Contractor:** FEI Construction

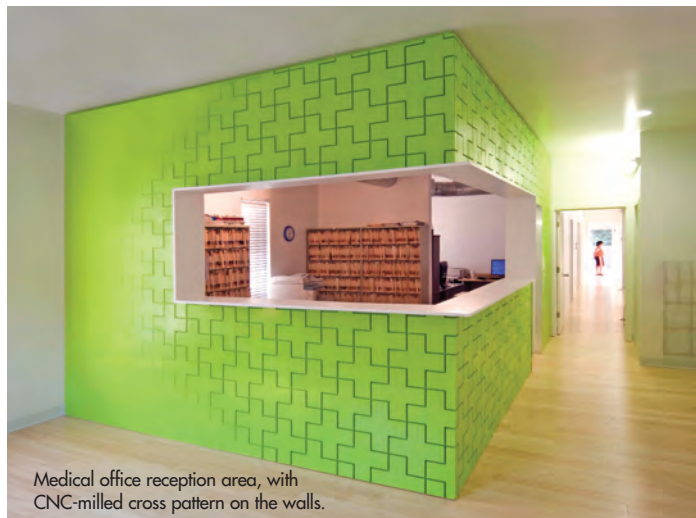
With its understated, boxy composition, corrugated metal cladding, and acid-green-and-silver perforated metal screens around its main entrance, the new building at 2345 Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard, SE, designed by the Boston firm of **Höweler + Yoon Architecture**, could easily be mistaken for a trendy art gallery. In fact, it is a small commercial structure containing medical and dental offices catering to low-income residents of the Anacostia neighborhood, and was built for a very modest budget of \$188 per square foot. The colorful screens, composed of two layers of metal with perforations of different diameters, are actually sliding security doors that protect the clinic entrance and display windows for the separate ground floor retail space when closed.

The building’s site lies just outside the Anacostia Historic District, in an area characterized by a hodgepodge of fast-food restaurants, convenience stores, and empty lots. The new structure provides a strong anchor at a key intersection and sets a precedent for the scale and composition of possible future developments on adjacent lots. The modestly cantilevered second floor, accented with a witty “bay window”—really just an inexpensive, domed



Exterior view of 2345 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, SE, showing the sliding panels used to secure the entrances to the building outside of business hours.

Courtesy of Höweler + Yoon Architecture



Medical office reception area, with CNC-milled cross pattern on the walls.

Courtesy of Höweler + Yoon Architecture

skylight installed vertically—lends the simple, small building greater presence along the busy street.

The striking green color reappears in several places inside the medical clinic, most notably on a textured wall surrounding the reception desk. A “green cross” pattern, which varies in depth, was created using a CNC (computer numerical control) milling process. The jurors praised the project for making a lot out of a little. “Innovative use of materials gives life to an obviously limited budget,” said juror Thomas Beeby, adding that “[a] remarkable amount of thought went into this design.”





The Capella Hotel, with a bridge over the C&O Canal in the right foreground.

Photo © Jessica Marcotte

## Merit Award in Architecture

### Capella Hotel

Washington, DC

#### Michael Winstanley Architects & Planners

**Interior Designers:** Peter Silling & Associates

**Lighting Designers:** Horton Lees Brogden Lighting Design

**Contractor:** HITT Contracting, Inc.

The Capella chain is a rarefied group of “ultra-luxury” hotels, with properties in such far-flung places as Singapore and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. The company’s first Washington property occupies a former office building next to the C&O Canal in Georgetown. **Michael Winstanley Architects & Planners** oversaw the building’s conversion into a hotel.

Built in 1962, the original structure was a bland brick box with monotonous rows of punched windows bracketed by phony shutters. Committed to transforming the building’s yawn-inducing banality into elegant simplicity, the architects drew inspiration from Italian Rationalism, an early 20th-century architectural movement that eschewed ornamentation and celebrated pure geometrical forms. Rationalist architecture incorporated aspects of both classicism and modernism, yielding austere but monumental buildings often characterized by rhythmic façades and boldly expressed structural frames.

“We thought that this reference [to Rationalism] was appropriate because it would allow us to design a modern building placed in a historical context,” said **Michael Winstanley, AIA, AICP**. While maintaining the basic

form of the existing building, the architects lengthened the windows in the two tiers nearest the corner of each principal façade, thus creating a frame for the relatively Spartan grids of windows in the central bays. Narrow vertical strips made of black steel channels further emphasize the corners while subtly suggesting classical quoins. The most notable addition is the simple yet dramatic cornice, also of black metal, which provides a definitive cap to the building and glows when lit from below at night.

In the words of juror Thomas Beeby, the renovation “turned a repetitive block into a palazzo,” an appropriate term given the surprising Italian inspiration behind this simple modern building in Georgetown.

## Merit Award in Architecture

### 1320 9th Street, NW

Washington, DC

#### Wnuk Spurlock Architecture

**Interior Designers:** Darryl Carter, Inc.

**Structural Engineers:** SIE Engineering, Inc.

and Keast & Hood

**MEP Engineers:** Global Engineering Solutions, Inc.

**Contractor:** Glass Construction

The history of the row house and adjacent carriage house at 1320 9th Street, NW, is murky. Parts of the property are believed to date back to the Civil War era, and over the years, both structures were subjected to haphazard renovations and additions. At some point in the mid-to-late 20th century, as the surrounding neighborhood fell







The street façade of 1320 9th Street, NW, following renovation.

Photo © Gordon Beall Photography



The street façade before renovation.

Courtesy of Wnuk Spurlock Architecture

on hard times, the pair of historic buildings entered into a steady decay.

In 2008, while searching for a spot “in an emerging section of the city” to open a new design center, renowned Washington interior designer Darryl Carter came across the forlorn property and saw potential. At the time, the ground floor commercial space was in the very early stages of a renovation, but the dilapidated upper levels had been abandoned for many years, and some portions of the structure were bordering on collapse. Carter engaged **Wnuk Spurlock Architecture** to oversee comprehensive renovations, turning the main building into a public showroom and the carriage house into a design studio.

The result is a carefully rendered balance between old and new. The existing masonry walls, though patched and generally painted a bright white, retain their coarse texture, and the exposed rafters on the top floor of the main building bear the scars and mottled coloration typical of venerable wood structures. These elements contrast with the precision and geometrical clarity of new walls, doors, and windows. A glimpse from the street through the mullionless bay window, past a limestone arch salvaged from a mansion in Virginia, succinctly captures the rustic modernity that imbues the project.

#### Presidential Citation in Urban Design

### Georgetown “Social” Safeway

Washington, DC

### Torti Gallas Urban

**Landscape Architects:** Freeland and Kauffman, Inc.

**Lighting Designers:** MCLA | Architectural Lighting Design

**Structural Engineers:** Tadjer Cohen Edelson Associates, Inc.

**MEP Engineers:** Brandt Engineering, Inc.

**Civil Engineers:** Freeland and Kaufmann

**Visualization:** Interface Multimedia

**Contractor:** Roche Constructors Inc.

To an out-of-towner, it may have seemed ironic that the previous supermarket on this site was widely known as the “Social Safeway.” There was nothing remotely glamorous about the building, which opened in 1980, but its auspicious location just north of Georgetown made it a destination for young, single Washingtonians hoping that romance might bloom amid the fresh produce. While their success rate is unknown, there is no question that the store itself was an architectural failure—a bland brick box tucked behind a vast parking lot that rudely interrupted the Wisconsin Avenue streetscape.

The new supermarket, by **Torti Gallas Urban**, transforms its neighborhood by mending that wide gap in the streetscape and restoring pedestrian activity to a block that was once almost exclusively the province of cars. The two-story structure is built right up to the



The new Georgetown "Social" Safeway, with the pedestrian and vehicular ramp at right.



Photo © Maxwell MacKenzie

sidewalk, with directly accessible retail spaces on the ground level and the main grocery store above. The Wisconsin Avenue façade is articulated as a series of eight vertical bays, the rhythm of which recalls that of commercial row houses down the street in Georgetown's historic core. A vehicular and pedestrian ramp leads to a two level-parking garage at the rear of the building.

The architects kept the profile of the garage low so it would not be obtrusive when seen from the adjacent Dumbarton Oaks Park.

This first LEED-certified supermarket in Washington, DC, the new Safeway can lay claim to being a true "green grocer," and according to the latest rumors, its "social" credentials remain intact. 🌱

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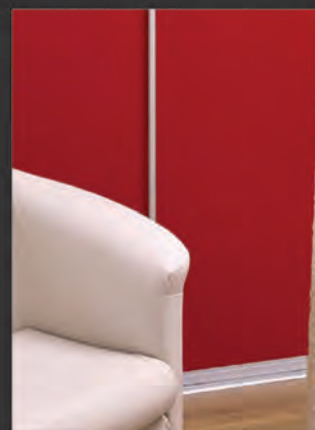
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# Office Intrigue:

## Innovative Designs for Corporate Interiors

by Denise Liebowitz



Open office area at  
Kramer Consulting Services.



For many of us, the image of American innovation involves geeky 20-somethings sprawled across couches in urban lofts at wildly creative tech start-ups. Now, in a bid to foster the same collaborative, innovative spirit, mainstream corporate America is getting in on the act. Increasingly, businesses are dumping their corner office suites and the walls that isolate employees from one another. Instead, corporate leaders want work and meeting spaces that feel like living rooms, common areas filled with natural light, cafés where workers mingle and exchange knowledge, and circulation patterns that help break down the office hierarchy. Each of the following winners in the Interior Architecture category demonstrates how design can define culture.

