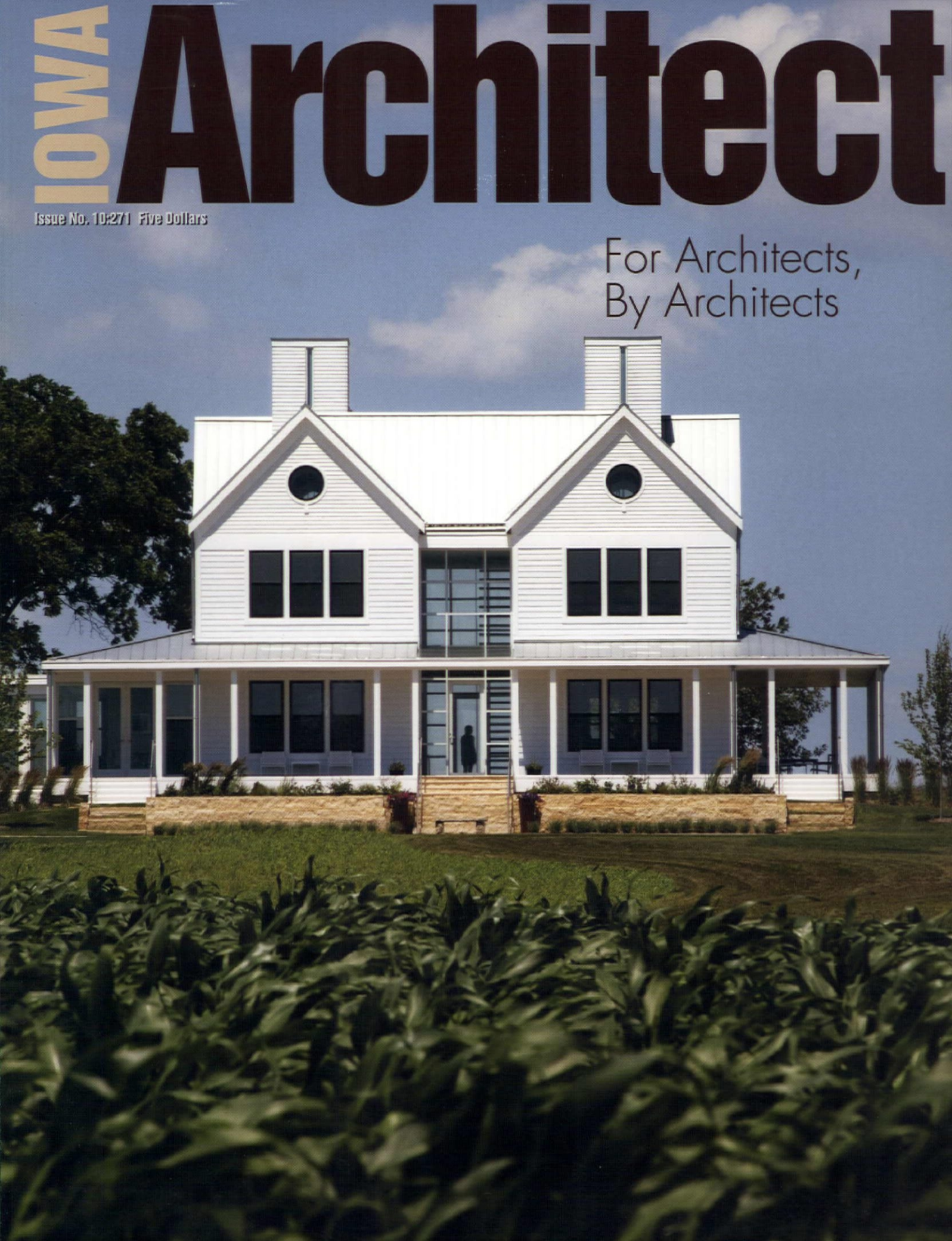
IOWA Architect

Issue No. 10:271 Five Dollars

For Architects,
By Architects



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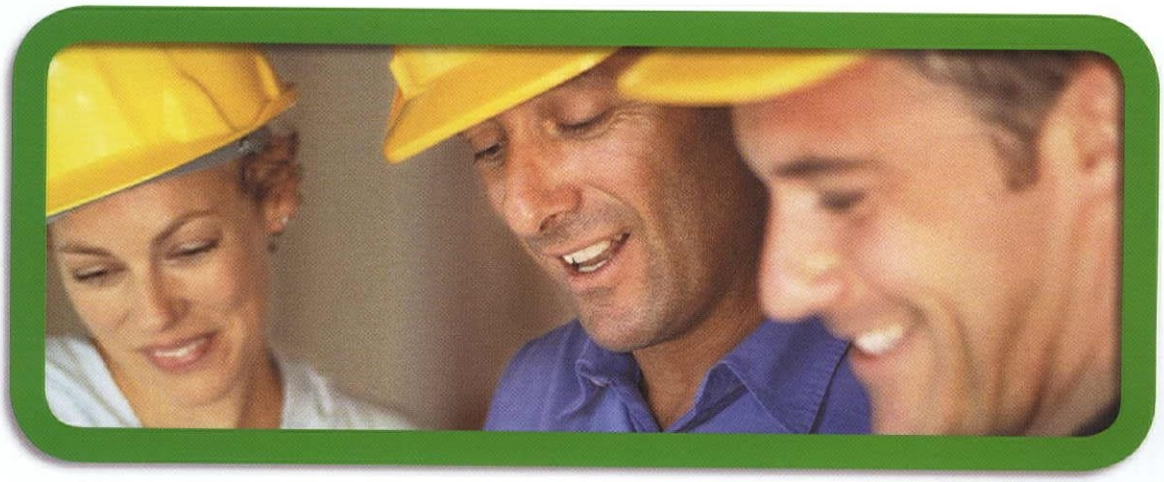

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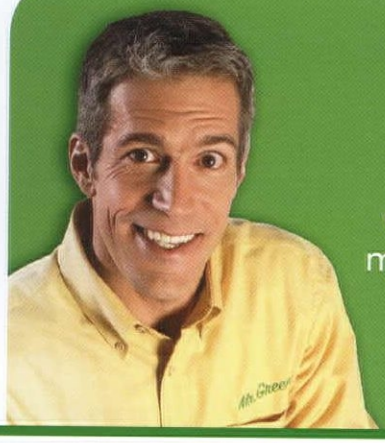

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CONTENTS

IOWA Architect 10:271

For Architects, By Architects

DEPARTMENTS

COVER
Monson Residence
Photographer: Farshid Assassi, Hon. AIA Iowa, Assassi Productions ©

One of the most difficult challenges for a designer is to design for one's self. A project can be so heavily laden with constraints that the design path is relatively well-defined from the onset. Architects with the opportunity to design for themselves in an unrestrained environment soon learn the task is not without burden. This is when a strong initial concept behind the project is most critical. The projects within are each a testament to the development of such an idea—fostering it's unscathed, healthy evolution all the way to a built form.

Be it an office, a home or a piece of furniture, each is the result of a logical thought process—embodied within the finished work and distinctively unique to each designer. They reveal a pride of craftsmanship made apparent through thoughtful execution and relentless attention to detail. From concept to completion, each of these designs displays a balanced control of aesthetic freedom, showcasing the talent behind the work designed by—and for—the designers themselves.

For Architects, By Architects

You may have noticed this issue, and the last, were late in getting out. We regret that Dawson Publications, which has been publishing the magazine for more than two years, has closed its doors. Through a coordinated effort by the AIA Iowa Office and a number of heroic volunteers, Stonehand Publishing was found, and Iowa Architect continues. Thanks to all of you involved!

Finally, we pay tribute to Chick Herbert, the founder and past president of Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck (formerly Charles Herbert and Associates). Chick's immense impact upon architecture in Iowa is unmistakable. Not only did he design some of the state's most recognizable buildings, but he also served as mentor and educator to many generations of young architects.

Tim Schroeder, AIA, LEED AP
Editor, *Iowa Architect*

IN MEMORIAM

BY CALVIN F. LEWIS, FAIA

1925–2010

Charles E. "Chick" Herbert

MY GREAT FRIEND, MENTOR, AND INSPIRATION

Cal Lewis was a long-time friend and colleague to Chick Herbert and was a partner with the firm Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck. Chick was both a mentor and inspiration to Cal over the years. Cal is a professor and past chair of the Department of Architecture at Iowa State University, where he continues to instill the values he learned from Chick and empower future generations of architects.

