

FAIA: HONORING OUR DISTINGUISHED FELLOWS **A DESTINATION:** ART AND MINIMALISM
WHERE COLLABORATION MEETS CONNECTIVITY **WHAT LIES AHEAD:** SYSTEMS ESSENTIAL TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
SPRING 2017

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editor's letter



Welcome!

Today's workplace is a notable departure from those of the past. Landscapes full of one-size-fits-all cubicles have given way to spaces that embrace technology, flexibility, and a multitude of work styles. Environments are as important as salary and benefits when it comes to attracting and retaining talent, and organizations are taking note. The office of today invests in immersive environments built to boost employee engagement and well-being, and project a strong sense of identity and mission. Consumers, too, are seeking purpose and connection in the choices they make. When the core values of an organization are reflected in the details of how and where the work occurs, it can serve as a differentiator, making one stand out in a crowd. These values can be present through myriad design decisions, from physical characteristics – such as project location, energy use, and materiality – to the way a particular environment supports a specific use, such as collaboration, intense focus, or connection to nature. In the hands of a skilled architect, spaces made to embody the culture of an organization and its aspirations can create a strong sense of connection and loyalty from outside and within.

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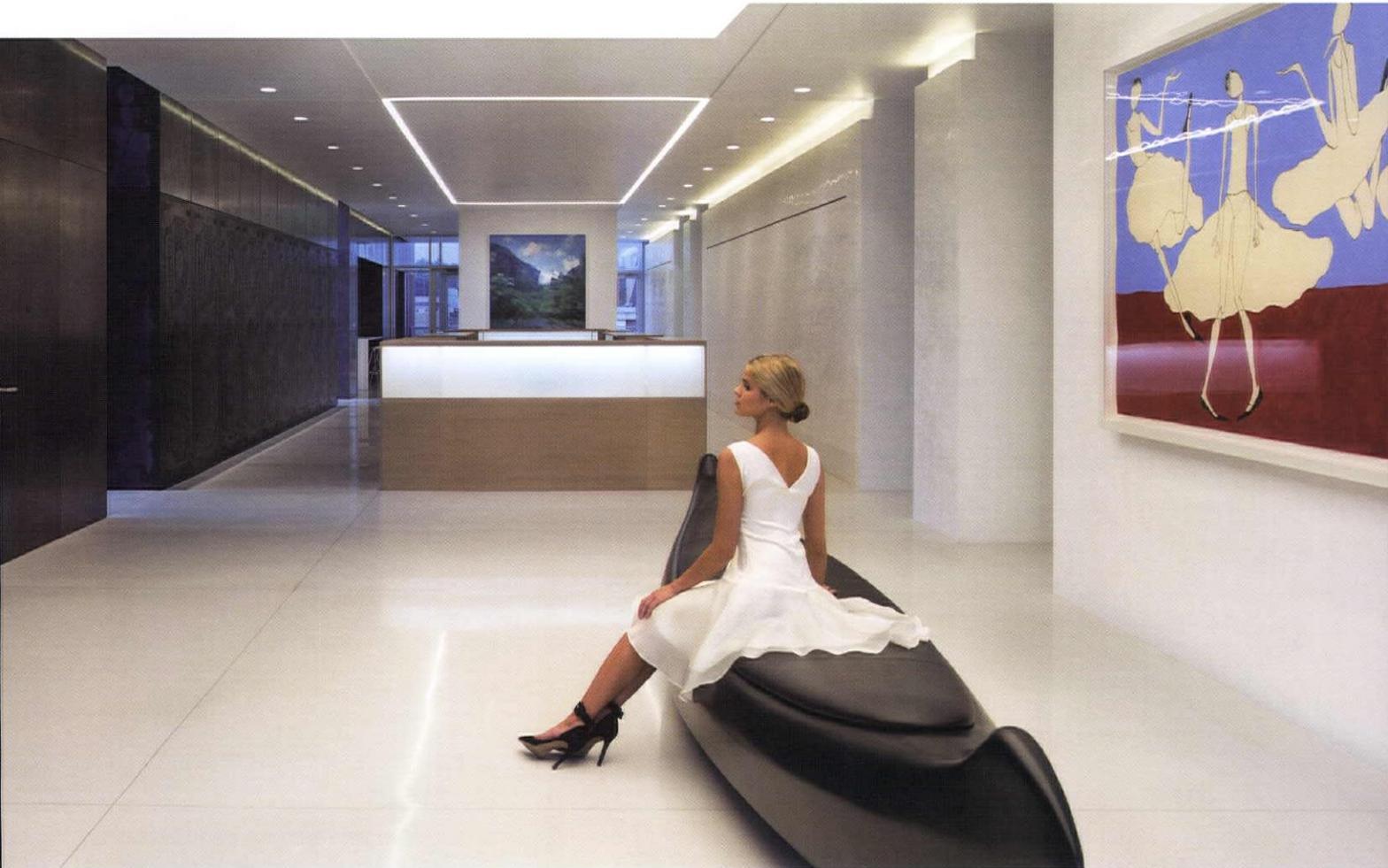
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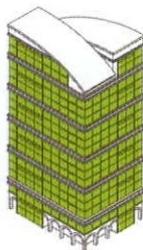