#### Merit Award in Interior Architecture

### Kramer Consulting Office

Washington, DC

### Kramer Consulting Services PC

**Associated Architects:** K + P Architects, PLLC

**Contractor:** HBW Group

“The design uses the kitchen as a hub,” explained **Jeffrey Kramer, AIA**, founder and president of **Kramer Consulting Services**, a design and project management company. “We didn’t relegate it to the back [of the office suite], but placed it front and center to use it for informal lunches and, really, as an impromptu gathering area.” Located at 20th and M streets, NW, in a modern office block, the original space mimicked a dark, deep cave, according to Kramer. But he liked the high ceilings and saw the potential to benefit from the two exposures and create an open, light-filled space. “We were moving out of very cramped, warren-like offices in Georgetown and

we all wanted an open plan with lots of light—a home base for project managers and architects to work and collaborate.”

The entry/reception area features a casual grouping of comfortable and brightly colored chairs flanked by two glassy meeting rooms. The sleek kitchen, boasting a big flat-screen TV, is nearby, and a series of open workstations is placed to get the best of the ample natural light.

An integrated palette of bright primary colors against a backdrop of clean white ties the space together. The look is spare, functional, and contemporary, reflecting “[a]n intelligent use of a limited number of design moves,” according to one juror. When asked about how non-clean-desk employees respond to such a streamlined work environment, Kramer said, “Everyone seems to like working here; they get the aesthetics and rise to the challenge of the space.” In any case, the design includes plenty of storage areas, so clutter easily can be stashed away.

#### Merit Award in Interior Architecture

### IAI Headquarters

Chantilly, Virginia

### KGD Architecture

**MEP Engineers:** GPI, Inc.

**Contractor:** Jones Lang LaSalle Construction Company Inc.

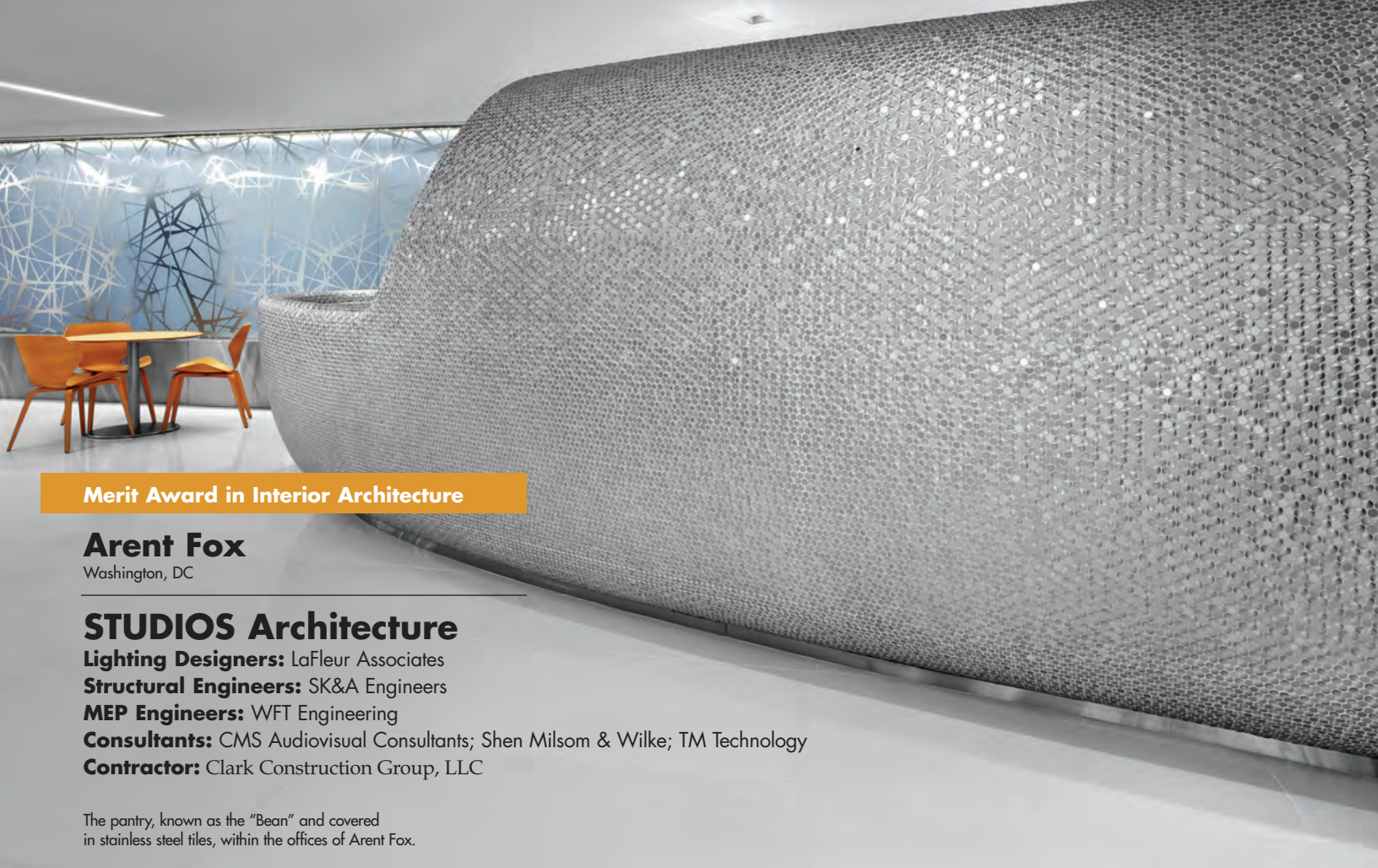
This engineering and software firm supports national intelligence surveillance reconnaissance. Frequently ranked high as a “Great Place to Work,” the company set a high design standard for its new headquarters. The goal was to demonstrate that innovation occurs in great workspaces and a high-trust culture enables ideas to flourish. The new space needed to function as a home for its family of workers who are stretched across the country.



Reception area of the IAI Headquarters.

Photo © John Cole Photography





Merit Award in Interior Architecture

## Arent Fox

Washington, DC

### STUDIOS Architecture

**Lighting Designers:** LaFleur Associates

**Structural Engineers:** SK&A Engineers

**MEP Engineers:** WFT Engineering

**Consultants:** CMS Audiovisual Consultants; Shen Milsom & Wilke; TM Technology

**Contractor:** Clark Construction Group, LLC

The pantry, known as the “Bean” and covered in stainless steel tiles, within the offices of Arent Fox.

Photo © Eric Laignel

The company occupies three floors of a building near Dulles Airport, with a ground-floor conference center (the Sensitive Compartmentalized Information Facility) and offices on the top two building floors. “IAI is a mathematically driven company; almost all of its employees are PhDs,” explained **Manoj Dalaya, AIA, LEED AP, of KGD Architecture**. “Its facilities must be secure.”

The executive floor is on the ground level, intentionally located next to the mailroom and encouraging employee mingling and reflecting the company’s ground-up, flat organization. The mailroom shelves are arranged in the Fibonacci series, a distinctive mathematical sequence probably best appreciated by the mailroom patrons. In the conference area that can be sealed and secured, color-changing panels convey whether the space is in use or not, and on a cost-effective feature wall, the company’s mission statement and values are laser cut and backlit in binary code. Mathematically-inspired design continues throughout the space where wall coverings, glazing, and furniture upholstery are further enlivened by fractal geometrical patterns mimicking the organization’s satellite antennas.

In spite of the high level of security, the completed space is inviting and conveys a sense of excitement: “Inventive, unique, well-determined, and well-designed,” in the words of one juror.

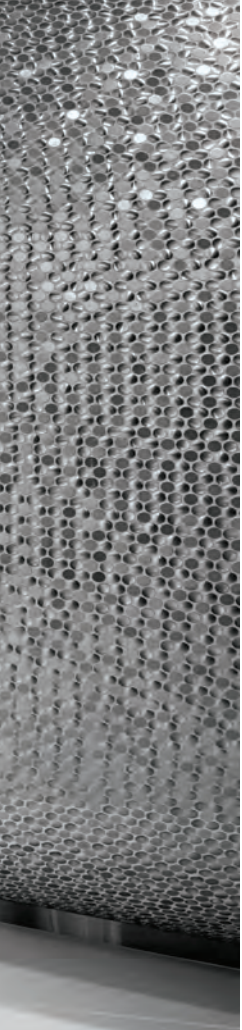
## Arent Fox

“This was about designing a space that moved people away from the ‘them/us mentality’ to ‘we’re a team together solving people’s problems,’” said **Todd DeGarmo, FAIA, LEED AP, CEO and principal of STUDIOS Architecture**. His team was involved from the very beginning of the site selection phase as Arent Fox, a prominent, diversified law firm, sought new downtown office space. They selected a prime K Street location for their 235,000-square-foot headquarters, where the firm is the anchor tenant occupying seven floors. From the lobby, visitors can ascend to the firm’s reception area via a dramatic and monumental glass stair. A chiseled stone wall lines the stairway that is lit with pendant LED lights suspended vertically between floors on steel rods.

