

MARCH/APRIL 2003

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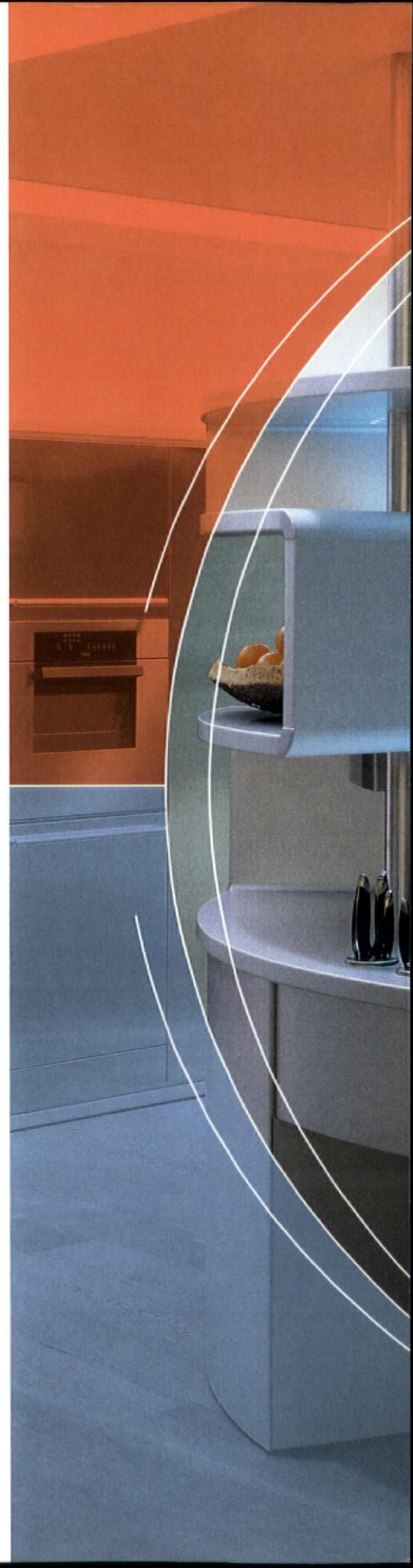


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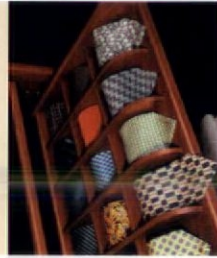


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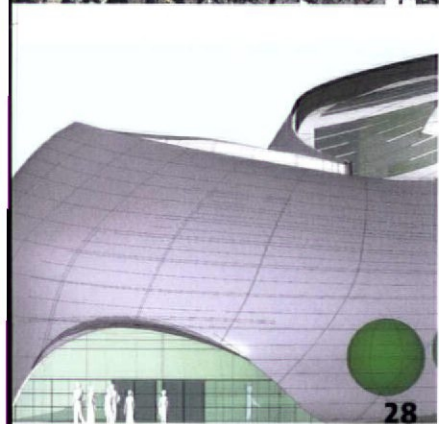
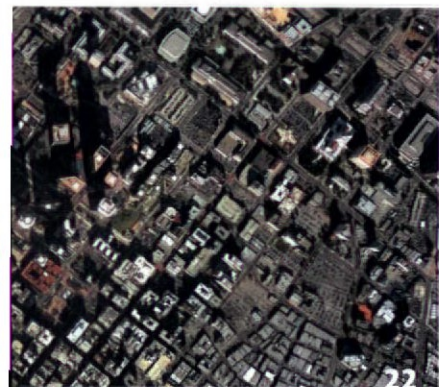
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A modern interior design advertisement featuring a minimalist living room. The room includes a long, low-profile sofa with light-colored cushions, a dark wooden coffee table with a glass top, and a tall, dark shelving unit with open compartments. The background wall is composed of large, light-colored square tiles. The floor is dark wood. The overall aesthetic is clean and contemporary.

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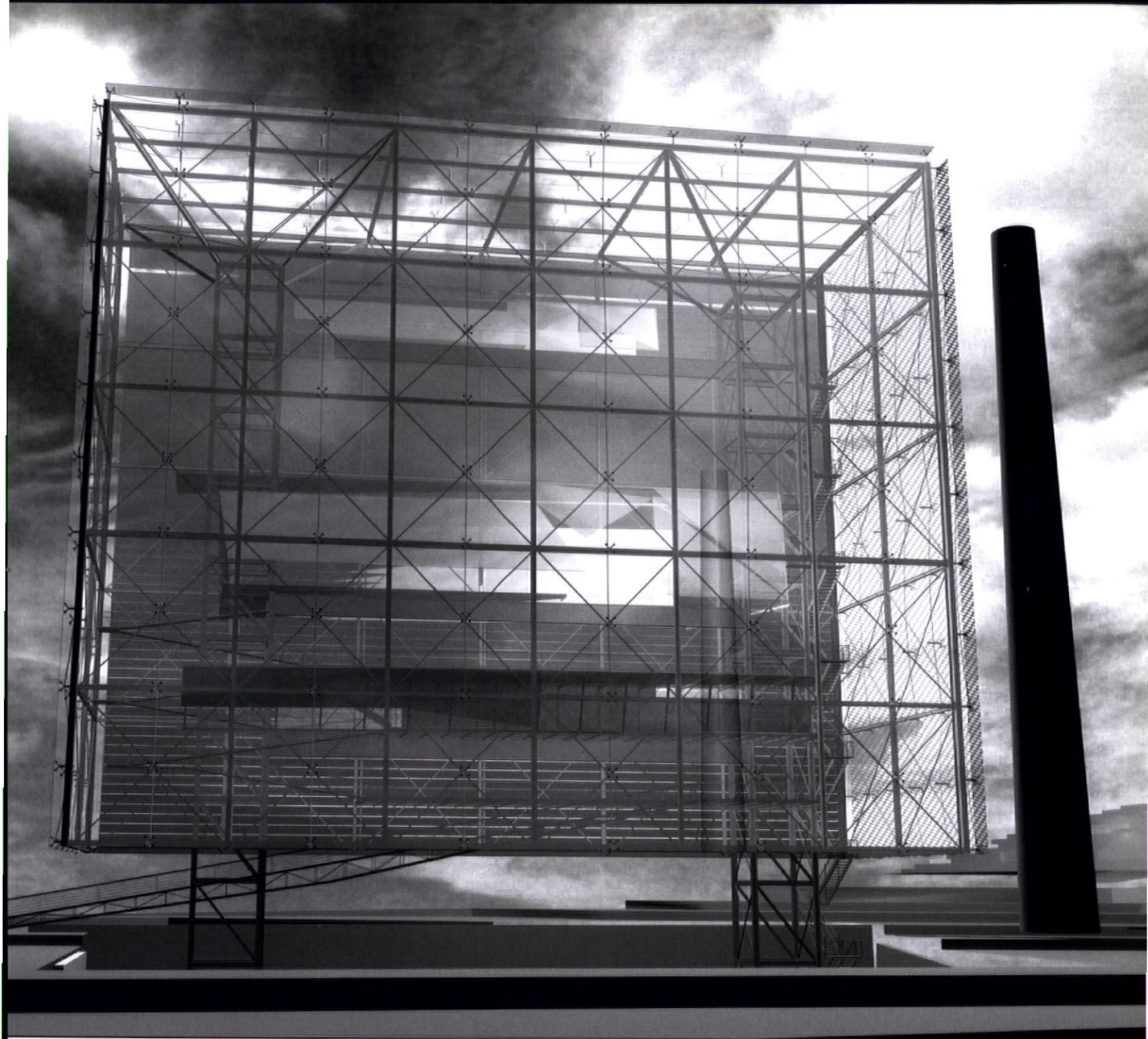
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MICHAEL WEBB was born in London and has lived in Los Angeles for 24 years. He is the author of 18 books, including *Through the Windows of Paris*, *Modernism Reborn: Mid Century American Houses*, *Richard Sapper*, *Architecture + Design LA* and *Architects House Themselves*. Besides reviewing books and exhibitions for *LA Architect*, Michael is a regular contributor to *Architectural Digest*, *The New York Times*, *Domus* and other American and overseas magazines.



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editor's chat

WITH DEBORAH WEINTRAUB, CITY ARCHITECT, CITY OF LOS ANGELES



ALTHOUGH LOS ANGELES HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN CONCEIVED AS A CITY I would like to think that we are now recognizing the richness of downtown LA, gathering our civic strength and economic prowess, and recreating a solid hub for our sprawling spokes to cling to. Accomplishing this type of core-building will demand the engagement of multiple philosophies, including adaptive reuse of significant historic architecture, new construction that embraces sustainability, an aware-

ness of green space and a cohesive mix of ethnic and economic strata. This issue of "LA Architect" takes a look at the city's recent past (Late Modernism), present (making sense of our city through mapping) and future (downtown LA development).

For this issue's editorial, I spoke with LA City Architect, Deborah Weintraub. Two years into her tenure, Weintraub has brought her passion for the power and the value of design to the Bureau of Engineering, and her commitment to sustainability has led to the passing of legislation that requires all city-funded projects be LEED's certified.

Laura Hull: Deborah, in an earlier meeting we talked about your development as an architect and how the choices you made inform your present goals. How much of the expertise you are bringing to your job is related to these past experiences?

Deborah Weintraub: Yes, I have an eclectic background for an architect. I went to two schools: Princeton and Berkeley, so I have a mix of eastern high design and the more socially oriented training of the west. I initially followed a fairly traditional career path of apprenticing in various firms in New York City, working at large corporate offices doing shopping centers, multi-unit high-rise housing, historic preservation and adaptive reuse, even a master plan for *Readers Digest*. Eventually I opened my own practice in New York and shifted to residential and small-scale commercial work. I completed well over 100 projects and then I moved to California and gave birth. That will put a kink in your career! I took a little time off to be with my first child, a daughter, and then decided that I did not want to run my own practice, I wanted to work with other people.

LH: What year did you move to California?

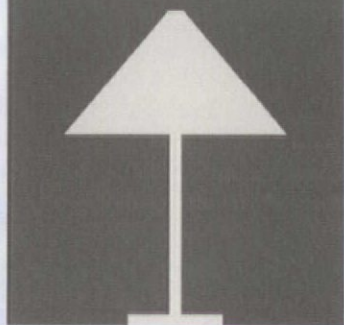
DW: I moved here in 1989.

LH: That was a difficult year economically to be an architect in Los Angeles.

DW: Yes, but I needed to earn a living, so I answered an ad in the LA Times for someone who could speak Spanish, had knowledge of construction, and knew something about the NAFTA countries. The first two I had, but I knew nothing about NAFTA, in any great detail, except my father is an economist with expertise on the NAFTA countries. So I crammed with dad for the interview and got the job, which turned out to be for the Canadian Consulate. I spent the next three and a half years as a trade officer for the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs promoting Canadian goods and services in the five western states. At one point they asked me to promote the export of Canadian architectural services, which at first I thought was humorous in the midst of the economic slump. I did, however, see one area that had been relatively untapped and that was Canada's unique expertise in the field of sustainable design, which they were unaware of. I was the first person in that organization to say, "This is something Canada can export that is unsurpassed almost anywhere." In the process I gave myself a graduate level education in sustainability.

Continued on page 46 >>

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2003 AIA Honor Awards

One of architecture's highest acknowledgements, the AIA Honor Awards this year received nearly 600 nominations. The jury selected 32 award recipients from three categories: architecture, interiors, and urban design. In the words of AIA president Thompson E. Penney, FAIA, "this year's honorees inform the public of the breadth and value of architecture [and]...highlight the profession's most innovative and important contributions to the built environment." The following firms from the Los Angeles area were selected:

HONOR AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ARCHITECTURE

- *Federal Building and United States Courthouse*, **Richard Meier & Partners**, Central Islip, NY
- *Diamond Ranch High School*, **Morphosis**, Pomona, CA
- *3rd & Benton/7th & Grandview Primary Centers*, **Rios Associates, Inc.**, Los Angeles, CA
- *Boo1 "Tango" Housing*, **Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners**, Malmö, Sweden
- *Colorado Court*, **Pugh Scarpa Kodama**, Santa Monica, CA
- *Hype Alpe-Adria-Center*, **Morphosis**, Klagenfurt, Austria

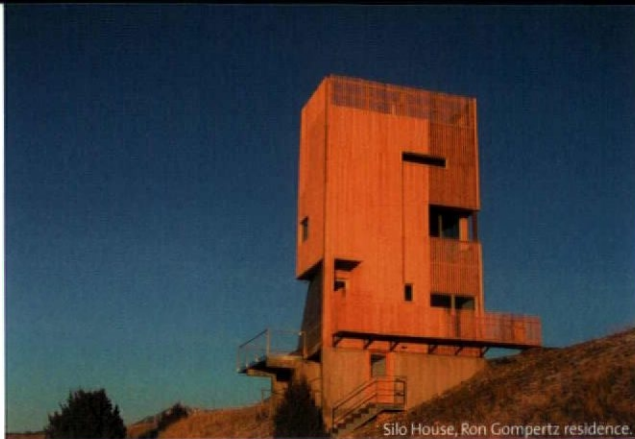
HONOR AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING INTERIORS

- *Lutece*, **Morphosis**, Las Vegas, NV
- *Collins Gallery*, **Patrick J. Tighe, AIA**, West Hollywood, CA
- *The Architecture of R.M. Schindler Exhibit at MOCA*, **Chu + Gooding Architects**, Los Angeles, CA

The recipients will be honored in May at the AIA National Convention and Expo being held in neighboring San Diego.

Donald C. Hensman

Architect Don Hensman died on December 9. He was 78. Hensman's influence reverberates throughout Southern California with hundreds of housing projects and scores of past students who carry on his philosophy. Known for his collaborations with architect Conrad Buff III and later, Calvin C. Straub, he combined his interest in new technology and experimental solutions with sensitivity to the Southern California landscape. After WWII, Hensman was particularly concerned with affordable housing and contributed to Entenza's Case Study Program with two houses, No. 20 and No. 28. A longtime educator at the USC School of Architecture, he, along with Buff and Straub, formed the dominant philosophy of the school in the 1950s, influencing students Frank Gehry and Jon Jerde, among many. In 1994 he and his partners received the USC School of Architecture's Distinguished Alumnus Award. A consummate detailer and risk-taker, Hensman continued to design and build homes after his 1998 retirement. The USC Architectural Guild Press will publish a new book chronicling his work and the work of Buff next year.



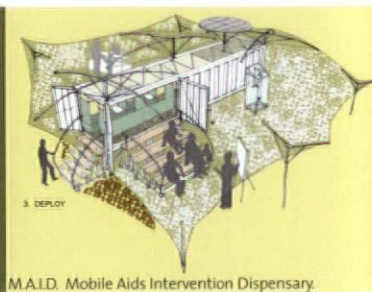
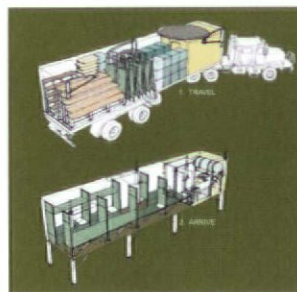
Silo House, Ron Gompertz residence.

