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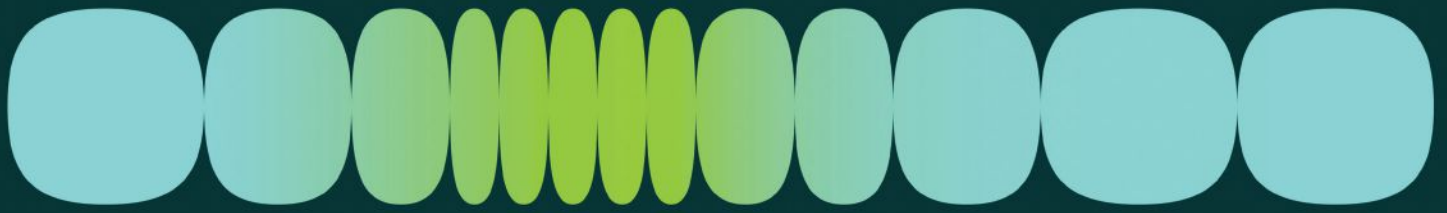
THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AIA IOWA

Respite:

Places that Restore Our Resilience



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IOWA ARCHITECT MAGAZINE SUMMER 2025



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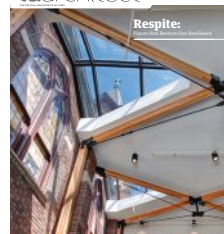
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editor's letter



Grant Nordby, AIA

Editor, Iowa Architect

Years after the August 2020 derecho swept across Iowa, two experiences still stand out. The first: utter physical exhaustion from clearing trees, dawn until dusk, expressed in the phrase, "We are strong, but we are *tired!*" The second: sublime wonder and welcome respite as our children looked above the blacked-out city to see the Milky Way galaxy in the night sky for the first time.

Human lives are both fragile and resilient. Resilience—our ability to recover from setbacks—comes as we access timely *respite*: moments of sublime relief from the grind of life. These often occur in the shelter of sensitively designed spaces: churches, getaway destinations, libraries, and even fire stations as we will see in the following pages. The common thread is the relief they offer: an opportunity to rest the mind and body in a space set apart from sources of stress.

In this issue, we will seek respite together in spaces designed to restore our resilience. How do they give us rest?

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One Year Later: Disaster Assistance Retrospective

WORDS : JASON KRUSE, AIA

Architects work every day to design built environments that are responsible and resilient. Beyond designing for future resilience, there is a need for architects to also assist our communities immediately following a disaster event. That is where the American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter's (AIA Iowa) Disaster Assistance Program (DAP) has allowed architects and engineers to help during critical moments, post-disaster.

Federal and state disaster-response staff numbers are small due to budget constraints. They cannot be everywhere at once, and they cannot do all the recovery work themselves. They furnish expertise but rely on volunteers—like AIA Iowa's DAP—to help reach disaster-impacted areas swiftly enough to avert injuries and compounding property damage during the crucial first few days of recovery. During this period, inexperienced citizens may not realize their danger from working in buildings with structural failure. DAP helps separate the smaller number of high-risk properties from those that are safer to enter. This gives residents access to the latter group of structures sooner, enabling them to halt mold and moisture damage and to occupy safe structures sooner, taking pressure off emergency housing resources. In this way, DAP helps avert injuries and deaths, multiplies the reach of limited government and community resources, and enables timely recovery efforts that limit further property damage.

Our small group was put to the test during the storm season of 2024. AIA Iowa staff leaders and volunteer architects rose to the challenge. Looking back, it has provided a lot of pride in our profession to observe the communities we helped onto the path toward recovery. Leaning on a dozen or so architects from across the state, we are trained and committed to help assist future disaster recovery efforts. And we have learned from last year's events to make our group's procedures stronger for future deployments.

On April 26, 2024, an EF-3 tornado swept through the town of Minden, population 600. The town did not have building inspection capabilities, so the state mobilized our group as a specialty team to assist in Safety Assessment Program (SAP) evaluations. This effort provided residents with some assurances to get back into their homes and to help restart the community rebuilding efforts. The team evaluated 126 structures, including single-family homes, multifamily homes, and commercial buildings. Our group of five architects from across the state helped identify critical areas of focus for rebuilding efforts once initial debris was cleared and critical infrastructure was restored.

Just two months following the Minden event, flooding in northwest Iowa pushed rivers beyond historic flood levels, breaking

levees and leaving entire communities under water. Six communities along two rivers required approximately 800 structures to be evaluated across the impacted portion of the state. As a single entity with limited members and volunteer capabilities, the AIA Iowa DAP could not handle this number of evaluations without additional support. To address this need, the AIA Iowa team leveraged both its Memorandum of Understanding with the state and its building evaluation systems—which were stress-tested in Minden—to grow the group's pool of trainees to include staff from the state Building Inspection office and Department of Transportation. These groups were mobilized a few days after AIA Iowa's DAP architects were on-site. Through the leadership of the AIA Iowa team, multiple organizations were able to work under a single operating system to quickly scale up and meet the requests from local communities.

2024 revealed the benefits accruing to the state of Iowa from organized, local expert assistance by architects. Reflecting on last year, and on a diminishing disaster-response capacity beyond the state level, one recognizes the timely value provided by AIA Iowa's DAP volunteers. Some of that value is returned to volunteers in the form of deepened understanding of Iowa's vulnerable infrastructure and of how to design for future resilience, making us even more able to protect public health, safety, and welfare in our daily work. Our profession has a unique skill set; what we know and do matters. The more we serve, the more value we have to offer.

No area of the state is free of natural disasters. At a time when federal climate disaster prevention, preparedness, and recovery resources are limited, our group has built relationships and resilience locally, demonstrating that architects can be as vital to the immediate response as in longer recovery and preparedness efforts. It is our opportunity and responsibility as architects to expand our efforts in disaster assistance, particularly in smaller communities that lack the resources for effective disaster response. Architects can be critical drivers in timely response and recovery efforts. We have the skills, we are organized, and we are teamed with the right partners to continue to build Iowa's resilience against whatever storms may come.

AIA National's Disaster Assistance Program

www.aia.org/design-excellence/climate-action/resilience/disaster-assistance-program





BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE

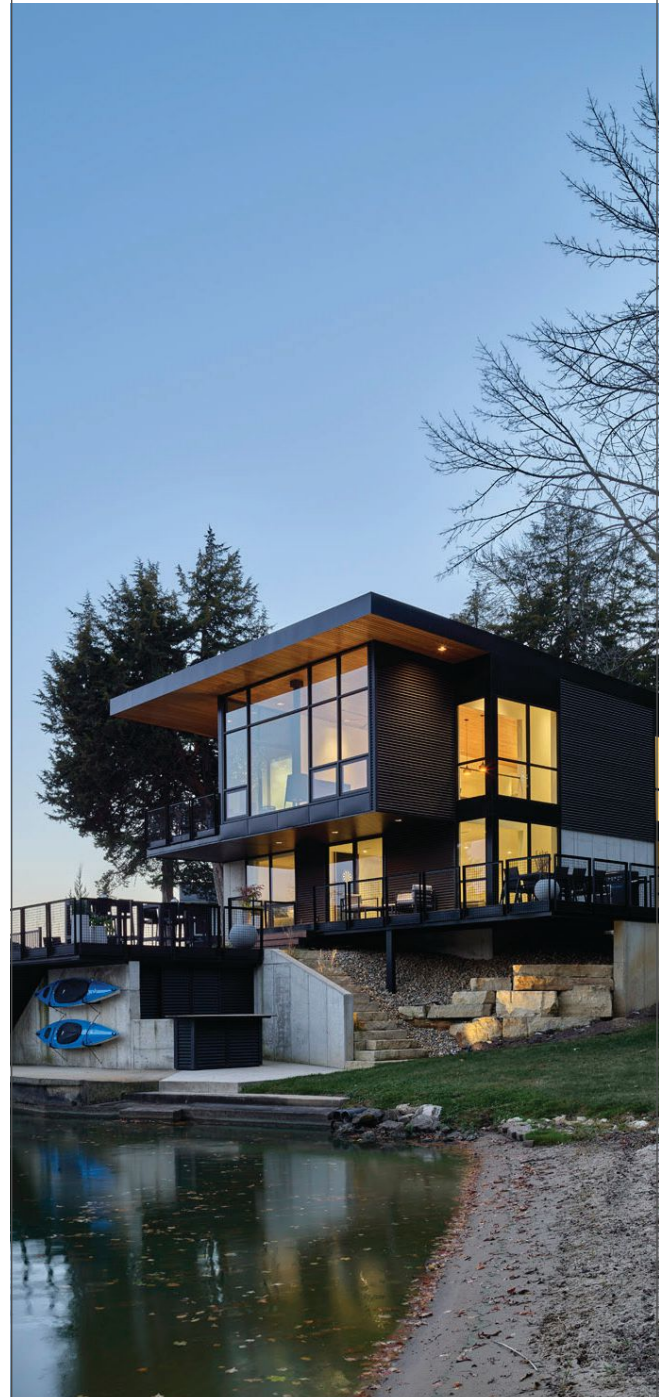


AFTER



NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS

IOWA CITY | DES MOINES



OHMMMMMMM

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Years of Membership

Long-Standing AIA Iowa Members Recognized for Commitment to the Chapter

Every year at the Chapter's annual Spring Conference, the American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter (AIA Iowa), recognizes licensed members who have shown their long-standing commitment to the Chapter and the profession through years of continuous membership. Members

receive recognition certificates starting at 25 years of membership, followed by 35, and every five years in subsequence. This annual observance is special to AIA Iowa members and inspires others to achieve a similar commitment; 2025 was no different. Chapter leaders were thrilled

to recognize 31 long-term members with Years of Membership Certificates and acknowledgement at our virtual Spring Conference on April 4, 2025.

Congratulations and thank you to each recipient for their continued membership with the Chapter!

2025 Years of Membership Recipients:

25 Years

Mark H. Allen, AIA
Vitus Bering, AIA
John F. Snyder, AIA
Joseph M. Tursi, AIA

35 Years

Robert R. Braun, AIA
Kevin Eipperle, AIA
John K. Gardner, AIA
Scott Hansche, AIA
Gary A. Hintermeister, AIA
Jerry D. Rainey, AIA
Lynn L. Rusher, AIA
Richard S. Seely, AIA
Greg T. Sundberg, AIA
Jane Frudden Templeman Larson, AIA

40 Years

Robert F. Bisenius, AIA
David D. Schulze, AIA

45 Years

William L. Anderson, FAIA
Steven E. Gray, AIA
Paul W. Klein, AIA
Rod Kruse, FAIA
Judith A. McClure, AIA
R. Allan Oberlander, AIA
Douglas A. Wells, AIA

50 Years

Daryl E. Andersen, AIA
Paul D. Anneberg, AIA
James A. Brygger, AIA
William D. Nelson, AIA
Scott E. Olson, AIA
James L. Schoenfelder, AIA

55 Years

James E. Grisolano, AIA

60 Years

R. Hovey Brom, AIA

"We extend our deepest gratitude to these esteemed AIA Iowa members for their many years of steadfast commitment to the Chapter and the profession of architecture. Their dedication has remained a constant, contributing significantly to the vibrancy and success of Iowa communities and beyond and serve as a powerful inspiration to members statewide."

— JESSICA REINERT, HON. AIA IOWA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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Projects
In Progress



South Tama County Community School District Middle School Campus Renovation



Tama, Iowa
ISG

The South Tama Community School District, in partnership with ISG, is transforming a long-vacant juvenile detention center into a modern middle

school. To make this project feasible, the State of Iowa Governor's Office donated it to the City of Tama, who then transferred ownership to the school district. This 67,913-square-foot facility, combined with a 28,617-square-foot addition, is undergoing extensive renovations to address its outdated infrastructure and repurpose spaces originally designed for detention into functional, student-centered learning environments.

The reimagined middle school will provide students with an engaging learning environment that fosters academic success. The community, students, and staff are excited about specialized classrooms, a music commons, a library, STEAM classrooms, a gymnasium with locker rooms, and a fitness center. Additional improvements, including parking and site enhancements, are designed to ensure the middle school facility meets both educational and operational needs. This thoughtful redesign reflects South Tama Community School District's vision for a vibrant, supportive space for fifth through eighth grade students while creating a facility the community can be proud to call its own.



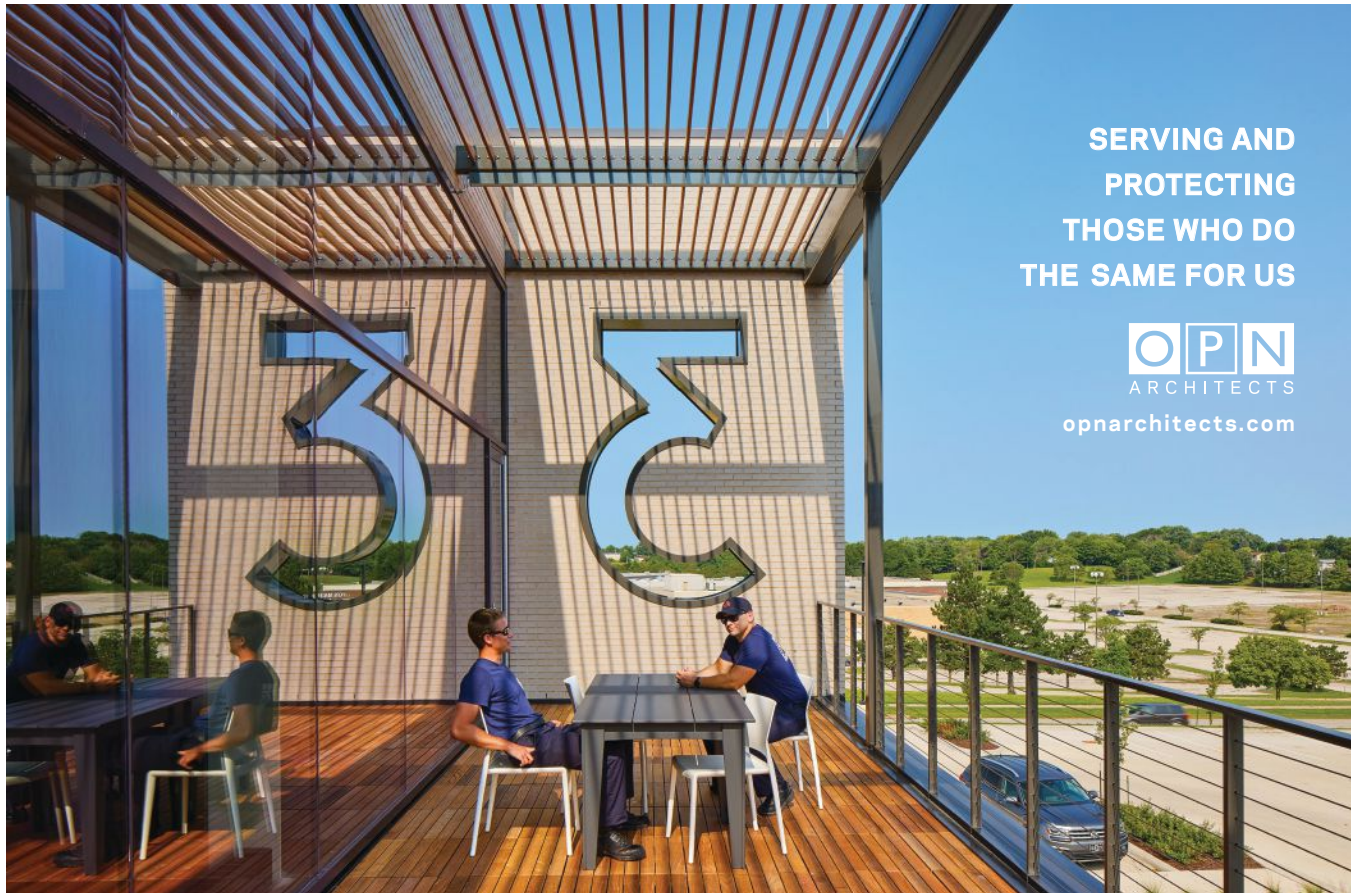
Drake University Olmsted Center – First Floor Renovation