The reception space boasts a dramatic physical and visual connection to the building lobby below and large expanses of glass define offices and conference rooms in a way that blurs the lines between circulation and enclosed space. In the conference center, polarized switchable glass was incorporated to maintain exterior views and provide privacy when needed. A generously sized auditorium is identified with bold color, and curvaceous hallways play off the rectilinear floor plate. The cafe includes a pantry, its appliances and vending machines concealed inside a giant freestanding “bean” covered entirely in stainless-steel penny tile. Smaller, similar pantries appear on the other levels.







One of the main goals of the client was to break down the walls between support staff and attorneys. For the design team, this was an opportunity to place staff who would normally be enclosed within walls out in the open adjacent to the attorneys. This sweeping openness is something of a departure from the traditionally maze-like configuration of many large law firms. The design also breaks down the distinction between offices on the prime K Street and Connecticut Avenue sides and the not-so-prime offices on the alleys by establishing draws to the back of the building such as the café, pantries, and collaborative work areas.

"It felt like it would be a great space to work in," said one juror.

#### Presidential Citation in Sustainable Design

### SmithGroupJJR Architectural Office

Washington, DC

### SmithGroupJJR

**Contractor:** HITT Contracting Inc.

When it recently relocated its Washington office, **SmithGroupJJR**, a large national architecture and engineering firm, had an opportunity to test the bold vision of the future workplace it has been offering to its

clients. In this vision, technology is the game-changer that allows knowledge workers to be productive anytime, anywhere, untethered from a physical office. The firm maintains that offices have become a destination for collaboration and communication; the 21st-century office is open and team-based, and offers a new balance between "I" spaces and "we" spaces.

In the previous location, the firm's space was divided about equally between private offices and workstations. The new space is 100 percent open plan and accommodates the same number of employees in significantly less square footage. Work now takes place in a variety of formal and informal collaborative spaces ranging from conventional conference rooms to glass huddle areas and studio touch-down spaces. Adjacent to the reception area are a comfy living room and café. In an open-bench-style studio, natural light reaches every seat and the glass doors of the large conference room fold back so gatherings can extend into the living room.

And talk about sustainability! As it turns out, the firm knew from the beginning this space would be temporary—only a couple of years—until the building for its new permanent location was completed. The final move is now under way and SmithGroupJJR is taking just about everything with it down to the carpet, ceiling tiles, and light switch plates. More than 80 percent of the materials in the current space will be reused in the new one that was specifically designed to receive them. 🏡



The "living room" in the Washington offices of SmithGroupJJR.

Photo © Eric Laignel





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Robert Gurney Architect | Photo © Anice Hoachlander



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# Houses in the Now:

## Award-Winning Private Residential Projects

by Ronald O'Rourke

Merit Award in Architecture

### Tred Avon River House

Eastern Maryland

#### Robert M. Gurney, FAIA

**Interior Designers:** Baron Gurney Interiors

**Landscape Architects:** Lila Fendrick

Landscape Architects

**Engineers:** D. Anthony Beale LLC

**Contractor:** Peterson + Collins

This year's award-winning private residential projects show the current state of the art in house design in various regards, including space arrangements, materials, management of light, and sustainability features. But they also demonstrate an enduring quality of good residential design in any era—namely, a result that fully and efficiently meets the client's specific goals.

The Tred Avon River House, designed by **Robert M. Gurney, FAIA**, marries a low, glass-clad pavilion with two additional volumes to create a T-shaped residence that takes maximum advantage of its picturesque setting near the Avon River in Easton, Maryland.

The pavilion, which brings to mind Philip Johnson's Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House near Plano, Illinois, contains the house's primary living spaces and

View of the Tred Avon River House, looking through the main living and dining areas to the water beyond.





The portable Minim House, as currently situated in a back yard in Washington.

Photo © Paul Burk Photography



The compact interior of the Minim House. Photo © Paul Burk Photography

## Merit Award in Architecture

### Minim House

Washington, DC

### Foundry Architects

**Structural Engineers:** Skarda & Associates, Inc.

**Contractor:** Element Design + Build

master suite. The contrasting 36-foot-high volume behind includes a family room and two additional bedrooms. A third component houses the garage and additional service space.

"The house is unveiled as three solid [elements], linked together with glass bridges and suspended above the landscape," Gurney said. "Initially presented as solid and austere, it unfolds into the 124-foot-long living volume, light-filled and wrapped in glass, with panoramic views of the river."

Covered terraces and a screened porch extend the interior spaces. "The house was designed as a vehicle to experience and enjoy the incredibly beautiful landscape," Gurney said. "It's crisply detailed and minimally furnished, so that views of the site can provide the primary sensory experience."

The house is suspended four feet above grade to protect against flooding. Features for reducing energy use include large overhangs above the terraces to reduce summer heat gain, a concrete floor slab to capture solar heat in the winter, a geothermal mechanical system, hydronic floor heating, and extensive daylighting in the pavilion.

The jurors described the project as "extremely elegant," "precise and delicate," and "a tour de force." "What Mies couldn't fit in the glass box, he put in the basement," one of them said. "Here, it becomes interesting new architectural forms."

If you want to bracket the spectrum of current house design, you could do worse than to pair the generously sized Tred Avon River House with the Minim House by **Foundry Architects**—a house so small there was no room for the final two letters.

Currently located in a back yard in Washington, the 11-foot-by-22-foot Minim House is an exemplar of the Tiny House movement that is exploring strategies for designing minimally-sized houses.

"The Tiny House movement's philosophy is based on living in the smallest possible footprint, often on land that would otherwise go unused or underused," said **Will Couch, AIA, LEED AP**, a principal of Foundry Architects. "Tiny Houses are portable and must therefore meet the rigorous Department of Transportation standards and be able to resist additional forces not typically applied to stationary structures."

"Minim House is a prototype built for a specific client, and is attached to a heavy duty trailer bed," Couch added. "Its 210 square feet of interior space is meticulously designed and detailed to create a comfortable living space for two adults." The house includes several features that enable it to operate mostly off the grid, including a rooftop solar array and a system for collecting and filtering rainwater.

The design, one juror said, is "detailed to be evocative of a house," and "raises a series of questions as to what makes a house a house, and not a trailer." Another added, "There's an enormous precision of geometry, and much invention."





The One Nest Project.

Photo © Paul Burk Photography

## Presidential Citation in Sustainable Design

### The One Nest Project

Delaplane, Virginia

#### McGraw Bagnoli Architects

**Structural Engineers:** Rathgeber Goss Associates

**Contractor:** GreenSpur Inc.

If the Tred Avon River House and the Minim House establish the two ends of the house-design spectrum, then The One Next Project by **McGraw Bagnoli Architects**—a moderately sized residence with extensive sustainability features—falls somewhere in the middle.

The house, located in Delaplane, Virginia, “is a collaborative attempt to re-invent the materials, means, and methods of today’s construction industry,” said **David C. Bagnoli, AIA, LEED AP BD+C**. To help reduce costs, it was designed with simple, modular components that could be assembled in a short period of time.

“This project was all about rethinking how we design and build more sustainably,” said Bagnoli. “There hasn’t been a radical shift in construction methods in the United States for decades, and this project was conceived to change that. The house was built in less than 100 days. It respects its setting, sits lightly on the earth, and is finished with natural, warm, and local materials, including locally reclaimed barn wood.”

“The house was designed to maximize communal living while minimizing wasted space,” he added. “The narrow floor plate allows natural light to permeate the interior. The rooms flow into one another, virtually eliminating the need for horizontal circulation spaces, while vertical circulation is consolidated into a spiral stair.”

The house includes an array of features for reducing energy and water use, including a rainwater collection and storage system, a ductless HVAC system, and a high-efficiency fireplace.

“With generous windows and a large porch, the house encourages connection with the outdoors,” Bagnoli said. “It feels light, spacious and comfortable, while supporting a philosophy of natural, sustainable living and building.”



Stairwell of the +2edison7 house.

Photo © Hoachlander Davis Photography



## +2edison7

Arlington, Virginia

### Studio Twenty Seven Architecture

**Contractor:** Phelps & Phelps Consulting

To create a modern and sustainable new residence for himself and his wife, **Todd Ray, AIA**, a principal at **Studio Twenty Seven Architecture**, designed the renovation and expansion of a post-World War II house located in an Arlington, Virginia, neighborhood filled with other houses built at the same time with similar original features. (The house is at the corner of 27th and Edison Streets, which inspired not only the unusual nickname for the project, but also the name of the firm, which began there in Ray's basement.) Although many of the nearby houses have been enlarged and reconfigured over the years, achieving their own identities, the +2edison7 project represents the first sustainable conversion in the area.

Ray's design uses the masonry core of the original structure, but expands the house's volume and reorients the design away from the street and toward the quiet of its garden. "The massing rises from the original core, with an addition slid atop, folded and shifted to open the house to the landscape," Ray said.

"The density and rhythm of the neighborhood suggested a design based around precise viewpoints," he added. "Each window is located to mediate the public-private threshold of the site, focusing on the most compelling views yet, allowing privacy and capitalizing on specific solar orientation."

Compared to the original house, the building as renovated uses 64% less energy per square foot. The project has received six certifications for sustainability, including LEED Platinum certification from the USGBC, Gold certifications from the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and Arlington County, Energy Star and Air Quality Plus certifications from the EPA, and a Wildlife Habitat certification from the National Wildlife Federation.



