

# Florida/Caribbean ARCHITECT

Official Journal of the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects | Summer 2024





## Architects of the Featured Projects

**Jonathan Parks, AIA**, designs advance architecture to support a better understanding of ourselves and our environment. As the founder and principal-in-charge of a Sarasota, Florida-based design firm for more than 20 years, SOLSTICE Planning and Architecture is a studio that provides architectural, planning and interior design services. Originally from Amherst, New York, Parks completed his graduate studies in Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania.



**Jason Hagopian, AIA**, is the president and founder of Neuvio Architects. Hagopian's leadership extends beyond executive responsibilities and includes active participation in the planning, design and production of projects. His skills as an effective communicator, creative problem-solver and resourceful consensus builder make him a valuable and trusted advisor to clients and project stakeholders.



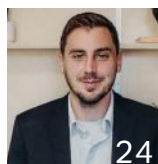
**Alfonso Hernandez, AIA**, is the lead design architect and managing member of Alfonso Hernandez Architect LLC (AHA). He graduated from the University of Miami and has been working in the South Florida market for 29 years. He founded AHA, an architectural firm in downtown West Palm Beach, in 2007. The firm promotes sustainable practices and seeks to design architecture that has a strong connectivity to nature.



**Barron Schimberg, AIA**, and Schimberg Group combine a high level of design and detail with an efficient, well-organized management system. Schimberg takes pride in getting things done smoothly and efficiently. He aims to deliver an architectural process that not only helps to increase a client's revenue or donor funding but also provides an enjoyable, fun experience. Every project is approached with collaboration and creativity. Barron includes his entire team and often the contractor when working through design charrettes.



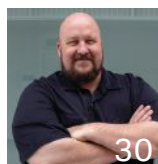
**Max Jarosz, AIA**, is co-founder of Daft Büro Architecture and an assistant professor of research and director of fabrication at the University of Miami where he oversees the fabrication facilities and operations. He teaches courses on robotics, digital fabrication and emerging technology in the field of architecture. Jarosz holds a Master of Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Additionally, he holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Miami.



**Doug Shuler, AIA**, graduated first from Tallahassee Community College before continuing his architectural education at FAMU, where he graduated with his architecture degree. After graduation, Shuler worked closely with valuable mentors and quickly secured an indispensable decade of knowledge and hands-on experience all of the while becoming known for his fresh and modern approach to design.



**Jeffrey Huber, FAIA**, is a principal and manages the South Florida studio of Brooks + Scarpa and is also the firm's director of landscape architecture, urban design and planning. He is an associate professor at the School of Architecture at Florida Atlantic University.



Architecture impacts our lives every day, shaping the spaces where we live, work and play. This issues features projects where communities gather, wellness is prioritized and vacations are enjoyed. The spaces that create our built environment enhance the human experience.



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# Florida/Caribbean ARCHITECT

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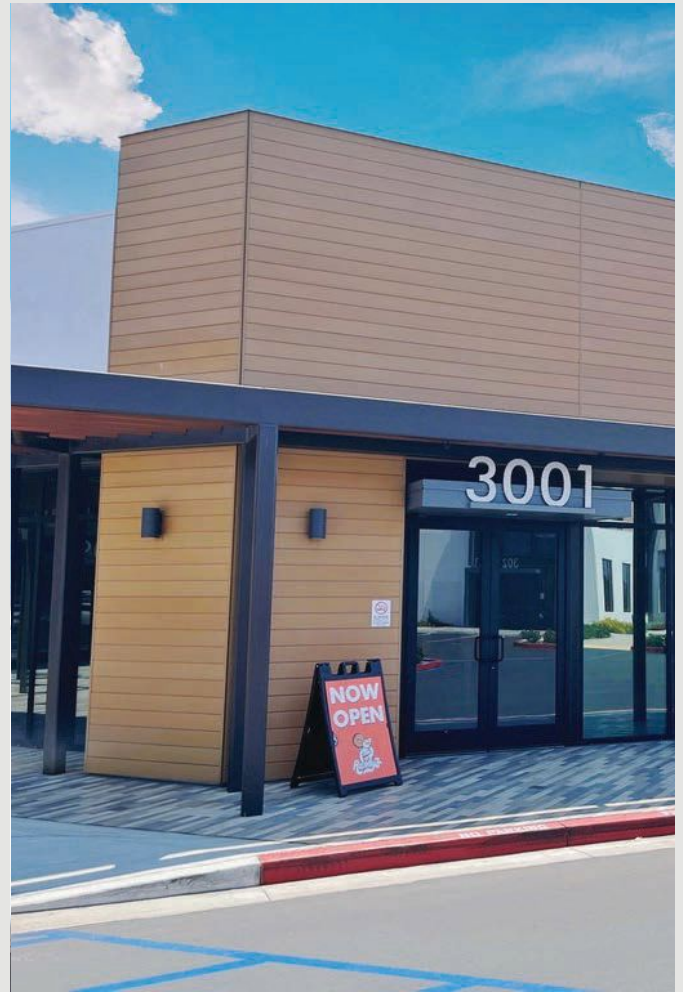
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# President's Perspective

## Rhonda Hammond, AIA

"I believe the essence of community-centric architecture is the principle of inclusivity. By providing spaces designed with the integration of diverse needs and activities, architects contribute to the creation of places where people can come together, interact and connect."

As professionals and students of architecture, we know the built environment plays a pivotal role in shaping the identity and culture of a community. Beyond physical structures, it can serve as a reflection of lifestyles and often exhibits the values of the community, providing a snapshot of where its residents and leaders have chosen to invest resources. Architecture that is designed to integrate seamlessly within the community, offering spaces for living, working and playing, is essential for fostering a sense of belonging, resiliency and overall well-being.

I believe the essence of community-centric architecture is the principle of inclusivity. By providing spaces designed with the integration of diverse needs and activities, architects contribute to the creation of places where people can come together, interact and connect, creating a community. At its best, a place of gathering will foster inclusivity, offer a sense of unity among residents by breaking down social barriers in its ability to bring people together and even serve as a historical footprint, such as The Eva Mack Community Center featured in this issue. The center is a space designed to meet the needs of its surrounding residents while also incorporating its historic beginnings into its new design.

As architects who practice in Florida, we are well informed in the importance of

designing spaces that are resilient and we consider a community's changing needs and regional conditions, such as sea level rise, hurricanes and flooding, and how designing with these needs in mind ensures that the built environment remains useful and relevant for generations to come. Community focused architecture enhances the architectural pillars of sustainability and resilience. With the incorporation of sustainability into basic design principles, architects limit the environmental impact of their projects and contribute to the long-term health and wellness of the community.

The intention of architecture that works within the community and provides spaces to work, live and play is not only about constructing buildings but also transforming how a place uses and prioritizes their areas to foster a sense of balance between function, form and purpose in people's lives. Good architecture has the capability to foster improved physical and mental well-being and enhance overall quality of life.

As our 2024 Convention and Trade Show are just around the corner, I hope you will join us as we continue to foster these same ideas while we gather with our colleagues and friends from across the state to engage, learn, be inspired and celebrate all of the facets of our architectural community.