House, built for Ron Gompertz. Perched on the high bank of the Yellowstone River, MT, the house is a vertical clone of the region's many grain silos. For information on registering for the 2003 awards go to www.wooddesign.com

Selected for the 2002 American Architecture Awards, two projects by **AC Martin Partners** will be exhibited at the **Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design**. High School No. 3 for the LA Unified School District (see LA Architect, September/October '02, "Adapt-a-School") converts a 14-story parking structure into a 10-story, state-of-the-art school. Also in the exhibition, Wallace All Faiths Chapel, at Chapman University in Orange, CA, celebrates the many faiths of the campus.

It is estimated that three-quarters of the world's AIDS population inhabits Sub-Saharan Africa and that the majority of those afflicted are untreated. One of the major factors of this statistic is the inability of medical professionals to access vast areas of the continent with adequately equipped facilities. To meet this need for care, **Architecture for Humanity** challenged the world's architects to submit designs for a mobile HIV/AIDS health clinic.

More than 530 teams from 51 countries from around the world responded and in late November an international jury selected first, second and third place winners, a Founders Award winner and eight notable entries. Local **Rob Johnson** of Los Angeles was one of the eight honorable mentions. The winning designs, which will be exhibited at the Danish Design Center in Copenhagen and the Royal Institute of British Architects in London, can be viewed at www.architectureforhumanity.org. With revenue from entry fees and further donations, one or more of the winning prototypes will be built and tested in the field in hopes of producing a cost-efficient mobile design that can be replicated in other regions around the world.



M.A.I.D. Mobile Aids Intervention Dispensary.

Killefer Flammang Architects was awarded the 2002 Community Enrichment Award sponsored by the **Southern California Development Forum**. The award highlighted KFA's Santa Monica Swim Center, a 50,000 square foot project that rests at the border of Santa Monica College. To invite local residents into the municipal facility, KFA devised a series of portholes that puncture the perimeter wall of the facility, allowing the community to view the two pools, one for recreation, the other a 50-meter Olympic-sized fitness pool. The project also includes a two-story building with locker rooms, office space and meeting rooms.

Deadline Alert

Livable Spaces, Inc., a group dedicated to affordable housing and environmental issues, is sponsoring a competition that calls for the urban design of approximately ten acres of land that will include 50 units of for-sale affordable and sustainable housing, mixed-use commercial/retail and other site amenities. Stage 1 of the competition is an open-call to licensed architects and architectural firms in the US. The deadline is April 28, 2003. A jury will select five architects to compete in Phase 2, with an honorarium of \$10,000 plus travel. The winner will be selected by July 28, 2003. For more information visit www.livableplaces.org or contact Claire Bowen at cbowin@livableplaces.org.

April 12th is the submission deadline for the **Inaugural California Design Biennial 2003**, an event organized by the Pasadena Museum of California Art that will present a cross-section of the most significant product design in California in the past two years. The juried exhibition features seven categories: Consumer Products, Digital Media, Fashion, Furniture, Graphic, Toys, and Transportation. For entry information visit www.pmcaonline.org or call 626-568-3665.

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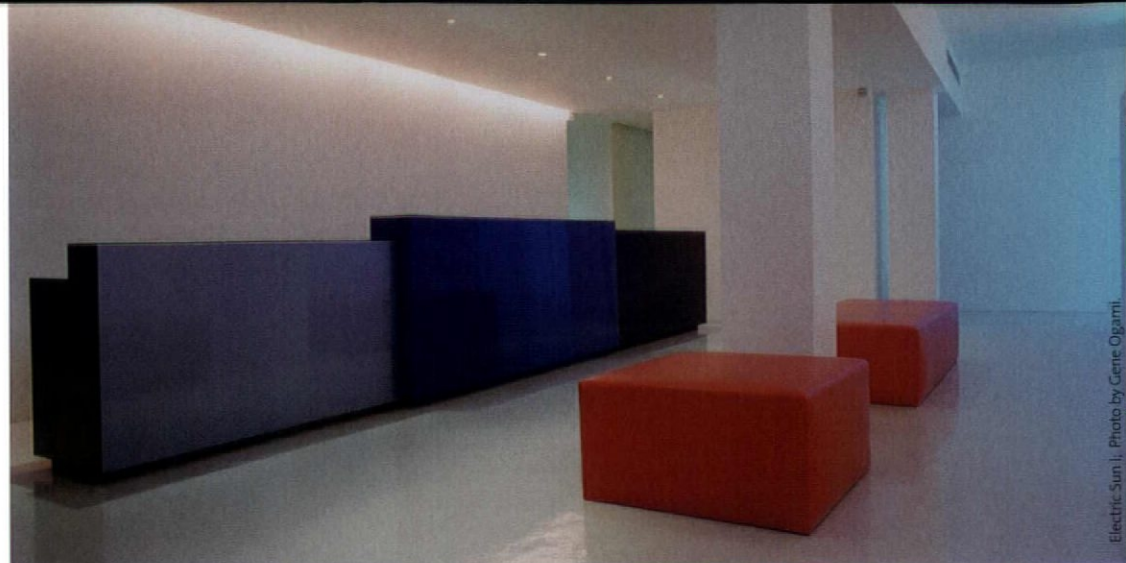


AIA Urban Design

In Fall 2002, the **AIA/LA Urban Design Committee** held a series of panel discussions on the topics of housing and schools. The discussions were focused on three topics: solutions to the housing crisis, housing/schools—looking at conflicting interests and the challenges of joint use projects, and school planning and design with discussions on lessons learned in the past cycle of school design as well as ideas for improving the process. The group will continue its dialogue in 2003 on the next round of 40 new schools in 40 different Los Angeles neighborhoods commissioned by LAUSD.

Also brewing in the Urban Design Committee's 2003 calendar is the development of an overall strategy for engaging the new Neighborhood Councils. As part of the Los Angeles City Charter, Neighborhood Councils were conceived to take an advisory role to the City Council regarding local development. Dozens of Neighborhood Councils have already been formed, and many more are being developed. As these Councils develop they will have a significant impact on the urban landscape and will become involved in a variety of issues relating to urban design and community development: what types of projects are developed within each community, which projects are supported, and which meet with opposition, etc. The AIA/LA Urban Design Committee is developing a Resource Committee to provide information, answer questions, and evaluate plans for Neighborhood Councils. They are also developing a presentation to be given to the Congress of Neighborhood Councils on April 5, 2003.

The AIA/LA Urban Design Committee is a forum for discussion where professionals from different points of view can come to engage, discuss, argue, agree and disagree on important and complex issues affecting the future development of Urban Los Angeles. For more information on how to participate in the discussions, please contact Stephanie Reich, AIA, co-Chair, AIA/LA Urban Design Committee at stephanieereich@cs.com.



Events + Exhibitions

The **Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum** will open its second triennial exhibition called "Inside Design Now" showcasing innovations in architecture, interiors, product design, fashion, graphic arts and new media. The exhibition is a critical overview of leading developments in contemporary American architecture and design over the past three years and includes nine Angelinos: **Escher + GuneWardena Architecture, Jennifer Siegal, SuperHappyBunny, LoyandFord, Geoff McFetridge, Frank Nuovo, Troika Design Group, David Wasco and Sandy Reynolds-Wasco and Lorraine Wild.** The exhibition runs April 22 through August 3, 2003. For more information visit www.si.edu/ndm or call 212-849-8400.

On May 17th it's your chance (actually, for the 24th time) to wander into one of the most eclectic artistic communities in the country during the annual **Venice Art Walk**. The Saturday portion of the two-day event is a self-driving tour of 'significant LA architecture' (TBA) and art-filled homes. On Sunday numerous private studios of prominent Venice artists are open to participants, as well as an auction, live music, and concessions. This much anticipated fundraiser benefits the Venice Family Clinic, a vital community constituency that has steadfastly given free healthcare services to the uninsured poor and homeless. For information visit www.venicefamilyclinic.org or call 310-392-9255.

SAFE—Design Takes on Risk is the topic this year at the **53rd International Design Conference in Aspen** running August 20–23, 2003. Designers, architects, artists, scientists and environmentalist will debate the dichotomy of SAFE: the yearning to ignite change (the communicative power of displacement and danger) and the desire to feel secure (the absolute need for safety). The 2003 program committee includes Paola Antonelli, Hella Jongerius and Gregg Pasquarelli. For more information visit www.idca.org or call 800-815-0059.



As art often influences architecture, this time around architecture influences art. San Francisco-based artist **Vincent Fecteau's** small-scale sculptures are made of the same materials as architectural models, but these gems exist only for their purity of form. If one were to consider them models, they would certainly be models for impossible structures. Part of an ongoing exhibition at the **Pasadena Museum of California Art**, the show runs through May 25, 2003 and also includes the work of photographer Catherine Wagner and watercolorist Milford Zornes. For information visit www.pmaonline.org or call 626-568-3665.

Sponsored by the **Otis College of Art and Design's** Environmental Design Department, **Petra Blaisse** will lecture on her interiors, gardens and landscapes. Known for her inventive manipulation of the conventional relationship between

inside and outside, the Dutch designer stuns the senses by applying unexpected combinations of color and form and employing uncommon materials. Blaisse is a longtime collaborator of architect Rem Koolhaas and the principal of **INSIDE OUTSIDE** in Amsterdam. April 24, 7 pm, Otis Forum, Ahmanson Building, 9045 Lincoln Blvd. 310-665-6800.

Firm News

Robert Newsom, FAIA, of **Cannon Design** is the new AIA California Council president. Mr. Newsom not only co-chaired CALC PAC, raising \$2-million, but also lead the fight against Proposition 224. The offices of **Richard Meier & Partners** have been awarded the new San Diego Federal Courthouse project. Michael Palladino, AIA, Partner-in-Charge of the LA office, will champion the 600,000-sq-ft project.

Don Grainger, AIA has been named senior associate of **Perkowitz + Ruth Architects** in Long Beach. The **MAK Center for Art and Architecture** has appointed Kimberli Meyer, artist and architect, as their new Director. Meyer began her career as an architect in Chicago and later received an MFA from CalArts. The construction cost consulting firm of **Davis Langdon Adamson** has hired Lisa Matthiessen, AIA (previously Director of Architectural Projects at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles) as Senior Associate to lead their sustainable design consulting services. **Gensler** announces two new Vice Presidents, Arpy Hatzikian and Keith A. Thompson.

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[And don't forget the inside too.]

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books

Reviews by MICHAEL WEBB



stimulating essays by artists and clients, and pictures of objects that have inspired them, in addition to an illustrated catalogue of their 200 buildings and projects.

American Signs: Form and Meaning on Route 66

(LISA MAHAR. MONACELLI PRESS, \$40 PB) ISBN 1-58093-119-7

A scholarly study of vintage motel signs on an abandoned highway may sound absurd, but architect Lisa Mahar draws you into her obsessive quest. She spent eight years on research and layout—driving, photographing, and analyzing the shifts in style over the 35-year heyday of what was once America's most celebrated artery. It celebrates a vanished era of local sign makers who had pride of craft and a responsiveness to location, in contrast to the standardization of corporate logos. Mahar's analysis of geometry and iconography is fascinating.

Open House: Unbound Space and the Modern Dwelling

(DUNG NGO & ADI SHAMIR ZION. RIZZOLI INTERNATIONAL, \$75 HC) ISBN 0-8478-2472-1

Heavy on pictures and short on text, this is a quirky collection of houses that take the modern obsession with openness to one or another extreme. Familiar examples like Philip Johnson's Glass House and Shigeru Ban's Wall-less house—with its toilet and tub sitting out in full view—are juxtaposed with some interiors that feel confined and a couple of blue-sky projects that seem almost claustrophobic. However, as surveys of contemporary architecture become ever more predictable, a book as eccentric as this is welcome.

Andrea Palladio: The Four Books on Architecture

(MIT PRESS, \$24.95 PB) ISBN 0-262-66133-0

One of the most celebrated and influential of architectural texts has been republished in a highly readable version by Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield (the first new English translation since 1738!) with facsimiles of Palladio's woodcuts, correctly placed in the text. It makes a wonderful introduction to the timeless principles of architecture and to Palladio's dazzling oeuvre. How agreeable it would be to browse this classic in the shade of the Villa Rotunda on a hot summer afternoon.

materiality

Iron: Erecting the Walt Disney Concert Hall

(GIL GARCETTI. BALCONY PRESS, \$39.95 HC) ISBN 1-890449-15-6

In his foreword, Frank Gehry calls ironworkers "the forgotten heroes of architecture," and this book celebrates their courage and skill. Nobody who saw the structural frame going up on Grand Avenue will forget its raw beauty, but most of the bones were covered in a shimmering skin a year before the hall opened. Garcetti, better known as the former DA of Los Angeles County, has captured the physicality of the work in his photos, and in the words of the people who did it. Their pride and solidarity are inspiring.

Robert Polidori Havana

(EDITED BY ELIZABETH CULBERT. STEIDL, DISTRIBUTED BY DAP, \$75 HC) ISBN 3-88243-333-7

Visceral images of a unique city, in which splendor and squalor are juxtaposed, and the past is suspended within the present, decaying yet enduring. Robert Polidori has captured the beauty and melancholy of Havana, gazing unflinchingly at the ruins and the people who inhabit them. When the boycott is finally lifted, all this will be swept away by a tide of new development, so try to see it now and use this wonderful book as an introduction and a lasting memento.

Seven Interviews with Tadao Ando

(MICHAEL AUPING. MODERN ART MUSEUM OF FORT WORTH, \$30 HC) ISBN 1-903942-10-1

Tadao Ando has created the best new museum in America, across the street from Louis Kahn's classic Kimbell, and chief curator Michael Auping has done a brilliant installation of the museum's stellar collection. To whet your appetite for a visit to Fort Worth, read this penetrating analysis of the creative process—a four-year series of exchanges between curator and architect. It's a must-have for everyone who cares about the art of building—for its insights and its exemplary design.