Exterior of the +2edison7 house.

Photo © Hoachlander Davis Photography



The NaCl house.

Photo © Paul Warchol Photography

### Merit Award in Architecture

## NaCl

Bethesda, Maryland

### David Jameson Architect Inc.

**Contractor:** Freedom First Homes

Sitting on a gently sloping half-acre site in Bethesda, Maryland, the house called NaCl—the chemical symbol for sodium chloride, or table salt—is an assemblage of pure-white rectangular volumes punctuated by frameless windows.

The 4,800-square-foot house, also known as the Helmsdale Residence, "breaks the prescriptive mold of horizontally layered homes," said **David Jameson, FAIA**, principal at **David Jameson Architect**. The house "aspires to render unclear the spatial organization of the project and explore an architecture of ambiguous scale."

The sharp-edged structure stands out from its forested site, resembling a mineral formation recently exposed to the air by natural forces. "The exterior composition reflects a dynamic fluid interior," Jameson said. "Uncorrelated to the building's structure, glazing panels are detailed flush to the exterior surface, eliminating shadows, which further inhibits a reading of the building's scale."

The house's interior employs the same all-white color scheme, and includes a centrally located double-height living room. The result is an open, light-filled residence.

The jury noted "the complex intellectual premise about the formal properties of the building," and praised the house for its "endlessly changing surfaces." One juror summed it up as "complexity controlled through rigorous design."





The Rappahannock Bend Summer House.

Photo © Julia Heine/McInturff Architects

#### Merit Award in Architecture

## Rappahannock Bend Summer House

Rural Virginia

### McInturff Architects

**Landscape Architects:** Crowther & Associates

**Structural Engineers:** Neubauer Consulting Engineers

**Contractor:** Bonitt Builders

The Rappahannock Bend Summer House—a pool house/guest house on the grounds of a historic country house in King George, Virginia—was designed by **McInturff Architects**. Conceived as a largely open-air structure, the building is used as a guest house year-round and as a pool house in the summer. The project, the firm says, “attempts to revisit 18th-century concepts of comfort and sustainability in a 21st-century language.” It was previously covered at length in the Summer 2011 issue of **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

The building, one juror commented, “seems to be very comfortable in its site.” Another, noting the project’s “progression of materials from the ground up to the sky,” praised it as an “incredibly elegant little pavilion. It engages the pool, the trees—everything.”



The Treehouse.

Photo © Paul Burk Photography

#### Merit Award in Architecture

## The Treehouse

Washington, DC

### Cunningham | Quill Architects

**Contractor:** The Ley Group

This finely-detailed pool house, located in Washington’s Cleveland Park area and designed by **Cunningham | Quill Architects**, is perched over the property’s sloping rear edge, giving it the appearance of being nestled in the trees. The structure, sheathed in stained cedar and split bluestone, incorporates deep eaves that complement the roof forms of the main house. The project was previously covered at length in the Summer 2013 issue of **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

The Treehouse is “low-key but excellently executed architecture,” one of the jurors said. Another praised it as “very monumental for a little tiny building.”

#### Merit Award in Interior Architecture

## NOC Conversion

Washington, DC

### Robert M. Gurney, FAIA

**Engineers:** D. Anthony Beale LLC

**Contractor:** Added Dimensions, Inc.





Stairwell of the See-Through House.

Photo © Greg Powers Photography

## Award for Excellence in Interior Architecture

### See-Through House

Washington, DC

#### KUBE Architecture

**Millworkers:** Potomac Woodwork

**Contractor:** Think Make Build

Shifting to interior projects brings us to the See-Through House by **KUBE Architecture**. The project, located in Washington's Foggy Bottom neighborhood, completely renovated the interior of a dark and narrow townhouse to create a strikingly bright and open modern residence with innovative clear-glass floor plates. This project, too, was previously covered at length in the Summer 2013 issue of **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

"The constraints of the project became the opportunities," the jurors said, adding that the house employs "a clear, single idea of a slot of light" and "rose to the top on the first round" of their evaluation.



Interior of the renovated apartment in the former naval officers' club (NOC).

Photo © Maxwell MacKenzie

We finish with a second residence by **Robert M. Gurney, FAIA**—the NOC Conversion, situated in Washington near Dupont Circle. The project renovated a four-level, 2,000-square-foot condominium unit in an unusual, nearly cylindrical building that was originally built in 1944 as a naval officers club (NOC). In 1990, the structure was divided into two semi-circular condominium units.

"Due to the building's original central staircase and curving outer wall, the 1990 reconfiguration resulted in a space with small, oddly shaped, and compartmentalized rooms," Gurney said. "The renovation gutted this interior to the masonry bearing walls to permit the design of a new, open living configuration with an increased sense of spaciousness."

The renovation replaced most of the windows with larger steel windows and doors. "On the main level, these new windows and doors open to the terrace surrounding the unit, enhancing the relationship to the outdoors," Gurney said. "A new glass bay contributes to this relationship, accommodating a relocated stair to living space below the terrace and access to the parking area." The terrace space "is conceived as an outdoor room, incorporating cooking, dining, and seating areas."

The design features an open plan and minimal detailing. Dark stained-oak flooring acts as a counterpoint to the unit's white walls, blond-wood cabinetry, and stainless steel kitchen and bath surfaces.

"The project is intended to embrace the unusual semi-circular footprint and enable the inhabitant to be aware of the unusual geometry from all vantage points in the unit," Gurney said. The jurors noted how the project's design features are experienced both inside and outside the unit. The residence, they said, is "eloquently detailed" and employs "exquisite condition to detail within an idiosyncratic shell." 🏡





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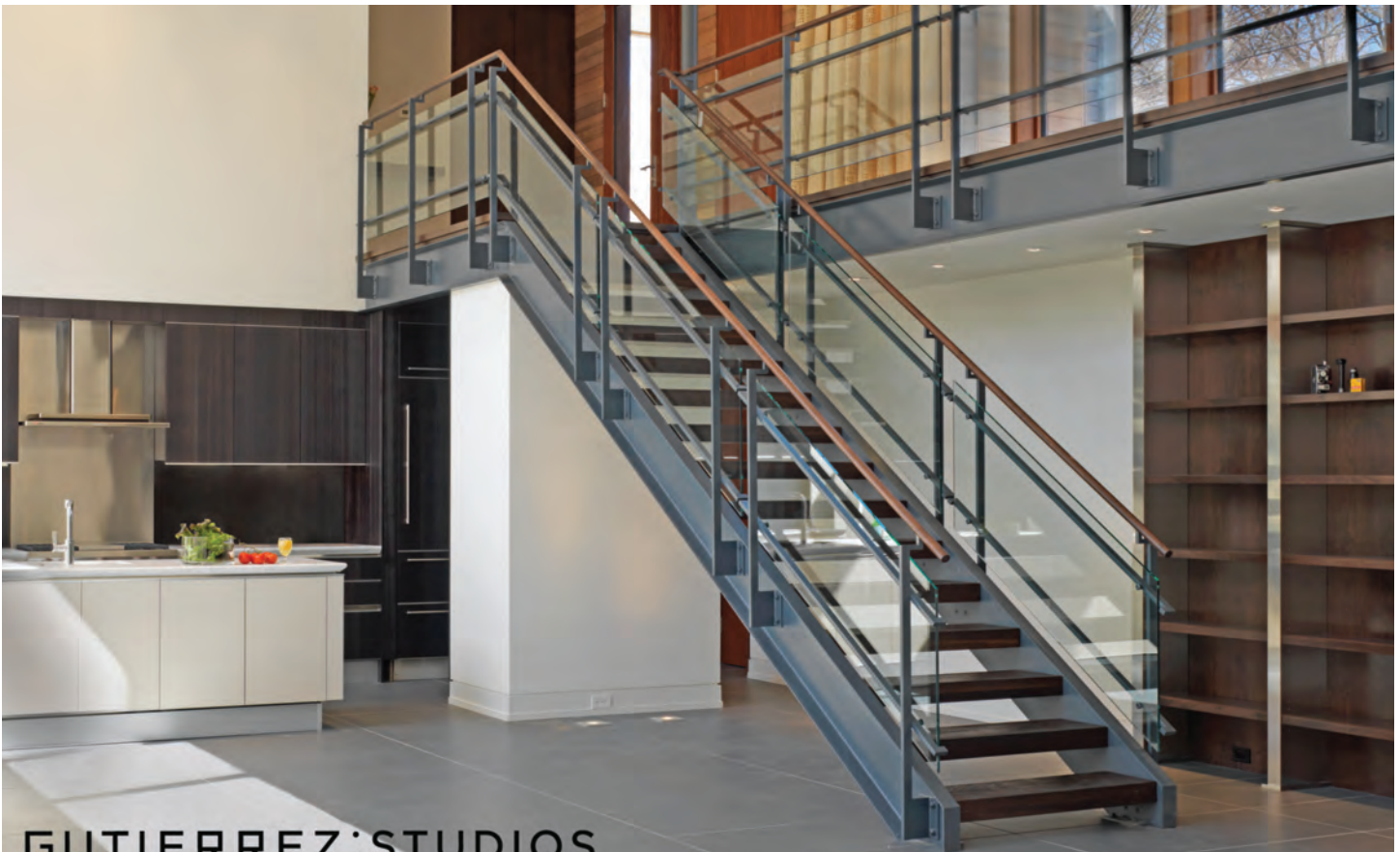


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The Georgia Avenue façade  
of the 3 Trees Flats.