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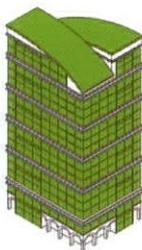
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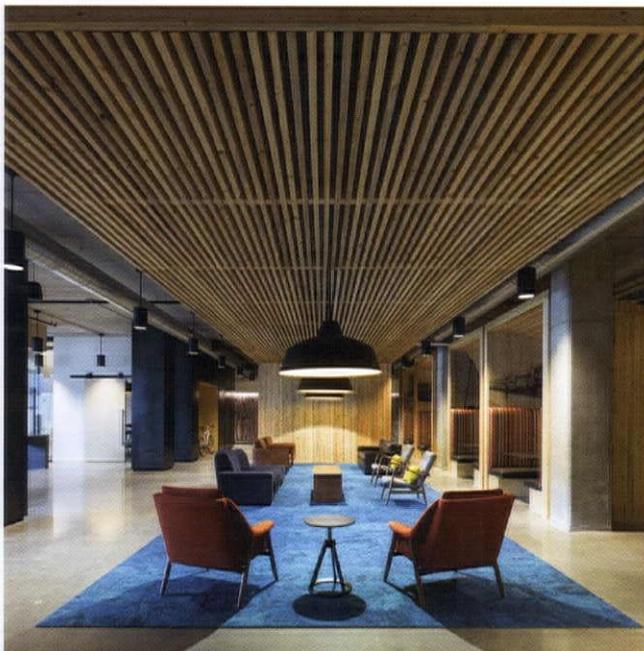
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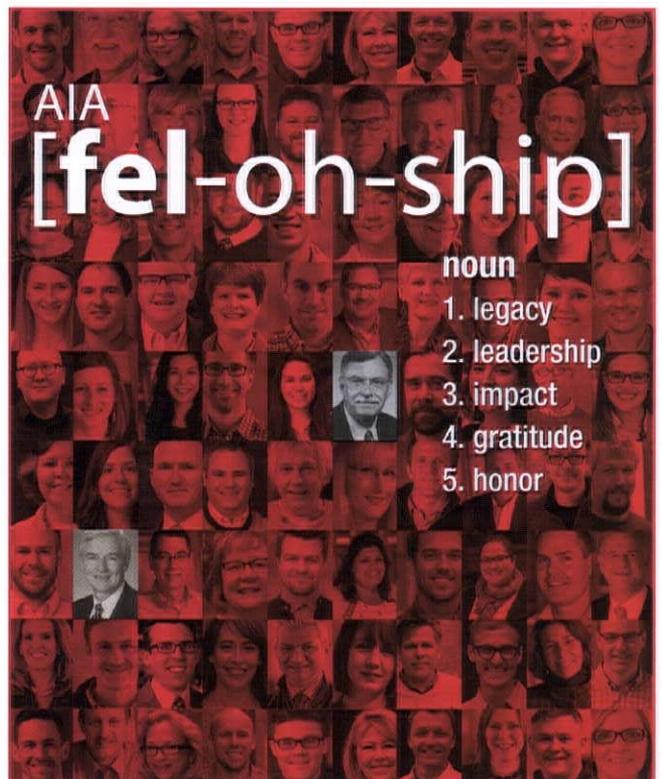
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For Anderzhon, Fellowship is an honor and responsibility

WORDS: CHAD TAYLOR

Eppstein Uhen Architects Senior Planner Jeffrey Anderzhon, FAIA, received his American Institute of Architects (AIA) Fellowship in 2007, joining a select group of AIA Iowa members. Fellowship is a distinction well earned and rarely bestowed; rarer still are Fellows from AIA Iowa members, with just six architects being so named since 2000.

"It's a recognition in honor of the contributions that have been made to the art and science of the Institute, and to architecture in general," Anderzhon says of Fellowship. "It's very satisfying, but it's also a responsibility to contribute to the profession and to continue to hold the same high ideals and standards."

Anderzhon has made his greatest impact as a designer of senior living homes. An often overlooked discipline, designing living spaces with senior citizens in mind is something that Anderzhon sees as a positive and meaningful challenge, and one about which he is passionate. "I think it was Mark Twain who said that a society is judged by how they treat their elderly, and we haven't



been great at that," he says. "These are environments that can really make a difference in people's lives for the better."

Anderzhon is looking to continue making a positive difference with his work for years to come, but also knows that an equally large responsibility that comes with Fellowship is to act as a steward for those who will follow in his footsteps.

"There are some younger individuals who know they want to work in this area and I feel it's my responsibility to pass on my thought process and my experience to them," he says. "I want to continue to do what I'm doing, making a difference for the elderly. I feel a responsibility to share that with the younger generation, and carry that forward."

A photograph of a large, cylindrical concrete pillar in a modern, brightly lit interior space. The pillar is the central focus, with a circular light fixture above it. The walls and floor are light-colored, creating a clean, minimalist aesthetic.

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Stay A While

Pigott's newly renovated office invites collaborators, clients to work and play

WORDS: ABBY GILMAN
IMAGE: FORD & BROWN
ARCHITECT: BLUESTONE PROJECT SOLUTIONS

A flurry of activity engulfs the first floor of Pigott's newly renovated office. Project managers, designers, salespersons, and office leadership sift through samples in the library, discuss projects over the workshop tables, and congregate in the kitchen to chat over a coffee.

Pigott, which specializes in commercial interior design furniture solutions, is merely a few months out from the major overhaul of its corporate office and design

studio in the Ingersoll Avenue neighborhood of Des Moines. Led by a desire to turn the stale, beige, closed-off space into a lively workshop, leadership started at the root: its employees. Work patterns and use of existing spaces were analyzed. The result was a smaller, but more flexible, footprint. Each employee was given the option to opt into an assigned space.

"We're giving people more latitude to make more choices," says John Stenberg, president and owner of Pigott, referencing the company's newly adopted work-from-anywhere approach. "We're also trying to create a space that's so desirable that they want to be here, and to create within that, opportunities for them to move about and to change their setting so it reinvigorates them."

The renovated space — which was designed by Pigott in collaboration with Bluestone Project Solutions — achieves all of the above. The front entry was given a new life in the form of an outdoor patio made of DIRTT products. A wall of windows on either side of the entry allows sunlight in, and serves as a sort of living advertisement at night. The drop-ceiling was removed, offering an impressive four more feet of height across the office. All design activities, including workshop tables and the materials library, were brought out of the basement level to the forefront of the open space. Coupled with a vignette of casual seating adjacent to an open kitchen, the layout of the first floor invites clients and partners to explore the space, play with the materials and products, and hunker down with a cup of coffee to get work done.

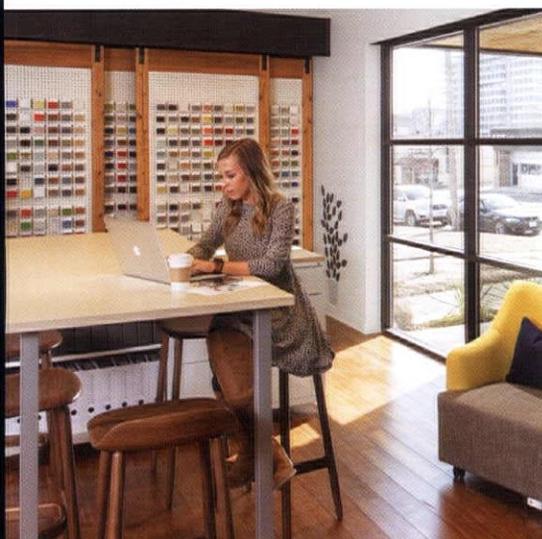
"We were very deliberate about what we wanted to create here for the architecture and engineering community," explains Stenberg. "We wanted this to be a place they could come in, and an environment that would help support the collaborative process of the work they do with us."



