

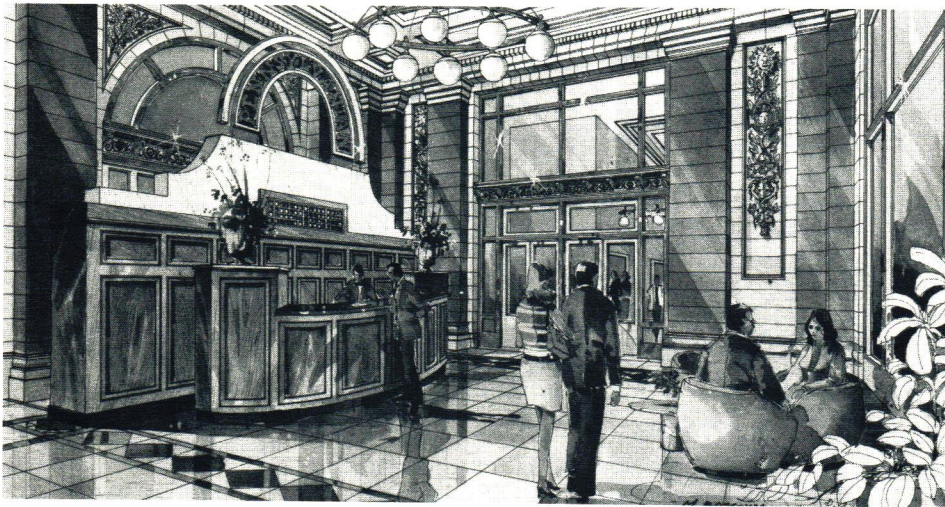
# COLUMNS

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American Institute of Architects, Pittsburgh Chapter

June, 1988

## The Pennsylvanian: A New Station In Life



*The Pennsylvanian, a certified historic structure, is included on the National Register of Historic Places. The 170,605 sq.-ft. tower is being rehabilitated into 242 luxury apartments.*

As the grand old Pennsylvania Railroad Station reopens as *The Pennsylvanian*, it reverts to part of its original use. In addition to its functions of moving people to and from trains and providing office space for the rich and powerful Pennsylvania Railroad, the 10-story building offered sleeping quarters for off-duty railroad workers. Pennsylvania Station dormitories were spartan temporary accommodations for workers who would return home on the next run. In contrast, *The Pennsylvanian* is designed for luxury living.

According to the developer, Historic Landmarks for Living, the *Pennsylvanian* is unique in its adaptive reuse of a station. Here and elsewhere, railroad stations have been transformed into shopping malls, hotels, restaurants and museums. Smaller stations have become corporate headquarters and commuter stations have taken on new life as community centers. However, the *Pennsylvanian* is the first abandoned transportation center to be reborn as a luxury apartment complex.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The great railroad stations or depots were the gateways to every large city from shortly before the Civil War to the post-

World War II years. They were a symbol of the power and wealth of the railroads. The Pennsylvania Railroad was the richest and most powerful of all American rail lines. It controlled the Pennsylvania legislature and many city halls, with lines stretched from the Hudson River west to Chicago and St. Louis.

To reflect its grandeur and prestige, in 1898, the railroad began to plan a new gateway to the city that had become the steelmaking capital of the nation. For its architect, the Pennsy chose Daniel H. Burnham, the Beaux Arts classicist well known for the planning of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. The Pennsylvania Station was Burnham's first important commission in Pittsburgh and led to many other projects including the Frick, Oliver and Highland buildings.

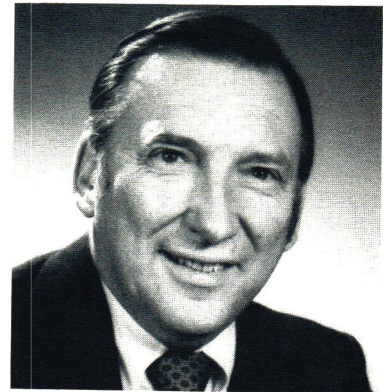
The distinguishing feature of the twelve story building was the Rotunda, a domed arched entrance on the west end. Its purpose was utilitarian, serving as a portico where arriving and departing passengers could enter and leave carriages, cabs and later, automobiles. Every major railroad station had some kind of covered porte co-  
*(Continued on page 4)*

## More Affiliates Join Pittsburgh Chapter

"Seven years ago, we had five," says Lana Andrews, Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Chapter AIA. "In the past two or three years, we have seen a dramatic increase in Professional Affiliate members. They give the chapter another dimension. We've had seminars and programs given by Affiliates. They're an excellent resource for our members. You can call and get information from a colleague--it's not a cold call."