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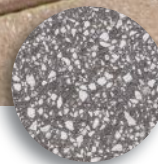


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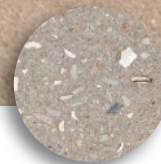
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# Resiliency & Design Intent

## The Role of Concrete Block in Florida Construction



*In the dynamic construction landscape, resiliency is not just a desirable trait; it's a necessity, especially in regions prone to environmental challenges like Florida. Here, where the elements can be harsh and unpredictable, the choice of building materials becomes paramount in ensuring the design intent of a project is not just realized but sustained over time. Among the various options available, concrete block, a form of masonry, emerges as the material of choice for construction projects in the Sunshine State.*



### ***Inherent Resiliency***

Concrete block's inherent resiliency to the unique environmental factors in Florida is key in ensuring the longevity and success of a construction project. "Block's resiliency to the environment in Florida insures the design intent of the project," says Architectural Specification Manager Chris Bettinger. "Whether it's enduring the relentless heat and humidity, resisting the force of hurricanes, or mitigating the effects of moisture and mold, concrete block stands strong against the elements." This durability not only protects the structural integrity of buildings but also safeguards the design intent envisioned by architects and engineers.

### ***Aesthetic Appeal***

Beyond its resilience, concrete block offers unparalleled versatility, providing designers with a canvas on which to realize their creative visions. The variety of sizes, scales, and textures available in block allows for endless design possibilities. From sleek modern facades to timeless traditional structures, masonry can be tailored to suit any architectural style. Moreover, the ability to combine different textures and patterns adds depth and character to a project, enhancing its aesthetic appeal while maintaining its durability. "Block has proven to be a great aesthetic choice," says Bettinger. "Giving you plenty of options to create a truly original design without sacrificing the safety and performance of a project."



In the realm of aesthetics, concrete block stands out as a material that not only meets but exceeds expectations. Its solid, robust appearance lends a sense of permanence and strength to buildings, instilling confidence in their safety and performance. Yet, despite its practicality, block offers designers ample opportunities for creativity and expression. With a wide array of colors, finishes, and surface treatments to choose from, concrete block allows for the creation of unique and original designs leaving a lasting impression.

### ***A History of Durability***

The performance of masonry over time is a testament to its reliability and effectiveness in Florida's challenging environment. Across communities, there are countless examples of innovative designs showcasing the enduring resilience of concrete block construction. From residential homes to commercial developments, the durability and versatility of masonry have been consistently demonstrated, proving it to be a trusted choice for architects, builders, and homeowners alike.

### ***Environmental Factors***

Material selection plays a crucial role in achieving the design intent of a construction project, especially in regions like Florida where environmental factors can pose significant challenges. Concrete block, with its inherent resilience, versatility, and aesthetic appeal, emerges as the

material of choice for builders seeking to create structures not only able to withstand the test of time but also embody the vision and creativity of their designers. In Florida's ever-changing landscape, block stands as a steadfast and reliable foundation upon which to build the future. "Over time, masonry's performance has been evident," says Bettinger. "Every community has examples of creative designs confirming the resiliency of masonry in Florida."

### ***About Block Strong***

Block Strong is a partnership between Florida Concrete & Products Association, Inc. and Florida Concrete Masonry Education Council, Inc. Its primary mission is to help consumers, construction professionals and designers understand the importance of quality building materials.

*To learn more about the benefits of concrete block, visit [BlockStrong.com](http://BlockStrong.com).*





# Art Ovation Hotel

Sarasota, Florida

SOLSTICE Planning and Architecture | Sarasota, Florida



Photo courtesy Floridays Development

When Jonathan Parks, AIA, founder of SOLSTICE Planning and Architecture, began designing a hotel for a city-controlled site in downtown Sarasota, he realized that there was a missing piece to the puzzle: a parcel of privately owned land with a small building on it that was situated at the most prominent corner of the block. Parks could have simply designed around the missing piece, but he was convinced that the project would be much better if it incorporated the corner parcel. He then made a bold and consequential decision.

The architect personally executed an option contract on the privately owned property. "I ended up acting as the first developer for my own project," Parks said. "I then had to get through a competition for the actual commission, but since I controlled

the corner, my design could be different from anybody else's."

Parks' shrewd move not only afforded him unique design opportunities but also gave him uncommon leverage throughout the design and construction process, even after a new developer entered the picture. "It gave me a seat at the table when big decisions were being made," he explained. "For example, they were pushing for a 10-story building, but I thought that would overwhelm the [adjacent] theater district. My wife is an actress, singer and dancer — the last thing I wanted to do was overshadow these theaters, so I pushed back and brought the scale down."

The result is the Art Ovation Hotel, the first new hotel planned in downtown

Sarasota in more than 75 years. Rather than a typical business or tourist-oriented lodging, Parks conceived the project as a cultural hospitality venue "dedicated to the arts and creative well-being." It hosts a wide variety of arts-related programs, from performances to exhibitions to displays of the culinary arts. A lecture series sponsored by the nonprofit group Architecture Sarasota sold out its 500 seats weeks in advance. "You can even sign out a violin if you needed to," noted the architect.

Unlike in most hotels, where cookie-cutter art adorns the guestroom walls, every piece on display at the Art Ovation is original. Accordingly, the hotel has its own art vault along with a budget for the purchase of new works.



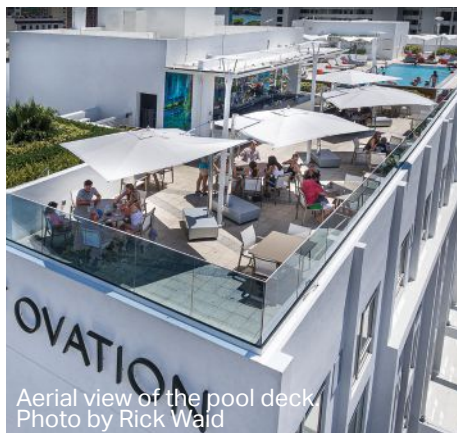
Curatorial decisions are made in collaboration with the Ringling College of Art & Design, a venerable Sarasota institution.

Parks worked to ensure that the new building was well integrated into the neighborhood and streetscape. Deep canopies along Palm Avenue provide shady outdoor seating areas for the hotel's main restaurant, while the building's faceted corner at the intersection of Palm and Coconut avenues creates a plaza that is enlivened by public art. The lobby is used for performances nightly, which are visible from the sidewalk thanks to large expanses of glass. The roof deck, which includes a pool and gathering spaces, is open to hotel guests and locals alike. A fluidly sculptural pedestrian bridge connects the hotel to the adjacent parking garage, which was also designed by SOLSTICE and provided the direct impetus for the construction of the new hotel.

The building's exterior consists primarily of stucco-covered concrete, painted steel and glass. Structural columns project slightly beyond the building plane and taper gently at the top, lending a vertical emphasis to the façades. The roof parapets are angled, growing taller at the primary corner, creating a sense of restrained grandeur.

"I was able to achieve all of this because I still hadn't given the new developer the option to the land at the corner yet," said Parks. "Eventually, of course, I did give the option over to them, but to the hotel's credit, they kept pretty much everything I fought for. The owners stayed with the vision."

That appears to have been a smart move. According to Parks, "When last we looked, Art Ovation was the highest occupancy hotel of any size of any flag on the west coast of Florida."