Top to Bottom: The new facade — made partially of DIRTT Millwork, a product represented by Pigott — adds textural warmth and extends in the form of a pavilion.

Employees and visitors congregate in the lively and welcoming kitchen.

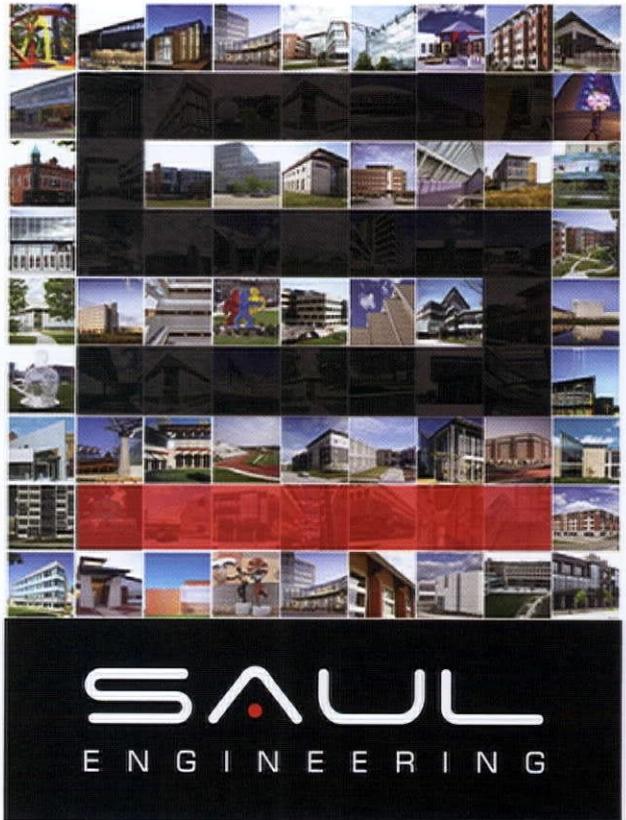
Natural light floods the workstation in the materials library.



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WORDS: LAUREN DAY
IMAGE: AARON THOMAS
ARCHITECT: BERGLAND + CRAM ARCHITECTS

Most small towns in Iowa aren't known for significant architectural presence. In an agrarian society, buildings are generally not for show, but for function. The farming community knows that efficiency and practicality will serve its work better than beauty. Sukup Manufacturing Co., a manufacturer of grain-handling, drying, and storage equipment in Sheffield, Iowa, knows how to design with clients in mind. The company's expertise has landed this family-owned, small-town company with an international reach. While the owners know the ins and outs of manufacturing a solid building, when it came time to design the new Sukup Manufacturing Co. headquarters, they knew the project would be best in the hands of an architect.

Kristy Sagdalen King, Assoc. AIA, principal at Bergland + Cram, and her colleagues were able to incorporate Sukup's needs, reflect the company culture, and provide a breathtaking design for the new headquarters building in Sheffield. The initial requirement was to create an upgraded office space for the company to organize and streamline administrative work. Sukup wanted to maintain its business model that had launched the company to such success, but needed the new building to help perfect the process. All involved knew the design would need to encompass the company's values and work. It takes thoughtful design to not just create a beautiful space, but one that truly fits the ethos and identity of a client. The new headquarters building accomplishes all of that.

The Sukup campus sits at the northeast entrance of Sheffield, giving visitors a sense of the company's impact on the town's 1,200 people. The building connects to the manufacturing floor, creating an ease of welcoming visitors and clients in an impressive space while being able to move easily into the heart of the corporation. Sagdalen King took into account the layout of the office space to accommodate departments, including designating pockets for people who work together the most, creating efficiency for the teams. The design of the office references a circular grain bin, a nod to the industry that also provides an easy flow of movement. Functionality is a common design request from any client, but Bergland + Cram knew how much value it holds at Sukup and worked to make the space perfect in this way.

The team at Sukup lovingly describes the aesthetic of their new, gorgeous building as "prairie industrial." The floor-to-ceiling windows open the building, and give it the context of being in a field. Half of a Sukup silo, fitted with a modern spiral staircase and seating area, greets visitors in the main entrance hall. Sagdalen King's architectural design was able to encapsulate a feeling of hard work, raw beauty, and company pride, inside and out. The exterior and interior were designed with Sukup's own metal product, reinforcing the high regard and pride the company has in its work. While Sukup has had wide success, its driving force is humility: giving farmers and farming companies the quality products they need, and the new Sukup headquarters perfectly reflects those ideals.

The architectural design encapsulates a feeling of hard work, raw beauty, and company pride.



Sukup Manufacturing headquarters in Sheffield, Iowa

What we talk about when we talk about **PARKING**

WORDS: COLE NORUM



Ryan Doyle & James Spiller of Blackbird Investments

Two men sit in a conference room atop a rehabilitated tractor warehouse and talk about where to park 20 years from now. They are Ryan Doyle and James Spiller, Assoc. AIA, of Blackbird Investments.

Doyle and Spiller are thinking ahead. Decades down the line, to the future of Des Moines' urban development, the field to which Blackbird has contributed significantly since its founding in 2013. The young group's portfolio is already impressive: 19 projects totaling more than \$400 million. These include new builds like the planned mixed-use development on the site of the old Younkers building. Then there are adaptive reuse and rehabilitation projects. Among these is the Wilkins building and its renowned Tea Room, adjacent to the Younkers site.

"Some buildings that are built today sometimes only last 20 years," says Spiller, Blackbird's design and development manager. "Our goal is not to execute projects with such limited foresight. History shows us how to make buildings that last."

"But, the uses of the buildings won't always remain the same," adds Doyle, a founding partner of Blackbird, alongside his brother Justin Doyle, his father Harry Doyle, TJ Jacobs, and Hugh O'Hagan.

