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SUMMER 2015

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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AIA IOWA



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editor's letter



Welcome!

Architects have always done more than simply design buildings, although most people don't realize it. The talents and skills architects must possess cover a wide range of fields. Architects must be historians, sustainability experts, community planners, community volunteers & organizers, and sometimes even developers, in addition, to all the skills needed to design a building and oversee construction projects.

In this issue of Iowa Architect we look at projects where the architect undertook an unconventional role and helped deliver a project that couldn't have happened without them.

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Student Field Days at Iowa State University

contents

IOWA ARCHITECT MAGAZINE SUMMER 2015



^ *Historical Perspective, p. 32*

Features

16 **Major Effort Saves Energy**

Modern ideas are a perfect fit for the century-old Market One building.

20 **Inundated with Ideas**

Czech Village and New Bohemia bounce back for the long-term.

22 **Building Community**

Multiple projects show how architects help groups in need.

32 **Historical Perspective**

New interior recalls the glory days of the historical Stuart Depot.

Departments

07 **Collected**

Art & Architecture: The Body Hutch by Peter Goche; ASK Studio's Bike Racks

10 **Profile**

Linda Schemmel, Planner, City of West Des Moines

12 **On the Boards**

Grand Jivante, Retirement Community; Weather Dance Fountain Canopy; STEMM Children's Village; Keller Williams Realty; Walnut Creek Church



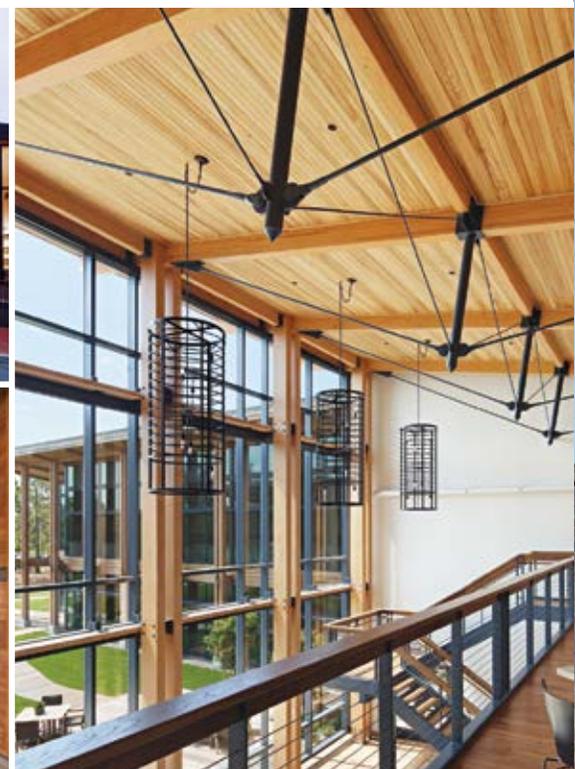
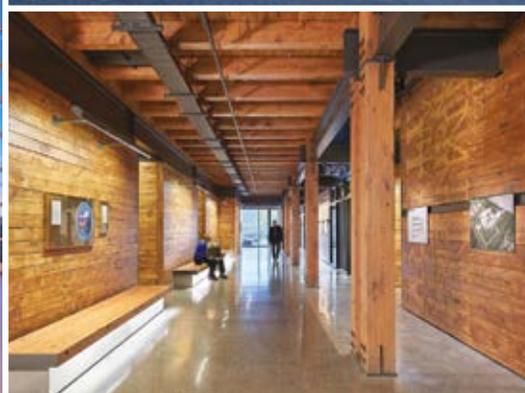
ON THE COVER

This classic 1901 structure has been transformed for modern live, work and play. p. 16



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Past award winners (clockwise from left) – Jackson Hole Airport, Gensler, photo Matthew Millman; Drs. Julian & Raye Richardson Apartments, David Baker + Partners, photo Bruce Damonte; Live Oak Bank Headquarters, LS3P Associates Ltd., photo Mark Herboth; Federal Center South – Building 1202, ZGF Architects, photo Benjamin Benschneider; SAC Federal Credit Union Headquarters, LEO A DALY, photo Brad Anderson; (center) Stapleton Library, Andrew Berman Architect, photo Naho Kubota

collected

People
Products
Inspiration

Art & Architecture

WORDS: CHAD TAYLOR

IMAGES: CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO

Architects marry form and function in this issue's Collected features.

ART MEETS

fashion

The Body Hutch by Peter Goché

At its core, good architecture is the happy marriage of form and function. So when artist and architect Peter Goché, AIA, was approached by the Des Moines Art Center to construct the centerpiece of its Art Meets Fashion pop-up boutique, that was the goal everyone had in mind.

“They needed to somehow transform the Art Center’s lobby into an event and have what they would call a ‘world-class presence,’” Goché says. “What they needed in absolutes was a place to hang clothes, and a place to try those clothes on.”

But, of course, what they wanted was something considerably more than the absolute. And it was up to Goché to fill that gap.

“That’s what was great about it for me,” he says. “Part of the reason they came to me was because they didn’t have anything in mind. It has more to do with my presence as an artist in that realm. I tested some ideas for about three weeks but what it came down to was returning to my sculptural works and returning to something I’d done before, but on a much smaller scale.”

