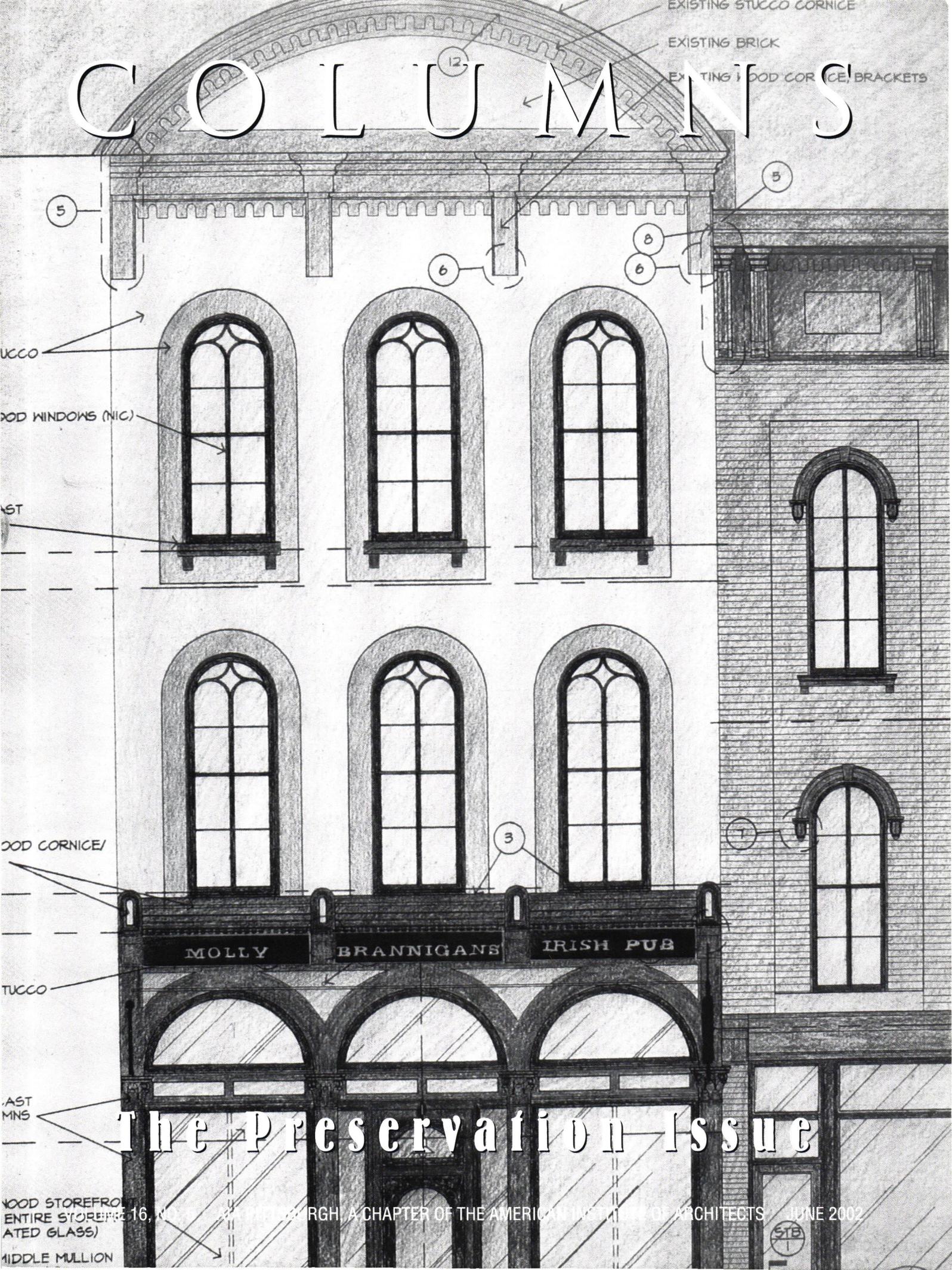


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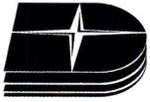
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The Preservation Issue





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Notes on Some Recent Reads By Tracy Certo



"Carnegie liked New York. He liked the lack of heavy industry, the fact that mills and plants and factories did not clutter the landscape but had been consigned to locations elsewhere."

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On the cover: Adaptive reuse of two downtown Erie 1857-59 Italianate commercial buildings into retail space and offices. Crowner King Architects.

By coincidence, the two books I've been

reading while working on this preservation issue mention Pittsburgh of old. The first is a minor but vivid passage in the compelling book, *A Beautiful Mind*. Author Sylvia Nasar describes the city as John Nash arrives from rural Bluefield, West Virginia to attend Carnegie Tech in 1945:

"With its smelters, power plants, polluted rivers, and ubiquitous slag heaps, Pittsburgh was a city of violent strikes and frequent floods. So dense was the sulfurous haze that engulfed its downtown that travelers often mistook morning for midnight. The Carnegie Institute of Technology, perched halfway up Squirrel Hill, hardly escaped the inferno. The ivory-colored brick of its buildings—designed, or so students said, to serve as factories should Andrew Carnegie's school fail—were glazed yellow black. Its walkways were gritty with soot particles the size of pebbles. Its students were forced, before a lecture was half over, to brush the cinders from their lecture notes. Even at high noon in midsummer, one could stare directly at the sun without blinking."

At that time, Carnegie Tech president Robert Doherty "had seized the opportunities created by wartime to turn the engineering school into a real university," writes Nasar. In addition, corporate giants like Westinghouse gave scholarships to lure talented students to CT. A sidenote here: The year Nash entered the school he was in very good company, with an extremely bright and prominent group of mathematicians—as well as a local artist named Andy Warhol. During his studies at what would later become Carnegie Mellon University, Nash originated his game theory.

Another good read, *In Sunlight In A Beautiful Garden*, is an account of the Johnstown Flood of 1889. Fictional characters and situations are mixed in with non-fiction and legends such as Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Mellon and Andrew ("Put all your eggs in one basket then watch the basket") Carnegie. Throughout this highly descriptive and captivating book, we get some delicious insight into these men.

To wit: When Andrew Mellon was 25, he returned from a trip to Europe to T. Mellon and Sons Bank on Smithfield St. with a new eye, an eye accustomed to the chic city of Paris. *"He had seen how sunlight could make roofs shimmer. The bank building, which his father had designed and*

built himself, which had once seemed so magnificent to him, with its four imposing stories, the arched windows crowned with cornices and keystones, the dark stained hardwood paneling that made the lobby so inexplicably imposing, now seemed like the product of too much effort. He thought it imitative, an expression of a failed attempt to beautify."

Makes you wonder what would he think of the building now that it's a department store. In the same book, I was jolted by this gem about Carnegie, upon moving to New York with his mother: "Carnegie liked New York. He liked the lack of heavy industry, the fact that mills and plants and factories did not clutter the landscape but had been consigned to locations elsewhere." Holy sulfurous haze, such irony!

The book, by Kathleen Cambor, focuses on the events leading up to the devastating flood, which occurred on Memorial Day. Once the water burst through the dam at the South Fork Hunting and Fishing Club, it took an hour for it to reach Johnstown.