The five partners and Spiller have diverse backgrounds: engineering and commercial brokering, real estate, insurance, and design. But they share the founding principle that development is not solely a financial transaction. "We believe development benefits everyone," Doyle

says. "From the developers and architects involved. The engineers, contractors and subcontractors involved. For the community as well as the actual physical site."

This "holistic development," as Spiller defines it, guided Blackbird's rehabilitation of the historical Advance-Rumely building into Market One, a high-end office space in Des Moines' East Village, and home to Blackbird. The result is a 100-year-old building that produces more energy than it consumes. "As much as we want to be considerate to past techniques, we need the expertise of professionals now to show us what technology can provide for us," Doyle says. "We want to work with design professionals who can make all of those smart systems look beautiful."

Atop the roof, large windows let swaths of sunlight into the glass-enclosed conference room. Several feet away sit some 700 photovoltaic cells, culling the same sunlight to power the entire building. The result is stunning. And sustainable.

In the glass room, the men come back to parking. "In 20 years, maybe, having additional parking structures is not where this society is going to go," Doyle says. "Saying that today, we do need parking for people. So, when we're considering the creation of these ramps, we do it with an air of flexibility, that they can be repurposed."

That could mean eschewing sloping ramps in favor of flat floors or a corkscrew design; even introducing robotic car storage solutions.

This is another facet of the group's founding philosophy: determining a development's future practicalities, which themselves sit in the grander context and culture of the city to which they add. Plot by plot.

Construction with consideration.

"We're not just thinking about today, about what it's going to take to lease a project up," Doyle stops. Then he wonders aloud. To Spiller, to himself: "What will this landscape look like in 20 years? We are bought into Des Moines. Into Iowa."

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An Eye for Design

A modern approach with high-end details creates an office where you'll actually want to get your eyes checked

WORDS: LIZ LIDGETT
IMAGES: PAUL CROSBY
ARCHITECT: SUBSTANCE ARCHITECTURE

When architecture is at its best, design and function converge to create a space in which the client will thrive. Urban Eyecare & Eyewear in West Des Moines hired Substance Architecture to create such an environment for the new optical shop in 2016.

Located on the ground level of an existing mixed-use structure and inserted between two 14-foot-wide storefront bays, the space required a design solution that

allowed entry and visibility from both the front and the back of the building. Along with the necessary elements of an optometry – exam rooms, reception, and retail space – the location was split between public and private spaces. A simple diagram organizes the interior spaces lengthwise into two bays. Cody Knop, AIA, architect at Substance and lead for this project, expands: “This allows for very natural progression throughout the

space, whether you are there for an annual eye exam, new pair of glasses, or needing to make an appointment.”

An open reception area lined with an illuminated reclaimed wood wall used to display eyewear options to clients is separated from the exam rooms and offices by a folding white gallery wall. This wall, an axis with the main entry, was created as a blank canvas for 250 custom wood display shelves. On the other side, Iowa



artist John Bosley has designed a series of custom prints featuring iconic eyeglass silhouettes. The modern white walls, wooden accents, and artwork give the optometry a decidedly contemporary and urban feel going above and beyond the expected. With custom steel and wood millwork, the space feels warm despite the gallery aesthetic with both ends of the building allowing for views and daylight directly into all areas.

Any challenges the location may have initially presented were treated as a positive. “Typically, retail spaces are only afforded storefront on one side,” says Knop. “The space Urban Eyewear & Eyecare is housed in is unique in that it has two storefronts, one in the front and one in the back. This presented a design opportunity and solution that allowed entry and visibility from both sides of an existing building as well as provides

natural daylight deep into all of the programmatic spaces that benefit from it.”

Owner Dr. Lisa Lansink says of her new space: “After the end of 2016, I couldn’t believe how successful my first year was. I know that the aesthetic of our office is part of the reason we have had such success.” Knop and Substance Architecture created a space where Lansink could make her mark on the industry.

Opposite: Showing one of two entrances on either side of the building. The wall of glass provides beautiful natural light through the building.

Above: A wall of reclaimed wood divides the space between public and private.

Right: A custom wall of retail shelves displays the product for sale while keeping with the modern aesthetic.





a destination

Art + minimalism intersect above downtown



WORDS: LIZ BROWN

IMAGES: CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO

ARCHITECT: NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS

As the Midwest thaws, some eager adventurers, full of wanderlust, begin to plan road trips. These ventures begin with a vision: an end goal. Friends are invited and a destination chosen. With the goal and your companions solidified, the details begin to take form. Maps are unfolded upon coffee tables, soundtracks are chosen, cameras and outfits are packed. Anticipation builds.

Much in the same way, architects approach building projects. The first step is the vision. Intangible concepts like a mission statement or a cultural goal can be physically outworked within a space as the dialogue between the client and the architect becomes a tangible reality.

In the 350 E. Locust Street, Des Moines project, due to the client's philanthropic nature, the space needed to be multi-functional – impressive as well as inviting. This private office space, explains Khalid Khan, Assoc. AIA, principal at Neumann Monson Architects, was created with a dual purpose: for business and for entertainment, including charitable events. "The client desired to convey a sense of openness and grandeur while creating a space for relaxation and private conversations," he says. "Each facet of the design sought to reflect the duality of openness and intimacy, of opulence and restraint, of accumulation and benevolence."

In order to create such an atmosphere, the south walls are white, lit from above with lights set into the ceiling and several hanging fixtures; the entirety of three outer walls are windows, spanning the height of the space and providing a view of downtown as well as access to a roof terrace. The white floor is lit by banners of natural light as the sun moves across the sky. The interior doors, made of translucent glass, filter that light without entirely blocking it out.

The open interior is contrasted by several dark northern walls and clean-lined black chairs. Black detailing is also found in the overhead light fixtures and picture frames that hold the many smaller pieces of art. This material palette, Khan says, "enriches the program by creating duality in purpose and dichotomy in appearance."

The owner's art collection, with pieces large enough to nearly cover entire walls, plays a significant role in adding color and luxury to the space without overpowering the meticulous minimalism. Blues in the artwork are complemented by blues in the sky, and are particularly prominent against the white walls. The eye is drawn immediately to the pieces. The restraint in the rest of the decor allows such specific focal points. The remaining details of the space are subtle: a fireplace, a custom pattern on the blackened steel – a treatment of the \$1 bill, a nod to the business done within – and an abstract backlit raindrop pattern in the lobby. The vision for the marrying of opulence and restraint was never lost, not even in those subtleties.