Professional Affiliates now number 29. Two years ago, as this type of membership began to grow, the Membership Committee took steps to define Affiliate Membership. Some chapters have no criteria; they simply accept all who apply. Other chapters enroll no Professional Affiliates whatsoever. The Pittsburgh Chapter determined that Profes-  
*(Continued on page 12)*

## The Kaiser Commandments



"How are we to communicate the need for great and useful architecture in America?" That was the question posed by Lloyd Kaiser (above), President of Metropolitan Pittsburgh Public Broadcasting, Inc. in January 1988 when he addressed the AIA Grassroots Conference in Washington D.C. Kaiser, appointed the public member of AIA National in 1987, spoke to an audience made up of local chapter presidents and presidents-elect from across the country.  
*(Continued on page 16)*

## BREAKING GROUND

### Kudos

This year's **Steward L. Brown Scholarship** winner is **Andrew D. Moss**. Moss, a resident of Pittsburgh, is a fourth year student at CMU. The scholarship funds a travel/study program, which will take Moss to Egypt and Turkey. He also intends to contact several of the British architects who participated in the R/UDAT. A special thank you to AIA jury members, Syl Damianos, Jim Brown and Bill Kerr.

Congratulations to fifth year architecture student, **Douglas Sipp**, winner of the **1988 Lathers Local 33-L Architectural Scholarship**. The \$3000 prize is awarded annually by the Bureau of Lathing and plastering of Greater Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Mellon Department of Architecture. Sipp, a Pittsburgh native, was honored for his innovative design for the rebuilding of the Lyn Theater in St. Louis, Missouri.

### Transitions

**Jon M. Grant**, a director of the Pittsburgh Chapter and Chair of the Ways and Means Committee is moving to Washington D.C. Jon has been elected partner of Williams Trebilcock Whitehead and will head

their new branch office in the nation's capital.

The Washington office will serve strong markets in Virginia, Maryland and the District. It will specialize in commercial and office interiors, and personal care for the elderly. Grant will act as liaison with existing WTW clients including Pittsburgh developers to gain entree into the area.

January 1988 marks the completion of a plan of reorganization culminating in the creation of the **Architecture and Engineering firm of Larsen & Ludwig, Inc.** Larsen & Ludwig is the fourth successor firm to the Hunting-Davis company, founded in 1910. Best of luck in this newly structured firm.

News from **Dave Davis**, Professional Affiliate, General Manager at Mosites. While he will continue to represent the building division of Mosites as an independent consultant, he has started a new business, **David A. Davis Productions**. The company will develop promotional materials for architects and other design professionals. Davis, who has a background in technical writing and visual production, will specialize in developing video productions for proposal presentations. New address and phone: David A. Davis Productions, RD #3, Box 3642, .

Grove City, PA 16127; 814-786-7270.

Member firm **Williams Trebilcock Whitehead** has named **John R. Bonassi** vice-president of marketing and public affairs. Bonassi, who also serves as mayor of Greentree, was executive director for U.S. Senator John Heinz' Pittsburgh office for the past 3 1/2 years. At WTW, Bonassi will supervise all marketing and public affairs activities and also will be involved in client development and new business presentations.

### Business Briefs

**Pella Window & Door** has hired a *giant* in the industry. **John Skorupan**, an All American Linebacker from Penn State, continued a successful football career with the Buffalo Bills and the New York Giants. Skorupan, formerly in contractor sales with Westinghouse Electric Supply, has joined Pella as Commercial Sales Engineer for Western Pennsylvania. Skorupan will provide assistance to builders and architects in developing project specifications, preliminary engineering and budget development for window configurations in new construction and renovation. [Ed. note: You may want to have him *tackle* some of your window problems.]

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## INSITES

### Letters to the Editor

The **Rack Manufacturers Institute, Inc. (RMI)** is a new, full-service trade association offering information on industrial steel storage racks and rack systems. RMI, a single source of information and expertise on all rack storage technology, provides an extensive literature publication program for users and specifiers. For more information, contact: Rack Manufacturers Institute, 8720 Red Oak Blvd., Suite 201, Charlotte, NC 28217. Phone: 704-522-8644.

### Here and There

**Williams Trebilcock Whitehead** is designing the new Orchard Hill Episcopal Church in Franklin Park, PA. According to Paul A. Whitehead, project architect, the 12,000 square foot facility will have a rustic look, matching the country environment of the community. WTW plans a contemporary interior for another client, the law offices of Rothman Gordon in the Grant Building. The renovation will include an expanded reception area, more office space and new conference and computer rooms.

The new **Visitors' Information Center on Mount Washington** opened its temporary facility on the lower floor of the Carnegie Library. This new facility has undergone the first phase of a remodeling program designed by the PA West Chapter ASID. This project is part of the ASID Community Services projects. It includes a face-lifting transformation of under utilized space into a bright, cheery area and re-use of existing library furniture. Phase Two, a complete redesign of the space is scheduled for Spring 89 completion. The final phase will return the space to the design of the 1900 era when the building was built.