COURTESY OF HLKB

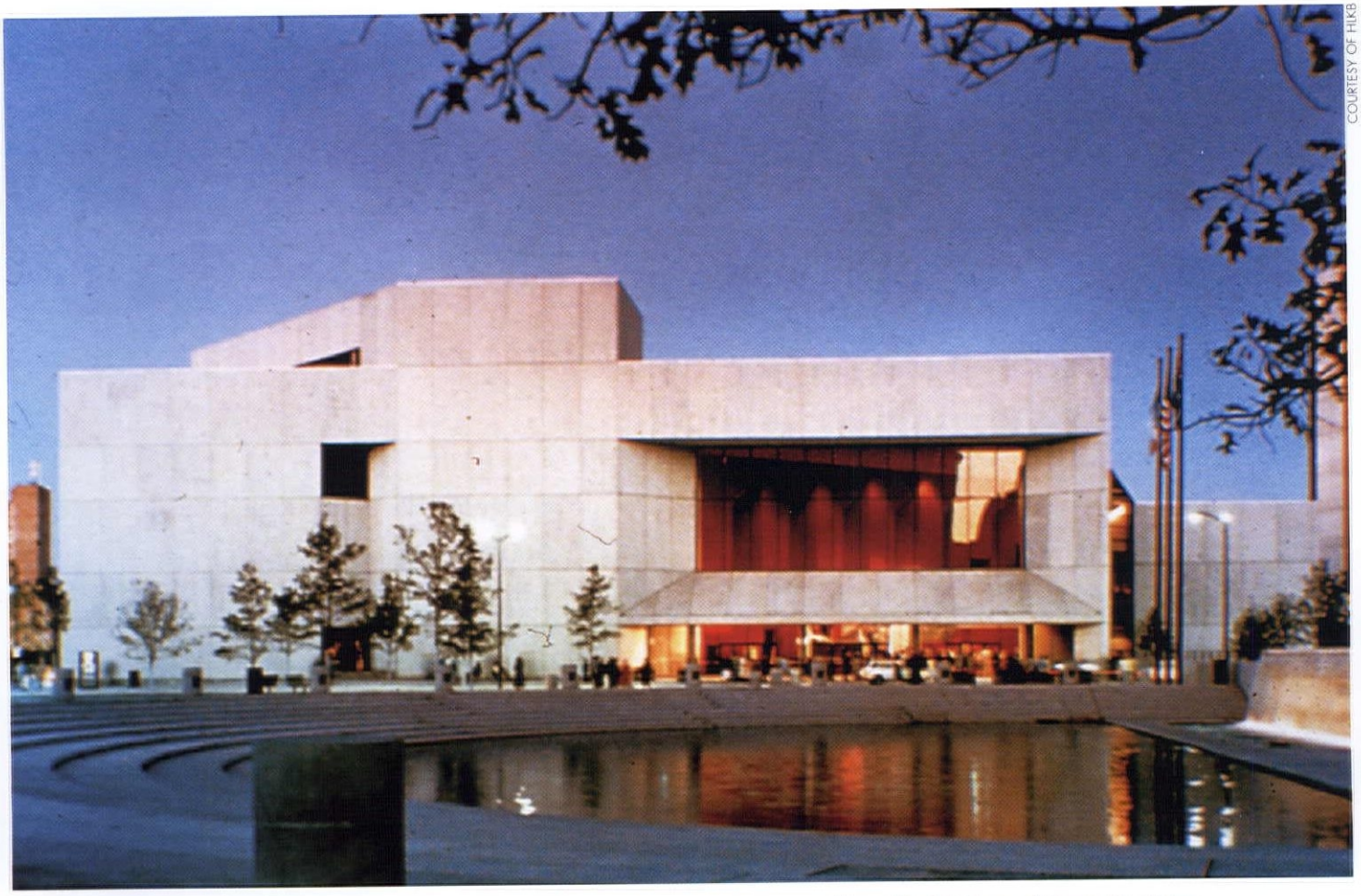
Portrait of Chick Herbert *circa* 1958.

Chick Herbert has likely had a greater impact on the architecture, and, consequently, the people of Des Moines and Iowa than any architect may have ever had on his or her hometown and state. His amazing success was nationally heralded in 2001 when the firm he founded, Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture (HLKB), was recognized by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) with the National AIA Firm Award, only the 35th firm to be so honored. In a discipline dominated by the coastal metropolises, it was unprecedented for a modest Midwestern firm to win that award and get its name engraved in the granite wall at the AIA headquarters in Washington, D.C. A map representing the location of all the AIA Firm Award recipients through 2001 clearly demonstrates the firm's unique accomplishment.

This most prestigious firm recognition was earned by receiving seven National AIA Honor Awards for Design Excellence in less than a decade and more than 200 other design awards over the history of the firm. Only one other firm, SOM, a huge international practice, won more AIA Honor Awards over that same brief period. All of those accomplishments evolved from the fledgling firm, Charles Herbert and Associates, which Chick started in 1961. He had no work in hand, but he possessed a strong belief in the benevolence of architecture and the power gained from engaging others. Chick's father-in-law had offered him the opportunity to join in his successful business, but Chick chose to follow his passion for architecture and earn his place in the community. It was a courageous decision that proved to be wise as well.

The extraordinary collection of award-winning architecture produced by his firm would usually constitute a highly successful career. However, Chick's greatest legacy has been his positive influence on the many people he touched, not only through his inspired and intelligent architecture, but also through the generous relationships with his devoted

COURTESY OF HLKB



COURTESY OF HLKB

Above: The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines.

employees, delighted clients, respectful peers, loyal friends and beloved family. I have not heard an ill word spoken about Chick Herbert from anyone at anytime in the 40 years I have known him. There have been innumerable testimonies extolling his positive influence as the consummate mentor, and I lead that chorus. He taught us that architecture is about people, as a business, profession and place. The quality of each building, as well as the quality of the firm was absolutely dependent on the quality of the human relationships that were developed. This profound lesson was invaluable to observe and incredibly difficult to replicate without his gentle guidance and positive reinforcement.

Management strategies are finally catching up to Chick's instinctive, compelling methods of personal interaction. His overwhelming success came from empowering others—giving them opportunities to learn, grow and even to err along the way. The optimism and motivation created by his expressions of confidence were contagious. With each new opportunity, he trusted us to go beyond our own perceived capabilities. Failure was not an option because no one wanted to betray the faith Chick had so graciously bestowed. An environment of enrichment and discovery prevailed. A sign on the office wall challenged us all to "do a common thing uncommonly well."

He was an avid student but a subtle teacher. Chick was always looking for inspiration and was never satisfied with the status quo. He constantly sought ways to better the built environment and to gain and share enlightenment. He listened carefully, learned well and helped educate through mutual discovery rather than enforced dictum. Chick became the ultimate architectural resource for our community leaders. They respected and trusted him and followed his wise counsel.

A prime example of that leadership was Chick's critical role in the development of the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines in 1979. Downtown Des Moines was deteriorating at the time. An architect from California had been hired to design a new civic auditorium to help revitalize the downtown, but the bond issue to finance the project failed by one percentage point to receive the required 60 percent majority required for passage. All appeared lost, but David Kruidenier, a prominent civic leader, solicited Chick's assistance to promptly redesign a new Civic Center that was both sufficiently affordable and properly noteworthy to attract private funding in lieu of the failed public bond issue. The successful fundraising effort afforded both a new civic auditorium and a public plaza that signaled the rebirth of downtown and became the cornerstone for the extensive redevelopment that has continued to occur ever since. Now, 30 years later, another revitalization of the plaza is being envisioned in recognition of the central role this civic amenity has played in the vibrant life of our city.

Chick was always looking for inspiration and never was satisfied with the status quo.

COURTESY OF HLKB

Chick's greatest legacy has been his positive influence on the many people he touched.

COURTESY OF HLKB

Charles Herbert and Associates 20-year firm anniversary.

Another landmark project in the redevelopment of downtown was the Meredith Corporation complex completed in 1980. Once again, one of Chick's respected peers, Bob Burnett, the president of Meredith Corporation at that time, had come to him with a significant challenge. Meredith had purchased a site in West Des Moines and had already developed a design with an architect from Boston. The company was on the verge of moving its entire operation out of downtown. Serendipitously, the oil embargo and monetary crisis of the mid-1970's was having a financial impact on the company's fiscal planning. Mr. Burnett contacted Chick to look into the pragmatic possibility of converting the company's existing historic downtown facility into a new headquarters.

The goal of the project was to provide a highly identifiable facility for this national media company. It needed to be responsive to their sophisticated, creative staff and greatly improve the building's energy performance. The challenge was to accomplish these difficult tasks within an existing building, including their former utilitarian printing plant. The building had been constructed early in the century and had undergone numerous additions over those many years. In addition to those demanding expectations, the remodeling project was to be phased over several years and would have to be constructed around the existing staff, since they would have to remain in the building throughout the entire remodeling process. Undaunted, Chick accepted the task.

The proposed scheme restored the building's original historic tower and façade as well as enhanced the remainder of the aging building complex by covering it with an energy efficient glass skin. Although today's current standard for structured employee parking in the downtown was unprecedented at that time, the project also proposed adding a parking ramp for employee convenience. Mr. Burnett was highly skeptical of the proposal's eccentric architectural expression, which contrasted the new sleek skin with the historic facade, but Chick put his personal credibility on the line for this unique proposal. Fortunately, the project was a great success, receiving TIME magazine's "Best in Design" award for 1983. This innovative adaptive-reuse project revived the building's original landmark status. It also established a precedent and helped to restore confidence for corporate redevelopment within the urban core.

COURTESY OF HLKB

Encouraged by Meredith's initial success, the City of Des Moines asked Chick's firm to collaborate with a team of other professionals to analyze the potential for a proposed linear urban park that would not only serve as a valuable civic amenity, but also stimulate and shape additional development opportunities in the downtown. This bold planning vision helped convince Meredith to expand their building complex. Working with Chick's firm once again, the project created a true gateway into the city. Meredith's new building and public gardens anchored the new park, receiving both a National AIA Honor Award for Design Excellence in 2002 and the "Building of the Decade" award for the 1990s from AIA Iowa in their publication celebrating 100 years of architecture in Iowa.

The existence of the new park, coupled with Meredith's initiative, did help generate extensive new corporate development that now borders the park and defines its edge. Even the park itself has evolved into the Pappajohn Sculpture Garden, a powerful and pastoral urban setting for a world-class art collection. The list of projects in the city that were created or influenced by Chick and his firm are far too numerous to identify individually, but if you live in Des Moines, they have surely had a positive impact on your life each day.

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Above: Meredith Corporate headquarters and Gateway expansion.

The influence of Chick's architecture was not limited to his home City of Des Moines; it extended across the entire state and especially to Iowa State University, his alma mater. On many occasions when a building of significance was being considered on campus, Chick was entrusted with the responsibility for creating an appropriate vision.

Parks Library, the academic center of the university, received Chick's careful attention; the Grant Wood murals and grand public spaces were resurrected to their former glory through the sensitive but bold addition and remodeling to the traditional iconic building. Chick also gave new life to historic Alumni Hall overlooking Lake Laverne, which became the new admissions building for prospective students being introduced to the university. When the College of Design was formed in 1978, Chick was selected to create the new academic identity for the entire design community. The energy-efficient atrium building united and activated the new college within its shared communal space. Chick's heritage as a Cyclone basketball player was a bonus when the athletics department called on the firm to establish the new home for Iowa State athletics. The Jacobson Building addition and remodeling created a new front door to the football stadium and served as the keystone structure for the entire stadium complex. It became a featured vantage point for Jack Trice Field where Chick particularly enjoyed watching his fellow Cyclones perform.

In 1991, AIA Iowa, the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects, decided to institute a Medal of Honor intended to recognize their extraordinary members for distinguished service to the profession of architecture. It is not surprising that they chose Charles E. "Chick" Herbert to receive their very first gold medallion. It remains the highest individual honor bestowed by our architectural community. Similarly, Chick will always be the gold standard of our profession.

Last fall, on his 84th birthday, Chick attended the annual AIA Iowa Convention in Des Moines to learn something new and share his passion and compassion with his friends and peers in our noble profession. Even in his retirement, he remained an inspiration to all. His towering yet humble presence will truly be missed, but his benevolent legacy is destined to live on and flourish.