Des Moines, Iowa
10Fold Architecture + Engineering

Located in the heart of Drake University's campus, the Olmsted Center has served as a hot spot for student functions and engagement, studying, and collaboration. To better serve the needs of Drake University students, key spaces on the first floor

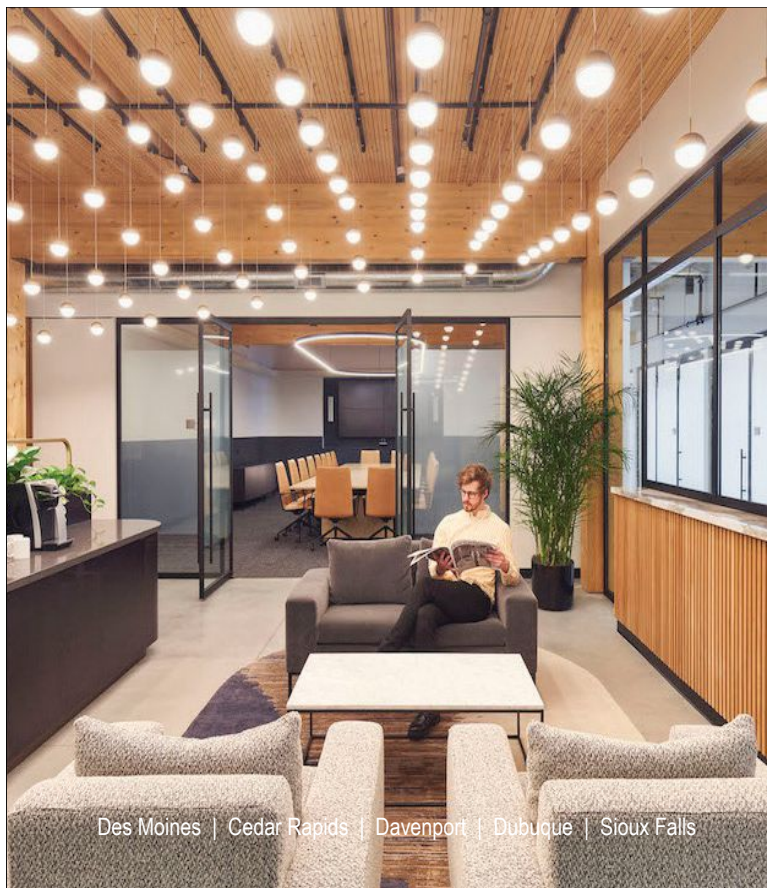
will be refreshed, creating more opportunities for group socialization and lounging on campus. The renovation will feature a campus living room focused on relaxation and recreation accommodating all students. Among the improvements to student common spaces, there will be an addition of "Drake on the Go," a modern campus convenience store, along with renovations to the "Bulldog Shop" to enhance the retail experience for both students and visitors. This renovation aims to support student success, foster community, and revitalize the heart of the Olmsted Center.



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Viewed from the backside, a series of decks, balconies, roof overhangs, and retaining walls (which mitigate erosion and act as handy kayak storage) help dissolve the boundary between the cabin and the shore.

THE SLOW GETAWAY

Family Recharge at the Cabin

WORDS : ANDREW GLEESON **IMAGES :** CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO
ARCHITECT : NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS



Top left: To maximize the symbolism of a conscious break between the hustle and bustle of life's daily routine and the quietude of lake life spent with family and friends, a bridge walkway connects the detached front garage to the front entrance of the cabin. **Top right:** The sleek kitchen is from IKEA, and its assembly was an all-day family adventure. **At left:** A wall of glass on the eastern-facing lakeside has gentle overhangs and balconies that pull the horizontal planes outdoors and frame full views of the water.

The cabin nuzzles into the sloping shores of an eastern Iowa lake. Neumann Monson Architects utilized this hilly site to create an unassuming single-story garage on the streetside that gradually gives way to a glassy two-story volume on the lakeside. This transition between front and back is more than an advantageous use of the site; it is a conscious break between the hustle and bustle of life's daily routine and the quietude of lake life spent with family and friends. Dave Zahradnik, AIA, principal and vice president at the firm, led the cabin's design and stressed the importance of this break. To maximize this symbolism, a bridge walkway connects the detached front garage

to the front entrance of the cabin. The architect describes it as a "symbolic crossing over" where the problems of everyday life can be left behind. The narrow bridge leads to a small porch and a glass front door that reveals a slice of the lake in the distance. The linear movement of the path is reinforced by the lines of a wood slat soffit, which seamlessly transforms into the ceiling surface on the main level. This blurring between interior and exterior becomes dramatically noticeable upon entering the large living space. A wall of glass on the eastern-facing lakeside has gentle overhangs and balconies that pull the horizontal planes outdoors and frame full views of the water. These hovering



Above: The linear movement of an outdoor path is reinforced by the lines of a wood slat soffit, which seamlessly transforms into the ceiling surface on the main level. This blurring between interior and exterior becomes dramatically noticeable upon entering the large living space.

planes create an overwhelming sense that the main living area is on the water—the lake’s smells, reflections, and activity are felt in this expansive space. The kitchen rests at the back by the front entrance. The south end of this level has a primary and a guest bedroom. The main bedroom shares a large balcony with the living area, offering a commanding perch.

The clients are early risers and stressed the importance of the eastern morning sun in the design. In subsequent talks with the architect, they are pleased with how the dawn sun reaches deep through the space into the kitchen. At certain times of the year, the sunrise briefly casts light directly onto the slatted ceiling. The client has joked that on these mornings, making breakfast requires sunglasses. As morning extends toward noon, the sun spreads rippling reflections off the lake. These effects help cement the illusion that the cabin is swaying idly on the water.

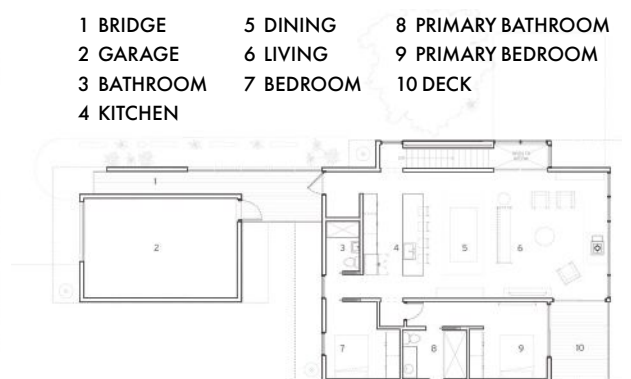
On the north side of the main level, there is a pop-out stair that leads downstairs. This level hosts a large family gathering room and three additional bedrooms on the south end. Utility spaces are embedded into the slope at the back, but on the east, the family room has ample glass doors that continue the space outdoors onto a large deck. This deck is fragmented into a series of platforms as it descends to the shore. Viewed from the backside, a series of decks, balconies, roof overhangs, and retaining walls (which mitigate erosion and act as handy kayak storage) help dissolve the boundary between the cabin and the shore. The streetside is firm

and contained, but the lakeside slumps its shoulders and sprawls out into the water.

The cabin was not intended only for summer outings. The clients wanted a reliable refuge to bring their blended family together year-round. With five adult children, these empty nesters have found the cabin perfect for summer vacations and weekend retreats, but they also celebrate important holidays there. Any excuse at any time of year to go to the cabin is welcome.

The project looks expensive for a weekend cabin, but there were several creative ways that the architect, client, and contractor (Tanmann Construction) saved on cost. Encouraged by friends who lived on the lake, the land was bought during the pandemic, complete with an existing cabin that dated back to the 1960s. Initially, they intended to retrofit this fixer-upper but ultimately decided to use only its footprint and retaining walls.

Repeating the profile of the existing structure also helped prevent the new design from blocking views of the lake from neighboring properties. The client and architect designed and installed many of the fit-outs, railings, and other construction elements themselves or in close collaboration with fabricators. The sleek kitchen is from IKEA, and its assembly was an all-day family adventure. The cabin proves how a considerate design, carefully calibrated to site and program, can positively contribute to the spiritual health of a family. Everyone needs that one place to get away from it all.