Photo © Paul Warchol Photography

# Apartment Living:

## Award-Winning Residential Projects Span the District

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

### Merit Award in Architecture

#### 3 Trees Flats

Washington, DC

#### Schlesinger Associates Architects

**Architects of Record:** EDG Architects

**Structural Engineers:** Tadjer-Cohen-Edelson Associates

**MEP Engineers:** Summit Engineers

**Contractor:** Meridian Construction Co., Inc.

Built on a city-owned site on Georgia Avenue in the Petworth neighborhood, the 3 Trees Flats include both subsidized and market-rate rental apartments. The high ratio of affordable units (119) to standard units (11) is somewhat unusual—market-rate apartments are typically in the majority in new buildings—but reflects the active input of the Petworth community during the planning and design processes. The project was made possible by a series of financing mechanisms, including tax-exempt bonds from the DC Housing Finance Agency, a grant

from the DC Primary Care Association involving tobacco industry settlement funds, and various tax credits and abatements.

The main façade is animated by a row of four projecting bays that lend vertical emphasis and suggest the rhythm of traditional row houses. The bays are asymmetrical, with corner windows facing southeast, allowing views down Georgia Avenue, and notched fins to the northeast, which simultaneously enhance the sense of the façade's depth and obscure views of through-wall air-conditioning units behind them. A metal screen over the entrance is intended to support climbing vegetation, one of a range of sustainable design elements incorporated into the project.

The relatively deep site led **Schlesinger Associates Architects** to design the building around a courtyard, which allows double-loaded corridors to the north and south while providing natural light to a 28,000-square-foot community health center that occupies the ground floor. A highlight of the courtyard is a metal sculpture by Robert Cole that inspired the name of the development. A second phase, immediately to the south of the current building, is planned.





The building at 625 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, known as In Living Color.

Photo © Alan Karchmer Architectural Photographer

#### Merit Award in Architecture

### In Living Color

Washington, DC

#### Suzane Reatig Architecture

**Structural Engineers:** Tadjer-Cohen-Edelson Associates

**Civil Engineers:** CAS Engineering

**MEP Engineers:** IT Associates

**Contractor:** McCullough Construction

The nickname of this project—In Living Color—derives from the series of brightly colored panels that enliven its exterior. Although narrow in plan and not especially tall, the building is highly visible thanks to the unusual geometry of its site and the linear garden that separates its long western façade from the adjacent alley. It joins the historic Asbury Dwellings across Rhode Island Avenue and the new Watha T. Daniel/Shaw Library across 7th Street to create a distinctive urban node near the Shaw Metro station.

The 16-unit apartment complex replaced four dilapidated row houses. Architect **Suzane Reatig, FAIA**, convinced District zoning officials to increase the property's allowable density based on its proximity to a subway station as well as a number of mid-rise buildings along 7th Street. The project includes 14 market-rate units plus two units designated as affordable.

In Living Color previously won a Washingtonian Residential Design Award and was more extensively profiled in the Summer 2013 issue of *ARCHITECTUREDC*.



The Senate Square complex as seen from the roof of one of the new towers.

Photo © Maxwell MacKenzie



Street-level view of the Senate Square complex.

Photo © Maxwell MacKenzie

#### Presidential Citation in Urban Design

### Senate Square

Washington, DC

#### Esocoff & Associates | Architects

**Landscape Architects:** Clinton & Associates

**Lighting Designers:** Gilmore Lighting Design

**Interior Designers:** Shvo

**Acoustical Designers:** Acoustical Design Collaborative, Ltd.

**Structural Engineers:** Tadjer-Cohen-Edelson Associates

**Civil Engineers:** Bowman Consulting Group Ltd.

**MEP Engineers:** Metropolitan Engineering, Inc./Shapiro-O'Brien

**Contractor:** James G. Davis Construction Corporation

The Senate Square residential complex occupies a prominent site just northeast of Union Station, at the western end of the burgeoning H Street Corridor. Two new 12-story buildings designed by **Esocoff & Associates | Architects** fill out a city block that includes a historic seminary previously renovated into a condominium by Abdo Development, and a smaller, mid-block historic structure that now serves as amenity space for the complex. Fifteen percent of the 476 apartments in the new buildings are designated as affordable units.

Although essentially modern, with their open floor plans and large expanses of glass, the Senate Square buildings reflect a concerted effort on the part of the



architects to be sympathetic to the existing structures on the site and to the historic row houses and low-rise commercial buildings on adjacent blocks. Critical large-scale design decisions include a stepped roof profile, beginning with a pair of towers facing H Street and descending gradually toward the narrower streets to the north and east. Subtler gestures include the “ganging” of windows into two-story frames, resulting in decidedly vertical proportions that allude to those typical of nearby Victorian row houses.

The architects also worked to ensure that the relatively large development would not disrupt the staccato rhythm of the surrounding streetscapes. Along 3rd and Eye streets, NE, metal staircases provide access to individual unit entrances on the second floor. Meanwhile, along 2nd Street, NE, a series of gateways—featuring laser-cut metal filigree panels—leads directly to garden-level units. The use of polychrome masonry further helps to relate the new structures to their older neighbors.

### Presidential Citation in Urban Design

## The Nannie Helen at 4800

Washington, DC

### Torti Gallas Urban

**Interior Designers:** Kreative Ways & Solutions, LLC

**Landscape Architects:** Parker Rodriguez, Inc.

**Structural Engineers:** SK&A Engineers

**MEP Engineers:** Metropolitan Engineering, Inc.

**Civil Engineers:** VIKa Capitol, LLC

**Acoustical Engineers:** Miller, Beam & Paganelli, Inc.

**Contractor:** Blue Skye/BCC Matthews, LLC

Named for Nannie Helen Burroughs, an African-American educator and activist who in 1901 established the pioneering National Training School for Women and Girls, this mixed-use project brings 70 affordable housing units to the Deanwood neighborhood of Northeast DC. The building offers a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments along with recreational facilities for residents and retail space, all within a 15-minute walk of three Metro stations. According to the architects at **Torti Gallas Urban**, the construction budget for the project was only slightly lower than would be typical of market-rate housing—the units are made affordable through a DC government program that provides subsidies for capital and operating expenses.

Recognizing that the Nannie Helen would be much larger than any of its immediate neighbors, the architects employed several design strategies to diminish its apparent scale. The principal façade, for example, is split into two primary components: the western portion features a series of light-colored bays projecting from a darker background wall, while the eastern portion consists of a light-colored wall with darker, inset windows. Slight modulations in the height of the building prevent it from appearing monolithic.

The project followed Enterprise Green Communities guidelines for sustainable design, which include reflective roofing to reduce solar heat gain, pervious paving in parking areas to reduce storm water runoff, and a bioretention swale to filter pollutants from surface water that does end up in the storm sewer system. 🌱

The Nannie Helen at 4800.





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# For the People:

## Government Projects Reflect Commitment to Good Design

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

The new atrium space at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Photo © Eduard Hueber/archphoto.com

### Merit Award in Architecture

#### National Museum of American History, Public Space Renewal

Washington, DC

#### Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

**Lighting Designers:** George Sexton Associates

**Signage and Exhibition Designers:** Chermayeff and Geismar, Inc.

**Structural Engineers:** Robert Silman Associates

**MEP Engineers:** Vanderweil Engineers

**Civil Engineers:** Wiles Mensch Corporation

**Consultants:** Kroll, Inc.; Lerch Bates & Associates; Rolf Jensen & Associates; Shen Milsom & Wilke

**Contractor:** Turner Construction Company

The Smithsonian Institution has been called “the Nation’s Attic,” and for decades the National Museum of American History was

perhaps the institution’s most attic-like facility—a confusing warren of spaces, many of them dark, crammed with (admittedly historic) stuff. In 2002, the museum convened a “blue-ribbon commission” to consider improvements to the building’s public spaces. The firm of **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill** was selected to oversee renovations based on the commission’s recommendations, which included reducing clutter, clarifying circulation patterns, positioning iconic artifacts in prominent places, and enhancing both artificial and natural lighting.

The most important element of the renovation was the introduction of a skylit atrium that brings light deep into the building and provides a central orientation space. This atrium affords easy access to a new gallery designed to hold the Star Spangled Banner, one of the most important artifacts in the museum’s collection. The fragile flag itself must be shielded from sunlight, of course, and could not be displayed directly in the atrium, so the architects placed an abstract metallic sculpture suggestive of a waving flag on the wall by the entrance to the gallery, which serves as a sign announcing the adjacent display as well as a symbolic centerpiece of the museum.



Because the main entrances from the National Mall and Constitution Avenue are on different floors, it was important that those two levels be clearly linked without interrupting the flow of light through the atrium. To achieve this, the architects designed a grand staircase, made mostly of glass, which keeps the space bright while promoting efficient movement of visitors. The translucent staircase also offers a powerful visual counterpoint to the solidity of the museum's exterior.