Herzog & De Meuron Natural History

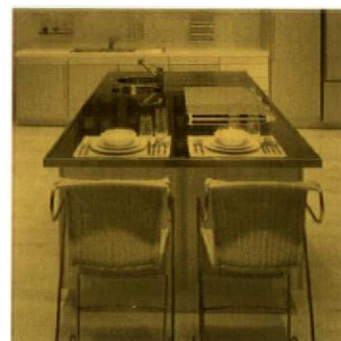
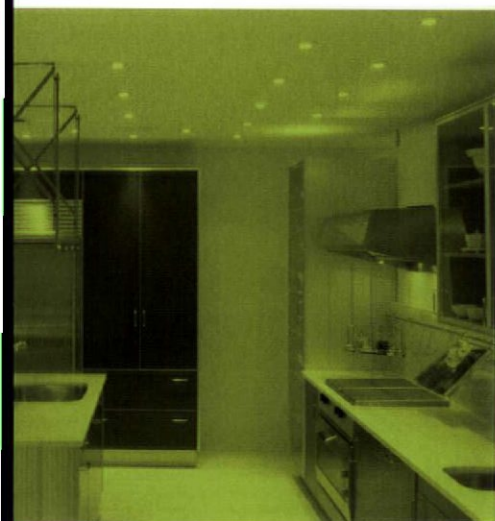
(EDITED BY PHILIP URSprung. CANADIAN CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE AND LARS MULLER PUBLISHERS, \$65 HC) ISBN 3-907078-85-3

Another object book with content that matches the originality of the design. Herzog & De Meuron, the Basel-based architects, are best known for their art museums, but also for creating buildings that are works of art—even when the program is as mundane as a railroad signal box. This companion to the recent CCA exhibition is an anthology of interviews,

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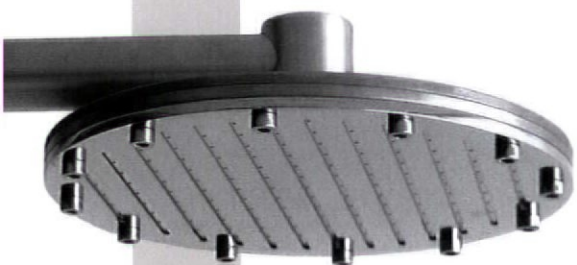


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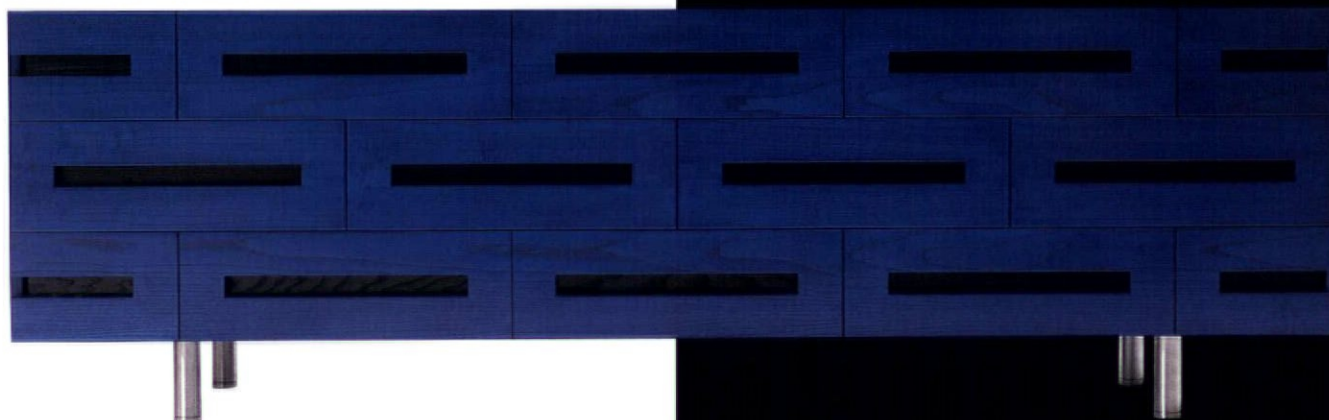


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You're invited to a special 50-year Commemorate Celebration and Exhibition in honor of **Vespa, Boffi, and Italian Design**. Vintage Vespas and historic images of Italian kitchens will be on view from May 1 through May 8. Boffi Showroom, 1344 Fourth Street, Santa Monica, 310-458-9300.



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The City vs The People

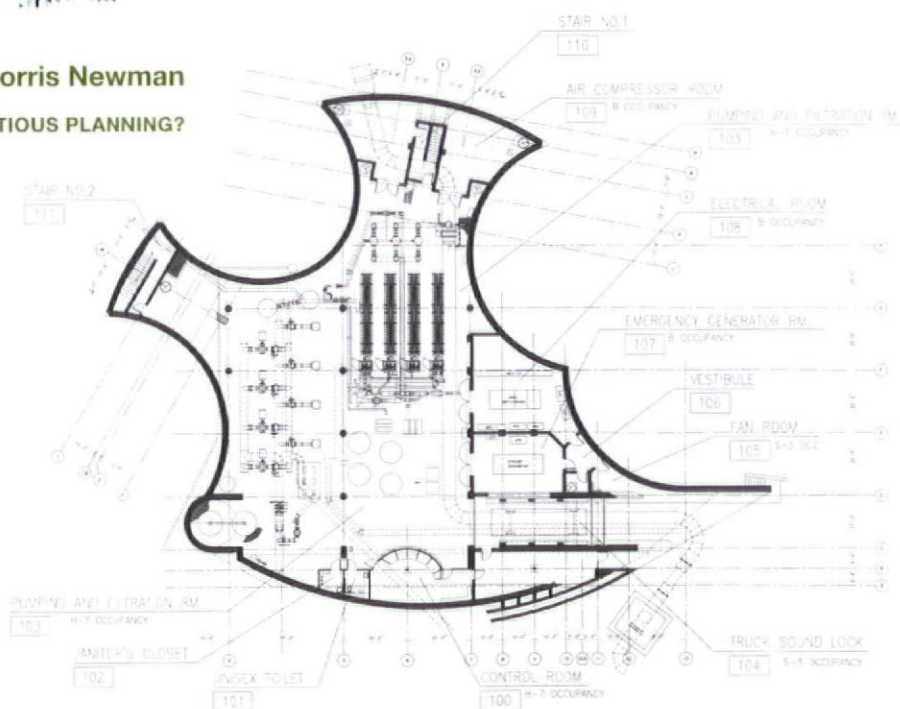
By Morris Newman

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN BOTH SIDES DEMAND CONSCIENTIOUS PLANNING?

SHAPED LIKE AN IRREGULAR SHAMROCK IN PLAN, the Stone Canyon Pumping & Filtration Plant is scooped out on the sides, like bites out of a cookie. Those scoops make room for existing oak trees on the site, an unusual accommodation for a large-scale piece of infrastructure to make to the natural context. But architect Richard Matteson says his concept for a water filtration plant in a wooded area of Bel Air was to "make a garden," rather than an imposing building.

The result is a project that, if constructed according to plan, will be virtually camouflaged by local trees and plant life. The filtration plant will be partly submerged in a hillside to hide much of its nearly 15,000-square-foot bulk. The sod-covered

Continued on page 45 >>





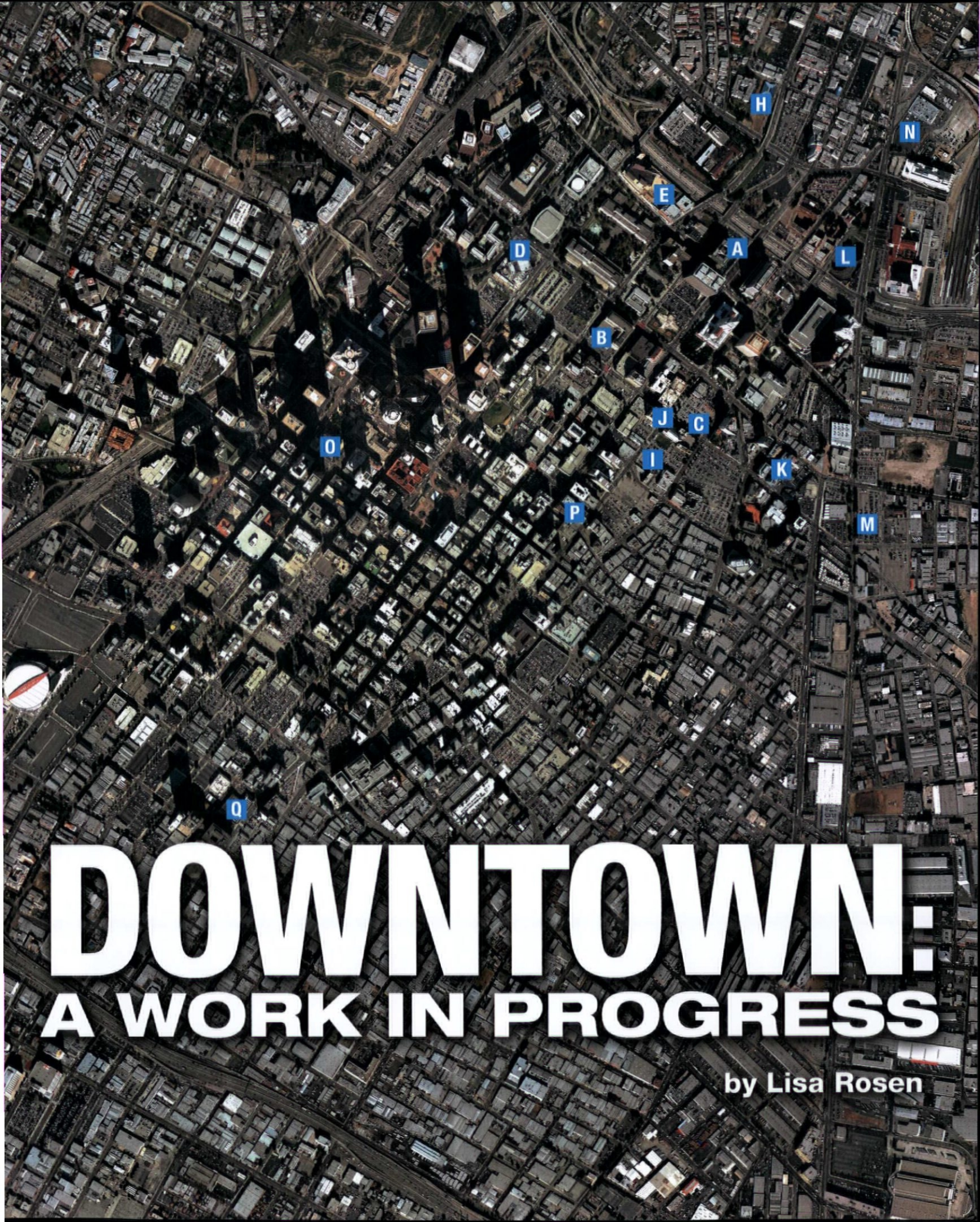
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DOWNTOWN: A WORK IN PROGRESS

by Lisa Rosen

The news of development in downtown Los Angeles...

KEY

- A** Hall of Justice
- B** Federal Courthouse
- C** Caltrans
- D** Walt Disney Concert Hall
- E** Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels
- F** Pecan Park
- G** Boyle Heights Youth Opportunity Center
- H** Chinatown branch of the LA library
- I** Little Tokyo branch of the LA library
- J** St. Vibiana
- K** NCPD
- L** Placita de Dolores
- M** Alameda Civic Development
- N** California Endowment Headquarters
- O** The Standard Downtown LA Hotel
- P** San Fernando Building
- Q** LA Herald Examiner

has been trickling in over the years like lonely dispatches from some far off, desolate land. Each story raised hopes that maybe this time, this project will make the area viable again. This time kept stretching into next, but the development continued, building by building, until the trickle suddenly became a torrent, and that desolate land became a destination. Here then, is an overview of the flood of projects transforming downtown.

Located between the new Cathedral and City Hall, and built in 1925, the Hall of Justice **A** is the oldest building in the Civic Center. The 14 story Italianate neoclassical building has been closed since the 1994 Northridge earthquake. A private team made up of Clark Construction, Urban Partners LLC, and Nadel Architects, Inc. will design, build, finance, and manage the property for the county. The \$140 million project will seismically retrofit and completely modernize the building, fitting it out as headquarters for the LA Sheriff's department, the DA, the Dept of Parks and Recreation, and other county tenants. Construction will begin mid-2004, with a planned two-year renovation process. According to City Architect Deborah Weintraub, the County was motivated to renovate the building by the triumphant restoration of City Hall.

A few blocks away, at 1st and Hope the new Federal Courthouse **B** will fill the entire block across from the LA Times building. Designed by Ralph Johnson, FAIA, Lead Designer, Principal, and Aki Z. Knezevic, AIA, Principal-in-Charge, Perkins & Will Architects, the building will be completed in 2008, and will meet the latest green and sustainable design objectives. Down the street, at 1st and Main, The Caltrans building **C** is being shepherded by the design/build team of Clark Construction, Urban Partners LLC, architects Morphosis and Gruen Associates, and landscape architect Doug Campbell. The building includes sustainability features such as photovoltaics and

Downtown Los Angeles aerial map courtesy of I. K. Curtis Services, Inc., Burbank • www.ikcurtis.com



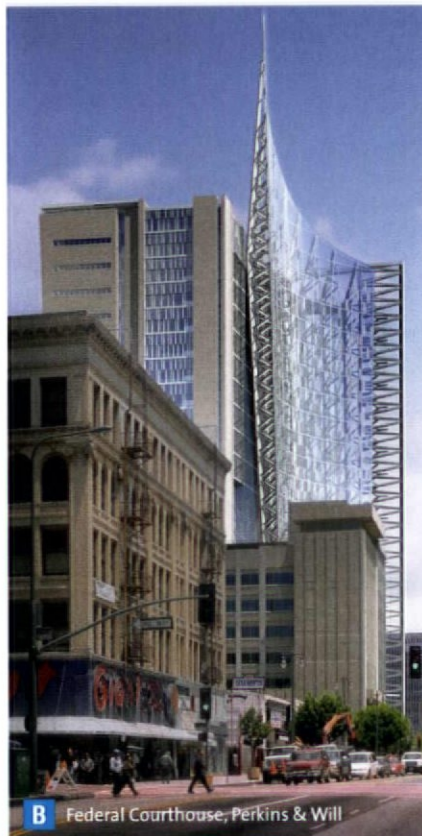
moveable screen walls, and will be completed in October 2004. "I think someday people will come downtown and want to see the Cathedral, the Walt Disney Concert Hall, and the Caltrans building, as complementary and contrasting examples of the state of architecture at this moment," Dan Rosenfeld (principal, Urban Partners) said. "They are three world class statements—all very different, and all within a couple of blocks of each other."

Frank Gehry's design for the Walt Disney Concert Hall **D** on Grand Avenue has already had a huge influence on the downtown scene, even well before its completion. As Deborah Weintraub succinctly put it, "Disney Concert Hall will put us on the map internationally in a way no other building will." Scheduled for completion in May, it will open for the Philharmonic's fall season. The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels **E**, by architect Rafael Moneo, is another new Grand Avenue icon. Since opening on Labor Day 2002, the Cathedral has attracted over half a million visitors. Arata Isozaki's Museum of Contemporary Art on Grand Street has been a cultural monument sitting in wait of the promised urban renewal to come since 1986, and its prescient location is finally paying off.