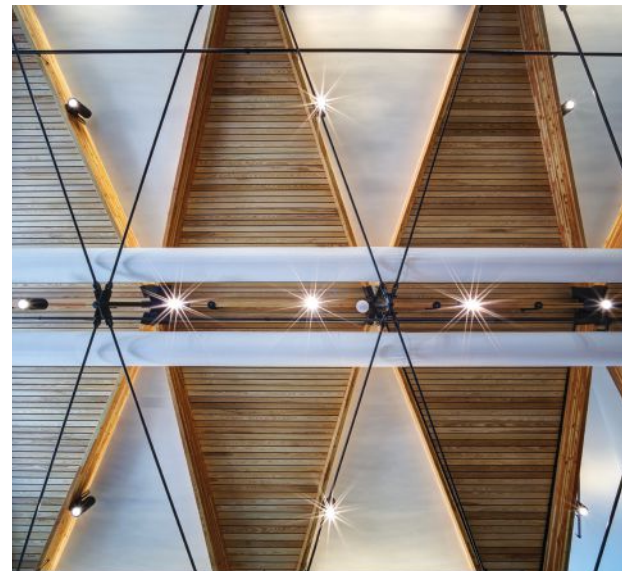
Clockwise from top left: On the north side of the main level, there is a pop-out stair that leads downstairs. This deck is fragmented into a series of platforms as it descends to the shore. Neumann Monson Architects utilized this hilly site to create an unassuming single-story garage on the streetside that gradually gives way to a glassy two-story volume on the lakeside. Initially, the client intended to retrofit this fixer-upper but ultimately decided to use only its footprint and retaining walls. The family room has ample glass doors that continue the space outdoors onto a large deck.



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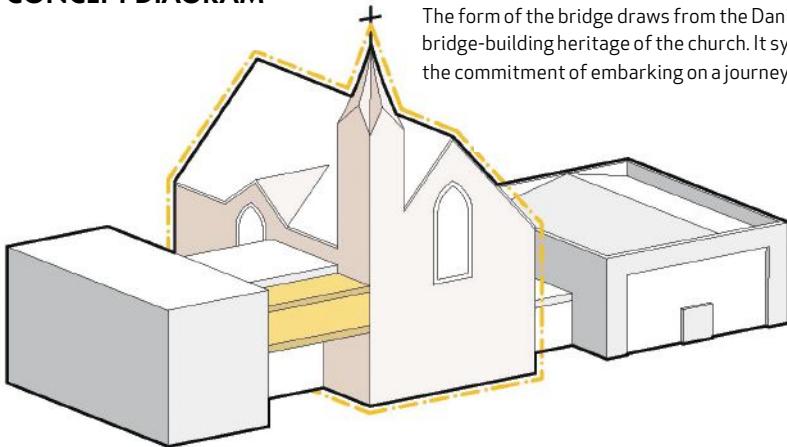


Above: Timber compression members pair with black steel tension rods in soaring “V” forms, mirroring the Gothic arches of the sanctuary. **Below:** New exterior lighting illuminates the sanctuary like a beacon at night, while the modest, welcoming embrace of the fellowship hall and main entrance invite the curious in through glowing glass walls. **Bottom Left:** The additions’ exterior forms are purposefully modest, and their materials are natural—appearing “quiet, clear, and honest.”

CONCEPT DIAGRAM

BRIDGE AS HERITAGE

The form of the bridge draws from the Danish bridge-building heritage of the church. It symbolizes the commitment of embarking on a journey.



CHURCH AS A VESSEL

The East and West additions represent the idea of land as simple masonry forms. The historic church, with the steeple reaching toward the sky, similar to a ship’s mast, floats between



RECONNECTED:

LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH

WORDS: GRANT NORDBY, AIA **IMAGES:** CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO **ARCHITECT:** SLINGSHOT ARCHITECTURE

The sanctuary of Luther Memorial Church was built by Danish American craftsmen in 1918 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Martin Luther's famous 95 Theses. Ever since, the building has served as a focus of the local Danish community, and it functions as the de facto "campus church" of nearby Grand View University. More than 100 years later, the church

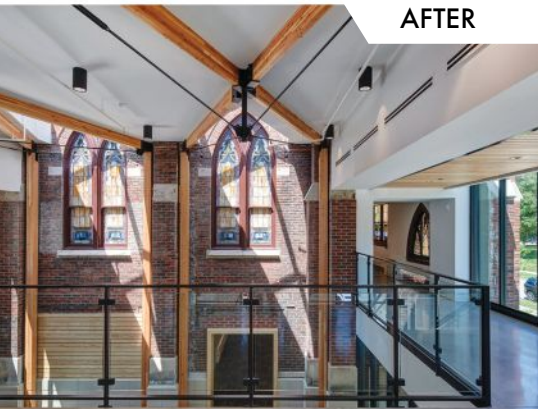
recognized a need for more inviting spaces to reconnect it with the campus and community. They turned to Slingshot Architecture for solutions.

There were numerous challenges. Principal David Voss, AIA, explains that the roofline of a gloomy 1950s-era addition had been "built up against the [sanctuary's] existing stained glass





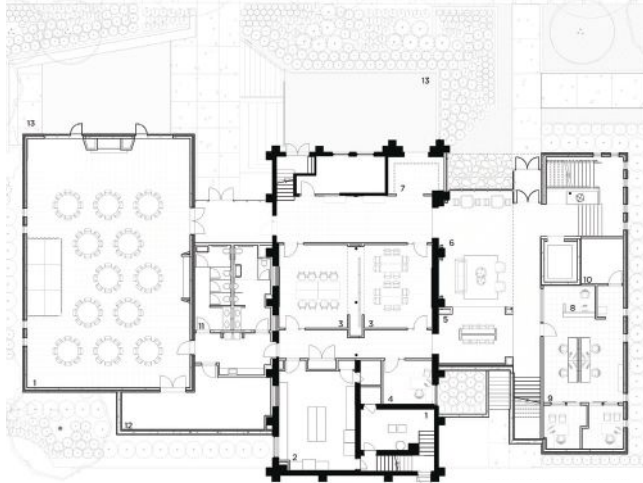
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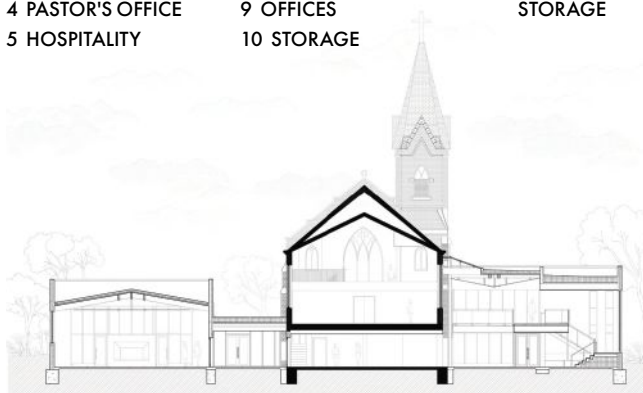


Top left: Materials in the new spaces are organized in simple, clean forms washed by daylight, conveying a sense of calm yet convivial well-being. **Top right:** Restored woodwork celebrates original Danish American craftsmanship, while the additions continue the tradition in modernist Scandinavian fashion through wood accents and timber compression members. **At bottom:** The new fellowship hall's indoor/outdoor fireplace is surrounded by large windows, giving expansive views in both directions. **Opposite, at top:** The 1950s addition was demolished, replaced by new construction of approximately the same volume but radically different in feel—now offering a series of transformational welcoming spaces. **Opposite, at bottom:** The concept of warm, welcoming *Hygge*—a Danish term conveying ideas of comfort and close-knit community—consciously extends to the materials used.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 FELLOWSHIP HALL | 6 INTERIOR GATHERING | 11 RESTROOMS |
| 2 CATERING KITCHEN | 7 COAT ROOM | 12 MECHANICAL |
| 3 CLASSROOM | 8 RECEPTION | 13 EXTERIOR STORAGE |
| 4 PASTOR'S OFFICE | 9 OFFICES | |
| 5 HOSPITALITY | 10 STORAGE | |



EAST | WEST SECTION - AA



windows.” It also decidedly lacked welcoming curb appeal. The basement community room was typical of many found across the Midwest: dark, dull, and spartan. A gently inviting entry sequence and indoor/outdoor gathering spaces were sorely needed to extend spiritual and community life beyond liturgy and into people’s daily walk. But how to find space on the crowded site, hemmed in by surface parking and neighboring structures?