#### Merit Award in Architecture

## Holiday Athletic Center, US Air Force Academy

Colorado Springs, Colorado

### Cannon Design

**Graphic and Lighting Designers:** Cannon Design

**Landscape Architects:** Thomas & Thomas

**Structural Engineers:** KFC Engineering

**Civil Engineers:** Classic Consulting Engineers & Surveyors

**Geotechnical Engineers:** Kumar & Associates

**Site, Electrical, and Telecom Engineers:** MKK Consulting Engineers, Inc.

**Fire Protection Engineers:** Frontier Fire Protection

**Contractor:** GE Johnson Construction Company, Inc.

The main campus of the US Air Force Academy is a masterpiece of post-World War II modernism. Designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with landscape architect Dan Kiley, the Cadet Area, as the central campus is known, consists mostly of elegant, rectilinear buildings surrounding an open plaza called the Terrazzo. The architectural highlight is the astonishingly angular Cadet Chapel, which simultaneously evokes Gothic cathedrals and jet airplanes in flight.

The new Holaday Athletic Center, designed by the firm of **Cannon** to complement the architecture of the original campus, stands slightly downhill of the central quadrangle. Accommodating all 12 major outdoor sports programs offered at the academy, the airy facility has an appropriately hangar-like feel, with a 65-foot clear ceiling height, exposed trusses, and large expanses of translucent panels to admit abundant natural light. The building's structural components are based on a seven-foot module, which was commonly used in older structures within the Cadet Area.

The athletic center's signature architectural feature is a series of angled screens along the west façade. Clearly inspired by the distinctive geometry of the Cadet Chapel, these elements, each composed of four trapezoidal screens supported by triangular frames, help to filter afternoon sunlight while also serving to announce the main entrance below. The building is entirely naturally ventilated, and thanks to its generous use of translucent cladding, generally requires artificial illumination only at night.



The Holaday Athletic Center at the US Air Force Academy, with the entry façade at left.

Photo © Fred J. Fuhrmeister





Exterior of the Mission Training Complex.

Photo (c) Joe Romeo

## Merit Award in Architecture

### Mission Training Complex

Fort Bragg, North Carolina

#### Jacobs

**Engineers, Landscape Architects, Graphic Designers,**

**Interior Designers:** Jacobs

**Contractor:** Yates Construction

The Mission Training Complex at Fort Bragg was conceived as a prototypical facility for training military commanders and staff under simulated battlefield conditions. Perhaps surprisingly, given such a hard-nosed program, architectural quality and sustainability were explicit concerns on the part of the client throughout the design process. The project team at **Jacobs** was asked to create a building with a distinct character—"a modern facility representing the modern soldier"—but also one that would complement the existing architectural context of the base.

The facility includes high-tech classrooms, flexible work cells, conference rooms, and both indoor and outdoor "tactical operations centers." Many of the spaces have stringent security requirements, yet must be flexible enough to be reconfigured as training strategies continuously develop. One specific design challenge was to ensure adequate levels of natural light in a building that houses a good deal of electronic equipment requiring low illumination levels in order to function properly. The architects addressed this by means of a "light snake"—a series of clerestory windows above circulation spaces, bringing filtered daylight into the heart of the building. Translucent polycarbonate panels and limited areas of clear glass bring additional daylight into non-sensitive administrative and support spaces.

The project was awarded LEED Gold certification based on a number of common green design strategies, such as the use of low-flow plumbing fixtures and recycled and locally sourced materials, as well as some unusual ones—most notably an effort to restore a portion of the Pine and Red Cedar Forest habitat of the endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpecker.





The re-created Old House of Delegates Chamber at the Maryland State House.

Photo © Joseph Romeo

#### Merit Award in Historic Resources

## Re-Creation of the Old House of Delegates Chamber, Maryland State House

Annapolis, Maryland

### Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners

**Lighting Designers:** Domingo Gonzalez Associates

**Audio-Visual Consultants:** Shen Milsom & Wilke

**Decorative Plaster and Paint Designers:** Evergreene Architectural Arts

**Structural Engineers:** Keast & Hood Co.

**MEP Engineers:** Mueller Associates, Inc.

**Contractor and Cost Estimators:** The Christman Company

Maryland's State House, completed in 1779, is America's oldest state capitol building in continuous use for that purpose (it also served briefly as the national capitol when the successor to the Continental Congress met in Annapolis from 1783 to 1784). The Georgian-style building is modest both in its architectural expression and in its scale—the first floor originally contained relatively small chambers for the state Senate and House of Delegates, separated by an arcaded hall, and little else. Today, both legislative bodies meet in larger chambers housed in an addition completed in 1905.

While that early 20th-century addition was under construction, the original chambers were renovated and stripped of most of their elaborate decorative features, so when the firm of **Beyer Blinder Belle** was hired recently to restore the Old House of Delegates Chamber to its former glory, the architects had to start almost from scratch.

One of the first design tasks was to establish a target period for the re-creation of the chamber's interior, which had undergone several renovations during the 19th century. The architects settled on a high Victorian design dating to 1876, which was well documented in photographs and other archival material. These documents provided detailed information about furnishings, decorative stenciling, plasterwork, and even draperies and carpets, which the design team meticulously analyzed and interpreted in order to produce historically accurate facsimiles.

The effect of the re-creation is uncanny. To the casual observer, it would appear that the chamber interior is a careful restoration of *in situ* architectural features, when in fact, nearly every element of the room is new. The project succeeded in resurrecting a historic space that most people would have assumed was lost forever. 🏡

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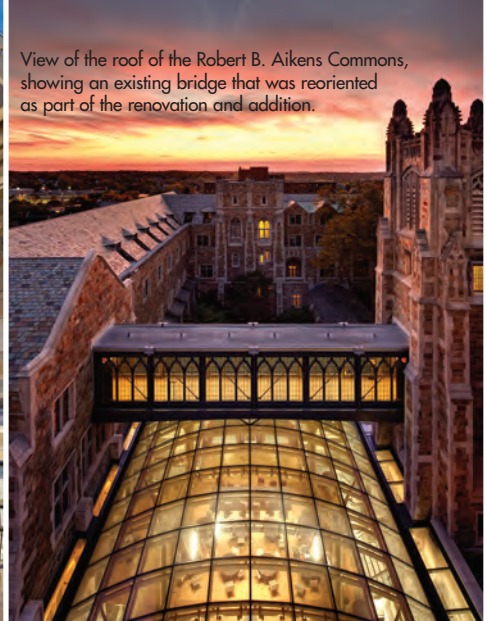


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The Robert B. Aikens Commons at the University of Michigan Law School.



Photos © Bryan Becker Photography

# Legal Constructs:

## DC Firm Fits New Facilities into Michigan Law School

by Steven K. Dickens, AIA, LEED AP

**Award for Excellence in Historic Resources**

### The Robert B. Aikens Commons, University of Michigan Law School

Ann Arbor, Michigan

#### Hartman-Cox Architects

**Architects of Record:** Integrated Design Solutions

**Contractor:** Walbridge

On the University of Michigan's website, under the heading "Law School Facts," the institution boldly claims, "The Law Quadrangle is the finest living/learning environment in the world of legal education." That this is the second bullet in a listing of 24 suggests its importance, and indicates the positive response to the two latest additions to the quadrangle, both by the DC firm of **Hartman-Cox Architects**.

The Robert B. Aikens Commons won an Award for Excellence in Historic Resources—the only one presented this year—for skillful infill and restorations within the original campus. The entirely new South Hall won a Presidential Citation for Sustainability in recognition of its incorporation of current environmental strategies within an outwardly traditional design.

The Law Quadrangle at the University of Michigan consists of a series of rambling buildings by the architectural firm York and Sawyer, constructed between 1924 and 1933 in a rigorous Collegiate Gothic style, with a small number of modern additions. Until the construction of South Hall across the street, these buildings housed the entire school, including dormitories, classrooms, and the library, which was modeled on a Gothic cathedral. The picturesque

**Presidential Citation in Sustainable Design**

### South Hall, University of Michigan Law School

Ann Arbor, Michigan

#### Hartman-Cox Architects

**Architects of Record:** Integrated Design Solutions

**Contractor:** Walbridge

composition included a number of architecturally impressive elements, but it lacked a unifying, central gathering space.

Hartman-Cox's solution was to infill a courtyard between an existing academic building and the library, creating a series of spaces on two levels for lounging, studying, gathering, and (one presumes) networking. These spaces freely mix restored historic elements with new elements in both neo-traditional and modern styles.

The marquee space, the new heart of the Law School, is the glass-roofed upper level. Its four walls are meticulously restored former exterior walls, glowingly Gothic in character. The original windows remain to provide direct visual connections. Due to fire separation requirements of the building code, these revisions entailed painstaking insertion of fire-rated glass over the historic leaded and stained glass.

The floor, furnishings, and ceiling of the space, however, exude a quiet, confident modernity. Most striking is the glass ceiling, gently arched and supported by four steel "trees," ingenious elements that resolve a variety of structural and technical issues. Their curving "branches" allude to the curves of the Collegiate Gothic style, yet are clearly modern. The four tiers of purlins similarly work on





The new South Hall at the University of Michigan Law School.



A classroom in South Hall.

Photos © Bryan Becker Photography

multiple levels, providing an appropriate visual delicacy while simultaneously incorporating myriad sprinkler heads, lighting, smoke detectors, and other obligatory components.

The Commons project shows “an impressive combination of accurate research and period design,” said juror Robert Loversidge, adding, “The detailing is exquisite.”