Art Ovation Hotel  
Design Process

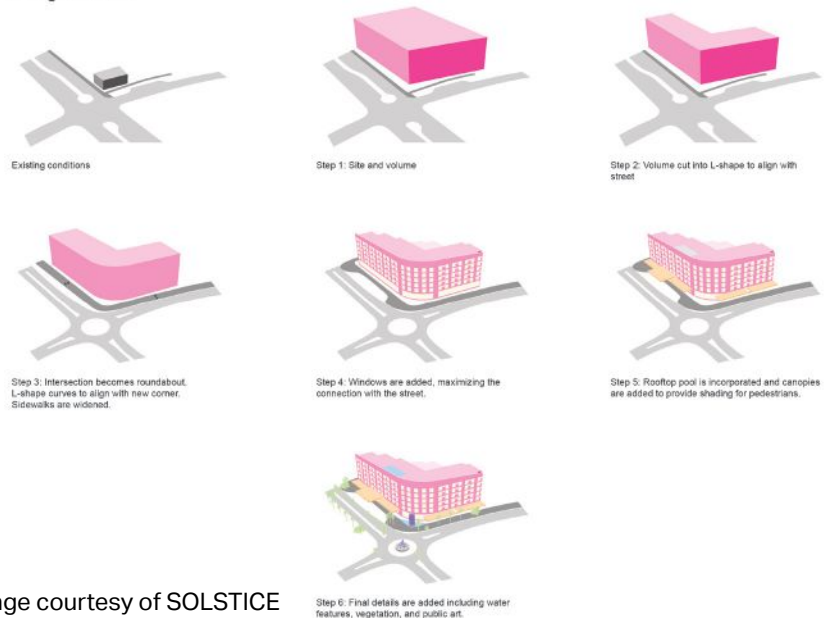
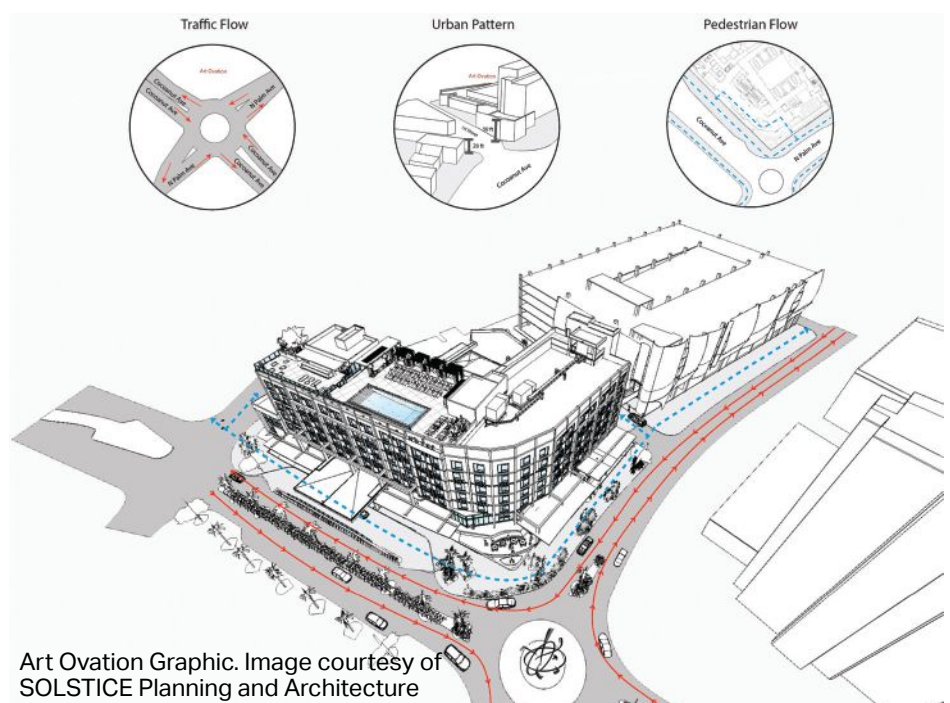


Image courtesy of SOLSTICE  
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# ASPCA Community Veterinary Center Miami, Florida

Neuvio Architects | Fort Lauderdale, Florida

The new ASPCA Community Veterinary Center in Liberty City, northwest of downtown Miami, brings much-needed veterinary care to a neighborhood that has long lacked services taken for granted in more affluent areas. Developed in the 1930s, the Liberty Square housing project at the center of the neighborhood initially accommodated mostly middle-class Black families displaced from nearby Overtown, a segregated area in severe decay at the time. Following decades of disinvestment, however, Liberty Square became plagued by poverty and crime, as poignantly depicted in the independent 2016 film *Moonlight*, which went on to win three Oscars including one for Best

Picture (following a notorious mix-up in the announcement of the final award of the ceremony).

In 2015, the Miami-Dade County government launched a long-term initiative to revitalize Liberty City, including razing and replacing its original, now-dilapidated housing stock. While some people have criticized the program as a form of gentrification, there is no doubt that the initiative has already produced a stunning physical transformation in the neighborhood's core. The redevelopment effort has also paved the way for new services and amenities that would have been inconceivable not long ago.

The ASPCA Community Veterinary Center is one example. As the result of a public/private partnership between the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Miami-Dade County Animal Services Department, the facility provides pet care, medicine and educational programs, all free of charge. The center also routinely spays or neuters upwards of 80 to 90 animals a day, helping to reduce the population of unwanted dogs and cats in the area.

"The project began with extensive research in the neighborhood," said Jason Hagopian, AIA, president of Neuvio Architects. "Our team literally went door to door to interview residents.



Photo by Sandy DeWitt Photography



Some of the locals asked, 'Why are you spending money on this when we have trouble just paying for food?' Once our team explained why this center was important, and that its services would be free, people got behind it."

Neuvio Architects had never designed a veterinary facility before but had a successful track record of projects for other Miami-Dade County departments. Hagopian and his team benefitted from the fact that the ASPCA already had well-developed guidelines for the design of such facilities. The architects met with ASPCA staff members at the organization's headquarters in New York and visited existing veterinary centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn to study precedents for the project.

The Liberty City facility's signature architectural element is a front porch, inspired by the porches that the design team found to be essential to the neighborhood's culture. Elevated slightly above the public sidewalk, this partially covered sliver of outdoor space is both a welcoming gesture and a subtle nod to the continuing need for robust security measures while the area is in transition. The center section of the porch is separated from the sidewalk by a wall of custom-designed concrete breeze blocks in jazzy diagonal patterns that allude to the permeable blocks popular in the mid-20th-century architecture of the area. To either side of the breeze block wall are sliding aluminum gates with complementary diagonal slats that can safely secure the porch at night without making the building seem like a fortress. Completing the lively composition are angled steel columns supporting the porch roof.

Colorful murals enliven the otherwise neutral palette throughout the project. Lining the back wall of the porch are shapes abstractly suggesting various animals. In the main interior waiting area, which occupies a tower that anchors the corner of the building, the walls abound with more literal depictions of various breeds of dogs and cats.

The center was designed to achieve LEED Silver certification in accordance with Miami-Dade County project guidelines.