A new at-grade fellowship hall now mirrors the 1950s footprint, buffered from the taller original sanctuary by dark-clad, receding forms. This addition allowed for classrooms to relocate to the sanctuary basement. The 1950s addition was demolished, replaced by new construction of approximately the same volume but radically different in feel—now offering a series of transformational welcoming spaces. A generous, daylit entrance now leads to a two-story, skylit lounge, augmented by service spaces and a sanctuary-level nursery for wrangling young children during worship services. Once cozily settled, visitors turn up an ample stair to find themselves on a “bridge” spanning the entrance and taking them into the sanctuary. This has been restored to its original splendor, handcrafted woodwork gleaming in the light of restored and unobstructed stained-glass windows.

The new fellowship hall is heavily used by the community, fulfilling its mission of welcoming others. Its indoor/outdoor fireplace is surrounded by large windows, giving expansive views in both directions. These invite passersby inward via the commodious new outdoor terrace, and they prompt churchgoers to gather visibly in purposefully porous public spaces. This public-facing elevation aligns with the Beaux-Arts entrance of the imposing Humphrey Center (campus administration) across Grandview Avenue, to which it is explicitly linked by an ample walkway. New exterior lighting illuminates the sanctuary like a beacon at night, while the modest, welcoming embrace of the fellowship hall and main entrance invite the curious in through glowing glass walls.

The concept of warm, welcoming *Hygge*—a Danish term conveying ideas of comfort and close-knit community—consciously extends to the materials used. Restored woodwork celebrates original Danish American craftsmanship, while the additions continue the tradition in modernist Scandinavian fashion through wood accents and timber compression members. The latter pair with black steel tension rods in soaring “V” forms, mirroring the Gothic arches of the sanctuary. In strategic locations, these cradle skylights give light to both the original stained glass and to spaces below—an elegant re-knitting of new and old into more perfect unity. The timbers also nod to the Danish shipwright tradition, the sanctuary’s vessel-like analogue made explicit in the restored model of a sailing vessel on display in the sanctuary. Modern methods extend and renew historic ones, relinking churchgoers to their roots while embracing new growth.

The additions’ exterior forms are purposefully modest, and their materials are natural—appearing “quiet, clear, and honest,” in Voss’ words. But these simple forms give way to joyfully daylit structural gymnastics indoors—their understated Scandinavian warmth half-concealed, half-revealed. Materials in the new spaces are organized in simple, clean forms washed by daylight, conveying a sense of calm yet convivial well-being.

This well serves the needs of churchgoers and visitors who come in search of comfort, community, and spiritual connection. Here, they find respite from the stresses of life, affording time and space to process vicissitudes and restore their spirit in the warm fellowship of friends.



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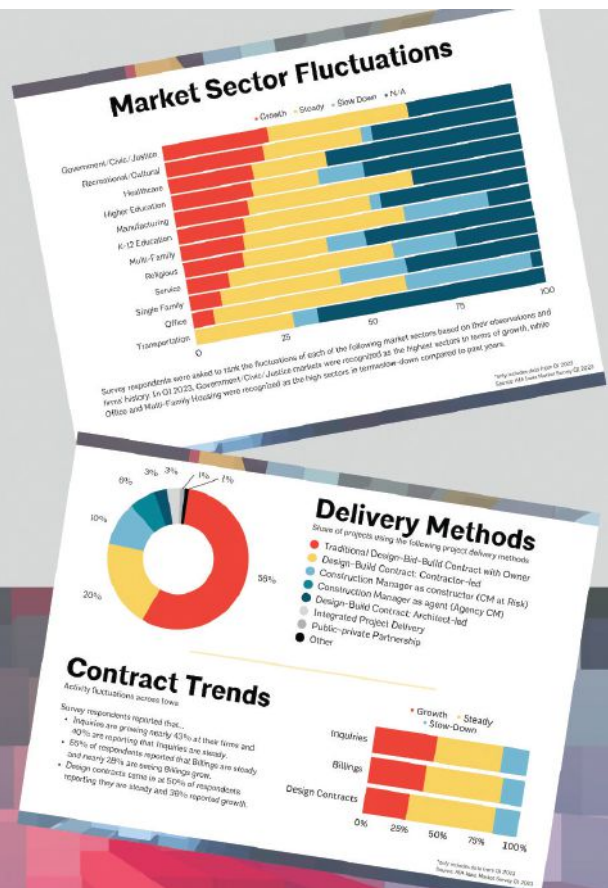
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RURAL RESILIENT: HOTEL STUART

WORDS : EVAN SHAW, AIA, IMAGES : MA ARCHITECTURE ARCHITECT : MA ARCHITECTURE

Nestled among the wind-swept plains and just a short westerly drive from Des Moines, the sleepy city of Stuart has had a relatively quaint existence since its boom days as a rail hub for the Rock Island. Except, perhaps, for the time Bonnie and Clyde robbed the local bank. Today, the city is reaping the benefits of small town living and values. Due to its proximity to Des Moines, Stuart is quietly becoming a haven for those who desire a slower rural pace yet still want access to all the accoutrements of city living.

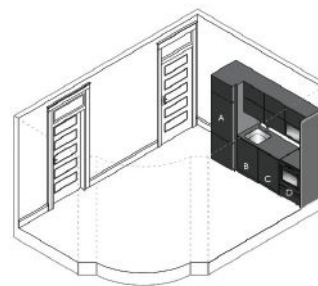
A vestige of its railroad heritage, the Hotel Stuart was originally built across the street from the town depot as a means of servicing weary travelers as they traversed the country. The sign above the door advertising it as “strictly modern,” thus assuring guests that even though they were far from home, the comforts of home were at hand. Interestingly, the hotel continued to operate until the 1970s, well after passenger rail service had ceased but before the interstate highway system was completed. It was during this era that the hotel hosted its most famous guest—novelist Jack Kerouac—as he crossed the country writing what would become his magnum opus: *On the Road*. However, a small roadside hotel can’t

At left: A vestige of its railroad heritage, the Hotel Stuart was originally built across the street from the town depot as a means of servicing weary travelers as they traversed the country. The sign above the door advertising it as “strictly modern,” thus assuring guests that even though they were far from home, the comforts of home were at hand. **Below:** While the original corridor walls were maintained in compliance with regulations for the historic tax credit program, new bedroom, bathroom, living, and kitchen spaces were sensitively inserted.





Above: A required accessible unit was created on the ground level, as adding an elevator to the building was not technically feasible. **At right:** Even though a previous renovation had been started, there was a substantial amount of work that needed to be completed. The entire back of the building required repointing and even some structural repair of the brickwork.



KITCHEN MODULE

A REFRIGERATOR/
FREEZER
B SINK

C DISHWASHER
D ELECTRIC RANGE/
MICROWAVE

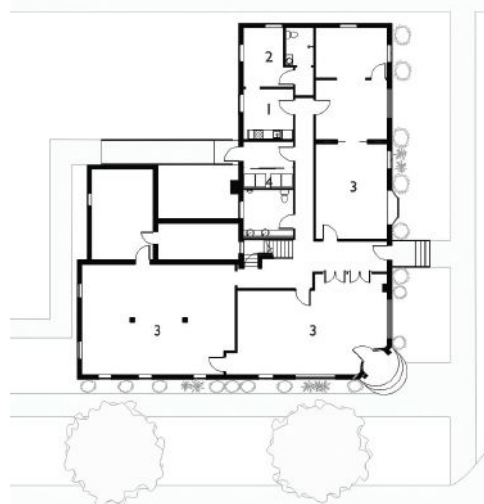
keep pace with progress forever, and by the late '70s, the building would be abandoned and fall into a state of disrepair.

