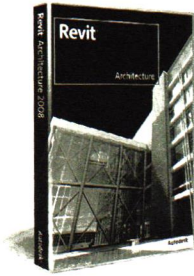


COLUMNS

JUN/07 Why BIM? Why Now? The evolution of the design process | Power Up: The 2007 Solar Decathlon Competition | Book Review: The Spectator and the Topographical City | AIA Pittsburgh, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects

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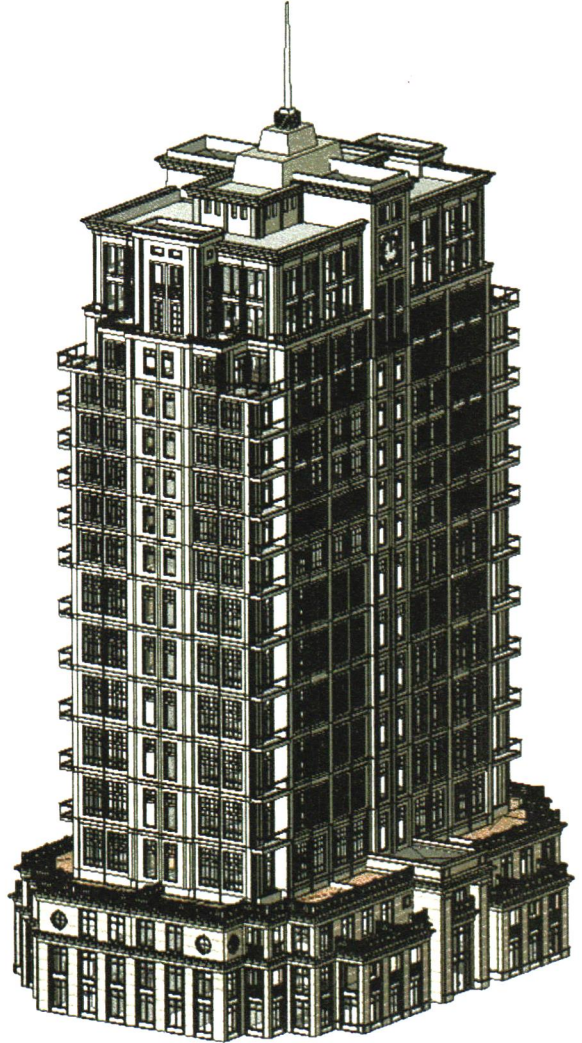
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HOMEFRONT

BY TRACY CERTO



By the third day in Spain I was no longer allowed to say, “Look at that building!” My sons put a moratorium on it for there were far too many stand outs and they tired of my pointing them out as we walked all over Madrid and then Barcelona.

Having served as editor of this publication for six and half years now, my interest in architecture, which was considerable when I started, has only deepened. In the last issue we did a feature on tomorrow’s classics and quite a few architects commented that this was not Europe where they built legacy buildings. I kept thinking of that as I saw one after another exceptional building, the kind that get your heart racing, the kind that make you exclaim, “look at that building!” Even I got tired of hearing it.

While I loved seeing Madrid, it was a pit stop to Barcelona where I longed to see Gaudi’s Sagrada Familia, La Padrera, Parc Guell and other mystical and amazing works. At Sagrada Familia, still very much under construction, architectural artifacts like a gold mosaic star lay on the dusty floor awaiting its placement somewhere in the vast, soaring, fantastical cathedral.

Gaudi beckoned but there was more – in the distance loomed Jean Nouvell’s so called Blue Cigar and there on the way to the airport was Richard Rodgers’ brand new award-winner. From the four palaces housing the Picasso Museum to the Cathedral where Ferdinand and Isabel met Columbus upon his return, everywhere, gorgeous buildings. (“Miren el edificio!”) That didn’t work either. They know Spanish.

It was a rich, visual architectural feast in both cities and I will be forever grateful to my experience at Columns in helping elevate my awareness and deepen my appreciation of excellent design. I’ve always had a mindset for design; I am the kind of person who loses whole plots in movies

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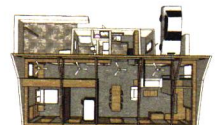
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Martin Ramirez



On the cover: Thomas Jefferson University, by Burt Hill



as I focus instead on a beautifully designed house on the screen or an exceptionally cool chair or exquisitely designed necklace. So my time at Columns, immersed in design issues and exposed to great design on a regular basis, has served me well.

This is my last issue as editor of Columns. It's been more than six years and although I have enjoyed my time here immensely, it's time to move on. I will be close by as editor of Pop City where we will continue to cover architecture, architects, urban design and other issues of interest to you. (Look for a civic design microsite coming soon.)


Change is good and I welcome the chance to delve into other ventures including more travel and more buildings to enjoy.

I also welcome the chance to say thank you to so many of you who have made this an excellent adventure. From the chapter presidents I had a chance to work with—from David Høglund, FAIA, Rich DeYoung, AIA, Stephen Quick, AIA, Tom Briney, AIA and Jim Radock, AIA—to the communications committee and the staff at AIA Pittsburgh, from Maya and Becky to Rachael and of course Anne Swager, Hon. AIA. Not to mention Joe Ruesch, graphic designer. And my gem of a mom, a faithful reader of Columns who was running out of shelf space to stash them all.

In my first column, Anne Swager suggested I talk about myself (and boy did I!). Throughout the years I have spilled on a number of subjects on this page. Some of you have told me you prefer it when I talk about my travel which only spurred me on of course and allowed me some nice tax deductions. (I really thank you for that.) More importantly, throughout my time here, I have learned from you.