The result, with the help of production assistant James Trower, is a series of nested rooms that provide space for clothes to be displayed, sold and tried on, all while giving attendees an engaging, interactive experience.



This page: architect Peter Goché’s concept was built around the desire to make the Art Center’s space as visually striking as possible, while still providing all of the practical function that the pop-up boutique required.

Opposite: The Ames bike racks draw upon both the history of the city itself and its strong ties to literature: some of the racks feature the map of the old rail lines, while others include quotes from famous authors about bicycles.





ART MEETS

function

ASK Studio's Bike Racks in Ames

When you think of a bike rack, your first thought probably isn't "architectural opportunity." But when the Ames Community Art Council put out a call for submissions, ASK Studio saw the chance to do something fun and different.

"We thought of it as a design opportunity," says ASK's Brent Schipper, AIA. "So when we saw it, we thought that, as architects, we could do public art as well as people who are considered artists.

"These little building projects had a purpose," he continues. "They had a budget, and they were to be an artistic representation of Ames. We think that we make art

with those parameters of function and budget every day."

ASK's concept for the bike racks reflect the city's history. One of the racks, called "Cycle Tracks," draws inspiration from the old Dinkey rail line that used to service the city, and draws upon a 1902 rail map for its form. It's a subtle design that some people will appreciate more than others.

"I'm not sure how many people will ever understand the map," Schipper says. "But someone who does recognize it, I think they will have that nice 'ah-ha' moment."

Linda Schemmel

Bridging the gap between
planning and reality

WORDS: HANNAH GILMAN
IMAGE: COURTESY OF LINDA SCHEMMEL

As a child, Linda Schemmel, AIA, made jungle gyms of homes under construction. Her grandfather was a builder, and she spent her Minnesotan childhood playing in that space, surrounded by structures being pieced together.

So it's no surprise that she continues to play in that space, as a planner for the City of West Des Moines. "Architecture was familiar to me," she says. "It was something I could be creative with, so my decision to pursue architecture was that commonality of looking at things under construction and then wanting to create in that 3D environment."

She earned her bachelor of arts in architecture and joined BSB Design—a residential and commercial firm with offices across the country—which meant Schemmel spent more time on the coasts than she did in Iowa. After six years with BSB, she left and started her own firm, Design Development Inc., which she ran for nearly 15 years. It was during that time that she began volunteering for the Plan and Zoning Commission for the City of West Des Moines—a move that would land her a job with the City in 2006.

"The biggest thing I noticed when I was on the Plan and Zoning Commission was that there was really a need for somebody who had the ability to take a look at a project and understand that if a planner said the architecture wasn't meeting the criteria or they didn't like it, they didn't know why," says Schemmel. "I was able to work in an interpretational space and help translate between what the architect and the developer were talking about. There's a big disconnect in that communication."

That's why her role in a job traditionally held by a non-



architect has been such a successful one. "As an architect working in the City's planning department, Linda was able to help us non-architects better understand the elements of building design," says Christopher Shires, a principal with Confluence who worked with Schemmel during his time as the development and inspection manager for the City of West Des Moines. "She provided us the vocabulary to more clearly communicate the City's desired architectural standards, focusing on the basic principles of design rather than dictating a specific architectural style or exterior material."

But Schemmel—whose day-to-day tasks range from working on a number of special projects focused on redevelopment, historical preservation, and sustainable design to reviewing planning applications—has had a role much greater than simply acting as a translator between architect and non-architect, says Shires. "Linda is one of the most dedicated and hardest-working people you are likely to meet. In addition to that, she really cares about the success and positive outcome of her projects, and always put in the extra effort to see that things were done right."

Fortunately for Schemmel, she often gets to see the success and positive outcomes of her projects firsthand—she's able to witness the people of the community enjoying West Des Moines. "It's always nice when you work in the built environment because you actually see your impact," she says. "Being able to see people use it and experience it on a larger scale, on a development in the community, is a level of reward that you don't always get."



IOWA CITY | DES MOINES

Des Moines Municipal Services Center

on the boards

Projects
In Progress



Grand Jivanti, Retirement Community

Iowa Falls / Bergland + Cram

Grand Jivanti is designed to provide more than 140,000 square feet of elder care living and wellness accommodations. A 26-acre campus will serve as a hub for the community at large to encourage interaction with, rather than isolation of, senior residents. The Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) in Iowa Falls allows residents to age in place and includes 64 skilled nursing/rehab rooms in addition to flexible assisted/independent apartments. Living units are arranged in separate and uniquely finished households which function as self-sufficient and distinct populations in contrast to the traditionally institutional approach to senior care. An attached Wellness Center includes a three-lane lap pool, therapy pool, indoor walking track, and fitness center. Stand-alone, single family homes for seniors complete the neighborhood. Construction begins mid 2015.