Around 2010, when Stuart was beginning its renaissance, Hotel Stuart caught the eye of Kirk Blunck, FAIA, one of Iowa's premier architects and preservationists, while he was working on the nearby All Saints Church. He purchased the building and began a slow renovation, restoring the original sign, the ground floor street front windows, some first-floor spaces, and started framing on the second floor with the intent of reviving the building into a boutique Airbnb experience. However, tragedy struck midway through the project when Blunck unexpectedly passed away, leaving the building unfinished and empty for another decade.

Hotel Stuart sat uncompleted, barren, and desperate for a new owner with a vision. It was then that a happenstance weekend scenic drive down White Pole Road—the same route traveled by Kerouac many years before—led architect Mindy Aust, AIA, and her husband, developer Matt Aust, past the empty shell. Something about the building spoke to her; she could see the same unique quirks and details that made the building special to Blunck all those years before. She saw how, with a little TLC, Hotel Stuart could once again be a vibrant contributor to the Stuart community. The fact that Stuart was a small town no longer in decline meant that a project was economically viable, so, after a bit of due diligence, they bought the building.

Even though a previous renovation had been started, there was a substantial amount of work that needed to be completed. The entire back of the building required repointing and even some structural repair of the brickwork. Wood floors and plaster required refinishing and completely new plumbing and mechanical systems were needed throughout, as well as a much-needed fire suppression system. The biggest change was the conversion of the second-floor hotel rooms into apartments, a much-needed commodity in Stuart. While the original corridor walls were maintained in compliance with regulations for the historic tax credit program, new bedroom, bathroom, living, and kitchen spaces were sensitively inserted. A required accessible unit was also created on the ground level, as adding an elevator to the building was not technically feasible. The first floor holds a common laundry room, while the remainder is reserved for commercial storefront use.

The end result is a revitalized Hotel Stuart, full of vibrant activity and life—a building returned to its rightful place in the community and ready for the next 100 years.



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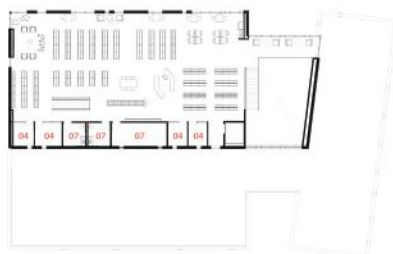
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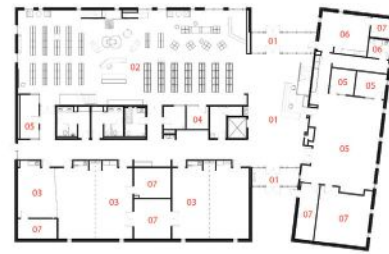
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SECOND FLOOR



MEZZANINE



FIRST FLOOR

FLOOR PLANS

- 1 PUBLIC
- 2 COLLECTIONS
- 3 PROGRAMMING
- 4 STUDY ROOM

- 5 STAFF WORK
- 6 PROGRAMMING
- 7 BUILDING SUPPORT

GRIMES PUBLIC LIBRARY: NURTURING COMMUNITY

WORDS: MIRCEA NASTASE, ASSOC. AIA **IMAGES:** CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA,
INTEGRATED STUDIO **ARCHITECT:** INVISION

From the earliest Carnegie libraries dotting the state to the modern civic centers of today, Iowa's public libraries have continued to transition alongside their communities. These spaces are not only for learning but for gathering and pausing amid the rush of life. The Grimes Public Library embodies this role, positioning itself not just as a storehouse of books but as a shared space for its community. In this space, knowledge, refuge, and connection intertwine.

Positioned at the intersection of homes and schools, the library is a natural hub for the rhythms of daily life. A bike path winds past its entrance, drawing in families, students, and neighbors who see it not as a destination but as a part of their everyday landscape. "Libraries are a fundamental piece of a city's social infrastructure and therefore should be designed for all members of the community," shares Grimes Public Library Director Cheryl Heid. The Grimes Public Library does just that. Here, a child stops on the way home from school to grab a new adventure, a retiree finds a place to linger over the morning paper, and a young professional escapes for a moment of quiet before returning to the rush of work. The library belongs to them all.

Originally designed at 31,000 square feet to accommodate this growing community, budget considerations led to a more modest 22,500-square-foot facility. Embracing this challenge, INVISION carefully designed the site and massing to ensure future expansion(s) to the public areas will be seamless, allowing the library to grow without disrupting existing operations.

The exterior of the building is divided into two main areas: a limestone and brick single-story private operations section that grounds the structure in history—recalling the solid, enduring materials that have long defined the Midwest—and a larger mass

The exterior of the building is divided into two main areas: a limestone and brick single-story private operations section that grounds the structure in history—recalling the solid, enduring materials that have long defined the Midwest—and a larger mass clad in contemporary black metal panels to contrast from the single-story mass and signify the main public space.







clad in contemporary black metal panels to contrast from the single-story mass and signify the main public space. Tying both masses together is a linear motif derived from the rhythm of book spines, expressed in narrow windows and metal panel patterns. The larger public collections' mass is topped with the building's most distinctive architectural gesture—the library's roof, shaped to evoke the character of an open book. What began as a pragmatic solution to conceal the elevator overrun evolved into a signature design feature, dignifying the main entry into the building while solving various design challenges.

Upon arrival, one will notice a break from the “traditional” library experience. A new model embraces an open, engaging, and often loud atmosphere emphasizing interaction and inclusivity. The library incorporates playful and interactive elements such as a small playground and hands-on activity stations, creating diverse spaces for all people. With three distinct areas—including a two-story collection space, a single-story administrative wing, and public meeting spaces—the building offers diverse programming opportunities, with the lower level of the main collection space dedicated to children, a mezzanine level for teens, and a quieter second floor housing the adult collection. Even when the main collections area is securely closed for the day, a strategic layout allows public spaces to remain open after regular library hours, reinforcing the library's role as a true community hub that is accessible whenever needed.

The Grimes Public Library serves as the “living room” of the city. A welcoming space that fosters connection, nourishment, and growth through warm materials, soft seating, and intimate reading nooks that contribute to a sense of familiarity. An entry art piece, highlighting the donors who made the building a reality, embodies this notion by drawing a parallel between the deep roots of native prairie grasses—which quietly anchor the soil and shelter fragile life—to how libraries provide a protective environment where young minds can nourish and grow. Architecturally, the library embraces this mode with materials that echo the intimacy of the home through wood-inspired panels, soft seating, and spaces designed for gatherings. A centerpiece of this effort is the second-floor fireplace, where the flicker of an electric fire and the simulated sound of crackling embers provide a moment of pause. Here, a visitor can settle in with a book, wrapped in the quiet glow of a space that feels both public and deeply personal.

Through a collaborative design process between INVISION, the City of Grimes, and library staff, the new facility stands as an example of how public architecture can foster resilience, engagement, and renewal. More than just a place for books, the library has become an extension of home, a retreat from the everyday, and a welcoming environment for all.

Top left: An entry art piece highlights the donors who made the building a reality. **Bottom left:** A centerpiece of home-like intimacy is the second-floor fireplace, where the flicker of an electric fire and the simulated sound of crackling embers provide a moment of pause.