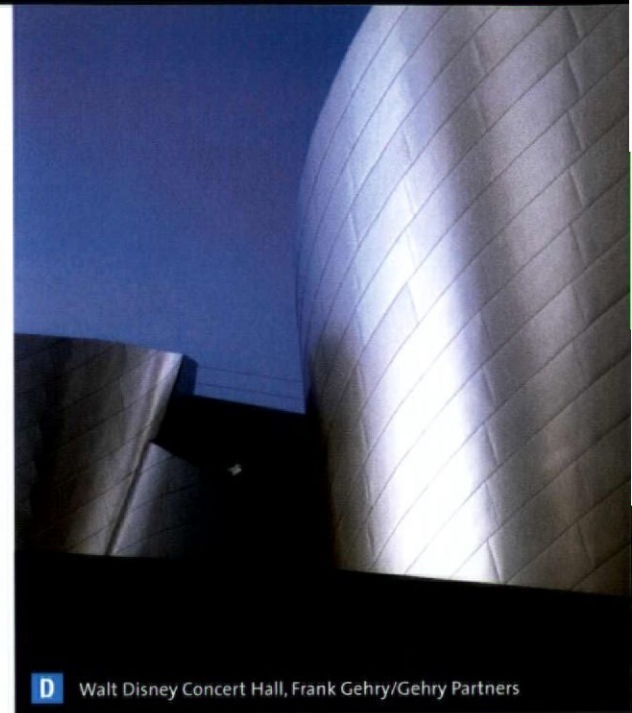
This row of treasures inspired a project to improve Grand Avenue itself. Martha Welborne, managing director of the Grand Avenue Committee, described a threefold plan: to improve the streetscape and pedestrian areas, transform the county mall between the DWP building and City Hall into a central park for the city, and turn now-empty development



B Federal Courthouse, Perkins & Will



B Federal Courthouse, Perkins & Will



D Walt Disney Concert Hall, Frank Gehry/Gehry Partners

"I think someday people will come downtown and want to see the Cathedral, the Walt Disney Concert Hall, and the Caltrans building, as complementary and contrasting examples of the state of architecture at this moment." —Dan Rosenfeld



Caltrans, Morphosis **C**

parcels into a balanced array of retail and dining establishments. Eli Broad, chairman of AIG SunAmerica, Inc., has long been an advocate for downtown investment in general and the Grand Avenue project in particular, for one simple reason: "I have yet to see a city in world history that's become great without a vital core." The first necessary step is for the City and County to form a Joint Powers Authority over the project, which has yet to happen.

Another long-held dream of individual activists, the restoration of the LA River, is gaining widespread support from a large coalition of organizations both public and private. The plan for a new state park called The Cornfields is the first concrete (or more accurately, anti-concrete) step. Consisting of a

32-acre oblong parcel of land on the eastern edge of Chinatown, its borders are Broadway and Spring, and the LA River and College. The short-term plan is to landscape a small portion this year, with the permanent construction of the entire site to take place three years down the road. The hope is that a world-class park on the edge of downtown will serve locals as well as drawing tourists. Sean Woods, Urban Park Planner, called Cornfields "a little piece of the green necklace" that the restored LA River will someday become.

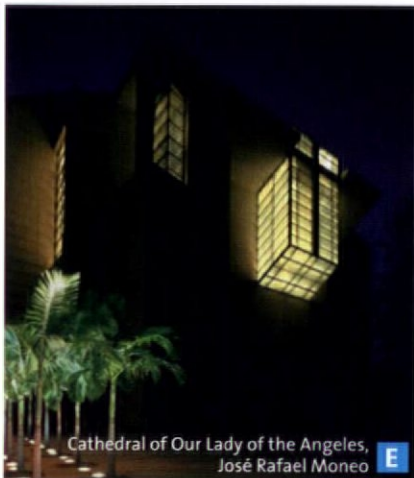
Thanks to Proposition K and a thirty-year assessment of the city's recreation and park facilities, a number of new gyms are being built, and old ones renovated. One such project is in Boyle Heights. Koning Eizenberg Architecture has designed Pecan Park gym **F** in accordance with the city's new policy of sustainability. The Gold Line trolley will run in front of the gym, connecting the park back to downtown. Weintraub said, "in every meeting that we've had with the community, they're waiting with bated breath." Nearby is the Boyle Heights Youth Opportunity Center **G**, designed by Pleskow + Rael, on 4th Street. The Center is a kind of alternative school, intended to bring inner city children up to speed on the digital revolution. Other City projects include a new Chinatown branch of the LA library **H** by architects Carde Ten, and the library's Little Tokyo branch **I** by CWA as the Architect of Record, with Tony Lumsden, FAIA, as Design Architect.

The Little Tokyo branch sits on the eastern portion of St. Vibiana's **I** property, at 2nd Street between Los Angeles and Main. The former Cathedral itself is being developed by Gilmore Associates and the State to be used as a performing arts center for Cal State LA. Brenda Levin, FAIA, of Levin & Associates Architects, is designing the conversion. There will be a housing component on the southern portion of the site, which will likely be a combination of mixed income rental units and for-sale condominiums, according to developer Tom Gilmore.

Down the street, 1st and Central will be the site of The National Center for the Preservation of Democracy (NCPD) **K**, affiliated with the Japanese American National Museum. Levin & Associates Architects will renovate and expand the historic Buddhist temple, adding a 200-seat theater. According to a press release,



K National Center for Preservation of Democracy, Levin + Associates

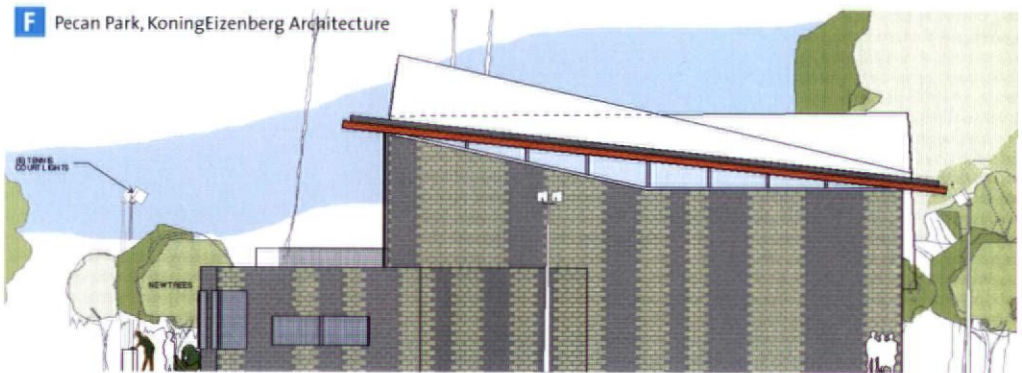


E Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angeles, José Rafael Moneo



G Boyle Heights Youth Opportunity Center, Pleskow + Rael

F Pecan Park, KoningEizenberg Architecture



H Chinatown Branch of the LA Library, Jensen



"For fifty years it seems the influence and affluence have been moving out to the suburbs. Here's somebody doing the opposite, coming downtown because it's the right thing to do."

—Dan Rosenfeld



The Standard Hotel, KoningEizenberg Architecture 0



Little Tokyo branch of the LA library, CWA/LUMSDEN 1

the NCPD "will be a new model for public education, promoting the principles of democracy and inspiring all people to actively engage in its development." Just to the east, the biggest upcoming City project will cover almost an entire city block, from Alameda to Vignes and from First to Temple. The complex will include police facilities, the bomb squad, a jail, an emergency operation center, and one of the new downtown fire stations. The City plans to use separate architects for each of the facilities and will shortly hire a team to masterplan the block.

Over at El Pueblo Historic Park, Levin & Associates Architects has been retained to work with County Supervisor Gloria Molina on conceptual planning for a project called El Centro de Cultura y Arte. They will work with Rios Architects on hardscape and landscape for the project. The adaptive reuse and expansion plan will convert county-owned buildings dating from the late 1800s into a center celebrating the contributions of the Latino community of Los Angeles, both in history and culture. The site is appropriately located in the historic core where the city was founded, across from Olvera Street. Also in the area, the City has hired ACG Environments to renovate Placita de Dolores 2, a plaza that faces Union Station. The Placita sits in front of the old Yellow Line substation from 1904, which ACG is going to restore as well, with plans to eventually turn it into a transportation museum. Set to begin in July, the project will create a direct pedestrian connection from the Placita into the heart of Olvera Street, making the entire area more accessible. The City plans to create a new streetscape 3

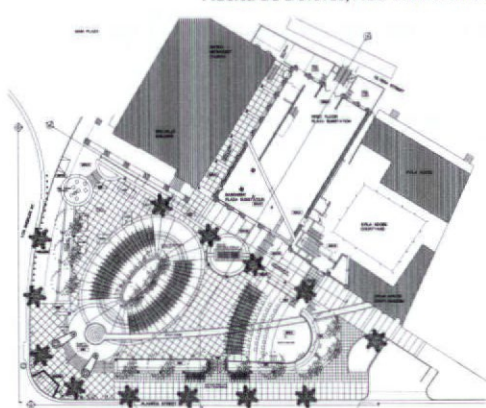
all along Alameda. Work on the area in front of Olvera Street begins sometime this spring. "Everything that is going on downtown right now seems oriented towards a more pedestrian friendly environment," noted ACG principal Tony Gonzales.

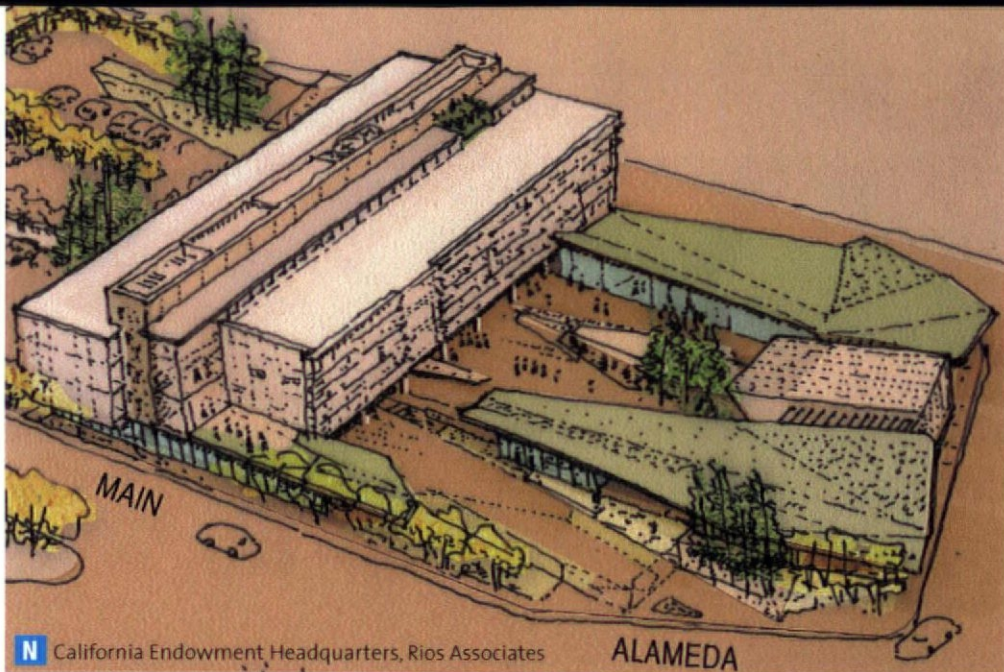
The California Endowment headquarters 4 is another new project near Union Station. Construction begins in November and is set to end 2005. Mark Rios, AIA, of Rios Associates is the architect, both for building and landscape design. The executive architect is House and Robertson. Urban Partners is the development manager. The Endowment's institutional purpose is to support healthcare, primarily in underserved communities, and the move downtown from Woodland Hills underscores this commitment. The site is at the center of LA's public transportation system, equally accessible to all neighborhoods. "For fifty years it seems the influence and affluence have been moving out to the suburbs," said Dan Rosenfeld. "Here's somebody doing the opposite, coming downtown because it's the right thing to do."

It's also the sporting thing to do. Down the hill at 1111 South Figueroa lies the Staples Center, designed by architect Dan Meis of NBBJ. At first its location was widely derided: who was going to travel all the way downtown for a game? But not only have they traveled, they've stayed for dinner, as area restaurants can joyfully attest. The number of visitors to downtown has risen over the last five years from 3 million to 11 million, and Staples can take a lot of credit for that.

Halfway between Staples and the Civic Center, a slightly smaller venue is also making

Placita de Dolores, ACG Environments 2

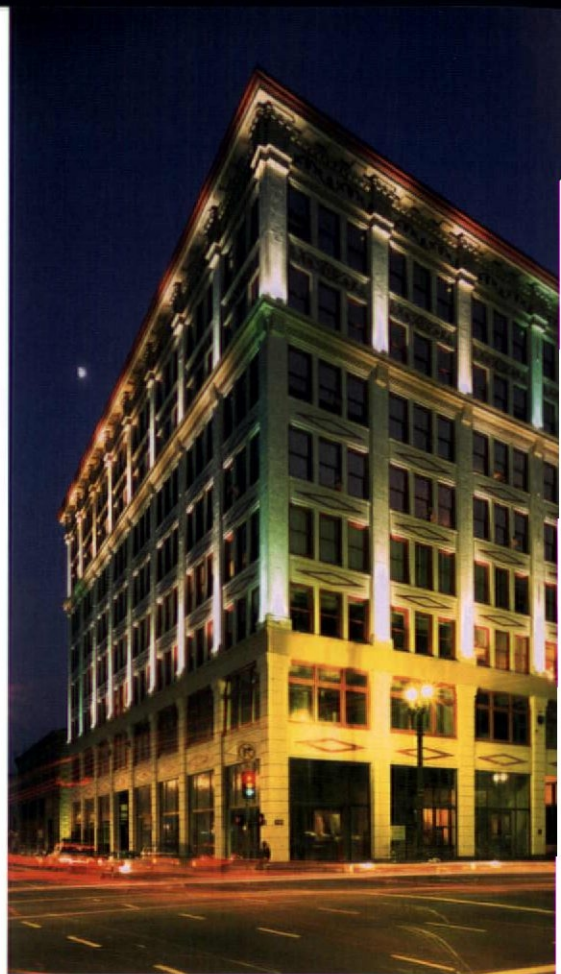




N California Endowment Headquarters, Rios Associates



Q LA Herald Examiner, Levin + Associates & Urban Partners



P San Fernando Building, Killefer/Flamming



a big impression. The Standard Downtown LA Hotel [\[icon\]](#), at Flower and 6th Street, has been an enormous catalyst to downtown projects according to developers and architects alike. Hotelier Andre Balazs hired Koning Eizenberg Architecture to convert the old 12-story Superior Oil office building into the place to be in a city full of places to be. According to Hank Koning, FAIA, Balazs was brave to open the boutique hotel there. "Its phenomenal success is great for him and downtown," Koning said. "That's what we need down there to make it a 24

hour city." Two loft conversions are already taking place in the area surrounding the hotel, which opened in May 2002.