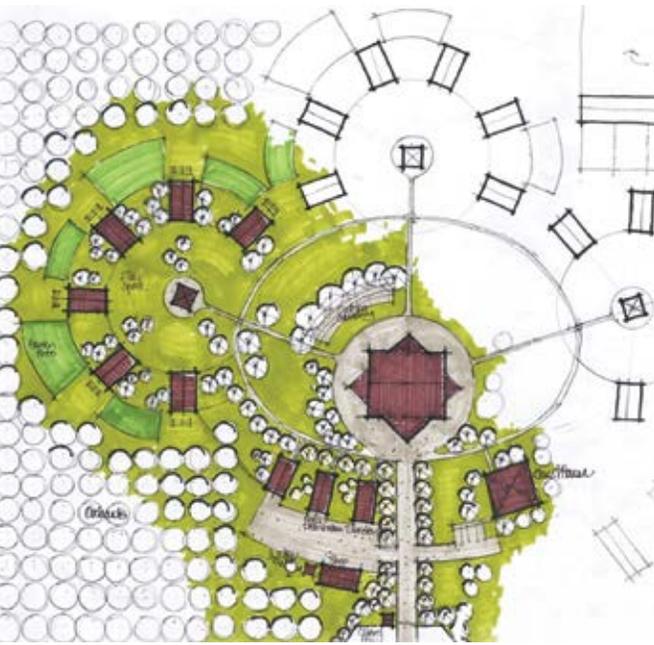


Weather Dance Fountain Canopy

Iowa City / Neumann Monson Architects

Neumann Monson Architects was hired by Genus Landscape Architects to design the new Weather Dance Fountain Canopy. The project is part of a larger Iowa City downtown streetscape master plan. The proposed 700-square-foot canopy is situated symmetrically on the Dubuque Street corridor and will serve as a primary destination for performance and activity within the pedestrian mall. The canopy will provide shelter for a multipurpose stage below and will feature integrated, adjustable lighting options for various uses.

The structure will be supported by steel beams and is conceptualized as an angled suspended glass plane that maximizes acoustic performance. Above the glass plane is a louvered canopy that will serve as the main sunshade. Design considerations include integrating a changeable backdrop for various Iowa City Summer of the Arts events, pedestrian circulation, and emergency service vehicle access.



STEMM Children's Village

Mbuguni Village, Tanzania,
East Africa / FEH Associates Inc.

In 2008, FEH Associates took the opportunity to assist STEMM in the master planning, design, contract negotiation, and construction of a village orphanage complex designed for 180 children on 90 acres of land in rural Tanzania.

FEH helped incorporate local construction materials in unique ways. The climate is very hot so a double-layer vented roof assembly was designed to contain the heat and vent to the exterior. An additional gravity system with a cupola vented the interior spaces and created air flow to cool the interior.

Gravity venting systems were not familiar to the local tradesmen so FEH sent a project manager to work with and train them during the construction of the children's homes. The local tradesmen now have the training and understanding of the gravity cooling systems. They were also able to physically experience the cooling as they entered the completed homes. The skills the tradesmen learned will enable them to incorporate these venting techniques into future buildings.



Walnut Creek Church

Des Moines / OPN Architects

Walnut Creek Church in Des Moines' East Village neighborhood is undergoing renovations to add a kids' center, offices, a fellowship hall, and a new entrance. Currently, the church occupies half the space of the 20,700-square-foot building, but once complete, the renovations will finish an unused 10,000 square feet of functional program space. Architects from OPN created a master plan pro bono, and OPN was hired to draw up plans and create construction documents. The renovations will add windows to the nearly windowless building, a skylight in the kids' center, and a mezzanine above the kids' center that will be used to host smaller events. Materials and finishes will stay true to the style of the East Village and echo the building's industrial history. Exposed brick and dark walnut wood will be continuous throughout the design, juxtaposed with technological elements placed throughout. Work began in the fall of 2014 and is expected to be completed late summer 2015.

Keller Williams Realty

West Des Moines / Neumann Monson Architects

A once-vacant restaurant building in a vibrant business district will soon feature a new facade for Keller Williams Realty. A new 90-foot-long by 20-foot-tall screen wall will cover the existing building face. It will provide a space where a new glassed-in vestibule entry and open patio will sit. The screen wall will be constructed of multiple layers, first being the vertical cruciform steel columns that tie back to the existing building, followed by the diamond latticed steel straps, and finally the 1x1 horizontal finished wood strips. An opening in the wall will create views from the patio out and also reveal the steel structure behind the wood strips. The patio will be open-air with views through the screen wall. Fabric shades above will provide shade during the warm summer months.



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The 100+-year-old brick building with pleasing proportions seems rather elegant and is the first project for its type in Iowa with NetZero energy usage. This well-executed modern addition complements the original building and the surrounding built environment of this district. The addition could even be considered as a successful stand alone structure.



WORDS: MARK E. BLUNCK
IMAGES: JARED HEIDEMANN AND GEORGE QUINN
ARCHITECT: NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS

MAJOR EFFORT SAVES ENERGY

Maximizing history
and efficiency in the
Market One building

Planet Earth is heating up at a rapid geological pace with rising sea levels and potentially irreversible climate change. While the Western states experience excess heat—California is in its fourth year of devastating drought—the Midwest and Eastern regions suffer from record snowfall and consistently dangerous sub-zero temperatures.

In 2007, the American Institute of Architects concluded that 48 percent of greenhouse emissions are the result of the operation of our homes and buildings. In May 2015, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that the global carbon dioxide level exceeded 400 ppm in March for the first time since measurements began in the late 1950s. It is abundantly clear that a truly disruptive approach is needed to decrease energy consumption—not incrementally, but with revolutionary approaches to reduce greenhouse gases.