During that time, *"A black mist, 'a death mist' as it was later called, hovered over it as it collected barbed wire, locomotives, railroad tracks, pulverized frame houses, keys and hobbyhorses, window glass, factory boilers, fuel. At spots where the valley narrowed, the water wall grew to seventy feet, and more than once it blocked itself. A debris dam formed, and the killing wave paused, briefly, as if to reconstitute itself, as if accumulating force for its movement forward."*

There's more, just as intense. Our local history is fascinating and always makes for interesting reading. In this issue we focus on preserving history—the good parts, that is—from understanding historic designations to features of some award winning restorations. Pittsburgh is rich in historic buildings in all its urban areas. Much work is being done and there's still much more to do. In Erie, which we spotlight here, urban renewal in the late 50's destroyed many of the downtown buildings. That makes all the restoration projects, some of which we feature, that much more valuable.

In the meantime, summer is approaching so if you're looking for some good books, I recommend the two mentioned here. Happy reading.

AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Pennsylvania. The objective of AIA Pittsburgh is to improve, for society, the quality of the built environment by further raising the standards of architectural education, training and practice; fostering design excellence; and promoting the value of architectural services to the public. AIA membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited number of professionals in supporting fields.

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All That and The Cool Factor, Too by Anne Swager, Hon. AIA

One of the most common statements

I hear is *I bet you could write a book*. Usually I nod in an amiable way and on my better days, I have a pithy comeback about what everyone thinks I know. If the truth were to be told... I don't know that many secrets. Most of what I know or knew has long been discovered by others. The rest I have largely forgotten. More importantly, I have a hard time believing that a tell all book on the Pittsburgh architectural community would be a best seller. That's why I stick to my daytime job. Secrets aside, I am getting pretty good at predicting the behavior of the architect species. Sometimes I even act like you. I walk into a building and I immediately look at the ceiling just to see how much the developer/client really cared about design. I can criticize finishes and function with the best of them. However, don't expect me to actually put pen to paper and design. I am quickly and completely out of my element.



"Eve deserves great credit for bringing back our sliver buildings. We are pleased to applaud her with our monthly rent check."

Since last spring, we have been looking for new office space for AIA Pittsburgh. We talked with the landlord about staying in our present space with a radical redo to make it more functional but we couldn't afford the tripling of our rent. Even more practically, living through a major construction would guarantee that I would finally jump from the Ninth Street Bridge. So...the hunt was on. We had a number of criteria besides the basics—that we all had to fit and the space had to be affordable. We wanted to continue to share space with the Community Design Center. The space needed to be accessible. And we felt we had to stay downtown (since most of you are downtown) and we wanted to remain in the cultural district if possible. The final criterion was the most difficult. The space had to be *cool*. I never was able to completely get my arms around the cool factor. I'd look at a space and have no idea what the possibilities were. The committee would begin with their critique usually ending with something like... *cool windows but raising the floor ruins it or I love the space*

but the entry has to go. Best yet was the range of opinions on any given space from doable to absolutely not.

By January, the staff was beginning to panic and the Board was sure we would be setting up shop in a bus shelter. All the Board members had been called into action. Their firms had drawn innumerable nickel sketches as we tested space after space. Finally, we had a spot. It was tight but we thought affordable and we sprang into action. Board members from different firms came together to jointly plan. Dan Rothschild took a role as lead coordinator and with great patience and savvy kept everyone on schedule and everyone planning and designing. But, it was not to be. Dollar amounts kept changing and with an economy in a downturn our feet started to freeze. In soared loft developer, Eve Picker, who had persistently bugged all of us to consider relocating into a loft space. Suddenly, she had two vacant lofts. It would mean the CDC and AIA would be separated by a set of stairs or elevator but a short lease term of three years meant we could hunt anew before long.

The decision was made. As of June 1, we will all be happily ensconced in The Bruno Building at 945 Liberty Avenue. The CDC is in Loft 2 and we are in Loft 3. The space is intended for residential use. When you get off the elevator, you walk into our kitchen which staff has promised to keep spotless. To keep staff together, a staff person will not meet and greet you immediately. We are hoping our clever signage will direct you and if worse comes to worse, you will hear us yammering away on the phone.

The space is unique and it's fun. We have lots of natural light, a full service refrigerator and best of all our costs have stayed within reason. In September, we plan on holding our membership meeting in the space. Until then, we hope to see as many of you as possible. Eve deserves great credit for bringing back our sliver buildings. We are pleased to applaud her with our monthly rent check.



New Deadlines for Columns

Please note that we are issuing new deadlines for *Columns* Magazine that will result in getting the magazine to you a little earlier each month. Please submit all material for Breaking Ground (including From The Firms, Business Briefs, Kudos) by the 25th of the month.

If you submit news that reaches us by say, August 25th, then it will appear in the October issue due out five weeks later.

While we're on the subject, let us remind you that *Columns* is on a very tight schedule. Once we put one issue to bed, we're pedal-to-the-metal on the next. Keeping to deadlines is not only efficient, but it also affects the quality of the magazine. So if you are contributing content to the magazine, it is essential that we hear from you in a timely manner. We would be very grateful to get the information on time.

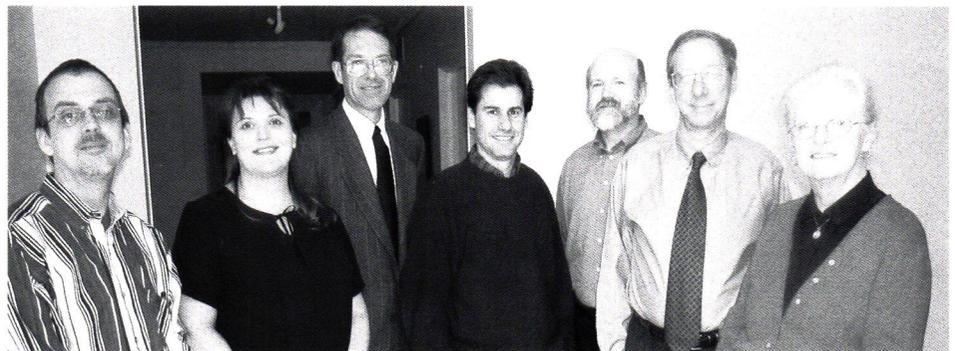
Correction

In the last issue, the names of Joyce and Frank Yoch of The Village Dairy in Mt. Washington were misspelled. We apologize. We also take this opportunity to recommend the Sunday brunch.

Major Award, Well-Deserved

Laura Lee, AIA, Associate Professor of Architecture at Carnegie Mellon University, has won the 2002 William H. and Frances S. Ryan Award for Meritorius Teaching. The award is given annually to faculty who have demonstrated unusual devotion and effectiveness in teaching undergraduate students.

Thirty-four letters of recommendation were submitted from former and current students, colleagues and peers, including Vivian Loftness, FAIA, head of the School of Architecture who wrote that, "Laura Lee is one of the outstanding faculty members at CMU, challenging the students while fully supporting them as they meet those challenges."



All Complaints Should Be Directed Here

Here's the real power behind *Columns* Magazine. The Communications Committee meets once a month to discuss features and help shape the magazine. Along the way we enjoy some great discussions and always, some laughs. It wouldn't be *Columns* without them.

Pictured below from left to right: Bob Bailey, AIA of IKM, Inc., Eileen Kinney-Mallin, Prof. Affiliate, of Cornelius MacLachlan & Filoni, David Vater, AIA, Dan Rothschild, AIA of Rothschild Architects, Donald Zeilman, AIA of Urban Design Associates, Alan Fishman, AIA of IKM, Inc. and *Columns* Coordinator Joan Kubancek of the Pittsburgh AIA office.

Loftness awarded FAIA distinction

A jury for The American Institute of Architects (AIA) elevated Vivian Loftness, FAIA to its prestigious College of Fellows, an honor awarded to members who have made contributions of national significance to the profession. Loftness was among 68 AIA members to be honored in 2002.