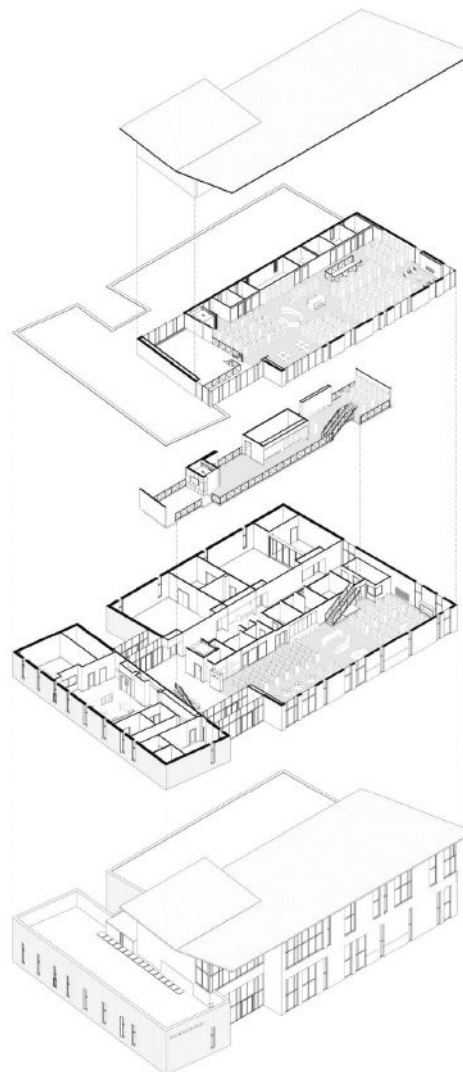


The building offers diverse programming opportunities, with the lower level of the main collection space dedicated to children, a mezzanine level for teens, and a quieter second floor housing the adult collection.



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ADULT COLLECTION



TEEN COLLECTION



CHILDREN'S COLLECTION

HERO'S HAVEN:

DAVENPORT FIRE STATION NO. 3

WORDS: MICHAEL FOLSOM, STUDENT AFFILIATE OF AIA IOWA **IMAGES:** OPN ARCHITECTS **ARCHITECT:** OPN ARCHITECTS

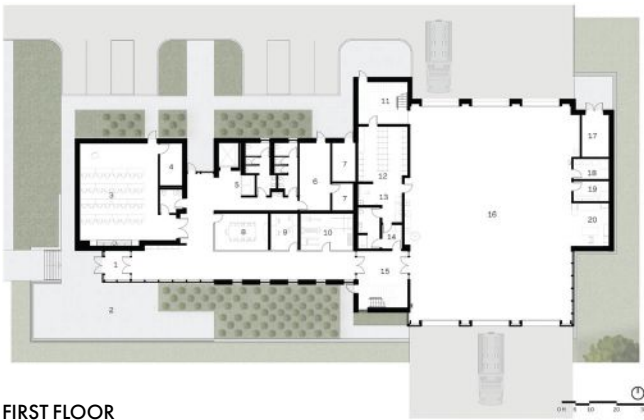


Davenport Fire Station No. 3 stands as a bold civic landmark, merging progressive design with a refuge for first responders. Designed by OPN Architects, this state-of-the-art 18,740-square-foot facility serves not only as a home for an enduring icon of public safety—the fire truck—but also as a sanctuary of mental and physical rejuvenation for its firefighters.

Anchored on the east by a two-story apparatus bay—from which fire engines and emergency vehicles are stored and deployed—the station features a single-slope roof that opens to the south. This orientation, combined with a double-height glass facade, enhances the building’s civic presence while inviting winter heat gain. This south facing glazing not only opens the building up to the street but also reinforces the connection between interior space and its surroundings. The design reflects biophilic design principles—incorporating natural elements into architectural spaces to promote well-being.

Inside, the station is sequenced to address both the safety and well-being of the firefighters. Recognizing that cancer and cardiovascular disease remain significant health threats to firefighters, the building’s layout strategically separates the high-risk “hot zones” near the apparatus bay from the “cold zones” that include living and public spaces. Air lock vestibules and decontamination areas serve to minimize exposure to fire and ash carcinogens, underscoring a design philosophy that prioritizes resilience and long-term health. In this way, the fire station functions as a protective nest for critical equipment and a secure harbor for those who risk their lives to protect their community.

The living areas, located on the second floor and only accessible to fire department personnel, are designed to support both sociability and individual respite. Open, shared spaces—such as a full kitchen, a large family-style table, and a TV and gaming lounge—foster community and connection among firefighters.



FIRST FLOOR

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 ENTRY | 8 CONFERENCE ROOM | 14 CLEAN ROOM |
| 2 PATIO | 9 REPORTS | 15 AIR LOCK |
| 3 COMMUNITY ROOM | 10 FITNESS ROOM | 16 APPARATUS BAY |
| 4 STORAGE | 11 TRAINING STAIR | 17 OUTDOOR STORAGE |
| 5 VENDING | 12 TURNOUT | 18 AIR ROOM |
| 6 WATER/IT | GEAR STORAGE | 19 MEDICAL ROOM |
| 7 MECHANICAL | 13 DIRTY ROOM | 20 WORKSHOP |



SECOND FLOOR

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 ROOF TERRACE | 7 UTILITY |
| 2 LOUNGE | 8 LAUNDRY/STORAGE |
| 3 KITCHEN | 9 CAPTAIN'S OFFICE |
| 4 DINING | 10 DISTRICT CHIEF OFFICE |
| 5 DORM | 11 TRAINING MEZZANINE |
| 6 RESTROOM | 12 SIMULATION ROOM |

Above: The station’s design reflects biophilic design principles—incorporating natural elements into architectural spaces to promote well-being. **Left:** Anchored on the east by a two-story apparatus bay—from which fire engines and emergency vehicles are stored and deployed—the station features a single-slope roof that opens to the south.



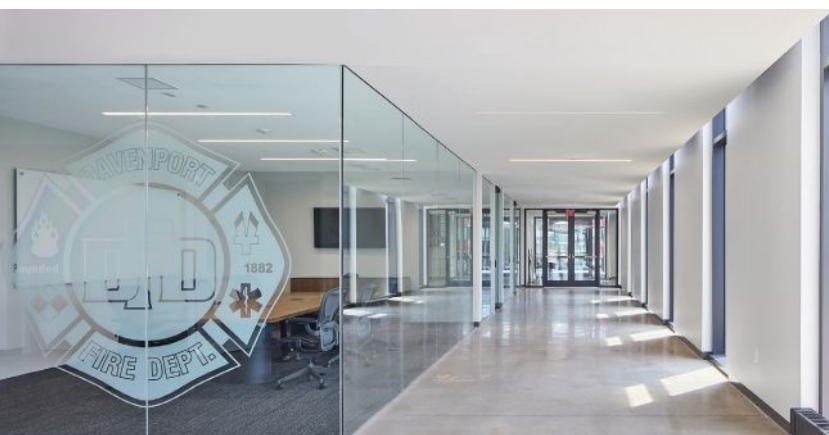
At the same time, the layout offers privacy and retreat via bunk rooms and sliding barn doors that allow the lounge to be separated from the kitchen and dining area. “We were challenged to design small but efficient bunk rooms,” says Landon Burg, AIA, an architect of the project. “Camaraderie is very important in a fire house, so encouraging use of communal spaces is important.”

Natural daylight plays a pivotal role on the interior, reducing stress and supporting cognitive function during long, high-stress shifts. Large, operable windows in the sleeping rooms, along with bright, light-filled public areas, help regulate the firefighters’ wake-sleep cycles. “We believe strongly in ... biophilic design,” says Burg. “The use of natural materials, daylight, and strategic views

are shown to have measurable positive impacts to our mental and physical well-being.”

An integral feature of the station is its outdoor roof terrace, which provides sanctuary. This terrace, arrayed with natural wood planks and sheltered by solid walls with shading overhead, offers a unique blend of exposure and enclosure. It allows the firefighters to enjoy views of the community they serve while providing a private escape to recharge after a taxing call. “This creates a dual prospect and refuge condition,” says Burg. To balance transparency, security, and energy concerns, the design team incorporated a multiplicity of shading strategies. This ensures that while the station remains open and inviting, it meets the criteria of its occupants.

At top: The outdoor roof terrace, arrayed with natural wood planks and sheltered by solid walls with shading overhead, offers a unique blend of exposure and enclosure. **Bottom left and right:** Open, shared spaces—such as a full kitchen, a large family-style table, and a TV and gaming lounge—foster community and connection among firefighters.