Amidst this backdrop, AIA members are making an effort to mitigate the impact of energy loss as exemplified in the renovation of historical buildings in many cities, including downtown Des Moines. The downtown’s renaissance over the last 20-plus years has been nothing short of remarkable. After being abandoned by shoppers and office workers relocating to suburban malls and office parks in the 1970s and 1980s, the central business district resembled a ghost town after 5:00 p.m. But as a cascade of successful transformations attracted businesses and people back downtown, architects and developers began searching for new design and engineering challenges.

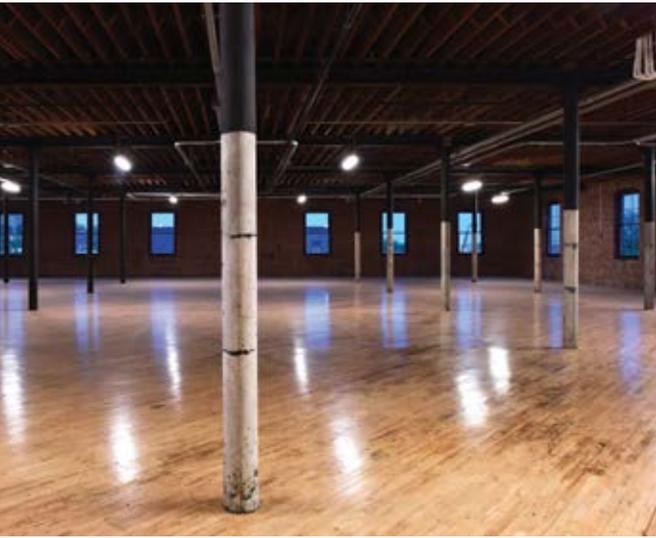
In the newly named Market District stands a handsome and stately brick-clad industrial building from the turn of the last century. Market One is a classic 1901 structure that operated as offices and production facilities for the

Advance-Rumely Thresher Company, a manufacturer of agricultural machinery, including traction engines, shredders, and combines. “This became the first project in the district,” says Project Architect Channing Swanson, AIA, of Neumann Monson Architects, “and we took that advantageous grid position as an opportunity to draw a line in the sand, and demonstrate the incredible power of redeveloping these century-old structures into modern places to live, work, and play. The developer and client was MODUS Engineering, a mechanical/electrical/plumbing consulting firm, sharing the team goal of proving that these buildings are not only financially, socially, and ecologically responsible options, but also have the capability to become a lucrative investment instead of an ongoing expense.”

The collaboration between the architectural and engineering teams

Below: An expansive open office space with hardwood floor and four private white and glass-clad private offices provides transparency between future multi-tenants. The photovoltaic solar panel array on the parking lot canopy provides the electrical needs of the building and shade for automobiles.

While the original building is an excellent representation of early 20th-century architecture, the addition is all modern glass and steel with corporate style sleek smooth surfaces.



was fortuitous as each brought their specific expertise to resolve building and energy issues. One method to create a more energy-efficient building is to install insulation between the building envelope and new false interior walls. This technique has its place in more recent buildings, but is problematic for both aesthetic and historical issues in a much older structure. An even more detrimental concern is that introducing vapor mitigation and insulation into breathable 100-year-old walls may impact durability and cause significant material and structural damage. This presented the project team with the proverbial constraints and limitations paradox, so it became imperative to search for a more suitable approach. The engineering development team had inclinations, however, as to what would be necessary to create the first commercial zero-energy building in Iowa—even for one more than a century old.

Since major alterations were deemed unfeasible, it was determined that vastly improved building efficiency would come from new energy systems. A geothermal exterior air mechanical unit utilizing variable refrigerant flow provides heating and cooling capacity. In order to provide for maximum electrical needs, a series of two photovoltaic arrays were organized on the building roof and a new adjacent parking lot. The demolition of two small decaying structures allowed for the placement of parking spaces directly across from Market One, with a canopy entirely covered with solar photovoltaic panels. This also significantly reduces the urban island heat effect and provides shade to

|| This became the first project in the district and we took that as an opportunity to draw a line in the sand, and demonstrate the incredible power of redeveloping these century-old structures into modern places to live, work, and play.

CHANNING SWANSON, AIA, NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS ||

automobiles during hot Iowa summers. The photovoltaic array on the building has far fewer panels than the parking structure and, according to Swanson, “They have been incorporated in a sensitive manner so as to not compete with the historical building fabric. The original parapet walls hide these panels, and they work really well with the new insertions on the roof, which include a deck and a new modern office space for the client.” Accordingly, the combination of the geothermal system and the panels is predicted to produce 115 percent of the required energy load over the course of a year.

The architects have designed an impressive rooftop office penthouse so flawlessly executed that it could be replicated as a free-standing piece of architectural art. Of course, adding this to the building had its own precise set of constraints and limitations. “Architectural renovations pursuing state and federal

historic preservation tax credits must be sympathetic to the historical fabric of the original building,” Swanson notes, “and the appropriate massing and material usage must blend in with the built fabric existing in the district during the building’s period of significance.” The perfectly proportioned modern office is set far back from the important prominent elevation and is compatible with the historical building and to this entire downtown region.

As Swanson concludes, “I believe our biggest contribution—our value—came in structuring the renovations and insertions to maximize the limitations of the building, the preservation of the remaining historical elements, the maximizing of the passive contributors to the energy equation, and the vision to roll all of that into an enjoyable, cost-effective, and pragmatic architectural solution.”