The new Fellows, who are entitled to use the designation "FAIA" following their names, will be invested in the College of Fellows on May 10 at the 2002 AIA National Convention and Expo in Charlotte.

Fewer than 2400 AIA members out of 71,600 total are distinguished with the honor of fellowship. The elevation to fellowship is conferred on architects with at least 10 years of membership in the AIA who have made significant contributions in the following areas:

- Promoted the aesthetic, scientific, and practical efficiency of the profession
- Advanced the science and art of planning and building by advancing the standards of architectural education, training and practice
- Coordinated the building industry and the profession of architecture through leadership in the AIA and other related professional organizations
- Advanced the living standards of people through an improved environment
- Made the profession of ever-increasing service to society

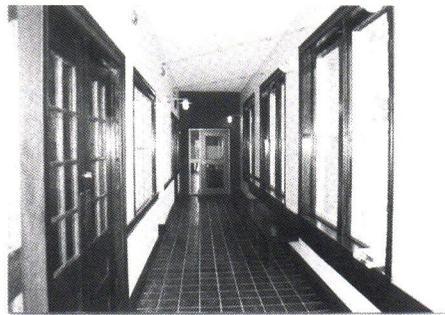
Vivian Loftness, Professor and Head of Carnegie Mellon University's School of Architecture, was awarded Fellowship in the American Institute of Architects on achievements in advancing the science and art of planning and building by advancing the standards of architectural education, training and practice. Loftness has focused her energies during her 25+ years of practice on significantly improving the quality of the built environment, by advancing knowledge in Climate and Architecture, Energy Effectiveness and Sustainability, and Innovative Systems Integration for Performance. Her achievements in research are recognized nationally and internationally. She has led a series of passive solar design competitions, developing performance criteria and educational materials. For the past six years, Loftness has led the School of Architecture at Carnegie Mellon University, winning AIA, ACSA, and AIAS educational awards, as well as receiving the highest commendation from NAAB. She has also served on six building industry boards, a dozen federal strategic planning workshops, five National Academy of Science committees, as well as serving as a member of the National Academy of Science's Board on Infrastructure and the Constructed Environment. Her work on the award-winning Intelligent Workplace has led to dozens of design charettes for international clients. It is becoming clear that the work of Vivian Loftness in regionalism, total building performance, advanced building systems integration, and flexible infrastructures for dynamic organizations, is becoming mainstream to the profession - an amazing realization of her goal to bring research to practice towards improving the quality of the built environment.

Preservation Awards 2002

Congratulations to the following AIA firms and members who recently received Preservation Awards from the Historic Review Commission of Pittsburgh

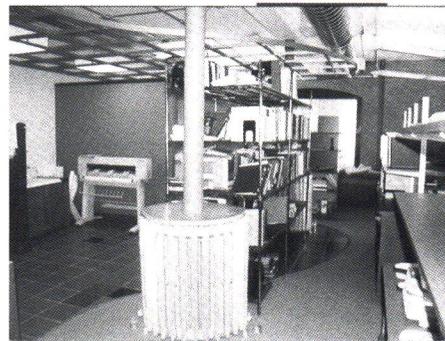
North Shore Parking Garage

OWNERS: Sports and Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County
 ARCHITECTURE FIRM: WTW Architects
 GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Mascaro Construction Company, LP
 PROJECT: Construction of a parking garage



810 Cedar Avenue *Deutschtown City*

Designated & National Register Historic Districts
 OWNERS: East Allegheny Community Council, Inc.
 ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Tai + Lee Architects, PC
 GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Team Construction & Development Corporation
 PROJECT: Complete interior and exterior renovation of house
 PROJECT INITIATED BY: East Allegheny Community Council, Inc.



1015 – 1025 Allegheny Avenue & 1006 Abdell Street *Manchester City Designated & National Register Historic Districts*

OWNERS: Allegheny West Civic Council, Inc.
 ARCHITECTS: Integrated Architectural Services
 GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Angel Contracting
 PROJECT: Façade restoration

ABOVE: *The Bathhouse, 3445 Butler Street*

BELOW: *1015-1025 Allegheny Avenue*



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ALLEGHENY WEST CIVIC COUNCIL
 845 North Lincoln Avenue
 Pittsburgh, PA 15213

INTEGRATED ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES CORPORATION... ARCHITECT





ABOVE AND RIGHT: **903 Liberty Avenue**

Highland Park Microfiltration Plant

Highland Park National Register Eligible Historic District

OWNER: City of Pittsburgh

PROJECT ARCHITECT: Urban Design Associates
Architects

LANDSCAPING ARCHITECT: Jack La Quatra, ASLA
La Quatra Bonci Associates, Inc.

CONTRACTORS: Oakdale Construction
Galloway Bay

PROJECT: New Construction

Baker Hall – Carnegie Mellon University *Carnegie*

Institute National Register Eligible Historic District

OWNER: Carnegie Mellon University

ARCHITECT: Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Jendoco Construction
Corporation

PROJECT: Addition to building

2525 Liberty Avenue – Rycon Construction Company

OWNERS: Rycon Construction, Inc.

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: WTW Architects

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Rycon Construction, Inc.

PROJECT: Adaptive reuse of a strip district warehouse

2425 Liberty Avenue – Former Westinghouse Air Brake Company

OWNERS: 2425 Liberty Avenue Associates, L.P. National
Development Company

EXTERIOR ARCHITECT: Joel Kranich Architects, P.C.

INTERIOR ARCHITECT: studio d'ARC architects, P.C.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: NDC Builders

PROJECT: Adaptive reuse of a strip district warehouse



3445 Butler Street – The Bathhouse *Lawrenceville*

National Register Eligible Historic District

OWNER: Lawrenceville Associates, LLC

ARCHITECT: Quad Three Group

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Greg Mihalko, Inc.

PROJECT: Adaptive reuse of former bathhouse building
to an office building

903 Liberty Avenue *Penn-Liberty City Designated
and National Register Historic Districts*

OWNER: Berger Real Estate

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Integrated Architectural
Services

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Repal Construction Company

PROJECT: Facade renovations

An Inside Look at the Historic Review Commission

By Angelique Bamberger

In an area as long-settled and steeped in history as Pittsburgh, there is bound to be a strong tradition of historic preservation. And indeed, a quick count shows that our city has 26 historic districts and a few hundred individual buildings, structures, and sites that are listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the City itself has designated 11 historic districts and 64 individual historic landmarks. All told, several thousand properties in the City of Pittsburgh have some kind of historic designation, and more historic districts and landmarks are regularly being created. And this is to say nothing of the larger region.

But what does recognition of these places' past mean for their future? Once designated, are historic districts and landmarks frozen in time? Or are there opportunities for contemporary designers to add to the historic context? What are the "rules" that architects must follow when working with historic buildings and districts?

Historic Designation 101

Let's begin by defining the different types of historic designation and their implications.

The National Register of Historic Places may be the best-known but least-understood historic appellation. Simply put, the National Register is the country's inventory of buildings, structures, districts, and sites that are historically, culturally, architecturally, and/or archaeologically significant. A hundred or so properties and 14 districts in Pittsburgh are actually listed on the National Register, but many more have been determined eligible for the list. Eligibility means that a property or district meets the criteria for listing on the National Register, but the paperwork for official listing has not been filed with the Department of the Interior, or (in some cases) the property owner objects to official listing. Properties cannot be listed on the National Register without their owners' consent, but they may maintain their "eligible" status indefinitely.