The influence of Chick's architecture was not limited to his home City of Des Moines; it extended across the entire state.

COURTESY OF HLKB

Above: Blank Performing Arts Center, Simpson College, Indianola

ALTERNATIVES

BY PETER P. GOCHÉ

Encloister

STEVE SANDA

With whispers in foreign tongue, childhood footsteps encircle. Seated at the travertine inlet, the hand traces over previous illuminations beneath baldachins hollow. Mental mutterings are accompanied by the intonation of a labored ascent. Overhead, Francesca sorts cutlery.
—Illuminated text

Organized gestures, which are to say ritualized and codified gestures, are not simply performed in "physical" space.[1] The human being is capable of producing such gesture and, therefore, space within physical spaces. Consider, for example, the cloister and the solemn pace of the monastic community who are contained there. What has happened here is that, happily, a gestural space has succeeded in mooring a mental space—a space of contemplation and theological abstraction—to the earth, thus allowing it to express itself symbolically and to become part of a practice, the practice of a well-defined group within a well-defined society. Hence, then, is a space in which a life balanced between the contemplation of the self in its finiteness and that of a transcendent infinity may experience a happiness composed of quietude and a fully accepted lack of fulfillment.[2]

STEVE SANDA

STEVE SANDA

STEVE SANDA

Encloister, a performance art installation by Peter P. Goché, was developed specifically as a matter of repeated visits to the Chiostro della Bramante in Rome, Italy. This *chiostro*, or cloister, was commissioned by the pontifcate of Julius II in 1504. The Holy Father hired Donato Bramnate to design this small cloister as an addition to the existing church of Santa Maria della Pace.

The Pace cloister is on two floors of approximately equal height. The most unusual feature is the way in which a column is made to stand immediately above the centers of each of the ground-floor arches—a subtle shift in the Italian Renaissance style of architecture that holds a "solid-over-solid and void-over-void" proportioning system as the proper. This subtle adjustment of proportion and contrasts of light and shade charge the space of the Pace cloister as monastic. This courtyard is bounded by the convent and loggia at both the ground level and the primo piano. The courtyard, which offers natural light and ventilation to the complex, is square in plan with a rainwater inlet at its center. This area is paved with granite cobblestone.

The convent and courtyard now serve as a multifunctional exhibition site created and presently managed by the association, Dart Societa', which manages the scheduling of shows and different events. As a cultural production and promotional group, it works in partnership with the City of Rome and the Region of Lazio, as well as with other cultural institutions and public and private, national and international bodies and organizations. The conversion has yielded a series of spaces (exhibition, restaurant and bookstore) similar to those at the Des Moines Art Center.

The routine gestural occupation of the interior loggia and courtyard consisted of a bodily deployment of self in a monastic walk that inscribed and culminated in the production of an illuminated text while seated in the center of the physical space. This writing was initiated by the deployment of a hollowed baldachin for illuminating the act.

This bodily measure and instrument mark and appropriate the architectural space of the original cloister and resident culture. As a result, what remains and is contained is the collective memory of repeated human celebration specific to this place. Its manifestation is based on the desire to unfold a cultural view of the world through the re-insertion of rite in this now public setting originally enclosed as a private dwelling-place where the religious live according to their rule. In this way, the performer and casual observer enter into a full sensory experience and corresponding recognition of the historic inmate behavior.

STEVE SANDA

[1] *Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 1991) p. 216.*
[2] *Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 1991) p. 217.*

Still Life with Landscape

BALANCING TRADITIONS AND MODERNITY IN A CLASSIC IOWA SETTING

Kevin Monson designs a new dialogue between traditional and modern living outside of Iowa City.

The rolling hills around Iowa City inspired Grant Wood to paint a lifetime's worth of saturated, almost cartoon-like landscapes inspired by the land's graceful curves. Add a stark farmhouse that's all angles and straight lines against this backdrop, and you have one of the indelible images of the Midwest—or a regrettable cliché. Iowa architects and landscape architects are used to dealing with this legacy; how do you get people to see the farm and not "the farm?" For architect Kevin Monson, the answer lay in mixing forms, materials, spaces and views into a carefully orchestrated layering of new and old.

Monson and his family bought a 1880's farmhouse that stood atop a crumbling stone foundation and over 200 acres of prime Grant Wood landscape just outside of Iowa City. To address the foundation problem, the house itself was moved to a site closer to the main road, but Monson envisioned a new, reinterpreted house that would sit atop the original site on a new substructure. Here, he faced the conundrum of how to respect the traditions of the place while continuing his Neumann Monson Architects' philosophy of modern and minimalist materials, forms and detailing. "Some of the beauty of the rural vernacular is its pure simplicity," says Monson, "which is not at all foreign to modern architecture." This proved to be the guiding principle for a balanced approach. From the outside, the new house recalls farmhouses' gabled forms, but here the gable is doubled on the main elevations with a glazed stair hall between the two gables. A porch running around the first floor ties the two gabled forms together, but also introduces subtle asymmetries that create a more formal, screened-in outdoor room on the east and a more casual "working" porch to the west.

These allusive forms are rendered in a resolutely contemporary palette of materials, detailed thoughtfully and

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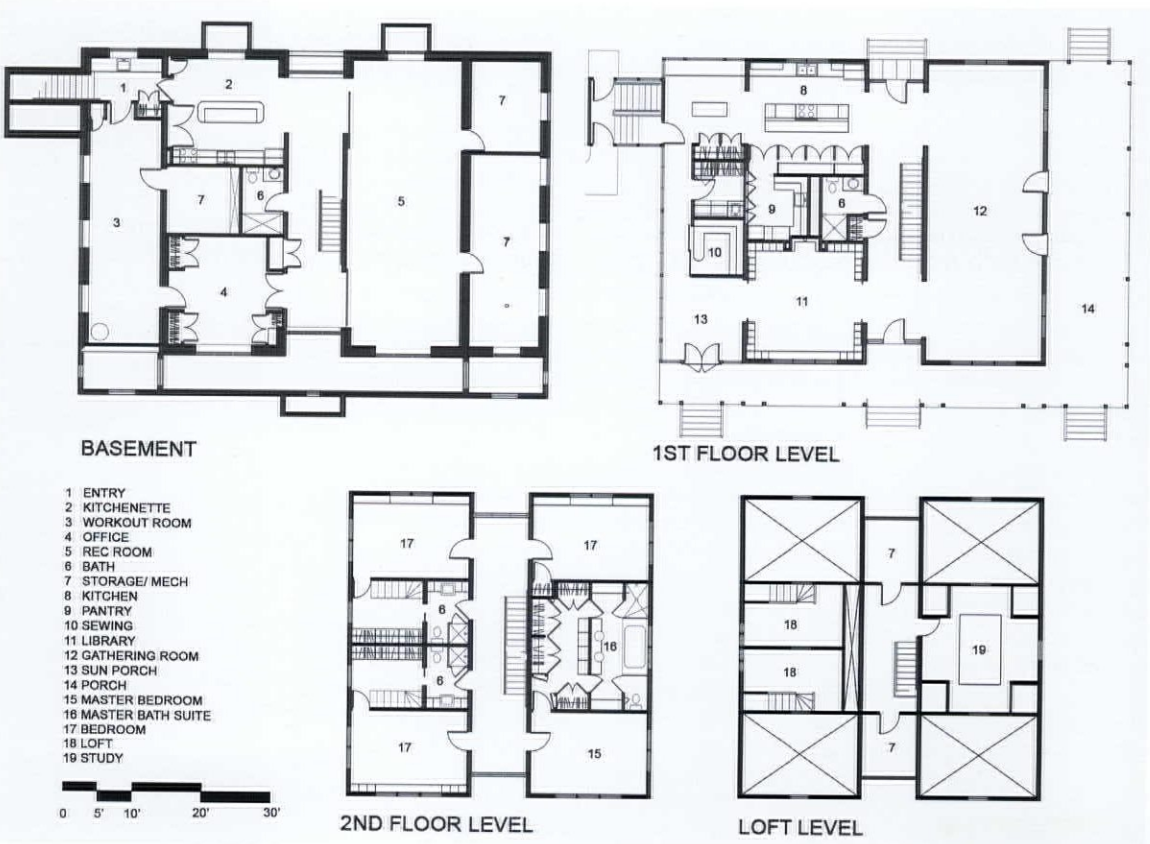
Right: The house's wraparound porch offers views in all directions and connects to working elements of the site.

Below: In the plan, the Monson residence builds on the immediately apparent symmetry of the main elevation. Circulation occurs around a central, glazed stair hall.



Project: Monson Residence
Location: Iowa City, IA
Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
General Contractor: Smith and Wood Construction
Mechanical Contractor: Brandt Heating and Cooling
Electrical Contractors: Merit Electric
Structural Engineer: Neumann Monson Architects
Interior Design: Neumann Monson Architects
Landscape: Genus Landscape Architects
Photographer: Farshid Assassi, Hon. AIA Iowa, Assassi Productions ©

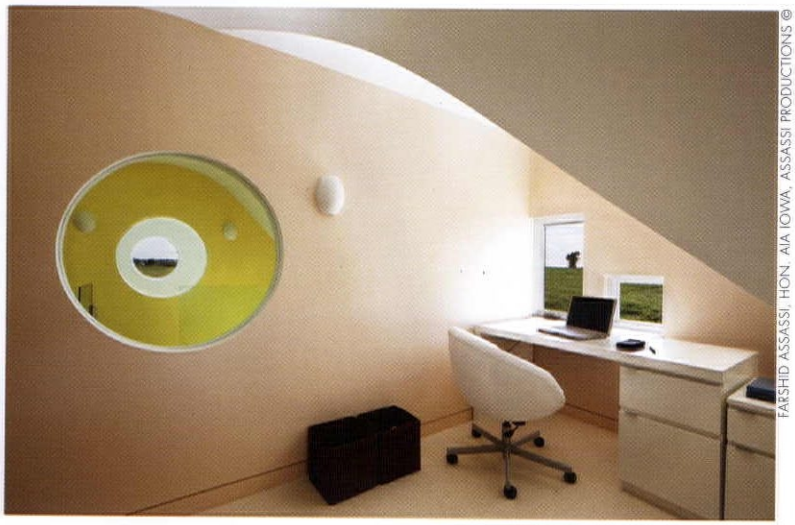
THOMAS LESLIE

FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©

with minimal articulation—another parallel, says Monson, to the original. "Farmhouses weren't overly adorned. They were simple, and they were designed for a harsh climate." Today, that translates into cement board instead of wood siding to resist hail and weather, but with joints and edges that directly recall the corner boards of Victorian structures. Inside, the spaces are more firmly entrenched in the 21st century, with cantilevered stairs, rich surfaces and carefully placed lighting, all creating a sense of a contemporary shelter perched atop a timeless landscape.