Inundated

with ideas

A natural disaster can devastate a city, but it can't wipe away its cultural heritage. In 2008, when murky floodwaters inundated Cedar Rapids—eight feet swept into the landmark National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, and wiped out much of the historical Czech Village and New Bohemia neighborhoods—residents rose up and responded.

A steering committee of community leaders looked to professionals to craft a long-term plan that could guide the rebuilding process, and the Cedar Rapids arm of OPN Architects answered the call with high-quality, pro-bono assistance.

“We wanted to continue to help our community recover,” says Heather Lynxwiler, AIA, who worked on the project. “[Developing the plan] was the next step in recovery and working to keeping the momentum up. We, as a community, had made great strides; it was time to not only look at replacing, but also adding and planning for the future.”

The resulting Czech Village/New Bohemia Strategic Revitalization Plan is now an important resource for emerging projects in this vibrant district. Implementation is broken up into steps to be undertaken in three phases over the course of the two decades following the flood: years one through five, years five through 10, and years 10 through 20.

“We needed something developers and investors could look to and envision the future,” says Gail Naughton, president and CEO of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and revitalization steering committee member. “[The plan] has been a valuable tool, and OPN’s donation of time and staff was priceless. For us as a museum that sees visitors from all over the world, the stronger destination we have, the more exciting and fulfilling experience people have.”

City officials and businesses also supported the strategy, recommending proposals on city-owned parcels reference

the plan. New infill construction, sensitive to surrounding historical structures and in keeping with the context of the neighborhood, is a major priority. Catalyst and anchor projects that consistently draw visitors and other businesses establish customers, such as the NewBo City Market, housed in a former abandoned industrial site, were critical. Mixed-use developments, like the Geometric building, which houses office space for tech companies as well as first-floor retail on a former brownfield site, are emerging. Housing, particularly row housing, is on the horizon, which will help build a 24-hour vibe. Shorter-term, grassroots projects that could inspire interaction resonated with community stakeholders.

“‘Tactical urbanism’ is a fairly new urban-planning term that was introduced in this report,” says Jennifer Pruden, executive director, Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District. “In fact, artists and community members have been helping to rebuild the district for years with every festival, pop-up public art display, yarn bombing, bubble blowing, ice sculpture and urban garden they’ve created. It is that lack of barriers that entices people to be involved in this district. Every individual can make an impact, and we hope to foster that connection into the future.”

For Lynxwiler, designing a revitalized district that emphasizes walkability, wayfinding, and whimsy can also contribute to the emotional well-being of the community.

“The light-hearted nature of the whimsy and art helps bring smiles and joy to an area that had been hit hard with a terrible disaster,” says Lynxwiler. “It speaks to the eclectic and creative nature that really makes the area a special place. Working to create well-planned infill that supports human comfort will knit the community together.”

From Top: Rendering of the view toward the south down Czech Village’s main drag.

Bird’s-eye rendering of the proposed plans for revitalization of the New Bohemia district.

Street-view rendering of the New Bohemia district.



Every individual can make an impact, and we hope to foster that connection into the future.

JENNIFER PRUDEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CZECH VILLAGE/NEW BOHEMIA MAIN STREET DISTRICT



BUILDING *Community*

Architects across the state
lend their expertise and talents
to groups in need.

WORDS: KELLY ROBERSON

ARCHITECT: OPN ARCHITECTS, ASK STUDIO, FOX
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



Scenes from volunteer efforts by architects from around the state, including with students, at an urban farm, and outside an arts-focused building.

"Can I Be Your Neighbor?" Design Challenge

Blame the '70s. Blame monolithic architecture and bad design. Blame one-sided news stories or underfunding. Whatever the reasons, public housing typically has a negative stigma. A competition in Polk County that involves high school students and architects at ASK Studio aims to change that.

Modeled after a similar contest in California, the "Can I Be Your Neighbor?" program is from the Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF). Its mission, says Justine Bangert, Assoc. AIA, with ASK, is simple: to advocate the positive social impacts that affordable housing has for a community. "We want to help the general public understand what affordable housing is, its purpose, and what it means for people who are in need of it," she says. "In a larger scope, part of the PCHTF vision is to make sure that affordable housing is recognized as a community asset instead of a liability."

To do that, the competition focuses on a core group of people who may not yet have formed opinions about affordable housing: high school students. "We are able to teach students that someone who is served by affordable housing is someone they might see every day—whether it be a teacher in their school, a healthcare worker, or their banker," says Bangert.

The architects from ASK play a key role: They formulate a program, based on a fictitious family but with a real site in the city of Des Moines. Classes from several metro schools—generally CAD or architecture/engineering—use the competition guidelines as part of the curriculum, with an eight-week program that includes a mid-term desk critique, a preliminary jury, and a final jury. There,

the students must present in public, dressed for the part; the jury chooses the top three projects, says Bangert, which receive a scholarship prize. "The students are typically upperclassmen in high school with plans to go into design or engineering, and we have seen the competition become a sort of reality check," says Bangert. "They suddenly realize that home amenities that they often see, such as double sinks in bathrooms, are not an everyday need, but usually a 'want.' It seems to be a humbling experience for them."