There are too many other loft and condominium projects to list individually—17 at last count. According to the mayor's office, over 4000 housing units are in some stage of planning or construction downtown. Over 3000 of those units are being designed by Killefer Flamming Architects. They worked on the first three loft conversions in the old Bank District starting in 1998, for developer Tom

"Everything that is going on downtown right now seems oriented towards a more pedestrian friendly environment." —Tony Gonzales

Continued on page 42 >>

LEO A DALY'S
INVENTIVE
NEW PLANS
FOR A RAIN FOREST
AT THE LA ZOO

BABY'S NEW HOME

By Allison Milionis



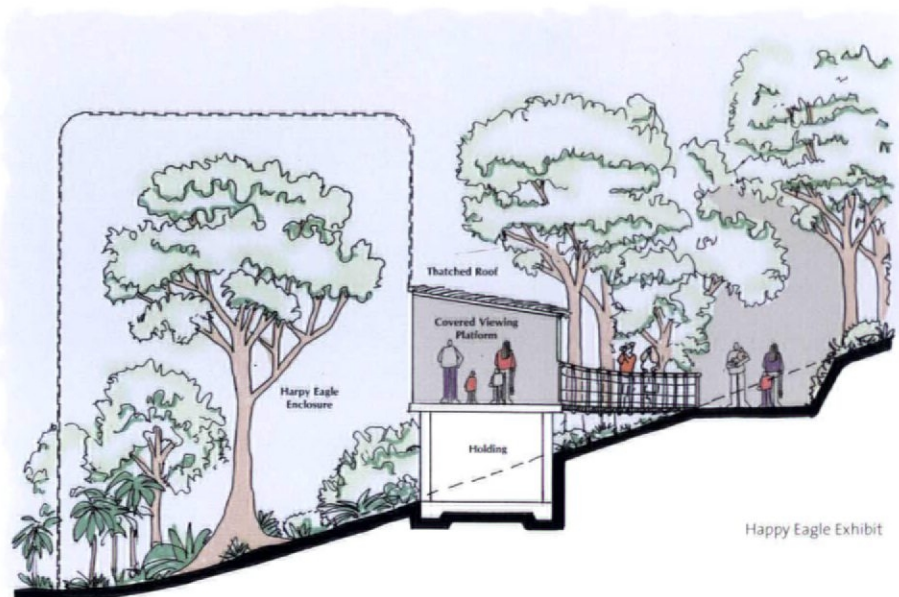
WHEN IT COMES TO ZOO ATTRACTIONS, THE creepy species rule. Whether slithering or blood sucking, there are few exhibits that can compete for one's attention, fascination and total disgust. It's no surprise that the reptile and insect houses are some of the most popular zoo exhibits for kids. Generally dark, cavernous spaces, these exhibits are like houses of horror where children can observe nature's most macabre behaviors.

The Reptile House at the Los Angeles Zoo is home to some pretty impressive and rare reptilian species. Take Baby, a 20-year-old Indian Python with a ferocious appetite for bunnies. Stretched out at a glorious 15 feet, Baby is an awesome sight, a true showstopper, and the grand dame of the Reptile House. One would think with such status, Baby's house would equal her star power. But Baby, like her scaly neighbors, resides in an outdated facility in total disrepair. Built in 1966, the Reptile House has taken a beating from over zealous kids, baby strollers, and general use; and frankly, the architecture is nothing to talk about. The house is washed up and Baby deserves something better.

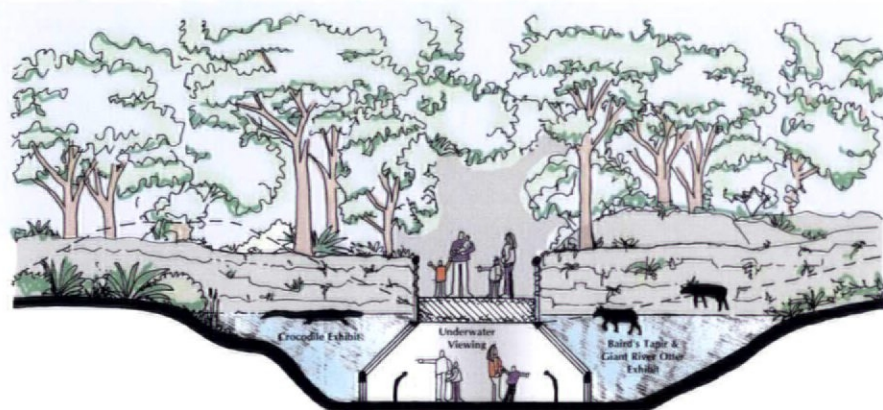
For the most part, there is solidarity among zoos because they all aspire to preserve and enhance the well being of wildlife. But they still have to attract visitors to exist and this can fuel some healthy competition: for example, Los Angeles and San Diego. Though a lovely place to visit, San Diego was unable to compete with the allure of LA's theme parks until the San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park emerged on the scene. For animal attractions, tourists started heading south, probably unaware that LA even had a zoo. In fact, it's likely many LA residents didn't know there was a zoo in their own city, so enamored were they by San Diego's aggressive marketing campaign.

Thankfully, the recently completed plans for the LA Zoo's Rain Forest of the Americas reveal an exhibit that has the potential to put Los Angeles back on the map, and keep those south-bound tourists right here in LA. The exhibit will consist of 4.5 acres, 2.5 of which will be developed. Within a dense jungle landscape, visitors will view exotic, endangered animals such as jaguars, howler monkeys, crocodiles, and the rare Baird's Tapir. The Forest will include the 10,000-square-foot Reptile and Insect Interpretative Center, a waterfall, and a public gathering area for day and evening programs.

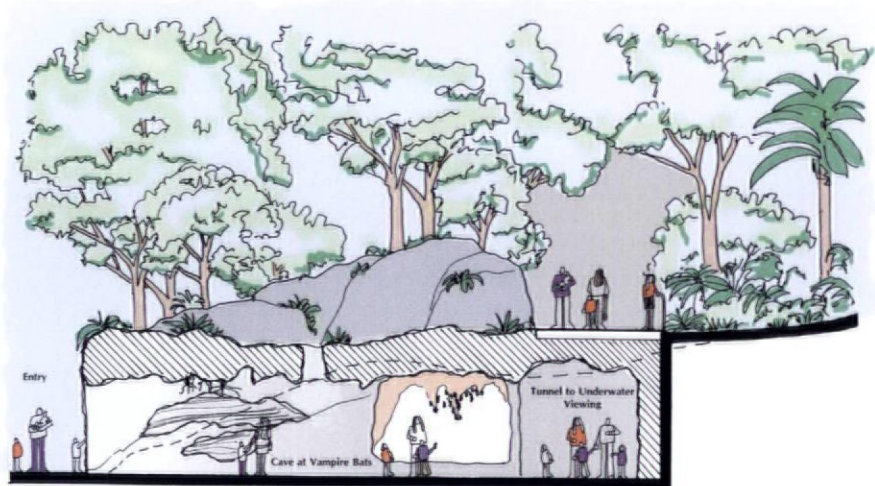
Behind the winning design of this encompassing project is an enthusiastic team from LEO A DALY, with a newfound knowledge of exotic South and Central American animals. Before even conceptualizing the



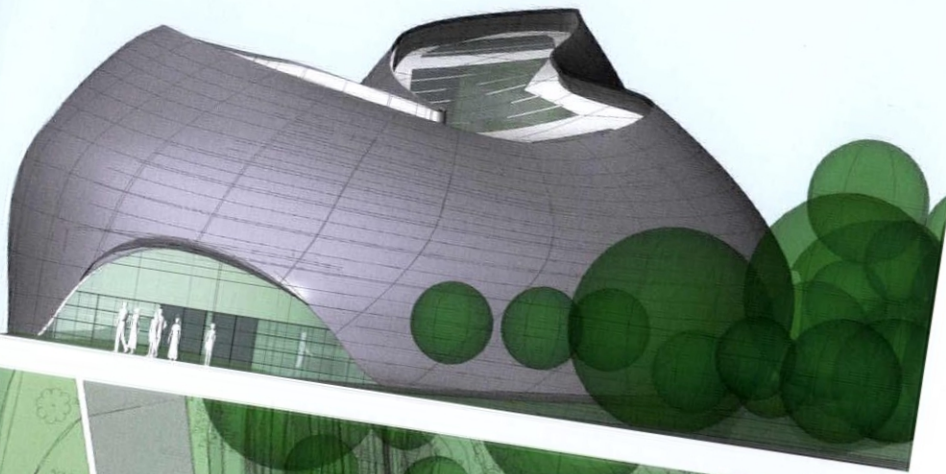
Happy Eagle Exhibit



Crocodile and Taper Exhibit
w/ Underwater Viewing



Tunnel



Rain Forest plan, the team did their homework, beginning with the zoo species list. From this they identified several of the more titillating species, referring to them as the "wows." The "wow" exhibits are arranged so that visitors, following one of several footpath options, experience a sense of discovery. For example, a path that travels beneath a footbridge bisects two water exhibits, providing a surprising underwater view of crocs on one side, and Baird's Tapirs on the other. Employing the circulation tricks of amusement parks, the team designed a 40-foot waterfall at the back of the exhibit. The roar of water cascading over the falls is intended to draw visitors to the entrance, then into the exhibit where they'll become immersed in the dark, canopied world of a South and Central American rainforest.

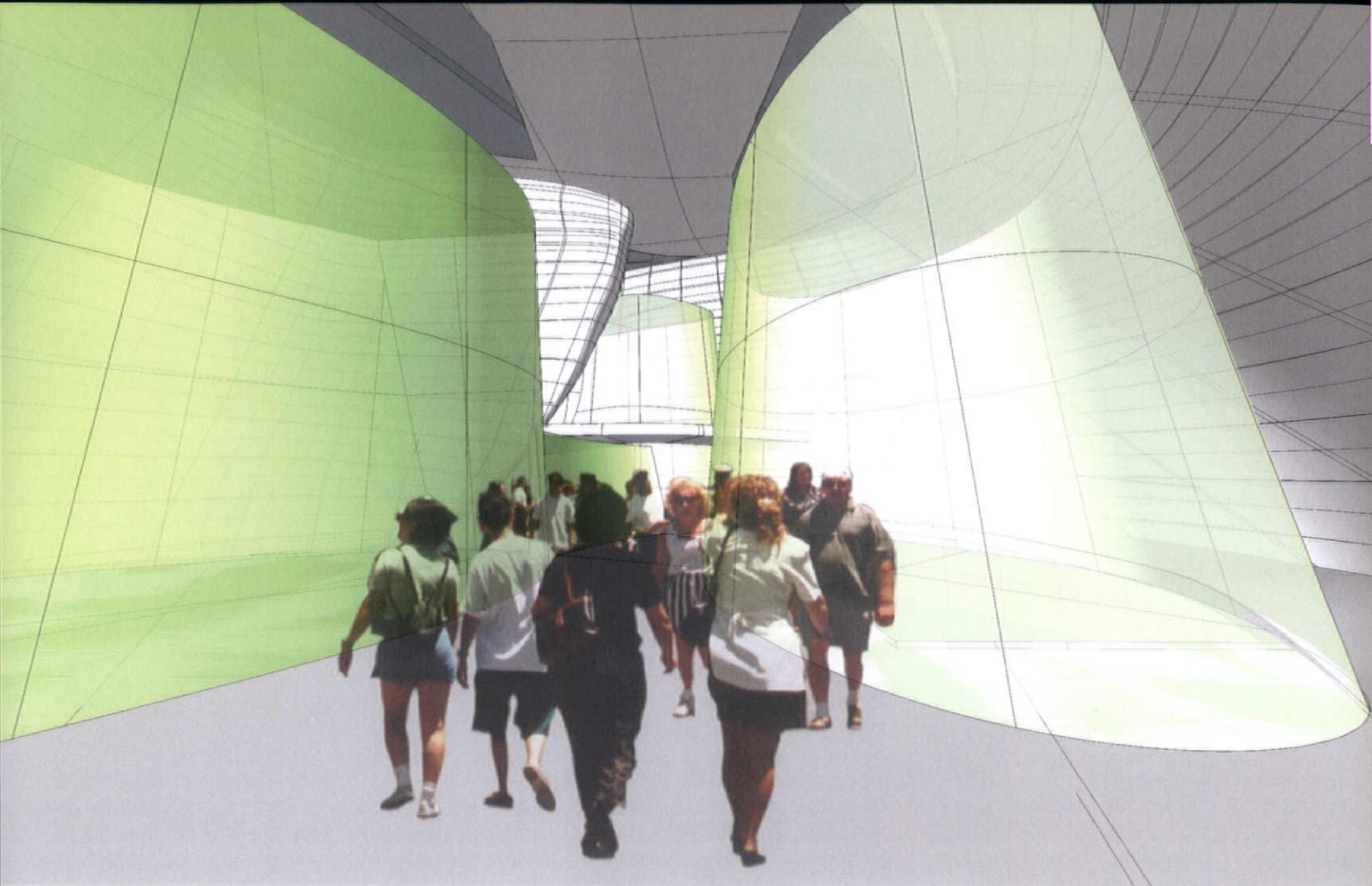
Though the LA Zoo has the luxury of a healthy concentration of trees and plants, it hardly constitutes a rain forest. To achieve that effect, young trees and exotic plants indigenous to the South and Central American regions will be planted among some of the existing growth so that one day (within approximately five years) the exhibit will be nearly as deep as a jungle, with a thick canopy of foliage. Luckily, the Zoo is located in a unique temperature zone favorable for growing plants from nearly everywhere in the world, making the possibility for this microclimate real.

No one entering the Rain Forest will be able to resist the biomorphic structure that is to be the new home. Void of any right angles (because there are none in nature), the structure could have grown out of the ground. It is in itself a "wow" building that is as much about drawing attention as it is a sanctuary for nature's creepiest.

The design went through several conceptual stages before it jelled in its current state. Using Rhinoceros, a 3-D modeling program with the capability of making buildings out of blobs, the Center was molded, pulled and pushed into shape. The LAD team scoured pictures of reptiles for inspiration, studying their forms and patterned skin. When they showed their design concept to Zoo representatives they were delighted and relieved by the positive response, considering no one had pointed out specifically what they wanted, only what they didn't like.