Contrary to popular belief, listing on the National Register does not provide ultimate protection for historic properties. In fact, it does not restrict private property owners at

all in the use, sale, alteration, or even demolition of their historic buildings unless federal funds or licenses are involved. Then why bother with National Register listing? For these reasons:

- The National Register is prestigious; listing provides clout and credibility to preservationists' arguments that a building or district is important enough to be saved.
- Buildings listed on and eligible for the Register qualify for federal historic tax credits and other financial incentives for rehabilitation.
- Finally, both listing and eligibility trigger a mandatory review of federally-funded or licensed projects.

Aside from the obvious highways and other major public works, federal projects requiring review include home improvements enabled by URA loans (because they are funded by HUD) and the placement of cellular communications equipment on historic structures (because they are licensed by the FCC). Rather than constraining private citizens, this review requirement acts as the federal government's check on itself to make sure it does not spend public tax dollars to damage or destroy significant historic resources without serious consideration of the consequences.

Then there is local historic designation. This has more "teeth" than listing on the National Register, and will be the focus of the rest of this article. In Pittsburgh, local historic districts and landmarks are established by an act of City Council after a process of information-gathering and public hearings. Owner consent is not required, although an owner's objection to the local designation of his or her property does make it more difficult. Once designated, City Historic Districts and City Historic Landmarks come under the jurisdiction of the Pittsburgh Historic Review Commission.

The Pittsburgh Historic Review Commission

The Historic Review Commission is a body of seven people, appointed by the Mayor of Pittsburgh, who represent various professions concerned with the built environment. In addition to a professional preservationist and a representative of a local preservation organization, the Commis-

The full agendas of the Historic Review Commission are testimony to the amount of restoration, renovation, and new construction that take place on and among historic buildings every year.

sion includes an architect, a real estate professional, a city planner, a representative from the Bureau of Building Inspection, and two members-at-large who are chosen for their dedication to the cause of preservation in the city. The Historic Review Commission must review and approve any alteration to the exterior of a City-designated Historic Landmark or to a building in a City-designated Historic District before that alteration can take place. The source of funding is immaterial; this requirement applies to any exterior work, from routine maintenance to new additions, that affects any aspect of the building that can be seen from the public street or way.

In operation, the Historic Review Commission is similar to the Zoning Board of Adjustment or the City Planning Commission. It meets regularly (usually on the first Wednesday of every month) to discuss and vote on the issues before it, but also has a staff which receives applications on an ongoing basis and issues permits, known as Certificates of Appropriateness, for work which can be approved immediately. Such work includes: routine maintenance, repair and replacement of building elements in kind, and restorations based on documentation of the building's original (or early) appearance. In general, most work which does not involve changing the materials or appearance of a building, or which returns a building to its documented historic state, may be approved by Commis-

sion staff without a hearing of the Historic Review Commission itself.

All other applications are referred to the Commission for a public hearing. These include applications for new construction, demolition, and replacement of historic building materials and features with new ones (for instance, proposals to replace original wood windows with aluminum or vinyl sash are common, and must always be reviewed by the Commission). The Commission also reviews applications for renovations which are not based on historical evidence, such as the replacement of a non-historic aluminum storefront with a new storefront of traditional, but contextual, design.

The Commission votes to approve, deny, or continue every application at the public hearing. Some applications may be approved with modifications, which are usually agreed upon by all parties at the meeting. If the Commission denies an application, it informs the applicants of what changes would be necessary to make the application acceptable.

Getting Approval

By now it must be clear that historic designation does not freeze buildings in time. Far from it; the full agendas of the Historic Review Commission are testimony to the amount of restoration, renovation, and new construction that take

Pittsburgh's Historic Review Commission has also approved—though sometimes not without controversy—proposals for new buildings, facades, or additions which boldly feature contemporary materials and design.



The Mexican War Streets Historic District on the North Side is a residential neighborhood of mid to late 19th century rowhouses built out to the tree-lined sidewalks. Department of City Planning.

In the end, it is important to remember that the Commission attempts to be a conduit, not a barrier, to good design. But its first mission is to protect the city's distinctive and often fragile historic places.

place on and among historic buildings every year. Rather, historic designation allows and even encourages changes to historic buildings and districts within certain parameters. What, then, are those parameters?

The question of how to prepare proposals with the best chance of Commission approval is an important one because of the time, money, and aggravation that can be saved by getting it right the first time.

The first step is understanding how the Commission makes its decisions. For each City Historic District, the Commission has a set of Guidelines which establish what is appropriate in that district and provide a framework for the Commission's reviews. This standard of "appropriateness" is based on the assumption that each historic building is a product of its own time, materials, technology, and stylistic influences, and guides the Commission to recognize and respect the original intention of the builder. In reviewing applications, Commission members put their personal tastes aside and refer to their Guidelines, which in turn are based on an understanding of the historical patterns, materials, and details of Pittsburgh's late 19th and early 20th century neighborhoods. In general, the Commission looks for historic building fabric to be maintained and preserved whenever possible; replaced in kind when it is too deteriorated to keep; and rebuilt based on documentary evidence and/or traditional prototypes when it is missing altogether. At the core of the Guidelines are the ten basic principles outlined in the federal Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. Above and beyond this, the Commission's Guidelines include detailed information tailored to the architectural character and period of significance of each local historic district. For example, guidelines for commercial districts, such as East Carson Street and Penn-Liberty, include sections on traditional storefront design and signage, while guidelines for residential districts address issues unique to houses, including porches, stoops, garages, and fencing.

The Commission considers each application on its own merits. The members generally uphold the standards of treatment set forth in their Guidelines, but may approve an alternate treatment if the particular situation warrants. For instance, the Commission usually adheres strictly to its rule that original wood windows may not be replaced with

aluminum or vinyl. But in the case of the Clark Building, a large commercial building with an exceptional number of windows above pedestrian eye level, the Commission voted to approve aluminum replacement windows on the basis that (a) the difference in material would not be very apparent several stories above the ground, and (b) the cost savings on the windows enabled the applicants to consider appropriate historic treatments in other important areas of the building.

Because the Commission's Guidelines outline in detail what it is and is not likely to approve, they are also very useful to property owners, architects, and contractors in planning work in historic districts. Potential applicants are encouraged to obtain a copy of the Guidelines before drawing up plans and, if there is any question as to whether the proposed work will meet the Guidelines, to set up a meeting with the Commission's staff to discuss the project. The staff can advise applicants as to whether the proposed work can be approved administratively or will require a Commission hearing, and, in the latter case, which aspects of the application are likely and less likely to meet with Commission approval. It is obviously advantageous for applicants to try to receive an administrative approval, since this is the most expedient way through the historic review process. However, many projects by their nature must be reviewed at a public hearing, and making the staff aware of them early on will facilitate timely scheduling through all phases of the process.

In some historic districts, applicants are also asked to attend a meeting of the Local Review Committee (LRC). Local Review Committees are comprised of property owners within the district who meet before each Commission meeting to discuss proposals for work in their neighborhood. The LRC members evaluate each application according to

Five Steps to Historic Review Commission Approval

1. Request and read Guidelines for historic district in which the project is located.
2. Schedule preliminary meeting with Commission staff to go over project and approval schedule.
3. Submit application with supporting documentation, such as existing conditions photographs and drawings, to Commission staff at least two weeks before hearing date.
4. Attend Local Review Committee meeting, if applicable.
5. Attend Historic Review Commission meeting.

the Guidelines for their district and make a recommendation to the Historic Review Commission. Their recommendation is non-binding, but it does carry weight with the Commission members, so all applicants scheduled for a Commission hearing are encouraged to attend the LRC meeting in advance. Aside from being another step in the process, Local Review Committee meetings can be very useful to applicants. Many find themselves incorporating Committee members' suggestions and input into the final plans to be brought before the Historic Review Commission.