For its part, ASK is part of that reality check, providing requirements for drawings and design and offering expertise on real-world rules for designing affordable homes, including suggested square footage (1,200) and a per-square-foot cost. There are also practical considerations. "For example, storage is an important need in affordable housing, and sometimes you have to be creative to figure out how to fit it in within the square footage parameters, so the students' creativity with storage and how they meet the overall needs of the family specifically might be more heavily weighted than their overall conformance to budget realism," says Bangert.

The connection between the classroom and the real world has made its mark, too. "Some schools will design a home as part of a teaching tool for CAD programs, and have welcomed the opportunity to use the Design Challenge program as the teaching tool instead. They like that the Design Challenge is able to give students a more real-world taste of architectural design," says Bangert. "We continue to see a steady interest and participation, and the student projects get better every year. We hope to grow the program even more next year."



Professionals review work from area high school students. The presentation and review are designed to stimulate real-world experiences, as is the project. Students, some of whom have expressed an interest in architecture, generally participate as part of a CAD or architecture/engineering course.



BUILDING COMMUNITY

Centre for Arts & Artists



No matter where, no matter when, no matter the obstacles: Art and creativity find ways to thrive. But making it easier for artists to work, display, and collaborate can have multiple benefits for the communities in which they live as well.

That's the case in Jasper County, where artists gravitate to the Centre for Arts & Artists (CAA), housed in what was once a warehouse and lumberyard building. Established in 2007, the building has undergone a conversion that now includes 10 working studios, clay/kiln rooms, a therapeutic art room for children, a classroom, a home for four community groups, art displays, and three rental businesses, all designed to showcase and encourage arts in the area.

The group used other community-based efforts across Iowa as inspiration, says volunteer and architect Jack Topp, AIA, with OPN Architects and CAA chairman. "Initially I was evaluating various buildings around Newton, leading tours of the group to various other regional organizations and facilities in order to benchmark the endeavor," says Topp. "The most inspirational visit for our group was visiting the newly completed Clear Lake Arts Center and Art 316 in Des Moines. By combining the art center program with the artists' studio spaces in the facility, these activities are financially supported by the various office and warehouse tenants within the facility."

The CAA has a long and deep history of community partnership and connection. That includes everything and everyone from Topp to local financing from the First Newton National Bank and a gift of a portion of the building's value from a local couple, Dan and Patty Skokan.

In addition to establishing those creative spaces, the group has injected life into what was an underutilized, neglected, 64,000-square-foot building. The project created better pedestrian access as well as a new front entry pergola, improved the exterior envelope, added sidewalks and plantings, removed unwanted elements such as loading docks, and reconfigured the interior, says Topp. For his part, Topp helped CAA identify and evaluate challenges with the physical space, and assist with an overarching vision, especially as the building and group expands and grows.

Artist turnover, says Topp, is extremely low, and the CAA group continuously reaches out to area groups and schools for opportunities to share and connect. Their efforts, it seems, are working: The CAA was honored with Community Star Partner designation by Central College, just one out of five groups honored from the 100-plus organizations that the college partners with. "We have received many comments that the local artists would not have excelled in their work without the support, inspiration, and collaboration with others in the building and its visitors," says Topp.



Community involvement has been key to creating a vibrant arts collective in Jasper County's Centre for Arts & Artists. Volunteer labor has kept up on various projects, including a refreshed facade and murals. Volunteers gather after working on another project. Turnover for spaces has been low thanks to popularity and demand.