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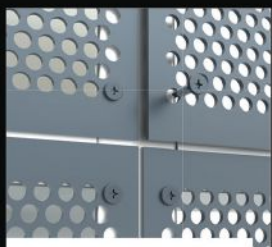


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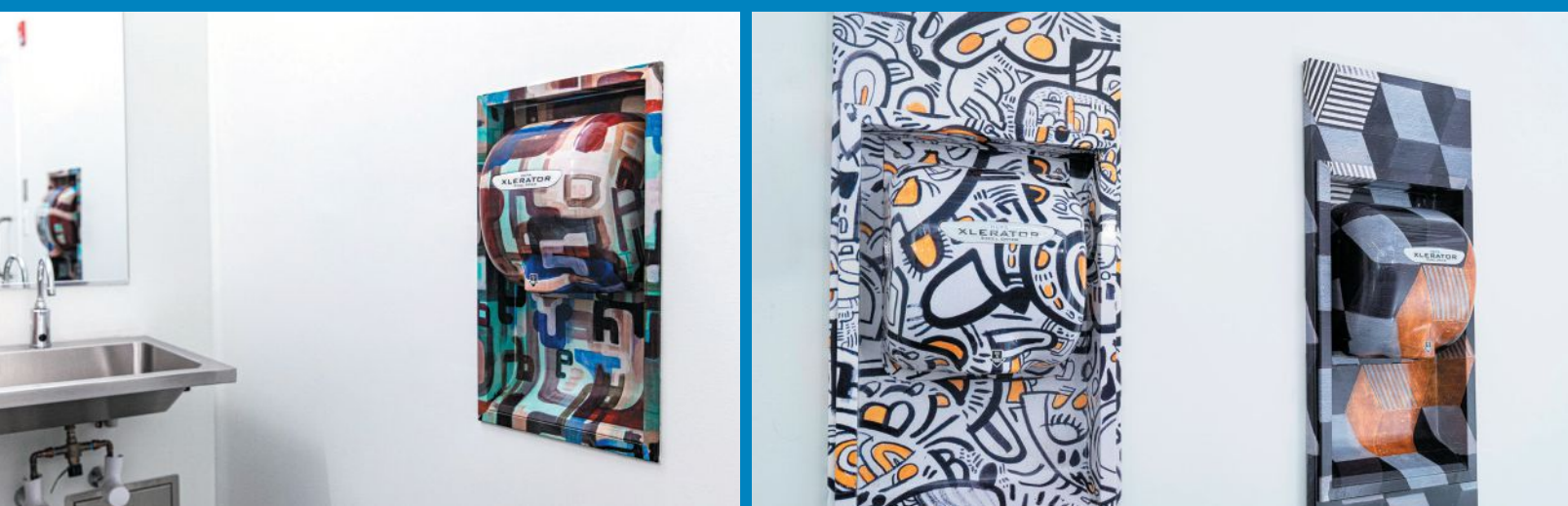
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# Eva W. Mack Community Hub

West Palm Beach, Florida

Alfonso Hernandez Architect LLC |  
West Palm Beach, Florida



Photo by Sunman

Interior view from the north area. At the north end of the central space is the multipurpose room that has sliding wall glass doors that open or close depending on the desired use of the space. This room is defined by movable tables and colorful chairs that align with the original design concepts. The large window at the northwest corner is the focal point of the space.

The late Eva W. Mack, the first Black female mayor of West Palm Beach, was remembered by one of her colleagues and friends as “a totally unselfish person.” It seems fitting, then, that the new community hub named in Mack’s honor was conceived to house not only the offices of the health foundation that she established but also an assortment of other nonprofit groups and governmental agencies. Expanding on that inclusive spirit, the program for the facility also called for publicly accessible conference rooms, a computer lab and a co-working space.

The building, designed by Alfonso Hernandez Architect LLC, expresses that complex array of tenants and functions through bold geometrical devices, pops of color and thoughtful volumetric manipulation. It also incorporates elements that allude to the history of its site, which was once occupied by a segregated public swimming pool. The pool was later replaced by the initial headquarters of the Sickle Cell Foundation of Palm Beach County & Treasure Coast, the charity that Mack created.

“In many of our projects, we don’t necessarily know who the end user is,” said Alfonso Hernandez, AIA, LEED AP. “This was different. It gave us an opportunity to tell the story of the site and the organizations that use our building.”

One of the first challenges Hernandez faced was how to position the building on the site. He wanted the main entrance to be close to the existing sidewalk along the main road to make it welcoming to pedestrians and bicyclists. He was also determined to protect two mature oak trees growing just a few feet from that sidewalk. His solution was to bend the building in plan, resulting in a subtle curve that softens its otherwise rectilinear massing.

The building’s cross-section, featuring a tall central spine flanked by shorter spaces, further protects the large trees by allowing



their branches to spread freely over the lower-rise components.

The front façade consists of two simple blocks clad in white stucco with a horizontal canopy over the entrance between them. Asymmetrical insets around the punched windows are painted gray, adding a sense of depth. The taller, set-back block, also painted gray, lends hierarchy to the composition while offering the first hint as to the building's interior organization.

At the northern end of the building, adjacent to the side parking lot, the tall spine extends beyond the lower blocks and terminates in a glassy bay punctuated by diagonal columns and mullions. Facing the rear of the building, the taller volume is lined with clerestory windows. A secondary entrance off the rear parking lot is marked by a custom mural evoking a mandala, a geometric pattern associated with various Asian spiritual traditions and intended to symbolize oneness.

The rationale for the building's massing becomes clear upon entering. The tall central space functions as an internal town square, accommodating the main reception desk and public amenities such as computer stations and desks. The space is amply daylit thanks to the clerestory windows, while wood baffles modulate the light and add visual warmth. The long, curved wall along one side of the space is lined with glass doors, their frames painted different colors to convey the distinct identities of the various nonprofits occupying the corresponding offices. Brightly colored diagonal lines on the walls and angular patches of color on the floor further animate the space, creating what Hernandez calls a "tapestry" symbolizing the communal whole composed of many parts.

At one end of the central space is a large multi-purpose room, which occupies the glassy bay with diagonal columns and mullions. At the opposite end are two smaller conference rooms. Next to those spaces is the Sickle Cell Foundation's office door, which is adorned with a large portrait photo of Eva Mack. She appears to be looking across the vestibule toward a historic photographic mural showing women diving into the segregated pool that once stood on the site. For architect Hernandez, the positioning of the two photos is apt: "It's as if she's sending a message encouraging everyone in the community to dive into whatever you want to do."



Above: View from the northwest corner. The site contains several mature oak trees; the largest tree has a 36-inch-diameter trunk. The existing trees will remain situated in their original position, adding to a sense of stability on the site.



Photo by Sunman



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# Resilient Retreat

## Sarasota, Florida

### Schimberg Group | Sarasota, Florida



East view of entry buildings. Photo by Venjhamin Reyes

In architectural circles, the word “resilient” typically describes the capacity of a building or city to rebound quickly from natural disasters. In the case of Resilient Retreat in Sarasota, however, the term refers not to the architecture, but to the people who use it.

Founded by Sidney Turner, Ph.D., a psychologist and researcher, Resilient Retreat provides a place of respite for people who have experienced trauma, including survivors of abuse, first responders and military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, among others. The facility offers non-clinical, evidence-based treatment programs such as workshops, yoga, art and music therapy, and animal companionship. Many activities take advantage of the retreat’s setting amid 84 acres of conservation land, emphasizing the healing power of nature.