In the case of individual historic landmarks, the Commission does not have formal written guidelines or Local Review Committees. The sheer variety of City Historic Landmarks – the list includes schools, churches, residences, bridges, a former warehouse, and more – makes it impossible to have one set of guidelines that applies to the particular characteristics of all of them. Rather, the Commission conducts its review of proposals concerning historic landmarks by considering the character-defining features of each landmark, and how any given application will affect them.

New Construction

Up to this point we have been focused on the restoration or renovation of existing historic buildings, in which appropriateness is usually a straightforward question of how the building was originally designed and built. The issue of new design and construction in historic districts is a somewhat different matter, since what is "appropriate" may fall anywhere on a spectrum between traditional design in traditional materials, on one end, and contemporary design in "new" materials, such as exposed steel and aluminum, on the other.

The Historic Review Commission's Guidelines for such projects are similar from district to district. They call for echoing the prevailing patterns of massing, materials, openings, orientation, texture, and color that are found in the existing streetscape, and for incorporating certain design elements common to contributing buildings in the district, such as cornices and window sills and lintels. They do not call for the replication of historic architectural styles, but leave room for creative design expression as long as the new structure harmonizes, rather than deliberately contrasts, to the existing historic buildings.

What About Those Plaques?

It can be confusing. First there are so many different types of historic designation, and then there are all those plaques. The ones that say "Listed on the National Register of Historic Places" mean just that. A few buildings in Pittsburgh bear plaques stating "National Historic Landmark." This is the highest historic designation that can be bestowed by the Secretary of the Interior; it is reserved for buildings and structures of eminent national importance, such as the Allegheny County Courthouse. Many more buildings in Pittsburgh bear plaques stating that they are simply a "Historic Landmark." These plaques are produced by the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation for buildings of local, as well as regional and national, significance. They are honorary and do not, in themselves, imply any regulatory jurisdiction.

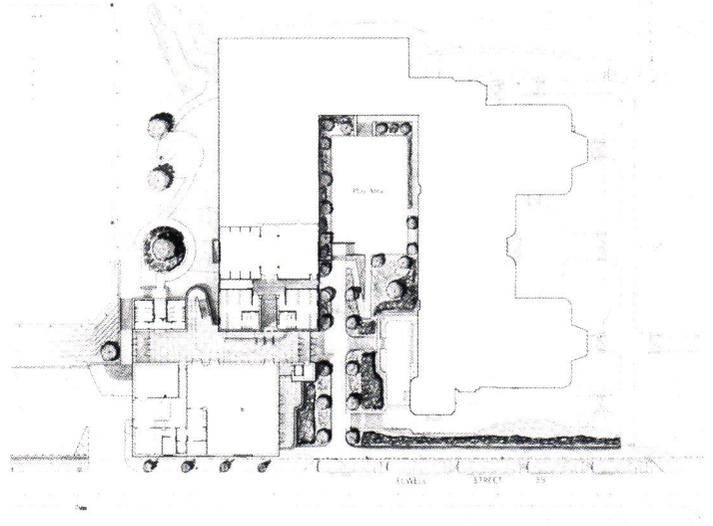
The Secretary of the Interior's Standards state that new construction should be clearly differentiated from old so that one does not mistake a building built last year from one that has stood in a historic district for 100 years. Even in adhering to this standard, there is considerable room for variation.

Some architects and their clients choose a deferential approach, employing a traditional vocabulary of materials and detailing to blend the new construction into the historic district. Such structures are usually differentiated from their historic neighbors chiefly by their relative simplicity and, once built, become "background buildings" which defer to the exuberance of Pittsburgh's nineteenth and early 20th century architecture. Close attention to proportion and to the execution of those decorative details that are included is extremely important in designing a facade in this manner so that it maintains the texture and grain of the historic streetscape. The Bruegger's building in the East Carson Street Historic District, designed by Morgan Associates, Inc., is a good example of this approach. It ably anchors an important corner, reinforcing modules which define the character of the district without trying to either mimic or overshadow the significant historic buildings it faces.

But new construction need not be quiet in order to coexist with historic buildings. Pittsburgh's Historic Review Commission has also approved—though sometimes not without controversy—proposals for new buildings, facades, or additions which boldly feature contemporary materials and design. Again, the rhythm and proportions of the new facades are of utmost importance in establishing a relationship between the new building and the old. The borrowing of one feature from the historic context—for ex-



An example of new design which is appropriate to its history yet of its own time, the Mifflin School addition designed by STRADA won high praise from the Historic Review Commission. The addition, which is behind the school, is made of the same brick as the original. Significant details of the original building shown here include rounded corners and vertical piers capped with Art Deco ornamentation. The site plan shows the new addition, bottom left, that forms a courtyard with the International Style addition of 1956.



ample, a brick facade with rhythmic punched openings—can establish continuity with the historic district while providing a ground against which less traditional elements can be introduced.

An example of new design which is appropriate to its historic context yet unmistakably of its own time is a new addition to Mifflin School designed by STRADA. Mifflin School is a 1932 Art Deco/Art Moderne City Historic Landmark which also includes an International Style addition from 1956. STRADA respected the architectural importance of both the 1930s and 1950s buildings by locating its 21st century addition behind the main structure, where it would not compete with the most significant historic facade; incorporating the International Style addition into an interior courtyard space, rather than destroying or obscuring it; and matching the pale yellow brick common to both earlier structures, with details that respond to, though do not replicate, those from 70 years before. This design, currently under construction, won the approval, with high praise, of the Historic Review Commission.

Reasonable people may certainly disagree about what is appropriate design for historic buildings and districts, and the Historic Review Commission has seen its share of controversy over everything from ever-popular vinyl windows to glass curtain walls. In the end, it is important to remem-

ber that the Commission attempts to be a conduit, not a barrier, to good design. But its first mission is to protect the city's distinctive and often fragile historic places. Architects who use the Commission's own Guidelines in planning their projects and contact Commission staff for a preliminary meeting early in the design process will have the greatest chance of success during the review and approval process.

How to Contact the Historic Review Commission

The Commission office is located in the Department of City Planning at 200 Ross Street, 4th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

Angelique Bamberg, Historic Preservation Planner in the Department of City Planning, is the primary staff to the Historic Review Commission. She may be reached at:

Phone: 412-255-2243

Fax: 412-255-2838

Email: angelique.bamberg@city.pittsburgh.pa.us

Maria Burgwin works as staff to the Commission on a part-time basis. She may be reached at:

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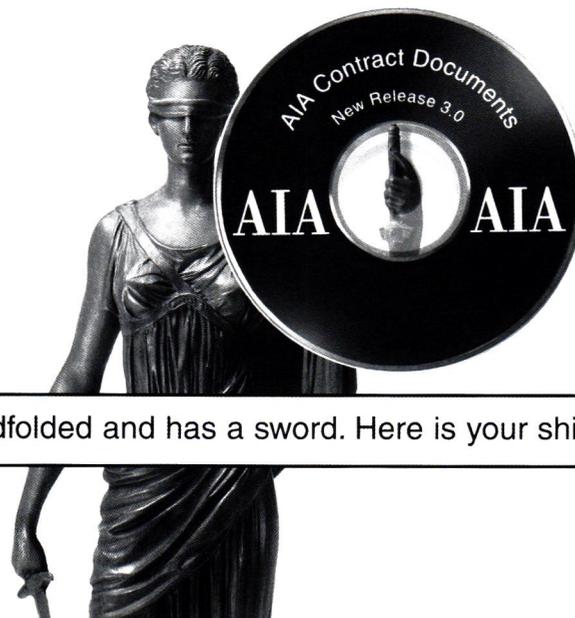
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New Digs for AIA Pittsburgh

If all goes as planned, AIA Pittsburgh should be in new quarters by the time you read this. Our new address: 945 Liberty Avenue, in the tall narrow loft building recently renovated by EDGE studios in collaboration with Eve Picker and no wall productions. Our current neighbor, the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh, is making the move with us.