The "skin" of the building is more literal: 18,000-square-feet of green scales. At first selecting copper panels, which would patina over time, the team learned that runoff from the copper might have an adverse effect on various plant and ani-

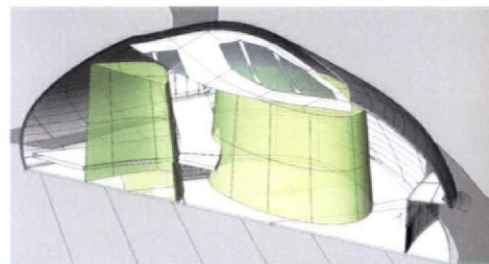
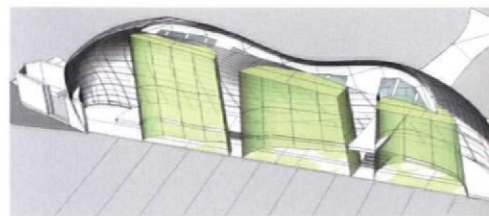
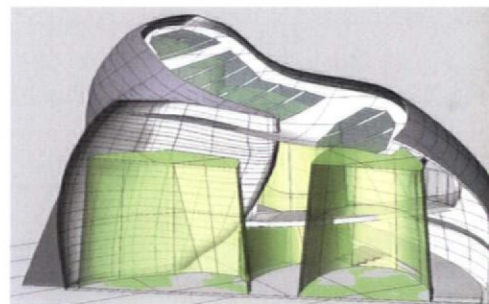
Both pages: Reptile and Insect Interpretive Center.



mal species. Further research produced specially treated titanium panels in iridescent green. Flexible, durable, and environmentally friendly, the panels create an interesting texture and convey a sense of movement. Against the dense landscape of the Rain Forest, the Center will appear to be camouflaged, not unlike the animals that inspired its form.

Upon entering the Center, the dramatic façade will give way to a pseudo-naturalized environment of semi-darkness. Following an ascending path, visitors will pass through five different climate conditions on an educational journey that ultimately leads them to the Rain Forest. The exhibits, or biomes, wind along an interior wall like ribbon, providing several different views of the dioramas and the inhabitants. The experience is likened to a museum, a linear movement past galleries of living art. The picture window exhibit doesn't exist here. Gone is the heat lamp. Only muted daylight will penetrate the interior; and an energy efficient cooling system using convection and misting will replace the need for air conditioners to create a more natural climate, and experience for visitors and inhabitants.

So what is it like to design for a reptilian client? "Having a deadly, venomous snake as a 'client' is different than a typical client; they don't talk back but you still have to treat them carefully," says Alex Ward, Director of Design. "Seriously, the same rule applies as in any other project—the better you get to know the needs of the 'client', the more informed and interesting your design becomes." The reptiles, insects, and their keepers, will greatly benefit from the hours of research the LAD team spent getting to know their clients. Though designed to draw attention, the Rain Forest's true purpose is to provide an environment that enables the practice of conservation, and encourages education. All creatures, no matter what their rating on the creepy scale, deserve a more-than-decent existence while under our watch. The Los Angeles Zoo has made the connection between good design, improved animal care, and engaging experience. This may be all that is needed to catapult the Zoo's popularity beyond that of its neighbor to the south. Well, that and 270-pound Baby stretched out in the comfort of her new biome. ■



LATE MODERN EMBRACING

By Kazys Varnelis

Photography by Jim McHugh

Are we finally beginning to appreciate our more recent past?

SITUATED BETWEEN THE DOMESTICATED MODERNISM OF THE CASE STUDY HOUSES AND the Santa Monica School neo-avant-garde, Los Angeles's late modern architects, big firms like Victor Gruen Associates, Luckman and Pereira, Albert C. Martin and Associates, and Welton Becket did much to reshape the cityscape during the years between the Korean and Vietnam wars. Yet, while work of this era elsewhere has been the subject of much attention in venues from *Wallpaper** magazine to academic conferences, its Los Angeles manifestation remains little appreciated.

The chief guidebook to the city, David Gebhard and Robert Winter's *Los Angeles: an Architectural Guide*, describes the office buildings and civic architecture of the period as possessing "in most instances an unbearable monotony." In his *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, Reyner Banham ignores it entirely. This is more charitable than the recent attention paid it by Rem Koolhaas, an architect who has virtually made his name by reappropriating late modern forms and techniques, but who last year proposed to tear down the Luckman and Pereira complex at LACMA. Instead of reacting with shock, most local critics applauded his decisive spirit and took the opportunity to condemn the existing structures.

A black and white photograph of a modern building facade. The building features a large, dark, grid-like window pattern on the left and a lighter, solid-colored section on the right. The letters "CBSO" are prominently displayed in a large, bold, serif font on the lighter section. The building is set against a dark, overcast sky. Some bare tree branches are visible in the lower right corner.

CBSO





There are, however, signs on the horizon that the work of the LA late moderns is being rediscovered. Gruen has been the subject of academic interest for some time now. Last year the University of California-Irvine held a symposium on Pereira and USC Guild Press published a handsome edition of his works. In March of this year, the LA Conservancy's Modern Committee celebrated Welton Becket's work at an event held in his Cinerama Dome.

But a resuscitation of the LA late moderns reputation won't come easily. They lack the *avant-gardiste* romance of Gill, Wright, Schindler, or Neutra. There is none of the intimate domesticity of the Case Study houses. Nor is there the zaniness that characterizes Art Deco or 50s Googie modernism. Lacking an intellectual pedigree or theoretical position, this work has not usually held the attention of academics. This was big, serious architecture meant to be taken largely as built. Moreover, the contemporary scene does not look up to these firms; this is the work that the Los Angeles 12 and the Santa Monica School reacted against.

Modernism was no longer revolutionary for the late moderns. Instead, they worked to give physical form to big business and big government. As these would come under scathing criticism in the 1960s, the late moderns would be tarred along with them. Yet many late modernists already sensed that something was going wrong in the postwar city. The problem of congested city centers, so key to the advocacy of modernist urban planning had been exacerbated, not solved, by decentralization. Businessmen, so eager to build imposing modernist headquarters, shared little enthusiasm for progressive housing models and instead built thousands of acres of tract homes. Government lending policies promoted mindless suburban sprawl.

If the late moderns had lost the stridency of the avant-garde, they still hoped to reshape the city. This was an urgent task: the Southern California landscape was reshaped more thoroughly during the 1950s and 1960s than during any previous or subsequent decades. As this happened, profit-oriented construction produced waste, inefficiency, and a disregard for urbanity. In the new suburbs of the immediate postwar era, any broader sense of the civic was an afterthought at best. LA's late moderns had the ambition to remedy that.

Victor Gruen, in particular, railed against the destruction of the city and the proliferation of what he called "subcityscape," the gas stations, car lots, billboards, and trash prevalent in the day. In his 1964 book *The Heart of Our Cities*, Gruen proposed a polycentric city model as an alternative to the existing condition of central-core congestion and suburban sprawl. Gruen believed that through the introduction of subsidiary nuclei—for working, shopping, or education—in the previously homogeneous suburbs, monotony would be undone, pressure on traffic to city cores would be relieved, and urbanity would thrive.

Envisioning a concentrated new shopping district that would act as a modern agora, Gruen developed the shopping mall. In his vision, this would be no mere cathedral of consumption, but rather would have rich programming generated by residents of the local

2) Pacific Design Center by Cesar Pelli for Victor Gruen Associates.

3) Los Angeles County Museum of Art by Luckman and Pereira.

4) Beverly Hilton by Welton Becket.

community and would limit commercialism's excesses by regulating signage and nearby development. Although the end product is certainly not without its faults, how many other architects can claim to have developed a new typology virtually single-handedly?

At Irvine Ranch, William L. Pereira Associates explored the possibilities for making a community that would avoid the monotony of the suburbs and would be sustainable over a long period of time. Given the program of a campus for the University of California, education was at the core of the project, but Pereira introduced a rich integration of offices, government, and commercial facilities along with single family and apartment living. Inspired by the Garden City movement, Pereira paid ample attention to greenbelts, many of which remain in place today. So, too, he created intensive centers of concentrated activity, the very opposite of suburban sprawl, a move that appears to reflect the thinking of Team X as well as critic William Whyte's call for clusters of density in the suburbs.

Nor was the work of the LA late moderns confined to the suburbs. Take Welton Becket's Century City Master plan, Capital Records Building and Beverly Hilton or Pereira and Luckman's LACMA complex and CBS Television City, the latter still as fresh as anything being done today. But the crowning urban moment of the LA late moderns would have to be the pairing of Welton Becket's Music Center and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power building by AC Martin. Here, Gruen's vision of a pedestrian downtown center revolving around culture is fulfilled in an architectural water fantasy.

If there is any building in Los Angeles that marks the end of late modernism, it is the Pacific Design Center, designed by Cesar Pelli for Victor Gruen Associates and completed in 1975. While the PDC is out-of-scale in regards to the surrounding community, it is deliberately so. In contrast to the tactic taken by more recent projects such as The Grove, Paseo Colorado in Pasadena, or Hollywood and Highland, Pelli's PDC avoided any false contextualism, feeling this would have damaged the surrounding texture irreparably. Instead, at a local level the PDC's blue glass surface reflects back the surrounding cityscape, making it legible, while at the scale of the city, it acts as a landmark, a great blue toy in the landscape.

Perhaps we will discover some affinity between this era and our own, post-doc.com, age. Theory and subversion, the driving forces of neo-avant-garde practice in the early 1990s, seem to have run aground. Likewise, architecture's more recent infatuation with business strategies of the new economy seems to have cooled as the stock market has collapsed.

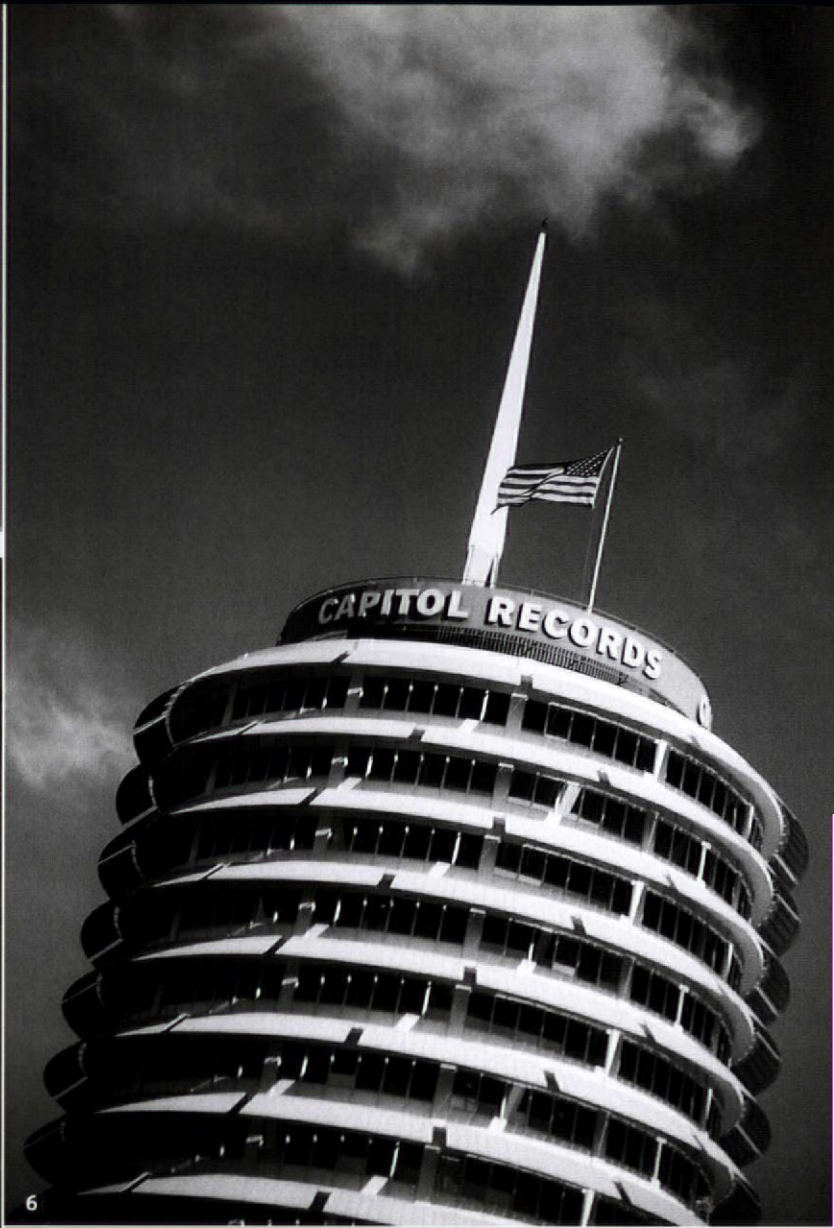
The late moderns may have been big, even dinosaur-like, but who wouldn't deny that the dinosaurs were among the most noble of creatures? The late moderns were not afraid to engage the city, to make big plans, to dream of a civic realm, of solutions to sprawl. Contemporary architects, who may envision themselves in the role of the supposedly more nimble mammals, need to learn to dream these kind of dreams again. ■

5) Dorothy Chandler Pavilion by Welton Becket.

6) Capital Records Building by Welton Becket.

7) Los Angeles Department of Water and Power by Albert C. Martin and Associates.







DELINEATING THE CITY

By Paulette Marie Singley



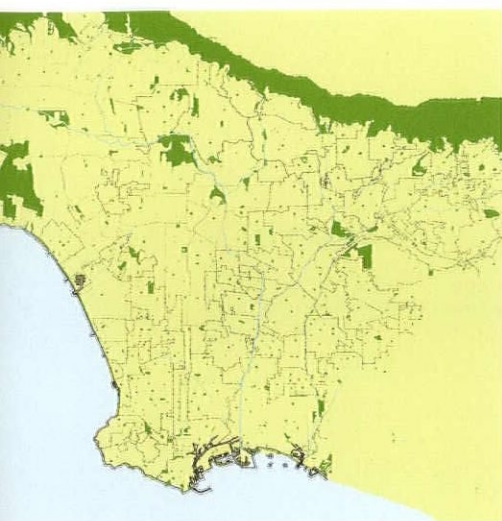
David Hockney, *Mulholland Drive: The Road to the Studio*, 1980, acrylic on canvas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by the F. Patrick Burns Bequest. © David Hockney

IMAGINE A MAP OF THE GREATER LOS ANGELES area that focuses on psychological perceptions rather than the basic cartographic data of roads and topography. What would such a map look like and how might one go about inscribing its lines? Perhaps such a map would depict veins of fault lines, tracks of an Olympic marathon, scars of progressive erasures, or clips of cinematic moments. Kevin Lynch, writing in *The Image of the City*, similarly posits that the way in which individuals subconsciously delineate their surroundings produces a 'cognitive map' that, when drawn on a sheet of paper, renders experiential perceptions into tangible documents. Likewise, as an avid interpreter of Los

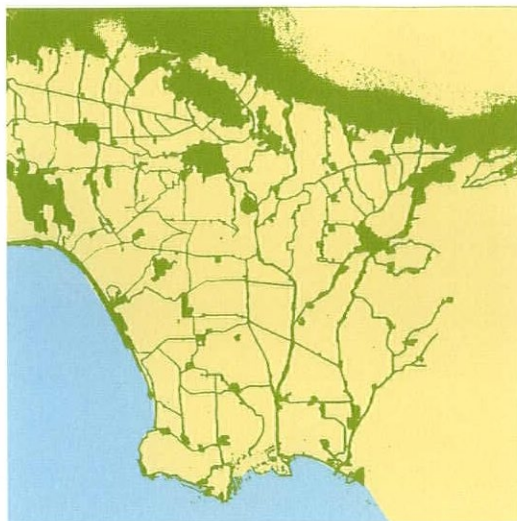
Angeles and other complex visual fields, David Hockney provides one possible example of such a map in his 1980 painting "Mulholland Drive: The Road to the Studio." Here Hockney develops a visual map based upon the simultaneous depiction of plans and perspectives that offers a specific strategy for documenting the city, not in conventional orthographic projection, but as a series of superimposed images.