Working on this final issue was an education; I might know more about Building Information Modeling than some architects at this point. It's fascinating stuff and if I were you, I'd buy the software.

Nearly seven years ago when I first took over a black and white and well-worn magazine, design software for architects was primitive in comparison. Today, Columns is a beautifully redesigned four-color publication and there exists a software system like BIM that will make your work lives so much easier.

That's progress. That's change in the best sense of the word. So as I leave you this month I wish for you more of the same. Good progress in the right direction. And I thank you for making my life so much richer along the way. Keep in touch. 



Above: Detail from Park Guell bench
Right: Atop Casa Mila
Photos by Tracy Certo

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

BY JIM RADDOCK, AIA

It is a period of rapid evolution within the profession of architecture and the AIA. As we celebrate the AIA 150, it is evident that rapid change is upon us in many ways, most notably in the tools we use to design buildings and the ways buildings must be designed.

As I write this column from the 2007 AIA National Convention, only three weeks after our own Build Pittsburgh, I am happy to report that the AIA is building for the future of the profession on both the national and local fronts, in keeping with its mission to be “the voice of the architectural profession and the resource for its members in service to society.”

The dominant theme at this year’s Build Pittsburgh was Building Information Modeling. Attendance at programs like this in Pittsburgh and nationwide demonstrate that interest in the subject is increasing, with good reason. Both public and private owners are beginning to implement requirements that new projects must utilize BIM to some extent, and the number of owners and the extent of utilization will only be increasing.

The theme of the 2007 convention in San Antonio was “Growing Beyond Green.” The timing of the annual event benefited from the momentum generated by February’s 2010 Imperative webcast. As you’ve undoubtedly seen in the last issue of Columns and elsewhere, the 2010 Imperative is a component of the 2030 Challenge, which calls for immediate action to achieve a 50% reduction in fossil fuel consumption in all new or renovated buildings, with the ultimate goal of all construction using no fossil fuel greenhouse gas-emitting energy to operate, or being “carbon neutral,” by 2050.


We architects have the opportunity to make a dramatic difference now, and architects must take the lead and embrace this call for action, which

requires that sustainability be permanently ingrained in our definition of good design. The AIA has adopted the 2030 Challenge, and is being proactive as the voice of the profession with regard to this ambitious agenda. And it is working. The AIA’s support was integral to the recent adoption of the 2030 Challenge by the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Both of these movements are with us to stay, and even as they present challenges, they intertwine in ways that will create great opportunities. BIM is the perfect tool for the integrated design techniques required to model, evaluate, and produce high-performance structures.

In order to harness the power of this new technology, the AIA is collaborating with allied professional organizations to develop new standards of interoperability (the ability of software and hardware from multiple vendors to communicate seamlessly).

As the central resource for knowledge and collaboration within the profession, the AIA is working to facilitate and streamline the sharing of this kind of developing knowledge and experience with its membership through initiatives like the AIA Building Connections website www.building-connections.info, a clearinghouse for information on the topic of interoperability, and the new, user-friendly AIA search engine, Soloso (solo source), which was demonstrated at this year’s convention and is currently in beta-testing.

One of the primary duties of AIA Pittsburgh is to connect you, the membership, with the resources of the AIA. To this end, AIA Pittsburgh is planning an upcoming membership meeting, as well as smaller forums that will focus on these and other exciting developments occurring at the national level in your American Institute of Architects. 

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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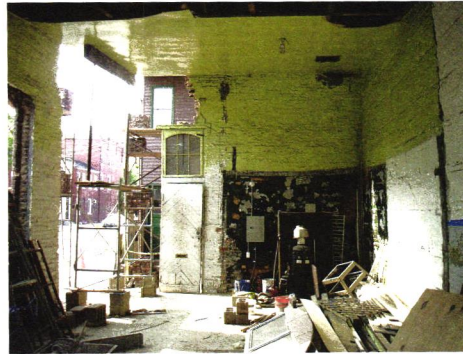
Volume 21, No. 3



THE REGION'S COOLEST SPACES AND THEIR CHAMPIONS

The 2007 Cool Space Awards, presented by Cool Space Locator, promotes urban revitalization by highlighting unique workspaces in southwestern Pennsylvania's urban and walkable neighborhoods.

Ten winners were recently selected. Eight winners are physical spaces, and for the first time, two winners are communities that have embraced the characteristics of their cool spaces to encourage economic revitalization in their business districts.



Blacksmith Studio, before and after

The 2007 Cool Space Award winners are:

Blacksmith Studio: A former blacksmith's shop in East Allegheny that underwent a thorough rehabilitation, with sweat equity and creative financing, to restore the space to its original glory. It now houses two design firms.

The Ice House Artist Studios: A former factory in Lawrenceville rehabilitated as affordable studio space for artists of all disciplines. The studios reflect original spaces and materials, including exposed brick and ductwork, large windows, and expansive interiors.

Imagebox Productions: A mixed-use building that has recycled a vacant, blighted property into a fresh, contemporary space while visually respecting the streetscape of Garfield.

The Kingsley Association: An \$8 million community center that is Lincoln-Larimer's first major development in decades. A descendant of the settlement house movement, this facility provides recreational opportunities for distressed East End communities.

Mayor John Fetterman and the Braddock community: Fetterman and allies have led a recent surge of interest in Braddock, attracting artists and businesses while providing for the basic needs of existing residents.

Metanoia Development and the Bellevue community: Metanoia has helped to bring a diverse edge to Bellevue's business district. Tenants include vintage department store 517521, the creative professionals collective Creative TreeHouse, and café Affogato. Bellevue is also home to recent arrivals in fine gastronomy.