“This is the only place like this that we know of anywhere in the world,” said Barron Schimberg, AIA, LEED AP, principal architect at Schimberg Group, the firm that designed the complex.

The retreat’s main building contains a central living/dining/kitchen space, two bedrooms, and administrative offices.

Covered porches connect that building to two flanking wings containing additional bedrooms. Nearby is a multi-use pavilion, built on the footprint of a former 5,000-square-foot barn, that includes the primary “Gathering Place,” therapy rooms and a residence for the family of the property’s caretaker. Depending upon the needs and sensitivities of the clients in residence at a given time, portions of the facility may be kept deliberately vacant. The staff schedules individuals and groups with similar issues at the same time to avoid discomfort or conflict.

The exterior architecture of the complex evokes the Florida vernacular, juxtaposing galvanized steel columns with wood siding and rafters in the porch roofs. Light, open metal railings along the porches provide a sense of security and gentle separation without blocking views. The corners of the bedroom wings are notched, creating semi-private outdoor spaces where guests can interact with others while remaining reassuringly close to their quarters.

For the interior, the shared goal of both client and architect was to create an environment that balanced commercial occupancy with a residential feel. The

constant guiding principle throughout the design process, according to Schimberg, was *hygge*—a Danish and Norwegian word that is notoriously difficult to translate simply into English. It is variously described as a sense of coziness, comfort, togetherness or well-being.

“The solution,” according to the architects’ project statement, “includes clean lines and the use of natural or natural-feeling materials like contract-quality grass cloth and variations of wood species for interior architectural details, flooring, cabinetry and furniture. The *hygge* color palette includes light, monochromatic neutrals drawn from nature, combined with accents of color. The furniture and décor used Scandinavian mid-century designs to create a residential feel.”

The design seeks to maximize flexibility, allowing the staff to accommodate the varied and sometimes unpredictable needs of guests. Bedroom options, for instance, include some with typical eye-level windows and others with only clerestory windows, recognizing that some clients might feel vulnerable if they can see people walking outside their rooms. The layout also includes a wide variety of dedicated and informal spaces where





Multi-use barn building. Image courtesy of Schimberg Group

therapy sessions, workshops and classes may take place depending on the needs of the participants. One unusual aspect of the design process for this project was the involvement of an advisory group, known as "Voices," comprising people who had experienced various forms of trauma. In order to maintain their privacy, this group never met directly with the design team, but relayed its reactions and recommendations through Dr. Turner. Nonetheless, their input had a profound impact on the project.

"In the original design for the living space," Schimberg explained, "we showed wood beams with cross braces. The Voices group, some of whom had had bad experiences in church settings, said the design was too church-like." The architects revised the design accordingly, switching to a simpler exposed-rafter solution.

"I can't tell you how many times Sidney would text me over the last year or so," recalled Schimberg. "So many people have come away saying, 'This place made me feel comfortable and made me feel safe.' This is why we do what we do."



Dining room and commercial kitchen. Photo by Venjhamin Reyes



# PatBO Miami

Miami, Florida

BoND | New York, New York

Daft Büro Architecture | Miami, Florida



The exterior façade unifies the first and second floor through the uniform color of the arched wooden slat system. Photo by StudioPyg.

In Miami's Design District, the competition for architectural attention is fierce. Many of the world's most fabled fashion houses have commissioned extraordinary buildings there, some of which have become widely recognized symbols of their brands. Even the parking garages in the district invite feverish photo-taking among locals and visitors alike.

PatBO, a Brazilian women's-wear line named for founder and creative director Patricia Bonaldi, is a newcomer to the Design District, where the company recently opened its first retail store in the U.S. The store was designed by New York architecture studio BoND, which had previously designed PatBO's Manhattan headquarters and showroom, in collaboration with the Miami-based firm Daft Büro Architecture as architect of record.

The Miami shop occupies one segment of an existing retail row, designed by Stantec, which is notable for its faceted second-story window bays lined with vertical strips of gray, weathered wood.

Faced with a relatively modest budget and a project timeframe that was nearly unimaginable — less than one year from the beginning of design to the store's opening — the architects knew they had to accomplish a lot with a little. Their strategy was to focus on just two primary design moves — one exterior and one interior. Subsidiary elements would support these big gestures to create a coherent whole expressing PatBO's corporate identity.

"The client was pushing for a way to distinguish her store from its neighbors," said Max Jarosz, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, cofounder of Daft Büro. "The base building read as a single, horizontal structure. We needed to do something to establish a vertical presence."

The solution focused on recessing the entrance plane a few feet behind a new screen made from vertical wood strips like those on the bay above, thus defining a semi-enclosed,