Unlike Hockney, who navigates the peaks and valleys of LA with painterly ease, Fredric Jameson, the literary and cultural critic, concludes that the difficulty of orienting oneself in the Bonaventure Hotel serves as a metaphor for LA's perceptual disorder. Jameson's 1988 visit to

the Bonaventure—with its vertical elevators accelerating spectacularly upward through a glass atrium, jetting along the exterior mirrored skin, and finally landing its captive audience next to a rotating cocktail lounge—provoked him to label the atrium as a postmodern hyperspace in which it is impossible to cognitively apprehend one's location in relation to the external world. In contrast to Jameson, an author who presents Los Angeles as a disorienting reflection in the Bonaventure, architects and urban designers possess tools that allow them to portray the city as possessing a definitive and orienting panorama. In particular, Elizabeth Moule and Stefanos Polyzoides, Mario



Gandelsonas Existing open space and river courses



Proposed greenways



Proposed development along the greenway

Gandelsonas, Douglas R. Suisman, and Johnson Fain not only navigate through the complex reticule of Los Angeles urbanism but also do so with an aim to reveal the hidden layers and invisible patterns that structure our notion of the city.

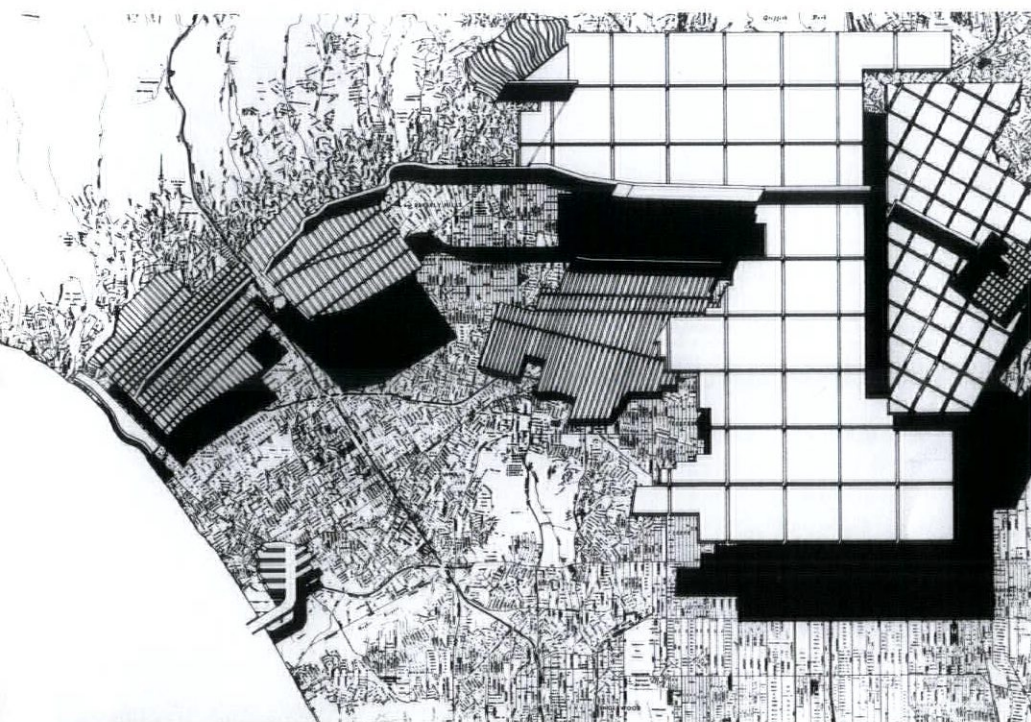
In their important essay "The Five Los Angeleses," Elizabeth Moule and Stefanos Polyzoides diagram the urban history of the city from its origins to their prognosis for its future. The five Los Angeleses for these authors are "The Pueblo" (1781-1880) and the original Spanish grid, "The Town" (1880-1900) which coincides

with the transcontinental railroad reaching LA in 1876, "The City" (1900-1940) which expanded with the 1913 aqueduct importing water from the Owen's River, "The Metropolis" (1940-90) that emerged with the 1938 ground breaking of the Pasadena Freeway, and finally the "Region/State" (1990-), a Los Angeles that dominates an expansive geopolitical field while facing numerous, but not necessarily abject, circumstances. Along with analyzing the city's growth over time, Moule and Polyzoides offer a compelling critique of those who developed a myth of a tabula rasa in order to justify urban

policies that promoted demolishing rich existing contexts that did not conform to a modernist ideal of public space.

If Moule and Polyzoides propose a chronological cartography of the city, in *X-Urbanism* Mario Gandelsonas draws on a (a-temporal) map that cuts through LA's complex formal geometry with precise horizontal strokes that combine a reading of its formal structure with sociopolitical and economic forces. In "Plan 1: The Territorial Grid" he argues that Los Angeles' perceived chaos obscures what is in fact a complex system of city grids laid out at different angles and in opposition to the Jeffersonian one-mile grid that performs as a kind of cohesive glue to what otherwise would be a scattered collage of fragments. Gandelsonas analyzes the geometries of Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, the mega city, the boulevards, intersections, grids shifts and more in a cartography that in fact describes an unseen but highly perceived understanding of the city. Indeed, Gandelsonas specifically positions his work in opposition to Lynch's, explaining that he is interested in producing "two- or three-dimensional drawings based upon plans," rather than the vaguer phenomenological mapping that Kevin Lynch suggests. Gandelsonas endorses a kind of operative cartography that proposes to transform or mutate the city as much as, or more than, recording it.

From operative to allegorical mapping, Suisman's pamphlet, *Los Angeles Boulevard: Eight X-rays of the Body Public*, documents the symbolic and spatial implications of linear public spaces such as Wilshire Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard.



Wilshire Boulevard with citygrids, Gandelsonas

...architects and urban designers possess tools that allow them to portray the city as possessing a definitive and orienting panorama.



Wilshire Boulevard, Suisman

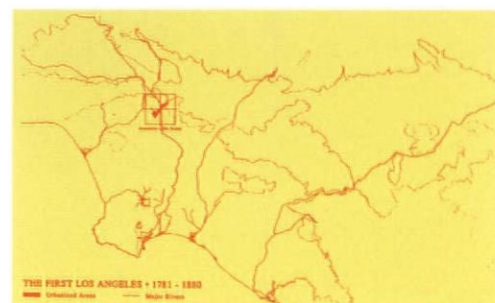
According to Suisman, a boulevard in Los Angeles “makes arterial connections on a metropolitan scale,” “provides a framework for civic and commercial destinations,” and “acts as a filter to adjacent residential neighborhoods.” Wilshire’s density and urban form supports Suisman’s interpretation of this boulevard as a nascent “linear city”—after Arturo Soria y Mata’s 1886 plans for Madrid—to the extent that “Reyner Banham would dub it the world’s first linear downtown.” His careful analyses contribute to a larger understanding of the city as a montage of memory and iconography.

Finally, as far back as the early 1930’s, when members of the Los Angeles business community observed that a shortage of open space in the city might inhibit tourism, citizens employed the firms of Olmsted Brothers and Harland Bartholomew and Associates to propose a solution. Through this initiative emerged “Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region” (1930). Sadly, little direct transformation of the city based upon the recommendations of the report would occur. Over sixty years later, in 1994, the architectural firm of Johnson Fain, in collaboration with Beth Rogers of Pacific Earth Resources (California’s largest grower of turf), addressed the problem of open space in the city when William Fain observed that Los Angeles devotes only four percent of its area to open space—in contrast to Boston and New York each of which maintain nine percent and seventeen percent respectively. Fain devoted unreimbursed office time to creating the award-winning “Greenway Plan for Metropolitan Los Angeles.” Many of the neglected

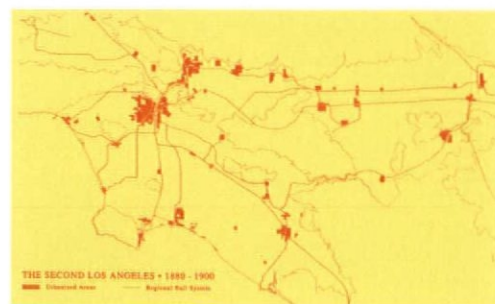
patches of open space that can be found in the contemporary city run along abandoned rights of way next to government-owned property. He and his team completed a series of close analyses, drawing layer upon mylar layer of separate infrastructures systems, networks, and demographics in order to arrive at the last map that they developed into a plan for open space that takes advantage of these overlapping systems and networks.

From open space to vehicular arteries or between history and theory, this handful of examples of architects and urban designers have revealed hidden dimensions of the city that illustrate cognitive maps unavailable to the casual observer or distracted tourist. Such sophisticated understandings of Los Angeles’s rich yet fragile texture form several points of departure for describing an architecture of the city no longer indebted to ideas such as reckless demolition or privatized public space that characterize, and consequently afflict, so many stereotypical responses to this city. Hockney’s simultaneous views, Moule and Polyzoides’s temporal layers, Suisman’s vehicular corridors, Gandelsonas’s geopolitical slices, and Johnson-Fain’s composite gardens each document both the existing and potential city we inhabit—the past, present, and future Los Angeles. ■

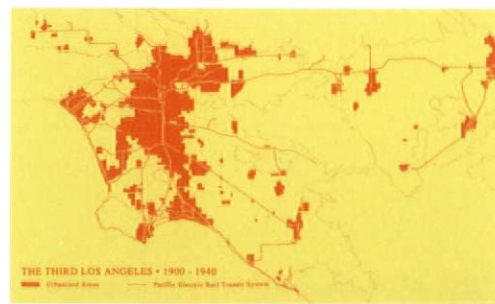
—This essay is adapted from a chapter titled “Los Angeles: Between Cognitive Mapping and Dirty Realism” that is included in the forthcoming publication, *Shaping the City: Studies in History, Theory and Urban Design*, Rodolphe el-Khoury and Edward Robbins eds., London: Routledge, 2003.



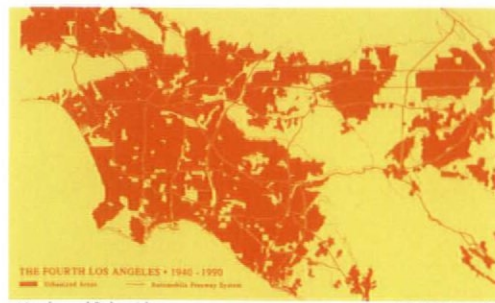
The Pueblo



The Town



The City



Moule and Polyzoides

The Metropolis

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>> "Downtown" – Continued from page 27

Gilmore. The San Fernando [2], the Hellman, and the Continental buildings were completed two years ago, and fully occupied ever since. Wade Killefer, AIA, considers Tom Gilmore the visionary who made the present loft explosion happen. Gilmore says he and partner Jerri Perrone simply didn't know better than to look downtown. "We were entirely ignorant of this incredible suburban mindset of Los Angeles," Gilmore said. "We didn't know enough to know that what we were trying to do wasn't considered possible at the time." In addition to Gilmore's presence, the adaptive reuse code passed by the City three years ago has made the conversion process much easier. When Brenda Levin started out in 1978 with the Oviatt building for downtown pioneer Wayne Ratkovich, "it was torture to try to get approval," she recalled. She went on to credit the Standard, and the loft conversions, with changing the demographic of the downtown population from conservative, middle-aged businesspeople to young hip professionals, adding "I feel ancient at the Standard." (Levin and Urban Partners are also involved in an office conversion in the historic core—a restoration and adaptive reuse of the LA Herald Examiner [3] building on 11th and Broadway. Built in 1914, the historic structure was designed by Julia Morgan, the first woman licensed to practice architecture in CA. The building has been shuttered since the newspaper closed in 1989. There is no timeline yet for the project.)

The interest in living in a vital urban setting makes sense to Killefer, because "there's not enough fun, hip, edgy housing in Southern California." Most housing projects, by his firm and others, are taking place in the historic core, but a few are set to go in the fashion and business districts, Little Tokyo, and South Park near Staples. "Downtown is going to be a completely different place in two years," Killefer said.

LA famously has no center—its suburbs are stitched together in a sprawl from ocean to mountain. And like a microcosm of the greater area, downtown is a series of separate districts without a center: finance, fashion, arts, government, Chinatown, Little Tokyo.

Each of the disparate areas are in need of connective tissue, which the new projects will help provide. Along with the apartments, the ground floor retail will create a more accessible pedestrian city. A new Ralphs supermarket is going in at 9th and Flower. A Long's drugstore will open at 810 Flower. Some of the least glamorous projects are the most highly anticipated.

There is a downside to all of the opportunities these projects offer. Gentrification threatens both the people living in housing which will no longer be affordable to them, and those already living on the streets. The City has created a \$100 million fund to promote low-cost housing, which is a positive start, but much more will need to be done. According to Gilmore, smart development can be a big part of the solution. "Providing affordable housing, not in sort of economic ghettos, but in a balanced mixed-income format, is a real long term benefit to the homeless population and the population that requires affordable housing," Gilmore said.

The issues are complex and will need real leadership to address, but their solution will give rise to a truly cohesive downtown. "The whole effect of suburbanization was to isolate and separate everyone, whereas this newfound interest in downtown is supported and will ultimately succeed because people want to be with other people," said Dan Rosenfeld. "Given all the things that pull us apart in this dispersed and diverse city, downtown is a force that pulls us together." ■



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>> "City vs People" – Continued from page 20

roof is to be planted in coastal sage and other native species. The front elevation is covered in terraced planter boxes. In short, the filtration plant is a building that was conceived largely to hide itself and mitigate its own impact on a sensitive landscape.

The unusual design is the culmination of an equally unusual public process, involving 12 years of negotiations between the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) and a coalition of neighborhood groups. In the late 1980s, federal water-quality required cities to enclose reservoirs to ensure water purity, or build filtration systems for reservoirs that could not be enclosed. Shortly after, DWP proposed building large-scale filtration plants near several small reservoirs, including Stone Canyon.