At the intersection of these details and the large arcs of color and light, there is an elegant place for both the client and guest. Like the ending of a trip, the architect created something both functional and memorable, impressive and inviting. A worthy destination.



Opposite: Dark walls and large pieces of artwork complement the clean vision of the space. Windows provide both natural light and a view of downtown.

Above: Natural textures and neutral colors subtly accent the rooms.

A photograph of a modern office lounge. The room features large windows on the left side, offering a view of a cityscape with greenery and buildings. In the foreground, there is a grey modular sofa, two orange armchairs, and a patterned ottoman. A person is standing near the windows in the background. The ceiling has recessed lighting. The text "all together now" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

all together now

I INTERSECTIONAL T E N T I O N

WORDS: MARK BLUNCK, HON. AIA IOWA

IMAGES: STEVE HALL, HEDRICH BLESSING

ARCHITECT: BNIM ARCHITECTS

In an increasingly complex world, the ability and will to engage in meaningful analytical problem-solving may seem futile. The world presently stands on the precipice of numerous tipping points, and it seems that any concerted effort may prove inadequate at this stage of modern human development. While these problems were created by humanity, they can also be solved by our species, and what finer way to embark on this adventure than with ambitious and creative college students?

The University of Iowa has commissioned many fine architecture firms over the past several decades to design educational buildings and spaces. This narrative thread across the state exemplifies the value that Iowans place on the importance for an educated and informed citizenry. In order to facilitate an encompassing collaboration among several departments – including the humanities, arts, natural, biological, health, and social sciences – the university established the Iowa Informatics Initiative (UI3). The primary directive of this program is to bring together faculty and students in both formal and informal settings, to contemplate and discuss ideas and solutions from their respective scholastic disciplines, and create new paradigms and solutions for a restless world.

BNIM Architects' Des Moines studio collaborated with a university leadership team led by Professor Gregory R. Carmichael, UI3 Director, to transform an existing floor space in the College of Public Health building. Principal Kevin Nordmeyer, AIA, states that, "The challenge for the design was facilitating common ground between various researchers and administrators from around the campus and creating a space that serves as a physical and intellectual home for UI3."

The initiative of this collaborative culture has been achieved with a multitude of various-sized office and meeting rooms. The light-filled spaces can accommodate a focused individual to well over 20 people,



providing a multitude of planned and spontaneous intersectional opportunities in a collision-prone environment. The spatial organizing component utilized throughout the space comprises warm walnut wood bent linear ribbons located in the larger central spaces, with contrasting bright white secondary ribbons organizing smaller workspaces along the perimeter.

These organizational elements were further interpreted at various scales to include surface treatments of frit patterns for privacy, along with writable wall spaces in vital areas. The scientific nature of the overall project is enhanced with human genome patterning as coded messages signifying project identity. “This series of consistent gestures at various levels establishes and reinforces a sense of place and identity unique to the program,” Nordmeyer says.

The University of Iowa has embarked on a comprehensive effort to confront and challenge the multitude of issues facing humanity. By bringing knowledgeable people together from diverse backgrounds into a visually appealing design and natural setting, and equipped with the appropriate social and technological tools, maybe our future is not so bleak. As Buckminster Fuller observes: “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

Opposite: The UI3 facility is located in an existing building adjacent to the Art Building West and the Visual Arts Building near the campus edge, where faculty and students can work in a comfortable and supportive environment with views to the lush green landscape.

Above: Mid-century classics by Eero Saarinen and Charles and Ray Eames offer a pleasant juxtaposition to the rectilinear architectural forms, and were specified to evade a trendy look that would appear passé in a few years.

Below: The walnut veneer panels on the larger linear ribbons were selected for their warmth and acoustical properties, with other secondary materials of solid surfaces, glass and paper stone providing work and writing surfaces.



Where connectivity

WORDS: HANNAH GILMAN | IMAGES: WAYNE JOHNSON, MAIN STREET STUDIO | ARCHITECT: OPN ARCHITECTS



Pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim needed a new facility. One flooded with natural daylight, built for spontaneous interaction that would inspire innovation between lab and office. OPN Architects answered the call.

Nestled in the prairie grass and corn fields of Ames, Iowa, just a mile south of the oldest veterinary college in the United States, lies Boehringer Ingelheim – one of the world’s largest animal health companies on a mission to vaccinate and provide treatment for all major species.

But the people at Boehringer know their mission isn’t possible without innovation, and that innovation isn’t possible without collaboration. In the former space, the labs and offices were disparate, both physically and visually. So they turned to OPN Architects to bring their values to life throughout their new 52,000-square-foot research and development lab. The new building maximizes natural daylight and spontaneous interaction through its transparent, connected design, with principal architect David Sorg, AIA, at the helm.

meets collaboration



Conceived as an object in the landscape, surrounded by prairie grass and corn fields, the 52,000-square-foot corporate office and laboratory's simple massing and color palette both compliment and contrast with its environment seasonally.

THE QUEST FOR NATURAL DAYLIGHT

Boehringer Ingelheim's first request was somewhat unconventional and almost taboo in traditional lab spaces: natural daylight. "We oriented this building true north-south so we could take advantage of daylight in the office space," says Sorg. "But what you might not know about most labs is that not only do they not need natural light, but also they don't want it."

This request presented both a challenge and an opportunity for OPN. Their answer? A first-floor lab space with a deep box footprint, and a long, narrow second-floor office space that maximizes daylight.

"Traditionally, you'd take that first-floor footprint up to the second floor," says Sorg, "but that would have created a very dark, unpleasant office space. We really had to come up with a creative

way to allow the lab to function as it needed while finding an interesting solution to connecting the offices."

The solution was not letting the lab's footprint determine the office's footprint, and instead constructing a building that, from afar, looks like a wide-stretched "T" – a sturdy wooden square base with a 70-foot-wide delicate glass rectangle cantilevering over it, creating overhangs that, in turn, created the lobby and the shipping and receiving area. "Disconnecting the two spaces, not needing them to be the same width and length, really allows the building to perform much more specifically to how the employees at Boehringer do their work," says Sorg. "The lab wasn't constrained in any way by what needed to happen upstairs and vice versa."