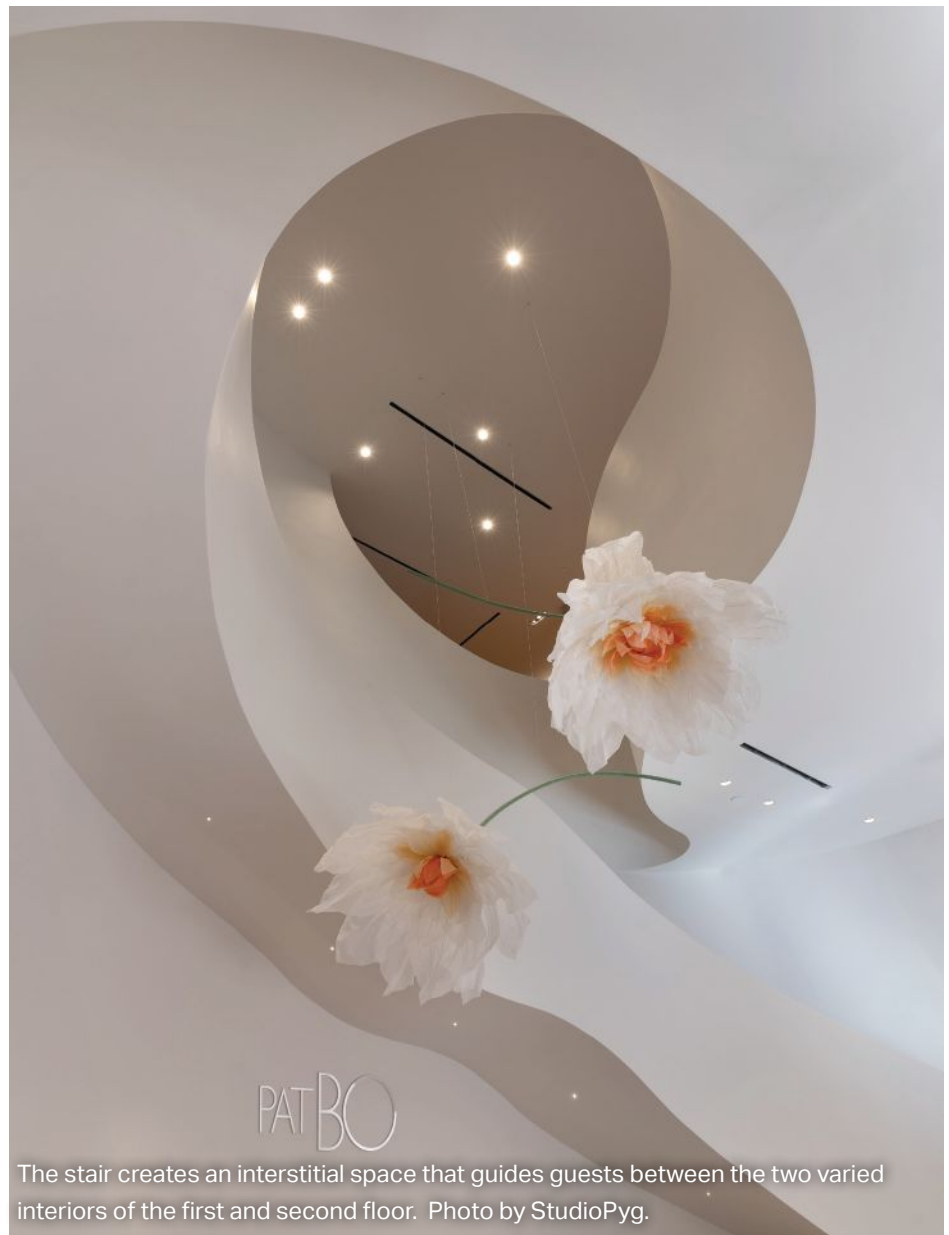


porch-like space. The bottom edges of the wood slats are cut to form a graceful arch that frames the entrance. This transition zone uses the same pavers as those on the adjacent sidewalk, suggesting that it is an extension of the public realm, which sends a subtle message to passersby that they are welcome to enter. To emphasize this already distinct façade, the architects decided to paint all of the wood slats on both levels pink. Matching vinyl strips on the existing windows of the projecting bay form an inverted arch that complements the arch below.

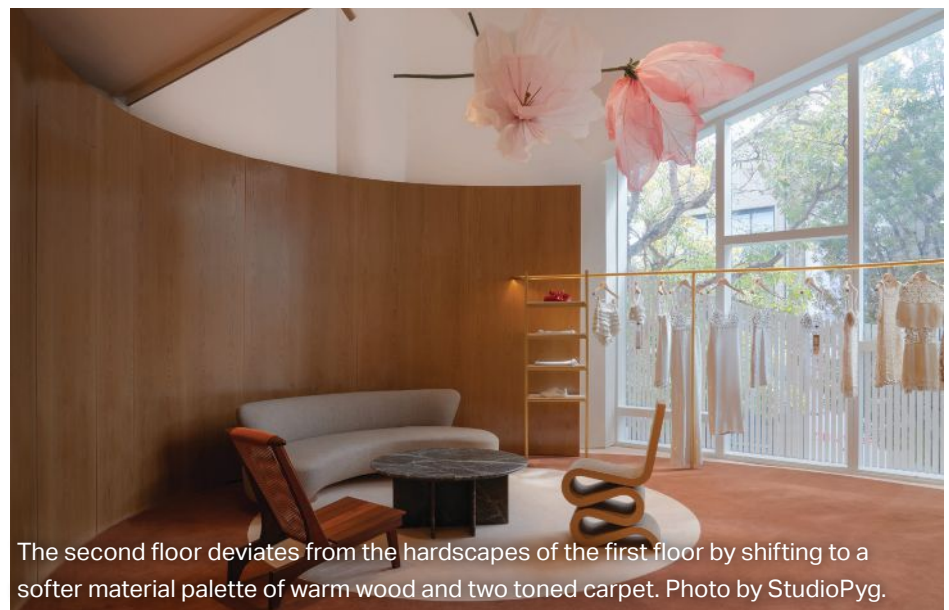
The signature feature of the interior is a sweeping sculptural staircase that clings to an apse-like wall separating the main retail space from dressing rooms and other subsidiary functions on the ground floor. Deceptively simple, with its solid white railing and lack of visible structural support, the staircase presented numerous technical difficulties. To avoid time-consuming below-grade work, for instance, the architects collaborated with structural engineers from Eastern Engineering to devise a way to build the stair without foundations. The staircase passes through a tall interstitial space between a drop ceiling and the second floor and disappears into an asymmetrical void, creating a sense of mystery. Suspended floral sculptures add a whimsical touch.

The second floor contains a “boutique” space with a carpeted floor and wood-paneled walls, contrasting with the terrazzo flooring and white walls on the ground level. Some of the interior millwork finishes, along with the green quartzite stone walls lining the sides of the exterior transition space, were made by Brazilian craftsman who did the initial work in their home country. When they arrived with the materials in Miami, they had to go out and buy saws and rework many elements to fit.

“The defining aspect of this project was the incredibly tight timeline,” said Jarosz. “They reached out to us in December [2022] and said they wanted to be open by Art Basel in December of the following year. There was no room for delay because Art Basel drives a significant amount of pedestrian traffic into the District, which plays a critical role in driving the yearly revenue of this type of store. We probably started in February and submitted construction documents in September. Working intensely with the contractor, Red Door Construction, we got it built in 10 weeks, just in time for Art Basel.”



The stair creates an interstitial space that guides guests between the two varied interiors of the first and second floor. Photo by StudioPyg.



The second floor deviates from the hardscapes of the first floor by shifting to a softer material palette of warm wood and two toned carpet. Photo by StudioPyg.



# Leon County Amtrak Station Visitor Information Center

Tallahassee, Florida

Barnett Fronczak Barlowe & Shuler Architects |  
Tallahassee, Florida



View of east façade. Photo by Nancy O'Brien – Sunlight Photos.

In the mid-19th century, Leon County was the most populous jurisdiction in Florida. Located in the eastern Panhandle, it was home to Tallahassee, which became the capital of the Florida Territory in 1824 and retained that role after statehood in 1845. It was chosen because of its strategic location roughly equidistant between Pensacola and St. Augustine, two of the state's three largest cities at the time (the third was Key West).

Tallahassee seemed predestined to become a railroad hub. In 1858, the Pensacola & Georgia Railroad Company built a one-story depot south of the city center. The successor company, the Jacksonville, Pensacola & Mobile Railroad, built a two-story addition

in 1880. This facility continued to serve both freight and passenger trains until 1971, when the new national rail network, Amtrak, canceled passenger service to Tallahassee, ending a 113-year run. Service was reinstated in 1993, only to be suspended again after Hurricane Katrina damaged the rail lines in 2005.

While the historic station fell into disrepair, the area immediately around it was experiencing a renaissance. The site is now bracketed by the All Saints Arts District to the northeast, home to the largest concentration of locally-owned businesses and arts studios in the area, and the lively Railroad Square Art District to the southwest. Meanwhile, the bustling campuses

of Florida State University and Florida A&M University are only slightly farther away.

Barnett Fronczak Barlowe & Shuler Architects (BFBSA) was hired in 2016 to analyze the condition of the historic train station and develop a renovation plan. The project finally received funding in late 2018, only to be derailed (no pun intended) by COVID-19. The renovated station, which now houses the Visitor Information Center run by Visit Tallahassee, an agency of the Leon County government, finally opened in 2023. BFBSA's scope of work entailed cleaning the brick façades, restoring doors, windows, grilles and gates, and replicating original signage. Site work included adding



new stairs and accessible ramps, as well as improving vehicular access. On the interior, the renovation left the original wood beams, trusses, brick walls and barn-style doors exposed.