South Hall shows much of the same elaborate detailing as the Commons. The projects share certain sustainable traits such as local/regional sourcing of materials and, at a more basic level, the inherent sustainability of robust construction. But South Hall’s sustainability runs deeper, as one would expect nowadays for an

entirely new academic building.

Thanks to high-efficiency chillers, daylighting controls, and other elements, South Hall’s energy use is 25% less than the standard for a building of its kind, and it uses 42% less water. An unusual element is the electrochemical precipitation (ECP) water treatment system, which eliminates the need for chemical additives to the cooling towers’ water. The ECP treatment not only reduces corrosion and biological contamination without resorting to hazardous chemicals, but it also drastically reduces water usage and minimizes operating costs. 🌱



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The Treehouse  
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Minim House  
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# Thinking Universally:

## Design for Everybody

by Denise Liebowitz

**Presidential Citation in Universal Design**

### USO Warrior and Family Center

Fort Belvoir, Virginia

#### STUDIOS Architecture

**Landscape Architects:** Quatrefoil, Inc.

**Lighting Designers:** MCLA | Architectural Lighting Design

**Structural Engineers:** SK&A Engineers

**MEP/Fire Protection Engineers:** Syska Hennessy Group

**Civil Engineers:** Bowman Consulting

**Consultants:** Hinman Consulting Engineers; Richter & Associates; Shen Milson & Wilke

**Contractor:** Scott Long Construction Company

The central space of the USO Warrior and Family Center at Fort Belvoir.

While people once spoke of “handicapped accessibility” for disabled people, we now talk about “universal design” for all of us. In the past 30 years we’ve come a long way in our thinking about design that accommodates everyone regardless of age or ability. In the 1980s Ronald Mace, FAIA, founder of the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, saw that features designed to accommodate those who are disabled often benefit everyone; if a design works well for people with disabilities, then it is likely to work even better for people without them. Curb cuts and sloped sidewalk ramps are very handy for wheelchairs, but they’re just as great for bikes and strollers. Who doesn’t benefit from smooth, ground-level entrances, wider doors and hallways, or stable and slip-resistant surfaces? “Universal Design needs to be part of the profession’s best practices,” urged Mace. “Usability and aesthetics are mutually compatible.” This year’s chapter award winners in the Universal Design category are fulfilling Mace’s vision.

### USO Warrior and Family Center,

“We told [the architects] we wanted this building to be designed to the ‘audible gasp’ standard...,” said USO president Sloan Gibson at the opening of the Warrior and Family Center at Fort Belvoir. The center serves the nation’s returning servicemen and -women as they recuperate from injuries incurred in battle. It offers a home-like environment to troops where they can receive training and services and gather with one another and with their families for recreation and relaxation. “We really wanted to make it feel like a home away from home,” said **Brian Pilot, AIA, LEED AP, of STUDIOS Architecture**. “It had to look residential but perform commercially.”

The audible gasp part begins at the entry. The central two-story great room and fireside lounge are crowned by a wooden vaulted ceiling. There is a gleaming kitchen, plus a dining room, computer lab, high-tech game room, music and art rooms, and versatile lounges. There are quiet rooms and an outdoor “healing” garden for private respite—all designed for veterans and their families coping with life-changing injuries. The design team worked with warriors, clinicians, and families for more than six months to assess their needs.

“The design had to accommodate a wide range of disabilities in one space—not just physical injuries, but traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder,” explained Pilot. “We tried to make it completely frustration-free.” Solid-surface flooring, wide hallways, level thresholds, curbless showers, and lowered kitchen counters are just some of the features that help wounded warriors feel confident about their ability to function in the wider world.



Photo © Bruce Damonte



## Presidential Citation in Universal Design

### Learning Living Residence Hall 6, Gallaudet University

Washington, DC

#### **LTL Architects (design)/ Quinn Evans Architects (architects of record)**

**Structural Engineers:** Robert Silman Associates

**MEP Engineers:** Setty Associates International

**Civil Engineers:** Delon Hampton & Associates

**Fire Protection/Life Safety Engineers:**

The Protection Engineering Group

**Contractor:** Sigal Construction

One of the world's premier institutions for the deaf and hard of hearing, Gallaudet University has long been a pioneer in pedagogy, research, and technology for its community, and now it is establishing a new architectural vocabulary to better accommodate the hearing impaired.

DeafSpace principles, developed under the leadership of Hansel Bauman, Gallaudet's director of Campus Design and Planning, lay out five major design elements that define the relationship between



Learning Living Residence Hall 6 at Gallaudet University.

Photo © Prakash Patel

the deaf experience and the built environment: space and proximity, sensory reach, mobility and proximity, light and color, and acoustics. **LTL Architects** of New York, in collaboration with the local firm of **Quinn Evans Architects** as architects of record, applied these principles in designing the university's new Living Learning Residence. The building is composed of four residential floors accommodating 165 students and four faculty apartments located above a ground floor, which houses a coffee bar, a terraced living room, classrooms, offices, and a flexible collaboration studio.

Since visual communication is critical to the deaf experience, the design maximizes sight lines and avenues of communication.

The revamped Seal and Sea Lion Exhibit at the National Zoo.

## Presidential Citation in Universal Design

### Seal and Sea Lion Exhibit on the American Trail, Smithsonian Institution National Zoological Park

Washington, DC

#### **Quinn Evans Architects**

**Landscape Architects:** The Portico Group

**Structural Engineers:** McMullan & Associates

**MEP Engineers:** James Posey Associates

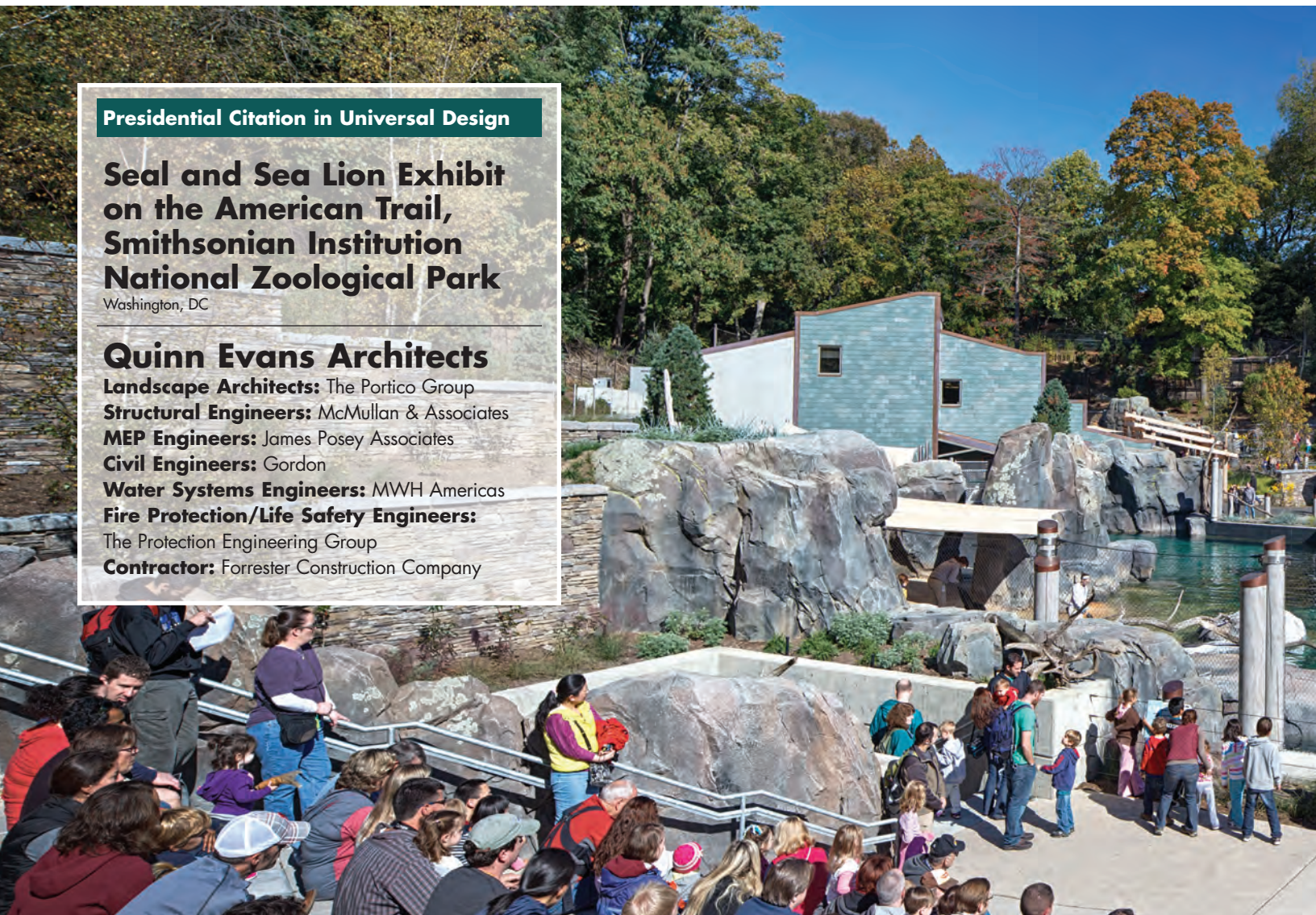
**Civil Engineers:** Gordon

**Water Systems Engineers:** MWH Americas

**Fire Protection/Life Safety Engineers:**

The Protection Engineering Group

**Contractor:** Forrester Construction Company





A dramatic open staircase encourages students to communicate between floors. An internal vista is created in the ground-floor living and learning hall, and expanses of glass face the campus green to permit signing between those in the building and those outside. While there is abundant natural light throughout the building, special care was taken to control the quality of light and avoid glare. “Glare for a deaf person is like background noise for us,” said **Jeffrey Luker, AIA, LEED AP**, principal-in-charge of the project for Quinn Evans. Students carry on sign conversations while they are walking and therefore need to perceive blind corners, changes in grade, and other obstacles with just a quick glimpse, so bright colors are used to define edges clearly.