### News From National

Did you know that the 7.3 billion spent annually on architectural services is leveraged to nearly \$400 billion in the value of new construction-- almost 10% of the gross national product? This and many more interesting facts can be found in a new reference book published in April by the AIA. **Architecture Fact Book: Industry Statistics (1988 Edition)** is the most comprehensive and up-to-date profile of the rapidly changing architectural profession and construction industry. It is part of the AIA's long-standing effort to engender public and industry-wide understanding of architecture.

The book is divided into three sections: architecture as an industry; the nature of architectural firms; and a look at Americas's architects as individuals. It is available from the AIA Bookstore (202-626-7474) at \$19.95 (\$14.95 for members) plus \$3.00 shipping.

To the Editors:

I was delighted to read Robert Pfaffman's Letter to the Editor in the May issue in which he suggests refreshing new directions for the Public Awareness Committee. After launching COLUMNS and publishing the Chapter's first Directory of Architectural Firms, the Committee is looking for new projects and for new blood. We are ready to welcome colleague Pfaffman and his ideas into our committee.

Cordially,

Ivan Santa-Cruz, AIA  
Chairman, Public Awareness Committee

To the AIA:

I want to express my appreciation to you in awarding me the Steward L. Brown Scholarship. I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised at the selection and consider it an honor. I currently plan to contact several of the British architects who participated in the R/UDAT, such as Alan Simpson in Newcastle and John Thompson in London. The first stages of planning are taking

form and travel schedules will soon develop. I plan to leave early July.

Once again, I thank you for the award and I hope that I can make successful use of it. I am looking forward to sharing my experiences with everyone in a year.

Sincerely,  
Andrew D. Moss

To the Editors:

I would like to thank you for your generous coverage of the Community Design Center and the Palladian. The articles you wrote were excellent and have been a tremendous asset in our efforts to create a new presence in the architectural community.

The Palladian attracted 300 supporters, raising more than \$10,000 for our design fund.

I would also like to take this opportunity to tell you how much I enjoy reading COLUMNS. It is a great way to keep up on what's happening. I look forward to each new issue.

Sincerely,  
Lynn L. Manion, Director  
Community Design Center of Pittsburgh.

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*Pennsylvanian (Continued from page 1)*

there. Few offered a gateway as graceful and dramatic as Pittsburgh's Rotunda.

As rail travel fell victim to the post-World War II growth of airlines and the interstate highway system, railroad service was abandoned or drastically curtailed. Gradually, the great stations were closed; a few were torn down.

In 1978, the tax code changes spurred preservation by giving tax credit for renovation of historically certified buildings. Abandoned railroad terminals that had long been held by local redevelopment authorities suddenly became viable development projects.

Several cities saw new life come to their stations while the western headquarters of the Pennsylvania Railroad sat idle. One preservationist, without hope of saving the entire structure, suggested saving the Rotunda. "If more apartment houses are built in the downtown area, making it once again a place of residence, the Rotunda as a promenade or eating place, or even as the center of a little park...could be a note of grace in a renewed residential area," wrote James D. VanTrump in 1968.

#### *THE RESTORATION*

Just 20 years later, not only has the Rotunda been repaired and restored, but the entire building has become a place of residence, bringing people back to a gracious and convenient downtown lifestyle.

Architects Bower, Lewis, Thrower of Philadelphia worked closely with the developer, Historic Landmarks for Living, and with contractors, Tom Mistick and Sons, Inc. of Pittsburgh.

Just as the Rotunda was the showpiece of Burnham's original design, it was also the greatest challenge of the renovation. According to project manager, Jim Friel (Mistick): "It was the most unique phase of the job. The existing structural steel was all corroded and decayed. Piece by piece, we had to repair the original steel. We took micrometer readings on each piece, reported our findings to the structural engineer, and he told us how to reinforce or repair each one as we went. The main structural element is terra cotta tile. Each tile is tied to the steel, so after each section of steel had been repaired, each terra cotta arch had to be reinforced before

going on to the next. The arches were fragile when we were repairing them, so the job was difficult."

In addition to the Rotunda, the two story concourse and the tenth floor former offices are being restored. The concourse features elaborate plaster mouldings and cornices. A glass skylight, hidden under layers of tar during World War II, has been cleaned. It lights the concourse during the day through a translucent lay-light. The tenth or "historic" floor will have all original woodwork and decorative ceilings repaired and cleaned. The rest of the residential space has been gutted and rebuilt.

Friel, new to Mistick and new to renovation, finds such work more challenging than new construction: "The interesting part is when you first walked in and saw the condition of the place. Walls were falling down and furniture was piled everywhere. The concourse is beautiful now, with all the plasterwork. It's very dramatic, especially if you see the before and after."



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