That sense is most apparent on the porch, where vistas of a newly restored barn and a combination of restored prairie and working farm extend in all directions. "The most difficult decision was the garage," says Monson. "Every view in every direction was worth celebrating. We didn't want anything to block the views." Tucking the garage on the western edge of the house helped, but Monson found a way to get even these views back. Atop the house's twin gables is a roof deck that oversees not only the site but also the rolling hills beyond. "We can watch fireworks from eight different towns on the Fourth of July," says Monson.

—Thomas Leslie, AIA, is an associate professor at Iowa State University and a 2010 Eshbach Visiting Scholar at Northwestern University's McCormick School of Engineering.



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Above: On approach, the straightforward appearance of the two gables is subverted by gently asymmetrical porch elements and a contemporary palette.

Left: View from an upper floor room, under one of the two gables. The contrast between the polished interior and the agricultural landscape is highlighted throughout the house.

Woodland Transparency

SEASONAL CHANGE PAINTS A NEW MASTERPIECE

Contemporary design frames both interior and exterior into a single continuous gesture at the Thies residence.

Dan Thies' Cedar Rapids residence explores the contrasts between architecture and nature in a heavily wooded, sloping site. The house, designed as an object in the woods, is intentionally made distinct from its natural site but also responds to its dramatic terrain. Commonalities are based on connections and spatial definition rather than attempting to mimic a natural aesthetic in the building itself. By being distinctive from nature, the house cleverly mediates one's experience through the site and articulates formality within the natural environment.

The residence is the result of a major renovation of an existing house designed by Ray Crites. The original organizational and functional intent had been eroded by a series of additions, so preserving the house was not essential. A significant portion of the building was removed, leaving only the foundation, garages and pool. The new design subtly honors Crites' original design through its architectural clarity, composition and plan.

Invisible from the road, the home is approached obliquely by way of a driveway carved out of the trees which emerges at the entry courtyard. Upon entering the clearing, visitors are confronted by a sloping 10-acre site which falls away as one passes into and through the house. The house becomes a site mediator as the walk-out lower level responds to the topographic shifts in the landscape and reinforces the dialogue between architecture and nature.

The house appears solid at its public face, and the main living space is revealed as a transparent void only to the private spaces of the rear yard and pool. From the home's interior spaces, one's view is continually directed back out to the landscape.

The plan is organized by a cross axis that references the layout of the original Crites house. A circulation axis runs the length of the house, linking the dining and living areas to bedrooms in a similar order from public to private, terminating with a view to the woods through a full-height window. The center of the house is occupied by the main living space transparent to both front and back sides, creating a secondary cross axis of views in and through the space.

An open stairway to the lower level descends along the two-story north window wall, providing access to the office, entertainment and guest bedroom areas. The purposeful connection to the wooded property is reinforced with full-height glazing that provides spectacular light quality and views into the rolling parkland site beyond. The regulated geometry of the pool to the south, accessible from the main level, contrasts with the more natural reflecting pond and waterfall to the north, accessible from the lower level. Both are viewed from the primary living areas through full-height window walls.

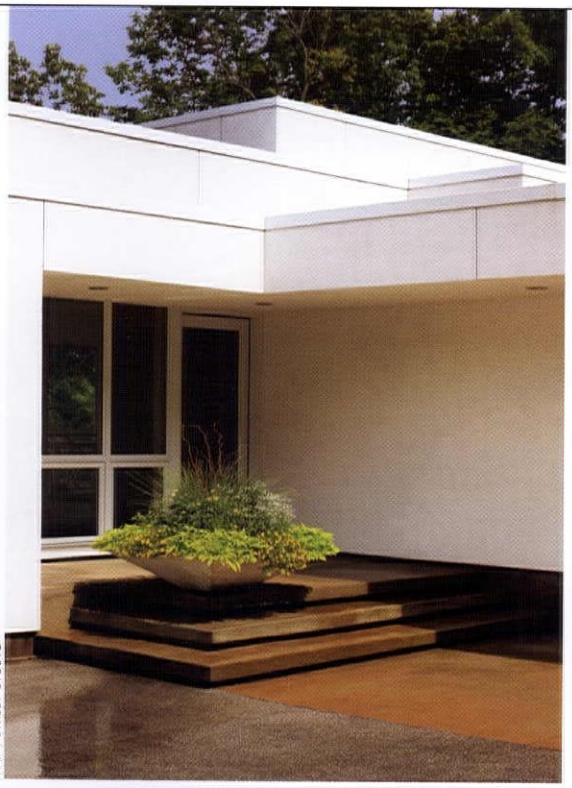
A minimalist interior with white walls with maple wood trim and cabinetry makes for a sleek and contem-

Right: The formal geometry of the pool contrasts with the natural reflecting pond and landscaping in the rear yard.

MAIN STREET STUDIO

Project: Thies Residence
Location: Cedar Rapids, IA
Architect: OPN Architects, Inc.
Structural Engineer: Jim Tometich
General Contractor: Quality Builders
Photographer: Main Street Studio

BRADY DORMAN



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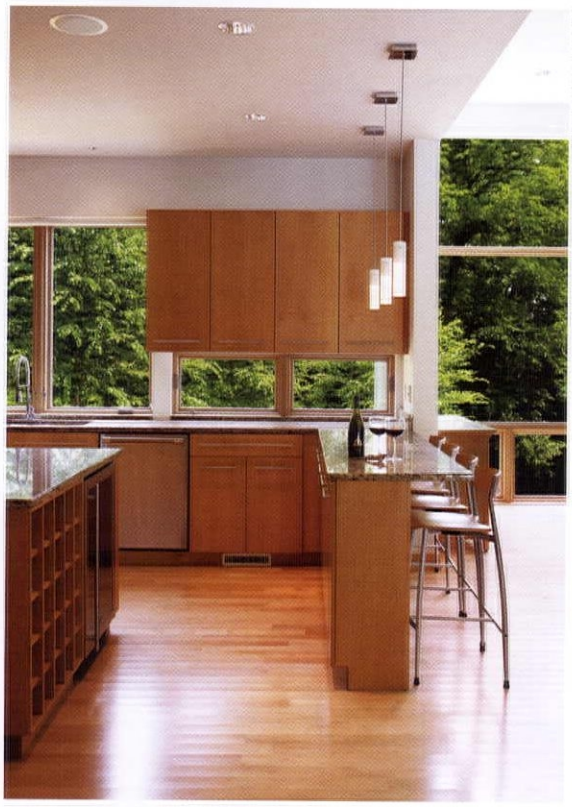
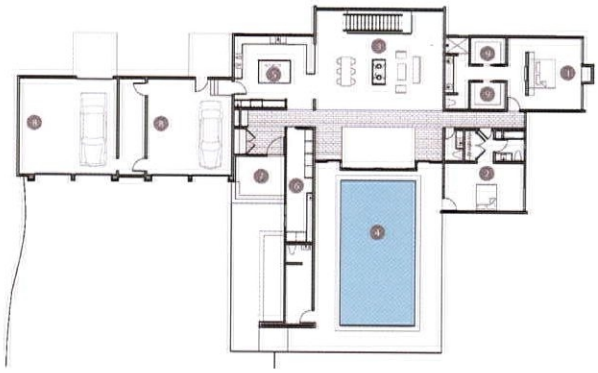


Left: The house is distinct from its natural site and responds to its dramatic terrain.

Right: The main living space is transparent with views to both formal and natural outdoor spaces.

Key

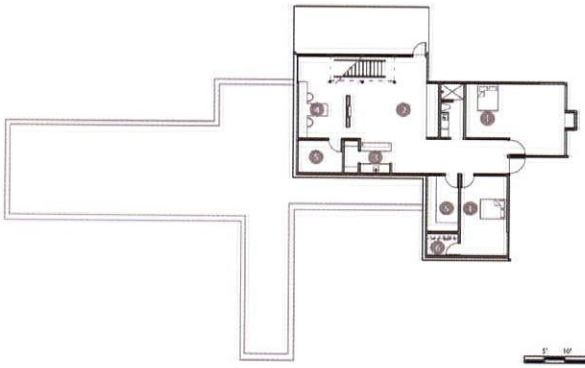
1. Master Bedroom
2. Bedroom
3. Great Room
4. Pool
5. Kitchen
6. Laundry Room
7. Entryway
8. Garage
9. Closet



LEVEL ONE PLAN

Key

1. Bedroom
2. Family Room
3. Wet Bar
4. Office
5. Storage
6. Closet



LOWER LEVEL PLAN

porary living space. This simplicity allows for the natural views to become the real focal point of the house.

The dichotomy between rigid architectural form and the natural landscape is addressed by mediating their distinctions through thresholds and defining spaces. The simple, clean geometries of the Thies residence articulate an intriguing contrast between the formal dwelling and the unrefined nature it inhabits.

—Brady Dorman is a 5th year architecture student at Iowa State University with a focus on architecture, urban planning and transit. More of his writing can be found at www.urbanthinking.org.

Public Engagement

"YOU TALK THE TALK. DO YOU...WALK THE WALK?" —*FULL METAL JACKET*, ANIMAL MOTHER, 1987

"We love the space, and it's a fabulous central location connected to the skywalk system and close to the Polk County Courthouse and Convention Center."
—Suzanne Schwengels

For 15 years, the office of the American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter, was discreetly located on the main floor of Hotel Fort Des Moines at 10th and Walnut Streets. Designed by Proudfoot, Bird and Rawson and completed in 1918, the hotel played host to a variety of film celebrities and politicians during the 20th century - from Mae West and Henry Fonda to Nikita Kruschchev and Spiro Agnew.

The hotel was restored and renovated in the 1980s with impeccable work by Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck and Shiffler Frey Baldwin Clause. The woodwork, furnishings and details throughout the building made it one of the finest hotels in the city. There were two factors, however, that made this less than an ideal venue for the AIA chapter. Hotel Fort Des Moines is situated on the periphery of the central business district several blocks away from the main business activity in the downtown center. There was only a remote possibility of a "chance" encounter with the office by professionals, besides those staying in the hotel, and its existence was virtually unknown and unseen to the general public. The other consideration was that it was not an efficient space for the business functions and capabilities of the chapter.