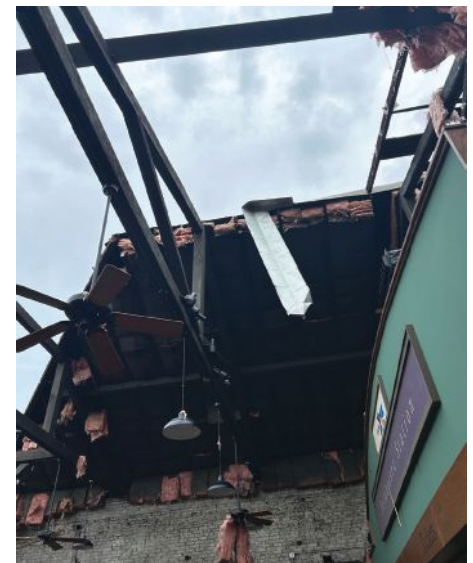
"When we came along, the building was painted purple and green, like the Incredible Hulk," joked Doug Shuler, AIA, principal architect and partner with BFBSA. "We ran into some unpleasant surprises once we started the work, such as termites. The biggest surprise was the underside of the floor trusses. A previous contractor came

in with a pressure washer, and water had gotten into the wood, so it started to grow fungus. The 130-year-old flooring had to be ripped up and replaced, which was kind of heartbreaking."

The architects also replaced the dilapidated wood canopy over the front door, which was not original. The new steel-and-glass canopy adds a distinctly modern element while remaining sympathetic to the restrained neoclassicism of the original depot. The canopy is detailed so that it touches the historic façade as minimally as possible.

The community holds out hope that the rejuvenated station may someday welcome rail passengers again. "It's mostly occasional freight rail traffic these days," he explained, "but every now and then there's talk that Amtrak might be interested in restarting service. For now, the building really serves as the welcome house for Tallahassee and a nice museum piece — a tale of the past."

Editor's Note: On May 10, Tallahassee was struck by three tornadoes, causing significant damage to this structure.



Top Left: Enlarged partial view of north façade, passenger rail platform and side entrance. Photo by Nancy O'Brien – Sunlight Photos.

Bottom Left: Exterior view from 1961, looking east toward the main depot, shows that the original aesthetic was still intact at this time. The verbiage "Seaboard Freight Station" is clearly displayed along the west facade on the frieze. The 2022 renovation took care to reproduce and provide identical signage (now visible on all elevations) as it had been removed during a prior renovation in the 1980s.

Bottom Center and Right: Images of the aftermath of tornadoes. Pictures courtesy of Barnett Fronczak Barlowe & Shuler Architects.





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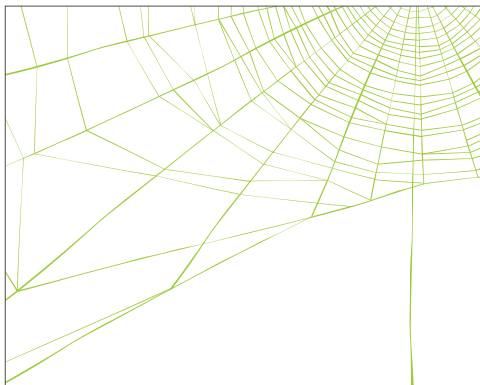
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# Salty Urbanism: A Design Manual to Address Sea Level Rise and Climate Change for Urban Areas in the Coastal Zones

An Interview with Jeffrey Huber, FAIA, ASLA, NCARB, LEED AP | Brooks + Scarpa



A page from *Salty Urbanism*. Image courtesy of Jeffrey Huber/Brooks + Scarpa/FAU.

*Florida/Caribbean Architect* recently interviewed Jeffrey Huber, FAIA, ASLA, NCARB, LEED AP, principal with Brooks + Scarpa in Fort Lauderdale, about his upcoming book *Salty Urbanism: A Design Manual to Address Sea Level Rise and Climate Change for Urban Areas in the Coastal Zones*. The book is scheduled to be published on June 25, 2024, and will be available on Amazon.

**Florida/Caribbean Architect:** What do you mean by “salty urbanism?”

**Jeffrey Huber:** The reality is that, as sea levels rise, we can forget about preventing flooding in coastal areas. The issue becomes managing flooding in a more effective, resilient and ecological way. And more and more of the flooding is going to be from saltwater, which is a

wicked problem. This book graphically lays out the implications of these issues at an urban scale.

**FCA:** How is the book structured?

**Huber:** It provides a series of toolboxes to help architects, landscape architects, planners, city officials and residents to understand the hydrology, ecology and



geology of these areas and transition to a new approach to architecture and urbanism. Every neighborhood has a different challenge, so that's where we started: at the neighborhood scale down to the street, the block and the building.

**FCA:** How did the project get started?

**Huber:** Florida's state legislature had authorized Adaptation Action Areas, which encouraged flood-prone coastal communities to develop plans for prioritizing funding for infrastructure improvements. One of the Adaptation Action Areas was North Beach Village on the Fort Lauderdale barrier island. I organized a group from Florida Atlantic University to study the area and then got my office involved.