The seven-story building, which looms over its neighbors, is approximately 110 feet long and 20 feet wide. Constructed of orange Pompeian bricks with stone and terracotta ornaments, the building features a façade with commercial sash-windows in a Richardsonian case.

Inside, "a distinctly New York feel" is created by an elevator that opens directly into the 1700 square foot units, says Picker. Each loft is unique with textured brick or plastered walls and oak or contemporary birch ply floors.

By the time AIA Pittsburgh moves in, a new venue from no wall productions will be ready, dubbed www.meethere.com. A fully furnished meeting space available for rent, it will be a storefront location complete with a high-speed DSL line. The space is for everything from opening events to brown bag lunches.

Historical Background

Although no record has been found of the exact date of construction, the Pittsburgh City Directory lists the Graff

Company as occupants of the building of 945 Liberty Avenue as early as 1915. A manufacturer of stoves, furnaces, tiles and fireplaces, the company remained in the building for forty-plus years. (A Magic Chef sign painted on the east wall of the building is faded but still visible.)

After the Graff Co. closed, 945 Liberty Avenue stood vacant for many years. That was in 1958, the end of an industrially based society and the start of a commercially based one.

In 1961, the building was purchased by the Bruno Brothers, John F. and Walter C. Bruno, whose company dealt in wholesale beauty supplies. Although their occupancy was short-lived compared to the Graff Co. they also left a legacy: The original Bruno Bros. sign remains on the front façade.

Unfortunately, we know little about the architectural history of the building. Records from the Planning Department suggest the building dates back to 1910, though the sizable Pompeian bricks with their ornamentation are reminiscent of Romanesque architecture which was revived in the late nineteenth century.

Since the renovation of the building, it has won two awards, a Preservation Award 2000 and a Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation Award of Merit. Burchick Construction and no wall productions shared phases of the construction. AIA Pittsburgh welcomes your visit.

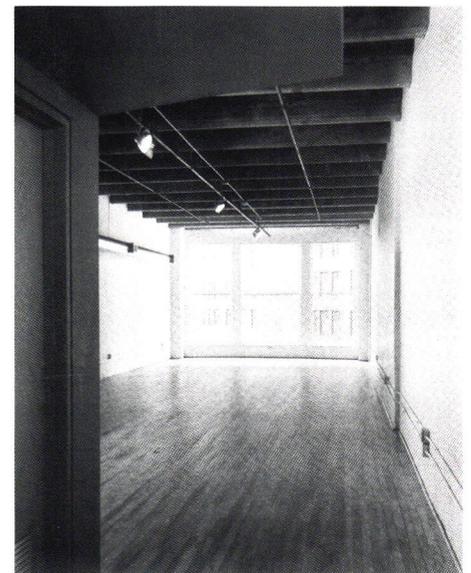
Eve Picker, just named one of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's most influential businesspeople, is on her fourth restoration project downtown. She just closed on 907 Liberty Avenue while another neighbor project, 905 Liberty, is under construction. In addition she is completing 18 lofts in The Brake House in the Strip District and recently started construction of eight condos in Brighton Heights.

"I have absolutely no trouble filling my projects but they're small," says Picker, who hails from New South Wales, Australia. Although she has a lot going on, she says, "I'd love to do affordable housing anywhere but it's impossible with construction costs." Aside from her own projects, she is acting as a local developer consultant to the Armstrong Cork Building (which she can't talk about right now).

Picker moved to the area from New York with her husband, a University of Pittsburgh historian and philosopher of science who specializes in relativity theory.



Neat building, great views. The view from the Bruno Building on Liberty Avenue.



EDGE studios and no wall productions collaborated on this renovation of the Bruno Building. If all goes well this space should be filled by the time you read this.



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Spotlight on Erie, PA and Crowner King Architects



SIGSBEE CARETAKER'S HOUSE *This 1873 Stick-Style Victorian structure sits on a highly visible corner of an Erie Water Authority reservoir. Although the structure no longer serves any functional purpose, the authority recognized its historic value and agreed to restore the exterior.*

First, Some History

The city of Erie, which was laid out by Andrew Ellicott who completed the plan for Washington, D.C., was a result of the state legislature's "Act to Establish a Town at Presque Isle" in 1795. In 1800, population was all of 81.

Industry boomed in the decades following before declining dramatically in the post-war era. As people increasingly moved to the suburbs and outlying areas, downtown lost its importance as well as its luster. In the name of urban renewal, large sections of downtown Erie were razed and replaced with modern buildings in the late '50s. Part of State Street became a pedestrian mall.

Then The Preservation Efforts

Fortunately for this lake city, a great effort started in the mid 80's to revitalize the downtown area. Since then, significant preservation efforts have taken place with several Historic Preservation Tax Credits in one of the neediest parts of downtown. Meanwhile, Erie Insurance, Hamot Hospital and Gannon University, all anchor organizations, continued to invest in their facilities.

Today, downtown is now healthier, with a mix of business, housing and cultural spots. Since the number of historic buildings is much smaller due to the past urban renewal, every renovation project is that much more meaningful to the community to preserve the history.

A Word on Crowner King Architects

Crowner King Architects, known as the Erie region's historic preservation specialists, has been a major participant in the rebirth of the downtown area.

Bob Crowner, AIA, founded the firm in 1978 and has served on the City of Erie and Erie County Planning Commissions for the past 25 years. He has been a strong advocate ("the lone voice") for reminding the communities about the difference between the urban and suburban. His firm now hires 12 professionals, including Jeff Kidder, AIA who has been responsible for many of the preservation projects.

Kidder conducts walking tours of Erie's historic district and presents slide shows to community groups. A history buff, he admits to constantly researching Erie's architectural history. Right now, in fact, Kidder is currently renovating his own home, The Wallace-Knox Residence, which is an 1834 federal style masonry building.



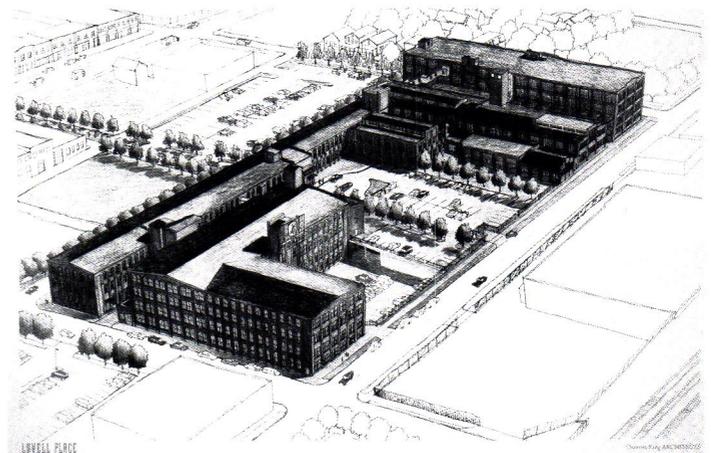
MODERN TOOL SQUARE Originally built in 1895 as a central market but later used as an industrial and warehouse complex, Modern Tool Square is located in the heart of downtown Erie. Occupying two thirds of a city block, Modern Tool was first renovated by a developer and Crowner King Architects in 1986 as rental housing, festival marketplace, restaurants and a theater. A new owner purchased the property in 1992 and retained Crowner King Architects to convert the festival market area into medical and profession office space. A restaurant and the housing was retained and expanded. Today there are 58 market rate rental apartments and 15 office tenants.