VALUE THROUGH INNOVATION

Boehringer Ingelheim's vision is value through innovation. "They had a fundamental belief that if they could create this synergy between lab and office and allow conversation to happen at any point in the day and anywhere in the building, that it would help them be more innovative as a company," says Sorg. Zones of spontaneous interaction; opportunities for employees to have conversations beyond planned meetings.

The lobby – clearly intended for the cross-pollination of lab and office employees – is where both spaces meet, and where the spontaneous interaction really comes into play. It's a buzzing, highly active social zone with a bar and seating, which allows the staff to be significantly more collaborative than they had in the past.

Above: A yellow-fritted conference room suspended above the bright, day-lit two-story lobby and gathering space is a cue to the company's vibrant culture.

Left: At the top of the open staircase, a wall of more than 1,300 glass vaccine bottles is both a branding statement and a visual punctuation between the public and secure areas of the floor.

Pushing this even further, says Sorg, is the addition of a large window from the lobby into the lab. "Typically, labs are more sequestered," he says. "What this does is allow all visitors and office employees to connect with the lab and to what they're doing, as well as allow the lab employees to connect with the overall, larger mission of the building and the company so they're not just in the corner."

The same goes for the office spaces, too. "To be collaborative, you really need to be able to see and connect with your colleagues," says Sorg. "A building with tall partitions, independent offices and



Café seating extends onto a patio area and green roof, reinforcing the building's connection to its rural setting.

a building core in the middle of the floor plane wouldn't allow for visual connectivity." So they strategically opted for low partitions, designed only one private office, and pushed the traditional core, where you'd typically find toilets and utility closets, to the corner.

Even the conference rooms and meeting spaces offer a sense of transparency, thanks to yellow-fritted glass walls that both animate the interior and provide just enough privacy that passersby can see activity without feeling like they're peering into a fishbowl.

The result? Wide open spaces, great natural light, and an unobstructed view. And if it gets too warm, louvered sunscreens come into play. "You always feel connected, which fosters and encourages collaboration," says Sorg.

BRINGING THE BRAND TO LIFE

The very structure of the building coupled with the intentional cross-pollination spaces speak to Boehringer's progressive, innovative ethos. But Sorg and his team took it even further, bringing some of the company's key components to life.

Take the wall at the top of the lobby's open staircase, which features more than 1,300 glass vaccine bottles. The bottles – the same ones used in the labs below – were reimagined as a wall, which acts as a barrier between the public area and the private office space. "We took a fairly plain object and relied on the transparency, reflectivity, and rhythm of the bottle to create what we think is a great branding element that connects to who they are and what they do in a subtle way," says Sorg. "When we think about branding, it's not just about using the company's logo."

Another example? The image of a pig, which stretches across a wall in the café and, when inspected even closer, is revealed to be

made up of hundreds of tiny images of the five primary animals they vaccinate and for which they provide treatment. "The idea is that it's a story with multiple levels and layers to it," says Sorg. "Employees sit down and see a large graphic, then connect it with the mission of what they do."

And beyond the desire for natural daylight was the desire to achieve a biophilic design, always connecting the site with its surroundings, from the second floor's 360-degree views to the patio and green roof to the outdoor walking trail.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

"Boehringer Ingelheim said they were extraordinarily thankful that, every day, they get to work in a facility with natural daylight that focuses on collaboration and bringing their brand to life," says Sorg. And happy, too: Sorg says one of the most rewarding comments the OPN team heard from Boehringer's leadership was that they could see a significant improvement in the mood, morale, and efficiency of their employees based on the new building.

And that's invaluable. "The building was designed to enhance recruitment and retention," says Sorg. "When you're not along the coasts, you have to work a little harder to get the best and brightest minds. They wanted a building that would immediately speak to who they are as a company and connect to the next generation."



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What Lies Ahead

A new building in downtown Iowa City demonstrates systems essential to a sustainable future.

WORDS: KELLY ROBERSON

IMAGES: CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO

ARCHITECT: NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS

Every generation produces creative imaginings of what daily life might look like in the future. Some visions – say, *The Jetsons* – supply more humor than they do practicality. Others tell foreboding stories, such as *Blade Runner*, forging a dystopian existence that posits dire connections among humans, technology, and cities.

But the reality of what lies ahead for metropolitan areas and for their residents' quality of life may in large part be determined by what architects and clients do as they approach the very real issues of resources and energy consumption. As the supply of nonrenewable options diminishes, some energy sources are likely to get very expensive. Other nonrenewable options hold promise for both sustainability and a positive impact on business and individual day-to-day bottom lines.

Neumann Monson Architects and MidWestOne Bank declared themselves firmly in the latter camp with the design and construction of an Iowa City Operations Center. The project's goal was to collect 100 staff members, scattered across several facilities in the greater downtown area. The client's constraints were minimal: MidWestOne Bank wanted to be downtown in a design-forward office and have room for speculative office space, says Channing Swanson, AIA, principal with Neumann Monson.

The eventual location of the new six-story, 56,000-square-foot headquarters, a block across from the Johnson County Courthouse in what's known as Riverfront Crossings, provided a tricky design challenge for Neumann Monson. One corner of the lot offered the sole spot for a building, but it was a sliver of space with less-than-enviable views on two sides. And therein lies the peril and the promise for architects when faced with a trio of hurdles (materials, budget, and site): Good design often happens not when an ideal situation presents itself, but when challenges lead to forward-thinking solutions. It is those twists and turns that

often result in a jump by a client and an architect that's leaps and bounds over others – and an embrace of a future that's certain to come.

For MidWestOne Bank, Neumann Monson embraced the orientation of the building, turning it to the client's advantage. The architects placed stairways, elevators, and enclosed offices on both short ends of the structure. That decision helped mitigate any adverse effects of both west and east sunlight. The unobstructed north elevation, which faces the street, downtown, and the courthouse, captures as much low-level light as possible. The southern orientation – with an existing apartment building immediately at its doorstep – relies on a patterned curtainwall to filter both view and light. The firm also tucked two drive-through lanes under the building.