Matthew 25

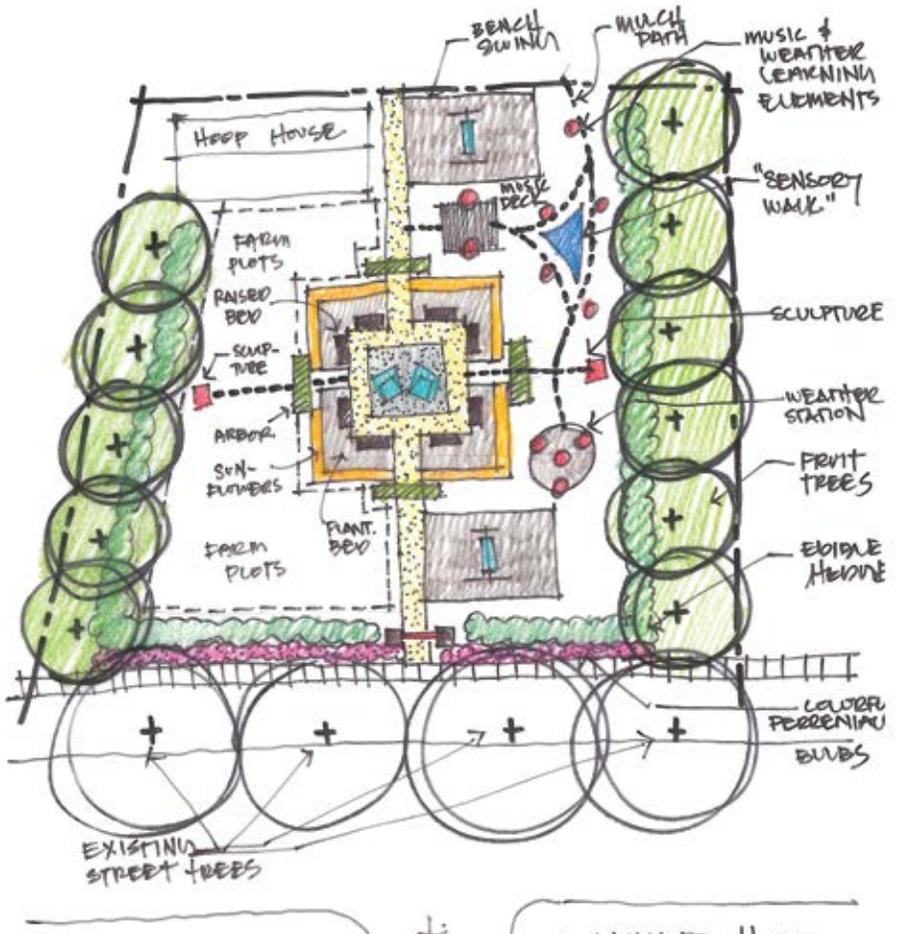


The June 2008 flood did more than create unimaginable damage in Cedar Rapids: In some ways, it fundamentally changed the relationship that the city, particularly west-side neighborhoods and downtown, and its citizens had with their land and their buildings. Some structures received sensitive and necessary renovations, while others—many homes on the west side—were unable to be salvaged. Their demolition left what could have easily become an urban blight—vacant lots with no future vision, says Bradd Brown, AIA, principal, OPN Architects. In their place, a group approached the city with a different idea.

Matthew 25 (www.hub25.org), created in 2006 as an independent, local non-profit and focused on youth, strengthening families, and issues specific to those same neighborhoods, approached the city—which had bought the lots in a vast buy-out program—and proposed converting many of the spaces into urban farms. The goals, says Brown, were multi-layered: to promote healthy eating, including outreach to west-side schools; to beautify the area; to unify the neighborhood through volunteer opportunities and events; and to provide a low-cost CSA, with extra food sold or donated to a local free-meal agency.

OPN was involved from the organization’s inception, donating services to the organization’s temporary, post-flood office space/tool-lending space/neighborhood coffee shop. Two OPN employees, Stacey Hanley, Assoc. AIA, and Denise Clark, serve on the group’s board of directors, and OPN has also helped design an expansion to the farm, and provided general design guidance on master planning and signage, says Brown, as well as additional farm improvements, educational elements, and gathering areas. The firm also donated design improvements to the new location, a flood-damaged, history building that’s currently raising funds.

One of the most difficult things for small, underfunded, understaffed organizations is thinking outside the day-to-day, to focus on big, bold, broad next steps that continue to advance a mission and cement the future of a group. That’s been an essential role for OPN with Matthew 25. “We have been able to help them understand the size and impact of potential improvements and to assist in communicating these improvements to city officials, neighborhood residents, donors, and volunteers,” says Brown. “When you decide to assist an organization on a pro-bono basis it is likely because you are very passionate about the group and its mission. This makes the hard work and the commitment of time much easier, but it is important to be all-in and provide the same level of service you would to a more traditional client. In many ways, the scope of work is non-traditional, and the results—because they are often built with volunteer labor—may not meet the highest standards we are accustomed to, but the feeling of having assisted a tremendous organization achieve great things is a very rewarding experience.”



Razed homes gave way to an expansive urban garden in Cedar Rapids. With no plan for some spots in the post-flood ravaged west-side neighborhoods, the community group created an innovative solution that has multiple tiers of benefits for residents, students, and the community, too.





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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Stuart is a resilient community, having survived among other things the infamous 1930s Barrow Gang's (Bonnie and Clyde) robbery of the First National Bank (now the police station), the 1897 loss of the Rock Island railroad division station and all the machine shops, and an arsonist's destruction of the landmark All Saints Catholic Church in 1995. A more positive example of this resiliency is the recent restoration of the 1879 brick train depot by the architecture firm Knowles Blunck

Architecture of Des Moines.

For more than 30 years, the old Rock Island depot stood empty and had become an eyesore. The original floor and ceiling were gone, with the only original footprint of the brick shell, windows, and wainscoting. Gone were the separate gentlemen's and ladies' waiting rooms, ticket office, and spacious baggage room. The Stuart depot was created in 1879 from the recycled materials of a demolished depot in Rock Island, Illinois. This new

depot was a significant part of the large railroad presence found in early Stuart. The city's founder, Civil War veteran Captain Charles Stuart, had worked with the Rock Island officials to assure Stuart would be the site of the division station and machine shops in this small city of 2,500, founded in 1870. However, in 1897, Valley Junction (now West Des Moines) became the new division station, and within one week more than 400 people left Stuart. This was the beginning of the



Opposite: Luggage door was restored. Original wood bumper remains.
Above left: Restored exterior of historic Stuart Depot.
Left: Period look takes viewer back in time.

end for Stuart’s railroad presence. The business district moved to the north side of town, leaving the rail line and depot on the south side. After a push led by the city and invested citizens, the old depot was placed on the National Historic Register in 1980, which helped draw attention to the structure’s importance in the community.

Knowles Blunck Architecture was hired to renovate the old depot. In the presentation to the Stuart City Council, the architects explained their vision

to revitalize this important landmark property so the “new” depot could act as a catalyst to spur investment in the community and its other landmark properties. Knowles Blunck Architecture created the design for the new interior, keeping the original footprint with three large rooms, wonderful curving arches above the windows and entrances, and clean lines. The architects kept the exterior stone embellishments as they were originally designed. The restored

train depot has a new beginning, and is serving Stuart with the long-term goal of developing relationships with other community entities and having private businesses find a home in the depot.