DIMENSION IMAGES

Above: The bright white walls and high ceiling combined with light wood partitions and red chairs create a clean look. The open configuration of space adds to the sensibility of efficiency and transparency.

DIMENSION IMAGES

Right: The American Institute of Architects Iowa Chapter office no longer sits on the perimeter of the business district but now enjoys a public street level presence close to the action. Within the block are the Civic Center, Nollen Plaza and Crusoe Umbrella, a fine assemblage of architecture, public space and sculpture.

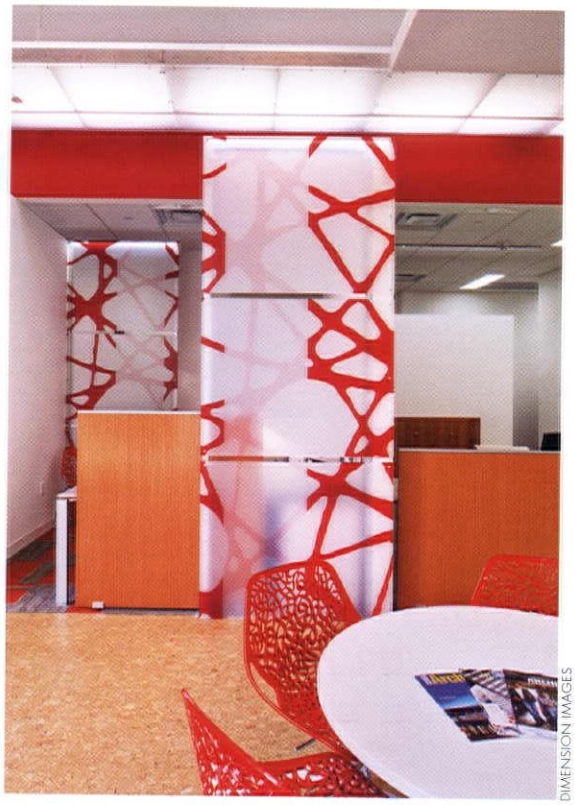
Project: AIA Iowa Office Interior Renovation
Location: Des Moines
Architect: RDG Planning & Design
General Contractor: Graham Construction
MEP Engineer: RDG Planning & Design
Structural Engineer: Shuck-Britson
Photographer: Dimension Images

MARK E. BLUNCK

DIMENSION IMAGES

The AIA was losing its hotel lease, and a decision was made to move to a centrally located office space in the center section of downtown. The Capital Square Office Building, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in 1983, at 4th and Locust Streets had a publicly visible ground floor space available. In addition, building management was willing to subdivide it for the smaller needs of the chapter. The AIA contracted the firms of RDG Planning & Design and general contractor Graham Construction. The three entities began work on designing a new space to illustrate the importance of good design and energy efficiency principles to the profession and general public.

The flexible design includes gallery and retail space in response to the need for an open look to encourage people to venture inside. These spaces are adjacent to a large conference room, and this entire open portion is utilized for social events along with educational and promotional happenings. Workspaces are situated along the exterior wall, enabling staff to accomplish their tasks with maximum north and northeast daylight through glass walls. An ambient lighting system responds to the amount of natural illumination and adjusts the output accordingly. Floating ceilings of recycled panels glow from overhead lighting and visually connect the social spaces with the conference room. A further example of energy efficiency is the HVAC system that performs 35 percent above ASHRAE standards and uses carbon dioxide sensors to maintain high indoor air quality.



DIMENSION IMAGES

Above: The conference room is open to the reception area and can be separated with a sliding wall from the lobby and reception area in the background. The red and gray commercial carpeting complements the wall and AIA logo.

Left: The translucent white panels with red web patterning illustrate the idea of layering and collaboration of various disciplines coming together and symbolize how this interweaving is vital in creating useful and pleasing architecture and design.

DIMENSION IMAGES

DIMENSION IMAGES

Left: Staff workspaces are located for access to daylight and views in all areas. The floating ceiling of recycled resin panels glow from overhead fixtures, and the LED task lamps complete the lighting requirements. The minimal palette emphasizes the concept of efficiency and simplicity.

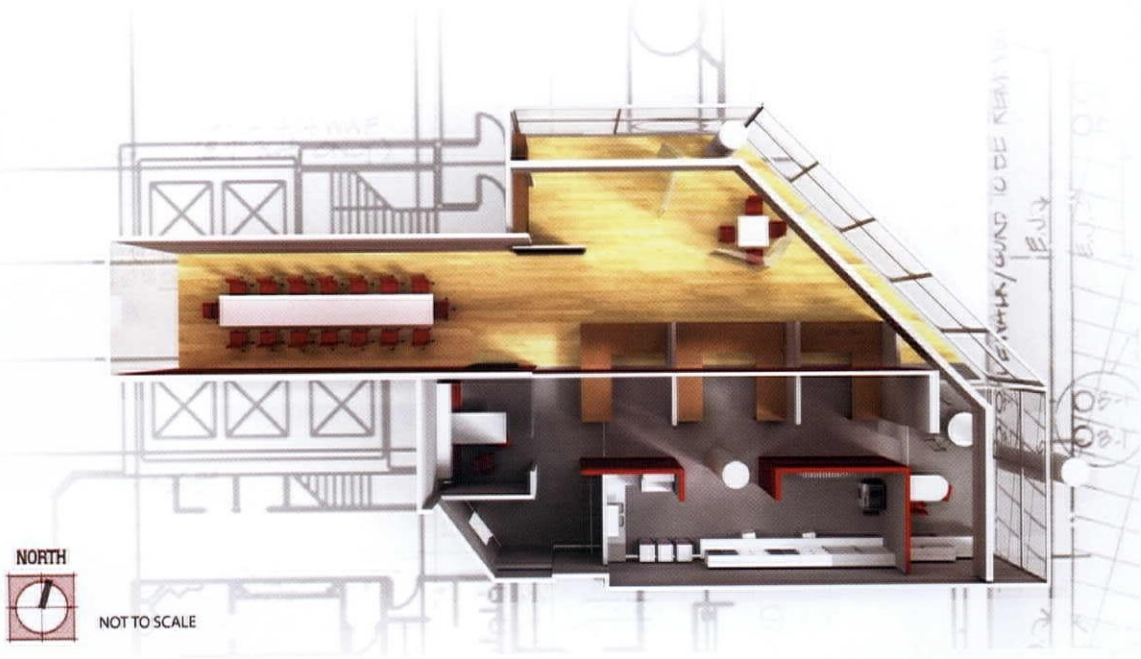
Right: The graphics were inspired by many sources including the T8 sculpture by Mark di Suvero at the Pappajohn Sculpture Park. The Ferrari-like red is employed on walls, carpeting and chairs. The slightly buoyant corkboard floor has a nice feel and comfort level.

Below right: The open nature of the renovated space provides a large open area for daily business along with social and professional activities. The offices provide much needed additional workspace for staff.

The AIA expressed a desire to reuse the millwork materials from the previous hotel location. While this method would have been an ideal example of appropriate resource management, the tight budget did not allow it. The materials that were suitable for the move include casework pieces in the new reception area and storage units in the kitchen space and storeroom areas. A proposal to the new hotel tenant suggested that the materials left behind become part of their own operation, thereby preventing the items from becoming part of the monument to 20th century waste – the sanitary landfill. As George Carlin once noted, "What's so sanitary about a dump?"

The Teknion District desks present a modern style and combine the aesthetic attributes of classic furniture with the functionality of freestanding pieces. According to Cathy Neumann of RDG, "The design of these and other pieces supported our concept of transparency and layering in the elevated overhead cabinets and overlapping surfaces. These surfaces and under-surface storage create a more efficient use of space. The open plan, elevated overheads and lowered panels allow all staff members clear views to the outside and provide them with natural light in their workstation."

The RDG design team member approach represented a close collaboration within the firm. Interior designers se-



lected furniture and finish options and worked with the graphic designer to develop the overall look. The lighting designer conducted existing light level tests and created unique settings throughout the space to ensure LEED standards were satisfied. The mechanical engineer supervised the design of the HVAC system and set up temperature control zones to make each space comfortable. The LEED Accredited Professional at RDG constantly scrutinized the planning, design and construction process and submitted the project to the United States Green Building Council for review. Neumann noted that, "All team members maintained open lines of communication with the client throughout the design process. All members attended team meetings to ensure that any decisions were considered through many perspectives."

The ultimate success was due to the Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) method of full integration of all personnel in every decision-making task. The completion of the project within a 10-week project schedule would only be possible with a continuing full consideration of all factors by the client, architect and general contractor. Graham Construction came on board in the early phase to offer cost analysis and design input. They developed a budget with RDG to meet the program requirements and to fully consider LEED standards along every step with the client and architect. The IPD approach eliminates each participant focusing exclusively on their specific design and construction role and requires everyone to consider the impact of their work on the entire process. Ken McCormick of Graham Construction added that, "A project with the time and budget constrictions of the AIA Iowa Office Relocation would not be possible without the Integrated Delivery Process. This system allowed the owner to get what they required for the budget they could afford."

After 15 years in a beautiful hotel on the outskirts of downtown, the AIA Iowa Chapter is now a more visible enterprise. This new space in a modern building presents a fresh look, and perhaps with a few architecture and design presentations, the public will understand how the built environment works and how things go together.

—*"Comes a time when you're drifting, comes a time when you settle down, comes a light, feelings lifting, lift that baby right up off the ground. Oh, this old world keeps spinning round, it's a wonder tall trees ain't laying down, there comes a time." Mark E. Blunck, Hon. AIA, is looking for that light feeling lifting expressed by Neil Young.*

Below: The new office achieves visibility from both street level exposure and directly inside the building. The deep red provides a striking visual impact compared to the common bland corporate color scheme seen so often.