Stone Canyon Dam is the scenic centerpiece of a 600-acre watershed forest just south of Mulholland Drive. The view of the dam is prized by homeowners on surrounding hillsides who look down at the water, so the notion of a massive filtration plant seemed an affront to neighborhood groups. In the early 1990s, five groups formed the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs and asked Los Angeles City Council not to build the plant. The council recognized the group and instructed DWP to negotiate with them. Later, the Council would also give the same group the right to have a say in the choice of final design.

After several years, DWP and the homeowners reached a compromise: The water company would not build the large-scale facility, as earlier planned, but would instead remove Stone Canyon Dam from the city's water system. That left the problem, however, of what to do with excess water that periodically collects in the reservoir after rainfall. The solution was to build a smaller pumping and filtration station to remove extra water, filter it, and pipe it into the city's water system.

In 1998, DWP issued a request-for-proposals, and eventually selected the team of Black & Veatch, the engineering firm, and Matteson, a veteran of The Saarinen Associates (later Roche-Dinkeloo), the San Francisco office of SOM and DMJM, who now has his own office. The bulk of the building was one obvious problem; the program originally called for a 20,000-square-foot facility, "the size of a basketball court with room for bleachers on both sides," according to Matteson. His concept submerges the building into the hillside, while rearranging the massing of the building to accommodate existing trees. One technical challenge lay in how to shoehorn both

pumping and filtration equipment in a rational way inside the irregular envelope. By re-shuffling the hardware, Matteson was able to reduce the building mass by a quarter. To eliminate a controversial proposal for a perimeter road around the building, which would have destroyed several trees, Matteson instead provided an area for trucks to load and turn around in front of the building, directly off Stone Canyon Road.

Beyond minimizing its own bulk, the Stone Canyon water plant must maintain strict control on light and sound. To prevent glare, the final design is windowless, while path lighting uses low-voltage lamps that are close to the ground. Baffling the grinding sound of the water pumps was more difficult, because the water company promised the neighborhood not to increase the ambient noise at the site. The strategy was to control the sound emerging from the two large vent towers, with hoods. These hoods became the most visible parts of the design and resemble small, temple-like buildings (they could be replicas of the Ise Shrine made by Smurfs.) The hooded towers keep the neighborhood quiet by redirecting sound toward the hillside and away from homes.

Although the design has gone through several versions, Matteson's basic scheme gained ready acceptance from hard-line homeowners. "Everybody whom I've spoken to says they love it," comments Brian Studwell, a director of the Bel Air Association who took part in many negotiations with the water company. According to Studwell, the environmental sensitivity of the filtration plant, as well as the collaboration between a public utility and a neighborhood group on the design of infrastructure, was "so unique in the annals of municipal government that DWP has written papers about it and sends speakers around the country" to describe the project.

The building's camouflage may, in fact, prove too effective for some people, according to Martin Adams, DWP manager of planning and project management, who cites a comment from a local homeowner. "We are getting a glorious building," said the homeowner, adding, "It may be unfortunate that it's so difficult to see." ■

PROJECT TEAM CREDITS:

LEAD ARCHITECT & ARCHITECT OF RECORD:

Richard Matteson

PRODUCTION ARCHITECT: Kal Architects

BUILDING & ELECTRICAL SERVICES: Lee and Ro, Inc.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Lynn Capouya, Inc.

GEOTECHNICAL: Ninyo and Moore

ACOUSTIC: Veneklasen

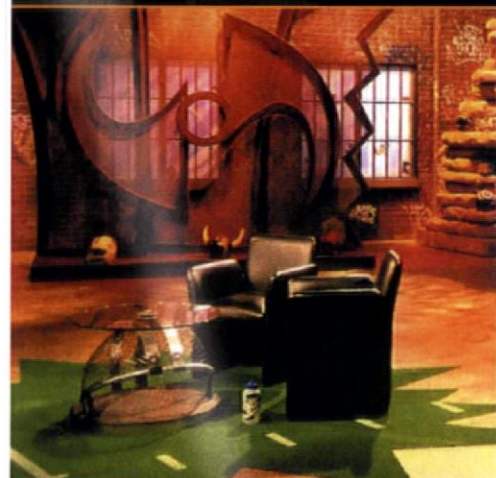
SHORING DESIGN: Burnett and Young

CAD SUPPORT: Marrs Services, Inc.

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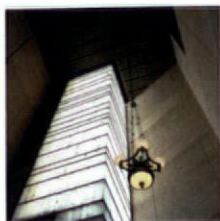
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>> "Editor's Chat" – Continued from page 10

[Weintraub's efforts eventually led to Canadian input into early discussion on the creation of LEED's, with the U.S. Green Building Council]. Eventually I was recruited by Edison to join a small group of 2 architects and 13 engineers from all over the world with incredible passion and expertise for promoting energy efficiency. We also worked with policy related questions about California standards, and with the federal government on programs such as Rebuild America.

LH: And this led to your present position with the City of LA?

DW: Yes, I began there two years ago.

LH: So, in order to acquaint the reader with your department: Who, What, Where?

DW: Basically, I manage an architectural division of

50 or so people, and we do two things—we manage outside consultants and we also do in-house work. Prior to my taking this position, we were moved into the Bureau of Engineering.

As far as What we do, in-house we tend to work on projects that have a construction value of between one and ten million. Typically projects over ten million are sent to various consultants that we manage. The types of projects range from community centers, youth centers, and animal care facilities, to historic preservation. One of the fascinating things about working for the City is the wide range of projects. We have worked on maintenance yards and air treatment facilities, which are part of the sewer project. We do street landscaping and we're involved with several of the bond programs, such as

the fire stations and the police stations that are being designed and built in the next five years. The department is much like an AE office, because in addition to architects we have a strong landscape group and a strong mechanical and electrical engineering group.

LH: Do you think that involvement by architects and design experts could and should happen on a broader plane throughout the community?

DW: Yes, I proselytize for schools of architecture to encourage students to think about careers that put them in positions of power outside the traditional paths, which happens more in Europe. In Europe 10,000 kids graduate from architecture school and maybe one fifth of them end up as



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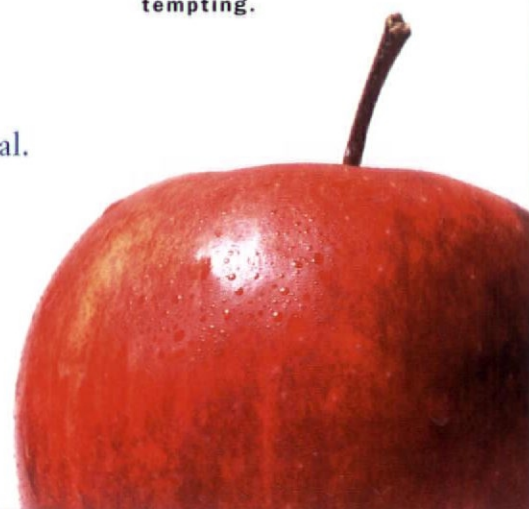
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LH: How does an architect or design professional get more involved in the community?

DW: First of all, think outside the box in terms of your career path. I think it's important to get licensed and to work in architecture in a traditional way, which I did. But then it's important not to be afraid to do volunteer activities. I think more architects should understand that their input and training is valuable to non-traditional venues. I would love to see an architect become mayor, someone who looks

at the city from the perspective of the power of its built form to impact its social dynamic. I wish there were more architects on appointed commissions in the city. I wish there were more architects who were willing to stand up and become part of the fray, because these are positions that require people with strong opinions and the willingness to fight for them.

LH: The AIA Urban Design Committee is beginning to establish a dialogue with the Neighborhood Councils.

DW: Yes, I think the Neighborhood Councils are a growing and expanding political force and a perfect opportunity for younger architects whose careers aren't quite so demanding, to learn how to speak about design in public. A problem that we as architects have is we speak about design in such an

arcane language. The vocabulary we use to describe design is so private that intelligent people in other professions, making major decisions, just turn off.

LH: Is there a final message you would like to convey?

DW: To the architecture community, I would like to go back to sustainability and how it connects to design. As architects sit down to put a project together, they look for sensitive issues on which to hang their decisions. I think that making design decisions based on how a building will efficiently operate over its long term, in a cost effective and environmentally effective way, will be a powerful generator of design ideas in the next generation. ▀

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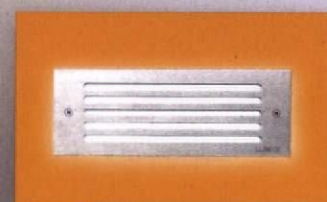
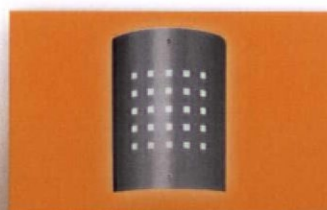
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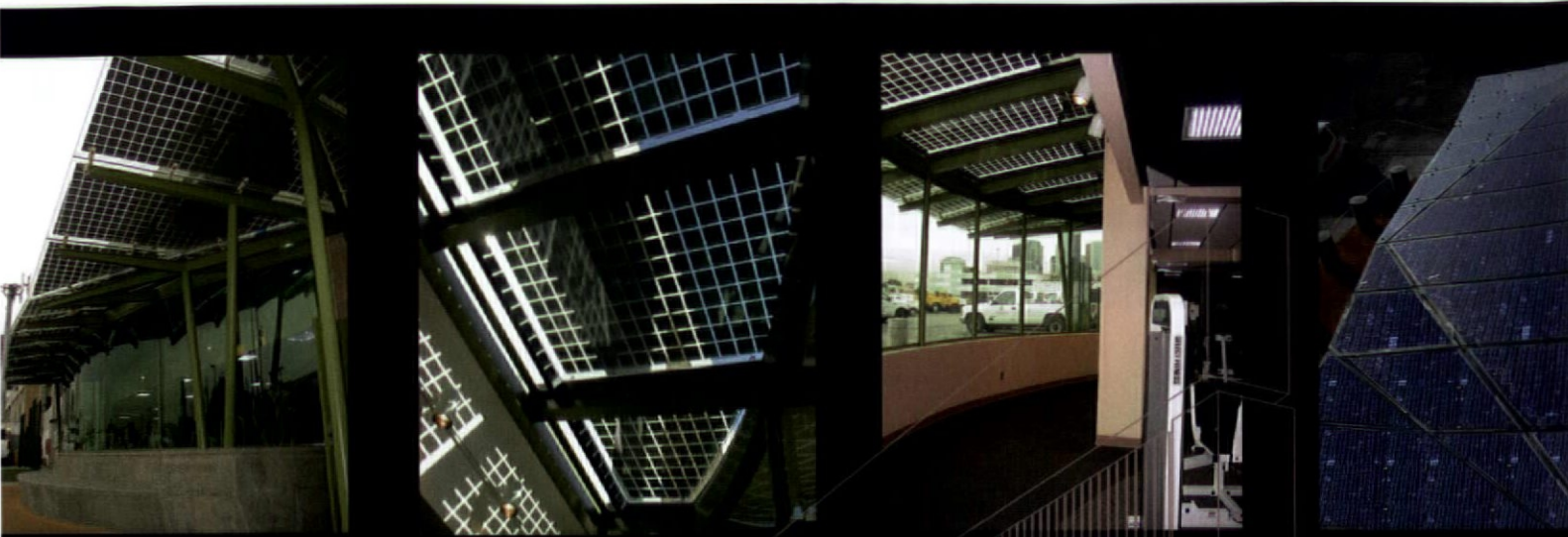
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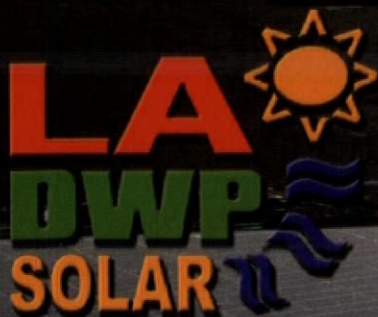
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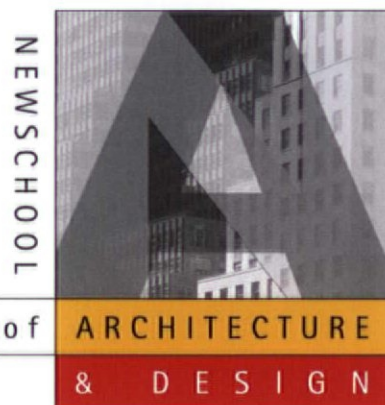
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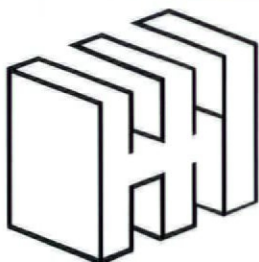
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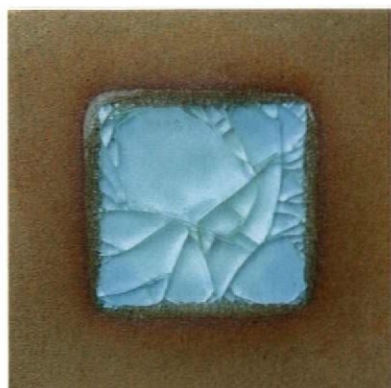
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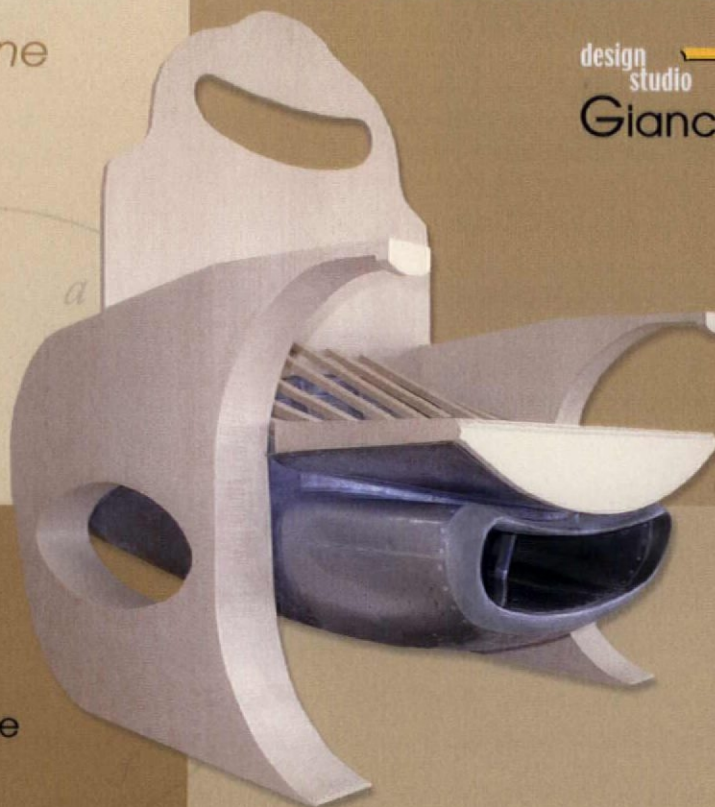
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