

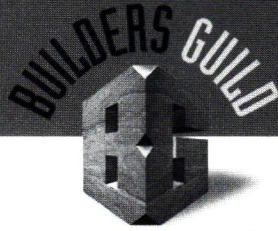
C O L U M N S

A black and white photograph of a modern building. The central feature is a tall, narrow chimney constructed from rough-hewn stone. To the left, a large glass-enclosed structure reveals an interior with a staircase and wooden beams. To the right, a covered outdoor patio area is visible with several chairs and a table. The sky is a uniform, light gray, and the overall composition is vertical and architectural.

BOOKS

BY AIA PITTSBURGH FIRMS

VOLUME 20, NO. 8 AIA PITTSBURGH, A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2006



It's going to work

The Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania, Inc.

We ARE the Building Trades
We ARE Union Workers and Contractors

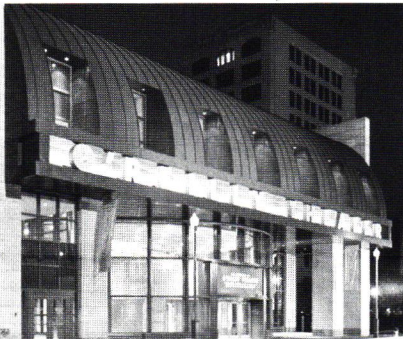
Lincoln at North Shore



"Without the assistance of our general contractor and major subcontractors from design development through construction, the Lincoln at North Shore may not have been developed. Today it is recognized as the most successful apartment community in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area."

Kevin Keane, Sr.
Vice President/Partner
Lincoln Properties Company

O'Reilly Theater



"The O'Reilly Theater provided a number of unique challenges as a highly visible project on a tight urban site. More visible exterior and interior finish elements, such as exposed architectural concrete stair risers, curving millwork and the vaulted copper roof, were all beautifully executed."

Caroline L. Hancock
Director of Communications
Michael Graves & Associates

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Committed to the Success
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Art Institute of Pittsburgh



"This was a top-notch project. In regards to quality of the built environment, this facility is now considered to be the leader of all our schools across the country."

George Pry
President
Art Institute of Pittsburgh

PNC Park



"The unions built PNC Park in just two years--on time, on budget. They were motivated to build the best ballpark in the country, and they did it. It was a great partnership."

Kevin McClatchy
CEO & Managing General Partner
Pittsburgh Pirates

The Book Issue

By Tracy Certo



“The visual richness of these streets was held together by an underlying mathematical discipline of repetitive floor plans and sections.”

If Columns is late this month

it's because this editor got immersed in reading the firms' books featured in this issue. It was hard to stay focused on finding just the right excerpt; instead I got caught up in the books, reading more and more, from the six steps to working with an architect to identifying different house styles. Did you know York was once the capital of the 13 colonies? Briefly, in 1777, before the Continental Congress moved it to Philadelphia. Thirty-plus years ago UDA was working in York to catalog the National Historic District, then the largest in the country. Here's what David Lewis, FAIA writes in the forward:

“At first we were awed by the variety of detail in the facades—the brickwork, lintels, bay windows, brackets, dormers, doors, steps and ironwork. When we looked more closely, we realized that the blocks were a repetitive grid. The sequences of townhouses and main street shops had been laid out with the repetitive lot sizes within the blocks. And, in consequence, the visual richness of these streets was held together by an underlying mathematical discipline of repetitive floor plans and sections.” (An underlying mathematical discipline. We'll come back to that.)

They found the same rich details in townhouses and although the details were different, there was a unity of scale. Turns out the builders and their clients had “chosen their details from the catalogs of suppliers who manufactured their products to obey common modules. Hence the richness and the unity of street after street in this beautiful town.”

Why then and not now? That was the question. Their book, *The Architectural Pattern Book*, is about re-establishing the language of these original patterns which were understood back then not only by the builders but by the folks who inhabited these places.

I had read part of this book prior to a trip to New England where we visited picturesque towns such as Stowe, Woodstock and Burlington, Vermont and Hanover, New Hampshire. Not to mention Boston. Ev-

erywhere I looked for that underlying mathematical discipline, the repetition of detail and the unity of street after street—and often found it.

Many things struck us about these welcoming places, from the architecture to the street grids which invited us to continue our exploration. Unlike the distressed towns UDA was working on awhile back, these towns were still like their robust selves of generations ago. And they had an appealing mix of comfort and excitement, each with their own vibe and yet sharing similarities with the others. Looking back, I can recall our trip by the coffee shops we stopped in along the way, every one of them in historical buildings and rich in detail, from tin ceilings to old wooden display cases. As appealing as the coffee shops were, they serve a function as the hub of the commercial district and they drew us in as well. We spent a lot of time in coffee shops. Hard to resist a charmer like the Dirt Cowboy Café which was my favorite.

Returning home, I read more about the adaptation of pattern books to contemporary needs: like the patterns for the Arts District in East Garrison that feature a modernist interpretation of traditional loft buildings which makes the case for allotting change. As an example, there's a movement in the National Heritage Society's Main Streets program to get Wi-Fi in their districts, as I saw on their web site. It's a must with those glorious coffee houses.

So—you can see what I mean about getting diverted. This was just one book. I went through five. Don't get me started on the beautiful images found in *How to Work With an Architect* or the stunning photos of houses and landscapes in the coffee-table size *12 houses* from Bohlin Cywinski Jackson.

Then Bob Bailey, AIA, wrote a good review of the book featured here (p. 16) and after reading it, I added that book to my list.

My only question to all these firms: must I return them?

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On the cover: House in the Endless Mountains, northeastern, PA, by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. Photo by Matt Wargo.