DIMENSION IMAGES

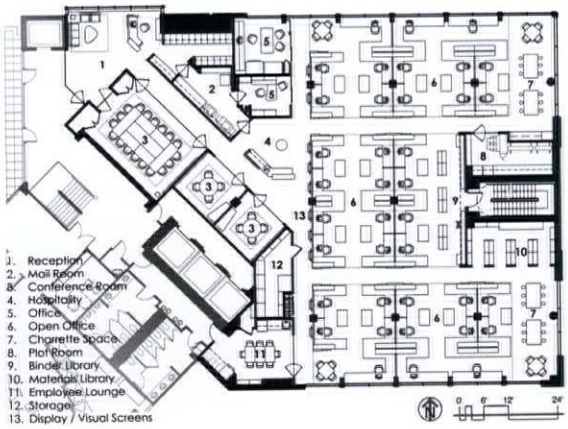
Workshop

NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS' PLACE OF WORK CREATES A POWERFUL UNIQUE SURROUNDING

A workshop is a productive space in which people deal face-to-face with issues of autonomy, originality and authority.
—Richard Sennett

It is essential for an architect to consider the environment in which he or she carries out associated creative and technical sequences. Equally, and hopefully, it might be a spatial housing that encourages experimentation and innovation. In addition, it could well be evidence of a language/style/aesthetic that is employed in the various commissions that yield support for the enterprise.

At the very least, it serves as a place for production, and as a place commonly referred to as "the office." Although this term serves the general purpose as it relates to its "professional" agency, it does little to reveal the nature of effort exerted in the quest by its often-maddened inhabitants to make highly prescribed sets of drawings and specifications particular to a building, a set of expansion joints or a piece of furniture.



In the case of Neumann Monson Architects' place of operation, we could understand the space of practice to be a workshop. The history of the workshop shows, in sum, a recipe for binding people tightly together. The essential ingredients of this historical recipe were religion and ritual. A more secular age replaced these ingredients with originality, a condition separate in its practical terms from tenets. Originality implies a new form of authority, an authority frequently short-lived and silent. To put it abstractly: in a workshop where the master's individuality and distinctiveness dominates, tacit knowledge is also likely to dominate over that which is explicit.[1]

Within this place of work, we enter into a space created from a number of individual materials and systems that have been deliberately assembled to perform in a particular architectural manner specific to daylight harvesting, sun control and acoustics. As noted by project architect Dave Zahradnik, "We saw the design of our own office as an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to sus-

Right: Floor plan showing individual work stations and access to daylight.

Below: Reception area beside a surrounding full-height glass window wall.

FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©

Project: Neumann Monson Architects Office
Location: Iowa City, IA
Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
General Contractor: McComas Lacina Construction
Interior Design: Neumann Monson Architects
Mechanical/Electrical Engineer: Alvine Engineering
Structural Engineer: M2B Structural Engineering
Photographer: Farshid Assassi, Hon. AIA Iowa, Assassi Productions ©

PETER P. GOCHÉ

Below: View from center workstation looking north to a window wall.

Below right: Conference room with full-height glass and borrowed light.

FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©

tainable design principles." In short, it is a simulator; an instrument that attests to firm principles of sustainability as it relates to materials and methods.

The firm embraces a flat hierarchy and, accordingly, sought to shape the 8,740 GSF environment in a manner that supported an "open and accessible" design process. Workstations are open, welcoming and transparent with minimal division. Conference rooms are finished with floor-to-ceiling glass to provide transparency and accessibility.

There is something socially consequent about this workshop. The material culture of their production environment symbolizes the firm's social value. Neumann Monson Architects made these spaces using glass and transparency: ordinary materials. Within this spatial confine, we are confronted with the autonomy of individuality, a spirit of originality and the authority of "greenness."

—Peter Goché is an artist and lecturer in the Department of Architecture at Iowa State University.

[1] *Richard Sennett, The Craftsman (Yale University Press, New Haven & London) p. 80.*

FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©

Expand What Exists

A CONTRAST WITH OLD AND NEW

With the architect as client, OPN Architects, Inc., utilized existing resources and explored different materials and ideas for a space about their own creation.

Architects work with clients to think carefully about ideas and plans both as a big picture and through the details. As the staff at OPN Architects Des Moines studio considered these items for their own workspace, the process became a series of discussions about a space they themselves would create. When the architect is the client, a sense of freedom exists to explore different materials and investigate ideas that may not be possible with another client.

"This type of project became a platform to experiment a bit with materials and systems that we might not otherwise get an opportunity to work with, including a firsthand experience with many sustainable approaches. It gave us a true sense of 'practicing what we preach,'" Brett Mendenhall, AIA, project manager.

The project was an office expansion, so it was business as usual in terms of occupying the space on a day-to-day basis, and the development and construction went on as work proceeded for other new and existing projects. The Des Moines office of OPN Architects is located in a six-story building at First Street and Court Avenue that was formerly a hardware company warehouse.

The casual observer may or may not notice the exposed hardware fasteners and joist hangers. These details, coupled with exposed brick and ventilation systems, fit into the master plan for the space in the same way as the giant pivoting bamboo conference room door, which grabs visitors' attention in the reception area. According to Danielle Hermann, AIA, "Visitors and clients tend to say a lot of the same things. They are all intrigued by the big pivoting door."

Staff took part, witnessed the development and asked questions. Charrettes and discussions took place. The staff gave input and thoughts about how the design was coming along and investigated concepts to develop the plan.

This was an extension, which took the module that was set up and expanded it. The space has rhythm, with primary access on one side and secondary access on the other, and it works well.

Architects looked at every detail, every day. In an effort to repurpose and reuse, each existing component was carefully considered, and nothing was thrown out. Bookcases were cut down and relocated to various points in the office. As a result of the lowered built elements and in the absence of traditional doors, natural light floods the expanse. The

FLOOR PLAN

MAIN STREET STUDIO

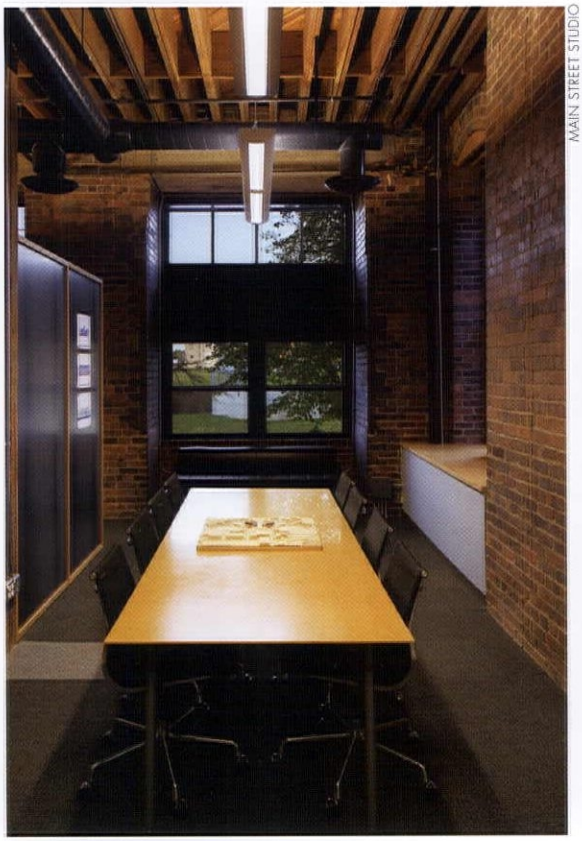
Right: Design charrettes and discussions resulted in an efficient rhythmic space.

Below: Natural daylight with the right mix of artificial light aids in efficiency.

Project: OPN Architect Studio
Location: Des Moines, IA
Architect: OPN Architects
General Contractor: Ryan Companies
Electrical Engineer: Wolin
Mechanical Engineer: Baker Group
Interior Design: OPN Architects
Photographer: Main Street Studio

M. MONICA GILLEN

MAIN STREET STUDIO



MAIN STREET STUDIO

MAIN STREET STUDIO

Above: The expansion extended the existing space and merged the old and new with old and new materials.

Left: Exposed joists and columns were included in the design while traditional doors were not, which begins to redefine the relationship between leadership, staff and clients.

Right: The giant, pivoting bamboo door grabs the attention of visitors.

uncovered brick and displayed support systems warm the space and add color in the same manner. New suspended ceiling elements draw a pleasant contrast between the masonry and giant oak columns.

"I loved the process of exposing the historic building elements and appreciate the inviting quality and warmth that those materials lend," says Emily Kistner, intern architect, associate AIA.

Increased collaboration between office leadership, staff and clients was an essential goal. To draw attention to the new and old was similarly vital. Both objectives were realized, which resulted in a space favorable to impromptu partnerships and discussions.

Out of the chaos inherent with any remodel, repurpose or change emerged order, fostering an environment for thought and creation.

—M. Monica Gillen lives and works in Ames.

Creative Communities

STUDENTS DESIGN AND BUILD A SPACE FOR GROWTH AND CHANGE

The TownCraft Iowa State University Extension Studio in Perry serves as a multi-functional space for the development of ideas for positive change for small towns in Iowa.

For almost 15 years, Associate Professor Bruce Bassler has directed design/build studios for Iowa State University's College of Design. Initially, all projects involved remodeling part of the building designed by Charles Herbert and Associates in 1976, creating new spaces for teaching and learning in underutilized spaces. While recent studios have addressed other places and programs and have a broader array of clients, you could say that the College of Design is now expert in directing design students how to make their own classrooms.

The TownCraft Iowa State University Extension Studio is a mature example of the work of Bassler's studios. One of the first off-campus projects, it also served as an early opportunity to work with a "real client" in the sense that the ISU Extension would permanently inhabit the facility. Since students from the College of Design use it occasionally on a temporary basis, the space has turned out to be a very successful multipurpose space for the primary client and the local community.

"In many ways that were perhaps not intended, the studio serves the mission of ISU Extension's effort in Perry quite beautifully," says Tim Borich, director of extension community economic development. Borich was directly involved in the studio process as a critic and client. He is very happy with the final product because it has so many potential configurations. The studio can be a place to serve a formal dinner to community members or to stage breakout sessions adjunct to a meeting in the adjacent conference room and presentation hall.

Developing a highly flexible space was the primary goal of the architecture and interior design students enrolled in this class. According to Joshua Ridgely, now an intern architect at SVPA Architects, Inc., "We had to face the challenge of too many individual ideas and work hard to develop a strong spatial concept and a coherent aesthetic agenda. This happens everyday in practice, of course. But, in school, such collaboration is not crucial." The project works in so many ways, in part, because of the clever details for changing the display format and the refined strategy for rearranging the custom-made drafting tables. The students wisely designed the space to work for both individual and group tasks.