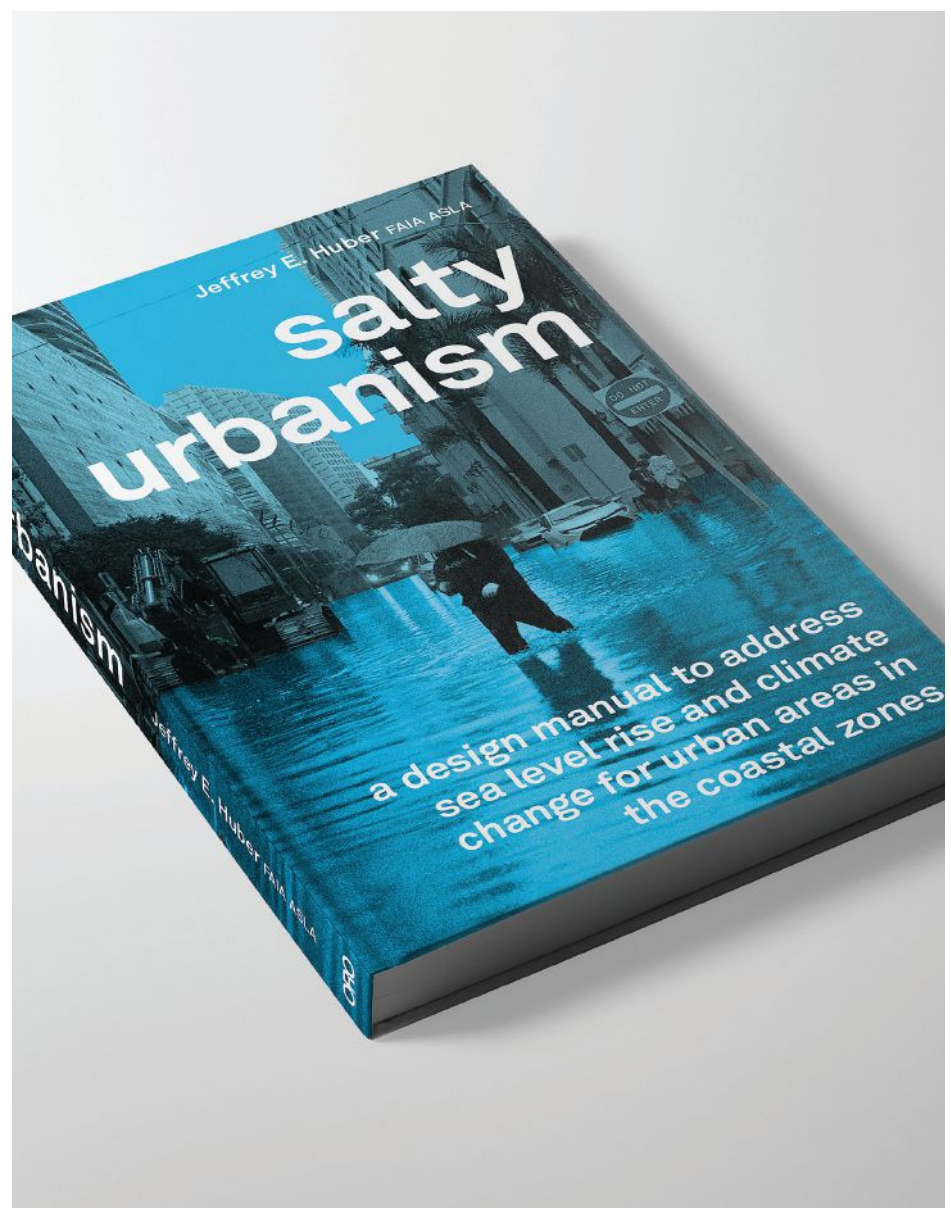
Then we started getting grants from groups like the National Endowment for the Arts. We also won a Sea Grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration — I understand I'm the first designer or architect who ever got this grant in the state of Florida — as well as a grant from the AIA Upjohn Research Initiative.

**FCA:** What sorts of problems did you identify in North Beach Village?

**Huber:** North Beach surprisingly has up to 14 feet of elevation at its highest point, but much of it is only about 1 foot above sea level. Obviously with 6 feet of sea level rise predicted by 2100, a lot of the city could disappear. But even before then, there are threats from routine storm-related and tidal flooding.

One problem is that the streets at North Beach Village were so over-designed — I mean you could land a 747 on some of them. One of the students did an analysis showing that the neighborhood had 90 percent impervious surface. We know the watershed begins to show environmental degradation with just 10 percent impervious surface.

So one strategy is putting the streets on a diet, removing unnecessary impervious surface, adding traffic calming and trees, which not only provide shade but can help mitigate flooding. The right tree



*Salty Urbanism* cover. Image courtesy of Jeffrey Huber/Brooks + Scarpa/FAU.

in the right place can absorb up to 100 gallons of water in a 24-hour period.

The beachfront is also vulnerable, as we saw after Hurricane Irma in 2017, when literally tons of sand ended up in the middle of Highway A1A. This is why we need root dunes, as I call them, not sand dunes. If they have enough fibrous plant material, they can hold the sand in place, protecting the beaches from erosion.

**FCA:** What broad proposals emerged from your studies?

**Huber:** We developed three options in detail, ranging from relatively modest interventions to a radical acceptance that much of the

land in the neighborhood is going to go away. We were essentially calling Fort Lauderdale to task and saying, "If you're going to call yourself the Venice of America then maybe you really start to look more like Venice, with defined areas of land and buildings surrounded by water."

Surprisingly, when we presented these ideas to the community, the participants favored the most radical one. They saw it as a place that could still draw people here, even though it's a very different lifestyle that emerges. I wouldn't say it's easy — legally, technically or physically — but the people saw potential in this radical rethinking of what their city might be.



# On the Boards

## Cibao New International Airport

### Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic

luis vidal + architects | Santo Domingo,  
Dominican Republic



Images courtesy of luis vidal + architects



Santiago de los Caballeros is the second-largest city in the Dominican Republic and home to Cibao International Airport, which opened in 2002 and quickly became the third-busiest airport in the country. The airport is especially popular with Dominicans traveling to and from major cities on the East Coast of the United States.

Now underway is a major expansion that will roughly double the airport's capacity. Designed by luis vidal + architects, the project entails the construction of a new passenger terminal adjacent to the existing one, which will be converted into a mixed-use facility including restaurants, shops, a hotel, airport offices and parking. The design of the new terminal is distinguished by its undulating roof, whose form was inspired by the region's characteristic linear agricultural fields. The roof will be supported by a glulam structural system. The completed terminal will include large outdoor gardens where passengers may wait after passing through security.





# Roads Duplex Miami, Florida

Chandler and Associates Architecture, P.A. |  
Miami, Florida



Render of side of project. Image courtesy of Chandler and Associates.



Just inland of Miami's bustling Brickell district lies a quiet residential neighborhood known as the Roads, a roughly triangular area where the city's insistent grid of north-south "avenues" and east-west "streets" gives way to diagonal thoroughfares designated as "roads" instead. Originally platted by the pioneering woman developer Mary Brickell in the 1920s, the area has become one of the most sought-after in Miami.

This proposed residential duplex was designed for an acutely angled corner site

at the edge of the neighborhood where the two street grids meet. While one unit has a straightforward rectilinear layout aligned with the diagonal street and incorporating a traditional back yard and pool, the other unit comprises two distinct volumes, one on the diagonal and the other rotated to align with the standard street grid. The architects placed the second unit's primary outdoor space and pool in the front corner yard, thus enhancing privacy between the two dwellings.



# Architects & Their Art

## Champlain Bridge Watch

Apexx Architecture, LLC | Tallahassee, Florida



Champlain Bridge Watch with Raw Steel Option. Photo by Steve Christensen.



Maxim D. Nasab, AIA, NCARB, whose Tallahassee-based firm, Apexx Architecture, LLC, specializes in bridge design, has a longstanding interest in such structures. For his Master of Architecture thesis at the Savannah College of Art & Design, Nasab designed an “inhabitable bridge” crossing the St. Lawrence River in his hometown of Montreal, Canada. It was essentially a modern version of Florence’s Ponte Vecchio, incorporating residential and commercial uses.

Another of Nasab’s interests is watches. When he heard that the aging Champlain Bridge linking central Montreal with its suburbs across the river was to be replaced, Nasab had an idea for commemorating the original structure, built in 1962. He contacted a watchmaker named Steve Christensen to discuss the prospect of creating a watch made from pieces of the old bridge following its demolition.

Then, in a remarkable coincidence, civic leaders announced a competition to elicit proposals for reusing elements of the original bridge. Nasab and Christensen’s idea was selected as one of 11 winners. Nasab developed the design to fit one of Christensen’s existing cases. The dial, which is composed of steel from the demolished structure, bears an abstract logo that evokes the new, cable-stayed Champlain Bridge while the hands allude to the open-web girders of the cantilevered bridge it replaced. The perimeter of the dial is lined with a version of a graphic scale that would be recognizable to any architect, engineer or design aficionado. The rear of the watch is transparent, allowing views of its intricate Swiss movement.



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