According to Luker, this was a truly cooperative effort beginning with students who played a role in selecting the winning design-build team, and including Gallaudet’s Bauman and LTL’s lead designer, **David J. Lewis, AIA**.

## Seal and Sea Lion Exhibit, National Zoo,

It began as a relatively modest project: Fix the 1970s-era life support systems in the seal and sea lion pools at the National Zoo. The chiller was malfunctioning, pumps were outdated, and the exhibit was losing 150,000 gallons of water a day. The renovation addressed those problems but then went far beyond that limited charge. There is now more shade for the seals’ and sea lions’

sensitive eyes, and the pool bottom is a more natural dark and non-reflective color so it doesn’t have that swimming pool look. New demonstration areas allow staff to share with visitors animal care and research stories, and a large curved acrylic window set into the pool structure allows visitors to go nose-to-nose with the animals.

“None of us wanted this to look like Disneyland,” said **Alyson Steele, AIA, LEED AP**, of **Quinn Evans Architects**. The project took its design cues from the Pacific Northwest—boulders wrap around the pool and conifers line the hillside. The buildings, which house the water equipment, behind-the-scenes space for animal care, and keepers’ offices, feature materials such as western red cedar, copper, and slate that evoke coastal architecture. Waves lap beaches of sand and rock and conjure up foggy mornings along a Northwest shoreline, and there is even a tidal pool where visitors can kick off their shoes and play in the waves.

The renovation project required the complex integration of several systems including water and energy conservation, fresh and salt-water cleansing, managed wave action, and shade control. It also included reconfiguring the zoo’s American Trail, the pedestrian path that winds among exhibits and up and down the park’s steep hillsides, to make it ADA compliant. Now the trail makes the 80-foot change of elevation in gentle stages comfortable for toddlers, seniors, and everyone else. 🐾

Photo © Ron Blunt Photography







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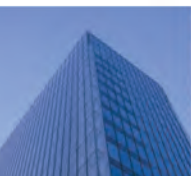
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# Small Wonders:

## Three Modestly-Sized Projects with Big Impacts

by Ronald O'Rourke

The new staircase leading to the viewing platform for the historic ice well at Gadsby's Tavern.

Photo © Hoachlander Davis Photography

An architect's talent is sometimes best revealed in a well-done small project that generates an outsize impact. The jurors this year gave awards to three thoughtfully executed small projects that, while quite different from one another, share a common thread of illustrating how good design on a small scale can go beyond meeting functional needs to generate a sense of wonder.

**Bell Architects'** renovation of the entry stair and viewing platform for the historic subterranean ice well next to Gadsby's Tavern, at the corner of North Royal and Cameron Streets in Alexandria, transforms what had been a drab stairwell into a graceful entrance worthy of one of the city's more distinctive historic structures.

The ice well, which dates to the 1790s, lies beneath the sidewalk that runs along the Cameron Street side of the tavern. The 1970s-era stairwell that provided access to the ice well's viewing platform, while serviceable, was dark and cramped by today's standards, and did little to attract the interest of passersby.

As renovated, the entry is much more inviting from the street, a lot more fun to move through, and more informative about the

### Special Citation in Historic Resources

## Gadsby's Tavern Ice Well

Washington, DC

### Bell Architects, PC

**Associated Architects:** Larson/Koenig Architects

**Lighting Designers:** George Sexton Associates

**Graphic Designers:** Paris Design

**Structural Engineers:** Robert Silman Associates

**Civil Engineers:** RC Fields, Jr. & Associates

**MEP Engineers:** Grotheer and Company

**Cost Estimators:** Project Cost, Inc.

**Contractor:** Centennial Contractors Enterprises, Inc.

well's significance. The area is considerably more open, and the dark brick of the old design has been replaced with light-toned bluestone, creating a space that is substantially more welcoming and safer-looking.





Two views of the children's spaces inspired by the habitat of naked mole rats at the National Zoo.

Photos © Chris Spielmann

The project's serpentine stairway has an organic, almost Art Nouveau sensibility. The viewing platform, which introduces another curving surface, adds to the sense of procession through the space, creating a brief, Alice-in-Wonderland-like feeling of travel to a far-off time and place. "The below-grade viewing area," the firm says, "evokes images of a water-eroded quarry."

The redesigned viewing window offers a less-obstructed view into the well, and engraved stone panels above the window provide supporting historical information. Up on the sidewalk, a new paving pattern calls out the circular shape of the ice well, and additional engraved stonework identifies what lies directly below, enriching the experience for passersby.

Although considerably more dramatic than what it replaces, the renovated entry employs fewer street-level curbs and rails, and consequently is, if anything, less obtrusive than the old design when viewed from a distance, allowing the historic architecture of the tavern building itself to be more easily appreciated. The renovated entry thus catches the eye of those walking by without "photo bombing" its historic context. The jurors praised the project as one that "integrated art, architecture, and craftsmanship."

#### Folly Award in Interior Architecture

### Design and Naked Mole Rats

Washington, DC

## Andrew Pressman, FAIA

**Contractor:** Cassio Tito

Moving from virtual time travel to the realm of childhood imagination, **Andrew Pressman's** installation economically converts an adjoining pair of bedrooms into a functional



and fun sleep-study-play zone for his two children. The project features bright colors, lofted sleeping areas, and an elevated passageway linking the two rooms. The result is an enjoyably complex arrangement of space that meets his children's daily needs while encouraging their sense of adventure.

"A trip to the National Zoo inspired the concept for adjacent bedrooms for our seven-year-old twins, Samantha and Daniel," Pressman said. "They loved the idea of a giant play structure incorporating their sleeping, study, and play areas. They thought of the concept after observing naked mole rats scampering through plastic tubes within their uniquely constructed environment."

Samantha and Daniel helped to design the installation using a chipboard study model. "The project's objectives," Pressman said, "included creating a space that becomes a three-dimensional portal to a world of imagination and dreams, a safe haven to inspire creative thinking, and a place for fostering independence yet nurturing camaraderie."



The beds provide the perfect setting for family gatherings such as evening storytelling, castle banquets, and oceanic voyages with Bruce, the eight-foot shark.” The twins, he added, “love the bridge, which enables them to visit each other—without their parents’ knowledge—long past bedtime, and to never fear being alone in the dark.”

“After a day of looking at a lot of very professional work,” one juror commented, “this stood out as unfettered space-making.” The jury noted approvingly that with this project, the architect “experimented on himself.”

Although the project was built for Samantha and Daniel, there is magic in it for adults as well, because it can take them back to a time when, as children, they themselves took pencil to paper to draw pictures of crenellated castles and fantastic sea monsters.

## Merit Award in Architecture

### Tale of the Tongs

Inishturk Island, County Mayo, Ireland

### Travis Price Architects

**Project Team and Contractors:** Travis Price, FAIA; Kathleen Lane, Assoc. AIA; Danny O’Toole; Kelly Davies; and 16 students from the School of Architecture and Planning, the Catholic University of America; with assistance from the Mayo County Council

As a final step, we travel from the realm of childhood imagination to an actual distant land—County Mayo in Ireland—where architect **Travis Price, FAIA**, and a group of 16 architecture students from the

Catholic University of America designed and built a collection of elemental structures that sit lightly on a remote coastal landscape, helping to bring forth a sense of mystery and reverence among visitors to the site.

The project, called The Tale of the Tongs, is located on Inishturk, an archeologically rich island nine miles off Ireland’s west coast that has been inhabited since 4,000 BCE. The installation is the latest in a series of memorializing structures in far-flung locations created by groups of undergraduate and graduate students working under Price’s direction.

“Each year,” Price said, “a project is designed in the spring semester and built in nine days on site at a remote location, celebrating the mythology and culture of an extraordinary land.” For The Tale of the Tongs project, the students worked with local craftsmen to build the structures using stone from the site, glass and stainless steel.

The installation “commemorates families who have resided on Inishturk for generations, earlier inhabitants going back 6,000 years, the Irish diaspora who emigrated, and those who return to their Irish heritage,” Price said. “The project evokes the centuries of cultural gatherings on Inishturk, and is intended to function as a shrine, a respite, a view point, and a rest point, with a hearth at its center dedicated to the diaspora. Tongs of the hearth set the coals to rekindle the fires of reunion.”

The Tale of the Tongs is “one of the most amazing little projects I’ve ever run across,” said one juror, who added that it brings out the “mythical aspect of architecture.” Another juror noted how the project’s structures were “put together with extreme care and sophistication” to create “a magical presence in an amazing landscape.” 🏡

The Tale of the Tongs project in a remote area of Ireland.







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