Bassler is very pleased with the final resolution of the details in terms of aesthetics and craftsmanship. The students ended up simplifying some of the moving parts because they were going to be too difficult to construct, and, in the end, the project is probably better off. As with all of his design/build studios, "the students run headlong into

Right: A restrained palette of materials helped the students find common ground during the design process.

CURTIS EHLER AND DEREK QUAM

Project: TownCraft Iowa State University Extension Studio
Location: Perry, IA
Architect Rehab: Mills Architecture
General Contractor Rehab: Breiholz Construction
Electrical Contractor: A & W Electrical Contractors
Mechanical Design/Build Contractor: Baker Group
Structural Engineer Rehab: JP-SE LLC
Interior Design: Students under the direction of Bruce Bassler - Matt Bindner, Mike Cady, Mike Dean, Jessica Derynck, Curtis Ehler, Gabriel Gallaher, Sheena Idio, Krystal Jansen, Sarah Noble-Hagerty, Derek Quam, Joshua Ridgely, Ashley Schrage (Alexandres), Grant Thompson, Kate Thuesen (Vander Vegte)
Photographers: Curtis Ehler and Derek Quam

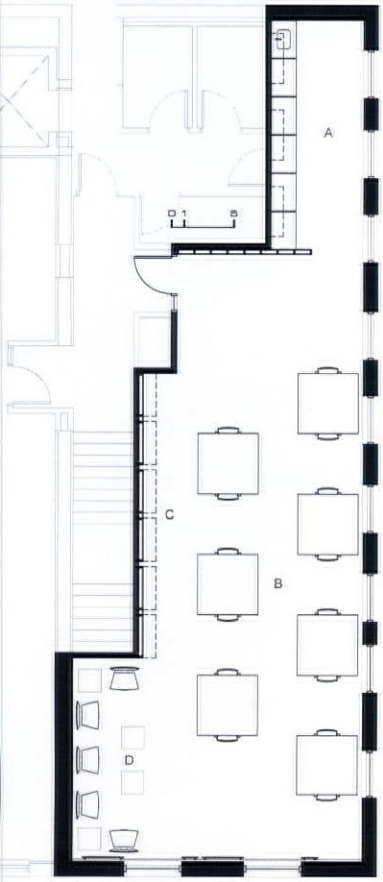
CLARE CARDINAL-PETT

CURTIS EHLER AND DEREK QUAM

CURTIS EHLER AND DEREK QUAM

Left: The concrete countertops in the workroom and on all the windowsills were cast by the students.

Right: The display wall, with student–designed and crafted light fixtures, transforms to accommodate a variety of formats.



CURTIS EHLER AND DEREK QUAM

the realities of construction and come out of the experience with more respect for the contractors and craftsmen they will be working with someday," says Bassler.

The studio space is part of a more comprehensive rehabilitation of the historic First National Bank Building in Perry, completed under the supervision of Jeff Mills at Mills Architecture. Mills generously set up the space for the students and stepped back, letting the effort take its highly successful course.

—Clare Cardinal-Pett is an associate professor of architecture at Iowa State University.

Above: Students designed and built the furniture, including these chairs for the sitting area. The window blinds are made of recycled corncrib boards.

Left: The main studio area is an open and flexible space. Seven separate work desks can be banked to make one long one.

Contents Known

DESIGNING A LINE BETWEEN PERSONAL CLOTHING AND PRIVATE SPACES

"The façade says: I am, I can I want—in other words, whatever the owner and his architect wanted when they built it. The façade also says: but I am not going to show you everything. Sure, there are things inside—but you go and mind your own business... We use signals."
—Peter Zumthor, Atmospheres

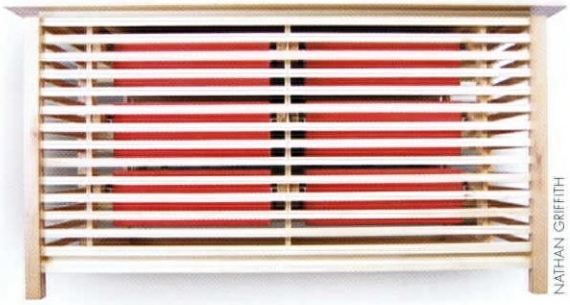
The dressing room, like many spaces in the modern home, is constantly evolving by responding spatially to questions of trend and necessity. When the dressing room is altogether eliminated for purposes of ease or efficiency, its functions of storage are often appropriated to the bedroom in the form of furniture or more specifically in this case—a chest of drawers.

Nathan Griffith's design, built to house his and his wife's undergarments, looks to answer similar architectural challenges of the dressing room. Most apparent is Griffith's response regarding how a vessel for intimate articles can skirt the line between enclosure and exposure while fitting comfortably into the home's most private room.

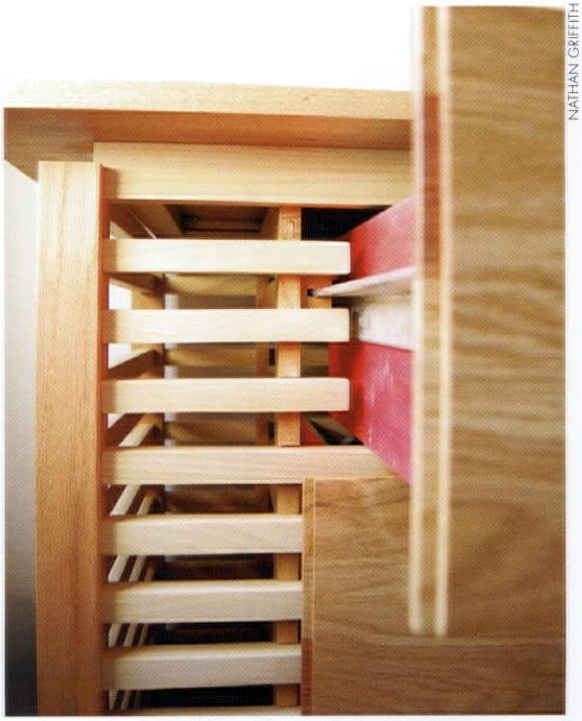
The clean, horizontally-slatted poplar visually grounds the piece, while slotted oak supports bring vertical stability to create an elegantly unified chest. One-inch gaps between the slats provide glimpses to an interior void housing a volume of bubble gum pink drawers which appear to float effortlessly in place. The use of color and materiality seem to have been naturally adapted from historical precedents of the dressing room. Akiko Busch, in her book, *Geography of Home*, explains that "because [dressing rooms] were so private, their designs tended to be eccentric, expressing the whims of their occupants in a much more personal way than the more public receiving rooms did." More than whimsy alone, Griffith's layering of visual information is at once innocent and taboo, suggesting a privacy reserved for him and his wife, all the while providing their home with simple aesthetic and a functional chest of drawers.

—Nick Lindsley, Assoc. AIA, lives and works in Iowa City.


NATHAN GRIFFITH


NATHAN GRIFFITH


NATHAN GRIFFITH


NATHAN GRIFFITH

Left: Back elevation, the pink drawers hang weightlessly within the poplar-slatted body, with the form drawing inspiration from Iowa's vernacular corncribs.

Right: Front elevation of chest, featuring oak-faced drawers and slotted oak legs.

Below left: Corner detail with view into void.

Below right: Aluminum drawer slides and pink drawers visually pierce the face of the chest when extruded.

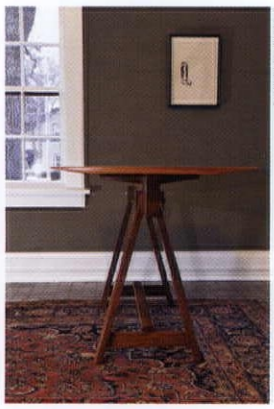
Designer: Nathan Griffith
Photographer: Nathan Griffith

NICK LINDSLEY

A Balancing Act

"SHOPPING FOR FURNITURE" IS A DESIGN-BUILD EXERCISE

An architect and engineer balance aesthetics with constructability in the design of a writing desk.



DAVID K. PURDY

Growing up in a family who approaches selecting new furniture, not by visiting a local shop, but by getting out a sketch pad and designing, it seems only fitting that this architect takes the same methodology regarding furnishing his own home. From a very early age, the architect was involved in furniture design and construction with his father. Both honed their woodworking craft from a cabinetmaker friend. This relationship resulted in furniture that, while custom, often appeared as though it came from a furniture store, rather than from the family's garage.

The premise for this piece, a writing desk, comes from one of the simplest ways of creating a work surface—laying a wood panel over a pair of sawhorses. In this case, a single sawhorse, albeit more refined than the object used to inspire its form, becomes the base and the tabletop precariously balances in the center. This balancing act is further heightened by tapering supports under the work surface, and the top itself narrows to the thinnest knife-blade edge possible while still maintaining the structural integrity and practicality of the tabletop's perimeter. Mortise and tenon joinery is introduced to both connect the cherry wood sections as well as to highlight the subtle contrasting pattern between the end and face grain.

DAVID K. PURDY

While years have passed and this designer and his father now live in different states, today, the collaborative dialogue must happen remotely. Not only is the table itself a balancing act, but so too is the design process between an engineer father and his architect son.

—Isaac Bracher, AIA, resides in the historic Forestdale Neighborhood of Des Moines. When he's not designing furniture, he's busy restoring his home, built in 1928.

Above: The tabletop delicately floats above the finely detailed base to create a balanced composition.

Right: Mortise and tenon joinery connects the tabletop to the beam underneath in this detailed view of the work surface.

Below left: The sawhorse inspiration for this piece is evident; the connections, reveals and wood joinery work in concert to refine a utilitarian form.

Below right: A pairing of the Eames chair with the desk demonstrates a correlation between the fastening devices on the two pieces.

DAVID K. PURDY

DAVID K. PURDY

Designer: Isaac Bracher
Photographer: David K. Purdy

ISAAC BRACHER

A Jewel Box of a Different Kind

AN AGRARIAN OBJECT REINVENTED FOR THE DINING ROOM

A Buffet table inspired by a wood joinery technique that's as functional as it is pleasing to the eye.

Long before the advent of cardboard and plastic shipping crates, wooden produce boxes were historically used by farmers to transport their harvest to market. These simple pine containers would be joined at the corners with box joints. This method of wood joinery is less expensive to construct than the tapered dovetail joint, thus making it a logical choice for a utilitarian box. The designer's appreciation of this joining method and the simplicity of the boxes as objects informed this design exploration.