The once-forlorn train depot now has a second life thanks to the extensive professional expertise of an invested architecture firm. With a goal to rebuild in a lasting way, Knowles Blunck has been successful in its commitment to Stuart.



HOW DESIGN WORKS FOR YOU

20 Questions to Ask your Architect

1. What does the architect see as important issues or considerations in your project?
2. How will the architect approach your project?
3. How will the architect gather information about your needs, goals, etc.?
4. How will the architect establish priorities and make decisions?
5. Who from the architecture firm will be dealing with you directly? Is that the same person who will be designing the project? Who will be designing the project?
6. How interested is the architect in this project?
7. How busy is the architect?
8. What sets this architect apart from the rest?
9. How does the architect establish fees?
10. What would the architect expect the fee to be for this project?
11. What are the steps in the design process?
12. How does the architect organize the process?
13. What does the architect expect you to provide?
14. What is the architect's design philosophy?
15. What is the architect's experience/track record with cost estimating?
16. What will the architect show you along the way to explain the project? Will you see models, drawings, or sketches?
17. If the scope of the project changes later in the project, will there be additional fees? How will these fees be justified?
18. What services does the architect provide during construction?
19. How disruptive will construction be? How long does the architect expect it to take to complete your project?
20. Can the architect provide a list of client references?

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Architect: INVISION
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Goché's Body Hutch 8

Architect: Goché Inclusions, LLC
Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

Ames Bike Racks 9

Architect: ASK Studio
Location: Ames, Iowa
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

Major Effort Saves Energy 16

Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
Contractor: Beal Derkenne Construction
Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Engineer: Modus (MEP)
Photographer: Jared Heidemann and George Quinn
Structural Engineer: Raker Rhodes
Landscape: Genus Landscape Architects
LEED Consultant: C-Wise

Inundated with Ideas 20

Architect: OPN Architects
Location: Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Photographer: Images courtesy of OPN Architects

Building Community 22

Can I Be Your Neighbor?
Architect: ASK Studio
Location: Des Moines, Iowa

Centre for Arts & Artists

Architect: OPN Architects
Location: Newton, Iowa
Photographer: Images courtesy of the Centre for Arts & Artists

Matthew 25

Architect: OPN Architects + Fox Landscape Architecture
Engineer: Anderson Bogert
Location: Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Photographer: OPN Architects

Historical Perspective 32

Architect: Knowles Blunck Architecture
Location: Stuart, Iowa
Photographer: Matt Neibuhr

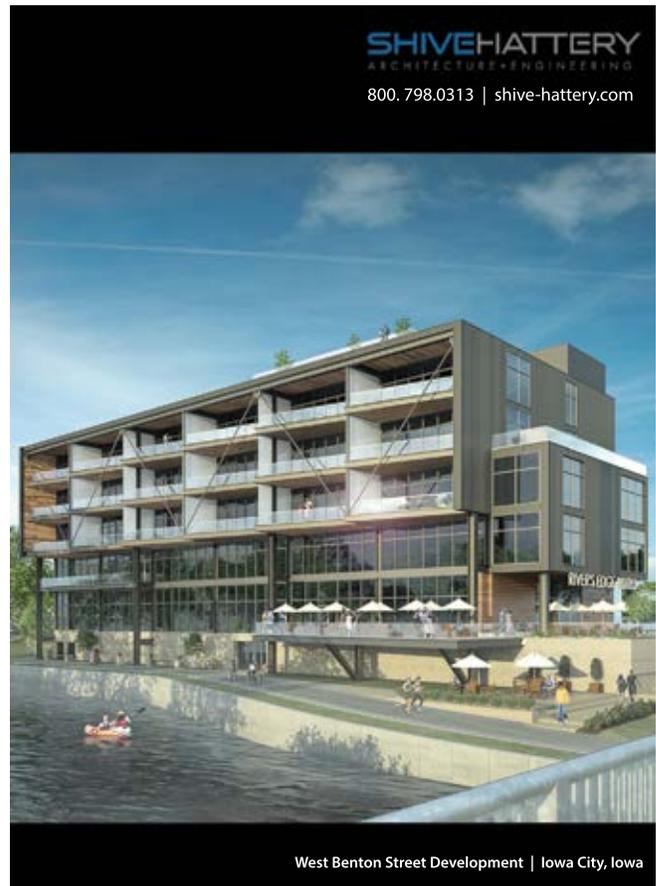
advertising index

AIA Iowa	30, 34, 37	PLaN Architecture	35
Charles Saul Engineering Inc.	34	Rapids Reproductions	15
Commercial New Construction	36	Rohrbach Associates, P.C.	15
Confluence	15	Shive-Hattery Architecture + Engineering	38
European Motors	BC	Stetson Building Products	31
HPI Partners	14	Saints Center	14
Liz Lidgett	38	Substance Architecture	IBC
Masonry Institute of Iowa	4	SVPA Architects, Inc.	37
Neumann Monson Architects	11	The Weidt Group	14
OPN Architects, Inc.	31	Tometich Engineering, Inc.	31
Pigott, Inc.	30	United Brick and Tile	IFC
		Wells Concrete	37
		WoodWorks	6

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