Conversion of 1888 William J. Sands residence from three-unit apartment building to a bed and breakfast.



1100 BLOCK OF STATE STREET The City of Erie Façade Improvement Program renovated 15 commercial building facades in the central business district. The goal? To reestablish the historic appearance while maintaining each store's identity. Through the Community Block Grant Program, the City of Erie provided 50/50 matching funds for the building owners. The projects were approved by a Design Review Committee.

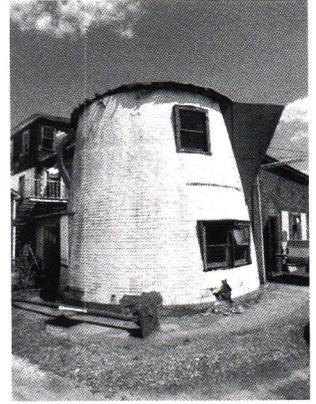
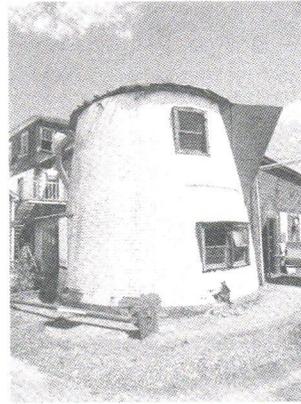


LOVELL PLACE The conversion of the former Lovell Mfg. Co. in downtown Erie into a mixed use development consisting of 180 market rate apartments, 20,000 sf of offices, a restaurant and bookstore. Comprised of 11 interconnected buildings built between 1883 and 1950, the sprawling complex occupies an entire city block. The brick buildings with heavy timber or steel floor and roof structures enclose a total of 359,000 SF.

The Bedford Coffee Pot

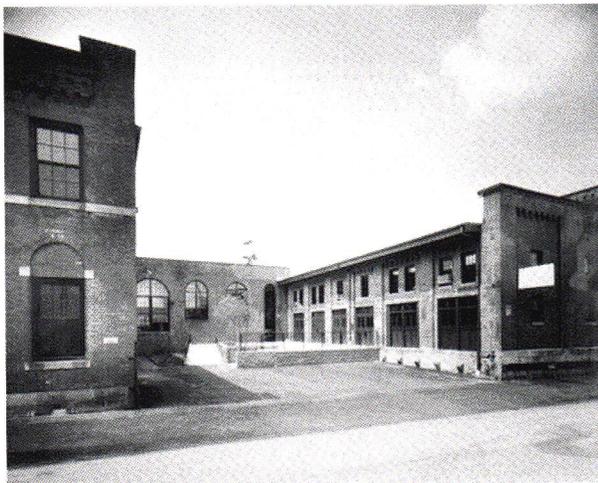
"Some cities have hot neighborhoods for renovation," says architect Mike Eversmeyer, AIA of Perkins Eastman. "In Pittsburgh there's more of a steady flow of projects."

"The interesting thing," he notes, "is the range of projects that are out there." Such as this one, The Bedford Coffee Pot in Bedford, PA, one of the rare signature pieces of architecture from the 1920's. Meant to attract motorists from Lincoln Highway, the building is in dire need of repair. To pave the way for restoration, Perkins Eastman prepared the Historic Structural Report and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.



The Ice House

In Lawrenceville, the Ice House, a brick industrial complex nearly a century old, was converted into 34 artist workspaces ranging from 430 square feet to more than 2300. The workspaces offer dramatic industrial design for creative souls, some units with ceilings as high as 35 feet. Perkins Eastman Architects.



From the Firms

→ **Perkins Eastman Architects** and Turner Construction have been awarded the Wheeling Victorian Outlet Center project in Wheeling, WVA. **Richard Northway, AIA**, principal, says the large scale project, which includes 550,000 sf of retail space in the downtown district, presents a rare opportunity to design an example of historic preservation, adaptive re-use, and new construction of contextual in-fill buildings.

JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design is currently working on the following projects for the University of Pittsburgh: an acoustical and mechanical renovation of the Bellefield Hall Auditorium. Project manager is Michael Pappas; and renovation and streetscape redevelopment of the retail storefronts at the base of the Schenley Quadrangle on Forbes Avenue. The project includes new storefront assemblies and associated lighting, signage, canopy and sidewalk enhancement. Project manager is Schewanda Russell.

JSA Architecture has been selected by the Soffer Organization as the architect for a new three level, approximately 165,000 square foot mixed-use building to be located along East Carson Street between 27th and 28th Streets. As part of the South Side Works development, it will house retail space on the first floor and offices on the upper two floors. Project architect is Lou Bernardi.

CelliFlynnBrennan completed the concept design for a new science building at Elizabethtown College and recently participated in the groundbreaking for the Mercy Smart Health Center in Bethel Park. The firm is completing renovation of a major shopping center in Chillicothe, Ohio and awaiting the opening of the Washington Ballpark, home of the Wildcats minor league team.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has selected Dick Corporation to provide all construction tasks for the new \$19.2 million Federal Courthouse Annex in downtown Wheeling, WV. The Wheeling Courthouse Annex will consist of approximately 90,000 gross sf. A four-story glass atrium will provide an architecturally sensitive link between the existing courthouse and the new annex. Goody, Clancy & Associates of Boston, MA is the lead architect for the project. Bethesda, MD-based HLM Design is the architect of record.

Repal Construction Co. has begun work on a building at 723 Braddock Avenue in Braddock. The project is known as the Housing Plus II Program that operates in the renovated space. The architect is Richard H. Keller.

Business Briefs

→ **Joseph W. Nagy, Jr., AIA** has rejoined the professional staff at **WTW Architects**. He has been assigned as project manager for the team working on the design of Penn State's new School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

P.J. Dick Corp. hired **Will Hartlep, AIA** as design collaboration manager, a newly created role to help bridge the gap between builders and designers on design/build and other projects involving collaboration with the design field. Hartlep was the project architect on the Point State Park and Fountain and also Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts.

Washington Reprographics announced the promotion of John Dziak, to president and appointed him to the company's board of directors. He has been with the firm since 1988 when he started in sales.

CelliFlynnBrennan hired **Jan Brimmeier, AIA** as design architect and project manager.

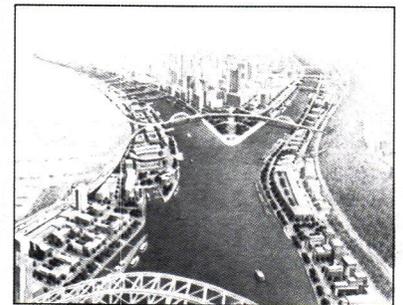
Nello Construction Company has added a new senior estimator, Stephanie Mayger, to their staff. She is a graduate of Penn State with a B.S. in Architectural Engineering.

Kudos

→ The AIA Executive Committee has officially confirmed the appointment of **Anne Swager, Hon. AIA**, Executive Director AIA Pittsburgh as a member of the 2003 Honorary Membership Jury.