The slender site mimics solutions ever-present in Europe: Slender isn't always bad, and, in fact, can more easily push and pull natural light into all corners of the building.

Three different design options allowed the architects to integrate environmentally responsive building methods and materials. The first was the glass curtainwall; it creates both a practical and beautiful solution to managing views and light. The architects varied its density, or frit pattern, from zero to 20, 80, and 100, using a guilloche pattern that's based on the engraving on a dollar bill, says Swanson. The pattern is denser to the east, west, and south, and more open to the north. "It's a repetitive and economical solution – the module stays the same, and the only thing that varies is density of patterning," he says.

The second design option implements an activated concrete core to provide both heating and cooling; it is the first commercial structure of its kind in Iowa to use the system and is tied into the geothermal system, too. It's an oft-used technology in Europe but less so in the United States because of the humidity. To counteract that, Neumann Monson combined it with a chilled beam system. "Plastic piping is embedded in concrete slabs, which is then tied into the geothermal well system to provide both radiant heating and cooling," says Swanson. "It creates heat in the winter and pulls heat from people in the summer to even out the temperature load change."

The third and final innovative design option is one that's implemented less often in a four-season climate like Iowa's: solar panels. The grid on the roof offers shade to the patio there, making it habitable on the hottest summer days, and it also generates energy. "When you install solar panels, the optimum orientation for taking in the most sun is often based on latitude, and most people think that it is 42 degrees," says Swanson. "In reality, an angle of approximately 22 degrees for a solar panel takes in the optimal amount of sun year-round based upon when the sun actually shines the most."

Currently, the client occupies floors one, two, and three, as well as the top-floor penthouse space. For them, including multiple tenants was a benefit, as was the forward-thinking design and systems. "They could build it nicer by building it bigger," says Swanson. "It was an interesting challenge: Could we make a building that was purely about its systems also be attractive – so beautiful and a good place to work? Nothing is superfluous, and if you take any of it away, the building starts to suffer."

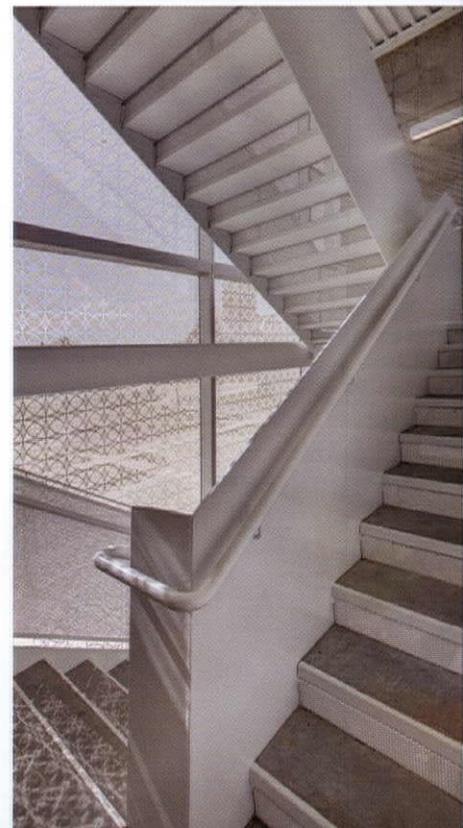


Previous: A slender corner site prompted an inventive approach to grab as much sunlight from the north as possible, and to use the building's glazing to block harsh rays and less-than-perfect views.

Above: The glass curtainwall uses a varying frit as well as a guilloche pattern to provide necessary privacy levels.

Right: The concrete core works in tandem with the geothermal system; it balances the heat put off from people and the environment to create the right temperatures inside the building.

Opposite: Solar panels peek out from the rooftop of the building; their incline enables them to capture energy, even on Iowa's low-sunlight winter days.







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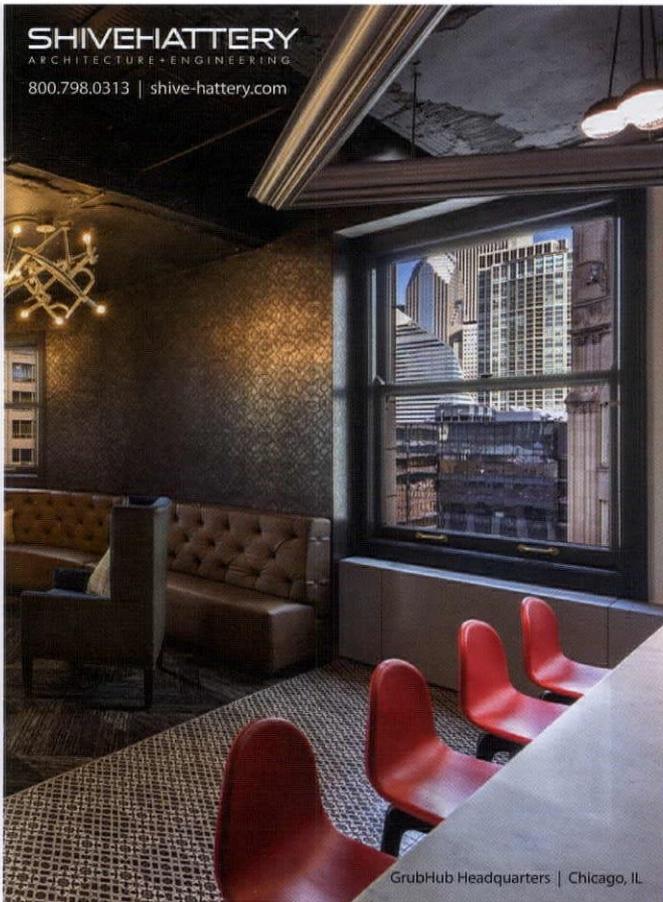
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Photographer: Paul Crosby

Engineer: KJWW
AV & Acoustical: The Sextant Group
Photographer: Steve Hall, Hedrich Blessing

A Destination 18

Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
Location: Iowa City, IA
Contractor: McComas Lacina Construction
MEP: Modus
Structural Engineer: M2B
Civil Engineer: MMS Consultants Inc.
Landscape: Confluence
Acoustics: C&C Consultants
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

Where Connectivity Meets Collaboration 22

Architect: OPN Architects
Location: Ames, IA
Contractor: Story Construction
Engineer: KJWW Engineering
Photographer: Wayne Johnson, Main Street Studio