The station's design also sets a new standard for future first responder facilities; the integration of a multifunctional storm shelter—doubling as an Emergency Operations Center and meeting room—illustrates a forward-thinking approach to spatial optimization. Moreover, the building pays homage to the city's historic firehouses, drawing on traditional materials to ground the design. Buff-colored brick replaces the conventional red, referencing the past while signaling a modern identity. Warm wood accents throughout the station add to this continuity, creating a sense of cohesion. Together, these elements create an architectural dialogue between tradition and progress—transforming the station into a civic landmark that honors

the city's legacy while supporting the wellness needs of today's firefighters.

In essence, Davenport Fire Station No. 3 is much more than a facility for emergency response—it is a meticulously designed safe haven, a nest of resilience, and a vibrant nucleus that nurtures the physical and mental well-being of its firefighters. Just as the firetruck remains a timeless emblem of bravery and service, this new station reflects those same enduring values. Through thoughtful integration of warm materials and wellness-focused design, the station becomes a refuge—a place where the valor of first responders is honored and every design element contributes to creating a welcoming facility that feels like a second home.

At top and bottom right: Through thoughtful integration of warm materials and wellness-focused design, the station becomes a refuge—a place where the valor of first responders is honored and every design element contributes to creating a welcoming facility that feels like a second home. **Bottom left:** The space illustrates a forward-thinking approach to spatial optimization.



LEARNING REIMAGINED: THEODORE ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

WORDS: ANNA SQUIER, AIA IMAGES: CHRIS BOEKE STUDIO ARCHITECT: NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS

A library is traditionally defined as a collection of resources, books, magazines, and digital media, organized for use by a community for education and research. However, the role and design of libraries have evolved. No longer are libraries just quiet spaces lined with book stacks. Today's libraries are vibrant, flexible environments that encourage collaboration, exploration, and engagement. The renovation of the Theodore Roosevelt High School Library exemplifies this shift.

Led by the Roosevelt High School Foundation, the library's transformation aimed to create a modern learning resource center tailored to diverse learning styles. The project prioritized cutting-edge technology, flexible furniture, daylight, and inclusivity to support both individual study and group work.

Neumann Monson Architects spearheaded the design, with architect Cheung Chan, AIA (also a parent of Roosevelt students), at the forefront. Chan worked closely with the Roosevelt High School Foundation, Des Moines Public Schools, students, the high school's principal, and consultants to reimagine the library's role in a modern educational setting. The collaborative process resulted in a contemporary space that challenged the typical role of the library while embracing student culture and values. Chan shares, "A guiding question throughout was, what role does a library play in a modern school, and how does it support the modern learning style?"

Student engagement was key. In workshops, students received floor plans of the existing space and were asked to



At top: With a cantilevered design, the "Rider Bar" invites students to gather, connect, and recharge—both figuratively and literally. **At left:** In workshops, students received floor plans of the existing space and were asked to annotate them with ideas and priorities. This feedback became a visual roadmap that informed multiple design iterations. **Opposite, top right:** Minimal white partition walls serve as a gallery for curated works by local artists, offering a visual narrative that echoes the community's depth and diversity. **Opposite, bottom right:** At the heart of the library sits the "Rider Bar," a multifunctional circulation desk that also acts as a charging station and social hub.





Above: Perimeter walls are activated with built-in bookshelves that reintroduce the role of books in a contemporary spatial experience, anchored by built-in window seating that invites pause and reflection.

annotate them with ideas and priorities. This feedback became a visual roadmap that informed multiple design iterations.

“The goal was to integrate all forms of learning into one space,” Chan explains. “We wanted to boost student engagement by creating more opportunities for collaborative study.” The result is an open layout with a variety of flexible spaces including conference rooms, group areas, and study nooks, all designed with minimal partitions aligned with reveals in the ceiling that trace the existing building’s structural grid.

Minimal white partition walls serve as a gallery for curated works by local artists, offering a visual narrative that echoes the community’s depth and diversity. Perimeter walls are activated with built-in bookshelves that reintroduce the role of books in a contemporary spatial experience, anchored by built-in window seating that invites pause and reflection. Expanded clerestory windows introduce abundant daylight and framed views, enriching the spatial quality while subtly augmenting the original elevation’s long vertical lines with tall vertical mullions. This verticality is echoed in the interior storefronts, creating a cohesive architectural language. The interplay of these vertical elements choreographs the movement of light and space, drawing occupants through the depth of the space toward areas of discovery and engagement.

At the heart of the library sits the “Rider Bar,” a multifunctional circulation desk that also acts as a charging station and social hub. With a cantilevered design, it invites students to gather, connect, and recharge—both figuratively and literally.

Accessibility was also a major focus. Existing single-user restrooms were expanded and redesigned to meet modern standards, ensuring barrier-free, inclusive facilities for all students.

The renovated Roosevelt Library is more than just a place for books. It is a thoughtfully designed, student-centered environment that supports modern education through innovation, inclusivity, and collaboration. According to Chan, “To be able to see the space being utilized, whether in the way intended or not intended, is the most rewarding. Sometimes, unintended is the most exciting.” It is learning reimaged.

“The goal was to integrate all forms of learning into one space ... We wanted to boost student engagement by creating more opportunities for collaborative study.”

— CHEUNG CHAN, AIA



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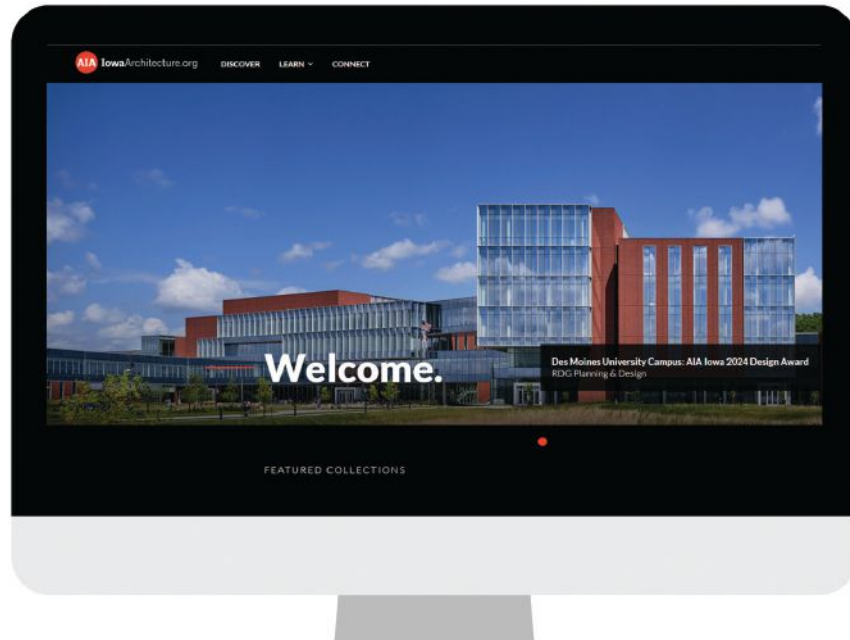
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The Cabin

Location: Delhi, Iowa
Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
Contractor: Tanman Construction
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

Luther Memorial Church

Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: Slingshot Architecture
Contractor: Breiholz Construction
Civil Engineer: Bolton & Menk
Landscape Architect: Bolton & Menk
Lighting Designer: Trivalent
MEP Engineer: Modus
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio
Structural Engineer: Raker Rhodes

Hotel Stuart

Location: Stuart, Iowa
Architect: MA Architecture
Photographer: MA Architecture
Structural Engineer: IMEG

Grimes Public Library

Location: Grimes, Iowa
Architect: INVISION
Contractor: Weitz
Civil Engineer: Bishop Engineering
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio
Structural/MEPT Engineer: IMEG

Davenport Fire Station No. 3

Location: Davenport, Iowa
Architect: OPN Architects
Contractor: Tricon Construction Group
Civil Engineer: IMEG
MEP Engineer: IMEG
Photographer: OPN Architects
Structural Engineer: IMEG

Theodore Roosevelt High School Library

Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
Contractor: Core Construction
MEPT Engineer: Modus
Photographer: Chris Boeke Studio

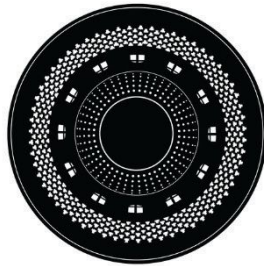
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