LIGO ARCHITECTS received five Design Awards from Pittsburgh Magazine as featured in the March issue.

Chan Krieger & Associates was awarded the 2002 Institute Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design from the American Institute of Architects for the firm's recently completed Vision Plan for Pittsburgh's Riverfronts (pictured here). Chan Krieger is the lead consultant to the Riverlife Task Force. **Alex Krieger,**



FAIA is principal-in-charge. Other members of the design team include **Bohlin Cywinski Jackson**, Hargreaves Associates, Economic Research Associates, Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, and Urban Instruments, Inc.

Janet Torriero, CEO and owner of Nello Construction Company, is the recipient of the "Outstanding Woman in Construction Award" by the Building Construction Department, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, Virginia Tech.



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C O L U M N S UPCOMING ISSUES

JULY / AUGUST

- Carnegie Mellon's Case Studies in Architecture by Megan Nash
- PHLF's Orphaned Spaces
- Marketing Information Systems by Diana Rudoy

SEPTEMBER

- Transportation Issues: Parking as Infrastructure, Mon Valley Expressway, LRT and Maglev, UDA's 20/20 Vision Plan for PAT, Spotlight on Oakland's Traffic and Parking Challenges

OCTOBER

- Architecture of Performing Spaces
- The Business of Architecture: The Office Manager/Business Manager – the heart of the firm?

TO CONTRIBUTE TO AN ISSUE or to submit a story idea, contact the editor at 412/563-7173 or email: tcerto@adelphia.net

AIA ACTIVITIES

June 7, Friday

Communications Committee Meeting, noon at the Chapter office, 412-471-9548.

June 10, Monday

AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting, 5 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are welcome, 412-471-9548.

June 11, Tuesday

Professional Development Committee Meeting noon at the Chapter office, 412-471-9548.

June 17, Monday

Urban Design Committee Meeting 5:30 p.m. at the chapter office, contact Arch Pelley, AIA 412-456-0900

June 20, Thursday

Legislative Committee Meeting, noon at the Chapter office, Chuck Coltharp, AIA, 724-452-9690.

June 26, Wednesday

AIA Pittsburgh's Foundation for Architecture 5 p.m. at the Chapter office. Contact Ed Shriver, AIA, 412-263-3800.

AROUND TOWN

June 9, Sunday

Shadyside Walk: A Controversy in Stone and Glass. Two of Pittsburgh's great Gothic Revival church buildings face one another at Walnut Street and Shady Avenue in Shadyside. Carlton Strong's Anglo-Norman Roman Catholic Church and Ralph Adams Cram's Calvary Episcopal Church will be examined by Dr. Bernard Kent Markwell, Historian. 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. For information and reservations 412-648-2560 or www.pitt.edu/~cgs/lifetime

June 11, Tuesday

CSI Meeting. 2002 CSI Awards Dinner Cruise on The Gateway Clipper. Boarding 6:30 p.m., Sailing 7 – 9 p.m. Gateway Clipper Fleet near Sheraton Inn Station Square. Contact Deborah Merges at 412-855-0928 or 115 Kingsman Dr. Aliquippa, PA 15001 by May 22nd for reservations. \$28

June 12, Wednesday

Society of Design Administrators. Karen Schuler, President of TekTron will speak on Continuing Business during times of Network and Computer Disasters. Engineers Club, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch \$17 members, \$19.50 non-members. Reservation call Cheryl Marlatt at 412-281-1337.

June 26, Wednesday

AIA/ASLA Social Hour. Bossa Nova, Seventh Street, Downtown 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

AIA Pittsburgh is using e-mail to keep our members informed of the chapter's activities. If you would like to be included and are a member, please send your address to aiappgh@sgi.net.

CONTRACTORS' DIRECTORY

A LISTING OF AREA CONTRACTORS AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. To include your firm in this directory, call AIA Pittsburgh at 412-471-9548.

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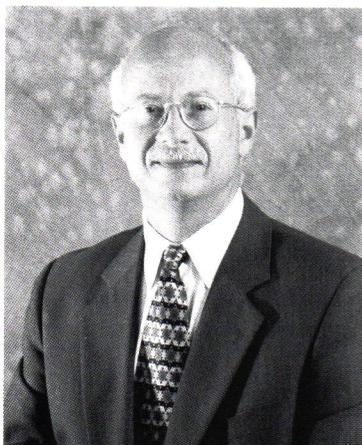
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FIRM: L.D. Astorino Companies (LDA)

PERSONAL: Wife and best friend - Alice May; two daughters- Alissa, 16, Meredith, 11. One Brittany – Archie, aka Archibald Ban Dee Triumph, aka Arch de Triumph

DREAM VACATION: Fly the Concorde to Europe with two weeks of cycling in France, two weeks driving a roadster through Italy, one week on a Mediterranean beach and home on the QEII.

YEARS IN PRACTICE: 29 (O.M.G.)

EDUCATION: Taylor Alderdice HS 1965 / Carnegie Mellon University, Computer Science 1965-1967
Carnegie Mellon, Architecture 1967-1970 / Rhode Island School of Design 1973-1976, B.F.A. 1975, B. Arch. 1976

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IF YOU HADN'T BEEN AN ARCHITECT, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN:

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WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB:

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FAVORITE ARCHITECT:

Lutyens for his complexity and subtlety

FAVORITE ARCHITECTURE BOOK:

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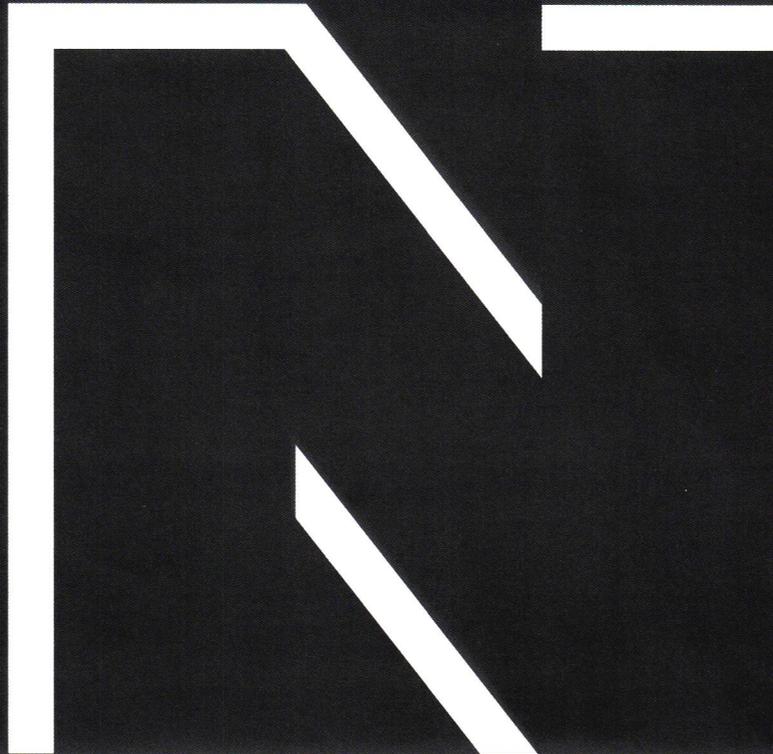
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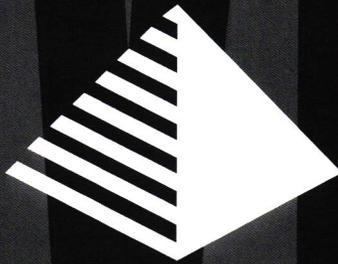
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