DAVID K. PURDY

DAVID K. PURDY

DAVID K. PURDY

DAVID K. PURDY

Left: When opened, the drawer reveals the dovetail joint contrasted by the box joint. The interior of the drawer is fabricated from poplar wood.

Right: A subtle slot pull focuses the eye on the wood and construction techniques, rather than a prefabricated handle.

Below left: The wood "tableware box" is perched above a painted tube steel frame.

Below right: The corner detail highlights the alternating pattern of the box joint in addition to the natural ray flakes in the quarter sawn oak.

Crafted from quarter-sawn white oak, selected for its tight grain and dramatic ray flake patterns, the sideboard is seen as a box for storing tableware. A thin, elongated drawer is divided into three compartments: one for flatware, another for napkins and a third for table linens. Constructed and detailed with an engineer's sleight of hand, the box joint fingers are built to a tolerance of eight thousandths of an inch. This meticulous craftsmanship eliminates any gaps between the fingers. To maintain the purity of the box, no metal hardware should be used; a shallow slot is devised to serve as the drawer pull. The conceptual idea of the wood box as an autonomous object is also reinforced by contrasting the container with its tall, slender tube steel frame.

This jewel box even provides entertainment during a dinner party, as intrigued guests often ask, "What's inside that drawer?" It begs to be opened and have its contents revealed for the curious dinner guest.

—Isaac Bracher, AIA, is an architect with OPN Architects and a graduate of Ball State University, where he received the AIA Henry Adams Medal.

Designer: Isaac Bracher
Photographer: David K. Purdy

ISAAC BRACHER

The Eames Classic Hi-Fi

AN EXERCISE IN EMULATION

"The recognition and understanding of the need was the primary condition of the creative act. When people feel they had to express themselves for originality for its own sake, that tends not to be creativity. Only when you get into the problem and the problem becomes clear, can creativity take over."
—Charles Eames, Architect, Graphic and Industrial Designer, Filmmaker

BRIAN GUNNING

Above: Hardware and terminals were carefully chosen to coordinate with the Eames Lounge Chair.

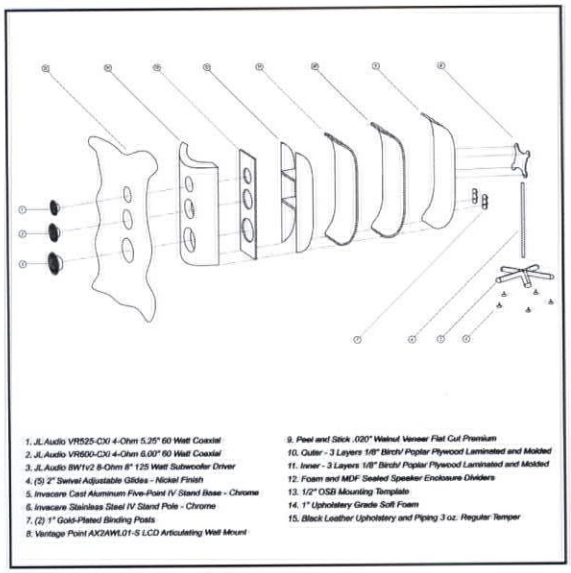
Right, top: This diagrammatic assembly drawing is an engineering view of architectural concept.

Right: Viewed together the Eames DNA is clearly present in both.

Designer: Jason Cave
Photographer: Brian Gunning

BRADY DORMAN

Can an existing good design be applied to new, alternative functions? Charles Eames once said that when people feel they have to express themselves for originality for its own sake, that it tends not to be creativity, and only when the problem becomes clear, can creativity take over. As a young designer, Jason Cave was interested in the hybridization of the Eames Lounge aesthetic with the performance requirements of a speaker. Instead of creating a new aesthetic, he explored the application of the modern classic to an entirely different object. Cave crafted the speaker hybrid in 2008 while an M Arch student at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.



BRIAN GUNNING

The Eames Speaker was an exercise in emulation and reinterpretation, partially about recreating a beloved design aesthetic and partially about pushing boundaries and exploring new territory in industrial design. Similar to biological hybridization, the project strives to incorporate the best of both "breeds" into a new hybrid: The Eames Speaker.

BRIAN GUNNING

Above: Twenty-two discrete steps to move from concept to prototype.

The Eames Speaker examines the tactile quality of sound and asks the question, does it sound better when it comes from a beautiful object? Analogous to eating a potato while smelling an apple, our brains interpret a hybrid taste. The speaker tectonics is true to the Eames Lounge, incorporating bent plywood, full grain leather and aluminum and chrome hardware.

The Eames Speaker succeeds as a prototype for further pursuits in hybridization of design and alternative utility.

—Brady Dorman is a 5th year architecture student at Iowa State University with a focus on architecture, urban planning and transit. More of his writing can be found at www.urbanthinking.org.

PORTFOLIO

BY EVAN SHAW, AIA

Northeast Iowa Community College, Industrial Technologies Building
Peosta, Iowa
INVISION

INVISION has developed new master plans for both campuses at Northeast Iowa Community College. A new 54,000-square-foot Industrial Technologies Building on the Peosta campus has been commissioned as the first step in the realization of the new campus vision. A unifying precept of the campus plan and the building design is the development of a pedestrian courtyard that employs the building as a mediator between the vehicular activity and the pedestrian campus. Relegating the large shops to the lower level of the facility, minimizing the building's footprint and significantly reducing circulation, lightens the mass of the building. The internally insulated cast-in-place concrete plinth of the lower level provides a strong base. In contrast, the upper level consists of light gauge framing and curtain wall. Bathed in natural light, the office suite, classrooms and student lounge serve as a beacon to the public and appears as a floating lantern in the evening.

YMCA Supportive Housing
Des Moines, Iowa
Architects Smith Metzger

The YMCA of Greater Des Moines is relocating the supportive housing currently in its downtown Des Moines facility to just south of the urban core. The design features two major elements: A three-story dormitory structure with 140 units, and a triangular wing housing common functions such as dining, recreation, classrooms and staff offices.

Court Avenue Pump Station
Des Moines, Iowa
Substance

The Court Avenue Pump Station is part of the Principal Riverwalk—a $60 million public/private partnership that will revitalize the riverfront and provide a much-needed amenity for the residents and employees in downtown Des Moines. This largely enclosed facility contains equipment that will help address flooding concerns in the Court Avenue District—concerns that were reinforced during the summer flood of 2008—by providing a means of pumping storm water into the Des Moines River during flood events.

Within the zinc-clad structure is an electrical closet, three large pumps, two vertical lifts, two large gate valves, a dumpster, and an emergency generator, all equipment required to fulfill the functional requirements for the pump station. The intent of this project is to mask this large-scale infrastructure from Riverwalk users and allow it to extend and work with, rather than against, the landscaping and architecture of the area.

JOURNAL

BY DANIELLE HERMANN, AIA

Starchitect Stuff

According to the all-knowing Wikipedia, "Architects plan, design and review the construction of buildings and structures for the use of people by the creative organization of materials and components with consideration to mass, space, form, volume, texture, structure, light, shadow, materials, program and pragmatic elements…" But, as we all know, the definition of what an architect does is rapidly expanding into new areas, and one of the most prevalent of these is product design. As evidence, just a few years ago, had you asked the general public to name a famous architect, the most common answer you would get was Frank Lloyd Wright. But today, ask that same question, and you might just be surprised at the response! The Starchitects we all know and love are quickly becoming part of pop-culture and are showing up in some unexpected places.

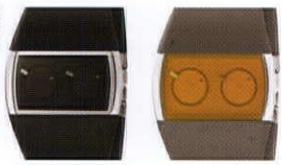
Frank Gehry formed a partnership with Tiffany & Co. in 2003 and created an exclusive collection that launched in 2006. The collection utilizes metals, woods and stone along with some traditional gemstones, and his designs are inspired by structural elements while also deeply rooted in his lifelong obsession with art. There is a clear sense of movement in almost all of his pieces, and many contrast rectilinear shapes with undulating surfaces, not unlike his architecture.

MICHAEL THOMPSON

Zaha Hadid recently released her limited edition footwear with Lacoste. The 'Capsule' collection became available worldwide in September of 2009. These unique creations emphasize fluidity through use of a digitized wave patterns and are constructed to wrap and mould themselves around the shape of the foot that wears them. The shoes are unisex in design and are embossed with the Zaha Hadid for Lacoste logo on the side of the heel. Again, the architect's style and methodology seems consistent, regardless of work product.

AHA HADID ARCHITECTS

Last, but not least, there is Mr. Philippe Starck. As a prevalent product designer since the early 90s, Starck has partnered with numerous companies to produce everything from plumbing fixtures with Duravit (www.duravit.com), to furniture with Kartell to products for Target in 2002. One of my personal favorites is his ongoing collaboration with watchmaker Fossil (www.fossil.com). Two of his new watches were recently released, and you can have your choice in men's or women's styles for anywhere from $100-$200.



FOSSIL

Homegrown Goods

We can't all be a Starchitect. We can't all even have the Starchitect Stuff we might so covet. For most of us, entering into the realm of product design seems downright impossible. But a brave few are proving it's not and are putting their architectural backgrounds and design skill to use in the fashion world. Two recent Iowa State University graduates can attest that all it takes is some inspiration and a will to make it happen.

RHETORIC

rhetoric clothing company was founded by Lizbeth Cayro and W. Dylan Dawson, who describe themselves as, "students of architecture, distracted by fashion and dedicated to celebrating life." Their start-up company is founded on the belief that the X and Y generations have adopted the T-shirt medium as a form of personal rhetoric.

While hiding out in South America (Peru mostly), the rhetoric co-founders developed, planned and launched their web-based company in October of 2008 (www.rhetorictshirts.com). One of their primary focuses was on the quality of the product, so they carefully selected Peruvian cotton from a worldwide search and paired it with a modern "American" style T-shirt cut. With the "canvas" in hand, the work was underway.

RHETORIC

Though they have cultivated relationships with international artists who range in mediums from graphic design, paint and ink to pencil, and of course, architecture, they have also created many of the designs themselves. The prints are inspired by innovative examples of pop-art, fringe sub-culture and youth, and the substance-based imagery is meant to inspire thought and nostalgia.

After pushing out their 2009 line-up, the pair continues to develop their architectural careers in Seattle and are building their next clothing collection which promises to offer new styles. Stay tuned to see what comes next for this up-and-coming company!

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