What Lies Ahead 28

Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
Location: Des Moines, IA
Contractor: Graham Construction
MEP: Modus
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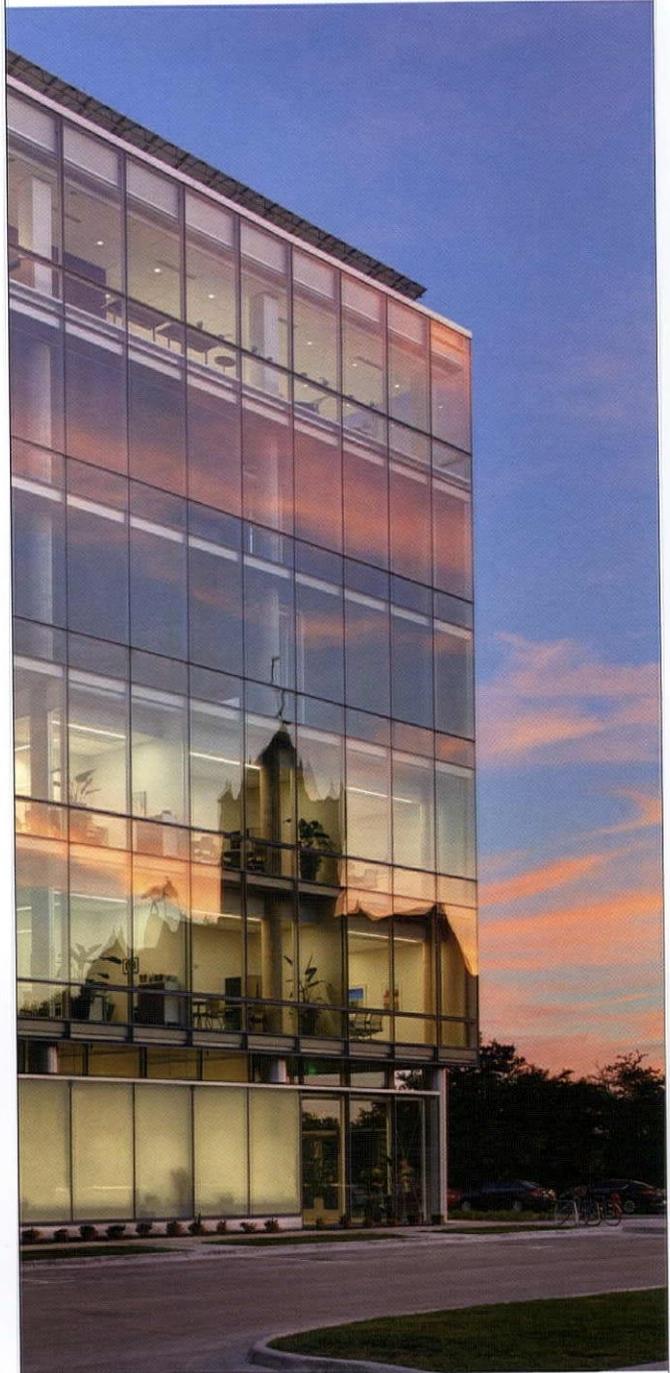
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AIA Iowa loves to celebrate its members and their devotion to communities across the state. Visit AIAIowa.org/CitizenArchitect to learn what our members are doing for our mission is promote the value of good design and advocate for the health and safety of the public.

Every April AIA Iowa gathers in Ames, Iowa to learn more about architecture and provide continuing education. This year's conference theme is **RESILIENCE**: delving into design and crafting practices to adapt easily to change. Learn more about this event on April 12th at AIAIowa.org

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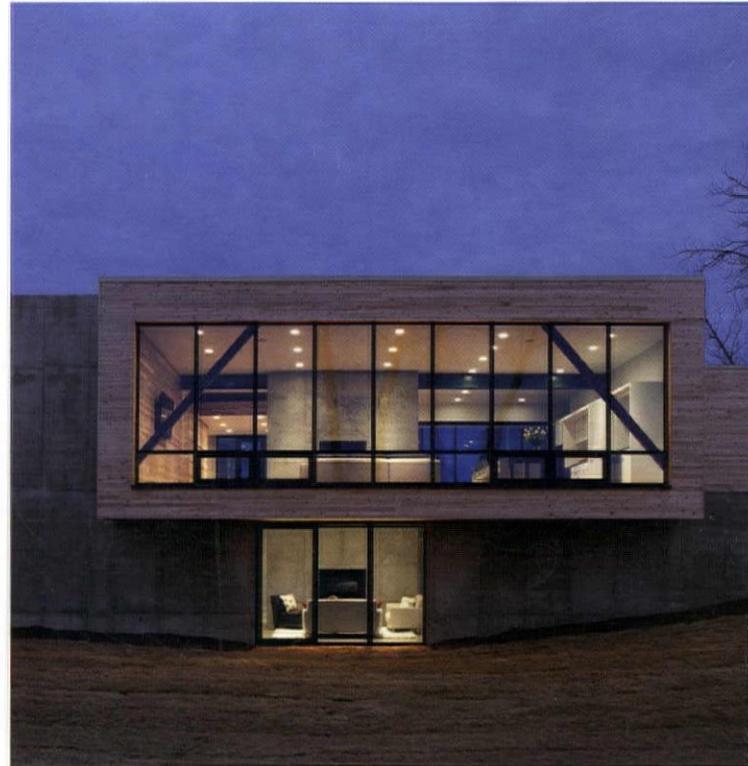


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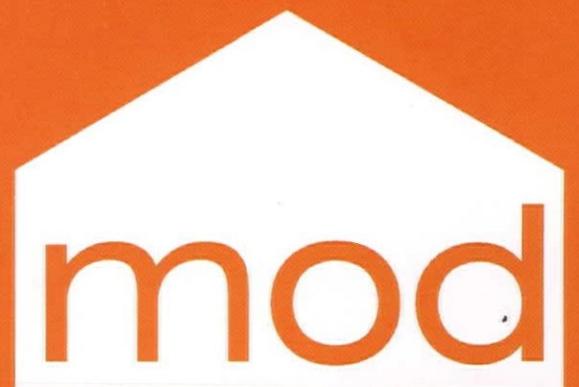
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